

MODERN LITERATURE - II

(B.A. English Sem. IV)

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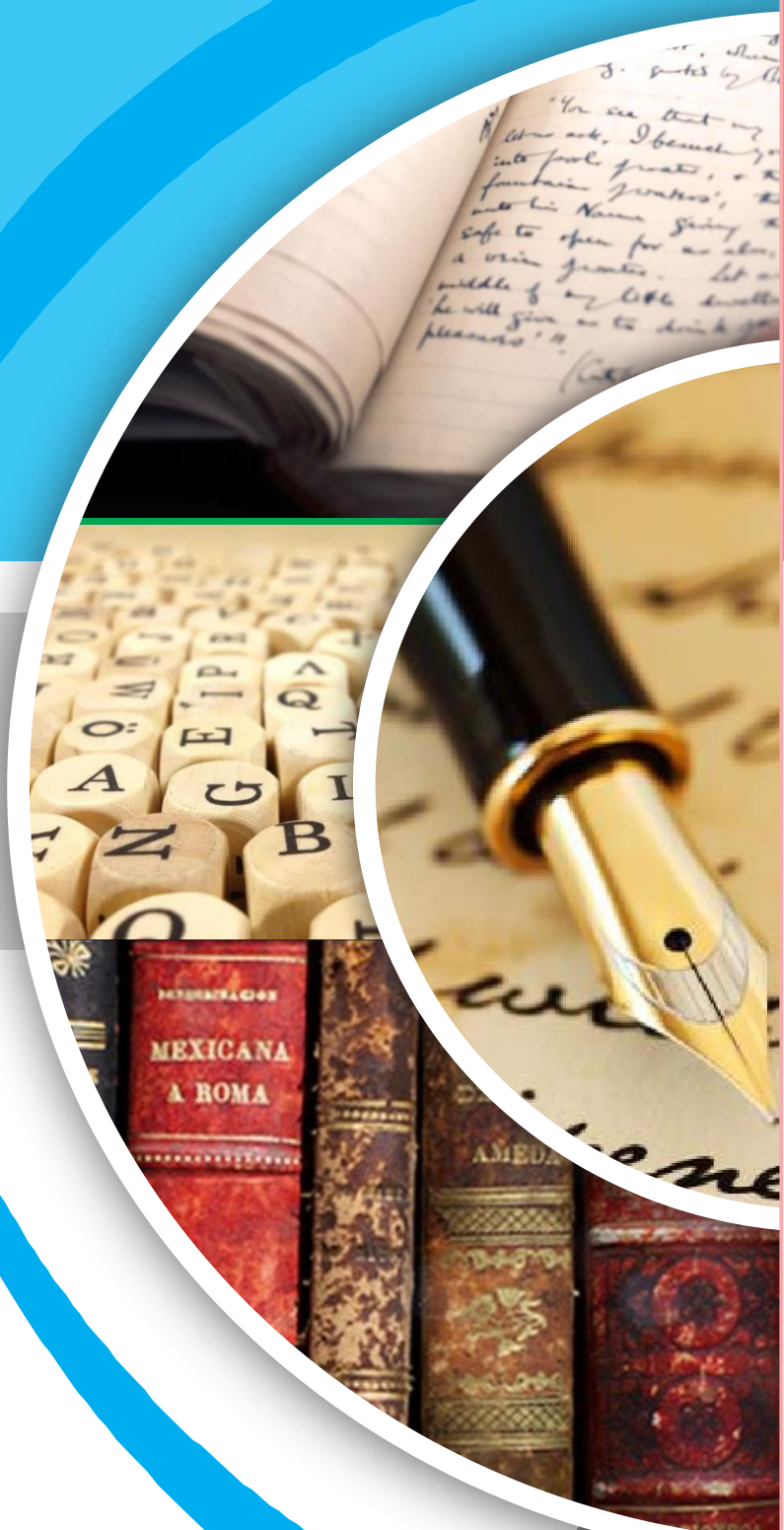


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UNIT-1 The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

T.S. Eliot started writing "Prufrock Among the Women" in 1909 as a graduate student at Harvard. He revised it over the next couple of years, changing the title to "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" along the way. First published in the Chicago magazine Poetry in June 1915, "Prufrock" later headlined Eliot's first book of poetry, Prufrock and Other Observations (1917). The collection established Eliot's reputation as a Modernist poet to be reckoned with, and "Prufrock" detailed many of the techniques and themes

Eliot would expand with "The Waste Land" and later works: vocal fragmentation and allusiveness, a precision of imagery borrowed from the 19th-century French Symbolists, a condemnation of the sterility of the modern world, and a dry, self-conscious wit.

The poem is very much a young man's work, though its speaker, through dramatic monologue, is a presumably middle-aged man. The farcical "J. Alfred Prufrock" name echoes Eliot's style at the time of signing his name "T. Stearns Eliot," and we can assume that Eliot shared at least some of Prufrock's anxieties over women, though he clearly satirizes Prufrock's neuroses (and, thus, his own) at points in the poem. However, this remains a dangerous assumption, as Eliot famously maintained in his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that the "progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of self." "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is a poem written by T.S. Eliot in 1910 and published in 1915. It is considered one of the quintessential works of modernism, a literary movement at the turn of the 20th century that emphasized themes of alienation, isolation, and the diminishing power of the traditional sources of authority. The poem is a dramatic monologue, in which the speaker narrates the anxieties and preoccupations.

