

An Archetypal Approach to Sylvia Plath's

Selected Poems

A DISSERTATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF

MPHIL DEGREE IN ENGLISH



SUBMITTED BY

SABINA SHAH

SUBMITTED TO

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

MARCH 2010

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURE AND HUMANITIES

Created with

 **nitro**PDF[®] professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Thesis / Dissertation and Defence Approval Form

The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defence, are satisfied with the overall exam performance and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Languages, Literature and Humanities:

Thesis / Dissertation Title: **An Archetypal Approach to Sylvia Plath's Selected Poems: Daddy, Lady Lazarus and The Couriers**

Submitted by: Sabina Shah

Registration No: 21-MPhil (Eng) SO5

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Name of degree

English

Discipline

Name of Research Supervisor

Signature of Research Supervisor

Name of Internal Examiner

Signature of Internal Examiner

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Name of External Examiner

Signature of External Examiner

Date

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Declaration

I, Sabina Shah, do hereby declare on solemn affirmation that the work presented in this dissertation is my own and was carried out as an MPhil scholar of IIUI, under the supervision of Dr. Riaz Hassan. I have never presented it to any university or institution for the award of degree.

Sabina Shah

Dr. Riaz Hassan

(Supervisor)

Dedicated

To my

Revered Parents

Who sacrificed their happiness to provide their parental care.

(May Allah give them long and healthy life)

Aameen

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Acknowledgements

All Praises and Thanks to The Almighty Allah (SWT), The Most Gracious and The Most merciful who bestowed upon me uncountable and unlimited blessings, wisdom and knowledge despite my disobediences, betrayal and astray, to accomplish this dissertation and many other tasks.

I have a deep sense of gratitude and thankful to my esteemed teachers especially Prof. Dr. Riaz Hassan who not only supervised my dissertation with scholarly care but also supported and helped me by providing books and suitable suggestions and appreciation.

I am no less thankful to all my family members, especially my dear parents and husband for their parental love, best wishes and prayers, unrestricted and unconstrained love. They are the main source who instilled a critical edge to provide the new direction to my career.

I want to pay homage here to all my teachers who directly and indirectly guided me to the path of learning and wisdom, truth and reality and to all my friends and well wishers.

Sabina Shah

Abstract

Of interest is how Sylvia Plath's suicidal tendencies were reflected in, perhaps even exacerbated by, the psychological substratum of her poetical writings, and how poetry might have acted therapeutically as a platform for relieving stress. The ramifications are, of course, endless. For the purposes of this study, I have focused on a limited number of areas, namely, three poems, reinforced with ideas culled from a further seven poems, thus making a data-collection exercise based on ten poems in all; that seemed to support what I was trying to establish. Also, I have looked for clues to the barely conscious or unconscious substrata of belief, together with archetypes such as the "Father God" figure, that often guide an individual's behaviour. I have also looked for expressional manifestations of these undercurrents, such as phonetic gesture or phrasal repetition that might indicate neurotic obsessions. The intellectual and emotional confusions arising from these might prevent a person from reaching workable approaches to the business of living. The methodology consisted of excursions into Jung's deep pattern psychology within a general framework of abnormal psychology as described in Chapter Three, and absorbing as much about Plath as I could from different sources—to get into her shoes, as it were. A great deal of material is available on her unhappy life, emotional problems, psychological instability, vision, poetic ability and feminism, and some of this is reflected in Chapter Two. However, for the purposes of this study I have not gone beyond the limits indicated above.

In brief, my findings indicate that the destructive substratum that drove her to attempt suicide every ten years or so (as she tells us in "Lady Lazarus") remained in place and ultimately killed her, regardless of attempts to exorcise it through perceptive but somewhat self-delusional analysis. The psychological approach to her poetry probes deeply into her mind and reveals her torturous thoughts through her language. Intimations of this substratum are what I have looked for in three of her poems. I understand her poetry or at least some of her poetry as a desperate but unsuccessful outlet for airing her problems, and for remedying or diverting them before they destroyed her. However, I find that the effects of her self-analytical poetry were palliative rather than curative—she

looked at symptoms, not causes. These matters have been discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four and Five

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Glossary of terms used in this thesis

A

<i>A priori</i>	axiomatic
<i>ab initio</i>	from the beginning
Abandonment	desertion, leaving behind
Abatement	reduction, lessening
Agnosticism	non-belief, scepticism, atheism
Allegorical	figurative, symbolic
Alliteration	repetition of consonants
Analogy	comparison, similarity, correlation
Analytical psychology	logical, critical, systematic
Anthropologist	a person who studies human beings
Anomaly	irregularity, abnormality, difference
Apocalypse	disaster, catastrophe, destruction
Apollo	Greek god of sunlight and music
Apostle Paul	one of Christ's followers
Archetype	model, prototype, prime example
Arras	curtain
Aryan	so-called superior people, members of the Indo-European group of nations
Assonance	repetition of vowel sounds
Attitudinal/belief-based structure	perception resulting from conditioning
Auschwitz	an infamous Nazi execution camp

B

Bedevilled	troubled
Belsen	an infamous Nazi execution camp

C

Celtic	relating to the early inhabitants of Europe
Chivalry	politeness, courtesy, graciousness
Cognate	similar, alike, related
Cognitive	to do with the working of the brain
Cognition	the working of the brain
Concordance	agreement
Conjure	summon, call up, invoke
Connotation	suggestion, implication, association
Conscious	aware, mindful, alert
Consonance	agreement
Corinthians	a chapter of the New Testament
Cornerstone	foundation stone, keystone, basis
Correlation	association, connection, relationship
Cosmos	space, universe, heavens
Covenant	agreement, contract
Credence	belief, acceptance, authority, credibility
Crested	reached the top of
Crooning	singing in a soothing manner

Cynic pessimist, sceptic, disparager

D

Dachau an infamous Nazi execution camp

Daunting overwhelming, frightening, discouraging

Defensible correlation a well-argued association

Denunciation condemnation, criticism, accusation

Deo-Pita the Father-God of old India

Dracula the chief vampire (the vampire story belongs to Europe, and is recognized as the archetype of lurking evil)

E

Ecclesiastes book of the Old Testament

Electro-shock therapy treatment sometimes given to mentally disturbed people

Embedded rooted, implanted

Emblem symbol, sign, motif

Empirical experiential, experimental, observed, practical

Episode incident, event, period

Epithet description, appellation, label

Eros Greek god of love

Errant wayward, delinquent

Exorcise get rid of, expel, banish

F

Fable or myth	story, allegory, legend, parable
Fascism	dictatorship, oppression, tyranny
Fretful	nervous, agitated, neurotic

G

Garbled psychological compound	distorted, confused, muddled emotional/mental complex
Gender politics	feminism
Genocide	mass killing

H

Hallucination	illusion, delusion, delirium
Haphazard	random, chaotic, messy, jumbled, hit and miss
Haunt	trouble, disturb, irk
Hearsay	rumour, gossip, tittle-tattle
Hypothesis	theory, supposition, proposition
Hysteria	panic, frenzy, madness

I

Idealism	romanticism, impracticality, optimism
Illusion	delusion, false impression, misapprehension
Imminent	forthcoming, coming up, looming

Imperative	vital, crucial, essential
	conclusion, assumption, conjecture
Inherent imbalance	intrinsic, innate, inborn inequity, unevenness, disproportion

J

Jupiter	father-god of the old Romans
Juxtaposition	combination, coincidence, concurrence, union

L

Latent personality disorder	hidden, underlying, concealed personality confusion, chaos
Laureateship	official recognition given to an English poet
Leash	restraint, restriction
Lucifer	the disobedient archangel who was thrown out of heaven to rule in hell as Satan.

M

Macro factors	total, overall, large-scale
Male chauvinism	male prejudice, narrow-mindedness, bigotry
Mania	obsession, desire, craze, passion
Mentor	adviser, counsellor, guide
Miraculous	amazing, astounding, marvellous
Mitigate	alleviate, lessen, allay

Mythology	legends, folk lore, tradition
Mythic metaphors	legendary, traditional images, descriptions, similes
Myths and legend	folklore and fable, fairy tale

N

Narcissism	self absorption, egotism, selfishness
Neurotically	overanxiously, fearfully, obsessively

O

Obsessive disorder	compulsive, fanatical, chaos turmoil, anarchy, mayhem
Obtrusive	conspicuous, unmistakable, prominent
Omen	sign, prophecy, warning
Onomatopoeic	mimetic
Orientation	direction, course, point of reference
Ostracized	disliked, not accepted, detested

P

Paradoxical	inconsistent, absurd, ironic
Parameter	factor, consideration, limitation, constraint
Paranoia	fear, suspicion, obsession
Pauline Christianity	ideas about Christianity spread by St Paul
Primordial reality	prehistoric, ancient, primitive truth

Primordial symbols

primitive, elemental
images

Q

Quibble

slight criticism, trivial objection,

S

Scrutiny

inspection, study, examination, analysis

Self-flagellation

criticising oneself

Seminal thinkers

influential, decisive thinkers

Sexual libertinism

sexual freedom

Staccato

disjointed, disconnected, faltering

Symbol

sign, representation

T

Tabula rasa

blank slate,

Tantamount

equivalent, identical, as good as

Thanatos

instinct of death

Transcendental

permanent

Trauma

shock, upset, disturbance and pain

U

Unceremoniously

abruptly, hastily, callously and brusquely

Unconscious

unaware, lifeless and comatose

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional
download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Undercurrent	flow, stream and tide
Underpinning	foundation, keystone, at the bottom of
Underscore	highlight, emphasize, accentuate
Undertone	hint, suggestion and connotation
Usurp	take over, grab, seize and appropriate

V

Validate	authenticate, confirm and authorize
Virulent	strong, dangerous and powerful
Virtuosity	intelligence, genius, talent

W

Wanton massacre	motiveless, meaningless and unjustifiable mass destruction, butchery and slaughter
Wayward words	naughty, errant, rebellious words
Weird	strange, odd, unusual and eerie

Z

Zeus	Father-God of old Greece.
------	---------------------------

Table of Contents

Defence Approval Form
Submission Approval Form
Declaration
Dedication
Acknowledgement
Abstract
Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Background	1
2. Literature Review	14
3. Methodology	31
4. Archetypal Analysis of Three Core Poems	36
5. Reinforcement from Other Poems	82
6. Findings and Conclusion	109

Bibliography

Appendix

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Brief General Background

Sylvia Plath committed suicide in her thirty-first year. This has always been of interest to commentators. Her suicide forms one of the inner constructs of this dissertation, and the outer manifestations of these constructs are her writings. The puzzlement lies in the sharp contrast of the high intelligence and artistic creativity she demonstrated as a student, regularly winning prizes for outstanding performance on one side, and her intractable emotional insecurity on the other. She was a psychotically and neurotically unhappy person who kept looking for reasons and justifications for her suicidal tendencies, and mistakenly thinking that, having identified them, she was now free of them. The promise of a sparkling career was frustrated by the lukewarm reception she received from the public.¹ This was compounded by her own negative personality traits, the loss of a well-loved parent, and a rather strange externalization of her inner turmoil to the genocide of Jews at the hands of Germans in World War II.² She was herself an American of German stock, but it is difficult to understand why she should have shouldered the guilt of that numbing episode.

She was able to live precariously through thirty years of torment and distress, until something triggered her last, successful attempt at suicide. This trigger might have been her inability to reconcile with the disloyalty of her husband Ted Hughes, who was untrustworthy with women.³ Other possibilities include some sort of Christian death, resurrection and redemption theme, but these possibilities are speculative.⁴ In something as complex as the human psyche, there is probably no single cause for self-annihilation: there is probably a multiple universe of causes strong enough to sway the individual to

¹ Susan R. VanDyne, *Revising Life: Sylvia Plath's Ariel Poem*. (USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993) 4

² Walter Laqueur, *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. (London: Yale University Press, 2001)

³ Susan R. VanDyne, *Revising Life: Sylvia Plath's Ariel Poem*. (USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993) 3

⁴ See Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol.2. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986)

the commission of such an act. The researcher has taken these speculations into psychology, which entails as much or even greater speculation about unobservable cognitive elements in the mind of this unhappy poet.

Psychology probes into what is going on in person's mind, and this includes both conscious and unconscious mental activity. Words are to some extent the mind's mirrors, but perhaps not always very accurate ones. The researcher has tried to go backwards, to trace overt expressions to their covert sources in her psyche. By definition, this kind of effort cannot be anything but speculative in nature. It can be offered only within a frame of probability, not of certitude.

1.2 Introduction to Archetypes

According to Annis Pratt, archetype is the term derived from the Greek word 'archi' means a commencement and 'typos' means a stamp. In Pratt's *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*, archetypes are symbols, images and patterns.⁵ The patterns occurring again and again in literary piece are called archetypal patterns which are also applicable to the past or ancestral occurrences and convey the same meanings as they had in the past.

In essence, collective human archetypes can be found in a truly universal sense, i.e., significant to all or nearly all human beings, or in an area-wise sense, such as the myths and legends derived mostly from the old religions of Greece and Rome which are shared by people living in Europe and America, but which are not shared by people living in, say, Africa or Asia.

Some of the more universal archetypes relate to shadowy under-perceptions about an overriding deity (usually sensed as a kind of father figure), and this is found in pretty nearly all cultures round the world. This under-perception is often the cornerstone of an individual's subconscious mental structure, not in a physical sense but in an ideational one, setting the context for his belief-systems with regard to right, wrong, justice, good,

⁵ Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981) 3

evil and general morality, and also with regard to assumptions about the underlying order of existence, the world and the universe. They form, however erroneously, the inner and outer scaffolding of the individual's psyche. The stronger the hold they have on that psyche, the greater the reaction when they are proved to be false or hollow.

For a child setting out on the path of understanding the world, the deity-father figure might be confused with the physical father. The infallibility, perfect wisdom and immortality ascribed to the deity-father might then be expected from the child's physical father. To discover, as Sylvia Plath did at the age of eight, that the physical father is neither infallible nor immortal, is to do nearly irretrievable damage to a primary archetype and we can observe some of her agonized reactionism in "Daddy." There is probably some overlapping to be found with other father figures as well to be observed in this poem, which is discussed in the main chapters of this study. This is one reason for selecting this poem.

Another universal archetype is linked with the creative, life-giving mother figure, which, as discussed later in this study, is strangely lacking in Plath's writings. The nearest we come to a consideration of the female principle in the totality of things is in "Lady Lazarus," and this is one reason for selecting this poem. However, this is the female principle in a man's world, so it is not a satisfactory counterweight to "Daddy," which is an exposition of the male principle but also in a man's world—the man lives in a man's world which reflects little of the woman's role in the scheme of things, while the woman also lives in a man's world and her actions are seen mainly in reference to that world. There is an inherent imbalance to consider here.

According to Jung, archetypes are the usual situations of life like finding reasons for some task one is doing and playing different roles of different characters in our lives. There are some dominant archetypal roles like the aforementioned father, mother and child, because almost everyone in the world uses these archetypes. Archetypes are the primary arbiters of much that we do in reference to our several roles as citizens, fathers, mothers, husbands, wives or children. At the base of the individual's emotional stirrings and responses (which lie somewhere beyond or below consciousness) we must subsume

the presence and formation of certain foundational categories of the mind which he calls 'primordial images' or 'archetypes.' Those emotional experiences might have formed into basic categories in the past, but they are integrated into the brain's structure with the passage of time. The researcher is aware that this is only an assumption and that it cannot be validated. However, it is a plausible assumption.

The emotional experiences of poetry can be expressed in two ways. One is through themes of everyday life and the other one is through forms which the themes acquire. The reader's response to such themes is another medium for analytical study. The deep seated response to poetic themes can be best felt when one 'lives with such themes'⁶ and ponders on them, within a framework of what some anthropologists call 'cultural patterns.'⁷ The 'cultural pattern concept' indicates its relation with 'the concept of form and system in the 'arts and cultural disciplines' in the psycho-social environment.'⁸ The psycho-social environment activates the 'psychic processes' and system of symbols in the mind.⁹ A symbol is the collective sign of those inward patterns. Bodkin calls them archetypal patterns which respond to primitive themes in poetry. Themes can be identified as underlying structures with specific forms or patterns which permeate a given work.

According to Jung, an instinct which is inborn *a priori* in a species like man affects an individual's actions in certain situations and circumstances; man's consciousness depends to a large extent on his instinctive makeup, like the instinctive actions of 'the leaf cutting ant.'¹⁰ The instinct exists in its total pattern, the circumstances and situations of human actions make total pattern.

⁶Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Theory: Psychological Studies of Imagination*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971) 3

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid. 4

¹⁰C. G. Jung, *On the Nature of Psyche*. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982) 111

Apart from the authors quoted earlier, the researcher has drawn additional ideas from commentators such as David Daiches¹¹ and Harry Levin¹² who argue, as in the case of Daiches,¹³ that the disintegration of religion and of a deity-based order of the universe might leave behind an intolerable void, especially for sensitive people: or, as in the case of Levin,¹⁴ that psychoanalytical criticism can become 'crudely fundamental' in its reduction of the vocabulary of symbolism to a few simplistic elements which unnecessarily restrict the critical function, a cautionary note of great significance to anyone embarking on psychological approaches to the study of literature, such as the present one.

The researcher does not suggest that religion was rejected entirely in the wake of World War II, which was initially fought between nations professing the same faith (in fact, between nations with similar ethnic backgrounds) and developed fairly quickly into the indiscriminate slaughter of nations with different faiths and backgrounds (such as Jewish and Japanese people, among others), but it is clear that traditional values and assumptions came under much negative scrutiny in its aftermath. In trying to understand a writer such as Sylvia Plath, it is useful to look at both macro factors (the general mood and thinking of her times) and micro factors (her personal history and responses to happenings in her life). In general it was a time of pessimism and disillusionment. Old values and spiritual anchors as represented by religion, social order, marriage, family, conventional morality and civic responsibility had virtually vanished, while new ones had not come in to replace them. This was the 'hippy' age of counter culture, in which groups of young people deliberately challenged the older order of things which, they said, had failed to provide a workable vision of corporate living, having led to the horrors of World War II in the recent past, and which now seemed to be leading to a violently destructive confrontation between two large, competing political systems—these groups asserted that drugs, alcohol, sexual freedom and a denial of the work ethic could reduce if not solve

¹¹ D. Daiches, "Religion, Poetry and the Dilemma of the Modern Writer," in *Perspectives in Contemporary Criticism*, edited by Sheldon Norman Grebstein, Harper and Row, 1968

¹² H. Levin, "Symbolism and Fiction," in *ibid*

¹³ *Ibid.* 57

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 65

the world's problems. That these matters troubled Sylvia Plath is evident from her frequent references to the mass atrocities of this war, many of them committed by people with the same ethnic German/Austrian background as herself. She found herself in a troubled age at the macro level, and her own life was lived under the unexplained shadow of a cyclic suicidal impulse, together with the uncertainties created by an unfaithful husband at the micro level. This is taken up later, in the main chapters of this thesis.¹⁵

The strength of archetypal patterns and their analysis connects us to the past and gives those patterns and images a kind of overlapping permanence which could also be implicated in future actions. Modern man is in search of self which leads to readings in life and death, the inclination towards studies of self leads one to go deeper into religion as this is the matter of purgation, rebirth, God, hell and heaven. Modern man's revived inclination towards religion is a sign of reverting back to the 'unconscious' which has been ignored for a long time. There is some revival now, as we will see in Sylvia Plath's usage of archetypal patterns in her poetry. These symbols and images are the part of collective unconscious which consciousness brings rather loosely and imperfectly to the fore.

The weaknesses are also there with the strengths. When we see good and evil co-existing it can confuse the mind. This confusion muddles the situation for the reader. There is, of course, a basic weakness in this. There is no way of establishing that this is, in fact, how Plath thought, or that these subconscious factors actually operated in her psyche. This weakness applies to the whole complex of psychoanalysis in general as understood by seminal thinkers such as Freud, Adler and Jung, and probably led to its gradual demise in a strictly scientific world that demanded observable facts and scientific certitudes. Speculation about the unconscious, no matter how plausible, must remain uncertain. At the same time it seemed to me that any approach that avoided talking about the unconscious was likely to be simplistic and superficial, and that the unconscious should not be avoided only because it cannot be observed or measured. It is the massive base of the iceberg upon which the small, observable tip rests, and it is a mistake to assume that the tip of the iceberg is the iceberg itself. For this kind of approach, the best anyone can

¹⁵ See Chapter Four, 36-81 and Chapter Five 82-108.

do is to look closely at what she has written and make educated guesses, and this is what the researcher has tried to do.

Archetypal criticism is best understood in contrast to the so-called New Literary Criticism (now several decades old) associated with Frye and Richards, which focuses on the text itself and on its independence. New Criticism developed in the 1920s; is a movement and critical school, about which the book entitled *The New Criticism* was written by John Crowe Ransom, centres primarily on the text.¹⁶ Sylvia Plath has also written in the modern age when criticism raised its voice against the old traditions. The language used in her poetry makes her text suitable for this kind of analysis, not only semantically but also phonologically and phonetically. The emphasis is on the ironic paradoxes and contradictions seen in Plath's poetry, some of which have been highlighted in Chapter Four.¹⁷ The analysis notices Plath's voice and images that support these paradoxes, contrasts and ironies of words and situations, especially in the three core poems. In addition to this, Archetypal criticism applied in poems looks outside the text to universals in the human psyche. For example the 'wedding ring' as a symbol of marital commitment and sanction under God's law has significance at both inner and outer levels, and this is universal. It is significant on the wide-scale infidelity and sexual libertinism that characterized the post-war period in the west, and it is also applicable to other times and places. Likewise, the 'Lazarus' symbol of the miraculous return to life after death (the resurrection theme) would have special significance for Plath herself, because of her cyclic attempts at suicide. At the same time it would have wide significance for most people brought up in the Christian tradition. These are deep-seated archetypes.

1.3 Archetypal Patterns

Archetypal theorists were cultural and religious historians and commentators talking about humanitarian issues, often taking Jung as a resource but not always.¹⁸ Sylvia Plath's poems suggest the influence of Freud and Jung on her beliefs, whether limiting or

¹⁶ J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: Penguin Books, 1999. 544

¹⁷ For details, see Chapter Four, 36-81 and Chapter Five 82-108

¹⁸ Ibid. 47

promotional. The unconscious element in Plath's poetry invites this sort of criticism by its penchant for 'allegorizing and flattening out the characters and events in interpretation.'¹⁹ Francis M. Cornford, a Cambridge classicist, describes the interpretation of poetry, mythology and philosophy as an unconscious activity that is detached and impersonal.²⁰ According to the archetypal approach, 'art originates in religion' which is tantamount to saying 'it originates in culture' (and we discover Plath saying, 'dying is an art'). She creates her art under the biblical symbol of the lazar, her death instinct is reinforced by a culture of violence and bloodshed, and she uses the medium of religion to portray her art in culture.²¹ Hers is a religio-cultural kind of art, and this is revealed in masterpieces of succinct expression such as "The Couriers" where she portrays the widespread breakdown of social values in her time.

Maud Bodkin's archetypal patterns in poetry have made a significant impact on this approach, and I have used her as the source for a number of ideas in this study. As a psychologist her arguments carry considerable weight, that themes encompassing specific shapes or prototypes persist in different periods with some changes, and that patterns of conscious and unconscious thoughts are aroused due to those pervasive (though subterranean) themes.²² I have tried to trace some of these patterns in the dominant three poems in question.

For Bodkin, the source is always the psyche and I have maintained this view while analyzing different themes and aspects of Sylvia Plath's poems. She presented archetypal patterns such as 'rebirth,' 'heaven and hell,' the 'devil', the 'hero' and 'God,' which are relevant to both past and present. The analysis of primordial symbols and images pushes her back to past and present both by portraying emotional patterns through the archetypal approach. The patterns and images are both positive and negative like rebirth in which life leads to dark death but there is a renewal and new life after that. Heaven, hell, God

¹⁹Ibid. 48

²⁰G. Douglas Atkins & Laura Morrow, eds., *Contemporary Literary Theory*. (USA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989) 47

²¹Jeffery Gray, *Consciousness*. (Oxford University Press: London, 2006) 49

²²G. Douglas Atkins & Laura Morrow, ed., *Contemporary Literary Theory*. (USA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989) 50

and the devil are interlinked, with both positive and negative connotations in their composite patterns.

The three poems "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus" and "The Couriers" of Sylvia Plath are significant in the sense that Plath's 'conscious and unconscious' substrata are dealt with in a discernible pattern.²³ They all belong to the same collection, but a mood shift can be sensed from one poem to another. The belief structures exhibited in these three poems are the consequence of either conscious or unconscious influences of already established beliefs in the mind right from childhood. Psychology is important to both the mind and poetry, since poetry is the product and expression of some activities of the mind. This approach has been employed to discover consciously or unconsciously articulated attitudinal and belief-based structures through the portrayal of different themes and other linguistic inventions in deviations, phonology and repetitions, that might have contributed to her suicidal tendencies.

1.4 Archetypes

Jung's concept of archetypes as categories of the mind that lie in the collective psyche of the human race is well known. In general he is hostile to the ancient view that the mind of an infant starts off as a *tabula rasa*, or blank slate, which is then progressively 'covered' with knowledge derived from experience as he wanders about on the journey of life. He assumes that a baby's mind already has certain patterns and expectations which determine his understanding of life as he grows older. Some of these patterns are common to all people. Some might be more 'area-oriented' in that they are common to large groups of people. An example of this is the old mythology of Greece and Rome, which has provided a rich tapestry of symbols for many Europeans, even today.

²³In the early years of 1890s Freud did a systematic study of conscious and unconscious mind processes after examining his patients' case studies. For Freud, the conscious mind comprises everything that we know or are aware of. We can work with this kind of brain output. Memory is stored in the unconscious but can be recalled for use by the conscious functions of the brain. The second type of mental processing is the unconscious mind. It is the store of feelings, ideas and memories, which lie exterior to the conscious mind. The unconscious mental processes keep on affecting one's attitude, actions constantly without any conscious awareness of it. In this way it affects one's personality to a greater extent. See Nick Rennison, *Sigmund Freud*, (Great Britain: Pocket Essentials, 2001) 29-32

1.4.1 Basic archetype

One important and basic example of a universal kind of archetype manifests itself in a general belief in the existence of a prime-mover, a creative force, nearly always perceived to be all-powerful and all-knowing, *nearly always male* (researcher's emphasis), usually related to fatherhood, usually perfectly 'good,' 'wise,' 'creative,' 'generous,' 'forgiving' and 'loving,' but liable on occasion to use harsh measures when confronted by mankind's seemingly ineradicable propensity for wrong-doing, crime and sinning. The frequency with which this concept occurs through history in different parts of the world lends credence to Jung's assumptions. 'Jupiter,' the Father-God of old Rome is 'Deo-Pita,' the Father-God of old India and 'Zeus,' the Father-God of old Greece. This is in the classical Greco-Roman (or even Indo-European) tradition which, according to Arnold²⁴, still permeates at least one large area of European thinking. The other area is equally strongly influenced by the Hebraic-Christian tradition, which is also dominated by a Father-God figure, the Yahweh of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. In Chapter Three the researcher has attempted to show how this archetype makes a crucial contribution to Sylvia Plath's central tensions, especially as elicited through the three poems selected from the collection entitled *Ariel*. Although these poems were published together in the same collection, they were written at different times, "Daddy" first, "Lady Lazarus" second and "The Couriers" last, and the researcher has maintained the same sequence for purposes of this study.

1.4.2 Tensions arising from archetypes

Some archetypes manifest themselves in symbols and myths. The ramifications of these primary archetypes are wide. For the average person, a universe ruled with *absolute* power by an *absolutely* good and rational force cannot be meaningless, chaotic and purposeless. How, then, does one fit an insanely murderous, apparently meaningless spectacle such as the Second World War into God's rational scheme of things? It is easy to see that perhaps the most basic of all archetypes is being challenged by Sylvia Plath's

²⁴ See Matthew Arnold, "Sweetness and Light," in Enright, D.J. and Chickera, E., *English Critical Texts*, OUP, 1962, 378-380. For Arnold, the quality of 'sweetness' lies in the Hebraic tradition, and that of 'light' in the Greco-Roman tradition
http://us.mc1125.mail.yahoo.com/mc/welcome?gx=1&tm=1262762901&rand=3f0qaatqrb89h_-_ftn1

post-war generation. Where was God? Why did He let so many ordinary people die? Why did He remain unmoved by the gassing of millions of innocent Jews? Why did He permit the wholesale destruction of advanced civilizations? What was all this talk about ‘goodness,’ ‘rationality’ and ‘purpose,’ when everything pointed in the other direction? Where was He when He was needed?

