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NOTES ON IMP: IMP VOICE IN WOMEN'S POETRY: LOOKS AT CHARLOTTE MEW, STEVIE SMITH, NINA CASSIAN AND WISLAWA SZYMBORSKA

Abstract: *Just as Susan Sontag's 1964 essay, 'Notes on Camp' nimbly tried to capture the decisive frivolity and blunt whimsicality of camp, I'd like to propose 'Notes on Imp'. Like camp, which rests on innocence, revealing and despoiling it, the imp grafts a knowing mischievousness onto the serious matters of self-disclosure and vulnerability in contemporary poetry. While gay men, particularly, have developed camp as a strategy and style both in defence of, and to herald their sensibilities in a straight culture, so female poets, especially, use the tactics and tone of the imp as a shield and a vehicle to subvert the powerful inequality in male-female relations.*

This essay examines how the often-androgynous imp inhabits a netherworld that exists before or beyond gender distinctions. Gender remains overwhelmingly divisive for women: it divides them from the other, the better, as well as dividing them from their pre-pubescent, untrammelled self. I will demonstrate how the preternatural insights of the imp carry an intrinsic authority, slipping in and out of a third voice, neither male or female – or both – with the precociousness of a child who speaks with too much truth. Whether to avoid state censorship or propriety, poets like Nina Cassian, and Wislawa Szymborska, in an echo of earlier poets like Charlotte Mew and Stevie Smith, adopt a playful cynicism to observe the authoritative (male, adult) world askance.

I will argue that the imp addresses high culture and philosophical importance in an underhand fashion, offsetting gravity with levity, asserting a gleeful independence and irreverence. The imp speaks for the rule-breakers, the outsiders about the folly of trying to speak of, or for, or about. Yet, like the feathers added to a bird's wing, the imp adds power and speed to the words' flight.

Key words: *imp, poetry, poetic, voice, gender, Szymborska and Cassian.*

Just as Susan Sontag's 1964 essay, 'Notes on Camp' nimbly tried to capture the decisive frivolity and blunt whimsicality of camp, I'd like to propose 'Notes on Imp'. Like camp, which rests on innocence, revealing and despoiling it, the imp grafts a knowing mischievousness onto the serious matters of self-disclosure and vulnerability

in contemporary poetry. While gay men, particularly, have developed camp as a strategy and style both in defense of, and to herald their sensibilities in a straight culture, so female poets, especially, use the tactics and tone of the imp as a shield and a vehicle to subvert the powerful inequality in male-female relations.

Originating in German folklore, the imp was depicted as small, boisterous and ugly. A fallen fairy, its behavior was more mischievous than malevolent. It was seen as a lonely prankster who played jokes on people to win their affection. But soon peopletired of the trouble they caused and would shun them. In Christian mythology, the imp was the devil's helper, sent to cause mayhem on earth and test patience and virtue. After tormenting the angel choir in Lincoln Cathedral in the 14th century, an imp was changed into stone and still sits grinning down at the congregation as proof of the triumph of good over evil. In Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy's 'Fairy Tales', of 1647, an exiled prince, Léandre, protects a snake rather than slay it, and is rewarded by being transformed into a 'lutin' or imp. 'You are invisible when you like; you cross the vast space of the universe in one moment; you rise without wings; you go through the ground without dying; you penetrate the depths of the sea without drowning; you enter everywhere, though the windows and doors are closed; and when you decide, you can let yourself be seen in human form.'

A kind of miniature superhero, then, who by donning a red hat trimmed with two parrot feathers, is rendered invisible. Disguised as a woman, Léandre sneaks onto the women-only Island of the Quiet Pleasures and wins the heart of a disillusioned-in-love, secluded princess. So we have an anti-ecclesiastical, practical joker who enjoys transgender adventures. I like the idea that the word 'imp' derives from the word 'ympe', a young grafted tree, where the tissues of one plant have been fused with another in a method of asexual plant propagation. The imp may also spring from a bottle to grant your every wish (with a large and irrational caveat) as in 'The Bottle Imp' by Robert Louis Stevenson, in 1891. Or may simply be the voice in your head that wills you to do what you should not merely because you've thought

it. Edgar Allan Poe named these self-destructive impulses, 'The Imp of the Perverse' in his story of 1845.

