The Portrayal of Death in Sylvia Plath's Selected Poems

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Abstract
One of the most outstanding poets, novelists and short story writers in American literature is Sylvia Plath (1932-1963). A confessional poet whose texts are genuine in style and subject matter. Death is a dominant theme in the poetry of Sylvia Plath. She had dealt with this topic from various perspectives. Her father's death left her dejected. Besides, her husband's betrayal made her more forlorn and desperate. All of these events in her life caused her mental state disorder and this is clear in the poems I chose to analyze, “Daddy”, “Lady Lazarus”, and “Edge”. This paper examines Plath's depiction of death in her poetry and the illustration of death related to her biography. It also aims at presenting the existence of death in her life and the absence of the fear of death in her poetry as well; which is her observation of death. Moreover, it will examine how Sylvia Plath’s mental state did affect her works and how it is important for the reader to know the background of Sylvia Plath to understand her works. Hence, the paper will start with introducing her style of writing. Then, the paper analyzes the selected poems accordingly. For this purpose, the paper will give a deep dive into the selected poems of the poet's posthumously poem collection book “Ariel”, and conclude the overall picture of each poem for better understanding the reasons behind the poet’s behaviors. Finally, the paper concludes the findings of the study.

1 Introduction
Death has always been a recurring theme in most of the texts in world literature. Some writers have been obsessed with this traditional theme. Literature mirrors life, thus writers, poets in particular, have regularly attempted to reflect the miseries of their lives which have caused them to long for death. Scholars are primarily concerned with the concept of death with those writers who have committed suicide. Mainly because not only they have described death, but also have experienced it. There are poets who describe death as something tranquil and natural, such as Emily Dickenson. On the other hand, there are also poets who write about the horrors of war and death, Wilfred Owen and other war poets would be great examples of this kind. Nevertheless, Sylvia Plath's concept of death is different from them and other poets dealing with the theme of death, she does not follow the style of others in the descriptions, and she has created her own style. Sylvia Plath is among those who played a vital role to present her understanding of death distinctively. Due to her dull life, death has been her companion throughout her life. She
was only eight years old when her father died in (1940). Petrified and scared, she was more interested in death than life. Later on, she got married to Ted Hughes, a prosperous English poet whose infidelity led her life to ultimate despair. Therefore, it is reasonable that Plath was so fond of the theme and concept of death. A simple observation of her works indicates her depressed life (1).

1-1 Confessional Poetry
Confessional poetry is a style of writing which flourished in America in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The poet's personal anguish is the main topic of the confessional writers. Through this style, the poets express and confess the stresses of their private lives in terms of psychological conflicts. Hence, it is therapeutic as it represents and cleanses the writer's pain. The forerunners of confessional poetry include some prominent writers such as Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Theodore Roethke etc. Confessional poetry tries to; "put the speaker himself at the center of the poem in such a way as to make his psychological vulnerability and shame an embodiment of his civilization" (2).

Moreover, confession has a religious connotation as in Christianity the sinners confess their sins in front of the church Father to unburden their pain so that they can rest and feel better about the sin that they have committed. Irving Howe, a literary critic, provides a fine definition of confessional poetry: "a confessional poem would seem to be one in which the writer speaks to the reader, telling him, without mediating presence of imagined event or persona, something about his life" (3). Obviously Plath is a confessional poet and her poetry expresses her agonis because the subject matters of her poems are taken from her own life. Readers can feel the fact that she was leading a terrible life. She has used poetry as a means of psychological therapy, more like shouting and cleansing, her downheartedness can be effortlessly identified.

1-2 Sylvia Plath as a Poet
Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) is a famous American poet, novelist and short story writer. She is well-known for her vivid writings about her life and psychological problems. A scrutinized reading of her poetry reveals a notion that death is something that she is professional at, she does not experiment death but rather an expert in that field. It becomes clear that Plath sees death as "art", and it is not something extraordinary but as normal as other arts "like everything else". She also states that she is very good at this art "I do it exceptionally well". Any form of art should spring from the heart and the soul of the creator so that it can be genuine. No fake arts are amiable. Thus, Plath is authentic with her art, she is doing it "exceptionally well", and "it feels like real". No wonder someone with such a talent of the art of death will undeniably have a "call" which refers to dying. Sylvia Plath was thirty one years old when she put her head into the oven and committed suicide (4).

