

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



**READING SYLVIA PLATH'S POETRY THROUGH CONTEMPORARY
LITERARY THEORY**

PhD Thesis

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Department of English Language and Literature

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Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Kemalettin YİĞİTER

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DECLARATION

I proclaim that I collected and implemented all data according to academic guidelines and ethical policy while writing this dissertation. Also, I proclaim that I indicated all citations and references in this study originally.

Murat KARAKOÇ



To Deniz





FOREWORD

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ABBREVIATIONS

- CP** : Collected Poems
JSP : Journals of Sylvia Plath
UJSP : Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath
MLF : Mouvement de Libération des Femmes





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SYLVIA PLATH ŞİİRİNİ ÇAĞDAŞ EDEBİ TEORİLER IŞIĞINDA OKUMAK

ÖZET

Bu tez Sylvia Plath şiirini, edebiyat ve şiirsel söylem için bir eleştiri alanı olarak öngörülen çağdaş edebî teoriler ışığında tekrar okumaktadır. Bu çalışmanın ana yaklaşımı tek bir teori çerçevesinde olmayacak çünkü Sylvia'nın şiirleri geniş çaplı, farklı konulara dokunabilen şiirlerdir. Sylvia'nın uygun şiirleri psikanaliz, feminist ve postmodernist teoriler ile incelenecektir. Onun hayatı ve şiiri her zaman bir karmaşa olarak görülse de, birçok eleştirmen ve araştırmacı tarafından ilgi gösterilmiştir. Yazmadaki başarısı hayatındaki parçalanmışlıktan gelmektedir ve keskin kalemi aslında yaşanmışlıklarının ürünüdür. Bu tezdeki amacım Sylvia Plath şiirini çağdaş edebî teoriler ışığında incelemek ve onun sanatını, yaşadığı dönem ve hayatıyla bağdaştırmaktır.

İlk bölüm Plath'ın *'Daddy'*, *'Medusa'*, *'Edge'* ve *'Contusion'* şiirlerini 50'li ve 60'lı yılların Amerika'sında edebî bir trend olarak ortaya çıkan 'Gizdökümcü Şiir' akımının bir parçası olarak psikanalitik bir incelemeyi içermektedir. Bu, tutucu yaklaşımlara karşı tabuların yıkıldığı bir dönemdir ve Sylvia'da bu akımın en önemli temsilcilerinden birisi olmuştur. Sylvia'nın ebeveynlerinden ve çocukluğundan nasıl etkilendiğini ve bunu şiirine nasıl yansıttığını inceleyeceğim. İkinci bölüm ise Sylvia Plath şiirini feminist bir okumayı içerecek. Mitolojik bir alegori olan *'Two Sisters of Persephone'* adlı şiirinde kadın ruhunu ifade etme amacıyla Sylvia'nın nasıl mitolojik dokundurular kullandığını göreceğiz. Şiir Plath'ın zamanındaki kadın rolünü anlatan yerinde bir kurgulama ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Daha sonra onun son dönem şiirine örnek olarak ünlü ve intihar odaklı bir eser olan *'Lady Lazarus'* şiirini inceleyeceğim. Bu şiirde o, derin intiharvari metaforların yanında toplumdaki güçlü kadın rolünü aramaktadır. Kocasını Ted Hughes'u bir akıl hocası olarak algılamaktadır; fakat birtakım intihar girişimleriyle yeni bir kadın olmayı ve erkeği alt etmeyi arzulamaktadır. Ted Hughes'a odaklanan *'The Jailer'* feminizm bölümünün son şiiridir. Şiirde yazar, kocasını kendi özgürlüğünü engelleyen ana etken olarak ortaya koymaktadır. Sylvia Plath şiirinin postmodern eğilimleri üçüncü bölümde incelenecektir. Sylvia Plath şiirini oldukça etkileyen soykırım imgeleri postmodern bölümün başlıca inceleme konusu olacak. Yazarın en ünlü iki şiiri *'Daddy'* ve *'Lady Lazarus'* bu bölümde yine ortaya çıkacak çünkü bunlar Plath'ın soykırım söyleminin en iyi örnekleridir. Son olarak, İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nın insanlar üzerinde ne kadar kötü etkileri olduğunu anlatan *'Mary's Song'* bu bölümün incelenen en son şiiri olacak. Çalışmanın sonuç bölümünde Sylvia Plath'ın yazarlığı ve ona yazmakta ilham veren herşey gözden geçirilecek.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Plath, Şiir, İngiliz Edebiyatı, Edebi Teori.*



READING SYLVIA PLATH'S POETRY THROUGH CONTEMPORARY LITERARY THEORY

ABSTRACT

This dissertation reads Sylvia Plath's poetry through contemporary theories that have all been predicted as a field of literary and poetic criticism. The study will not centralize around one theory exclusively as Plath's breadth of poems are well rounded in terms of touching upon different matters. Sylvia's relevant poems will thus be analyzed through three theories: psychoanalysis, feminism, and postmodernism. Although the relationship between her life and her poetry has always been seen as a complexity, her poems have been of interest to many critics and researchers. Her success in writing comes from the gradual disintegration of her life, with her sharp pencil being a product of her experiences. My intention in this study is to analyze Sylvia Plath's poetry in light of contemporary literary theory and correlate her age and her life with her art.

The first chapter will deal with a psychoanalytic examination of Plath's '*Daddy*', '*Medusa*', '*Edge*', and '*Contusion*' as a part of confessional poetry, a 1950's and 60's American trend within poetry. It was a collapse of taboos against conservative attitudes at that time, and Sylvia appears to have been one of the main representatives of that trend. I will try to express how Sylvia was affected by her parents and childhood, and reflected this onto her poetry. The second chapter will be a feminist reading of Plath's poetry. We will see how she used mythical allusions in the aim of expressing the soul of a woman in her mythological allegory of a poem, '*Two Sisters of Persephone*'. The poem creates a relevant composition telling the role of woman during Plath's time. I will then examine Sylvia's famous suicidal poem '*Lady Lazarus*' as an example of her late poetry. Through this, she looks for her strong role in society alongside deep metaphoric reference to suicidal metaphors. She perceives Ted Hughes, her husband, as a mentor but through attempting suicide, she wishes to become a new woman and vanquish man. '*The Jailer*', which focuses on Ted Hughes is the last poem of the feminist reading chapter. In this poem, the writer indicates her husband as a jailer who is the prominent figure in handicapping her freedom. The postmodern undertones in Plath's poetry will be studied in the third chapter. Holocaust imagery that have a great impact on Sylvia Plath's poetry will be the centre of analysis in this section. Her two well-regarded poems '*Daddy*' and '*Lady Lazarus*' will re-emerge in this chapter again, for they are the best examples of Plath's Holocaust writing. Finally, '*Mary's Song*', which expresses how World War II had effected people negatively, will be the final poem studied in this chapter. In the conclusion part of the study, Plath's authorship and what inspired her her writing will be examined in more detail.

Keywords: *Plath, Poetry, English Literature, Literary Theory.*



1. INTRODUCTION

Oh, satisfaction! I don't think I could live without it. It's like water or bread, or something absolutely essential to me. I find myself absolutely fulfilled when I have written a poem, when I'm writing one. Having written one, then you fall away very rapidly from having been a poet to becoming a sort of poet in rest, which isn't the same thing at all. But I think the actual experience of writing a poem is a magnificent one. (Plath Web)

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) was a twentieth century writer whose short but cataclysmic life appears in her novel, short stories, journals, and poems. Very few writers have influentially reflected their real-life experiences in literary texts as Sylvia Plath was able to achieve. Besides the writer's brilliant talent in writing, her unusual life is also essential if we are talking about 'Sylvia Plath effect' today. Sylvia Plath makes extraordinary visits to ordinary lives. Her readers are not in search of pleasure; rather, they comprehend Plath's work of art as a 'mirror' because they are sure that it is very possible to find somewhere that is the reflection of their anguishes, disappointments, hopes, and nonchalance in the writer's works. Sylvia Plath instinctively felt herself alone throughout her life and this loneliness is a feeling that can be experienced by all people who are in a chagrin atmosphere. Her poems have been a press agent for readers. Many researchers have indicated Plath's unusual life and her traumatic end as the main reason(s) for her authentic writing. Furthermore the time she has lived in was also an apparent effect on it. Following World War II, the framework of modernism was applied to interpret much of the world's cultural, social, and economic conditions and results. The excessive individualistic approach of society caused alienation for people and, as a result, associated those who were generally melancholic or emotional as being struck with a sense of loneliness. During the first half of the 20th century, the modern period had an explicit effect on society because of its existence as a complex relationship with simultaneous societal shifts like urbanization, industrialization including mechanization of labor, and grassroots city-based political movements. Many critics of culture, who will be mentioned in detail in the chapter on post-modern reading, evaluate this as the result of modernism

because Sylvia Plath's childhood existed through that time frame. Plath always remembered her childhood out of an inherent sense of nostalgia.

Sylvia Plath was born in 1932 as a daughter of middle class American parents in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. Undoubtedly, she has an inner poet within, early on, as she started writing poems as soon as she learned how to write. At 8 years old, Plath's first poem got published in the 'The Boston Sunday Herald' newspaper. However she in her lifetime only ever published one book collection of poetry, 'The Colossus'. She got the fame of 'major writer' posthumously; in particular, her book 'Ariel' being the most influential in that fame-ship. The beginning of Plath's critical reputation came two years after her death, with the 1965 publishing of a review of her collection 'Ariel', by Hughes. At the age of four, Plath and her family moved to Winthrop, near the sea, in order to be closer to her mother, Aurelia's, family. Sylvia Plath liked the sea very much and often used sea imagery in poems. This change seemingly had a distinct effect in her preference for images. Sensitive, determined, intelligent, perfectionist, and hardworking are just some of the examples of definitions that have been applied to defining Sylvia as a child. In a review on Ariel, Ted Hughes (1965, p. 3), Plath's husband, expressed her secret of genius in 'Poetry Book Society':

“...Sylvia Plath was the perfect pupil: she did every lesson double. Her whole tremendous will was bent on excelling. Finally, she emerged like the survivor of an evolutionary ordeal: at no point could she let herself be negligent or inadequate”

Two-and-a-half years after Plath's birth, her brother Warren was born; he was last child of Aurelia and Otto (Sylvia's father). Otto was born in Grabowo, an eastern German town often referred to as a 'Polish Corridor'. He immigrated to the United States in 1900, at the age of 15, and had changed his surname from 'Platt' to 'Plath'. At first, he settled in New York City, but he then moved to Watertown for his education with the aim of becoming a politician; however soon became interested in biology upon reading Charles Darwin. He received his M.A. in German, and began teaching German and biology at several universities until finally settling at Boston University where he reached full professorship. His PhD dissertation studied bumblebees which later inspired Sylvia Plath's own 1959 poem 'The Beekeeper's Daughter'. The final verse of that poem is mentioned in vivid detail in her father's book 'Bumblebees and their Ways'. In 1929, Otto met Aurelia, who had enrolled in his German class. The two married on January 4th, 1932 in Carson City, Nevada.

Their marital life are not indicated positively by Aurelia, for she complains about it in her book as unsociable, saying ‘social life was almost nil for us as a married couple’ (Aurelia, p. xxviii). Moreover, Otto Plath prevented Aurelia from having a working-social woman role, insisting that she resign from Brooklyn High School where she taught German. To be a ‘full-time home-maker’ influences Aurelia deeply in terms of human dimension for she could not actualise herself in society completely (Aurelia, p. 2). Hence, Aurelia’s confusion is reflected towards Sylvia Plath, who charged her father with it. In her marriage, Sylvia Plath experienced such confusion as well, as she too had to be a housewife and take care of her children. Her reaction on it through poems is evaluated in the feminist reading chapter. This was not the only anger of Sylvia Plath felt towards her father Otto. Her father’s health began to deteriorate after her brother’s birth. One of Otto’s friends had died from lung cancer; he thought that he himself too had cancer owing to similar symptoms, but he instead died from diabetes mellitus, which had caused a gangrenous infection despite their being possible treatment of the disease in existence by that time period. Otto’s death was one of the most profound events of Sylvia’s life; perhaps the single most. According to her, it was the moment happiness ended and the anguish began. She wrote in her journal: ‘‘My father died, we moved inland. Whereon those nine first years of my life sealed themselves off like a ship in a bottle-beautiful, inaccessible, obsolete, a fine, white flying myth’’ (Plath 1998). Sylvia Plath was in an emotional wreck as she thought that she was removed from happiness since her father’s perceived abandonment. The writer could never get rid of her past and forget this trauma until the bitter end; suicide. ‘Carpe Diem’, the Latin expression meaning ‘seize the day’ or, more comprehensibly, ‘enjoy the day’, was not in Sylvia Plath’s line of interest as she explains in her journal: ‘With me, the present is forever, and forever is always shifting, flowing, melting. This second is life’ (Plath 1998). Her father’s unexpected and early death is a clear trauma that influences Sylvia Plath throughout her short life. In my chapter on psychoanalytical reading, the position of Otto Plath’s death in Sylvia’s life is analysed as an ‘emotional holocaust’ for the writer (Kehoe, p. 1). In this context, the poem ‘Daddy’, which is one of both hers and Western Literature’s most well regarded poems will be analysed in light of Freudian concepts in terms of effects of Otto Plath’s death on the writer. Furthermore, the poems ‘Medusa’, ‘Edge’, and ‘Contusion’ are the other poems by the writer that will

be evaluated in the psychoanalysis chapter. These poems will be analysed in light of imagery surrounding death.

Sigmund Freud's studies on neurotic disorders in the light of unconsciousness became a popular lens for literary criticism by consequence of significant research. Freud argued that childhood memories of people affect them throughout their entire lives, and that people's behaviours are determined through their experiences, much akin to writers. In this sense, psychoanalysis has held a remarkable place among contemporary literary theories. While analysing a literary work such as a poem, novel, play, or short story, the researcher of the text needs biographic knowledge about the creator of the text for a better and more comprehensive, thorough study. The connection between psychoanalytic theory and literature is both inevitable and vital because writers tend to weave their traumatic backgrounds into their texts. Hence, psychoanalytical theory has rapidly developed and blossomed in the last century, with it today being a contemporary literary theory used to analyse literature.

Psychoanalysis is rooted in Freud's outlined list of symptoms in having researched his patient's neurotic disorders of patients. Although many different psychoanalytical movements after Freud have emerged thus far, there have been significant differences in contrast with Freud's own statements. These new statements have largely been connected with his arguments. Regardless of the fact that Sigmund Freud began his research with neurotic patients, the resistance that was detected in his patients motivated him to do self-analysis and observe himself. As a result of these studies, Freud revealed the unconscious processes in the mind and their reasons of resistance that prevent them from surfacing at the conscious level. He detected the differences of conscious and unconscious mechanisms of human mind. Rafey Habib (2001, p. 574) evaluates the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness in terms of repression that emerges in human beings:

Reasoning that everything forgotten by a patient must have been somehow distressing (alarming, painful, shameful), Freud concluded that this was precisely why it had been expunged from the conscious memory. Freud hypothesized that, in the neurotic, any powerful impulse or instinct which was embarrassing continued to operate in the realm of the unconscious where it retained its full "cathexis" or investment of energy. This instinct began to seek substitutive satisfaction by circuitous routes and would produce neurotic symptoms.

Repression is an instinctive behaviour of the human mind because there are behavioural dispositions in the mind's unconscious content that develop through

instincts. In my psychoanalysis chapter of the thesis, I touch upon Plath's sense of repression in the context of her unconscious tendencies. Moreover, there is a short touching upon Aurelia's, Sylvia's mother's, repression.

Although the discipline originates from neurological research, it has gradually turned to an 'interpretive art', branching out into various fields (Craib, p. 2). In Freud's first printed book, 'Studies on Hysteria' (1895), research and discussion on psychoanalysis started. Freud indicates his studies as a treatment of seduction through hysterical symptoms by correlating them with childhood experiences in the context of sexual impulses. He implemented observations on childhood experiences and tried to explain human behaviours in terms of infantile gender. In his study, 'Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex', Sigmund Freud (1962, p.65) clarifies how he studied childhood observation:

Direct observation of the child could not at the time be utilized to its full extent and resulted only in individual indications and valuable confirmations. Since then it has become possible through the analysis of some cases of nervous disease in the delicate age of childhood to gain a direct understanding of the infantile psychosexuality. I can point with satisfaction to the fact that direct observation has fully confirmed the conclusion drawn from psychoanalysis, and thus furnishes good evidence for the reliability of the latter method of investigation.

This book actually is a turning point for psychoanalysis because, after this book, it is seen that Freud began to accept the impulses in the focus of object relations. Tendencies on satisfaction of impulses, whose basis is pleasure, principally determine the process of finding object and development of object relations. Melanie Klein, a famous Austro-British psychoanalyst during the time of psychoanalyst Anna Freud, daughter of Sigmund Freud, dwelled on object relations. Even any short dissection on Sylvia Plath's works shows that the death instinct appears more so than life instincts. For example, in her poem 'Three women', which is composed around the voices of three women during childbirth, there is a stanza including the word 'death' five times:

[...]This is a disease I carry home, this is a death.

Again, this is a death. Is it the air,

The particles of destruction I suck up ? Am I a pulse

That wanes and wanes, facing the cold angel ?

Is this my lover then ? This death, this death ?

As a child I loved a lichen-bitten name.

Is this the one sin then, this old dead love of death ?

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 177)

The poem probes their consciousness in the light of societal sexual abuse and brings three different perspectives to female body. There is a clear complexity in her life because of the incoherence between her childhood experiences and her future life in terms of object relations. In this sense, her anxiety towards death instinct dominates her life instinct, and therefore it is not a coincidence that this poem was written when she and her husband were experiencing serious problems in their marriage in March of 1962. The atmosphere of Sylvia Plath is explained through psychoanalysis's 'libido theory' in my chapter. Although complexity in object relations does not always cause neurosis or psychosis, it emerged as a psychological problem in Sylvia Plath after the great disappointment surrounding Ted Hughes. As it is examined in psychoanalysis chapter, for Sylvia, Ted Hughes was a role model that had been sought by her, and the libido within Plath could not provide satisfaction because libido is the power of instinct. Ted Hughes can be accepted as an 'object' to which Plath's libido wanted to conquer. In his book 'A Short Introduction to Psychoanalysis', Sigmund Freud expresses the problem of Plath's libido. He argues that 'neurotic problems tend to become more quickly and thoroughly alive when a patient is seen frequently, often relieving the burden on outside relationships' (Milton & Polmear, p. 157). The most intensive feeling of outside relations is love and love affairs can be examined through object relation and libido theory. According to Freud's assumptions on libido, it has two ways to manage the events. During the process of satisfaction, the libido either completes it or leaves the satisfaction. In this context, Freud suggests two types of libido. The first one is 'object libido', which feeds external objects, and the second is 'ego libido' or 'narcissistic libido' (Watkins & Barbarasz, p. 241). Freud analysed both libidos are evaluated within the scope of sexual energy. According to him, our behaviours that emerge from refusing our consciousness can be explained toward sexuality.

Sigmund Freud suggests five phases in human development: oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. Life begins in the oral stage. The oral phase is the stage that life begins. During this phase, the baby explores everything around him or her with the mouth because the mouth is a human being's sensorium. This phase occurs between birth and 18 months. The next phase, the anal phase, occurs between 18 months and 3 years in human beings. During this stage, the excretory system is the center of life. Freud also labels this as the 'sadistic-anal phase'; this is the period of 'infant's interest in excreting or retaining his tools' (Eidelson, p. 210). The phallic phase happens between ages 3 and 6 years. This period in human development is the most significant for this study because this is when boys and girls begin to experience Electra Complex and Oedipus Complex. Works of Sylvia Plath have been a matter of subject for psychoanalysts in terms of the Oedipus or Electra Complex, as argued by Carl Jung. In this stage, people develop sexual feelings toward their opposite sex parent. Furthermore, hostile feelings are experienced for the same sex parent during this period. Libidinous forces work around the opposite sex parent as mother/son or father/daughter. While the term Oedipus can refer the complex of both sexes, the term 'Electra' is evaluated as the complex of a daughter for her father, and a part of Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy' is analysed through the lens of this complex. The most significant aspect of the phallic phase is that girls and boys begin to become aware of their sexual roles. The latency stage is indicated as the period from 6 years of age to puberty. In this phase, girls and boys begin to suppress their sexual instincts moderately. After the age of five, the child begins to be instinctively in an intense passivity that continues until puberty. Although the fixation of this stage is given as 'none' by Freud in his theory, some psychoanalysts suggest various crises in this period. For example, the case of 'identification' can, in this phase, result as a crisis if it is not fulfilled by the child. In their book, D. Louw and A. Botha state that this stage is 'dominated by the child's identification' and the death of writer's father, Otto, occurs in Plath's latent stage (Louw & Botha, p. 47) for he died when she was eight. Her fixation rises to identification (Schultz, p. 164). In the psychoanalytical reading chapter of this study, this fixation is analysed in detail because Otto Plath's death has powerful effect on Sylvia's life and work of art. In this sense, this stanza from her 1959 poem 'Electra on Azalea Path' can be shown as an evidence of her disappointment with Otto's death:

[...]How shall I age into that state of mind ?

I am the ghost of an infamous suicide,

My own blue razor rusting in my throat.

O pardon the one who knocks for pardon at

Your gate, father—your hound-bitch, daughter, friend.

It was my love that did us both to death.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 117)

Particularly the last line of the stanza points to the destruction that was caused by her father's death. She feels that the death of Otto is the reason of her mental death—perhaps her own physical death later on. Freud's final developmental stage is the 'genital phase'. According to him, this stage 'is achieved only with puberty' (Eidelberg, p. 211). Each one of the phases until this period is accepted as 'narcissist phases' as the child only focuses on his or her own body's satisfaction. After puberty, the individuals begin to be interested in real object choices around them more than egocentric tendencies. Genital phase is the 'ultimate step in development of both sexes' (Nagera & Baker, p. 93).

Sigmund Freud argues for three systems of mental functions and evaluates human behaviours and characters according to this system. His theory of 'Id-Ego-Superego' is the centre of the human psyche that determines human attitudes. Freud terms this theory as 'the psychic apparatus' and improves the self-object relationship of brain through this theory (Northoff, p. 326). According to Freud, 'the id is the part of the mind concerned with the immediate gratification of needs' while the 'ego is the realistic part' and the superego is 'moralistic part' (Jackson, p. 343). Researches have used Freud's theory in order to discover writers' literary works because they try to identify their works of art through the way writers' characters' motivate them. Psychoanalysts explore how id-ego-superego of writers influences them. Psychoanalysts claim that certain characters within the literary works represent the id, ego, or superego. They illustrate these parts of mind with their attitudes, instinctive behaviours, conflicts, and/or ethical manner. The table by Saul McLeod below symbolizes id-ego-superego effect on mind:



Figure 1.1: The Psychic Apparatus

Sylvia Plath essentially experiences serious compulsions in her life while making choices between her ‘id’ and ‘superego’. She explicitly reflects this to her journals in the light of an psychoanalytical perspective as well: ‘Forget myself, myself. Become a vehicle of the world, a tongue, a voice. Abandon my ego...’ (Plath 1998). Particularly ‘Thanatos’, which is the death drive of Freud’s theory is used for analysing Plath’s conflicts in her poetry, as the writer has a clear tendency gravitating towards death and she reflects it in her poems. Plath is a writer who attempts suicide three times in her life, upon which the last attempt succeeds.

Any writer who cannot achieve creating distinctive literary works does not gain a reputation; the skill of a famous writer comes from his or her rich instinctive world, producing unique fantasies and imaginations. Sylvia Plath was absolutely successful in affecting her readers, even if she herself could not see her fame. The mechanism of writers’ back formation works from their unconscious level to the conscious level. In this sense, Sylvia Plath’s poems were all too often under her Oedipus Complex, as described by Freud, or her Electra Complex, as put forth by Carl Jung. The theory’s name ‘Oedipus’ comes from ‘Greek mythological character ‘Oedipus King’, who kills his father and marries his mother’ (Fritzen, p. 51). The Greek dramatist Sophocles writes ‘Oedipus Rex’, which inspires Sigmund Freud in designating his theory. Hence, this term has been used as a prototype for this theory. Freud asserts that Sophocles’ play is actually one of the sections of psychosexual development of human beings within its universal symptoms. In the play, Oedipus kills her father, Laius, unknowingly and marries his mother, Jocasta, unknowingly. This unconscious situation profoundly takes Freud’s interest because he aims to discover human beings’ unconscious aspects and understand our tendencies according to them.

According to the Oedipus Theory, while ‘the first love-object for both sexes is the mother’ at the first phase of psychosexual development, the boy’s love-object begins to focus on mother and the girl’s love-object toward the father at the next stages (Habib, p. 575). Furthermore, girl infants experience ‘penis-envy’, and it’s possible for her to experience neurosis as a result of it. It can also cause to psychological problems for girls and the connection of ‘penis-envy’ with depression is evaluated in the psychoanalytical reading chapter as a part of Sylvia Plath’s manic-depression. At the age of eight, Sylvia lost her father, whom she was very fond of as well as experienced psychological destruction from because ‘penis-envy serves to shift her interest and affection to her father’ (Stevens, p. 42). Loss of Plath’s father changed her life in terms of psychosexual development and her expression of that the day her father died was the preview of her inner world’s destruction: ‘I will never speak to God again’ (Folsom, p. 524). Psychological researchers argue such a destructive impact as a natural reaction. For instance, Laraina Herring (2005, p. 39):

Children are particularly susceptible to language use when death occurs. Children are literal beings. Metaphors such as ‘Daddy is sleeping now’ do not translate to a child’s literal mind. Many children are afraid to go to sleep after being told ‘Daddy is sleeping.’ If a child is told ‘Daddy went to be with God,’ the child may wonder why Daddy chose to leave just then and, in turn, she may be angry with God for taking him away.

Particularly, the Nazi-Jew composition of Plath is analysed in psychoanalytical reading the chapter. She created a distinctive Nazi analogy in expressing her father. Otto Plath is identified as ‘black man’ in her poem ‘Daddy’. Christina Britzolakis (cited in Bloom 2001) states that many Sylvia Plath analysts see Otto Plath as Sylvia’s ‘Oedipal father’. The psychoanalytical relationship between father/daughter and mother/son and its effects on psychosexual development bear a close relationship with literature since the Oedipus Complex’s influence on literary analyse ‘has been so immense’ (Adams, p. 711). In this context, the Oedipus Complex has been a field of study for psychoanalytic critics because literary texts are the product of writers’ unconscious. Paul Schwaber (1999, p. 139) claims that ‘psychoanalysis and literature have had a fruitful relationship’. In this context, the first chapter attempts to read Plath’s poems through psychoanalytic criticism, evaluating the poet’s works in terms of her ‘death’ and ‘parental position’ images. The main focus will be on Sigmund Freud’s arguments, but alongside his theories, Carl Jung and Melanie Klein’s studies will also contribute to study. Jung’s determination on the mother/daughter relationship is significant and available for some of Plath’s stanzas on her mother. As

well, Melanie Klein's arguments on the psychological results of Oedipus Complex are considerable assessments for this chapter. Jacques Lacan, who is perhaps the most important psychoanalyst after Freud, has also contributed to this chapter with his statements on subjectivity. He brings clear explanations to Plath's alienation.

Although her time of life is nearly threefold that of Sylvia's life, Aurelia Plath's quality of life and her rigours are not very different from her 'witch-Goddess' daughter (Eradam, p. 80). Aurelia Schober Plath was born on April 26th, 1907 in Massachusetts. She was the daughter of an Austrian-originated father, Frank Schober. She was a bilingual American and had taught German in schools and through private lessons. Her school teaching career does not last long however, for Otto insists on her becoming a housewife and looking after her children. At that time, she defines her marriage as 'the illness' (Wagner, p. 4). Actually, Sylvia Plath's refusing to be like her mother as is stated in the feminist reading chapter is a fear of 'déjà vu' and, for that reason, she shouts at her mother in 'Medusa' as: 'I didn't call you/ I didn't call you at all.' (Plath & Hughes, p. 225). As many researchers accept, Sylvia Plath's composition of 'Medusa' as the 'mother figure' for the writer, the poem is analysed from the perspective of psychoanalytic reading in this study in terms of her mother complex, despite the fact that this poem is often evaluated in the light of feminism (Axelrod, p. 85). In Freud's 'Medusa's Head', he describes Medusa's head as representing female genitalia, and yet later on identifies Medusa as a symbol of horror within the same book. 'Medusa's Head' is 'castration fantasy, female sexuality, feared, not desired' according to Freud (Alban, p. 235). As a result, Sigmund Freud is faced with sharp criticism by feminists because of his sarcastic arguments on the female sex. Freud was explicitly trying to suggest the female body as a 'second sex'. For a long time, feminists' opposing Freud's allusions on women had been so weak that they 'evaluated Freud's femininity conception out of psychoanalysis pattern' (Mitchell, p. 368). However, Simon de Beauvoir gives us the most influential consideration on Freud's male-dominant approach with her masterpiece work 'The Second Sex'. In this study, she examines an infant girl in a psychoanalytic perspective and tries to question Freud's insufficient arguments. De Beauvoir especially emphasizes that Freud could not succeed with the reason of why the source of father's dominance is a social reality. Moreover, she criticizes Freud with his evaluating male and female only through the historical perspective. Luce

Irigaray, a French Feminist, comments on Freud's identification of male-dominance through mythological events and thus evaluates it in terms of religious inferences by mentioning 'Antigone, Clytemnestra, Ariadne, Athena, Korè, and Persephone' (Grosz, p. 162). According to her, mythological characters in these events do not show patriarchal discourse; but, religious discourses in history bring sacrificial abuse for women. In her journal 'Women, the Sacred and Money', Plath (1998, p. 11) asserts religious speech and questions why Freud indicates woman as a 'scarified' body:

Why did speech fail? What was missing? Why kill, cut up and eat as a sign of the covenant? And isn't it possible to analyse why speech was so inadequate that such an act became necessary? Was it, for instance, because of a lack of harmony between words, acts and bodies? Are cultures sacrificial if they manage to unite acts, words, microcosmic and macrocosmic nature and the gods? In that case how are systems of exchange and sexual difference possible?

