

## Denying *Eros*: Reading Women's Poetry of the Mid-twentieth Century

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While female voices in male western literature have traditionally served an *erotic* purpose,<sup>1</sup> the epithet—presupposing a certain standard pattern of male and female behaviour—seems to be less suitable for describing the female voices in the literary work of real women. A look at the reception of mid-twentieth-century British women's poetry confirms our assumption: Elizabeth Jennings, Ruth Pitter, and E.J. Scovell have been repeatedly described as “pure” poets, a designation that denotes a lack rather than an asset, if one remembers Blake Morrison commenting on Fleur Adcock's *Selected Poems* (1991) that few women have written so well about sex as she has.<sup>2</sup> That notions like *pure* or *sexy*, naturally sensitive to shifting tenets of social decorum and subjective experience, should form part of the critical vocabulary is symptomatic of a culture's preconceptions about human relationships, intimacy, and its attitudes towards the body. To explore these attitudes in the women's poetry at issue, what they mean in terms of poetic form, themes, and diction, constitutes the main concern of this paper.

*L'écriture féminine*, lesbian love, and body politics<sup>3</sup> represent recent modes of expression through which women writers have tackled sexual love, and constitute distinct signs of a feminist revolt against what has been subsumed as patriarchal concepts and values. Such concepts have been recognised as being at the heart of certain literary conventions; the love lyric, feminist critics have argued, constitutes a masculine domain, presupposing as much a male speaker or vantage point as the epic. How divergent postures are in pre-twentieth-century love poems of male and female writers has been shown by Erich Zauner.<sup>4</sup> Addressed by a male lover to an unattainable woman whose beauty and virtue are praised, the genre has made it problematic for women to follow the tradition of Petrarch and the Elizabethans, as Gilbert and Gubar, Goldin, Montefiore, and Homans have observed.<sup>5</sup> Being *poetry*, the mistress-mirror or “non-person”<sup>6</sup> can hardly, at the same time, be the poet as well.<sup>7</sup>

The question arises: How did women poets cope with the cultural role of object or inspiring muse rather than with that of creator before the heyday of the gender debate, when poetry became, more consciously and emphatically, a forum for articulating and confronting female authorship and sexuality (see H  l  ne Cixous, Adrienne Rich, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva)? Does their poetry altogether eschew erotic potentialities, and if so, how are these repressed, transcended or sublimated? To answer these questions we have to look beyond current definitions of literary eroticism as sexual love, for objectives other than titillation or sexual arousal;<sup>8</sup> in turn, love poetry, must be understood as not necessarily involving the real or imagined presence of an earthly lover.<sup>9</sup> I will therefore address myself not so much to notions of the *erotic* as to the more complex principle of *eros* and also broach such diverse antagonistic concepts as *caritas* and *sexus*, *thanatos* (death), *hypnos* (sleep), *logos* (intellect and creative energy),<sup>10</sup> and *Narcissus* (the anti-Eros, denying procreation).<sup>11</sup> To explore recurrent positions of the poetic self—the silenced, dead, ghostly, isolated voice—in relation to the deeper existential implications of these dichotomies, as well as such reiterated themes as auto-aggression, total commitment and self-denial, replacement of the living body by a lifeless *imago*, or divestment and violation of the body, I will employ various psychoanalytical models of explanation.

Freud understood what to Plato had signified a masculine principle of procreation and competition for perfection,<sup>12</sup> to Spinoza intellectual love of God and the affirmation of the world in pleasure (*laetitia*),<sup>13</sup> and to the mystic the harmonious confluence of all that exists, as an indestructible demand of human nature to return to the pleasure-principle. According to Freud, *eros* forms part of an instinctual dualism between Life and Death or Aggression, which he relates to central existential conflicts.<sup>14</sup> Jung refers the polarity of *eros* and *thanatos* to the concepts of *anima* and *animus*;<sup>15</sup> Gerhard Adler concentrates on the dichotomy of a matriarchal *eros* and a patriarchal *logos*;<sup>16</sup> Drewermann analyses it in relation to the Fall;<sup>17</sup> and Brown defines erotic life as the “relation of the ego to its sources of pleasure” and a fundamental search for “some appropriate form of union with objects in the world”, which he aligns to concrete psychical realities—“the immortal dream of love”, “the source of our restless discontent” and the “fountainhead of morality”—,<sup>18</sup> whilst insisting that there is an inseparable nexus between the affirmation of life and the affirmation of death in the human soul. Such a binary orientation, however, harbours conflict and the *eros* is liable to sublimation. The poetic imagination in the texts at issue pinpoints these discordant forces, showing an intense concern with death and suggesting a large scale of ambiguous and contradictory emotions, all centrally connected with essential questions of the human condition and more diverse than the reader is likely to encounter in the tradition of male love poetry:<sup>19</sup> doubt, distrust, subjection, withdrawal, mockery, insecurity, masquerade, a desire to become and change, longing and frustration.

Lilian Bowes Lyon’s short poem “Helen Meditates before her Portrait as

a Woman” may serve as a starting point of our analysis:

They still woo me there, and none miss me;  
 In their eyes, that were my prison, dead I live.  
 Foolish are men, that in a fleeting image would embrace me.  
 My bright Ghost to whom shall I give?<sup>20</sup>

Written in the early thirties, Bowes Lyon’s poem raises a number of perspectives which align it backwards with the poetry of Christina Rossetti, whilst pointing ahead to the work of Mary Stella Edwards, Stevie Smith, Phoebe Hesketh, Ruth Pitter and many others: the voice does not pertain to the living. Spoken by one with whom all physical and verbal interaction is barred—firstly because we hear a portrait speaking, secondly because the figure represented is dead—the poem opens up a two-layered figurative plane: death-in-life and life after death, the one psychological, the other eschatological. Significantly, the speaker declares that, being dead, she lives, the implication being that life is possible *because* rather than *although* she is biologically dead. The phrase is ambiguous and, apart from its innate connotation of passivity on the part of the woman, the courtship of the portrait abounds in narcissistic overtones. After all, the plight of Narcissus is not self-love, but unrequited love—the impossibility of loving an image, because when Narcissus falls in love, he does not yet know that the image is his own.<sup>21</sup> Narcissus, however, is troubled by the image’s silence, whereas the portrait’s wooers welcome such passivity. This enhances a view of the female as a “localisation of the ideal”.<sup>22</sup> Being idealised, the speaking woman is turned into an object (“dead I live”),<sup>23</sup> a passive recipient of love. Helen meditates before her portrait “as a Woman”, which suggests that the picture records her outward appearance without doing justice to her inner life or character. Hence in semiotic terms, the portrait functions as a metaphor of the *mere* body, which is permanently exposed to vision and conducive to interpretations. Reserved for a “fleeting image”, the lover’s embrace denotes lust, and the male gaze constitutes a prison to the woman under its scrutiny. Signifying the body’s amenity to be possessed and adjusted to suit its viewers’ desires, the picture prompts a response, but cannot engage in it. Like the nymph Echo, whose love Narcissus thwarts, the female speaker is petrified into a portrait. What remains is a voice no longer heard by men. Almost a century earlier, Christina Rossetti had criticised in her poem “In an Artist’s Studio” the painter’s transmogrifying stance, by which the female body is absorbed into his creative plan:

One face looks out from all his canvasses,  
 One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans;  
 We found her hidden just behind those screens,  
 That mirror gave back all her loveliness.  
 ...  
 He feeds upon her face by day and night,

And she with true kind eyes looks back on him  
 Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:  
 ...  
 Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

Not only is the body exposed to the distorting apprehension of its observers, it is intrinsically defined by the existence of other bodies, as Denise Riley suggests: "The body becomes visible *as* a body, and *as* a female body, only under some particular gaze ...".<sup>24</sup> Denying the visible body may therefore be understood as a means of escaping that gaze and the control exerted over it by patriarchal culture, which has traditionally ascribed the sphere of the body to women<sup>25</sup>—a phenomenon Spelman has traced back as far as Plato.<sup>26</sup> By ridding herself of all flesh and identifying with the spiritual, the speaker in Bowes Lyon's poem also rejects those processes of surveillance (monitoring her appearance, dress, and diet) to which women in the western world are habituated from an early age.<sup>27</sup> Yet, when the "fleeting image" is denied, there remains a ghostly ego, which suggests both the divestment of the body after death and a retreat *in* life to an inviolable core of the self paradoxically marked by the faculties of sight, speech, memory, ("they *still* woo me *there*"), judgement ("Foolish are men"), and self-reflection—processes which still presuppose life at a biological level. Thus, whilst annihilating the body, the Ghost acts in space and time as if it were a body, retaining for the speaker essential perceptive, cognitive and motoric functions. The communication between self and other, however, is severed.

Lacan's theory of the *stade du miroir*<sup>28</sup> may elucidate the alienation of the self described in Bowes Lyon's poem. Unlike the typical (interior) *I-Thou* dialogue of the love-lyric, the female speaker is denied reassurance by a second person because, as Montefiore implies: "'Thou' is, to the 'I', primarily a means of self-definition reflecting 'I' back to itself".<sup>29</sup> This explains why in her poem "I Am" Phoebe Hesketh proceeds from "I am nothing, / uncounted as pebbles / sparrows, grass, / dispensable as one sperm / in a universe" to a triumphant "And I am all ... / Does not the sun / shine upon me? / A tree give its shelter / and a lover identity?"<sup>30</sup> In Bowes Lyon's poem the gaze is her own and, as the speaker lacks an interlocutor, the contemplation of her picture at a time when she is symbolically reborn, or about to be, is comparable to the

assumption of his specular image by the child at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursing dependence, [which] would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject.<sup>31</sup>

This "total form of the body" is given to the child only as *Gestalt*, which

“symbolises the mental permanence of the *I*, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination”.<sup>32</sup> Although we have left the infant stage, the extent to which this *mirage* can be recognised as a total form of the body seems to be crucial to whether the *other* is experienced as reassuring or alienating and, subsequently, whether the *other* is formative in the development of identity.

In Mary Stella Edwards’ poem “The Mirror”, reflection ensures a “sense of being”: “The face reflected, gazing, ... / seeks repose / Merely in evidence of identity”. Although the spectral image “is not what one expects— / The likeness, seen before, a kind of bluff”, it is comforting, as it suggests a potential “expansion of the self until it enjoys the world as it enjoys itself”,<sup>33</sup> such expansion forming the touchstone of human perfection according to Freud. In Edwards’ poem, the self-image and the notion of the *other* are closely allied in their functional constitution. Simulating an encounter with the *other*, the mirrored face insinuates to the viewer that she is indeed capable of being encountered, loved, and possessed.

... That a face at all  
Looks back at one — is even there — effects  
Some reassurance: “That the eyes meet mine  
Shows I have eyes to meet”; that those eyes greet  
The doubt behind them gives a sense of being;  
The answering question shows they can divine  
That something is desired; their fears repeat  
That who desires has life in more than seeing.<sup>34</sup>

The position of the female voice, however, is not that of the lover or knowing subject, but of the beloved or known object, the one whose face is met. According to Goldin, the courtly love lyric rests on a different assumption. He accounts for the topos of idealising the lady by suggesting that it “saves the lover from the thirst and despair of Narcissus, from loving what cannot live. ... The self-image is as elusive as the reflected image in the fountain, but the lady lives and can be possessed”.<sup>35</sup> If Edwards’ poem represents a cardinal example of Lacanian self-recognition and Goldin’s thesis an instance of Freudian “object-cathexis” (the desire to possess another object), Bowes Lyon’s poem of the meditating Helen falls short of either possibility.

Recognising her portrait as nothing but a reservoir of male projections, the female viewer (Helen) is denied the moment of primordial, pleasurable self-recognition. She *knows* that the picture reflects an illusory, misrepresented identity and, feeling nothing but estrangement, is denied experience of the “je-idéal”<sup>36</sup> which Lacan deemed necessary for the formation of both personal identity and the relation between the organism and its reality, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt* (4). Symbolically, her new self is a negation of her former self. The Ghost’s speech is self-referential. After all, speech is a property of the mortal body, as Ruth Pitter in “Close, Mortal Eyes” also suggests: “The

soul has eyes: alas, she has no tongue, / She has no word of all the mysteries, / No syllable that may be said or sung".<sup>37</sup> Language does not "restore to it ... its function as subject", to use once more Lacan's phrase. Hence, Bowes Lyon's poem leaves no room for this vital transition from the spectral *I* to the social *I*, no hope for reunification of the instinctual opposites of Life and Death: "My bright Ghost to whom shall I give?" Similarly, in sonnet 71 Shakespeare envisages his own decaying corpse, but his verse constitutes a self-conscious monument to his fame, a circumstance to which he calls attention twice: "Nay, if you read this line, remember not / The hand that writ it ... O if (I say) you looke upon this verse ..." (ll. 5-6; 9). Meditating on his own death, the speaker at the same time asserts his present agentive and creative powers and, what is more important, introduces a loving *other*, a consciousness through which he can give force to his ideas and turn his affirmation of death into an affirmation of life.