Interestingly, she was not even writing in codes to hide her previous suicide attempts, but she was openly stating that she has “done it again,” that’s is quoting her own words to refer committing suicide already and predictably she will try again. Indeed she did and succeeded in putting an end to her life. Perhaps she was calling the world to help, at least to feel her. For instance, four years before her suicide, she starts the entry with very personal and melancholic expressions. It is worth mentioning that she tried to commit suicide when she was only twenty. When she was a college junior she took sleeping pills, but survived. Nothing would lead a young lady to commit suicide unless her life must have been too melancholic. It is important to say that there is only one medical document that she tried to commit suicide at the age of twenty, but she herself mentions that it was more than once:
“Very depressed today. Unable to write a thing. Menacing Gods. I feel outcast on a cold star, unable to feel anything but an awful helpless numbness” (5).

Plath was diagnosed with clinical depression. She used poetry to explore her own state of mind in the most intimate terms, and her breathtaking perspectives on emotions, nature and art continued to fascinate many throughout the history of poetry. Bipolar disorder, also known as Manic Depression, is a kind of mental disorder in which the patient goes through periods of depression and abnormally elevated moods. It is a kind of mood shifting, whereas the patient shifts from being extremely happy to be extremely sad. Bipolar disorder usually occurs in people aged 18 to 25 (which explains Sylvia’s first attempt to suicide), it can also start at the end of puberty during pregnancy or during midlife (explains why she casted confessional poetry in her midlife). Bipolar disorder allows you to experience emotions more than normal people, more pain, more anger, more love, more passion, more sorrow, and more feelings all in a higher level (6)

According to a psychiatric, Robert Marrone, the author of Death, Mourning and Caring, explains the major signs that exist in a person who will end up with committing suicide:

“Suicidal ideation, triggering events, and warning signs form an interrelated triad that is present in many suicides. Suicidal ideas, threats, and attempts often precede a suicide. The most commonly cited warnings of potential suicide include (a) extreme changes in behavior, (b) a previous suicide attempt, (c) a suicidal threat or statement, and (d) signs of depression, hopelessness, and a sense of a meaningless life (7). This gives clues of why Plath had threatening signs about her committing suicide. Regarding her father’s death, in a letter, her mother describes Sylvia Plath's breakdown, "[W]hen he died I had to tell the children in the morning that her (Sylvia's) father had died and he wasn't suffering anymore. Sylvia just slipped underneath the covers of her bed, and said “I’ll never speak to God again” for she had been every night that her father would be well.” She had a great love for her father; she seemed to fabricate her father. She always thought of him as a hero, a masterful who could catch bees and they would not dare to sting him. Hence, her father’s death played a major role in her breakdowns (1).

Another painful reason of stress and depression in her life was her husband's infidelity with his lover, Assia Wevill. Plath was abandoned by Ted Hughes whom the two used to be so in love. His departure increased Plath’s downheartedness. To cope with the intolerable pain, she started taking antidepressants. Eleven days before her death, she composed a poem full of bleakness entitled Contusion. Through the title, readers expect a desolate poem as contusion refers to a bruise on a living body or on a corpse. Here, Sylvia Plath does not depict death as something shocking and unfamiliar, but rather as something silent and lifeless. As mentioned before, perhaps death is the bruise in the life of Plath. She concludes this short poem quickly, probably to reflect that that she is going to end her life soon:

The heart shuts,
The sea slides back

The mirrors are sheeted (Contusion: 10-12)

She has already made it clear that she will die soon “The heart shuts,” so she does not need to mention the details, for example how the heart shuts? Her obvious indications are enough for any reader to understand the meaning of her heart being "shut", the return of the "sea" and the sheeting of the "mirrors".

One can easily recognize her weariness of life and suicidal attempts. It would be true to state she is neither alive nor dead. "[w]hat a trash" is her peak of desperateness to describe her life so despairingly. It seems that it has become her fate to defeat "each decade"
2-1 “Daddy”

“Daddy” is the most famous poem of the Ariel volume, as one of the most controversial modern poems. The 16 Stanza poem was written on October 12th 1962, a month after being separated from Ted Hughes, her husband. The poem shows the complex attitude the poet has toward an imaginative personality that has been presented in two forms, one as her father then as her husband. The literary composition perpetually shifts from child-like fury to dead-serious venomous emotion. Throughout the poem, she uses the childish Daddy rather than “Father”. The outburst juvenile emotions are the bitter of her feelings of abandonment as a baby.

