

Feminist Writings
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Tulips - Part 2

Hi, so welcome to NPTEL course title “Feminist Writings”, where we are looking at Sylvia Plath's poem of Tulip, and this session we will conclude the poem and hopefully make it as interactive as we possibly can. So just to go through what the poem does generally, it talks about, agency (0:34) and sensory exponentially in the medical space over the human subject is essentially an increasingly commodified as an object of investigation, dissection, diagnosis, and where there is a very dramatic, collapsed, the economy of empathy there is no empathy at all between the nurses who come in and go and the human patient who suffers a in a very passive conditions. So that kind of empathy (0:59) is equated with agency (1:01).

And also I mean, if you want to push it further and making into some kind of a real serious environment studies, there is a very interesting correlation to be made between empathy and agencies.

So, a lot of current neuroscience studies tells us that we can only be agentic when we are experiencing an economy of empathy. When empathy goes away that has a very adverse effect on the human agentic control at a (1:26) level as well as, as an extended level, right? So those of you interested in serious cognitive studies, could possibly go down that direction.


But for the purpose of this course, we are talking about embodiment and a very, dialogic relationships, embodiment as an embedded condition, which is the neural psychological, the visceral condition, and also embodiment as an extended condition in terms of his negotiations with the discursive apparatus around the human subject.

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Nobody watched me before, now I am watched.
The tulips turn to me, and the window behind me
Where once a day the light slowly widens and slowly thins,
And I see myself, flat, ridiculous, a cut-paper shadow
Between the eye of the sun and the eyes of the tulips,
And I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself.
The vivid tulips eat my oxygen.

Before they came the air was calm enough,
Coming and going, breath by breath, without any fuss
Then the tulips filled it up like a loud noise.
Now the air snags and eddies round them the way a
Snags and eddies round a sunken rust-red engine.
They concentrate my attention, that was happy
Playing and resting without committing itself.

The walls, also, seem to be warming themselves.



Now, just to go to the final stanzas of this poem if we take a look at what should be on the screen, where the speaker says, nobody watched me before, now I am watched. So the whole idea of being watched becomes important because it is a very direct reference and illusion to medical surveillance, she as a human subject has been watched, monitored, refight, and cut down with the medical gaze, which is very impersonal and dehumanizing quality. So the medical gaze is quite refined and quality. It makes her an object and she is watched.

The tulips turned to me, and the window behind me where once a day the lights slowly widens and slowly thins and I see myself, flat, ridiculous, a cut paper shadow between the eye of the sun and the eyes of the tulips, And I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself. The vivid tulips my oxygen. So we talked about already, how the window over here becomes a liminal space time, it is a special temporal signifier, it is not just a space which traditionally and literally is, but it is appointed to time, the passage of time, because window is only passage through which the human subject can experience time in a very indirect way, so she can see it, she can speed and the light to some coming in and dazing out. And that would determine a clock time for her, right? So the window becomes quite literally a liminal space time frame, right?

So we are talking about window being a space frame. It also becomes a time frame over here, a special temporal frame, which is very liminal and quality. And once a day, the light slowly widens and slowly thins, right? So that determines day or night, the gradual widening of the

light, and gradual thinning of the light, etc. And also important to see is how the tulips turn to her. The tulips are gazing at her. Tulips become very much collusive for this medical gaze that she is experiencing already. The tulips become slightly monsters in quality, and that again is very important because that is part of the defamiliarization package that a poem does. It converts traditional metaphors into uncanny metaphors, right? So tulips flowers, which are traditionally metaphors of tranquillity, reconciliation, perhaps romance as well, are all dramatically and deliberately defamiliarized into violent objects, objects of violence, objects of compassionlessness etc.

So Tulips become quite complicit and collusive with this refined medical gaze that she has been subjected to at this point of time. And also interestingly as the idea of the flattened out body, right. And I see him as a flat, ridiculous, a cut-paper shadow. So the idea of flattening out again, those of you interested in serious cognitive embodiment studies who find this a very common experience of loss of embodiment, the sense of being flattening out.

And again, flattening out is a special temporal phenomenon. It is not just a flattening out of space the body as a space is also a flattening out to the body has a movement and times. So you get a sense of liquidation of the time, liquidation of space. So it is a very special temporal phenomenon. The idea of the experience of getting flattened out, right? And that is the very classic trope of deembodiment or disembodiment, loss of embodiment.

