

## **‘Daddy’ and His Discussion of Authority**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sylvia Plath’s “Daddy” is one of her most widely studied poems under psychoanalytic theories. This paper, however, argues that the poet offers a meticulous framework of art revealing the strata of an autocratic government from its heyday to the fall of its leader. In this regard, the paper presumes that the poet had already established antagonism between Daddy as the symbol of arbitrary power and herself as the representative of the suppressed in society. This study applies the concepts of race, space and vision to the poem based on Sallie Westwood’s power grammar in his *Power and the Social* (2002) and also gives prominence to political cognition introduced by Teun A. van Dijk. Finally, the paper affirms that although there are traces of autobiographical narrative within the poem, Plath’s work surely stands as a great illustration of a totalitarian regime that sanctions programmes of propaganda, surveillance and ethnic purgation.

*Keywords:* “Daddy”, political cognition, power grammar, Sallie Westwood, Sylvia Plath, Teun A. van Dijk

### **INTRODUCTION**

Originally published in 1965, *Ariel* proves to be the true manifestation of Sylvia Plath’s private content and rhythm, urges Susan Bassnett (2005). The critic will receives

well the poetry collection due to its vast embodiment of love, hatred and feminism as well as its creation of personal mythology – depiction of a journey from death to re-birth, celebration of femininity and the terrors of war. Bassnett also dismisses the terms “confessional” and “surrealist” referred to Plath’s poetry. She takes sides with Ted Hughes, Plath’s husband, as they grasp her works to be “a continuous opus ... an ongoing work that, like her Journal,

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recorded the endless variations in her mood and thought patterns” (2005, p. 43), which potentially rejects the idea of Plath’s surrealism, for Plath originally employed her own version of mythological imagery and her symbolism develops a meaningful rapport only in her personal context. There is, however, the perpetual voice of ‘aggressiveness’ echoed in the most prominent pieces of the collection such as “Daddy”, “The Applicant”, “Lady Lazarus” or “Death and Co.”, if not in the entire collection. The works vividly demonstrate an image of feminine entrapment within the deeper self and outer masculine society as well as a thwarted escape the poet wishes to accomplish.

In *Ariel*, voices are silenced and superseded by imagery, extremely personal imagery. Christina Britzolakis reads the images of an “entombed voice” in the work (1999, p. 109). The poetical images of the collection, in fact, further fulfil the shattered trend of fragmentation of Plath’s mind and poetry and form a circle of life and punishment, but this time, as her last work she may have been attempting to absolve herself of all pain and agony and reach a re-birth in “Getting There”, “Ariel” and “Daddy”. “Daddy”, composed on October 12, 1962 and published posthumously in *Ariel*, is a reflection of mental complexes that Plath developed mainly as a result of her father’s early death. Sylvia Plath commented on her work that

*[t]he poem is spoken by a girl with an Electra complex. Her father died while she thought he was God.*

*Her case is complicated by the fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish. In the daughter the two strains marry and paralyze each other—she has to act out the awful little allegory once before she is free of it. (Plath & Hughes, 2005, p. 196)*

Critics see “Daddy” to address the troubles of ‘conjugal’ compromise, too. Judith Kroll, for example, hesitates in wondering whether Plath ever desired to break free of male mastery. She reminds her readers of the concept of the “Lord-of-the-natural-world” figure (which places Plath as Eve) and discusses the images of masculinity in the poem that plunge her into a self-imposed whirlpool.

In unpublished letters, she writes of him as a mythical hero or divinity from another age: an Adam who is both violent and creative, a possessor of strength and genius, who would breed supermen.

*It is obvious that many qualities of this omniperfect husband/god could equally well characterise an omnipotent devil, and in fact, part of Plath’s presentation of him is as a reformed or reformable destroyer. (1976, p. 249)*

But Plath’s meter and rhymes are probably a considerable challenge to Kroll’s conceit. Both Jo Gill (2008) and Susan Bassnett believe that due to the use of ‘nursery rhyme rhythm’ and ‘clanging rhymes’, such as ‘do’, ‘you’,

'shoe', 'screw', 'blue', 'du', 'two', 'Jew', 'goo', 'who', and so on, supported by fragmentation, repetition and verb omission, the work amplifies fervour and celerity, which project a sense of transgression and ambition.

