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## NO OTHER POSSIBILITIES THAN TRAUMATIC REALISM IN SYLVIA PLATH'S ARIEL POEM (1965)

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### ABSTRACT

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This research aims to analyze the traumatic realism in the poem Ariel (1965), written by Sylvia Plath. This research uses Michel Rothberg's (2000) theory to show traces of trauma realized in literary works and uses Abelson's (1995) theory to find extreme experiences that traumatize individuals. Researchers use an approach or reference based on the biographical book "The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath," written by Gill (2008), to find a correlation between Plath's life and her writing in Ariel. This research uses a qualitative descriptive design to reveal and investigate the phenomenon of trauma and the forms or modes of extreme experiences in Sylvia Plath's life that are realized in Ariel. Data was obtained from textual sentences or words in poetry that refer to events or happenings in Sylvia Plath's life. Based on Spradley's theory and analysis, we think that Ariel's poetry is closely related to events in Sylvia Plath's life.

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### INTRODUCTION

Ariel is a poem written by American poet Sylvia Plath in 1962 and published posthumously in the collection Ariel in 1965. Despite the poem's ambiguity, the poem depicts an early morning horseback ride towards the sunrise (Bassnett, 2005). Ariel consists of ten three-line stanzas with one additional line at the end, then follows an unusual italic rhyme scheme. Davis (2000), notes a change in tone and a break in the

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slanted rhyme scheme in the sixth stanza, which marks a shift in the poem's theme from being literally about riding a horse to being more of a metaphorical experience of oneness with a horse and the act of riding it. The poem was written just five months before she finally committed suicide, so it is not surprising that, given the title, it is also one of her Ariel poems.

"Ariel" was the name of the horse Plath rode at a riding school on Dartmoor in Devon. Ted Hughes's husband, Ariel, is the name of the horse she rides every week. Much earlier, when she was still a student at Cambridge, she had gone riding with an American friend to Grantchester. Her horse bolted and fell, and she came home to the corral, about two miles, at full gallop, hanging by the horse's neck (Steinberg, 2004; Bloom, 2007; Bayley & Brain, 2011).

In this context, this research aims to explore the representation of traumatic realism in one of Sylvia Plath's most famous works, namely the poem Ariel. The theoretical approach that will be used is the theory of traumatic realism developed by Rothberg (2000). This theory helps to understand how Plath's poetry creates narratives that reflect uncertainty, trauma, and intense inner struggle. Rothberg believes that traumatic realism attempts to show "traces of trauma" and show the difference between everyday reality and real extreme experiences (Osman, 2017; Mahan, 2017; Roggendorff, 2012). Application of this theory to Plath's poetry can reveal how individual trauma permeates culture and literature.

To express the extreme experience that traumatized the individual, Abelson's (1995) theory was applied as a form of realization of the extreme experience expressed in poetry. In addition, the realization of Plath's life is also based on the book "The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath," written by Gill (2008). This is a reference for finding out the meaning and purpose of each stanza of poetry based on the author's life experience. This is in line with traumatic realism in the poem "Ariel" by Sylvia Plath, referring to the use of strong language and presentation style to express experiences of trauma and mental instability. Additionally, Plath's work often depicts her own conflicted emotional experiences, including depression and deep personal struggles.

The "traumatic realism" here, as mentioned above, refers to extreme experience. The triggers of trauma, as implied by Rothberg (2000), are extremist actions and psychological anxiety in the form of threats that cause trauma. Extreme attitudes directed

at objects or people will lead to responsiveness in the form of trauma. This is caused by bad experiences or events. Extreme actions, according to Abelson (1995), are actions that determine the position of the wrong attitude, which is contrary to the values of individual people or groups, and a large extent will cause conflict between themselves. While traumatic realism by Rothberg (2000), stated efforts to show "traces of trauma" and show everyday reality and real extreme experiences. Therefore, trauma here arises as a result of extreme experiences and causes an individual to do something contrary by realizing the trauma into something real in the form of extreme experiences (Kharoua, 2016; Heidarizadeh, 2015; C. Davis & Meretoja, 2020).