Aurelia and Sylvia Plath's relationship was not overly intimate. The writer always supposed her mother to be someone whom should admire her continuously. For that reason, she preferred to hide her unsuccessful events in her life. She clearly perceived her mother as a source of tension or disapproval, someone whom she could bear to see only in her strength, but never her weakness (Axelrod 89). In this sense, Plath's marriage to Ted Hughes was a kind of gambling that should be won in front of her mother, which caused a pressure on the writer. For that reason she hid her anguishes and problems in her marriage from Aurelia. In a letter to Warren, her brother, she states that she 'shared really only the best parts of her experience with mother' (Aurelia, p. 240).

Ted Hughes is one of the most important British poets of twentieth century English literature. He was born on August 17th, 1930 in West Riding, Yorkshire, England. His father was a World War I veteran, in Gallipoli. Hunting and fishing were the most attractive activities for Hughes during his childhood. Despite the fact that he starts to work as a mechanic for the British Air Force, he then moves to Cambridge in order to attend Pembroke College with a scholarship. He discovered and intensively studied mythology there. In 1954, he graduated from Cambridge and then started to concentrate on literary studies. His poetry is identified as a distinctive style but still includes modern motifs in it. Hughes's poetry comprises 'extreme seriousness, vivid violence, bursts of painfully accurate analogies, and appropriate metaphors' (Eugene, p. 2). In a 1956 party that is organised for the honour of Ted's

literary magazine 'St Botholph's Review', Hughes meets Sylvia Plath. She was attracted by this 'young Yorkshireman', and before long, they got married in June 16th, 1956. Harold Bloom (2001, p. 14), in asserting how exactly Ted Hughes affects Sylvia, suggests that Plath found Hughes to be the first man she could see herself becoming submissive to, both as a woman and as a poet, much in the manner that her mother had to her father.

It is accepted by John Gordon (2003, p. 190) that Ted Hughes is 'another level' for Sylvia Plath in her life after the first man Dylan Thomas, a famous American writer who influenced Plath throughout her early life. During the first years of their marriage, everything is fine and they write poems for one another. They mostly live in United Kingdom, but for a time they live in US. There, she teaches in Smith College, where she attended before getting a Fulbright scholarship to study at Cambridge University. Afterwards, Ted Hughes insists on returning to United Kingdom, and so they move to London. In August of 1961, they move to Devon where they find a house in the countryside. Sylvia likes it there very much because she motivates better for writing her poetry. Their relationship and marriage begins to worsen, and in July of 1962, it reaches its worst period. She learns about Ted Hughes's affair with Assia Wevill, who had been in a relationship with Ted Hughes for six years. Wevill too commits suicide. Many people often evaluate this as Ted Hughes's dominance on women in relationships as easily being able to yield problematic results. Sylvia Plath never bears her husband's deceiving his wife and she thus perceived this as a traumatic event. The first moment when Sylvia Plath understands Hughes's affair with Assia was during a house visit by Assia and her husband David Wevill. Ted and Assia were in the kitchen preparing salad for dinner and Sylvia hears their voices flirting. David (cited in Koren & Negev 2015) tells about that moment:

"We could hear Assia and Ted's muffled voices, and suddenly Sylvia went very still. She touched me on the knee and said, 'I'll be back.' She jumped from her chair and ran into the kitchen as if she remembered that she had left some fire burning."

The word 'burning' here becomes very meaningful when Sylvia Plath writes her poem 'The Detective' that is referred to as it was written on Ted Hughes and Assia Wevill's affair by researchers, particularly the third stanza of the poem strengthens this argument:

[...]A body into a pipe, and the smoke rising.

This is the smell of years burning, here in the kitchen,

These are the deceits, tacked up like family photographs,

And this is a man, look at his smile,

The death weapon? No one is dead.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 208)

In this study, Ted Hughes appears in two aspects. Firstly, in the psychoanalysis chapter, he is, for Sylvia, the model of (a) man, in this case Otto, her father. This same chapter evaluates how her disappointment with Hughes affects her mental world. The next evaluation on Ted Hughes is the feminism reading chapter. Sylvia Plath's marriage to Ted Hughes was the event that negatively affects her life the most after Otto Plath's death. As a woman, Sylvia Plath wishes to actualise herself in society both as a successful writer and as a well-versed housewife. In this sense, Ted Hughes usually gets severe criticism by feminists who are researching Plath's poems. Furthermore, devotees of Plath find Hughes guilty with her suicide. Ted Hughes was 68 when he died, living twice as long as his wife; this has been an injustice for many people. As a result, Hughes had always been faced with poignant criticisms until the day he died on October 28th, 1998. For instance, Geoffrey Levy draws attention to Hughes's effect on Plath's death and says that 'his father drove his mother to kill herself' while he is writing an article on Nicholas, their son (Web). Furthermore, American activist and writer Robin Morgan writes a poem on this subject. Her poem 'Arrestment' emphasizes that Hughes provokes Plath's death. She writes 'I accuse/ Ted Hughes' and uses the word 'murder' there (Morgan 2). Within this context, many Plath analysts declare Ted Hughes caused 'self-destructiveness' for her for he prevented Plath from feeling herself strong as a woman (Bloom, p. 14).

Although feminist movements' common target is to procure the liberation of women, they are discussed from different perspectives that have incrementally proceeded forth. According to a general identification, feminism is evaluated in three waves as first, second, and third-wave feminism. First-wave feminism is stated as the first feminist movements that emerged in order to provide 'special needs and desire of

women' during nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Kahle, p. 2). Especially after The World War I, equality between men and women started to be a matter of subject and many philosophers, thinkers, academicians, and politicians began to indicate the importance of equality between men and women. For example Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkish Republic, emphasizes this issue in 1925:

“Human kind is made up of two sexes, women and men. Is it possible that a mass is improved by the improvement of only one part and the other part is ignored? Is it possible that if half of a mass is tied to earth with chains and the other half can soar into skies?”
(Ergun, p. 305)

Theoreticians after the year 1960 have been suggested as second-wave feminists. The expression ‘second-wave’ was developed by Marsha Lear, who tried to label the rising feminist activities in the U.K, America, and Europe after 1960s. One example of a political movement associated with second-wave feminism’s was the Women Rights Movement. The post-war period was very hard for women to actualize themselves, but they then gradually started to become members of the working class because the number of men was insufficient after big factories emerged. This changed the balance of social positions; new approaches on women’s situations started to come about and every field of society started to change gradually in the twentieth century. These post-war changes in terms of historical significance, economy, and politics played key roles in sculpting and setting into stone easily conceivable and visible changes ideological meaning. In this sense, feminism improved and raised the perception of woman and her status in this century. In addition, there were so many new associations and groups that began to emphasize woman rights. For example, the National Organisation for Women, which was founded in 1966, is still known as the strongest female organisation that includes activists promoting equal rights for women. Another significant organisation is Women’s Equity Action League, which was established in 1968 in the United States. This was a group formed by more radical feminists than the National Organisation for Women, and mainly focused on social equality of women such as education and employment. National Women’s Political Caucus (1971) intended to stress women’s political rights in government.

Feminists of this new generation are referred as third-wave feminists, who are ‘eager to shape new-millennium feminism’ (Tong, p. 9). In general, third-wave feminists oppose society’s perception on women’s’ body as sexual objects, and try

to implement their struggle through political and social activities. In this sense, third-wave feminism is the continuity of second-wave feminism but ‘many third-wavers see the feminist movement as stalled, in desperate need of new energy and much richer racial, ethnic, and sexual diversity’ (Bobel, p. 4). This new generation of feminist activity, also called as contemporary activity by some researchers such as Jo Reger, uses desire and passion and gratification as well as anger in their struggle. Especially, in the field of the queer struggle, they carve out sympathetic activities through TV programmes or social media. This kind of struggle can also be defined as a postmodern struggle. Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Nira Yuval-Davis, Susie Bright, Margaret Atwood, Jennifer Baumgardner, and Barbara Kingsolver are only some the contributors to third wave feminism activity. In her poem ‘Reveille’, Barbara Kingsolver summarizes the criticism of third-wavers on the results of emotional and physical abuse of woman body:

*I am the woman whose flesh
does not move when she walks,
the nipple-less,
the bloodless, sweatless woman
who cries copious tears from the pressure
of all other prohibited secretions.
... (Kingsolver and Cartes, p. 7)*

Feminist approaches have been argued through five main titles: Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism, Marxist Feminism, Socialist Feminism, and Postmodern Feminism. Furthermore, other subordinate approaches have emerged as well. These are Psychoanalytic Feminism, Cultural Feminism, Spiritual Feminism, Eco-Feminism, Existentialist Feminism, French Feminism, and Lesbian Feminism, etc. In this study, Sylvia Plath’s poems are mainly analysed through French Feminist Theory. Two of its prominent representatives, Luce Irigaray and Helen Cixous, will be in the focus of feminist reading chapter.

The concept of 'French Feminism' has been used in world since 1970s and particularly the organisation of 'Mouvement de Libération des Femmes' (MLF) that was begun by French Communist and Socialist Party has caused the appearance of that term. The MLF started to spread its policies including the struggle against rape, the disequilibrium between salaries of men and women, violence towards women, and the discrimination of laws against women, etc. The influence of the MLF quickly attracted criticism because it was gradually 'developing its own analyses of women's oppression' and that it was notably influential in protecting women's rights in France (Duchen 17). When the Communist Party won the elections in 1981, the goals of the organisation took place through considerable political enforcement. But literally, the genre of 'French Feminism' started to be first used by American Feminists and is acknowledged for all of the developments and movements against gender discrimination in France since the 1960s. French Feminism concentrates on the acts of reading and writing as subversive, political (Elaine, p. xii).

French philosophers predominantly started to appear in structuralism and post-structuralism with their arguments after the time 1970s. Concordantly, French feminists have been effective in the thinking world since then and have been affected by postmodernist thought. But, French Feminists have also inspired the development of postmodernist thinking. French Feminism actuates after the political approaches of French Revolution. From Olympe de Gouges to Jean Jack Rousseau, there have been many contributors to French Feminism. They have asserted many significant approaches on the idea of 'Liberation of Women' through political discussions. In this sense, Joan Wallach(1996, p. xi) Scott argues the importance of French Feminists and their contributions to social order in his book:

“If we can understand the French feminist's struggles in terms of the politics of undecidability, we can also, perhaps, better understand, and so better address, the conflicts, dilemmas, and paradoxes of our own time”.

Helene Cixous, Sarah Kofman, Julia Kristeva, Catherine Clement, and Luce Irigaray are prominent philosophers and literary critics of French Feminism in the last forty years. They have reevaluated feminism in the scope of language, symbolising, and discourse by questioning masculine gender. They assert feminism through psychoanalytical perspective through the lens of maternal-

feminine relations. However, this is not a Freudian perspective, for he does not show sufficient interest in the 'mother role'. Rather, their approach is a Lacanian one, as they focus on his terminology of phallogentrism. Lacanian thought has largely inspired the most prominent representatives of the psychoanalytic-linguistic strand of French Feminist theory (Cavallaro, p. 34). French feminists potently oppose the discourse of patriarchal 'symbolic order' because it causes clear sexual discrimination in society. Jo Gill's book evaluates 'symbolic order' and its effect on writing in terms of French Feminism. Moreover, Gill (2006, p. 121) makes a connection between Irigaray's essay and Sylvia Plath's approach on becoming 'double':

From the perspective of French feminism, the language of the symbolic order stultifies women, denying their subjectivity, repressing their desire, and preventing them from coming fully to writing...Irigaray's essay 'This Sex Which is Not One' offers a potentially productive way of thinking about Plath's widely documented interest in the figure of the double. For Irigaray, female desire 'does not speak the same language as men's desire'.

Sylvia Plath has often been a matter of subject for French feminism researchers and analysts because the language of the writer's poems and her distinctive novel 'The Bell Jar' is allegorically symbolic of women's oppression. Furthermore, Plath's semi-autobiographic novel and poems display the maternal relation as a mother of two children and as a rebel 'daughter rejecting her mother's influence' (Raza , p.132). In the feminist reading chapter, Luce Irigaray and Helen Cixous's statements will be in the focus.

Luce Irigaray (1985, p. 31) tells that male dominance influences all fields of society in so far as women are phallicly marked by male authority figures like husbands, fathers, procurers, and the like. Researches on language should be implemented stylistically in a subject-body relationship so that a clear analysis exists on who is passive and/or who is active. According to Luce Irigaray, the language system is predicated on sex. The roles and positions of sexes have been revealed through sexual differences in patriarchal society and this system influences language, social attitudes and existence of human being. As a result men and women provide the repetition of this circulation by becoming a part of the discourse. The sexuality of the discourse imposes the word systems and Irigaray shows the definitions of masculine and feminine in languages. The most important

words such as ‘God’, ‘Moon’ or ‘Sun’ have been used in the frame of male-sex.

Irigaray (1985, p. 122-3) asserts it in ‘This Sex Which is Not One’:

To claim that the feminine can be expressed in the form of a concept is to allow oneself to be caught up again in a system of ‘masculine’ representations, in which women are trapped in a system or meaning which serves the auto-affection of the (masculine) subject.

Sylvia Plath has so many poems that can be considered as a literary work that has the ability to devastate the male-dominance discourse being criticized by Luce Irigaray. For instance, ‘Two Sisters of Persephone’, which is analysed in this study, reflects the struggle of a person who both wants to be a poet and woman in the society. There has always been the same viewpoint on the struggle of a woman who wants to be a successful poet. She will inevitably fail. If she succeeds as a poet, she will fail as a woman, or vice versa (Birkle, p. 103). In this sense, Luce Irigaray is one of the backers for Sylvia Plath who was in a struggle of actualising herself.

Helen Cixous, whose work came out in the 1970s, predicated on Jacques Derrida’s statements for criticizing Western Culture’s patriarchal language. Because Derrida also claims that the basic of Western philosophy depends on ‘logocentrism’ that argues misunderstanding an illusion on language. In case of this illusion, Helen Cixous tries to constitute a discourse that is not logocentric. To her, Western culture is not only logocentric, but also ‘phallogocentric’ that expresses phallus as the centre of power. So the language of culture arises through this dichotomy. The text is apparently constituted by dichotomies (Jacobus, p. 10). In this sense, Helen Cixous believes that such a dichotomy depends on the comparison of active/passive discussion with male/female roles. She aims to overthrow this dichotomy that evokes an unequal male/female hierarchy as Derrida tries to achieve too. According to Cixous, that is an ideological evaluation that never reflects the reality.

In all patriarchal societies, outstanding values are intrinsic to man, and undistinguished values are intrinsic to woman. As stated in religious books, God first created man and then created woman from his rib bone. In mythology, Zeus is the leading God and his goddess wives are not as important as him. Man is powerful and active, while woman is passive and weak. Man symbolizes ‘mind’ and woman symbolizes ‘emotion’ so man is honest and woman is imposter. Writers too reflect such perceptions upon literary texts. For instance, Turkish poet Tevfik Fikret (1968, p. 23) writes in his 1968 poem:

[...]The boat is like a child; do not enter if he plays

Do not interfere his joy; yet, stay on alert; because

Sea is like a woman; Oh! Believing is never possible.

... (Translated by me)

Helen Cixous believes in the necessity “of feminine language that will eliminate cultural perspectives administering repression of women. Helen Cixous declares a non-phallogentric language, which rebelliously prevents dichotomy of male/female. Sylvia Plath is a perfect example as a woman writer who expostulates the oppression of woman. Women writers can contribute to Cixous’s approaches well for they write ‘in white ink’, which is the product of their holy milk (Leitch, p. 2037). In her famous study ‘The Laugh of Medusa’, Helen Cixous (2000, p. 875) expresses the significance of women’s writing:

I shall speak about women's writing: about what it will do. Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies-for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text-as into the world and into history-by her own movement.

Feminist movements have criticized the works of male writers who pose a discriminative approach against women from 1960 onwards, and feminist theoreticians have supported and encouraged women writers to create an anti-male dominant tradition. In this sense French feminists have revived the problem of discourse that gives permission to humiliate women. Plath’s poems have been one of the most powerful discourses with its strong feminist language. In the feminist reading chapter, her most famous poems ‘Lady Lazarus’ and ‘The Jailer’ that criticizes her husband Ted Hughes will be analysed, alongside the ‘Two Sisters of Persephone’.

After Plath graduated from Cambridge, she and her husband moved to the United States where Sylvia starts to teach at Smith College. In the aim of focusing on writing more poetry, they move to Boston and stay there until they hear about Plath’s pregnancy. They then decide to go England back and settle to countryside. The year 1960 is very important for the writer because she gives birth to Frieda, and also prints her only book of poetry, ‘The Colossus and Other Poems’ while she is alive.

The book was good enough to take attention of literary world, and this interest notably encouraged the writer. She then immediately begins to write her only novel 'The Bell Jar', which is a semi-autobiographical novel reflecting her depressive side. She also writes her late and most famous poems between 1960 and 1963. Her second and last child, Nicholas, is born in January 1962. Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes divorce that same year. After experiencing great inner destruction, she moves to London and meets William Butler Yeats, who impacts the writer profoundly yet again. At this point, there emerges a virtual explosion of poetry in Plath's last years. She writes a large number of poems but she cannot see the great reputation that her works earn because she commits suicide on February 11th, 1963. This time, her suicide attempt is successful; she puts her head into a gas oven. Her husband Ted Hughes takes on her writings, and Plath's most famous poetry book 'Ariel' is printed in 1965. 'Three Women' (1968), 'Crossing The Water' (1971), 'Winter Trees' (1971), 'The Collected Poems' (1981), and 'Selected Poems' (1985) are Sylvia Plath's printed poetry books. 'The Bell Jar' (1963), her only printed novel, has been translated into numerous languages. Moreover, the writer has numerous printed storybooks.

Some critics, such as Macha Rosenthal, Al Alvarez, and Karl Malkoff evaluate Sylvia Plath as one of the representatives of 'Confessional Poetry', that is, the 'self-revelation' of the writer and popular in 1950s and 1960s, particularly in America (Brozak and Media 2015). Anne Sexton, Robert Lowell, Theodore Rothke, and W.D. Snodgrass are other confessional poets of this movement as well. This movement has been quoted under different names such as 'personal poetry', 'extremist poetry', and 'subjective poetry' etc., but all of these terms refer the same consideration: autobiographical poetry whereby poet's confessing herself or himself. As the other representatives, Sylvia Plath also reflects her own anxieties, instinctive confusion, and feelings of guilt and mercy and, as a result, the writer can 'practice the most extreme experiences too' (Marmara, p. 10). This movement is defined as a 'Cold War product' and evaluated as a post-war action (Middlebrook, p. 636). It can be said that World War II has affected the representatives of this kind of poetry. They have reflected their concerns through poetry much akin to the way Sylvia Plath has. In this sense, confessional poets are postmodern writers, for postmodernism is defined as a reaction against modern thought and its aftermath World War II.

Although the origin of the term 'postmodern' reaches to 1870s', the definition gains meaning in the second half of 20th century as a very prevalent movement. After 1960, the discussions emerged on the distinction between postmodernism and modernism. The term postmodernism has since gained importance from 1970s and 80s onwards. Essentially, Jean-François Lyotard's work 'The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge' has been accepted as the first significant study making a clear postmodern/modern distinction. The knowledge, after all, can be consumed easily as well as be marketed as a commodity. Lyotard bases this statement upon new, gradually developing technological informatics. This change, this advance in technology equally leaves its mark on human knowledge as well. This is a new and different understanding of knowledge; postmodernists criticize modernism's approach towards knowledge because modernism uses it instrumentally with the aim of protecting enlightenment.

Before postmodernism, the Frankfurt School criticized this approach was also criticized. They follow Frederic Nietzsche's statements and claim that knowledge is formulated in the aim of getting power. Consequently, Hitler's lust for power is a result of modern thought and the Enlightenment Project. Horkheimer and Adorno define modernism or the Enlightenment Project as the 'instinct of self-protection' by (Şaylan 126).

Besides its epistemological explanations, postmodernism is sociologically discussed as well. Neo-Marxists Fredric Jameson and David Harvey (cited in Jameson 1991) especially indicate postmodernism as being a 'higher and much more complex level' of capitalism. Thus, postmodernity is a homogenized concept that has been created by capital all over the world. To Harvey (1990, p. 82), postmodernity 'played an important role in stimulating the market'.

There have been very different and multifarious interpretations on the concept of 'postmodern' to the point that the term has acquired a complex implication. Some critics decide that the movement is the furtherance and expansion of modern thought, while others decide that it is a cardinal fracture. However, it is clear that postmodernism is a new and popular trend in every field of art. After the great interest on structural and post-structural discussions in literary criticism, the postmodernist approach has fascinated theorists, and many works have been analysed

in the light of postmodernist literary theory. David Carter (2006, p. 109) explicitly suggests the interest of postmodernist theory in his book:

Whatever the usage one prefers, it is clear that 'postmodernist theory' implies certain critical stances: that the attempts to explain social and cultural developments by means of 'grand narratives' (all-embracing theories or accounts) are no longer feasible or acceptable, and that ideas can no longer be closely related to a historical reality. All is text, image, simulation.

Carter's expressing of postmodernism allusively criticizes modern thought as he discusses postmodern approach's historical interest. The chapter of postmodern reading in this study analyses Plath's poetry in the light of Holocaust imagery and its results causing loss of reality and value. In this context, her two most famous poems, 'Daddy' and 'Lady Lazarus', will be analysed again because both of them are finest examples of her poetry with their distinctive Holocaust imagery. Besides these two works, 'Mary's Song' will be another poem of Plath that will be evaluated in the postmodern reading chapter.

The postmodern period has been accepted as the beginning of post-war period, and there have been many works of art dealing with the Holocaust and its cruelty. Artists' concerns around the Holocaust have been evaluated as the reflection of its traumatic and psychological results on human beings. The reality of the Holocaust was a historical trauma that destroyed much of humanity's collective soul. Coming to terms with and digesting that thus has had negative repercussions that have echoed across generations of Western Civilization, in turn forcing us to re-interpret our own assumptions about human nature, about history, culture, progress, politics, and most especially morality.

As a confessional writer, Sylvia Plath composes illusory imageries, which analysed here through Jean Baudriallard's postmodernist approach on 'reality'. The writer creates 'non-real' characters that are not accepted in her world through Holocaust references, such as her father, who is declared in her poem as a Nazi despite the fact that he is not. Her characters' loss of reality in the poems is not very different from the loss of humanity during the Holocaust. The writer denies it in her mind. Baudriallard's 'Simulation and Simulacra' will be in the focus of postmodern reading. Furthermore, Jean Lyotard, who is declared as the pioneer of postmodernism, has made statements on the Holocaust. He indicates it as a 'crime', and his arguments will be applied to Plath's poems. The writer's Holocaust discourse of the writer is clear, as is their empathic manner at maximal level. For example, in

‘Mary’s Song’, the writer says ‘This Holocaust I walk in’. Such an expression shows that Sylvia Plath could not be indifferent to history’s most brutal event (Plath & Hughes, p. 257). There are so many features that make the writer one of the distinctive poets of the 20th century, such as her succeeding to reverberate biographical and mythical images into the fabric of her poetry. It is a century where poetry has been overwhelmingly self-conscious and self-reflexive (Roberts, p. 2). Along with her brilliant skill in composing marvellous stanzas self-reflexively, Sylvia Plath is necessarily a peculiar postmodern poet within post-war literature.



2. FREUDIAN CONCEPTS IN THE POETRY OF SYLVIA PLATH

“... she did not expect to have literary remains. Nevertheless, she certainly knew there was a chance she would die. In her interior conflict between self-abnegation and self-assertion, perhaps the former had won a devastating victory over the art as well as the life.” (Axelrod, p. 20)

Sylvia Plath was a remarkable twentieth century poet not only because of her brilliant ability in juxtaposing words, but also in her dealing with unconventional themes such as death, dejectedness, ignored questions of females, and suicide. Her sensational death has usually been accepted as one of the main motives of her reputation, but Plath's courage and indifference to suicide includes immense and deep susceptibilities that come at a great cost to search deeper into. For this reason, her writings are very deserving of analysis in detail and, as Judith Kroll (1976, p. 303) admits, many researchers have been entangled in a fascination with Plath's suicide. In this chapter, I will examine certain poems of Sylvia Plath within the framed context of psychoanalysis, as led by Sigmund Freud, who attempted to cure the psychological disorders of neurotic patients in the last decade of nineteenth century. Among many of Plath's unique and excellent poems, 'Medusa', 'Daddy', 'Edge' and 'Contusion' will be in the centre of the analysis in this chapter. But in the aim of giving detailed explanations and comparisons, some other poems will also be a matter of subject.

As an engrossing writer, Sylvia Plath is one of the prominent figures of confessional poetry, a term used to define a trend within American poetry between 1950s and 1960s. The definition of 'engrossing' does not seem incidental if anyone feels that Sylvia is flattered by her readers, while she herself has been ascribed as 'shrew' by considerable critics. Confessional poetry cannot be declared as irrelevant to psychoanalysis because confessional poetry, Dodd (1992, p. 27) argues, 'synthesizes the inclination to personalism and consciousness...'. Confessional poets compose poems through the exploration of their inner world, their own feelings. This exploration is a product of their psychological processes

and experiences. Such experiences have always inspired psychoanalysts to research these inscriptions.

Freud treated his patients using unconsciousness methods, in particular hypnosis, with the aim of improving neurological disorders through his therapies. The unconscious is something that is the executive of us and controls our behaviours. Anne Skura states that Freud's original goal in psychoanalysis was to fill the gaps of his patients' memories (215). Although psychoanalysis was a clinical discipline, the studies of Freud in the aim of expressing the unconsciousness of human beings through dreams turned to an influential literary criticism in twentieth century. Alenka Zupancic (2008, p. 10), a notable Slovenian psychoanalyst, is completely reasonable in describing psychoanalysis as 'it predominated everywhere'. The twentieth century brought about many significant criticisms to the intellectual world of human beings such as feminist criticism, structuralism, formalism, deconstruction, and postcolonial criticism etc. Psychoanalytic criticisms, as developed through Freud's studies, have been one of the most important theories of the age. From philosophy to linguistics, Freud's ideas were used and developed by many theorists, thinkers, researchers and philosophers. The Frankfurt School, a critical theory school, came up in 1923 and theorists such as Habermas, Horkheimer, and Adorno improved psychoanalysis findings in other fields, particularly in terms of social issues. Psychoanalysis continued to progress rather rapidly in England and America, but it did not happen in German-speaking countries (Lagache, p. 19). Karl Abraham and Melanie Klein gave importance to the deeper sides of unconsciousness and the path to reaching into the past. Melanie Klein, a very prominent psychoanalyst, has many changes and contributions to psychoanalytic theory. Most notably are her studies on the role of mother and her 1957 seminal paper dealing with 'Envy and Gratitude'. She focuses attention on the eclectic structure of 'ego'. A child eats a chocolate for he or she wants, not for another one will be devoid of it (Craib, p. 102). Melanie Klein had considerable disagreements with another psychoanalyst Anna Freud, daughter of Sigmund Freud. She focused on the similarities of the defence mechanism that is practised by 'ego'. German psychoanalyst Karen Horney was interested in conflicts of human beings with regards to environment and strategies of ego. Another and important trend of psychoanalysis is French psychoanalysis. Jacques Lacan is the

pioneer of this trend, and he mainly deals with the entire of the self. In many cases, he found Freud's explanations insufficient and thus developed his own method. The differences and parallel thoughts between them have always been a matter of discussion for researchers. In light of Julien's (1994, p. 20-1) statements, he mostly focused on 'paranoid psychosis' and, in this sense, he directed his attention towards 'personality conceived as the totality of the specialized, functional relationships that adopt the animal-human to society'. Jacques Lacan formed a comprehensive psychoanalytic literary research and he has ethical implications in his method. Although many researchers try to find out a definite difference between Lacan and his predecessor, there is no remarkable difference. Lacan developed and carried Freud's thoughts into modern times, and it is a distinctive turning point but their methodologies are not different. In this sense while analysing certain poems, Lacan and several other psychoanalysts' approaches can assist too. The main approach will be Freudian, however theorists such as Lacan, Jung or Klein, will sometimes also touch upon Plath's poems.