Despite their diminutive size, the imp can't be harmed by men. Because of its protean nature and mercurial wit, it was impossible to pin down or annihilate. It was driven by a mental vivacity more than a sexualized body and its sudden appearance broke the rules of natural law, transforming the human in some way, before vanishing again. Its disgraceful deviancy and delinquency characterizes a refusal to grow up, to conform. It often presented a riddle that the victim had to solve to gain some form of truth or passage to the next stage of development.

This paper will examine how the often-androgynous imp inhabits a nether-world that exists before or beyond gender distinctions. Gender remains overwhelmingly divisive for women: it divides them from the other, the better, as well as dividing them from their prepubescent, untrammelled self. I will demonstrate how the preternatural insights of the imp carry an intrinsic authority, slipping in and out of a third voice, neither male or female – or both – with the precociousness of a child who speaks with too much truth. Whether to avoid state censorship or propriety, endure exile or outsider status, poets like Nina Cassian, Wislawa Szymborska, Selima Hill and Dorothy Molloy, in an echo of earlier poets like Charlotte Mew and Stevie Smith, adopt a playful cynicism to observe the authoritative (male, adult) world askance.

When scolded as an imp rather than a very bad girl, the female child notices a tone of admiration lacing the admonishment. Here was a badness that was praised. Example: a five year old girl enters a room full of guests with a new, unwrapped tampon plugged into her ear. Its white tail makes her announce it as a mouse she's found. Everyone laughs. The delighted reprimand is almost encouraging. That a

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girl could be so harmlessly improper, so inventively misbehaved, inspires the adult who's lost touch with their own playful unorthodoxy.

Susan Sontag argues that 'camp is the answer to the problem: how to be a dandy in the age of mass culture'. For Charlotte Mew, 1869–1928, a studied imp-like persona allowed her to be an androgyne, a pre-butch woman, a character who gained permission to announce a gender she'd made up. 'She was very small, only about four-foot ten inches, very slight, with square shoulders and tiny hands and feet. She always wore a long double-breasted top-coat of tweed with a velvet collar inset....Her face was a fine oval and she always wore a little hard felt pork-pie hat put on very straight. The whole time she was speaking she kept her head cocked at a defiant angle.' (Alida Monro, 'Charlotte Mew – a Memoir' published in *Collected Poems*, Duckworth, London, 1953, p.viii) That her main companion was a green parrot called Willy, reputed to be ninety years old, completes the picture of a literary eccentric.

In 1913, she fell in love with the novelist May Sinclair, who was horrified by Mew's declaration, refused to speak to her and began to spread nasty rumours about her. Mew's highly sensitive sensibility made the world a hostile, haunted and often alien space:

'A rose can stab you across the street
Deeper than any knife
And the crimson haunts you everywhere.'
(from 'The Quiet House')

Her persona preferred wildlife to human kind. In 'Afternoon Tea' she writes:

'Please you, excuse me, good five o'clock people,
I've lost my hatful of words,
And my heart's in the wood up above the church steeple,
I'd rather have tea with the birds.'

Another character in a poem called 'The Farmer's Bride' becomes afraid of her

love, new husband and of 'all things human,/ like the shut of a winter's day,/ her smile went out and 'twadn't a woman – / more like a little frightened fay...'

This pained other-worldliness lead Mew to question the role of art and God in suffering. In 1911 she was to ask: 'I wonder if Art – as they say, is a rather inhuman thing', implying that her alienation is both integral to her creativity and caused by it. In 1916, a printer refused to print her long poem 'Madeleine in Church' because he thought it blasphemous. Of God she had written: 'I do not envy Him his victories,/ His arms are full of broken things..' But her lament soon switches to an invulnerability and defiance, which I suggest typifies the tone of the imp: '...But I shall not be in them. Let Him take/ The finer ones, the easier to break.'

In the poem 'In the Quiet House', she envisages herself consumed by intense experience and prepared to be thoroughly wasted by it as though death itself doesn't destroy you as much as living a fully felt life:

'The colours of the world have turned
To flame, the blue, the gold has burned
In what used to be a leaden sky.
When you are burned quite through you die.'