Keiko Kimura stated in his essay that the death of Plath’s father affected the process of compensation, and must have led her to feel that she did not only lose her beloved father but some parts of her own self as well. She tried to overcome her grief, and to restore the lost love and face her inner problems through poetry (9).

The same way William Yeats describes the connection between poetry and inner conflicts, “[W]e make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry” (10).

Even after Otto Plath’s death, she confirmed that she never mourned her father, “I thought it odd that in all the time my father had been buried in this graveyard, none of us had ever visited him this might show why she never came in terms with his death, and led her to commit suicide, after four month of writing “Daddy” (11).

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: 1-5)

The poet conveys how trapped she is with the belief of saving father in the first person point of view, through comparing herself to a “foot” living in a “black shoe” the shoe in this being her father, the same shoe that traps the foot can also protect it “for thirty years, poor and white.” She is not even able to have a child-like freedom to “breath or Achoo.”

Sylvia’s father, Otto Plath, died when she was eight years old (1). However, she was “ten when they buried you (her father)”(Daddy 57) this burring was inside Sylvia’s imagination, as it might have been after her first suicidal experience, which she declares in “Lady Lazarus” “The first time it happened I was ten. / It was an accident” (24-25). It appears that it took Sylvia two years to let her feelings, which have been referred to as “they” in the poem, bury her father. However, in “Daddy” she confesses "At twenty I tried to die / And get back, back, back to you" (58-59), to an extend that she “thought even the bones would do” (60) as if she hoped to be buried close to him, but she survives death and was reborn fragiley since “they stuck” her “together with glue.”

Even after recovering, Sylvia could not fill the emptiness her father left in her heart. It is ironic from the speaker to use a childish name as “Daddy” to address her devil, Nazi, and vampire-like father she had. The odd thing is the title that does not fit her evil image of the speaker’s father. Apparently, the title “Daddy” fits with the singsong rhyme and other childish aspects of this poem like the word “gobbledygoo” in line 42. But this playfulness, childlike choice of describing and word choice, paired with the violence that she had and described, shows us the speaker’s internal struggle between loving and hating her deceased father. Therefore, despite the hatred for her childish image of “Daddy”, she was desperate for his love, almost like a little child. It seems that she was willing to have that image on whatever cost, and she gets it – even in the form
of brutality – she wanted to put an end to the idea of being stuck to one person by making a model of her father.

The substitute Plath makes to replace her father is her husband, Ted Hughes, whom she met after her first suicide attempt. The man she imagines is not black for she does not say a “black man” instead of her father, but she does say he is "A man in black". Moreover, she does not say he is Nazi or German like her father, but says he is like Hitler, symbolically as “Meinkampf” means “my struggle” in German and it is the title of a book written by Hitler. In line 66, the substituted man gets even worse than being merely described as mentioned. She describes their love to be “of the rack and the screw.” Both of the rack and the screw are dreadful tools of torturing. However, our heroine whom ‘adores a Fascist’ marries him, confirming her wedding vows, “I do, I do.” By marrying the man she modeled after her father, she fulfills the Electra complex.

After Hughes’ betrayal, Sylvia realizes that she finally has to get to the bottom line of her delusions “So daddy, I’m finally through.” She no longer can feel her connection to her Daddy “The black telephone's off at the root, / The voices just can't worm through” (Daddy: 69-70)

It is as if they have been in contact over a phone, which is now “off at the root.” Then she states, that killing Daddy is executing both, her father, and her husband who renewed the ideals of Daddy, in her thoughts.

In the ritualistic anger and violence of the last stanza, when the villagers join the heroine in ‘dancing and stamping’ on the ‘man in black’, violence to her seems to be an essential component of her love, and probably her life, and she accepts this in order to get over the whole image of the old and the new Daddy. Jones and Cox go so far as to claim that because this poem is placed historically it: “…is committed to the view that this ethos of love and brutality is the dominant historical ethos of the last thirty years” (12).

Our heroine of “Daddy” who ‘tried to die / And get back, back, back to you’ (Daddy: 58-59), exorcised her self-created devil of imagination. Being deprived from the only man she thought she could ever love broke her; therefore, in “Daddy” Plath kills her father in her mind. She clears her mind of him and uses the metaphor of stakes and vampires to push him away from herself for the last time. Moreover, she does not only kill him or remove him from her mind but she also succeeds in killing the image of her husband whom she was married to, for seven years.

