

Eros in Sylvia Plath`s Selected Poems

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No. and date of approval: 27/9/61 in 12/3/2019

پوخته

ئەم توێژینه‌وه‌یه به شیکی هه‌له‌ینجراوه له پرۆژه تیزیکى دکتورا به‌ناو نیشانی غه‌ریزه‌ی ژيان و غه‌ریزه‌ی مردن له درسه‌کردنی چهند شعریکى سلفییا پلاپ و ئان سیکتۆن. "دیمه‌نى زیندوو بونه‌وه له شیعره‌کانی سلیقیه پلاپ", ییکهاتوو له دیمه‌نى زیندوو بونه‌وه له دوو شیعی به‌ناوبانگیدا: "Full Fathom Five" ۱۹۵۸ز، "The Colossus" ۱۹۵۹ز، "وه شیعره‌کانی پیشوی پلاپ ئەو شیعراوه ده‌گرێته‌وه که له نیوان سالانی ۱۹۵۶ بۆ ۱۹۶۲ نوسراون، له سه‌ره‌تای شوکردنی به تێد هیوگس تاوه‌کو جیا‌بوونه‌وه‌ی. له‌م ماوه‌یه‌دا که به ماوه‌ی خو‌شى ده‌ناسریت، پلاپ زۆر دل‌خۆشه له‌گه‌ڵ می‌رده‌که‌ی. له‌به‌رئه‌وه‌ی که وه‌کو باوکی سه‌یری می‌رده‌که‌ی ده‌کات، له‌م ماوه‌دا پلاپ باوکی به‌که‌سیکی گه‌وره‌و پیرۆز ده‌بینیت وه دیمه‌نى ئیجابی و روناک به‌کارده‌هینیت بۆ وه‌سفکردنی باوکی وه بۆ گه‌رانه‌وه‌ی بۆ ژيان، ئەمه‌ش ئەوه‌ پيشان ده‌دات که پلاپ هيشتا هیوايه‌کی که‌می به‌ ژيان ماوه.

الملخص

هذا البحث مأخوذ من رساله الدكتوراه بعنوان "الحياة والموت في دراسة بعض قصائد سلفيا بلاث و ان سيكستون"، حيث يتكوّن من مشهد الموت والانبعاث في اثنتين قصائد مشهورة لها وهي: "Full Fathom Five" 1958م، "The Colossus" 1959م، "قصائد بلاث السابقة هي القصائد التي كتبت بين أعوام (1956 و 1962)، في بداية زواجها من تيد هيوغس حتى انفصالهما، هذه المرحلة والتي عُرفت بمرحلة السعادة، كانت بلاث سعيدة جداً مع زوجها، لأنّها كانت تنظر إلى زوجها كما تنظر إلى والدها، في هذه المرحلة كانت ثلاث ترى أنّ والدها شخص كبير ومقدّس، لذا كانت تستعمل المشاهد الإيجابية والمضيئة في وصف والدها. وهذا يدلّ على أنّها كان لديها شيء من الأمل بالحياة.

Abstract

This paper is an extract from a PhD dissertation which is entitled "Eros and Thanatos: A Study in Selected Poems of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton".

Plath's early poems include those poems which are written by Plath from 1956 to 1961; from the beginning of her marriage to Ted Hughes until her separation. In this period, which is called the calm and brighter period, Plath is very pleased with her husband. As she looks at her husband as her father, during this period she thinks of her father as a great and holy person. In her early poems like "Full Fathom Five" and "The Colossus", she uses light and positive imagery to describe her father and bring him to life again, and she has a little hope. The image of rebirth has its own significance in this study and we illustrate it in two of her poems. This study discusses Eros in "Full Fathom Five" and "The Colossus" through the psychoanalytic approach.

Keywords: Eros, rebirth. Sylvia Plath, Full Fathom Five, The Colossus.

