A FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS ON SYLVIA PLATH POEMS

FITRI IRYANTI
NO. 103026027624

ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT
LETTERS AND HUMANITIES FACULTY
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
“SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH”
JAKARTA
2010
A FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS ON SYLVIA PLATH

A thesis
Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty
In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Strata 1 (S1) Degree

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ABSTRACT

FITRI IRYANTI, A Figurative Language Analysis on Sylvia Plath Poems. Thesis. English Letters Department, Letters and Humanities Faculty, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta 2010

This research is aimed at taking comprehensive understanding regarding the use of figurative language within the three poems of Sylvia Plath; Mirror, Morning Song, and Metaphors as the object of the research. The method of the research was descriptive qualitative to depict about the content of the poems.

In this research, the writer analyzes the data where the figurative languages are analyzed for their meaning in common sense and with the context of the poems. She also found that Plath uses many varieties of figurative languages there are metaphor, simile, personification, paradox, synecdoche, symbol, and hyperbole.

As the conclusion, the writer found that Sylvia Plath has used figurative language to make an effect in the poems. There were seven lines that contain figurative language in Mirror, there were seven lines that contain figurative language in Morning Song, and there were eleven lines that contain figurative language in Metaphors.
APPROVAL SHEET

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Approved by
Advisor

DANTI PUDJIATI, S.Pd, M.Hum.
NIP. 19731220 199903 2 004

ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTMENT
LETTERS AND HUMANITIES FACULTY
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY
“SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH”
JAKARTA
2010
Name : Fitri Iryanti
Nim : 103026027624
Title : A figurative language analysis on Sylvia Plath Poems

The thesis has been defended before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s Examination committee on June 01 2010. The thesis has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Strata 1 (S1) Degree.

Jakarta, August 10 2010

Examination Committee

Dr. H. Muhammad Farkhan, M.Pd. (Chair person)
19650919 00003 1 002

Drs. Asep Saefuddin, M.Pd. (Secretary)
19640710 199303 1 006

Danti Pudjiati, S.Pd, M.Hum. (Advisor)
19731220 199903 2 004

Drs. Asep Saefuddin, M.Pd. (Examiner I)
19640710 199303 1 006

Elve Oktafiyani, M. Hum. (Examiner II)
19781003 200112 2 002
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or the other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, August 10 2010

Fitri Iryanti
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The writer would like to thank to Allah the One for divine gift of grace. He alone we ask for help, for guidance and everything. He has given the writer many favors. He has allowed the writer to finish this paper. It is a great pleasure for the writer. Praise and peace be upon the Master of the Messengers, the prophet Muhammad SAW. May we always be in straight way until the end of the world.

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Finally, the writer hopes this paper will be useful for the writer herself and for those who are interested in literary research.

Jakarta, August 10 2010

The Writer
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

There is an art in this life, and the art removed to be creation and it is known as a literary. Literature represents a language of people, culture and tradition, but literature is more important than just historical or cultural artifact. Literature introduces us to new world of experience. We learn about books and literature, we enjoy the comedy and tragedy stories and we may even grow through our literary journey with books. Furthermore, literature represents “life” and “life” is in large measure of social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been objects of literary imitation.1 It means the literary is mirror of life because it is related with social reality. According to Nicholas Marsh, literature is about ordinary life, however, and it is written for ordinary readers like you or me, so you must not underrate the value of common sense or ignore the obvious.2

In literature there are some literary works that include: Novel, short story, drama, and poetry. Poetry is one of creative form in literature. It is expression of heart voice and strong feeling that written in beautiful stanza form and expressed with style and motion suitable with the contain so that it is performed and listened


beautifully. Poetry is the imaginative expression of strong feeling, usually rhythmical and the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility.³

Poetry is different from short story or novel, short story or novel is a literary work in history form, poetry is more specific and philosophical than history. Because it usually represents about condition of author’s soul expressed through writing. Poetry was more philosophic than history but it always remained much inferior to philosophy itself, there is more than a touch of superciliousness in his treatment of poetry.⁴ Poetry also contains philosophical messages. The poem that usually poet use to communicate his or her experiences of life, emotions, imaginations, and senses.

One of the genius American poets who is capable of communicating her sense through poem was Sylvia Plath. *Mirror* is one of the poems which exemplify Plath’s ability using her intelligent and sense. At an early age, she began to write poems. She published her first poem when she was eight and by the time she was an experienced writer at age seventeen. Sensitive, intelligent, popular in school, earning straight A’s, winning the best prizes, Plath was best known for her intelligent in school and winning the best prizes. Her sensitivity was inordinate but it was her ability to express it. She was born in Boston, Massachusetts on October 27, 1932 and died in London, February 11, 1963. She

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Sylvia Plath was also famous with her poems which contain the beauty of the words and using her sensitivity to express her imagination feeling. Three of her poems; *Mirror*, *Morning song*, and *Metaphors* are consisting of beautiful diction, sense and figurative language. Therefore, the writer becomes interested in analyzing the figurative language of Plath’s poems. The descriptive words of figurative language has a meaning in senses other than literal, even the words convey precise meaning.

According to Croft figurative language is a symbolic or metaphorical and not meant to be taken literally.6 Perrine says: “figure of speech constitutes any way of saying something other than the ordinary way”.7 It avoids telling

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something directly in order to emphasize its meaning. As it elaborated by Bradford T. Stull in his book Elements of Figurative Language that figurative language is the language that avoids speaking directly or plainly about the subject under examination. Figurative language is also the language that either speaks symbolically about the subject or the language when speaking about the subject.