Summary

- "If I thought that my reply would be to someone who would ever return to earth, this flame would remain without further movement; but as no one has ever returned alive from this gulf, if what I hear is true, I can answer you with no fear of infamy."

Let's go then, you and I, when the night sky is spread out like a patient anesthetized on an operating table. Let's walk down half-empty streets, which are marked by sleepless, cheap hotels where people only stay one night, and by shabby, run-down restaurants. The streets follow each other like a boring argument with malicious intentions. They make you think of some urgent question... but don't ask what it is. Let's go and make our visit.

Women enter and exit the room while talking about Michelangelo.

Yellow smoke rubs its back against the windows; it rubs its snout all over the windows, licks the corners of the night with its tongue, lingers above the stagnant water in the drains, mingles with soot from the chimneys, slips by the patio, and suddenly jumps—but seeing that it's a cool autumn night, curls around the house and fades away.

Yes, there will be time to look at the yellow smoke that slides along the street, rubbing itself against the windows. There will be time, there will be time to prepare to meet people; to murder and create; for work and answering questions; time for both of us. And there will be time, still, for a hundred indecisions, to change my mind a hundred times, all before afternoon tea.

Women enter and exit the room while talking about Michelangelo.

Yes, there will be time to ask, “Do I dare?” And again, “Do I dare?” Time to turn around and go back downstairs, worried about the bald spot on the back of my head. (People will say: “His hair is really getting thin!”) I'm wearing my morning coat, with my collar buttoned all the way up to my chin, along with an expensive but not overly showy necktie with a simple tie clip. (People will say: “His arms and legs are so skinny!”) Do I have it in me, or am I brave enough, to change the world? A single minute contains enough time to make decisions and changes, although I'll just change my mind again a minute later.

That's because I have done it all already. I've seen it all: I've experienced evenings, mornings, and afternoons, and I could measure out my life by the number of coffee spoons I've used. I've already heard the voices singing in the other room. So what gives me the right?

And I already know how people look at me. I've seen all the looks people give—the way people look at me and dismiss me with some clichéd phrase, fixing me in their gaze like I'm an insect specimen pinned and wriggling against the wall. So how should I start to spit out the memories of my life, like the butt-ends of a cigarette? And what gives me the right?

And I already know what women are like. I've known all kinds of women—those whose arms are covered with bracelets and have pale, hairless skin (although in the lamplight I can see that their arms are covered in light brown hair). Is it the smell of perfume from a dress that's making me lose my train of thought? I'm thinking of arms resting on a table, or wrapped up with a shawl. So what gives me the right? And how should I begin?

Should I say: I've walked in the evening through narrow streets and watched lonely men leaning out of windows and smoking in their undershirts?

I should have been a creature with worn-out claws, scurrying across the floors of the silent ocean.

And as it gets later in the day, the night itself seems to sleep so peacefully! It's as if it's been stroked to sleep by long fingers. It's either asleep or tired—or maybe it's just pretending to be asleep, stretched out on the floor beside us. Should I, after afternoon tea, have enough strength left to disturb this moment and cause drama? I cry, refuse to eat, and pray—and like John the Baptist, I've seen my (now slightly bald) head brought in on a plate. But even so, I'm no holy messenger, and I don't have anything very important to say. There was a time when I could have been great, but that moment has passed for good; I've seen death's butler hold my coat, but he just laughed at me. And to put it bluntly, I was scared.

And would it have been worth it anyway? After all the afternoon tea, as we were sitting among the porcelain teacups and talking idly, would it have been worth it to force a smile and bring up the problem I'm thinking about? To have smooshed and simplified this huge, all-encompassing problem into a manageable bit, like a ball, and then have rolled it towards some question that's so big it's hard to articulate or understand? To say: “I am Lazarus, come from the dead, come back to tell you everything, I'll tell you everything”? If someone, fluffing up her pillow, should say: “That is not what I meant at all; That is not what I meant, at all.”

And would it have been worth it anyway? Would it have been worth it, after everything I've seen in life: the sunsets and the dooryards and the streets sprinkled with rain? Would it have been worth it after the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that graze the floor—and all of this, and so much more? I can't say what I want to! But if a magic lantern could take my nervous thoughts and put them in patterns on a screen that became words: Would it have been worth it—while fussing with a pillow or taking off a shawl, and turning towards the window—to say: “That is not it at all; That is not what I meant, at all.”

No! I'm not Prince Hamlet, and I was never meant to be. I'm just a background character, a lord following the prince who can serve to fill a crowd, begin a scene or two, or give the prince advice. No doubt I'm an easy tool, subservient and happy to be useful. I'm polite, cautious, and

careful; full of lots to say, but what I say is obscure and unclear. Sometimes I'm ridiculous—sometimes I'm even almost like a clown.

I'm getting old. I'm getting old. I'll start rolling up the bottoms of my pants.

Should I part my hair in a different place? Can I be bold enough to eat a peach? I'll wear white flannel pants, and walk on the beach. I have heard the mermaids singing to each other.

I don't think those mermaids will sing to me.

I have seen the mermaids riding towards the sea on the waves, the wind whipping up the waves' foam and making the water look like a swirl of black and white. We've been waiting in the rooms underneath the sea, next to mermaids wrapped in red and brown seaweed—waiting for human voices to wake us up, and then we'll drown.

