



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**English Literature**

**PSYCHOLOGY AND FEMINISM: EXPLORING SYLVIA PLATH: A REVIEW**

**KEY WORDS:** Sylvia Plath, Psychoanalysis, Feminism

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**ABSTRACT**

Sylvia Plath is an American poet, novelist, as well as short story writer. She is renowned for her incredibly intimate and candid poetry and is regarded as one of the most significant writers of the 20th century. Because of the intensely personal and frequently unsettling aspects of her writing, which represent her battles with mental illness as well as her emotions of hopelessness and loneliness, Plath is a contentious figure in literary history. Many her works of stories and poems are regarded as personal, and she frequently explores themes of death, sadness, and self-destruction in her writings. Plath's contentious reputation has also been influenced by her life and death. While some criticise Plath's writing for its depressing and gloomy themes, others saw her as a feminist icon or an advocate for the underprivileged. She is still regarded as among the most popular and extensively researched poets of the twentieth century, and her writings and life continue to spark conversation. This review paper tries to delve deep into the psychological and feministic aspects of Sylvia Plath.

In a research article FROM A VICTIM OF THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE TO A HEROINE OF FEMINIST DECONSTRUCTION: REVISITING SELECTED POEMS OF SYLVIA PLATH (2014), A. Mahdi Maher evaluates that the development of identity in Sylvia Plath's poetry influenced by the unique historical environment of their time, and her writings reflect the ideological goals of their social milieu. Her artistic output is mostly influenced by the Civil Rights Movement's ideals, which upheld American women's right to cultural autonomy. During the 1960s and 1970s, women's efforts to resist patriarchal appropriation were a prominent feature of this historical period. This study purports to investigate some selected poems by Sylvia Plath and Sylvia Plath was portrayed in these poems as a tenacious feminist author and activist right up until her passing. The research tracks the poet's transformation from a defenceless object into a combatant who sought to prevail in every conflict she had with men. Many of Plath's poems explore the experience of women who are perceived as commodities or objects and are thus denied the right to be autonomous individuals

In a research paper titled A Psychoanalytic Study of Sylvia Plath (2016) Feirstein Frederick observes Part of Sylvia Plath's resentment against her controlling but loving mother was directed on her late father and her husband, whom she mourned and abandoned. Her bipolarity and the schizoid illness brought on by the symbiosis contributed to her suicide. Her anger towards the men also symbolised her fight to stop it. This essay's main goal is to examine how, within the framework of her life, the tone and subject matter of her most recent novel, Ariel, combined to create one lengthy suicide note, despite its exquisite writing. Her illness is surmounted in her most readable poetry, including "Daddy," "Lady Lazarus," and "Edge." Her pathology is dominant in others. Ariel Plath eventually drowned herself in a gas oven, just like she would have in the ocean, a crucial metaphor for her mother, in an attempt to transform oneself into a tragic, mythological heroine.

In a research article Sylvia Plath: a psycho-biographical study (2018) Panelatti, Francesca Angela examines that researchers from around the country and world have come to support the importance of psycho-biographical study due to a rise in interest in this field. Despite a rise in psycho-biographies on notable South Africans, most of these have concentrated on male research subjects, despite the country's contributions to society being recognised on a national and international scale. Psychologists in South Africa might be inspired to investigate notable and remarkable women who influenced history, domestically or internationally, given the country's endeavours to advance female empowerment in the aftermath of apartheid. One of the most significant and well-known people of the 20th century is Sylvia Plath. There isn't a

comprehensive psychological analysis of Sylvia Plath's life in any of the literature that are currently available. So, using purposive selection, the researcher chose her as the topic of this psychobiography in order to provide a psychological analysis and description of some parts of her life within the context of her socio-historical background. By utilising several psychological frameworks to analyse the historical and biographical information gathered about Sylvia Plath, this goal was achieved.