This kind of questioning might generate a sneaking doubt about His existence, a doubt that could itself lead to a gradual or rapid disintegration of the psychological structure upon which an individual predicates his or her life. The religious edifice, the internal scaffolding of morality, the inner conscience, all built up over several millennia of exhortation and conditioning by prophets, reformers, poets, thinkers and philosophers, would be under great strain.

1.4.3 Reactions

People might share the same archetypes, but they react to highly intrusive events (such as war) in different ways. This point is important--the symbols are essentially the same, but responses can be sharply different. The researcher has tried to show the mood swings, progressions and regressions of this highly sensitive poet, in part generated by (a) her German/Austrian background and her direct ethnic associations with Hitler [who was himself Austrian by birth, and strongly symbolic of a new wave of German nationhood], (b) her Jewish links—her mother was partly Jewish, (c) her deep regard for her own father and the sense of loss and abandonment she feels when he dies as a result of his own foolishness, and (d) the betrayal she suffers at the hand of yet another man, her husband, the father of her children.

The dominant unconscious archetypal figure is male rather than female. It is easy to see the obtrusive ‘father’ symbol in many of her poems. “Daddy” is, of course, the prime example, but we can observe it in one of her last poems as well:

They threaten

To let me through to a heaven

Starless and fatherless (researcher's emphasis), a dark water

("Sheep in Fog", last stanza, 1963)

It should be noted here that she uses 'fatherless' rather than 'motherless.' Feminine archetypes, such as the 'mother' symbol in "Barren Woman", are encountered with less force and significance in her poetry, but the researcher considers "Lady Lazarus" important enough to be given more detailed treatment.²⁵ The researcher also suggests that much of Plath's emotional distress is created by the expectations associated with the 'father' archetype on one hand, and the ruthless reality (much of it generated by men) of the world she is forced to experience on the other.

She reacts against the male figure. On a smaller, worldly scale, man (not woman) represents some of God's characteristics. In some cultures the male is nearly deified--for example, there is the 'patti-dev' or 'husband-god' concept in parts of India. In major cultures everywhere, man is the authoritarian father figure--he wields temporal power, and he controls and decides things in the real, day-to-day world. Though he might be nothing like that in reality, he is expected to be good, wise, kind, generous and loving. A young girl would tend to look up to her father as the concrete symbol of the basic things she believed in. For somebody whose feelings and perceptions were as sharp as Plath's, the involvement was intense, and the reaction to being let down was equally violent. This has been discussed in greater detail in later chapters. An equally painful, emotional, psychological withdrawal could also be premised resulting from the marital derelictions she experienced with her husband, the poet Ted Hughes.

The researcher has taken samples of Plath's poetry to cover the entire range of her poetic output, starting with "Recantation" at one end (published in 1956), through "Natural History" (1957), "I want, I want" (1958), "The Ravaged Face" (1959), "The Hanging Man" (1960), "Barren Woman" (1961), "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus" and "The Couriers" (1962) to "Sheep in Fog" (1963) at the other. However, the main thrust of the researcher's study is confined to the three poems mentioned earlier taken from Ariel (published in 1962), and these three poems are given the whole of Chapter Four. The

²⁵ In Chapter Four 36-81, Chapter Five, 82-108.

researcher has used linguistic approaches in some cases—for example, she has used the psychology implicit in some sounds in phonology to re-create the ‘outward’ orientation of Daddy--and direct analysis in others.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A vast and ever-growing storehouse of literature on archetypes and related interests is available to anybody interested in these matters. The researcher has drawn on the works enumerated here for some of the ideas that underlie this study. Her main mentors for the psychological aspects of the study mentors have been Freud, Jung and Bodkin, as mentioned in the Introduction.

Freud's contribution to the field of psychoanalysis, especially in dream analysis and the fulfillment of desire is so well-known that it hardly needs to be mentioned. Briefly, he says that a child's dreams are not complicated like those of adults, so 'wish fulfillment' can be easily observed in them (in *The Interpretation of Dreams* published in 1899.)²⁶ For Freud, a dream has a concealed meaning. This may be presented in altered form—it represents the 'unconscious' expressing itself, not directly, but through the filters of an individual's moral structure and social expectations. In his first mental topography, he divided the mind into unconscious, preconscious and conscious domains [...].²⁷ The alteration and distortion of dreams can cause the loss of the real meaning of dreams and may result in mental diseases like hysteria. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* published in German for the first time in 1920 as *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*,²⁸ Freud offered the idea of the 'Eros' or 'libido' as a prime motivator for human action. He further developed his theory in 1920 by adding the idea of 'Thanatos,' or the death instinct. The crux of this essay lies in the conflict between these two instincts. The 'Eros' is known for bringing about harmony or sexual activation, while the 'Thanatos' is stagnant, aggressive, repetitive and compulsive, and can lead to chaos or nothingness, or even the end of life. As discussed by the researcher in later chapters, some workings of the 'Thanatos' are visible in Plath's written output, especially in some of her poems. It might seem

²⁶ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. (Wordsworth Editions, 1997) vii, ix

²⁷ Ibid. vii

²⁸ Sigmund Freud, James Strachey, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961)

strange that a person would want to die, but this ‘death-wish’ might be more common than we are normally willing to acknowledge

Elaborating the idea of libido and folklore, Jung discovers the dreams of Frank Miller in the *Psychology of the Unconscious*, whose poetic explanations compel him to modify libido and advance the study of mythology. *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, published in 1912, is the basic text for Jung’s ideas and for comprehending mental and emotional states.²⁹ For Jung, libido is something more than sexual energy, which he calls psychic. It arises from the unconscious and emerges in the consciousness as image and symbol. These processes are unconscious and attain a kind of ‘rebirth’ in the conscious functions of the mind. Jung indicates the complexity of symbols and images by taking them from different fields of life like literature, art, religion, folklore, etc., to highlight the concept of the ‘collective unconscious’ and its constituents, which are known as archetypes.

The connotation of archetype is significant for Jung as he elaborates it in *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*, individual characteristics that contribute to something universal and acquire the shape of the collective unconscious, which might continue for centuries. His first publication in 1902 remained in focus throughout his work because it provided the foundation for what came afterwards. While providing the introduction and background, Jung elaborated the four archetypes which are important for him as the basis of mental and emotional functions. The four archetypes are ‘mother,’ ‘rebirth,’ ‘spirit’ and ‘trickster.’³⁰ Analysing their importance in myth, folklore and religion, Jung provides the readers an opportunity to explore themselves through what they observe in others.

Elaborating the central thematic constituents collectively found in myths, legends and literature in Jane Garry’s *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature: A Handbook*. It presents an elaborate investigation of the commonly found archetypes and themes or patterns which is altogether mythological. It has a detailed study of motifs and themes,

²⁹ Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*. (Read Books, 2007)

³⁰ Carl Gustav Jung & Richard Francis Carrington Hull, *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*. (London: Routledge, 2003)

for example; death, fortune and chance, flight to the next world, fraud, conversion etc. These types of themes and motifs are found in Plath's poetry.

Jung points out the difficulty of asserting things about the unconscious through conscious language in *Nature of Psyche*.³¹ One comes across problems while writing about intangibles--one starts writing consciously and tries to collect some material from the unconscious--this process might lead to something new and innovative. Whichever subject Jung discusses in this book leads to an open-ended question, which he later attempts to develop through the interpretation of dreams. He also discusses archetypes. Archetypes reveal primordial reality in the form of universal symbols and images which make an impact upon the psyche in its interactions with the outside world. The nature of the psyche can be positive, or it can be negative, depending on the outcomes of such interactions. The very term 'unconscious' carries negative connotations in its prefix, so, taking the 'iceberg' analogy of the mind's structure, the small, visible tip of which represents its conscious activity, it is easy to see that the attitudes and reactions of the conscious are heavily dependent on the huge, submerged part of the iceberg, the unconscious part of the mind. There is every reason to encourage the exploration of the unconscious in understanding basic questions, especially when considering a poet like Sylvia Plath. The researcher has chosen to look at her poetry rather than her prose, because poetic communication with its embedded symbols and mythology is probably closer to the workings of the unconscious, and therefore closer to the unsullied mainsprings of communication, than prose.

As an example of some of this kind of analysis, we can look at *Hamlet*. Shakespeare portrays an archetypal figure of 'sage man' in Polonius, who guides people around him and resolves problems.³² His sacrifice is elaborated through the hero and heroine's account. At the same time he is concerned with his social and political status. Hamlet and Polonius are presented as archetypes. In an archetypal study of *Hamlet*, Hamlet's rebirth occurs at various places—as the plot develops, he transcends 'individual' to 'social,' and

³¹Carl Gustav Jung, *On the Nature of the Psyche*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982)

³²Elizabeth Oakes, "Polonius, the Man behind the Arras: A Jungian Study." *New Essays on Hamlet*. Ed. Mark Thornton Burnett and John Manning. *Hamlet* Collection 1. (New York: AMS, 1994)

‘public’ to ‘spiritual.’ In this way, different archetypes have been presented differently. Polonius is the symbol of sagacity and prudence while Hamlet symbolizes the quest for perfection--which he achieves, though in some barely satisfactory manner. He symbolizes the struggle for spirituality. Guidance and spirituality are themes common to all times and cultures. Shakespeare’s primary concern seems to be evil and virtue. According to Oakes, the right source is, ‘[...] the archetypes that...vibrate beneath the surface.’³³

It is this ‘vibration of archetypes’ below the surface of Plath’s poetry that the researcher wishes to understand, and she has used a variety of approaches, including the psychology implicit in certain sounds (as in her analysis of “Daddy” in Chapter Three) to comprehend them better. Jung’s approach is significant in protecting, and projecting, old cultures and traditions as Bettina L. Knapp points out in *A Jungian approach to Hebrew Myth and Legend*.³⁴ The archetypal approach is, in other words, a source of protection for old traditions and cultures, and of linking them with the present. This approach is beneficial because not only are the old traditions perpetuated; they are also merged into current situations. In going down to basics in the human psyche, the archetypal approach seeks out permanent elements in the human predicament.

Studying the patterns of archetypes present in human unconsciousness opens the philosophy of spirituality which human beings employ for understanding themselves. This may be remedial or therapeutic, joining us with religion or giving us a theological connection.³⁵ She discusses the eight main archetypes, four are significant for one’s basic life, different roles contribute to that, they are child, victim, prostitute and saboteur, these are the four survival archetypes, the four royal family archetypes include king, queen, knight, maiden and etc and the shadow family is the lower family of the society which includes burglar, swindler, addict, etc. According Carolyn archetypes explain the world in a way that makes it more complete and detailed—the presentation is somewhat different from what is already there, introducing not only mythological touches, but also

³³ Ibid. 112.

³⁴ Bettina L. Knapp, *Manna and Mystery: A Jungian approach to Hebrew Myth and Legend*. (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1995)

³⁵Caroline Myss, ‘The Language of Archetypes’ Audio CD Book, 11 Discs. (Louisville: Sounds True Returns, 12.25 hours)

spiritual ones. This book gives an account of many characteristics that affect health, interactions, professions and different aspects or phases of life and fortune. These powerful forces direct our lives.

Aspects of archetypes in Emerson's work are detailed by Richard R. O'Keefe, who gives a detailed account of 'mythic metaphors'³⁶ in Emerson's language to identify 'prophetic'³⁷ expressions in *Mythic Archetypes in Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Blakean Reading*. This kind of analysis is rarely used for the American Romantics, but is widely applied on British Romantic poets. The first chapter elaborates the problem and recommends the way of resolving that problem, the subsequent chapters four in number are about practical criticism, here archetypal analysis has been used as a method for the analysis of Emerson's texts. The theoretical framework has been taken from Abrams, while Bloom and Frye's theories have been used for further progression in this sort of analysis of 'archetypal images.'³⁸ These archetypal images have no logical relevance; the archetypal patterns have been borrowed from Blake. Emerson and Blake both belong to Christian traditions and norms; they tried to reconstruct Christian culture and folklore to make it alive in the time when it is under considerable strain. This book draws points of correspondence between Emerson's and Blake's implementation of archetypal images. The theoretical model has been borrowed from Blake's model of four archetypal images, '[...] Creation, Fall, Redemption and Apocalypse.'³⁹

The researcher has adopted some aspects of this theoretical framework for this study.

Mentioning Bradford's criticism of the mythical and archetypal approach, James Allen says that Bradford himself was obsessed with myths throughout his life, but criticized it in poetry. Part of the confusion was caused by the existence of other schools like New Criticism at that time ('The Road to Byzantium: Archetypal Criticism and Yeats').⁴⁰ It was difficult to decide which type of archetypal criticism should be applied to Yeats'

³⁶ Richard R. O'Keefe, *Mythic Archetypes in Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Blakean Reading*. (Kent State University Press, 1995) 3

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ James Lovic Allen, 'The Road to Byzantium: Archetypal Criticism and Yeats', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Autumn, 1973) 53

work. Two major types of criticisms have been applied on the work of Yeats. One of them is Maud Bodkin's way of application, which draws heavily on Jung. The researcher has adapted some of Bodkin's approach to the identification of formative and operative archetypes in Sylvia Plath's poetry.

Concentrating upon the idea of family, Sven Armens talks about family relationships and their importance in *Archetypes of the Family in Literature*. It investigates literary portrayals of the parent-child relationship and the way imagery portrayed in this relationship is employed in poetry to give a source of interaction. Human roles are given new touches which repeatedly occur in literary production. The child comes across two basic factors in family life, mother and father. The matriarchal culture surrounds him with indiscriminating love, while the patriarchal system symbolizes obedience and respect for elders:

[...] *Physical Hearth* or fireplace around which the primary family unit groups itself with bonds of mutual affection, and the *Sacred Fire*, the altar devoted in Greek and Roman times to the worship of a deified ancestor and his patriarchal demands.⁴¹

The 'physical hearth' is the symbol of love, affection and care, while the 'sacred fire' is the symbol of conformity and respect for sacred virtues and teachings. These archetypal images have different connotations in different contexts but the above mentioned interpretations are linked with the context of this thesis. The matriarchal culture and patriarchal system both play a significant role in the brought up of child, both balance the nature of the parent-child relationship to make the child aware of right and wrong, and of other ethical and moral values.

The above mentioned concepts have been elaborated by taking the examples of the Shakespearean plays like Hamlet and King Lear which are beneficial in analyzing different relationships and linking them with characters' lives like

⁴¹ Sven Armens, *Archetypes of the family in Literature*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966) viii

[...] exploring the archetypal relationships of the father, mother, hero [...] and *King Lear*, a tragedy which not only depicts the double violation of both hearth and sacred fire but also the re-achievement of a family covenant in the reconciliation of Lear and Cordelia.⁴²

Most of the Shakespearean plays are written in poetic drama, the reunion of parental child relationship occurred in King Lear. Armens elaborates the idea by analysing examples from Shakespearean plays. The archetypal relationship of father/daughter in this is something comes between matriarchal culture and patriarchal system. The reason is only father plays the dominant role and mother appears rarely. The reconciliation is there in *King Lear* between father and daughter but Hamlet achieves a sort of spirituality in *Hamlet*.

Documenting the traditional practices of people in novels and films determines the relationship between the present day literatures and old legends derived from the Judeo-Christian, Greek, Roman, Celtic and Eastern traditions.⁴³ The elaboration of the literary tools and film means that classify folklore and legendary culture in themselves have been analyzed to recognize whatever they expose regarding modern tradition, norms and culture. This book explores different themes and matters of ethical values, courage or heroism etc reveals the basic ways of leading life. The archetypal approach applied to literature determines the different ways of leading life, which should be adopted and which one should be avoided to balance the scale of life rather than being extremist and sticking to one point and take great risks even at the cost of one's own life. This book explores the forever continued search for the way life should be led. Archetypes and archetypal patterns are the soul parts of this thesis, Plath's poetry indicates them greatly and her life experiences and biography also reveal their influence, her life history is prevalent with those archetypes and they become the part of her unconscious part of mind revealed in her poetry.

⁴² Ibid. ix

⁴³ William K. Ferrell, *Literature and Film as Modern Mythology*. (Westport CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000)

Sylvia Plath's life history has considerable relevance to the issues raised in the previous chapter. Linda Wagner Martin in *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage* writes about Plath's life, parentage and marital problems. Martin's book confirms Plath's difficulties with her husband, and we also learn that she received curative treatment, including shock therapy.⁴⁴ Today she might have been given other kinds of treatment, but it is useless to speculate about what might have been. She hints strongly at these developments in some of her poems as well. Different psychological problems may have tipped her over the critical point of committing suicide. Martin says that "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" are 'uniquely her own' and that nobody has shown the kind of amalgamation of styles and themes observed in her poems.⁴⁵ These poems represent both her emotional problems and her artistic excellence, and both are of interest in judging her work. These are not the ravings of a madwoman. They are the finely crafted expressions of an imaginative, powerful mind. Therein we may find the anomaly underscoring this study. Emotionally she is unhappy and unstable, but intellectually she demonstrates enviable control over her expression and language.

The external world affects Plath to an abnormal extent. Her German/Austrian background makes her to feel guilty in some way for the tensions of the Cold War.⁴⁶ In *Sylvia Plath, Letters Home, 1961 and 1962* as cited in Robin Peel (2002), Plath shows her interest in history and politics and wants Britain to be impartial rather than biased and hateful like the Germans.⁴⁷ She shows her distaste for war by writing about places notorious for genocide and murder, such as 'Auschwitz, Belsen and Dachau'.⁴⁸ The awareness of the Cold War and of Hitler's atrocities during the Second World War also contributes to her mental disintegration. That seems to be one reason why she killed herself by opening the

⁴⁴Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M, *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 7

⁴⁵Ibid. 9, 10

⁴⁶ Hitler had the same Austrian Background. See *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. Micropedia, Vol. V William Benton Publisher, 1973) 67. Also see *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*. (London: Yale University Press, 2001)

⁴⁷(Cited) Robin Peel, *Writing Back: Sylvia Plath and Cold War Politics*. (England: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corp., 2002) 15

For England's impartiality see Ibid.

⁴⁸Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*. (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965) 50

gas pipe in her kitchen.⁴⁹ Killing herself this way re-enacted the wanton massacre of helpless Jews by Germans in execution camps, and this might have been a symbolic atonement for those atrocities. Such conscious and unconscious feelings of guilt stimulate the tortuous thoughts we encounter in *Ariel*, especially in "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus." Plath is not an overtly political writer, but her language in *Ariel* indicates considerable awareness of nuclear dangers, international politics and world history.⁵⁰

Plath's unconscious guilt and sympathetic feelings for Jews take us to the Second World War, the many symbols and images of which have become a part of world history, providing relatively recent but truly universal archetypes, such as the immaculately uniformed but cold blooded Nazi officer, the unfeeling murderer, the thief, the barbarian, the destroyer of civilizations, the degradation consequent upon highly scientific but emotionless militarism, to people everywhere since the middle of the twentieth century. Plath uses those images and symbols frequently in her poetry to convey basic themes in her poetry. The unconscious forms are Plath's guilt and sympathetic feelings as portrayed in her poetry. The conscious contents are derived from the execution camps and gas ovens of Hitler's concentration camps where millions of those unhappy victims were tortured and massacred.

'Archetypal psychology' is not separate from 'analytical psychology'; C. G. Jung has given the name of archetypal psychology to analytical psychology so they have much in common.⁵¹ Archetype is the term to elucidate Jung, who discusses his ideas from different aspects and distinguishes between 'archetypes as unconscious forms' without having 'any specific content' and archetypal images as the 'conscious contents of those form.'⁵² According to Jung, archetypes shape the already established concepts and categorize the content available; here Jung takes content as images. The archetype is conceptual or abstract and archetypal image is actual, solid or concrete. Jung's purpose of psychological analysis is the separation of ego, he uses the term 'compensation' to create

⁴⁹Walter Laqueur, *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. (London: Yale University Press, 2001)

⁵⁰Robin Peel, *Writing Back: Sylvia Plath and Cold War Politics*. . (England: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corp., 2002) 18

⁵¹Polly Young-Eisendrath, Terence Dawson, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*. (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 107

⁵²Ibid.

substitutes to overcome the shortage caused by ego and other suppressed desires of the ego and balanced or reimbursed by the unconscious.⁵³

The archetypes are not bound to any age, period or time rather universal to every time period. She kept on writing poetry which not only make her live the period she lived but also reflected her depressed thoughts about Second World War in the archetypal images of 'Dachau', 'Auschwitz' and 'Belsen' and 'lies' and 'grief' in "The Couriers" as post-Jungian archetypes.

Jung characterizes the stimulation of unconscious forces in the reader's mind which he calls archetypes or primordial images. These images present experience which not only that concerned individual come across but his or her ancestors as well. Maud Bodkin has worked on his proposition and analyses different examples keeping his theory in mind in *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination*, to elaborate the archetypal patterns and images. Bodkin takes different examples and works as, for instance, *The Ancient Mariner*, where she discusses the rebirth pattern in detail by comparison, and transformation to something transcendental. The portrayal of emotional symbolism of Coleridge and Milton to present the turmoil of the cosmos, in heaven and hell—and we see Plath's connection of heaven and hell in the renewal archetype. The image of woman has also been presented in *Paradise Lost*, Dante's Beatrice which symbolizes chastity and piousness which we also note in the image of 'Lady Lazarus.' Virgil's Golden Bough presents the stage of rebirth archetype and one's belief in the force of self renewal. The positive and negative attitudes present in an unconscious have been explored by Maud Bodkin moulded in the shape of archetypes and images. The archetypal images of devil, hero and God are also presented in *Othello*, the figure of Satan in *Paradise Lost*; the archetypal hero raises devil and God, between piousness and evil. These patterns are also found in Plath's poetry.

Focusing on the female image Pratt presents the idea of Jung's archetypes of the real world as present in the unconscious. He also elucidates the use of symbols and images in women novels which reflect their age old conflict between their 'power and

⁵³ Ibid. 112

powerlessness' in cultural history.⁵⁴ Archetypal images and patterns mould the situations immersed in the collective unconscious. Pratt finds prominent constituents of images and mood in three hundred novels written by major and minor writers covering a large span of time of three centuries. This much time establishes old and ancient concepts in different images and symbols. The conceptions stored in different images and symbols are portrayed in different novels discussed by Pratt in *The Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. The relationship between complete human beings irrespective of gender has been portrayed which shows the probability of maintaining relationships between both. According to Pratt, the archetypal patterns found in women's novel are derived from age old traditions.⁵⁵ Female archetypes express themselves in symbols related to marriage, Eros, renewal and renovation. Archetypal patterns themselves bring life to age-old, dormant sensibilities, and represent a kind of rebirth of the literary world as well.

Conscious and unconscious levels of thought are also discussed in Jo Gill's *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath*. This book is devoted to the criticism of works on Plath written by people like Wagner Martin, Anne Sexton, Edward Butscher and others. Butscher's idea of a 'self-conscious persona' and the unconscious is dealt with in *Sylvia Plath: Method and Madness*. It discusses her personality disorders like 'psychoses and narcissism' and highlights the perplexed relationship between the positives and negatives of her unhappy life.⁵⁶ Her death is considered as the outcome of the unconscious disintegration of thoughts important to her poetic art. Her art is both conscious and unconscious. It is conscious because her biography reveals that she has consciously struggled for herself through her self-conscious persona. The priority given on the basis of gender difference by society is a representation of her internal experiences

⁵⁴Annis Pratt, *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981) 167

⁵⁵ Ibid. 170

⁵⁶Jo Gill, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) <<http://www.cambridge.org/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521606851&ss=fro/>>
Ibid. Para no. 8

discussed in her poems sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. As Sylvia Plath asserts, 'I think I would like to call myself "The girl who wanted to be God"'.⁵⁷

Her unfulfilled desires as stated above define her thinking processes and the expression of her thoughts through language. The language used in her art is the medium for revealing something, if not everything about her internalized experience; while her biography confirms the circumstances of her life. The field of psychology discusses in greater detail the effect of consciousness and unconsciousness on her poetry. Discussing "Daddy" in this book, Gill says Plath as a mixture of 'Nazi' father and 'part Jewish' mother has been presented to show the mother's part as a sufferer.⁵⁸ It stresses the implication of the Electra complex in Plath's poetry linking it with Freud's psychoanalysis.⁵⁹ Her extreme affiliation with her father is given sexual undertones. At McLean Hospital, Dr. Butscher explained her Freudian theory of psychoanalysis in reference to Sylvia Plath, and how she used her own poetry to alleviate her anxieties, Butscher describes "Daddy" as indicative of 'illness,' and at the same time 'curative' because of its cathartic features.⁶⁰ This book explores the conscious and unconscious processes of Plath's mind and also shows how her poetry acts as a kind of therapy.

Focusing on Plath's parallelism with Jung, Butscher presents Plath as having depressed thoughts off and on, as revealed in her poetry. The last phase of her life which has been presented in the "The Couriers", according to Butscher, gives an outlet to her aggressive thoughts. (*Note: the researcher has humbly offered her own analysis of "The Couriers" in the next chapter. She takes full responsibility for it*). The marital infidelity which characterized her times after the Second World War, to which her husband also succumbed, leads to a number of interesting speculations about abstract archetypes (marital fidelity) and concrete archetypal manifestations (the father/ husband image). The 'lazar' incident (of Christ's raising a man from the dead) as narrated in the New

⁵⁷(Cited) Ibid. Para no. 6

⁵⁸Jo Gill, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 38

⁵⁹Electra complex is the sexual attachment of a girl with the father, invokes the feelings of jealousy for her mother. While reading her poem for BBC RADIO, Plath calls her poem "Daddy", tells of a story of a girl who suffers from Electra complex.

⁶⁰Jo Gill, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 39

Testament is abstract in the sense that it is hearsay, but it is symbolic of re-birth and the defeat of death in the Christian ethos. Plath gives little evidence of recognizing her own personality flaws. She tends to push the blame outwards, to other people or situations or happenings. (*Note: please see the researcher's analysis of "Daddy" in the next chapter*)

Butscher also focuses on her feminism and her obsessive disorders and manias which reflect her neuroticism and other mental disorders like hysteria. She strived for self-recognition, not only in reference to her own self but also in reference to all women. Her husband Ted Hughes was the most immediate influence, or in other words, the most compelling challenge for her. He could directly or indirectly aggravate her mental disorders and hasten the development of her suicidal tendencies. How much he intrudes in the poem "Daddy" cannot be said with certainty, but the researcher suggests that the "daddy" archetypal image is an amalgam of God, Satan, Hitler, her own father, her husband and the male principle in general. (*Note: this is the researcher's own reading. She takes full responsibility for it*). The explicitly aggressive poem "Daddy" reveals some of her neuroticism, while "The Couriers" reveals some of the disillusionments and repressions of a neurotic poet towards life.

The ambiguities of her language prompt the need for some kind of linguistic analysis. Gerbig and Muller-Wood discuss how lexical ambiguity can give rise to a multiplicity of meanings. They discuss different stylistic features like repetition and lexical, semantic and syntactic deviations in different poems of Sylvia Plath. At this point the researcher would like to state that she has added a phonological dimension to "Daddy." (*Note: this is the researcher's own contribution. She takes full responsibility for it*).

According to Julia Kristeva, 'each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read.'⁶¹ Her poems have 'lexical tensions of positive and negative' and 'violence and beauty' which make her poems uncertain and

⁶¹ Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel." The Kristeva Reader, 24-33.

paradoxical.⁶² Her lexical choices are interdependent--their separation or displacement could change the interpretation. The shifting of words also shifts meaning—the signifying system goes awry--multiple interpretations become possible, leading to contradictions and paradoxical images. The repetition of German words in her poetry hints at her direct association with recent history, and the historical perspective suggests a progression of ideas. The way they change depicts her concern for language in general due to her ‘fundamental potential for’ ambiguous lexis or symbols.⁶³

While portraying two sides of the picture of Plath, Anne Stevenson focuses on her shortcomings, depicting her as cold. In the second section, she emphasizes Plath's deficient personality based on known facts, remarks of people who knew her and, of course, her poems to record her personality disorders. The witnesses are not friendly; the squabbles and rancour has been revealed. In the first section, Stevenson talks about Plath's uniqueness when she rebels against established norms and strives for something which could counter love, desire and her wish for being protected against her inner turmoil. In the second section her inner turmoil has been portrayed as the outcome of the excessive social emphasis on youth, especially for women, and the anxieties associated with passing age. This is a sort of unconscious influence upon one's mind, amalgamating her domestic issues and power as a poet. Stevenson makes her husband a hero in this book by focussing on Plath's flaws instead of looking at the two objectively. Her psychic struggle is seen in "Daddy" where she exorcises her inner demon (or so she thinks), but then yields to it in "The Couriers." Stevenson attempts to unite Plath's maturation both as a person and as a writer. These two really cannot be detached; but people who knew her tended to speak against her as a person and to belittle her as a writer.