1- The Biography of Sylvia Plath

Sylvia Plath is considered as one of the best-known American poetic voices since the Second World War. She achieves fame through her death, and along with Anne Sexton originates an era of American poetry. Few twentieth century women poets in the English language have earned such success or been surrounded by such burdensome cloaks of legend as Sylvia Plath. She writes poetry that deals with very personal and painful subjects in her life. Her poetry is confessional in nature and she is a troubled woman who tragically takes her own life. The imagery and attitudes in her poetry have their roots in her life experience. She writes without embarrassment or excuse, with remarkable passion, savagery and courage. (Gill: 3)

Sylvia Plath lived an outwardly exemplary life. She led a tragic existence from her childhood to her death, her life had influenced her writing, especially her later age. There is no doubt about that if she had not had such a tragic life, she would have missed the chance to write such dreadful and frightful poems. She was afflicted with her father's death while she was a little girl. Furthermore she was grievously affected with a discontented marriage which ended with divorce. As a result toward the end of her life, she was left alone with her two children and confronting the difficulty of life(Gill:4).

She was born in Boston, on 27th October, 1932 in Jamaica plain, Massachusetts. Her father, Otto Emile Plath, an immigrant from Grabow, Germany, was a professor of biology at Boston University and the author of a book about bumblebees. Her mother, Aurelia Schober Plath, a first generation American of Jewish Austrian descent, was almost twenty-one years younger than her husband. Aurelia met Otto Plath when she participated in one of his classes at Boston University. They got married in January 1932 and continued to stay and live in Boston. Sylvia's brother, Warren, was born in April 1935. The family moved to Winthrop Massachusetts in 1936 and Sylvia spent much of her childhood in Johnson Avenue. Otto Plath had treatable diabetes but he thought that he had lung cancer. When a close friend died of lung cancer, Otto became convinced that he, too, had lung cancer and did not seek treatment until his diabetes progressed too far and caused a leg amputation and was operated on. After this operation, he stayed in hospital until he died in 1940. Sylvia was eight years old when her father died. Meantime she published her first poem in the Boston Herald Children's section. After her

father's death, she experienced a loss of faith and remained ambivalent about religion throughout her life. Although it is not apparent from her biography, through her autobiographical novel *The Bell Jar*, one might see that Plath attempting her first suicide at the age of ten by swimming in the hope of drowning but was pulled back. So the death wish is, evidently, deep-rooted in Plath. (Bloom, 2001: 11)

2. Confessional poetry

Confessional poetry belongs to a group of poets of the United States from the late 1950s to the late 1960s. The best examples of confessional poetry are Robert Lowell's "Life Studies"(1959) and "For the Union Dead" (1964) which deal with his divorce and mental breakdowns , Anne Sexton's "To Bedlam" and "Part Way Back" (1960) and "All My Pretty Ones" (1962) that carry the idea of abortion and life in a mental hospital , John Berryman's "Dream Songs" (1964) on alcoholism and insanity , Sylvia Plath's *Ariel poems* (1965) on suicide, and W. D. Snodgrass's "Heart's Needle" (1969) on her divorce . The term "Confessional Poetry" was first used by M. L. Rosenthal in 1959 in a review of Robert Lowell's Life Studies. Although the term is applied to Robert Lowell's poems, it is Sylvia Plath who is known as the best confessionalist after the posthumous publication of her second poetry collection *Ariel* (1965) (Bloom, 2007, 7-8). It seemed to compose a break with poetic tradition, and widening the scope of admissible subject matter to include intimate and disturbing experiences formerly classified as too personal sometimes too embarrassing for serious art (Middlebrook, 2000: xiii). It is an autobiographical mode of verse that shows the poet's personal troubles with unusual frankness ; it is the poetry of personal and private experiences in



which different feelings and thoughts about traumatic experiences (e.g. death , morbid conditions , relationships) and emotional shocks are expressed in this type of poetry , often in an autobiographical manner . Private and taboo subject matter understood in psychological terms gave confessional poetry its distinctive character.

