

Articles

Exploring Psychic Reality through Poetry Analysis: Sylvia Plath's "Fever103°"¹⁾

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This study shows the inner dynamism through the analysis of a poem, "Fever 103°" written by the American modern poet, Sylvia Plath (1932–1963). This poem was already studied from a biographical standpoint. However, there are two problems with the previous studies. 1: The strong tendency to understand her poem from the standpoint of her biography seems to limit the possibilities for interpreting this poem. As long as we read this poem in this way, we will do no more than understand the historical facts of her life. 2: There is little consideration of the title, "Fever 103°". To address these problems, the poem can be analyzed as Plath's psychic reality as well as her dream. Exploring the poem with a view open to absence is one way to analyze a dream in psychotherapy. Plath feels a strong sense of impurity in reference to living in the real world. She expresses her discomfort as her having a foreign object in her body. This object, expressed in the forms of invisible and mortal germs, stands for sin and love for her. Finally, this title shows her tragic wish: longing to be burned in order to be purified and this shows the true relationship between the poem and its title.

Key words : psychic reality, Sylvia Plath, dream analysis, poetry analysis

1. Introduction

In this paper, a poem is analyzed as a psychic reality of a poet. The poem discussed is "Fever103°" written by an American modern poet, Sylvia Plath (1932-1963).

Sylvia Plath was the daughter of two academic parents. Her father was a biology professor at Boston University. Her mother met her father, when she was working on a master's degree in English and German at the same university. Plath had a brother who was

two and one-half years younger. It is said that there was the great value placed upon academics in her family. She showed her brilliance for creativity of literary works from her early childhood. At the age of eight, her father died. After his death, her mother raised her two children. Throughout her school years, Plath was an excellent student. She won a scholarship to Smith College and her literary works were published in magazines. When she was nineteen, she tried to kill herself by swallowing sleeping pills, and, as a result, she was hospitalized for half of a year. After her discharge and return to college, she won Fulbright scholarship to Cambridge

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University, England. There she met a poet and married him at the age of twenty three.

The poem "Fever103°" is composed about six years later of their marriage. At that time she was in a difficult situation. Because her husband had an affair with another woman, tension arose between the couple. They were living apart, but she was with her two young children, a two year old girl and a ten month old boy. It is generally considered that this sad period was Plath's most creative time. Shortly after this creative time, she put her head in a gas oven and committed suicide from carbon monoxide poisoning.

"Fever103°" describes a woman who suffers a high fever and is in agony. Finally at the end of the poem, she becomes a pure virgin and she is raised to Paradise and released from the agony. As she arises from the earth, she entirely rejects men.

In an earlier study, this poem is interpreted as an expression of Plath's anger against her husband, who cheated on her. That is to say, the agony of the woman in the poem is that of Plath who is hurt by his betrayal. Therefore in the last part of the poem, she refuses men (Takachi, 2007). Her biography shows her remarkable literary success and excellent academic records. Her strong desire for success is seen in her effort to become a good daughter, wife and mother. Therefore, this poem can be interpreted as a process involving her abandonment her social role and her discovery of her true self. The high fever eliminates her "past identity" (Kendall, 2001), namely, her old role towards men as a good daughter, wife and mother (Kroll, 2007).

There are two problems in the previous

studies. First, the strong tendency to understand her poem from the standpoint of her biography seems to limit the possibilities for interpreting this poem. As long as we read this poem in this way, we will do no more than understand the historical facts of her life. Second, there is little consideration on this title, "Fever 103°", although the studies have been made on this poem. What seems to be lacking is to find the connection between this poem and its title to understand the whole meaning of the poem that Plath had expressed.

In this paper, I will take the different approach from the previous studies. I will connect the poem with Plath's psychic reality which she must have experienced. By taking this approach, I can illuminate the Plath's psychic experience which is not written on her biographical fact.

To highlight her psychic reality, it is efficient to take a viewpoint opened to "absence" which is regarded as one approach to analyze a dream in psychotherapy. According to *The Innocence of Dreams* (Rycroft, 1979), dreams as well as poetry are imaginative and creative activity of a person's unconsciousness. That is to say, it is possible to analyze poems as well as analyzing dreams with a view opened to absence. The view to see "absence" is "to suppose the contents and themes which are not expressed yet," (Yamamoto, 2006) and to have the paradoxical stance to observe the negatives of represented expressions. Through the viewpoint, I consider one can realize the words of great capacity beyond the poet's intention, not by means of replacing Plath's

words into others, but by means of illuminating her life submerging beneath the surface.

It is possible to mention the view of “absence” from the etymology of “symbol.” Yamamoto (2006) has mentioned the source of symbol, «σύμβολον». Originally, a symbol stands for one piece of the broken tally to distinguish and confirm the right partner by means of matching two pieces into a whole set together. According to the etymology, it is considered that a symbol in one’s inner world will emerge from the inexistence of an essential part. An existing part stands for another non-existing part. In other words, without inexistence, symbolization would not happen in the therapy. From his suggestion, it could be deducted that psychotherapy can be done by seeing one’s inner world which is not expressed. The visible expression is a small part of inner movement, because it is limited by realistic rules and consciousness. However, by adopting the viewpoint of “absence”, we can get access to the hidden expression, namely the unspoken content.