Whatever kind of personality is portrayed, either with regard to her personality disorders or her shortcomings as a human being, the researcher hypothesizes that these outcomes are consequent upon what goes on in her mind, especially the unconscious part of it. This

⁶²Gerbig, Andrea and Anja Muller-Wood, "Trapped in language: aspects of ambiguity and intertextuality in selected poetry and prose by Sylvia Plath," *Style*, Spring, 2002. 5
<http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2342/is_1_36/ai_89985877/> Accessed on 24/09/08

⁶³ Ibid. 7

statement is probably true for everyone. The only tools we have at the moment to uncover the unconscious (they may not be fully adequate tools) are those suggested by the psychoanalysts, with special reference to Freud and Jung. Poetry is probably closer to those undercurrents than prose, which is why the researcher has undertaken this study in reference to Plath's poetry. The unconscious stirrings in her mind give rise to basic belief structures manifested in different themes in her poetry. *Perhaps a direct causal relationship can never be established or proven beyond doubt, but it is possible to hypothesize a defensible correlation. This is the construct of the present study.*

Focusing on her personality, Mary Evans says that Plath tried to protest for self-recognition--this is evident in *Missing Persons: The Impossibility of Auto/Biography*. Evans complains that women have been altogether excluded.⁶⁴ In this situation Plath feels a need to raise a voice for acknowledgement. An excursion into unconscious motivation seems necessary for this kind of speculation, but Evans does not discuss specifically conscious and unconscious dimensions of thought that might help to understand the underlying psychological platform subsuming personality development, including negative factors that might lead to suicide. This, to the researcher, seems inadequate for understanding a writer like Plath.

In reference to Sylvia Plath's domestic life, Tess Cosslett, who edits *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories and Methods*, argues that Plath focuses on woman's self-recognition. Life for a woman is defined by washing utensils and dusting the house, as she portrays in her novel *The Bell Jar*, through the persona of Mrs. Willard.⁶⁵ Here Sylvia Plath stresses the need for self-identification. Once again, domesticity, as defined for women, is an external social and marital compulsion that ignores underlying realities. And, once again, we need to probe beneath the surface into the nature of things to appreciate at least some of the basic tensions of the female predicament. Plath is a good subject for this, as she is aggressive, clever, rebellious and eloquent.

⁶⁴Mary Evans, *Missing Persons: The Impossibility of Auto/Biography*, (London: Routledge, 1999) 90

⁶⁵ Tess Cosslett, ed., *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*, (New York: Routledge, 2000) 83, 84

While recording her teenage years in *The Bell Jar*, Sylvia Plath deals with the persistent problems of morality, identity and behaviour as defined for women, pinpointing her discontent, aggression, clinical depression, mental collapse and cure (or partial cure).⁶⁶ Despite a remarkable academic record, she suffered from mental instability after leaving school, possibly because she found nothing for a thinking, ambitious woman. Her ambitions were those of a highly intelligent *person*, but the limitations thrust upon her as a *woman* neutralized it all. This is a semi-autobiographical novel where names of places and persons have been changed. It has references to real events in Plath's life. After electro-shock therapy she develops severe insomnia--here Plath's experiences have been discussed in the persona of Esther, who thrashes about inside the symbolic bell jar, trying to break out of it. She tries to commit suicide first by swimming too far, then by taking fifty sleeping pills and once more by locking herself in the basement. ECT has as a calming effect on her personality and makes her free from the suffocation of the bell jar. She can now breathe easily and can also recover from other events in her life, such as the loss of virginity. The death of her friend Joan makes her understand more about death as an answer to seemingly intractable problems. Plath committed suicide just after publication of this novel under the pseudonym "Victoria Lucas" in 1963.

Samuel Hazo, editor of *Power of Less: Essays on Poetry and Public Speech*, states that it is poetry that enables Plath to live as long as she does, a mere thirty years. In "The Poetry of Anemia", he asserts that her life has been 'lengthened and enriched' by poetry, highlighting the psychotherapeutical effects of the muse on Plath's mind.⁶⁷

The need for self identification, self-sufficiency and self-presentation is exacerbated when external feedback is lacking. Denise Riley in *Words of Selves: Identification, Solidarity, Irony*, says that outward or external acceptance requires considerable interaction with the environment, something denied to the average woman. In this book the focus is on the problem of identification and the balanced relationship between psychology and poetry. Here psychoanalytic theory explores the relationship between

⁶⁶ Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*. (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1999)

⁶⁷ Samuel Hazo, ed., *Power of Less: Essays on Poetry and Public Speech*, (Marquette University Press, 2005) 70, 71

poetry and unconscious thought; this includes Plath's 'guilty thoughts' generated in part by having a family background allied with the Nazis.⁶⁸ In Plath we find confusions and paradoxes in her mind that act as obstacles when she rises for self approval.⁶⁹ Plath desired both fame and name for her poetic talent: this was denied, at least in her lifetime, the burden of self-sufficiency was excessive.

This author establishes the absolute causal primacy of the unconscious working of the brain in all mental activity in a recent work entitled *Consciousness*.⁷⁰ However, she does not see conscious awareness as a kind of unnecessary froth on the processes of thinking. Conscious awareness might have something to do with all of this—it might be less important in the totality of things, but it seems to be a device for reviewing mental activity so that adjustments can be made for further activity. It is thus an evaluative, self-aware, regulating outcome of unconscious mental processes with some usefulness for those processes. My approach is basically the same, namely that all thinking is at bottom unconscious, but that the conscious working of the brain has some importance as well.

The foregoing list represents the primary sources used for this study. Sources of other limited items of interest are acknowledged in footnotes as and when they occur, and ultimately in the bibliography given at the end.

Summing up, the psychological/archetypal questions of conscious and unconscious thoughts cannot be answered with any finality. The researcher has therefore selected the items mentioned in this chapter for consideration in this limited study, particularly with regard to Plath's self-belief and suicidal tendencies and archetypal patterns. Sylvia Plath is a prime subject for psychological/archetypal speculation. A brief introduction to areas of psychology like archetype, its definition, archetypal images and patterns and some detail provide the basic material for the researcher's analysis of some of Plath's poems.

⁶⁸ Denise Riley, *Words of Selves: Identification, Solidarity, Irony*. (California: Stanford University Press, 2000) 56

⁶⁹ Ibid. 57, 2

⁷⁰ Jeffery Gray, *Consciousness*. (Oxford: London, 2006)

Chapter 3

Methodology

Implications

This is essentially a qualitative study. Validation would be indicated at the following levels⁷¹:

1. Data—at the primary level this was taken from Sylvia Plath’s own poetry. It presented no difficulty.
2. Some difficulties were encountered at the second level in validating psychological discussion. This was perforce speculative in nature, especially where areas of cognition were involved. As mentioned earlier, concrete data cannot be mustered from the inner workings of the brain, but plausible inferences can certainly be drawn. In fact, the offerings of seminal psychoanalysts such as Freud and Jung (upon whose writings I have based many of my observations) are themselves essentially speculative in nature, but they had wide currency in the western world at one time and still find many votaries today. No intractable difficulty was encountered in finding support from authentic writers such as those cited in Chapter Two for my basic premises.
3. Inferences—some of these are my own: I have noted my own contributions when and where they have been introduced. I have tried to support them from the writings of well-known authors such as Maud Bodkin.

⁷¹ These categories have been adapted from Joseph A. Maxwell, Harvard graduate School of Education, “Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research” in Harvard Educational Review, 62: 270-300 (Fall 1992)

4. Generalization—I think the findings are such that valid generalizations can be made and offer them for what they are worth in Chapter Six. The archetypal approach is not new, but what I have done for this writer is new in many ways.

5. Evaluation—I have endeavoured to evaluate the results of my observations and offer the evaluation for what it is worth in Chapter Six

3.1 Objectives

The purpose of this study is to determine through basic archetypes in Sylvia Plath's poems how far these contributed to her suicidal tendencies.

3.2 Methodology

In the main the researcher's approach is characterized by a close analysis of the ten poems mentioned in 1.4.4 in Chapter 1. This is qualitative descriptive analytical study. The collected data is ten poems in total; three main poems are sequentially discussed and seven poems are discussed for reinforcement.

She has not restricted herself to any one method, employing linguistics tools or direct criticism where she has found either to be more fruitful. This is qualitative descriptive analytical study.

This is a cognitive study. By their very nature, the trends, tensions and emotions ascribed to Sylvia Plath by the researcher cannot be adduced or presented in the form of absolute evidence in a scientific sense. However, she thinks that her case can be argued to the satisfaction of all.

3.3 Research Questions

With particular reference to Sylvia Plath's suicidal tendencies, can any psychological/archetypal elements be discerned in this selected poetry? This question includes the following questions:

- a. Does Sylvia Plath exhibit high neuroticism in her writings?
- b. Does poetry help her to establish an appearance of normal life, especially at the moments of crisis in her life?
- c. Can an estimate of her inner life be made from the language of her poetry?

3.4 Justification

There was a spate of psychological criticism in the twentieth century. Is there any justification for renewing it at this stage? The following is offered:

1. All facts are psychological in nature. By this the researcher means that we view, interpret and understand the world indirectly, through our psychological structures, and not directly, through our basic senses. The raw senses gather data and sense impressions from the external world, but these derive significance only from what the brain does with them. For example, the eyes present patches of different colours to the brain, and these patches are then organized by the brain into meaningful perceptions, and recognized as, say, 'my friend so-and-so, sitting at her desk about twenty feet away.' We see the world not as it is, but as we think it is. We see it also as we interpret it to be and this is itself heavily dependent on the structures and belief systems of our unconscious selves.

2. Literatures have their own ages, and many of the contexts of the past are of little relevance to us now. For example, it is unlikely that the age of chivalry will ever be resuscitated, so some people might feel that there is no need to bother about it—but we can relate to the knights, ladies, saints, rogues and clergymen of Chaucer's time because they represent some of the universals, both on and under the surface of the human predicament. Literatures that exhibit some kind of permanence from age to age are

usually those with abiding human interests, some of which might be found in the collectives of thinking, symbolizing and myth-making—universal in a human sense-- these are the things that endure.

3. Speculation about the sub-conscious and unconscious had its day and time in the writings of Freud, Jung and Adler, and in the widespread popularity of psychoanalysis as a system of mental and emotional therapy in the twentieth century, but it is not very popular now. The reason for this decline is that speculation is, after all, speculation. No verifiable, definitive assertions can be made about the unconscious, and this runs counter to the demands of empirical science. Nevertheless, the researcher feels that what happens in the unconscious is highly pertinent to life in general. In fact, it is what happens in the unconscious that decides both the base and structure of the experience of living. According to Libet's experiments, as stated later in this study, it would seem that there is no such thing as a 'conscious' decision about anything. *All decisions, even the decision to end one's own life (which is of relevance to any commentary on Sylvia Plath) are taken unconsciously* (researcher's emphasis). We must look more closely at the unconscious for anything associated to a person's life and works, even if we cannot make final assertions about it.

Probing the psychological directions of a complex and highly perceptive mind such as that of Sylvia Plath is a daunting task. Thoughts lead to thoughts in a never-ending stream. To give my own ideas some shape and structure, I have focussed on psychological/archetypal elements for this study. I have also chosen only three of Sylvia Plath's poems, namely, "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus" and "The Couriers", for the exposition of my ideas. Together, they exhibit some kind of loose cross-referencing, and may be put in a sequence of emotional and intellectual change.

Plath's use of language is deviational and spasmodic in the extreme, but her deviations are not conscious.⁷² An analysis of psychological elements would provide a new dimension to the study of her personality and works. Most people are somewhere from

⁷² Spasmodic means irregular. It is deviational and spasmodic in the sense that she uses such words, which might be apt in her culture. See meaning in A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1238

low to high on the scale of neuroticism, and like to daydream, but few people lose touch with reality to the extent one might note here. The psychological approach to Plath's poetry is significant in the sense that the action of committing 'suicide' links greatly with the conscious and unconscious thoughts of a person.⁷³ The reason for choosing these three poems is that they make some logical connection with one another as far as poetic language and the progression of thoughts are concerned. In mood, for example, she seems to be more aggressive in "Daddy", less so in "Lady Lazarus" and discernibly calmer and quieter in "The Couriers."

3.5 Rationale

The researcher chose this archetypal study of Sylvia Plath's poems because of her own interest in psychology. She has a four-year background in it. The sampling of poetry is chosen for this study because of its relevance to the researcher's central hypothesis as enunciated earlier.

⁷³ Lorna Sage, *The Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in English*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 501

Chapter 4

Archetypal Analysis of Three Core Poems

People express themselves in words and gestures. The nature of beliefs is linked with everyday life. This might result from unconscious workings of the brain and may be either positive or negative. Poetry is one kind of response to the one's experiences and relations. The term 'psychological reality' is suggested by Jung, and is further elaborated in Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination* by analysing the archetypal images and patterns associated with the collective unconscious.⁷⁴ The inherent dualism of archetypal images and patterns are elaborated in this chapter with the help of elaborating different themes and concepts. The pattern of tragedy portrayed in her poems depicts the psychological proposition of Freud and Jung relating to the Unconscious powers establishes individuals' practice and communicates experiences of life.

4.1 Aspects of Psychology—a brief background

Psychology deals with the thoughts and feelings of a person. It not only affects a poet's life but others as well, people who go about their daily work without consciously knowing about them. Psychology sees poetry in accordance with thoughts and feelings. A poet's poetry is not always a revelation or even a reliable representation of the poet's life-- language may help to reveal reality, but it is not necessarily the reality itself. We must look again and again at what a poet says about himself. Language is often used to obscure rather than reveal meaning, and we must not forget the inputs of the reader, who will always tend to judge things in accordance with his or her own range of experience (as I have done in this study).

Sigmund Freud has earned an important name in the analysis of conscious and unconscious thoughts of a person's mind, and the fact that he was Jung's teacher, even though Jung did not agree with everything he said, makes him important to this study as

⁷⁴ Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 78

well. Thought is linked with the psychology of man; the one who writes is influenced by the vast underground of his own unconscious psyche in his writings. This influence can be partly conscious. It can also be unconscious, or it can have intimations of both dimensions simultaneously. This means that a person may be partly aware of this influence on his thinking: alternatively, he may be completely unaware of it while writing. This is what Billig says about it, '[...] he attempts to link his psychology of unconscious thinking with a theory of consciousness.'⁷⁵

My own understanding is that the unconscious is much more important than the conscious in speculation of this nature. Following Libet (as mentioned in the chapter on methodology) it would appear that no decision is conscious.⁷⁶ We might think that we sum up the pros and cons of a situation before consciously coming to a decision about it, but in these we are mistaken. The decision has already been taken unconsciously, and this may or may not be followed by a conscious awareness of that decision. This, of course, raises interesting speculation as to the nature and role (if any) of the consciousness, but this falls outside the remit of this short study of Plath's poems. Suffice it to say at this point that skirting the unconscious simply because it cannot be seen and measured is undesirable in looking at a poet's output. Poetic language (in fact all language) is basically the product of unconscious mental activity, much as it might seem to be otherwise. This is how I have tried to judge poems like "Daddy," especially from the perspective of her suicidal tendencies, while psychomotor connections arising from a poem like "Lady Lazarus" also become significant.⁷⁷ From a psychological point of view

⁷⁵ Michael Billig, *Freudian Repression: Conversation Creating the Unconscious*, (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1999) 38

⁷⁶ Gray, *Consciousness* (OUP, 2006) 21-25. Gray mentions Libet's experiments which fairly conclusively demonstrate the primacy of the unconscious.

⁷⁷Poems given in Appendix

The term 'psyche' relates to the mind, while 'motor' relates to the response. A poem can be seen as a motor response, manifested through language, of unconscious mental activity. It is of interest to speculate how the response might influence the activity as well. By this I mean the conscious may have some effect on the unconscious, though this does not emerge from Libet's experiments as mentioned in footnote 3. However, a commonly held belief is that talking about something (i.e., bringing it into the consciousness) relieves, though it can also aggravate, the tensions of the unconscious.

Plath's internal pressures are translated into poetic utterances. These utterances might ameliorate those pressures, or they might not—they might also aggravate them. This unconscious amelioration or instigation is also found in Freud's words:

[...] personality consciousness remains constantly bound up with one of the two states, this is called the conscious mental state, and the other the unconscious [...]⁷⁸

So these two states are the part and parcel of one's personality, same is with Sylvia Plath, she cannot deny the existence of these two states in her consciousness, whatever the actions she do or whatever the incidence happen to her, her conscious and unconscious contributes a lot in effecting her personality.

4.2 Belief Structures: Limiting and Promotional

Belief structures are often formed out of specific incidents. The brain tends to generalize from specifics, and these generalizations tend to harden into permanent or semi-permanent patterns of the mind. For example, a child may be impatiently or contemptuously rebuffed by an elder for something that seems unimportant to the elder but very important to the child, and this may result in a kind of mental and emotional 'retreat' on the part of the child and the formation of a limiting structure. This might then provide an unduly restrictive framework for the mind, so that new situations, some of which might have nothing to do with the original incident, are judged in the light of this old script. It might also provide a framework for self-evaluation, some of which could become dangerous and destructive. Belief-structures are foundational patterns formed out of verbalized or partially verbalized and automatic or semi-automatic responses to events, and might date back to opinions expressed about the individual in childhood, although they can form at any stage in a person's life. Excessive childhood exposure to comments like, "he's stupid—he can't add up two and two," or, "she's a genius—look at the marvellous poetry she writes," might result in cripplingly limiting or unrealistically promotional belief structures.

⁷⁸Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. (W. W. Norton, 1966) 14

My interest centres on poetic manifestations of psychological conditions, both as causes and effects. Mind affects language and actions. This is an example of an idea converting itself into a physical reality. Frequent mind activity sets up habits of thought and action, and it is possible that what starts off as basically poetic in nature becomes a physical pattern, which, in turn, affects the behaviour of the individual. By this I mean that a person might use a certain kind of language partly because s/he has a highly neurotic or psychotic personality--alternatively, s/he may be neurotic or psychotic partly because of the internal belief structure and the kind of language s/he uses, and this observation would apply also to the person's inner language. It is a two-way street because many, perhaps all, of these belief-structures are language-based; it should be possible to modify them through the use of poetic language. This makes the effects of language pertinent to these considerations, be they curative in the sense of reducing stress or disease-producing in the sense of aggravating unconscious partly or wholly suppressed problems by bringing them to light.

Belief structures might result in self-assessment of different kinds that one has specific capabilities, roles or traits that cannot be changed; there is evidence of this in these three poems, as will be pointed out later. The view (a) that one cannot succeed so there is no point in trying; there is not much evidence of this point in these three poems: (b) that a particular viewpoint is right so there is no point in considering other viewpoints; this does not show up strongly in these three poems,: (c) that a particular action or result is the only way to resolve a problem,; considerable evidence of this is found in these poems--in Plath's case it seems to be that 'dying' is the only cure for her problems. Among other factors, it is important in the sense that it impels Plath to commit suicide.⁷⁹

To the preceding list the following categories may also be added:

⁷⁹ The self-assessment mentioned in this paragraph is based upon general observation of the group of It is associated with the Plath's psychological self-assessment.

(d) That one is doomed or fated to be such-and-such, or to do certain things in life, perhaps even to commit murder or suicide. That this occurs frequently is a matter of common observation. In Plath's case it manifests itself as a feeling that she is especially unlucky, partly because of the accident of birth, partly because of the distressing events in her life. As soon as we bring in the factor of fate or destiny we run into implied preconceptions about the Controlling Force of the Universe, or God. Belief structures based on similar premises would lead one to think that one's life-course has already been mapped out, and that nothing could be done about it. "The Couriers" suggests the presence of Hebraic/Christian or Biblical ideas, as will be seen in my discussion later on in this chapter.⁸⁰

(e) That by definition, one's race, ethnicity or nation prescribes certain special characteristics, disabilities or abilities. This is significant because Plath reverts to the 'German/holocaust'⁸¹ theme quite often. She is conscious of her Teutonic background, and disturbingly conscious that people like herself conspired in the mass-murder of other helpless, innocent people during the Second World War.⁸² This did not mean that all Germans were death-oriented or insane as she might have thought, including herself, but

⁸⁰It is biblical because this poem is one of Plath's last poems where Plath seems to settle herself with the nature's decision and stopped protesting verbally in her poetry.

⁸¹The holocaust was the organized murder of almost six million Jews by the Nazi rule and its associates. There are other alternative views, all people do not agree but nobody denies that it does not happen. See Walter Laqueur, ed., *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, (London: Yale University Press, 2001) 13. For details see 30, 31, 32

⁸²Plath was conscious of her Teutonic background due to the reason that Teutonics did not waver to make a harsh deal called a 'Jew Deal' with their own citizens and Hitler was the follower of Teutonic order. He hoped to emerge tireless, unaware of pain, aggressively active and brutal young generation regardless of any feebleness. See *Britannica Online*. Also check *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, for 'Crusades The Teutonic Knights and the Baltic Crusades', 913

For details see J. M. Roberts, *The Hutchinson History of the World*. (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1976) 961-983

it did show that many of them unthinkingly underwrote the depredations of their leadership under Adolf Hitler.⁸³

Our view of the world is not direct—it is filtered through an obtrusive and ever-present screen of language, which itself rests on the data collected through a screen of senses, but it is very rarely validated. Our language systems create sets of signs, symbols and structures, which we think and hope, reflect the real world. Plath's language systems in her poetry also tried to reflect the real world but her external world distorts the image she creates. In an external sense our vision is clouded, coloured and distorted by the language we share with other people around us. In an internal sense our psychology, is affected by the inner language we use for ourselves, the exhortations, the fugitive thoughts, the disconnected or barely connected ideas and the half-articulated feelings that stream through our waking and sleeping brains, and permeate all aspects of our being. This inner language is itself strained and twisted by the wild, uncivilized passions and emotions that drive us on as it has been traced in Plath's poems especially "Daddy." The assumption running in parallel with some of the hypotheses of psychology of this thesis is that we are not so much what we think, as what we verbalize. The inner poetic world is often overlooked in the discussions of a literary nature. In my opinion, this is a shortcoming. The present work is an attempt to trace some of these elements in Plath's poetry.

As a good example of what I mean by a limiting belief, the reader is referred to the following lines in "Lady Lazarus," where she says,

I have done it again

One year in ten

I manage it—

thus making a poetic reinforcement of a belief that she is cyclically impelled to make an attempt at suicide every ten years or so. This is not simply a recognition of something

⁸³Hitler was a dictator and did lot of massacre especially of Jews. However all people do not agree with the massacre of the huge number of Jews. Walter Laqueur, ed., *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, (London: Yale University Press, 2001) 13

that happens to her every ten years. It is the verbalization of a belief that this happens to her, that she is fated or structured for it. There is a qualitative difference between the two. She recognizes and expresses what she sees as a pattern in her life, an inescapable, regular, time-based compulsion. She tosses it off casually in this poem, but this is a key statement that summarizes a lot of what I have tried to say in this study. Her casualness can be recognized as a psychological avoidance strategy. In reality it is a terrifying belief to have about oneself: her repetitions reflect her fear of it. Talking about one's problems might have a curative effect. Sometimes, however, it might be better to let sleeping dogs lie.

Not all beliefs of this nature are limiting in their effects. Some are unduly promotional, and these can also be destructive if they ask for the improbable. Unrealistic expectations derived from the evaluations of others, or from one's own ambitions, can result in a heavy load of frustration. I see an ambitious young woman, an asset to the world of letters, who is forced into a mediocre role by a disinterested world.

4.3 Neuroticism and Psychoticism

People who are high on the scale of neuroticism or psychoticism tend to experience negative or sharply negative emotional reactions to situations that would normally be handled quite well by people with low scores on the scale.⁸⁴ High neuroticism is fairly common among poets. Neurotic people are nervous, anxious and liable to overreact to even low levels of stress. For such people, coping techniques are often poor and self-defeating. There is a tendency to revert to the basic patterns of their neurosis, regardless of external circumstances, even if those circumstances are quite good. If those circumstances are bad, there is a tendency to use them as further reinforcements of those

⁸⁴Neuroticism and psychoticism are psychological diseases, the second being more intense and dangerous than the first. One is fixated, overanxious and disturbed and can show violent behaviour, sometimes towards oneself. All people are neurotic in some degree, but most people develop adequate coping strategies and can live fairly normal lives. See Gordon E. Barnes, *The Addiction-Prone Personality*. (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000) 30, 31

basic patterns.⁸⁵ It is a no-win situation. In a sense they do not let themselves win, but revert to the negative patterns because these now seem normal for them. This, I assert, is because there is yet a deeper layer constructed round the belief structures mentioned earlier that directs the way the individual reacts to things and events. Either way, such people find justifications for maintaining and strengthening their primary psychological problems, which can then cause a great deal of damage both to themselves and to people around them.

In Plath's case, my opinion is that as a child and young adult, she formed unrealistic promotional beliefs based on the promise of high performance at studies, and also on the early positive reception she received as a poet. She also formed limiting beliefs based on what she thought was her perverse fate, especially when it came to the representation of the male principle through important men in her life.

4.4 Titles of Poems

The titles of the poems are revealing. "Daddy" indicates some kind of father fixation, "Lady Lazarus" has links with the New Testament and one of the miracles of Christ, and "The Couriers" is connected with messengers and carriers of empty tidings which have lost relevance for her. It is a matter of common observation that when people return to religion after a period of agnosticism or atheism, this is often because of an increased awareness of death.⁸⁶ "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" are not overtly religious in tone, though "Lady Lazarus" is directly connected with the biblical story. "The Couriers" reaches a point of decision. The religious phenomenon is seen among older people who are approaching the end of their lives. It is also sometimes visible among younger, death-oriented people.

⁸⁵ Reinforcements mean support, strengthening to do something. See Aubrey C. Daniels, *Bringing Out the Best in People*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Professional Book Group, 1999) 25, 26

⁸⁶ Agnosticism or atheism means having no religion. For details see Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986) 424-430

4.5 Chronological Progression

An attempt will be made to judge the significance of three poems selected from Plath's considerable output because they seem to be more poetically and logically illustrative than many others of the subterranean turmoil that characterizes so much of her writing. I shall touch upon Plath's need to explain her cyclic attempts to end her own life, to look for reasons for her unhappiness, and to express her general frustration at the apparently irremediable cankers in her soul.

Some of these interactions can be discerned in the poems chosen here, especially when they are placed in a loose sequence. One can sense a change in mood and tone from one to the other. She uses her poetry as an exercise in language for purposes of self-exploration and self-understanding.⁸⁷ Her conscious and unconscious mental process are mixed together and lead to the statement of wanting to kill her father again in "Daddy," perhaps just to relieve herself of mental pain.

That Plath's aggression and manic-depressive psychoses become less virulent is evident as we move from one poem to another in chronological order.⁸⁸ They were written in the same year, but chronologically "Daddy" comes first. It reflects considerable mental disorder and provides some evidence of a manic-depressive psychosis. "Lady Lazarus" comes second, it too, is replete with delusions and paranoia, but in a less violent and uncontrolled manner.⁸⁹ Some of the aggression is softened in this poem, though there is still evidence of anti-social tendencies. Then in "The Couriers", I find her more philosophical than aggressive. One becomes aware of deep and relatively well-ordered thinking, with less traces of mental instability. At the end of the poem she says, 'Love, love, my season,' so it is possible to sense a semblance of decision and the resolution of

⁸⁷ Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 9

⁸⁸ Manic-depressive psychosis, also known as bi-polar disease or bi-polarism, is a psychological condition characterized by extremes of elation and depression, which can lead to a fluctuation between over-confidence and excessive hesitation in dealing with life. For details see *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*.

⁸⁹ Paranoia is a mental disease characterized by delusions of grandeur together with excessive suspicion and fear. See Joseph H. Burke, *Even Paranoid Have Enemies: New Perspectives on Paranoia and Persecution*. (New York: Routledge, 1998) 87

extreme tensions in comparison with other poems where I find only pessimism, death, barrenness, nothingness and despair. Nevertheless, I see decisively dangerous elements in this poem, more so than the others, as discussed later. At this stage it is enough to state that as long as she is in agony she is involved with life. It is when she has made peace with her inner demons that the road to irretrievable suicide truly begins. This is not to suggest that it is consciously so, but in any case this study is concerned more with subconscious and unconscious processes than with conscious ones.