What seemed to be death-figures to Plath in many of her poems, figures that there was a threat to her and were about to swallow her up, she believed that she could reset herself and live by fixing and stopping her enemy in a poetic image. Plath transforms death by observing the details in which it is possible to control the scene of target issue and transform it through the power of language. She shows her way in blending and fuses different visual images in a meaningful way. Therefore, she moves her meaning and what she sees to a completely new level and creating order out of chaos (13).

As a confessional poet, Sylvia spouts her worries to overcome her problems, in the form of a poem. Although “Daddy” is not about her actual father, since anyone who knew her could eventually tell how much she adored him, the need of relying on someone, or rather a God, found itself being based on her father, then her husband. The father figure, that remained to haunt her, is named Daddy to show the childish ideals that remained after his death. The poem seeks to achieve freedom for Sylvia through a figurative murder of her father, and the image of her father that she manifested in her husband.
2-2 “Lady Lazarus”

Sylvia Plath faced the root of her problems in “Daddy” or rather the origin of her disease. Then in “Lady Lazarus”, by comparing herself to Lazarus, she moves her attention more completely to her own self. She moves with a flamboyant public gesture ‘Gentleman, ladies' (Lady Lazarus: Stanza 10 – Line 30) to deal with her actual personal experiences – her suicide attempts. However, “Lady Lazarus” remains very personal, Sylvia’s friend and critic Alvarez pins it with a biographical notes how the deaths of “Lady Lazarus” correspond to her own crises “the first just after her father died, the second when she had a nervous breakdown, the third perhaps a presentiment of the death that was shortly to come” (14). Ted Hughes, in a note to her later poems, said “There is a strange muse, bald, white and wild in her 'hood of bone', floating over a landscape like that of the primitive painters, a burning luminous vision of a Paradise. A Paradise which is at the same time eerily frightening, an unalterably spot-lit vision of death” (2, p. 85.)

“Lady Lazarus” is a poem dated October 1962, not long before Sylvia’s death, it consists of 28 stanzas, each of three lines, this style is also known as tercets – a mixture of enjambment and end-stop lines – to give the sense of beating and spouting the words out hardly by the poet. The poem establishes a clear envisioning of "Recurring Suicidal Thoughts or Fantasies" though the use a religious figure – Lazarus, whom, as told in Bible, was resurrected after four days of being dead by Jesus himself – to portray resurrection as an extended metaphor, and illustrates the flippant handling of her own suicidal tendencies. In Steven Axelrod’s essay, “Plath’s and Lowell’s Last Words,” he points to a style of poetry as a way to interpret Plath’s metaphoric representation of the mutated biblical figure “The Confessional poet assumes that psychological and historical experience, the individual and the general, are related, and even at some deep level synonymous.” However, “Lady Lazarus” is, unlike Lazarus, in control of her fate of choosing death over life to be resurrected afterward. She expresses her control through the powerful language, that shows the freedom she possess’ in deciding her fate (3, p.5-14).

“Lady Lazarus”, who is choosing the same fate as before, is in a twist situation of being “a Nazi lampshade” made of the skin of the Jews. Her face is “a featureless, / fine Jew linen” that the Nazis confiscated when they threw the Jews out of their homes. Therefore, since it was previously stated that her Daddy is “Nazi”, and Sylvia herself is Jewish, we can conclude that her “enemy”, that is her father, tortured her and “peel off the napkin” of Sylvia. Such image, shows how she was tortured to finally be “terrify” to her enemies, and be without the surface of lies she had, as to be ready for being recalled again. The kind of ‘trash’ that Sylvia has ‘to annihilate each decade' is not only the personal handicap of a sensitive human being and a feminine, but also the trash of her former generations. Ted Hughes notes in Newman's symposium “The chemical poisoning of nature, the pileup of atomic waste, were horrors that persecuted her like an illness – as her latest poems record. Auschwitz and the rest were merely open wounds, in her idea of the great civilized crime of intelligence that like the half-imbecile, omnipotent, spoiled brat Nero has turned on its mother” (14, p. 190).

Loneliness appears to be a good reason to approach death for as “No matter how enthusiastic you are, nothing is real, past or future, when you are alone in your room”, then she continues “I look down into the warm, earthy world... and feel apart, enclosed in a wall of glass” (15).