In "Helen Meditates before her Portrait as a Woman", the woman's plight is double: she has no self-image to strengthen her sense of being and no other to communicate her thoughts to. In Plato's *Symposium*, Socrates defines love as a desire for something that is not yet, but can be possessed<sup>38</sup> and, according to Freud, the child's love for the mother is governed by a desire to possess, for the father by a desire to identify with ("ego-libido").<sup>39</sup> The conclusion is obvious: the woman's desexualised spirit ceases to be lovable. An existentialist perspective might further argue that having discarded life, she has also discarded death, and without death, "individuals are reduced to the status of mere modes ...".<sup>40</sup> Her erring ghost resembles the slain "Angel in the House" whom Virginia Woolf expounds in "Professions for Women", asking what remains when she has succeeded in emancipating herself from this huge cultural spectre: "Ah, but what is 'herself'?"<sup>41</sup> What is Bowes Lyon's "pure" Ghost to do in the world of time and history? Though dead, she has not lost her time-consciousness, which is indicated by her use of the past and the future. Having renounced its bodily counterpart, the Ghost has freed itself from the gaze, but it is un-erotic and "Lost", as Phoebe Hesketh suggests:

After a spell above ground  
walking through walls and people  
feeling their eyes unseeing me,  
return to the empty house  
is a ghost's return to the grave. (*The Eighth Day* 83)

This denial of the body-ego recurs repeatedly in the women's poetry of the mid-century, opening the gate to Life's antagonist—Death. When at the age of 84 Sylvia Townsend Warner wrote to the prospective publisher of her *Collected Poems*: "I intend to be a posthumous poet",<sup>42</sup> her own definition is not only a defence against belated publication but also the embodiment of a dominant theme in her poetry: the abolition of history which gives the body context and, in psychoanalytical terms, is invariably linked with the "restless career of Faustian man".<sup>43</sup> She constantly imagines her own death as an event

recognised by inanimate nature. If not her life, her death will leave a mark on the earth, for the past itself is assuring. Speaking from the tomb, she reminds us that she *was*:

How fare my ash-trees now?  
Do my fruit-trees bear?  
The gnarled apple and the stately pear—  
How do they grow, and I not there, not there?

Neither more nor less  
Than when you walked below.  
Apple and pear tree fruit, and ash-trees grow,  
And the ripe fruit falls, and leaves begin to snow.

Yes, I remember well  
The plunge of apple and pear,  
The whirled whisper of ash-leaves flocking down air—  
But is it all as when I was there, was there?

Yes and no.  
Nettles and weeds grow tall  
Muffle each fruit fall:  
Unsought-for lie apple and pear, and rot one and all.  
(*Selected Poems* 92)

The questions are addressed to someone who surveys what is happening on earth but, unlike Shakespeare's loving, beloved *you*, it is an unfeeling, objective *other*, which has no relation to the deceased speaker and no interest in her. It is another *voice*, remembering her care, her weeding and her harvesting, rather than a bodily human being. The dialogue form equally suggests that the speaker who has attained a state of rest, which characterises all inorganic matter, has not become one with nature. Her consciousness still operates in time, and we are faced with the same muffled potencies of expression as in Bowes Lyon's poem.

Phoebe Hesketh has written a series of meditations on life from the perspective of a voice rather than *persona*. "Plaything" might refer to the vast potential of despair haunting man in his search for meaning, but the doll has overtly feminine connotations: "Rags / bundled to a likeness—/ a doll / breathed into with love-an'-hate / stitched together / in desire's twitching fingers ..." (*Eighth Day* 83). The impersonal tone of "Snow" supports the self-annihilating message of these reflections: "dumb ground staring / Air feather-headed / loosing words / everywhere / unheard" (*ibid*). The personal pronoun is employed in the accusative form, expressing an inert mode of experience—death "is a friend / ... lifting *me* bodiless / from boarded room"; consciousness, when explicitly suggested in "The Race", is readily denied—"I am nothing—/ a

servant / waiting, running, swept / up in others' needs. / ... I had not thought to run / from the straight—/ to be melted down / away from myself". Likewise, the first-person possessive pronoun is linked with dissolving eyes and a tree suffocating from the strangling embrace of "Ivy", until death becomes its sole reality. By according speech to the dying tree, this short parable supports Brown's thesis: "If death gives life individuality and if man is the organism which represses death, then man is the organism which represses his own individuality".<sup>44</sup> In death a sense of self emerges:

Victorious ivy breathes  
 over my bark  
 wreathes  
 a shining, strangling dark life  
 around my death (*The Eighth Day* 83)

"I have been here—not before, but after" Mary Stella Edwards writes in the same vein, and in another poem uncomfortably circumscribes the sphere of the self in terms of a deathly "Ruin", which again correlates with the Lacanian metaphor of the fortress, the dream symbol of the formation of the *I*,<sup>45</sup> effected in death rather than in life. Recalling for the reader Sylvia Lynd's "Solitary" woman who laments—"I am a ruined house, a disused way, / Silence, forgetfulness and dull decay"<sup>46</sup>—the speaker also defends her mouldy cavern where *eros* is warped in a morbid celebration of decay:

Cross not my threshold, mortal stranger;  
 Here is danger;  
 ...  
 Where lip to lip and breast to breast  
 Were softly pressed,  
 Bramble and crumbling stone embrace  
 With loathsome grace;  
 The cruel grass licks up the rain  
 Where love in vain  
 Built walls between itself and death  
 With labouring breath.  
 ...  
 Escape before your lips' delight  
 Is silenced quite;  
 Begone before cold shades have slain  
 Your ardent brain,  
 And your fair limbs are laid also  
 Cold clay below;  
 And come no more till time has made  
 You too a shade! (*A Truce with Time* 71)



Love cannot outlive death, which transforms softness into hardness, longing into horror, and sensuous beauty into a hideous parody. The corpse is guarded, and the emphasis is not so much on rejecting the living body as on the presence of inorganic matter. Death gives curious emphasis to the body, whether the speaker spells out a warning or entangles her former lover in a macabre fantasy, as in Phoebe Hesketh's "Skeleton Bride":