Actually, all poets use figurative language, whether they know it or not, and in order to read well, we have to recognize it and be aware of its effects. Most figurative languages have a simple purpose. They are to compare something that we are writing about, into the outside piece of writing: imaginative things.

*Mirror, Morning Song,* and *Metaphors* also have deep meaning. In *Mirror,* it tells about the “I” that represents as a mirror and lake. The “I” just reflect the truthful. The influence of the reflection make a woman who looks herself in front of it feels miserable of going old. This poem consists of two stanzas and eighteen lines. Plath uses personification, metaphor, and simile as the figurative language.

*Morning Song* is divided into six stanzas and consisted of eighteen lines. It tells about the happiness of a mother welcome her new infant. In this poem, Plath uses simile, metaphor, paradox, and personification.

In *Metaphors,* Plath describes a woman’s feeling of being pregnant. Her body is getting larger and the feeling is mixed up. It consists of one stanza and nine lines. In this poem, Plath uses metaphor, synecdoche, symbol, personification, and hyperbole.
Referring to the explanation above, the writer was interested to analyze figurative language used on three Sylvia Plath poems, they are: *Mirror*, *Morning Song*, and *Metaphors* which contain of beautiful wordplays.

**B. Focus of the Research**

The writer tries to focus only on figurative language of the three Sylvia Plath’s poems; they are *Mirror*, *Morning Song*, and *Metaphors*.

**C. Research questions**

Based on the background of study and focus on study above, the writer formulated the problem by making the research question below:

1. What kinds of figurative language can be found in three Sylvia Plath poems *Mirror, Morning Song, and Metaphors*?

**D. Significance of the Research**

The writer hopes the research can give any significance to the reader, especially those who will enjoy, understand, and appreciate Plath’s poems. The writer also hope that the research can give any information to whom that will analyze Plath’s poems more intently.

**E. Research Methodology**

This research methodology consists of some important aspect of the research such as the objective of the research, the method of the research; technique of data analysis; research instrument; and unit analysis.
1. **Objective of the Research**

   Based on the research question presented above, this thesis is expected to give adequate description of the application of figurative language. The general objective of the study is to take comprehensive understanding regarding the use of figurative language of three Sylvia Plath poems “**Mirror, Morning Song, and Metaphors**”. The specific objective of the research are as follows:

   1. To know the types of figurative language commonly used in three Sylvia Plath poems
   2. To know the meaning of figurative language used in three Sylvia Plath poems

2. **The Method of Research**

   In this research, the writer uses descriptive qualitative method which describes about kinds of figurative languages on three Sylvia Plath poems and the meaning of those figurative languages

3. **The Data Analysis**

   In this research, the writer uses descriptive analytic technique based on critical study and analysis to the qualitative data based on the study of figurative language used in the poems.

4. **Research Instrument**

   The instrument in this research is the writer herself by reading and analyzing the whole text in three Plath’s poems. The poems will be analyze
carefully by underlining the stanzas, lines, sentences or words that related to figurative language.

5. The Unit of Analysis

The unit analysis in this research is Sylvia Plath’s poems collected from various sources, entitled, **Morning Song** (taken from http://www.angelfire.com/tn/plath/song.html), meanwhile **Mirror** and **Metaphors** are taken from SOUND AND SENSE; An Introduction to Poetry by Laurence Perrine and Thomas R. ARP, published by Harcourt Brage College Publishers, 1992.

F. The Time and Place of Research

The writer started conducting the research when she was studying at eight semester at English Letter Department of Faculty of Letters and Humanities, State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. And, the research was located at English Letter Department of UIN, main library of UIN, Faculty of Culture Studies’ library of UI and Atmajaya and other libraries providing references and information about the material that she need.
CHAPTER II
THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

A. The meaning of poetry

Poetry is as universal as language and almost as ancient. The most primitive people have used it, and the most civilized have cultivated it because it has given pleasure. People have read it, listened to it, or recited it because they liked it and give them enjoyment.

Poetry might be defined as a kind of language that says more and says it more intensely than does ordinary language. To have better understanding about it, we need to know what the parts that build the poetry which are called by intrinsic and extrinsic element. According to M. Atar Semi:

Struktur fiksi itu secara garis besar dibagi 2: yaitu struktur dalam dan struktur luar atau disebut unsur intrinsik dan unsur ekstrinsik, unsur intrinsik yaitu unsur yang membentuk karya sastra seperti penokohan atau perawatakan, tema, alur (plot), pusat pengisahan, latar dan gaya bahasa, sedangkan unsur ekstrinsik yaitu segala macam unsur yang berada di luar suatu karya sastra yang ikut mempengaruhi kehadiran karya sastra tersebut contohnya faktor sosial ekonomi, kebudayaan, sosio politik, keagamaan dan tata nilai yang dianut masyarakat.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic element are related to each other functionally. In poetry intrinsic elements such as images, theme, figures of speech, rhythm and rhyme are very important to built a good poetry because through them poetry can make a poem with beautiful words as manifesting his feeling and also he can convey the information and experience. Moreover, intrinsic elements also build

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communication between poet and readers. So the readers can understand more about what the poet means in the poem. For example using figurative language helps the readers to understand the content of the poem. It also helps the poet to show the message that she or he wants to deliver to the readers. The writer focused her analyzing only intrinsic element of it especially the figurative languages.