Moving to psychoanalytic study, Robert Philips attributes Jungian psychoanalysis to the work. He believes that the poem provides a good chance for Plath to commit "metaphorical murder." He notes that references to the Nazi death camps in the poem imply Plath's "ambivalent state and her unfulfilled longing" (as cited in Butscher, 1979, p. 203). Nance and Jones see the poem as a manifestation of the psychological willingness of the poet to polish the image of "Daddy" that she carries in her mind. They state that the world Plath creates is "a combination of exorcism and sympathetic magic," in which she embarks on wiping out any remaining memories of Him<sup>1</sup> through juxtaposition of many uncontended (aggressive) words (1984, p. 124). However, Eileen M. Aird notes that the effects of Plath's childhood on this poem are deniable because the poem is a fictionalised piece of art that forms no real literal and historical basis (1975, p. 78).

Granted that, this essay sets out to explore a new angle on the element of power in the work. The poem is certainly alluding to sociological and political points of view as it unravels the agonising process of loss and later restoration of

power for the poet and of her struggle for survival within the Nazi totalitarian regime.

"All human beings are born free," Article 1 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "and equal in dignity and rights. Human beings are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood" (Smith, 2013, p. 40). To sociologists, however, the cited provision may not be practical at all. Political theorist Ernesto Laclau responds that freedom, in a socio-political framework, is marred by power (1996, p. 52). He explains that one cannot be free unless he represses others, and that freedom and power foster reciprocal exchanges. Thus, in order to understand freedom from a political point of view, the ontological nature of power needs to be addressed. Still, scholars roughly refuse to offer a precise definition of power as it varies under different conditions. For instance, Angela Cheater in *Power in the Postmodern Era* notes that even Foucault, to whom almost all discourse theorists are indebted for his intellectual and philosophical explications, is not consistent in his various descriptions of power. He describes power as "a more-or-less organised, hierarchal, co-ordinated cluster of relation" but also sees power going beyond individuals or even collective control (1999, pp. 3–4). Yet, Sallie Westwood (2002) notes that power is a sort of capability with which one manages to impose, for his own or his party's benefit, upon the lives of others (p. 1) or, as she

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<sup>1</sup> 'Him' is deliberately capitalised since, as mentioned elsewhere, "Daddy" represents a God-like persona for the poet.

writes elsewhere, “[power refers to] the capacity linked to the imposition of one person’s will on another” (p. 2). Westwood continues that, according to Foucault’s definition of power, such capacity cannot be treated outside or beyond social relations.

As for social relations, man, throughout his life, has to cope with different social groups, ranging from his family to the government, establishing control or surrendering it to others, because according to Alain Touraine, all these relationships are defined in terms of power (1981, p. 33). Teun A. van Dijk elaborates on the notion of Touraine’s ‘social power’ and sees it as an omnipresent state in all social interactions such as neighbourhoods, groups, classes and even parties, where members are regarded not as collective ‘united’ associates but individuals whose power defines their status (2008, p. 29). Barry Hindess (2004) argues that regardless of privileges of power, either a capacity or right to act, with no distinct difference, there must be subjects on whom the power is exercised. Power is manifested at different levels in each society, whether within a totalitarian regime or a democratic constitution. Laclau notes that power exists in the heart of most democratic countries and it will not be discarded (1996, p. 52). The powerful, according to Zolfagharkhani, employ whatever means they deem fit to maintain power. He indicates that notorious acts of assassination and imprisonment indicate the paradigms of “direct physical exercising” and the ploy of propaganda serves a government best to exert an