UNIT-2 "Daddy"

Themes

Death

Death is an ever-present reality in Plath's poetry, and manifests in several different ways.

One common theme is the void left by her father's death. In "Full Fathom Five," she speaks of his death and burial, mourning that she is forever exiled. In "The Colossus," she tries in vain to put him back together again and make him speak. In "Daddy," she goes further in claiming that she wants to kill him herself, finally exorcising his vicious hold over her mind and her work.

Death is also dealt with in terms of suicide, which eerily corresponds to her own suicide attempts and eventual death by suicide. In "Lady Lazarus," she claims that she has mastered the art of dying after trying to kill herself multiple times. She sneers that everyone is used to crowding in and watching her self-destruct. Suicide, though, is presented as a desirable alternative in many of these works. The poems suggest it would release her from the difficulties of life, and bring her transcendence wherein her mind could free itself from its corporeal cage. This desire is exhilaratingly expressed in "Ariel," and bleakly and resignedly expressed in "Edge." Death is an immensely vivid aspect of Plath's work, both in metaphorical and literal representations.

Victimization

Plath felt like a victim to the men in her life, including her father, her husband, and the great male-dominated literary world. Her poetry can often be understood as response to these feelings of victimization, and many of the poems with a male figure can be interpreted as referring to any or all of these male forces in her life.

In regards to her father, she realized she could never escape his terrible hold over her; she expressed her sense of victimhood in "The Colossus" and "Daddy," using powerful metaphors and comparisons to limn a man who figured heavily in her psyche.

Her husband also victimized her through the power he exerted as a man, both by assuming he should have the literary career and through his infidelity. Plath felt relegated to a subordinate, "feminine" position which stripped from her any autonomy or power. Her poems from the "Colossus" era express her frustration over the strictures under which she operated. For instance, "A Life" evokes a menacing and bleak future for Plath. However, in her later poems, she seems finally able to transcend her status as victim by fully embracing her creative gifts ("Ariel"), metaphorically killing her father ("Daddy"), and committing suicide ("Lady Lazarus", "Edge").

Patriarchy

Plath lived and worked in 1950s/1960s England and America, societies characterized by very strict gender norms. Women were expected to remain safely ensconced in the house, with motherhood as their ultimate joy and goal. Women who ventured into the arts found it difficult to attain much attention for their work, and were often subject to marginalization and disdain. Plath explored and challenged this reductionist tendency through her work, offering poems of intense vitality and stunning language. She depicted the bleakness of the domestic scene, the disappointment of pregnancy, the despair over her husband's infidelity, her tortured relationship with her father, and her attempts to find her own creative voice amidst the crushing weight of patriarchy. She shied away from using genteel language and avoided writing only of traditionally "female" topics. Most impressively, the work remains poetic and artistic - rather than political - because of her willing to admit ambivalence over all these expectations, admitting that both perspectives can prove a trap.

Nature

Images and allusions to nature permeate Plath's poetry. She often evokes the sea and the fields to great effect. The sea is usually associated with her father; it is powerful, unpredictable, mesmerizing, and dangerous. In "Full Fathom Five," her father is depicted as a sea god. An image of the sea is also used in "Contusion," there suggesting a terrible sense of loss and loneliness.

She also pulled from her personal life, writing of horse-riding on the English fields, in "Sheep in Fog" and "Ariel." In these cases, she uses the activity to suggest an otherworldly, mystical arena in which creative thought or unfettered emotion can be expressed.

Nature is also manifested in the bright red tulips which jolt the listless Plath from her post-operation stupor, insisting that she return to the world of the living. Here, nature is a provoker, an instigator - it does not want her to give up. Nature is a ubiquitous theme in Plath's work; it is a potent force that is sometimes unpredictable, but usually works to encourage her creative output.

The self

Plath has often been grouped into the confessional movement of poetry. One of the reasons for this classification is that she wrote extensively of her own life, her own thoughts, her own worries. Any great artist both creates his or her art and is created by it, and Plath was always endeavoring to know herself better through her writing. She tried to come to terms with her personal demons, and tried to work through her problematic relationships. For instance, she tried to understand her ambivalence about motherhood, and tried to vent her rage at her failed marriage.

However, her exploration of herself can also be understood as an exploration of the idea of the self, as it stands opposed to society as a whole and to other people, whom she did not particularly like. Joyce Carol Oates wrote that even Plath's children seemed to be merely the objects of her perception, rather than subjective extensions of herself. The specifics of Plath's work were drawn from her life, but endeavored to transcend those to ask more universal questions. Most infamously, Plath imagined her self as a Jew, another wounded and persecuted victim. She also tried to engage with the idea of self in terms of the mind and body dialectic. "Edge" and "Sheep in Fog" explore her desire to leave the earthly life, but express some ambivalence about what is to come after. "Ariel" suggests it is glory and oneness with nature, but the other two poems do not seem to know what will happen to the mind/soul once the body is eradicated. This conflict - between the self and the world outside - can be used to understand almost all of Plath's poems.

The Body

Many of Plath's poems deal with the body, in terms of motherhood, wounds, operations, and death.