4.6 Multiple Images, Symbols and Paradoxes

In this Chapter, I noted how she blends images in "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus." In this respect she is a worthy successor of the 'metaphysical' poets of yore, displaying all the anguish and vexation generated by the opposites of her nature that never relinquish their grip.⁹⁰

Her poem "Daddy" presents a composite image of many male figures like God the father (an enduring, universal archetype that goes back to the beginnings of the human race), Hitler the father of the German empire (Hitler can be seen as a universal, though relatively modern, archetype of political fascism and destructive dictatorship), Dracula the chief vampire (the vampire story belongs to Europe, and is recognized as the archetype of lurking evil), her babies' father (Edward J. Hughes) and her own father (Otto Plath) as well. It is this kind of complex synthesizing of abstract and concrete ideas that is both her strength and her undoing. The contraries of her nature meet in one. The elements neutralize one another so that a vacuum is left, a void that cannot be filled by ordinary means. The male principle is the destructive, vampire ghost that operates in her psyche.

⁹⁰ Metaphysical means beyond physical, something significant to abstraction. *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* in Volume XVIII, 1907–21 and Volume VII, "Cavalier and Puritan." The metaphysical poets belonged mostly to the seventeenth century. Their poetry is characterized by argumentation and complex images called 'conceits' which blend disparate elements together. I have bracketed Plath with these poets because she, too, has highly complex, tightly synthesized images in her poetry.

Yore means old times, long ago. See A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1505

The female principle, even in "Lady Lazarus," which is superficially about a femalized adaptation of a male figure in the Bible, remains untouched, at least in her conscious thinking. The figure of Lazarus is itself complex—in one of his miracles, Jesus is said to have raised him from the dead. However, the word 'lazar' also connotes a leper, a beggar, and an outcast. To this double image symbolizing a social outcast who is raised from the dead, Plath adds yet two more elements, namely, femininity and reluctance—she is not pleased at being rescued from the dead. One could also find interesting connotations in the word 'lady' rather than 'woman' or 'female.' In the Bible, Lazarus seems to be a plebeian or even an untouchable figure, whereas the word 'lady' has upper-class connotations.⁹¹ Of course, one could argue that Americans often use 'lady' in the vocative as a formal term when addressing a woman, any woman: but in both British and American conventions of the language, the word connotes respect and high social status.

Likewise, 'death' has at least two connotations. First, it is an irrevocable end of everything. Second, it is a kind of transition, a rebirth--not an ending but a new beginning of what is yet to come. The images used in "Daddy" are 'Meinkampf', 'Dachau,' 'Auschwitz' and 'Belsen', referring to Hitler's political manifesto and the gas chambers used for the mass murder of Jews (other so-called 'inferior' races also suffered) indicate her strong reaction to the events of the Second World War. She is appalled by them, especially since those crimes against humanity were committed by people who belonged to the same race as herself.

Plath uses symbols like 'Nazi lampshade' which identifies her and her sympathies for Jews in Second World War. This symbol indicates Jewish suffering at the hands of Germans. The usage of the word 'it' in the first stanza indicates her some negative action and it is revealed in the forty five line where she reveals her suffering and more like torturous feelings as suffered by Jews. Her close-death experiences make her feel that it an art, and she says 'I do it exceptionally well:' this hints with a piece of 'tongue-in-cheek' irony at her repeated trials to commit suicide. In the last stanza she says, 'I rise

⁹¹Plebeian means person belongs to lower social class. See A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 968

with my red hair', the Phoenix bird image comes to mind, symbolizing rebirth and renewal.

So, two connotations are noted here, good and evil both, one in renewal the other in wartime atrocity. These archetypes her poetry leads refer more to unconscious rather than conscious patterns. She is presenting something which has a long history and wide reference in the collective human psyche.

Likewise, the images of 'Nazi lampshade' and 'Jew linen' have dual connotations, both good and evil--the helpless innocence of Jews on one hand and the extreme brutality of the Nazi regime on the other—the reality of this world lies in vivid contrast with childhood idealism. Plath's poetry is itself full of paradoxes. It makes us aware of these dualities

4.7 Theme of Aggression

Her second poem in this short series, "Lady Lazarus," includes an iteration of the German/Hitler imagery seen in "Daddy." Is she serious about this justification? However, she seems less sure this time that she will be able to find the root cause of her sickness, and the poem ends on a threat to the world that, while she may die prematurely or be killed by external and/or internal causes, she will rise again and take her revenge by 'eating men' like air. Is this some kind of return to New Testament religion and the curative or destructive resurrection theme one finds in it?⁹² With Plath and her synthesizing proclivities, all paradoxes and extremes are possible. What is it that she is threatening here? The oppressive 'super-ego' of parental restrictivism, the male-dominated world that has kept her in a state of anxious, frightened subjection all her life

⁹² It is said that The New Testament is the outcome of the church but the church is not the outcome of the New Testament. It represents the Christian part of the Bible. For details see Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol.2. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986) 183-202. In Christianity the Resurrection refers to the coming back of Christ after his death by crucifixion and three days in the grave. The Lazarus story is also about coming back from the dead, though in his case it is due to the miraculous powers of Christ. The resurrection theme indicates a belief that a dead person can rise again. For details see Ibid. 344-350

like a 'foot' inside a 'shoe' or Hitler on the rampage against helpless Jews?⁹³ Is it a vaguely felt sense of religious oppression? Or is it a 'garbled' psychological compound formed out of all these possibilities?⁹⁴ One needs to look at the language of these two poems and through it become aware of the frantic, disordered synthesis of disparate ideas tumbling one over the other that lies at the back of it.⁹⁵

Once again the spectre of a failed suicide haunts her, and she feels she must explain herself, not only to herself, and also to a puzzled world. In "Daddy" she presents a composite male figure, as we have seen. In "Lazarus" she presents a composite female image, but once again in a passive rather than an active role.⁹⁶ And, once again, I find the numbing revelations of what the Germans did to the Jews during the Second World War being evoked in image after image:⁹⁷

[...] my skin

Bright as a Nazi lampshade,

My right foot

A paperweight,

⁹³Freud says that personality comprises three main factors. They are the id, ego and super ego. The id is the basic constituent of personality. It constitutes innate, unconscious and primal unconscious actions or behaviours. The ego is an expansion of the id, and is ruled by the primary element of reality. In other words, the ego imposes a reality-based set of controls on the id. It performs its actions in conscious, preconscious and unconscious dimensions of the psyche. The super ego is a kind of social monitor that imposes moral constraints acquired from parents, peers and society. It develops the concept of what is good and what is bad. For details see Wilfred I. Guerin, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 154-161

⁹⁴ Garbled means confused, distorted language. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*, (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 599. Different questions are raised to resolve the complexities of Plath's language in her poems.

⁹⁵ The word frantic means anxious, hysterical. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 577

⁹⁶Composite female image means complex female image. Ibid. 309

⁹⁷ Germans brutally killed Jews in the Second World War. For details see J. M. Roberts, *The Hutchinson History of the World*. (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1976) 961-983

My face a featureless, fine

Jew linen.

[...]

Ash, ash—

You poke and stir.

Flesh, bone, there is nothing there---

And yet another image of Nazi atrocities:

A cake of soap,

A wedding ring,

A gold filling.⁹⁸

And a climactic image in which she brackets God, the Devil and probably Hitler in one tightly synthesized concept:

Herr God, Herr Lucifer,

Beware

Beware.

Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air.

The importance of this is that once again Plath externalizes the causes of her female failings to the savagery of men, especially of men at war. That she should attempt to kill herself every now and then is not explained. Nor can it be explained through

⁹⁸ It is said that the Nazis sometimes made lampshades and paperweights out of the skin and bones of their Jewish victims, or boiled their body fat down to make soap, and stole gold ornaments and gold tooth fillings if they found any. However, all people do not agree with such claims. For more details read Walter Laqueur, *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. (London: Yale University Press, 2001) xviii

justifications of this nature. It does not explain why she should feel guilty about what the Nazis did to the Jews, simply because of her own German family background. What I am looking for are the underlying psychological triggers and belief structures about herself that bring about self-destructive actions. In "Lady Lazarus" we detect some of these in the following lines:

(Stanza One) I have done it again.

 One year in every ten

 I manage it---

This is as clear a statement as one could hope for of a developing belief structure about herself, namely, that every ten years or so she 'manages' to make an attempt at suicide. In other words, that she is so fated, or that there is some deficiency or inner compulsion that drives her willy-nilly to kill herself.

While comparing "Daddy" with "Lady Lazarus," one perceives a change in phonic values. Unlike the 'oo' phonic cast of "Daddy," "Lady Lazarus" does not function on any discernible overall phonic ambience. Her triumphal self-analysis and the identification of her mental instability with the composite father figure in "Daddy:"

 Daddy, you can lie back now.

 There's a stake in your fat black heart

And:

 [...]

 They always *knew* it was you.

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

It reflects a strident though misplaced confidence (that she has found and finally 'killed' the cause of her sickness) is replaced by a tinge of puzzlement and uncertainty, because she realizes she has not really found the cause. This is brought out by the multiple tones of "Lady Lazarus" in place of the single dominant one in "Daddy".

However, she has not quite abandoned the "Daddy" image:

So, so, Herr Doktor.

So, Herr Enemy.

I am your opus,

[...]

The pure gold baby

[...]

Do not think I underestimate your great concern.

followed by a sudden reassertion of her inner aggression, a desire to fight back at the composite male thing that drives her to self-annihilation. She is a female Lazarus, come back from the dead to exact a vengeful reckoning on the men who have wrecked her life, which could mean all men and all things symbolic of the male principle, including God:

[...]

Herr God, Herr Lucifer,

Beware

Beware.

Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air.

God is addressed as 'Herr', which is used in the German language for 'sir' or 'mister,' emphasizing the masculine nature of the archetype. God's creative and destructive powers are emphasized through the German theme, which underscores these two poems. But, for her, Herr God is also Herr Lucifer, the disobedient archangel who was thrown out of heaven to rule in hell as Satan. God and Satan are one. This is how the opposites of good and bad are synthesized into one concept. In other words, there is nothing good that does

not have the seeds of bad in it, and there is nothing bad that does not have the seeds of good in it--the moral question is self-balancing and self-neutralizing.⁹⁹ Under Hitler, the German empire was also scientific and inventive, contributing a number of useful things to the world.¹⁰⁰ The moral question has no resolution for her--confusions and despondency might result from such a vision. Most people have a strong need to know what is right as opposed to what is wrong.

It is noted that Plath's aggression is turned outwards while moulding her conscious or unconscious thoughts or internal psyche into language, but only in poems like these. It is an empty threat; in real life she is helpless against the injustices of God, helpless against the atrocities of war, helpless against Hitler's depredations, helpless to prevent the death of her father, helpless against the infidelities of her husband.¹⁰¹ This sense of injustice and deprivation manifested as aggression is thwarted by a wall of helplessness, and turns inwards to claim its victim, herself. In the last act, there is no one to glue her together, no Jesus close at hand to raise Lazarus from the dead yet again.

Her illusions and hallucinations lead her to portray an ambiguous picture of her life. As she says in "Lady Lazarus",

A paperweight,
My face a featureless, fine
Jew linen.

The above-mentioned verse is well formed syntactically. But there is a contradiction in her poetic language. On one hand the poet describes the linen as 'featureless:' on the other she calls it 'fine'. A reader might assume that the poet has presented yet another paradox,

⁹⁹ The philosophy has not been borrowed from anywhere rather developed the idea from Plath's poetry keeping in view the concept of good and bad and Plath's amalgamation of two in one.

¹⁰⁰ The German Empire indulged in atrocities without caring for values. For details see J. M. Roberts, *The Hutchinson History of the World*. (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1976) 961-983

¹⁰¹ Depredations mean damage, destruction, ruin and ravages. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 399

one among many. However, resolutions are possible. By 'featureless' she means blank, devoid of pattern or design, another symbol of the unknowns of death and the featurelessness of the after-life. The Jews who contributed to the making of this fine linen are dead, murdered. In the same poem at another place, she says:

Soon, soon the flesh

The grave cave ate will be

At home on me!

The exclamation mark indicates a semantic difficulty. In a literal sense, of course, a cave cannot eat. But in a figurative sense it can. Here she goes beyond the comprehension of a simple reader. The iteration of the juxtaposed long 'a' sound in 'grave,' 'cave' and 'ate' together with the linking rhyme of 'grave' and 'cave', this may be 'fortuitous' rather than conscious, but I am here concerned with the unconscious more than the conscious so it is worthy of note.¹⁰² The semantic difficulty mentioned earlier can be resolved by inference. The rhyme links ideas—this is a 'grave cave,' a cave that is at once 'grave' in the adjectival sense of 'serious,' and 'grave' in the nominal sense of the final resting place, the 'cave' here symbolizes 'death.' The unknowns of the after-life are the inner aspects, the dark mysterious depths of the cave. Its gaping mouth is the entrance to the cave, through which comes death, and all death is a kind of murder. Some are murdered by time, some by events, some by their own hand and some by other people.

Regardless of how it happens, in the final analysis it is all 'death.' Soon death will 'eat' her as well. In fact, she says 'soon, soon,' rather than 'soon,' a repetition that may have significance from a psychological point of view. The saddest part of life is the sure coming of death; an excessive awareness of it neutralizes the enthusiasms of life. Most people are usually caught up so much by life, by the immediate imperatives of survival, earning money, and bringing up children, that they rarely think about death. But I sense that 'death' as an obtrusive reality looms large in Plath's psyche. Why does she think that

¹⁰² Fortuitous means accidental, happening by chance. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 571

one 'soon' is not enough for what she wants to say? Is this a fear-loaded premonition of imminent death? Or is it a cool recognition that death comes to all people including herself, and that whether it comes a few years earlier or later, its arrival is always too 'soon,' a mere flicker of time in comparison with the incommensurables of eternity?

In "The Couriers" she talks about love as the answer to things; this is the principle she is now going to adopt. She sees life as a succession of seasons, and that she is now going to enter the season of love. Once again there is an echo of Biblical themes, especially as voiced by the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the *Corinthians*.¹⁰³ I suggest that she sees suicide as an act of love, strange, as this may seem. The swing from the great expectations she had as a girl at one end, and the confidence sapping realities she actually experienced at the other, tipped the scales, never very stable at the best of times, towards death.

But if 'all is vanity,' as she suggests in this poem, then what does a person have to live for? Some psychological prop is required. Some reflection of Pauline Christianity as stated in *Corinthians I* is visible here, that, after other things fade away, three things will abide, hope, faith and love, and of these the greatest is love. Hope and faith seem to have withered away. But love is something she can maintain regardless of circumstances, and this is what she reverts to, now that she has experienced the emptiness of life and its miseries. The rather obscure imagery of Nature, 'frost on a leaf' coupled with the nine volcanic cauldrons 'each talking and crackling all to itself on the top of nine black alps', an indirect reference to the nine lives of a cat of which she has used up three in unsuccessful attempts at suicide, is followed by an intellectual leap to an assertion that 'love' is her 'season.' Perhaps love can carry her past the nine crackling cauldrons. Perhaps love, with its concomitant affirmations of life, and its ability to forgive the slights, humiliations and reverses that she and all people suffer, is the answer to her turmoil.¹⁰⁴ But of course, love is not something one can turn off or on at will—I posit the humble

¹⁰³ *Corinthians*, Chapter 13, Verses 1 and 2 and Chapter 14, Verse 1, among others—there are many references to 'love,' seen as a quickening, healing, all-embracing principle.

¹⁰⁴ Concomitant means associated, linked. See A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 254

opinion that in Plath's defensively aggressive nature, anger overshadows love most of the time.

4.9 Germanic base

Plath was exposed to some parental German in the household when she was a child is revealed in this poem when she says 'ach, du' meaning 'alas, thou' and 'ich, ich, ich, ich' meaning 'I, I, I, I'-- more repetitions, in stanzas three and five, and mentions how difficult it was to articulate the sounds. The 'German' theme is taken over into "Lady Lazarus", which will be discussed later. She attempts to graft the ugly contemporary German 'ethos' of war and genocide on to her father in order to make it easier for her to 'bury' his memory.¹⁰⁵ God is displaced by the 'swastika'.¹⁰⁶ Her father becomes the man in black with a 'Meinkampf' or Hitlerite look, a 'panzer man'.¹⁰⁷ He is half consciously associated with Hitler, and this makes it possible for her to break out of the "daddy" mesh consisting primarily of a feeling of grave injustice that he should have died when she was a child, together with a considerable reservoir of anger that a man who once symbolized wisdom and authority for her should not have had the basic good sense to know that he was dying, not of cancer as he thought, but of diabetes which might have been controlled had he been aware of it. She sees his death as unnecessary, the result of stupidity rather than of intractable disease. In fact she projects it as a deliberate escape strategy adopted by him so that he could abandon her. She is not willing to forgive him. It is confused and disordered, but such is the nature of her sickness.

¹⁰⁵ Ethos means culture, era, and attitude of a people, philosophy, and nation. Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 502

¹⁰⁶ Sawastika was a symbol of the victory of Aryan man, that is, Hitler. Today it is the symbol of Nazi Germany. Mitchell G. "The Sawastika," *Jewish Virtual Library*, (Chevy Chase, MD: The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2008) <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Swastika.html/>>

¹⁰⁷ Meinkampf was the title of Hitler's political manifesto. For details see *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. (London: Helen Hemingway Benton Publisher, 1973-1974) 67

Panzer is allied to or characteristic of the mechanized armoured units employed by the German army in World War Two, a 'panzer man' means a member of a tank crew. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 1061

Of course, when she says "daddy" she is not referring only to her physical father. For her, at least in this poem the generalized meaning of the word includes all fathers plus God the Father and Hitler the political father of the recent and particularly vicious German empire, as it was projected by the western media. From childhood she is disillusioned with God's set-up, which permits the savagery of war and the mass murder of innocent people.¹⁰⁸ Life and the aspirations of life become pointless when life itself is pointless, as is tellingly demonstrated by the facts of war.¹⁰⁹

The import of what I have said here is that Plath is externalizing her focus in "Daddy," looking for causes of her suicidal sickness outside herself. She needs to explain her self-destructive tendencies. In this poem she considers the external cause to be a triple, quadruple, pentacle, or perhaps even sextuple entity, a loosely constructed composite of Otto Plath, Dracula, God the Father, the Devil and Hitler.¹¹⁰ This composite image might also include her husband Hughes, although he is less evident at this stage.¹¹¹ The image becomes the inner devil that keeps on pushing her towards 'self-annihilation', or so she

¹⁰⁸The image of God developed in her poems is negative; the system of God where savagery and mass murder prevails is under God's set-up.

¹⁰⁹The facts are the ruthless killings of Jews. For details see J. M. Roberts, *The Hutchinson History of the World*. (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1976) 961-983

¹¹⁰Otto Plath is her physical father. Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 4

God the Father (Christian concept) who has created this world.

Hitler is projected as the political father of the German people. For details see J. M. Roberts, *The Hutchinson History of the World*. (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1976) 961-983

¹¹¹Hughes is the father of her children. His full name is Ted, or Edward, Hughes. Plath and Hughes got married in London on 16 June 1956. Their marriage took place within four months of their first meeting. During her stay with Ted Hughes she again went for psychotherapeutic treatment, the first time being when she faced academic failure. Hughes eventually abandoned her and married another girl. After her separation from Hughes she fought with her conscious and unconscious mental disintegration and at last committed suicide and ended her life. According to Hughes, 'her quest for self-realization' was responsible for her death. Her biography indicates that it could also be due to her father's death, failed marital relationship or non-accomplishment of her aim of self-realization. Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 7

thinks at this point in her life.¹¹² In recognizing and describing this figure as a devil, she thinks she has exorcized him—'Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.'

Yet, her final act of suicide can, perhaps, be seen as a sacrificial act of love as she took care that the poisonous gas of her suicidal oven would not affect her children.¹¹³ It is an indirect re-enactment of the atrocities perpetrated in the gas chambers of Dachau, Auschwitz and Belsen.¹¹⁴ Christ-like, perhaps she feels she must die to redeem the atrocities perpetrated by her Germanic kinfolk on helpless victims.¹¹⁵ It seems strange that an intelligent woman should be so affected by ugly things that happened in another country, but a reasonable picture for the cyclic irruptions of self-destructive emotions can be drawn from her poems.

¹¹² Here self-annihilation is used as a noun meaning suicide or self-destruction or killing one's self.

¹¹³ See Sadi Ranson-Polizzotti, *Giving Up: The Last Days of Sylvia Plath*, (Eric Olsen, 2004) in online magazine *Blogcritics*.

<<http://blogcritics.org/archives/2004/09/07/190018.php>>

¹¹⁴ Re-enactment means repeat the actions of past event, renewal, restoration. See A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1066

Dachau was a concentration camp where prisoners were brought and executed by different means but mainly by gas chambers by the Nazis. For details see *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*.

Auschwitz was the biggest German concentration camp. It was divided into three parts, one for administration, another for killing and a third for forced labour. Here it is discussed as an extermination camp. See *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*.

Belsen was another concentration camp where large numbers of prisoners were brought, especially to work in factories. For details see *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*.

¹¹⁵ Redeem means to compensate for. See A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1064

4.10 Plurality of Concept/Generalization

Sylvia Plath's generalizations might be read in the framework of Jung's exposition on archetypes. However, Jung might not be at the forefront of her thinking because these archetypes are present in every person's unconscious or pre-conscious psyche.¹¹⁶ What she does in her poems is to indirectly confirm some of Jung's ideas. However, the devil is not fully understood, nor is the exorcism complete. There is another attempted suicide and another attempted justification in "Lady Lazarus". The image is underlined by the repetition of the word Daddy--this is 'daddy-daddy,' not just 'daddy.' There is plurality in the concept, many daddies rolled into one. This is an example of her synthesizing imagination, of forcing several elements into one concept. The repetition also belies her assertion that she is 'through' with him. This is the little girl pulling at her uncaring father's coat, demanding that he listens to her. If she is really through with him, why should she care? The mere fact that she addresses him in the direct, vocative case indicates that he is still an internal reality for her. This is revealed in her verses in "Daddy".

The foregoing brief analysis does not consider the possibility that when she says 'I' she does not mean herself, or when she says 'you' or 'du' she does not mean a person she is addressing. These words can be universalized and generalized, and it is well known that when a person talks to himself he might address himself as 'you.' All these possibilities exist. However, they have not been raised in this study, which is less concerned with variations and avenues of meaning than with poetic and psychological implications.

It will be noted that in this poem Plath talks exclusively about the warlike, oppressive male principle as exemplified in God's dictatorship coupled with her father's death and German militancy, and its destructiveness of the finer things, for instance, beauty, tranquillity, freedom of life--indeed, of life itself. No mention is made of her mother or of

¹¹⁶ See Jolande Jacobi, *Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of Jung*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1959)

the female principle of creating, caring and nurturing. In her perception of things, men are dictatorial and wantonly destructive.

It will be noted, also, that this is an attempt to put the blame for her own derelictions on something or someone else. It is an externalized attempt. However, I feel that trying to blame the childhood memory of her father, even when Sylvia Plath colours that memory with Nazi associations is rather weak.¹¹⁷ Daddy is a powerful poem, but a limping self-justification. This is one of the dangers of memorable language. Fine words can mask basic inadequacies; this is not a fully honest poem. Asserting that 'it's all your fault,' is probably not a healthy way to settle one's own emotional problems.

The presence of logical levels is especially noted in the last poem "The Couriers". Here she attains some degree of mental and emotional maturity. The applicability of psychological models of conscious and unconscious thoughts implying Jung's analysis of unconsciousness leading to deletion, distortion and generalization in Plath's poems establishes a sort of flexibility and tenderness while changing the underlying syntax or semantics of her expression.¹¹⁸ In this way her rigidity in language can be converted into flexibility with the help of covert psychological understanding. Something of this mind mapping can be traced in "The Couriers" when she says,¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷(Cited) Robin Peel, *Writing Back: Sylvia Plath and Cold War Politics*. (London: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corp., 2002) 15

¹¹⁸ Deletion means to remove something that has been written. The model of deletion is applied on Plath's poetry in the sense that some words from her poetry are deleted and attempted to analyse it from linguistic point of view. See A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 332

Distortion means to change the facts or ideas. Here the ideas and facts have been interpreted from the language of poems. So the language revealed the facts and the researcher interpreted them according to her perception and psychological and linguistic implication in the poems of Plath. Ibid. 365

As discussed, the same in "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus". Generalization means to apply the same situation to other situations, or to assume that what is true for a few examples is also true for many. See Jolande Jacobi, *Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of Jung*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1959)

¹¹⁹ Tony Buzan formulated this concept of mind mapping in the late 1960's. It is to link and establish the relationship between pictures or diagrams in the mind and the text in hand. See *Merriam-Webster Online Search*.

All to itself on the top of each
Of nine black Alps.
A disturbance in mirrors,
The sea shattering its grey one-----

Here the words 'black' and 'grey' indicate parameters for some kind of mind mapping. This shows that she does not believe in superficial understanding—rather, she creates logical connections and logical levels in her poetry.

4.11 Concept of Life and Death/ Self Approval

Plath's psychological suffering is probably one of the prime causes of her internal artistic fire. Many extraordinary artists have suffered great torments. It is tempting to postulate a correlation between extreme distress and high artistic achievement. She could not achieve the pinnacle of literary artistic excellence in her life but could feel the extreme sensitivity of attempting to commit suicide thrice. She tries to seek satisfaction in experiencing death rather than enjoying life. Her illness also increases her aggression and makes her more introverted, and this suddenly breaks out in her poems. Moreover she says in "Lady Lazarus",

This is Number Three.
What a trash
To annihilate each decade.
...
I do it so it feels like hell.
I do it so it feels real.

Is this some kind of self-flagellation?¹²⁰ Is it a desire to feel the pangs of something that annihilates itself in the very act of experiencing it? Does she want to experience the feeling of death by snuffing herself out? Why does she want to feel like hell? She is pursued by unrealistic desires. It is impossible to feel the suffering of death before dying, but the very act of dying makes it impossible to evaluate the feeling retrospectively. An experience that has no aftermath cannot be called a significant experience.

Plath seems to be conscious about her age and other natural changes occur during this transition. Different stages have different emotional expressions vary from person to person. As she says in "Lady Lazarus", 'And I a smiling woman / I am only thirty.' Here Plath seems to be concerned about her female biology. She is focused not only upon her age, but also the persona she presents to the world. Externally, at least, she is a 'smiling woman,' but this is a fraudulent image. It is one of the several dualities that fester inside her. She cannot be what she is—because of the pressures of society, she must always be something else. Her concern about herself is also due to extreme sensitivity. The progressive or cyclic depression I note in her life is a consequence of it. Here another aspect of her personality could be found in which her deep relationship with her female biology is linked and manic depressive thoughts seep into the inlets of her mind. This subterranean or profound connection of excessive thinking with her female biology is prominent in her poetry, and especially so in "Lady Lazarus" when she talks about suicide.

I understand "Lady Lazarus" to be less an explanation of her own suicidal tendencies, and more a justification of suicide itself. Death, whether by age or circumstance, is effectively the end of everything for a person, so why quibble about how he/she dies? Blow him/her up with bombs, shoot him, let him rot through sickness or old age, let him end his own life—what is the difference? Some denials of common values in life, together with one possible resolution, are seen in "The Couriers."

¹²⁰ Flagellation means to torture one's ownself especially as a religious punishment. See A. S. Hornby, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 483

She was able to pass herself off as a 'smiling woman' for thirty years. But in the final analysis it was not enough. Her 'cyclic eruptions' had to be brought under control if she were to function as a viable human being.¹²¹ That she is aware of this is brought out in the last poem of this series, of which more will be said later.

In "Lady Lazarus", she has been portrayed as some devil or evil. After reading her famous 'threat'

[...]

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air.,

some hope for her comes to mind. But she soon reverts to psychotic imagery. Little might be found that is deviant in her use of language, but semantically there are several twists and turns to be negotiated. A reader might be hard pressed to handle these complex psychological implications in her poems. As she says in "The Couriers", 'The word of a snail on the plate of a leaf? / It is not mine. Do not accept it.' Here she takes a marvellous start but again the use of a word 'not' twice in this poem makes it less appealing for the reader as compared to something that has been accepted, possessed and appreciated. The need for appreciation seems to be dominant everywhere. Readers of her poetry are able to isolate this need when they talk about her unwarranted self-destruction. She found little approval or appreciation during her lifetime.¹²² It was only after her death that her excellence as a poet was recognized. Her isolation can be portrayed as 'the darkness of death' which leads to rebirth in to new experience of rebirth, which unites self, one's

¹²¹Cyclic eruptions mean certain outbreaks which occur repeatedly. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 370, 497

¹²² I come to know about it after reading her biography in which it is said the 'she had not been accepted for Frank O' Connor's summer writing class at Harvard'. After that she suffered from severe insomnia and went through great mental depression. Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 4. Also see Cairiona O' Reilly, *Sylvia Plath*. 356<<http://www.oup.com/us/pdf/americanlit/plath.pdf/>>
<<http://www.oup.com/us/pdf/americanlit/plath.pdf/>> Accessed on 8/06/08

individual and the world beyond this world.¹²³ This harmony revitalizes the magnificence of life especially in “The Couriers.” The change is expected after stagnation through the power of her poetry and her talent became immortal after her death.