Freud (cited in Djokosujatno 2002) believed that "everyone experienced the neurosis, basically physiques development always develops based on conflict pattern" The human mind has an unconscious part and all these conflict patterns emerge there. Those conflict patterns step in engaging with and solving clashes between social norms and personal norms. Psychoanalytic theory is built upon the perception of patient's resistance towards his unconscious while conscious---the goal thus being to keep the unconscious out of the active conscious.

Freud's simulation of mind to an iceberg was a 'complex' and flexible structural model' that identifies the parts of mind as 'id', 'ego', and 'superego' (Milton, Formear & Fabricius, p. 20). Ahles (2004, p. 7-9) defines them in his book, stating that id is 'the agency of mind that subserves the functions of drives and emotions.' Ego is 'responsible for various functions such as perceptions, language, control of the motor apparatus and cognition', and the superego as the 'part of ego' that 'induces guilt or shame'. Until Freud coined the terms id, ego and superego, there was only preconsciousness dependent upon unconsciousness and consciousness. Besides cognitive explanations, psychoanalysis concerns with sexual concepts. In his study 'Beyond The Pleasure Principle' (1920), he focuses on the relation between aggression and sexuality. He became an important inspiration for many

gender and cultural researchers such as Julia Kristeva, Hermann Rorschach, Carl Rogers, Joseph Wolpe, Alfred Adler, Gustav Jung, and even surrealist painter Salvador Dali. With the help of analogies and metaphors, Freud expresses the nature of psychic repression in order to make explicit social conflicts because all social conflicts such as war are a result of psychic repression. Early experiences of human beings, particularly childhood experiences, are the main factor in adopting social norms. In this sense Kagan and Lamb (1990, p. 250) draw a definition in their book on the emergence of morality in young children:

‘...psychoanalytic theoreticians have found it useful to postulate early structures that enable the child to learn standards and rules. In general, guidelines for action (do’s) are thought to be learned before prohibitions (don’ts), and a major period for internalization is highlighted, spanning the end of the first year thorough the middle of the second year. The structures are both cognitive and affective; furthermore, they involve internalizing aspects of parental relationships within the context of need satisfaction. These formulations are descriptive, and, while plausible, they require research linking them to other sectors and evaluating the ways that individual differences in development and socialization impact upon internalization.’

The emphasis on parental relationship is very important for psychoanalytic theory, and Sylvia Plath usually pinpoints her impressions around it. In her 1961 poem, ‘Insomniac’, she expresses a dark memory. “Parental faces on tall stalks, alternately stern and tearful,/... Memories jostle each other for face-room like obsolete film stars” (Plath & Hughes, p. 163). The speaker likens stalks of a flower to the appearance of parents. They are a ruler to her as she uses the word ‘stern’. Nevertheless they are in pain in her view and she is in an effort of humiliation. Furthermore, the speaker defines them like an old-fashioned film.

The images of ‘death’ and ‘parental position’ will be analysed in the light of Freudian concepts. Both images have become a source a great interest for analysts who are examining a literary work through psychoanalytic theory for it opens plausible ways to them in explaining written texts. The instinct of death is accepted as forming the centre of human neurosis. Norman Brown reminds psychoanalytic theory’s defining birth as ‘trauma’ and explains its approach to death. Norman Brown (1959, p. 284) defines birth, psychoanalytically speaking, as trauma. On death, he notes that human neurosis is rooted in the death instinct, beginning with baby’s inability to accept separation from its mother. This notion of separation has a ripple effect across all living organisms until death itself. Hegel notes that separation is felt at hour of birth and at the hour of death. To live, and to

die, begins at birth for human beings, thus the psychoanalytical notion of `birth trauma`. Immortality thus can be boiled down in the Platonic sense to meaning a denial of being born.

Death image is one of the most common themes in the poetry of Sylvia Plath and, according to Steinberg (2004, p. 38), she is 'a symbol of death and depression' although her style does not seem so drastic for others even if in fact it is. Sylvia Plath perceived the world and life as being responsible for softening her excitement, and in turn she thus created images on death meticulously. But her attitude towards death is very clear: The biological end of the body is actually a renewal for Plath. 'I am Vertical' is one example of her poetry in which Plath set her desire to death because it is not something convulsive. "Compared with me, a tree is immortal /And a flower-head not tall, but more startling,/And I want one's longevity and the other's daring" (Plath & Hughes, p. 162). In these stanzas, it's clear that Plath tries to consubstantiate herself with a tree in jealous way. The word 'longevity' refers a posthumous belief. It is something that needs to be emulated because such time is longer than life. More interestingly, Sylvia Plath celebrates walking to death in her long 1962 poem 'A Birthday Present':

[...]I would have killed myself gladly that time any possible way.

Now there are these veils, shimmering like curtains,

...

Do not be mean, I am ready for enormity.

Let us sit down to it, one on either side, admiring the gleam,

...

If you only knew how the veils were killing my days.

To you they are only transparencies, clear air.

But my god, the clouds are like cotton.

Armies of them. They are carbon monoxide.

...

I would admire the deep gravity of it, its timeless eyes.

...

There would be a nobility then, there would be a birthday.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 206-8)

Sylvia Plath (Plath & Hughes, p. 206) is explicitly determined to commit suicide in saying ‘...that time any possible way.’ and proud of it. The word ‘gleam’ in the twenty-fourth line of poem reflects her optimistic approach to death, or in other words it is the symbol of rebirth because she not only defines death in the frame of bright concepts but she also admires it. She emphasizes the gas of an oven in the line ‘... They are carbon monoxide.’ (Plath & Hughes, p. 207). In fifty-ninth line of poem, ‘There would be a nobility then, there would be a birthday’, Plath imagines celebrating the death and possibly perceives it as a present by entitling the poem as ‘The Birthday Present’ (Plath & Hughes, p. 208). “Plath’s motivation in writing such ugly and terrifying pictures of death is certainly not its glorification” (Folsom, p. 521). Folsom (2001, p. 525) also expresses Plath’s approach to physical death by saying that ‘the death of senses, in particular the death of the visionary imagination, is what Sylvia Plath feared most’. As many poets do it, Sylvia also embeds the imagery of death to poems. Turkish writer Nilgün Marmara, who committed suicide at age 29, had written studies on Sylvia Plath. Her style of writing is usually compared that of with Plath. Marmara cited in İnal 1992) asserts that ‘poetry is detaining me from death but at the same time I live the death in my poems’.

The interest on death by psychoanalysts is not abnormal because ‘the death instinct generates more anxiety than does the life instinct’ as Klein (1975, p. 57) claims. “What we are left with is the fact that the organism wishes to die only in its own fashion.’ is the evaluation of Freud in ‘Beyond The Pleasure Principle’ on death by presenting it as ‘conservative instincts’” (Klein p. 46-7). Freud uses Greek illustrations in expressing death as ‘Thanatos’ and life as ‘Eros’. The view Freud wanted to support is one in which Eros [life drive] and Thanatos [death drive] are equal but opposing forces (Carel, p. 41). Both concepts are in conflict, thus incidents and fondness of human beings are a result of their aims as Sylvia Plath’s tendency on death; suicide was her decision whether it was an effect of psychological disorder or not.

The parental position and relations of Plath's with her mother, Aurelia, and father, Otto, will be another matter of subject for analysing. Freud's Oedipus Complex which is both about boys and girls will be analysed on poems in particular. This complex theory has always been seen as contentious by researchers. Freud indicates that boys fall in love their mother in their childhood and because of castration anxiety they avoid from it. Moreover, girls experience jealousy with male individuals for they do not have a penis; this is called as 'penis envy'. This results in girls as being in conflict with their mothers for they blame mothers for this situation. Most individuals overcome these conflicts when they are accepted by society and have a notable place within it. However, it can sometimes emerge at a later age if they fall into a deep depression as we see in Plath's life. "Oedipus complex not only affects a person's life, but also in art, pop music, literature, humor, insulting God, and many other sacred aspects" (Wang, p. 1423). In this context, Plath's poems are highly available for a psychoanalytic research. Later poems of Sylvia Plath are, moreover, more suitable writings for analysing her questing father in terms of psychoanalysis, for her early poems are very complex and devoid of integral and psychological destruction.

2.1 Medusa

Sylvia Plath wrote the poem on October 16th, 1962 out of an indignant mood against her mother. She composed the poem at the same time she was writing 'two letters to Aurelia telling her that -she must not go back to the womb- that she can not return home to her mother in the US...' (Gill, p. 45). The usage of the biological word 'womb' is the symbol of turning back to her origin, to her home, and to her rejected mother. Like all parents, Aurelia also wanted best for her daughter, so the problem in this rejection is not about Aurelia. Rather, it is about the pain suffered by Plath in her unconscious instincts. Drassinower (2003, p. 149) explains this well-intentioned approach of parents towards their children in light of Freud's thoughts:

For Freud, this eminently well-intentioned parental wish for the child's bliss is but the return of the parents' own longing for perfection. 'The child,' Freud tells us, 'shall fulfil those wishful dreams of the parents which they never carried out – the boy shall become a great man and hero in his father's place, and the girl shall marry a prince as a tardy compensation for her mother.' The child, in other words, shall achieve a kind of deferred immortality in the parents' name; it shall become the vehicle of the parents' desire".

The child's constituting of his or her own individuality is very important for Freud and, if this is not completed, there emerges complex instinctive feelings in children's later times. Approaches of Aurelia in the past and hopes of her on Plath's having a happy marriage, unconsciously, caused a repression on her and the unfavourable result constructed a temper against her mother. Russell and Jarvis (2003, p. 75) state that Freud was correct to propose a link between depression and anger, however, they do not provide direct support for the idea that loss causes anger, which is turned inwards and leads into depression. Furthermore, the depressive side of Sylvia is known and this destruction turned to anger against her mother. This stanza shows an apparent anger of Sylvia to her mother:

[...] I didn't call you.

I didn't call you at all.

Nevertheless, nevertheless

You steamed me over the sea

Fat and red, a placenta

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 225)

The poem is composed around a medusa, which is a small jellyfish, but as Gill (2006, p. 83) declares 'Medusa is the Aurelia'. Furthermore, the name 'Aurelia' is expressed as the synonym of medusa in Hemming's 1958 study on zoological names. Sylvia Plath may be inspired by this research as she is writing the poem but it still remains secret that cannot go beyond estimation. 'I didn't call you' is a discourse by Sylvia in an indict way towards her mother. This is an annihilation of the mother by the infant, something akin the reflection of an instinctive impulse. Also, the metaphor of 'placenta' here is very distinctive in terms of her feelings on her mother during at the time she wrote the poem. The placenta is a specialized pregnancy-specific structure that develops concurrently with development of the embryo and fetus (Soares & Hunt, p. 3). Besides becoming aware of her mother's vital place in her life, she is in denial of her because of her instinctive destruction. Moreover with descriptions such as 'Fat and red...', she is in a feeling of disparagement. Sylvia Plath intentionally prefers the mythic character Medusa while composing her poem

in the aim of a metonymic setting. The laugh of Medusa can also be ironic in terms of her strength's power. She just looks at the eyes of men who transform them into stone, all the while laughing at them because of their powerlessness. Even the serpents on her head refer to the history of her evilness; she is powerful and feared. The evil of medusa is the evil of Sylvia's mother.

August 27th, 1962 was the day Aurelia got a letter from Sylvia, noting that she had filed for legal divorcement. These months were hard times for Sylvia because she could not accept the separation from Ted Hughes because of another woman, Assia Wevill, and she never did it until her death. In this sense, Bassnett (2005, p. 16) expresses the atmosphere in Sylvia and Ted's home during this time through the visit by Aurelio to them:

Aurelia Plath records that she visited Sylvia in June 1962 but found great tension between her daughter and Ted Hughes. She, and others, attributed this to Ted Hughes' affair with another woman and Sylvia Plath's inability to cope with it. The tension she was experiencing shows up in the poems dating from this period...

The more she suffered pain from her psychological destruction, the more poems she produced. After her first and only pressed poetry book while she is alive, 'The Colossus' (1960), she started to write poems that would appear in her posthumous book 'Ariel' (1965). The work of Ariel includes mostly psychoanalytical aspects of Plath's poetry. For many critics, Plath's most famous poems as well as perhaps her last years' distressing experiences were in this book. Aurelia sometimes visited her daughter in England and witnessed Sylvia and Ted's marriage's falling apart. During this emotional breakdown, Sylvia always hoped Aurelia to find a solution for the problems of her marriage and Aurelia's impotency caused an instinctive anger against her. If Aurelia were not with Plath, she would instead call her mother and share circumstances with her. These telephone conversations also found place in the poem Medusa. Plath described these through the lines: 'Old barnacled umbilicus, Atlantic cable, /...Tremulous breathe at the end of my line,' (Plath & Hughes, p. 224).

Sigmund Freud established three systems—id, ego, and superego—in case of the contradistinction of preconscious and unconscious. Superego is formed in the Oedipus complex, which covers the process of assimilating the ideal mother and ideal father (Lagache, p. 18). Freud explains a child's ambivalence towards the parent of the same sex in his theory of the Oedipus complex (Idema, p. 27).

Psychoanalytic theory declares the Oedipus complex in terms of both opposite and same sex. So Plath's approach toward her mother is abnormal and her anger can be explained through the same sex indications of the Oedipus complex. Freud (1962, p. 21) clarifies it in his theory:

A child's sexual wishes –if in their embryonic stage they deserve to be so described -awaken very early, and that a girl's first affection is for her father and a boy's first childish desires are for his mother. Accordingly, the father becomes a disturbing rival to the boy and the mother to the girl.

The deprecating tendency of Sylvia (1998, p. 30) on her own gender was something that she thought about as early as her teenage years because in 1950 she noted in her journal that 'Being born a woman is my awful tragedy'. In this context, this reaction emerged in her poem 'Medusa' against her mother.

*[...] In any case, you are always there,
Tremulous breath at the end of my line,
Curve of water upleaping
To my water rod, dazzling and grateful,
Touching and sucking.
... (Plath & Hughes, p. 225)*

Plath was a great poet with her distinctive use of metaphors and analogies and, in this stanza, she is pointing out that her mother was her identity by saying '...you are always there'. There is a description of relationship between a mother and baby. The first phone conversation occurred 1950. 'Tremulous breath in the end of my line,' points out that, in speaking on the telephone with Aurelia, the 'tremulous breath' is her breath, and the 'line' refers to the telephone connection. In the final word of stanza, the dispraise emerges. The word 'sucking' signifies that her mother is gradually consuming Plath's identity. Sylvia Plath's anger is directly towards her mother, but not towards all mothers or woman. Psychoanalysis does not make do only with explaining mental process of human beings, it also expresses it through power interactions and conflicts. For example, anger can be prevented against a more powerful contender while it is not prevented against a weaker one. In her study, as a review of 'Letters Home', Rosenstein (2004, p. 53) detects the temper in Plath's

letters and expresses that it is ‘a contradiction between the poet we know and the daughter we discover here’. It is clear that she can sometimes be highly cruel to her mother in her writings. “Overexposed, like an X-ray, / Who do you think you are?” are two lines as an evidence of her cruel approach to her mother” (Plath & Hughes, p. 225). Plath is attempting to ignore her mother Aurelia with the metaphor of ‘X-ray’. She puts forward her mother as an unreal object or in other words, as a more daring disposition, she wants her to be dead. In the next line Plath interrogates her mother’s identity. Furthermore Plath continues to question her mother’s existence through religious imagery in the next lines. “A communion wafer? Blubbery Mary? / I shall take no bite of your body, / Bottle in which I live” (Plath & Hughes, p. 225). She draws upon the importance of a pure mother in the first line but afterwards firmly rejects to be a piece of her mother and prefers getting nothing from her body. Here we can remember the imagery of ‘placenta’ because Plath composes congruence between it and this stanza. The ‘Bottle’ is the inside of a pregnant woman’s body. According to Gill (2006, p. 83), the poem ‘Medusa suggests the enormous psychic energy flowing between mother and daughter’. This is, of course, energy but one that isn’t very optimistic as we interpret from Plath’s aggression.

In the poem, Sylvia Plath uses a lot of religious imagery with the aim of explicitly putting forward the relationship between mother and daughter.

[...]You house your unnerving head – God-ball,

Lens of mercies,

...

Red stigmata at the very center,

...

Dragging Jesus hair?

Did I escape, I wonder?

...

A communion wafer? Blubbery Mary?

...

Ghastly Vatican.

I am sick to death of hot salt.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 224-5)

Sylvia Plath was not tightly linked to religious affairs in her life because she found it as ‘controlling and repressive ideology’ (Wagner & Martin, p. 19). As Gill (2006, p. 117) indicates, in spite of this attitude: “Plath draws on the aspects of the symbolic and religious discourse of motherhood...” . Daniel Lagache (2005, p. 144), a French psychoanalyst, claims that ‘the expression of religious phenomena that particularly bases on Judeo-Christian traditions is tied with the concepts of Oedipus Complex’. Religious concern of Sylvia may not be overly intense but Aurelia’s high interest on religion made it inevitable for Sylvia to compose a connection between her mother and religious themes. Bayley and Brain (2011, p. 98) touch Plath’s usage of religious symbols while confessing her thoughts on the relation between mother and child.

But something more personal takes up the poetic centre: something more to do with the *me* than the religious *Creator* of her earlier drafts. Halfway through her revisionary journey, Plath’s speaker suffers a philosophical and personal dilemma: to conceive or not to conceive; to embrace or not the *dark thing* that is gestating from within her; to accept or refuse a new aspect of what constitutes the poem’s *me*. In doing so, she is forced to do away with the artificial props of natural and religious spectacle – the passion of sunsets and *pietas* – and to embrace the relationship of mother to child.

In the poem, Judeo-Christian symbols are used in order to generate a relationship between mother and child. The Medusa’s head, Aurelia, is linked with the ‘God-ball’ for the purpose of showing the power of it. The line “Red stigmata at the very center,” reflects Plath’s perception on Aurelia: mother means anguish. ‘Ghastly Vatican. / I am sick to death of hot salt.’ lines show her wearisome feeling (Plath & Hughes, p. 225). Some object relation theorists have developed suggestive analyses of religion, arguing that the pre-Oedipal relationship is the definitive matrix of religion and culture (Sharma, p. 118). The unconscious experiences of Sylvia Plath may be a serious factor that motivates her composing religious metaphors. As much as Plath’s preferences were instinctive and unconscious, they were built both intentionally and well. Her choice and determination on death have been discussed

from the same perception too, but she walked into suicide premeditatedly. Her suicide attempt is interpreted as an act of aggression directed against the mother who has come to be identified with a vampiric superego (Britzolakis, p. 25). The description 'vampiric' is not coincidental when Plath's metaphors and revilements are analysed. The ego obeyed willingly to rigid inclinations of the 'ideal-ego' (superego) of her. Freedman (2002, p. 153) indicates Plath's revilements. He argues that "indeed, the evocation of the mother as devouring monster seems to be a reactive inversion of the perhaps more primitive sense that the speaking child consumes or threatens to consume its sacrificial mother".

Any researcher analysing a literary work has always been in an unavoidable disorder while picking out the deepest structures in the author's mind. In general it is not possible to reach there and in this context literary criticism is used to explain authors' mind and inner world. The work of art has a general meaning and it has also a target. Psychoanalysis is very important criticism in this way because its methods are used to attain psychological approaches of writers. Freud determines a close relation between the writers' neurosis and their activity of creation, and he tries to detect the role of unconscious approaches of them (Moran, p. 149). Besides their works of art, their letters, journals, and diaries are also significant at this frame. Sylvia Plath believes that every word can be analysed in details and words are similar with mechanics of music, or a colour in a picture in terms of technical form. From a young age, she started to write and whenever she took the pen in her hand or whenever she pressed the letters of her typewriter, she cared for words. In this sense Plath's journals have been very helpful in understanding her psychological situation during the time her poems were written. Moreover readers and researchers are able to realize the process of Plath's life that caused the settling of the target of her poems through her journals. For example in JSP, we can see her consideration on 'being old' through these words: 'How people stand being old? Your insides are all dry up; when you were young, you are so self-reliant. You don't even need much religion (JSP 21)'. This conscious approach reflects her further poems unconsciously. In *Medusa*, it is explicitly deduced that she establishes an image on her old mother through somatic discourses:

Off that landspit of stony mouth-plugs,

Eyes rolled by white sticks.

Ears cupping the sea's incoherences,

You house your unnerving head – God-ball,

Lens of mercies,

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

The preliminary stanza of the poem includes quite humiliating images on Plath's mother and these images are mostly composed on physical appearance. 'Eyes rolled' discourse is Plath's palpable aim in revealing Aurelia's senility and quickly she completes the line with '...by white sticks'. Through this line Sylvia expresses her unconscious approach on 'being old'. The American psychologist and author Joseph Murphy (1963, p. 30) describes the power of unconscious on creativity in the work of art:

Your subconscious mind is the source of your ideals, aspirations and altruistic urges. It was through the subconscious mind that Shakespeare perceived great truths hidden from the average man of this day. Undoubtedly, it was the response of his subconscious mind that caused the Greek sculpture, Phidias, to portray the beauty, order, symmetry, and proportion in marble and bronze. It enabled the Italian artist, Raphael, to paint Madonna's, and Ludwig van Beethoven to compose symphonies.

Sylvia Plath's desire to kill her mother can be evaluated oedipally in the frame of the whole poem for this killing occurs in Plath's mind and this disposition comes from her childhood, not something that emerged in the late ages of her. Even if Plath, herself, is a mother as well, she slams her mother atrociously. According to Tyson (2006, p. 20), the neurotic person feels in this sense that "... if I dream I am trapped or lost in a small, dark room, I might be expressing an unconscious fear of my mother's control over me or an unconscious fear that I have never completely matured as a human being.". Every problematic event that happened in Plath's life, particularly marital ones which cause her to feel incomplete matured as a human being, triggered a violent reaction against Aurelia. A general evaluation on the whole life of Sylvia Plath shows that every word that has been chosen through a specific purpose by her is not coincidental.

2.2 Daddy

A father (Otto Plath) died of a gangrenous infection, leaving his daughter bereft of her belief in God: 'I will never speak to God again' the young Sylvia said to her mother (Folsom, p. 524). In 1940, at the age of eight, Plath rejected believing in God. Most of Plath poetry was inspired by her own life and as a result this makes Plath one of the representatives of confessional poetry. Besides being one of Plath's most famous poems, 'Daddy' is accepted as one of the finest examples of the mid-twentieth century's trend in 'confessional poetry'. This is because Sylvia Plath draws a picture of her feelings in this poem and of course 'confessional poetry is seemingly autobiographical. The poems feature a 'first-person speaker' who seems to refer to the poet (Shannon, p. 627). Confessional poets wrote everything around the relationship between their inner and external worlds so that any reader of confessional poetry is able to travel through the poet's life experiences and even gossip. There is an inevitable connection between confessing of poets and psychoanalytic theory for they manifest their experiences. Furthermore Helen Vendler (1995, p. 31) describes confessional poetry as 'Freudian lyric'. Confessional poetry is reviving experiences that causes to trauma and trauma creates a defence mechanism against repressions in human beings. Freud described the defence mechanism of repression as resulting from a traumatic experience, usually of a sexual nature, during childhood (Freedman, Kaplan, and Sadock, p. 232).

In the poem 'Daddy', Sylvia Plath epitomizes her 'furious rhythm with its relentless use of rhyme' (Dodd, p. 28). Sylvia did not conceal her feelings in her poems, particularly her anger as is seen in Daddy. This furious rhythm shapes around the belief of Otto Plath's inconsistency against her daughter. The fifth stanza of the poem is the divulgement of Plath's inconsistency by Sylvia:

[...]Says there are a dozen or two.

So I never could tell where you

Put your foot, your root,

I never could talk to you.

The tongue stuck in my jaw.

... (*Plath & Hughes, p. 223*)

Sylvia Plath expresses in her journal that 'nobody died in my life' and if it is thought that Otto Plath died when she is eight, she did not like him, yet whether or not she did not like him is still a riddle. Sylvia sought her dead father throughout her life and tells "Says there are a dozen or two,/ So I never could tell where you". The death of Plath's father caused her psychological destruction and she could thus never get rid of that throughout the duration of her life. Thanatos (The Death Drive) is the conclusion of Freud who claims that psychological self-destruction and internal conflicts may sometimes be the experience of death in our life. Moreover Sylvia Plath faced this repression in her early ages and its impact was unavoidable for her. Such a repression caused to a feeling of abandonment within Sylvia; she always believed that her father left her untimely and very early. The intensity of this feeling was so high that Sylvia was perceived to feel tormented by her father's ill-timed escape or, in other words, death. Otto Plath was a desired father for Sylvia and even though her imagery in this poem was sharp, Plath was in a sense of yearning for her father. This instinctive approach is able to be well analysed through the Oedipal Complex. The term 'Oedipus' is used from 1910 onwards when Freud put it in his book and it is the complex of sexual drives being experienced in childhood. The term comes from Greek mythology, which tells of Oedipus killing her father and marrying her mother. This complex can be seen as maternal or paternal and can also be seen as a combined figure. The loss of father can precipitate to a temper as Sylvia Plath felt it.

Indeed, the trope of dead fathers is about the persistence of violence in disguised forms, a violence that is the root of both the subject and the love. From the very beginning, the dead father is a screen. In the Oedipal complex, the father who is already dead, beyond both (his) desire and (my) revenge, arises as a fantasy: through this fantasy, the child explains to himself or herself the loss of the mother, the dead of the originally unified self, though such unity, of course, never existed. The myth of the dead father, appearing to explain death, in fact really screens a prior death, loss, violation. This myth and the subsequent transference that arises from it are mechanisms for protecting the subject against its own rage, mechanisms that work by enabling the subject to identify with that rage itself as a paternal legacy. (Schwarz, p. 157)

Freudian theory explains the backgrounds of family conflicts through oedipal conflict in the context of childhood experiences and, of course, other psychoanalysts such as Lacan and Melanie Klein contributing to oedipal complex in basic principles. Apart from little diversity, Lacan developed the dynamics of oedipal complex and Russell Grigg (2008, p. 37) expresses that according to Lacan: 'Oedipal Complex

covers the entire field of analytic experience, marking the limit that our discipline assigns the subjectivity'. He brought a more complex and detailed dimension to this conflict. Melanie Klein evaluates Oedipal complex in the light of its psychological results and she disagrees with Freud in this sense. According to her 'Envy and Gratitude' theory, envy has negative effects on Oedipal conflict causing a depressive reaction that begins in the earlier period of the individual than Freud thought. The poem 'Daddy' will be analysed through Freud's approach because in this poem Sylvia kills her father and shows her tendency towards death, yet she unconsciously kills herself by integrating her own death with it. Freud dwells on the instinctive death-wish against father and by means of her instinctive death-wish; Plath kills her father in this poem:

*[...]Daddy, I have had to kill you,
You died before I had time –
If I've killed one man, I've killed two –
The vampire who said he was you
And drank my blood for a year,
Seven years, if you want to know.
Daddy, you can lie back now.
... (Plath & Hughes, p. 222-4)*

The Mythical King Oedipus killed his father and married his mother. Otto Plath, Sylvia's father, dominated Sylvia's whole life psychologically. Sylvia dreams to be Oedipus because she wants to kill her father in her mind. Otto Plath died when Sylvia was eight, but it is clear that, the physical death of him was not sufficient for her; she wanted to kill him in her mind too. For this reason Sylvia Plath wrote these lines at age 30, some 22 years later after her father's death. The reflections of Sylvia Plath's experiences in her poems are so clear in various works. Killing her father was an obligation for Plath and the line 'Daddy, I have had to kill you' is a cue for this feeling. Freud says that: "the writer or artist is originally a man who turns from reality because he can not come to terms with the demand for renunciation of

instinctual satisfaction as it is first made” (Wellek & Warren, p. 82). Plath’s childhood experiences and her satisfactions are often seen in her poems but, aside them, her excruciating memories also exist in her poetry. Her poem ‘The Eye Mote’ which was written in 1959 contains such memories and wishes. “I wear the present itch for flesh,/ Blind to what will be and what was./ I dream that I am Oedipus” (Plath & Hughes, p. 109) are lines from this poem that shows her definite wish and memory together. Being an Oedipus will ensure Plath to fulfil her desire for killing her father. Plath used to love controlling and manipulating her experiences because, in her opinion, the human experience was very significant in one’s life. In this context, it can be frequently seen that she composed images through her own memories and experiences. In addition to other literary arts, Sylvia Plath used poetry as an instrument for expressing her cry, and yet poetry is the strongest voice of the writer. Perhaps this is because of its power in rising poet’s voice. For Plath, writing poetry was a way of utilizing her anger. In this sense, Jane Hirshfield (2013, p. 37) defines poetry as ‘comprehensive’ and ‘thirsty’. She adds that ‘It pulls toward what is invisible to highly directed looking, toward what is protean, volatile, unprotected, and several handed’. Plath’s inner world was thirsty too for this reason, and she weaved her pain into poetry. As a result her of disintegration, her alienation and her loss of identity are able to be seen explicitly in poems. Plath makes the invisible visible (Narbeshuber, p. 186). In Hughes’s critical assessment, her poetry then becomes inextricably linked with a psychological relationship to the past mediated by a certain kind of discourse –Freudian psychoanalysis (Bayley & Brain, p. 54). Daddy is one of her poems which shows her evil relationship with Otto Plath thorough the speaker of the poem. In a 1962 interview made with Plath, she defines the poem ‘Daddy’. She notes that this is a poem articulated by an Electra complex-marked girl. Her dies at a time where she looks up to him as a god. This furthermore is complicated by her god being a Nazi and her mother possibly being part Jewish. Plath’s desire to go back her father is explicitly seen in the stanza below. In terms of Freudian psychoanalysis, she unconsciously produces a love for her dad even if the speaker of Daddy is highly angry and her suicide attempts are a desire of rebirth for Plath:

[...]Bit my pretty red heart in two.

