

Daddy essay



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In Sylvia Plath's poem, "Daddy", Plath makes many connections between her stifling father and her own husband. Plath discusses her conflicts with her own father, which do not end with his death, but continue when she marries a man just like her father. Plath displays a sort of evolution of her feelings for her father, and compares him to the man that she has married. Both of the men that Plath has let into her life have left a very miserable mark on her life. From the opening lines of the poem, the reader is given a sense of the dominance and darkness of the father.

With references to Nazis, concentration camps, swastikas, and vampires, Plath makes it very clear that both her father and her husband have caused plenty of unhappiness in her own life. "Daddy" appears to serve as closure for Plath, as she releases her true feelings for her father and husband. Plath describes her father in the opening stanzas of the poem, telling the reader that he was like a shoe that had her trapped for thirty years. Plath gives the reader the impression that her father was suffocating and controlling by comparing him to a shoe.

Plath is so upset with the way her father treated her that she even explains that he died before she could have killed him. She even goes as far as to say that because she could not get revenge on her father, she made a model of him, which is to say that she married a man that she viewed as very similar to her father. This man "had a Meinkampf" look, which tells the reader that he was a believer in the Nazi regime, just as her father was. This also serves to inform the reader that her husband was just as horrible as she believes her father was.

Plath goes on to say that the man she said “ I do” to had a love for the rack and the screw, an obvious reference to a passion for torturing others. By making this reference, Plath symbolically gives the reader a sense of absolute domination by both her husband and father. Plath tells of her own victimization, and by doing so, vindicates herself. As Roger Platizky notes in his analysis of “ Daddy”, Plath’s “ victimization and attempted vindication are dramatized in Plath’s poem”. Both Plath’s father and husband left Plath with a complete lack of who she was, leaving her feeling as though she didn’t have any real identity.

Referring to her father as a statue with a “ bag full of God” shows that Plath’s father was a man who always knew what should be done, and expected complete submission to his own authority. This same sense of hopelessness is conveyed with regard to Plath’s husband, with references to him being a vampire that sucked her blood for years. The comparison of her husband to a vampire is yet another powerful line, which shows how Plath believes that her husband has literally sucked the life out of her, leaving her without any sense of herself.