Sylvia uses the symbol of a cat to refer to herself, assuming that she also has “nine-times to die.” Although her first “was an accident” when she “was ten,” her second time was
intentional. However, even though she “meant / to last it out and not come back at all” she survived! Now she thinks she will be resurrected until she reaches her ninth. She no longer fears death, but sees it as an art to be mastered. “Lady Lazarus” is actually performing the suicide act in a manner that ' feels like hell, ' it is a deliberate choice of pain, and at the same time, it is something that can remove the hurt of daily activity: "I rocked shut / As a seashell" (Lady Lazarus: 38-39). An art that would theatrically bring its master back “To the same place, the same face, the same brute” (Lady Lazarus: 52) and such miracle is worthy to “knock me out” (Lady Lazarus: 55) amaze her.

The use of the German title for the doctor “So, so herr Doktor” (Lady Lazarus: 65) who treated her, is symbolic to pin point that they are the same as the doctors in the Holocaust, instead of treating patients all what they did was torturing. Devalued as human to others, the way they observe her is like a pretty piece of trinket made for staring and preserving. Plath puts across a passive sense of voyeurism. She ‘shrieks’ every time she is revived from the dead with the ECT machine.

The “opus,” the “valuable” and the “pure gold baby”, that was created by “Herr Doktor” and her Daddy “Herr enemy”, has burnt to ashes with nothing left but “A wedding ring”, “A gold filling” and the future “cake of soup” she would be turned up to by the Nazi (Daddy) – the Nazis used to turn the remains into soap.

At the end of the poem, Plath warns God and Lucifer about her in undisputed art that would bring her back to life stronger than before. Susan Bassnett quotes Sylvia’s personal comment on “Out of the ash / I rise with my red hair / And I eat men like air” (Lady Lazarus: 82-84) and says “The speaker is a woman who has the great and terrible gift of being reborn. The only trouble is she has to die first. She is the phoenix, the libertarian spirit, what you will. She is also just a good, plain, very resourceful woman.” As she is revived like a phoenix, that the Nazi cannot torture her, since she “eat men like air” (14, p. 70).

Plath would launch herself at the heart of death in order to be recalled to life in a different form of existence. Although the person is presented as suffering in a different and unique sense, Plath, the artist, produces a form in which this suffering is controlled and given meaning. Through this, she also gives meaning to death itself and preserve it as an art (7, p. 188).

Plath’s first intentional suicide attempt, which was through an overdose of sleeping pills, was stopped and she was saved miraculously. Moreover, she witnessed how her broken life came back together after the loss of everything. She might also have thought about attempting suicide once more, thinking her life would come back together just as it did after her first attempt. She may have thought about it as a punishment for her husband’s actions and a way to put her life back on the track. This stinking unwanted resurrection is the background to Sylvia’s personal utterance on self-destruction. A closer observation of her final moments, it can be noticed her cries for help trough the clues she left behind, as she “Had everything worked out as it should – had the gas not drugged the man downstairs, preventing him from opening the front door to the au pair girl – there is little doubt she would have been saved. I think she wanted to be; why else leave her doctor’s telephone number?” None of us will ever be able to know the truth behind her true intentions. However, her actions within the context should be dealt with alongside of her life in order to see the bigger picture, which is not only specifying her life, but her works and what she said in her writing as well (16).

2-3 “Edge”
“Edge” is Sylvia Plath’s last poem which consists of ten couplets. It is written merely six days before committing suicide. As many of her
poems, death representations is noticeable in “Edge”. The wordings of the poem are very simple and short. The lack of poetic sophistications might indicate the poet’s finality, as it seems that she has reached the point of not being able to further express herself. The direct exposure of the poem can be interpreted as her exhaustion in life. The very title and its chronology elucidate the in-between condition of Plath, life and death. There seems to be a very thin line between the two. It is not only the “Edge” of her poetry, but her life as well. Nevertheless, the poem presents less anger and negativity. It rather shows her reality as it is. The closer she is to death, the calmer she reacts as Robert Marrone notices the "sudden change from extreme depression to being at ‘peace’" (Marrone, p.188).

