

How does Plath incorporate the strong feeling of motherhood and naturalistic behavior of the unborn being in herself: A selective study on You're and Stillborn, Metaphors, Morning Song.

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Abstract:

The aim of this present paper is to give a detailed analysis of the psychological indication of a human mind before being a mother after pregnancy. The name Sylvia Plath, an American confessional poet, itself is the matter of great psycho as it has been discussed a lot since the past few decades. With this these poems foreshadowing the cult of the deep psychology of a girl before having a sense of motherhood completely, Plath exaggerates the notion of the strong sense of motherhood as well as her own feeling over the unborn being growing up gradually in herself. A deep psychology and strong sense of motherhood completely grasps over her brain made her able to pen the theme of her strong feeling over the unborn. And this kind of physical as well as psychological bonding led her to project an another world for having been isolated from this narrow and undependable world around her. Her highly but practical world of imagination taken from her personal life derives a great deal of force of her mind.

Keynotes: Psychological indication, fertility, undependable world, psychological bonding, inner-self, maturity.

Introduction:

Sylvia Plath was born on October 27, 1932 in Boston. The situation in which she finds herself has a cultural as well as personal decoration. Academically she was very brilliant and did well at

Cambridge during her B.A. and in February 1956 met Ted Hughes at a Cambridge party and finally decided to get married to him. Eventually after a certain period of time she gave birth two children- Frieda and Nicholas. Being a good mother was immensely important to Plath that may have indicated her poetic creed of imagination. Plath certainly thought that having a child was the true embodiment of motherhood. Adrienne Rich whose first collection of works was published in the dignified and prestigious Yale Series of Younger Poets in 1951 and was deeply aware by Plath, has pointed out regarding the inconsistent states of being a woman and a writer in the world of male poets of their generation:

There was nothing overt in the environment to warm me; these were the fifties and in reaction to the earlier wave of feminism, middle- class women were making careers of domestic perfection.....the family was in its glory.

Documentary evidences that Plath was far from reticent in her attitude towards marriage and children. From her early womanhood she appears to have taken a true interest in children and child-rearing. Plath, according to her mother seemed to look forward to motherhood that benefited rather than retarded Plath's poetry said Robin Peel. Peel designates that Plath's final month of pregnancy provided a burst of mental energy that incorporated to vivify the theme of womanhood.

Plath's letters and journals highlight her expectation to have the "highest perfection" that made her feel that there is no difference in between literary creation and biological creation at all. In 1957 she declared that " I will write until I begin to speak my deep self, and then have children and speak still deeper. The life of the creative mind first, and then the creative body."

The connection between producing poetry and giving birth is clearer than in Stillborn:

O I cannot understand what happened to them!
They are poorer in shape and number and every part.
They sit so nicely in the pickling fluid!
They smile and smile and smile and smile at me.
And still the lungs won't fill and the heart won't start. (line 6-10)

And without being sentimental she confidently presents babies as blessing as her writing and sterility as a curse. Sandra Gilbert suggests that while one might think of a child as a stereotyped way something will be occurred differently in one's mind:

In fact, for Plath the baby is an embodiment of her creative inspiration and image of freedom.

To Plath the inability to carry children seemed to be an ultimate failure of a woman and that's why she reduced the De Chirico's hollow womb figure to a blind mannequin gradually. Plath's own brush and anguish with barrenness didn't last too much long. Shortly after the skillful diagnosis of a doctor's temporarily infertility she became pregnant with Frieda. Apparently Plath's joy in producing children was evident and the effect on her sense of well being was considerable. After the birth of her first child she wrote: "I think having babies is one of the happiest experiences of my life. I would like to go on and on!" In motherhood Kate Moses argues Plath's core ambition and deep calling. Moses also points out that in her "cow heavy" state Hughes writes, "That was the you, Plath could not suppress the exuberant joy she felt at being a mother and wrote a letter to her mother in joy "I'm going to have all my babies at home; I've loved every moment of this experience!"