4.12 Resurrection Theme and Settlement

In the light of the foregoing, I recognize "The Couriers" to represent a defining moment in her life. Of the several dangerous streams running through her unconscious, that which is manifested in this poem is perhaps the most dangerous of all, because it reaches a point of decision. Whereas her previous attempts at suicide are impulsive and haphazard, her final attempt is well planned and deliberate, and intimations of this can be sensed in "The Couriers." My reasons for making these assertions are as follows:

As long as she is tortured and unhappy, as revealed in the previous two poems, she remains connected to life. In opposition to this, the relative calmness of this poem indicates that she has come to terms with things and that she is beginning to detach herself from life. In "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus" she lives unhappily, but at least she lives. In "The Couriers" she begins to look at life objectively and succeeds in severing the connection—she is now ready to die as revealed from the use of her poetic language and linking it with the thoughts. She tests life and the things people hold to be important in it, and finds them wanting. There is a gloomy, "all is vanity" tone in the poem, somewhat similar to that found in *Ecclesiastes*, one of the three books sometimes ascribed to the Prophet Solomon in The Old Testament.¹²⁴ 'All is vanity' is offered as the final wisdom, the wisdom of seeing life for what it is, an illusion, the mere stuff of dreams, and an unimportant, passing phase in the totality of being. She retreats from life to the principle of 'love' and wants to be resurrected like Lazarus to achieve immortality and be remembered by the outer world forever.

¹²³ Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) 79

¹²⁴This refrain 'all is vanity' runs through much of the Old Testament. See Mark A. Copeland, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, (2001) <http://executableoutlines.com/ecc/ecc_sg.pdf> Accessed on 9/06/08

4.13 Self Therapy

The fact that she can turn her aggression outwards in some of her poems is important, because this enables her to balance the scale, at least for some time. The danger of bottling up destructive emotions, and the psychotherapeutic value of self-expression through the ordered, exacting poetic demands of poetry, should not be overlooked.¹²⁵ I suggest that without this safety valve for her emotional distress, she would have been more unstable than she was.

One important outcome of an overriding death consciousness is that it can sap the will to live, if the end of life is featureless death, life becomes meaningless.¹²⁶ Why struggle for something that is essentially nothing? Why give value or importance to anything? Why hold desperately to any institution or man-made set of categories? In the end, everything goes, swallowed up by the cave. In "Lady Lazarus", she says,

[...]

I do it so it feels like hell.

I do it so it feels real.

I generally applaud the virtuosity of expression found in her poetry, rather than rejecting or disapproving of her wayward words. This self-therapy was perhaps more effective than anything she received from physicians, doctors, or psychologists.¹²⁷ She is self-critical for thrice attempting to kill herself. The translation of deep-seated neuroses into words helps in mitigating the force of those neuroses. Her inward-turned aggression and

¹²⁵ Psychotherapy means to treat mental and emotional disorders or diseases by making use of psychological methods like expressing one's inner torment. See Sue Marshall, *SPC Series: Differences and Discrimination in Psychotherapy and Counselling*. (London: Sage Publications, Incorporated, 2004) 1, 2.

¹²⁶Overriding means dominant, prevailing, overruling. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 1048

Sap means weaken. *Ibid.* 1294

¹²⁷A doctor put her on anti-depressants for a while. Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M. ed., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 4

anxiety are softened, so the writing of poetry is a positive factor in her ability to cope with life. She may even have lasted as long as she did because, or partly because, of her poetry.

This is evident from her poem, as she says, re-quoted here for easy reference:

Nevertheless, I am the same, identical woman.

The first time it happened I was ten.

It was an accident.

The second time I meant

To last it out and not come back at all.

I rocked shut

This kind of cathartic expression provides a sort of vent for her feelings. Her suicidal attempt as grounded in this poem reveals her to be burnt and suffocated inwardly. She decides 'not' to 'come back at all' but again she is not successful. She gets more time to express her torments.

It is usual to read "The Couriers" as a relatively 'calm poem', the passions spent, the devils laid to rest, and the recognition of a point in her emotional and intellectual development where she manages to come to terms with herself. However, and this is important, it is also possible to read this poem as a deceptive piece, a conscious or unconscious attempt to use language to gloss over destructive tendencies that she strongly suspects are still lurking inside her complex personality, and to 'lull' her own suspicions against a dangerous and implacable internal enemy.¹²⁸ She says, 'Acetic acid in a sealed tin? / Do not accept it. It is not genuine'.

From a psychological perspective, subtle changes in the language are observed in neurotic and psychotic people who undergo counselling. Plath also underwent some

¹²⁸Lull means calm, silent. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 875

therapy by using her internal psyche in her poetry that this has led to a temporary abatement of her underlying psychosis and affected the language of her poetry and accepting something which is not 'genuine' for her in "The Couriers" but had a great need for that in "Daddy." Treatment that does not address root causes can be deceptive, leading to an artificial and unreal state of optimism, of a kind akin to what I see at the end of the first poem in the series. Actually, she is not 'through' with the composite male figure she creates in "Daddy."

4.14 Feminism

I do not think Plath was a feminist in terms of gender politics, or that she lived in a state of helpless resentment as a sensitive, thinking, feeling woman caught up in the injustices, crudities and barbarities of a man's world. I also do not think she was an ardent or self-aware Christian. However, the confusions caused by her childhood moral 'conditioning' and scale of expectations on one side, and her intellectual doubts, the ugly intrusions of the world around her and the ferocities and atrocities of war on the other, are visible in the poems such as the two "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus."¹²⁹ Confusions there are aplenty in her life, but no greater than those that afflict many people, and none such as to affect a convincing explanation of her repeated bouts with suicide.

Here the question arises as to why she speaks so much against the male principle. As rulers in a male-dominated world, she finds men sharply wanting in their obsession with power, and in their readiness to indulge in the most vicious and destructive acts in their pursuit of it. Her inward cry is, where has the moral principle gone? It is difficult to abandon the moral principle, even in the face of so much evidence to the contrary. She blames men and she blames God, a male figure, and she finds it very difficult to reconcile large-scale manifestations of evil to the so-called goodness of the world, as God is supposed to have made it. As thinking, feeling woman, she also chafes against her lot as a woman, confined to just one or two socially accepted roles in life, dependent for her well

¹²⁹ Conditioning is a psychological process in which the behaviour of a person turns out to be dependent on the circumstances occurring in that situation. See Patrick Hanks, ed., *Collins English Dictionary*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 314

being upon the whims of unpredictable and unreliable men.¹³⁰ Then, of course, there is the question of marital responsibility. She is haunted by the memory of abandonment by her father in childhood, and her husband later in life repeats this.¹³¹ The separation between Plath and Hughes, too, is the cause of a lot of soul-searching.

The puzzle as to why her mother receives no mention in these poems cannot be easily answered. This might be her unwilling concession to the radical feminism of several women writers of that time, a belief that if you want to win a point, the attack must be rigorously and uncompromisingly one-sided, never admitting possible weaknesses on the other side. This is an unsatisfactory explanation. I have already stated that, unlike some of her contemporaries, she is not a political feminist; she is not a highly vocal participant of the movement. A detailed discussion of this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

4.15 Phonological Aspect

One senses a lot of near 'hysterical' pursuit for reasons for her own suicidal promptings in "Daddy", the crystallization of these reasons round a composite father-figure with some rather confused, far-fetched God/German/Devil imagery and a premature proclamation that she now understands the root cause of her problems and has laid it to rest.¹³²

Two things might be noted in this poem: (a) the title—the figure is a composite one, but she uses the familiar, intimate word “daddy” rather than any kind of respectful, awe-

¹³⁰ Chafe means to irritate or annoy. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Vol.II. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) 243

¹³¹ Her father was reluctant to get the treatment and died of diabetes. Plath seems to be regretting that moment in her poems because he died when she was very young. Similarly her husband Ted Hughes left her for another woman and Plath started living separately with her two children. But her mental depression and repeated bouts of anxiety increased day-by-day and resulted in suicide. See Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 4. Also see Gabriela Easterday, "Sylvia Plath's Final Work: *Ariel* Evolving" *Hot Papers 2002: The Best Academic Writing at Wayne State College*. (2002) 22
<http://www.wsc.edu/schools/ahu/publications_media/publications/hot_papers_02.pdf> Accessed on 09/08/08

¹³² Hysteria is also known as Conversion Disorder, it arises due to emotional disturbances and conflicts, it may also include paralysis of some physical functions. See *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*.

inspired term for God, and (b) the poem rests on the outward thrust of the lips generated by the iteration of the long 'oo' sound links it to the effect created in the mind, exemplified in the first line, 'You do not do, you do not do'. This sound is heavily embedded all the way through the structure of the poem till the last line, 'Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm *through*.' Both of these observations are my own, and I present them here for what they are worth. The familiar, affectionate, child-to-father tone set by the 'daddy' title is belied by the anger that rings through the poem, and in the psychology of sounds, the 'oo' projection might carry several connotations as discussed below.

There are multiple associations with this sound: (a) a tone of sadness is evinced, akin to the distant howling of a dog or wolf, a predatory animal mourning its own harsh, precarious existence in the wilderness: (b) the 'onomatopoeic' atmosphere of the poem is reinforced by its phonic echo of 'blue,' a word with several connotations, including the American one of sadness: (c) on the opposite side of the scale, this is also a crooning, soothing sound, so the 'therapeutic' undertones should not be overlooked: (d) it is redolent of the sky and sea, of great imponderables and vast horizons.¹³³ This poem should be read in the double context of, (a) her own Germanic background.¹³⁴ Both of her parents were of Teutonic stock--her father Otto was a German immigrant, while her mother Aurelia was Austrian, and (b) the shocking revelations of the Second World War and of Hitler's genocidal mass assault on the so-called 'inferior races' mainly the Jews living in Germany at that time.¹³⁵ The blue-eyed, fair-haired 'Aryan' was the bloodthirsty, mindless predator,

¹³³ Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965) 49

Onomatopoeic words are those words are used the way that the sound has been suggested. For example hissing, buzzing etc. See J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. (London: Penguin Books, 1999) 614

Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 9

¹³⁴ Here it is discussed due to German's atrocities on Jews. For details see J. M. Roberts, *The Hutchinson History of the World*. (London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1976) 961-983

¹³⁵ Hitler was Austrian; the association with Hitler's birthplace makes Plath feel guilty. Ibid.

while the intellectual, peaceable Jew was the helpless victim.¹³⁶ The first line is especially interesting, 'You do not do, you do not do'.

The density of meaning emerging from this statement belies its apparent simplicity. At first reading, it might seem non-representative, dependent more on its phonic 'oo,' 'oo' effects rather than on its message. What, after all, is the message? If the first 'you do not do' is a phrase in totality, at least two meanings can be distilled from it, (a) 'you do not do', here (my emphasis), in the sense of 'you do not act', and (b) 'you do not do' (my emphasis), in the idiomatic sense of 'you do not meet my expectations'. Here one wishes one could have heard Sylvia Plath reciting her own poem. Her stressing of sounds would have been relevant to understanding it. However, in the absence of such a prop we are forced to look at the text alone, in its own right. If a subtle pause is put between the two halves of this phrase, i.e., 'You do/not do,' it reads like an affirmation 'do' followed by a negation following in close proximity, which is a fairly common rhetorical pattern in her poetry, reflecting in a psychological sense a tendency towards contrastive, oppositional and paradoxical thinking patterns. Hers is a brain that hardly begins to think about some proposition when it is bedevilled by oppositions and uncertainties.

An alternate explanation might come from the Christian marriage ceremony in which both the man and woman are asked if they take this woman or this man for wife or husband, to which they reply "I do." If this has any relevance, this double rebuttal in her opening line of this poem is a reminder to Ted Hughes, or perhaps to all errant and escapist spouses, that their "I do" is meaningless if they cannot remain faithful to their vows. If this is true then this poem addresses something more than just her own daddy,

See Walter Laqueur, ed., *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, (London: Yale University Press, 2001). Also See Robert S. Wistrick, "The Old-New Anti-Semitism" from *The National Interest Online*, (Washington, DC: The Nixon Centre, 6/22/2003)

¹³⁶Hitler himself was Aryan and called Aryans the 'master race.' See *Columbia Encyclopedia*. Sixth Edition, 2008. He used every means to establish a dictatorship.
<<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Hitler-A.html>.> Para no. 7 Accessed on 10/06/08

and this leads me to believe that she is presenting a complex image composed of several possibilities, as mentioned earlier.

It is good to remember that the statement is repeated in the first line. The second 'you do not do' would probably offer a different 'tonal' pattern, depending on how it is read, and render a different meaning from the first.¹³⁷ In fact it would be reasonable to expect that the second pattern is different from the first. From a poetic language standpoint it is not easy to repeat something exactly. However, from a written text it is not possible to infer tonal patterns, and there is no way of guessing what Plath had in mind. Repetitions are more re-cyclic in nature than exact replications of what went before. Repetition is itself a rhetorical device with certain purposes and effects, such as emphasis, variation, musicality, assonance and feeling.¹³⁸

Since the primary interest here is psychological, repetitions would indicate something of the conscious and even more of the unconscious belief structures noted earlier. I am here concerned with the way she establishes the phonic 'underlay' of her poem by a heavy reliance on the 'oo' sound mentioned earlier.¹³⁹ Making the 'oo' sound requires that the lips be puckered and pushed forward; this is an outward pointing gesture.¹⁴⁰ The

¹³⁷Tonal means tone of words or the way words have been pronounced. A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1368

¹³⁸Assonance means recurrence of same vowel sounds to attain the effect of sweet sound. Vowel sound is produced by the words like boot/roof; ease/peace. See J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. (London: Penguin Books, 1999) 58

¹³⁹Underlay means cause or motivation. A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2005) 1412

¹⁴⁰Puckered means wrinkled or creased. Ibid. 1024

The sound participates in words indicating the second and third person in a number of

reinforcing gestures of a sentence such as ['I look at me'] move from the inner, active self to an imaginary, passive, outer manifestation of the self. Gesture is a natural accompaniment of speech.

In "The Couriers", she follows a given pattern of affirmation followed immediately by negation in the first six lines. First she poses a question then she negates it twice in the second line. In the fourth line she gives the reason after negating the question, while in the sixth line she gives a metaphorical answer that at her failed marriage and her husband's infidelity. The tone could be understood in the essence from the phonic articulation of the verses, the way the tone is produced the meaning could be instilled. As she says,

The word of a snail on the plate of leaf?

It is not mine. Do not accept it.

Acetic acid in a sealed tin?

Do not accept it. It is not genuine.

A ring of gold with the sun in it?

Lies. Lies and a grief.

The same pattern has been followed in these six lines, the question mark at the end of first, third and fifth verse indicates the question and the way it has been articulated shows it to be an interrogation based on commonly held affirmations with regard to nature, industrialization and marriage. The second, fourth and sixth line indicate negation, the

Indo-European languages, for example 'tu' and 'vous' in French, 'du' in German, 'tu' in Urdu and 'thou', originally pronounced like the German 'du', and 'you' in English. English belongs to the Indo-European family. Indo cues to the Indian sub-continent. It includes English, German, Punjabi, Urdu, French, and Russian etc. See *Britannica Online*.

In opposition to this, words for the self often require a flattening or inward seeming gesture from the lips, as in 'ich' in German, 'je' in French, 'io' in Italian and 'mein' in Urdu. This is more obvious in subject cases than in object ones. In a way, using words such as 'moi' in French, which requires an opening and expansion of the lips or to a lesser degree 'me' in English, externalizes the self when it comes in the object position. Referring to other languages help in understanding Plath's use of German words and their phonic value and I have tried to generalize its effect.

second and fourth lines have double negation while the sixth line has a sort of metaphorical negation. The meanings could be distilled from phonological articulation of these verses the way they have been written to convey the essence of their interpretation and exhibit the indirect paradoxical pattern in this poem. It is paradoxical in the sense that what the first, third and fifth lines presents the second, fourth and sixth line contradict it.

4.16 Repetition

Repetition is a well-known rhetorical device for (a) emphasizing important points, (b) forming linkages between ideas, (d) repeating pleasing sounds or 'ideational' patterns, and (e) exaggerating things.¹⁴¹ However, apart from its rhetorical functions, repetition can indicate underlying obsessions, and it is in this sense that I have mentioned it here. Some of her iterations do not seem necessary or even desirable; they do very little for the things she wants to say. Why, for example, has she adopted a repeated 'oo' phonic pattern for "Daddy"? Why does she bring in the 'Hitler, holocaust, and German atrocities' themes in both "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus"? Why does she repeat 'ich' four times in "Lady Lazarus"? The answers are not immediately apparent, but I have attempted to explain them in this chapter. I suggest that their function is not entirely rhetorical, and that they indicate a neurotic tendency to return to basic obsessions each time she senses that either she or other people are beginning to digress from them. Hers is a powerful ego coupled with a powerful obsession with her ego.

How far Freud's theory of the two opposing instincts to 'live' (Eros) and to 'die' (Thanatos) can be used to explain her personality is not within the remit of this dissertation.¹⁴² The theory states these are implanted factors, namely, that we live as long

¹⁴¹ Ideation is the formation of ideas or mental images of things not present to the senses. It is that state of consciousness that may be termed as ideational. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Vol.V. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) 17, 18. Also see Riaz Hassan, *Aspects of Psycholinguistics*, (Islamabad: National University of Modern Languages, 2007)

¹⁴²Eros is Freud's concept. He says that Eros is to connect different things with each other in such a way that guides to something lively and advanced. See Hirsch Nicola Abel, *Eros*. (Oxford: Totem Books, 2001) 4

as the instinct to live remains strong enough to keep the instinct to die at bay, but that the instinct to die is ultimately the stronger of the two. If death is the product of the instinct to die coming to the fore, then this is presaged in "The Couriers."¹⁴³ I have tried to show how this poem reflects a moment of truth, a settling of internal accounts, a point where she begins to understand that she must go, at least according to her way of thinking. That her final attempt at suicide should have come as she crested the end of the third decade of her life is perhaps fortuitous, a fulfilment of her own idea that she manages it every ten years or so.¹⁴⁴

"The Couriers" is a kind of reconciliation of distressing opposites, but it is really something more than just reconciliation—it is more like abandonment, a wholesale rejection of the things of this world followed by an escape into the principle of 'love.' This poem's dangerous undercurrents run parallel to the abandonment theme, against which she fulminates aggressively in "Daddy," and, sadly, which she herself indulges in when she commits her last act of suicide. She was abandoned by people who were important to her—now she is ready to abandon people to whom she is important, her children and other family members. I understand "The Couriers" to be a prelude to her own death. It is not so much a premonition of death, as an indication of the path towards death her mind takes at that point.

4.17 Deviations

It is probably true to say that most expressional writers have psychological problems in some degree, in the sense that alcoholism, drug-addiction, poor social adjustment, underdeveloped interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, failed relationships with spouses,

Thanatos is Freud's concept means to live having death as a 'purposeful goal' in front. Tension and aggression are basic in one's psyche. If they are not expressed outwards then they are turned towards one's own self. See Roger Brooke, *Pathways to the Jungian World: Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology*. (London: Routledge, 1999) 121-123

¹⁴³ Presage means signify. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Vol. IV. (London: Oxford University Press, 1933) 1294, 1295

¹⁴⁴ Fortuitous means accidental. *Ibid.* 478

etc., can be seen in the lives of many poets like Coleridge, De Quincy, Dylan Thomas and Shelley among many others.¹⁴⁵ The poet Hughes cannot be exempted from this observation. His own adjustment to life, and to the women in his life, was constantly not good.¹⁴⁶ It is tempting to state that Plath's emotional turmoil was the direct result of Hughes' unfaithfulness and carelessness as a husband, and this is the impression one gets from some of her writings. However, it can also be argued that Hughes' reactions were in part the result of her neuroses, so how much is the cause and how much the effect is difficult to say, but it is there in relation with each other. Plath brought latent personality disorders with her to the marriage. So, probably, did Hughes, but he is not the subject of this study. It is reasonable to assume that these were exacerbated on both sides by the pressures of a failed marriage.

In this chapter, I attempt to analyse some quotes from Plath's writings and to show how the layering and embedding of ideas, the way thoughts and feelings tumble over one another and the way a language, originally fashioned for practical purposes, trips over itself in trying to accommodate these psychological complexities, are indicative of the pathology that underlies them. It is possible to sense the tortured poetic complexities of a psychotically unstable person like Plath.

¹⁴⁵ Samuel Taylor Coleridge was preoccupied with dreams. His marriage also failed. Like Plath he also suffered from addiction due to sickness and marital maladjustments. He wrote poems in this dejected state named "Dejection: An Ode". For details see Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Vol.2 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006) 424-491

Thomas De Quincey was an essayist. His financial problems led him to depend upon opium. He wrote in his addicted state. He also wrote about the consciousness delineating the 'sense of guilt and alienation' as it has been traced in Plath's poetry. For details see Ibid. 554-572

Dylan Thomas was an alcoholic and an impetuous man whose poetry subsumes paradoxical images taken from the Bible and Freud. Like Plath's paradoxical images his poetry is replete with the ideas of opposing forces of 'violence and tenderness.' Ibid. 2444-2450

Percy Bysshe Shelley acted as a reformer in his poetry, tried to take away evils from the society. There are different views of his death. Some say it is due to his depressed marital relationships and being a social outcaste. See Ibid. 740-850

¹⁴⁶ Hughes was Sylvia Plath's husband

For the purposes of illustrating my position, I will revisit the following lines, taken from "The Couriers", 'A ring of gold with the sun in it? / Lies. Lies and a grief.' The primary formation of these two lines manifests itself as a juxtaposition of radiance, value and beauty on one side, and an undercurrent of negative emotionalism on the other, or the promise of life thrust against a background of harsh reality. That much emerges from these lines immediately. However, a closer analysis of her consciousness and unconsciousness reveals a number of problems.

First among these problems is the repetition of the word 'lies.' They both fall outside the question mark at the end of the first line. If it were taken as an end verb for the previous line, the first statement without the question mark would read thus, 'A ring of gold with the sun in it / lies...' If this is how it is to be read, one might ask why the poet has placed it at the beginning of the second line. But, of course, run on lines are not only possible, they are frequently encountered in poetry, so this is not to be a valid question. However, if it is a verb as suggested here, it is difficult to bracket it with the second 'lies,' which is or seems to be a noun. Of course, the second 'lies' can also be read as a verb, a simple repetition of the first verb.

A second problem arises if the two 'lies' are bracketed and taken as nouns. I then get repetition of two plural nouns summated with a singular 'grief', which is deviant. This deviance is compounded when I consider that 'grief' is an uncountable emotion, which cannot be singularised, in ordinary English.

A third problem arises if I take the first 'lies' as a plural noun and the second 'lies' as a singular verb. There is no concordance between the two. The second line then shows up as a succession of plural followed by two singulars, the second of which is deviant for reasons noted in the previous paragraph, adding to the difficulty of having a plural noun dependent on a singular verb.

Plath's second line in this example is very difficult to resolve unless it is taken as a statement with no real relationship with the first line. If it is taken as a separate utterance it can be read as an uncontrollable, even angry, outburst of feelings of betrayal 'lies, lies'

followed immediately by a poignant sense of sorrow 'a grief'. The intermediate turmoil and set of inferences that lead to the precipitous contrast between the 'bright' imagery of the first line, and the staccato textual deficits of the second line, are not made visible here.¹⁴⁷ It is as though the poet is determined not to be pleased by anything, and that almost everything becomes a reminder of her unhappy obsessions.

4.18 Brevity

The comparative brevity of third poem is significant as compared to other two poems; the first two poems are elaborate and consume more words than the last one. "The Couriers" says what it wants to say in just thirteen lines while "Daddy" runs to eighty lines and "Lady Lazarus" needs even more, eighty four. In a sense there is a cessation of striving for answers and remedies for her affliction. The misplaced confidence of the first poem and the uncertainty and agony of the second poem give way to a quieter and more peaceful acceptance of the situation in the third poem. The fitful involvement with life is replaced with a mood of dismissal, a kind of 'all, all is vanity' refrain, somewhat similar to that found in Ecclesiastes-- I have added biblical elements. That the younger Plath was exposed to Hebraic/Christian elements is not in doubt, although she did not behave in a religious manner when she grew up. Many feminists were anti-Jewish or anti-Christian because they thought that the Semitic tradition debased women.¹⁴⁸ The first six lines consist of encapsulations given as questions regarding certain situations or institutions,

¹⁴⁷ Precipitous means abrupt, done very quickly, without enough thought or care. See A. S. Hornby, *Q* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 992

Staccato means disjointed, disconnected. Patrick Hanks, *Collins Dictionary of the English Language*. (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1981) 1414

¹⁴⁸ Semitic means that which is associated to the Prophet Abraham's descendants, namely, the Arabs and Jews. The growth of secularism and modernity slowly and gradually decayed Christian belief. For details see Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 4 . (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986) 323-330

followed by 'offhand' denials-- affirmations in interrogative form followed by quick dismissals and negations: ¹⁴⁹

The word of a snail on the plate of leaf?

It is not mine. Do not accept it.

Acetic acid in a sealed tin?

Do not accept it. It is not genuine.

A ring of gold with the sun in it?

Lies. Lies and a grief.

The question/affirmations are (1) the so-called message of Nature touted by a long line of Romantic writers, 'the marks left by a snail on a leaf', (2) the promises of an artificial industrial age, 'acetic acid in a sealed tin', and (3) the expectations of the institute of marriage symbolized by a 'ring of gold with the sun in it'. These are all tossed aside unceremoniously as of little worth.

4.19 Conscious and Unconscious Articulation

These poems are reflective of psychological aspects of conscious and unconscious influences on this writer's mind. They have been dealt with in selective detail to indicate the link between her psyche and her poetic language, which not only shows her internalized behaviour but also some outer manifestations of life which are duly confirmed from her life-history. The three poems are linked together through the poet's unconscious thoughts and feelings in the sense that her aggression as verbalized in "Daddy" becomes less visible in "Lady Lazarus," and is resolved in some way in "The Couriers."

Freud and Jung both contributed a lot in analysing the mental processes of consciousness and unconsciousness, the detailed analysis have been done in this chapter to indicate the

¹⁴⁹ Offhand means discourteous, cool. See A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 879

major aspect of collective unconscious which is significant to the archetypes and archetypal patterns and images. The different examples have been quoted from three poems to analyse the archetypal patterns and importance of collective unconscious. These examples did not only discuss the semantic aspect of three of her poems but also the linguistic aspects including phonological and phonetic that is the crux of this thesis. Sylvia Plath's language has been discussed in greater detail and the text of her poems have been analysed according to archetypal patterns and their application on her poetry. The analysis of established archetypal images in collective unconscious releases the tension created in her poetry, also provides relief to the readers.

The conscious and unconscious expression of Plath's inner turmoil and inner thoughts points to her final action of committing suicide. In these poems, I have noticed that the text successfully exhibits the inner catastrophe. Plath's poems are dealt in greater detail from psychological point of view. As it does involve the analysis but the psychological aspects of her personality are given major importance keeping in view the poetic language or text used in her poetry discussed in this chapter. As phonological analysis reveals her inner unconscious thoughts and feelings of never being fulfilled as shown through her biography of not being acknowledged when she was alive. The Pulitzer Prize was awarded after her death.¹⁵⁰

Here her death is symbolic because whatever the success she gains from outside that is after her death. The recognition comes after the end when she is no more to feel it. There is a renewal, a sort of rebirth just like happiness after sorrow, rise after decline, same happened here, pleasure after depression but in her absence, her soul may feel it but she can not feel it physically. Her death also contributed a lot in getting attention of the outside world, this is a sort of unconscious inclination towards someone who has died and this conscious attention consciously reveals her as a superb poet but also a good responsible lady of her home which she could not continue further due to severe mental insomnia and depression.

¹⁵⁰Wagner Martin & Linda Wagner-M., *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. (London: Routledge, 1988) 18

The symbols and images used in her poems reveal her mind as something residing inside happened long ago but still has its side effects upon her mind and personality. The unconscious revelation of consciousness is always latent, something she does not like as shown in her poems but compelled to adopt the same way to end her life.

The dissection of her poems reveal her developing art with the passage of time and found some unconscious maturity as time passes, her developing talent progresses and she uses some more mature images but not aggressive in nature. This unconscious shift also develops the intricacy in the unconscious movement of the rhythms of words in the text of her poems. The philosophy lies behind her poems is the unconscious steady movement of expanding ideas which comes to the consciousness of the readers to dissect the Plath's solid rock in the beginning converted into soft and complaint acquiescent of the pains given by the outer world.

