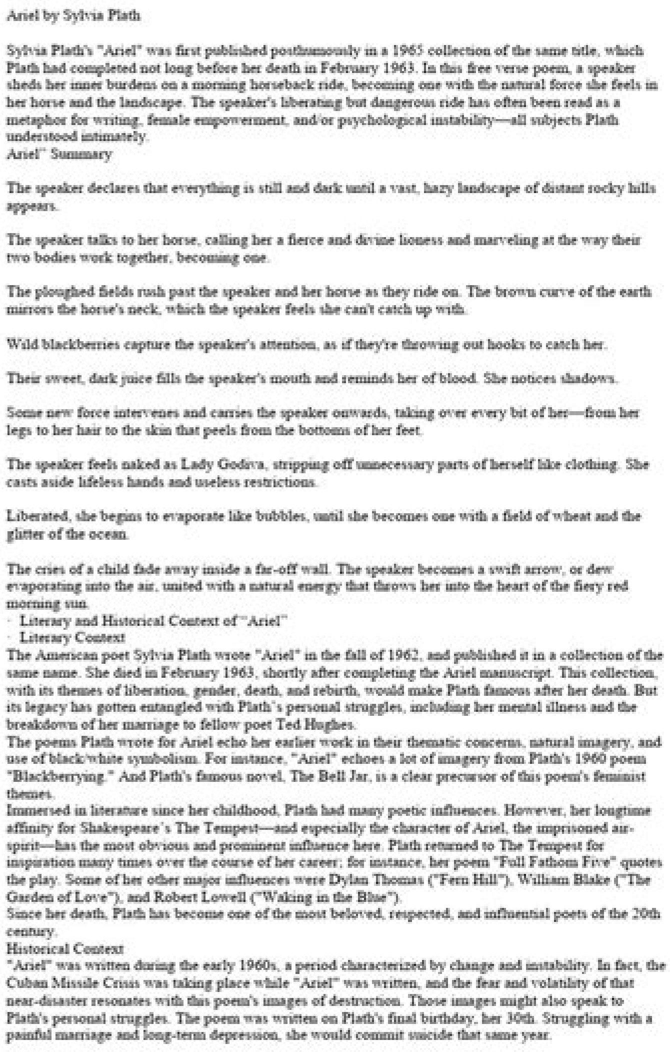
Ariel By Sylvia Plath Analysis



Ariel by Sylvia Plath

Sylvia Plath's "Ariel" was first published posthumously in a 1965 collection of the same title, which Plath had completed not long before her death in February 1963. In this free verse poem, a speaker sheds her inner burdens on a morning horseback ride, becoming one with the natural force she feels in her horse and the landscape. The speaker's liberating but dangerous ride has often been read as a metaphor for writing, female empowerment, and/or psychological instability—all subjects Plath understood intimately.
Ariel" Summary

The speaker declares that everything is still and dark until a vast, hazy landscape of distant rocky hills appears.

The speaker talks to her horse, calling her a fierce and divine lioness and marveling at the way their two bodies work together, becoming one.

The ploughed fields rush past the speaker and her horse as they ride on. The brown curve of the earth mirrors the horse's neck, which the speaker feels she can't catch up with.

Wild blackberries capture the speaker's attention, as if they're throwing out hooks to catch her.

Their sweet, dark juice fills the speaker's mouth and reminds her of blood. She notices shadows.

Some new force intervenes and carries the speaker onwards, taking over every bit of her—from her legs to her hair to the skin that peels from the bottoms of her feet.

The speaker feels naked as Lady Godiva, stripping off unnecessary parts of herself like clothing. She casts aside lifeless hands and useless restrictions.

Liberated, she begins to evaporate like bubbles, until she becomes one with a field of wheat and the glitter of the ocean.

The cries of a child fade away inside a far-off wall. The speaker becomes a swift arrow, or dew evaporating into the air, united with a natural energy that throws her into the heart of the fiery red morning sun.

