

# Mirror by sylvia plath essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Karl Marx stated that the bourgeoisie are those that 'have' (typically business owners and such) and the proletariat is the working class. It's similar to a couple of my favorite quotes from the Broadway Musical Sweeney Todd. One of them actually, from the song "No Place Like London"; it states that "At the top of the hole sit the privileged few making mock of the vermin in the lonely zoo..." The second is similar, stating "there are two kinds of men and only two: there's the one staying put in his proper place and the one with his foot in the other one's face" from "Epiphany".

I feel these two quotes really get Marx's idea of bourgeoisie and proletariat. The first way to look at this is within wizarding society. It is safe to say that those like Cornelius Fudge (the Minister of Magic) and the wealthy (and usually pure-blood) families like the Malfoys are the bourgeoisie. One of Marx's 'defining traits' of the bourgeoisie is that they usually make the laws and typically those laws are meant to keep the majority of the population, the proletariat, suppressed.

If the wealthy, like Lucius Malfoy, have a huge influence over the government and within it (as he does, usually by means of threats), these laws will remain suppressing. Now, Marx also includes business owners in the category of bourgeoisie. However, I think there is a lot of room for 'grey area' when this comes to mind. For instance, Olivander owns his wand shop in Diagon Alley. However, we never see that he has any workers. In fact, when he gets kidnapped by Voldemort towards the end of the series, his shop is closed down. In this case, I would consider him, despite being a business owner, in the proletariat.

Aside from small business owners, it is safe to say Squibs (born to magic families with no magic gift) and the poorer families, like the Weasleys, are in the proletariat class. This would include the vast majority of wizards and witches. Muggle-borns usually appear in this class as well, though it is not unheard of for a particularly talented muggle-born to join the higher ranks. If we were to go even farther and include other magical creatures/beings, I would have to agree with . Creatures such as house elves, giants, centaurs, goblins, and ESPECIALLY house elves would be at the bottom of the proletariat class.

However, I disagree that all wizards would be above them and considered bourgeoisies. They may be a little higher on the social food chain, but they are still oppressed by higher, wealthier, and more powerful wizards. The motif of “lake” is seen in the second stanza. A lake has more depth than a mirror because it’s a three-dimensional object but when it comes to reflecting whatever they see they’ll both reflect just a physical appearance. This implies that the mirror is trying to show the insignificance of a third dimension and putting itself on the same level as a lake.

This motif is completed by the last two lines, “In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman / Rises towards here day after day, like a terrible fish. ” A contrast between a “young girl” which is now “drowned” in the “lake” and an “old woman” rising toward the woman from inside the mirror is created. Happiness and joy of life, which usually associated with being young, is now “drowned” and no longer exists. An unhappy ageing woman nearing her death replaces this. This idea of death is shown with the

simile " like a terrible fish" because fish rise to the surface when they die, as death will rise toward the old woman.

So at the end of the stanza I believe that Sylvia herself becomes apparent and the mirror loses its completeness by showing preconceptions about faces and darkness. I think that the poet is standing in the mirror in search for something looking at the wall occasionally being interrupted by darkness and shadows. So in the first stanza Plath is drawing a parallel between her and the mirror and speaks for her outer self. In the next stanza Plath uses a lake as a metaphor for herself, (A woman bends over me, searching my reaches for what she really is,) which is again a reflecting surface.

An old woman comes to look in the lake and although the image she is presented with upsets her she continues to come back. This demonstrates that humans have an innate urge to try to see themselves as they really are, even if sometimes the image is not what they want it to be. Plath describes the moon and candlelight's as liars, because they are able to hide people's flaws. Which Plath now depends on the lights of liars, candles, and the moon. I believe this is a symbol of how people lie to themselves about who they truly are by covering up and hiding themselves with material things wealth etc.

But it doesn't help and because it talks about tears and agitation. Which symbolizes the frustration of the woman feels when she sees herself in the mirror. Each morning in her face replace the darkness, is referring to when she looks in the mirror every morning relieving the darkness from it. The last two lines describe how the old woman's aging. The image of drowning a

young girl is very powerful, the old woman feels as though she has wasted her youth, and she is very scared about getting older.

This also has to do with the preconception the society places on people on being perfect, young, and forever beautiful. The reference to the fish is a metaphor for the youth that has slipped through her hands so quickly. Just like a fish would if you were to hold it. This poem has a sad flow about it, but it is all true. Sylvia is basically just explaining the process of getting older, but she is just making it personal, by referring to herself. This poem is written very well and I enjoyed reading and analyzing it. It is mostly self-explanatory, but some lines I had to really think about.