



Sylvia and Suicide

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Abstract: This paper discusses the different suicide attempts of Plath and the reasons behind these attempts. Within the context of psychoanalytical approaches to suicide and death, the aim of this study is to trace the mutual poetical reflections of the mechanisms of the unconscious and the human psyche that turn the poetry of Plath into 'art of dying'.

Key words: Death, Suicide, insomnia, love, longing

Introduction:

Sylvia Plath, a phenomenal feminist, a poet who in each of her work described her longing for love. In every aspect of her life she felt hurt and deceived. Plath was very passionate for every relationship. She loved very passionately whatever was dear to her. The first love of her life being her father whom she loved so much that she felt her life ended after his death. Sylvia started writing from her early childhood and grew up close to her father. She became very fond of father but his untimely death left her heartbroken. After the death of her father, Sylvia attempted suicide for the first time. It was then, when she accepted that death only could relieve her from the pain of separation from her father. This tragic incident in her life was discussed by Sylvia Plath in one of her work, where she has said that it felt to her as if something had been pierced out of her own body. Her first attempt to suicide had failed in which she tried to slash her legs just to check whether she was courageous enough to kill herself. Her love for her father is evident from most of her writings.

Sylvia was very passionate about writing and was in love with a welsh poet Dylan Thomas, whom she adored so much that when once an editor arranged a meeting with him, she waited for two days outside the hotel where Dylan was staying just to meet him. All the infatuation towards him was due to his poetry as Plath also loved writing.

Sylvia was in a very bad mental state and was suffering from depression which led to her back to back suicide attempts. She spent six months in an institute for mental health where she received shock therapies as well. However the effect of the tragedies of her life on her mental was such that it provided very less help to Sylvia to recover from her mental illness. She continuously put her efforts in bringing herself to an end. Although she had

found the love of her life in Ted Hughes but to her utter disappointment, Ted also cheated on her, which worsened Sylvia's already vulnerable mental health. The longing for love continued in Sylvia's life even after her marriage and she blamed Ted for abusing her too.

Sylvia developed a sense of love for death which persuaded her for the suicide attempts. Plath had made up her mind that she is going to meet her father after her death. She was thus trying every way to end her life just to meet her father. Sylvia from her life experiences could only end up with the feeling, that no man could love her with all his loyalty like her father did. After the separation from Ted Hughes, Plath suffered severe depression which got worsened day by day. She was unable to get rid of suicidal thoughts and cope up with the daily life. Plath had discussed her depression and suicidal attempts with many of her friends. In the final stage of her depression, she was suffering from insomnia and was on pills. Multiple modalities of treating her depression were tried, but she failed to recover rather succeeded in her last suicidal attempt leading to an end of her era.

Conclusion: Suicide is certainly an extreme act of the limits, breaking the boundaries and disturbing the existence. Plath successfully carried away this act in order to end the sufferings of her life as she wrote 'Dying is an art' and she being the artist played this act equally well.

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