3- Psychoanalytic Approach to Plath's poems

Psychoanalysis is one of the approaches to interpret the psychological aspects of any literary work including the stories, the characters and the authors. Psychoanalytic literary criticism is derived first from the work of Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) to show the unconscious

forces , desires and fears that are hidden beyond our mind . Freud's major theory is the generational conflict between children and parents which is called Oedipus Complex. This theory is based on the feelings of sexual desire which a boy has for his mother and the jealous

feelings towards his father. For the girl it is called the Electra Complex which is the love for the father and hatred of the mother. The Electra Complex is described in Freud's *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love* which is to the girl just as the Oedipus Complex to the boy (Hall, 2001: 103,107).

The Electra Complex, which is one of the recurrent themes in the confessional poetry, can be obviously seen in Sylvia Plath's poems. At the age of eight Plath's father passed away and she is forbidden to attend the funeral. This prohibition causes her an everlasting trauma for she thinks that her father is still alive in her mind and she tries to revive her father's image in her poems , this is why she has an ambivalent relationship and feelings towards her father (Chung, 1997: 88) .

In fact the theme of the Electra Complex is vigorously used by Plath in the poem "Full Fathom Five" (1958) for she reveals it in a direct and effective way to show a sexual scene :

Your shelled bed I remember
Father , this thick air is murderous
I would breathe water (93: 43-45) .

The above lines confirm that the poet is eager to join her father by committing suicide. So here, she also expresses ambivalent feelings towards her father. One might observe that Plath's trauma throughout her life is caused by her father's early death for she is psychologically confused and suffered a lot by thinking of him and it becomes a source of inspiration for her to write. Indeed the theme of the Electra Complex is erotically expounded by Plath in *Electra on Azalea Path* (1959) , that is to say she uses sexual imagery to demonstrate her relationship with her father : "O pardon the one who knocks for pardon at / Your gate , father ... your hound bitch daughter , friend" (117: 44-45) . These lines affirm Plath's emotional feelings towards her father and that she desires to die and join her father. Freud's analysis of a girl who had the same situation as Plath's case might be concerned as he states that "a girl was totally suffering with everlasting Electra Complex when she was finally disappointed" (Freud, 1993: 134).

4- Full Fathom Five

"Full Fathom Five" belongs to a group of poems entitled *The Colossus* which was written by Sylvia Plath in 1958 and published in 1960. The title "Full Fathom Five" literally means the depth of the sea which is equal to thirty feet. But intellectually and methodologically, it is taken from the famous song of Ariel in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Martiny, 2012: 123)

Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his
Nothing of him that does fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell: Ding-dong,
Hark! Now I hear them Ding-dong, bell . (Shakespeare, 1968: 395)



In the play, Ariel sings this song to Ferdinand who could swim through the tempest from the shipwreck to the island. Ferdinand believes that his father is now drowned and that he is a part of the sea and the Ariel tells him that his father is thirty feet under the water. Similarly, Plath thinks that her father is part of the sea . She spends her childhood by swimming and sunbathing on America's North Atlantic coast but now after her father's death and her leaving away from the coast , she tries to cherish the memory of her father and her childhood . So, childhood happiness ends with the death of her father as it moves Plath away from the location in which such happiness is possessed . Wagner states "The time before her father's death had become idealized for Plath" (2000:160) . Since Plath's poetic treatment of the seascapes indicates her psychological disturbance as she believes that she can join her father by writing about the sea and even at the age of ten she tried her first suicide attempt by swimming in the hope of drowning. Concerning her childhood memory on the sea, Plath says : "And this is how it stiffens, my vision of that seaside childhood . 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, 1979:124) .