In "Metaphors," she describes how her body does not feel like it is her own; she is simply a "means" towards delivering a child. In "Tulips" and "A Life," the body has undergone an operation. With the surgery comes an excising of emotion, attachment, connection, and responsibility. The physical cut has resulted in an emotional severing, which is a relief to the depressed woman. "Cut" depicts the thrill Plath feels on almost cutting her own thumb off. It is suggested that she feels more alive as she contemplates her nearly-decapitated thumb, and watches the blood pool on the floor. "Contusion" takes things further - she has received a bruise for some reason, but unlike in "Cut," where she eventually seems to grow uneasy with the wound, she seems to welcome the physical pain, since the bruise suggests an imminent end to her suffering. Suicide, the most profound and dramatic thing one can do to one's own body, is also central to many of her poems.

Overall, it is clear that Plath was constantly discerning the relationship between mind and body, and was fascinated with the implications of bodily pain.

Motherhood

Motherhood is a major theme in Plath's work. She was profoundly ambivalent about this prescribed role for women, writing in "Metaphors" about how she felt insignificant as a pregnant woman, a mere "means" to an end. She lamented how grotesque she looked, and expressed her resignation over a perceived lack of options. However, in "Child," she delights in her child's perception of and engagement with the world. Of course, "Child" ends with the suggestions that she knows her child will someday see the harsh reality of life. Plath did not want her children to be contaminated by her own despair. This fear may also have manifested itself in her last poem, "Edge," in which some critics have discerned a desire to kill her children and take them with her far from the terrors of life. Other poems in her oeuvre express the same tension. Overall, Plath clearly loved her children, but was not completely content in either pregnancy or motherhood.

Summary

"Daddy," comprised of sixteen five-line stanzas, is a brutal and venomous poem commonly understood to be about Plath's deceased father, Otto Plath.

The speaker begins by saying that he "does not do anymore," and that she feels like she has been a foot living in a black shoe for thirty years, too timid to either breathe or sneeze. She

insists that she needed to kill him (she refers to him as "Daddy"), but that he died before she had time. She describes him as heavy, like a "bag full of God," resembling a statue with one big gray toe and its head submerged in the Atlantic Ocean. She remembers how she at one time prayed for his return from death, and gives a German utterance of grief (which translates literally to "Oh, you").

She knows he comes from a Polish town that was overrun by "wars, wars, wars," but one of her Polack friends has told her that there are several towns of that name. Therefore, she cannot uncover his hometown, where he put his "foot" and "root."

She also discusses how she could never find a way to talk to him. Even before she could speak, she thought every German was him, and found the German language "obscene." In fact, she felt so distinct from him that she believed herself a Jew being removed to a concentration camp. She started to talk like a Jew and to feel like a Jew in several different ways. She wonders in fact, whether she might actually be a Jew, because of her similarity to a gypsy. To further emphasize her fear and distance, she describes him as the Luftwaffe, with a neat mustache and a bright blue Aryan eye. She calls him a "Panzer-man," and says he is less like God than like the black swastika through which nothing can pass. In her mind, "Every woman adores a Fascist," and the "boot in the face" that comes with such a man.

When she remembers Daddy, she thinks of him standing at the blackboard, with a cleft chin instead of a cleft foot. However, this transposition does not make him a devil. Instead, he is like the black man who "Bit [her] pretty red heart in two." He died when she was ten, and she tried to join him in death when she was twenty. When that attempt failed, she was glued back together. At this point, she realized her course - she made a model of Daddy and gave him both a "Meinkampf look" and "a love of the rack and the screw." She promises him that she is "finally through;" the telephone has been taken off the hook, and the voices can no longer get through to her.

She considers that if she has killed one man, then she has in fact killed two. Comparing him to a vampire, she remembers how he drank her blood for a year, but then realizes the duration was closer to seven years. She tells him he can lie back now. There is a stake in his heart, and the villagers who despised him now celebrate his death by dancing on his corpse. She concludes by announcing, "Daddy, Daddy, you bastard, I'm through."

Analysis

"Daddy" is perhaps Sylvia Plath's best-known poem. It has elicited a variety of distinct reactions, from feminist praise of its unadulterated rage towards male dominance, to wariness at its usage of Holocaust imagery. It has been reviewed and criticized by hundreds and hundreds of scholars, and is upheld as one of the best examples of confessional poetry.

It is certainly a difficult poem for some: its violent imagery, invocation of Jewish suffering, and vitriolic tone can make it a decidedly uncomfortable reading experience. Overall, the poem relates Plath's journey of coming to terms with her father's looming figure; he died when she was eight. She casts herself as a victim and him as several figures, including a Nazi, vampire, devil, and finally, as a resurrected figure her husband, whom she has also had to kill.

Though the final lines have a triumphant tone, it is unclear whether she means she has gotten "through" to him in terms of communication, or whether she is "through" thinking about him. Plath explained the poem briefly in a BBC interview:

The poem is spoken by a girl with an Electra complex. The father died while she thought he was God. Her case is complicated by the fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish. In the daughter the two strains marry and paralyze each other –she has to act out the awful little allegory once over before she is free of it.

In other words, contradiction is at the heart of the poem's meaning. Neither its triumph nor its horror is to be taken as the sum total of her intention. Instead, each element is contradicted by its opposite, which explains how it shoulders so many distinct interpretations.