I come to you now to woo your mind  
 ...  
 See how my ribs let the moonlight in.  
 Feel the sockets of my eyes—  
 Each one pockets a star; I grin  
 For you may not chastise  
 Responses of the flesh, the bloom  
 Of shoulder, cheek, and breast;  
 The grey cell of your mind has room  
 To give a skeleton rest  
 And still be unpossessed.  
 ...  
 O, won't you test my rigid wrist  
 And fingers pencil-fine?  
 Explore the mouth where once you kissed  
 Your soul away in mine? (*The Eighth Day* 28)

The dead body's transparency, permeability and rigidity pervert former feminine attributes—"Till now I stand before / Your gaze, a woman no more"—challenging the imagined interlocutor's power to love when denied the chance to possess her.<sup>47</sup> Again, the voice is not content with dissolution and sets the body in relief by denying it (affirmation-by-negation): "... it is by being the negation of the body (the soul) that the ego remains a body-ego".<sup>48</sup> Death replaces life and assumes the activities of the living body: Edwards' female "Ruin" admonishes the living, Hesketh's skeleton bride forces her putrefied limbs onto her suitor, and Fleur Adcock's "Grandma" claims a kiss when visited in a nightmarish journey:

So I climbed up that ladder in the frescoed barn—  
 ...  
 and found, without surprise, a decomposed lady  
 who drew me down to her breast, with her disengaged  
 armbones, saying "Come, my dearie, don't be afraid,  
 come to me" into a mess of sweetish decay.<sup>49</sup>

Her words teach the dreamer what the deprived lover of Hesketh's skeleton bride fails to see, that "even the dead want to be loved for their own sake" (27). Are we to take this line as an explanation as to why the voices in so many poems

should choose to speak from among the dead?

Women's poetry is massively peopled with corpses, and the preoccupation with death is striking. To Stevie Smith death is a fixed and alluring quantity and obsessively summoned. After contemplating the various ways of committing suicide, the speaker in her poem "Death Came to Me" chooses death by shooting. The conclusion is plain and final: "I put it [the revolver] to my head / And now I'm dead".<sup>50</sup> That death rather than the lyric self should function as grammatical subject in the title of a poem about suicide is significant. Death, after all, calls because life is negated, as in Kathleen Nott's acid *Elegies* (1981): "Only asleep I do not think of death / But practice there for your unpeopled night".<sup>51</sup> The sardonic voice in Stevie Smith's "Come Death (I)"—"How foolish are the words of the old monks, / In Life remember Death ... Foolish illusion, what has Life to give? / Why should man more fear Death than fear to live?" (ibid. 70)—yields to a more poignant, pleading attitude in "Come, Death (II)", written in hospital shortly before her death and recited as her own epitaph:

I feel ill. What can the matter be?  
I'd ask God to have pity on me,  
But I turn to the one I know, and say:  
Come, Death, and carry me away.

Ah me, sweet Death, you are the only god  
Who comes as servant when he is called, you know,  
Listen then to this sound I make, it is sharp,  
Come, Death. Do not be slow. (*Selected Poems* 282)

There is not only a profound concern with a friendly, kind, even *erotic* death—(death more often than man represents the object to which the libido is attached), but also with when and how he will call: "How will you treat me, Death, when I am dying?" Dorothea Eastwood asks;<sup>52</sup> Hesketh prays, "Let me go like a leaf / or a flake of snow / quiet as a feather" (*Eighth Day* 82); E.J. Scovell, who is more deeply concerned with spiritual essences than earthly phenomena, continually aspires to airy lightness; Ruth Pitter's "For Sleep, or Death" evokes an incantatory ritual—

Cure me with quietness,  
Bless me with peace;  
Comfort my heaviness,  
Stay me with ease ... . (*Urania* 13)

—and Kathleen Raine's Yeatsian dialogues between the self and the soul are fervent pleas for the dissolution of the body:

DEATH, I repent  
Of these hands and feet

That for forty years  
 Have been my own  
 And I repent  
 Of flesh and bone,  
 Of heart and liver,  
 Of hair and skin –  
 Rid me death,  
 Of all that I am.<sup>53</sup>

All these poems share the notion that the self rests with the invisible soul rather than the visible body and that the latter must be transcended in order to fulfil the former. For some reason or other—mystic exaltation,<sup>54</sup> a desire to be freed from history and time, to escape the body's encoded cultural significance and revolt against repressive civilisation, to be relieved of the pressures of possession and overcome the rift between male and female sexuality—the woman poet's human ego refuses to actualise its erotic potentialities, renouncing a bodily union with the "world of love and pleasure"<sup>55</sup> and directing the energies of the mind against *eros*. The topography of this negation is an autumnal landscape where beginning and end are one and nature abounds in oxymoronic correlations of *eros* and *thanatos*: "And seeds fall heavy with life / And the brown leaves light with death", "the stream to the world's hollow sea",

So it seems, as the frail company,  
 Leaf and fruit once the brood of the sun,  
 Sinks down to the mud and the slime where life and decay are one.<sup>56</sup>

Woman's participation in this duality is illustrated in Bowes Lyon's poem "Snow Bees", those "Close friends we have / Still in the womb, / Or dumb in grave" (*Collected Poems* 96). Often, her natural imagery conveys an uneasy sense of violation, invasion, and penetration—"sky-wounded water" ("Sky Glittering North" 108), the scarred coast ("Until Time Relent" 113), the "crucial tide / That cracks the bone" ("Sacrifice of the Limpet" 143), the crushed bird, its crumpled and broken wings ("A Gleam Ahead" 133), "The gleaners had left all the field bone bare"; "The cold began to gnaw / My too-material finger-tips; they tore / The gossamer as they touched it" ("After the Gleaners" 185). Heaven and earth, man and nature, matter and spirit are set in opposition, and the cosmos is imagined as being governed by suffering,<sup>57</sup> a "wound made Word" ("The Keen Wind" 137). The world is a great divorce, redeemed not through confidence in, and avowal of, life, but by martyrdom: "Oh world to come! / The wasting shell's memorial sigh, the lenient martyrdom." ("Sacrifice of the Limpet" 143). The denial of the life-instinct goes hand in hand with a sense of man's intrinsic unworthiness, which breaks forth with greater urgency in Stevie Smith's poetry, as will be shown later on. Far from crowning God's creation, man is the source of destruction and desecration, "Geared down to life-long death" ("Industrial City by Moonlight" 157), earth's

supreme enemy whose work Bowes Lyon greets with a curse: “Then burn like stubble; crash; tuberculous towns” (“Man” 159-60). What hurts is not the thought of “The Grave” but the violation done to the earth as “your house” is dug, and all is well when daisies in spring “heal that scar” and “Your wistful bones ... / Too deeply wintered-out to wound the sun” (124). This aggression against the body is also patent in Bowes Lyon’s poem “Death in Summer”, where the earth greedily feeds on the carcass: “The soldier lay on the ground, he felt the Earth / Swell eagerly through his adolescent limbs”.