Plath's "Full Fathom Five" is the first poem which is written about her father as a sea god. Plath herself describes "Full Fathom Five" as "one of the best and curiously moving poems about my father-sea-god muse" (Plath, 1979:339). She portrays her father as a majestic, magnificent and grandiose figure, and she feels of his presence in her life and her desire to join him in the sea :

Old man, you surface seldom.
Then you come in with the tide's coming
When seas wash cold, foam-
Capped: white hair, white beard, far-flung,
A dragnet, rising, falling, as waves
Crest and trough. Miles long (92, 1-6)

At the very beginning of the poem, Plath sheds light on the image of rebirth as she imagines that her father rarely comes up in the sea "You surface seldom" . The metaphors and diction which are used by Plath display the sympathy and love she feels toward her father after his death . Plath thinks that her father is resurrected when he is pushed by the waves of the sea . She compares his hair to a dragnet (a fishing net dragged along the bottom of a body of water) that rises and falls with the waves. The concept of the sea and the waves refers to Plath's childhood memory as she permanently thinks that her father is a part of the sea and by looking at the sea she sees him and gives her comfort and relaxation as she states "When I was learning to creep, my mother set me down on the beach to see what I thought of it . I crawled straight for the coming waves and was just through the wall of green when she caught my heels" (Plath, 1979: 117).

Plath has an imaginative and romantic depiction of her father when he is floating . As she hopes her father's resurrection , she thinks that when her father floats on the sea he has become older ; his hair is white , spread and there are wrinkles and knots on his face . She even compares her father to the old myth that is unimaginable and she glorifies her father as the ice-mountains are kneeling for him:

Extend the radial sheaves
Of your spread hair, in which wrinkling skeins
Knotted, caught, survives
The old myth of origins
Unimaginable. You float near
As kneeled ice-mountains (92, 7-12)

Another reason that Plath links her father to the sea is that, during her childhood she hears a poem of Mathew Arnold from her mother " The Forsaken Merman " in this poem the Merman is depressed and bewailed because his wife leaves him for the land and never comes back to the



undersea world and she neglects him. Eventually, the Merman goes to the land to find his lost wife. According to Plath's imagination she has the same case as Merman but the difference is that her father goes to sea and she remains on land. At the end of the poem the Merman sings mournfully

There dwells a lov'd one,
But cruel is she.
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea . (Arnold: 105)

This circumstance leads Plath to discover both where her father dwells and her creative writing of poetry which is one of the reasons that Plath called the sea " her poetic heritage" (Plath, 1976: 345) . This probation makes Plath think that writing poetry about the sea and her lost father is the means of lamenting, rebuilding and reunion with her father. The concept of the sea connects Plath's childhood memory with the events of the tempest, her father's image in the sea and even her husband who is thought to be her father's substitute. Plath says:

"Full Fathom Five" has the background of *The Tempest*, the association of the sea, which is a central metaphor for my childhood , my poems and the artist's subconscious , to the father image relating to my own father , the buried male muse and god-creator risen to be my mate in Ted , to the sea-father Neptune and the pearls and coral highly-wrought to art: pearls sea changed from the ubiquitous grit of sorrow and dull routine (Plath, 1979: 222) .

Then , Plath describes the strangeness and peculiarity of her father after his surfacing and resurrecting :

Of the north, to be steered clear
Of, not fathomed. All obscurity
Starts with a danger:
Your dangers are many. I
Cannot look much but your form suffers
Some strange injury (92, 13-18)

Plath knows that her father is dead, yet psychologically she thinks that he is part of the sea and he may come back to her , therefore, she is waiting for her father on the shore which is the border of her kingdom. Then she depicts the deformity of her father after resurrection. She believes that her father is punished since he leaves his daughter alone from her childhood. Her father's body is deformed and dangerous in such a way that even Plath is unable to look at him. Here, Plath's psychological disturbance clearly can be felt as she is subconsciously shifting her opinions towards her father from nobility to obscurity and from myth to danger. Moreover, her belief is changing to the idea of death :

And seems to die: so vapors
Ravel to clearness on the dawn sea.
The muddy rumors
Of your burial move me
To half-believe: your reappearance
Proves rumors shallow, (93, 19-24)

