

"on the subway" by sharon olds essay sample

[Health & Medicine](#), [Sex](#)



“ On the Subway” by Sharon Olds Essay Sample

“ On the Subway” is a poem about the inferiority and weakness of women which results them to be ambitious and belief in their ability to overcome patriarchy. The poem effectively describes the bitterness and anger of females. In particular , it displays the idea that a weak man in the society is superior than a powerful woman in the society. Thus, the poem effectively depicts the way less powerful females are in the society. There are several techniques used to depict the inferiority of females in the society : they are exposed to be weaker in the eyes of men: their fear is expressed vividly : the tone of the poem is reminiscing: the poem uses metaphor to contrast the power of the weaker male to powerful female. The tone shifts at the end , as females starts giving way to hope. The inferiority of females is effectively developed through a series of images that suggests the fear and worries of females in the society. The poem commences with the images of gender division that exists in the society. This is developed metaphorically in the lines “ we are stuck on the opposite sides of the car, a couple of molecules stuck in a rod of light rapidly moving through darkness”, thus, “ opposite sides” intensifies that men and women are socially constructed to occupy different sides even in public transport.

The narrator’s fear of males is emphasized by the uncertainty of her safety. This is developed through the images she starts picturing in her head . The narrator describes her inferiority when she says “ he could take my coat so easily, my briefcase, my life.” The tone shifts at the end when the narrator uses ambitious words to overcome patriarchy. And she says, “ And he is

black and I am white, and without meaning or trying to I must profit from his darkness". This implies that females can overcome patriarchy, if they become ambitious. Sharon Olds depicts the weakness and inferiority of females in " On the Subway" by effectively using images of fear and gender division. The ambitious tone of the poem gives way to hope and belief in the ability of females to overcome patriarchy. The poem explores the domination of weaker males who take advantage of superior females.