“indirect” impact on society (2011, p. 1). Accordingly, in order to control a human being indirectly, the powerful must manipulate the faculty of reason, or, based on van Dijk, “political cognition.” ‘Cognition’ is “the process of knowing, understanding, and learning something” (*Longman Dictionary*, 2009, p. 314). “Political cognition” refers to the level of awareness towards current political affairs. van Dijk explains,

*The study of political cognition focuses on various aspects of ‘political information processing’. It essentially deals with the acquisition, uses, and structures of mental representations about political situations, events, actors, and groups. Typical topics of political cognition research are: the organization of political beliefs; the perception of political candidates; political judgment and decision making.* (2008, p. 158)

Thus, in order to maintain power, he continues, the powerful need to control discourse – the language used in affairs – in all its forms such as educational system, media, arts etc. Politicians with the aid of their press secretaries have a good comprehension of how to use viable methods to manipulate people, which in turn leads to manipulating their political cognition.

On the other hand, the lack of reasoning may be attributed to elements of race, space, vision and ideology of the victims.

It is worth mentioning here that there is no clear-cut border separating racialised, spatial and visual power. Further scrutiny of the mentioned categories reveals how intensely they are embedded within each other. Westwood (2002) points out that racism and racialised power are crucial elements in the realm of colonialism and colonial power. She refers to Foucault, who notes that racism developed in the colonial period, generating internal divisions. Westwood urges that the concept of 'otherness' is at the very heart of 'racialised power.' Kenan Malik notes

*The concept of race arose from the contradictions of equality in modern society, but it is not an expression of a single phenomenon or relationship. Rather it is a medium through which the changing relationship between humanity, society, and nature has been understood in a variety of ways. (as cited in Westwood, 2002, p. 31)*

Ages ago, the signifiers of difference were, perhaps, based on corporeal marks such as skin colour or facial features; however, in contemporary times, science has helped thinkers to bring biological dissimilarities into account, namely 'scientific racism'. According to Templeton, Fish believes that racial categories are culturally real and biologically meaningful (2002, para. 1). In the abstract of his paper, he writes that "[h]umans have much genetic diversity, but the vast majority of

this diversity reflects individual uniqueness and not race" (2002). Westwood also concludes that colour and blood become the signs of (non-)conformity within society (p. 35). As an inevitable result, the victims of perpetrated discrimination suffer from psychosomatic disorders as they see their race as a major hindrance to normal living. Thus, she asserts, "difference and racialisation are embedded in the social, and construct the racialised, diasporic spaces of the current world" (2002, p. 42).

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* proposes two definitions for 'nationalism': "the desire by a group of people of the same race, origin, language etc. to form an independent country" and "love for your own country and the belief that it is better than any other country" (2009, p. 1159). Anderson (1991) discusses the imaginary nations and nationalism that can be attributed to the previous discussion on racism. He writes that, people with common bonds develop their own nation with clear non-geographical borders from other parts of society in their minds. According to the first definition of nationalism, people of the same race are in better harmony with each other than a community made up of different racial segregations. A government whose high-ranking members seek racial-orientated motives abuses people's emotional bonds in favour of aggrandisement of its own power. "Structures of feeling," the term Raymond Williams coined, inserts the public's commitment to a specific place

into the ideas implemented by the abusive powerful (as cited in Westwood, 2002, p. 112). 'Love for the fatherland' behooves people to defend their territorial integrity to the last breath because, as Westwood notes, it generates a strong frenzy over the notion of geographical identity that lets people believe they have "common bonds" with each other (2002, p. 100). Westwood reinforces that the state deliberately brings up the idea of spatial fervour to provoke its subordinate masses' sense of nationalism and the essence that they need to safeguard their country (p. 99).