I was ten when they buried you.

At twenty I tried to die

And get back, back, back, back to you.

I thought even the bones would do.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

Sylvia Plath composed this poem using Nazi imagery in order to indicate extreme feelings felt about her father. In this context, she draws a connection between her own experiences and a Jew. Furthermore Plath writes so hard that she holds her father equivalent with devil. She even refers to him as a vampire by saying “The vampire who said he was you/ And drank my blood for a year”. Moreover she makes an effort to demonstrate herself innocent against her father and in this context Plath nestles the imagery of Jew.

[...]An engine, an engine

Chuffing me like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 223)

The seventh stanza of poem and in here Otto Plath horrifies her own daughter with his diabolical structure like a strict Nazi. Sylvia Plath images herself as a prisoner in a Nazi Camp and she is suffering from her father. Plath is the victim of her father and Jacqueline Rose (1992, p. 228) renders this situation as ‘displacement’ in terms of psychoanalysis. Plath feels herself as a Jew who suffers from Nazis by saying “I began to talk like a Jew. / I think I may well be a Jew”. Nazi camps represented places of suffering that inspired Sylvia Plath to imagine herself within the fences of. “A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, and Belsen.” is the line giving the names of camps and by virtue of painful times Jews experienced there these camps were used as metaphors in post-war poetry. For instance, Leon Wieseltier (1976, p. 20) declares that: “Auschwitz bequeathed to all subsequent art perhaps the most arresting of all

possible metaphors for extremity...”. Otto Plath was originally German and went to America in 1900 at the age of fifteen; Sylvia’s German background never left her. The poem Daddy is comprised around her father’s German background due to the fact that her psychoanalytic obsession that comes from her childhood.

[...]Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

...

In the waters of beautiful Nauset.

...

Ach, du.

In German tongue, in the Polish town

...

Ich, ich, ich, ich,

...

I thought every German was you.

...

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

...

With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygook.

And your neat moustache

...

Panzer-man, panzer-man, Oh you –

Not God but a swastika

...

A man in black with a Meinkampf look

... (Plath, p. 222-4)

Plath prefers the German word 'Achoo' instead of the native English word 'sneeze'. Plath's father Otto lived in Cape Cod, Germany before he got to America; the name 'Nauset' is Cape Cod's former German name. As a rhyme, Sylvia Plath sometimes used the discourse of 'Oh, you...', but she nonetheless preferred to drive its German meaning 'Ach, du' in the third stanza of the poem. She wrote the word of 'you' in end of line sixteen times in Daddy as a rhyme scheme, as well as once used 'du', which is the personal, informal form of 'you' in German. As mentioned above Dachau, Auschwitz, and Belsen are Nazi camps used to imprison and torture Jews, most of which are located in modern day Poland. Thus Plath composed the line 'In German tongue, in Polish town.' in the aim of emphasizing those places. The meaning of 'panzer' is 'armoured' in English and she describes her father as 'Panzer man' through repetitions. The metaphor of 'panzer-man' is the symbol exhibiting her father's harm that affects Sylvia Plath deeply. The lack of a father caused a strong temper in Plath and, through this temper, she tries to portray her father as a dangerous man. Plath's anger is one the most influential factors causing her depression. Bruch notes that anger appears to play a very fundamental role in depression. He adds identifying unconscious anger and wherefrom it stems, for example loss or rejection, can enhance tolerability and diminish depressive guilt (Bruch 2). Loss of father created an integral breakdown in Sylvia Plath and she lived with this complex unconsciously throughout her disconsolate and short life. The most appreciable German usage in this poem is the line 'Ich, ich, ich, ich,' with its emphasizing, repetitive usage and sense. 'Ich' translates as 'I' in English and Freud used the concept 'I' in order to explain the process of self-consciousness. His term 'Das ich' (I) was later coined as 'ego'. In here the term 'ich' is actually the symbol of Sylvia Plath's ego. Plath imagines that she cannot speak: 'It stuck in a barb wire snare./.../I could hardly speak.' She talks about her tongue, as it is understood from the former stanza. The repetition of 'ich' means that she wants to say something about herself but she is not able to do so. When it is looked at the end of the stanza, it is clear that this obstacle is drawn intentionally, for she says: "I could hardly speak. /I thought every German was you. /And the language obscene". The word 'obscene' reflects her negative experiences of her father. Such disturbance created a prejudice on Otto's German background and language. This confusion of identity is a 'life-long

alienation of the ego' and Plath always felt such self-crackdown in her life (Habib, p. 591).

The poem *Daddy* contains extreme and exaggerated metaphors written by Plath with the purpose of revenge against her father. The shocking effect being created by Nazis during the Second World War inspired many writers to originate metaphors around it. Plath also composed her lines through Nazi symbols in order to show him as an evil and revenge from him.

'Daddy' embodies Plath's ambivalent resistance toward and dependence on the discourse of her father. She combats his fascistic and demonic violence, but her elegy reproduces it in exaggerating his evil and destroying his image. For Plath, patriarchal violence found its ultimate expression in the Nazi death camps, which were the triumph of the victimization from which she suffers. (Ramazani, p. 1151)

Sylvia's cruel images of her father create a terror in itself against the war terror. She believes Nazis are bereft of their mercy and humanistic sides like her father. This is a belief that she created in her childhood.

[...]Not God but a swastika

So black no sky could squeak through.

Every woman adores a Fascist,

The boot in the face, the brute

Brute heart of a brute like you.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

She portrays her father like a brutal Nazi but at the same time she emphasizes that there is a possibility that every woman can feel love for such a man. She writes: "Every woman adores a Fascist", and here the man who is labelled as fascist is Otto Plath. Every woman may feel the desire to defect to a fascist in order not to be alone and this is explicitly a desire of power. Nonetheless, she is also afraid of her father and she draws him as a scaring man.

You do not do, you do not do

Any more, black shoe

In which I have lived like a foot

For thirty years, poor and white,

Barely daring to breathe or Achoo.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 222)

While she was writing in this first stanza 'Any more', only Plath knew that it symbolized the decision to die. On account of this decision, perhaps, Sylvia committed her third and last suicide a few months after she finished Daddy. As a metaphorical approach, Sylvia saw the light and felt the salvation to which she missed for years. Because in this stanza, Sylvia expresses her gloomy times that she suffered over a period long time: "In which I have lived like a foot /For thirty years, poor and white". Meanwhile the usage of 'white' in this line is also very important since it reflects the alienation of Plath (black) with her father (white). In terms of psychoanalysis, Lacan (1964, p. 218) brought a clear explanation to the term of alienation in his 1964 study "The Seminar, Book XI, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis". He dealt with the notion of 'separation' and he described it as 'the weak point'. The term 'black' is a very significant symbol in Daddy. With the word 'blackboard', Sylvia Plath used it seven times in this poem:

[...]Any more, black shoe

...

So black no sky could squeak through.

...

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,

...

Any less the black man who

...

A man in black with a Meinkampf look

...

The black telephone's off at the root,

...

There's a stake in your fat black heart

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 222-4)

While explaining Freud's approach to symbols and meanings of words, Dalbiez (1940, p. 101) argues that 'common parlance unhesitatingly uses white as the symbol of moral innocence, and black as that of moral evil...this is enough to set a gulf between the concepts of symbol and of symptom, or, as we prefer to say, of effect-sign'. Obviously, the word 'black' is the symbol of Plath's psychoanalytic symptom on her dead father Otto Plath in this poem. Dalbiez's definition of effect-sign emerges in *Daddy* in the frame of Plath's composing the term 'black' as an effort of demonstrating her father as an evil. She writes: "But no less a devil for that, no not /Any less the black man who' and declares Otto as devil he will no more be a devil when she reached to death" (Plath & Hughes, p. 223).

The feeling of Plath's suffering from her father, like a Jew suffers from a Nazi, comes from Electra complex. Jung first used the term in 1915 with the aim of describing the feminine Oedipus conflict. It seems to be a widely held impression that a girl's psychosexual development was originally labelled the Electra Complex by Freud (Erwin, p. 174). Plath's Electra complex appears in terms of her anger and she perceives her father as an enemy. Plath's Electra is described by Jill Scott (2005, p. 8), in 'Electra after Freud: Myth and Culture', thorough both Freudian and Jungian Electra complex:

The greatest cultural myth surrounding Electra is that there is no Electra complex per se. Jung made only fleeting reference to the complex without ever fully defining or describing it. The very existence of the term may have been an attempt on his part to distance himself from Freud, to stage a subtle critique of the Oedipus complex by suggesting there is a female counterpart. More interesting than the passing references to the Electra complex, whether by Jung or Freud, are the associations and assumptions connected with it and its manifestations as a trope in popular discourse and cultural production, for example Sylvia Plath's now famous statement that her poem 'Daddy' is about a girl with an Electra complex.

Plath also has her own note on her writings thorough the Electra Complex. She declares about her poem *Daddy* that: "In the daughter the two strains marry and paralyze each other—she has to act out the awful little allegory once before she is free of it" (Bloom, p. 133). Otto Plath died when Sylvia was eight years old and this was the period in which she treated her father like a god. By reason of her this

childhood perception, she wrote as ‘Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,’ (Plath & Hughes, p. 222). The confusion and paradox with the loss of father in her childhood caused hysteria for Sylvia Plath.

The analogies used by Plath in this poem are a product of a childhood trauma. Her father’s early death is like an evil that offends Plath’s feelings with this offence causing her to attempt committing suicide: “At twenty I tried to die/ And get back, back, back to you”. The repetitive discourse is the emphasizing of Plath’s wish to experience rebirth and regain her father again. According to psychoanalysis, human beings are originally born with a ‘pleasure-pain principle’ (Feud, 1969, p. 265). This principle claims that people seek pleasure against negative situations and try to avoid pain.

[...]But they pulled me out of the sack,

And they stuck me together with glue.

And then I knew what to do.

I made a model of you,

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

Plath’s making a model of her father and wending her way into another man is a kind of effort for salvation from internal pain. In this sense Freud (1969, p. 256) states: “In the course of development the original pleasure principle undergoes a modification with reference to the external world...”

Sylvia Plath composed the poem in 1962, and this is the time she was deeply suffering from the abandonment and deception by her husband, Ted Hughes. The repressed feelings of Plath did not emerge until she comprised a model of man in case of her father and all her fantasies broke down. “And then I knew what to do. / I made a model of you, / A man in black with a Meinkampf look” (Plath, p. 224). “Out of her need for a paternal figure and as a result of her unresolved issues because her father died when she was so young, she is now connected to a new man who is just like him” (Bloom, p. 43). She wanted the man that she would love to compensate Plath’s father. He must give support as her father might do. Brown (1959, p. 161) clarifies the neurosis in the light of Freudian theory:

In technical Freudian terms, an identification replaces object-love, and by means of such identifications object-libido is transformed into narcissistic libido. The lost objects reinstated in the human ego are past objects; the narcissistic orientation of the human ego is inseparable from its regressive orientation...The separation in the present is denied by reactivating fantasies of past union, and thus the ego interposes the shadow of the past between itself and the full reality of life and death in the present.

After the death of her father, Sylvia Plath held men equivalent with Otto, whereas all Plath's relationships base on this unconscious feeling. For instance, she loved a man named Richard Sassoon, who caused Sylvia deep suffering. Sassoon lived in Paris; Plath used to visit him there. February of 1956 was very hard for Sylvia Plath because she had a psychological destruction after Sassoon's decision to separate. In her journal, Sylvia Plath (1998, p. 158) said that 'Oh God, God. I feel the pain inside me. God, I did not know this. They even took a dad in my hand.' When Richard Sassoon finished everything; the model of father inside her flew away. This identification emerges in Daddy:

[...]If I've killed one man, I've killed two –

The vampire who said he was you

And drank my blood for a year,

Seven years, if you want to know.

Daddy, you can lie back now.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

Whereas every love of man can be addressed as an archetype for Sylvia Plath, such archetypes serve as a father figure her. In view of Jung's approach to these archetypes, they are a kind of pursuit, an effort to reach something new. In the aim of explicating the roles of such archetypes, Jung (1959, p. 301) states: "It persists throughout the ages and requires interpreting anew. The archetypes are imperishable elements of the unconscious, but they change their shape continually." Moreover, Sylvia Plath's pursuit to a man emerges in one of her 1963 poem (but started to write in 1956); more interestingly the name of the poem is 'Pursuit'. She uses rigid lines in here too in order to describe her anger on Ted Hughes- unconsciously Otto Plath- and this composition is distinctly a reflection of her pursuit of father.

There is a panther stalks me down,

One day I'll have my death of him.

...

Doom consummates that appetite

...

The black marauder, hauled by love

On fluent haunches, keeps my speed.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 22-3)

The analogy of panther in this poem obviously addresses Ted Hughes who, in Plath's opinion, insidiously harms her and will ultimately bring the end of Sylvia Plath. She then writes 'The black marauder'. This is similar with the desire of death in Daddy: "The vampire who said he was you /And drank my blood for a year," (Plath & Hughes, p. 224). The highly erotic poem, Pursuit, shows both her desire on Ted and his baleful effect on her.

Plath consubstantiates Ted Hughes with Otto Plath so explicitly that besides killing her dad instinctively, she believes in killing her husband too. The line "If I've killed one man, I've killed two" designates Ted as a second man in here and it was told by the vampire that he was Ted who excruciates her during the last year. When Plath's bibliography is looked at, the time between 1961 and 1962, which is the year Daddy was composed, was the year she faced the most rigorous sufferings. Such mental and psychological destructions, inevitably, caused a tendency to suicide for Plath and committing suicide is not a weakness in itself for it is a product of brave and decisive steps. Al Alvarez who had done significant number of studies on suicide and tendencies of writers' on it made considerable conclusions. Moreover, he had opportunity to meet with Sylvia Plath. Alvarez (2001, p. 102) claims that suicide is "terrible but utterly natural reaction to the strained, narrow, unnatural necessities we sometimes create for ourselves." Hence, lines of Plath show a natural reaction on death. Plath, intrinsically, created a temper against her father and this feeling reached to top point in the last stanza of the poem.

[...]There is a stake in your fat black heart

And the villagers never liked you.

They are dancing and stamping on you.

They always knew it was you.

Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm thorough.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

Indeed, the sixteenth and last stanza of the poem is the effort of exculpation herself. In their compilation work on Sylvia Plath, Bayley and Brain cite the sentence of Bundtzen as she is explaining this last stanza. Bundtzen (cited in Baykey & Brain 2011) asserts that according to last stanza Otto Plath is 'the real criminal, the bloodsucking vampire who has been cannibalizing the speaker...' 'They always knew it was you' is the line of Plath's confessing that all knew that her father was responsible for the entirety of the trouble she suffered. Furthermore Plath signifies her father as a 'bastard', which in English slang refers to a man without father. This is the blast of Plath's anguishes and a way through the happy, only for her, end including death. Also, it is a 'triumphant sequence' against her father (Bloom, p. 47).

2.3 Edge

The creative visitation was not from heaven, but from the hell of rage. Yet so powerful is the art that one feels an unsettling elation as one reads the lacerating lines. The poem are about death, rage, hatred, blood, wounds, cuts, deformities, suicide attempts, stings, fevers, operations—there is no question of coming to terms with them...She, the poet, is frighteningly there all the time. Orestes rages but Aeschylus lives to be almost seventy. Sylvia Plath, however, is both heroine and author; when the curtain goes down, it is her own dead body there on the stage, sacrificed to her plot. (Hardwick, p. 1)

For Sylvia Plath, writing poetry was something that provided her isolation against the external world and she used to perceive it as protection and even sanctuary. Time and time again she had radical but short emotional changes in depiction, yet the effect of a mental disorder dominated her writing throughout her life. But still, it's not clear whether Sylvia Plath had a psychological disorder or not. Only a handful of researchers and psychologists have examined her writings.

One psychologist interested in whether Plath might be a manic-depressive, depressed at certain periods and manic in her creative periods, believe that the girl in *The Bell Jar* (and

thus perhaps Plath herself) had endogenous depression, a condition thought to be congenital, or something one is born with. (Inness, p. 37)

Sylvia Plath (2000, p. 395) defines the life of human beings in UJSP as being ‘two electric currents’ and that she points two ways: one is ‘joyous positive’ and the other is ‘despairing, almost, hysteric negative’. The feeling of disappointment impacted her writing style profoundly. Anyone who has experienced psychological destruction or problems in their childhood potentially experiences general disappointment throughout life. Most *psychoanalysts* agree that some *disappointment* in the primary caregiver is inevitable and even desirable if psychological growth is to proceed (Alpert, p. 43). During her psychological growth, Sylvia Plath lost her father in her eight, and the negative effect of that loss reflected to her whole life. In contrast, it has always been discussed that Plath’s unique style and composing in her writings can come from her strong internal conflicts. This is something like the army system in early ages. The commanders used to move up if they were to become successful in war. Success in war is the symbol of growth because a soldier grows only in a war. Her neurosis was Plath’s war through which her skills on writing developed.

Sylvia Plath sought a denouement for her anguishes and wished to be free again for she did not feel herself free for a long time; as a result the instinct to be free became a need for her. Freedom is an attitude that all people wish to experience, but this is not always possible. The percentage of people who can get everything they want must not be larger than the percentage of people who get everything they need. In terms of psychoanalysis, this situation can be explained with the relation of consciousness and unconsciousness. The ‘wish’ of human beings is a conscious concept but the ‘need’ is unconscious, namely, it is not arbitrary. Inevitably, the theme of freedom has been a matter of subject for psychoanalytic theory. Freud describes freedom as ‘uncoerced behaviour’ (Meissner, p. 97). In her mind, Sylvia Plath found a solution in reaching freedom by death and seemingly, she accepted death as the only option in order to reach the real freedom. While Freud talks about the ‘death wish in a human being, he declares that ‘death takes him! “Our unconscious, like the ancient Athenian code of Draco, it knows no other punishment for crime than death” (Meghnagi, p. 33). Unconsciously, Plath reflected an instinctive fear. She felt scared of being alone after she lost her father and, for this reason, she always looked for a man who was able to fulfil a father’s absence. But

when she couldn't find what she hoped instinctively, her unconscious and internal horror emerged.

Sylvia Plath has written many poems where the themes and subjects deal with the concept of death. 'I am Vertical', 'All the Dead Dears', 'Sheep in Fog', 'Edge', 'Contusion', and 'A Birthday Present' are only a few of many poems that were conceptualised around death. All of those poems have a common inference in that the idea of death means renewal or rebirth for Sylvia. One of her later poems, 'Getting There' indicates an example of Plath's approach to the consideration of rebirth.

*[...]I shall count and bury the dead,
Let their souls writhe in a dew,
...
Step to you from the black car of Lethe,
Pure as a baby. (Plath & Hughes, p. 248)*

While she is burying the dead body, she defines it as 'Pure' with the simulation of baby. A baby is the symbol for a new life and, in terms of Plath's definition, the death is renewed.

Although there is still no definite conclusion on this, the poem Edge is thought to be last poem of Sylvia Plath before she committed suicide on October 11th, 1963. It has ten stanzas that were written as two lines and it indicates a very confusing and complex composition that presents two dead children as well as a woman in the poem. Sylvia Plath reflects their supreme moment in the frame of exaggerated physical descriptions. If it is considered that this poem was written only a few days before her suicide, it is not seemingly ridiculous to say that she reverberates her own death, which was premeditated in those days. February 5th, 1963 is the date of the poem in CP, five days before her suicide. Consequently, if this is the true date, Plath is inevitably under the effect of her suicide decision, requiring great courage. It is very clear that Sylvia Plath asserts the death as a positive and necessary fact. The

atmosphere of the poem exhibits a disappointment as well as it indicates approbation on death. In this sense, the first stanza of the poem is very significant and rigid. Moreover this rigid tone continues throughout the poem:

The woman is perfected.

Her dead

Body wears the smile of accomplishment,

The illusion of a Greek necessity

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 272)

The word 'perfect' impeccability expresses a human being and it is as if provided only by means of death. The woman, who is one of the characters of Edge, consummates her mission when she died. 'Body wears the smile of accomplishment' is the line that indicates the significance of death because in this line the poem's speaker metaphorically dresses a cloth over the dead woman. This is cloth symbolizes the victory of death. Such a death wish is not something that emerged in Plath's soul in terms of psychoanalysis and Brown (1959, p. 285) explicates this in his book in details:

Mankind's diversion from the actuality of living-and-dying, which is always in the present, is attained by reactivation in fantasy of the past and regressive attachment to fantasy of the past, ultimately the womb from which life came. Thus again the incapacity to accept death only results in the morbidity of an active death wish.

The death wish is, in other words, a destructive wish in terms of social norms, is accepted as a neurosis for the psychoanalytic approach. But the death wish is not something unnatural for psychoanalysis and Schwarz (2013, p. 141), in light of Freud, expresses that 'yet it would be wrong to describe the death wish as something entirely negative, for together with the libido it serves life'. In the 'Edge' the libido serves life through death, which is complex in terms of social norms. However Freud claims that everyone is neurotic in real but the healthy one, being accepted by society in this way, lives the neurosis thorough social norms. The word 'body' in the second stanza of the poem symbolizes Plath's psychology and she get an accomplishment within the death body: "Body wears the smile of accomplishment, /The allusion of a Greek necessity." Moreover there is a description from the ancient Greek and Plath demonstrates a necessity in here. The approach of necessity means that the death of

woman was unavoidable. And the connections with Greek tradition continue in the poem.

[...]The illusion of a Greek necessity

Flows in the scrolls of her toga,

Her bare

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 272)

The composing of Greek and other classical traditions and motifs in here is not coincidental in the light of Plath's aim of indicating the importance of death. Higgins and Bergman (2014) declare the importance of dying and traditions of the ceremony of a death person:

The Greeks believed that when a person dies, his spirit or psyche leaves the physical body in the form of a little breath or puff of air. The deceased was then prepared for burial according to Greek customs. The dead body was washed, anointed with oil, and dressed for the rituals... The ancient cultures of Greece and Rome showed a strong faith in the afterlife, which is reflected in their elaborate ceremonies and burial rituals.

Dead bodies used to be dressed in toga-like cloths in Ancient Greek culture. Because this dress is the symbol of honour of the dead one's good sides while alive. There is an achievement of a woman's death through suicide in the second stanza of Edge; Plath expresses it as 'the smile of accomplishment'. The following lines, composed around these classical term motifs, convey this suicide to a sacred situation. In other words Plath tries to convert illegal or unethical behavior, make it accepted legally, ethically, and even religiously. Lacan (1998, p. 66), in his own study, defines the wish of one's death as 'suicide is the only successful act. This is because, to him, the wish to die arises from both conscious and unconscious parts of the mind in terms of a 'death drive'. In this sense, Sylvia Plath's defining of suicide, that is as an accomplishment, is clearly incidental if her five days later suicide is considered. "Her bare /Feet seem to be saying: /We have come so far, it is over" are the lines which demonstrate the end of life and in here the word 'bare' is the symbol of physical death's nonsense existence. Rich and Lorde (1996, p. 84) suggest the theme of death here as '...it is only an "illusion," so that she is actually saying that there was no dishonour that caused her suicide even though she could be how society might

interpret her suicide. The mission of death as pointed in the second stanza through 'Greek Necessity' is completed in the fourth one. In his study, Gill (2006, p. 12) expresses Plath's suicide and approach to death in this way:

'...her suicide has been interpreted in various ways...For some, the suicide is simply an unavoidable, if terrible, consequence of Plath's history of mental illness. For others, it seems the necessary and therefore justifiable climax of her writing; the trajectory of her career, culminating in the *Ariel* poems, leaving no other route.'

Plath's usage death as imagery in her last poem before her suicide, and her rearing that up, can be considered as it is inevitably necessary. The first four stanzas of the poem indicate a mission, and as a result of it there is a victory. This victory is implemented through suicide. The last days of Sylvia Plath passed with a final decision on suicide and death. This exact decision of Plath reflects deeply in her last poem 'Edge', and Plath believes that suicide will be an end for all of her anguishes. Freud (1915, p. 252) described such an instinct in his 1915 book:

The analysis of melancholia now shows that the ego can kill itself only if, owing to the return of object-cathexis, it can treat itself as an object – if it is able to direct against itself the hostility which relates to an object and which represents the ego's original reaction to objects in the external world.

This is evidently a description of suicide by Freud, and Plath's last poem is inevitably available to this description. The matter of suicide is analysed by Freud in terms of narcissist view. Sylvia Plath's melancholy affected her writing and images. Moreover, as she writes in one of her manuscripts, 'I am the daughter of melancholy' (Bloom, p. 125). Her hysteric situation caused her to perceive and accept herself as an 'object'; she decided to kill herself after she killed her ego first. Relinquishing an object is easier than relinquishing one's own body. Freud's essay 'Mourning and Melancholy' deals with the separation of the loss of object with the loss of one's himself and herself. In his 1915 essay, Freud (1915, p. 245) argues the loss through an unconscious process and says: "In melancholia, the unknown loss will result in a similar internal work and will therefore be responsible for the melancholic inhibition".

Within the fifth stanza, the death of two children comes out and it has always been discussed that these children are Sylvia Plath's own daughter, Frieda, and son, Nicholas. If Plath's death plan is considered, it is not irrelevant to make connections between this child image and the night of her suicide. She left her

children a pitcher of milk and a few loaves of bread. The poem Edge draws such a scene:

[...]Each dead child coiled, a white serpent,

One at each little

Pitcher of milk, now empty.

She has folded

Them back into her body as petals

Of a rose close when the garden

Stiffens and odors bleed

From the sweet, deep throats of the night flower

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 272-3)

Plath's most intensive dilemma in the decision of suicide was her children, for she was afraid of worrying them under the effect of motherhood instinct. Such instinct is very significant for Sylvia because as Wagner states 'to be a good mother is her only real ambition' (100). Nicholas and Frieda's vital necessities may not be met completely after her suicide and she accepts them as 'dead' when she died. The 'white serpent', a burial tradition in classical world, symbolizes their children's death. The reason in such a death is Plath's suicide. Moreover she feels that she poisons her children; the line 'Pitcher of milk, now empty' indicates it. The word 'empty' represents the completion of their death after they drunk the poisonous milk. The 'milk' that feeds Plath's children when they are born is killing them now, and their mother kills them thorough her own death. In a 1959 film 'Black Orpheus' that takes a racist matter has a scene in which a mother kills her own son. The mother's reaction is evaluated as a 'trauma' and 'sense of impossibility' by

Eigen (2007, p. 1). The depressive side of Sylvia Plath is noticed throughout every one of her poems. But her last poem is very significant both in terms of literary setting and instinctive confession to which psychoanalysts call unconscious expression. The line 'she has folded' indicates that she was the cause of their children's death because by means of the word 'folded' the mother metaphorically absorbs their souls. Furthermore, here Plath intentionally uses the word 'back' in the next line, wanting to point out that the child comes up from the womb and turns back to it. The word 'womb' is used frequently by Sylvia Plath; seven times in CP, in order to express arising of human being or metaphorically something else. The simulation of turning back to mother with a flower's closing its petals at night is well done in terms of aesthetic literary writing. The success of this poem comes from both its psychological side and metaphorical side. Wagner describes the poem Edge as 'terrible it may be, or perhaps it is "terrible" in the sense of creating terror as a parallel to "awful" as a means of inspiring awe' (103). A very pessimist and bleak atmosphere was composed by Sylvia Plath owing to the fact that she was decidedly very soon to commit suicide. She was in the bottom of her internal world. Such a feeling was the result of her deep psychological destruction and mental illness. Her final poems do show a fascination with death and with pain, both physical and mental (Bassnett, p. 20). The very gloomy atmosphere in the poem continues in the last two stanzas of the poem too.

