

I. Introduction

Motherhood in Modern Poetry

Motherhood is a common subject matter of poetry. Female writers and poets express their inner maternal feelings through their poems. Though it is a common subject matter and a universal theme, different poets present it from different angles. Some regard it as an obstacle and hindrance to career and the self identity of a woman whereas some take it as the supplement of the identity of woman. Sylvia Plath is of first type who feels motherhood as the burden. Plath is a modern feminist poet. Many poems by Plath show her negative concept on motherhood which is associated with her domestic sufferings. Her poems leave the traditional, loving and caring mother behind and introduce a modern mother who is indifferent towards the children and tries to find the individual self. In some of her poems, she presents a rude and carefree mother in place of the stereotypical loving and caring mother. The mother escapes from the duties instead of glorifying the state of motherhood.

Many modernist female writers like Plath present the same kind of traditional topics but with different themes. Plath was a passionate woman who attempted to be a wife, mother and a poet at the same time but later she found difficulty in it and started feeling the children and the family ties as a burden and the obstacle to freedom and career. Regarding the theme of motherhood, many female poets like Elizabeth Bishop, Rita Dove, Gwendolyn Brooks, Anne Sexton, and Adrienne Rich also has composed several poems. Each of their poems sketches a typical mother and mother's fate –mothering, caring and nurturing the children. The experience of menstruation, delivery, childbearing, and mothering are presented along with the feminist ethos.

The confessional and the suicidal themes of the mother are the ignored subject matters of the past. But the modernist writers like Plath have violated the conventional concept as well as form and structure to define motherhood has been blurred.

Plath's Poetry: the Reflection of her Personal Experiences

Plath was born in 1932 in the well educated Boston family. She is an important poet of the post World War era. The experiences of childhood and youth are sketched in her poetry. The personal experiences and feelings of the woman became the major subjects of Plath's poetry. The issues like childbearing, childhood rearing and the duties and responsibilities as a mother are the focal points of her works. Her literary career developed rapidly after her marriage with Ted Hughes and she shared a lot of ideas too. But Hughes' relationship with the other woman pushed their nearness apart. Due to it, she had to take care of the two children in the condition of economic crisis. The conflict between her career and the family ties led to the severe depression which dragged her to suicide in 1963. Her poems are full of the personal struggle with self-consciousness and the societal limitations experienced by women. She suffered a lot so that the mind created such brilliant poems. *The Colossus* is the only book of her poems published in her life time. *The Bell Jar* is her single semi-autobiographical novel. *Ariel* contains the poems selected by Ted Hughes among the many works of Plath. *The Collected Poems* won the Pulitzer Prize in 1982.

To support her theme, Plath takes the assistance of the literary devices like image, metaphor and the distinct use of diction. The early poems display the sense of motherhood and fragmentation with the contemporary society where the later poems are the evidences of the increasing frustration. Her ambition of finding happiness through work, marriage and family were kicked out by the events like hospital stays for miscarriage, the breakup of her marriage, the burden of the two children and her economic crisis and fluctuating mood. The hatred towards mothering may be due to the lack of maternal love in her own life too. Plath's mother Aurelia worked at two jobs to support Plath and her brother, Warren. So her mother could not provide the sufficient maternal love and care to her children that helped to grow the seed of hatred toward mothering. Therefore, her poems reflect her increasing anger, bitterness

and despair. Such poems are mystic and resigned with darker images. *The Colossus* displays a more distinctive voice with harsh images and less formal style.

Plath is a mother, artist, wife and more a female who visualized the inner psyche of the women of mid-twentieth century. The struggle for the self identity in opposition to the conventional female roles is noteworthy. Her poems can be analyzed from the multiple perspectives like feminism, structuralism, psychoanalysis and the like. As the poems are full of the female voices along with the baby images, woman's traits and experiences, they can be usefully studied. Her poems are the manifestations of the female world. As a female poet of patriarchal society, it is her great effort to stand in the side of woman for the upliftment of their situation by creating different images.

Literature Review

Treatment of motherhood in Plath's poetry is the great discussion among the critics and writers. Her poems got immense popularity after their publication, mainly after her death. Talking about the treatment of motherhood in Plath's poetry, Plath herself explained that writing about the experiences of a mother is quite new and has psychological depth. Many critics and writers have put forward their judgments on different base.

Ted Hughes said in *Collected Poems*, "Plath finds, writing poems on the subject matter of children is colorful and amusing. Such poems succeeds in revolting against myths where female appears as other" (14). Most of the critics view Plath on her theme of suicide only. In fact, she is not limited to it rather she is the index of feminism. Bundtzen in Plath's *Incarnation* shows her as a feminist regarding the subject matter of children. He says:

. . . I sensed that Plath's voice in addition to the subject matter in much of her work was distinctively feminine. Her poems have full images and symbols which speaks feminine voice. Reading her poems feels like to live in woman's body of the hurt and wonder of love, making in all its forms such as children,

loaves of bread, paintings and buildings. Her poems seem born of a piece put together by the rhythms of her own breathings. (11)

The feelings of true modern mother are successfully presented through her selected images and diction. Even a single poem of Plath goes without the child's image. The idea, 'once, a mother is mother for ever' is traditional for Plath who views mothering from different perspective. We find many critics' view on her poems. Among them, Showalter is one who finds the possibilities of both positive and negative sources of strength in female tradition. In "Feminist Criticism in Wilderness", she writes:

One of the great advantages of the women's culture model is that it shows how the female tradition can be a positive source of strength and solidarity as well as a negative source of strength of powerlessness; it can generate its own experience and symbols which is not simply the obverse of the male tradition. (326)

Therefore, Plath's poems are specially written for the children project her negative concept towards motherhood which is totally different from stereotypical concept. They are the representations of feelings of feeling and emotions along with the desire of liberation of the modern mother.

II. Modern Feminism

Feminism: Struggle for Equality

Feminism, as defined by Columbian Encyclopedia is a movement for the political, social and educational equality of women (934). Feminism is the struggle of women for their liberation. Feminists focus on the women's right and their emancipation from the patriarchal society. Feminism affects the world politically, culturally, spiritually and economically. They reject the tradition of masculinity, contemporary culture and wrong belief against women. The aim of the feminist is to eliminate the oppression, suppression and inequality based on class, gender and sex. Therefore, their demand is the political, social, and educational equality of the women. They aim to identify the sources of suppression.

From the beginning of the civilization, women were regarded as physically and intellectually inferior to men. It was said that man was always superior to woman but the situation could not remain stable. Along with the Industrial Revolution, women became aware of their subjection and they gradually began to raise the voice for property and engage in business. In this way, the Industrial Revolution brought a radical change in the life of western society in the second half of eighteenth and nineteenth century. The increasing development in industries resulted in the decline of the domestic industries, which had an impact in the income generation of the woman.

In the article, "What is Happening in America?" Reynolds shows the critical condition of the women of nineteenth century. In the early nineteenth century, women were paid less attention than the man. They were deprived of formal and higher education. In French Revolution too, Women's Republican Club demanded that liberty, equality and fraternity be applied regardless of sex. North America in 1948 issued the declaration of independence for women demanding full legal equality, educational and commercial opportunity, the right to collect wages and the right to vote. This movement extended rapidly and soon extended to

Europe. As a result, nineteenth century women did started to job in the factories, speaking for public, working in newspaper and fighting for their self-identity.

Some of the so-called experts and the male professors of the very century used to say that women's brain is smaller than man's is. Girls can not learn as much as the boys can. Some women however did not believe their brains were small. They are as smart as man are. They were determined to use their brains. Little by little, women demanded for higher education, entrance into the trades and industries as their rights. At the same time women were fighting against slavery and poverty of the women too.

The concept of feminism changed with the span of time. In the first half of twentieth century, women got the right to vote. In 1960s, Feminism experienced a rebirth especially in United States. The National Woman's Political Caucus and other groups pressed such changes as abortion right, supported childcare centers, equal pay for women, the occupational upgrading of women, the removal of all legal and social barriers in education, politics and the economic sectors of woman's life.

In this way, the modern mothers also are concerned with one's interest for their career. This primary concern is not their children but their career. However, the females are still subordinated within their confined sphere created by the male centered society and they are continuously fighting against it.

Reflection of Feminism in Literature

The Feminists often present the distinct view regarding the issues of equality, how to attain equality and the extent to which the gender based identities should be questioned and critiqued. Most of the Feminists promote the women's right, interest and issues. Early Feminists and primary Feminists are often called the first wave feminists and the feminists after 1960s are the second wave. Whatever the naming be, all the feminists believe in the women's liberation and womanhood. Liberal feminists believe the woman's Liberation movement revolves round the

equality of the sexes and that biological sexes should not be the only factor in shaping a person's social and socio-economic rights. Radical feminists argue that feminism is ending societal domination. Socialist feminism connects the oppression of woman to Marxist ideas about the exploitation of the labor by patriarchal system. Such feminist focus the affects of the society as a whole. Eco-feminism sees the domination and the exploitation of the woman by the man for their profit, success and pleasure. The individual feminists wish the freedom as the basic point of all the issues.

Mary Wollstonecraft was regarded as the first feminist theorist who advocated for the political and the social right of woman. Feminism gained new dimension and spirit after the publication of "*Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792)*". This is the first attempt of feminist writing where she says mind does not know what sex is. However, sex is the creation of men to overpower themselves. The women of nineteenth and twentieth century had to struggle much for the establishment of equality. Jane Austen, George Eliot and Bronte sisters were some nineteenth century novelists who developed feminist perspective in their writing.