According to Westwood (2002), Benedict Anderson introduces the concept of "map" and "mapping" in the study of 'spatial power.' Map is the embodiment of territorial ownership of a nation, among other things. The powerful exhibit such a medium of 'visual power' to brandish their competence over the powerless (p. 100). Westwood consociates 'visual' and 'spatial power', which collectively manifest through 'mapping' (2002, p. 115). She also mentions that "cartography provides a visual representation of land mass" (ibid.). Concepts of nation and nationalism, flags and flag ceremonies, religious signs and representations, political leaders' posters or statues and other symbols of shared beliefs and bonds can be perceived as the means of exercising power through space and vision. Thus, a piece of printed paper is deployed to actuate the sense of self-sacrifice in the masses for their country. Westwood also maneuvers on the expression "seeing is believing." Although he is especially keen

on the application of the axiom in religion and 'visual power,' he notes that it can be generalised to other aspects of power exercise in a society. Mass media, notably for autocratic regimes, render invaluable assistance to subjugate the powerless and to remind them of their correct place within society. On the other hand, there exists a coterie of enlightened minds who wish to remain cognisant of the massive thrusts of deceptive propaganda (2002, p. 119).

Finally, on the context of political cognition, to van Dijk, ideology is "group or class 'consciousness', whether or not explicitly elaborated in an ideological system which underlies the socioeconomic, political, and cultural practices of group members in such a way that their interests are realized" (2008, pp. 33–34). Both ideology and the fabricated ideological practices are often acquired, enacted or organised by the dominant such as the state authorities, media tycoons, education executives or church elders who aim to have their ideology indoctrinated as the 'general' or 'natural' system of values, norms and goals. Instilling doctrines requires time and strategy. The dominant single out and later restrict the types and topics of discourse as well as access to information. Regarding the latter, van Dijk elaborates on the ways of forming ideology within the social groups to which people belong. He explains that ideology starts to form by reading, listening and watching different types of texts and news in the media. In the realm of media, for example, topic filtering avails news tycoons 'restriction of information'

and 'construction of social and political cognition.' "Some discourse of genres," he notes, "such as those of catechism, party rallies, indoctrination and political propaganda indeed have the explicit aim of 'teaching' ideologies to group members and newcomers" (p. 9). According to Burton and Carlen (1979, p. 36), "[t]hese conditions essentially determine the contents and the organization of public knowledge, the hierarchies of beliefs and the popularity of the agreement, which in turn are potent factors in the formation and the reproduction of opinions, attitudes, and ideologies." As it is, it is safe to suggest that all previous manifestations of power discussed in this introduction, by and large, smooth the path of mind control for the fabrication of cognition and ideology to be imposed on the powerless.

## DISCUSSION

A civilised man does not live in a vacuum. He is obliged to interact with other individuals in order to satisfy his needs. With each act of social synergy one conducts, according to van Dijk (2008), he places himself in an unbalanced situation; as a member of a group, he is either the one in power or the one under power. Westwood quotes from Machiavelli, "Power is simply the effectiveness of strategies for generating a wider scope of action, vis-à-vis other people who must then operate within this arena" (2002, p. 8). To put it simply, the powerful seek ways to exercise their power over the powerless, and morality is the least of their concerns

where violence and suppression are the means of control. Hannah Arendt (1969) in her *On Violence* states that violence is allied with physical force and is invoked when the power is in danger, while John Keane notes that violence is an unwanted physical interference that leads to a series of effects ranging from shock to even death. He believes that violence wields an objectively cold, dispassionate authority on its victims and regards them as means to an end (1996, p. 165).

In *Ariel*, Plath opens and ends her poem with the image of the circle of power in which she has "lived like a foot" in a

... *black shoe* ...  
*For thirty years, poor and white,*  
*Barely daring to breathe or Achoo*  
 (1965, p. 49).

However, as if her self-revealing confessions possessed a healing power, she proceeds to redeem herself of Daddy's tyranny when she and her villager friends celebrate "dancing and stamping on" (1965, p. 51) him, exulting "Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through" (1965, p. 51). Thus, Plath, who was once deprived of power and helpless to bring change to her life, rises up and nullifies Daddy's ultimate power through a graduate process of self-awareness, replacing his with her own power.