B. Explication

An explication has been defined as an examination of a work of literature for a knowledge of each part, for the relations of these parts to each other, and for their relations to the whole.10

To get the content of the poem, explication is the important one. In the explication of a poem, the writer explains the entire poem in detail, unraveling any complexities to be found in it. This method is valuable in approaching a lyric poem, especially if the poem is reach in complexities.11

C. The Nature of Figure of Speech

Before we discuss about figure of speech it is better for us to see denotation and connotation meaning first because both are very important to build the poetry and to understand the meaning of word. Denotation is the dictionary meaning or meanings of the word. Beyond its denotation, a word also may have

10 Ibid. p. 347.
connotation. The connotation is what it suggests beyond what it expresses: its overtones of meaning. For instance, the word “home” by denotation means only a place where one lives, but by connotation it suggests security, love, comfort, and family. The words “childlike” and “childish” both mean “characteristic of a child”, but “childlike” suggests meekness, innocence, and wide-eyed wonder, while “childish” suggests pettiness, willfulness, and temper tantrums. Connotation is very important in poetry which the poet can concentrate or enrich meaning and say more in fewer words. From the explanation above connotation can form figure of speech which is a departure from the ordinary form of expression or the ordinary course of ideas in order to produce a greater effect.¹²

Here, there are some definitions of figures of speech:

- Figure of speech is a twisting of the normal meaning of word.¹³
- Figure of speech is a speaking in language symbols.¹⁴
- Figure of speech is a way of saying something other than the ordinary way.¹⁵

Those are some of the definitions of figure of speech. All of the definitions have different essences significantly. Thomas considered figure of speech as the words cannot be taken literally because it does not make any sense. Bradford considered figure of speech as a language that is explicitly not literal: language

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¹³ Thomas Mclaughin, op. cit. p. 6.


¹⁵ Laurence Perrine and Thomas R. ARP. op. cit. p. 61.
refigured in order to elucidate but not to speak plainly. Perrine considered figure of speech as a way of saying something but meaning another and need to be concerned with no more than a dozen.

Even though there are different definitions of what figure of speech is, it does not matter for us in understanding what figure of speech is. It is clear that figure of speech is the language cannot be taken literally.

D. Kinds & Meaning of Figure of Speech

1. Simile

According to Christopher simile is a direct comparison between things which are not particularly similar in their essences. Siswanto considered simile adalah adanya perbandingan antara 2 objek atau benda yang berbeda jenis, namun memiliki titik kesamaan. A comparison made between two objects of different kinds which have, however, at least one point in common. The most frequently used connectives are like, as, so, appear, seem, more than. The similar definition said that simile is a figure of speech in which a comparison is expressed by the specific use of a word or phrase such as, like, as, than, seems, or as if. If a poet writer, for example,” I was happy as a lark” he is using a simile. He compares his happy as a bird that twitters and sings a happy song.

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17 Siswantoro, loc. Cit.

2. Metaphor

A metaphor is an implied simile, metaphor also compares two different things but it does not like simile, state one thing is like another or acts another but takes that for granted and proceeds as if the two things were one and it does not use a connective word such as ‘like’ or ‘as’.\textsuperscript{19} According to Bradford metaphor is the comparison of two things without using the words “like” or “as”.\textsuperscript{20} According to Christopher metaphor is figure of speech with compares one thing to another directly.\textsuperscript{21} The metaphor in other words establishes an analogy between objects without actually saying. However, it directly suggests comparison of two things by creating as equation. In summary, metaphor states that something is something else while simile says that one thing is “like” something else.

Metaphor is used in poetry to explain and elucidate emotions, feelings, and relationship other elements that could not be described in ordinary language. Poet also use metaphor as a way of explaining or referring to something in a brief but effective way. For example, “A fierce person” can be referred to as a tiger. Usually metaphor created through the use of some form of the verb “to be” for instance, if we say, “life is a hungry animal” has become a metaphor for life, and if we say that someone is a fox or that something is a jewel, we are comparing them to a fox and jewel, and mean that they have some of the qualities that are traditionally associated with foxes or jewels.

\textsuperscript{19} Siswantoro, \textit{op. cit.} p. 27.
\textsuperscript{20} Bradford T. Stull, \textit{op. cit.} p. 15.
\textsuperscript{21} Christopher Russel Reaske, \textit{op. cit.} p. 36.
Sylvia Plath successfully uses metaphor to lead her readers to form whole pictures from the fragmentary images she presents in her poetry. She rarely names the actual subjects of her poems, instead presenting a series of clues that lead us to discover them for ourselves. Metaphor evokes an image by representing one thing with another thing that is not really like it. In examining the comparison of two things that are not alike, we can find meaningful similarities under the surface.

Metaphor may take one of four forms, depending on whether the literal and figurative terms are respectively named or implied, in the first form of metaphor, as in simile both the literal and figurative terms are named. In Francis’s poem “The Hound”, for example, the literal term is “life” and the figurative term is “hound”. In the second form, the literal term is named and the figurative term is implied. In Robert Frost’s poem “Bereft”, for example, the literal term is “bereft” and the figurative term is “a condition of house as a lonely old woman because her husband live her”. In the third form, the literal term is implied and the figurative term is named. Here, Sylvia Plath’s poem “Metaphors”, for example, the literal term is “pregnant”, the figurative term is “metaphors”. In the fourth form, both the literal and figurative terms are implied. In Emily Dickinson’s “I like to see it lap the miles” for example.

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3. Personification

Personification is the process of assigning human characteristics to non-human objects, abstractions or ideas. This definition similar to Perrine explanation that personification consists in giving the attribute of human being to an animal, an object or a concept. For example in The Sick Rose, William Blake personifies the rose: “O rose, thou art sick!” He personifies the rose like a human being.

4. Symbol

Symbol is an image so loaded with significance that it is not simply literal, and it does not simply stand for something else, it is both itself and something else that it richly suggest, a kind of manifestation of something too complex or to elusive to be otherwise revealed. According to Perrine in literature a symbol maybe defined as something that means more than what it is. For example, “some dirty dog stole my wallet at the party” it means that the dirty dog as a symbol, it may be a thief.