Feminism took shape as a movement only after 1960s liberation movement in the early part of twentieth century and helped in shaping the feminism. Feminists attempt to break down the barriers between male and female spheres completely through their writings. An important precursor in feminist movement of twentieth century is Virginia Woolf who has occupied a significant place. Her famous article "A Room of Ones Own" (1929) and the number of essays deal on woman authors and on the cultural, economic and educational disabilities within the patriarchal society. The society has prevented the women from realizing their productive as well as creative possibilities. The article talks about how women are imprisoned within the domestic promises and stopped to write. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex (1949)* launched a much more radical mode in France.

In America, modern feminist criticism begins with Mary Ell man's "Thinking About Women" (1968) where she talks about the derogatory stereotype of woman in literature. Kate Miller's *Sexual Politics* (1969) attacks the male biased Freudian Psychoanalytical theory in which Freud has degraded women as submissive sexual subjects. In this way many writers who deal with women's problem and voice emerged, including both male and female in twentieth century. The publication of *Of Their Own* (1977) by Eline Showalter gained popularity because it examines the British Women novelists since Bronte sisters from the point of view of experience. Similarly Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's "The Mad Woman in the Attic" (1979) tends to see nineteenth century women writers in terms of twentieth century feminism.

The Position of Women in Literature

The long time's struggle for the emancipation also could not contribute sufficiently to bring the full freedom for the women in different areas. In the field of philosophy, the ideas and the opinions of the females are paid less attention. Linda Kerber, in the book *The Republican Mother: Women and Enlightenment-An American Perspective* defines philosophy as a male noun. Especially male counterparts do not let females to secure place for them. Females are considered as male's subjects. Kerber opines, "Husbands regained over wives, wives suffered the penis of childbirth, but these were the description of reality and reality might be changed by human intention. Labor might be medically eased, a woman who was queen in her own right did not become when she married her husband's subject" (145).

Females are presented in sub-ordinate position, with their indoor responsibilities. So, feminism is the movement for the upbringing of the backward women one step ahead. This movement made the women aware about their identity and they started rejecting the male hegemony. Kerber again says:

Women are still confused within boundary of family ties. Even though they get free time they are not able to get outside and contribute for the nation. Feminism

is for the rights of half of human beings, which are forgotten by all the legislators, limited within slogans and proves best weapon for the election. Women are ruled because of it, they are invisible: for it males are responsible because they do not relate women not other than their daughters, sisters, wives or mothers and never as their counterparts (150).

Though the political function of the woman is acceptable, the participation of the women is much less where as males are mostly outside home for the political discussion and females are busy inside the home. They do not have enough time for the development of the nation and their career. In this way, even the modern women are also left within the intellectual gap. So the modern feminists demand for the direct participation of the females in any works of literature and in the society too. Along with the changing time, the female writers also discovered their suppressed ideas, feelings, opinions and thoughts through their writings. Even the less educated females are actively participating in the writing magazines. Welter writes in the article “The Cult of Womanhood”, “Modern families are filled with the female tragedies. Similarly, poetry, essays, criticisms and dramas are also providing the place for the female’s agonies, cries, demands and the wish for woman’s liberation: education is much more emphasized for girls who are ready to marry. . . for the mothers to make their home happy home” (63).

The question of identity and the place of women arise, there appears the right of freedom, freedom from each and every ties, even the half part of the life, children. Besides glorifying the state of being a mother, modern mothers are rethinking of their liberation from the modern ties and boundaries. They have developed the new concept of motherhood which is not totally dedicated towards the homely life, and responsibilities but more oriented towards their emancipation.

Although Woman Suffrage gifted equality in politics, still women have problems domestic roles as they have to give up their individuality. Chafe, in *Women and American*

Society opines, “. . . A young woman contemplating a career had two choices. Either she proclaimed herself a woman or an achieving individual and therefore less a woman. She could not do both and if choose to, follow the second option she took the risk of loosing forever the chance ‘to be a loved object’ the kind of girl whom man woo and boast of , toast and marry” (260).

It is not to be surprised that few women are willing to take such a risk and the reality of the society they live in. They begin to think for their own career along with home and children. They dare to come out of the bondage and breathe the air in the freedom by involving the different activities of the society. French Feminist Simon de Beauvoir in her famous article “The Second Sex” says, “One is not born but rather becomes a woman . . . It is civilization as a whole that provides this creature . . . which is described as feminine” (995). She explains the condition under patriarchy model and their limitations within an object of male. In her article, she further says:

In sexuality and maternity woman as subject can claim autonomy but to be a true woman she must accept woman as a fellow being, an equal: but they still require her to remain inessential . . . with man, there is no break between public and private life . . . whereas women’s independent success in contradiction with her family since the ‘true woman’ is required to make her object, to be other (1000).

Women are considered as other as if they were the creation of the males. They do not have their own identity in the society and they need to be interpreted by males and must be true women.

The contemporary woman began to realize their position in the universe as a human being and to recognize their relation as an individual to the world. The woman in the twentieth century breaks the bars of the age of illusory costumes and conventions and dare to overcome them. The role of wife or mother is taken as gift and using their so-called weakness like motherhood and womanhood and dependency are used as the sources for the writings of the modern writers. They

attempt to show that only women can write their feelings of motherhood and womanhood including other subject matter experienced by the females. Thus they present themselves as strong and powerful as males.

Modern Mother as an Indifferent Mother

These recent last decades of twentieth century introduced the birth of new kind of motherhood. Some poets talked with too much pride in their reproductive achievements. Poets like Sylvia Plath, Sexton and Loe bring revolution on the traditional concept of mother making their poems as the bridge between the body and the page. Lanro discusses more on the birth of the new kind of motherhood poet in *The Fruits of Their Labors: The Childbirth Poetry of Plath, Sexton and Loe* that:

Early on the American history, Bradstreet had written from the perspective of the expectant motherhood but without any description of the body involved in pregnancy and her publication was framed by a preface assuring her dalliances in poetry to her children's naptimes. Description of pregnancy in woman's poetry remained tenuous and abstract until the poets who all insisted on displaying the maternal body within the page effectively breaking down the barriers that kept the female body out of their art (150).

It has been difficult to discuss for the work of female poet's with children without considering the problem that the women writers face to be either a mother or a poet. Neglecting one or the other was nearly impossible for the modern writers. Feminist literary criticism has postulated that woman's exclusion from art was related to her reproductive body. Given the natural ability to reproduce, women had no need to reproduce art .

Sylvia Plath is remembered as a confessional, suicidal or hysterical woman but according to her she is distinctly feminine and shares the woman's experiences vividly. Plath has expressed her personal view on a variety of recurring themes including the obstacles faced by the

woman poets. Among the most original and personal perspective of her is that on motherhood. From early Poems to the novel and mostly in the late poems, motherhood is represented in many ways but distinctly. Almost her poems have the image of the children in different forms as Dobbs justifies “domesticity is an ultimate concern” for Plath. She has complex and ambivalent attitude toward motherhood, which reveals suffering with powerful and original images and diction. Focusing on this concept of Plath, Dobbs writes the article, “Viciousness in the kitchen: Sylvia Plath’s Domestic Poetry” that, “Plath’s life and her writings are filled with anxiety and despair over her refusal to choose and instead to try to have what most males consider their birthright-bath . . . her commitment to domesticity, especially motherhood, was ambivalent” (3).

In Plath’s view, her poems are her children, as she reproduces them and children are her poems as she creates them. Both are interrelate but not separable. In Plath’s brief essay entitled *Context*, she says, “My poems . . . about a child forming itself finger by finger in the dark. For me, the real issue of our time is the issues of every time-the hurt and wonder of loving; making in all its forms children, loaves of breads, paintings, buildings . . . The unicorn thing-a real poem . . .” (58).

As a modern poet, Plath tries to leave the traditional mother behind and introduces a modern mother who is far different from the previous one who is indifferent to the children. Her poems lack interest in pregnancy, childbirth and mothering. The mother in her works do not enjoy with such experiences rather she remains indifferent towards them and wishes for the liberation. Waston clarifies the frustration of the modern mother and says, “. . . women were more and more limited in the joys and frustration of motherhood. It was a transition that brought tension to everyone, men, women and children alike”(32).

The modern mothers are tired and exhausted by the time consuming job of tending children. Until twentieth century, they are also confined within home, so they see new opportunities in liberation and they seek for it. Plath, through her poetry tries to seek the same

freedom from the family ties, which disturbs her frequently. The change in different levels of society, politics and her personal life influence her to create such poetry, which resemble the contemporary problems. She is angry at the problem of domination of male culture, tradition and the burden of children. In the beginning of her writing career, she was inspired by the male ideology as a tool to revolt against male domination by breaking the conventional patriarchal model who wants to see woman 'a true woman' and who must accept herself as the "Other". Woman is capable of the total love of her lover, she is deep richness, a warm sting but she should give up all the personal transcendence and continue that of her male. In a sense woman is 'mysterious' from the point of view of other because they have very complex psychological nature and unable to penetrate the special experiences on pregnancy, menstruation and childbirth. Therefore, they hide their social feelings, so the women are mostly ignored and misinterpreted by men. But as a scholar and a feminist, Plath chooses the domestic subject matter which was necessary to select such subjects and those experiences and the emotions of women in order to revolt against the traditional concept of motherhood.