The poem is written in the third point of view as if she has stepped out of herself and made her final statements on her life, the poem works as an offering statement to detach judgments to the dead woman. The poem begins with a description of a "perfected" (Edge: 1) woman. A woman who is perfected merely through death. As a confessional poem, undoubtedly the woman characterizes Plath's own voice. The perfected woman is immediately associated with "her dead." The beginning of the poem marks the end of her life. “Edge” is a colorless poem, one with the least poetic fashioning. The chosen words are mostly blank and lifeless. Since it is her last poem, it represents her hollow and dull world

The end of a depressed woman's journey is weary and exhausting. When one has no more places to go then, "Feet seem to be saying:/We have come so far, it is over" (Edge: 7-8) is very much expected. Her tired feet represent her worn-out journey in life which has come to an end. She has tried all to be done to rescue her life, yet none has worked, that is why she feels accomplished, "Body wears the smile of accomplishment." Her being "perfected" is attached to her death, as her smile and the perfection come after her death. Moreover, she smiles, as she is happy with her life being over and sees it as a form of happiness.

“Edge”, unlike “Daddy” nor “Lady Lazarus”, is considered as a denial of a new life, ultimately stating her vulnerability and her choice of demise. She gives up fighting death, being “Lady Lazarus” or the phoenix that rises from the ashes. “Edge” is a poem where Sylvia reclaims her offspring, which have been described as “Cold fold of ego” in her earlier poem “The Night Dances”. Death, as the last hope, as a one-sided journey, and at the same time, as the theme of sterility, is finally being the artist that draws the bottom line of Sylvia’s life.

One ironical textual interpretation of the poem is infanticide. Sylvia Plath never mentions her children as a part of her suicidal attempts; however, the idea of infanticide is conspicuous in “Edge”. “Each dead child coiled, a white serpent” (Edge9-10) describing her children as “white serpent,” shows that her children prevented her from getting “perfected”. As a matter of fact, the Bible depicts the devil as a snake that lures people from being perfected and dig them into live (17). Therefore, her children can represent the pure omission beings, who kept her busy from death and now "She has folded/ Them back into her body as petals"(Edge 12-13). The thought of killing her children along with herself is "terrifying" (18). That is the textual evidence which might entice infanticide metaphorically referring to the Greek tragedy of Medea. As known, it refers to the Greek myth in which Medea killed her two children as a revenge on her husband’s infidelity (19). It is clear that Sylvia considers her death to bring despair to her husband and children’s life, a despair that would push them to prefer death to life. She not only accepts death as a savior, but also as an avenger.
To end this cluster of motifs, the moon that encompasses the woman’s being as “she” was the witness of the dead woman’s life, indifferent despot, but nonetheless a pervading presence: "The moon has nothing to be sad about/ Staring from her hood of bone/ She is used to this sort of thing/ Her blacks crackle and drag."

(Edge 17-20). The “Hood and bone” are the materials the moon uses to hide her “blacks,” the moons suffering is what left her quietly to understand the smile of the dead woman.

Obviously, Plath has already tried to commit suicide several times and nature has always existed in all the attempts, probably the sun, the sea, a tree or the moon. Here, the moon is not surprised with her life’s being over as "she is used to this sort of thing." The repetition of the suicidal attempts is the main reason why the moon is unmoved by the dead body of the woman. Moreover, the poem does not sound like being completed, however, her despair left even the moon speechless. The moon knew that death is not as tragic as the woman’s life. Sylvia’s only method to be “perfected” is to die a vengeful death, with a smile of a tortured soul.

Death, for Sylvia is not merely for self-destructing means, but it also is a vain liberation avenue for a desperate person, which could not be found anywhere but within the arms of death. The bare Plath, who lost her title as a daughter, as lover, as a respectful woman in society, and the one whose “pitcher of milk, now empty” can no longer see the use of being a mother as well, therefore, she cannot see the point of living a life without a title. Plath’s nihilistic state finally welcomes death by perfuming the final act as ‘Sylvia the poet’.

**Conclusion**

After scrutinizing "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus", and "Edge", one understands that death is an evident subject matter in her poetry and life. Although each of the poems portrays different aspects of death, they all still complement each other in terms of the portrayal of death in various perspectives. Death was not the self-destructive bottom line for Sylvia, but rather a zero point where the negative meets the positive. The confessional means of her poetry, work as a spout of the personal experience of the poet, and it shows how she faces her agonies. Plath has made use of the techniques used in confessional poetry to convey her message of a tragic feeling of being eager to escape from life. In the end, Sylvia remains a mystery, as we would never know whether her illness inspired her work, or was it her work that exacerbated her illness. However, although Plath’s poetry can indeed be shocking, sorrowful, full of rage and trauma, she seized her readers as witnesses, not only for the truth of her psychological issues, or how fate was unfair to her, but also to the truth of her marvelous ability to express what usually, for us, remains inexpressible.

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