

# Sylvia plaths daddy through the eyes of a reader and the eyes of two experts

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Aida Kattan Dr. Proctor English 1302-6131 Essay # 3 October 8, Sylvia Plath's "Daddy" - Through the Eyes of a Reader and the Eyes of Two Experts

On the surface, Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy" describes the tumultuous and dysfunctional relationship she experienced with her own father. Likewise, on a deeper level, the poem expresses the same thoughts; however, allusions and allegories that are words used necessitate, that the reader spends a great deal of time as well as some secondary sources to dissect the meaning behind the thoughts that Plath is attempting to convey. As such, this short analysis will work to juxtapose the views that this author has and correspondingly incorporate and justify the views of two experts drawn from two separate scholarly articles. For instance, the second line of the poem begins with Plath comparing her father to nothing more than a "black shoe" (Plath 2). The imagery of this comparison in and of itself is striking. Plath continues to claim that as he was the old black shoe - she was the white foot housed inside - afraid to make a sound. This powerful imagery sets the tone for what will be a diatribe that attacks the pure soul of the abusive and maniacal figure that is her father. Plath goes on to assert that her father is the exact embodiment of all things, evil as she describes him as Hitler and eventually a form of vampire that haunts Plath's life. Says Platt of her father, "Not God but a swastika So black no sky could squeak through. Every woman adores a Fascist, The boot in the face, the brute Brute heart of a brute like you" (Plath 22) Upon closer analysis of the poem, the reader can note that Plath is using her father as a vehicle to discuss something else. Midway through the poem the reader notes that Plath begins to discuss the murder of a second man stating, "If I killed one man, I've killed two" (Plath

22). In this way, Plath is referring to the fact that her husband has replaced her dead father as the dreaded curse that haunts her mere existence. As such, the poem experiences growth as the reader becomes aware that the solitarily horrendous creature that she describes is no longer a single person but instead a revelation concerning her own life and the experiences she has had to endure. Regardless of the focus of her emotion, one solitary factor serves to focus the oftentimes desperate nature of the poem into one cohesive piece - rage. Says Platt near the end of her piece, "Daddy, you can lie back now. There's a stake in your fat black heart" (Plath 22). An analysis of the poem by Roger Platzky notes, "Images of victimization in Sylvia Plath's poem 'Daddy' - of Nazis, swastikas, barbed wire, fascists, brutes, devils, and vampires - are so frantic, imposing, and vituperative that the poem seems more out of control than it actually is" (Platzky 105). This understanding of Plath was in fact the desired effect. In this way, Plath continues to denote the fact that her emotions, rage, furor, and hatred equate to the unhinged nature of the physical way that the poem is put together. Furthermore, when the reader encounters Plath's own vitriol, the nature of the physical structure and deregulated nature of the poem only serves to further cement the furor with which Plath describes the feelings she harbors. Likewise, one author notes the following: "'Daddy' has been scrutinized from a number of different angles. (It) reveals autobiographical precision, domestic roles, psychological conflicts, and masculine entrapment" (Hassanpour et al 123). In this way, the reader is assured that the thinly veiled hatred and allegorical backdrops are not indications of a deeper and veiled meaning; but are instead indications of the true thoughts,

feelings, emotions, and experiences which the author herself experienced throughout the course of her life. Platt notes, " Put your foot, your root, I never could talk to you. The tongue stuck in my jaw (Plath 22). The fact that Plath uses such descriptive and hate-filled language are seen as not so much of a literary tool to garner attention, but more appropriately a reflection of the entrapment, and hatred that Plath feels for both of the men that are described in the poem. Although her life is far from perfect, it is also worth noting that Plath still displays a vibrant flare of defiance and active feminism as her hope and desire to rid both of these curses from her life; even resorting to the act of murder to accomplish this goal. In this way, Plath is taking on herself the mantle of action that has previously only been a part of the male gender as described in her poem. Plath reaches a crescendo when she exclaims, The villagers never liked you. They are dancing and stamping on you. They always knew it was you. Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through (Plath 22). Finally, the two sources briefly analyzed, Hassanpour et al and Platzky, confirm the author's beliefs that Plath's topic is concentric around the subject matter she presents and not indicative of multiple layers of meaning. Although the poem in and of itself has a depth and complexity of language that many poems lack, the overriding theme and feelings are straight forward expressions of how the author truly feels; both in the Platt's poem " Daddy" and in her real life. Works Cited Hassanpour, Forough, and Ruzy Suliza Hashim. " An Angry Language: A Stylistic Study of the Images of Men in the Sylvia Plath's " Daddy." *Studies in Literature & Language* 4. 1 (2012): 123-128. Communication & Mass Media Complete. Web. 5 Oct. 2012. Plath, Sylvia. *Ariel*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1965. Platzky, Roger. 'Plath's

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