Maternal love is of crucial importance for the children. The children wish to remain with the mother and expect the warmth. Men too need the females for their physical and moral support. But what is the wish of the mother or woman is never viewed. Chodorow clarifies the responsibilities of woman or mother, in the book, *The Reproduction of Mothering* and writes:

. . . women not only bear children, they also take the primary responsibilities of care, spending more time with the infants and children and sustain primary emotional ties with infants . . . women mothering is one of the few universal and enduring elements. Women's mothering is of profound importance for the family structure, for ideology about women . . . it is rarely analyzed (3).

Sylvia Plath is exhausted by such traditional concept and tries to come out of it. For Plath, stereotypical motherhood and glorifying in mothering is sacrificing her individuality which is not

lesser than death. Dobbs writes, “Childbirth is a kind of martyrdom. A woman dies when she bears a child and she continues to die as the child feels literally and metaphorically on her”(4). Plath also dies many times in the course of mothering. In the article “Accessing Sylvia Plath’s Poetry”, Dubois also presents the similar view and writes, “In the course of mothering, she has to sacrifice her career, where her feelings “Living with her was like living with my own coffin” suggests that she tries to get rid of the children’s nurturing and caring” (30).

Though she acknowledges the positive aspect of mothering in few of her poems like *Child, Manor Garden, Balloon* ect, even that sentiment is guided by loss. Thus her poetry presents the concept of motherhood as one defined by the loss, the loss of physical beauty, the loss of free time and the loss of one’s identity. Mostly in her later poems, she has dark images, which are full of anger and disgust. Plath has exposed the feeling of detachment and bewilderment in the poems like "Edge", and "Kindness" where her feelings- “I am no more your mother/than the cloud that distils the mirror to reflects own slow” suggests her alienation and the loss of individuality. In the poem "Morning Song", she compares the child with the inanimate objects like the watch and the like. However, in the final part of the poem she seems somewhat passionate towards the child but that love was not the natural maternal love rather guided by reason.

Plath tries to overcome from the fears created by the fears created by the loss of individuality eclipsed through maternity. Noticing the strength to overcome from such threats Nehring writes in the article, “Domesticated Goddess”, "It is Plath’s greatest strength that she tells us in the poetry not only what is nice but also what is true and what can be true. She shows not only woman’s selfless delight in her infant but also her fear of being upstaged, eclipsed , by maternity turned into an absurd instrument of biology, a means, a stage, a cow in calf, as she puts it in *Metaphors (7)*" .

Plath has uttered private grieves which are involved in mothering. Her difficulties in bearing, nursing the children manifest tiresome and indifferent nature of a mother. Her poems lack the important value of the children. She has not shown any kind of happiness for the arrival of newly born child. Children are unconcerned and uninterested parts of her life. She could never enjoy with it and compares birth with death. The speaker's pregnancy is the subject matter of the poems like "Dark house", "Metaphors" and "Manor Garden" present motherhood as monstrous as the child is for her. *Tulips* also describe mother's feelings towards the child but in the negative tone. She compares the baby with tulips "like an awful baby", she wants to reject them because she says, and "they eat my oxygen".

In this way, Plath wants to get rid of the children and the trap of the family rules. So the feminist Plath wants to attain full freedom from the suppression. The poet's inner psyche and the influence of the contemporary busy life of the mothers and the lack of the maternal love in her personal life holds the unusual portrayal of motherhood. Moreover, Plath attempts for the liberation, which makes her an indifferent mother in the modern society.

Plath: A Modern Feminist

The twentieth century modern women have a great option whether to choose her career or to be a mother. Both could not go side by side. Even to choose the career was risk along with the family duties. Among them, Sylvia Plath is one who wanted to be a successful poet as well as a mother at the same time but not succeeded. Before being a mother, Plath was managing her career and was nurturing the children and the husband but when she had the responsibilities of the mother, she gradually faced the problems. Plath could not handle finally and choose her career. It does not mean that she rejected her role of the mother but she focused more for her career and less to the children. Therefore, her writings are filled with the sense of modern feminism. It develops the new concept on motherhood, the indifferent and modern mother who is modified from the traditional concept. Plath is remembered as one of the renounced feminist in

the modernist literature. Haralson in *Encyclopedia of American Poetry: The Twentieth Century* views:

Feminist criticism has also claimed Plath as a forerunner, someone who was acutely aware of the limitations placed on woman just before the storm broke. She wrote at the time when the storm broke. She wrote at the time when the feminist statements were beginning to be made but she did not intensify with the downing movement. She began to write when the great modernists were still alive, mostly looming male presence whose influence must have reinforced her belief that the literary world all but closed to women.(566)

Though her life and her reputation have been marked by her mental illness, her writings are the explorations of the patriarchal and conservative world. After the separation with the husband Ted Hughes, and the burden of the two children and the financial problems lead Plath towards death. In fact, she was murdered by the male domination and its suffocation. After being mother and with the women's liberation of 1960s, Plath appeared with the different themes though she used the common subject matters. Her later works are full of the sense of motherhood. She did not like to limit herself within the four walls of the house. She began to give more importance to the writings than her children and her family. She did so because she was living in the age that emphasized personal happiness.

Like other modern feminists, Sylvia Plath emphasized on the freedom and individuality rather than equality with the males. She blurred the concept of the traditional motherhood that, only with the nurturing and the proper bearing of the children, a woman can acquire her own identity and the 'self'. Her want of liberation from the domestic ties is reflected through the novel and poetry. Plath has taken the universal and the common issues like suicide, motherhood and nature, which were unavoidable issues of her period. So she is considered as modern feminist poet. Bundtzen in *Plath's Incarnations: Woman and Creative process* says that,

“. . . many feminists regard feminism as a grass-room movement that seeks to loss boundaries based on social class, race, culture and religion. They also argue that an effective feminist movement should address the universal theme.” (9)

Even though, she has taken the universal themes, she has presented them in the distinct way in comparison to her contemporaries like Anne Saxton. She sees the art in death that no one had even imagined too. So finally, she does suicide in order to experience the pleasure of art that she sees in death. Except the theme of motherhood, suicide and nature, we can see the mythologies which are beautifully presented. "Daddy", "Lady Lazarus", "Ariel" are examples of it.

The only novel *The Bell Jar* and almost of her poems carry the personal failure, mental illness and breakdown and alienation which were the contemporary problems of the era of great depression developed by the World War I. Haralson says, “. . . the work of Plath and Saxton –may in fact be apart of larger shift in American culture and poetry in the decades after the World War, a shift that in compassed the Beats as well as the explosion of new writing gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. . . (550)”.

The modernist writers have the tendency to exploit myth. Plath has also done the same in her works. For instance, in “Lady Lazarus”, she has feminized the male myth. To promote the theme of motherhood, she has assisted images and symbols. The breakdown from the past and stand herself with the innovative views can be considered as the outflow of a modern writer’s mind. The experimentation of the innovative techniques, the departure from the standard ways of representation, the violation of traditional syntaxes are some of the modernist techniques that she obtains. So she is undoubtedly a modern feminist writer and she holds all these modernist techniques in order to raise the issue of feminism. So, she is a modern feminist.

Plath is a woman, a wife, a mother and more a feminist writer of the twentieth century. Her essays, a novel and her poetry are the concretized flow of her feminist concept.

Feminism is rarely noticed and discussed directly in her work but we analyze them from feminist point of view, we can explore it, concerning the feminist voice in Plath's writings, Showalter in *Towards a Feminist Poetics* says:

Many women literature in the past dealt with 'metro phobia' or the fearing of becoming one's mother. In Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* for examples, the heroine's mother is the target for the novel's most punishing contempt. When Ester announces to her therapist that she hated her mother, she is on the road to recovery. Hating one's mother was the feminist enlighten of the 50s and 60s; but it is only metaphor or hating oneself. (1230)

In her only novel *The Bell Jar*, Plath reveals the modern feminist view with the help of her major character, Esther. Through it, Plath satirizes on the domestic ideology. Plath is considered as modern feminist poet. The most popular "Ariel" shows her vision of what she attempted in her poetry and her life. Plath has presented pregnancy as a disgusting experience through "Metaphor", has shown mother as an escapist in "Tulips", has attempted to transcend the singularity of existence through Edge and presentation of the sense of alienation and disgust in mothering through "Morning Song" In this way, Plath proves herself as a successful and a martyred modern feminist of this era.

Chapter III

Treatment of Motherhood in Sylvia Plath's Poetry

"Metaphors": Pregnancy as a Disgusting Experience

"Metaphors" is one of the most famous and well known poems of Plath. It was composed around the time of her first pregnancy. Over the nine lines, Plath employs nine metaphors to represent herself and her pregnancy. The dissatisfaction with one's physical self caused by pregnancy is vividly expressed through the lines,

I'm a riddle in nine syllables... (1)

A melon strolling on two tendrils... (3)

I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf... (7)

Boarded the train there's no getting off. (9)

The speaker has self disgusting experience of pregnancy. She has neither any sweet imagination of the forth coming nor feels proud but compares herself with the unattractive images like "an elephant", "a ponderous house", "a melon", and "a cow in calf".