So, and also the word ridiculous is interesting because that, I may have mentioned this in class already, that is a very interesting point to entanglement within two kinds of conditions which take place during disembodiment or deembodiment. One is, you know the experience of superficiality. You become superficial, that is the flattening out a bit and ridiculous makes him superfluous, right so this combination of superficiality and super fluidity are coming together is very much part of the, the loss of the embodied density or the ontological density, which makes her human subject and you end up being a cut-paper shadow, right. So this whole idea of being a cup-paper shadow that is something quite absurdly meaningless and quality becomes squad deliberately dramatize over here between the eyes of the sun and the eyes of the tulips.

So again, we have two kinds of eyes and questioned the eye to sun, the eye of tulips. We can do two readings to this. One reading is quite literally in quality. The eye to sun over here is window in the room, the eye of the tulip is the other end of the room. So she stopped between

two ends of the room that is one reading, the other reading equally possible is looking at herself as being caught between two kinds of gaze two orders of gaze. One macro order of gaze the eye of the sun and one more micro order of gaze, the eyes of the tulips, she is somewhat situated between these two orders of gaze and a very helpless passive conditions, right? So she is stuck between two kinds of gazes as it was.

So both readings that they sort of agree on the cluster phobic quality of this kind of an existence, whereas she is stuck in a room between a window and tulips which are presumably by the wall and also she is stuck in a situation of being cut down by two kinds of gaze, the macro gaze of the sun looking at her and the micro gaze of the tulips looking at her from inside the room. So, the ray intimate micro gaze and the massive macro gaze both cut her out as a human subject.

And the next sentence, the next line is important as well. And I have no face, I wanted to efface myself. So yesterday we talked about how the two readings which are possible out of this. I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself. So face being very interesting part of you which is both the most public part of you as well as the most private part of you. It is most public in the sense that it is the most extended part of your embodiment it is what you are in a source of space. And also it is the most private part of you because it is the most unique bit of your individuality and your identity. So the face becomes a very interesting. Again, there is a (())(7:38) of liminality about the embodiment performed by the face. It is the most public as well as the most private order of embodiment.

So I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself. Again, the whole idea of effacing yourself could be a symbolic illusion or appointed to perhaps an intention of suicide or killing herself. I want to do away myself, but equally another valid reading would be I have wanted to efface myself away from this trauma of existence. And of course we know that there is a biographical backdrop in the poem the very spectral prince of the dead child, the unborn child, the miscarriage, which she suffered until this poem got written. So, that that also comes down in a very interesting sense.

And another reading equally valid would be “I have no face, I have wanted to efface myself” and as we discussed in class yesterday the whole idea of having a face could be a social construct and I have no face now, I want to efface myself could be a subversive strategy. I want to do away with all kinds of faces, comfort to me, right? So, I want to move away from

any kind of you know performance of face. I want to efface myself completely. So, that can become an agentic aspiration. So, both readings are equally valid at this point of a time.

And the last sentence over here is a direct pointer to the violence enacted by the tulips. The vivid tulips eat my oxygen. The whole idea of eating oxygen becomes important over here. Oxygen becomes the metaphor of life blood vitality, the life spirit, which gets eaten up or consumed by the tulips. So, the whole idea of consumption becomes quite viscerally depicted in this poem, at this point of time.

Okay! So, and then we have a further descriptions of what the tulips are, where the tulips come from and the psychological effect, the visceral effect tulips have had on as human subjects. Before they came the air was calm enough, Coming and going, breath by breath, without any fuss. Then the tulips filled it up like a loud noise. Now the air snags and eddies round them the way a river Snags and eddies round a sunken rust red engine. Now this metaphor is interesting because all the time, everything before that is really natural, organic, idyllic in quality and suddenly we have this rust red engine. That is an alliteration about it, rust red a degree of decadence, a degree of violence perhaps. And we know the word red, the color red becomes quite a symbolic in the context of this poem. It can also it becomes appointed to a bodily wound, which is perhaps connectable to her experience of miscarriage and also that the redness of the tulips and they sort of dialoguing with each other in a very unsettling, psychological way.