This sense of contradiction is also apparent in the poem's rhyme scheme and organization. It uses a sort of nursery rhyme, singsong way of speaking. There are hard sounds, short lines, and repeated rhymes (as in "Jew," "through," "do," and "you"). This establishes and reinforces her status as a childish figure in relation to her authoritative father. This relationship is also clear in the name she uses for him - "Daddy"- and in her use of "oo" sounds and a childish cadence. However, this childish rhythm also has an ironic, sinister feel, since the chant-like, primitive quality can feel almost like a curse. One critic wrote that the poem's "simplistic, insistent rhythm is one form of control, the obsessive rhyming and repeated short phrases are others, means by which she attempts to charm and hold off evil spirits." In other words, the childish aspects have a crucial, protective quality, rather than an innocent one.

"Daddy" can also be viewed as a poem about the individual trapped between herself and society. Plath weaves together patriarchal figures – a father, Nazis, a vampire, a husband – and then holds them all accountable for history's horrors. Like "The Colossus," "Daddy" imagines a larger-than-life patriarchal figure, but here the figure has a distinctly social, political aspect. Even the vampire is discussed in terms of its tyrannical sway over a village. In this interpretation, the speaker comes to understand that she must kill the father figure in order to break free of the limitations that it places upon her. In particular, these limitations can be understood as patriarchal forces that enforce a strict gender structure. It has the feel of an exorcism, an act of purification. And yet the journey is not easy. She realizes what she has to do, but it requires a sort of hysteria. In order to succeed, she must have complete control, since she fears she will be destroyed unless she totally annihilates her antagonist.

The question about the poem's confessional, autobiographical content is also worth exploring. The poem does not exactly conform to Plath's biography, and her above-cited explanation suggests it is a carefully-constructed fiction. And yet its ambivalence towards male figures does correspond to the time of its composition - she wrote it soon after learning that her husband Ted Hughes had left her for another woman. Further, the mention of a suicide attempt links the poem to her life.

However, some critics have suggested that the poem is actually an allegorical representation of her fears of creative paralysis, and her attempt to slough off the "male muse." Stephen Gould Axelrod writes that "at a basic level, 'Daddy' concerns its own violent, transgressive birth as a text, its origin in a culture that regards it as illegitimate –a judgment the speaker hurls back on the patriarch himself when she labels *him* a bastard." The father is perceived as an object and as a mythical figure (many of them, in fact), and never really attains any real human dimensions. It is less a person than a stifling force that puts its boot in her face to silence her. From this perspective, the poem is inspired less by Hughes or Otto than by agony over creative limitations in a male literary world. However, even this interpretation begs something of an autobiographical interpretation, since both Hughes and her father were representations of that world.

Plath's usage of Holocaust imagery has inspired a plethora of critical attention. She was not Jewish but was in fact German, yet was obsessed with Jewish history and culture. Several of

her poems utilize Holocaust themes and imagery, but this one features the most striking and disturbing ones. She imagines herself being taken on a train to "Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen," and starting to talk like a Jew and feel like a Jew. She refers to her father as a "panzer-man," and notes his Aryan looks and his "Luftwaffe" brutality. One of the leading articles on this topic, written by Al Strangeways, concludes that Plath was using her poetry to understand the connection between history and myth, and to stress the voyeurism that is an implicit part of remembering. Plath had studied the Holocaust in an academic context, and felt a connection to it; she also felt like a victim, and wanted to combine the personal and public in her work to cut through the stagnant double-talk of Cold War America. She certainly uses Holocaust imagery, but does so alongside other violent myths and history, including those of Electra, vampirism, and voodoo. Strangeways writes that, "the Holocaust assumed a mythic dimension because of its extremity and the difficulty of understanding it in human terms, due to the mechanical efficiency with which it was carried out, and the inconceivably large number of victims." In other words, its shocking content is not an accident, but is rather an attempt to consider how the 20th century's great atrocity reflects and escalates a certain human quality.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine that any of Sylvia Plath's poems could leave the reader unmoved. "Daddy" is evidence of her profound talent, part of which rested in her unabashed confrontation with her personal history and the traumas of the age in which she lived. That she could write a poem that encompasses both the personal and historical is clear in "Daddy."

Morning Song

In the first stanza of the poem Morning Song by Sylvia Plath, the mother and the narrator narrates the birth of the child. She also hints at how the fetus grew bigger in the womb: 'love set you going'. But when the mother actually got the child, she didn't feel any love at all!

The very beginning contains several surrealistic images, that indirectly reinforce the oddity and alienation that the mother felt when faced with the infant out of her own body. For instance, the first line contains the simile 'gold watch' that is intended to describe the child! A surreal image is one which is not rationally or logically interpretable. How can a newborn, or even the fetus in the womb, be like a gold watch? Such an image, sets the reader's mind in a wild search for meaning; it also contributes to the open-ended 'modernist' nature of the poem. One might say that the mother regards the child a golden thing because it is valuable to her; but here the case is just the opposite. The mother could not feel any so-called maternal (natural?) love for the odd thing imposed upon her body and life. This can be interpreted in another light: the mother feels that the child is a thing, not a living being. She remembers how the infant was beaten by the midwife making it cry and come to consciousness. When the infant cried, the mother felt that its unusual (un-human) voice filled the elements (or things; not to talk about filling the feelings of the mother). She also reinforces the 'thingness' of the baby by calling 'it' a statue (in a museum). 'We', probably she and her husband, stood around the new thing blankly as walls!