Plath's fascination with the workings of the body was evidently nurtured by the scandal in which children were born bearing the consequences of their mothers taking the morning drug while pregnant. Paradoxically Ariel opens with an aubade, Morning Song narrating the close relationship between mother and child as the child wakes at the middle of the night. The poem depicts the parental awe in the presence of the new born: "we stand around as blankly as walls."

Discussion:

In Metaphors the pregnant woman is the loaf, in You're the baby itself is linked to rising bread. There are few poems which surprisingly talk about children from the parents' point of view. The child on swallowing the world develops its own clear voice. In the poem Metaphors Plath compared herself to a riddle in nine syllables implying the long nine months of pregnancy before child birth and also intensifies the pang and suffering of carrying of a baby in her womb. The strong depiction of the figurative use of the melon skillfully corroborates

the two sides of the prototype of a female character- one is of woman and another is of an unborn baby that is resembled with “fine timbers”. Kate Moses concludes that in the poem’s culminating lines Plath’s narrator becomes completely and willingly “effaced” allowing her child full ownership. His stark idealization of “loaf’s big” image symbolizes the true picture of a pregnant woman whose womb is filled up by the unborn baby. Her strong depiction of the close-connection of a mother with that of her unborn child is incorporated by this images like “ponderous house”, “a cow in calf” etc.

I’m a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant , a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils.
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers! (line 1-4)

This process of pregnancy is structured around conceits that steps from one to another bias with a hopeful of referential strains. Organic images like melon, fruit, apples symbolize with that of construction such as “ponderous house”. A detailed imagination of an unborn baby is partially depicted in the mind of a mother. And this concept is idealized in the works of Plath and affects her mind too. She let her mind to substantiate the image of her unborn child’s colour after the delivery and seems to be the right meaning of her perfect explanation of her baby. And in order to give birth a beautiful and healthy child she is practicing herself to have enormous apple everyday symbolizing the true specimen of the developing of one’s health at the time of pregnancy:

I’m a means, a stage, a cow in calf.
I’ve eaten a bag of green apples,
Boarded the train there’s no getting off. (line 7-9)

Plath is intelligent enough to depict the image according to her mental health at the time of her pregnancy while she was writing this poem. Eating a green apple usually symbolizes the sign for maintain good health and this was her main intention of keeping this image with this thematic aspect.

In her next poem written in between January and February 1960 You're Plath depicts the ambivalent, anxious but joyful moment and experiences of pregnancy. Using personal experience she demonstrates the exact position within herself. Plath is discussing this poem with the ideas of an unborn baby's position. By describing the baby with its feet pointing to the stars Plath is imagining the position the position of the fetus within her. Comparing the child to the gilled fish is a way of describing how undeveloped the life form is. By depicting the image of the next line "thumbs down on the dodo's mode" Plath points out the difference between the new life of the child and the dodo bird of both north and south pole inland. Then Plath compares this unborn child to that of the condition and of the situation of an owl staying at the night usually in the veil of dark night. The fetus is also living inside the womb of the mother. The last line depicts the stark description of the entire cycle of pregnancy of ten months for giving birth a child. That's why she depicts the month from July to All Fools's Day; April month for her "little loaf":

Of July to All Fool's Day,

O high-riser, my little loaf. (line 8-9)

In the second half Plath is becoming more conscious and anxious too. She is waiting since last ten month of her pregnancy and symbolizes her waiting like a "mail/ Farther off than Australia." She is expecting to have a child free of all burdens and difficulties and wishes to have face of clean ambiances.

Right, like a well-one sum,

A clean slate, with your own face on. (line 17-18)

Alice Ostriker has argued that the connection of motherhood with effacement of the self is a part of the female biasness that deals on the sense of the missing identity. And Plath's metaphors are glided by the hidden vernacular perceptions too.