The symbol is the richest and at the same time the most difficult of the poetic figures. Both its richness and its difficulty results from its imprecision. Although the poet may pin down the meaning of symbol to something fairly definite & precise, more often the symbol is so general in its meaning that it can suggest a great variety of specific meanings. For instance Robert Frost in “The

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23 Ibid. p. 39.
road not taken” it may symbolize the choice in life; such the choice of profession, residence, mate, etc.

5. Paradox

Paradox is a statement or situation containing apparently contradictory or incompatible elements, but on closer inspection may be true. Paradox is a statement that is apparently contradictory but a deeper level is in fact. However, while it many appear that the opposite is contradictory, paradox of ten underlines the possibility that both may be true. Paradox is employed in poetry primarily as a device of emphasis and drawing attention to something. The value of paradox is its sock value. For example, John Donne in holly sonnets “And death shall be no more, death thou shalt die”.

6. Hyperbole Of Overstatement

Hyperbole is a figure of speech which employs exaggeration. Hyperbole differs from exaggeration in that it is extreme or excessive. Something it is used for comic purposes, but more often it is used seriously. Hyperbole can produce a very dramatic effect, for instance, Shakespeare uses hyperbole in a sonnet.

In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,

For they in thee a thousand errors note

The idea of seeing a thousand errors is of course an course an overstatement or hyperbolic expression of the poet.

7. Synecdoche and Metonymy


\[26\] Christopher, *op.cit.* p. 34.
Synecdoche and metonymy are two related figures of speech. It is often difficult to tell the difference between them. Synecdoche is the use of the part for the whole and metonymy is the use of something closely related for the thing actually meant.\textsuperscript{27} As in “He has many mouths to feed”, ‘the mouth’ is the part of our body that functions for eating but in this context it means ‘a man’.

Synecdoche and metonymy are alike in that substitute some significant detail or aspect an experience for the experience itself. Robert gravers uses synecdoche in “The naked and the nude” when he refers to a doctor as “Hippocratic eye”, Shakespeare uses synecdoche when he says that the cuckoo’s song is unpleasing to “a married ear”, for he means a married man.

\textsuperscript{27} Laurence Perrine and Thomas R. ARP. \textit{op. cit.} pp. 65-66.
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH FINDING

A. Data Description

As the first step of research findings, data description describes data collected for the use of the research. Within this phase of the research, analyzing each intrinsic element in poem is called explication or close reading. Explication may be defined as an examination of work of literature for knowledge of each part, for the relation of these parts to each other and for their relations to the whole. It is detail clarification of a work, sometimes line by line or word by word, which is interested not only in what that works means but also in how it means and what it means. It thus considers all relevant aspects of a work speaker, images, figure of speech, rhythm, and rhyme. Besides analyzing the diction, the usage of intrinsic elements cannot be separated, because through them a poet can convey the information and experiences. Moreover intrinsic elements also build communication between the reader and poet. So the reader can understand more about what the poet means in the poem.

Referring to the explanation above, clearly that analyzing intrinsic element is one of a way to get the content of the text. Moreover it also helps understanding the content or what poet wants to show the readers and it can use in three of Sylvia Plath poems to support or find out the contents of the poem. *Mirror*, *Morning Song*, and *Metaphors* are the poems that analyzed by the writer.
1. Mirror

a. The stanza

Mirror

(1) I am silver and exact. I have no preconception.
(2) Whatever I see I swallow immediately
(3) Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
(4) I am not cruel, only truthful-
(5) The eye of a little god, four cornered.
(6) Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
(7) It is pink, with speckles. I have looked it so long
(8) I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
(9) Faces and darkness separate us over and over

(10) Now I am lake. A woman bends over me,
(11) Searching my reaches for what she really is.
(12) Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
(13) I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
(14) She rewards me with tears and agitations of hands.
(15) I am important to her. She comes and goes.
(16) Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
(17) In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
(18) Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

b. Figurative language

Table 1
The List of Figurative Language Found in The Poem Mirror

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
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<th>Quotation of poem</th>
<th>Kinds of Figurative Language</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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</thead>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am silver and exact. I have no preconception</td>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>“I” represents as a mirror. The mirror describes itself as a person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Whatever I see I swallow immediately</td>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>“I” represents as a mirror. It sees and catches things like human being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>The eye of a little god</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>The eye of a little god is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
god, four cornered metaphor of mirror

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Most of the time I <strong>meditate</strong> on the opposite wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>Now I am lake.</strong> A woman bends over me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Then she turns to those liars, <strong>the candles and the moon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rises toward her day after day, <strong>Like a terrible fish</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Poem explication

“Mirror” is one of the famous poems of Sylvia Plath. This poem is interesting to be examined because theme of the poem is about the truth and lies. “Mirror” describes a woman’s struggle against the lies and the truthful of own image from the perspective of a mirror.

Sylvia Plath wrote this poem to describe her own self. Her very short thirty year life was riddled with stress and depression. Even though she was a very smart and talented young woman, at the age of twenty she tried to commit suicide. Unsuccessful at this task she continued to write, though her work suffered, and became darker and more depressing. A few years later she married and had two children and one miscarriage. Still bothered by this miscarriage sadly Sylvia succeeded in her second attempt at suicide, by inhalation of natural gas. Most of her poems toward the end of her life were depressing and having to do with death, “Mirror” is the one example of her dark poetry. Therefore, “Mirror” was the suitable poem to reflect or describe her feeling on that time. The theme of
the truth and the lies was expressing her condition which she was going through, time after time she felt more depressing, so after married and divorced she could not lie herself anymore that she has lost her happiness.