To return to 'Notes on Camp' in which Sontag suggests that 'the most refined form of sexual attractiveness consists in going against the grain of one's sex', her analysis only considers the effeminate man not the butch woman. Butch doesn't qualify as gender artifice, although there are plenty of examples of camp female masculinity from Greta Garbo in 'Queen Christina' to Mercedes McCambridge in 'Johnny Guitar'. For Stevie Smith, 1907–1971, her sartorial choice worked to disguise her ambivalence towards fully embodied femininity. Like Mew, there are many descriptions of her small stature and unusual dress. Smith too, developed a costume to help create a plausible self and herald an unconventional attitude and approach to life. 'She was small-boned and frail-looking

*Notes on Imp: Imp voice in women's poetry: looks at Charlotte Mew,
Stevie Smith, Nina Cassian and Wislawa Szymborska*

and dressed with some care in a style of her won which, had, at first sight, and specially when she aged, a "little girl" look....with her dark, straight, page-boy hair and dark eyes set in a pale, mobile face, she could have an almost sprite-like appearance.' (James MacGibbon from the Preface to *Stevie Smith: Selected Poems*, Penguin, London, 1978.)

Stevie Smith was, like Mew, a vociferous and vigorous critic of the Church of England, situating herself as a believer, a non-believer and an agnostic all at once. In 'Our Bog is Dood' she uses witty wordplay to undermine Christian self-righteousness and lack of questioning:

Our Bog is dood, our Bog is dood,
They lisped in accents mild,
But when I asked them to explain
They grew a little wild.

We know because we wish it so
That is enough, they cried

....

And if you do not think so
You shall be crucified.

....

For what was dood, and what their Bog,
They never could agree....

....

The sea that soon should drown them all,
That never yet drowned me.

Like Mew, she delighted in being the burr in the surplice of sanctimoniousness and she also considered art as something given and lived beyond the human: 'Art,' she wrote, 'is as wild as a cat and quite separate from civilisation', (From 'The New Age') a place that gave Smith spiteful resilience as well as courage and succour. Like Nina Cassian and Wislawa Szymborska, who I will go on to examine, Smith dismayed at humanity's meanderings into war and spiritual despair:

Man is coming out of the mountains
But his tail is caught in the pass.
Why does he not free himself
Is he not as ass?

Do not be impatient with him
He is bowed with passion and fret
He is not out of the mountains
He is not half out yet. (from 'Touch and Go')

The tone of imperious pity, common to the imp, resonates with later poets of the 20th century. Marina Warner argues that in Ovid, metamorphosis often breaks out in moments of crisis as an expression of intense passion. Is this manifested in Mew and Smith as intense gender displacement and also as spiritual disconnection, despite a strong attraction, to the church? Metamorphosis occurred in places of cross-roads, points of interchange between one culture and another, between one intellectual hegemony and the next. Not able to inhabit the role of girl any longer, both Mew and Smith use the tone and persona of the imp as a positive shadow, something that speaks through them, as though it were not them, or a truer version of them. They employ the imp as a way of telling of the threatened self, allowing the female poet to be a hero, a demi-god, a shapeshifter, a seer. While the poet is mortal and natural, the imp is immortal and supernatural. It is seemingly mutable while her own self is fixed to an immutably gendered body and her soul to an immutable Christian God. If the gay man is in love with and protected by the camp persona, is there a way that these women can love themselves more via the impunity of the imp's tone and stance? If camp is a defense against homophobia through a glorification of the feminine, the persona of the imp is a defense against misogyny for the non-feminine, non-fecund, masculine woman. It is a voice that moves and structures the imagination and a necessary mythologizing of the self. See also the work and photographic self-portraits of French artist, Claude Cahun, 1894-1954.

Question: Where does the imp live?

Answer: Anywhere and nowhere.

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If animals think more with their bodies than humans do, then imp is way to think with your instinct. It delivers magic powers, it expands and dissolves the self, allowing the poet to move between worlds, providing a cover for the darts of provocative truth-telling subversion requires. Thus it embodies the condition of writing itself.

Having re-considered Dorothy Molloy and Selima Hill in light of this paper, in spite of their irreverence, there is something un-imp-like about their work. Molloy is too infused with the iconography of Catholicism to wholly undermine it, and much less in need of a spiritual intermediary. She uses charms and relics like unicorn dung, rose water, eau de vie, a small canif to ward off evil, while the imp doesn't need tools and potions to achieve its effects. Molloy and Hill's worlds are more peopled and more socially conventional than either that of Mew or Smith. There is a lack of light-footedness essential to the imp. Of ten Hill's tone is cruel and unforgiving as in her poems about her sister in 'Violet', while the imp is imminently and eminently forgivable. You forgive its egotistical cavorting because it is so charming, so unruly and so dispassionate in its poking fun at stale tradition. There's truth in imp misbehavior that is beyond honesty. It remains cheekily unrepentant. Hill is too full of ancient hurt and too embodied to be impish. She sees herself a 'flat-footed sofa,/that's suddenly learnt to swim,/ piled high with jellies, cheeses, cushions,/ fishes, poodles, babies, balding men....' (from 'Being Fifty').