When the body is not obliterated, it is perverted, or held in contempt. Recognised “by its blemishes: / moles and birthmarks, scars, tattoos, oddly formed earlobes”, as Flair Adcock observes, it eludes such identification in her poem “Gas”,<sup>58</sup> where she confronts us with a strikingly fantastic anatomy. By imagining a cataclysm after which the survivors undergo a grotesque division of bodies, Adcock pictures a loss of continuity and coherence comparable to what Lacan calls “aggressive disintegration”:<sup>59</sup> The self multiplies, partially dies, and re-duplicates again:

I am eight people now – and four dead  
...  
I see my image everywhere –  
feeding the hens, hoeing the spinach,  
peeling the potatoes, devising  
a clever dish with cabbage and eggs.  
I am responsible with and for  
all. If B (we go by letters now)  
forgets to light the fire, I likewise  
have forgotten. If C breaks a cup  
we all broke it. I am eight people,  
a kind of octopus or spider,  
and I cannot say it pleases me. (*Selected Poems* 40-41)

In section one, Adcock mocks the body’s uniqueness: “it can never be one alone”. All of a sudden there are two identical pairs of arms, “two hearts now for our identical / blood” and, instead of a body, there is a “basic design”, constituting a vague and mercurial form of identity, because the number of clones generated out of her “mould” permanently varies and escapes the speaker’s control. Such progressive reproduction destroys the *eros*, because *erotic* presupposes difference,<sup>60</sup> the existence of something not yet possessed: “How lust / for what is utterly familiar? / How place an auto-erotic hand on / a thigh which matches one’s own?” (39). At the same time Adcock’s poem opens up the question of what separates the ego from the external world. Identity is no longer defined by the space which the body occupies, nor by the time through which it develops, because it has no history. Hence, the emergence of a body is not comparable to birth, nor to Eve’s creation out of Adam’s rib, because both imply consecutive time and otherness. If a human being acquires ontological

uniqueness “not by possession of an immortal soul but by possession of a mortal body”, as Brown indicates,<sup>61</sup> death no longer guarantees such individuality in Adcock’s poem: the poetic self permanently undergoes death, but returns only partially to the inorganic level. It is in a curious position of surveying and recording these metamorphic processes: “I / look upon myself, dead”, “I see my image everywhere”, “I can / see us all, wading in the river ...”. In fact, we get the impression that the speaker (a seeing soul, not unlike the detached voice in Bowes Lyon’s poem) rests outside these inconsistently and unpredictably proliferating bodies, which are impossible to co-ordinate. Organic processes are entirely separated from the perceptive, feeling, and thinking consciousness. Speaking as an observer rather than a participant, she experiences what in psychoanalysis is known as *pensée opératoire*, and her multiplication may indeed be understood as an outward expression of such mechanistic thinking: the *other* is experienced as an image of the self, so that the individual continually reduplicates in others as in a mirror.<sup>62</sup> The speaker longs to rid herself of this unsolicited profusion of bodies — “Now, instead / we plan our death. Not quite suicide, / but a childish game” — and eventually prays for obliteration of even this last residuum of her individuality — her “mould”.

Such a grotesque collapse of bodily integrity not only ensures an escape from the gaze,<sup>63</sup> but also signifies a deliberate breach of social, ethical or aesthetic conventions, of cultural taboos, and an eruption of unstructured psychic forces. None of the poets at issue has given a more original and poignant expression to the revolt of the chaos in the *id* against the *superego* than Fleur Adcock. Her poetry continually suggests an uncontrolled wilderness deep beneath our rational organisation of the world. When the chaos breaks forth, it shatters our wonted belief in identity. Mankind is not rational, she continually suggests, but absurdly keeps rationalising itself. Nightmares furnish a truer picture of a world that is, to Adcock, inherently sadistic and characterised by discord and disintegration — the tendency to synthesis and unity being another manifestation of *eros*, according to Freud.<sup>64</sup> In Adcock’s universe children are destructive, animals kill, couples fight and split. Violent metaphors are evoked, such as the decaying bird full of maggots “with the creeping stench / And the wriggling, munching scavengers”, to express a dead affair (“Advice to a Discarded Lover” 15). Occasionally, the earth rebounds on its unlovable inhabitants by a “conspiracy of inverted birth”, withdrawing flowers, shrinking trees in a “backward trend” and refusing to generate: “and how shall we / Endure as we deserve to be, / Foolish and lost on the naked skin of the earth?” (“Regression” 12). Again, man is “lost” when the powers of *eros* subside. According to Diotima, whose speech Socrates recalls in Plato’s *Symposium*, Love is not directed towards beauty, but towards creation and birth in beauty.<sup>65</sup> The imagery of Diotima’s speech bears a remarkable resemblance to Adcock’s vision — when Love approaches ugliness, it withdraws sadly and refuses to procreate.<sup>66</sup>

The rebellion of the lawless *id*, the dissolution of the body, the forced confrontation with death, as presented in Adcock’s poetry, all have an

aggressive, sadistic orientation. More often, however, the barren, mutilated, grotesque or rotten body correlates with a depressive self-hatred, whose roots we may trace to Kierkegaard's "Verzweiflung der Unendlichkeit"<sup>67</sup> or, from a psychoanalytical perspective, understand in connection with Freud's "self-punishing institution of the super-ego";<sup>68</sup> the latter—so prominent in Stevie Smith's poetry—continually leads man to a humiliating and masochistic form of self-exposure, analogous to the cripple who keeps showing his deformed body and thereby forces the world to see his handicap whilst alerting people to their own shortcomings. The forces of *eros*—"self-acceptance, self-activity, self-enjoyment"<sup>69</sup>—are alien to the universe of the desperate. The notion that an expansion of the self is inconsistent with an expansion of the active life of the human body is not alien to the self-sacrificial structure of the Christian *agape*—"Love slays what we have been that we may be what we were not" (St. Augustine)—,<sup>70</sup> and psychoanalysis, considering the neurotic manifestation of Kierkegaard's notion of despair as depression, likewise relates it to the Fall.<sup>71</sup> Smith's poetry continually draws our attention to man's imperfect nature and infers from his mortality and defectiveness that his creator, invented by his own fallible mind, is incomplete too. Thus denying belief, which Kierkegaard had set in opposition to sin,<sup>72</sup> whilst obsessed with an inordinate compulsion to improve man<sup>73</sup> and aspiring to an absolute ideal—drastically incongruous with what she continually perceives as a flawed environment—the self in Smith's poetry is bound to end in isolation and self-destruction.