But interestingly what we see over here is the organicity and the idealic quality of the rivers, the air snagging, and adding etc suddenly just supposed with artificial machine this decadent, rusty, red machine, the engine coming together, and that is obviously a very, very potent, description of medical experience, especially in a clinical space because in a medical space, the human being does not remain organic entirely.

The human being becomes supported by machines. The human becomes entangled with machines. So in that sense, any medical experience is an entanglement with the machine, right? Whether it could be a life supporting machine, it could be a life giving machine. It could be ventilating machine, it could be any kind of machine. But a human being essentially becomes entangled with machines in the medical space.

So this metaphor of the machine, the rust red engine becomes very, very important that air snacks and Eddie's around them, the way a river snacks and Eddie's around a sun sunk and rust red engine they concentrate my attention, that was happy playing and resting without committing itself. And again, the whole idea of the attention getting concentrated has a degree of violence about it. If you remember the beginning of the poem, the very opening stanza, we had is a very strange line that "I am learning peacefulness". So, peacefulness does not become an organic, passive peaceful existence. It becomes something which is acquired, perhaps through drugs and needles and medication, etc.

So there is a degree of violence and violent in position that comes with peacefulness, we will talk about this later, that how she gets sleep and numbness through needles, numbness, sleep, which are traditionally very abstract, a phenomenal qualities, a perfectly quantifiable, in this medical space. A perfectly a purchasable in a way in the medical space and know exactly how much sleep we need to give to the patient. You know, exactly the mechanism of producing sleep in an artificial way to the patient.

So in a way, again, those who are interested in medical humanities and the relationship with literature and medicine, very rich research this is a very interesting poem because what it says is quite essentially that the human body, the human being, the human self becomes deliberately and perhaps permanently problematize. At the moment it immerses in a medical space it becomes a part man, part human, part machine in a way, which is perhaps irrecoverable it cannot recover the pure organic human self anymore.

So, the part of the healing process is also a part of the intervention process, intervention by machines, whether it is the transplant, whether it is an artificial heart, whether it is an artificial limb of Phantom limb which has been transmitted by an artificial limb. So all kinds of mechanisms are at play over here and it becomes very interesting entanglements so the healing mechanism, the corrective mechanism, it requires a very direct intervention on machines into the human body.

So to the point that the the division, the boundaries between the human and the machine becomes blurred completely become blurred completely do not (13:20) when one ends, when one begins. So, the rust red engine becomes very important metaphor of that kind of an immersion into a machinic existence from a purely organic existence. And we have following that we have this whole idea of the attention being concentrated to the tulips, they demand

attention in a mechanical way, there is almost a trigger “Quality bothers attention”. The tulips come and trigger the attention like switching on switch, attention becomes a, a mechanical performance, which can be triggered by certain things you know just like numbness, it is not an organic numbness not something which is tiredness, honouree, it is a numbness which is given to you, injected into you in order to make you something right. So that whole idea of violent of transforming you into something becomes quite dramatically evident.

So the concentration before, the attention before the tulips had come was happy playing and resting without committing itself. So the tulips have now demanded attention which was playful before the tulips had come in. So that before the tulips came in, the attention was playful, was not committing to anything and that that organic attention, that organic playful, ludic quality for attention is (())(14:30) converted into something mechanical and forceful and perhaps violent.

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THE VIVID TULIPS
The vivid tulips eat my oxygen.

Before they came the air was calm enough,
Coming and going, breath by breath, without any fuss.
Then the tulips filled it up like a loud noise.
Now the air snags and eddies round them the way a river
Snags and eddies round a sunken rust-red engine.
They concentrate my attention, that was happy
Playing and resting without committing itself.

The walls, also, seem to be warming themselves.
The tulips should be behind bars like dangerous animals;
They are opening like the mouth of some great African cat,
And I am aware of my heart: it opens and closes
Its bowl of red blooms out of sheer love of me.
The water I taste is warm and salt, like the sea,
And comes from a country far away as health.



And now we have a final stanza where it has almost not just (())(14:41) quality, but its degree of infernal quality about it (())(14:45) to a certain extent, The walls also seem to be warming themselves. The walls are also, seem to be warming themselves, right so the walls are warming up around me this seems to be some kind of explosion about to take place and what explosion has already occurred once in a poem at the very beginning, when she said “I have nothing to do with explosions”. Now the tulips become quite literally a metaphors in explosion, alright. Now, what kind of explosion is at play over here?