The imp carries no prisoners. She's lean and utterly alone. She has no responsibilities, no dependents. While Hill depicts herself as a kangaroo giving birth to ducks - the imp never gives birth.

Question: What does the imp's tone say?

Answer: I will charmingly disarm you.

Barrenness is essential to the imp, as Nina Cassian, born in Romania in 1924, asserts in 'A Famous Woman':

Lady Macbeth had a goal,
Lady Macbeth has a vision.
preparing for an essential birth,
totally barren she remained.

If instead of her clear vision
she had merely had offspring,
who would ever have heard of her?

The only thing Cassian creates is a screech to protect herself, like a rabbit 'who could only invent that shriek/ (far bolder than his own anatomy)/to confront Death.' (from 'The Rabbit') Part animal, with snout and fangs, Cassian merely asks for a single claw with which to cling to her perch. But the human cannot recover 'its flawless instinct' and so falls off and dies. Greedy for metamorphosis, and refusing the stagnancy of stasis, Cassian limns herself as a schooner, a lily, a dog, a one-winged angel, a carnivorous flower, a flightless bird, afflicted with three major afflictions: 'Pride, Loneliness and Art.' ('Please give this seat to an elderly disabled person.') Cassian hovers, hangs, hesitates between places and species. She's entrapped between two sets of open doors or in Dedalus's labyrinth which she is terrified to leave. Her plurality thrills and disconcerts her: 'severed by nightmare;/ the river and the moon cut me in two.../and the part with my head/ I now rock to and fro'(from 'They Cut me in Two'). Her limbs are thin, like those of a young goat she secreted out of herself. She's 'divided into seven pieces, into seven solitudes, with a resounding centre.' She navigates among genders: 'sometimes boy, sometimes girl/and who knows what else!...solving equations/ rushing 'through the world like a living sound.'

In 'The Green Elephant' she invites us closer: 'Come, come close to the window'. 'Come' can be an order, a seduction, a warning, a threat. We don't know what tone carries the meaning until the second and third line: 'I present you with a model/ of the universe'. Tone occupies a neutral

word or phrase and fuels it with feeling. With 'I present you', enters a tone of command, detachment. Then in the next stanza, it sweeps into grand irony, almost hyperbole with 'Let's inspect these trophies/ and this fine collection of guillotines/ with the blood wiped off.' Then another sudden turn into an unexpected tone of vulnerability and regret: 'and the proud tusk of the Green Elephant/which I shot once from a low angle/in a moment of cowardice and screaming.' The colonial empire is foundering, the imperial distance shattered by human frailty. 'Despite the confusion, I still recall/the bow of its colossal knee.'

Then memory slips into a tone of inclusivity, so close to pomposity: 'It shouldn't come as a surprise to you/that after such a great feat/there was no proper reward./ These injustices are quite common./But come./Come close to the window.' There is a terrible knowing in the last invocation but there will always be a barrier between us and them. We can look but cannot touch. We could learn a lesson from this display of emblems of misrule but the narrator implies that we probably won't.

Tone is the shoplifter in the shop of words. It leaves without paying. Cassian adopted the impish, slightly surreal world to avoid state censorship after her first book was attacked as anti-Communist. She made her style plainer and her word-play less sophisticated. While she was teaching at NYU in 1985, her house in Bucharest was sealed and her possessions seized. She was unable to return, her work was expunged from Romanian literature and her books banned for several years.

Louise Gluck suggests that 'the fundamental experience of the writer is helplessness' and speaks of 'the humiliation of being overlooked' that is most artists' lot. For many of us, writing is the torment, the trouble, the bother – it IS the imp – the attempt to win favour, followed by the hassle of the dedication and selfish ruthlessness

writing demands, which eventually can isolate and drive others away.

As a young poet, Gluck was hungry for praise but too proud to be seen to need it and carried a scorn for consolation. Her self-description echoes with the characters of doughty indeterminacy of Mew, Smith and Cassian as they move between the actual and the real and try to unite them or glorify the chasm. For Mew, the battle ended in suicide, for Cassian, in exile. The courage to meet the adversary, whether it be the church or the state, or death itself, is transported by the bridge of the poem which, as Gluck argues, requires distance to exist.