Plath wrote “Mirror” in the first person from the point of view a mirror or lake. Plath often incorporates mythology into her poetry like the Greek story that a beautiful princess that looked at his reflection in a lake so long, after that she fell in and drowned. Plath uses this metaphor to show that a young girl that used to look in the mirror has now drowned and an old woman rises towards her like a terrible fish.

This poem tells about “I” that represents as a mirror. The “I” does not think about but show what is really there and also never judges, it just reflect the truthful. “I” also represents a lake. There is a woman looks at it, the lake also reflects her faithfully.

In the first stanza, Mirror personifies a person that looks everything what is really there, whatever it sees it catches the thing exactly. It conveys a double meaning, the mirror both accepts what it sees without question and catches the images that it reflected. In the second stanza mirror personifies a lake. The lake is like the mirror, there is a woman now searches for what she really is in the lake and the lake reflects her faithfully. She is afraid to admit the truth but once she has reflected in the lake the truth is open. The woman is getting old and she knows it deep inside but still does not have the courage to admit it to herself. She is not happy about her appearance and denies the appearance which has reflected by the lake then she looks away to the joyful lies of the candles or the moon, in this case
The candles and the moon represent people who lie to her, telling her that she is beautiful, maybe in her youth time she was beautiful but now she is getting older then she cries. Day after day she comes and goes looking herself, the lake always reflects her faithfully, her beauty begin to lost and she becomes old like a terrible fish.

The poem is more than an object, it is about our thought processes when we reflect upon our youth and struggle with old age.

2. Morning Song

a. The stanza

Morning Song

(1) Love set you going like a fat gold watch.
(2) The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry
(3) Took its place among the elements.
(4) Our voice echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.
(5) In a drafty museum, your nakedness
(6) Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

(7) I’m no more your mother
(8) Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow
(9) Effacement at the wind’s hand.

(10) All night your moth-breath
(11) Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:
(12) A far sea moves in my ear.

(13) One cry, an I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral
(14) In my Victorian nightgown.
(15) Your mouth opens clean as a cat’s. The window square

(16) Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try
(17) Your handful of notes;
(18) The clear vowels rise like balloons.
b. Figurative language

Table 2

The List of Figurative Language Found in The Poem *Morning Song*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Quotation of poem</th>
<th>Kinds of Figurative Language</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>Love</em> set you going like a <em>fat gold watch</em></td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>It compares a love to a watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Our voice echo, magnifying your arrival. <em>New statue.</em></td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>New statue is metaphor of baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Shadows our safety. <em>We</em> stand round blankly as <em>walls</em></td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>It compares “We”(the family) as the walls who stand blankly or surprisingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>I’m no more your mother</em></td>
<td>Paradox</td>
<td>It is paradoxical statement that is contradictory, but in fact the relationship between mother and the baby is too big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Effacement at the wind’s hand</td>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>The wind like human that has a hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td><em>Your mouth</em> opens clean as a cat’s</td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>It compares the baby’s mouth to a cat’s mouth if it is opened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>The clear <em>vowels</em> rise like balloons</td>
<td>Simile</td>
<td>It compares the vowels to balloons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Poem explication

Sylvia plath’s “*Morning Song*” is a beautiful poem concerned about how first time of being mother. The poem tells about the happiness of a mother welcome her new infant. The title morning song gives the impression that is filled with hope and makes a person want to sing.

Starting at the first stanza the speaker is feeling happy when she knew she has born a baby and heard the first cry of the baby when born into the world. She describes her love to the baby as a gold watch which is a precious and valuable
thing. The second stanza tells that the family especially her parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends are making their comments about the baby, some will point out how cute it is, how tiny those fingers and toes are, how sweet it smells. They are standing around looking the nakedness of the baby in baby’s room. The third stanza shows that the speaker feels the baby is less her mine than when the baby was still in her womb. She feels like a cloud is looking down on her shadow or reflection, that is her baby, and now the wind is slowly pushing the cloud away, the wind is pulling the speaker away from her baby. The connection between mother and baby is weakening.

The fourth stanza until the last stanza tells about the speaker experience of being mother. Being a new mother is not difficult, all night she keeps awake listening to the sound of the baby’s breathing, she also become aware of the noise that can disturb the baby’s sleeping. If the baby wakes up and cries she immediately gets out of bed to look the baby even though she stumbles from bed still sleepy and wearing a night gown but she feels happy after she look the baby face and there is nothing happen. She feels comfort when she sees the baby’s mouth opens as a cat’s mouth, it seems the baby gives some notes or vowels to her that cannot be described by anything except the feeling of happiness.
3. Metaphors

a. The stanza

Metaphors

(1) I’m a riddle in nine syllables,
(2) An elephant, a ponderous house,
(3) A melon strolling on two tendrils.
(4) O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!
(5) This loaf’s big with its yeasty rising.
(6) Money’s new-minted in this fat purse.
(7) I’m a means, a stage, a cow in calf.
(8) I’ve eaten a bag of green apples,
(9) Boarded the train there’s no getting off.

