Images in *Daddy*

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Abstract

Sylvia Plath’s *Daddy* is not about a real specific event of life as an example of the subconscious experiencing its very own suffering and attempting to conquer what it feels influenced by. The speaker is an image-savvy artist. Her sense of being exploited and exploiter is reminded through the images.

Keywords: Images, foot, daughter, Daddy.

In *Daddy*, the speaker starts by imagining herself, for example, as a captive who lives in her father’s black shoe like a foot. She positions her dad into her own place, then quickly searches for his foot, his source. She thus switches from booted to booter as her dad reverses the track. Actually, the narrator gets stuck to her own tactics. Through turning them into images, she can control her terrors. The daughter labels that she is trapped when she identifies herself as a foot. As she utters, “Daddy, I have had to kill you”, it seems that she understands the importance of rituals. Her plain, incantatory monologue is the ideal medium for the disordered mind to express itself.

Plath called these poems “light verse” while conversing to A. Alvarez. Despite its nonsense rhymes and rhythms, its images that flip quickly, *Daddy* doesn’t seem to easily fall into that category. It is neither playful nor decorous. On the other hand, it is neither ponderous nor solemn despite its theme. This provides above all no insight into the speaker, no mitigating facts and no excuse. The classification of Plath is perhaps only evident if we find her speaker to be a poet’s parodic edition. The speaker manipulates her fear in the language of singsongs and thus expresses herself in “light verse”.

Plath depicts characters whose appearances on stage are subversions of the artistic act. They’re stuck in their minds. In reality, their energies work toward self-revelation to erect a barricade. The obsession of Plath with the parodic image of an inventive artist derives from a profound insight into the mind’s machinations. Such verses are totally based on her personal observations; they are not from the heart uniformed screams. Instead, by creating characters that could not manage theirs, she wanted to deal with her emotions. Those poems are wonderfully managed, like the speakers in them; but the poet behind the poem uses her immense technical control to manipulate the tone, rhyme, rhythm, and pace of the language of the speakers in order to reveal truths about the speakers that their obsessive assertions deny.
Daddy is the most popular poem of Sylvia Path. It has been compared to Pablo Picasso graphic painting Guernca. The time is imaginative. The shadow of the past looms large on the present and fore closes the future. It is the matter that organizes the manner/technique. The “schizophrenia” in the attitude of the speaker towards her follower enables the poet to organize the poem to separate phonic scales i.e. a positive and a negative.

The poem’s opening line: “You do not do, you do not do” invokes those social injunctions against which the behaviour of persons is measured at the individual and social level. The daughter is an amnesia-stricken speaker. The daughter speaker reduces the poem to an aft repeated story of parental seduction. She tells her story of living under inhibitions i.e. the Mosaic Law- father’s law as a foot for 30 years.

As she was the object of ridicule for 30 years, and will no longer emulate the old woman who lived in the shoe of someone. Then she thinks of the past days when she used to pray for her father whose one leg had to be amputated to test gangrene spread in his body during his last illness. She was not in a position to have her injustice articulated. She treats herself as a Jew when she was chuffed off like a Jew. She was afraid of him and because of oppression and suppression every woman used to adore a Fascist. At this stage the poem does not remain an autobiographical poem rather it offers social criticism how during the day of fascism there was lot of suppression. No one can speak. The speaker has her father’s image with a cleft in his chin that looked like devil.

She then recalls the black man who bit her pretty red face. She became a model like him. At this stage, the poem tends to be a struggle for autonomy and independence by the daughter speaker. The black telephone is left off the hook and the voices just cannot worm through.

It is assumed that the father and a substitute have drunk her blood. The false security illusion has gone out. The girl has once again drawn to a spy card in marrying a father figure because of choice. If she has to kill one, then it’s imperative that the girl kill two as the dead father is present only in her husband. In the concluding stanza, the daughter speaker reflex: “There’s a stake in your fat black heart”.

The villagers didn’t like him. They drowned him. They were never afraid by him. The father is disliked person not only by the daughter speaker but by the villagers because he was a vampire who fed on others and has reduced them to the living dead. So, she is at the end of her association with her father’s overpowering figure. In this way, the poem does not remain autobiographical but it gives life’s criticism as well as the liaison amid daughter and father, and the relationship of love and hate which she has learnt from her experience of life.

Works cited