The walls also seem to be warming themselves. The tulips should be behind bars like dangerous animals. The tulips should be forbidden, the tulips should be banned, there should be banned like dangerous animals. They are opening like the mouth of some great African cat. And we talked about this and perhaps in the class before. The whole idea of some great African Cat becomes important, on the one hand we have the cat as pinioned domestic recognizable animal and we have some great African adding a sense of mystery and perhaps danger and exotic quality to it. And it becomes, it ends up being an animal you do not quite know. It is some great African cat. So it is unknowability about the tulips, the degree of mystery and menace about the tulips gets heightened and dramatize over here quite deliberately.

So, they are opening like the mouth of some great African cat. You do not quite know what it is. It perhaps is a cat, but it was like some great African cat, which you do not quite know, cannot quite classify as a human subject, right? So this whole combination of the domestic flying metaphor and the undomestic dangerous metaphor, ferocious metaphor becomes interesting over here it is very interesting combination between the homely and the unhomely, right? So some great African becomes the homely, the uncanny or something you do not know, cat of course is perfectly domestic, something you know already and something that you recognize as a human subjects so this whole idea of between recognisability and unrecognizability is at play over here. They are opening like the mouth of some great African cat.

And I am aware of my heart, right? So this is very interesting bit where we perhaps talked about it already an example of hyper reflexivity you are aware of awareness. Again, a classic probe in embodiment studies ((16:58) embodiment studies might want to go down this direction. I am aware of my heart, I become aware of my viscerality I am aware of the mechanisms of my heart or my body of my organ and I think I may have mentioned this before the whole idea of being sick, the whole idea of being ill makes you gives you heightened awareness of your sensory self, of a sensory mechanism of who you are, how your heart functions etc. Things we should ordinarily take for granted, right? So it is almost like metafiction, you are aware of the mechanism of how things get done because things getting slowed down you know decelerated and unsettled, right? And that slow slow down decelerated sign the whole slow down decelerated embodiments, perhaps gives you a special insight into things we should take for granted ordinarily.

So in other words, what happens, same with metafiction, the seamlessness of the performance, the seamlessness of the mechanism gets interrupted and you begin to recognize the seams at play, you begin to recognize the mechanism the apparatus you begin to have an understanding of the apparatus that play because the seamless quality of spatial temporal flow gets interrupted, which is a classic definition of metafiction. So seamlessness gets interrupted and therefore you recognize how narratives are formed this is how narratives are built and manufactured and forged into existence.

But with the same with the body over here when you become sick, when they become ill, when a certain quality of the seamless mechanism of the body gets interrupted only then you become hyper aware and hyper reflexive in the sense of understanding certain things which you take for granted.

And a very good essay to read about this if you are interested in that direction is Virginia Woolf's a brilliant essay called on being ill, I am going to read it as a really good piece of work, where she talks about how when she compares she makes a comparison between the sick body and a city which has a strike, right? So when a city has a strike, everything shuts down. Then you recognize things which you do not normally notice, right? You recognize lanes and streets and factories and little shops, which you ordinarily pass by in a normal functioning day. But when a city has a strike, when the entire mechanism comes into an uninterrupted stop, a halt, a pause, it is only then you need to step back and notice things which you normally glossed over, right? So similarly with a sick body on being ill, when you are ill, you notice things about your body, about your cognitive abilities, about motor abilities, which ordinarily take for granted. It is a really, really good essay. Do take a look if you have the time.

So I am aware of my heart, it opens and closes Its bowl of red blooms out of sheer love of me. So again whole idea of recognizing the heart, understanding the heart, being hyper aware of the heart becomes the visceral existence at play. The water I taste is warm and salt, like the sea. So it could be relation to tears, perhaps it could be relation to you know the sense of loss which she has suffered. And comes from a country far away as health. So health becomes the country, health becomes territorial over here. And so the whole idea of a territorializing health is interesting because what that does is that it makes her an outsider to that territory, it makes up an outsider to that kind of existence.