b. Figurative language

Table 3

The List of Figurative Language Found in The Poem *Metaphors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Quotation of poem</th>
<th>Kinds of Figurative Language</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I’m a riddle in nine syllables</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>“I” compares to riddle or puzzle and nine syllables means nine months, it is the period of pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>An elephant, a ponderous house,</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>Elephant is metaphor of the speaker body which become fat because of her pregnancy. Ponderous house is metaphor of her stomach which contain the baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A melon strolling on two tendrils.</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>The melon is metaphor of her stomach as round as the fruit of melon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>This loaf’s big with its yeasty rising.</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>The loaf’s big is metaphor of the stomach become as the pregnancy progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Money’s new-</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>The money is metaphor of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>I’m a means, a stage, <strong>a cow in calf.</strong></td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>The cow in calf is metaphor of the speaker. The speaker as a child who does not know everything because this is new to her.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>Boarded <strong>the train</strong> there’s no getting off.</td>
<td>Metaphor</td>
<td>The train is metaphor of her pregnancy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-4</td>
<td><strong>O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!</strong></td>
<td>Synecdoche</td>
<td>Plath describes the baby as referring to the whole such as the red fruit, ivory, fine timbers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-8</td>
<td>I’ve eaten a bag of <strong>green apples,</strong></td>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>The green apples are symbolized of a bitterness and sickness.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-3</td>
<td><strong>A melon strolling</strong> on two tendrils.</td>
<td>Personification</td>
<td>The melon like human being that can stroll and round up by itself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-8</td>
<td>I’ve eaten a bag of <strong>green apples,</strong></td>
<td>Hyperbole</td>
<td>The speaker exaggerated that she has eaten a plenty of apples fruit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

c. Poem explication

In “**Metaphors**”, it tells about a woman who being pregnant. Every woman knows many changes in the body or feeling when being pregnant, the body is getting larger and the feeling is mixed up.

This poem is interesting to be discussed. Sylvia plath uses metaphor successfully to lead her readers to form whole pictures from images that she presents in her poetry. It can be seen in her work as in “**Metaphors**”, it tells about the “I” who refers to a pregnant woman that is uncomfortable and not enjoying of being pregnant because her body changes become fat and large, her stomach is growing bigger as the pregnancy progress. However, she will become a mother and has a baby, she is happy and accepts herself of being fat or large because
every woman will feel the pregnancy whether it feels glade or not there is nothing she can do other than to remain pregnant.

B. The Analysis of Data

The next step of research finding is analyzing the data. The writer analyzes the data where the types of figurative language are determined here. Next, the figurative languages are analyzed for their meaning in common sense and with the context of the poems.

1. Mirror

The figurative language in “Mirror” consists of three personification, one simile, and three metaphor, they are;

**Personification**

Plath uses personification by the mirror like a human being, it starts from the first line “I am silver and exact. I have no preconception”. Here, the “I” is a mirror. The mirror personifies itself as a person that can speak, it tells that it has silver color and real but it has no prejudice which only judge and visualize what it sees.

Personification was used to visualize an object or a concept in human being. Plath is also expressing personification in line 2: “Whatever I see I swallow immediately”. In the poem she gives an attribute of human being to the mirror as if a human can see. The mirror also can catch the image in front of it exactly whether the image is good or bad, tall or short, and beautiful or ugly. For the
example, if the woman stands in front of mirror probably she wants to take a look whether she is beautiful or not so the mirror will reflect her as exactly as seen on the surface, it will display her with no hesitation.

Plath also uses personification in the first line:

Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over

“Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall”. Here, meditate is a human mannerism. Meditate usually is a way of people do something to calm and quiet their soul or they do just for being silent in one place so the mirror is taking in human habit. The mirror always stands by face to face on the wall every time and every day, usually it hangs on the wall also in one room if there is no one in front of it the wall will appear. The wall has a color, it is pink with many small spots. The mirror gazed it so long then the mirror begins to think that the wall is a part of the mirror heart, but there are the things that cut off the view of the wall it were the faces. The faces must be persons who look in the mirror to see themselves and if they went away the darkness falls there is nobody in front of it except the wall, so the faces and the darkness are flickered for the mirror, it separates the mirror and the wall over and over.

Simile

Plath uses simile in the last line:

In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.
From the sentence above, Plath uses simile for comparing the old woman with a terrible fish. Simile is a figure of speech in which a comparison is expressed by the specific use of a word or phrase such as, like, as, than, seems, or as if. In the poem there is a young girl that has been looking at the lake every day but after day she realizes that she is getting older like a terrible fish and she does not like, that is why Plath compares old woman such a terrible fish.

**Metaphor**

The use of metaphor in the first stanza in line 5: “The eye of a little god, four cornered”. Here, the poet describes the metaphor that is used to compare the eye of a little god as a mirror. Metaphor is not like simile, it is comparing two different things without using the word “like” or “as”. In metaphor the comparison is implied and the figurative term is substituted for or identified with literal term. The eye of a little god is metaphor of the mirror, the mirror has the eye which can see and look everything.

The metaphor appear again in the second stanza in line 10: “Now I am lake”. Here, the poet describes that the mirror has changed become a lake but the function of reflection something is the same, the differences between them just lake has a deep. The person who looks her reflection at the lake can reach it and it will reflect her deep soul.

The use of metaphor is also in line 12: “Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon”. Here, Plath uses metaphor to refer to the candles and the moon light as liars because they just show different light or show up shadows of half of the big pictures and they do not give the exact truth like the mirror or lake.
Or it could be saying that the woman in the poem thinks the candles and the moon as the people who lie to her. The way she sees herself but the people may not see her at the same way, they may look at her as the opposite of what she thinks of herself. As they said she looked beautiful but the fact she was not because she was getting old.

2. Morning Song

The figurative language in “Morning Song” consists of four simile, one metaphor, one paradox and one personification, they are;

Simile

In line I: “Love set you going like a fat gold watch.” Plath used simile for comparing love to a watch. The image of the watch is fat and made from gold, it also describes the baby is fat. Gold is a precious and valuable thing especially in terms of the new baby it values to the mother.