van Dijk prioritises discourse over human consciousness because discourse possesses such an enormous capacity that it precipitates impact on the mind without the individual coming to notice it. Thus, those

in power should predominate 'discourse' if they want to maintain their power (2008, p. 10). Plath confirms that she "never could talk" since her "tongue stuck in [her] jaw" (1965, p. 49). She reinforces the image of the 'suppression of dissent' she creates in her poem by giving an authentic muffled German voice of "Ich, ich, ich, ich" (1965, p. 49), as if her vocal cords were ripped out or as she puts it, her tongue is "stuck in a barb wire snare" (1965, p. 49). The poet metaphorically attributes the suppressed freedom of speech to "barbed wire" and "gunged" voice of "... ich, ich," to create a poignant and painful scene. The pain is intolerable; therefore, "the language [becomes] obscene" (1965, p. 50).

Michel Foucault submits a meticulous resolution to illuminate the components of state sovereignty, one of which is surveillance, over society and civil order (as cited in Westwood, 2002, p. 129). An ardent reader of fiction may immediately recall 'Big Brother' in Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* or, rather more creatively, 'Eye of Sauron' in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, as first-hand concepts of surveillance. To him, although, replacing a sophisticated set of machines with a flag seems far-fetched, the Nazi Swastika, along with the portrait of Daddy on the blackboard is like a double-edged sword; not only is it a symbol of power, it also casts a constant eye on men to display what it considers appropriate behaviour according to the Party's code of practice. Through a progressive yet melancholic redemption, Plath refuses to comply with the code.

When "The black telephone's off at the root" (1965, p. 51), she excommunicates herself from the world of taunting memories she lives in because "The voices just can't worm through" (1965, p. 51). Still, the telephone, which is 'black,' the colour that the poet associates with the Party, may stand as a metaphor of eavesdropping. In other words, Plath struggles to restore a once lost power to protect herself and to value her privacy and does not let "the voices," of any nature, to invade her life any more. She is finally through.

Westwood in her discussion on 'visual power' suggests that visual media can conjure a vision of militarism or, on the contrary, proud shreds of history before its viewers (2002, p. 116). In other words, military maneuvers can both display the strength of an army to defend a nation and its territorial integrity or the admonitory implication of swift and severe response to those who dare to rebel. Gas-masked death-squads emitting a harsh tone of "gobbledygook" as well as "Luftwaffe" (1965, p. 50) marching in front of their leader with his "neat mustache" (1965, p. 50), who stands as 'the' icon of bravery, the "Panzer-man" (1965, p. 50), render the image of an undefeatable war machine that holds the poet in awe.

Besides photographs and pictures, Westwood considers signs and symbols as further components of visual power (2002, p. 116). She argues that the rise of a new party to power parallels designing a symbol or sign of recognition mostly in the form of a flag. With the establishment of the party,

the flag takes on a metaphorical meaning of ultimate power over people's mind. The flag is constantly in front of people to remind them at all times who is in power. Interestingly, she points out that practices like saluting the flag are visual reminders, and wield the power to effect 'emotional bands' or 'political love,' as Anderson calls it. Plath underlines the absolute power of the Swastika by putting it in a position higher than God in the heavens, "Not God but a swastika" (1965, p. 50). It is so holy that "no sky could squeak through" (1965, p. 50). It is so mesmerising that it makes "Every woman [adore] a Fascist" (1965, p. 50), no matter how hard that "brute" Fascist tramples on their faces (1965, p. 50).

Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945) was indeed the grand designer of the Nazi propaganda. Knowing the value of 'visual power' as "a means to an end" (1934, p. 30), he played a very unique role after WWI in persuading the Germans into regaining their trust in the newborn party. As *History.com* writes

*He [Goebbels] arranged massive political gatherings at which Hitler was presented as the savior of a new Germany. In a masterstroke, Goebbels oversaw the placing of movie cameras and microphones at pivotal locations to accentuate Hitler's image and voice. Such events and maneuverings played a pivotal role in convincing the German people that their country would regain its honor only by giving unwavering support to Hitler.* (2014, para. 5)

The programme, however, works as long as the truth does not surface. In other words, the encompassing deception of social welfare and illusion of economic prosperity can be only practised to the extent that the masses can be kept from awakening to the reality of their current state. Once it is out, 'political cognition' frustrates the false evangelism that the government attempts to deploy. Plath's juxtaposition of an incongruous scene of "... one gray toe / and [his] head ... / in the waters off beautiful Nauset" (1965, p. 49) indicates a disturbing revelation. She acquires an understanding that the Nazi occupation diminished her world that was once like Nauset, a beautiful and extremely convenient place to live, into a wasteland of "freakish Atlantic" (1965, p. 49), that accommodates a "Ghastly statue" (1965, p. 49).