In the second stanza, the mother has the courage to confess that she didn't feel like being a mother to this new thing, as people had perhaps told her.

By the third stanza only do we find that the mother is beginning to feel the natural impulses of being a mother; but that also comes out of an experience. It is probably after a few days, the speaker seems to have been sleeping with the baby, when she suddenly wakes up to 'feel' the child's breathing over her gown. This time she describes the infant in terms of its 'breath'; it becomes a living being. The night gown full of pink rose print also suggests that the woman is beginning to realize her basic and natural feminine qualities, that she is after all capable of being a mother. She brings out the female image in herself by describing the 'Victorian' nightgown, suggesting that she has a social aspect of her life, though the typical Sylvia Plath would vehemently satirize the male-dominated culture confining women to the traditional gown. In the fourth stanza, the child cries, and the mother 'stumbles from bed', startled and fascinated by the charm in the magical voice of a child, her own child. Addressing the child, which was previously a thing, as "You", she says, "Your mouth opens clean as a cat's". The child is progressively assuming the status of an animal! It is trying its handful of 'notes'. She hears 'clear vowels' rising like balloons. Now, at last, we can feel that the mother's words are pregnant with passionate love for the child. The odd comparison of voice with balloon has now been suggested of the mother's wish for the child to grow and play with the balloon, when she would find herself completed as a mother, with a child she bore and brought up. This also suggests that the child is a new source for the mother, the poetess who was most probably worried that her pursuit as a poetess would have to be sacrificed after the birth of the child. The child's human voice, its beautiful vowels, will also become a part of the subject matter of the mother-poet.

UNIT-3 A Streetcar Named Desire

Themes

Fantasy/Illusion

Blanche dwells in illusion; fantasy is her primary means of self-defense, both against outside threats and against her own demons. But her deceptions carry no trace of malice, but rather they come from her weakness and inability to confront the truth head-on. She is a quixotic figure, seeing the world not as it is but as it ought to be. Fantasy has a liberating magic that protects her from the tragedies she has had to endure. Throughout the play, Blanche's dependence on illusion is contrasted with Stanley's steadfast realism, and in the end it is Stanley and his worldview that win. To survive, Stella must also resort to a kind of illusion, forcing herself to believe that Blanche's accusations against Stanley are false so that she can continue living with her husband.

The Old South and the New South

Stella and Blanche come from a world that is rapidly dying. Belle Reve, their family's ancestral plantation, has been lost, and the two sisters are the last living members of their family and, symbolically, of their old world of cavaliers and cotton fields. Their strain of Old South was not conquered by the march of General Sherman's army, but by the steady march of time, and as Blanche's beauty fades with age so too do these vestiges of that civilization gone with the

wind. Blanche attempts to stay back in the past but it is impossible, and Stella only survives by mixing her DuBois blood with the common stock of the Kowalskis; the old South can only live on in a diluted, bastardized form.

Cruelty

The only unforgivable crime, according to Blanche, is deliberate cruelty. This sin is Stanley's specialty. His final assault against Blanche is a merciless attack against an already-beaten foe. Blanche, on the other hand, is dishonest but she never lies out of malice. Her cruelty is unintentional; often, she lies in a vain or misguided effort to please. Throughout the play, we see the full range of cruelty, from Blanche's well-intentioned deceptions to Stella self-deceiving treachery to Stanley's deliberate and unchecked malice. In Williams' plays, there are many ways to hurt someone. And some are worse than others.

The Primitive and the Primal

Blanche often speaks of Stanley as ape-like and primitive. Stanley represents a very unrefined manhood, a Romantic idea of man untouched by civilization and its effeminizing influences. His appeal is clear: Stella cannot resist him, and even Blanche, though repulsed, is on some level drawn to him. Stanley's unrefined nature also includes a terrifying amorality. The service of his desire is central to who he is; he has no qualms about driving his sister-in-law to madness, or raping her. In Freudian terms, Stanley is pure id, while Blanche represents the super-ego and Stella the ego – but the balancing between the id and super-ego is not found only in Stella's mediation, but in the tension between these forces within Blanche herself. She finds Stanley's primitivism so threatening precisely because it is something she sees, and hides, within her.

Desire

Closely related to the theme above, desire is the central theme of the play. Blanche seeks to deny it, although we learn later in the play that desire is one of her driving motivations; her desires have caused her to be driven out of town. Physical desire, and not intellectual or spiritual intimacy, is the heart of Stella's and Stanley's relationship, but Williams makes it clear that this does not make their bond any weaker. Desire is also Blanche's undoing, because she cannot find a healthy way of dealing with her natural urges - she is always either trying to suppress them or pursuing them with abandon.

Loneliness

The companion theme to desire is loneliness, and between these two extremes, Blanche is lost. She desperately seeks companionship and protection in the arms of strangers. And she has never recovered from her tragic and consuming love for her first husband. Blanche is in need of a defender. But in New Orleans, she will find instead the predatory and merciless Stanley.

Desire vs Cemeteries / Romance vs Realism

The fundamental tension of the play is this play between the romantic and the realistic, played out in parallel in the pairing of lust and death. Blanche takes the streetcars named Desire and Cemeteries, and like the French's "la petite mort," those cars and the themes they symbolize run together to Blanche's final destination. This dichotomy is present in nearly every element of the play, from the paired characterizations of Blanche the romantic and Stanley the realist, to how all of Blanche's previous sexual encounters are tangled up with death, to the actual names of the streetcars.