[...]The moon has nothing to be sad about,

Staring from her hood of bone.

She is used to this sort of thing.

Her blacks crackle and drag.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 273)

The moon/lunar imagery represents all that is light in the black sky at night. Plath treats the moon as dead bodies of women and their children. Their dead bodies are shining like a moon after the planning of death finished. This is inevitably a

victory of the speaker of the poem and of course the speaker is Sylvia Plath's internal world. Moreover this is an impeccable victory. The moon takes on a role, playing often in Plath's poetry as a distant, unsympathetic observer of human vulnerability (Bloom, p. 82). It is observing the dead bodies in the ninth stanza of *Edge*: 'Staring from her hood of bone'. The final stanza states a nonentity with the image of the black side of a woman because, as Plath indicates, 'Her blacks crackle and drag' so there remains nothing. The death instinct of Plath in *Edge* is clearly part her internal world's unconscious design and Freud (2010, p. 56) emphasizes with such instinct in his 'Beyond and Principle':

The dominating tendency of mental life, and perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli...a tendency which finds expression in the pleasure principle; and our recognition of that fact is one of our strongest reasons for believing in the existence of death instincts.

The last poem '*Edge*' is a poem in which Plath creates a flawless terror that arose from her tragedy and depressive side. 'Sylvia Plath had been living under other kinds of enormous, untenable pressures and it seems far more likely that those pressures were the immediate cause of the depression' and her depressive side became the raw material for her poetry (Bloom, p. 208).

2.4 Contusion

Sylvia Plath's final poems mainly focus on the death instinct and desire to commit suicide. As a way out of salvation, suicide is a solution for overcoming her anguishes at whatever cost. For Sylvia Plath, "it was an attempt to get herself out of a desperate corner her own poetry had boxed her into" (Alvarez, p. 13-4). During the years of her sensational death, she was intensely criticized because of such a death but later, after her works were analysed and read in detail, the profoundness of her life was understood.

The scathing sensationalizing of Plath's suicide and her outsized iconicity as one of the 'pin-up' poets of twentieth century celebrity culture (her swimsuit photographs have been satirized, caricatured and glossed in popular songs) warrant that we attend to the role of spectacle (and spectral identifications) in shaping Plath's cultural legacies, while cautiously resisting the voyeuristic, sensationalizing, literalizing, death-obsessed gaze.(Bayley and Brain, p. 33)

For a poet who has a deep psychological destruction, it is very natural to compose lines that are against social norms because everything they feel internally is life

itself. They may even react to death as Turkish writer Cemal Süreya (2008, p. 98) does in his poem:

God, I'm dying,

It turned too.

Each dying is early one,

God, I know.

Yet, the life you got by me,

Not bad.

Release the over. (Translated by me)

'Üstü Kalsın' is both the name of Süreya's book and poem, and in this poem the line 'Release the over' indicates that everything is not yet complete. Moreover as he says 'Each dying is early one' like Plath's, John Berryman's, Vladimir Mayakovsky's, Amelia Roselli's, Stephen Haggard's, or Anny Sexton's notion of dying. All of these poets have committed suicide, and have been remembered with their moments as extensive as their most excellent works. But Sylvia Plath is a bit distinctive in that she accepted death from birth and handled it in all of her works. Samuel Beckett describes the feeling of death from birth through to universally in his famous play "Waiting For Godot": They give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then its night once more" (57). Beckett refers to mothers in this sentence as 'They' and that human beings are born with the motivation to die. In this sense, how can Plath's tendencies around death exist out of social norms? Liran Razinsky (2013, p. 282-3) makes a clear connection between people's death instinct from a very early age:

Death troubles people from childhood till old age, and on a profound psychic level, similar to the one psychoanalysis deals with... We are born into death, a datum that precedes life itself. When knowledge of death develops, it has an impact, and it should be of concern to psychoanalysis... Death is too important an issue to be excluded.

Just like all thoughts, the concept of death shapes and changes through unconscious experiences, and all human beings constructs a kind of approach to death. When certain expressions of Sylvia's are looked at more closely, her approach towards is quite clear. She misses it and wishes to die. In 'Edge', she composes perfect stanzas

on death because she feels that she is ready for it. Alvarez (2001, p. 10) wrote about his last visit to Sylvia in his book 'Savage of God' and mentions that 'her hair was in a bad smell, like an animal'. When Nilgün Marmara reads Alvarez's recollections, Plath is in her last days. Marmara (2005, p. 27) interprets her final days' disposition of being dirty as Sylvia Plath relinquishes using water which is 'the symbol of life'.

'Contusion' is one of Sylvia Plath's last poems and according to CP it was written on February 4th, 1963. This short poem, which was written seven days before her committing suicide, describes a cut in the body and blood slowly flowing from the body, which in turn will cause death. It was composed as four stanzas with three lines and it is one of Sylvia Plath's shortest settings. Her last poems are full of pessimist approaches. "Two of these, 'Contusion' and 'Edge', are poems in which any semblance of struggle has been abandoned; they are perhaps the saddest of all her works" (Bassnett, p. 136).

Colour floods to the spot, dull purple.

The rest of the body is all washed out,

The colour of pearl.

... (Plath & Hughes 271)

In the first stanza of 'Contusion', there is a metonymical usage because the third line of the stanza, 'The colour of pearl', points out the 'sea' within the simulation. The word 'spot' is also the centre of sea and all power or weakness of sea gathers there. Physically that's the contusion area and it caused the body's death. Its colour is 'dull purple', while all other parts of the body is white (white body symbolizes a death body). According to Freudian theory, human beings tend to have a "death instinct as well as a tendency to life". Freud expresses such a death instinct around 're-establishing' of our struggles and repressions. Freud claims that if mental and instinctive repressions reach to a resistless degree, 'the goal of life becomes death' (Horney, p. 122). Sylvia Plath's insisting on death and her stability on the decision of suicide come from her destruction. In this context, Horney (1939, p. 123) argues that Freud's approach to the connection of the death instinct and sexual instinct is also able to be declared as a catastrophe for her. He discusses that 'what we are able to observe are fusions, an alliance of the death instinct with the sexual instinct. It is this

alliance that prevents the death instinct from destroying us, or at least postpones this destruction. All of her responses on life arise from her internal destructions in terms of psychoanalysis. All her death-focused poems, such as 'Edge', 'I am Vertical', 'Contusion', 'Tulips', 'Balloons', and 'Words' etc. lean towards her death instinct. Moreover, Freud's 'Pleasure Principle' claims an 'avoidance of pain and the production of pleasure'; this also could not emerge in Sylvia Plath's life (4). Even during her teenage years, she experienced a deep sense of moodiness against all things beautiful. Plath used to question 'beauty'. Plath (1998, p. 35) wrote in her journals: 'What is the use of beauty? Is it a temporary security?' Furthermore, Freud's narcissist approach and its features cannot be observed in Plath's life and literature, although she confesses her own experiences in her poetry. While Marjorie Perloff (1972, p.587) evaluates Plath's poetry, she says that 'too often the poet seems concerned with the individual detail rather than the total constructs. Freud (1915, p. 75) defines the narcissism as "the libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego and thus gives rise to an attitude which may be called narcissism". But within Plath, this does not emerge as a satisfaction in libido. She does not want to get pleasure through her ego. Rather, she seeks just a peaceful life through death. For this reason she composes a perfect death in contusion. This is death as a result of blood loss.

[...] In a pit of rock

The sea sucks obsessively,

One hollow the sea's pivot.

The size of a fly,

The doom mark

Crawls down the wall

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 271)

In the second stanza, Plath's describing of contusion continues and is defined through the sea here too. The word 'pivot' is again at the centre of the sea. It is contusion that allows death slowly because that is hollow and pulls all water (blood) of the sea (body). Her life is 'a pit of rock' and the 'sea' that is the symbol of her

anguishes; destruction sucks them obsessively. Plath's life drips from her body slowly and she expresses it as the word 'fly'. Aside that, nobody can find a remedy for her trouble, so she has to die because it is necessary. Her helpless position is described as a 'doom mark' in the third stanza since it is impossible to change it. In this stanza, Plath stimulates the 'wall' to 'body' and the 'fly' (blood loss) emerges quietly as 'Crawls down the wall.' The metaphors and composition are so strong here that the reader is not able to stay indifferent to the death of speaker in the poem. The sea is not stable and the seawater represents Plath's infinite soul that has a drastic character. After all, death is indispensable for Plath. O'Reilly (2003, p. 360) describes Plath's approach to inevitable death in this way:

Her poems essentially show the pressure of an unbearable coexistence of opposites and themes as the terrible insecurity of the self, the reality of indifference, lovelessness, and the inevitability of death and loss that preoccupied Plath from the beginning of her writings to the end. They present images of self-loss, an alienation bringing about extreme self-involvement, the self not as emergent but fragmented, dissipated, obsolescent by many different masks and positions.

Thanatos, the death instinct of a human being according to psychoanalysis, is an instinct that breaks down a person's internal world. He or she wishes to die as soon as possible. In this sense Freud (1940, p. 149) expresses this wish in his 'An Outline of Psychoanalysis' as "it is because living things came later than inanimate ones and arose from them, and thus instincts tend towards a return to an earlier state". For this reason, many of Plath's poems point out renewal or rebirth through committing suicide her death plan.

In the final stanza of the poem, the death occurs after a slow and painful blood loss: "The heart shuts, /The sea slides back, /The mirrors are sheeted". (Plath & Hughes, p. 271). Now it is time to rest in peace in a new and endless world because the heart completes its mission after the physical end happens. This suicidal poem of Sylvia Plath indicates a wish for her soul's return to unconscious freedom.

3. A FEMINIST READING: THE STRUGGLE OF BEING WOMAN IN PLATH'S POETRY

When I say “woman,” I am speaking of woman in her inevitable struggle against conventional man; and of a universal woman subject who must bring women to their senses and to their meaning in history. But first it must be said that in spite of the enormity of repression that has kept them in the “dark” – that dark which people have been trying to make them accept as their attribute - there is, at this time no general woman, no one typical woman. (Cixous, 1976: 875-6)

Throughout humanity's history, the value of women, the roles that have been considered for them, the inequitable masculine dominance and women's loss of identity have always been discussed and scrutinized. Women's claim of equality in some fields such as economic, social, and political equality was mostly perceived as an extra demand and that, for this reason, they were exposed to be in fray in order to deserve them. Such a need to be in struggle is not something new, but implementing it has been more intensive and popular in woman and civilization's recent history, largely being considered to be completely dependent on man from the dawn of early societies. For instance, ‘woman used to live under the dominance of man absolutely’ in the early Indian tradition; she did not have any existence except physically, but the most crucial detail is that in some parts of India ‘woman used to be burned when her husband died’ for she is the symbol of

evil (Bahadır, p. 51). In earlier times, philosophers used to discuss whether women were evil or not, and whether she has a soul or not. As a result, it was not likely for woman to have a belief that men were approaching them unjustly. If anyone tried to talk about a social or gender inequality between man and woman, he or she would be assumed as a mad. In this chapter, there will be an examination on the struggle of being a woman in Sylvia Plath's poems. There will be three poems that are studied in detail, including stanzas from her other poems as support. One of her most famous poems 'Lady Lazarus', in which Plath feels the need to end man's dominance through the line 'I eat man like an air', will be the first one that will be examined in this chapter (Plath & Hughes, p. 247). The next poem will be 'The Jailer', which includes critics of Plath on her husband Ted Hughes. The final poem is a mythical allegory: 'Two Sisters of Persephone'. The movement of French Feminism, which evaluates feminism in terms of language, symbols, and discourse, will be the prominent feminist approach in this chapter. The two French feminists Luce Irigaray and Helen Cixous will be the main researchers whose statements will lead the chapter. French feminists are also concerned with the ways in which women's socio-economic and psychological experiences are connected (Tyson, p. 96).

The biological difference between man and woman is an inevitable and indispensable distinction, but man reflects such a natural difference across all fields of society. The different chromosomes, biological features, and hormones can cause a human to be unequal to the other sex, creating taboos and roles that have indestructible walls of perception. Perhaps until Mary Wollstonecraft's 'Vindication of the Rights of Women' (1792), which is accepted as the beginning of feminist thinking, nobody thought to talk about the equal treatment and status for women. As Simon de Beauvoir (2011, p. 151) mentions in the 'Second Sex', man gets his power 'through culture'. He is not powerful from birth. Both sexes have only genetic differences at birth. Culture creates the notion of 'others' and, as a result, there have been new ideological movements since the 18th century that have intended to advocate for women's rights. Feminism initially roots in France and America, and this ideological thought developed through various branches. As it is seen in every theoretical movement, feminism has endured very rigid critique too, most especially in the 20th century which had seen the production of many

considerable feminist works. Ken Kesey's 1962 novel 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest', for example, has an impulsive female character, nurse Mildred. In this novel, women are portrayed as a gender that usually irritates men. Another effective example for this critique is 'All the King's Men' (1946), written by Robert Penn Warren. In this novel, woman can cause degeneration in man even if he has the potential to be a very powerful societal force. Femininity is indicated as a work of the devil, and a female's attractiveness can be used with the aim of causing a perfect execution for man. In this context, Irigaray's (1985, p. 23) statement in 'This Sex Which Is Not One' is true: 'Female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters.' From primitive societies to our new post-modern cultures, man is the power in family and responsible for protecting his family, hunting for and sustaining the economy of family. Woman has always been in the background of man. The motive of fighting and being powerful made man active, while the emotional and compassionate side of woman that comes from maternal instinct make her passive. Woman became like a machine of childbirth and pleasure for man. Sylvia Plath criticizes the motherhood in this way in her 'Morning Song' (Plath & Hughes, p. 156):

[...]All night your moth-breath

Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:

A far sea moves in my ear.

One cry, and I stumble from my bed, cow-heavy and floral

In my Victorian nightgown.

...

Sylvia Plath complains about motherhood and its tiring results that cause a sense of alienation and separation within her. She mentions her imperative night awaking after a sudden cry of her child. She is aware of a mother's compulsory in looking after her mother, but Plath writes this poem when she is in pain, in February of 1961. She had difficulties in writing her poetry at that time and the theme in this poem is that, it is not possible for a woman both to be a mother and a

famous writer. As a consequence of changing life styles and woman's becoming more active in society, feminist thinking gradually became popular and started to be discussed more often. The vision of women's liberation, which both captured and still holds public imagination, was the one representing women as wanting what men had (Hooks 4). In this context, Plath is just like the main character of 'The Awakening' (1899) by Kate Chopin who is one of the first 20th century feminists. This character is Edna Pontellier who is both fond of her sexual desires and aware of her strengths as Plath is.

The roots of feminist politics stem from the convergence of post-1800 European and North American industrial growth, capitalism, socialist critique, and democratic theory. The 19th century was the time when philosophers, thinkers, and researchers started to believe in giving more importance to the necessity of woman rights. Defending the right of women's education, Lady Mary Wortley Montague and Marquis de Condorcet were two of the first thinkers emphasizing feminism in the age of enlightenment. But, the first person to declare the term 'feminism' was Charles Fourier, who argued that the development of society was only possible by enabling woman rights in 1808. This century was a time in which industrial developments emerged and the structure of society changed. The role that was projected for women was that they be responsible for their home, children, and husbands, the latter of whom worked in factories. Women's place was only that of the family living environment, not the public one, and as a result woman was identified only through ethical values. While he is talking about 18th century England's approach to marriage, William Blackstone (1899, p. 430) states the position of woman at that time in his book 'Commentaries on the laws of England':

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs everything; and is therefore called in our law-french a feme-covert; is said to be covert-baron, under the protection and influence of her husband, her baron, or lord; under her condition during her marriage is called her coverture.

These French simulations and settings brought about by Blackstone serve as good statements in terms of expressing the situation of woman at that time. The dependence of woman on man is legally accepted by the 18th and 19th century English society. Mary Wollstonecraft (2007, p. 412), who is an 18th century female

writer, provides advice to man in her book 'Good Men, Women', arguing that: 'Make woman rational creatures and free citizens, and they will quickly become good wives'. As well as being the pioneer of feminist thought, Mary Wollstonecraft defends women's freedom in the context of women's traditional family role(s) because of the society's then view of woman's status and place. At that time, the capital system made women a piece of the social system, with their femininity and existence in family. Thus, their value was only consisted of feeding their children and husbands, and giving men pleasure. For that reason, the 'dowry system', whereby a girl's father paid money to the groom in a marriage, was something that symbolizes the valuelessness of girls. Of course, before this period, there were attempts made to highlight the inequality between man and woman. For instance, in her letter, the duchess of Newcastle, Margaret Cavendish (1623-1673) (2001, p. 106) defended woman equality in this way: 'For the woman was given to man, not only to delight, but to help and assist him; and I am confident, women would labour as much with fire and furnace, as men...'. When it is thought that such a defence was made in the 17th century, it was a very significant sentence. In the 18th century, the 'Declaration of Independence' was signed in United States and according to this declaration, women could take part in courts and defend themselves. They also started to run their own co-operation. These were significant developments in terms of women's rights but they still were not part of the political world and still were not active members of society. Even in the 19th century, women were not much more than members of a family. Emily Dickinson (cited in Petrino 1998), who was a 19th century American poet and profoundly influenced Sylvia Plath, criticized the status of women in society:

Her breast is fit for pearls,

But I was not a 'Diver' –

Her brow is fit for thrones

But I have not a crest.

Her heart is fit for home –

I – a Sparrow – build there

Sweet of twigs, twine

My perennial nest.

The word 'nest' is her home, in which she spends all her life like a prison, lasting forever, as we understand from the word 'perennial'. Dickinson composed the indispensable place of women in the society. It can be understood from her lines that, regardless of whatever advantage women have and whatever they do, their final destination is not much more than home, and that is their 'sexual fulfilment' (Gordon, p. 276). The situation of woman was identified with 'home' and was very far away from today's concept of woman in society. In this sense, Simon de Beauvoir (1949, p. 21) expresses the sense of woman in her 1949 book 'The Second Sex':

Woman? Very simple, say those who like simple answers: She is a womb, an ovary; she is a female: this word is enough to define her. From a man's mouth, the epithet "female" sounds like an insult; but he, not ashamed for his animality, is proud to hear: "He's a male!" The term "female" is pejorative not because it roots woman in nature but because it confines her in her sex, and if this sex even, in an innocent animal, seems despicable and an enemy to man, it is obviously because of the disquieting hostility woman triggers him.

Following 19th century perceptions on equal rights for men and women, the 20th century became very significant and intense in terms of development. Moreover, this was the century in which Sylvia Plath lived and experienced the repressed women's pain in both her own life and her writings the only monition in her struggle of self-actualization. The question of 'What it was like to be a woman writer in post-war period?' is reflected in this contentious poet's works. Besides becoming a good mother, it was a struggle for her to become a famous poet, and it was a struggle to be charming and sentimental apart from being a woman, a wife, and a mother. For that reason, perhaps it was the most pleasant event to be admired by male figures, poets and critics for Sylvia Plath. Sylvia (1998, p.98) declares her atmosphere in her journals:

My greatest trouble...is jealousy. I am jealous of men – dangerous and subtle envy which can corrode...any relationship...I envy the man his psychical freedom to lead a double life – his career, and his sexual and family life.

Although she envied and criticized men's place in society, she never ignored them in her writings. Plath never emphasized the dominance of women as 'revolutionary (radical) feminists' did in 20th century. It is clear from her poem 'Lady Lazarus' that she perceives her husband Ted Hughes as a mentor (Tong, p. 48). In this

context, we can label her as a reformist feminist despite the fact that Plath hated to be labelled, for it prevented her from feeling herself free. Plath's success in writing comes from her own life's disintegration. Her sharp pencil is a product of her experiences. Like a traditional college girl, she did not tell everything to people around her. She just wrote and wrote in her secret world. Her intention is clear in her journal: 'I refuse to be weak, to explain myself to another one.' (JSP 163). In essence, the most significant effect of Plath's writing comes from her poetry's style, which is not a result of planning a career. This style is only the output of a painful life from which she always suffered. Of course Sylvia Plath decided to be a famous poet and gain a respective career, but Plath wrote poems in order to reveal her inner world the most distinctive feature of confessional poetry. Plath's career was a difficult target in the 20th century because, at that time, to be woman was a significant obstacle of getting a brilliant career. For instance, in his famous poem 'Falling', American poet James Dickey (1968, p. 297) criticizes the obligation of women's struggle in the way getting a career:

[...]Of airliners passing over them at dead of Midwest midnight passing

Over brush fires burning out in silence on little hills and will wake

To see the woman they should be struggling on the rooftop to become

Stars: for the ground is closer water is nearer she passes

...

Francis Bacon, a significant philosopher of the Middle Ages, claimed that 'knowledge is power' four centuries before Plath's time, but there were still serious threats and interferences for women. Sylvia Plath fell in a struggle for actualizing her identity and her body; she achieved this via her excellent writing ability. Furthermore, such a struggle made her a significant subject in Women's Studies research, and as a result 'many readers regard Plath as the precursor to the modern feminist movement' (Feeney, p. 34). Women have always been faced with serious adversities in society; hence every woman who could have the opportunity to be a phenomenon such as a writer used their writings with the aim of expressing their pains that arose from male dominance.

French feminism, which will serve as the primary feminist movement of this chapter, has been developed in the frame of various theories such as structuralism, Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis, and Jacques Derrida's approaches. This movement is much more abstract, academic, and theoretical. Luce Irigaray focuses on 'Patriarchal discourse' and Helen Cixous gives importance to 'solidarity', or an 'alliance' between women and inspirational female writers (Habib, p. 669). The impact of two theoreticians on feminism is significant, and this chapter will comprise of their writings as a means of analysing Plath's poetry.

3.1 Lady Lazarus

Over the course of six days in October of 1962, Sylvia Plath composed one of her most famous poems, *Lady Lazarus*, comprising of twenty-eight three-line stanzas – and based on an example of 'Terza Rima', in the Italian traditional poetry style (Rosenblatt, p. 41). This style was used by Plath in many poems, such as 'Gulliver', 'Fever 103°', 'Ariel', 'Mary's Song', and 'Poppies in October'. Nevertheless, *Lady Lazarus* is a bit stronger and with its changing atmosphere, the poem is a sinister one. Against the grain of the 20th Century's oppression of women, this poem is perhaps a symbol of rebellious female poetry, with its strong and brave composition. The speaker of the poem is defined as a 'cruelly sharp knife', by Kathleen Margaret Lant (2014, p. 652). As one of the pioneer representatives of confessional poetry, Sylvia Plath demonstrates her temper on patriarchal order of society in this poem, a battle clearly within her. She felt herself as a victim of patriarchal ideology insofar that such a feeling is inevitably reflected in Plath's poetry; particularly *Lady Lazarus*. Through dying, Plath feels the need to be reborn, which will make her more powerful in *Lady Lazarus* and, according to Aird (1973 p. 84), the poem's 'hysteria is intentional and effective'. In this work, as it can be seen in most of her poems, there is a sort of style that clearly embraces the Romantic Movement's patterns and, in that sense, Tim Kendall (2001, p. 147) explains his definition of *Lady Lazarus* in this way: 'Hers is an art which hides its artfulness – so successfully, in fact, that it has often been interpreted in Wordsworthian terms as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, rather than the product of radical and conscious expertise.' Plath sometimes is compared with the 18th century romantic poet Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770) who

committed suicide by poisoning himself, but this comparison generally concentrated on the poet's death. Nevertheless his suicide is symbolized as 'artistic martyrdom' that inevitably affected the following century's writers such as Sylvia Plath, Ernest Hemingway, John Berryman, and Virginia Woolf (Berman, p. 137). Of course, the above poets did not commit suicide, however Chatterton did, and it was only after great suffering, that writers accepted him unconsciously as a role model. In this context, the setting and style of *Lady Lazarus* was claimed by some critics to reflect romantic poetry.

'John' is the section of Bible that contains the conversations about Lazarus. Lazarus was a dead man and, four days after his death, Jesus resurrected him from the dead. Jesus was late to see Lazarus, and Lazarus was terribly sick at that time before he finally died. This miraculous raising from the death affected Plath. Plath changes the gender of the Biblical character Lazarus with the aim of creating a feminist discourse to the poem. Plath believed that she would rise and be stronger when she defeats men.

[...]Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 247)

In this final stanza of the poem, Sylvia Plath explicitly threatens all men through the last line. The speaker of the poem reflects the tendency of feeling herself strong. This disposition reflects into to each and every of the poem's stanzas. 'I rise with my red hair' is one the most significant imageries of the poem. The colour 'red' is never coincidental usage for Plath. Red has different meanings and can be appropriated to emphasise difference (Ryan, p 72). Sylvia Plath intends to accentuate the difference between men and women, and she believes that she is more powerful and advantageous than men because of her attractiveness. Because the colour red makes women sexually desirable, it is clear that such a desire makes men weak. Sylvia Plath was bored of being a housewife with two children, and for this reason she feels herself weak and wants to defeat men. As it is discussed in the introduction part, Sylvia Plath tries to be more powerful than men. Her husband,

Ted Hughes, was able to deal with his writings comfortably and develop his career while Sylvia Plath had to look after her children, manage her house, and write poems simultaneously. This caused her to feel weaker than him, but her approach and feelings on the position of women in the house was not new in *Lady Lazarus*. The atmosphere of the house was a disadvantage for women and Sylvia (1998, p. 12) criticized this in her journal during the Smith College period:

Through the glass square, high in the door, I saw a block of sky, pierced by the sharp black points of the pines across the street. And there was the moon, almost full, luminous and yellow, behind the trees. I felt suddenly breathless, stifled. I was trapped, with the tantalizing little square of night above me, and the warm, feminine atmosphere of the house enveloping me in its thick, feathery smothering embrace.

As Özlem Görey (2014) points out in her doctor of philosophy thesis, Plath's poetry is clearly an 'explosion' of a woman against patriarchal society and, according to her, Plath's attempts are all 'the struggle of the woman poet who tries to drag the unrepresentable within the realm of representation' in her poetry. But, *Lady Lazarus* was one of the last poems in Plath's life. This was the final explosion of her power instinct against men, and this explicitly was the strongest one with its sense of an end: 'And I eat men like an air'. This antagonistic approach is a result of a temper on men, arising from Plath's own life and disappointments. The artistic ability of Plath constructs a chilling but effective imagery in *Lady Lazarus*. She puts contradictions in the poem. While Plath can finish men in the final stanza by metaphorically eating them, she expresses her fear in the fourth stanza of the poem sarcastically:

[...]Peel of the napkin

O my enemy.

Do I terrify? –

(Plath & Hughes, p. 244)

Of course Sylvia Plath emphasizes here that she is not afraid of men. More significantly, the word 'enemy' indicates her hate towards men in the frame of Nazi and Holocaust references that cover most of the poem. This word is seen twice in the poem. The second usage is used through a German speaking: 'So, Herr enemy' (Plath & Hughes, p. 247). Sylvia Plath created an 'unnamed enemy'

in her mind and installed it to this poem (Rosenblatt, p. 41). This approach by Plath was not new at the time she wrote *Lady Lazarus*, as she explained in one of her memories in an interview. When she was about twelve years of age, she wrote a poem for a competition and she could not be first. She was second, but a boy had written the first poem. When she was asked, she said that it was very natural because he was a boy. This intention continued throughout her life; such a reaction emerged in her poems as it is clearly seen in *Lady Lazarus*. But in this poem, Plath demonstrates her reaction against men through suicide attempts she experienced once every ten years. She starts to poem with:

I have done it again.

One year in every ten

I manage it –

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 243)

At age 10, Plath was faced with an accident and death. At aged 20, she attempted to a suicide but is unsuccessful. At age 30, she drove her car out off the road deliberately. The theme of death in this poem has been analysed through different dimensions, but the most general consensus is that Plath accepts death in *Lady Lazarus* as rebirth. Such a rebirth will make her more powerful, for she feels that she is weak against patriarchal society. Luce Irigaray (1985, p. 30), in her book ‘*The Sex Which Is Not One*, criticizes such a as having many misogynist individuals:

The rejection, the exclusion of a female imaginary certainly puts woman in the position of experiencing herself only fragmentarily, in the little-structured margins of a dominant ideology, as waste, or excess, what is left of a mirror invested by the (masculine) "subject" to reflect himself, to copy himself Moreover, the role of "femininity" is prescribed by this masculine specula(riza)tion and corresponds scarcely at all to woman's desire, which may be recovered only in secret, in hiding, with anxiety and guilt.