'Black' is the most frequently mentioned colour throughout the poem. In "... black shoe / in which I have lived like a foot" (1965, p. 49), Plath employs the metaphor of "black shoe" to illuminate the society she lives in, and it is 'black', the colour of night, horror and SS soldiers. Besides its literary connotation of suggesting an arbitrary society, Plath expresses her disgust about the betrayal of her leader to the people. Daddy deceived his people for at least "thirty years," keeping them under total suppression.

van Dijk takes a meaningful glance at the concept of education and cognition. He notes that the powerful maintain their authority over a nation by administrating

curricular materials. In fact, it is the powerful who should decide who should know how much. Expanding the scope of his theory, van Dijk also argues that the powerful exert their control on the “formulation” and “distribution” of knowledge, too (2008, p. 63). Jurgen Herbst mentions that

*The prescribed way of beginning a class session in all schools of the Third Reich was for us students to rise from our seats when the teacher entered the classroom. The teacher then would walk to the front, face us, raise his right arm in the Nazi salute, and say, “Heil Hitler, boys,” and we would reply, “Heil Hitler, Herr Studienrat,” before we would sit down again. (2002, p. 53)*

Plath confirms the above by referring to Daddy’s ubiquitous presence in the consciousness of every student:

*You stand at the blackboard, daddy,  
In the picture I have of you,  
A cleft in your chin instead of your foot  
But no less a devil for that, no not  
Any less the black man who  
Bit my pretty red heart in two  
(1965, p. 50–51).*

*Historical Boys’ Clothing* reports that classrooms had to be furnished with “a portrait of the Führer at the front,” above the blackboard accompanied by “a large map which was used to mark the progress of the War” (2014, para. 3). In the poem

“blackboard” signifies a classroom where students are trained and given ideology. It is crystal clear that, in order to control cognition of the young generation, those in power must control materials of education in the interest of themselves. Plath’s reference to the blackboard may mean that she acquired cognition about the unvarnished truth after 10 years so that “At twenty [she] tried to die” (1965, p. 51). As a matter of fact, those early memories haunted her to the threshold of death. Westwood gives special attention to the concepts of ‘maps and mapping’. Maps adorned classrooms with the latest conquests of those in power and manifested a strong sense of visual power to provoke the tide of nationalism in the pupils.

Gregory Wegner in his book *Anti-Semitism and Schooling Under the Third Reich* provides his readers with more detailed information on how the Nazi educational system ran a racist programme mingled with the core curriculum of young German students to develop early animosity towards the Jews. During biology class, for example, the students learned the racial supremacy of the Aryan race as well as the implication of natural selection or the survival of fittest (2002, p. 70). Moyra Grant states that Hitler himself issued a decree that compelled both male and female students to fully learn the cardinal importance of “blood purity” (2003, p. 121). *History Learning* notes that

*Pupils were taught about the problems of heredity. Older pupils were taught about the importance*

*of selecting the right "mate" when marrying and producing children. The problems of inter-racial marriage were taught with an explanation that such marriages could only lead to a decline in racial purity.* (2014, para. 4)