Here , Plath is entirely mystified within the idea of death and rebirth . She has been led to half-belief in the death of her father but she hopes him to revive and she has been awaiting him. She is eager to see her father again despite of his deformity and danger and risk. As death and rebirth are the major current themes in most of Plath's poems , she thinks that the only way to join her father is death . Marjory Stone states that Plath's "Full Fathom Five" imagines self-destruction and explicitly suggests that a suicide would reunite the speaker with her dead father" (Stone and Thompson , 2006 : 272) . Thus , Plath is remembering her father when she is thinking of contemplating suicide and end up her life . Rita Horvath explains :



In "Full Fathom Five" Plath attempted to identify one calamity, her father's untimely death, as the original traumatic loss that included, epitomized, and caused all the other traumatic losses of her life.... Plath's poems reveal that the identification of trauma is by no means unequivocal or satisfactory. Many of Plath's critics sense this deficiency and suggest alternative traumas, psychoanalytic, medical, or feminist in nature (Horvath, 2005: 56-57).

In the following lines, Plath makes a philosophical and skilful depiction of death. As everyone throughout the world have different desires and hopes to be earned in the future, her only anticipation and hope is to join her father in death so as to be resurrected in a better way:

For the archaic trenched lines
Of your grained face shed time in runnels:
Ages beat like rains
On the unbeaten channels
Of the ocean. Such sage humor and
Durance are whirlpools (93, 25-30)

She sheds light on the duration of the age which is passing swiftly just like the speed of rains. She also compares the passage of time to the waterfall that runs down into the ocean. Plath's intention of this description is to satisfy herself that her age is passing quickly and approaching to the end which is death. So, she always indicates the idea of death and rebirth in her poems. She insists on joining her father in the sea as she wants to get rid of the earth:

To make away with the ground-
Work of the earth and the sky's ridgepole.
Waist down, you may wind
One labyrinthine tangle
To root deep among knuckles, shinbones,
Skulls. Inscrutable, (93, 31-36)

Plath keenly tries her best to extract herself from the current life and join her father in the sea which is the permanent world. Then she describes the waist of her father's body that is rooted into knuckles, shine-bones and skulls. Here, Plath once again connects her depiction of her father to Ariel's song who tells Ferdinand that his father's body is not coral, but remains like the husk of the hermit crab. In both descriptions the dead bodies are unchanged but rather sunk in the water so as to resurface and appear again. At the end of the poem, Plath becomes impatient towards her father as she shows her father's pride and vanity. He ignores her and he does not reply to her as she is on the shore and waits for his response:

You defy questions;
You defy godhood.
I walk dry on your kingdom's border
Exiled to no good.
Your shelled bed I remember.
Father, this thick air is murderous.
I would breathe water. (93, 39-45)

Eventually she believes that her staying on the land is useless when she is far from her father. And the direction of Plath's attention and idea is varying when the old man is finally called father. As she is unable to persuade her father to be resurrected and come back to her, she thinks of joining him in the sea and breathes water instead of air. Anne Stevenson says:

Although Otto Plath had died two years earlier, the family's move away from the sea dramatically sealed him in a moonstruck, glassed in compartment of Sylvia's imagination, where he evolved into his godlike /devil-like manifestations, strippe of reality. Eventually she came to associate her father with a block of time she had sealed into a never land of childhood (1990:12).



Here, the most outstanding point of shifting location for Plath is that , she always wants to entertain the memory of her childhood . As she is deprived of her father and the sea at the very beginning of her life, now she wants to compensate them and go back to both of them. For Plath the sea and her father are two unseparated twin, her deprivation of the sea is as painful as the death of her father.

