

Session timeout



Your previous session has ended.

OK

[Download Here](#)

BROWSE



searching APAFT

[CHANGE DATABASES](#)

An error has occurred

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)



P Peer Reviewed

F Full content available

'Out of control': Excess, desire and

[SHARE](#) ...

agency in female drug writing

Hecate

Volume 42 Issue 2 (2016)

Prowse, Nycole

Abstract: This paper examines excess and desire via a postmodern feminist reading of the drug writing of twentieth century writers Emily Hahn (1950) and Anna Kavan (1975). The undesirability of the "excess" of drug use (particularly for women) in social

terms is inverted in female drug writing. The uncontainability presented by the literary drug trope allows and celebrates the multitudinous "excessive selves" (Jennifer McWeeny) of female subjectivity represented in female drug writing. It is the excessiveness of the female drug-using body-its hyperbolic state, its extremities, the way in which it leaks beyond and exceeds the limits of "proper body" and social order that makes it so dangerous-or, in Kristeva's terms, abject. Grosz's interpretation of Kristeva's abject body is of one that challenges "the conditions under which the clean and proper body, the obedient, law-abiding, social body, emerges" (Elizabeth Grosz, "Volatile Bodies"). The examples of female drug writing examined within this paper affirm the subversive power of agency and unique selfhood, refusing the claims of containment, not necessarily of the drug but the drug writing. The drug trope as it is used in female drug literature anticipates (as in Emily Hahn's memoir "The Big Smoke") and exemplifies (as in Anna Kavan's *Julia* and the *Bazooka* and *Other Stories*) the postmodern subject and the empowerment that comes with this conception of the female subject as ever-changing, heterogeneous and becoming. The corporeal "leakiness" (Margrit Shildrick and Janet Price) of the body in the female drug writing examined here is one that leaks out and transforms: a leaking body which, in Grosz's terms, is "malleable and continually changing, always potentially open to new meanings and investments." The unconstrained notions of the body-epitomised by the permeability of the drugged body in female drug writing-see it as "out of control," "over the top" and beyond the discursive policing of institutional and symbolic structures.



FULL TEXT PDF (203KB)

To cite this article: Prowse, Nycole. 'Out of control': Excess, desire and agency in female drug writing [online]. *Hecate*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2016: 39-54. Availability: <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=205290835358310;res=IELAP/> ISSN: 0311-4198. [cited 20 Jul 18].

Personal Author: Prowse, Nycole;

Source: *Hecate*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2016: 39-54

Document Type: Journal Article

ISSN: 0311-4198

Subject: Exoticism in literature; Women--Drug use; Drug addiction; Opium abuse;

Peer Reviewed: Yes

Database: APAFT



 [View desktop version](#)
Informit v4.0 Copyright © 2015