Race and power in turn lead to creation of two other concepts, 'us' and 'them' or 'the others.' Those in power manipulate ideology and cognition of the masses by invoking prejudice against other races; much of the ideology rests on physical features, for instance, skin colour. Westwood warns that such a biased philosophy consigns humanity into "enslavement and genocide" (2002, p. 32). Plath is fixated with the idea of racism. With acrimonious taste, she compares the Nazi war machine to "an engine / [that is] Chuffing [her] off like a Jew" (1965, p. 50). She sees herself like "A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen" (1965, p. 50). Thus, the poet blatantly takes the side of the Jews and starts to "talk like a Jew" (1965, p. 50), the language of the oppressed. Since racism is orientated towards the social factor of power, it poses an inevitable impact on the sufferer. Even memories of the past inflict agonising "pain." Furthermore, Westwood states that victims, with a background of being constantly belittled for what they are, will always be exposed to unresolved mental problems (2002, p. 38). She also gives the example of black people in Britain and the United States who are beset with untreatable schizophrenia. "The snows of the Tyrol, the clear beer of Vienna" (1965,

p. 50) triggers an avalanche of unhappy recollections of misery that Plath, now as a member of Jewish society, undergoes. She ironically sneers at the concept of "impurity," the Nazi label for 'the others' (Jews or the black). She reopens the history book of the Jews who had to stay in the cold mountains of the Alps, in "snows of the Tyrol" (1965, p. 50). She summons her luck and uses her "Tarot pack" to tell her fortune of being united with the Jews. Her fusion with 'the others' seems like an anti-thesis to her Daddy's anti-Semitic programmes. In fact, she is quite thrilled that she directly targets Daddy's "neat mustache" and "Aryan eye, bright blue," (1965, p. 50), the very goals of Goebbelsian ethnic cleansing.

Territorial expansion and suppression of dissent are like little brothers to a totalitarian regime. Giddens acknowledges the importance of borders in demarcating the "sovereignty" of a country, whether democratic or totalitarian, and attributes them to the display of power of that nation (1985, p. 51). To accomplish the aforesaid, regimes, simply though cunningly, fabricate compelling justifications to wage war on other countries. The rationalisation largely hinges on arousing nationalistic and patriotic fervour of the masses. Williams discerns the abuse of power in the deliberate provocation of nationalism. He utters the phrase "structure of feeling" to highlight the manipulation of emotions by the powerful to direct nationalistic sentiments towards desired paths (as cited in Westwood, 2002, p.112).

In early 1939, the German generals planned Operation Himmler. The mission was to convince the people that the Polish authorities were already executing an ethnic cleansing programme against the German citizens in Poland. Later, on 31 August 1939, German forces marched into Polish lands (Manvell & Fraenkel, 2007, p. 76). The outcome of Himmler's meticulous plan, Plath reveals, is "the Polish town[s] / [which are] [s]craped flat by the roller / Of wars, wars, wars" (1965, p. 49). Together with the Jews, the poet decides to form a sentimental attachment to the Polish people by calling them "friends." She cannot speak about the despicable crimes the Nazis commit since she "never could tell where" (1965, p. 49) her Daddy put his "foot" in Poland.

## CONCLUSION

"Daddy" is a concise artistic interpretation of a society that reinforces the unmistakable ambience of despotism. Plath allies herself with the victims of Nazi totalitarianism and reflects how it feels to be crushed "like a Jew." From the viewpoint of power politics, the work illustrates a society in which three grammars of power i.e. racialised power, spatial power and visual power are directly or indirectly exercised. In fact, Plath adopts certain symbols such as the Swastika, blackboard and barbed wire to defamiliarise states of an omnipresent surveillance programme, manipulation of the educational system and suppression of dissent, accordingly. The poem is an elegy of racialised genocide. Plath reflects

on the savagery of Daddy, who ordered the innocent 'others' to be silenced only because they were born Jew, inferior to the Nazis' blue eyes, and practised a different ideology, assuming another god, not the Nazi toothbrush-moustached idol. Moreover, the work denounces society for its ignorance as it had failed to acquire a correct cognition of current social and political affairs; therefore, it may deserve to be crushed by the brutes. Plath demonstrates that she has undergone an arduous exodus from haunting memories of the past. She ends her poem with revelation of total consciousness, the fact that she barely survives but she is through.

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