5 The Colossus

"The Colossus" is a poem written by Sylvia Plath in October 1959. It is also the title of her first collection of poems published in the UK in October 1960 by William Heinemann , and in the USA in 1962 by Knopf . This collection is very significant as Linda-Wagner Martin says "In *The Colossus* which is her first collection of poems she writes with a degree of assurance that would be rare in her contemporaries of either sex on this side of the Atlantic" (Wagner-Martin: 32) . In the poem "The Colossus" Plath transforms the image of her father into a huge colossus that once prevailed over the harbor at Rhodes in ancient Greece , which lies now into pieces . The Colossus at Rhodes was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and it was the Greek sun god . It is estimated to have been 100 to 115 feet high and was destroyed in an earthquake in 224 B.C.

In "The Colossus", Plath ascertains a personal experience about her relationship with her father. She loves and hates him at the same time because he still influences her life. The main theme of "The Colossus" is recreating and rebuilding. Plath thinks that the Colossus is her father's dead body that has been destroyed within the passage of time. Comparing her father to

the Colossus exposes Plath's psychological alluring to her father and her admiration for the colossal power that her father once possessed.

Plath's selection of "The Colossus" as the title for her poem and her first collection of poetry raises her fear of the monumental stone and of violent natural destruction , powerful gods and history . Although Plath loves her father and she wants to glorify and magnify him by comparing him to a well-known huge statue, from the beginning of the poem it is obvious that Plath is unable to re-erect and repair the statue which is broken into pieces. It means that her father just like the statue is unable to be resurrected and regained to the real father as she wanted (Bloom, 2001:15).

I shall never get you put together entirely,
Pieced, glued, and properly jointed.
Mule-bray, pig-grunt and bawdy cackles
Proceed from your great lips.
It's worse than a barnyard. (129, 1-5)

She is unable to put the broken pieces of the statue together, it means that her father's force and power will not be reestablished since the broken statue represents the death of her father.. As Plath is psychologically confused between love and hatred towards her father, she belittles the role and prestige of the great statue to compare it with some animals that make sounds. Here, Plath may refer to the religious aspect as she thinks that making this sound implies that her father cries because he is accused and tortured for leaving his daughter. Although Plath does not believe in religion but she thinks so just to please and satisfy her inner side.

Melanie Klein (1988, 344) states that Plath's sorrow and trauma from the loss of her father is apparently destructive and profound, therefore, the early mourning of her father forced her to the depressive position that later reacted in her life and her poems. So, her father's death leaves a hole in her inner world this is why she struggles to reinstate her father and her inner world. Plath writes in her journal "I rail and rage against the taking of my father ... my villanelle was to my father; and the best one. I lust for the knowing of him" (Plath, 2000: 129). Here, Plath tries to regain the lost loved object by writing poetry. Thus, writing about her father through her

poems not only enabled her to make contact with her lost father but also to restore and reestablish her shattered inner world.

In the second stanza Plath realizes that her attempt to recreate her father and to bring him back to life is useless, that is why Steven Gould states that Plath describes the image of her father as an object rather than a human being. Her father remains as a symbol just like the colossus not as individual. (1998, 26)

Perhaps you consider yourself an oracle,
Mouthpiece of the dead, or of some god or other.
Thirty years now I have labored
To dredge the silt from your throat.
I am none the wiser. (129, 6-10)

Plath concentrates on her failure that she is unable to revive her father and to speak with him for many years.. Hanna Segal describes Plath's feeling as the manic-depression or the paranoid-schizoid position ; as she is torn between love and hatred towards her father she is in a manic position to raise her father . Hanna Segal States :

To protect itself from total despair the ego must have recourse to violent defence mechanisms. Those defense mechanisms which protect it from the feelings arising out of the loss of the good object form a system of manic defences . The essential features of manic defences are denial of psychic reality , omnipotent control and a partial regression to the paranoid position and its defences: splitting, idealization, denial, projective identification, etc. This regression strengthens the fear of persecution and that in turn leads to the strengthening of omnipotent control (Segal: 197) .