Such comparison does not show any positive feelings towards pregnancy. In the article "Assessing Sylvia Plath's Poetry", Dubois discusses the dissatisfaction of the pregnant speaker to state experience. As he writes:

By referring to herself as "Cow-heavy", Plath reveals her disgust with her physical self, brought about by the weight gain typically associated with pregnancy. The speaker describes herself as "an elephant", "a ponderous house"/A melon strolling on two tendrils, and "a cow in calf". None of these images used to describe the pregnant speaker are positive in implication.(2)

The sense of self-disgust is created by the physical alterations and the changes in the life style which are brought by pregnancy. The speaker, a pregnant woman, loses her physical

beauty because of pregnancy. The changes are unavoidable and irrevocable. Plath addresses the state of irrevocability by stating:

I'm a riddle in nine syllables, (1)
 I've eaten a bag of green apples,
 Boarded the train there is no getting off. (8-9)

By supporting the concept of irrevocability Dubois compares the state of being mother similar to the boarding of a train which guides woman into a predestined role of motherhood. He writes, “. . . by comparing her pregnancy to the boarding train, the speaker furthers the notion of motherhood as inescapable: a train travels down linear rails, and bears its rider to predetermined destination, just as motherhood guides a woman into predestined role”(2).

Pregnancy is totally new, strange and odd experience for the speaker. In *Plath's Incarnation*, Bundtzen writes, “Plath has coined lots of metaphors for both experiences of a pregnancy and of foetus. Her images capture this new strangeness how odd it must seem for the mother who carried the baby in her body for nine months”. (228) In fact Bundtzen shows the negative concept of Plath towards children.

In “Metaphors”, Plath has played metaphysical game with the referent, a pregnant woman, with series of images. For Plath new coming baby is “red fruit”, “ivory”, “fine timbers” “loaf” and “calf” whereas pregnant woman is “an elephant”, “a ponderous house”, “a melon”, “a cow” and “a stage”. The profusion of metaphorical images in “Metaphors” seems ironically disconnected but they suggest genuine metaphorical connection. The vivid metaphors for the heavy condition of a pregnant and developing foetus inside the womb enhance one another and thus create poetic quality.

Such metaphors reveal the degree of mental stress over the maternal conditions which indicate that motherhood may be something indifferent. The strong dislike of the speaker for

the heaviness of her body is discussed by Dobbs, “Several of Plath’s poems about pregnancy and motherhood . . . play a metaphorical game: the referent (the foetus child or the pregnant woman) is described through a series of images. In “Metaphors” the pregnant woman is “a riddle in nine syllables/An elephant, a ponderous house.” (6)

It seems significant that she could not deal with maternity or babies in positive or hopeful manner. The poem, thus, reminds us about the frustration at the experience of pregnancy. The speaker has self disgusting feelings.

In spite of disliking, poetic persona is compelled to face predestined role of mother. As she “boarded the train there’s no getting off.” So that Plath’s mother persona is different from stereotypical adoring, loving, and caring mother. As she states, “O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers! /This loaf’s big with its yeasty rising” (4-5), she introduces an indifferent mother who doesn’t want to take the responsibility of mother and wants to be detached from it. So, Plath’s selection of images is suitable for the revelation of the concept of pregnancy which is self-disgusting one.

To bring new concept on motherhood Plath has violated traditional soft, fine soothing imagery by replacing with surreal images. Comparing her verse with the strongest brew Nehring writes:

. . . her poetry might not have made the grade without the violence in its history. Her poetry as much I’m concerned is some of the most starkly gorgeous and audacious of all time, the gift for metaphor is unsurpassed in modern literature: and her honesty is rearing, hard-own, and precise. If we could bottle her verse, it would be the strongest brew in the bar. (2)

“Metaphors” is composed of a number of metaphors. It is also rich in alliteration and assonance which generate purely aesthetic pleasure in sound. Plath has used the metaphors to create just opposite effect for the mood of a pregnant woman. More than that, each line is

end- stopped that makes each line a tight unit of thought. So, every line conveys a complete thought. Here, Plath's use of end –stopped lines achieve negative effect to support the brooding mood of a mother who is about to bear a child.

We do not get glorification and joy in the state of being mother. The poet is dissatisfied with the loss of her physical beauty due to heaviness. It indicates the loss of creativity as Dobbs says-“Plath fear of procreativity was, in large part, a fear of a resultant loss of creativity (6)”. Plath's such portrayal of image of motherhood in “Metaphors” gives new insight to the modern women to think what they are. Procreativity is dominating female's creativity so that Plath has created a disgusting situation of a pregnant woman.

"Tulips": Mother as an Escapist

Plath's portrayal of motherhood in Tulips is quite different. Here, Plath has created a person who tries to escape from her domestic roles and likes to remain in her own world. “Tulips” are taken as fragile objects but here Plath empowers them by comparing with the baby that is destructive and awful to her. The poem “Tulips” represents mother as an escapist and concentrates on a single object ‘tulips’ which “eat my oxygen”.

The poem is full of calm images and as the poem develops, the tone also changes into harshness. The speaker, who is lying in hospital, feels immense peacefulness, having given up all her responsibilities, identity and connection to the world. Lying quietly on the bed shows the speaker's denial of her duties.

Look how white everything is, how quiet . . .

. . . peacefulness, lying by myself quietly (2-3)

I am nobody: I have nothing to do . . . (5)

In spite of the coldness of the winter the speaker is quiet and in pleasant mood. “Tulips” are presented as snow white, quiet and exciting which has created peaceful environment in the beginning of the lines. But such pleasant images are twisted and

introduced something awful and monstrous. This peacefulness is disrupted by the red tulips, which is given by her husband, invading her privacy and feeling of detachment from the world.

The tulips are too red in the first place, they hurt me.

. . . I could hear them breathe

. . . like an awful baby. (36-37)

The speaker does not like the disturbance created by the presence of tulips. She wants to remain in her world, the world of individuality from which she will be able to fulfill her desires. This is why she is so angry at the invasion of the tulips which stops her not to enter in her new world, the world that is different from her domestic world and the world which she has created temporarily. So she doesn't want to be limited in such activities and tries to get rid of them—"My body is a pebble to them". By attacking even the nature of her husband and the child Plath makes this idea clear.

"My husband and child smiling out of the family photo;

Their smiles catch onto my skin, little smiling hooks. (20-21)

The speaker desires to go away from the smiles of husband and the child. That sort of happiness pulls her inside the boundary. She is tired of family burden. Their smiles hurt her she sees herself "flat, ridiculous, a cut-paper shadow" and compares with "a thirty-year-old cargo boat". Old cargo boat symbolizes the burden which she is holding for thirty years. So she says "efface myself" from which we can find that she can load off her burden. In this way, a mother speaker tries to escape by keeping "them" "behind bars".

In the later part of the poem, Plath compares her baby with tulips. For Plath red tulips are like an awful baby. So she rejects them because she says "they eat my oxygen". As she rejects them she wishes to be out of them. Actually, to be free she has rejected the gift tulips given by her husband. Plath shows her rejection of the gift from the lines,

I didn't want any flowers, I only wanted
 To lie with my hands turned up and utterly empty
 How free it is, you have no idea how free-
 The peacefulness is so big that it dazes you, (29-32)

Her desire for peacefulness is shown by Dobbs. He says, "Actually she wants gift-gift of death, not tulips. So she rejects the gifts of tulips because she finds freedom, a kind of perfection in rejection of the gift. (4)".

Her freedom is new and terrible at the same time because it costs so high. For it, the mother must give up her children who took on to her. But as a cruel mother she is ready to give up all for her freedom-"The tulips should be behind bars like dangerous animals" (58). The image of a "awful baby" is ridiculous which is compared with red tulips that "hurt" her. This signifies total rejection of the child in her life. Plath's such annoyance towards children is discussed by Nehring in *Domesticated Goddess* as, "Ted's bringing her tulips when she was in the hospital... the flowers "hurt" her. They are "dangerous animals": the smiles of the speaker's husband and child "Catch onto my skin" like the smiling hooks" (5).

With the comparison of the baby with tulips, Plath personifies the tulips as,

. . . I could hear them breath . . . (37)

Their redness talks to my wound (39)

. . . now I am watched. (43)

She blames them for consuming her oxygen and choking her. "Too red" tulips hurt her and she could hear the breath which is compared with baby's breath that is "awful" to her. It shows the excessive hatred toward her child. Similarly "Redness" of tulips is compared with the unnatural skin of the baby. Such dislike towards red color symbolizes the rejection of the body and the foetus which upsets her and finds very complex describe.

These redness talks to my wound . . .

They are subtle: them seem to float . . .

Upsetting me wit their sudden tongues and their color. (39-41)

From the comparison of the baby with tulips, Plath has revealed her regret for having baby. The presence of child there is fuss everywhere and from it the calmness is disrupted with loud noise. It is revealed through the lines below,

Before they came the air was calm enough

Coming and going, breath by breath, without fuss.

Then the tulips filled it up like a loud noise. (50-52)

In fact, Plath is tired of the time consuming task of nurturing the child, “they concentrate my attention” (55), she gets no time for the creation and to live in her world so she wants to keep them aside- the tulips should be behind bars like dangerous animals” (58) because “they eat my oxygen” like an “African cat” present her inner psyche. So that she wants to escape from her child and also her family ties. As she realizes and recognizes her hook to keep her back she wishes to escape by setting herself free. In *Dying in an Art Steiner* explores Plath’s principal realization by saying, “The brokenness so sharply feminine and contemporary is, I think, her principal realization” (330).

My patent leather overnight case like a black pill box,

My husband and child smiling out of the family photo:

Their smiles catch onto my skin, little smiling hooks. (19-21)

The rejection of tulips and the disliking of the child smiling signifies her mentality to get relief from mothering. She is fed up with “child smiling”, “awful baby”, “thirty-year-old cargo boat”, “rust red engine” and “African cat” and desires to be emptied. It suggests her escapist mature through which she gets her freedom.