This is an evaluation of Irigaray on the position of women in patriarchal society. Luce Irigaray, like Julia Kristeva, focused on the prelinguistic stage and feminist discourse rather than the Oedipal stage while researching masculine dominance. Furthermore, she questioned it through different frames particularly through literary power:

...why should women abandon the Imaginary so they can be oppressed, suppressed, and repressed in patriarchy's Symbolic order? Why not instead stay in the Imaginary, and relish the joy of being different from men? Why not remain identified with one's first love, the mother, and develop with her new ways of speaking and writing, of constituting one's subjectivity, that do not lead to women's oppression? Why lead life on men's terms at all? (Tong, p. 7)

Metaphorically, women are represented as a back-garden of men according to Irigaray, and their status cannot change in a society where all females have to follow men if they want to get a good position. Unlike de Beauvoir's approach of subjectivity, Irigaray is not sure about women's realizing the significance of subjectivity in order to get rid of otherness. Rather, Irigaray rejects subject/object dualism or else woman 'fails to transform the patriarchal symbolic order' (Hekman, p. 58). Even Plath, who is accepted as one of the prominent figures criticizing women's status, started to expostulate the dominance of man extensively after she experienced a deception and illegal love affair by Ted Hughes. Moreover, Ted Hughes was not helpful in developing Plath's career and this affected her deeply. In seeking of identity, Sylvia refused her alienation in society and as parallel output, she questioned woman in the same manner Irigaray did. In *Lady Lazarus*, Sylvia Plath composes a very successful imagery in the frame of holocaust discourse. She compares the Jews and women in the poem, expressing the oppression implemented upon both of them. This identification is very clear in *Lady Lazarus* and the composition is highly efficient style by Sylvia Plath. The identification begins in the second stanza and continues immediately after the other stanzas.

[...]A sort of walking miracle, my skin

Bright as a Nazi lampshade

My right foot

A paperweight,

My face featureless, fine

Jew linen.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 244)

Jesus raised dead Lazarus miraculously from the tomb, and there is a connection here between two miracles. Sylvia implies that she is not dead and still keeps on living.

She is surviving in spite of the all of repressions and anguishes that may turn a woman's life to hell, much like a Jew's success not to die by escaping the Nazi genocide. 1962 was a time in which the dark stain of World War II had not yet passed. As a writer of partial German origins, as is told in the introduction, Plath often used Nazi metaphors in her poems, however *Lady Lazarus* is a poem that focuses on a woman's oppression. The word 'featureless' in the third stanza is very significant in understanding Plath's intention. This is the featureless face of a Jew under a Nazi captivity. Rather than Irigaray's subjectivity, Helen Cixous approaches it mildly, which is more parallel to the viewpoint of Sylvia Plath. As it was mentioned before, Plath does not insist on dominance; rather she believes in a full equality. Cixous's expression is seen in Susan Sellers' (1994, p. xviii) 'The Helen Cixous Reader':

The difference is in us, in me, difference plays me. And it is numerous: since it plays with me in me between me and me or I and myself. A "myself" which is the most intimate first name of You. I will never say often enough that the difference is not one, that there is never one without the other.

In her book 'Writing and Difference', Plath's attempt to write on difference is absolutely available to a statement by Jacques Derrida. Derrida (1978, p.13) claims that the aim of such writing is an 'attempt to forget difference'. Furthermore, Plath improves such an instinct in *Lady Lazarus* and sets a slight irony in the poem. In the line 'Do I Terrify? -', she ridicules the power of man. This is observed in the lines 'At home, on me/ And I am a smiling woman.' Sylvia Plath criticizes the captive woman metonymically. She is also a woman at home, but we know that she was not happy. This is a choice by Plath in reflecting her frustration. The success of the poem is that she constructs a long way (universal side) with little stones (autobiographical side). She is aware of the poem's effort that tries to describe all women's trouble. In a BBC interview broadcast, Plath defines the poem as 'a woman who has the great and terrible gift of being reborn. The only trouble is, she has to die first. She is the Phoenix, the libertarian spirit, what you will. She is also just a good, plain, very resourceful woman.' (Plath & Hughes, p. 294). Here, it is clearly understood that this is not only *Lady Lazarus*' struggle, but rather all women's struggle, and that should be the 'specific language' according to Luce Irigaray (Cetorelli, p. 26). Irigaray's specific language is an anecdotal act against patriarchal discourse, making female bodies to be perceived as weaker in our society. Many modern and postmodern

feminist writers have used their pens as a weapon in order to emphasize the equality of genders, expressing cross-sexual preferences. They just want to be understood by society and impose their preferences. Literature is the most effective way of succeeding with their intentions and, for that reason, in postmodern times ‘Queer Theory’ became popular. For instance, Jeannette Winterson, an English postmodern feminist novelist, wrote her novels in the light of gender equality. Her pen is compared with an ‘ecstasy’ with its effect: ‘she uses experimental writing technique such as love, sex and gender, sexuality together with different time frame that is all-pervading and is eternal and elusive.’ (Frankova, p. 7). In the ‘Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit’, Winterson’s autobiography and most famous work, Jeannette (2001, p. 41) expresses her temper towards men: ‘I was glad I did not have testicles.’ The anger that Plath has is not very different from Winterson’s when her lines are examined.

[...]And there is a charge, a very large charge

For a word or a touch

Or a bit of blood

Or a piece of my hair or my clothes.



So, so, Herr Doktor.

So, Herr Enemy.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 246)

During the World War II, gas chambers were where the Nazis used to kill and torture Jewish people. In Plath’s mind, gas chambers were not very different from a home in which a woman is prisoned and devoid of self-actualization. The word ‘charge’ covers a response that is implemented upon men. Only women face the trouble, only they pay for it. Plath used to oppose such an approach during her life. Sylvia (1998, p. 43) declared in her journal that ‘never will there be a circle...’ Even Plath drew the circles in which she disagreed with in her journal:

Never will there be a circle, signifying me and my operations, confined solely to home, other womenfolk and community service, enclosed in the larger worldly circle of my mate, who brings home from his periphery of contact with the world the tales only of vicarious

experience to me like so:  No, rather, there will be two overlapping circles, with certain strong riveted center of common ground, but both with separate arcs jutting out in the world. A balanced tension, adaptable to circumstances, in which there is an elasticity of pull, tension, yet firm unity. Two stars, polarized:  like so.

‘Herr Enemy’ in the twenty-second stanza of Lady Lazarus is the man who tries to involve the woman and dominate her as Plath described in her journal. She described it at age 20 and wrote Lady Lazarus at 30. Although the time is different, the instinctive approach or the figure of man in Plath’s mind is stable. Such composing by Plath has captured many researchers’ interests because Lady Lazarus is both reflecting the time’s social atmosphere and perception of woman. For instance Axelrod (1990, p.84) expresses the importance of Lady Lazarus:

The trope of the striptease emerges in the poem as a metapoetic element, a self-reflexive comment on the poetics of exhibitionism that are so fundamental to these poems, grounded as they are on Cold War concerns about privacy and exposure, in the interplay between body, gender, celebrity, and power.

Actually, Lady Lazarus is just a symbol that represents all women who are enforced to live under the domination of man’s power and thus want to rise like a phoenix, as is implied in the poem. Plath’s intention reflects the idea of Helen Cixous, and is stated by Laura Alexander in her study. Alexander (2014) claims that ‘Cixous frequently employs “woman,” to speak for all women’s experience, despite differences in national, cultural, and sexual preference’. Most of Plath’s poems reflect an effort to compose universal images such as ‘Purdah’, ‘Heavy Woman’, and ‘Elm’ etc. In this sense, Lady Lazarus presents the status of post-war woman to the audience who can easily understand that women were under oppression of male dominance.

[...]Them unwrap me hand and foot ---

The big strip tease.

Gentlemen, ladies

These are my hands

My knees.

I may be skin and bone,

Nevertheless, I am the same, identical woman.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 245)

The tendency of being a miracle throughout the poem means that the poem's speaker, a woman, wants to rise again or be reborn with different, powerful and new features. Sylvia Plath points to her feeling of incompleteness and weakness in the third stanza: 'My face a featureless, fine' (Plath & Hughes, p. 244). By comparing her atmosphere with that of a Jew's anguish in World War II, she reveals a scream against the patriarchal order of society. According to Helen Cixous, rising again or the rebirth of a woman, the central theme of *Lady Lazarus*, is something that is instinctive and natural if she feels herself under the domination of masculinity. Cixous (2008, p. 64) declares it in 'White Ink: Interviews on Sex, Text and Politics': '...woman must develop a rapport with her unconscious which is not stereotyped, downtrodden: she must revive herself, recover her vital forces, she must dare herself, she must dare to be herself.' She is creating a barker in the poem. She shouts to the crowd: 'Gentlemen, ladies'. Here, the crowd is society and Plath tries to set a realist atmosphere in the poem. She wants to express that she is not afraid of death, which will provide her a new and better world. 'These are my hands /My knees' express the message of the speaker. According to that message we understand that Plath does not hope for admiration or applause.

Women have always been a threat to society throughout human history; Plath introduces woman as a real threat in *Lady Lazarus*. Such a threat will never die. Plath identifies herself as a cat: 'I am only thirty. /And like the cat I have nine times to die.' (Plath & Hughes, p. 244). In *Lady Lazarus* woman turns into a skilful threat, emerging with more powerful and new features, much like what happens the Bible. As she declares in her book 'Letters Home', edited by her mother Aurelia (2011, p. 308), Sylvia wants to be a strong woman and this is like lyrics of a song in her literary works: 'My poems and stories I want to be the strongest female paean yet for the creative forces of nature, the joy of being a loved and loving woman; that is my song'. Woman's wish of being stronger will forever last according to Plath; their smiling faces are representative of their salvation. That is symbolized through 'pearls' in the poem:

[...]As a seashell.

They had call and call

And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls.

...

Comeback in broad day

To the same place, the same face, the same brute

Amused shout:

'A Miracle!'

That knocks me out.

There is a charge

For the eyeing of my scars, there is a charge

For the hearing of my heart –

It really goes. (Plath & Hughes, p. 245-6)

There is a call in the forty-second stanza of the poem, and this is not the only call. Also, Plath defines a call in forty-fourth stanza too. This call is comes from death, which is a way of being forceful in Plath's opinion. Plath creates a comparison in Lady Lazarus between her life and the event(s) in the Bible in terms of a miraculous framework. For this reason, this poem seems to be an autobiographical work. The death is a 'miracle' that knocks her out. Life is a boxing match for Plath and she loses the first round. The poet's psychological atmosphere is reflected in the poem clearly for she knows that she is so close to death. As a result, Plath is not glad to live under the domination of a patriarchal society that turns her into a victim devoid of the ability to rise. In Pam Morris's (1993, p. 60) 'Literature and Feminism', Plath's desire to die is summarized as Plath attempting to find her own meaningful existence

through the translation of her emotions, circumstances, desires, and frustrations via her literary works. She is seeking validity, to be seen as intelligent, for her suffering to be viewed as imposed, and of course a call for women to collectivize and re-write their own lives. Women's writing seemingly states the erased and gives voice to the ignored, unsaid, demeaned, and demystified.

Violence emerges in many of Plath's poems because it arises as a temper on life and towards men in her works. Moreover, she admits it in her journals. Plath's declaration is stated in 'The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath'. Sylvia (2000, p. 395) says: 'I have a violence in me that is hot as death-blood.' In this sense, the violence in *Lady Lazarus* comes out as death, and is described in the frame of biblical discourse although such an end is a restarting for Plath. In her book 'To be Two', Luce Irigaray evaluates the violence from the same perspective of Sylvia Plath. Irigaray (2001, p.74) states that 'All violence shatters against one thing. That is death.' Moreover, in 'This Sex Which is Not One', Irigaray (1985, p. 24) asserts death as a signified situation or wish, and adds that it is a reaction against the 'violent break-in' which is a discourse of sexual relation. She defines the violence of man by matching 'auto-eroticism' and 'hetero-eroticism' in terms of sexual desire. The attempts of violence or the sadomasochist fantasies of men are evaluated within the framework of psychoanalysis by Luce Irigaray. Such tendencies are the result of their maternal relations. Hence, woman has to instinctively develop a dependent approach against the power of man if she is otherwise unable to create a resistance and accepting it. In this sense, of course ironically, Sylvia Plath composes a non-resistance and acceptance in *Lady Lazarus*:

[...]I am your opus,

I am your valuable,

The pure gold baby

That melts to a shriek.

I turn and burn.

Do not think I underestimate your great concern.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 246)

In fact, Plath is not valuable but she ironically composes a metaphor in here in order to express her anguishes. Of course Sylvia Plath did not relish to be a 'pure gold baby' of a man. She states in her 'Bell Jar' that is a clear work of art defining Plath's attitude to man. Plath (1971, p. 228) says in the book that 'What I hate is the thought of being under a man's thumb,'. Such an approach is preciously convenient for Helen Cixous' statement from 'The Laugh of Medusa'. Cixous (2000, p.878) points to a 'New Woman' in the book, and adds that it is after all time to 'liberate' their sex. In a sense, Cixous tries to provoke women against man to get rid of his crushing dominance. Both Sylvia Plath and Helen Cixous produce rebellion in their texts in a time where women were gradually becoming aware of the trouble. This trouble is the inequality between two sexes resulting from men's objectifying women. All around the world, women started to oppose man's objectifying woman, particularly in Plath's own America. For instance, as Cixous did, American feminists provoked women against a beauty contest on September 7th, 1968. They believed that such contests humiliate and colonise women since they display their naked bodies and beauty in a parade. They compared women in a the parade with sheep, and they protested that contest by lighting up famous magazines of the period such as 'Cosmopolitan', 'Family Circle', and 'Ladies Home Journal' in Atlantic City. Sylvia Plath criticised such an approach in many of her poems. For instance, in the first stanza of her 1961 poem 'Heavy Women', Plath criticizes the lack of individuality and according to her women is just an evoking machine:

Irrefutable, beautifully smug

As Venus, pedestaled on a half-shell

Shawled in blond hair and the salt

Scrim of a sea breeze, the women

Settle in their belling dresses.

Over each weighty stomach a face

Floats calm as a moon or a cloud.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 158)

The second period of 20th Century was very significant in terms of people's ever heightening awareness that woman was being consumed by man, and that man tried to accept woman as a second sex. The writer of 'The Sex Which is not One', Luce Irigaray, evaluates such a consumption in terms of Marxist feminist perspective. The name of her book is not coincidental in this sense but, in another book of hers, she defines man's approach to woman through a different perspective. In 'Between East and West', Irigaray (2002, p.27) clarifies it: 'Man essentially wants to reproduce, nothing can stop him from doing this, not even the intelligence of woman, and this will when it does not produce natural children, gives birth to imaginary children'. As Irigaray points out in her book, Sylvia Plath was also aware that man was an obstacle in her productivity; particularly in marriage. Sylvia (1971, p. 45) expressed this in 'Bell Jar' too. The protagonist of it, Esther, states Plath's ideas:

“And I knew that in spite of all the roses and kisses and restaurant dinners a man showered on a woman before he married her, what he secretly wanted when the wedding service ended was for her to flatten out underneath his feet like Mrs. Willard's kitchen mat.”

Although she knew that her marriage with Ted Hughes would prevent her from being a creative writer, she was greatly disappointed in her. She fell down, struck rock bottom, and wanted to reborn. Death was the only way for getting her strong identity again as Jesus provided to Lazarus in Bible. So, in this poem Lady Lazarus is Sylvia Plath, who is searching for her freedom again.

3.2 The Jailer

As one of the prominent writers of confessional poetry, Sylvia Plath in her later poems reached her prime in terms of externalizing her inner world. 'The Jailer' is described as one of the finest examples of confessional poetry with its 'I' language. She used the word 'I' twelve times in this poem and used both 'my' and 'me' thirteen times. As a result Plath touched upon the 'I' language twenty-five times in total. This poem is an 'evisceration of a marriage', and it was written soon after Plath's separation from Ted Hughes for another woman; Assia Wevill (Brain, p. 18). The 'Jailer' in the poem is expressly Ted Hughes who made the speaker of the poem a captive. The speaker feels that she was exposed captivity in a jail by a man who tortures her:

[...]He has been burning me with cigarettes,

Pretending I am a negress with pink paws.

I am myself. That is not enough.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 226)

In 'The Jailer,' Plath takes the trope of bodily dismemberment to its extreme in a fantasy of torture (Clark, p. 201). Moreover this poem is a clear uprising against Plath's marriage life that prevents her from speaking louder. To be a wife and a mother became obstacle for her self-actualization. Nevertheless, her husband Ted Hughes was the one who is walking out of this jail. It was time for the woman who tolerated and did not speak enough. In this sense 'The Jailer' was a blast because it is a real torture to dominate such a free spirited woman as Sylvia Plath. She suffered from being quiet because in a male-dominated home. Helen Cixous and Catherine Clement (1986, p. 92) explain such anguish in their 'The Newly Born Woman':

Every woman has known the torture of beginning to speak aloud, heart beating as if to break, occasionally falling into loss of language, ground and language slipping out from under her, because for woman speaking – even just opening her mouth – in public is something rash, a transgression. A double anguish, for even she transgresses, her word almost always falls on the deaf, masculine ear, which can only hear language that speaks in the masculine.

Their determination is absolutely something that Sylvia Plath had in her marriage. For that reason, Sylvia defines Ted Hughes as a jailer. He could easily study his poems and compose fascinating lines while Sylvia had to look after children and overcome house works. Furthermore, she was left alone because of another woman. She is angry with Ted Hughes because of his selfishness and brutal side. Plath's shattered heart stimulated her former mental disorder and after her separation from Hughes, Sylvia wrote more confessional poems like 'The Jailer'. This poem is like the drawing of a painter who works on his or her living environment. The introduction of the poem even begins with a composing of her home; in other words her jail:

My night sweats grease his breakfast plate.

The same placard of blue fog is wheeled into position

With the same trees and headstones.

Is that all he can come up with,

The rattler of keys?

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 226)

From the beginning of the poem, Plath starts to express her negative dealings inside home in the first line. This domestic composition of Plath represents all her reactions she collected during marriage. Then, within the second stanza, Sylvia begins to define her torturer. 'I have been drugged and raped' (Plath & Hughes, p. 226). She feels that Hughes deceived her. In this sense, Ted Hughes symbolizes the execution in 'The Jailer'. The strong images of drugs and rape suggest the physical violation of the persona's femininity and emphasize her victimization as a woman (Birkle, p. 70). Such a feeling of victimization comes from the approach of patriarchal ideology of the society. Through education, religion, and family, patriarchal ideology injects the feeling that men are dominant. Despite there being serious efforts on changing the viewpoint that women are/were the slaves of their husbands in a family, Plath suffered from this psychological violence. She was negatively affected by her husband's attitude to the point that Plath's positive opinion on marriage collapsed. Before her marriage, Plath used to dream being a good mother and wife for her family and she wanted to be a slave of her husband, but as a result it is clear that she was not able to estimate the offending results of that. Plath (2000, p. 164) wrote in her journal that 'I believe I could paint, write, and keep a home and husband too'. Ted Hughes changed Plath's predictions on marriage as she wrote in her journal again:

“Husband thinks. He agrees...Fight about his deep-rooted conventional ideas of womanhood, like all the rest of the men, want them pregnant and in the kitchen. Wants to shame her in the public...” (Plath 2000)

Sylvia Plath's struggle of being the ideal woman having both a happy family life and a successful writing career continued throughout her marriage. In her ideal marriage, she dreamed to be a wife and mother who was still as powerful a woman as she was before marriage. Second-wave feminists, who became popular after 1960s, intensely protested and criticized that society correlated man with reason while woman were correlated with nature and body. A woman's body started to be objectified by patriarchal identities and even by artists. For example, British sculptor Allen Jones was tempestuously criticized by feminists because of his series 'Women as

Furniture'. In the series, the fetishized bodies were described as a table leg. As second-wave feminists, Sylvia Plath was against the power of man in the society and she tried to oppose it in 'The Jailer'; nevertheless she is in a sense that such an opposition is in vain:

[...]All day, gluing my church of burnt matchsticks,

I dream of someone else entirely.

And he, for this subversion,

Hurts me, he

With his armour of fakery,

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 226)

Sylvia Plath was in a real disappointment during the time when she wrote 'The Jailer', and her disappointment is reflected in the poem by saying 'I dream of someone else entirely'. The person at home was not the one Sylvia Plath dreamed of being and the writer expresses her as 'subversion'. All of her dreams and beliefs collapsed, and inevitably she was suffering from this collapse. It hurts Sylvia Plath. The word 'armour' represents man's ideological dominance, which is the result of sexual dominance in Plath's life. In another line, the speaker expresses herself as 'I am myself', but she knows that 'That is not enough' (Plath, p. 225). In this line, Plath demonstrates her weakness against man and feels that weakness, that is, until 'Lady Lazarus' when she rises, Plath feels that weakness. Sylvia Plath rises and gets rid of such a weakness as if she heard Luce Irigaray's (1985, p.215-6) call in 'The Sex Which Is Not One' after fifteen years later her death:

Our strength lies in the very weakness of our resistance. For a long time now they have appreciated what our suppleness is worth for their own embraces and impressions. Why not enjoy it ourselves? Rather than letting ourselves be subjected to their branding. Rather than being fixed, stabilized, immobilized. separated.

This is important for Sylvia Plath because she is unable to feel herself as strong during the period in which she wrote 'The Jailer'. In the light of Irigaray's statement, the reason is that Ted Hughes refused and escaped from Plath's impressions and embraces. He found it in another woman and this caused a disappointment for Plath.

In this context, Sylvia Plath defines the house in which she lived with Ted Hughes as a jail, and composes this poem in this way.

In her study with Catherine Clement, Helene Cixous emphasizes the significance and target of women's writing, and such a definition appears in Plath's 'The Jailer'. She admits that there is a man in the jail, and she is well aware that it is impossible to ignore that man although she wishes it to be:

[...]I am myself. That is not enough.

...

I dream of someone else entirely.

...

His high cold masks of amnesia.

...

I imagine him

Impotent as distant thunder,

In whose shadow I have eaten my ghost ration.

I wish him dead or away.

That, it seems, is the impossibility.

[...] (Plath & Hughes, p. 226-7)

In here the word 'amnesia' is a very striking usage in terms of Ted Hughes's neglecting his wife's existence, which is the result of a man's brutality and this determination aligns well with Helen Cixous's (1986, p. 42) argument in 'The Newly Born Women':

Today, writing is woman's. That is not provocation, it means that woman admits there is an other.[...] It is much harder for man to let the other come through him. Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me - the other that I am and am not, that I don't know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live [...]for men this permeability, this nonexclusion is a threat.

The atmosphere of their home and a self-centred husband's treatment scorned and disappointed Sylvia Plath. As Cixous claims, Sylvia Plath was a real 'threat' for him, the result of his unaware tendency of dominance against a woman. In a patriarchal society, man is the centre of society, family, and any other group. The mechanism of getting rid of such a disposition was limited, as we understand from her lines. She expresses it as saying, 'I wish him dead or away/ That, it seems, is the impossibility' but this is not a specific image for Sylvia Plath's poetry. Anyway, she generally prefers to use images of man as a dominant character in her poems. As a point of reference, Yusuf Eradam (1997, p. 60) argues in his 'Benden Önce Tufan': 'Attack on gods sometimes becomes the main target of poetry and the images of man emerge as insidious, malignant, dominant and oppressive' (Translated by me). For instance the fifth stanza of the poem indicates Ted Hughes's insidious side:

[...]The fever trickles and stiffens in my hair.

My ribs show. What have I eaten?

Lies and smiles.

Surely the sky is not that color,

Surely the grass should be rippling.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 226)

As is seen in 'Lady Lazarus' too, torture is also a 'central mechanism' in the poem 'The Jailer' (Bayley and Brain, p. 69). In this poem, her husband, Ted Hughes, is the speaker's torturer. Sylvia Plath is the victim of this marriage and she feels herself dependent to her jailer, torturer, and husband. As a result she misses being free: 'That being free. What would the dark/ Do without fevers to eat?' (Plath & Hughes, p. 227). Sylvia Plath's anguishes in her marriage were explicitly reflected by the speaker of the poem through the word 'raped', and through the racist image which defines the perception of her husband on Plath: 'Pretending I am a negress with pink paws' (Plath & Hughes, p. 226). The meaning of 'negress' means 'black woman' according to Cambridge Online Dictionary (2014) and this is inevitably approach of Ted Hughes towards Sylvia Plath as the society's insulting approach to black people. Furthermore, in a romance which was composed on four main characters and edited

by E. Nesbith (1906, p. 70) in 1906, the man's superior fascination with women is indicated. The first character Betty, who is a naive girl, is introduced in the sixth chapter as a lion and her weakness is described through her 'pink paws' as Sylvia Plath preferred to describe it in her poem too: 'Betty's little pink paws were not powerful like the lioness's...' Plath's decision on her hero, who is a hero before the marriage, changes and collapses when she realizes that he turns into a pumpkin, like fairy-tale. Ted Hughes is fake and harms to her victim as Plath expresses:

[...]And he, for this subversion,

Hurts me, he

With his armor of fakery,

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 227)

Plath describes the institution of marriage as a prison in her poem because of her feelings. But such a feeling is explicitly the result of patriarchal societies' perception of woman in a marriage. In this sense, 'The Jailer' represents the disappointment of a contemporary woman writer as a result of the dominance of a man. Marriage was something Plath enjoyed by before it disappointed her. During Plath's Smith College years, she states that 'marriage is self-expression'. This is clear evidence, proving that she believed in the optimistic atmosphere of marriage and that it could contribute to her internal world. However, this did not come true. French feminists generally criticized patriarchal ideas marginalising woman in terms of marriage, as Monique Wittig had in an essay she wrote in 1996. Dani Cavallaro (2003, p. 95) evaluates Wittig's approach to marriage in his study on feminism:

According to Wittig, the institution of marriage is the principal culprit in the enslavement and objectification of women in patriarchal societies: men appropriate for themselves the reproduction and production of women and also their psychical persons by means of a contract called the marriage contract which assigns the woman certain obligations.

This materialist perspective of reflects the main reason for Plath's anguishes she felt during and after the marriage. According to Sylvia Plath, marriage brings a double-standard approach for woman and such a sexual difference, or discrimination, exterminates the paradigmatic marriage life in her mind. The main reason became to be abandoned by Ted Hughes as she expresses in the third stanza:

[...]Something is gone.

My sleeping capsule, my red and blue zeppelin

Drops me from a terrible altitude.

Carapace smashed,

I spread to the beaks of birds.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 226)

Before their marriage, Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath promised to help one another in their writing careers and planned to inspire each other much as they had before their marriage. Sylvia Plath writes a letter to her mother in 1956 and explains Ted's inspiring her. She (cited in Aurelia 2011) says that 'Ted says he never read poems by a woman like mine; they are strong and full and rich...' But Sylvia realized that this was happening as a one-sided contribution when Ted Hughes won a prize in 1959 for his work 'The Hawk in the Rain'. But this did not disturb her at all until they moved to Devon, England. There, Plath completely became a housewife and mother in their country home. Their first child was born in 1960 in this home. Her writing slowed down after a good writing period in America, where she completed her first and only published book 'The Colossus' when she was alive. Producing a literary text was the most vitalizing activity in Plath's life and she felt very disappointed when she could not write intensely during her married life. This is the result of feeling incarceration and punished by her husband Ted Hughes. In the poem, Sylvia Plath means that she is a vulnerable person who is jailed by her brutal jailer and he is punishing her with the help of his masculine dominance. This is the reflection of a woman's actualizing herself. Helen Cixous defines such a female as 'woman-in-struggle[s]' in her study 'The Laugh of Medusa' (885). Sylvia Plath found herself in this struggle throughout her marriage. While Jo Gill (2006, p. 69) evaluates Plath's later poems, he says that 'the more one struggles against violence or oppression, the tighter one is trapped in it'. In the 20th Century, society's definition on womanhood was not more than being a housewife and mother. In this sense, being both a successful poet and housewife was an aim far from her reality. On the other hand, Sylvia Plath accepts for herself an equal side in a dual place of marriage. In the poem, the writer emphasizes that she is the indispensable side of her husband. She is necessary for him and he is nothing without her:

[...]Do without fevers to eat ?

What would the light

Do without eyes to knife, what would he

Do, do, do without me ?