Her well-known poem "Not Waving But Drowning" expresses supreme circumstantial irony: the unruffled voice of the drowned meets with the callous, medical explanation of those who might have saved his life. There is neither blame nor resentment, but a profound Sartrean sense of nothingness, unmitigated by "good God", who, as so often in Stevie Smith's poetry, prefers not to interfere: "What care I if good God be / If he be not good to me" ("Ego-centric").<sup>74</sup> Describing herself as an agnostic Anglican,<sup>75</sup> Smith is cynical about man's need to be loved and to believe in an omnipotent God, which she considers equal to inventing "fairy stories about everything" (197). God is either an airy creation of man's vain protest against mortality or, given a separate identity, he is conceited, unfeeling and unpitying, a devourer of carrion, who not only feeds on the dead, but greedily sucks the life out of those who have slashed their wrists, as her grim poems "God the Eater" and "God the Drinker" suggest. In another poem he has the spoilt ego of an imbecile emperor who acts out of megalomania, not magnanimity, and has dropped man into a hostile world without equipping him properly. Being god's best-loved creature proves man's fundamental plight:

Man is my darling, my love and my pain,  
My pleasure, my excitement, and my love again,  
My wisdom, my courage, my power, my all,  
Oh Man, do not come to me until I call.

In man is my life, and man is my death,  
He is my hazard, my pride and my breath,  
I sought him, I wrought him, I pant on his words.  
In him I experience indeterminate growth.

Oh Man, Man, of all my animals dearest,  
Do not come till I call, though thou weariest first.  
("God and Man" 143-44).

God, Smith reminds us, is "among the dustbins and the manure", "in the broom" and "in the cobwebs of the room" ("Mother, among the dustbins" 74-75). The pure lamb of love and compassion is hopelessly ineffectual. Scorn and anger are a better cure, she suggests. Thus in "Anger's Freeing Power", the raven that fancies himself imprisoned is not liberated by the narrator's loving effort and humanitarian ideals, but by the jeering ravens: "You wretched bird, conceited lump / You well deserve to pine and thump". Upon these words the raven is healed and the narrator left to ponder:

Yet when I woke my eyes were wet  
To think Love had not freed my pet

Anger it was that won him hence  
As only Anger taught him sense.

Often my tears fall in a shower  
Because of Anger's freeing power.

The trust in the powers of love is shattered by the efficacy of crueller instincts, which in a depressive state man refuses to acknowledge.<sup>76</sup> Smith consistently administers the raven's cure to herself, but the darker forces of *thanatos* are not successfully integrated into life, and her poetry obstinately rejects what the world might offer in terms of kindness, love and benevolence. The weak and imperfect do not deserve kindness.<sup>77</sup> Man is scorned and worthy of scorn—the English woman because she "is so refined / She has no bosom and no behind", the poet for relying on a howling and muttering muse (219), and the "intelligent English, / Of the Arts, the Professions and the Upper Middle Classes" for degenerating from "under-cover men" to "corpse-carriers" (210).

Smith's seemingly naive and frivolous outlook reveals a deep-rooted distrust of humanity, which is both an instrument of self-torture and a defence of the vulnerable ego against life's vicissitudes, resignation being one form of dealing with this feeling of unworthiness and insufficiency.<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, cruelty is more easily endured when looked upon as punishment. In order to cope with her father's deserting her, the woman who recalls her childhood in "Papa Love Baby" assumes responsibility for his act, refusing to accept that pain also hits the innocent—"I think I was somewhat to blame"—and creates

the impression of an unloving girl:

What folly it is that daughters are always supposed to be  
In love with papa. It wasn't the case with me  
I couldn't take to him at all  
But he took to me  
What a sad fate to befall  
A child of three.

The response to meaninglessness is meaningless guilt.<sup>79</sup> Yet, the greater the responsibility the individual assumes, the more she realises the world's failure to meet her exacting demands. Freud accounts for this awareness of life's unsatisfactoriness as follows:

What appears in a minority of human individuals as an untiring impulse to further perfection can easily be understood as a result of instinctual repression. The repressed instinct never ceases to strive for complete satisfaction, which would consist in the repetition of a primary experience of satisfaction. No substitute or reactive formations and no sublimations will suffice to remove the repressed instinct's persisting tension.<sup>80</sup>

In the long run, such restless striving for perfection and beauty, motivated by their very lack (according to Socrates),<sup>81</sup> is bound to trigger in man a demonic compulsion to bring suffering onto himself;<sup>82</sup> and, eventually, self-annihilation;<sup>83</sup> "It is hard, under conditions of general repression, to affirm the death instinct without becoming an enemy of life", Brown explains, and "under conditions of general repression the death instinct operates malignantly. ... a defusion into a simple wish to die is always lurking in the background".<sup>84</sup> Driven by an aggressive principle of negativity, the self in Smith's poetry develops a moral conscience that will eventually crush her. The reflective individual must die because those impervious to his or her high claims continue to live. Neither the presence of men who stand passively around and blindly perform their daily duties, nor the trumped-up consolation of a redemptive God, can rescue the desperate, as is shown in "I Am", where the priest's promise of salvation meets with the poet's scathing:

Far from normal far from normal far from normal I am  
He sighed as he stood on the river bank and watched where the fishes swam  
But ever the wind in the willow trees whispered, I am; I am.  
He saw the variety of nature

The ant the mole and the sky  
And resignedly hurried upon his way  
Crying: I, I; I, I;



Then a priest came and told him if he was good  
 And thought as he ought and did as he should  
 He should be saved by the Lamb's fresh blood.

Oh I know, I know the poor man cries,  
 I know the worth of the heavenly prize  
 And I know the strength of the race to be run  
 But my black heart cleaves to the strength of my gun.