In a research paper titled The Psychiatric Profile of a Woman within the Collected Prose of Sylvia Plath cis owicz, Agnieszka examine the select few passages from Plath's writing that seem to best capture the intricacy of her mind and provide a comprehensive psychological profile of her. For those who are unfamiliar with Plath's life, her writing may seem difficult to comprehend. Plath's biography is presented in a way that illustrates how her life and the project's theme of examined works are related. The Journals and Letters Home are the ideal addition to Plath's life story. Plath portrays herself as a mentally independent lady who expresses all of her bad emotions in an honest and transparent manner. Journals present us with a more authentic Sylvia Plath. She expresses her anger towards her mom and the unfulfilling life she leads. A completely different picture of Sylvia—one of a happy, vibrant person who adores her mother and has a close bond with her—emerges from Letters Home. Plath wrote Aurelia a letter detailing every significant occasion in her life. Letters between the mother and daughter show a psychological dependence. In Letters, Plath plays a devout mother and wife, an American in her fifties who gives her all for her family. The Bell Jar is Plath's lone book, which was released under a pen name and turned out to be her greatest posthumous hit. It's a tale about a Boston girl named Esther Greenwood who wins a one-month visit in New York City from the highly read magazine. Esther is dissatisfied with reality even when her fantasy comes true. The main character finally wants to end her days in the "bell jar" as her indifference and unhappiness grow. Esther attempts suicide but is unsuccessful due to her desperation. One can consider The Bell Jar to be an autobiographical work if they have a solid understanding of Sylvia's biography and have read the journals and letters home.

In a paper Anguished Psyche is Selected Poems of Sylvia Plath (2020) Thapa, Bishnu examine how Sylvia Plath's Selected Poems depict the Anguished Psyche. The aetiology of her psychic problems will be investigated, and a textual examination based on psychoanalysis as articulated by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan will also be used to analyse the elements responsible for her mental distress. Plath compares Nazi, the poem's male authority figure, to her nemesis in "Lady Lazarus." Hitler utilised the bodies of the

Jews who perished in the Nazi concentration camps as commodities. The speaker is upset over the patriarchy of the Holocaust. Plath likens the savagery of patriarchy to that of Hitler in her poem. Her identity has once more been turned into a commodity, a la Nazi. Plath uses references to and imagery from Nazi Germany during World War II to depict the oppression of the speaker. She creates a German picture to symbolise oppression and Nazism. The viewer is being given a mental picture by the allusions to Nazis as well as Jews in this instance, which is also a metaphor from "Daddy." She is a victim, much like the Jews were during the Holocaust, and the physicians and other authorities are her oppressors, just like the Nazis. Similar to this, in "Ariel," the crimson eye alludes to patriarchy, which she rejects by taking her own life. It's a confession of suicide, but one that uses the act as a weapon against patriarchy. Plath saw life as poetry, but Freud thought that the purpose of life is death.

In a research paper titled Psychological Perspectives of Personal Trauma in the Poetry of Sylvia Plath Beg Sibtain Mirza says- It seems irreversible that Sylvia Plath has become a cult figure in the history of Modern American English poetry. She is an unstoppable poet who uses poetry to ebulliently express her own emotions, thoughts, life experiences, and relationships with her spouse, father, mother, children, and society at large. Her impressive body of work includes Winter Trees (1971), Crossing the Water (1971), Ariel (1963), and The Colossus (1960), among others. She committed herself at the young age of 31, taking her own life, yet her poetry continues to captivate and enthrall people everywhere in the world. Her poetry, however, is a peaceful stasis of her emotional suffering and is blatantly subjective.

In an article Portrayal of Patriarchy in Sylvia Plath's Poetry, Yasmin, Samina, Nusrat Sultana, and Sundas Aslam observe the poetess's assertion that she wrote during a time when women were still seen as second-class citizens. In her poems, Sylvia Plath portrays women who feel ensnared in onerous household responsibilities and long to escape the limits of the dominant sexist society. Following the death of her father and her separation with Ted Hughes, the writer conducted a comprehensive study of patriarchy. This study examines the patriarchal themes in Plath's poetry, which minimises her experiences as a housewife and single mother. Plath's encounter with oppression has a clear historical precedent in the fight for the rights of women at that time.

The above-mentioned articles shed light on the psychological and feminist reflections in Plath's poetry. As a scope of further research, Sylvia Plath can be studied in an ecological perspective.

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