Summary

The play takes place right after World War II, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Kowalski apartment is in a poor but charming neighborhood in the French Quarter. Stella, twenty-five years old and pregnant, lives with her blue collar husband Stanley Kowalski. It is summertime, and the heat is oppressive. Blanche Dubois, Stella's older sister, arrives unexpectedly, carrying all that she owns. Blanche and Stella have a warm reunion, but Blanche has some bad news: Belle Reve, the family mansion, has been lost. Blanche stayed behind to care for their dying family while Stella left to make a new life for herself, and Blanche is clearly resentful by her sister's abandonment of the family. Blanche meets her sister's husband, Stanley, for the first time, and immediately she feels uncomfortable. We learn that Blanche was once married, when she was very young, but her husband died, leaving her widowed and alone. Stanley initially distrusts Blanche, thinking that she has cheated Stella out of her share of Belle Reve - but Stanley soon realizes that Blanche is not the swindling type. But the animosity between the two continues. Blanche takes long baths, criticizes the squalor of the apartment, and irritates Stanley. Stanley's roughness bothers Blanche as well, since he makes no effort to be gentle with her. One night, during a poker game, Stanley gets too drunk and beats Stella. The women go to their upstairs neighbors' apartment, but soon Stella returns to Stanley. Blanche is unable to understand Stella and Stanley's powerful (and destructive) physical relationship. That night, she also meets Mitch, prompting an immediate mutual attraction.

The next day, Stanley overhears Blanche saying terrible things about him. From that time on, he devotes himself fully to her destruction. Blanche, herself, has a shady past that she keeps close to the vest. During the last days of Belle Reve, after the mansion was lost, she was exceptionally lonely and turned to strangers for comfort. Her numerous amorous encounters destroyed her reputation in Laurel, leading to the loss of her job as a high school English teacher and her near-expulsion from town.

Tensions build in the apartment throughout the summer. Blanche and Stanley see each other as enemies, and Blanche turns increasingly to alcohol for comfort. Stanley, meanwhile, investigates Blanche's past, and he passes the information about her sexual dalliances on to Mitch. Although Blanche and Mitch had been on track to marry, after he learns the truth, he loses all interest in her. On Blanche's birthday, Mitch stands her up, abandoning her for good. Stanley, meanwhile, caustically presents Blanche with her birthday gift: bus tickets back to Laurel. Blanche is overcome by sickness; she cannot return to Laurel, and Stanley knows it. As Blanche is ill in the bathroom, Stella fights with Stanley over the cruelty of his act. Mid-fight, she tells him to take her to the hospital - the baby is coming.

That night, Blanche packs and drinks. Mitch arrives unexpectedly. He confronts her with the stories of her past, and she tells him, in lurid detail, the truth about her escapades in Laurel. He approaches her, making advances, wanting what she has denied him all summer. She asks him to marry her, and when he refuses, she kicks him out of the apartment.

Hours later, Stanley comes home to get some sleep while Stella's labor continues. Blanche further antagonizes Stanley, destroying his good humor, and he responds by mercilessly destroying Blanche's illusions, one by one, until finally he rapes her.

Weeks later, another poker game is being held at the Kowalski apartment. Blanche has suffered a mental breakdown. She has told Stella about Stanley's assault, but Stella has convinced

herself that it cannot be true. A doctor and nurse come and take Blanche away to the asylum. The other men continue their poker game as if nothing has happened.

UNIT-4 “PATRIOTISM BEYOND POLITICS AND RELIGION”

Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam was one of India's most distinguished scientist, 11th President of India and the recipient of the most prestigious Bharat Ratna, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan-the country's three highest civilian honours. Due to his great contribution in the field of space research and missile development, he came to be known as the „Missile Man of India“. In spite of being such an eminent personality, he remained humane and humble throughout his life. Though he came from a poor family, he was a hardworking and dedicated person, with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and learning. He believed that every single person he met can help him in learning something new. He narrates in his books, all his stimulating experiences with students, young people, teachers, scientists, politicians, saints and seers. According to an editorial of the prestigious e-newspaper The Hindu, “ More than as a scientist and a technocrat, Kalam will be remembered for his tenure as India's 11th President, when he moved the institution away from being merely formal and ceremonial in nature. He used the presidency as a platform to inspire youth, who were readily impressed by his earthy demeanour and discursive approach to public speaking.” He was the only President of India who broke the tradition of his position, reached ordinary people, listened to their grievances and won their love and affection. That is why he is generally known as the „People's President.“ Dr. Abdul Kalam remained accessible to the youth. He tried to reach the youth of our country and inspired them to become responsible citizens of our country and to contribute something to its development. He always dreamt of making India a developed country. Dr. Kalam used to say that if people will remember him as a good teacher that would be the utmost privilege for him. He had a firm belief in the tremendous potential of the youth of our country. He aimed at motivating India's people, especially its youth for the development of our country. According to Dr. Kalam, throughout his career in Science and Technology, he had always counted upon the power and prospects of the youth. In his book Ignited Minds, he wrote, “My strength has been my young teams who never let me down. And what satisfaction there was in working with them on some of the most complex projects in some of the most challenging situations! Given the freedom to achieve and guided properly, I am convinced the young of