Plath reveals that her father considers himself a religious authoritative source or a god "Perhaps you consider yourself an oracle / Mouthpiece of the dead or of some god or other". in fact Plath psychologically confused and she regards her father as her private god of poetry. Her father's death always becomes a source of inspiration for Plath to write poetry and she gives immortal life to her father in her poems. Grace Shulman (2010 : 2) says " 'The Colossus' represents a turning point in her poems about the father , about the gods in her mythology , and about what she speaks of as her 'death' the failed suicide attempt of 1953"

Plath's endeavor to re-erect the statue is getting worse . She compares her father to the colossus as she wants to resurrect her father and brings him back to life . The tools and devices she uses to repair the statue are inadequate as the ladder is small and the gluepot is farcical for her work . Here , she affirms the greatness of her father's once again as she describes herself as an ant crawling and mourning . When she is unable to forget her father , she is impatiently trying to mend his head which has become just a skull and his eyes which are hopelessly bald . So , she acquires her self-assurance and mental satisfaction only through attending , serving and repairing her colossal-like father . She alludes to take the role of the heroine who tends the statue and exerts to resurrect the dead father through writing her poems . regarding Plath's relationship with her father and her psychological disturbance with male figures Rees-Jones Deryn says :

Deryn (2005: 105) believes that "The Colossus" explores Plath's identification and resurrection of the father, at a time when she has returned to her country of birth . . . it points up how the poem is exploring the relationship Plath has between male and female integrated self , her English and American self, playing out both on screen and in still images , part of her continuing mythology of her relationships with men.

Scaling little ladders with gluepots and pails of Lysol
I crawl I like an ant in mourning
Over the weedy acres of your brow
To mend the immense skull-plates and clear



The bald, white tumuli of your eyes. (129, 11-15)

Plath still strives to praise her father as she uses light imagery and metaphors to describe him. She has hope as she describes the blue sky that bending over them as “out of the Oresteia” a trilogy of ancient Greek plays. She also praises the role of her father to compare him to the Roman Forum and shows her hair as “acanthine” which is the acanthus leaf that was repeatedly used as part of the sculptural décor at the top of the ancient Greek columns. Accordingly, she describes the colossus and her father as part of the famous historical Greek tradition of art and civilization (Bloom, 2001: 16).

Plath's intention to use mythological references is to create an epic dimension. She is no longer the unknown girl who mourns and laments the death of her father, but rather a prototype of the mythological Electra. So, her piety and devotion to her father becomes a kind of destructive obsession rather than love:

A blue sky out of the Oresteia
Arches above us. O father, all by yourself
You are pithy and historical as the Roman Forum.
I open my lunch on a hill of black cypress.

Your fluted bones and acanthine hair are littered (129, 16-20)

Plath's love for her father is so influential that she creates visionary and fancy world for both of them. Once she states “A blue sky out of Oresteia” she considers herself and her father as characters out of a Greek drama which means that they are unreal people. Consequently, they become more than themselves when they are identified with the devoted daughter and dead father archetype. Keiko Kimura says “This poem tells the story of the speaker's Electra Complex. She regards her father as the hero of the Oresteia. The speaker's psyche is made by a patriarchal culture. She devotes herself to the patriarch” (17). Thus, Plath is keenly adhering and sticking to her father that apparently relates her to the concept of Electra Complex. The reference to black colour is vital and significant as the power and supremacy of the colossus is a dark one offering no pity or passion at all. In her later poems, “Ariel” Plath uses the black colour

recurrently to describe her father, while she always uses white colour for herself which hints her impotence and weakness in front of her father.