(Plath & Hughes, p. 227)

The victimization of her by Ted Hughes is something that he impairs with his own power according to Sylvia Plath. The repetition of the word 'do' can be seen in the poem 'Daddy' too. 'Daddy' was written five days before 'The Jailer' and the sound of 'do' is the reflection of her rebellion language against her husband's patriarchal dominance over her. According to common opinion of French feminists, the only way to get an independent position against male power is to compose a female discourse as Plath tries to do in 'The Jailer'. Particularly Luce Irigaray put emphasis on the importance of creating a female language in the light of psychoanalytic research. In her book 'This Sex Which is Not One', Irigaray (1985, p. 213) states 'stretching out, never ceases to unfold ourselves, we have so many different voices to invent in order to express all of us everywhere, even in our gaps, that all the time there is will not be enough'. The significance of creating a female language against masculine is one of the most effective motivations for the struggle of eradicating the unnecessary dominance of man. In this sense the voice of Sylvia Plath in 'The Jailer' brings out the degenerated side of married life, which is one of the main themes of her novel 'The Bell Jar'.

3.3 Two Sisters of Persephone

Sylvia Plath was very fond of mythological stories and often weaved mythological allegories into her poems. *Barren Woman* (Nike and Apollos is composed), *Fever 103°* (Cerberus appears), *The Colossus* (Oresteia and Electra appear), *Medusa*, and *Lesbos* are just some of her many poems that include mythological events or are completely based on mythological characters. The poem 'Two Sisters of Persephone' is an excellent example of criticizing contemporary facts by accommodating mythological allegory into a daily case. Here, the role of woman in Plath's era is the subject examined by the writer. The poem consists of seven stanzas with four lines, and there are no explicit rhyme schemes. When we look at Plath's *Two Sisters of Persephone* poem, at first glance we can see the plot from personal experience as a result of her confessional tendency. The poem echoes more deeply, namely through various ancient myths. Through mythical prototypes, Plath introduces the connections between the sexual correspondence in her own life and in society. This gave her the chance to create a personalised system of symbols that she then integrated in her own poetic mythology. It can be understood that this poem arises from personal emotional experiences, and that Plath believes in the necessity of manipulating experiences in order to make them relevant to the larger things. Following World War II, writing literary texts through writers own experiences became very popular. Carmen Birkle (1996, p. vii) defines it in the preface of her book:

“Of course, all literature is based on the writer's own experiences, but it is more so with contemporary women poets who see their lives as women socially predetermined and their vocation as poets questioned and obstructed by the rules and norms of a patriarchal society.”

There are some classical texts that give information on the Greek Myth Proserpina; Claudian's 'De Raptu Proserpina' is one of these sources. It is the story of rape as experienced by Proserpina. Proserpina is a goddess in Greek mythology and, according to Claudian, 'it is Proserpina's destiny to be shared equally by mother and husband' (Duffey, p. 111). Proserpina is the Romanized Latin version of Persephone; both are the same goddess. Some of the sources express her as Proserpina. Persephone was the goddess of harvest; she was young, beautiful girl. She was Zeus and Demeter's daughter. One day, she was captured by Hades. Demeter was so worried about her daughter's abduction by Hades. Zeus wanted their daughters back.

Then Hades made his plan and gave a pomegranate to Proserpina. It bound Proserpina to underworld for four months out of every year. During the time that Persephone did not stay near Demeter, she was very sad and she did not want anything to grow. The story of Persephone is the beginning of the winter in Greek mythology.

Plath's lasting achievement was her ability to combine the personal and the mythical in this poem, thereby devoting this with a timeless and relevant literary effect. There are obvious examples of this literary phenomenon constituting the dark or hidden part of human nature in Plath's poem. For example, the first two lines set up the dichotomy between a self and its replica:

Two girls there are: within the house

One sits; the other, without.

Daylong a duet of shade and light

Plays between these.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 31)

The destiny of two daughters is similar as it is understood from the first line of the poem, as it is the same of all women around the world. They are in the same 'house' like two daughters. Such a unity and balance between women is represented through the word 'duet' between 'shade and light' and it symbolizes the co-reliance that must exist between the same sexes in order to be more powerful. Helen Cixous (1986, p. 63-5) claims in her article 'Sorties' that 'thought has always worked through opposition' and she makes a list there:

Activity/Passivity

Sun/Moon

Culture/Nature

Day/Night

Speaking/Writing

Parole/Ecriture

High/Low

Helen Cixous claims that such dichotomies reflect the dark side and positive side of patriarchal society. While positive dichotomies such as day, high, sun, and activity etc. symbolise man, dichotomies such as night, low, moon, passivity symbolise woman in society. The composing 'duet of shade and light' by Plath has a similar approach in terms of reflecting two sides of post-war communities. One of the sisters is represented by 'light', which is the ideal woman in Plath's mind. The other one is presented by 'shade', which represents reality. According to 'shade' imagery of Sylvia Plath, woman is someone who stays at home and who doesn't think. She is the 'other' who can only be a piece of man's world. She is the dark or hidden part of human nature, and is the general theme of this poem. Sylvia Plath had a unique mind that includes conscious and unconscious objects and subjects together. Her deep mind has a collective unconscious, in which certain symbols can be considered as universal prototypes that bring up the same emotional effects in all of people, overlooking of age, nationality or social status. One of these prototypes is the shadow, or "alter-ego", which constitutes the dark or hidden part of human nature. In this sense, 'Two Sisters of Persephone' is very good material showing the psychoanalytical approach of French feminists. French feminist thought is based on a systematic constraint of women's experience. It is women's nature, bodies, and expressions that give definition to woman or to femininity. Women can be in all branches of life and also literature, through language, philosophy, psychoanalysis, the social practices, and the direction of patriarchal culture within which we live in and resist. By evaluating each of these, Plath represents womankind.

The poem of 'Two Sisters of Persephone' is inevitably significant with its dualities, externalizing two sides of Persephone and the 20th Century woman. Unlike the second sister, the first one is a woman who is always occupied with work; those tasks are the centre of her world. The writer compares her situation with a mathematical problem, and the speaker describes her restricted world in the second and third stanzas:

[...]In her dark wainscoted room

The first works problems on

A mathematical machine.

Dry ticks mark time

As she calculates each sum.

At this barren enterprise

Rat-shrewd go her squint eyes,

Root-pale her meager frame.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 31)

There is arrogance towards this girl by the speaker because her only thing in life is dealing with such tasks that are only part of the cycle of her life. There is an allusion about this woman that she is the dark side of the society with her penurious world. The time of the poem is 1956's America. This is the period where women were exposed to an explicit sexual discrimination; particularly other female writers, intellectuals, and artists etc. The post-war politics of America accelerated women to be at home, and constituted working areas for soldiers who had returned World War. In such a time, any woman who attempts to rise against that one-sided order of society was perceived as disturber, and conservative writers tried to indicate them as a communist bogey. Sylvia Plath was a part of the piece of those minority woman writers at her young age. Yusuf Eradam (1997, p. 111) evaluates the post-war writers in 'Benden Önce Tufan':

After 1945, most of American writers faced with an introversion and they pushed the limits of what an alone person feel in a contemporary world that crushes human and what they can come across with. (Translated by me)

In this context, some critics criticized Sylvia Plath for her insubordinate style of writing. For instance she was intensely criticized by Saul Bellow because of her gender, as well as by and Irving Howe, who put her down because of her religious and cultural background at that time. Such critics were clearly the result of patriarchal perception. It is really difficult to alter such a perception because, as Pierre Bourdieu (2001, p. 5) mentions, 'when we try to understand masculine

domination we are therefore likely to resort to modes of thought that are the product of domination’.

Sylvia Plath’s usage of enjambment creates a very effective impact on reader in terms of two girls’ discrepancy. The second sister, who is indicated as a dynamic, active, and sociable person in the poem, is prone to live her life. Her body is very important and she is aware of her beauty and femininity. She represents the ‘light’ side of Plath’s composition. Nature-referenced words exist (earth, pollen, poppies, green, seed, grass-couched) that were chosen by the writer intentionally in the aim of correlating her with outer world. For women to be active is very important in obtaining equal roles in society and Plath was well aware of that as Luce Irigaray (2004, p. 101) mentions the significance of it in her book:

In diverse traditions, the feminine is characterized by the ear and the masculine by the eye. And in the religious feminine rituals, music is more important than words. Through rhythms and tonalities, energy and breath are led from centres of elemental vitality to the more spiritual centres: of the heart, of hearing, speaking and thinking, for example. Thus attraction including sexual attraction can become love, dialogue, meditation and creation. But if a culture in the feminine is a culture of listening – to more than looking – at, this does not mean that woman is merely passive and receptive to the words of man. Without listening in a way both active and passive, a transformation of one’s own energy cannot happen.

Irigaray’s comparison of music with the aim of defining a woman’s role in society is indispensable for understanding the struggle of Plath’s being an ideal woman as it is in both her mind as well as one of the sisters of Persephone. Such a woman is described through the second sister in the poem. Actually, becoming the second sister of Persephone means taking risk when the general sound of the poem was evaluated for the speaker implies it in the sixth stanza:

[...]Freely become sun's bride, the latter

Grows quick with seed.

Grass-couched in her labor's pride,

She bears a king. Turned bitter

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 32)

Plath associates the second sister with a shining event that is the life source and she is compared with ‘sun’s bride’. She is a very successful woman in society. She is free of the isolation, as is emphasized with the word ‘freely’. In the line ‘Grass-couched

in her labour's pride', the speaker suggests a dilemma, a difficulty of woman in the way entering success, which is the quittance of achievement. In 'The Newly Born Woman', Helen Cixous (1986, p. 116) argues this quittance: 'For a free woman, there can be no relationship with men other than war'. In a patriarchal society, man has no obligation to be in struggle in order to get a real self-fulfilment. Women are not born feminine in a patriarchal society, but as a result of its perspective, women are exposed to being feminine. Sylvia Plath felt this in her own life when she got married with Ted Hughes, and found herself as a stereotypical wife. This poem is the result of Plath's dilemma, or a confusion that is part of the chaos of becoming one of the sides of a dual role of post-war woman. We can argue that Sylvia Plath viewed women as second-class citizens and as victims in what was then a man's world. When a man spoke in Plath's time, his voice and his sayings overcome the voices and words of women, subsequently deactivating them of all control in that they should have held over their lives. They should have control over their own lives and their destinies. She replaced one man with another. She suggests that this is what women do women allow themselves to be powerless by being so dependent upon men. They should become independent from men and not live dependant up on men. She suggests that this is what all women need to do in order to truly live their lives. She viewed women as a group of people who needed to become stronger and more independent. Women have to humiliate her and make a spectacle of the female body. Basically, Plath feels that she and all women need to gain control and stop living in a man's world. For Cixous, women will not learn to resist patriarchal thinking by becoming part of patriarchal power structure, that is, by obtaining equal status (Tyson, p. 100). The final stanza of the poem indicates Cixous' statement that expresses the hopelessness of the first sister's becoming a woman:

[...]And sallow as any lemon,

The other, wry virgin to the last,

Goes graveward with flesh laid waste,

Worm-husbanded, yet no woman. (Plath & Hughes, p. 32)

The speaker defines first sister's atmosphere by comparing her with the appearance of the 'lemon', and she is claimed to reflect as the lemon's colour through this

metaphoric discourse. Moreover, the usage of 'death' imagery brings up the first sister's ridiculousness and ineptness in her traditional life. In the final of the poem, there is a crucial statement that argues the role of first sister's disadvantage for the modern women's struggle in society. However, the other sister also causes a disadvantage by ignoring her feminine side. Namely, Plath dreams of a woman who is able to realize both her femininity and potential in society. When one reads, 'Two Sisters of Persephone', at first, one thinks that it is a common poem and a woman writes something about her life. However, in fact, she reflects the women's life; women's happiness, sadness, emotions, feelings, darkness, lightness, struggle, and in the end freedom by being herself.



4. THE POSTMODERN CONDITION IN SYLVIA PLATH'S POETRY: HOLOCOUST IMAGERY

Among the many literary theories, postmodernism is the most complicated and inscrutable field of study within its generally accepted way of understanding the 'real'. By considering Sylvia Plath's poems and their reflections of the writer's exclusive selfhood, her texts are undoubtedly postmodern in evaluating the concept of the 'real'. When postmodernism's literary side is regarded, the connection between reality and language is one of its prominent concerns. Furthermore, the writer is accepted as getting involved in the postmodern period for it stretches from World War II well into the present day, although Plath's time marks the very beginning of postmodern discussion. For that reason, her poetry became one of the concerns of postmodern research after the 1980s more often. Besides, the discussion on the certain break between modernism and postmodernism still continues. In this sense, it is inevitable that Sylvia Plath's poetry includes both modern and postmodern structures, since she wrote during a period of great transition. Carmen Birkle (1996, p. 11) writes that Sylvia Plath is accepted as one of three female poets who are 'paradigmatic examples of the change that has taken place in the 20th Century from modernism to postmodernism'. Plath's literary works can be evaluated and analysed in many aspects from a postmodern perspective, including interests with fragmentation, ambiguity, reflectivity, discontinuity, self-consciousness, reality, simultaneity, and dehumanised events etc. In this chapter, Plath's Holocaust discourse will be analysed in the frame of confessional writing, in particular the loss of reality and loss of values. In this chapter, Sylvia Plath's two most famous poems 'Daddy', which is analysed through psychoanalysis, and 'Lady Lazarus', which is analysed through feminism, will be examined in this chapter because they have accepted as among some of the best examples representing Holocaust imagery. Additionally, 'Mary's Song' is another of Plath's poems laced with Holocaust imagery. It is preferred to evaluate 'Daddy' and 'Lady Lazarus' in one part, as both

poems are similar in composition and motifs, as has been acknowledged by many critics. Furthermore, critics have recommended that both be read together.

4.1 Lady Lazarus - Daddy

The Holocaust during World War II has been regarded as the most traumatic and inhuman incident of history, and as a yielded broad social, psychological, and philosophical effects as a result. The term 'Post-Holocaust' emerged after the war (Fackenheim, p. 20). It is the evidence of Holocaust's influence on human beings. All historical traumas, such as the Holocaust have had distinctive effects on popular culture. For that reason, the Holocaust has often been incorporated into postmodernism and has been a matter of subject for postmodern literary works. Sylvia Plath lived in a time when the Holocaust had both occurred and affected the entire world. This event was the most frequently cited affair in her artistic work although she experienced very different traumatic situations through her childhood. In one of her essays, Plath (2007, p. 169) refers to the Holocaust's impact in her mind in terms of 'real' incidents: "...the real issues of our time are the issues of every time ... the conservation of life of all people in all places, the jeopardizing of which no abstract doubletalk of 'peace' or 'implacable foes' can excuse". Such an approach by Sylvia Plath denotes the viewpoint of Jean Baudrillard, who has significantly impacted postmodern thought in a post-Holocaust situation: 'Turning the Holocaust into a spectacle produces a forgetting that is part of the extermination.' (Levi, p. 13). In this sense Sylvia Plath reflected her traumatic experience to her literary works and she produced many poems through Holocaust imageries. This is not an extraordinary outcome for her, and as a result of her composing this; its connection with historical traumas may well be a matter of subject for postmodern researches, as Robert D. Samuels (2015, p. 448) mentions it in his study:

'...trauma pushes us to rethink our conceptions of history and reference so that we take into account the radical temporal distinctions between an event and its representation. Moreover, this separation of the referent from the sign of the referent points to a postmodern and deconstructive notion of cultural representation.'

So, the Holocaust poems of Plath are the representation of her World War II trauma in the light of the postmodern notion, as she 'knowingly borrowed the discourse of her time and place' (Breslin, p. 676). Moreover, Holocaust has been defined as

'principle theme' for her work of art (O'Brien, p. 100), and her usage of Holocaust metaphors have often been criticized by researchers. Hence 'Daddy' and 'Lady Lazarus' that are evaluated in this part are available for understanding how the writer made descriptions in expressing her feelings with their 'self-dramatizing voice' (Breslin, p. 676). As a representative of confessional poetry, Plath created her poems through her hidden feelings and their involvements with real-life experiences, integrating them into her to postmodern literary theory. Edwards Shannon (2012i p. 633), in a study evaluating Diane Wood Middlebrook's essay, indicates her argument on the relationship and postmodernism:

Middlebrook positions the confessionals in a Postmodern context, noting that the poets of this generation (born between 1914 and 1934) exhibited great technical skill but opposed Modernist formalism and expressed disillusionment in the hard truths about mankind World War II exposed.

As with all confessional poets, Sylvia Plath was highly influenced by the events in her time and, as a result, she created these two striking poems through Holocaust metaphors. Plath's effort for expressing her temper and feelings through Holocaust imageries in the aim of putting forward women's liberation or cruelty of Nazi is not different from what postmodern writers do. For Jameson, postmodern literature serves as a symptom of the disease afflicting our era (D'Haen, p. 272). Moreover, according to some critics, postmodern literature's concern covers a 'deplorable commodification of all culture' that is equivalent interest with Plath's humanistic approach to a mass murder (Selden, p. 198). Such a crucial occurrence has inevitably taken interest of postmodern period's writers as have all extreme events discoursed by authors throughout history. However, the Holocaust encounters itself in modern literature as well as in postmodern writings. Because the time in which the event occurred was in period transitioning from modern literature to postmodern literature, there is a sharp difference between the two dealings. This is one of the basic differences between the two theories: Modernists evaluate the Holocaust in the frame of an objective perspective; postmodernists do so from a subjective perspective. That's why Sylvia Plath's Holocaust imageries are accepted as a postmodern discourse.

Due to the impacts of Holocaust stretching into the present day and our culture, 'Daddy' and 'Lady Lazarus' have still been a matter of subject for analysts. Within a subjective perspective, Sylvia Plath composed a very effective dramatic discourse

through Holocaust metaphor. In a sense, her subjectivity comes from her confessional side and Plath's perception of reality reveals a postmodern work of art. Precisely, as a postmodernist, Plath experiences the world as a fragmented place, where the loss of values and dehumanized reality causes disorientation (Klages, p. 23). In this context, the fourth line of the poem 'Daddy' indicates to us the disorientation that is caused by war (World War II):

[...]In the German tongue, in the Polish town

Scraped flat by the roller

Of wars, wars, wars.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 222)

Sylvia Plath aims to express here that her father loses his Polish identity because of war. Jean Lyotard, who is one of the pioneer philosophers of postmodernism, expresses such a situation as 'the destruction of whole worlds of names' while explaining 20th Century's insecure environment (Krieger, p. 64). Although he does not explicitly refer to it, World War II is the main reason for such loss as it is the most devastating event of twentieth century. In this stanza, Plath indicates post-war time as being a time full with identity loss of because of the Holocaust, and this causes a general disorientation. The effect of such a historical trauma is indispensable in Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy'. In 1974, Sylvia Plath answered a question of Irving Howe, who was the editor of a magazine. He asked her about duplication of the condition of Jews who were in camps:

'...it is decidedly unlikely that it was duplicated in a middle-class family living in Wellesley, Massachusetts, even if it had a very bad daddy indeed. To condone such a confusion is to delude ourselves as to the nature of our personal miseries and their relationship to - or relative magnitude when placed against - the most dreadful event in the history of mankind.'
(Ezrahi p. 214)

She defines the Holocaust as 'the most dreadful event in the history of mankind', and this definition is the evidence of her trauma on it. Accordingly, this approach by the writer is reflected on her Holocaust poems. Sylvia Plath expresses the victimization of a Jew by composing an empathy language, and she repeatedly indicates her wish to be a Jew in the poem 'Daddy':

[...]An engine, an engine

Chuffing me off like a Jew.

A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.

I began to talk like a Jew.

I think I may well be a Jew.

The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna

Are not very pure or true.

With my gipsy ancestress and my weird luck

And my Taroc pack and my Taroc pack

I may be a bit of a Jew.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 223)

There is an intentional identification between herself and Jew by the speaker of the poem, which produces a rebellion against Otto Plath, her German originated father. Such a displacement is Sylvia Plath's tendency to create a Nazi father with the purpose of showing her contempt on a male figure and genocide, which is a universal rather than a localized event. In this sense, Jean Lyotard who is interested in the metanarrative figure of postmodernism expresses the totalizing side of postmodern thought while he criticizes modernism's avoidance of the self-legitimizing approach to values. Legitimization is the most important concept that totalizes metanarratives of historical events. Modernism's scientific approach is not sufficient enough to understand metanarratives at all, for it changes. Para-logical perception of postmodernism is better than the modern scientific approach in analysing historical events. According to Lyotard, legitimation by paraology is a way to not only satisfy research into unknown realms, but also a means to satisfy the need for justice (Hill Web). Here, the word 'justice' is very significant in terms of Plath's pursuit of justice in her Holocaust-themed poems. Three years she before wrote the poem 'Daddy', Sylvia Plath (1998, p. 301) wrote in her journal about her acceptance to 'The New

Yorker', and she reveals her need of justice on Otto Plath: 'Must do justice to my father's grave'. In a sense, the poem 'Daddy' was her judgement of Otto Plath and she provided her justice to which she sought throughout her life:

[...]Not God but a swastika

So black no sky could squeak through.

Every woman adores a Fascist,

The boot in the face, the brute

Brute heart of a brute like you.

You stand at the blackboard, daddy,

In the picture I have of you,

A cleft in your chin instead of your foot

But no less a devil for that, no not

Any less the black man who

... (Plath & Hughes 223)

The swastika is the symbol of Nazism, and Sylvia Plath uses this symbol in order to match her father with a brutal sign. Furthermore, her father loses his divinity side and he is not a 'God' anymore. Rather, he is the symbol of violence and cruelty. As a daughter of a brute man, Sylvia Plath defines her love on her father through brutality because as every woman does, she both loves and hates such a man. Of course, here Plath creates a sexual critic that gives permission of the dominance of man by desiring them. This is a very postmodern discourse with its paralogical statement. Such contradictions are accepted as a form of postmodern literature, for this theory gets rid of modernism's rationality. Contradictions in the poem evoke a paradox as postmodern literature does it and Plath indicates such a contradiction in a BBC interview:

The poem is spoken by a girl with an Electra complex. Her father died while she thought he was God. Her case is complicated by the fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part-Jewish. In the daughter the two strains marry and paralyse each other—she has to act out the awful little allegory before she is free of it. (Bloom, p. 46)

As Hutcheon describes postmodern art, it is 'doubled' and 'contradictory' that are seen in Holocaust poems of Sylvia Plath (O'Grady, p. 120). Such elements are key factors for Sylvia Plath in the way any researcher defines her as a postmodern poet. Enjambment that is moving from one line to the other without a punctuation mark is another postmodern concept in Plath's poetry and 'Daddy': 'But no less a devil for that, no not/ Any less the black man who...' are lines that illustrate such enjambment. In 4th, 5th, 11th and 12th stanzas, the use of enjambment is seen too.

Frederic Jameson has significant critiques on postmodern thought in a Marxist perspective and criticizes postmodernism's depthlessness. He believes that postmodern era loses its awareness of history. He evaluates postmodernism's sense of history:

I believe also that its formal features in many ways express the deeper logic of that particular social system. I will only be able, however, to show this for one major theme: namely the disappearance of a sense of history, the way in which our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve. (Brooker, p. 179)

Apart from Jameson's critique, Plath's Holocaust poems are related to historical events, and Plath proves to be a skilful writer who can make connections between past and present. Plath's ability mainly comes from her power in relating her subjectivity with historical events. Christina Britzolakis (1999, p. 112), a famous Plath researcher, evaluates writer's disposition on ethical issues and states that 'in turning a historical event of this magnitude into a metaphor for subjective crisis, Plath allegedly perpetrates a violent twisting or perversion of the principle of metaphoric similarity'. Britzolakis' (1999, p. 110) definition of 'violent twisting' is so distinctive in 'Daddy' and 'Lady Lazarus' and, according to her, this is an example of 'irrationalist violence'. That's why Sylvia Plath is undoubtedly postmodern although her tendency for historical events is inevitable. Obviously, Sylvia Plath's sense of history arises from her confessional side and, as a result, she reflects her temper towards the violence of World War II. As was mentioned before, Sylvia Plath links herself with a Jew in order to indicate man's sexual violence. When she says 'Every woman adores a Fascist', she implies the imperative side of the victimization of a Jew (Plath & Hughes, p. 223). Margaret D. Uroff (1980, p. 156) defines 'Daddy' as a 'poem of revenge, and its violence is a reaction against

torture'. The thirteenth stanza of the poem is a very good example of Plath's transformation of violence:

[...]But they pulled me out of the sack,

And they stuck me together with glue.

And then I knew what to do.

I made a model of you,

A man in black with a Meinkampf look

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

Sylvia Plath wants herself to re-unite with her father, as it is understood before this stanza: 'At twenty I tried to die/ And get back, back, back to you' (Plath & Hughes, p. 224). She suffers because she loses her identity and tries to find refuge in her father's identity. Nevertheless, she finds herself out of it. This is where the postmodern discourse starts. The speaker of the poem tells of a model of her father. Her father is a man of German origin, but he is not a Nazi, despite the poem trying to show otherwise. In postmodern theory, Jean Baudrillard explains this as 'simulacrum'. According to him, the system of the world we live in is all simulacrums, meaning a copy without an original. It is more than real (hyperreal), and Baudrillard (1994, p. 12) explains it through the Disneyland example in his masterpiece 'Simulacra and Simulation':

Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, whereas all of Los Angeles and the America that surrounds it are no longer real, but belong to the hyperreal order and to the order of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology) but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle.

While Sylvia Plath compares and creates a simulation in her poem, she is well aware that her simulation and model of her father were not real. Baudrillard states in his book 'Simulation and Simulacra' that simulation 'is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal' (1994, p. 1). Postmodern literature's perception of realism is a kind of 'self-reflexive', one in which reflects the subjective side of the theory (O'Grady, p. 29). Furthermore Carmen Birkle (1996, p.34) states that the 'self-reflexivity of texts reaches a climax in the 1960s and 1970s postmodernism, which is the period Plath wrote her most famous poems. Although

Sylvia Plath's work of art is a bit different from her contemporaries in the way, she excellently reflects the effects of her mental illness. The writer creates highly postmodern texts in a time the theory is gradually developing. When the poem 'Daddy' is looked at, Sylvia Plath's composing of a model out of father, as a Nazi, prevents this poem from being an autobiographical one. Rather, it is semi-biographical for Otto Plath, as he was not a Nazi. The writer generates a simulacrum in here. Sylvia Plath's self-reflexive composing here is more real than her reality. Indeed, Plath's preference of such hyperreal is the result of her opinion on her father. It is the result of her father's loss of value in Sylvia Plath's mind. As it is evaluated in the psychoanalysis chapter, Sylvia Plath charges her father with relinquishing her very early and this opinion never changed throughout the course of her life. Confessional Sylvia Plath always achieved reflecting her own reality to her poems in terms of self-conscious way. Concordantly, Jon Rosenblatt (1979, p.51) describes the approach of Sylvia Plath on reality through the context of historical events and her self-consciousness while he is evaluating the reality of 'Lady Lazarus':

The reality of the poem lies in the convulsions of the narrating consciousness. The drama of external persecution, self-destructiveness, and renewal, with both its horror and its grotesque comedy, is played out through social and historical contexts that symbolize the inner struggle of Lady Lazarus.

Sylvia Plath's late poetry touches upon values much more so than her early writings and mostly refers to a neo-realist composition. From the beginning of her writing period, Plath noticed 'spiritual values' in her literary world but this was more after the world experienced the genocide of World War II (Wagner & Martin, p. 17). Moreover, Plath's own experiences highly contributed to this perception of values. She experienced a sort of alienation after her vicious experiences in life. She lost her father at an early age, her husband cheated on her, and she lost her concentration on life due to her mental disease. That's why she committed suicide 'in every ten' as she states in the first stanza of 'Lady Lazarus' (Plath & Hughes, p. 244). In this sense, her Holocaust poems are a judgement and revenge. For instance, while 'Daddy' judges the writer's father as it is understood from the title, 'Lady Lazarus' judges her husband and patriarchal society in the frame of postmodernist discourse. Explicitly, Sylvia Plath creates tension in her poems and 'risks confusing aesthetic values with judgements about identity' (Kendall, p. 51). She loses her face and her identity in 'Lady Lazarus' and she equates her sufferings with a Jew's torture:

[...]A sort of walking miracle, my skin

Bright as a Nazi lampshade,

My right foot

A paperweight,

My face a featureless, fine

Jew linen.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 244)

The word 'miracle' is the reflection of this poem's biblical theme as it is evaluated in feminism chapter, but the connection of the speaker's face with a Nazi concept is much more than a feminist perspective in terms of the social effect of Holocaust. Here, the writer aims to evoke a horrifying atmosphere what was experienced during the World War II. Besides an enjambment – a postmodern element – between the lines '...my skin/ Bright as a Nazi lampshade', the content of the lines is also a postmodern interest with its extremity and loss of value. Even seventeen years after World War II when both 'Daddy' and 'Lady Lazarus' were written, the impression of Holocaust was stable for it is perhaps the most influential event for the history of human beings. It is a break for postmodernism as well because it is accepted as the beginning of the postmodern period. In this sense, Jean Lyotard (1993, p. 19) defines World War II as 'the crime opening postmodernity'. The crucial events being produced by Nazis and Jews' slaughtered events and find a place in postmodern criticism. Fragmented bodies of Jews were used to produce some objects, although any historical inscription did not confirm such a claim. The lampshade was one the objects that symbolizes the cruciality of Holocaust. Plath used it in 'Lady Lazarus' while she is comparing herself with a Jew's loss of identity. Jean Baudrillard (1990, p. 23) provides an illuminating evaluation on this kind of loss of value and the Holocaust's anti-humanist, racist, and fascist side through a postmodernist perspective and a new period:

Human rights, dissidence, antiracism, SOS-this, SOS-that: these are soft, easy, post coitum historicum ideologies, 'after-the-orgy' ideologies for an easy-going generation which has

known neither hard ideologies nor radical philosophies. The ideology of a generation which is neo-sentimental in its politics too, which has rediscovered altruism, conviviality, international charity and the individual bleeding heart. Emotional outpourings, solidarity, cosmopolitan emotiveness, multi-media pathos: all soft values harshly condemned by the Nietzschean, Marxo-Freudian age... A new generation, that of the spoilt children of the crisis, whereas the preceding one was that of the accursed children of history.