The complaint yielding of pains is so sweet at the end that she accepts her fate happily and does not protest aggressively any more. This sort of maturity at the age of thirty comes rarely, her obsessions return again and again in her poems and she presents a sort of complex fable or myth by consciously contributed to mingling her life history with poetry, this connection has been established by her conscious in an unconscious way that it can not be split up because they it provides the basis both to her poetry she wrote later and the final act of committing suicide.

The ironies and paradoxes pinpointed in this chapter have also significance in her unconscious portrayal, two words having the positive and negative both connotations make a solid image¹⁵¹ in the eyes of the readers of her poetry. Those paradoxes have been established with the passage of time not only in the time of Sylvia Plath but all times and all ages. This is the greatest benefit of this approach which makes text alive in every age. It just not concerns with the one aspect of life, as it includes more than one, psychology encompasses every aspect of life, and it is such a vast field that it finds significance in every field.

¹⁵¹ See Chapters Three, 31-35; Four, 36-81 and Five, 82-108

Implications

The main justification for this approach is that it could be used with benefit for understanding other poets also, especially those who are obviously high on the scale of neuroticism. This observation would probably include poets like Donne, Shelley, Cowper, Chatterton, Coleridge, De Quincy, Dylan Thomas, Edith Wharton, Anne Sexton and Sarah Teasdale plus, of course, those who actually did commit suicide.¹⁵²

This study indicates possibilities in the sense that Plath's analysis would be useful for comprehending Plath's psyche and approach towards life. Some other poets have committed suicide, often due to recurring torments in their minds exacerbated by social

¹⁵²John Donne was a metaphysical poet of early seventeenth century. He wrote of something beyond the reality mainly of divinity, and condemned corruption. He used many paradoxical images, jibes and extended metaphors called conceits. For details see Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Vol.1 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006) 1260-1308

Like Plath William Cowper suffered from cyclic bouts of madness. He talked of worldly corruption in his poems as she did in "The Couriers". He also tried to commit suicide. In 1773, his wife left him after his second fit of insanity or psychosis. For details see Ibid. 2890-2897

Thomas Chatterton was a great genius who earned money by writing in journals. He committed suicide by poisoning himself with arsenic at the young of age of seventeen. For details see Margaret Drabble, ed., *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 187, 188

For Coleridge, De Quincy and Dylan Thomas, see footnote 99

Edith Wharton was an American novelist. Her writings focus on the replacement of the old world with new one. After marrying Teddy Wharton her life went on with illness and depression and she divorced him. Like Plath she also got the Pulitzer Prize but during her life time. She suffered from the muddled situation of two worlds, 'to adapt and survive.' Plath also faced difficulty in adjusting herself in the post Cold War situation that indirectly affected her in her survival. For details see Sage, Lorna, *The Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in English*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 661, 662

Anne Sexton was an American poet. She worked on 'self and its relation to the world.' Plath also worked on the same. She portrayed her domestic roles in her poetry and seclusion and melancholic attitude towards life escorted her on the track of suicide. For details see Ian Ousby, *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 848

Sara Teasdale was an American poet and also a Pullitzer awardee. Her poem "I Shall Not Care" reveals her thought about death and desertion. Her friend Vachel Lindsay also committed suicide. Her unsuccessful marital life and anguish and woe over the loss of her friend drove to take high dose of sleeping pills. For details see Sage, Lorna, *The Cambridge Guide to the Women's Writing in English*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 617, 618

disapproval and internal maladjustments. The text exhibits or implies those torturous thoughts to the world. The beneficiaries of this approach are critics of poetry. What I have said suggests that most perhaps all poets are neurotic to some degree, and that some are pathologically so. Whether they commit suicide or not, these elements can be traced in their texts for a fuller revelation of the forces that prompt them. I might find this to be a productive tool for understanding the underlying complexities of a person's psychosocial make-up, including some factors that work as hardened belief structures that can erupt intermittently to cause trouble, even to the extent of impelling that person to take his or her own life.

Summing up the above-mentioned points of findings; multiple images and paradoxes, repetitions, deviations, belief structures all are linked together through the chain of text and psychology. Here psychological implications subsume all due to the combination of psychology and poetic text. Whatever the findings are, they are interpreted primarily through the medium of Plath's use of language in her poetry. The establishment of belief structures, derivation of multiple images and paradoxes, feminism, deviations in language and repetitions of conscious and unconscious thoughts. The findings based on these three poems take into account both positive and negative factors in her personality like repetition of same images in her poetry reveals obsessive thought of that specific event, for example, of her father's death in "Daddy". Her mind suffers from psychological disintegration resulted in using the language reflective of many psychological problems and reveals her internal psyche and mind through her language and positive in the sense that she tries to cure her psychological problems by using poetry as the source, or in other words, for her catharsis. This disintegration of established belief structures both promotional and limiting in nature might have impelled her towards suicide and, taking external and social factors into account as well, almost certainly contributed to the perplexing thoughts that bedevilled her short life.

Chapter 5

Reinforcement from other Poems

In this chapter the researcher has endeavoured to give a kind of selected overview from the beginnings of Sylvia Plath's poetic output in 1956 to the end in 1963. The selection has been done according to the need to identify elemental archetypes in Plath's work, how these engender pristine belief systems and above all, how they might cause mental anguish in people of a certain kind (who would probably rate high on the scale of neuroticism) when they are brought up sharply against the brutal realities of living. The primary archetype that we observe in Plath's works either directly or indirectly is, of course, the 'father-god' one and the childhood belief that a universe ordered by a benign, fatherly figure must also be benign, generous and protective. By rights it should not contain anything evil. Most people start out with a belief in a beneficent order, but they tend to accommodate changes in their primary belief systems, or simply grow out of them, as they progress in life. Some people cling to their cherished expectations and never fully reconcile these with the need for change. This causes a great deal of *angst* and tension. The researcher's position is that Plath is one of them. We have already seen her intense reaction to the facts of life.

The period covered by these poems is not long, only seven years, so it would be unreasonable to expect any great movement or evolution in thought or outlook. In any case, she died too young for the full flowering of her talents. Some of her poems (such as "The Hanging Man") are slight. There is probably no need to read too much into them. However, most of her significant works are packed with such a density of symbol, image and meaning that it is difficult to say with finality what she means. It is pointless to talk about what might have been—she never broke out of the 'contraries' generated by her elemental belief systems, reactions and expectations, and finally succumbed to them.

5.1 Recantation

Recurrent themes are visible in Plath's poetry. Among her earliest poems (1956) we find "Recantation", a prelude to some of the ideas developed in later poems such as those discussed in Chapter Four, especially "The Couriers". A similar reactive (but not necessarily successful) rejection of previous doctrines is visible here—she would like to give up all thoughts of predicting the future through 'tea leaves,' 'palmistry' or any other self-deluding mental trick (we may read this as 'superstitions in general') against the 'flower in the blood.' Simply stating that she has given up this or that belief does not make it a fact, any more than her bold, dismissive excoriation of the 'father' symbol in "Daddy" (Chapter Four) makes it true. The 'father' or 'father-god' symbol can be seen in both earlier and later poems. This is a call for a return to the simple, straightforward living of innocent children, untroubled by the harsh realities of the world. Sylvia Plath dabbles with the possibility of a return to instinct as a guide to living. This is a kind of primitivism, a revolt against the excessive regulation and rationality of adult living, especially the kind defined and dominated by men. At a secondary level this may be seen as a revolt against men and the way they try to run the world. Excessive regimentation, standardization, over-intellectualization and the cold-blooded creation of murderous machines through science and technology, can lead to the periodic eruption of horrors such as the world (and Europe in particular) experienced during the Second World War. It can lead to emptiness in one important area of human living, the emotions. She makes a plea for recognition of primeval, instinctive, archetypal modalities of thought and action. But we feel that this is not a serious plea, nor is it a well thought-out plan or roadmap for living. It is just a possibility.

We find an echo of this theme in the next poem under discussion, of the excesses to which too much amoral, scientific thinking (the Monarch Mind, as mentioned in the next poem) can lead. It might be mentioned here that Germany during Nazi rule was a world leader in many aspects of science and technology, especially the technology associated with war.

5.2 Natural History

Her abiding outrage at the atrocities committed by Hitler and the Nazi regime is visible in another early poem, “Natural History”, published in 1957. This is reinforced in later poems such as “Daddy” and “Lady Lazarus”, as already discussed in Chapter Four. She talks about the ‘Monarch Mind’ and the damage this aspect of life has caused in the world. The universe is controlled by an absolute ‘mind,’ that of God. God is a male, the type-cast of all dictators (she sometimes identifies the ‘God’ archetype with another archetype, the ‘Devil’). Hitler, in the image of God (as mankind is said to be), is the epitome of the ‘god-devil’ archetype on earth--undoubtedly clever, but cold-blooded and calculatedly murderous. Hitler is interested only in dominance, regardless of how many people suffer or die in the process--and it seems to Plath that God is equally interested only in human submission to His will, and is equally unmoved by human suffering or wholesale murder. ‘Thinking’ is often associated with the male principle, just as ‘feeling’ is usually associated with the feminine principle. The world of science is a male-dominated, ‘thinking’ world, untroubled by questions of right or wrong. Yet too much rationality is dangerous because the moralities that underscore human living are downgraded or ignored. At some stage ‘feelings’ revolt against ‘thinking’—ordinary people, commoners (feelings) rise up against the monarch (thinking) and assert their right to exist. Plath hints that the world has been ruled too long by the mind—now, perhaps, it is time for the crown to be usurped by the ‘base, barbarous Prince Ow.’ From a phonological point of view, the choice of ‘Ow’ for a name is both apt and interesting. In the English-speaking world this is the involuntary cry associated with intense, painful feeling. It is also in part determined by the need to find a word to rhyme with ‘brow.’

The title of the poem is somewhat puzzling, because there is no real reference to history, except insofar as a repetitive pattern of absolute kingship, be it through hereditary title or through democratic votes, can be seen in the human condition, with one of its ugliest manifestations in the German dictatorship of the twentieth century, sufficiently close to Plath’s childhood to be a dominant factor in her mental makeup. The poem starts with the couplet:”

That lofty monarch, Monarch Mind

Blue- blooded in coarse country reigned:

Absolute monarchs, absolute dictators whose slightest whim is law—here we find Plath suggesting that no one-sided dictatorship is good, even that of the mind, perhaps even that of God. The ‘mind’ realizes itself as science, and this is essentially the product of a domineering, male ethos. Yet science tends to be cold-blooded and amoral, interested only in its own objectives and methods without any reference to right or wrong. It is capable of doing great good if it is underscored by morality. It is also capable of doing great evil when the moral dimension is overshadowed by the quest for power and dominance. Dictators (all rulers, in fact) are only interested in perpetuating and enhancing their own power, and the lives of ordinary people mean nothing in the pursuit of that power. By analogy, the dictatorship of the mind is undesirable, though this is the way civilization in the West has gone. Everything is subordinated to science. Here we can take the compound word “Monarch Mind” in four senses may be she is saying to Hitler’s mind, because he wants to rule on the whole world, second interpretation is that she is pointing her intellectual ability and lofty monarch is her body. She has great intellectual ability/ mind due to her mind she has got great punishment. Another interpretation is that may be she is pointing towards god because for her, god is an archetypal image i.e.; devil image, he only wants to rule. May be she is describing towards male. Sylvia is explaining in the first stanza that the rulers were enjoying all kinds of facilities. These rulers were ruling on the country in very rude and surd manner. Here we can say that ruler can be male and god, because male of that time were enjoying all kinds of benefits but women were living very mean life same is the case with god, he is benefiting all relishes but his public is living bad life. In the second line of the couplet she is discussing that the ruler belongs to the very noble family but their acts were not good.

Though he bedded in ermine, gorged on roast

Pure Philosophy his love engrossed

In the above couplet Plath is explaining that what benefits they were adopting. Here in this stanza public is victim, ruler is enjoying all the things like Sylvia shows that they

remain on the bed which was made of the animal fur, which is very soft and considers very highly quality. This thing shows their luxurious styles of living. And in the next line Sylvia describes that their words of promises were lost it means that they have forgotten their public and their rights.

While subjects hungered, empty- pursed,

With stars, with angels, he conversed

In this couplet Plath exhibits the condition of the public and may be herself. Here she is describing that the way of the living is very bad because their ruler has no concern with the people. But instead they just talk with the stars and the angels. They have not any sympathy with the public but they have concerns with the lifeless things.

When we critically evaluate the first stanza of the poem, we came to know that here poetess has used technique of *repetition* in the very first line in the shape of monarch. Sylvia has used Monarch Mind as Sa personification because after using this epithets she calls as “he”. Another technique of alliteration is used in the first stanza like the sound of the consonant /b/ in the words “Blue –blooded “and the sound of the consonant /p/ in the words “Pure philosophy”. In this stanza poetess has used the theme of the contrast, Sylvia shows that there is great difference in the life of a common people and the ruler’s life. As far as use of the archetypal images and metaphors are concerned, they are also quite intricate and highly suggestive. As far as the imagery is concerned in the last line of the stanza, poetess has used the natural imagery:

With stars, with angels, he conversed

Here in this line, Sylvia has described the two types of the images, one is concrete and other is abstract. Like star is the concrete image and angels are used for the abstract image. Both stars and angels are used for the monarch who belong to more high class and may be used for the man and for the god. May be she only wants to give the natural touch to the poem, because one of the chief characteristics of her poetry is her concept about nature? In spite of living a life of dejection she observes with keen eye all the natural phenomenon around her and recorded in her poems her most intimate reactions. She

looked at the simple objectives of the nature with great curiosity, observing minutely their different aspects; but she also observed nature more meditatively and tired to understand the mystery and complexity lying in it. The capitalization of the consonant in the word Monarch Mind shows that this word has significance in it. Monarch mind is personification because after that she describes it again “he”. In this stanza Sylvia has used the metaphor for the common people is “subjects”. She does not use the metaphors mere ornamentation rather her object is to inculcate power and force to an idea, this displaying a wider range in its use. In short due to metaphors her poetry has wide interpretations and the effect of the poetic composition. The tone of the poetess in this stanza is very sarcastic because here she describes the universal situation because when a new ruler comes he shows many promises that he will do this or that but after coming into the power he forgets every thing . This situation is discussed in this line in a very ironical manner:

Pure Philosophy his love engrossed

Irony is that people are dying with hunger but ruler is busy with the high status people. Another technique which is used by poetess in this stanza is hyperbole, in which way this is possible that a man has conversation with stars and angels. As far as the diction is concerned it is very appropriate according to the situation. Here she has used the compound words to give beautiful touch to the theme of poem like “Blue- blooded” and “empty- purse”, she is concerned about the use of words which could express exactly what she felt inside more. She gives great care to the evolution of not only lines but also the very syllable of each word.

In the second stanza, poetess has discussed the reaction of these people against the dictators (archetypal figures). Because it is natural law after the great sorrows and sufferings man gets the ability to go against their ruler.

In one body those earthborn commoners

Rose up and put royal nerves to the rack:

Here poetess shows that they are united against their ruler and their worries have made them united. And put the domain of the ruler on the ground. Here poetess is showing the power of the common people and the revolutionary attitude of the people that a common people can do every thing. He has great strength.

King Egg- Head saw his domain crack

His crown usurped by the low brow

Then she describes that these people have broken the domain of the ruler in front of his eyes. Here poetess shows that he got his domain by force. Then she calls the monarch mind the barbarous prince. And by the word Ow, she wants to express the feelings of the pain.

When we critically analyse the second stanza of the poem, we find that it is the reaction of the public against the dictatorship. It can be in the shape of male chauvinism or in the shape of god; both act as archetypal images. Here poetess has discussed the theme of the downfall, the ruler who was living lavish life

Though he bedded in ermine, gorged on roast:

But now his condition is very bad and distorted:

His crown usurped by the low brow

In this stanza Sylvia has discussed the adjective first then the nouns earthborn commons and Barbarous Prince, there are the uses of Epithets. In this stanza there is also the uses of metaphor like low brow is used as metaphorically and as well as Egg. - Head metaphor for the shallow mind. It looks very important regarding the rulers' policies. Sylvia Plath has used the metaphor egg-head for such people but T. S .Eliot, a great poet and critic has also coined a term, epithets for the people is Hollow Minded .He has discussed this word in his poem "Hollow Men" here calls all humanity hollow men because the first line of the poem shows the people the true reality, what we are:

We are the hollow men

we are the stuffed men

And here Eliot presents sixth effect of the war on the humanity; poet shows that war has very bad consequences at the end. Then he predicts that the consequences in this way:

This is the way the world ends

This is the way the world ends

This is the way the world ends

Not with a bang but a whimper

Here she has used the power of common people and the union is great strength. Here he has used the word prince which is the symbol of authority and the word “base” has the semantic ambiguity because base can be mean or can be basement of anything. And above all, she has ardently believed that suffering is the lot of man’s life and he must face it patiently because for every moment of joy, one has to pay a heavy price, as this has become the law of this so called modern civilized world. She feels that man has to face the buffets of life with great courage and determination. This she describes in the poem that first ruler was on high status but later a common has got the position and the domain was crack. We can compare this poem with another poem “Departure and Arrival” written by T.S. Eliot, who is famous poet and renowned critic. In this poem he describes the downfall of the rulers, how public welcomes them but their bad deeds cultivate hatred among subjects as these lines explain the shivering status of the archetypal image of ruler:

Thus I entered, and thus I go in triumph, people have drop down death.

“Paid by the world, what, dost thou owe?

Me?” _ God might question now instead,

Tis God shell reply I am safest thou”

The rhyming scheme of the poem is like aa bb cc

5.2.1 Themes:

In this poem, poetess has discussed the subjective and objective themes. Sylvia was purely an original artist who wrote on various themes and especially her approaches to the aspect of human life is quite different from many poets; contributing individuality to her art. We can take the “Monarch Mind” as male chauvinisms, this means the Ted Hughes, and monarch mind can be personification for Ted Hughes. Then we can say that she is discussing the subjective theme. She is throwing light on the theme of the self discovery because she wants to know her status. In another poem she also shows this theme:

“I took a deep breath and listened to the old bray of my heart. I am. I am. I am”

At another place she wants to show the world that she has great importance:

"I shut my eyes and all the world drops dead; I lift my eyes and all is born again.

"Kiss me and you'll know how important I am."

By Plath's these quotations we came to know that she wanted to get a great status in the society and as well as tell the people that she has great importance.

And if we say that Sylvia is discussing the objective theme then Monarch Mind is the personification for archetypal figure of Hitler, we can say that Sylvia is discussing the theme of the sufferings. Sylvia's most dominating philosophy propagated in her poems was life, suffering and suicidal tendency. As we know that her own life was an emblem of the contradictory aspect of life: Joyous positive and despairing negative and it is mostly the later one that fills the pages of her poems and becomes her dominating theme as well. She was a poetess who was always surrounded by doubts, apprehension, fear, anxiety: thus exhibiting a complex and allegorical sort of poetry. Another theme which is discussed in this poem is the theme of contrast, by this theme Sylvia shows the two classes of the society and the difference between the Man and Woman way of living and difference in the status.

To sum up, this poem is all about how some of us (humans) try to ignore the rule of nature and settle only when we are taught by the rule of nature itself. One who is filled with pride and arrogance of one's own strength and authority without thinking about those who depend on them is never forever. Time wipes out the sense of authority and power one possesses and it is taken over by some one else hence making the nature rule on its own. This is what has been happening and would continue to happen. Humans play characters, bad or good and pass on.

5.3 I Want I Want

Another poem that tests the god archetype is “I want, I want”, published in 1958. The baby-god ‘wants,’ but his wants go unnoticed by the father (God) who ‘set the wasp, wolf and shark’ (all dangerous creatures) to work, and who also ‘engineered the gannet’s beak.’ (an example of *useful* creativity). This father is the unfeeling (‘dry-eyed’) patriarch (once again we have the god archetype--she refers to him as ‘inveterate’ or ‘never growing old’) who created men (‘raised his men of skin and bone’), but these are as ‘barbs on the crown of gilded wire,’ or ‘thorns on the bloody rose-stem.’ The beauty of the rose is offset by the ugliness of the thorns. There is an undercurrent of ugly reality in the apparent promise of God’s world, and Plath is acutely aware of this. For her the thorn is the fact and the beauty of the rose is an illusion. She is one of those unfortunate people who see things too clearly. The myths and hopes engendered during childhood are neutralized and challenged by the facts of the adult world. This constant awareness of the gulf between appearance and reality is at once a sobering factor and the cause of a basic, insoluble tension in her life. In trying to resolve this tension she sometimes recommends a regression to childhood, as we see in this poem, and sometimes a hard crust of indifference, as we shall see in the next poem.

In the poem ‘I want I want’ Sylvia Plath has shown her unsatisfied nature and discontentment from life. This poem reflects her complex approach towards life, she had never felt herself secure in the world. Although she was a feminist but her poetry shows that she was always trying to find security and shelter in men, i.e. her father who died when she was a child and her husband who was not loyal to her. She took both as devils

and daddy figure is the main archetypal that she wants to suppress but could not just by mentioning in her poems. Then the era in which she was writing her poetry was the time when Germans were barbariously killing Jews and this really affected her senses, and she talks about the insensitivity of people. She was also deeply affected by the lack of attention and love from her mother and did not have any recognition from her side, and this was, what made her further distressed and fretful.

The theme of the poem is subjective and Sylvia Plath describes what she wants from life but what she gets from it is contrary to it. She wanted the love of her father but he left her and died when she was too young, thereafter her mother did not give her the attention and response that she expected from her. In this way, the suicidal tendencies provoked in herself due to the absence of that guiding star her father and acquired the status of someone who all the time tortures her. She associated that guilt not only to her father but another archetypal figure having different personal relation but providing same torturous life is the same kind of archetype that is her husband. She wanted the acknowledgement and credit of the work she had done but there was no one who could appreciate her after the death of her father. Then the environment of that time was also not very conducive or encouraging because of the Second World War. Moreover she wanted the undiverted and focused attention of her husband which was never there.

In the first stanza she is yearning, desiring and longing for the love that she could not get when she wanted it so badly. “Open-mouthed” in the first line of the poem depicts and portrays the want of something, as in the case of chicks and nestling young birds who keep their mouth open to get food from their parents. Then “baby god” which illustrates innocence, devoid of sin and mistake and immorality. She symbolizes herself with an archetypal baby and says what she wanted in her life was her father’s love that she got but could not get her mother’s love and the warmth of her lap. By going into her life history we come to know that this was the missing angle of her life. Her history tells us that it is not only the lack of her mother’s love but also there are certain other influences like her father’s death, unfaithfulness and betrayal of her husband and the Second World War affects on her mind. She is complaining to god that everyone is acting like a devil and tormenting her. She is shrieking for her mother’s love but could not get it and says

that her yelling is so harsh and strong that even the dry volcanoes may crack and split if they listen to what is happening inside of her but she complains that her mother still does not care and remains unresponsive.

In the second stanza she switches over for her father's love and here we see harshness. In the first stanza she showed politeness for her mother even though she did not get her love but here she says

Sand abraded the milkless lip

Cried then for the father's blood

Although her father had already died as he was not cured properly of diabetes. She says that her father left her to the mercy of this cruel and ruthless world, when she wanted him so badly. "Wolf, wasp and shark" are the words used in the stanza which is portraying tense imagery or torturous picture, an angle which is not very much in the favour of her father. Here she is discussing her father's love; she says that she is hurt by her father's death. Her history tells us that the death of her father gave her a disastrous life. After his death no one was there to acknowledge work or to encourage her and then she went into limiting beliefs, she wanted someone to recognize her work and tell her that she has done well but she could not find anyone. It is normal that if a child is working hard and is not getting due response and a pat on the shoulder, the child would certainly get into anxiety and will develop limiting belief that "I cannot do anything, I am not capable, how can I live in this world, how am I going to compete". She feels that the world is totally disappointed in her and no one is satisfied or happy with her personality. These kinds of thoughts later proved to be poisonous in her life. We find her split / scattered personality and inner conflict of hers in this stanza.

In the third and last stanza she is discussing the prevalent environment of that time when Germans were brutally killing the Jews during the Second World War. Holocaust had also a deepening effect on her feelings and writings. Hitler's soldiers forced tens of thousands of Jews in Poland into small sections of the cities, known as ghettos. The Jews were not given adequate food, and many of them starved to death. Hitler's army also sent

millions of Jews from Germany and other countries to concentration camps and many were killed. The death of millions of Jews under Hitler is known as the Holocaust. By “Inveterate Patriarch”, she symbolizes the archetypal personality of Hitler and by “Dry eyed” she symbolizes the cruelty that he leashed on Jews. She is also talking about the insensitiveness of the people who are not bothered to speak for humanity. Plath was a personality who had never been satisfied in her life, she wanted everything and everybody to be as she wanted, but that was impossible, and this made her uncompromising. In this stanza she wants people to wake up and raise voice for humanity. It feels that hostility has grabbed her heart and she wants people to raise their voice against Hitler.

Symbolism plays a large part in this poem. Open mouthed baby gods are the symbols of innocence, devoid of any sin, devoid of mistake, devoid of immorality, devoid of evil, devoid of treachery, devoid of cruelty and wrong doing. The writer compares herself to be innocent who is in want of love from her father, her mother and the world. The mother’s dug symbolizes the love and warmth of her mother that she could not get. In the second line of the second stanza ‘father’s blood’ symbolizes her father’s love. Wasp, wolf and shark are symbols of harshness.

Plath’s poetry is remarkable for its intensity and her writings are very strong and compulsive. In this poem a very tense imagery is portrayed in the forms of father’s blood, wasp wolf and shark, gannet’s beak, barbs, thorns and bloody rose stem. These are all very harsh and bitter words and shows devastation and degradation of life that she lived and also the environment at that time i.e post second world war.

Alliteration is another poetic device used in the poem. In the third line of the second stanza alliteration is used with “W” sound “Who set Wasp, Wolf and shark to Work”. In this she is portraying torturous imagery.

In the last line of the poem the “Rose Stem” is personified to be “Bloody”. Although we know that plants don’t have blood in their branches or stems but here she is trying to tell

us the insensitivity of the people who do not want to raise voice against the barbarism and cruelty of the archetypal figure.

5.4 The Ravaged Face

The primary difficulties remain. She is all too aware of life's thorns, of the ravages of time on the youthful beauty of a person. She recommends the development of a mask of indifference ('better the flat leer of the idiot/The stone face of the man who does not feel') or bare-faced hypocrisy ('the velvet dodges of the hypocrite') or something so naïve and innocent that it is acceptable to 'timorous children' or the 'lady on the street.' Pretence of the unreal might be better than an unmitigated understanding of reality. However, she cannot fool herself. Her 'Daddy' complex (a female variant of the Oedipus complex, sometimes called the Electra complex)) refuses to go away. Nor can she find any consolation in the teachings of Christ, the moral mentor of people living in her part of the world ('O Oedipus. O Christ. You use me ill.'). In the Trinitarian Christian ethos, which is the most widespread one, Christ is one of the three manifestations of God. In a sense what she says here is that there is no answer to her problems and no solace to be found from either man or God.

Poetry portrays the thoughts, vision and philosophy of the poet. The expressions employed by the poet normally associated to the situation which he has inside his mentality. Sometimes each utterance has a story behind itself. Poetry puts in the picture with reference to the poet's persona. What nature of thoughts he/she has. She was an extremely distinctive type of personality disappointed from the world. Here views are very desperate and she has a very pessimistic approach in her poetry. She was completely annoyed and fed up of this life. Certain factors were there behind her disappointed state. She was a very intellectual, efficient and extra ordinary superior in poetry. Her father facilitated her and encouraged her because he acknowledged her poetry very well. But unfortunately he expired when she was eight years only. This was immense loss for her because after fatality no one acknowledged her poetry. After Second World War the condition of the society was very terrible. She was in opposition to German and Nazis. She criticized (accused) them for the disaster of the world. Also she was of point that her

father had relation with them so she also considered him offender. The behavior of the society was also not good with her. It made her belief restricted. Her husband's behavior and dishonesty also made her frustrated. Her husband got a lot of noble prizes in poetry she was not given any reward for her poetry during her life time. When she compared herself with her husband, she had developed neurotic behavior. In World war second the attitude of Hitler towards the Jews was totally ridiculous. Hitler, the archetypal personality thrown the whole world in war and situation was very terrible and dreadful. Everyone was panic and worried all had very miserable state. She also tried to commit suicide but failed for first two times and at last in third attempt she died. The ravaged face is an archetypal poem which symbolizes a lot. The above discussed factors created a negative attitude in her mind about her father, God, husband and Hitler.