On the other hand, Plath’s choice of white and red color in “Tulips” creates contradiction to symbolize the peaceful and disturbing notion of her life. Here in “Tulips”,

her spirit is oppressed by the red color. As red tulips appear in her life, she totally rejects them and cries for freedom which leads her to search her identity in isolation. The search for individuality and self assertion is clarified by Bundtzen in *Plath's Incarnation: Women and Creative Process* Bundtzen says, “. . . use of different colors-are unruly (difficult to control or manage), emotionally disturbing and associated with individuality and self assertion (166)”.

The spatial setting, of the hospital where Plath had miscarriage, plays a vital role in the detachment with the child. Similarly, the use of punctuation in the middle of the lines almost holds back the overflowing of bitterness created by child. The use of similes, dark metaphors, unique and original symbols assonance and alliteration also enhance the theme.

"Kindness": An Indifferent Mother

“Kindness” is the poem written in the later part of Plath’s life which deals with the subject matter of mother-child relationship. In this poem, Plath has introduced an indifferent mother who is unconcerned with her children. Though the poem exposes the positive feelings towards children, negativity is dominant and where soothing mother absent.

The beginning line, “Kindness glides about my house” (1) refers to the problem which Plath has discussed in the rest of the lines. Though the poem seems simple it has different various meanings. Plath further clarifies her concept from second line coining the symbol- “Dame kindness”. It suggests “Dame Kindness” is responsible to glide every wishes of modern mother. Dame kindness is traditional mother who soothes over the domestic problems sweetly. Bundtzen explores stereotypical mother in “Dame Kindness” as, “Dame Kindness . . . is female stereotype for the good little house-wife-sugar and spice and everything nice. She smoothes over domestic problems with her sweet disposition" (6).

In “Kindness” the speaker is an indifferent mother who rejects the motion of stereotypical mother who sees children’s smiles everywhere “In the windows the mirrors/Are filling with smiles” (4-5) In the contrary Plath sees the slippage of the house because of

“Kindness”. By supporting the concept of Bundtzen, Haralson writes, "Dame Kindness has tenderness, warmth nourishment, mutuality. Comes from mother . . . represents an inner self-reproach. She is an allegorical figure reminding the poet of the claims of motherhood: “what is so real as the cry of a child?”(567).

For stereotypical mother the cry of a child is so real who finds nothing as real as child’s cry. It is so mild that the speaker finds rabbit’s cry wilder in comparison. This kind of nurturing mother is not appreciated by the poet. Plath who says, “But it has no soul.” Here “it” refers to stereotypical mother. For Plath, the stereotypical mother has no soul of her own who exists for her children not for herself. She has no identity and does not like to be limited within family and children.

In “Kindness”, Plath doesn’t agree in the expressions like, “Sugar can cure everything”/ “sugar is necessary fluid” /and “Its crystals a little poultice” (9-13) Plath doesn’t believe this. These are only notions of traditional mothers who have no soul. The speaker scares in “Sweetly picking up pieces!” (13). Here the speaker accepts the positive aspects in the presence of children. But there is not any merry making and glorification in the children’s smile and soothing of stereotypical mother. The speaker has no interest in such acts. She neglects even child’s cry.

Sugar can cure everything, so kindness says,

Sugar is a necessary fluid,

Its crystals a little poultice.

O kindness, kindness

Sweetly picking up pieces! (9-13)

Plath has described the stereotypical mother vividly by coining different images. The traditional mother wears “a ring of blue and red jewels”, “Japanese silks” decorated with

“butterflies” which anesthetized her as Plath believes. But it does not affect her who lacks interest in them which are spoken through the lines,

The blue and red jewels of her rings smoke (3)

My Japanese silks, desperate butterflies

May be printed any minute, anesthetized (14-15)

Biographical information- tells us that Ted’s arrival with a hot cup of tea-in the final stanza signifies the interruption in the process of writing by her husband and children. Even though she accepts two children are two roses for her but the blood of her body is poetry without which she can not exist. So, she rejects the disturbance in her process of creativity.

And here you come, with a cup of tea

Wreathed in steam.

The blood jet is poetry

There is no stopping it.

You hand me two children, two roses. (16-20)

In “Kindness”, Plath poses the situation -Ted’s act of treachery to her and the children. Really it is the result of treachery but it forces Plath to act as Ted. In other words, “Kindness” is also Plath’s treachery to her children. She is indifferent towards her children as if she had not any responsibility of a mother. She gives more priority to her poetry- “The blood jet is poetry”- and “Sugar” in only “a little poultice” soothes a little but not equally important like blood. This concept reveals Plath’s wish to live in the present not in the past as a stereotypical mother.

With the use of simple language along with images of softness, Plath explores her concept of unloading burden of children for the sake of her career. It also shows Plath’s compulsion who does not have enough time to be the perfect mother because she has to create her ‘self’, in the world of poetry. The comparison of her two children with “two roses”

and “rabbit” shows the fragility of such creatures mark lack of feelings towards them. Indifferently, Plath has not shown any sense of attachment towards children.

Each longest line of all stanzas holds weighty idea of the poem which the concept is clearly known. Similarly end stopped lines too hold right idea within them. The symbols like “Dame Kindness”, “rabbit”, “sugar”, “Japanese silks”, “butterflies” and “roses” are justified by its use; though they seem positive but here in “Kindness”, Plath has twisted some of them and used in her own original way to create the detached mood of indifferent mother.

“Edge”: An attempt to Transcend the Singularity of Existence

“Edge” is the final poem of Plath written just before her death. It is about an attempt to transcend the singularity of existence. Here, Plath has presented a strong mother who sacrifices her children because she doesn’t like to live in illusion. It is a cry for freedom in which a mother wants to take back the gift of freedom and wishes to go away from the hook. In “Edge” transcendence is achieved at one’s expense.

Plath has created a situation where her poetic persona is in the edge of life and death. The speaker wants to cross the edge so she sees “smile of accomplishment” in dead body. Though it is highly interpreted as a suicide note, it centers on domestic situation. The speaker, here, asks permission to cross the edge, for her death, with her children after reclaiming them with her flesh. According to Lanro, “Edge” is a poem, “. . . about a woman who, by virtue of the act of reclaiming her children with her flesh gains permission to die. It beings “the woman is perfected” and she is made complete by the action of incorporating her children back into her body” (153).

The speaker is tired of waiting “a Greek necessity” which results “illusion” and “Flows in the scrolls of her toga”. Her dreams, wishes and wants slip away before the achievement, so some mother says “it is over”. She wants to transcend herself. But to

transcend her there is not anyway except the scarification of the children. And finally she decided the abandonment of motherhood for the sake of selfhood.

The illusion of a Greek necessity

Flows in the scrolls of her toga,

Her bare

Feet seem to be saying:

We have come so far, it is over. (4-8)

Thus Plath tries to escape from the maternal responsibility as she was a single parent to tend her children. Being brave, she wants to take back the gift of freedom and eager to come out from the trappings of the children. Here, mother figure has neither love nor affection towards her children rather she is concerned for her own sake. It shows mother has no relationship with her children as if she was not their mother. “A white serpent” symbolizes the cruelty over her children. As a traditional mother, she is not ready to sacrifice herself rather she wants scarification of her children.

The speaker as an escapist mother reverses her maternal responsibilities; she is not ready to hold the burden any more. So that she forgets the duties of a mother which must be pure and true. Plath’s reversal views on maternal functions are discussed by Dobbs who says, “In *Edge*, the mother proudly takes back the gift of herself: “the woman is perfected” because she has reversed her maternal functions.” (7)

Each dead child coiled, a white serpent

One at each little

Pitcher of miles now empty

She has folded

Them back into her body . . . (9-13)

By incorporating two children into her womb, she pretends to take back the gift of freedom. After this attempt she is get rid of motherly responsibilities. In this way Plath attempts to transcend the singularity of existence, now she only exists which explores through the lines,

Pitcher of milk, now empty.

She has folded

Them back into her body as petals

Of a rose . . . (11-14)

“Milk” symbolizes mother’s true and pure love towards her children -“pitcher of milk, now empty” (11)- refers the love , affection and devotion of the mother towards the children is emptied. The speaker reveals that she takes them back into her body “When the garden/ Stiffens and odors bleed” (14-15). Here Plath compares the mother’s body as “a petals of rose” and “garden” is the society where she is living in. In fact it “stiffens and odors bleed” of garden” is the cause of incorporation.

Them back into her body as petals

Of a rose close when the garden

Stiffens and odors bleed (13-15)

In this way Plath blames the male dominated society as of the cause scarification of her self. Comparing the female body with “rose” of the garden, she tries to show the fragility of motherhood is dominated by male society. But, here mother persona is not weak and fragile but strong and able to bear any hardships in her life. She dares to incorporate her children back into her body though there is threat of the society. She doesn’t care whatever society responses her and acts against her.

The moon has nothing to be sad about

Sharing from her hood of bone.

She is used to this sort of thing

Her blacks crackle and drag. (17-20)

By personifying the moon, Plath has created vivid explanation of murdering. The only one eyewitness of the murdering is “the moon”, detached goddess neither complains nor becomes sad with the cruel activity of the mother because “she is used to “with “this sort of thing”. In this way the speaker does not care who ever notices her activities and continues the activity to achieve her goal. Her goal is to be free and to get freedom from the burden of children. So, artistically she incorporates her children without hurting into “rose petals” and liberates herself.