- Literary and Historical Context of "Ariel"
- Literary Context

The American poet Sylvia Plath wrote "Ariel" in the fall of 1962, and published it in a collection of the same name. She died in February 1963, shortly after completing the Ariel manuscript. This collection, with its themes of liberation, gender, death, and rebirth, would make Plath famous after her death. But its legacy has gotten entangled with Plath`s personal struggles, including her mental illness and the breakdown of her marriage to fellow poet Ted Hughes.
The poems Plath wrote for Ariel echo her earlier work in their thematic concerns, natural imagery, and use of black/white symbolism. For instance, "Ariel" echoes a lot of imagery from Plath's 1960 poem "Blackberrying." And Plath's famous novel, The Bell Jar, is a clear precursor of this poem's feminist themes.
Immersed in literature since her childhood, Plath had many poetic influences. However, her longtime affinity for Shakespeare`s The Tempest—and especially the character of Ariel, the imprisoned air-spirit—has the most obvious and prominent influence here. Plath returned to The Tempest for inspiration many times over the course of her career; for instance, her poem "Full Fathom Five" quotes the play. Some of her other major influences were Dylan Thomas ("Fern Hill"), William Blake ("The Garden of Love"), and Robert Lowell ("Waking in the Blue").
Since her death, Plath has become one of the most beloved, respected, and influential poets of the 20th century.
Historical Context
"Ariel" was written during the early 1960s, a period characterized by change and instability. In fact, the Cuban Missile Crisis was taking place while "Ariel" was written, and the fear and volatility of that near-disaster resonates with this poem's images of destruction. Those images might also speak to Plath's personal struggles. The poem was written on Plath's final birthday, her 30th. Struggling with a painful marriage and long-term depression, she would commit suicide that same year.

Ariel by Sylvia Plath is a poignant and complex collection of poems that delve into themes of identity, transformation, and the struggles of the human psyche. Written in the last months of Plath's life and published posthumously in 1965, "Ariel" stands as a testament to her mastery of language and her ability to convey deep emotional truths. This article will provide an analysis of the collection, exploring its major themes, stylistic elements, and the context within which Plath wrote these powerful poems.

Context of "Ariel"

Sylvia Plath wrote "Ariel" during a tumultuous period in her life, marked by personal struggles and a quest for artistic expression. After her separation from her husband Ted Hughes and her battle with mental illness, Plath sought solace in writing. The title poem, "Ariel," is particularly significant as it captures her feelings of liberation and despair, reflecting a duality that is central to her work.

Historical Background

1. Personal Life: Plath's tumultuous marriage, her struggles with depression, and her eventual separation from Hughes provide a backdrop for much of her poetry. The emotional upheaval in her life culminated in her tragic suicide in 1963, making "Ariel" a collection imbued with a sense of urgency and finality.

2. Literary Context: The collection was published during a time when confessional poetry was gaining traction. Poets like Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton were exploring personal experiences with raw honesty. Plath's work fits within this movement but also transcends it through its unique imagery and symbolism.

Major Themes in "Ariel"

The poems in "Ariel" explore a variety of themes, each reflecting Plath's inner turmoil and her relationship with the world around her.

Identity and Self-Transformation

One of the most prominent themes in "Ariel" is the exploration of identity and the transformative experience of selfhood. Plath often uses vivid imagery to depict the struggle between the self and external expectations.

- Rider Metaphor: In the title poem, Plath employs the metaphor of a horse and rider to symbolize the relationship between the conscious self and the subconscious. The rider’s journey can be interpreted as a quest for freedom, where the act of riding becomes a means of transcending personal limitations.

- Duality of Self: Many poems in the collection, such as "Lady Lazarus" and "The Moon and the Yew Tree," embody the tension between the public and private self. Plath grapples with her identity, reflecting on how society perceives her versus her internal struggles.

Death and Rebirth

Death is a recurring motif in "Ariel," often intertwined with themes of rebirth and renewal. Plath’s exploration of mortality is both haunting and illuminating.

- Cycles of Life: In poems like "Ariel" and "Tulips," Plath reflects on the cyclical nature of life and death. The imagery of flowers and natural elements serves to highlight the transient beauty of existence, suggesting a continuous cycle of decay and regeneration.

- Self-Destruction: Plath's work often touches on the idea of self-destruction as a means of transformation. In "Lady Lazarus," for example, she embraces the idea of rising from the ashes, reflecting on her own experiences with suicide attempts and her subsequent resilience.

Isolation and Alienation

Plath's feelings of isolation and alienation permeate her poetry, revealing her struggles to connect with others and herself.

- Personal Isolation: The poems often convey a sense of solitude, as seen in "The Bell Jar" and "The Applicant." Plath’s use of stark imagery and bleak landscapes illustrates her emotional distance and disconnection from the world.

- Societal Alienation: Plath critiques societal norms and expectations, particularly regarding gender roles. In "The Applicant," she examines the pressures placed on women to conform, highlighting the alienation that arises from these expectations.

Stylistic Elements in "Ariel"

Plath’s stylistic choices in "Ariel" contribute significantly to the emotional impact of the poems. Her use of vivid imagery, symbolism, and sound devices creates a rich tapestry that enhances the reader's experience.

Imagery and Symbolism

Plath’s imagery is often visceral and striking, employing symbols that evoke strong emotional responses.

- Nature Imagery: Nature plays a crucial role in "Ariel," serving as both a backdrop and a reflection of Plath's inner state. The horse in "Ariel" symbolizes freedom, while the tulips in "Tulips" represent confinement and the struggle for identity.

- Religious and Mythological Symbols: Plath frequently integrates religious and mythological references, enriching her work with deeper meanings. The use of figures like Lazarus and references to the moon imbue her poems with a sense of timelessness and universality.

Sound and Structure

The sound and structure of Plath's poetry in "Ariel" are integral to its power.

- Free Verse: Many poems are written in free verse, allowing Plath to break away from traditional forms and experiment with rhythm and pacing. This freedom enhances the emotional intensity of her work.

- Alliteration and Assonance: Plath employs sound devices such as alliteration and assonance to create musicality in her poems. This auditory element draws readers in and emphasizes key themes and emotions.

Conclusion

"Ariel" by Sylvia Plath is a profound exploration of the complexities of the human experience. Through her masterful use of language, imagery, and symbolism, Plath articulates her struggles with identity, death, and isolation. The collection serves as a powerful testament to her artistry and emotional depth, leaving a lasting impact on readers and the literary world.

Understanding "Ariel" not only provides insight into Plath's psyche but also invites readers to reflect on their own experiences of transformation and the search for self amidst the chaos of life. As we engage with her work, we are reminded of the enduring power of poetry to capture the intricacies of the human condition.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the central themes explored in Sylvia Plath's 'Ariel'?

The central themes in 'Ariel' include identity, femininity, death, and rebirth. Plath delves into the complexities of the self and the struggle for autonomy, often juxtaposing personal anguish with the natural world.

How does Plath use imagery in 'Ariel' to convey her emotional state?

Plath employs vivid and often stark imagery in 'Ariel' to express her emotional turmoil. The use of nature, horses, and the sky symbolizes both liberation and entrapment, reflecting her inner conflict and desire for freedom.

What role does the concept of transformation play in 'Ariel'?

Transformation is a crucial motif in 'Ariel', representing the speaker's journey from despair to empowerment. The poem captures a metamorphosis that suggests a release from pain and an embrace of a more powerful self.

In what ways does 'Ariel' reflect Sylvia Plath's personal experiences?

'Ariel' reflects Plath's personal experiences, particularly her struggles with mental illness, her roles as a mother and a woman, and her quest for self-identity. The intensity of her emotions mirrors her own life challenges and existential questions.

What literary devices are prominently featured in 'Ariel'?

In 'Ariel', Plath utilizes various literary devices such as metaphor, symbolism, and alliteration. These elements enhance the poem's emotional depth and contribute to its rhythmic quality, creating a sense of urgency and poignancy.

How does the structure of 'Ariel' influence its overall meaning?

The structure of 'Ariel', characterized by short, fragmented lines and abrupt shifts, mirrors the tumultuous emotions of the speaker. This format amplifies the sense of disorientation and intensity, effectively conveying the complexities of her experiences.

Find other PDF article:
https://soc.up.edu.ph/22-check/pdf?dataid=KUt05-3659&title=finding-main-idea-and-supporting-details-worksheets.pdf

Ariel By Sylvia Plath Analysis

Ariel是什么意思 - 百度知道

Ariel读作：['ɛrɪəl] ◦Ariel作为英文名字的时候，是上帝的狮子的意思，来源于 圣经。它还有有其他的意思。 1、羚羊类；瞪羚，是主要产于阿拉伯等地的一种大眼羚羊。 2、（莎士比亚 剧本< …

公司共享盘怎么进去 - 百度知道

Dec 7, 2024 · 公司共享盘怎么进去要找到公司的共享盘，可以按照以下步骤操作：1. 打开文件资源管理器（Windows系统按Win+E键），在左侧面板中找到"网络"选项，点击展开。2. 在网络中 …

ARIEL - 知乎

原作·脚本：笹本祐一 监督：わたなべぢゅんいち 人物原案：鈴木雅久 人设·作画监督：露山修 分为四部OVA（1989年7月21日 - 1991年4月21日）： ARIEL VISUAL1 SCEBAI最大の危機（ …

Arial 和 *Times New Roman*, 用哪个好? - 知乎

以前做幻灯片的时候，我一直用Times New Roman。不为别的，只因为这是我最喜欢的字体。但是我的老板每次都要我改成Arial字体。直到最近，老板在给另一个同学修改幻灯片的时候，才 …

黄怡然Ariel - 知乎

Sep 30, 2022 · 黄怡然Ariel 易参创始人&CEO，国内多家顶级基金、创业营孵化器常驻导师

输入俄文字母，将字体改成Ariel，并斜体，但是有几个俄文字母就 …

输入俄文字母，将字体改成Ariel，并斜体，但是有几个俄文字母就变了，请求解决！具体请看图片俄文的斜体字不是简单的字符倾斜而是有七个字符写法很另类 需要格外留神尤其是m和n并非 …

Drone 和 UAV 有什么区别? - 知乎

UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) 是专业术语，直接翻译是无人飞行器。是美国国防部 United States Department of Defense (DoD) 和美国联邦航空局 United States Federal Aviation …

以色列**Ariel University**值得去读**Phd**吗？ **-** 知乎

以色列Ariel University值得去读Phd吗？小蓝星 · undefined 来自知友的真实反馈 套瓷得到了这个大学一名教授的积极回复，生物化学工程，教授发表paper很多，2019年上半年就发表了很多 …

听我说谢谢你歌词 **-** 百度知道

听我说谢谢你歌词完整版如下：送给你小心心，送你花一朵。你在我生命中，太多的感动。你是我的天使，一路指引我。无论岁月变幻，爱你唱成歌。听我说谢谢你，因为有你温暖了四季 …

CAD想设置默认字样为**Ariel**，**CAD**里面能找到，但在**Fonts**文件夹找 **...**

Apr 29, 2021 · CAD想设置默认字样为Ariel，CAD里面能找到，但在Fonts文件夹找不到了?在“格式”----“字体样式”从里面找，出现那些没有显示的字体，就找看看，缺少哪个字体文件缺少字体文 …

*Ariel*是什么意思 - 百度知道

Ariel读作：['ɛrɪəl] ◦Ariel作为英文名字的时候，是上帝的狮子的意思，来源于 圣经。它还有有其他的意思。 1、羚羊类；瞪羚，是主要产于阿拉伯等地的一种大眼羚羊。 2、（莎士比亚 剧本<暴风雨>中的）空气般的精灵。莎士比亚戏剧《暴风雨》中一个空气般的精灵，是一个淘气、快活的人 …

公司共享盘怎么进去 - 百度知道

Dec 7, 2024 · 公司共享盘怎么进去要找到公司的共享盘，可以按照以下步骤操作：1. 打开文件资源管理器（Windows系统按Win+E键），在左侧面板中找到“网络”选项，点击展开。2. 在网络中找到公司所在的局域网，如果不确定可以咨询公

ARIEL - 知乎

原作·脚本：笹本祐一 监督：わたなべぢゅんいち 人物原案：鈴木雅久 人设·作画监督：露山修 分为四部OVA（1989年7月21日 - 1991年4月21日）： ARIEL VISUAL1 SCEBAI最大の危機（前編） ARIEL VISUAL2 SCEBAI最大の危機（後編） DELUXE ARIEL 接触編 THE BEGINNING DELUXE ARIEL 発動編 …

Arial 和 **Times New Roman**，用哪个好？ **-** 知乎

以前做幻灯片的时候，我一直用Times New Roman。不为别的，只因为这是我最喜欢的字体。但是我的老板每次都要我改成Arial字体。直到最近，老板在给另一个同学修改幻灯片的时候，才告诉我们为什么要用这种字体。英文字体分两类，一种是Serif字体，一种是Sans-Serif字体。 Serif 字体，就是有那种边边 …

黄怡然*Ariel* - 知乎

Sep 30, 2022 · 黄怡然Ariel 易参创始人&CEO，国内多家顶级基金、创业营孵化器常驻导师

输入俄文字母，将字体改成Ariel，并斜体，但是有几个俄文字母就 …

输入俄文字母，将字体改成Ariel，并斜体，但是有几个俄文字母就变了，请求解决！具体请看图片俄文的斜体字不是简单的字符倾斜而是有七个字符写法很另类 需要格外留神尤其是m和n并非英语中的M和N，而是T和P见下图

Drone 和 **UAV** 有什么区别？ **-** 知乎

UAV（Unmanned Aerial Vehicle）是专业术语，直接翻译是无人飞行器。是美国国防部 United States Department of Defense (DoD) 和美国联邦航空局 United States Federal Aviation Administration 采用的规范用词。泛指所有无人驾驶的遥控或自控飞行器，包括固定翼、多旋桨等，广义上甚至包括气球、遥控飞机等、有翼导弹等 …

以色列**Ariel University**值得去读**Phd**吗？ **-** 知乎

以色列Ariel University值得去读Phd吗？小蓝星 · undefined 来自知友的真实反馈 套瓷得到了这个大学一名教授的积极回复，生物化学工程，教授发表paper很多，2019年上半年就发表了很多篇，不过期刊影响力一般，不知道值不值得去 显示全部

听我说谢谢你歌词 - 百度知道

听我说谢谢你歌词完整版如下：送给你小心心，送你花一朵。你在我生命中，太多的感动。你是我的天使，一路指引我。无论岁月变幻，爱你唱成歌。听我说谢谢你，因为有你温暖了四季。谢谢你感谢有你，世界更美丽。我要谢谢你因为有你，爱常在心底。谢谢你感谢有你，把幸福传递 …

CAD想设置默认字样为**Ariel**，**CAD**里面能找到，但在**Fonts**文件夹找 **...**

Apr 29, 2021 · CAD想设置默认字样为Ariel，CAD里面能找到，但在Fonts文件夹找不到了?在“格式”----“字体样式”从里面找，出现那些没有显示的字体，就找

看看，缺少哪个字体文件缺少字体文件，按照下面的方法添加字体文件即可：方

Dive into our in-depth 'Ariel by Sylvia Plath analysis' to uncover the poem's themes

Back to Home