In this poem she is very frustrated, depressed and complaining. The army who fought in the Second World War; their faces are like animals in the circus that are tamed having archetypal characteristic and they keep the audience amused but here both army and people are in weird situation. Army is also depressed and the people are also shocked and stricken.

The poetess (Sylvia) used a very devastated language to describe the appearance of the army. They are mentally disturbed and ill. They are over sentimental, their condition is very alarming, their eyes are shedding tears and their noses are swollen due to depression. They are so weak and their heads are so burdened that they are wobbling. They are incurred and their faces are purpled and their mouths are skewered, they are moaning over their conditions. They cannot go to their homes and their judgments gone wrong. The poetess herself is not feeling good. She is fed up of this situation. She is depressed and worried.

In the line better the flat. She is complaining about Hitler: an archetype of devil that he is an idiot and hypocrite person and he has thrown the whole world into war. He has no feelings, no emotions. He is hypocrite and has destroyed the whole world. The army can only be frightened, the children and ladies are in the street. In the end she is evoking for help to Christ and Oedipus to help her out of this pitiful condition.

5.5 The Hanging Man

Her god-consciousness is visible in this short poem, except that this is ‘some god,’ not the Semitic God. The simile ‘like a desert prophet’ is apt in that it links the subject with a Biblical frame of reference, and the imagery is all dry and crumbly (‘a lizard’s eyelid’ snapping shut, and ‘a world of bald white days in a shadeless socket’). We must assume, therefore, that this is yet another step in the disintegration of a cherished belief and that nothing believable has come to replace it. Thus it is that a ‘vulturous boredom’ pins the protagonist in a tree. It is interesting to see that she is here giving the situation from a man’s point of view. Plath’s poetry is nearly always egocentric, strongly embedded in her own emotions and reactions. It is rare for her to step completely out of herself. We note that she does not do so, even in this poem. She reverts to herself in the last line, asserting that if the man were her, he would do what she did. But she does not tell us what she would do. We might guess that in a situation such as the one the protagonist finds himself, spiritually and emotionally dry, full of boredom, bereft of promise, without a way out (‘pinned in a tree’), suicide would be one possible answer, at least according to her way of thinking. But this might be reading too much into the poem.

“The Hanging Man” is a tragically ironic verse. The first line of the first stanza, ‘By the roots of my hair some god got hold of me’ clearly shows the victimization in which the poet has got no control over. It highlights the authority that ‘god’ has over the poet. The word ‘god’ has also not been capitalized, as it should have been. This attributes to Sylvia’s disbelief in God, the archetypal image.

The second line, ‘I sizzled in his blue volts like desert prophet’ describes destruction as conveyed by the word ‘sizzled’. The words ‘blue volts’ draw an image of lightning which links to the idea of death and destruction. The words ‘desert’ and ‘prophet’ become highly ironic when put together. A prophet is a messenger of God. A desert is isolated and threatening place. A prophet usually preaches in all places but a desert where it will be completely barren. Sylvia describes herself as a ‘desert prophet’ to show her revolt towards god, that she’s hoping her ‘preaching’ would not be fruitful.

The first line of the second stanza, 'The nights snapped out of sight like a lizard's eyelid' shows that the poet desires for the night and is frightened of the day. While night usually reveals an image of terror and fear, it seems that the night acts as a shield for the poet. In contrast, the day becomes a revelation for her. She feels unprotected and weak. The second line of the second stanza, 'A world of bald white days in a shade less socket' further supports this point. It shows that exposure of the day kills her and that she is unable to defend herself.

In third stanza, the poet could be referring to God as a 'vulturous boredom'. Here, God is being personified as an abstract concept 'boredom'. The poet paradoxically relates God as a meaningless archetypal presence. 'Boredom' is being described as 'vulturous' which means vicious. The phrase 'pinned me in this tree' shows her inability to retaliate and that she is completely trapped. Finally, the second line of the third stanza, 'If he were I, he would do what I did' is doubtful. It seems that Sylvia is trying to justify herself. There is a darker element of threat is present.

The name of the poem comes from "Hanged Man" in the Tarot card readings. It represents a mystic, a spiritual seeker, the Wounded-Healer. He has suspended himself in a world whereby he can gain new insights into himself and the Universe, and he has chosen the terrifying path: The path that willingly accepts the challenges and sacrifices in order to gain something better, something sublime, something wholly spiritual even if that means fighting for the truth.

Even though she uses the term 'man' because its more universal, Sylvia is referring to herself and hence playing with the theme of mirroring and reflection and feminism in her usual manner.

This truth might be found in death itself because that is what ends the suspension between life and the afterlife. Her mystic experience is hanging in the distinct stages of the attainment of hard truth, all of which have certain features to them. The final stage of the mystical experiences is the attainment of Nirvana, to use the Buddhist term or the realization of the Universe, achieving 'Oneness' or some form of ecstatic union with God.

It could also refer to the hanging and symbolic suspension stage of The Christ on the Cross. It is before this joyous stage of the experience of attaining God that the mystic must first enter pain and darkness of his own soul and embrace it beautifully sizzling in 'the blue volts' of some god 'like a desert prophet'. And it is this challenging, fearful stage, which ultimately tests the mystic and he has to sacrifice something precious in order to gain something better, this something would ensure that the darkness or the 'night' tears out of him 'like a lizard's eye'.

This might even be an omen for Sylvia's own suicide later on. The words are carefully reflective of the intense pain and the agony and frustration that not knowing the truth causes. The hanging or the suspension could be forced upon an individual by external conditions, but ultimately it gives them opportunity for thought, which leads to the finding of the solution to the inaction in order to attain enlightenment. It also represents Sylvia's typical themes of reflection and mirroring throughout the poem. Another meaning of "the Hanging Man" is the seeing of things in a different light, from a new perspective. The upside-down-ness of the hanging stage shows how he has changed the way he perceives everything. It is not really the external world, which has changed however: only his perception of it. Therefore it begs the question of what one needs to do in order to see things straight, in order to uncover the true nature of reality.

One of the possible answers to that question is given in the meaning of this stage: Search within yourself. This leads one to know that there is always pain in order to go from suspension of the 'night' into a world of bald white days' so that this 'boredom' form not knowing, from nearly attaining it and yet not being able to completely grasp it would be lifted and let the hanging man realize himself in the final fulfillment of knowledge. Therefore, there is no escape once this mystic reaches this stage as she explains in the end that if 'he were I, he would do what I did' and give up all his comforts to embrace the comfort of the truth even if that means pain and death or agony.

5.6 Barren Women

This is a straightforward take-off from her experience with a miscarriage in February 1961. We see a transfer from the Hebrew to the Greek tradition in this poem, but with a similar god-consciousness, albeit of now extinct deities that once had great currency in the great Hellenic and Roman periods of ancient history. The classical tradition has almost as much force as the Semitic one in the archetypal table of many Europeans and Americans. The metaphor is a telling one. She imagines herself as a museum filled with statues of gods such as Nike (the goddess of sport) and Apollo (the father of the nine Muses), to whom she will in time give birth. But these are lifeless manifestations of the 'god' archetype.

Plath is now barren. This is an example of the 'pathetic fallacy,' the transference of her own situation to the world around her. The museum is a place for outdated artefacts, statues and reminders of a dead past—it projects the idea of obsolescence. The gods she chooses for this poem are dead—everything is dead and meaningless. A woman is confined to three possibilities in life, she can remain a non-productive spinster, she can be a temptress and prostitute, or she can become a wife and mother. Plath was strongly moved by the third option, but with this miscarriage one of her main purposes has been negated. A sterile woman loses a woman's *raison d'être*, the primary function which determines her worth in society and the eyes of men. Her mental strength, scholarly accomplishments, social works or intellectual brilliance mean little—she is judged and valued by her fecundity.

The title of this poem and verses leads us to believe that this poem is about Plath's desire for a child. The word barren means "worthy of not producing or incapable of producing offspring." She then talks about having a museum without statues again referring the idea of being empty or without child. Actually she is referring here the miscarriage of her child in this poem and how she is empty without a child. She thinks herself as invaluable in the society as museums without statues and this emptiness without child is conveyed in the title of the poem "Barren Woman" mean a woman is barren without a child.

Plath in her poem portrays the theme of “Barrenness”. The "barren woman" describes her state of hollowness. She feels herself to be a deserted and empty space

Museum without statues, grand with pillars, porticoes, rotundas

And in its centre a fountain which is a symbol of wastage of water and its job is rather unworthy as it recycles its water,

In my courtyard a fountain leaps and sinks back into itself

She imagines herself a mother, but recognizes that "nothing can take place." The sole thing that pays attention is the moon, which is trying to make her cool and soother. This theme reflects another theme of emptiness. Barrenness means not only non-productive but the hollowness and stuffed barren lands of human life and attitude. She is barren but this flaw has brought up emptiness and anger in her personality. She is a mother without a child. She is symbol of infertility and infertility is one thing that makes a woman waste and disqualifies her in social standards.

Plath has used the imagery of structural design to present a woman who sees herself as cut off from nature because of her infertility. She is like a building, an object constructed by culture from chill stone, where only marble lilies resemble living things. Even her imagination is constrained by her barrenness, for imagining motherhood is reduced to imagining an audience and the creation of

"a white Nike and several bald-eyed Apollo" her only possible children are statues.

The speaker of the poem cherishes the ability to have children, to produce a "white Nike." The word “white” is an archetypal representation of *innocence* and *purity*, like a baby. Nike is the *goddess of victory*, and Apollo is the *god of sunlight and music*. They're valuable, productive, respected. The image likens the *moon* that is a symbol of chastity, to a nurse who, even as she places her hand on the woman's forehead, remains silent and "blank-faced," her caring for this woman clinical and inhuman. Infertility is thus presented in this poem as profound isolation from all other living things. It is assumed that Plath has written this poem in the regard of her sister-in-law Owlyn.

If we look into the background of the poetry of Sylvia Plath there are certain influences on her poetry and most prominent is the post war holocaust and death of her father. Death of father leads her to deep depression that she has described as being a "*symbolic death*" and "*black*." She recovered from her gloominess and was doing well for herself in 1961 when she got pregnant. Thinking of feeling to have a life inside of you, to be growing something enclosed by of your body, and then to miscarry. She was a young woman in 1961 when it happened. That was a time when miscarriages and infertility wasn't discussed openly. A young woman was supposed to be fertile and able to get pregnant without difficulty, and a woman who wasn't able to would be seen almost like a failure, like she wasn't holding up to her end of the bargain in the marriage, and that maybe she was being punished by God or was cursed. There are Plath's other poems on reproduction: "Three Women", "Heavy Women", "Childless Woman." Most important: Plath's rhetoric, at least the rhetoric of the poems she wrote prior to *Ariel*, now seems anything but revolutionary. As far as this poem is concerned, we can easily analyze that she reflects the miseries of her age and this poem has not only surface impression but long-lasting archetypal, symbolic, metaphorical and undeniable aspects of the barren women of the barren age.

Some critics are of the opinion that she was very crazy for fame and it is a worse aspect of her personality because poets and critics are of the opinion that a true poets should not create poetry for getting fame or materialistic approach because time will decide their worth but this is not true, as we should keep in mind that this might be a lame excuse of those poets or writers who were unable to capture the attraction of the reader toward their works. Plath was much worried and miserable woman and a pure poetess because; she expresses the whole essence of human realities and especially bitter realities of human life. As we know that her husband was insincere to her and she was unable to get fame like her husband; this poem is also the expression of her inner voice. She wants to make readers aware that instead of all types of intellect, creativity and sincerity, woman remains barren as we never expect fruitful crops from barren field; same is the case with women and especially of that age. Women were neglected and they were not given positive response who used to try to stand by men. Here she also describes by using

unique symbolism that it is the alarming situation for the progress of a society or nation that women are thought just Baby Manufacturing Machines and if they are unable to give birth to children; in other words are barren then they are only a burden for husbands, society and also for parents.

Plath becomes too harsh in this poem and in many other poems; she criticizes that we are living in the age of anxiety and have become hollow people; our voices are dried and meaningless; we walk but our movement is not more valuable than the movement of rats on broken glass. We think but this thinking is not a meditation but just the stupidity of hollow and barren mind.

Instead, the dead injure me with attentions, and nothing can happen.

the moon lays a hand on my forehead,

Blank-faced and mum as a nurse.

It is also commenced about the present poem that Plath is too much pessimistic or her maximum approach in poetry is cynic but it should be kept in mind that a pure poet is a mirror to his life and age and not an actor who changes his behaviour and role according to multi situations. As it is crystal clear that life is not a film that can be reviewed or reversed but a reality and the reality of one life, therefore, a refined person would not waste his or her life in pretending mood; same is the case with Plath and her works and the poem discussed.

This poem leaves unforgettable impression on our minds and literary spirit and it is unable for the readers to check themselves from buying her whole collection of poems.

5.7 Sheep in Fog

The extended metaphor adopted for this small poem is a fairly straightforward one. The 'sheep' are, of course, ordinary human beings, directionless when left to themselves, otherwise herded into pointless, routine activities with which they have no real involvement. The aimlessness of naive living creatures wandering about in a fog, of life

itself, is reinforced by a number of images, all with an aura of disappointment, of sadness, of meaninglessness, of decay. Of especial interest to the researcher is the last verse:

They threaten

To let me through to a heaven

Starless and fatherless, a dark water

She cautions herself against enjoying anything because of the inherent possibility of disappointment. She has experienced nothing but disappointment in everything she held to be important in the past, so she is hesitant about letting herself go to a heaven which is starless (without beauty) and fatherless (without protection), a 'dark water.' The reader's attention is drawn towards the word 'fatherless.' It may be noted that she does not say 'motherless' or 'parentless.' The father symbol is still strong within her.

Her famous poem "Sheep in Fog" reveals her complex and unsatisfied nature. It is the best example of her insecure state of mind. Throughout her life she stays dormant and pessimistic in her thoughts. The title of the poem delineates the lurking theme where fog is the symbol of triggering despair and feeling melancholy. It symbolizes disappointment and self pity. The word 'sheep' is often associated with the word 'lost.' I feel that Plath used the animal 'sheep' to transfer the emotion i.e. the confusion of being lost. Throughout the poem, she uses imagery to depict the themes, uncertainty and hope.

The uncertainty that Plath expresses in the title is a good prelude to the poem. The first stanza of the poem says:

'The hills step-off into whiteness

People or stars

Regard me sadly, I disappoint them'

It reveals the sadness of mind, a gloomy situation where nothing is going right for the speaker. She feels, she did nothing of substance to lay an impression on mind of anyone. She meditates deeper to have an insight into herself and feels that her life is without purpose. It is meaningless, without significance like an empty soul. She indicates people and stars having no regard for her, the underlying meaning of which is that she thinks that no one in the world is happy with her nor the nature showers her blessings on her. They are despondent about her. We find her split in person with an inner conflict in the first stanza.

This conflicting nature and split personality can also be seen in her mother poem, 'Poppies in October.' In fact her complex writing underlines her scattered character. The lack of attention by parents, particularly her mother, in her childhood left a scar on her heart which she was never able to cure all her life. The relationship of her father with her mother was not stable which planted an indelible mark on her soul. She felt wounded and lonely. In the end of first stanza, she is of the view that everybody is disenchanted from her and nobody loves her or cares for her.

Throughout the poem Plath uses animate and inanimate objects and personalizes them to draw the readers' attention to her emotions.

The train leaves a line of breath

O slow

Horse the color of rust

Hooves, dolorous bells-

All morning the

Morning has been blackening

Firstly, in the second stanza, 'the train leaves a line of breath,' Plath personifies the train. The 'train' provokes the thought of speed. Yet, 'leaves a line of breath. O, slow,' contradicts the image of the train speed. In fact, it conjures the image of lingering and going slow. She is explaining that every past event has a repercussion on the present. 'a

line of breath' gives reader a persisting and loitering memory of what had passed. The 'train' is a metaphor of past events and 'the line of breath' an indication that all events are inter-linked and connected. In addition, past events affect the future-ones. She is trying to find the archetypal image of daddy in her other relations though they are also going in the same direction mean they are giving any fruitful outcomes but just torturous thoughts so past affects future, similarly archetypal image of daddy affects other images like God, Hitler, husband.

The last line of second stanza with the words, 'the colour of rust' is often a good indication of age in inanimate objects. Rust is proof that the object has been left out, exposed to the harsh elements. 'Horse the colour of rust' gives us a subtle indication that the horse is weary and old. 'Hooves, dolorous bells' indicate the weary horse's slow passing and the sad warning that is being announced throughout the journey. The 'dolorous bells' serve as a herald, fore-warning us of the sad ending in the poem.

The next two lines of the poem draw us again back to the external surroundings. Plath describes the morning as 'blackening.' Mornings symbolize a fresh new start filled with hope, yet Plath already feels otherwise, so it has also the archetypal characteristic in itself. Her 'Morning has been blackening' hence proving that events occurring about her are taking a worst turn.

The horse and the heralding bells (that spell of doom) is the second image. It is yet another of Plath's methods in explaining that she has passed a point in life; the turning for the worst in events that marks Plath's passing to the point of no return.

'A flower left out

My bones hold a stillness, the far

Fields melt my heart'

The fourth stanza starts with another memorable image, 'a flower left out.' Women are often described as flowers and, in the western tradition, are commonly given names derived from flowers—Rose, Margaret, Jasmine and so on. The name 'Sylvia' itself

evokes a pastoral, floral image--one can picture Plath as the lone flower being ostracized and excluded.

Sylvia Plath wrote the poem in a time when she was undergoing a legal separation. I feel that at that period of time, she is cut-off from the world at large (she was living in England and her family was in America). Hence the emotion of being 'left-out' is depicted in such a dramatic way. 'My bones hold stillness,' shows that Plath is numbed to events and nothing can stir her anymore. Such a phrase reiterates that she has passed a point in her life where no mental or physical trauma could shake her. She is too melancholic, too dejected at the hands of four prominent figures of her life, even to feel. Yet Plath is plagued with past memories. In 'the far fields melt my heart,' Plath expresses her desire in going back to the 'far past.' She makes her comparisons in life in the present to that of the past.

Upon reading Plath's history, I understand that she lived in a place called Yaddo- an acclaimed retreat for poets. Yaddo is a countryside area that has many fields and daffodils. Hence I feel that "the far fields," that Plath makes specific mention of, is in referral to the happy times (melt my heart) she spent at Yaddo.

'They threaten

To let me through to a heaven

Starless and fatherless, a dark water.'

The last stanza is extremely significant. Plath uses it to reinforce the motif uncertainty. In the last stanza, Plath explains that happy memories 'threaten' her. She feels that the happy memories endanger her, as her comparisons to the past events bring her into the deeper waters of depression—"dark water."

The great poet Milton has defined heaven as a, "place or condition of great happiness." However we can see that in the poem Plath voices her doubt in heaven. Plath describes heaven as, "a heaven" therefore she does not imply **the** heaven that we refer to in traditional terms.

Plath is using such to indicate her uncertainty about her future happiness or even where she will be going to in her future. Plath's heaven is without a guide and ruler (starless and fatherless). It is merely an uncertainty (dark water) that straddles, never allowing for a breakthrough; she is trapped and never to be rescued.

This ending echoes the desperation of never being able to stand up to the blowing, worsening and burgeoning events that occur in her daily life. Plath uses this poem to explain the gradual process of how she has sunk into great depths of misery.

The colour scheme of the beginning and ending of the poem is a stark contrast. In the first stanza, Plath describes that the 'hills step-off into whiteness' thus giving the impression that the hills into an uncertainty. However this 'uncertainty' contains a little hope of archetypal type.

We can deduce so as Plath uses the colour white to depict the uncertainty.

Seeing white light has long been associated to enlightenment. I feel that for Plath usage of the colour white is extremely significant in the sense that she still can picture of hope and dream of enlightenment in the midst of uncertainty.

Whereas upon reading the last words of the last stanza (dark water), we receive the image of a murky, dark colour. This dark colour indicates that Plath has given up all dreams of refinement and has fallen into depthless hopelessness. This deathless hopelessness always unconsciously paves the way towards darker end that is committing suicide and little hope would awake in the form of her new purgated life or resurrection or renewal.

Chapter 6

Findings and Conclusion

Conclusions drawn from a study of this type, based as they are primarily on the researcher's insights into the unconscious workings of this poet's brain, can, of course, be challenged because of their speculative nature. The researcher's appeal is therefore to common sense and plausibility rather than to demonstrable validity. Wherever possible, some degree of validity and authority has been drawn from writings by eminent people in the field, and for this the early psychoanalysts (especially Jung and Freud) have been taken as primary mentors. These writers and practitioners relied to a great extent on highly plausible but unverifiable speculation about the unconscious workings of the brain, and this was both their strength and weakness. Aspects of the physical brain are amenable to experimental verification—it is possible to show through the application of external electrodes (or through more recent PET and fMRI procedures) that this or that part of the physical brain is involved in such and such activity—but aspects of the psychic brain are not—where, after all, is the unconscious part of the brain stored? Is it a physically verifiable entity, or is it a non-physical, psychic phenomenon, a product of the brain's general activity? Is the unconscious part of the brain merely an unverifiable hypothesis? Yet, much of what the seminal writers on psychoanalysis say about dreams, inner tensions, foundational symbolism and archetypes underlying the brain's non-physical structure finds an echo of agreement in the average person's experience of life, and it is to this that the appeal for validation must be made.

Reinforcement for the inspiration received from Jung is found in Maud Bodkin's seminal work on archetypes in literature, and the researcher has attempted to highlight the working of some primary archetypal patterns such as the rebirth pattern, the composite 'father' image of Daddy, God, the Devil, her husband, death, heaven and hell. Positive and negative factors are presented together in archetypal images and patterns.¹⁵³ Much the same images and patterns can be found from similar connotations in ancestral stories from the past. Rebirth after death leads to renewal of life; this belief combines past, present and future. These archetypal patterns are interconnected, so, while it is possible to

¹⁵³ For details, see Chapters Three 31-35; Four, 36-81 and Five, 82-108.

treat her poems in isolation, it is also good to read her writings in a synthetic framework, to see them steadily and to see them whole, as Arnold recommended. The researcher has tried to do this with a representative sampling taken from the whole range of her poetic output.

The **first chapter** focuses on the background and introduction of archetypes and a bit about Plath's background. The term archetype has been explained from different writer's points of view. Some major archetypes, such as deity figures, have been mentioned. These affect a person's life right from the start. The instinct of developing permanent concepts starts with the total pattern which can be formed by the circumstances and situations of human actions. The macro factors of the mood of Plath's time and micro factors of her personal history are significant while understanding her poetry. The archetypal patterns make images that have permanent and wide relevance to the human condition. What Plath explored in her times is relevant to the present age as well. The influence of Freud and Jung on her beliefs can be seen, and Bodkin's archetypal patterns are also obvious. The three poems of Plath are specifically and other ten selected poems are generally significant in conveying the emotional patterns.

The **second chapter** provides a review of different books related to the different archetypes and archetypal analysis and cross references to Shakespeare's Hamlet who is still alive as a western archetype. Plath's reveals their presence unconsciously and implicitly. One writer relates Plath's history to the Second World War and shows its influence on her personality and on the development of limiting and promotional belief structures. The inspiration from Jung and Freud enables her to portray abstract and concrete archetypal images in her poetry. Butscher presents her failed marital life and also shows the concrete image of devil in the personality of her husband Ted Hughes and her father both. The psychoanalytic theory has also been discussed to explore the deep seated intricacies of her psyche and guilty feelings somehow (though incomprehensibly for the reader) aroused by her Germanic background. The mere fact of her German-Austrian antecedents would not in any way implicate her in the war's atrocities, yet they seem to weigh heavily on her psyche.

The **third chapter** summarizes the method adopted for analysing these thirteen poems for analysing different archetypal patterns in promoting different beliefs. It mentions objectives and research questions and provides the rationale of choosing these poems for archetypal study.

The **fourth chapter** summarises an account of the definition of archetypes, and elaborates archetypal patterns. It also gives an introduction to Chapter Four. Basic ideas about the collective unconsciousness, titles of poems and chronological progressions have been dealt with to organize the chapter. Plath's neuroticism and belief structures have been explored through linguistic inventions in phonology, deviations and repetitions.

The archetypal analysis of three major poems which actually provides the basis of the whole thesis and gives major archetypal images and symbols. The limiting and promotional belief structures have also been mentioned in detail in these poems chronologically along with other thematic structures of life and death, renewal theme, self therapy, different phonological structures by exploring Plath's language, adopting repetitious attitude towards portraying her thoughts and deviating from regular use of language. These archetypal images and symbols universalise the idea and theme.

The **fifth chapter** summarises the reinforcement from seven other poems. It provides further background and underpinning to the established conscious and unconscious images and symbols as mentioned in chapter four. These poems are presented in chronological order, one poem from each year. They present images and symbols already established in the mind and Plath also encourages her readers to use those symbols as the effects and influences on her life has also been revealed by these ten selected poems separately. The separate discussion exhibits a sort semblance with the three core poems and also reinforces the same ideas. This chronological progression also reveals gradual development of neurosis due to different surrounding situations as she shows her barrenness in "Barren Woman". Though she has her kids but still feels as if she is devoid of them. This is just because of the infidelity of her husband and her father's death also

brought big setbacks to her life. The different poems reveal different situations by portraying them in different images and symbols.

The researcher will here give a brief, recapitulative account of basic archetypes in what she considers to be the workings of Sylvia Plath's mind in her short journey from an unhappy life to self-annihilation... 'Oh,' says Hamlet, 'that th'Almighty had not fixed his canon against self-slaughter...'. This is the puzzle. What drove her to commit a major sin like suicide?

Death

The obtrusive reality of death, the cruel monster that can take a father away from a doting, eight-year old child, the callous annihilator of millions of people caught up in the insane power struggles of rulers and princes, the spectre that ironically negates all human effort and ambition, looms strongly in Plath's psyche. Nobody wants to lose loved ones, but it happens in the normal course of events. Nobody wants to die, but subconsciously everyone knows that death will come sooner or later.

Most people have to come to terms with the fact of death. Some do this by suppressing all thoughts about it; others by deluding themselves that it is something that happens to other people, not to them; yet others by evading the issue, or by rationalizing it through non-evidential speculation about an after-life. Some people especially those whose experience and observation of events have resulted in much loss of faith rage mightily against it. Sylvia Plath belongs to the second category—she fears death, which means that she is more than ordinarily obsessed by it. From biographical accounts we learn that she had a repressed though basically abrasive and aggressive nature. Perhaps she thinks that she can defeat death by deciding for herself when she will die rather than waiting for it to strike. Death has to come-- why wait passively for the inevitable? The world expects women to be uncomplaining, receptive and passive, but by nature she is rebellious and combative. Why not control the matter through suicide? Instead of living under the unbearable, unpredictable threat of death, as most people do, why not die at a time of one's own choosing? She tackles the problem by meeting it head on.

Different religions have different concepts of death. In Buddhism, for example, the focus is on this life rather than on a speculative future life; in Hinduism it is a necessary part of a cyclic return to different forms and stations of life until perfection is achieved; in the Semitic religions, to one of which she belongs, death is not the end of everything but the gateway to an eternal life. Death is for the body not the soul. This downgrades the relative importance of the physical life, which is transient in any case. It is easy to begin to look upon it as nothing in essence. If, as we understand from the projection of Plath's outlook on these matters, she had also begun to doubt the validity of her childhood teachings about morality and religion, the Semitic injunction not to commit the cardinal sin of suicide could be sidestepped without any great moral soul-searching or psychic disturbance.

Rebirth

This is a persistent archetype found in most cultures and religions, though not in exactly the same form. In the Semitic religions, of which Christianity is one, death is not the cessation of everything, but a rather frightening moment in the transfer from one state of being to another. It is impossible to determine how much of her childhood belief in the religion of her birth remained with her at the time of her death. We have already noted the progressively demoralizing realizations that bedevil her life, chiefly that the universe is not constituted in an orderly or morally defensible manner, and that barbarism, theft, violence, immorality, unpredictability, undependability and mass murder are the principles upon which human relations and societies, even so-called civilized ones, are based. The rebirth archetype symbolizes hope for a second chance, but only after the present highly flawed dispensation has been shrugged off. It is perhaps this hope for a better life in the hereafter that prompts her to hasten the end of her present one, though this, of course, is mere speculation.