India can accomplish far more.” (Ignited Minds, Preface ix-x) In his book Ignited Minds, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has discussed how the “untapped” potentials of the young people of India can be utilized properly to achieve the goal of making India a fully developed country. According to him, the young people have developed a subjugated and docile attitude. They very often settle for less than what they deserve. That is why in spite of having skills, resources and talents India is not that much prosperous and developed as it should have been. Through Ignited Minds, Dr. Kalam aimed to motivate the youth to “get back on the winning track and unleash the energy within a nation that hasn’t allowed itself full rein.” In this book he has analyzed various issues that can accelerate the winning streak of today’s youth. Kalam has stressed the importance of a role model in the life of children and youth. He points out that a person needs different role models in different stages of his life and how role models can help him to achieve success in personal front, professional life as well as in contributing something for our nation. He also adds how great teachers and scientists can ignite the young minds through their vision for the benefit of our country. Dr. Abdul Kalam always insisted the youth to dream, not only to dream but to dream big. He used to say, “Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action” (Ignited Minds, 1). But he also advised them to strengthen their spiritual wisdom. He believed that upholding the value system is as important as prosperity through wealth generation. India takes its pride in the slogan „Unity in Diversity“. India has diverse geographical locations, regional diversity, cultural diversity, linguistic variations, ethnic diversity and diversity in religion. Religious diversity is one of the most conspicuous spirits of Indian society. All types of religions of the world are found here like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Islam and Sikhism. But now-a-days, politics is overshadowing religious sentiments. Politicians are using religion as a weapon to create a rift between people to secure their seats. But according to Dr. Abdul Kalam, diverse religions add new dimensions to the „Indianness“ (Ignited Minds, 115) of the people. He wrote, “The greatest danger to our sense of unity and our sense of purpose comes from those ideologists who seek to divide the people. The Indian Constitution bestows on all the citizens total equality under its protective umbrella. What is now cause for concern is the trend toward putting religious form over religious sentiments.” (Ignited Minds, 115) He believed that for India to prosper what we need is just pure patriotism, beyond politics and religion. If all the people of India come together, leaving behind all forms of diversities, to create a harmonious

India, that will be our greatest strength. To make this vision turn into reality, the youth can play a major role. Dr. Kalam had identified five areas where Indian youth can cater essential aptitude and these areas if tackled together can create great opportunities for the development of India. These five areas are agriculture, power, education and health care, information technology and the strategic sector. Since times immemorial India has always been considered as an agricultural country. Improvements in agricultural sector will ensure higher economic growth. Developments in education and health care will create scope for more and efficient manpower. Information technology sector is growing with passing of time and its further growth will accelerate the development process. Electric power yields energy security essential for the growth of all other sectors. Development in strategic sector, like nuclear, space and defence technology, are quite crucial for strengthening the power of our country. All these five areas, if developed in integration, will strengthen the backbone of our country and India would march ahead in the path of becoming a developed country.

According to Dr. Kalam's opinion, if something is at risk, then "human mind gets ignited" (Ignited Minds, 177) and the quality of the work gets amplified. He used to advise the youth to remember that challenges guide us to opportunities. When one picks up a work, he should perform it with complete dedication and diligence, without thinking of what the result would be. If he succeeds in the work, the success should act as an inspiration for future goals and if it fails, then the experience should be taken as a lesson for the next time. Failures should not restrict them from trying; rather they should use them as stepping stones for their success in future endeavors. Hopes and aspirations must remain alive till the last breath as they motivate us to be successful in every sphere. He wrote in Ignited Minds, "The young especially has to be guided properly, so that their lives find a proper direction and their creativity is allowed to flower." (Ignited Minds, 178) Kalam concluded the book with an excellent piece of poetry that brilliantly conveys to the young minds the message he wished to impart. It is not only a poem but looks more like a pledge. It seems as if Kalam, through this poem, wanted the youth of India to take this pledge and work according to it. This poem intends to ignite the young souls of India and motivate them to work towards a greater vision- the vision of making India a developed country. The poem is titled „Song of Youth“ (Ignited Minds, 196): "As a young citizen of India, armed with technology, knowledge and love for my nation, I realize, small aim

is a crime. I will work and sweat for a great vision, the vision of transforming India into a developed nation powered by economic strength with value system. I am one of the citizens of a billion, only the vision will ignite the billion souls. It has entered into me, the ignited soul compared to any resource, is the most powerful resource on the earth, above the earth and under the earth. I will keep the lamp of knowledge burning to achieve the vision-Developed India.” This „Song of Youth“ shows how strong faith Kalam had on the youth of his country. He believed that it is the youth who has the power to change the future of our country and fulfil his dream of making India a developed country. He visited schools and colleges in different parts of the country to spread the message that the youth should prepare themselves to make India a developed nation. “Ignite your mind and think big” (Ignited Minds, 187) was the message he imparted to the students. Kalam always considered the interests and needs of the nation greater than that of an individual. He wanted to embed this thought in the minds of the youth of our country. He wrote “when thousands recite this, I see the developed India” (Ignited Minds, 195). Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam’s book Ignited Minds shows what a true patriot he was and inspires the youth of the country to explore the unexplored paths to convert India into a developed and prosperous nation. This book shows the reason why A.P.J Abdul Kalam was and will always be the Youth Icon and a role model for large number of young people of our country.
