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AP Literature 2A

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POD Response 5

Mirror

The poem *Mirror* by Sylvia Plath starts off by describing the features of a mirror and how it shows only what it sees with no intentions of being cruel. The second stanza then states that it is now a lake. It is still a mirror that reflects its surface, but not the mirror hanging on the wall from stanza one. This time, a woman stares into the lake to see her reflection and the lake reflects what is there. The woman comes and leaves each morning and only receives the image of an old woman that is compared to a terrible fish.

The mirror flaunts the characteristics that it has of being exact and truthful without the bias opinion covered with lies because of love or hate. The mirror is an “eye of a little god” because it does not want to be mistaken for being cruel for it only shows what the truth is.

It appears as if the mirror is lonely, always seeing the same reflection of the pink opposite wall. Reflecting the same thing for so long, the mirror confuses the wall for its own heart, thinking this pink reflection is part of the mirror itself. The flickering that is mentioned appears to be the light being switched on or the sun that comes and goes. There is a cycle of people and darkness that visits the mirror over and over again.

In the second stanza, the mirror is now a lake with a woman that bends over it to glance at her reflection. Unlike the mirror from the first stanza, the lake shows more depth. The woman is searching the lake for her truthful self. However, the woman does not like what she sees and the mirror says that she “turns to those liars.” The liars are the moon and the candle that are only

seen in the darkness. They distort the real image by blanketing darkness over it, making the reflection unclear. To the mirror and the lake, they are the liars hiding within the darkness.

The truth of the mirror makes the woman cry droplets of tear into the lake. Agitated with what she see's, the woman distorts her image by splashing the water with her hands. However, the reflection of the lake is important to her since she's continuously coming back and forth to it every morning. Although she does not like what she see's, she continuously searches the reflection of the lake to find someone that is no longer there.

The young girl that the woman has "drowned" refers to the youth that she has lost. With every passing day, the woman is aging. Her youth is no longer coming back to her, yet she relies on the lies of the candles and moon to show her what is fading every day. The fact that aging is approaching is terrible as the fish that is being compared. The woman does not want to age or die and thus continue to look for the young girl that is no longer there.

Aging is unstoppable for it happens every day. It is not something that can be stopped or fought, only embraced. As much as one misses the youth that was once there, it cannot be returned. Lying to oneself is futile because age and death approaches all. Like the mirror and lake, it is not meant to be cruel. It is but the truth that everyone must face.

The way that Plath structures the poem *Mirror* is by separating the two types of reflection into two stanzas. The first stanza talks about the common mirror that sits on a wall while the second stanza is about a lake that portrays a mirror for it reflects just as a normal one does. These two stanzas separate the two different types of mirrors and their reflection. Yet, these mirrors simply states what it is: truth. As time passes, the mirror does not change. It still reflects what is right in front of it.

Different from stanza one, the second stanza states what the onlookers search for in a reflection. The job of a mirror is as stated, but stanza two transitions to tell about the dissatisfaction that people feel with their reflection over time. The simplicity of this short poem with only two stanzas makes the point clear-cut and obvious. The reflections of mirrors are genuine. As time passes, the reflection in the mirror starts to change as well. It is up to the onlooker to choose to embrace the change or try to hide the truth.