Thus she proves herself a strong mother who dares to get freedom from her children and transcend her singularity of existence. Here is not any sense of lamentation for death and murder of her children but a brave mother “wears the smile of accomplishment.” She thinks her act is not new in the society so moon is not sad for it. She thinks it must be acceptable. From the ending lines Plath shows the possibility of transcendence which is gained by one’s expense. “The woman is perfected” is the beginning line the whole poem concentrates. Bundtzen sees Plath’s strength and newly achieved emotional freedom in “Edge” as he writes:

For Plath, art is a physical elation. A new sense of the freedom of her body: these poems are filled with metaphors of flight, assertion, and transubstantiation into new states of being. Plath has destructed stereotypical motions of mothering but also recreated the new concept. Here she unpeels the child’s cry to destroy, reject or rebel against old selves and old loves. These new abilities are ‘brilliant negative’ but Plath fuses the brilliant negative with an event more ‘brilliant affirmation’ of her creative powers. (34)

With the detached point of view, Plath gains her wish to cross the edge. From the comparison of her body with the rose of the garden, Plath explores her attachment towards her body. The images like “coiled dead child”, “a white serpent”, “moon” show detachment towards children as well as to society. As a result she easily can step over the edge. Although the setting is in domestic, the mood is full of despair and tragic. The selection of the images, symbols, and metaphors create sad mood in the poem. The images like “dead body” of woman and children, the coilage of dead child, crackling and dragging act of moon; “black moon”, “a white serpent”, “empty pitcher”, “stiffens and odors bleed” create coldness and lifeless atmosphere in the poem.

“Rose” is the traditional symbol which symbolizes beauty, love, fragility, delicacy, but here in “Edge” Plath has turned it to her own original use to signify women’s body. The choice of rose as a symbol for mother’s womb symbolizes the strength of motherhood which can both bear the children and also take them back into the womb without hurting and damaging them. To release from the burden of children Plath has linked images of softness with dark images. “Pitcher milk”, “scrolls”, “toga”, “a rose of the garden”, “a moon” are linked with the images of hardness and emptiness where pitcher of milk is empty. Greek necessity flows in the scrolls of her toga, the garden of rose stiffens and odors bleed and moon has its darker side “blacks” remains silent in the murder of the children. The indifference nature of moon-“the moon has nothing to be sad about”- creates coldness and lifeless atmosphere in the poem. The states of being- softness and hardness, steadiness and process- play an important role in shift of mood from paralysis to release. Similarly, besides the state of being soft and hard, Plath has shown the state of steady and everything in the like ‘process’ of illusion, folding back of babies, moon’s staring signify in the poem.

For the singular existence, Plath has created a bold mother persona in “Edge” with the violation in traditional theme on motherhood forms as well. Here, the traditional stanza

pattern “spilt couplet” is broken by inserting off rhyming patterns. Similarly the broken syntax, run-on –lines, the use of assonance and alliterations with dark images and metaphors are dominant in the poem where unusual pauses and arrangements of words have violated traditional rules, notions and concepts to create dark mood and for proper cohesion. The poem is overall the struggle of Plath to create beautiful self in a new world.

"Morning Song": Alienation in Mothering

In “Morning Song”, Plath reveals her negative concept towards mothering. For her, mothering is futile and self-depleting task. "Morning Song" is the famous poem which is composed after giving birth to the daughter Frieda. Her aversion to the new-borne baby instead of motherly passion is vividly depicted in this poem. Plath has created a poetic persona who is not only unable to love her newly born baby but also dislikes and feels different from the traditional mother.

The poem begins from the development of the foetus. The speaker hints at how the foetus grew bigger in the womb. But when mother actually gets, the child, she does not feel any love at all. The beginning lines depict the absence of mother's love.

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.

The midwife slapped your soles and your bald cry

Took its place among the elements. (1-3)

The very beginning feelings towards child contains surrealistic images like "gold watch" directly shows the oddity and alienation that the mother felt when she have to faced with the infant out of own body.

Plath is honest to confess her feelings of alienation and separation through "Morning Song". The images like "god watch", thing ness of "it", and 'bald cry" underline the feeling of strangeness. Such surreal images and comparisons are functional to emphasize the sense of oddity and alienation. Child's cry is "bald cry" which is totally opposite to stereotypical

mother's notion as mother does not rush to feed. Plath has avoided traditional images and emotions to depict the sense of alienation. Even "love" is used to link the image "gold watch" of baby has negative tone and the newly born infant is a thing- "it", not a living thing. Generally mother regards her child 'igolden thing' and valuable thing but the joining of the word 'gold' with 'watch' shows an opposite and valueless.

"Morning Song" not only depicts alienation in mothering but also shows alienation in parenting. The parents can only "stand round blankly as walls" in response to this new being. There is no hurry in grasping and loving the child. Their voices "echo", they feel odd in "nakedness', the child is like a statue, the statue" of the "museum" which may be looked through glass from distance, but not to touch. The feelings of detachment and alienations are spoken by the lines,

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue
 In a drafty museum, your nakedness
 Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls. (4-6)

In the second stanza, the mother has the courage to confess that she didn't feel like being a mother. The detachment towards child of Plath is interpreted by Bundtzen:

They adults, can only "stand round blankly as walls". . . else ooh and aah,
 "magnifying your arrival". At first, the baby is one more "new statue" a new
 work of the mother's art, in the "drafty museum" of the sterile hospital nursery.
 (228)

She uses an odd comparison to describe the feelings. This absurd logic also reinforces the idea that the mother is feeling toward the baby. Plath shows her negative notion towards motherhood as she loses her identity in the course of mothering by the sense of alienation through the lines,

I'm no more your mother

Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow
 Effacement at the wind's hand. (7-9)

The lines above clearly suggest that the speaker cannot take responsibility of mothering; she is no more a mother to the infant than the cloud that effaces with the mind. As a modern mother the speaker shows courage to confess that she does not feel like being a mother to this new thing- "I'm no more your mother/ than the cloud" (7-8).

Dubois manifests the attitude of Plath towards mothering which is like a sacrificial act that is responsible for the loss of self. He writes:

Plath's concept of motherhood as a sacrificial act, resulting in a mother's eventual exhaustion, is reinforced by her poem, "Morning Song". The poem possibly precipitated by the birth of her child, is a piece of conflicted tone, at once heralding the birth of a child into the world and acknowledging the speaker's (mother's) perceived obliteration as an individual . . . This statement betrays negativity in the speaker's attitude towards motherhood; it implies both denial of the duties inherent in motherhood, and a consciousness of the loss of self perceived in the assumption of those duties. (1)

She refers herself "cloud" which signifies her temporary significance in life of her child. The individuality is disappeared by the obligation of motherhood, which is a force beyond her control.

"Morning Song" is entirely negative and downtrodden implication towards motherhood though the speaker feels attachment with the child in the end lines,

You mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square
 Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try
 Your handful of notes;
 The clear vowels rise like balloons. (15-18)

Here, "moth-breath", suggest something -new life and new possibilities; child's mouth is , "clean as a cat's ", child's sound is "clear vowels" which rise "like balloons" possess confident and strength voice of poet to portray new concept on motherhood. In fact it is the miracle of childbirth for a modern mother; it is frightening, uncomfortable and confusing rather than rewarding. Ford sees detachment and alienation of mother rather than love as he says:

As a confessional poet, Plath's "Morning Song" provides us with a complex outburst following childbirth. Plath exposes us to feeling of love, detachment, bewilderment and rejection where her feelings- "I'm no more your mother/ than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow/ effacement at the wind's hand" suggest a clouded alienation and loss of individuality. The traditional image of a new mother is shattered with Plath's evocative image of her stumbling from bed, "cow- heavy" and floral/In my Victorian Nightgown". In every way, Plath feels ridiculous and in both the subject and object of the ridicule . . . though some of her lines seem to be filled with the passionate feelings towards the child, it is no more than the tool to satire. (2)

Since "Morning Song" is also one of the poems to deal the disgusting experienc4s of pregnancy, her final lines of the poem are satirizing motherhood. One of the critics Sarah Juliet Lanro, in the article "The Fruits of Their Labors: the Childbirth Poetry of Plath, Saxton and Loy" says,

. . . poems on pregnancy, Plath reveals the degrees of mental stress over the maternal condition. Though Plath reveals the mere passion, poet's own state of mind often parallels the disconnected images of the time, space, and nature. The ambivalent like feelings in some turnings are no more than the piercing cries of Plath's plagued mind.(51)

The experiences of motherhood help Plath to realize her position and the oppressed condition. The birth of the baby is the birth of new phase of her life and also the death of the valuable time which is killed by the arrival of the child. Plath does not want to sacrifice her life for her child. As Plath herself writes in her journal- "My mother had sacrificed her life for me. A sacrifice I did not want" (26) Plath tries to get her individuality through mothering which depicts from the lines

All night your moth-breath

. . . I wake to listen (10-11)

One cry and I stumble from bed . . . (13)

The dark vision of the domestic life is portrayed by her simple images and metaphors. But they offer alternative meanings. Images and symbols like "gold watch", "bald cry", "new statue", "drafty museum" are doubled nature and they shift one implication to other. Even the silence of the room is as great as "a far sea" in the mother's ear.

The title "Morning Song" reveals the idea of liberation. "Morning Song" welcomes the new day in the life of modern mother. The day is born along with her baby. It is clear from the letters that the domestic relationship which she came to feel was the powerful sources to create the successful works and also the factual causes of her death.

