

DIVERSION/ PERVERSION: READING THE PERVERT IN

THE BELL JAR AND THE COLLECTOR

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ABSTRACT

A pervert can be understood as someone with independence and insight contrary to its popular meaning. This paper intends to find a similar strain in the novels *The Collector* and *The Bell Jar*. The protagonists in these novels are standing at the peripheries of society who do not 'fit in'.

The Collector can be read as an abduction narrative which builds up insightful arguments in the favor of the abductor in the given story. Although *The Bell Jar* can be read under the rubric of feminism, it being Sylvia Plath's semi-autobiographical novel this paper tries to read Esther Greenwood as another captive, one of her metaphorical 'bell jar'. To me Frederick Clegg is born where 'real' Esther Greenwood has died through treatment of insulin shock therapy, her 'perversity' has been sacrificed in favor of being a conformed social being. Ferdinand Clegg lives on in his perversity. He is the archetype of the original 'species being' and a foil to Esther Greenwood. But Ferdinand Clegg is also a murderer of human life. So it might seem very fancy to argue in favor of Charles Shobraj type figure but this would lead to sociological debates about where one should draw a line between madness and perversity.

KEYWORDS: Diversion, Perversion