She also used simile in line 6: “We stand round blankly as walls” for comparing “We” as the family to the walls. The wall is blank, the family like parents, grandparents, aunts, cousins and friend are surprised that they are happy to look the baby’s coming into this world. They stand surprisingly and they thought are blank looks the baby like the wall of the hospital.

Simile appears again in line 15: “Your mouth opens clean as a cat’s” for comparing the baby’s mouth opened like the cat’s mouth, when the baby was crying, it will open up its mouth as the cat opens its mouth to make sound, and the last simile in the last line: “The clear vowels rise like balloons” for comparing the
vowel to the balloons. At the first time, the one thing that the baby does only crying, for the mother it makes some notes and after a while the baby makes same vowels or being to vocalize it is like look of the rising of balloons with splash of color.

**Metaphor**

The use of metaphor in this stanza is in line 4: “our voice echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue”. Here, the speaker describes the baby as a new statue then this sentence still relates to the next sentence in line 5: “In a drafty museum, your nakedness” this soft and cuddly baby to the speaker or mother seems like a statue in a drafty museum. Usually after birth, the baby is saved in the baby’s room in the hospital while the people just look in outside of the room.

**Paradox**

I’m no more your mother
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow Effacement at the wind’s hand

Paradox is a statement that is apparently contradictory but a deeper level is in fact. From the sentence above Plath uses paradox in the third stanza line 7: “I’m no more your mother”. The speaker makes one direct statement that cuts the bonds of mother and child: clouds send down rain that form pools of water and those pools reflect the clouds while at the same time the wind is driving the clouds away. The speaker claims that her relationship with the baby is no more than that of the cloud and the mirror pool. The cloud refers to the mother and the reflection of the cloud is the baby when the baby still in her womb she always close to the baby every time, but after a birth both of them are separated.
Personification

It can be seen clearly that Plath uses personification in line 9: “Effacement at the wind’s hand”. On the poem she gives an attribute of human being to the wind as if it was a human that has a hand.

3. Metaphors

The figurative language in “Metaphors” is consisting of seven metaphor, one synecdoche, one symbol, one personification, and one hyperbole, they are;

Metaphor

As we have discussed about the form of metaphor in the theoretical framework, the poem of “Metaphors” was included in the third form of metaphor, that is, the literal term is implied and the figurative term is named. The literal term is “pregnant”, the figurative term is “metaphors” and it’s content.

Plath is a strong user of metaphor and from her poetry she almost celebrates it. She choose metaphor in order to communicate what she think and how she feel about something, to explain what a particular thing is like and to convey a meaning in a more interesting or creative way, besides metaphor is very important because of its functions- explaining, clarifying, describing, expressing, evaluating and entertaining, it also becomes a plaything and a puzzle, the reader is invited to dig out as many meanings and references as possible.

In this poem “Metaphors”, Plath chooses many metaphors to describe the woman of being pregnant. The use of metaphor can be seen in first line “I’m a riddle in nine syllables”. The “I” is metaphor of a riddle. The speaker suggests
that she was a riddle. Riddle means a puzzling question, statement or description, intended to make a person use her wits or intelligent. Here, the speaker asks the reader to find out the meaning of words that she used in the poem. At the first line, Plath also used nine syllables. She wants to show that in each line of her poem contains nine syllables and nine lines. Figuratively, nine syllables mean the length of person being pregnant, usually the period of pregnancy is nine months.

She also used metaphor in line 2: “An elephant, a ponderous house”. The speaker describes that she refers to an elephant, the body is becoming larger and bigger, her weight is increased steadily because the baby also is increasing in her womb. The metaphor also appears at the same line “A ponderous house”. It refers to the speaker as the ponderous house, the big house for the baby which is in her stomach or in the mother’s womb.

The metaphor also appears in line 3: “A melon strolling on two tendrils”. The speaker suggests that she is like a melon, it means that her stomach as round as the fruit of melon. Tendril means the melon’s stem which climb any nearby support. Her stomach is swollen and two tendrils mean her two legs. In other words, her stomach is swollen on her two legs.

The metaphor also appears again in line 5:”This loaf’s big with its yeasty rising”. It is comparing herself to the bread rising in the oven or her stomach is growing bigger as the pregnancy progress.

She also used metaphor in line 6: ”Money’s new-minted in this fat purse”. It is comparing the money new printing to the new baby, and fat purse is her big
stomach. The baby like money that is precious thing which is printing out in the stomach for the future in this world.

She also used metaphor in line 7: “I’m a means, a stage, a cow in calf”. Here, the speaker explores her relation to the baby that she is producing. She describes that she is a means or tool for producing the baby or the medium which a new life enters the world. And she describes that she as a stage, the board on which the action will be played out and it is important thing, because of it the mother is important to the baby. The last, she describes that she as a cow in calf. She describes herself to this mammal because the reproduction both human and mammal is the same, give a birth. Here, the speaker describes that she is trying to bear a child into this world such as the cow bears the calves.

The last metaphor can be seen in the last line “Boarded the train there’s no getting off”. The train is metaphor of her pregnancy. Nothing will stop the train until it arrives at its destination. The speaker describes her mixed feeling of being pregnant but since she got pregnant there is nothing she can do, she has another choice or option other than to remain pregnant and waits until the baby is delivered.

**Synecdoche**

Synecdoche is the use of the part for the whole. It appears in line 4: “O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!”. Plath uses synecdoche, the use of a part as referring to the whole to describe the baby. She chooses the parts of each whole which are the most valuable such as the ripened fruit of the melon, the ivory of the elephant’s
tusk, and the fine timbers which the wood for the house constructed. All of it describe the baby is precious.