Parenthood affects her self-image which Plath directly speaks-"One cry and I stumble from bed, cow heavy and floral/.in my Victorian nightgown. (13-14). Thus Plath satirizes the Victorian era by coining "Victorian nightgown" as a stereotypical image of traditional mother to manifest newly assumed role of a mother. Clarifying it Dubois writes:

Plath's choice to describe the nightgown of the speaker as "Victorian is not accidentally but instead, further reveals her attitude towards mothering. The Victorian era was one of staunch patriarchal values, and left virtually no room for women to foster individuality or creativity... the nightgown serves as an

exterior manifestation of the speakers newly assumed role as a mother and it accompanying restrains and limitations. (2)

By utilizing her unique and compelling writing, Plath is able to make a statement of alienation on motherhood that is unique to her own artistic vision and contrary to convention. Enjambed lines of the poem too add to portray special poetic quality which matches with thematic quality. To create dark mood of the alienated mother "Morning Song" lacks rhyming patterns. But assonance and alliteration enhance the quality of the poem. Thus by creating lack of sympathy with the detached point of view towards the newly born baby, Plath has presented alienation of a modern mother in "Morning Song"

Mushroom: Child as the Parasite

Mushroom is one of the well known poems by the greatest modern feminist poet Sylvia Plath. It is a symbolic poem in which the growing infant inside the womb of the speaker is compared to Mushroom. Here, the speaker seems to be passing from the experiences of pregnancy. The short stanzas of the poem carry deeper meaning. We can get the exploration of the depression of the speaker because of her pregnancy.

Overnight, very

Whitely, discretely

Very quietly (1-3)

The lines above carry the theme that the speaker came to face with the pregnancy which occurred over nightly, discretely and with the little warnings that the speaker herself was unaware of it.

The fragmented presentation of the parts of the baby's body like toes and nose in the second stanza refers to the child inside the womb which is not yet formed completely or still on the process of formation. Most surprisingly, the speaker seems to that the child so much that she doesn't want a fully formed child and wishes for the abandonment of the baby.

Our toes, our noses
 Take hold on the loam
 Acquire sees us, (4-6)

These lines reflect the need of women's empowerment. 'To acquire the air' also mean the breath of freedom. The speaker makes her argument strong by indicating towards the liberation of the mother. Here the acquirement of the air by the foetus inside makes the speaker aware about her hatred of the baby.

The speaker is terrified about what is growing inside her body. She thinks that the unknown fist that hammers inside is taking over her life as the mushroom takes over everything in the path. Plath realizes that her baby is mushroom for her. Thus the poem is about the imminent birth or the growth of the child in her womb like the growth of mushroom in a dark and airless room.

Stops us, betrays us
 The small grains make room (8-9)

In the above lines, the unawareness of the forthcoming child is shown. 'The small grains make room' refers to the children because the mother is compared with the earth. Child makes room but no space for the woman's identity. Woman's identity is displaced by child's entry.

The pathetic condition of the woman in the contemporary patriarchal society and the need of emancipation are appealed through the poem. The lines below also carry the situation of the females,

Soft fist insist on
 Heaving the needles
 The leafy bedding
 Perfectly voiceless
 Shoulder through holes. (10-14)

These lines reflect the condition of hardworking woman whose labor is ignored and are taken only as 'leafy beddings' for the males. Females are perfectly voiceless and the males pretend to be earless and eyeless. So the hard work of theirs, too have gone in vain. They are only taken as an object of exploitation to calm down the sexual hunger of their male partners.

However the women work so much both on land and water that they even work on the crumbs of their shadow but they are not rewarded rather are empty handed and only get disgusted and punished for taking birth as woman in the society. The lines below present the same theme:

Diet on water

O crumbs of shadow

Bland-mannered asking (15-17)

The speaker presents her hatred to the motherly role because it is the obstacle for her to liberation. She sees the need of woman's movement of liberation and again finally returns to the theme of hatred to the child.

Little or nothing

So many of us

So many of us (18-20)

Here the repetition refers to the time of depression is also repeated. "So many of us" in the lines indicate the number of women who have been suffered from male domination as well as from the repeated painful experiences of pregnancy.

The poem is composed of the eve of the feminist movement. So it can be analyzed as an appeal for the liberation of the females of the contemporary period who were dominated by the patriarchal society. Sarah Juliet Lanro, in the article "The Fruits of Their Labors: the Childbirth Poetry of Plath, Saxton and Loy" says, ". . . for Plath, the slow growth of the foetus inside the womb is comparable with the gradual displacement of self identity"(13).

Plath emphasizes those men, for years have basically ignored women and co modified them. Females are just taken as the stooping stools for them. The following stanza depicts the very thing.

We are shelves, we are
 Tables, we are meek
 We are edible
 Nudgers and shovers
 In spite of ourselves
 Our kind multiplies
 We shall by morning
 Inherit earth
 Our foot in the door (21-29)

Women are considered nothing more than the 'child bearing machine' and co modified like tables and shelves which are merely for the use in the daily life. Here Plath presents women as meek but she is able to generate life inheriting the quality to grow various living beings. In the same manner, mother is capable of bearing children. So, Plath is raising a question and striking a bitter satire by selecting the word 'meek' for women. It is the woman who has the very quality that the earth has. How can she be meek? 'Morning' symbolizes the revolutionary day or the feminist movement whereas the 'meek shall inherit the earth' as suggested by the Bible. Plath brings the Biblical allusion to express her anger against the dominating patriarchal society of the day.

The concluding lines of the poem predict that the feminist movement is going to open the door of opportunity and emancipation. It will cross the obstacles of tradition and responsibility. The "foot at the door" suggest that the women are stepping towards freedom. Plath is trying to stress out that women will keep fighting for equality. The poem reflects the

need of a modern independent mother and arises an issue that the sense of self identity is must for each woman.

"Mushroom" is a positive poem enforcing the power of women. She views that we are getting strong and shall no longer be housewives and 'child bearing machines' that depend upon their husband. It is about how women are becoming independent and revolting against the conventional roles of women. Quite contrary to the male ideology about the traditional mother, she blurs the stereotypical identity attached with the woman by patriarchy and creating an independent identity. Therefore, the baby has been taken as an obstacle on the path of attainment of selfhood because after attaining the role of a typical mother, it is difficult to acquire the identity of 'a woman'. Regarding it, Peter Orr in "A 1962 Sylvia Plath Interview with Peter Orr" writes, ". . . Plath shows a tendency of a modern mother who considers that the children are the impediments for a woman because they resist on gaining the real life and real individual freedom and limit the woman within the boundary of motherhood" (4).

Though the poet doesn't give the complete presentation of the mushroom in the poem, she indirectly compares the growing infant inside the womb with the mushroom. Through the reference of feminist movement, she shows her inner hatred of being a mother. She seems to believe that like mushroom, the infant is unwontedly growing inside the womb and on the way of displacing self identity of the speaker. The repetition of the words, Biblical allusion of 'meek', symbolism, comparison and contrast are the modernist techniques which uplift the modernist theme.

Mirror: Mother's Struggle between Self and Duty

"Mirror" reflects the depressed and the frustrated mood of a young woman who feels herself as an old woman. It is a harsh and quiet unnerving portrayal of a woman's struggle with her inner self. The tone of the poem reveals Plath's troubled status. We should also

mention that this poem is composed three days before her death. She seems to be depressed with her pregnant state which leads her towards depression and ultimately she perceives herself being an option less fellow and finally commits suicide. "Mirror" is the poem through which we can peep into the struggle between Plath's social life and her inner psyche in support to this idea, Karen V Kukil in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* writes:

Through the use of a simple mirror Plath explicates much more than her personal struggle with self-image in which she see the image of her infant too. It is here where we first encounter the struggle between the womanly feeling and the motherly feelings and in the battle of these two the first one wins ultimately. (25)

Though there is no definite word of baby in the poem, however it becomes obvious to the reader that she is talking about an unborn baby. Plath establishes the image of the mirror through the first half of the poem. The poet finds pleasure in the miscarriage or abortion of the baby rather than giving birth which shows her utterly disgusting feelings towards the duty and the sense of motherhood.

To show the disgusting experiences of her own life, Plath presents a poetic persona who exposes the real opinion of the poet herself. Plath's mouthpiece, the woman in the poem is going to give birth to the baby unwontedly. So each lines of the poem are full of the hatred to the upcoming child.

I am a silver and exact. I have no preconception.

Whatever I see, I swallow immediately.

Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike

I am not cruel, only truthful- (1-4)

In these first four lines of the first stanza, the speaker presents her view upon the unexpected arrival of the child. She refuses the child and shows the clear dislike but she still

claims herself truthful rather than the cruel one. Here 'silver and exact' refers to the speaker's silver-like fair and exact opinions. The word 'no preconception' carries the meaning that the speaker was mentally not ready for the upcoming child. She tries to "swallow" the child's identity because she perceives the child as danger. She is justifying that she is not cruel and devoid of love but the conception of the child makes her look at the opposite wall. In the line, "Most of the time I meditate upon the opposite wall (6)", "meditate upon the opposite wall" carries two meanings: one is- the speaker turns her back to the child and expresses her indifference toward the child. Next is the speaker turns to the opposite wall where she gets the reflection of her self-identity in the rejection of the child. The speaker gets closer to the self in meditating upon the opposite wall. The speaker uses the pronoun 'it' in meditating upon the opposite wall. The speaker uses the pronoun 'it' to the child which shows the indifference of the speaker to the child. In the final lines of the first stanza, the speaker says that the child is the part of her heart, she is just satirizing the owning.

