

depth insight into the inner turmoil of Esther and their outer consequences.

**Keywords:** Self-Sabotage, maternal figure, self-mutilation, identity conflict, and the death drive.

#### الخلاصة

تُجري هذه الدراسة فحصاً نفسياً تحليلياً لتدمير الذات كما هو مُمثل في رواية سيلفيا بلاث المؤثرة "الجرس الزجاجي". يستخدم هذا التحليل نظريات التحليل النفسي الفرويدية وما بعدها، مُركّزاً على كبت الرغبة، وصراع الهوية، ودافع الموت، وتأثير شخصية الأم، لدراسة المظاهر المُعقدة لميول إستر غرينوود التدميرية للذات. يُحلل البحث استخدام بلاث للصوت السردى للتعبير عن مواضيع تحليلية نفسية معقدة ودراستها. يُجري هذا البحث تحليلاً نصياً دقيقاً، ويُطبق أطراً نظرية ذات صلة لتوضيح الأسس النفسية للتخريب الذاتي في السرد، مُبرزاً تأثيره الكبير على مسار بطلّة الرواية نحو اكتشاف الذات وسلامتها النفسية. سنُدرج اقتباسات أصلية من الرواية لدعم التفسيرات التحليلية النفسية، مما يُوفر فهماً شاملاً لصراعات إستر الداخلية وتداعياتها الخارجية.

#### 1. Introduction

*The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath is the one and only novel of this author, which is a great reflection of mental illness, social pressures, and self-identity search in the middle of the twentieth century America. Being told by Esther Greenwood, a young and ambitious woman bright, the novel is a very personal

#### Self-Sabotage, a Psychoanalytic Study of Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*

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#### Abstract

This paper will engage in a psychoanalytic analysis of self-sabotage as it is depicted in the *Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, a famous novelist of the 20th century. Based on Freudian and post Freudian psychoanalytic theory, including repression of desire, identity conflict, the death drive, and the role of the mother figure, this analysis explores the multifaceted expressions of the self-destructive urges of Esther Greenwood. The study examines the manner in which Plath employs narrative voice in expressing and exploring intricate psychoanalytic issues. This essay performs a close textual discussion and transfers pertinent theoretical principles to explain the psychological premises of self-sabotage in the story and its great impact on the way of the main character to self-discovery and psychological health. To substantiate the psychoanalytic interpretations, real quotes of the novel will be used and they will provide an in-

concentrate on the phenomenon of self-sabotage as one of the symptoms of the suppression of desires with a particular emphasis on how the true feelings and desires of a person are fossilized by their internal and external forces. The issue of conflicts of identity will also be discussed and it will involve the conflict of trying to reconcile between the actual self and the ideal self. Freudian concept of the death drive/ Thanatos will be discussed as a latent process that contributes to the self-destructive tendencies.

Moreover, the psychoanalytic theory of the maternal figure, which is deemed significant in the formation of normal sisterhood relations, shall be addressed in regard to the ideological semiotics in psychoanalysis. Narrative voice will be discussed as a psychoanalytic utterance and it will give an insight into the internal world of the author. The paper employs the concepts of the psychoanalytic field to conduct a successful and satisfactory analysis of self-sabotage in *The Bell Jar*. It illuminates the complicated psychological events embedded in the narrative of the character Esther therefore giving a clear picture of the tormented psychology of human being and adding to the explanation and comprehension of the novel. The Freudian idea of the death

and introspective view of the experience of her severe depression. *The Bell Jar* received recognition because it is semi-autobiographical, reflecting the personal struggle that Plath was grappling with in relation to her personal mental state. But it is its lasting and suggestive power that has been credited to its elaborate and complex portrayal of the universal experience of human beings, including self-sabotage. The motif of self-destruction in its various forms is dominant in the storyline of Esther. The inability to achieve her novel, much needed by her on the one hand, and the growingly irresponsible and self-destructive nature of her habits, on the other, always denies her a possibility of success and happiness. Both such behaviors are not only willed choices, but they are also a demonstration of the underlying, often repressed, psychological struggles. The perfect tools conceptual scaffolding is offered by psychoanalysis as a perspective since it is concerned with the interplay of consciousness and perception, defense mechanisms, and primordial experiences. In this paper, the author examines basic concepts of psychoanalysis as they relate to how one gets to be self-sabotaging and how self-sabotage exists and manifests itself in *The Bell Jar*. The paper will



possible for a woman. Wagner shows how Esther Greenwood's "growth" is also rooted in the norms by which she is bound, so that her "growth... develops within a patriarchal context of initiation. That sets me up for all these other reviewers who are going to ask, 'Is the book about liberation or is it about what happens when you live out an imposed story?'