As Plath is failed in resurrecting her father and bringing him back to life, obligingly she describes the enormity of his death that is an immense ruin:

In their old anarchy to the horizon-line.
It would take more than a lightning-stroke
To create such a ruin.
Nights, I squat in the cornucopia
Of your left ear, out of the wind, (130, 21-25)

Plath's confusion and mystification might clearly be observed as she is tirelessly shifting her ideas from the attempting of resurrecting her father to the description of his death and then she demonstrate her fears of the grandeur of the collapsed colossus. Margaret Dickie says “Her fears also center on the catastrophe that produced the crumbling of the idol. This admission, if the statue is her father or a dying god, recalls Plath's early poetic concerns about creative paralysis and the sense of a collapsing order” (2010 : 1). Yet, in spite of her pessimism and amid her despair, there is still relief and comfort as the narrator stays during the nights “Nights I squat in the cornucopia”. A close relationship and intimation can be felt between Plath and the colossus as she contentedly reveals that she is safe with squatting in his ear which can no longer listen but can keep and protect her. The ear is not just described to protect her but also as a cornucopia which is the opposite of ruin and death. Jahan Ramazani (1994:282-83) states:

In ‘The Colossus’ she begins by mocking the dead man's vast incoherence but by the end of the poem she seems to have been sucked into his enormous bulk. She has partially

reserved this picture by her last paternal elegy, her discourse expanding to envelop her dead father, dilating into heterogeneous and imperious modes that could incorporate him.

There is an important image in the last stanza. Here the colossus is straightly under the light of the sun, whereas Plath keeps herself and stays in the shadow. This image indicates that Plath has to live under the shadow of some male power; being either the force of her late father's memory or under the domain of her husband. This need springs from the lack of confidence and emotional insecurity. She married Ted Hughes to be a replacement of her father. Henceforth, the image of the shadow shows Plath's conflict between self and other's dominion. Since she confesses that her "hours are married to shadow", she affirms that she is bound to the memory of her father; thus to death itself:

Counting the red stars and those of plum-color.
The sun rises under the pillar of your tongue.
My hours are married to shadow.
No longer do I listen for the scrape of a keel
On the blank stones of the landing. (130, 26-30)

The image of sunrise might also be considered. As she is bound to her father and she thinks that she is under his shadow, she uses the image of sunrise just to prolong her life and to remain married to shadow then obliquely married to her dead father. Steven Gould Axelord notices in 'The Colossus' the textual 'I' states that her "hours are married to shadow" that is, to the soul of the inanimate and oppressive father-husband who lives only in her remembrance. As a result, she herself becomes increasingly shadow like" (1990: 2). In fact, Plath fails to make a shadow of her own, thus her poetic creativity lacks the full maturity she would have possessed if she had been free and independent. The crucial self is imprisoned by both the internal lack of confidence and the external authoritarian male figures.

Finally, Plath states that she will not concern herself with listening to the scrape of a keel on the colossus's stone. Describing the image "keel" again refers to the Colossus statue from ancient times, for the statue stood astride a harbor entrance where ships would sail under its legs. So, the last two lines show a woman who is exhausted of waiting and hoping "No longer do I listen for the scrape of a keel / On the blank stones of the landing". Plath is perhaps becoming a

shadow of her estranged self. The landing stones are "blank" of promise; she will not be sailing anymore to the shores of hope. Eventually, the poem concludes with the notion that the more Plath attempts to flee the memory of her father, the more she is bound to him, which means that she is entrapped within her world of agony and disturbance. Thus, she can never forget her father and she exerts to use different images to relish the memory of him and to bring him back to life which alludes to the image of rebirth.

Conclusion

The reason behind writing about Sylvia Plath's poems is that, she is considered to be one of the most outstanding poets in the twentieth century. As Plath's poems precisely reflect the misery and melancholy of her own life, the readers are effectively attracted and shocked by her disastrous life and experiences. So, through her poems, the reader becomes familiar with her private life.

One can notice that the theme of Eros has a significant place in Sylvia Plath's poetry and she would like to have a normal childhood just like any other children. Throughout this study we realize that she wants to compensate the absence of her father with something else. She creates an imaginary world sometimes she compares her father with the sea another time she compares her father with the statue. She intends just to fill the gap she encounters due to the missing of her father. She attempts to get some kind of comfort at least for a while it means that she is seeking for pleasure that is the aim of everyone in this life yet she can never reach it.



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