And again, those are very interested in critical theory and how this you know unquenchable desire to apply theory to everything might wanted to look at delouses idea of deterritorializing at work the reason (20:30) where they talk about deterritorializing so that theory can be applied and it has been applied by research students walking on literature and medicine and biomedicine, it is very effective and handy theory that I am aware of, I do encourage students to go that direction, but you might want to take a look at that you know (20:48) talks about deterritorializing. So, what is deterritorializing? It is the experience of a known territory getting very dramatically defamiliarized, right. So that idea of territory, that idea of embodiment getting deterritorialized becomes very important over here, right? So the whole idea of a country far away as health becomes important, all right?

Okay, so the whole idea of health being a country, health a territory from which she has been deterritorialized becomes very important over here, right? And the whole idea of territorial territorializing is related to the idea of interrupted embodiment, the embodiment being interrupted, halted you know, defamiliarized So that idea of deterritorializing and defamiliarization may be mapped onto each other in a very convenient way in this poem.

So just to conclude the water comes from a country far away as health so health becomes the country to which she has become an outsider and the outsidersness is something which is so deliberately dramatize over here in terms of a location. So again, location becomes very important, location as a geography, location as the psychological quality. So all of these things become very important, especially the way, space gets mapped into embodiment in this poem.

So, she is located outside health literally, she is in the hospital, she would not be in the hospital if she were not located outside of health and also she is located outside of health in terms of a psychological (22:13) that since she have lossed she should suffer to sense of trauma that she suffered, the sense of being deterritorialized that she suffered, and that gets a dramatically described in this poem through very excellent use of craft, excellent use of metaphors, and excellent use of figurative language.

So that concludes “Tulips” by Sylvia Plath which is something we have done in relation to feminist writings. But I think I may have a hinted enough in terms of pointing our directions to which you can look at the poem even if you did not research in related to disciplines and not just feminist writings, but perhaps medical science and literature, perhaps critical theory,

perhaps embodiment and literature, body studies, space studies etc. So it is very rich poem in terms of offering you a lot of research avenues that you can possibly explore.

So, we have a discussion on the poem now. So if I could just start with a generic discussion about why is this poem important in this course? Why do you think that the poem like this “Tulips” by Sylvia Plath should be anthologized in a course by feminist writings? What is it about the poem that makes it a very good pick for a feminist writing course? Very generically, and then it move on to more specific descriptions, at a first reading what does it offer you that you think might written in a course like this?

Student is answering: It gives us a female experience of (23:39)

Professor: Right! Yes.

Student is answering: How that develops, how it (23:43) you from the everyday so called normal surroundings.

Professor: Exactly! And it is a very female experience because I mean on one hand there is the danger of a sensualizing experience, but only on the other hand experience that she had can only be experienced by a female, the experience of loss of the child, experience of miscarriage and entire poem being born out of the experience becomes quite interesting. So the very premise of the poem is on loss, is built on loss is built in lack, just built an on fulfilment and that loss that lack (24:17) it translates it extends in the organization I mean the experience of organization gets heightened, because the embedded quality of loss that she carries with her now.

And again, we are back to discussing this loop bit during the embedded quality of embodiment and the extended quality of embodiment. The extended alienation is what she suffers with her surroundings or the nurses around her, the tulips around her, the whiteness of the doctors around her, that alienates her completely. It also dialoguing with the embedded loss that she has in her, in terms of the miscarriage.

And in one point of poem, if remember which she talks about two kinds of red at play, the red of the tulips, and the red inside her which is possibly a pointed to the wound that she carries. A physical wounds perhaps of her miscarriage, but also it is quite dialogic in a very perverse way perhaps, where the red are the tulips around her. So that is a very good example of how

the extended alienation and the embedded quality of loss that become dialoguing with each other so that sense is very female experience.

And also if you do if you map a discursive study on to this, there is the specialty of the poem, we find that in medical space at play over here is very male is very much collusive with state apparatus is very much collusive with (25:33) state apparatus and it can go back and you know connect it in a very rich research or the relationship to medicine state and the human subject. Especially if we do studies on hysteria for instance, and how hysteria was a traditionally gender into female (25:49) very conveniently classified as a female (25:52) something which happens only if you have a uterus, hysteria comes on you know uterus this (25:57) of the word and it was it was not in male The whole treatment of hysteria was a very male treatment which was collusive with the state, the mechanism of the state is entailed confinement. It entailed coalition, it entailed force feeding references if you read the biography of Virginia Woolf, you find those instances like force feeding, doctors force them to eating a certain quantity of bananas and milk every single day to give a strength and confined her in a room in terms of not allowing her to write etc.