Bonds (1990) explores this idea further in *The separative self in Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar*, taking the implication of splitting into two by referring to the script as the "separative self." In her study, the culture that surrounds Esther translates autonomy into isolation, which serves here as a model of selfhood that alienates the subject from relationships and interdependency. The general understanding of Wagner is restructured by Bond as an ideological one: the telos that is being directed towards by Esther is not maturation, but a specific patriarchal ideal of a person, autonomous self. What this means to psychology is obvious: what is perceived as sanity or recovery can hide within it an internalization of traditions that separates women as they strive to remain connected and know

drive, or Thanatos, will be explored as an underlying mechanism contributing to the self-destructive tendencies.

Furthermore, the psychoanalytic concept of the maternal figure, seen as important in the development of typical sisterhood relationships, will be considered concerning the ideological semiotics in psychoanalysis. The narrative voice will be explored as a psychoanalytic utterance, providing insights into the internal world of the author. This paper utilizes the principles from the psychoanalytic field to perform an accurate and satisfactory interpretation of self-sabotage presented in *The Bell Jar*. It throws light on the complex psychological processes incorporated by Plath in Esther's storyline, thus providing a lucid representation of the human tormented psychology and augmenting the interpretation and understanding of the novel.

## 2. Literature Review

Wagner (1986) in writes in *Plath's The Bell Jar as Female Bildungsroman* that *The Bell Jar* is a female bildungsroman, and that woman grows differently from man: what was necessary for man, according to this schema was not necessary nor even

in distinguishing the idea from a strictly intra-psychic failure, calling attention to the fact that “sabotage” is also instrumental and may be both systemic and structurally rewarded. Rosner and Hermes (2006) in *Self Sabotage Cycle* bring a practical framework impacted by psychology in the counseling profession. The authors describe the cycle of trigger, unconscious belief, defensive choice and reinforcement of a negative self-perception with analysis of psychodynamic case material to explain why people maintain maladaptive patterns which thwart stated intentions. This is a theoretical model and, while not empirical, the formulation may serve as a useful guide for future researchers as well as clinicians working to link internalized narratives with observed self-defeating actions.

In *The Bell Jar: A Psychological Case Study* (2010), Tsank used a classical psychoanalysis study to interpret Tsank, translated here Contemporary work on Esther’s and Sylvias psyches borrows from these theoretical developments—or build upon them—while also sending us back to less theory-laden classics. The article emphasizes how external imperatives—

themselves. A decade later, in 2004, a study by Marilyn Boyer titled *The disabled female body as a metaphor for language in Sylvia Plath’s The Bell Jar* is one which broadens the definition of embodiment beyond textuality. Boyer reads the “disabled female body” as a figure for dismembered language itself, and disabled agency that is how medicalization and being silenced in *The Bell Jar* are literal and figural at once. The body is the place where the territory of social power is inscribed, and the voice becomes a way to defend this inscription. In Boyer’s essay, the question isn’t “Who is Esther becoming?” to “What clinical, linguistic, cultural infrastructures either impede or facilitate that becoming?” Her work combines literary analysis with ideas from dis/ability studies and psychoanalytic theory.

The concept of self-sabotage is also further fleshed out in adjacent fields. It appears that David and Dennis (2005) in *Self Sabotage* apply the term within an economic context to describe a form of strategically rational conduct in regulated industries, where firms can reduce their own inputs in order to harm rivals. This usage, though not in the literature or clinical settings, succeeds



Zahid & Taus (2024) in *The Dark Side of Success: Impostor Phenomenon as a Predictor for Self-Sabotaging Behavior and Workaholism*, stated that impostor phenomenon predict self-sabotaging behaviors and workaholism. Their results translate to empirical terms what the psychodynamic perspective tells us: feeling like a fraud is not only associated with over-working and procrastination (both perfectionistic) but also with behaviours that compromise performance and well-being more generally. This analysis links cultural scripts (e.g., ‘prove yourself’ or ‘earn your spot’) to internalised doubt, which in turn/ consequently produces acts that are supportive of the punishment logic embedded within such scripts. Rosner and Hermes described a circle; Zahid et al. visualized its modern representation in public space.

Jakubik’s (2024) dissertation *What if no one teaches you mental discipline?* is a move from explanatory to interventive: Using personal power to conquer self-sabotage. Focusing on women in leadership, this research explores how four specific forms of personal power (reframing self-talk,

particularly the prescription of gender roles and success stories – trigger internal battles that give rise to symptoms best understood at the interface between personal lived experience and underpinning culture. Tsank’s essay usefully sketches out the historical feminist claims, and how the “separative self” and disciplined body dovetail with ideas of repression, repetition, and breakdown.

De Villiers (2019) in *Metaphors of madness: Sylvia Plath’s Rejection of Patriarchal Language in The Bell Jar* states that Plath infuses “madness” metaphors to disrupt patriarchy. Here, ‘madness’ becomes more than pathological: it is a counter-discourse that articulates features of female experience which dominant lexica have been unable to cover. This discussion closes a circle that Boyer had opened: if the body encodes cultural inscriptions, the voice can respond. De Villiers, however, poses the question of self-sabotage as a linguistic one: when accessible words do not accurately reflect life itself, then withdrawal and even self-destructiveness may function within oppressive linguistic structures as ways of knowing and surviving.

Wolde (2014) defined Self-sabotage as a “set of abnormal behaviors leading to physical injury or damage to one’s own body”. This abnormal and dangerous behavior causes physical injury or even death. People have this sort of behavior usually come from stress and pressure they have at school, the surrounding environment, and the people in the community. It has a different source which most of which are depression. Those who cannot stand the stress and depression are generally blamed and even harm themselves just to ease their pain as a result of the self-destructive behavior. This behavior has a terrible impact on human body not only physically but also mentally. Physically, it could lead someone to do dangerous things to harm themselves. Mentally, it could drain someone’s energy and leave them giant-sized stress as well as depression. Several studies , like the one made by Matthew Nock (2010), found that “self-sabotage behaviors generally expressed in different types of self-harming such as self-mutilation, smoking, drinking alcohol, substance use, violent groups, intentional injuries, and improper ways of eating. Among them, self-mutilation is the most common ones”. Other

creating boundaries, seeking mentorship and taking calculated risks) can disrupt self-sabotage and encourage career progress. Bonds cautioned that the separative ideal yields isolation, whereas Jakubik’s tactics are relational and rhetorical, relying on fresh stories and friendly networks to prompt operational adjustments in personal dialogues. Her work develops critical education perspectives of the past forty years - moving beyond diagnosing structures that cause self-undermining to analyzing acculturated practices by which people can act upon possibilities for resistance and agency inside such structures.

While *The Bell Jar* remains an object of widespread critical attention, due in part to its canonical status and already ample psychoanalytic readings, it has not been approached in terms of self-sabotage. This lacuna in the studies underpins the importance and novelty of this study, which attempts, for the first time, to offer a new psychoanalytical reading by foregrounding self-sabotage as a valuable framework through which Plath’s work can be read.

### 3. Theoretical Framework



unconscious processing has a major impact on behavior, often resulting in effects that appear maladaptive at a conscious level. The concept of 'turning against the self' - redirecting aggressive impulses to a person's internal world in order to protect the self-form identification with the aggressive redirected from turning against yourself from Dictionary of Psychotherapy. This idea is one that comes up often in psychoanalytic conversations about self-destructiveness. This may suggest that self-destructive action is a means of adaptation to unbearable and hostile external or inner aggression. The need of self-sabotaging is closely connected with the repression of desire (one of the pillars of Freudian psychoanalysis).

Freud (1920) suggests that unacceptable impulses and desires are not allowed to get into consciousness, that is, this happens unconsciously. When we repress those desires, the ones that the society does not socially sanction or threatens the ego, they do not disappear, but they become the part of the unconscious where they have enormous impact that may manifest later in the form of perverse form and self-destruction. Lacanian psychoanalysis goes further to state this concept of desire as consistently

studies found that the most severe self-destructive behavior is suicide. People who have self-destructive behavior shake off sometimes alone but still controlled by someone professional because they often act carelessly. In this situation, once they found no help, it could lead them to be a reckless person, and the best way for them to ease the pain is to commit suicide (Hawton et al 2000).

In analytic thinking, self-sabotage, whatever it might be is not understood as a decision in the strict sense but an expression of various possibilities structured by unconscious conflicts and defenses. Freudian theory also originated a path for understanding what appear to be irrational behaviors, that people may act in ways contrary to their own best interest because of inhibitory psychic conflicts, particularly those based on repressed desires and unresolved childhood experiences. In modern psychoanalytic theory, self-sabotage is understood as a process in the channel between impulses and action. According to Tobin (2020), "from a psychoanalytic standpoint, 'self-sabotage is a direct expression of repressed intrapsychic conflicts'. This account is congruent with the widespread belief that

offers a more thorough-going explanation for the suicide and self-harming behaviors. It is a theory of an inherent unconscious tendency to decay and destruction, and to revert back to inorganicism, over against the life affirming Eros (Reisner, 2003). Controversial as it is, the death drive provides a conceptual framework to understand self-sabotage acts such as cutting and suicidal thoughts: an in-built tug towards annihilation (Hageback, 2020). Freud (1961) further argues that men desire death because the only path to true tranquility is through death, for that is the only escape from the struggles of life. Death exists in the subconsciousness of every human being as it is the most measured, most instinctive power in the consciousness of human beings. When someone is so deeply desperate for whatever reason, Thanatos just appears and pushes a strong desire for death on them. However, Thanatos, can also bring individuals to self-destruct, as well as inflict harm and death on others (Freud, 1961). This is what makes the distinction between self-destructive behavior such as self-mutilation and suicidal attempt, confusing but the unique features of both actions can be

particular to language and the symbolic order and its repression sends us into an endless state of never-ending dissatisfaction and egodystony (Evans, 2006). Another concept in psychoanalysis which is also significant is identity conflict which is usually discussed with respect to self-defeating behavior. Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development are less rooted in sexual issues than Freud's, for example and instead focus on the positive influences that shape identity development (Mcleod, 2018). When there are challenges in constructing a coherent self, especially when facing contending societal demands or internal contradictions, some turn to actions that undermine themselves as an attempt to articulate this inner fragmentation or contest the external pressures. Psychoanalytic theories of identity frequently focus on the relationship between autonomous subjectivity and intersubjective recognition; the disjunction between personal experience and external assessment can give rise to a powerful sense of self-dislocation and to negative, self-defeating habits (McWilliams, 2011).

Freud's (1920) later introduced death drive, or Thanatos,



physical, though figurative, suffocation of the bell jar directly parallels Esther's mental suffocation as darkness falls upon her psyche, and this situation irreversibly changes how the novel as a whole can and should be interpreted. Critics view this point of view from the perspective of social criticism alone for example; Diane Bonds views Esther's depression as an "intolerable psychic conflict produced by trying to meet cultural expectations of women" while Marjorie Perloff sees it as her "human inability to cope with an unlivable situation". These exercises, although quite legitimate, don't take into consideration the present life or death nature of Esther's disease. Hence, Esther's struggle with her own desires is central to her journey in the novel and is often left repressed, only to lead to self-sabotage. The world around her is still unfinished attempts of girls to follow expectations, demographic realities and class struggles crash down on her recently formed individuality and her desire to think and study. The first bliss she feels is when she arrives in New York as an intern, but that bliss soon fades to a sense of hollowness and an inability to process her meaningful experiences. For example, Esther remembers how she can't write or feel inspired;

determined by the intent of the individual.

#### 4. Discussion

The life of Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) was not long by normal measure, in social terms, her lifetime only lasted 31 years, but it was so rich. Sylvia Maria Plath grew up in a middle-class family that enjoyed democratic Anglo-Saxon traditions of love and freedom. She was a confident, ambitious young woman who wanted to make her mark on the world--and she was determined to write (Ismael, 2006). Her literary works , and epically *The Bell Jar* is a mental quest into the starching of Plath's identity and life mission. It paints vivid images that play out her feelings and the war raging inside it. *The Bell Jar* itself, separated from objects, in an isolated condition, is not too difficult to define: "it's a suffocating, rigid and impenetrable container the victim locked inside its transparent walls. But the encoded symbolism is a bit harder to see" (Tsank, 2010,). To many, *The Bell Jar* comes to symbolize society's suffocating pressures and pernicious double bind that ensnare Sylvia Plath's protagonist, Esther Greenwood, inside the bubble of glass which refers to fragility of human's life, represented by the symbol of the bell jar. But another much ignored fact is that the

defect in himself". Amidst her string of cascading failings, Esther glances at her mom's college admission standards and sees what she needs and realizes she is not up to snuff. And she immediately takes it negative on herself. While the fact of the matter is that her current university's Esther laments that "Plath Profiles curriculum" was "not the curriculum of the city college across the way" that the dumbest kid at her mother's college was smarter than she, as if she never took an English course in high school. These schools wouldn't even let me through the door, much less offer me a big scholarship like the one I had at my own college (Plath, 2005). Instead, her immediate impulse is to rail against what she assumes her own shortcomings to be, rather than assess the situation rationally. The fact that Esther goes from blaming herself in an almost comedic way to blaming herself for everything wrong with the world in an instant shows that her mind is not stable.

Furthermore, the 'numb trolley-bus' is a telling metaphor for her self-destructive passivity; the idea that she's being taken along without will or responsibility. This repression of her true desires is what will

I was supposed to be having the time of my life. I was supposed to be the envy of thousands of other college girls just like me all over America who wanted nothing more than to be tripping about in those same size-seven patent leather shoes I'd bought in Bloomingdale's one lunch hour with a black patent leather belt and black patent leather pocketbook to match...everybody would think I must be having a real whirl (Plath, 2005).

This excerpt exemplifies Esther's aloofness and her anhedonia, even though she is in a place that most would die for. Real experience and self-determination are what she wants but instead they too are stifled, so the result is a feeling of numbness and passivity. Esther turns her failures into self-refusal because she does not have a proper support system to help her deal with it, and on top of everything has a running war against her own perfectionism. Beck (1974) explains, "the person at risk for depression will attribute any negative incident to some



Europe and Africa and South America, and another fig was Constantin and Socrates and Attila and a pack of other lovers with queer names and offbeat professions, and another fig was an Olympic sailing champion, and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I couldn't quite make out. I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet.” (Plath, 2005)

This excerpt captures Esther's inability to choose from conflicting choices in life. Her indecision, an act of self-sabotage, is rooted in her fear to narrow down possibilities and her fight to make

ultimately make her “a white goof, given the vacancy and desolation of a room two days before it has to be vacated” (Plath, 2005) in the sense that depression infiltrates oneself as s/he becomes ever stranger to her or himself. Esther's self-sabotage is so much interwoven with her effort to generate an integrated identity when, throughout the novel she finds herself surrounded by defective roles which are totally controversial. She is torn between the idealized vision of the successful, all-American girl and her own messier and less conventional dreams. This ambivalence is poetically expressed in the well-known fig tree metaphor:

I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story. From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor, and another fig was

going to lie there and let the car exhaust seep in and put me to sleep. I thought, 'I'll just be a little bit dead.' But then I thought, 'No, I won't. I'll be all dead.' And I didn't want to be all dead. I just wanted to be half-dead." (Plath, 2005)

This passage points to the ambivalence of Esther's death drive. She finds oblivion appealing but shies from full annihilation. Her wish to be not dead but 'half-dead' gives the believe that she is yearning to be released from the pain of consciousness, without dying incipiently. This internal conflict between the life and death instincts is a prominent factor in her psychological battle, leading her to feel depressed, weak, and unable to change her reality. Depression is often shows the lack of escape of the protagonist, whereby s/he cannot remove themselves from the present environment (Mhayyal, 2013).

Her later, more serious suicide attempts are further evidence of the rise in power of the death drive as her insanity advances, it is leaving

peace with all the different sides of herself. The decaying figs represent what she allows to slip away by doing nothing about her turmoil of identity. This internal disunity precludes her from moving on and puts her in a condition of paralysis and depression. It is an aspect of existence, a component of the enigma that surrounds everyone's life. It often comes with broken bonds with loved ones. It's, as Amal Nasser Frag notes, "cannot be prevented because death and perpetual change are uncontrollable in living" (Frag, 2019). As Esther's state of mind keeps deteriorating, so do her self-ruining attitudes become more overtly suicidal, which brings them into line with what Freud regards as the death drive: And then. Her repetitive suicidal thoughts and acts reflect the ultimate form of such an unconscious tug toward annihilation. She subsequently becomes infatuated with death and sees it as a possible means by which she can escape her mental anguish. Her first, halfhearted suicide attempt is recounted with a chilling detachment:

"I am, I am, I am," I said, and then I put my head on the cold, clammy cement of the garage floor and closed my eyes. I was just



rules that the former does not find crucial. The lack of love and care by her mother was feeding her own economy negative, walking herself into an arena where she had wonderful thoughts but believing that it will be no one that wants her to fight, to fight herself. This felt unvalidation by the mother is one of the factors that lead to low self-esteem and inability of Esther to accept her own aspirations and needs. In part, her self-sabotaging impulses may be regarded as a protest against her mother and the social conventions that she is a symbol of. The poor mother-daughter relationship leaves Esther without a solid foundation to discover her identity which exposes her to the internal and external forces that cause her to break up. The Bell Jar Esther uses the first-person narration to explore psychoanalysis, as the first person narration allows the writer to dire.

I moved in front of  
the medicine  
cabinet. If I  
looked in the  
mirror while I did  
it, it would be like  
watching  
somebody else, in

an extreme version of self-sabotage in its wake.... Self-Sabotage with Respect to the Mother Figure in The Bell Jar Esther's relationship with her mother is a pivotal source of tension and reinforces patterns of self-sabotage. Her mother is the "normal" house life that she wants and rejects. She feels her mother is unsupportive of her academic aspirations and unemotional, alienating and lackluster in maternal advice. Esther's animosity toward her mother is revealed in her musings about what her mother has planned for Esther.

My mother had taught  
me to be a proper girl,  
to be a virgin, to be a  
good wife and mother.  
She had taught me to  
be a good student, to  
get good grades, to be  
a good girl. But she  
had never taught me  
how to be a person.  
She had never taught  
me how to be me."  
(Plah, 2005)

The quote underlines the sense that Esther has that her mother did not help her grow to be the real one, and instead, imposed a few traditional

helped to divulge concealed forces that pushed Esther Greenwood in her self-destruction by examining such themes as the repression of desire, identity conflict, the death drive and the role of mother figure. The analysis has shown that the self-sabotaging approach of Esther is not a series of rational choices, but a far more complex process that occurs when the depth of her psyche and is caused by the issues of real life along with social needs. Therefore societal expectations of women on women, as well as, passivity make Esther feel alienated, and her wants to be mentally and artistically satisfied are suffocated. The fig tree image gives an example of how she is indecisive about her future, and ambivalence prevents her from taking action that she continues to engage in such an identity conflict. As her psyche shatters the death drive is progressively brought to the fore thus; she continues to attempt suicide, or, in the end, she attempts suicide: ultimate self-sabotage.

Moreover, her maternal attachment is an emotional non-attunement that led to her fragile sense of identity and wishes not to be dragged down by the internal and external aspects eyes. What succeeds

a book or a play.  
But the person in  
the mirror was  
paralysed and too  
stupid to do a  
thing (Plath,  
2005)

This passage shows the extent of dissociation that is the core of the psychosis of Esther. This failure to enroll her own image is symptomatic of a breakdown of the self. Retaining the emotional crudities and outspoken veracity of the voice, the readers are allowed to be complicit in her mounting insanity develops a clinging, yet a sickly psychoanalysis of self-annihilation and devolution through distress. The recounting is reclamation and reassembling the fragments into a unified whole in order to make sense of that fractured history and heal which creates good therapy and its optimal opens a door into the unconscious: healing with understanding.

## 5. Conclusion

Psychoanalytical approach to *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath of this paper has demonstrated the depth of self-defeat as one of the central themes of the novel. This study has



grow more sympathetic to those who suffer in the world like Esther, trapped beneath their own bell jar of indecisions. If we can grasp the psychoanalytic roots behind Esther's adventure, we achieve a more profound understanding of the intricate layers assumed by the novel — both as literature and an excavation of human thought itself — and increase our compassion for sufferers such as Esther, confined beneath their oppressive bell jar -- their own indecisions.

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the first person voice in Plath in this instance is that it presents a vehicle to deliver psychoanalysis, an unedited and unusual look at the mind of Esther. The fragmentation of her story symbolically reflects both her fragmented mind, and it is a good metaphorical way of describing the corruption of her view on reality and the failure of self which inevitably results in madness. The telling though is also, a form of anticipating her future, of confronting this hurt by subjecting it to the light. And yet *The Bell Jar* is not only a powerful and enduring novel in its expression of mental illness, but it is also a narrative of the existential struggle that always was and always will be our common lot. An informed psychoanalytic reading of the novel reveals the hidden and occasionally invisible forces in action when people strive to sabotage their own potential, and offers abundant information about a complex, in many ways, and commonly tragic fact: self-sabotage. When we may be able to see the psychoanalytic basis of the adventure of Esther, we arrive at a deeper insight into the multiple layers presupposed by the novel, as both literature and excavation of the human thought, and

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