Suffering of a woman, crying of a child, child pangs and the feeling of motherhood are the recurrent motifs of the creative faculty of Sylvia Plath. Kathleen Connors writes that Plath feared not the psychological offspring but simply that "children might sap her creative energy." And it is evident by Plath's own writing of a letter to her mother at the time of her

second pregnancy with Nicholas “before Frieda came, I was like this.....” Plath’s thinking herself into another woman’s mind than of using a particular woman and all she stands for from which a woman as well as a victim would be penalized.

This kind of thematic aspect is highlighted in the poem Stillborn. The meaning of the title is of dead at birth or born death depicting the image of a fetus brought into the world dead. The wills, hopes of the mother for her child are gone gradually as if it has been faded by the misfortune and calamity of the unbiasedness of the world. Plath took the role of the mother who did not understand what was going on and desired to have the greatest smile of the child. Plath was able to acutely splash the colours of description and personification, yet wrap the message behind it in a way that challenges the reader that works well:

They are not pigs, they are not even fish,
Though they have a piggy and a fishy air-
It would be better if they were alive, and that’s what they were.
But they are dead, and their mother near dead with distraction,
And they stupidly stare, and do not speak of her. (line 11-15)

Plath’s Morning Song demonstrates the imbalance and loss of identity in the wake of the child’s delivery. She also proclaims that Morning Song designates the reestablishment of self following the birth of the child and sees the child as a mechanism set in motion “like a fat gold watch” (line 1). This “fat” and “gold” symbolize the watch’s permanency. According to Whittson the term “magnifying your arrival” is employed to signify the upcoming resonance of the fetus at the wall of the womb:

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.
In a drafty museum. (line 4-5)

We can here easily assume that Plath’s poetic speaker is not only concerned with her strong sense of motherhood but also gyrates the mechanical process of the mind and body. David Holbrook sums up the view in connection to Morning Song that she idealizes herself with the doctrine of mother earth that both bears and performs too. Kathleen Connors writes that Plath

not only suffers from the psychological point of pregnancy and its related issues but also anxious too for the harassment of being a mother after the end of her pregnancy. She also wishes to listen the cry of the baby at night during her sleep and it would seem to her that she is listening the breaking of the chasm of the deep sea at seashore:

.....I wake to listen:

A far sea moves in my ear. (line 11-12)

Her keen and careful attention towards her child is evident and is ready to do the best for the child at any cost at any time. She shakes off the pleasure of the night with “Victorian nightgown” and surrenders herself for her new born baby to be fed at the midst of the night after night. It’s acknowledged that she has a very strong sense of motherhood that helps her to make up the emotional sensibility within herself. Looking at the “dull stars” through window panes implies her strong sense of resentment of previous status of womanhood. Being a good mother was immensely important to her.

Conclusion:

To understand Plath and her mentality regarding her strong feeling of womanhood, we should have to engulf the relationship of her childhood relation with her parents. She is loved by her father and also by herself and finds a strong sense of resentment and bereavement in dealing with her mother, it’s evident. Indeed her strong feeling towards womanhood is nurtured well after her successful meeting and understanding of the progression of their relationship with Ted Hughes who seems to her the gift of all efficacy. Her feeling is exposed at the birth of Frieda and Nicholas exhaustively which help her to pen her inner sense of motherhood. To be a mother was a strong passion for her in spite of her backward feeling of hampering of creative writing. She did know very well how to balance these two ultimate works of her life. She was the true embodiment of a perfect mother whose main aim was to protect them in every situation which lead her to strengthen her mental make up even after her marital affair

with Ted Hughes. She was able to prove herself to be the perfect guide of their children without both a husband and a father. Her intellectual domain let her to use the most powerful images of sense of womanhood that help us to vivify the notion of her creative impulse. Images employed in her aforesaid poems derive the sense of different activities of both unborn and new born baby. She has idealized that true feeling would be come out spontaneously by the joyous and sportive moments spend with the children just to fix up the sensibility of the human mentality.

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