 Significant language features in ‘A Comparison’

Defining words/phrases:

Below is a list of selected words/phrases that you are encouraged to define.

Paragraph 1

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Envy |  |

Paragraph 2

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Physic interiors |  |
| Air letters |  |
| Rose arbors |  |
| Budgerigars |  |
| Mannerisms |  |
| Shunts back |  |
| Double-exposes |  |

Paragraph 4

| Word phrases | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Epic poems |  |
| Paperweights |  |

Paragraph 7

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Apparition |  |
| Bough |  |

Paragraph 10

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Heart line |  |
| Head line |  |

Paragraph 11

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Astounding egotism |  |
| Tender melancholy |  |
| Yew Tree |  |
| Contemplated |  |
| Subdue |  |

Paragraph 12

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Disheveled |  |
| Indiscriminate |  |
| Concede |  |
| Chaste |  |
| Obstreperous |  |

Paragraph 14

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Promptitude |  |
| Eddies |  |
| Meanders |  |
| Bureaus |  |
| Discernment |  |
| Rigorous |  |

Paragraph 17

| Word/phrase | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Manic |  |
| Unanswerable finality |  |

Analysing language features:

Use the table below to identify and analyse the significant language features Plath uses in her essay.

| Language Feature | Example | How does the technique position us to think and/or feel about the topic? | Why is the technique effective overall? |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Emphatic tone |  |  |  |
| Gender contrasting |  |  |  |
| Syntax |  |  |  |
| Metaphor |  |  |  |
| Personification |  |  |  |
| Short sentences |  |  |  |
| Tonal shift |  |  |  |
| Exclamation marks |  |  |  |
| Inclusion of poetic extract (italicised) |  |  |  |
| Rhetorical questioning |  |  |  |
| Simile |  |  |  |
| High modality language |  |  |  |
| Personal anecdote |  |  |  |
| Selective word choices (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) |  |  |  |
| Motif (“door”) |  |  |  |
| Overall tone: |  |  |  |

Interpreting the text:

Use the following questions to form your opinion about the key ideas/messages and intent behind Plath’s ‘A Comparison’.

* Who do you believe Plath’s target audience is? Why?
* What are the key ideas or messages Plath communicates through her essay?
* Why has she used extended metaphors throughout her response?
* Overall, what do you think Plath’s intention was when she wrote ‘A Comparison’? Why do you think this?

Writing a personal response:

Using your deepened understanding of ‘A Comparison’, write a detailed analytical paragraph in response to the following question:

What is Plath’s argument and how does she communicate it with power and precision?