Gluck talks about the invisible notion of scale that drew her to poetry: 'I loved these poems that seemed so small on the page but that swelled in the mind...the sort of sentence I was drawn to...was paradox, which has the added advantage of nicely rescuing the dogmatic nature from a too moralizing rhetoric.' Most poets are caught in the paradox of the desire for self-reliance and the need for an audience, both fiercely independent yet dependent on social and cultural approval. But these territories of allegiance and self-definition are much harder for the gender rebel and for the political or religious dissident.

For Polish poet, Wislawa Szymborska, like Cassian, these boundaries were perilous to negotiate. During martial law, she was forced to write under a pseudonym and publish underground and in the émigré press. Her pen name, *Stancsykowna*, was a feminized derivation of the name of a 16th century court jester, famed for his forthrightness. Her tone is often deadly sarcastic, subdued and decidedly less mercurial than Cassian's. She uses more of a collective 'we' or an 'I' more cleansed of subjective personality. 'The Turn of the Century' opens with: 'It was supposed to be better than the rest, our century'. The even, disappointed tone is immediately established. It's ironic, detached, blaming,

prosaic, almost factual. 'Already too much has happened/that was not supposed to happen,/ and what was to come/has yet to come./ Spring was to be on its way,/ and happiness, among other things.' The weary generalizing slips into bathos and a failed aphoristic tone. Things happened that 'were never to happen again, /such as war and hunger and so forth.' When the 'I' enters the poem in the penultimate stanza, it comes with sudden and terrible vulnerability: 'How to live – someone asked me in a letter,/someone I had wanted/ to ask the same thing.' From the awful summing up comes the exposure of the failure to know what to do with all that compact detail. She neutralizes language only to re-fire it with a swift and damning swerve of register as in the poem 'The End and the Beginning' in which one stanza runs: 'After every war/ someone has to clean up.' Her tone is savagely cold as if she must remain beyond feeling in order to bear it. It becomes so pared of affect that it appears almost autistic in poems like 'Some People'.

Just as Gluck wrote that the poem bridges the gap between the eloquent, placed self and the lost, mute self we experience most of the time, Derrida argues that 'projections of the voice reveal the space or gap between the speaker and what is thrown out as the simulation of the speaker's presence.' There is no unitary relation between the speaker and the speech act, or between the poet and the integrity of a single identity. Patrick O'Donnell agrees that 'voice can be construed as the phantom projection of the body's presence, or as the variable of identity that constitutes the speaker's projection of his or her self.' There is this quiet, sinister sense of Szyborska enduring an ongoing, appalling hallucination that is almost beyond the self to articulate and almost beyond language. You can feel that for her, voice is a form of separation that both heightens and annuls the self. If Mew, Smith and Cassian teased, Szyborska annihilates with her certain, mordant humour. She

tackles the imp head on, wrestles and wins. 'True it's hard to catch the world in its otherness', she writes. 'He sheds/ every form I give him. Silence has closed over him, his voice leaving no scar./ The absence has taken on the look of the horizon./ Zero writes itself.' (from 'A Poem in Honour Of') If camp dethrones seriousness, Szyborska uses seriousness to remove the body almost from the speaker and to seek to know consciousness itself. 'Only what's human can be truly alien' she suggests.

Question: What does the imp come for?

Answer: Your innocence and your self-importance.

Szyborska, like the other poets I've mentioned, uses the imp to undermine official discourses and notions of truth, ethics and history. Rather than challenge the synthesis of form, each of these poets use tone to catch the transformations of identity and subjectivity. Their conflicted natures as women and as critics of a totalitarian state or ossified Church are crucial. While Molloy and Hill cannot surpass the constraints of blood and femininity, Szyborska refuses the mothering source of the voice. Like Cassian, she deconstructs masculinist universalism and male authorial mastery by honing its language to a rapier that punctures and wounds phallographic law. 'Voice is what writing commemorates as its lost origins in the body', writes Patrick O'Donnell. For Szyborska, writing reactivates the questions of what it is to face being human and carry a human message using a marvellous dispassion that acts to unsettle inherited stabilities of self and the world.