I think it is a part of my heart but it flickers.

Faces and darkness separate us over and over. (8-9)

In the lines above, the speaker just has used the expressions of attachments between the child and the mother in the ironic way. 'Darkness' is the negative feeling that separates them. The child is not the source of light and glory but only the means of darkness and gloom for the speaker.

The second stanza of the poem highlights the mental overview of a woman's mind. This part most importantly focuses on the selfhood of the speaker. 'A woman' symbolizes the speaker's inner-self. The speaker is curious and in haste to acquire her identity and woman inside her constantly makes her think about her own identity. As the speaker is troubled by her futile effort in gaining an independent identity, she blames the child for being impediment to achieve her goal.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me

Searching my reaches for what she really is

Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon. (10-12)

In the line above, "lake" symbolizes the moment when the speaker is in the pool of blood while giving birth to the child. "A woman bends over me" means an independent woman inside her bends because of the child or the responsibility of being a mother. The very woman is "searching" the riches that indicate that she is in search of her self. The poet uses the line "turn toward the liars, the candles and the moon" to attack the traditional concept of motherhood and the male society which is deaf to hear the female voice of the modern time.

By getting the child, the speaker gets nothing but just depression, tears and agitation in return. The 'she' inside her punishes the speaker for forgetting the selfhood.

She rewards me with the tears of agitation of hands.

I am important to her. She comes and goes

Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness (14-16)

The "individuality" of the woman "comes and goes". Every morning her face turns "dark" because the child is the cause of her "darkness". With the birth of the child, the young girl feels that everything has been finished in her life. She immediately turns to "a old woman".

In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman

Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish (17-18)

The speaker compares the rise of the child with the rise of the terrible fish in the path of attaining identity. The fish is terrible because it is the enemy of her freedom. The speaker feels detached to the baby. She thinks that "the child is like a terrible fish that rises toward everyday". Probably she means to say that the experiences of pregnancy have to be borne many times in life and she considers this experience as the most terrible one. For her the child only brings her the terrible things in life. After the death of Ted Huges, Plath had to take care

of her children whom she never enjoyed and the same pain is depicted in her works too. In this context, Karen V Kukil again writes:

Plath never took her children as gifts rather ever ignored the duty of being a mother which depicts that she is entirely negligent about the sense of motherhood. Thus the speaker in her *Mirror* is one of the samples of the modern mothers of the modern era who are fully aware of their self-identity and directly revolt for emancipation. (33)

In this way we can claim that "*Mirror*" by Plath is the woman's battle who is confined between the family and the social ties and her need of freedom apart from all the constrains. Plath has used the modernist tropes to uplift her modern theme.

IV. Liberation: Modern Mother's Wish

Sylvia Plath's poetry is the exposition of her concept on motherhood which has of a great influence in the field of feminism. Her poems are the portrayal of the frustration felt by a talented and ambitious young mother. The confession of her tragic life that she explores in the rebellious poems resembles her self reflection. She attempts to establish an equal place with males in a male-dominated society. Further more; her poems are full of images which function at both literal and symbolic level. The images of the female body, children, and their presence in her life are captured for the discussion of motherhood. The influence of children and the family role upon modern mother is shown vividly to protest against the conventional conditions of mother.

Till her time, mother was taken only as the need of children and family. Mother's desires and wishes were never concerned. Along with the women's movement, this concept gradually changed and mothers too began to think about their personal life. As modern mother, Plath is also conscious for her personal life and thinks for her individual existence. As a result, she realized the main cause of women's backwardness is the interruption of children and husband and the role of the mother. Then she attempted to revolt against patriarchy model and tried to find her place in humanity.

The negative concept of Plath regarding motherhood is projected in almost all her poems. None of her poems show mother persona who is busy feeding and comforting her child rather we find echoes of escaping. Her use of images and choice of diction along with symbols depict the suffering in relationship to mother's role and experiences. Some of her poems portray the images of mother not as a producer or creator but as a liberator and escapist. She has also provided an image of indifferent mother with sense of alienation. In fact her poems don't have the world of motherhood but the world of one's own.

She made the women to revolt against the cultural oppression and traditional division of work, a role of mother. To get rid from the children's burden is the main desire of modern mother. Her poems are not for reformation of the society but for the self-reformation. Her poems support directly to feminist movement.

Plath rejected the stereotypical motherhood and identified the modern mother. The expressions like "I am no more your mother" are the most important experiences which reveal her detachment towards her children. Similarly "they eat my oxygen" shows her rage and hatred toward them. "We have come so far, it is over" refers her tiredness in the role of mothering. She is fed up with children. She wants to stop and wishes to choose the way she can walk alone. Plath's lyrics are the verses of lamentation and loss of her personal life. The tragedies include divorce, abortion, miscarriage; experiences like pregnancy, childbirth, depression and she wants to fight against the conventional society. Her poems not only reflect perfection of outer reality but also project her inner reality. Her deeply personal lamentations achieve universality through archetypal symbolism. Viewed as a cathartic response to her divided personal as an artist, mother and wife, Plath's works have been heralded for feminist critics illuminating the personal and professional obstacles faced by women in the mid twentieth century. Female creativity and female literary career is intermingled in the theme of motherhood.

Mother, the poetic persona of her poems like in "Metaphors" and "Morning Song" seems little and passive because of her the burden of the children, where as, "Tulips" and "Edge" introduce a strong rebellious mother with active role. In "Kindness", mother directly opposed the interruption. Experiences and wishes of a modern mother are vividly described in her verses. They focus the newly visible world of female culture. The presence of children is quite irritating and disturbing. Plath rejects the children as the obstacle of her poetic career. For Plath, childbirth is a kind of martyrdom. She dies first in her pregnancy in "Metaphors",

then in childbirth in “Morning song” and continuously dies in the role of mothering in “Tulips”, “kindness” and in “Edge”. She projects thus the rebellious view by projecting the concept of childlessness as a kind of perfection. In “Edge”, the woman is perfect because she has reversed her maternal functions by taking them back into her womb.

Plath reveals her detachment towards children and her attachment for her career as she projects in *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*- “The life of the creative minds first, then the creative body. For the latter is nothing to me without the first. (286)”. Her priority for her career continues till her last creation of her life-in “Edge”. The line, “the blood is poetry” portrays her preference for her poetry. Similarly “Their smiles catch onto my skin” projects her detachment towards children.

Plath demystified the world of mother, and her discomforts of pregnancy, miscarriage, pains of childbirth and their interruption. Though having complex psychological nature, Plath did not remain silent. She further revealed her overall view of mother’s world. Viewing her poems, the concept of motherhood is presented with the sense of alienation, lamentation and frustration which is larger issue.

Plath presented the innovative concept of the womb that is related with motherhood. By folding her children back into her womb, she transformed her womb into a power instrument which produces and also keeps back children safely without hurting them. Thus she challenged the patriarchal power which transforms his penis into an instrument of power to dominate. Similarly, she also penetrated female’s incomparable creativity which is productive and also reproductive and is impossible to men. Plath seems fighting by creating new feminine language by coining the distinct images. Her treatment of modern mother with the help of different sorts of literary troops like new metaphors and symbols is the modernist way to present her unusual concept of motherhood.

Plath artistically played with the simple images but the analysis is found complicated. Every symbol related with motherhood is of doubled nature. Her use of symbols thickens the meaning and makes the work powerful.

Like Virginia Woolf, Plath blamed children who as the obstacles for the production of the brilliant works. Another cause is because of interruption in the lack of their own room and own time. "Kindness" reveals this incident of her life which is directly opposed by the lines, "The blood jet is poetry/ There is no stopping it."

Her poems symbolize the hope for the possibility of new world. In "Morning Song" the title itself; in "Edge", "the smile of accomplishment"; in "Tulips", "the setting hospital having white walls"; and in "Kindness", "there is no stopping it"; represent the new possibility of her new world-wide zone. Plath is tired of mother's duties: "child's cry", "Japanese Silks", "Victorian Nightgown", "their smiles", "moth-breath" and "open mouth" from which she wants to escape to reach "wild zone" in which she is able to fulfill her desires. In this way we can see her anger towards the motherly duties. Unlike her contemporary female writers like Anne Sexton, May Swenson, Mina Loy, Adrienne Rich she neither sacrifices herself for the sake of children nor glorifies rather she wants scarification of her children as shown in "Edge".

Showalter's discussion of the notion that women have a completely different experience and perception from men is visualized in Plath's poems which echo the differences in styles, structure, language, and theme by the use of simple, common and unique language. Her simplicity in her language can be explored from the use of simple diction from the use of simile and simple metaphors in almost all her poems except in her few darker poems.

Plath, as a modernist female has broken the traditional patterns. Reliance on metaphors, which shift from image to image, presents the tensions and confusions of her

single patterning. The arrangements of the short lines and the larger lines in each stanza are weighty in idea. Thus she is a modernist writer who has balanced with her lucid stanzas, clear diction and the use of various literary tropes which enhances her themes on motherhood and the personal experiences of her life.

In this way, Plath has violated the traditional concept on motherhood and attempted to enter in the new world of motherhood. She blurs the traditional concept of a woman that she can acquire her own identity through the establishment of a perfect mother and she further gives preference to the creative mind to the creative body and carries the idea of childlessness. Motherhood, the subject matter of Plath and through her poems she has tried to raise the problem of the contemporary American women to balance the time between the career and the family. Women are struggling with the same issues that Plath struggled with a mid century about how to have rich personal life, the satisfying inner life and how to balance the family duties and the career.

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