And also I mean interestingly I think I may have mentioned this before, I want the celebrity patients of hysteria, also happened to be Karl Marx's Doctor Alena Marx who has written, how the great daddy is collusive with the doctors, right? So the great Karl Marx, the Big Daddy is completely in there through the doctors in terms of the dream about the confinement techniques, in terms of green with the caution techniques that a doctor must go through.

So it is very much gendered treatment, is very much the state the main state, the male capitalists, medical machinery are taking care and correcting the female, the interrupted female subjects. So that is kind of study, I guess does lend itself into this poem as well in terms of how the human experience is described in this kind of refined setting (where everything (27:23) the nurses are (27:24) and machines off course are (27:26), and also human beings (27:28), the human becomes it converts on human subject to human object, right and this conversion into an object which can be diagnosed, classified, tested, analyse, examined it becomes the part of the painful process, it becomes the part of alienation mechanism that has been described over here.

So yes, in that sense it is very much supporting what female alienation about an immersion it will unhealthy the space ironically, the unhealthiness of the space is relatable to the medical

quality of the space, right so that is the interesting part correlation with (0)(27:59) any other point that (0)(28:02) interesting?

Student is questioning: The trauma, the trauma in (0)(28:06).

Professor: Pardon, the trauma in?

Student is answering: Bell Hook's essay.

Professor: Yes.

Student is answering: Like you know the trauma and alienation in (0)(28:12) in domestic space is very much (0)(28:15) a trauma that Plath you know in the medical space, so both whom as well as state so both how the (0)(28:23) as well as family kind of trauma space (0)(28:28).

Professor: Absolutely, it is a very good point and of course we know that the home as well as the medical space, but become examples of ISA as well as RSA especially the hospital. It can double up as the ISA as well as RSA. So it is something which is supposed to cure you, but equally it can also punish you if you do not comply to the cure strategies, if you do not comply to the (0)(28:51) strategies. Especially if you read the American novels of 1960s or 70s which are very very disturbing novels about the tyranny of psychiatric let us say novel like "one free of a cuckoo's nest" so it is completely about the terror of psychiatric, the terror of confinement, and the terror of you know possibly cutting on a (0)(29:13) brain in order to make it better, etc.

So, that kind of strategy, that kind of coalition, that kind of the violence is very much time in the medical space and how does the human subject negotiate with that kind of space? So both become, you got right both become the part of the patriarchy package, the family over the human subject is corrected (0)(29:34) system or the family or the human subject is coerced into becoming a more complicit subject, more conforming subject, and then the medical space which is a more extreme extension of that form of coalition through machines, through instruments, which can become machines of healing as well as the machines of torture. Sometimes the difference is (0)(29:53) especially if you read (0)(29:55) you find that the machines of healing and machines of torture can often become one at the same thing, right?

So electric shock for instance which a very common strategy of curing diseases (30:08) first (30:09) soldiers and of course electric shock is a painful experience, but that that pain was seen as probably healing mechanism. So yeah, so the home space and the medical space become equally important and in a way it is very dialogic (30:23), it is very dialogic with (30:25) because even there she talk about trauma as a prominent marker. Of course in the Hooks essay there is direct violence perpetrated by the big daddy becomes an agent of the state correcting the nonconforming female subject, and to becoming more conformist in quality so that is the that degree of correcting the nonconformist is (30:48) here as well, right so she has been corrected by the numbness of the needles, she is been corrected by the tablets which put her to sleep, she has been corrected by the glossophobia in the rooms, they are all becomes part of the correcting mechanism, which obviously is quite violent in quality.

Okay! Any other point? That is a very good point. Any other point that you thought was interesting and read the poem and any image that stood out for you in terms of (31:16) power of viscerality, violence. I would (31:20) of course I mean it is hard not to do a biographical reading (31:24) when reading a poem. I mean, it is not something that we should ideally do all the time, but large part of our (31:29) experience actually informs a poetry.

So it is perhaps interesting and perhaps rewarding to look at life and look at the life experience in terms of how that lends (31:39) to poetry, we know that (31:42) was celebrity male poet (31:45) who was a bit of a celebrity in a London circuit at that point of a time. And interestingly, when Plath was writing her poetry most of that was not published, her last of the poetry was (31:57) publication, after she committed suicide and we could read away we can do represent reading (32:04) poet being consumed by the bigger male poet who was more of the published you know persona and that gives us, that connects with very key thing and feminist writings and feminism in particular the difference between writer, and the author, right. What is the difference between the writer and the author? It is the same difference between a cook and a chef, the writer and the author was a basic difference between the writer and the author. What is there any transition that needs to be done for a writer to become an author?

Student is answering: It is when a writer becomes recognized by the larger society that he is called he or she is called an author.

Professor: Right! Exactly! When writer becomes an author know the very blunt way to read it is when writer publishes in a social space. And by publishing, I mean the writer establishes as a contract with the market in terms of getting a publishing contract and in terms of getting a book contract, etc. Only then the writer becomes an author. So it is part taking of this capitalist mechanism through which you can become an author and that the life of Plath and life of use it is a very nice example of how Plath remain a writer for last part of her life because she was consumed by the glamor of her husband (())(33:27) that she was a poet for a long time. And of course we now know if you compare Plath's poetry with (())(33:33) poetry I personally feel is chalk and cheese really. I mean (())(33:37) obviously was a poet(()) (33:39), he got all the laurels and then he was a glamorous poet and very much a big guy in the British poetry circles, Plath was an outsider, culturally geographically, and also in terms of gender, right?

And that idea of being an outsider becomes, it keeps coming up in Plath's poetry this is the voice which once he get heard, but then it is the voice of (())(34:03), the voice of complete you know being cut off from recognisability from recognition, etc. And that that brings us some of the key things in feminist writings, including let us say something like agency, visibility, identity, recognisability so these become very important in feminist writings.

Especially if we look at Plath's poetry so the whole idea of visibility in Plath became (()) (34:26) condition, she became a big poet only after she died and also it is interesting even when we discuss Plath in a class, we find that somehow or the other hysteria becomes a big part of our understanding of a poetry, which again is very stereotypical way of looking at a female poet. So people talking about how Plath killed herself, people talk about her depression, as if that becomes a very organic part of the poetry as poetry cannot stand alone in its own right due to his own craft, due to its own mechanisms. So that again becomes the very convenient connection that we need to be aware of. That is why I said that you know, we should be a little careful in terms of drawing too heavily on Plath's poetry in terms of looking at her poems.

Some biographical details be useful in terms of how to inform poems historically but then if you look at the poem entirely as the random hysterical woman, then obviously that does a great service to the craft of Plath as a poet, right? So that, that also becomes something which we need to bear in mind, especially if are reading up a poem like this in a feminist writing course, right. So the whole idea of being a female writer who did not managed to become an

author and you know who was perhaps always under shadow of authorship and the authority of the celebrity husband that becomes the large part of way to look at Plath and her poetry today. So that is something which we need to bear in mind as well.

Any other point, any other image, any other idea that (36:00) poem, and I would unpack a little bit. I mean, it is a very good study, those of you who, if anyone's interested, write a paper on this course, that is a very ambitious aspiration on my part. But if there is anyone who wants to go the direction, a very good study would be to compare and contrast and have a relationship dialogic relationship with this poem and Iraqi Nights. Because both talk about the female voice in a condition created by men, war created by men and the medical space created by men, which is the space of surveillance, space of agents (36:36s), space of loss and control and loss of control, loss of embodiment in both poems become literally a motto of phenomenon, it affects you at motor level, at newer level, and of course at a more extended level. Your navigation which you discuss (36:52) things like going into grocery store, that the incidents going to school, to the market, these become accidents and miracles in such conditions and the same is Plath over here, little things such as a heartbeat, the idea that she still has a heartbeat, becomes a matter euphoria for her whether she can recognize up beating heart becomes (37:14) message or perhaps of optimism, perhaps at this point of time.

So again, you can connect both poems with the wolf theory of the strike, right? So what happens when some strike happens, the things slow down things get defamiliarized, the mechanism stops. If you look at the body as a city and the sickness as the strike to the city, it is very interesting analogy that you can establish to that kind of readers, so do read Wolf's on being ill because I think that is a seminal essay, which will help us to understand the poem such as this and if you have any more points to discuss, you can obviously come back later and have another interaction. But with that perhaps it is good to end the session, and we end with Sylvia Plath's "Tulips."