Then he put his gun to his head and shot  
 Crying absurdly, I am not. (150-51)

Smith's poems repeatedly suggest that life invariably ends in a premature and violent death, encountered at the hands of fate or heedless men, who are not deliberately unloving or bad, but either innately deficient in moral responsibility or simply used to availing themselves mechanically of the excuses so generously handed out by modern civilisation. Again, one is reminded of Kierkegaard's suggestion that the greater masses of men are too dull and spiritless to be even capable of sin.<sup>85</sup> If endowed with greater sensibility, these exceptional men are themselves plagued with doubts and a sense of futility and can but run, shoot, or hang themselves to death—always in the presence, or with the tacit agreement, of others. Mr Simpkins destroys himself when informed by his wife that life's dullness will continue after death: "This worked him to such a pitch that he shot himself through the head" (25). Life for the bereft continues its uneventful course, without excitement and at best with slight modifications: "And now she [Mrs. Simpkins] has to polish the floors of Westminster County Hall for her daily bread".

In Smith's poetry, suicide is man's inevitable response to life—perhaps a grand gesture, yet only the final proof of man's weakness and the fullest expression of his despair, restlessness, and fallibility. What seems an affirmation of death is "spurious", Brown argues, because if life cannot be affirmed, death cannot be: "Only if Eros—the life instinct—can affirm the life of the body can the death instinct affirm death, and in affirming death magnify life".<sup>86</sup> Psychoanalysis has shown suicide to be relative to the repression of the human body and the anxiety of, rather than wish for, death. Paradoxically, it is a manifestation of man's desire to "become" and suggestive of a "more active form of dying", through which the "human organism protects itself from the reality of living-and-dying ...".<sup>87</sup> Unrepressed life, then, seems to be beyond historical time.<sup>88</sup> Significantly, those who manage to survive in Smith's poetry are the anti-heroes, unambitious men who lay no claim to historical greatness, renounce the quest for a higher mode of being and, feeling no compulsion to change their lives, are closer to the biological principle of *homeostasis*, as in "Alfred the Great":

Honour and magnify this man of men  
 Who keeps a wife and seven children on £ 2.10  
 Paid weekly in an envelope  
 And yet he never has abandoned hope. (24)

Yet, these are no less pitiable than their suicidal counterparts—spiritless animals, who develop no self and whom Kierkegaard would have considered despaired of finiteness.<sup>89</sup>

What the sardonic pessimism in Smith's poetry suggests is a tragic absence of a viable mode of being—dullness on the one hand, and an "intrinsic insanity in sublimation",<sup>90</sup> on the other, i.e. in a rejection of the body-ego for unreal, ideal images,<sup>91</sup> or, as Ferenczi formulates it: "Pure intelligence is in principle madness".<sup>92</sup> When Narcissus recognises the curse of his love for an image that has neither form nor separateness, he sighs: "... my death is near, it is the end, for I have put my love in a mad place".<sup>93</sup> The renunciation of procreative love harbours a vast destructive potential—as in the case of Mrs Simpkins, whose sublimated *eros* prompts her husband's suicide, or of Muriel, the "Sorrowful Girl", who declares defiantly: "I am imprisoned and do not need to be freed / My prison is my sorrowful mind ..." (*Selected Poems* 225-26), or Maria, who cultivates her mind at the expense of her body and in due course repels her suitor: "She sighs for the man that went and the thoughts that stay / To trouble her dreams by night and her dreams by day" ("Marriage I Think"). In the background we hear the echo of Bowes Lyon's cry: "My bright Ghost to whom shall I give?" It is this process of sublimation which takes us back to the repudiation of history, the denial of *eros*, and the dilemma of the desexualised self in the poems discussed at the beginning: "Sublimation is the search for lost life ... sublimation is life entering consciousness on condition that it is denied. ... Sublimation is the mode of an organism which must discover life rather than live, must know rather than be"<sup>94</sup>—and knowing, obviously, cannot be reconciled to being.

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### Notes

1. See Anne Robinson Taylor's analysis of *Male Novelists and their Female Voices: Literary Masquerades* (Troy, New York: Whitston, 1981): "One peculiarity of the female voice in the novel seems to be its burden of eroticism. Its use almost inevitably invites sexual imaginings ..." (92).
2. Back Cover of Fleur Adcock, *Selected Poems*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
3. Janet Wolff, "Reinstating Corporeality", in *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: California University Press, 1990), 134-35.
4. "Typisch männliches und typisch weibliches Liebesgedicht", *Moderne Sprachen* 36: *Menschentypen und Poesie* (1995), 24-34.
5. See Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer*

- and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1979), 68; Frederick Goldin, *The Mirror of Narcissus in the Courty Love Lyric*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 15; Jan Montefiore, *Feminism and Poetry: Language, Experience, Identity in Women's Writing* (London and New York: Pandora, 1987), 98-99. Margaret Homans, *Women Writers and Poetic Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 5; 12-15.
6. Wolff, op. cit. 42-43.
  7. The poems of Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547) and also of Louise Labé and Sibylle Schwarz, however, show that there *were* women who imitated Petrarch. I owe this reference to Holger Klein.
  8. Hugh Holman and William Harmon's definition of *Erotica* in *A Handbook to Literature*, 1986; 6th. ed. New York: Macmillan, 1992.
  9. See, for example, Jennings's "Love Poem", collected in *Tributes* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986, 94), a eulogy of love ("love is quiet, and love is kind") rather than an address to a male lover.
  10. See Ludwig J. Pongratz's comment on the typology of *anima* and *animus* in *Hauptströmungen der Tiefenpsychologie* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1983), 353.
  11. See Goldin's analysis of the Narcissus myth. Op. cit., 33-37.
  12. See Pausanias' speech in Plato, "Das Gastmahl", *Sämtliche Werke*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Schneider, n. d.), vol. 1, 670-73.
  13. Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (1959; 2nd ed., Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 46-47. Brown seeks to relate Freud's principle of *eros* to Spinoza's intellectual love of God.
  14. See Brown's analysis of the Freudian *eros*. Ibid., 75.
  15. Eugen Drewermann, *Strukturen des Bösen*, 3 vols. (1978; rpt. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1986), vol. 3: *Die jahwistische Urgeschichte in philosophischer Sicht*, 194; see also Pongratz, 352-56.
  16. Gerhard Adler, *The Living Symbol: A Case Study in the Process of Individuation* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 32.
  17. Drewermann, op. cit., in particular vol. 3.
  18. Brown, op. cit., 40-45.
  19. See Zauner, whose analysis of pre-twentieth century male and female love poems yields a similar conclusion; op. cit., 30.
  20. *Collected Poems* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1948), 64.
  21. See Goldin's interpretation of the myth. Op. cit., 33-35.
  22. Ibid., 14.
  23. Ibid.: "Now the lover exalts the lady as the representation of his ideal nature, now he debases her as insensate, incapable of concern ..." (37).
  24. Denise Riley, "Am I that Name?": *Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 106.
  25. Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, eds., *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: California University Press, 1987); Wolff, "The Female Body in Western Culture", op. cit. 126-28.
  26. Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Woman as Body: Ancient and Contemporary Views", *Feminist Studies* 8:1 (Spring 1982).
  27. Gallagher and Laqueur, op. cit., 126-27.
  28. I am using Alan Sheridan's translated edition of Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits* (New York and London: Norton, 1977), in particular the chapter on "The mirror stage as

- formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience", 1-7.
29. Montefiore, op. cit., 101.
  30. *The Eighth Day: Selected Poems 1948-1978* (London: Enitharmon, 1980), 71.
  31. Lacan, op. cit., 2.
  32. Ibid.
  33. Brown, op. cit., 47.
  34. *A Truce with Time* (Cambridge: The Golden Head Press, 1968), 57.
  35. Goldin, op. cit., 92.
  36. See Lacan's comment on using Freudian terminology, op. cit., 7.
  37. *Urania* (London: Cresset, 1950), 67.
  38. Op. cit., 696.
  39. "Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex", in A.A. Brill, ed., *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Random, 1938), in particular "Infantile Sexuality", 580-603.
  40. See Brown's discussion of Hegel, op. cit., 104.
  41. *Collected Essays*, 2 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1966), vol. 2, 286-87.
  42. Back cover of *Selected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1985), quoting from her letter to the publisher of her *Collected Poems* (1982, ed. Claire Harman).
  43. Brown, op. cit., 91.
  44. Ibid., 105.
  45. Lacan, op. cit., 5.
  46. *Collected Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1945), 29.
  47. Compare again with Plato's definition of *eros*, Note 37.
  48. Brown, op. cit., 161.
  49. *Selected Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 27.
  50. James MacGibbon, ed., *Stevie Smith: Selected Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), 39.
  51. Quoted after Virginia Blain, Patricia Clements, and Isabel Grundy, *The Feminist Companion to English Literature* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 801.
  52. *Poems* (Norwich: The Soman-Wherry Press, n. d.), 11.
  53. *Selected Poems* (Ipswich: Golgonooza, 1988), 36.
  54. Brown: "And the Freudian (and Spinozistic) recognition of the bodily nature of all self-enjoyment indicates the obstacle that prevents both Platonist and Christian from accepting the self—the human body". Op. cit., 49.
  55. Ibid., 46.
  56. See Mary Stella Edwards, *A Truce with Time* 40; see also "Autumn Morning", *A Further Harvest* (London: Enitharmon, 1985), 32; and Bowes Lyon, "Sonnet", *Collected Poems*, 105.
  57. One should mention in this context that Lilian Bowes Lyon had suffered terribly from illness, and a biographical reading of her poetry may help to understand her "capacity for passionate suffering" as well as her "painful, overcast, wintry pilgrimage" (C. Day Lewis's "Introduction" to *Collected Poems*, 12; 16).
  58. The poem formed part of her 1971 volume *High Tide in the Garden*.
  59. Lacan, op. cit., 4.
  60. See again Goldin's interpretation of the Narcissus myth: "Each [Narcissus and Dané] learns something new: that this malady arises, and can be cured, only because there is a difference between oneself and another whom one loves". Op. cit., 25. See also Diotima's speech in *Symposium*, 703: "Denn niemand liebt, wie ich denke, das

Eigene als solches, es müßte denn jemand das Gute als das Angehörige und wahrhaftige Eigentum bezeichnen, das Schlechte aber als das Fremdartige”.

61. Brown, op. cit., 104.
62. See Pongratz's discussion of the French school of psychoanalysis (Pierre Marty, M. de M'Uzan and C. David), op. cit., 131.
63. Wolff suggests that the grotesque body is immune from incorporation into the objectifying gaze. Op. cit., 128.
64. Brown, op. cit., 85.
65. Plato, op. cit., 705.
66. Ibid., 704.
67. *Die Krankheit zum Tode: Der Hohepriester – der Zöllner – die Sünderin* (1849; Gütersloh, 1992), 26-30; 61-62.
68. Brown, op. cit., 44. See also A.A. Brill, introduction to *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, 12-13.
69. Ibid., 49.
70. Quoted after *ibid.*
71. V.E. Frankl, *Ärztliche Seelsorge: Grundlagen der Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse* (München: Kindler, 1975), 205; Drewermann, *Strukturen des Bösen* vol. 3, 471.
72. Op. cit., 81.
73. Brown, op. cit. 105.
74. James McGibbon, ed., *Stevie Smith* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), 23.
75. D.J. Enright, *Man is an Onion* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1972), 140.
76. J.H. Schultz, *Grundfragen der Neurosenlehre: Propädeutik einer medizinischen Psychologie* (Stuttgart, 1955), 273.
77. See again Kierkegaard on weakness and “Die Verzweiflung am Ewigen”, op. cit., 60-62. The despairing individual knows that his despair is weakness, but as he lacks belief in God, he despairs of his weakness.
78. See Ph. Lersch's distinction of resignation and sentimentality, the enjoyment of suffering, discussed by Pongratz, op. cit., 223.
79. Excessive responsibility has also been recognised as a symptom of depression. Drewermann, op. cit., 469.
80. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), 55-56.
81. See Plato, “Das Gastmahl”, in which Socrates argues that Eros is neither beautiful nor good because he represents the strife after them (698-99).
82. Brown, op. cit. 88.
83. Kierkegaard, too, brings despair in connection with isolation and suicide. See op. cit., 65-66.
84. Ibid., 106-107.
85. Op. cit., 100-104.
86. Brown, op. cit., 109. See also: “only he who can affirm birth can affirm death, since birth and death are one” (107).
87. Ibid., 160.
88. Ibid., 93.
89. “Die Verzweiflung der Endlichkeit”, op. cit., 29-32.
90. Ibid., “Apollo and Dionysos”, 157-59.
91. See Goldin's observation that, in classical and pre-classical times, Narcissus was conceived as the “anti-Eros”. Op. cit., 12.
92. S. Ferenczi, *Final Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psycho-analysis*

(London: Hogarth and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1955), 246.

93. Goldin, *op. cit.*, 36.

94. Brown, *op. cit.* 171-72.