Extreme experience, according to Caruth (1995), is a "narrative memory" structure that leads to bad events, where the truth of the event may not only lie in the brutal facts but in the way it happened that is contrary to reason or values. Abelson (1995), analyzed the social psychology process of extremity attitudes called "Processes Leading to Extremification." First, Group polarization refers to the existence of an attitude that is repeatedly influenced by the environment of the group or people around them. Second, Insults are negative attitudes in the form of insulting or offending other people's objects. Third, Thought polarization is a condition that is shaped or influenced by other people's thoughts repeatedly. Fourth, Expression polarization is the process of expressing a purpose, idea, or goal. Fifth, Belief polarization is a belief that is created repeatedly. Sixth, commitment and suffering, in the form of moral responsibility and being willing to suffer to achieve it. In this way, traumatic realism leads someone to act in extreme ways based on their extreme experiences.

These forms of extremity become reasons for traumatized individuals to act by realizing it in real life based on extreme experiences. This is the same as expressed by Rothberg (2000), that trauma is not in the extreme event itself but as a separation and unification between life and death, inside and outside, the familiar and the very strange. So actually, trauma is triggered by extreme actions, but that is not trauma. Even though the trauma of realism tries to get out of the extreme experience, it can be integrated into reality in real life (Tota & Hagen, 2015; Kohli, 2012; Matoba, 2023). Extreme experiences that create trauma will lead to past experiences, according to Klüger (2012), traumatic realism not only turns to the past but also tends to reappear in haunting repetition.

To express traumatic realism, Rothberg, M. (2000) stated that trauma does not

occur in extreme events but is triggered by extreme actions, which are then realized in real extreme experiences. Meanwhile, according to Abelson, R. P. (1995), there are at least six processes that form extreme actions. Group polarization, according to (Myers and Lamm, 1976), refers to the existence of a recurring attitude regarding the influence of individual thoughts on the group or people around them. Insults are in the form of insulting or offensive attitudes directed at certain people. Thought polarization is a condition that is formed or influenced by other people's thoughts repeatedly and is usually also formed by social interactions.

Expression polarization is the process of expressing a purpose, idea, or goal in a pattern. According to Powell and Fazio (1984), expressions are also formed in an attitude of accessibility, which makes it easier to express something. Belief polarization is a belief that is made repeatedly based on evidence as an interpretation. Commitment and suffering, in the form of moral responsibility and being willing to suffer to achieve it, Therefore, the process of creating extremity from traumatic realism is based on extreme experiences, which are then realized in real life (Hunt, 2010; Kurtz, 2018; Bryant, 2019; Mandal & Singh, 2020).

Several experts have conducted research on traumatic realism and Ariel poetry by Sylvia Plath in recent years. The first article was written by Sanjeev Kumar Roy (2020), entitled Sylvia Plath: Poems Summary and Analysis of Ariel. The article describes "Ariel" as a later collection of Plath's poems, written in the last phase of her life before her suicide in 1963. The article highlights that "Ariel" is an extraordinary collection of poems, noted for its thematic expression, symbolism, poetic virtuosity, and his personal soul.

The second article, written by Tiziana de Rogatis (2021), is entitled Global Perspectives, Trauma, and the Global Novel: Ferrante's Poetics between Storytelling, Uncanny Realism, and Dissolving Margins. This article discusses the relationship between globalization, trauma, and global novels, with a focus on the poetry of Elena Ferrante. The third article was written by Katrin Wehling-Giorgi and Tiziana de Rogatis in 2021, entitled Traumatic Realism and the Poetics of Trauma in Elsa Morante's Works. This article discusses the narrative structure in Elsa Morante's work and its relationship to traumatic realism and trauma poetry. In this article, the researcher argues that a close reading of history through trauma poetry reveals the way in which Morante's work engages with traumatic events in history.

Fourth, the work of Amber N. Kelley (2022), entitled *Being With/In Trauma: Entangling Agential Realism and Marriage and Family Therapy to Treat Traumatic Stress*. This article explores how marriage and family therapists can interact with individuals experiencing trauma and how the world is always entangled and connected. The fifth article by Mark Niles Bauer will be published in 2023 with the title *The Fever for Autobiography: Assumption and Confession in Sylvia Plath's Ariel*. This article explores how Plath's personal experiences and struggles were reflected in her poetry and how she used her writing as a means of self-expression and self-exploration. The article's author, Mark Niles Bauer, analyzes several poems from "Ariel" and discusses their connection to Plath's life and experiences. Overall, this article provides a detailed analysis of the themes and motifs in "Ariel" and sheds light on Plath's personal struggles and creative process.

There were five previous studies, including two studies that had the same object and three studies that had the same topic. Therefore, the topic of traumatic realism represented in the poem 'Ariel' by Sylvia Plath based on the theories of Michael Rothberg and Abelson is a gap in this research. This research will examine how Plath realizes the experience of trauma through the extreme experiences written in her poetry. Apart from that, to find out that the verses of the poem were based on traumatic events in the form of Plath's extreme experiences, researchers used an approach or reference based on the biographical book "The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath," written by Gill (2008). This is based on Sylvia Plath's life experience so that she knows the meaning of each stanza in the poem, referring to her experience of trauma and extreme experiences.

## **METHOD**

This research has a qualitative-descriptive design. This involves discussing the research sample and the overall procedures for collecting and recording data. Further expands the steps of data analysis and methods used to present data, interpret, validate, and demonstrate potential research results (Creswell, 2014). The research data is from textual elements seen in the source. The data were taken purposively from the poem *Ariel* (1965) by Sylvia Plath in which is based on the biography of Sylvia Plath, "The Cambridge Introduction to Sylvia Plath," written by Jo Gill (2008). The poem *Ariel* is the object of research based on traumatic realism. To determine the poem is included in it, the determination of traumatic and modes of extreme experience in research becomes the

focus of the researcher's findings.

This study uses the analysis technique from Spradley's (2016) to analyze the data in the research. This analysis describes differences, interprets things, provides explanations for cross-cultural comparisons, and this research provides ethnographic analysis to investigate and explain the results (Spradley, 1980, 2016). There are four stages of analysis: domain, taxonomy, componential, and analysis of cultural themes. First, in domain analysis, Rothberg's (2000) "traumatic realism theory" is applied to reveal the Traumatic in literary works, such as poems. After revealing the forms of traumatic, Attitude Extremity of Abelson, R. P., (1995) is applied here by expressing the modes of extreme experience that are realized through realities

Second, taxonomic analysis and traumatic and extreme experiences are aimed at the traumatic realism in the poem. The next step is to review the forms or modes of extremity (extreme experience) based on the theory of attitude extremity from Abelson, R. P. This is useful to show that there is a link between traumatic and extreme experiences. After that, the next step is componential analysis. Here, the findings from the domain and taxonomy analyses are presented in a descriptive form to show their relationship. This relationship will show the categorization of traumatic and extreme experiences in the poem. The last is an analysis of cultural themes. This step is to analyze the forms of traumatic and extreme experiences that are analyzed to show the textual elements in the poem.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section is divided into three parts to indicate traumatic realism through the extreme experiences in the poetry. The poetry was written by Sylvia Plath, the title is Ariel and published in 1965. The findings and explanations of each stanza of the poem will be explained. Each stanza of the poem is connected to events and experiences experienced by the author, Sylvia Plath.

Data Source	Traumatic Realism					
	GP	Ins	TP	EP	BP	CS
"Ariel" Poem (1965) by Sylvia Plath	×	2	×	8	×	6

**Table 1.** The Result of Componential Analysis in Traumatic realism and Extreme Experience

Note:

GP: Group Polarization

EP: Expression Polarization

Ins: Insults

BP: Belief Polarization

TP: Thought Polarization

CS: Commitment and Suffering

Table 1. shows that the Ariel (1965) poem has traumatic realism, which is written by realizing extreme experiences from Sylvia Plath. The extreme experiences made the writer (Plath) realize a poem, namely Ariel. In the researchers' findings, there are three extreme experiences that are realized in Ariel. There are the insults, expression polarization, and commitment & suffering. In the discussion, the researchers are not in sequence according to the verses of the poem. However, the findings are based on the sequence of Sylvia Plath's life story, written in a biography by Gill (2008).

**Sylvia Plath's Unsuccessful and Insulting in Ariel (1965)**

In Ariel's poetry, Sylvia Plath realized her extreme experiences in the form of poetry, which was published in 1965. This is the same thing conveyed by Rothberg (2000): that traumatic realism tries to show traces of trauma and show the difference between everyday reality and real extremities. Meanwhile, extreme experiences that traumatize a person include 'insults', or attacks that are thrown at the subject (Abelson, 1995). Plath's realization in her poetry is that there are 'insults' that create conflict within her, so she writes in poetic form.

Data Source	Textual data of Traumatic	Extreme Experience in Insults
Ariel Poem (1965) by Sylvia Plath	“Splits and passes, Sister to”	This sentence depicts that the horse rider is riding her horse very fast. In the sentence "splits and passes," it is depicted that the rope on her leg is parted and missed when she is riding the horse.
	“Flakes from my heels.”	The sentence describes the horse rider having her heel peeled off. The horse he was riding was very fast, and she could not stop it until her heel came off.

**Table 2.** Textual Data of Ariel Poem in Insults

In table 2, The horse named Ariel has a very fast speed, so the horse rider has difficulty riding it. This can be seen in the sentence "Splits and passes...": the horse rider's legs cannot control the rope that is on the horse's stomach because the horse is too fast, and the rider even loses control of the horse she is riding. Meanwhile, in the book written by Gill (2008), Plath received news that she had been unsuccessful in her application for a place on a high-level creative writing course run by short story writer Frank O'Connor. This made her feel humiliated, and she failed to get that opportunity. Besides that, second wave feminism has made Plath a woman who is faced with contradictory demands and is required to be smart and attractive, confident, and submissive, and an achiever (Gill, 2008, p. 7). This experience creates anxiety in her in the form of fear about her abilities.

According to Dobson (1985), anxiety will give rise to perceptions of threats to future happiness, threats to self-esteem, and threats to the individual's ability to understand her abilities. This is Plath's trauma in the form of anxiety because she feels like she has failed. The word "passes" in Ariel means missed. She missed the opportunity to take part in a writing course in 1953. The word also represents the extreme experience of humiliation that she, a woman with famous poetry writing, could be rejected from the course that year.

The sentence "Flakes from my heels" is related to the sentence above, which imagines that a horse rider cannot stop her horse from running too fast. In this representation of Ariel's writing, the sentence relates to an event that occurred in Plath's life, namely the revocation of her Full Bright scholarship at Cambridge because she was discovered to have married secretly (Gill, 2008, p. 7). Scholarship recipients at that time

had the condition that they were not allowed to marry during the study period. The word “flakes” means that he experienced a loss of scholarship and failure. Meanwhile, the phrase “my heels” means that losing a scholarship has had an impact on Plath and her husband's finances. Plath's failure indicated that she was traumatized and led to a state of stress (Alexander et al., 2004), seen when Plath moved to look for a new place to live after she lost her scholarship. Extreme experiences in the form of 'insults' made her write metamorphosis in Ariel.

### Sylvia Plath's Commitment and Suffering in *Ariel* (1965)

Commitment and suffering are widely depicted in Ariel's poetry. In the poem, there are many metaphors that show this. Sylvia Plath realizes the extreme experiences that traumatized her in the past through poetry. This can be seen in (Gill, 2008), book about Plath's biography, which tells of her life, family, and marriage. The book has become a reference as a correlation of poetry with the life story experienced by Plath from her life until her death. The Ariel poem that she wrote is inseparable from past events, which she wrote using the metaphor of 'horses'. Traumatic realism not only tries to go into the past but has a tendency to bring back past experiences that haunt it (Rothberg, 2000, p. 142). In bringing back past events, extreme experiences influence the emergence of trauma conditions, one of which is commitment and suffering (Abelson, 1995, p. 34).

Data Source	Textual data of Traumatic	Extreme Experience in Commitment and Suffering
Ariel Poem (1965) by Sylvia Plath	“Hooks—”	This word describes how Ariel's horse is tied to the horse rider. And there is a sign “-,” indicating that there is an attachment between the horse and the rider.
	“Black sweet blood mouthfuls”	The sentence imagines that the horse rider is imagining the blackberries being eaten.
	“Hauls me through air—”	This sentence shows that the horse rider is carrying the horse without being able to control the horse properly; the word “hauls” there means lifting or being forced, meaning that the horse rider can only follow the horse's path.

“Dead hand, dead stringencies.”	This sentence describes that the horse rider cannot move her hands because the horse she is riding cannot be controlled.
“The child’s cry Melts in the wall.”	This sentence gives an example of a horse rider who cannot control her horse's progress well, with an analogy like a child crying and her face facing a wall when crying.
“Eye, the cauldron of morning”	This sentence indicates that the horse rider solved her problem with the horse she was riding by dropping herself as a way of being able to ride her horse.

**Table 3.** Textual Data of Ariel Poem in Commitment and Suffering

In table 3, there are at least six textual data points consisting of each stanza of poetry. The word "Hook" describes a horse rider who is riding a horse with her hands tied to the rope holding the horse. In Plath's life, this word shows that she is bound by the demands of life that bind her. This is related to what has been conveyed in Table 2. The demand is that Plath succeed in whatever she wants to achieve.

In Plath's biography, written by Steinberg (2004), her failure to enter a writing class made her depressed. This is related to extreme action; the demand is an extreme action that triggers depression as a form of response to that action (Hammen & Watkins, 2018). While her mother Aurelia encouraged her to relax and have fun, Plath could not and felt as if she had let everyone down, including her supporters and sponsors. He had no desire to read, had trouble sleeping, and had no purpose. Plath wanted to give up immediately; the failure made her feel worse. This is closely related to excessive stress, which makes someone depressed because they think about it all the time (Hammen, 2005). According to her mother, Sylvia looked pale when she heard the news, which was coupled with emotional and physical exhaustion, and it seemed to be a psychological disorder for her (Gill, 2008).

The next stanza of the poem "Black sweet blood mouthfuls" depicts a horse rider imagining drinking a mouthful of sweet black blood, in this case intended to eat black berries. This shows that Plath tried to commit suicide by taking an overdose of her mother's sleeping pills. She swallowed forty-two sleeping pills and then lost consciousness (Steinberg, 2004, p. 41). Sylvia was then treated at McLean Hospital, on the outskirts of Boston. In the next stanza "Hauls me through the air," the horse rider is forced to follow

the direction of the horse she is riding and loses control. This can also be seen in the sentence "Dead hand, dead stringencies", A horse rider cannot ride her horse and can only follow where her horse runs. In Plath's life, she always demanded herself to be the best; this was related to the ideology at that time of feminism: women were required to have high ideals, to be smart, intelligent, and more than others.

In the verse "The child's cry melts in the wall", the horse rider compares herself to a small child who can do nothing but just cry. The horse rider is very frustrated because they cannot ride her horse well and lose control of it. If we refer to Sylvia's life, when she fails or is depressed, she has no solution and can only cry like a child. Apart from that, this sentence also shows that the miscarriage of her child in early 1961 made her traumatized and frustrated (Gill, 2008). And that same year, Plath was bothered by repeated attacks of sinus infections and also had pain from her appendix (Steinberg, 2004, p. 89).

In the last stanza, "Eye, the cauldron of morning," it is described that the horse rider deliberately threw herself down with Ariel's horse, and her eyes opened in the morning. This indicates that to relieve Plath's suffering, she committed suicide. Ariel's commitment and suffering in Sylvia Plath's life include failure to take Frank O'Connor's writing course, the demands of feminist life, the miscarriage of her child, sinus infections, and appendicitis. This representation of suffering led Plath to commit suicide in order to relieve all her suffering. Plath's traumatic realism realizes extreme experiences with metaphorical images in Ariel's poetry.

### **Husband, Children, and Family as an Expression of Trauma in Ariel (1965)**

Sylvia Plath expressed the events she experienced during her life in a poem entitled Ariel (1965). The imagery of horse rider and horses in poetry represents herself. Traumatic realism, according to Rothberg (2000), is showing the trauma that occurs in life with extreme experiences that occur in real life. Extreme experiences are expressed in the form of expression, which is a process of expressing a purpose, idea, or target (Abelson, 1995).

Data Source	Textual data of Traumatic	Extreme Experience in Expression Polarization
Ariel Poem (1965) by Sylvia Plath	"Stasis in darkness"	In this sentence, it is described that the horse the woman was riding did not move and was just silent in the dark.
	"God's lioness"	In that sentence, the horseman gave her horse the title, namely, the lion of God.
	"The brown are of the neck I can not catch,"	The shadow of riding so fast made the rider unable to reach the brownish rope around the horse's neck.
	"Nigger-eye Berries cast dark"	This sentence means that the horse rider cannot see very far because the horse she is riding is very fast and obscures her vision.
	"White"	The word "white" contrasts with black or dark. The horse rider was able to open her eyes, and the horse was starting to slow down.
	"Godiva, I unpeel—"	The parable of Godiva, a woman on horseback who was able to free the English people from taxation in the 11th century, makes the horse rider compare herself to Godiva. She can now ride her horse and control how fast the horse can run.
	"foam to wheat, a glitter of seas."	This sentence describes that the horse rider can now ride her horse. The sentence "foam to wheat" imagines that she can control his horse.
"Suicidal, at one with the drive"	This sentence indicates that it was possible that he accidentally fell from her horse, which made her commit suicide from the horse she was riding.	

**Table 4.** Textual Data of Ariel Poem in Expression Polarization

In the poem Ariel, Plath shows deep expressions about husbands, family, and children. In table 4, the sentence "Stasis in darkness" is the opening sentence of Ariel's poem, which in the first stanza describes the horse just remaining motionless and the horse rider also remaining silent in the darkness. When referring to Plath's life, the word "stasis" is an expression used because she no longer knew what to do because she found out that her husband Ted was having an affair in 1962 with a woman who had the same literary interests as her husband (Gill, 2008, p. 11). In the next stanza, "God's Lioness," it

is meant that Ariel's horse is likened to God's lion because it has a large and sturdy body and also has fast strength and speed, making the horse nicknamed the lion of God. When referring to Plath's extreme experience, this sentence is expressed as an expression of her being confident and able to remain strong in living a life of being cheated on by her husband. According to Steinberg (2004), Ted Hughes and Assia Wevill had begun a romantic relationship. They even traveled to and from London for various reasons, but when confronted by Plath, Hughes denied everything.

This indicates that the expression Plath expressed in these words seemed to give her encouragement. But on the other hand, Plath seems unable to withstand the weight of it all; in this sentence, "The brown is of the neck I can't catch," the horse rider cannot control her horse because the horse is running too fast. In the sentence "Nigger-eye Berries cast dark", horse rider cannot see anything when she is riding the horse because it is too fast. This indicates that Plath feels unable to accept her affair; the word "dark" indicates that she feels bad luck has enveloped her life because her husband is having an affair.

In the next stanza, the word "white" is in sharp contrast when compared with the words "dark" and "black". In this case, the horse rider can control and ride the horse by adjusting the rhythm of its speed. Horse that previously could not be controlled can now be controlled. Meanwhile, in Plath's life, this word expresses a traumatic experience with extreme experiences, indicating that she is optimistic and confident that she will be able to overcome the problems she faces. Even in this sentence "Godiva, I unpeel," the horse rider equates herself with Godiva, a horsewoman in 11th-century England, saving or freeing the people from taxation. The next stanza "foam to wheat, a glitter of seas", means the horse rider changed from not being able to carry a horse to being able to control and ride a horse. Referring to Plath's life, she was strong through her life, from initially not accepting her husband's cheating on her to now accepting it all. Plath decided to separate and spend the season in Ireland, resting and writing (Gill, 2008). "Godiva", Plath likened herself to a strong woman in the 11th century; she moved and focused on her children, and after separating, she became a shield for her children.

The tensest expression in Ariel's poetry is found in the last stanza "Suicidal, at one with the drive", in the poem's imagination, after being able to control the horse being driven by the rider. The opposite idea is to deliberately fall with the horse, as seen in the

word suicide. In Plath's life, the verse above depicts her as optimistic and confident. However, Plath was frustrated by her husband's infidelity. Even Plath was sick and had a fever, lost weight, and was unable to write (Steinberg, 2004, p. 105). In her letters, Plath showed how traumatized she was by the events (Gill, 2008).

Plath even suffered from insomnia and always took sleeping pills. In the early hours of February 11, 1963, Plath committed suicide using poison gas. This is the same as what is written with the word suicide in *Ariel*. Plath was found on the kitchen floor, with Frieda and Nicholas upstairs, locked in their bedroom with the window open, and a tray of bread and milk by their side. One of Plath's final acts was to seal her children safely away in their rooms. She left a note in her stroller in the main hallway that said, 'Call Dr. Horder' (Steinberg, 2004, p. 118). The realization of trauma expressed in *Ariel*'s poetry is traumatic realism, where it is triggered by extreme experiences, one of which is expression polarization. Plath tries to express every incident in her life through extreme, traumatic experiences in *Ariel*'s poetry.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Traumatic realism refers to extreme experiences that trigger trauma, caused by extreme actions and psychological anxiety. The poem "Ariel" by Sylvia Plath has succeeded in showing traumatic realism which refers to extreme experiences that trigger trauma. In this research, there are three extreme experiences manifested in *Ariel*, namely insults, expression polarization, and commitment & suffering. *Ariel*'s poetry shows that polarization of expression is an extreme experience that triggers the most dominant trauma in poetry. While the extreme experiences that trigger the least trauma in Sylvia Plath's work are motivated by humiliation.

Sylvia Plath realized her extreme experiences in the form of experiences of 'humiliation' and failure which created trauma within herself into her poetry. Traumatic experiences included a failed application for a creative writing course, the revocation of a Full Bright scholarship at Cambridge due to a secret marriage, and the pressure of the contradictory demands of the second wave of feminism which left her feeling humiliated and anxious about her abilities. Commitment and suffering are also widely depicted in *Ariel*'s poetry. Sylvia's previous failures triggered depression. As a result of the depression she experienced, this made her attempt suicide. This was motivated by failure to take a

writing course, the demands of feminist life, the loss of her child, the sinus infection and appendicitis she experienced. In Ariel's poetry, Plath also displays deep expressions about husband, family, and children. The tensest expression in Ariel's poem is in the last verse "Suicide, at one with the drive". In Plath's life, the verse above describes her as an optimistic and confident figure. However, Plath was frustrated by her husband's infidelity. Thus, the analysis of Sylvia Plath's "Ariel" through the lens of traumatic realism theory provides deep insight into how trauma can be represented in literature and how literary works can function as a channel for overcoming and experiencing traumatic experiences.

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