

# CONFESSIONAL ELEMENTS IN AMERICAN POETRY

By

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# MEANING/DEFINITION

- Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Poetry
- 1950's and 1960's
- The poetry of the 'I'
- The term is used by M. L. Rosenthal (1959) in a review of R. Lowell's work "Life Studies" entitled as 'Poetry as Confession'
- It is 'a literary work in which the poet reveals or confesses events or feeling which are normally hidden or concealed'

# FEATURES

- Revelation of hidden reality – Sylvia Plath
- The personal touch
- The conflict of inner and outer mind
- Feeling of shame or disgust for self - Sylvia Plath
- Theme of revolt
- Poetry of self/construction/portrayal of self with honesty
- Mental relief

# CONFESSIONAL POETS

- Robert Lowell – 1917-1978 - Alcoholism, drinking habit presented
- John Berryman – 1914-1972 - divided self, split soul
  - The Dream Songs – 385 poems
- Anne Sexton – 1928-1974 – Madness
  - Live or die
  - Love poems

# CONFESSIONAL POETS

- Sylvia Plath – 1932-1963, Committed suicide due to nervousness
  - The Colossus
  - Ariel
  - Winter trees
- W. D. Snodgrass – b.1926, frustrations
  - Heart's needle
  - After experience

# CONCLUSION

- Autobiographical
- Confessional tone
- Private and personal relations

**Thank You**

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