

Date 11 / 30 PV Log: (circle one) Poem / Movie / Picture / LyricTitle "Mirror"Author / Director / Sylvia Plath

Context (Where Found / Viewed / Read?)

I was given this poem by Mr. Shakely to be used in some way or another in the essay of my fall final exam.

Content / CD / Summary / Precis (Say? "Plot? Setting/Situation? Key lines/phrases scenes, etc? )

"Mirror" begins with a mirror that describes itself as an object that is so pristine and exact, always telling the truth no matter the circumstances. The mirror describes how it is "not cruel, only truthful," and that all it does is sit on a wall, reflecting the other side of the room until it is occasionally interrupted by people that stare into it. The mirror then turns into the reflective waters of a lake, and it reflects a woman who transforms from a young girl into an elderly person. Though the woman may not like aging, the water again is only truthful, as it says, "I see her back, and reflect it faithfully." The woman looks for kinder reflections of herself in other sources of light, but she still remains upset at her impending future.

Content / CM / Meaning? / Theme(s)?

"Mirror" reflects the difficulty of accepting truth, especially with regards to time and appearances. For example, the woman in the poem, disappointed by her loss of beauty and her development into an elderly woman with less than ideal appearances, occasionally will look at falsities of herself in order to appease her sadness, but she often returns to the mirror to see her true self. She needs the mirror because it provides an objective portrayal of herself in times of crisis, even though it may be the least bit desirable. She is being held back by the lies of her youth and beauty brought about by the candlelight and the moon, but she ultimately needs the truth to maintain a stable state of awareness. The truth can always be depended upon no matter the pain it brings. In fact, the woman never becomes satisfied with what she finds in the distortions of herself, so she learns to accept her aged and true appearance despite its unpleasantness.

Form (Diction? Construction Terms? Symbolism?)

"Mirror" is written in free verse, meaning that there is no set pattern of rhythm or rhyme, though Plath does use some slant rhymes in order to aid in the flow of her free verse. Slant rhymes are words that sound alike but do not necessarily rhyme, such as "fish" and "darkness." Plath also uses some repetitive phrases, such as "day after day" and "over and over," to contribute to the rhythm and fluidity of the poem. Finally, the mirror in the poem is personified, as it is able to recognize monotony, and it has the ability to observe and understand the woman in the poem.

Commentary (What do you want to say? Why like? Questions? Synthesis / Allusions-Connections /

Relevance to personal experience, to literature, 20Q's? etc.)? "Poetic" Traits?

"Mirror" is an interesting poem in that its interpretation is seemingly exact and definite like its own topic, a mirror. When perception is so subjective and nothing can be known for certain, a mirror tells everything as it is no matter what. Even if people believe or try to see something different than what the mirror reflects, the mirror is still definitively objective. What ultimately leaves questions for the reader is whether or not the woman actually becomes upset about her physical concrete appearance as time passes, or if she is actually disillusioned with what she finds inside herself. Perhaps her life in general has been meaningless because she has given into lies her entire life, and so, in hindsight, she feels as if she has no reason to live. Even though the poem may seem relatively simple, like a mirror, underlying motives of Plath may have driven a more complex meaning that lies behind how the poem appears. In terms of relevance, the mirror in the poem in a way resembles God. God knows the truth of the past, present, and future, just like the mirror displays everything truthfully, despite the fact that it only knows what it encounters. People turn to the omniscient God for guidance, which is similar to the way in which they turn to a mirror for factual objectivity. I do find this poem quite poetic because it advocates the simplest and most pure approach to life, one without and falsities or complications. It advises people to accept life for what it is because nothing can be done to alter its natural occurrences. Truth, or honesty, no matter its severity or undesirableness, is always the best policy in terms of Word and lifestyle because it is straightforward and always concrete. The truth gives people the answers they desire rather than leaving them in the fog.

over (do not mix logs; e.g., no poem log in front, and movie log on back)