**Symbol**

In line 8: “I’ve eaten a bag of green apples” Plath used symbol. The green apples symbolized a bitterness and sickness. When the woman was pregnant, she used to eat the sour fruit like unripe fruit and overindulge in foods which cause her to vomit and it feels a bitter taste and sick. The bitterness and the sickness just stating the uncomfortable of being pregnant.

**Personification**

Plath uses personification in line 3: “A melon strolling on two tendrils”. On the poem she gives an attribute of human being to the fruit of melon. The melon can stroll and walk slowly by itself.

**Hyperbole**

In line 8: “I’ve eaten a bag of green apples” the speaker used hyperbole. She exaggerated that she has eaten a bag of green apples. Nobody could eat a plenty of those fruit, but she means that she has gotten pregnant which make her uncomfortable because the whole of her body became fat and big.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

After the writer analyzed the Sylvia Plath’s works such as *Mirror*, *Morning Song*, and *Metaphors*, there is something that can be concluded. The general conclusion of the three poems is Plath used figurative language to make an effect in the poems, she used many varieties of figurative languages there are metaphor, simile, personification, paradox, synecdoche, symbol, and hyperbole.

*Mirror* poem is about the truth and lies, it tells about “I” that represents as a mirror. The “I” does not think about but show what is really there and also never judges, it just reflect the truthful. “I” also represents a lake. There is a woman looks at it, the lake also reflects her faithfully.

Then, in *Mirror*, mirror becomes two different things but the function as reflection is similarly. Firstly, mirror becomes a person that can see and think. Whatever it sees it catches the image exactly whether it is good or bad. Secondly, mirror becomes a lake. There is a woman looks and searches for what she really is on the lake and the lake reflect her faithfully that she is getting older. The woman does not want to admit it because the people said that she was a beautiful, but the lake is not false while the people who lied to her.

Having analyzed the poem *Mirror*, the writer can conclude that this poem use three kinds of figurative languages they are personification, metaphor, and
simile. These three kinds of figurative language become an important element in the process of interpreting and comprehending the meaning beyond the poem.

*Morning Song* poem tells about the happiness of being a mother and welcomes her new infant. How happy when she knew she has born a baby and heard the first cry of the baby when born into the world, the family look happy too seeing the baby. Even though, being a new mother is not difficult, all day and night she must keep awake take care the baby but it is her job as the mother and her love and affection more than anything else.

After analyzing this poem, the writer identified several figures of speech that used in the poem, they are simile, metaphor, paradox, and personification.

*Metaphors* poem tells about a woman who being pregnant. Every woman knows many changes in the body or feeling when being pregnant, the body is getting larger even in stomach when the pregnancy progress and the feeling is mixed up but every woman will feel the pregnancy whether it feels glade or not there is nothing she can do other than to remain pregnant.

After analyzing this poem, the writer found several figures of speech they are metaphor, synecdoche, symbol, personification, and hyperbole.
B. Suggestion

The writer suggests for those who are interested in studying about poetry, especially in Sylvia Plath works to use many approaches in comprehending to the content and message in her works. For students who are interested about the poem movement, it is expected that they have to improve and expand their knowledge about the poem. It is better if they look for another source about poem theory especially the theory about the element of poem.


Sylvia Plath (27 October 1932 – 11 February 1963) was an American poet, an experienced writer, a novelist and an author. Sylvia Plath published her first poem when she was eight. Sensitive, intelligent, compelled toward perfection in everything she attempted, she was popular in school, earning straight A's, and winning the best prizes.

Sylvia Plath was born in Boston, Massachusetts on October 27, 1932, and spent her early childhood years in Winthrop, a seaside town in the Boston area. Her mother, Aurelia Schober was Austrian while her father, Otto Plath an immigrant from Poland, He was a professor of biology at Boston University. They had met when Otto was the professor for one of Aurelia's courses at Boston University. Aurelia had graduated second in her high school class, was valedictorian of her Boston University undergraduate class, and was a teacher of English and German studying for her master's degree. Otto, whose ancestral German name had been "Platt", was a professor of German and Biology (his specialty was bees) who was married, but separated thirteen years, when he met Aurelia. Sylvia was born on October 27, 1932 in Boston after her parents had married on January 4 of that year. Her younger brother Warren was born a few years later in April of 1935. During the latter half of the 1930's Otto became increasingly ill and was convinced of his self-diagnosis of lung cancer and diabetes. Otto Plath died on the night of November 5, 1940, and when the eight-year-old Sylvia was informed of her father's death, she proclaimed "I'll never speak to God again". In 1941 Sylvia's "Poem" was printed in the children's section of the Boston Herald. It was a short poem, "about what I see and hear on hot summer nights," but it was her first publication, at the age of eight. In junior high, she continued to write and would publish her poems and drawings in the school newspaper. In high school she enrolled in the class of a tough English professor who challenged her abilities in the best of ways.

Her sensitivity was inordinate but it was her ability to express it. She entered Smith College on a scholarship in 1950 and while at smith she wrote over

Sylvia was still confused and angry about her father's death. She sometimes felt that, in a way, she had committed suicide because she could have prevented it. Her strong and conflicting emotions of love, hate, anger and grief. The loss of her father were to affect Sylvia for the rest of her life. At the age of twenty she tried to commit suicide. Unsuccessful at this task she continued to write, though her work suffered, and became darker and more depressing. A few years later in 1956 she married the English poet Ted Hughes and had two children (Frieda and Nicholas) and one miscarriage. Still bothered by this miscarriage sadly Sylvia succeeded in her second attempt at suicide on February 11, 1963 in London, by inhalation of natural gas.

Quoted from: