THE RESEMBLANCES BETWEEN SYLVIA PLATH'S LIFE AND HER *THE BELL JAR*

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Abstract

The Bell Jar is a novel written by Sylvia Plath. It is searing semi autobiographical with mental illness character described by Esther which is believed to be the resemblance of Plath's life. In this study, there are aspects which drew the writers' attention through the mirrored lives of two women, the fictional one Esther Greenwood and Plath as the author of *The Bell Jar*. Specifically, the writer focuses on women's writing and woman's psyche in gaining the answer about the narrative life of Sylvia Plath through Esther character. This study used library study to find any related data and descriptive qualitative method in the analysis. At the end, the study reveals that *The Bell Jar* novel reflects the the life of Plath through Esther character. Those are life as a writer, about her love relation and family relation.
Keywords: *Narrative life, Gynocriticism, Sylvia Plath, feminist thought*

INTRODUCTION

Literary work has deep relationship with its author. Moreover, a literary work is a tool to convey the author's feeling. The author's personalities and beliefs are bound up in the works. Some authors develop their stories based on their life, especially their emotional reaction when something happens to them. From their work, the reader can find some information about the authors. Based on Waren and Wellek (1956:94) literature represents life and life is in the large measure of social reality even though the natural world and the inner subjective world of the individual have also been objected of literary imitation. It means that literary work becomes a mirror of life because it is related with social reality.

In the middle of 1960s, there has been huge amount of interest in speculation about the nature of narrative. It was functioning to form information society, where communication and the means of communication have become increasingly important to societies, organizations and individuals. Furthermore, cross cultural studies Chafe (1980:203) and Levi Strauss (1972:10) suggest that narrative is a basic and constant

from of human regardless of ethnic origin, primary language, and enculturation. This statement is also supported by Barthes:

> The narratives of the world are numberless. Narrative is first and foremost a prodigious variety of genres, themselves distributed among different substance as though any material were fit to receive man's stories. able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures and the ordered mixture of all these substances: narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of Carpaccio's Saint Ursula), stained glass windows, cinema, comic, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society. it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. all classes, all human groups, have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men with different, even opposing cultural backgrounds, caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself. (1977:97)

Barthes states that every human being has their own narrative that appears based on their cultural background, gender, culture and understanding toward the condition. It is in the form of story in their daily life because narrative is about life itself. Regarding the narrating techniques Jhon Mullan (2006:40) simply states that one basic distinction is between first person narration and second person narration. Novelists are themselves often conscious of this as a choice to be made when they sit down to a new work. This kind of technique refers to narrative life. The reader is supposed to feel more connected with the main characters of the story. In this analysis the researcher tries to feel closer with the author of the novel. Due to the fact, the researcher should have strong proofs that the author mirrored her own emotions based on women's writing and woman's psyche.

The Bell Jar was chosen as the object of the study because of the unique of Sylvia Plath. She wrote the novel like the diary of herself. The type of her writing is mostly different with other writers. There is no sign of the time. So, as the reader, we should know and guess the time based on reader understanding. She tried to make the

plot is unique. She used reverse chronological as the plot. She made the story flows smoothly based on her experiences in her real life. Many moments of her life appear in the story. Besides, the novel describes how she strived to face problems. In accordance, the researcher chose gynocriticism as the approach to analyze how Sylvia Plath's life is highlighted in *The Bell Jar,* focuses on women's writing and woman's psyche. In this extend, this study describes narrative life and feminist thought of Sylvia Plath through it.

METHOD

Feminist Approach

Gender is significant in the construction of self. Based on Shaheen (2014:2) Gender is the condition of being male and female. The term gender denotes those socially approved roles, behaviors, actions and features that are considered by a society fit for men and women. These specific roles result in gender inequalities for example those differences between men and women that deliberately give favour to one group by disfavoring the other. Gender will be examined with special reference to feminism. Feminism, as a social movement recognizes and at the same time criticizes male supremacy and implies strategies to change it. Feminists claim for the equal rights for women and argue about women's equal share in society's prospects. Based on Rooney:

> Feminism has dramatically influenced the way literary texts are read, taught, and evaluated. Feminist literary theory has deliberately transgressed traditional boundaries between literature, philosophy, and the social sciences in order to understand how gender has been constructed and represent through language (2006: 1)

According to Barry (2009:121), the women movement in 1960 was not the first start of feminism movement. It was a reform from an old traditional feminism thought that discussed about the issue of women's inequality in a society. The feminist movement started long time before 1960 even though the movement of the feminism at 1960 was more well-known than before.

Tolan in Waugh (2006:319) explained that the history of feminism movement is divided into two waves. The first wave started from 1830 to 1920 and it was the best recalled as "the right to vote" movement. The second wave began during Women's liberation and has happened from 1960 until these days. It is obvious that women's equality movement has begun since 1830 until now. However, the exact feminism movement happening nowadays is influenced by the feminist movement in 1960.

Kate Millet in her book, *Sexual Politics* (Barry, 2009: 130) wrote about her disagreement on Freud theory which was the main reason of the patriarchal attitudes against feminist. Elaine Showalter is one of feminist in second wave. Tolan in Waugh's book (2006:328-336) also explained about Elaine Showalter, Julia Kristeva and Helena Cixous. Elaine Showalter with her book, *A Literature of their Own*, came up with the term gynocriticism which aimed to increase the number of female authors. The second wave writers above have shown some differences in their theories. Kate Millet argued on Freud's theory which became the main reason of the patriarchy idea on women. Elaine Showalter created *gynocriticism* which focused on the analysis of women literature.

Gynocriticism in literature

Gynocriticism derives from French "la gynocritique". Gynocriticism is the theory that explores literature by focusing on historical background, subject matter, genres, and structure of literature by women in order to make a method of analyzing literature written by women through woman's experiences, explains by the creator of gynocriticism Showalter:

> Gynocriticism is the study of woman as writers and its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres, and the structure of writing women, the psychodynamics of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual or collective female career, and the evolution and laws of a female literary tradition"(1982:14-15)

Gynocritics explore literature which contents women's language, women's ideas, and women's ways of communication, women's carriers, their history, styles, themes and genre of writing. Theme based on Fananie (2000:84) is the idea, opinion,

and the author view of life that becomes the background of literary work. It means that theme in literary work is an opinion, the basic idea or the main problem which is expressed by the author in her literary work.

Tandon (2008:84) mentions that Elaine Showalter has created gynocriticism in order to give the new type of women's works analysis based on the women's experience rather than to analyze it with specific theories that is used to analyze men's works. It can be seen that *gynocriticism* was created specifically to explain women's works through women's experience. Before gynocriticism existed, women's works were usually analyzed based on theories that were used to analyze men's works. Sharma (2016:5) stated that the gynocritics reject the male models and theories of literary criticism and wish to construct a female framework to analyze women literature because they feel that the male models and theories have no place on feminist literary criticism.

Wolfreys (2006:73) also added that *gynocritics*'s purpose was to be the study of literary works by women and this purpose has liberated women's works from men's works. The purpose of gynocriticism was to separate the analysis of women's works from men's perspective. Women's works were no longer needed to be compared to men's work because they are different. Both women and men's works have their own specific characterizations which differentiate them from each other. Showalter's explanation proved that women's literature can be analyzed by using specific ways.

Feminist criticism is sociolinguistic in nature because it places woman at the center and tries to describe women's writing with a practical attention to the physical use of words. There is marked difference in a masculine and a feminist; discourse as Humm in Sharma remarks:

> Women think in circles rather than lines, we tend to be holistic rather than sequential logic; we are oppressed with detail and with the pattern; that we write sentences to quote Virginia Woolf of a more elastic fiber than the old, that we are subjective and naturally attracted to interior spaces, children and animals. (2016:5)

The quotation above explains that women usually think different with man. Women try to connect one problem with others, see more as careful as possible so they can put every word to explain what they feel.

Sharma (2016:6) mentioned that all feminist critics share three basic assumptions. The first is that since rating manipulates gender for symbolic purpose, all literature as well as literary criticism is bound to ideological. It is believed that the ideology of women critics includes many more contradictions than the ideology of man. The second major assumption of feminist criticism is that there are sex related strategies of writing and the third assumption is that the continuing tradition of literary culture, like the economic and social tradition of which it is part, uses male norms to exclude to undervalue female writing and scholarship. Gynocritics challenge the traditional generic classification based on text about men being applied to women's modes. They challenge the term which give preference to the male view of world literature. It is important to mention here that there is certainly a link between history, sociology, psychology, anthropology and the feminist criticism.

Pillars of Gynocriticism

From the above discussion, one can find out that the gynocriticism centers women which differs from that of the male counterparts. There are four pillars or models of which the whole theory of gynocriticism is built up. They are biological, linguistic, psychoanalytical and cultural. Each is an effort to define and differentiate the qualities of women writers and their texts.

The first is women's writing and woman's body. Showalter in Norhayati (2005: 128) stated this model from the quotation of Cixious in *the life of Medusa* that more bodies hence more writing. Through this word Showalter tries to say that Inscribing of women's imaginary and physical experiences in writing would create a new reality and a new history. Because women's body and experiences must be assumed and lived fully, be written down in order to turn women from objects of men's fictions to subjects in their own circle of reality.

The second is women's writing and woman's language. Showalter in Norhayati (2005:132) argued that whether sex influence language and each such linguistic difference discernible in biological, cultural or social fields. Do women writers evolve new linguistic patterns and if so, is feminine reading and writing characterized by these patterns. The next model of gynocriticism is women's writing and woman's psyche. Showalter (1979:32) explains that the aspects of women's psychology get in touch with women's experiences as the author. The last is women's writing and woman's culture. The female culture, Showalter (1988:198) writes is defended by distinguishing between roles, tastes, activities, behaviors and functions actually generated out of women's life. It means that the story that produced by women in this part is affected by the roles, activities, custom and tradition in shaping the experiences of the women writer.

Women's Writing and Woman's Psyche

The next issue, gynocritics focuses on women's writing and her psyche. The aspect of female psyche includes biological and models of gender difference, as the body shapes psyche. Feminist critics correlate creativity to the author's psyche and so there is a relation between gender and creative process. Freud in Norhayati (2005:136) states, "Every child at play behaves like creativity writer, in that he creates to world of his own, a rather rearrange things of world in a new way which him place". This statement explains that the process of literary work same with the play kids which full of fantasy and day dreaming. Freud believes that when one condition cannot be what someone want, this condition will appear in their dream or fantasy. Freud sees that fantasy and dream are manifestation from unconsciousness of someone. So, he thinks that a literary work likes a dream and fantasy. Both of them are described what they want based on their unconsciousness. From this explanation the writer argue that literary work is manifestation from the experiences of the author, it is also included of gender.

The conventional psychoanalytical approach was dominated by both Sigmud Freud and Jacques Lacan. Penis envy, the castration complex and oedipal phase have become the Freudian and Lacanian coordinates defining women's relationship to

language, fantasy and culture. Freud in Norhayati (2005:137) states that in fantasy young woman and young man, they have references with erotic wishes. one thing which make them different is young woman is only allowed a minimum of erotic desire, and the young man has to learn to suppress the excess of self-regard which he brings with him from the spoilt days of his childhood.

Freud based his theory of sexuality on the possession of the phallus / penis. A male is a male because he possesses the phallus, a woman is simply not a man. Therefore, a woman is a lack, a negative entity. This lack of the female self can also be reflected in art and literature, where women frequently appear as objects of men's desires. Penis envy in women leads them to the sense of anxiety and lacking. Freud's psychoanalysis has been an important milestone toward further discussion on the nature and understanding of masculine and feminine identities and in the development of feminist philosophy. Many feminists disagree with Freud's biological determinism in the analysis of femininity. Freud considers women as inferior, weak and passive. He discusses women as sex object o men. He further suggests that men split women symbolically and erotically into mothers and sisters, on the one hand and prostitutes on the other. Gynocritics have denounced Freud's concept of penis envy, passivity, masochism, lesser rationality and weaker superego in women as mere patriarchal viewpoints.

Even many feminists disagree with Freud's biological determinism in the analysis of femininity. Freud gives contribution which explains that women's writing considered with the language and also their subjectivity, which lead the concept psychology of women and the unconsciousness characterization of unconsciousness and dream. Feminist states that psychology theory in men's writing are failed to describe the real soul of women, so women should have their own definition based on their experiences. This explanation is supported by Reik in Showalter (1979:32) which states "writing as Freud told us at the end of his life, is connected with urinating, which psychologically is easier for a woman, they have a wider bladder" writing in psychological aspect not depend on the wider of bladder but based on the experiences of women which does not have phallus.

Showalter (1979:32) explains that the aspects of women's psychology get in touch with women's experiences as the author. Most of the women writing talks about suffer and violence that finally makes them decide suicide. Based on women family and society experiences in Victorian Era. Showalter mention that in Victorian Era women oppressed by the self-censorship which mean they women could not write what they want at that time. In 1960, one of novelist writes, women greater dissemblers than men when they wish to conceal their own emotions. This oppression and emotion that hidden inside of women's psyche caused women are getting depression.

Nancy J. Chodorow in *Feminism: A Psychoanalytical Theory* (1989) discussed how Freudian theory could be used to understand the nature of masculine and feminine identities and the cause of male domination over female. She regarded masculine identity as man's mothering. Freudian psychology regards women as castrated men suffering from penis envy. He argues for the superiority of the penis. Penis envy is universal in women and is responsible for their castration complex. So women write with the sense of lack. Freud further argues that the unsatisfied dreams and desires of woman are chiefly erotic and these are the desires that shape his plots of women's fiction. A gynocritics reading reveals these repressed desires and fantasies in women writing.

Jacques Lacan modified and rewrote Freud's theory with his linguistic, structuralism and semiotic approach. He expostulated that the penis (the signifier) is the symbol of sexual power or phallus (the signified) of the father and of all men. He regarded the phallus as the key source of power in language and being, which real men as the norm and women as the other. In the patriarchal system, the law of the father is at the supreme status which represses femininity. Lacan mentions that feminine enjoyment does exist but is not articulated freely within the patriarchal system of language discourse. Thus, according to Lacan, women are the victims of the identity crisis.

In Lacanian psychology, the second stage of the development of a child is mirror stage. In this stage, the child sees its reflection in the mirror either it sees it literally or in a metaphorical sense, but the fact is that the child is still living in the pre

lapsarian or pre linguistic world. When a child enters the symbolic stage of language, he starts getting his own identity. But in the history of mankind, women have hardly entered that symbolic stage. They have always remained in imagery stage pre lapsarian stage or pre linguistic stage of ignorance. Here, the father stand for the symbolic order and so female child is not able to identify with him completely due to the absence of the biological organ. Lacan further explains that a girl's language and its laws are always negative, so it is characterized with lack. According to him, the distinction between the imaginary and symbolic is the difference between the maternal and paternal. As Gora Kalpan remarks:

> The phallus as signifier has a central, crucial position in language, for if language embodies the patriarchal law of the culture, its basic meanings refer to the recurring process by which sexual difference and subjectivity relation to a third term, for it is characterized by an identification with lack. (1977:3).

Both Freud and Lacan believe that men and women are essentially different from biology to creativity as regards to creativity gynocritics link female and male creativity to female and male orgasm. They argue that phallocentric validates male creativity and sees it as superior to female creativity. Gynocritics accepts the psychoanalytic differences in women and men but demands that female creativity be validated. According to psychoanalysts, absence, lack, inchoateness, insatiability, nothingness etc. are monstrous images of feminine and gynocritics have bitterly to the view of women as passive, narcissistic, masochistic and penis envying as nothing in herself but only miserable and measurable in relation to male norm.

The duty of gynocritics is not to accept women's writing as inferior to men's writing. Their writing is of as equal status as the writing by men. They are critique of Freud and Lacan because of their gender bias. A gynocritics reading represents a repressed egoistic and ambitious fantasy in women's writing, but it is not highlighted by the women writers because this type of fantasy of power is outside the world ascribed to women by the social boundaries.\

Another important issue of gynocriticism is mother, daughter relationship which is an immense source of female creativity. As Godard in Mapmaking: A Survey Feminist Criticism Expressed:

> Unlike the young male, the female has a more complex development to make, one which involves the recognition of identity as well as of difference, whereas the young male makes only the later distinction in the formation of his ego. In order for women to grow into authentic individuals, they must explore their pace in the matrilineal literary tradition (1987:12)

Here, there is a question. Why does psychoanalytical theory fail to explain the difference in the way women have written in certain groups. To find this, certain critics like Showalter (1988:197) mentions that we must go beyond the psychoanalyses to amore flexile model of women's writing. The idea of sisterhood is also an important characteristic of gynocriticim theory. According to Norhayati (2005:140), the aim of gynocritic is provide sisterhood. The idea of sisterhood stands as a symbol of rejection of the powerlessness that women felt because of the patriarchal structure of the society. Here the meaning of sisterhood is that women are different from men in their experiences and them, in group share a common culture incorporating their attitudes and vision of the world. Thus, the aim of gynocritics is to redraw the circle around a new center focused on women's own experiences. Through gynocritics, the readers have the opportunity to learn something solid, enduring and real about the relation of women and literature. Through their writing women has already written their experiences and their opinion with the case that their faced.

DISCUSSION

The Life of Sylvia Plath's as Described Through Esther Character

Sylvia Plath as a Writer

To analyze the narrative life and feminist thought of Sylvia Plath seen in Esther Character in the novel the writer must understand her background first. Sylvia Plath was one of the most renowned and influential poets and novelists, and short story

writers of the 20th century. She was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1932. She graduated from Smith College in 1955 and won a Fulbright Scholarship to Cambridge University. Her many books include the poetry collections *Ariel*, *The Collossus*, *Crossing the Water*, *Winter Trees*, and The Collected Poems, which won the Pulitzer Prize. *The Bell Jar* is her only novel. She was married to the poet Ted Hughes, and together they had two children until they separated in September 1962. She died in London in 1963. Through Ester's Character Sylvia Plath tried to express the experiences as the writer and won the prize in this quotation:

> "There were twelve of us at the hotel. We had all won a fashion magazine contest, by writing essays and stories and poems and fashion blurbs, and as prizes they gave us jobs in New York for a month, expenses paid, and piles and piles of free bonuses, like ballet tickets and passes to fashion show and hair styling at a famous expensive salon and chances to meet successful people in the field of our desire and advice about what to do with our particular complexions." (Plath, 2005:3)

The above Quotation describes the condition when Esther had won the contest from the famous magazine in New York named as Lady Magazine. She got the job and the opportunity to join that magazine caused her hobby. She sent her poems through the magazine then she got many big chances to see the successful people in the field of writing. What happened with Esther is the portrayal of Sylvia Plath's narrative life. In August 1951 Sylvia Plath won Mademoiselle Magazine's fiction contest with a short story. After being one of the two national winners of Mademoiselle's fiction contest, she won a guest editorship then she felt like the smith Cinderella met her idols like Alistair Reis, Anthon, Hect, Richard Wilbur and William Burford, whose pictures were accompanied by biographical notes and comments on poets and poetry (Plath, 2005:7).

> "What I always thought I had in mind was getting some big scholarship to graduate school or grant study all over Europe, and then I thought I'd be professor and write book of poems and be the editor of some sort, usually I had these plans on the tip of my tongue. I don't really know, "I heard myself say I felt deep shock, hearing myself say that because the minute I said it , I knew it was true." (Plath, 2005:32)

Based on the quotation Esther has the ambition to be an author of Poems book or professor or even get scholarship in Europe. From the quotation when Esther said that I knew it was true actually has deep meaning through the fact that Plath has already made it. Plath has already become an editor a member of editor since she was in the college. Women's writing and women's psyche are really close with the concept based on women's experiences. This is the reason why Plath described this story based on her real life.

Sylvia Plath's Love Relationship

Plath first met poet Ted Hughes on February 25, 1956 at a party in Cambridge. Plath's described Hughes as a singer story teller, lion and world wanderer with a voice like the thunder of the God. The couple married on June 16, 1956, at St. George the Martyr, Holborn. Through this biography Plath try to describe the same love relationship in Esther character through Buddy character. The way she thinks about Hughes at the very first time like the quotation:

> "Buddy said he figured there must be something in poetry if a girl like me spent all her days over it, so each time we met I read him some poetry and explained to him what I found in it. It was Buddy's idea. He always arranged our weekends so we'd never regret wasting our time in any way. Buddy's father was a teacher, and I think Buddy could have been a teacher as well, he was always trying to explain things to me and introduce me to new knowledge." (Plath, 2005:68)

This quotation means that Buddy is an adorable partner. He tries to understand the life of Esther who really like poets as a part of her life. They are sharing all the things include poetry that she really loves. Buddy gives her new knowledge about everything. The same case with Plath's feeling through Ted, from the biography Plath's stated that Hughes is good story teller. Related to the women's writing and women's psyche the literature is reflected the experienced of author. Here, Freud further argues which explain that women's writing considered with the language and also their subjectivity, which lead the concept psychology of women and unconsciousness characterization of unconsciousness and dream.

In 1961, Plath discovered Hughes had been having an affair in Assia Wevil and in September the couple separated. She was in a panic about money, and had to move to a bare flat in London with her two small children in the coldest British winter in a hundred years. All three of them had the flu, there was no phone, and there was no help with child care. After this

case Plath had car accident which she described as one of many suicide attempts. An inquiry on the day following Plath' death gave a ruling of suicide. Hughess was devastated. They had been separated six months. The expectation of Plath's love relationship doesn't work as her want. So, as the author, Plath tries to make the statement through Esther character by saying:

> What I couldn't stand was Buddy pretending I was so sexy and he is so pure, when all the time he'd been having an affair with that tartly waitress and must have felt like laughing in my face. Well, I had just decided to ditch Buddy Willard for once and for all, not because he'd slept with that waitress but because he didn't have the honest guts to admit it straight off to everybody and face up it as part of his character. (Plath, 2005:72)

Based on this quotation Plath as Esther character tries to tell that there is one case, when buddy is hypocrite. Buddy Willard is not kind as her thinks. What make the experiences of Plath same with Esther is both of them hate the one who make affair even in Esther character she has not been marriage because this is the purpose of the literary work based on gynocriticism theory, when something not happen based on what author want, it will appear in her imagination put on writing form. After that case Esther met other someone named Constantin.

> "And then I wondered if as soon as he came to like me he would sink into ordinariness, and if as soon as he came to love me I would find fault, the way I did with Buddy Willard and the boys before him. The same thing happened over and over: I would catch sight of some flawless man off in the distance, but as soon as he moved closer I immediately saw he wouldn't do at all. That's one of the reason I never wanted to get married". (Plath, 2005:83)

From the quotation above, we can see that Esther did not want to fall in love again because the more someone loves her it would more easily to her to see his fault and he would become an ordinary. She did not want to make a relationship with anyone because she afraid to getting hurt. It also happened in Plath's life with Hughes, since at the very first time her love relationship is beautiful and full of happiness and finally it was broken when she finally knew that Hughess has an affair with other girl, so better for her not to get married as Esther character in the novel.

Sylvia Plath's Family Relationship

A radical change occurred in Plath's life when she was eight. In November 1940, her father died after a long difficult illness. Plath's father died a week and a half

after Plath's eight birthdays, of complication following the amputation of foot due to untreated diabetes. Raised as Unitarian Christian, Plath experienced a loss of faith after her father's death remains ambivalent about religion throughout her life. This situation also seen in Esther life from this quotation:

> "The Italian in the black leather jacket stopped and pointed down in alley behind the white Methodist church. I remembered be the Methodist church. I had been a Methodist for the first nine years of my life, before my father died and we moved turned Unitarian". (Plath, 2005:164)

The above quotation informs that Esther's father also died when she was nine years old. She is also the girl who faith with the god as Methodist. In the middle of the novel Plath describes what she wants in Esther character that she imagines if her father was alive what she would do with him during his life. It can be seen from this quotation:

> I thought that is my father hadn't died, he would have taught me all about insects, which was specialty at the University. He would also have taught me German and Greek and Latin, which he knew and perhaps I would be a Lutheran. My father had been a Lutheran in Wisconsin, but they were out of style in New England, so he had become a lapsed Lutheran and then my mother said, a bitter atheist. (Plath, 1996:166)

The quotation shows that what Esther dream is also Plath's dream. She thought that if her father was a life maybe her father would teach her all about insect, biology, language of German and more faith to the god. The relation between women's writing and psyche can be seen through Esther character. Her father was an entomologist and a professor of biology at Boston University who authored a book about bumblebees. Plath uses this part to show what she wants based on her imagination about her father.

The influenced of her father's dead affected her relation with her mother. Esther was doubt and partial rejection of social and traditional values of her time. Most of them are embodied by her mother. For all her life, Esther has got the urge to be her own self, regardless of what others expect to be. In public, she wears a mask, build up a façade and takes on the roles others expect her to play although her inner self strongly rejects these roles. Esther never felt integrated, she criticizes the superficial world of cover girls and fashionable magazine.

Nevertheless, she also belongs to this world and works for a fashion magazine in New York. Whereas rejected the traditional life of a mother and wife, which seems boring to her she at the same time thought about what it was like being married and having children. She was looking for the woman inside her and wanted to find out what it meant to be a woman in contemporary society. While, at the same time she was torn by this burden. She found that her closes person, her mother, could not play role as a role model for her rather seemed to be a terrifying presence for the daughter. From this quotation Plath tried to describe Esther's mother:

> "My own mother wasn't much help. My mother had taught shorthand and typing to support us ever since my father died, and secretly she hated him for dying and leaving no money because he did not trust life insurance salesmen. She was always on to me to learn shorthand after college, so I'd have a practical skill as well as a college degree. (Plath, 2005:39)

The above quotation describes that Esther's mother has gone through bitter and difficult times as her husband had died early and left her and the children with no money. So, she tried to make living by teaching shorthand and typing. Although Mr. Greenwood encouraged Esther to pursue her writing career, she did not really believe in it and wanted her to earn money in more secure and permanent job. As a result, she urged her daughter to learn shorthand so she could find work as secretary after college. For Esther, however shorthand seems to be a domestic life and she, therefore, refused to learn it. Her mother was wondering why Esther could not succeed in life, threw shadows on her future and made it hard to decide what to do in life and even harder to believe in her qualities.

> This meant I couldn't get a job after college. My mother kept telling me nobody wanted a plain English Major. But an English Major who knew shorthand was something else again. Everybody would want her. She would be in demand among all the up-and-coming young men and she would transcribe letter after thrilling letter. (Plath, 2005:76)

In the end, Esther even started to learn shorthand but gave up soon as "there was not one job I felt like doing where you used shorthand" (Plath, 2005:122). She

definitely did not want to become a secretary as she “hated the idea of serving men in anyway” (Plath, 2005:76). This shows her modern attitude towards life and her resistance to a society in which woman have to serve, respect and obey men who are the dominant power. In general Mrs. Greenwood embodies the ideas society had about women in the 1950’s. Men were the dominant gender so whereas they earned the money, their wives had to pursue their domestic duties and please their husbands. The fear of becoming one’s mother is central issue adolescence and one of the major concerns of American middle-class girls in the 1950’s. Moreover, the Greenwood family serves as a typical example of the nuclear family that moves to the suburbs leaves their social background behind, and it is characterized by a missing father and a disturbed between mother and daughter. Plath takes up this motive in *The Bell Jar* by describing helplessness and pain both on the motherly and the daughterly side. Although Esther and her mother long for each other’s love, they lose it at the same time and even start blaming each other in the end.

CONCLUSION

Some authors develop their stories based on their life, especially their emotional reaction when something happens to them. From their work, the reader can find some information about the authors. In this study, the writer analyzes Sylvia Plath’s narrative life and feminist thought by looking at the resemblance between Plath’s biography and Esther character in the novel. The analysis shows that the novel describes the narrative life and feminist thought of Sylvia Plath. Those are narratives life of Sylvia Plath’s as a writer, Plath’s love relationship, Plath’s Family relationship. And at the same time the novel also describes her feminist thought, challenging traditional patriarchal society at that time.

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