Baudrillard has assigned a new perception of values by in the postmodernist time. The holocaust and its acrimonious shock made people fond of their moral and humanist values more. As a female writer, Sylvia Plath could not be indifferent to this event and reflected her own trouble onto her poems by combining them with Holocaust imageries. Anyway, De Beauvoir (2011, p. 661) states that a woman's approach of value 'is explained by her situation'. Sylvia Plath composes her situation ironically in 'Daddy' and uses 'I' language as a reflection of her self-expression:

[...]It stuck in a barb wire snare.

Ich, ich, ich, ich,

I could hardly speak.

I thought every German was you.

And the language obscene

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 223)

The word 'Ich' is the German equivalent of 'I' in English. What is more important here is that Sylvia Plath associates herself with her father in this stanza. The writer turns to her father's origin and begins to speak German because she loses her own identity and starts to become a cruel, Nazi-like person. She defines it in these lines: 'The boot in the face, the brute/ Brute heart of a brute like you' (Plath & Hughes, p. 223). The situation that her father is not a Nazi is Plath's simulacrum here, but the writer wants to believe in this since she is angry with her father and all other men, particularly Ted Hughes. This is a kind of fantasy in postmodern literature; more precisely this is the fantasy of freedom. Theodor Adorno (1981, p. 34), who is one of the pioneers of the Frankfurt school, states in 'Prisms' that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'. Many researchers have criticized this statement and mostly it has been evaluated through misunderstanding. Writers especially criticize this in terms of freedom and the limitless of writing, but Adorno intends to imply

Auschwitz's barbaric position and emphasizes that no other event can be as barbaric as Auschwitz. Plath's Holocaust poems were written eighteen years after Auschwitz. Her poems are good examples of Holocaust writings in terms of criticizing it, and Adorno thinks that losing the awareness and sense of Holocaust causes to a new barbarism. By reflecting her temper on Nazi cruelty towards Jews, Sylvia Plath shows her sense of Holocaust by using the word 'brute' in both poems:

[...]Comeback in broad day

To the same place, the same face, the same brute

... (CP, Lady Lazarus 246)

[...]The boot in the face, the brute

Brute heart of a brute like you.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 223)

This word indicates Nazis' sadist and masochist fantasies; the writer composed it to these poems intentionally. Such a mass murder and fascistic approach can be associated with Plath's self-suffering. She designs her father and her husband as a frightening character in her mind and, according to Plath, her father and her husband are responsible for all pain in her life as is evaluated psychoanalytically. The ninth stanza of 'Daddy' is her composing a frightening character:

[...]I have always been scared of you,

With your Luftwaffe, your gobbledygoo.

And your neat mustache

And your Aryan eye, bright blue.

Panzer-man, panzer-man, O You –

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 223)

She is the victim of her father like a Jew was the victim of a Nazi during World War II. 'Luftwaffe' is the German air force and it is the 'terroristic staccato consonant' created by the speaker of the poem (Britzolakis, p. 101). Furthermore, she composes

a metonymic discourse in this stanza by using ‘neat moustache’ and ‘Aryan eye’. Sylvia Plath illustrates a German character that inevitably is a Nazi. ‘Aryan eye’ is accepted as racist discourse by many analysts for it is the indication of Adolf Hitler in the aim of describing ‘perfect race’. For the sake of this perfect race, Nazi soldiers decided to clutter the world and show the superiority of their race. Just like in ‘Daddy’, Sylvia Plath demonstrates the Nazis’ tendency of superiority in ‘Lady Lazarus’ too, but in this poem the writer provides it in the frame of a biblical analogy. While Lazarus rises with the help of Jesus in Bible, the speaker of the poem rises with the help of German doctors:

[...]So, so, Herr Doktor.

So, Herr Enemy.

...

I am your opus,

I am your valuable,

...

I turn and burn.

Do not think I underestimate your great concern.

...

Herr God, Herr Lucifer

Beware

Beware.

Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

... *(Plath & Hughes 246-7)*

German doctors bring the speaker back from death, and finally she finds the opportunity to rise. Here Plath actually creates a conflict through a metonymic

discourse, her aim is to indicate German doctors as an evil in order to compare their genocide with women's oppression in society by male dominance. The writer's metonymic composition occurs too often in this poem, and is seen comparing the featurelessness of a Jew with brightness of a Nazi: 'Bright as a Nazi lampshade/...My face a featureless, fine' (Plath & Hughes 244). Her face is featureless like a Jew. According to Sylvia Plath, sexual oppression is also a crime against human beings, akin to the Holocaust being a crime against all societies. Jean Lyotard states that such crimes are the result of enlightenment enterprises. As he approaches this crime, the modern thought created it against humanity because 'from modern warfare, Auschwitz, and the Gulag to nuclear threat and severe ecological crisis'. All of these kinds of troubles were 'social and political disasters' that were built by 'Enlightenment project' (Selden, p. 205). In furtherance to Lyotard's definition of Auschwitz, Sylvia Plath demonstrates Nazi figures as guilty by composing the Nazi doctor as 'enemy'. She designs this enemy through the legitimacy of Holocaust metaphorically. She speaks as if her enemy is not a sadistic person but a benefactor as her father Otto Plath. This is an ironic approach by Sylvia Plath, as it is known that her father had had no affirmative impacts on the writer. Sylvia Plath's ironic composing in her Holocaust poems can be accepted as the signals of postmodern literary discourse for ironic usage in literary texts by the writer, and is one of the characteristics of contemporary literature. Von Heide Ziegler (1991, p. 290) mentions the employment of irony in postmodern literature in his study:

My thesis is that the postmodern ironic author attempts to project a world that is free of ideology, and that he tries to realize this aim by turning the relation between author and reader itself into the exemplary theme that his text addresses. By bringing the reader into the text and distancing the text from external reality – a reality naturally laden with ideology - the author tries to create a purely literary zone in which author and reader can meet free of contemporary constraints. In this manner, the attempt to alleviate the tension between conservatism and innovation, between tradition and the individual talent, not only informs, but actually constitutes the ironic postmodernist text.

As Ziegler states, Sylvia Plath's ironic writing is inevitably free of ideology because her poems are a reflection of the writer's confessional side. She does not aim to create a political or ideological discourse in her poems; rather she expresses her own feelings and allusions. Postmodern text can deal with politics and ideology, but this is much more different from modern discourse. Postmodern literature includes politics and ideology in the frame of conflicts, and it brings a contemporary style to

them. In his work, David F. Wallace (1997, p. 64) argues that postmodern irony (post-irony) is 'a return to sincerity'. As a confessional and postmodern writer, most of Plath's literary works are ingenuous. She achieved to convey her experiences in real life to a surreal text. In this sense, Sylvia Plath conceives postmodern elements in her poetry because surrealism 'anticipates tactics of postmodernism' according to LaFountain (1997, p. 154). Moreover Sylvia Plath's poetry includes other postmodern concepts too. For instance multiplicity, which is a postmodern notion in Lady Lazarus, can be indicated as an example to it. Sylvia Plath composes a death image that actually is an attempt towards death in Lady Lazarus. She had tried to die twice before this poem was written. The speaker implies the former attempts in three stanzas of the poem:

*[...]The second time I meant
To last it out and not come back at all.
I rocked shut
As a seashell.
They had to call and call
And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls.
...
It's easy enough to do it in a cell.
It's easy enough to do it and stay put.
It's the theatrical
... (Plath & Hughes, p. 245)*

Analysts have evaluated such a composition as a postmodern style of poetry, and Sylvia Plath's distinctness in writing shows basic postmodern elements even in the beginnings of the postmodern period. Particularly, her last poems are being further researched in this sense. For example 'Lady Lazarus' is Sylvia Plath's poem that has often been analysed in a postmodern perspective with its unusual theme and style. In

a study on the postmodern research of Sylvia Plath's poetry, Mathew Boswell (2008, p. 55) defines this poem through the writer's own frame and aim:

'She conveys a clear sense of the distinction between art and reality, and with it the sort of self-awareness and accompanying concern with artistic exploitation and representative ethics that were to become defining features of postmodernism, with postmodernism here understood not only in terms of its tendency towards pastiche and irony – both of which abound in Plath's work...'

Sylvia Plath's distinctive connection between her literary writings and reality has still been taken into consideration. She is one of the rare artists who is able succeed in reaching her audience's subjective side. For instance, she wrote 'Lady Lazarus' in order to express her own liberation, but this poem can both reflect all women's liberation and the Holocaust's inhuman results in a postmodern era. The writer in this poem composes loss of values in World War II with her own experiences. The writer shows her tendency for revenge against male dominance and the Holocaust's dehumanised events in the last stanza of the poem:

[...]Beware

Beware.

Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 246-7)

Plath's desire to rise with her red hair in the final portion of the poem is inevitably a wish of coming back to a new life and the order of society. In a sense, such eagerness can be associated with the writer's criticism and willingness on and for the results of modern thought. The Second World War is accepted as the outcome of both the modern period's and enlightenment project's corruption. In her study, Kristina Busse states Michael Berg's determinations on the reasons that provide World War II and the Holocaust. Busse (2014, p. 10) argues that according to Michael, the war is the result of 'moral and ethical responsibility of bourgeois modern value system'. Many researchers accept that postmodernism can be defined as a reaction to the modern period. In this sense, Sylvia Plath can be indicated as one of the pioneers of this new

postmodern approach for she produced such original texts in the very beginning time of the theory.

Hyperbole is a kind of exaggeration that has often been preferred to use in postmodern literature. It is used by Plath extensively in her imageries and metaphors particularly in her poem 'Daddy', with the aim of portraying her father as a Nazi. Hyperbole is a foregrounded strategy in a body of work that seeks to displace received notions of truth, and falsity it in an age where reality is mediated as never before (Bewes 21). Sylvia Plath attempts to compose her feeling on loss of reality in her mind by creating hyperboles in 'Daddy'. In line 47, the speaker exaggerates the blackness of swastika the symbol of Nazi and the writer creates a postmodern discourse through it: '...Not God but a swastika/ So black no sky could squeak through' (Plath & Hughes, p. 223). Furthermore, Margaret D. Uroff's (1980, p. 159) study suggests that the poem 'Daddy' is significant for understanding how Plath's writing style is particularly close to postmodern writing: 'Plath employs techniques of caricature, hyperbole, and parody that serve to distance the speaker from the poet and at the same time to project onto the speaker a strange version of the poet's own strategies'. This poem includes many postmodern strategies such as hyperbole, parody, and enjambment etc. Plath's language in the poem demonstrates distinctive elements of postmodernism in terms of reality. She indicates that her father as a vampire throughout the poem and in the final stanza prepares a Transylvanian finish for him:

[...]There's a stake in your fat black heart

And the villagers never liked you.

They are dancing and stamping on you.

They always knew it was you.

Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 224)

Such a loss of reality has been suggested by researchers, most notably Elizabeth D. Emmarth (1992, p. 4), as the role of 'reality' in postmodern literature: 'In postmodernism, language means residence in a particular discourse, and alternative

semantic systems or discourses are not just alternate views or versions of a “reality” that remains beyond them’. Otto Plath is not a vampire who is as evil as a Nazi, but Sylvia invents him in this way. This is Sylvia Plath’s own reality and she composes her later poems in the frame of that, bringing out a postmodernist discourse. In the final line of this poem, Sylvia Plath expresses her father as a ‘bastard’, a child without father. This child is exactly how the writer’s expressions are highly postmodern.

4.2 Mary’s Song

As an example of Sylvia Plath’s late poems, the poet wrote ‘Mary’s Song’ on November 19th, 1962. This poem is made up of seven stanzas with three lines. ‘Mary’s Song’ includes distinctive Holocaust imagery composed through a different perspective. While Plath concentrates on the period of Holocaust in ‘Daddy’, ‘Getting There’, and ‘Lady Lazarus’, she touches upon post-suffering besides the anguishes of Holocaust’s victims. Moreover, the writer deals with religious images apart from World War II language in this poem. Inevitably, as a precursor of confessional poetry, there are relevant indications of her confessional side in ‘Mary’s Song’. One of the distinctive characteristics of this poem is Plath’s maternal instincts. The speaker of the poem expresses the fear of losing her child. Many analysts accept that Plath’s child imagery (golden child) in this poem is made around of her second child, Nicholas, and she expresses her fear in the final stanza. Furthermore, this final stanza is a very significant example of how she succeeds in associating her confessional side with the Holocaust since she combines the horror of losing her ‘golden baby’ with the Holocaust’s oppressive results:

[...]It is a heart,

This holocaust I walk in,

O golden child the world will kill and eat.

(Plath & Hughes, p. 257)

Many postmodernist thinkers, especially pioneers of the theory, accept World War II as the beginning of a new period designated as ‘postmodern’. It is not abnormal to associate Nazism with modern period by researchers because most of them define

World War II as the result of modernism's corruption. Alan Milchman and Alan Rosenberg (1998, p. 2-3) state postmodern thinkers' approach to Nazism and Holocaust in their book 'Postmodernism and Holocaust':

Foucault has argued that genocide is the dream of modern powers, and that Nazism is the manifestation of racism in its modern, 'biologizing', statist form. For Lyotard, with Auschwitz, something new has happened in history, something which challenges the very rules of knowledge which prevail in the West: Auschwitz is the most real of realities... Its name marks the confines wherein historical knowledge sees its competence impugned. The concept of a 'differend', which is central to Lyotard's thinking, is articulated through repeated reference to the Holocaust.

The war did not appear coincidentally because of the developments in society and the result of technology granting the wish of demonstrating power. All fascistic tendencies grow up through such instinct. As it is pointed out in feminism chapter, the dominance of men over women also comes from this disposition. Women suffers in postmodern as Holocaust victims had they succeeded in surviving. While Plath associates herself as being a victim of a brutal Nazi, her father, she tries to do it in 'Mary's Song' too, However, the writer composes of a suffering that did not exist during the Holocaust. Just like all people around the world, Plath was also affected by the destructive results of war. Hence, she felt herself like a Holocaust victim in an empathic manner. Sylvia Plath was a person who used to live life profoundly and internalize it into her immense inner world. In this sense, the inhuman results of the Holocaust made the writer 'radically decentred', as all human beings are in facing and feeling it (Selden, p. 211). Raman Selden (1985, p. 211) expresses this situation as 'human shock in the face of the unimaginable (pollution, holocaust, the death of the subject) results in a loss of fixed points of reference. Neither the world nor the self any longer possesses unity, coherence, meaning'. So, as a sensitive postmodern writer, Sylvia Plath reflects her feelings upon her texts as she does in 'Mary's Song'. In the introduction of poem, the speaker creates a domestic life within an ordinary housewife's ordinary Sunday:

The Sunday lamb cracks in its fat.

The fat

Sacrifices its opacity. . . .

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 257)

Mother prepares lamb, but the speaker associates 'fat' of lamb with a holy material. The writer aims to compare it with Holocaust imageries afterwards. An everyday scene in the first stanza will turn to violence in the second and third stanza:

[...]The same fire

Melting the tallow heretics,

Ousting the Jews.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 257)

Such domestic imageries are often seen in contemporary British poetry because new generation poets like Sylvia Plath, Carol Ann Duffy, Ted Hughes, Thom Gunn, Philip Larkin, and Donald Davie etc. in the United Kingdom and Ireland got rid of Romanticism's and modern writing's form. While they include irony, disappointment, violence, and cruelty in their poems, they also process domestic life as Plath explicitly had in 'Mary's Song'. According to postmodern writing, there is no truth because the subject is lost; particularly, after mass destruction and genocide during the World War II. In the post-war period, loss of reality clearly appeared with visual technological devices and media. Jean Baudrillard claims that 'film, TV and advertising have led to a loss of the distinction between real and imagined, reality and illusion, surface and depth' (Barry, p. 87). So Plath internalized the horror of Holocaust deeply and she lost her sense of reality. Jacqueline Shea Murphy, a gender researcher, inclines of Holocaust's oppression and its reflection in Sylvia Plath's poetry. While Murphy argues on Holocaust poetry of Sylvia, she defines the writer's loss of reality in those poems: 'In them, the speaker moves from the position of the oppressed – the Jew, the mutilated concentration camp victim – to that of the oppressor, capable of killing and consuming others' flesh' (Chaney, p. 17). Plath's father was a German although not a Nazi. But Sylvia loses her reality in the Holocaust poems, and she associates herself with the oppressor of a Nazi as is seen in 'Daddy'. Furthermore in 'Morning's Song', the writer associates herself with Jews who were brutally slaughtered in concentration camps. In this poem, Sylvia Plath tries to express that she feels Jews' anguish in her heart and compares such anguish with her own pain:

[...]Grey birds obsess my heart,

Mouth-ash, ash of eye.

They settle. On the high

Precipice

That emptied one man into space

The ovens glowed like heavens, incandescent.

... (Plath & Hughes, p. 257)

The mystic atmosphere of these lines shows the power of Sylvia Plath's empathy. Like her writings, such a characteristic feature of her exists throughout her life. For instance, during her Smith College years, she wrote in her journal a sentence that questions the difficulty of lesbians in society at that time: 'Why is it impossible to think of two women of middle-age living together without Lesbianism the solution, the motive?' (Plath 2000). In spite of being a heterosexual woman, her statement in this sentence is a clear evident of Plath's empathic approach to everything around her. She is aware of Jews' anguish during the World War II as well as her own anguish. This awareness can be accepted as a result of the postmodern period's outcomes; particularly in terms of technological advancement. One of postmodernisms main perceptions is that, visual media (TV, cinema etc.) has many effects on people. During the post-war period, there were made a lot of films made about World War II. Here are names of some movies which films made during this period:

- 'The Hours of Hope': A 1955 film by Jan Rybkowski, with Jewish characters.
- 'The Proud and Profane': A 1956 war film by George Seaton; a drama telling the story of a woman whose husband dies during war and her struggle to find her husband's killers. This film reflects the oppression of women with husbands at war.
- 'Reach for the Sky': This British film from 1956, by Lewis Gilbert. This is biographical film. It shows the inhuman side of ware through the example of a fragmented body,
- 'The Betrayal': A 1957 film by Ernest Morris. This is the story of a man who was tortured by Nazis and became blind because of it.

- ‘Samson’: It is a Polish film directed by Andrej Wajda in 1961. This film tells about the Holocaust in Poland, reflecting the cruel side of Nazis.
- ‘Judgement at Nuremberg’: A 1961 American, talking about the post-World War II International Tribunals in Nuremberg regarding the Nazis.
- ‘The Counterfeit Traitor’: A 1962 war film directed by American George Seaton. This is a good film that reflecting the moral outcome of World War II. Alexander Klein’s novel inspired was the basis for this film.

Technological innovations made a great effect on mass culture in terms of structuring ideas, interests, expressions, and dispositions etc. of people in the postmodern period. Television and cinema have, in particular, dominated human beings’ senses. Hence, movies can easily influence people’s sense of reality. As a result, such a response was translated into works of art. Norman Denzin (1991, p. vii-vii) expresses this in his book on postmodernism and emphasizes the impact of television and cinema in postmodern period:

“I examine the basic thesis (taken from Baudrillard) that members of the contemporary world are voyeurs adrift in the sea of symbols. If this is so, then an essential part of the contemporary postmodern American seen can be found in the images and meanings that flow from cinema and TV.”

Furthermore, in 1963, there is a sentence highlighting the contact of cinema with society in the cover of the famous American ‘Time’ magazine. According to it ‘cinema has descended on the rising generation’ (Laist, p. 31). Plath can be included into this group of the ‘rising generation’ as a member of post-war American youth. The power of visual technology on teenagers in the beginning of the postmodern period was very clear and as a social girl, Plath was also indifferent to the hobby of going to the cinema. She used to like watching films this was a routine activity for her. The writer was ultra sensitive and this reflected in her feelings in writings. During the 1950s, and following, war films were very popular in cinematic life and Plath was interested in them. For example, on January 15th, 1955, Sylvia (2000, p. 194) wrote her impressions on a war film after she had just watched it:

I have just come back from a film: ‘die letzte brücke’. It was a German-Jugoslav film about the war, and the partisans fighting the Germans. And the people were real people with dirty shining faces and I loved them. They were simple. They were men and both sides were wrong and both sides were right. They were human beings and they were not Grace Kelley, but they were beautiful from inside like Joan of arc, with that kind of radiance that faith makes, and the kind that love makes.

Sylvia Plath was a more sensitive writer than a common sense writer and this made her one of the pioneer of confessional poetry and, furthermore Western poetry. War films had a great effect on her mystical images of war poems. In *Mary's Song*, the speaker reflects the fear of losing her child. Such a fear can be seen in many other of Plath's other poems as well. For instance, in the 'First Voice' of the poem 'Three Women', Plath expresses losing her baby. But in 'Mary's Song', the writer accentuates the inevitability of this because this is a destiny for humanity, for the (wo)man's evil side has existed since the dawn of history. In the last stanza of the poem, Sylvia Plath implies that her child's loss is inextricable as the Holocaust was too. The speaker states that her child will experience the same harm as Jews did World War II:

*[...]It is a heart,
This holocaust I walk in,
O golden child the world will kill and eat.
(Plath & Hughes, p. 257)*

This is a poem that interlocks both religious and historical images in the frame of postmodernist style. The mystical atmosphere of 'Mary's Song' is a good example of the writer's hyperreal side, as the 'real' can no longer exist after the Holocaust's inhuman, cruel, and brutal results. The writer's postmodernist narrative is a challenge to the loss of moral affairs during the war. The war is accepted as the result of the 'enlightenment project' or, modern thought and the beginning of postmodern time. In this sense, Sylvia Plath's unique works can be asserted as one of the first examples of postmodern poetry.

5. CONCLUSION

Sylvia Plath, who commits suicide at a very young age, does not make a choice between life and death in one respect. Rather, she prefers to be a mysterious genius of contemporary poetry, akin to Cinderella, a character of fairy tale legend who herself becomes the mysterious guest of the party. The reputation Plath earned posthumously through her dramatic work and life is the result of her great expression of her isolation, an alienation against life and herself. She is the witch goddess of poetry with both an heir of rebelliousness and intellectual responsibility that has inspired studies in accordance with various research interests.

The poetry of Sylvia Plath is at the edge of art and the life itself. The reader of Plath can both discover the depths of her life and experience through the lines of her art. Plath poetry displays a breadth of highly emotional, pessimist, passionate, artful, and philosophic imagery. Certain compositions can disturb you with violence, tension, and marginality; certain pieces have the potential to relax you through gorgeous, vivid descriptions of nature. Nevertheless, her work is under the influence of her intricate life, with reflections of her depression and gradual mental breakdown being so extensively intense and explicit in terms of emotion. Sylvia Plath feels herself to be obsessed, and recklessly reflects that upon her words. Her creativity, intelligence, and sensitiveness is what makes her poetry effective, three elements that span the length of her writing career down to her earliest childhood dabbling in poetry. Plath was known to hate being “ordinary” and believed that there can always be something new and different in life and literature. Her fondness of new things is one of the factors making Sylvia Plath special. Despite the fact that she loved the platform of the novel very much, Plath wrote only one novel in her life. Yet ‘The Bell Jar’, which is both a novel and semi-biographical, has been accepted as the first American feminist novel by a great many literary critics. Furthermore, Plath’s journals have been a source of inspiration for many readers with through common experience and how the literature is told. For many

young girls, Sylvia's life has been a role model in terms of her sufferings, interests, happiness, and torments.

Poetry is Plath's holy scripture through which she is able to resist against life. She pays importance to writing poetry, and yet was unable to write a significant quantity due to her broken marriage. She was forced to look after children and do housework, preventing her from writing poems. Moreover, her poet husband Ted Hughes, does not help her with and through these affairs, and he writes more poetry than Plath. Sylvia thus realizes the difficulties of being both woman and poet. All handicaps that negatively affect her writing are feed principally into her depression; particularly during her last years of life. In this respect, poetry becomes her escape, her rebellion. For that reason, during her depression, Plath fills her poetry with violence. Hence, her last three years become her prime, her peak in terms of producing high quality work, producing antagonistic lines full of temper towards her husband, mother, father, and the system of society humiliating her.

As a prolific reader from childhood, Sylvia Plath was always under the spell of the books she read. For example, Plath followed of Sigmund Freud and James Frazer's books, and resultantly wrote many psychoanalytical and mythological poems. By combining her feminine experiences with contemporary disciplines, the writer gives rise to new trends in poetry. Plath's confessional and extremist poetry is a result of her staggering life, and thus the reader of Sylvia Plath is ineluctably afflicted by her poems. Some of Plath's poems are so plaintive that, they may sometimes be unendurable. Her poems' almost numbing emotional tone has attracted many readers with high artistic pleasure. Her power of renunciation from everything, even from her life, is the raw material of Plath's poems and the writer's skill of writing makes one of the strongest forms of poetry. Plath not only punishes her enemies through writing, but she also scourges herself. In a sense, this is the result of a burning-out syndrome because, as Jacques Lacan (1998, p. 319) states, 'the only thing one can be guilty of is giving up one's desire'. In her poetry, Sylvia reflects her sufferings in a very impressive way for she knows the mathematics of language well. She never needs to search for material while writing poetry because Plath's brain functions as if it is in a post-war demolished setting. She always associates herself with oppressed people and uses poetry to set

forth her own life. She prefers to write her poems in a way where she exists in life. Sylvia feels that her existence is equivalent to poetry. She attempts to construct the meaning of life by turning her strong feelings and excitement to printed letters. Rather than concrete images, Plath tries to express her feelings through abstract images. In addition to this, she likes to translate daily descriptions to abstract images by rendering them metaphysical. For example with the word 'egg', she becomes interested with its undetermined shape and composes the egg as an uncertain instinct. If she interprets a person who becomes unimportant to her, she can compare him or her with 'gas' that floats and then disappears. In her eyes, all things real makes people sad and disappointed.

This dissertation has aimed to examine Plath's poetry in the light of contemporary literary theories, and to provide a connection between her life and her work. I determined that the power of Plath's biography influencing her poems in such a way that words juxtapose as a result of her anguishes, hopes, conflicts, and disappointments. In case of sinking into a distressful life, Plath uses her work to flee from pessimist destiny.

In understanding Plath, one needs analogize her life akin to a bird living in a nest, and being empathetic towards that, for the atmosphere of the writer is not in many ways very different from it. Her smiling face never refers Plath's inner turmoil to anyone around her. Plath experiences her alienation through her role as an intellectual woman and poet. She wrote hundreds of poems, a semi-autobiographical novel, and many short stories, as well as published in 696 journals, in a century that produced the first and second world wars. Every reader, analyser, and researcher entering Sylvia Plath's literature worries about her short life, but she never accepted death as an end or defeat. Her suicide was her last poem.





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RESUME

Murat Karakoç was born in Ordu, Turkey on November 30th, 1985. He attended Ordu Anatolian Secondary School and then went on, in 2003, to study English Language Pedagogy at Atatürk University, in Erzurum, graduating in 2007. During his university years, he paid attention to literature and he was interested in literary works of English Literature. Drama and Poetry were the genres of literature that took his interest much. Between 2009 and 2011, Murat completed a Master of Arts in English Language and Literature at Kafkas University. In 2012, Murat carried on in the advancement of his education, starting his PhD in English Literature at the University of Istanbul-Aydin. He concentrated on American and English poetry and contemporary literary theories. Murat is the proud of father of little Deniz. Deniz is the most inspiring person in Murat's life for he holds Deniz's hand whenever he is so tired. He devotes his free time to reading and writing poetry in both his native Turkish and adopted English.