Father-God

There is little doubt that this archetype works strongly in Plath's psyche. At the Sanskrit end of the Indo-European group of languages, the word 'dev' or 'deo' can have both good and evil connotations—in fact the word is still used in many linguistic descendents of Sanskrit, including Punjabi, even today, both to describe a god figure and to depict a frighteningly large man. That this word is a cognate of 'theo' and 'dei' at the European end of the Indo-European family is easy to see. Plath deliberately (or unconsciously) mixes the elements of the basic structure to create a composite image of (i) *good and evil* (represented by the male devil-god figure), (ii) *maleness* (represented in a composite image of male foolishness and unreliability in her own father, of male madness, murder and tyranny in the whole Nazi episode, and of male sexual deceit and immorality in her husband) and (iii) *dictatorial control* over the lives of weaker and more vulnerable members of the human race such as women (represented by rulers, who, once again, are nearly always men). The feminine principle is generally downgraded or ignored in Sylvia Plath's writings, although we do find a curious transference of the 'rebirth' or 'resurrection' theme from male to female in her 'Lady Lazarus' image, as already discussed in Chapter Four.

Heaven and Hell

The concept of hell and heaven as real places of reward or punishment is very old. In the old Graeco-Roman understanding of these places people had the upper atmosphere as generally representative of 'heaven' and the underworld as representative of 'hell'. In the old Hindu dispensation heaven was the escape from the endless cycle of rebirth, while hell was a continuation of it. In the Semitic religions the concepts are generally proffered as a pleasant, heavenly place of ease and plenty and the instant gratification of desire on one hand, and a fiery, hellish place of endless physical, spiritual and mental torment on the other. Heaven is the reward for following God's injunctions, while Hell is the punishment for disobeying them. That Sylvia Plath is not by nature inclined to the unquestioning acceptance of these images can be seen in her writings, but that she

questions the religious assumptions does not mean that she is in any way less affected by such basic archetypes. Rejection and acceptance are, after all, of the same basic concepts.

These archetypes are found in many of Plath's poems like "Death and Co", "Lesbos", "Fever 103", "Elm", "Cut", "Tulips", "Morning Song" and "Ariel," which have not been discussed in this thesis. They are found in one shape or another in Plath's poetry.

Summary of whole discussion

The broad directions followed in this study indicate that (a) Sylvia Plath was aware (or at least half-aware) of a cyclic inner instability that was likely to erupt every few years in an attempt to commit suicide, (b) she made several literary attempts to discover and, if possible, to exorcise this demon, and (c) beginning to understand that it lay outside her power to do this, she reached a comparatively calm level of self-reconciliation, as demonstrated in poems such as "The Couriers." The researcher has tried to show that the last stage, despite its deceptively calm tone, is perhaps the most dangerous one, because it paves the way for her final, successful act of suicide. In contrast, the previous attempts failed either because she intended them to fail (the act of attempting suicide is often a call for attention and help rather than a serious effort to annihilate the self) or because they were impulsive and unplanned. If the earlier attempts are seen as the relatively unplanned outcomes of temporary emotional distress (but with a continued commitment to life), the last attempt indicates a relatively permanent state of readiness to abandon all things, including her children, and indeed life itself.

The researcher has discussed only a few here, but she detects a similar pattern of fear and anguish, followed by disordered but highly intellectualized efforts to 'discover' causes, which are then followed by an emotional, almost fatalistic acceptance of her own self-destructive tendencies, across a much larger canvas of Plath's writings, including the novel *The Bell Jar*. However, the researcher has not attempted an analysis on a larger scale.

This is not to suggest that it is only internal, i.e., all within the psyche of the poet—external happenings and events must have contributed a great deal to her unhappy state

(the researcher's contribution here is to suggest that the dominant vowel sound of "Daddy" indicates an externalizing function). It will be noted in Chapter Four that the researcher adopted a somewhat different approach for her interpretation of at least one aspect of "Daddy," and she trusts that this is acceptable. It must be emphasized that this is her own perception of things, and she is not able to find confirmation from other sources. Sensing the mood of the poem lay at the base of the interpretation. The researcher chose to open a phonetic door rather than a semantic one. She perceived a dominant 'oo' sound in this poem, and, since the production of this sound requires a 'pursed lips' gesture, she inferred an underlying externalizing impulse for the poem, a shifting of blame to causes, entities and people outside herself. The inference is a plausible one, otherwise it is difficult to explain why this particular implied gesture should underscore this poem-- it is known in linguistics that gesture accompanies expression and reinforces it, at least most of the time (of course, it is quite possible for gesture to contradict expression, but this is usually done deliberately). The researcher humbly posits the possibility that *gesture is also archetypal in nature*, because it lies at the very base of the process of communicating ideas or feelings to other people. This is her own interpolation, but it should be pointed out that gesture is as old as communication itself, and that it projects, through accepted physical and muscular activity, the inner moods, thoughts and feelings of the individual. Words may act in consonance with gesture, but gesture is often enough in itself. It is universal in the sense that we can understand not only human physical signals, but most kinds of animal physical signals as well. *In fact, language itself, complex as it is, might only be one kind of gesture.* The supra-segmentals of communication, namely stress, intonation, duration and pause, which can make or break the communicative act, cannot be shown very satisfactorily in written text, so a lot has to be guessed or extrapolated. Sylvia Plath has helped the process by introducing a dominant vowel sound, at least for this poem. The researcher thus understood "Daddy" to be an assertive, accusatory piece, and she hopes that she has been able to establish that this is indeed so, as it forms the basic pattern for her thesis, namely, that these three poems indicate a changing mood from (a) somewhat angry denunciation to (b) somewhat puzzled introspection, and then to (c) fatalistic resignation.

These factors are outlined in the poems considered here--her revered and possibly over-valued father's death during her childhood, the distress and puzzlement engendered by revelations about World War II, the ever-present danger of yet another, even more horrifying war between East and West, and her sexually irresponsible husband's wandering nature. It should be noted that all the external factors mentioned here are *male* references, and this might be one reason for the shortage of *female* references in these poems. In Chapter Three the researcher has pointed out the feminization of the 'Lazarus' symbol, but it should be remembered that the primary symbol in the Bible is male, not female. However, when it comes to external factors, the researcher would like to reiterate an earlier observation that stress, sometimes very severe in nature, occurs in everyone's life, but not everyone commits suicide. The predisposition has to be present in the psyche. By rights, we should look for answers in both external and internal factors, but primacy should go to internal ones.

As previously stated, archetypes (at least in a Jungian sense) can represent abiding and universal themes in the collective psychology of people, or they can represent area themes. The main universal archetype identified by the researcher is the 'father-god' one, and the researcher's contribution here is to suggest that when this poet says 'daddy' she is referring not only to her own father but to a composite symbol of fatherhood with multiple dimensions. Among the area themes, we find the "Lazarus" one of sickness and resurrection through the miraculous intervention of Jesus Christ—perhaps she is suggesting that the world is terminally ill and that its salvation lies in a return to the certainties of the Christian faith, but this is only a possibility. Lazarus symbolizes the sickness, death and rebirth (with the help of miraculous forces) theme in the Christian world, but as stated earlier, the interesting addition here is that she 'feminizes' the symbol. This is as close as she comes to recognizing and asserting the female principle in these poems—is she suggesting that, since men had made such a mess of the world in their heedless destructiveness, it was now time for women to take over? The possibility exists. Something like it shows through this poem when she warns the world that she will come back to 'eat men like air.'¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ For details, see Chapter Four, 45-49 and 58, 59.

Relatively less well-known archetypes are visible in “The Couriers.” These are more like ‘area’ archetypes than universal ones. They are drawn partly from the ‘nature’ tradition established by western poets and writers since the middle of the eighteenth century, from such writers as Herder, Novalis and the Schlegel brothers of Germany, and later the Lake poets and younger romantic poets of Britain, partly from the ‘urban-industrial’ imagery introduced by early twentieth-century poets such as Hulme and Eliot, partly from everyday commonplaces like ‘a cat has nine lives,’ and partly from general principles (such as that of ‘love’) derived from the Bible. This poem raises the possibility that she trivializes both the romantic and industrial traditions, and that she becomes more poignantly aware of religion as she approaches her final act of suicide (at least this is how the researcher reads it).¹⁵⁵ This has been discussed in Chapter Four in greater detail.

The language of Plath's poems is reflective of the inner turmoil that drives her to extreme measures. Her psychological problems are virulent and self-destructive. Female writers are probably more prone to mental illness than male writers. However, in my opinion, comparisons of this nature are bound to be uncertain because very few women adopt writing as a profession, and the few that do are not always welcome. No attempt will be made here to analyze the respective merits of Hughes and Plath's poetry, as this lies outside the scope of this thesis. However, I will take the chance of voicing an admittedly subjective opinion that, of the two, Plath is by far the more compelling poet, although it was Hughes who gained Laureateship and public acclaim. Today hardly anyone reads Hughes, while Plath still commands a wide and appreciative readership.¹⁵⁶ This reinforces the observation (1) that thinking, feeling, ambitious women are restricted from the beginning of their lives: (2) that they are subjected to a wide range of social, biological, psychological and marital negativities: and (3) that primary neuroses are likely to be exacerbated by an apparently unending series of reverses like the one she encountered. If women writers are more likely than men writers to suffer from psychological problems, this should occasion no surprise.

¹⁵⁵ For details, see Chapter Four, 36-81

¹⁵⁶ It is said due Plath's bent towards neurotic and psychic problems which is the major problem of everyone in today's world.

These poems are good exemplars of my central thesis. "Daddy" reveals Plath's childhood dismay at the discovery that she has no control over external events, and to some extent this dismay is carried over into her adult life. The paradoxes and ironies in her text reveal her conscious and unconscious rebellious attitude against God. I notice this in the harsh language she uses for her father (though this is probably a composite image), with hints of something similar towards her husband in "Lady Lazarus." Plath the disturbed, immature child is not greatly dissimilar from Plath the emotionally agonized adult. University of Texas at Austin psychologist James Pennebaker talks of the therapeutic effects of poetry when he says: '[Plath] has found positive health and mental health benefits from writing...'¹⁵⁷ Later (on the same page) Pennebaker (as cited in Bailey, 2003) observes that it is Plath's poetry that gives her some motive for living and provides a chance to explore her mind. Her poetry acts as a purpose-giving and exploring cure for her inner turmoil. It provides a justification for living and an impetus for intellectual activity.¹⁵⁸ This is a sort of psychological therapeutic cure through both catharsis and self-exploration. But, if it can mitigate some of the problems, it cannot remove the primary difficulties, as I observe in her last days revealed through the text or poetic language of her poetry, on the premise that language is a conscious outcome of unconscious thought. It would be interesting to speculate what might have happened if Plath had achieved some public recognition as a poet. If I view the matter chronologically, then "Daddy" seems to be the most rough and harsh of the three poems under discussion.¹⁵⁹ There is some cross-symbolism between God the 'father,' her own 'father' and Hughes as the 'father' of her children. There is a generalized sense of betrayal dating back to her childhood associated with all males. This was confirmed by Hughes' marital derelictions; it is this sense of futility, helplessness and betrayal first by God, then by her own father and finally Hughes, all highly-valued father-figures, that lies at the root of much of her distress. Yet her father and her husband could not be blamed altogether. There is much to say about the effects of her hysterical personality.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ (Cited) Deborah Smith Bailey, "The Sylvia Plath Effect" *Considering Creativity*, Vol. 34, No. 10 (Nov, 2003) 42. <<http://www.apa.org/monitor/nov03/plath.html>> Accessed on 01/06/08

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ For details see Chapter Four, 36-81 and Chapter Five, 82-108

¹⁶⁰ Hysteria is also known as Conversion Disorder, it arises due to emotional disturbances and conflicts, it also includes paralysis of physical functioning. See *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*.

Her deep relationship with her parents is portrayed in her poetry. As a mother she played her role very well.¹⁶¹ She probably expected more from her parents that is why she is so shocked by her father's untimely death. Her artistic salvation and downfall are both exposed aptly in her poetry either at one extreme or the other.

This sort of emotive intensity is the same at ten as it is at twenty years of age. Ten years after her father's death the feelings are as immediate and powerful as they were when he first died. She feels strongly, she thinks endlessly; she craves certain things in life that continually elude her. She is a prime candidate for destructive neuroses, and her poetry is a rich source for sensing them. Her language and thought complement each other; if one is absent then the other one alone cannot create a neurotic and psychotic Plath, especially in a psychological context. Plath's psychic depth enfolds not only emotions and feelings but also her intellectual self-recognition. The psychological analysis reveals a need for self-acknowledgement along with some cathartic process.

Although Plath's condition is specific, in that it is the product of her times, circumstances and personality, it has some general aspects as well. The average reader can recognize the truth underlying her unhappiness. The application of the archetypal approach including psychological aspects to Plath's poetry suggests how she uses poetic expression for the temporary relief of her problems. She is able to overcome them for a short time. Readers who are sensitive to her condition can observe the use of psychotic, neurotic and hysterical words in her poetry and how they act as a release for excessive emotional pressure. The neurotic and perplexed imagery of her poetic expression not only defines her condition with considerable precision; it also acts as a safety valve. To some extent people can order and exorcise their feelings by putting them down in writing, which is a deliberative, slow process rather than letting them run wild. Some discipline is introduced into thinking by the process of writing, any kind of writing. Poetry is more strongly disciplinarian in this respect than prose, because the writer has to think deeply and feel

¹⁶¹ She played her role well in the sense that she just sealed her kids' room before committing suicide so that it should not affect them. She did not marry for the second time like Ted Hughes who was careless to his children but she seemed to be more concerned.

the language in its essential rhythms and stresses before he or she can produce something telling, such as the poetry of Plath.

Psychological approaches coupled with the recognition of the therapeutic effects of poetry, which show up strongly in Plath's poetry, provide new areas for further exploration among other poets. In this way readers are able not only to widen their thoughts but also discern new perspectives in the appreciation of poetry. The usage of discrepant imagery also helps to avoid tedium. Plath extracts pessimism everywhere by talking about death and other dark themes of life. Where she talks about life and beauty, she suddenly shifts back to the demons of her soul that haunt her. This is what has been inferred from her poetry.

Some psychological inferences have been drawn from these poems. Taken together they constitute a very small sampling of this poet's output. A great deal more could be culled from a wider selection, and from a more detailed cross-referencing of these poems with other poems and other writings, but this lies outside this limited study's terms of reference. I consider Plath to be a good subject for this kind of speculation because of her instability, high neuroticism and suicidal tendencies. However, I have offered this approach in all humility with a recommendation that it can be used especially with regard to the identification of basic belief structures for the illumination of some personality aspects of other poets and writers, many of whom suffer from similar psychological problems. The answer to all three of the questions raised in the first chapter is in the affirmative, as I have attempted to show in this thesis.

It is recommended that the archetypal patterns traced by linguistic analysis and the way poetry helped Plath can also help mankind. The way poetry helps Plath also helps human kind when they write or express their repressed inner desires. The repression leads to neurosis and psychoses but when one gives language to his or her feelings then they can be cured slowly and gradually. Now a days mankind is overpowered by psychological complexities and diseases, moulding feelings in the shape of words like Plath can help

them a lot. It not only releases stress but also increases the instinct of eros in one's self and decreases the instinct of thanatos.¹⁶²

The age in which the poetry has been written also accounts for some of her output, and we have seen how the post-war era affected her. People, especially sensitive artists, are sometimes driven to commit suicide when they find no one to listen to them. The irony of Plath's considerable poetic output is that she had only a limited reputation in her own life, but an enormous one after she ended it. Plath was an 'extremist.' She probably expected too much from others. Her husband was also a poet who achieved Laureate status, but he did not commit suicide. She had her children to divide her attention but this did not lessen her retaliatory attitude. This is a sort of protest against male domination and the wide-scale destruction of life, property and, above all, the psychological health of mankind that results from this kind of domination.

Recommendations

The researcher sees enough in the foregoing to recommend a similar approach for other writers, especially for male authors such as Nietzsche, Lamb, Chatterton or Cowper, for whom madness was a fact of life, and for other women authors who actually committed suicide. The age-old idea of the 'mad' or 'nearly mad' poet, the statement that there is a thin line between 'genius' and 'madness,' the suggestion of a relationship between the forces that drive a person to become a creative writer (especially of poetry) and true insanity, are significant enough to be taken seriously. If Jung's assertion that the mind is constituted *ab initio* on basic, collective archetypes has any force (the researcher is fairly sure that it has) then much can be done to clarify primary working elements in the psyches of individual poets, especially of unhappy, tormented poets such as Sylvia Plath, to understand what they have done, and why. The researcher presents this study as a humble attempt at doing so, but the field is wide open.

¹⁶² See Chapter Two, pg no. 14, Chapter Four, 72-73 and ft. nt. 141 on 72

Bibliography

- Abel, Hirsch N. *Eros*. Oxford: Totem Books, 2001
- Allen, James L., 'The Road to Byzantium: Archetypal Criticism and Yeats', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 32, No. 1, Autumn, 1973
- Armens, S. *Archetypes of the Family in Literature*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966
- Atkins, G. D. & Morrow L. ed. *Contemporary Literary Theory*. USA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989
- Gerbig, A. & Muller-Wood, A. "Trapped in Language: Aspects of Ambiguity and Intertextuality in Selected Poetry and Prose by Sylvia Plath," *Style*, Spring, 2002. 10 July 2008
<http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2342/is_1_36/ai_89985877/>
- Bailey, Deborah S. "The Sylvia Plath Effect" *Considering Creativity*, Vol. 34, No. 10 Nov, 2003, 42. 10 May 2008 <<http://www.apa.org/monitor/nov03/plath.html/>>
- Barnes, Gordon E. *The Addiction-Prone Personality*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000
- Knapp, Bettina L. *Manna and Mystery: A Jungian approach to Hebrew Myth and Legend*. (Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1995)
- Bodkin, M. *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971
- Brooke, R. *Pathways to the Jungian World: Phenomenology and Analytical Psychology*. London: Routledge, 1999
- Burke, Joseph H. *Even Paranoid Have Enemies: New Perspectives on Paranoia and Persecution*. New York: Routledge, 1998
- Caitriona O' Reilly, Sylvia Plath. 8 Jun 2008
<<http://www.oup.com/us/pdf/americanlit/plath.pdf/>>
- Copeland, Mark A. *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, 2001. 12 July 2008
<http://executableoutlines.com/ecc/ecc_sg.pdf/>
- Cosslett, T. ed. *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*. New York: Routledge, 2000
- Cuddon, J. A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: Penguin Books, 1999
- Daniels, Aubrey C. *Bringing Out the Best in People*. New York: McGraw-Hill

- Professional Book Group, 1999
- Drabble, M. ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985
- Easterday, G. " Sylvia Plath's Final Work: *Ariel* Evolving" *Hot Papers 2002: The Best Academic Writing at Wayne State College*. 2002. 16 Aug 2008
 <http://www.wsc.edu/schools/ahu/publications_media/publications/hot_papers_02.pdf>
- Eliade, M. ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol.1, 2. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986
- Evans, M. *Missing Persons: The Impossibility of Auto/Biography*. London: Routledge, 1999
- Feldman, Jerome A. *From Molecule To Metaphor: A Neural Theory of Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006
- Ferrell, William K. *Literature and Film as Modern Mythology*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000
- Freud, S. & James Strachey. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1961
- Freud, S. "The Anatomy of the Mental Personality," *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*. Hogarth Press, 1933
 --- *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Wordsworth Editions, 1997
- G, Mitchell. "The Sawastika," *Jewish Virtual Library*, Chevy Chase, MD: The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2008. 20 Sep 2008
 <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Swastika.html>>
- Gill, J. ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 15 May 2008
 <<http://www.cambridge.org/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521606851&s=fro>>
- Gray, J. *Consciousness*, Oxford University Press: London, 2006
- Greenblatt, S. ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Vol.1,2 New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006
- Guerin, Wilfred L. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005
- Hanks, P. ed. *Collins English Dictionary*. Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co.,

1981

- Hazo, S. ed. *Power of Less: Essays on Poetry and Public Speech*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005
- Hornby, A. S. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005
- Jacobi, J. *Complex, Archetype, Symbol in the Psychology of Jung*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959.
- Jung, C. G. & Francis Carrington Hull, F. *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*. London: Routledge, 2003
- Jung, C. G. *On the Nature of the Psyche*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982
- *Psychology of the Unconscious*. Read Books, 2007
- *Modern Man in Search of Soul*. London: Routledge, 1933
- Knapp, Bettina L. *Manna and Mystery: A Jungian approach to Hebrew Myth and Legend*. Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications, 1995
- Laqueur, W. *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. London: Yale University Press, 2001
- Lorna, S. *The Cambridge Guide to the Women's Writing in English*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999
- Martin, W. & Linda Wagner-M, *Sylvia Plath: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1988
- Marshall, S. *SPC Series: Differences and Discrimination in Psychotherapy and Counselling*. London: Sage Publications, Incorporated, 2004
- Myss, C. 'The Language of Archetypes' Audio CD Book, 11 Discs. Louisville: Sounds True Returns, 12.25 hours
- Newton, K. M. *Twentieth Century Literary Theory*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1988
- Oakes, E. "Polonius, the Man behind the Arras: A Jungian Study." *New Essays on Hamlet*. Ed. Mark Thornton Burnett and John Manning. *Hamlet Collection* 1. New York: AMS, 1994
- O'Keefe, Richard R. *Mythic Archetypes in Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Blakean Reading*. Kent State University Press, 1995
- O' Reilly, C. Sylvia Plath. 17 Jun 2008
- <<http://www.oup.com/us/pdf/americanlit/plath.pdf/>> Ousby, I. *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge

- University Press, 1993
- Peel, Robin *Writing Back: Sylvia Plath and Cold War Politics*. England: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corp, 2002
- Plath, S. *Ariel*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965
- Plath, S. *The Bell Jar*. London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1999
- Porterfield, Sally F. *Jung's Advice to the Players: A Jungian Reading of Shakespeare's Problem Plays*. Westport, Connecticut, and London: Greenwood Press, 1994
- Pratt, A. *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981
- Ranson-Polizzotti, S. *Giving Up: The Last Days of Sylvia Plath*, Eric Olsen, 2004 in online magazine *Blogcritics*. 18 April 2008
<<http://blogcritics.org/archives/2004/09/07/190018.php>>
- Rennison, N. *Sigmund Freud*, Great Britain: Pocket Essentials, 2001
- Riley, D. *Words of Selves: Identification, Solidarity, Irony*. California: Stanford University Press, 2000
- Roberts, J. M. *The Hutchinson History of the World*. London: Hutchinson Publishing Group, 1976
- Sage, L. *The Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999
- Stevenson, A. *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989
- Thomsen, H. *From Thoughts to Obsessions: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in Children and Adolescents*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998
Encyclopedia Britannica Online.
- VanDyne, Susan R. *Revising Life: Sylvia Plath's Ariel Poem*. USA: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993
- Wistrick Robert S. "The Old-New Anti-Semitism" from *The National Interest Online*, Washington, DC: The Nixon Centre, 6/22/2003
- Young-Eisendrath, P. & Dawson, T. ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008
- Columbia Encyclopedia Online*. Sixth Edition, 2008. 19 May 2008
<<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-Hitler-A.html>>
- Encyclopedia of Myths::Sa-Sp Online* <<http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Sa->

Sp/Semitic-Mythology.html/>

Merriam-Webster Online Search.

The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volume (1907–21). Cavalier and Puritan.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica. London: Helen Hemingway Benton Publisher, 1973-1974

The Oxford English Dictionary. London: Oxford University Press, 1933

The Quest Study Bible. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984. 23 Jun 2008

<<http://www.angelfire.com/tn/plath/chrono.html>>

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Appendix

Recantation-----1956

'Tea leaves I've given up,
And that crooked line
On the queen's palm
Is no more my concern.
On my black pilgrimage
This moon-pocked crystal ball
Will break before it help;
Rather than croak out
What's to come,
My darling ravens are flown.

'Forswear those freezing tricks of sight
And all else I've taught
Against the flower in the blood:
Not wealth nor wisdom stands
Above the simple vein,
The straight mouth.
Go to your greenhorn youth
Before time ends
And do good
With your white hands."

Natural History -----1957

That lofty monarch, Monarch Mind,
Blue-blooded in coarse contry reigned;
Though he bedded in ermine, gorged on roast,
Pure Philosophy his love engrossed:
While subjects hungered, empty-pursed,
With stars, with angels, he conversed

Till, sick of their ruler's godling airs,
In one body thsoe earthborn commoners
Rose up and put royal nerves to the rack:
King Egg-Head saw his domain crack,
His crown usurped by the low brow
Of the base, barbarous Prince Ow.

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

I Want, I Want-----1958

Open-mouthed, the baby god
Immense, bald, though baby-headed,
Cried out for the mother's dug.
The dry volcanoes cracked and split,

Sand abraded the milkless lip.
Cried then for the father's blood
Who set wasp, wolf and shark to work,
Engineered the gannet's beak.

Dry-eyed, the inveterate patriarch
Raised his men of skin and bone,
Barbs on the crown of gilded wire,
Thorns on the bloody rose-stem.

The Ravaged Face-----1959

Outlandish as a circus, the ravaged face
Parades the marketplace, lurid and stricken
By some unutterable chagrin,
Maudlin from leaky eye to swollen nose.
Two pinlegs stagger underneath the mass.
Grievously purpled, mouth skewered on a groan,
Past keeping to the house, past all discretion ---
Myself, myself! --- obscene, lugubrious.
Better the flat leer of the idiot,
The stone face of the man who dosen't feel,
The velvet dodges of the hypocrite :
Better, better, and more acceptable
To timorous children, to the lady on the street.
O Oedipus. O Christ. You use me ill.

The Hanging Man-----1960

By the roots of my hair some god got hold of me.
I sizzled in his blue volts like a desert prophet.

The nights snapped out of sight like a lizard's eyelid :
A world of bald white days in a shadeless socket.

A vulturous boredom pinned me in this tree.
If he were I, he would do what I did.

Barren Woman-----1961

Empty, I echo to the least footfall,
Museum without statues, grand with pillars, porticoes, rotundas.
In my courtyard a fountain leaps and sinks back into itself,
Nun-hearted and blind to the world. Marble lilies
Exhale their pallor like scent.

I imagine myself with a great public,
Mother of a white Nike and several bald-eyed Apollos.
Insread, the dead injure me attentions, and nothing can happen.
Blank-faced and mum as a nurse

Daddy-----1962

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.

Daddy, I have had to kill you.
You died before I had time--
Marble-heavy, a bag full of God,
Ghastly statue with one gray toe
Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic
Where it pours bean green over blue
In the waters off beautiful Nauset.
I used to pray to recover you.
Ach, du.

In the German tongue, in the Polish town
Scraped flat by the roller
Of wars, wars, wars.
But the name of the town is common.
My Polack friend

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.

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

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.

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--

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

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 to you.
I thought even the bones would do.

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

And a love of the rack and the screw.
And I said I do, I do.
So daddy, I'm finally through.
The black telephone's off at the root,
The voices just can't worm through.

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.

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.

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

Lady Lazarus-----1962

I have done it again.
One year in every ten
I manage it----

A sort of walking miracle, my skin
Bright as a Nazi lampshade,
My right foot

A paperweight,
My face a featureless, fine
Jew linen.

Peel off the napkin
O my enemy.
Do I terrify?----

The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth?
The sour breath
Will vanish in a day.

Soon, soon the flesh
The grave cave ate will be
At home on me

And I a smiling woman.
I am only thirty.
And like the cat I have nine times to die.

This is Number Three.
What a trash
To annihilate each decade.

What a million filaments.
The peanut-crunching crowd
Shoves in to see

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.
The first time it happened I was ten.
It was an accident.

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.

Dying
Is an art, like everything else.
I do it exceptionally well.

I do it so it feels like hell.
I do it so it feels real.
I guess you could say I've a call.

It's easy enough to do it in a cell.
It's easy enough to do it and stay put.
It's the theatrical

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.

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.

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.

Ash, ash ---

You poke and stir.

Flesh, bone, there is nothing there----

A cake of soap,

A wedding ring,

A gold filling.

Herr God, Herr Lucifer

Beware

Beware.

Out of the ash

I rise with my red hair

And I eat men like air.

Created with

 **nitro**^{PDF} professional

download the free trial online at nitropdf.com/professional

The Couriers-----1962

The word of a snail on the plate of a leaf?
It is not mine. Do not accept it.

Acetic acid in a sealed tin?
Do not accept it. It is not genuine.

A ring of gold with the sun in it?
Lies. Lies and a grief.

Frost on a leaf, the immaculate
Cauldron, talking and crackling

All to itself on the top of each
Of nine black Alps.

A disturbance in mirrors,
The sea shattering its grey one ----

Love, love, my season.

Sheep in Fog-----1963

The hills step off into whiteness.
People or stars
Regard me sadly, I disappoint them.

The train leaves a line of breath.
O slow
Horse the colour of rust,

Hooves, dolorous bells -
All morning the
Morning has been blackening,

A flower left out.
My bones hold a stillness, the far
Fields melt my heart.

They threaten
To let me through to a heaven
Starless and fatherless, a dark water.