Julia Kristeva suggests that the subject is never formed or finished but harkens back to the pre-linguistic order even as she progresses. This subject-in-process moves between the formal language of the father and the pre-verbal state of the mother. Kristeva names strategies that show remnants of this maternal authority occurring

in language as fissures, noise, disfiguration, disruptions, tears in the veil of representation, outbursts, disorder, excess and stuttering as semiotic ruptures of paternal discourse. The tone of the imp, I would argue, is both a projection and disruption of subjectivity, not through linguistic displacement but through a sharpening of the voice to an acid acuity. The imp stands between the natural and the supernatural, between the maternal and the paternal, between the semiotic and the symbolic boundaries. It acts as a shield and vehicle for the 'whole', socialized being, loosened from the corporeality of the female body. It may teach, enchant, amuse and divert but it is not a sensualist. There is no voluptuousness here. Wayward and bemused, it uses remoteness to itemize things in macro-focus – the paradox of precision from a great distance.

If the imp in Charlotte Mew, Stevie Smith and Nina Cassian has their hearts in its hand, in the work of Wislawa Szymborska, it has the whole of humanity in its hand. Her work is of a different magnitude and weight. Its scale and scope are able to freight pity and compassion for the human condition in a deadpan, delicate and deeply moving way. She details the inadequacy of the human experiment, of the human form, chronicling the whole sorry mess with the cool detachment of a soul surveyor. She uses immense agility and vitality to counter despair and despondency. This imp is the god of imps. Capacious, capri-

cious, felicitous, it is 'far bolder than its own anatomy'.

I have argued that the imp addresses high culture and philosophical importance in an underhand fashion, offsetting gravity with levity, asserting a gleeful independence and irreverence. The imp speaks for the rule-breakers, the outsiders about the folly of trying to speak of, or for, or about. Yet, like the feathers added to a bird's wing, the imp adds power and speed to the words' flight.

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ZABILJEŠKE O IMPU: POGLEDI NA GLAS IMPA U POEZIJI ŠARLOT MJU, STIVI SMIT, NINE KASIJAN I VISLAVE ŠIMBORSKE

Rezime

Osvrćući se na esej Suzan Sontag koji je objavljen 1964. godine pod naslovom 'Zabilješke o kempu', a u kom se opaža autorkina namjera da vješto dočara odlučnu lakomislenost i otvorenu hirovitost kempa, nastojala sam u ovom radu da započnem nešto što bi se moglo nazvati 'Zabilješke o impu' (imp - majušno ne-

stašno stvorenje iz mitologije; đavolak, prim. prev.) Poput kempa, koji počiva na nevinosti, otkrivajući je i orobljujući, imp prenosi smišljene nestašluke na ozbiljne teme samootkrivanja i ranjivosti u savremenoj poeziji. Dok su muškarci, naročito gej muškarci, razvili kemp kao strategiju i stil odbrane, ali i definisanja vlastitog senzibiliteta u okviru strejt kulture, žene pjesnikinje koriste taktiku i ton impa kao štit i sredstvo kako bi podrivale upečatljivu nejednakost u muško-ženskim odnosima. U ovom kontekstu takođe sam ispitivala na koje načine imp, nerijetko androgin, nastanjuje podzemni svijet koji postoji prije ili poslije rodnih razlika. Rodom se i dalje insistira na različitosti žene od drugog, boljeg, ali i na razdvajanju žena od njihovog pretpubertetskog, nesputanog sopstva. Pokušala sam da pokažem kako neuobičajeni uvidi impa nose neku vrstu intrinzičkog autoriteta, napuštajući treće lice, kom se periodično vraćaju, a koje nije ni muško niti žensko – ili je možda i jedno i drugo – sa drskom zrelošću djeteta koje priča previše iskreno. Bez obzira na to da li zbog zaobilaženja državne cenzure ili propisang ponašanja, izdržavanja života u egzilu ili statusa autsajdera, pjesnikinje poput Nine Kasijan, Vislave Šimborske, Selime Hil i Doroti Moloj, pribjegavaju razigranom cinizmu kako bi posmatrale autoritativni (muški, odrasli) svijet sa strane, baš kao što su to prije njih činile pjesnikinje poput Šarlot Mju i Stivi Smit. U ovom radu zastupam mišljenje da se imp obraća visokoj kulturi i filosofiji na prikriven način, izjednačujući ozbiljnost sa lakom, čime iskazuje svojevrstu nezavisnost i nepoštivanje nametnutih pravila. Imp ovdje priča u ime onih koji krše zakone, o ludosti pokušaja da ih predstavi i definiše. Međutim, baš kao što perje oraskošava krilo ptice, tako i imp dodaje snagu i brzinu riječima koje lete.

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