By taking this approach, it becomes possible to find the meaning of the poem in more detail, and even more valuable than Plath had intended. In this paper, I attempt to describe Plath’s psychic reality. Through this process, the consequent relationship between the poem and its title will be shown.

2. The Scene of the Poem

In this section, I would like to paraphrase

our discussing poem by following the change of her images. It seems to be difficult to follow Plath’s various images as one coherent and convincing flow, because at first sight each image seems to be separate. However, here I paraphrase and follow her images to help see through the haze of the fever.

[1-7 stanzas] At the beginning of the poem, she asks what pure means. Then the tongues of ugly Cerberus is wheezing at the gateway of Hell are focused on. His tongues are impotent to lick something clean. After the shaking and the contraction of muscles, the phrase “the sin, the sin” (1.7) follows. She perceives the fiery roar and inerasable smell. The smell comes from a candle which is just been put out. Then the smokes turn into the scarves of Isadora and they make Plath feel threatened. One of the scarves gets caught in a wheel. These yellow smokes become elements and roll on the ground without going up. The elements choke the weak people. There is a baby in a hothouse and there an orchid which is hung in the air looks like a ghost.

[8-9 stanzas] Suddenly the evil leopard appears, and the radiation makes it white into death. The bodies of the adulterers are greased. The radiation swallows everything like the ash of Hiroshima.

[10-12 stanzas] She starts to talk to her lover that she was unsteadily burning all through the night. The sheets become wet like the kiss of a lecher. For three days and nights, she sustains herself on lemon water and chicken (broth), but this remedy only makes her nauseous. She says that she is too pure for any other person, and her body

suffers with you the same way as God suffers with the world.

[13 stanza] She becomes a lantern. She describes that her head is a moon which is made of Japanese paper, the thin layer of gold that is eternally fragile and valuable.

[14-18 stanzas] She also describes that her fever and light do not threaten you. She becomes a glowing camellia. After she supposes that she goes up, the beads of heated metal are thrown into the air. This purges her into a clean acetylene and virgin. She is attended not by men, but by roses, kisses, and cherubim. With the melting away of her petticoats and her old selves, she rises to paradise.

3. The Interpretation of the Whole Poem

To begin with, I would like to show my interpretation of this poem to help the discussion in the following sections.

The poem begins at the scene of unclean hell where it is far from purity. Cerberus is there guarding the gate of hell. Cerberus stands for the poet, Sylvia Plath who is in terrible agony because of a high fever. Because of her agony, physically she receives impure and uncomfortable feelings as if she lives in hell and is uncertain what purity is at all. In spite of her pain, she is unable to lick her wound as animals do to cure themselves, since her pain is caused by her fever. That is to say, she cannot run out of her agony nor has anything to do with it.

Such high fever gives her chills then she

feels as if she has done something wrong and needs to pay for it with her pain. The breath that comes out of her mouth is hot. She feels that it is like the flame from Cerberus's mouth. Her hot breath makes her sicker. It smells like the smoke of a candle which has just been put out. Its offensive smell does not dissipate but clings to her neck like Isadora Duncan's long scarf which strangled her. Such smoke does not rise to the sky but creeps heavily on the earth. One tail of the scarf, namely the smoke gets caught in a wheel of the vehicle exactly like the cause of Isadora's death. In this way even her breath clings to her neck and chokes her.

She feels that her hot breath can infect other people who have little resistance to disease such as old men and babies. At the same time she also feels that she is as weak as a baby whose immune system cannot defend against a high fever. She compares herself to a baby who is shut into the hothouse. In the hothouse the baby is helpless against rising temperature. It cannot manage the heat and weakens to death. In such hothouse the orchid wilts from the heat.

When her fever and agony peaks, she loses her senses as if she is murdered by an evil leopard. The moment of her fainting is described as the moment of the fall of the atomic bomb to Hiroshima. The extreme high fever makes her mind go blank.

She starts to describe her high fever with the sensual expressions. Gradually her appearance that she sweats and writhes in the bed associates with a sensual scene. She says that her fever is intermittent all through night and her sheets are uncomfortably wet

with sweat. For three nights, she suffers with fever in such way. She knows it is common to starve a fever, consuming only chicken broth and lemon water. However she is not even able to consume liquids, since even this makes her feel nauseous.

Little by little, her fever calms down. Then her subjectivity shifts into the fever which has suffered Plath's body. The fever tells Plath that she (the fever) is too pure for Plath's body and for any other person. The fever explains that Plath's flesh profanes the pure fever as the world profanes God. That is why Plath's body suffers with the fever.

God can be the sun of the world, while the fever is not the God himself but it is the resemblance. Therefore the fever becomes the moon instead of being the sun. The moon which she (the fever) turns into is the one which is made of fine and valuable gold.

Being symbolized as the moon, the fever goes out of Plath's body and start to rise to the sky. Hence the fever does not suffer her body any more. The fever turns into the red camellia and rises to the sky with flashing. The fever which is now Plath's subjectivity is going up with being sultrily red like beads of heated metal. She describes herself that she is clean acetylene and virgin. When she rises, she denies to be accompanied with men. The pure fever, namely she goes up to heaven throwing away her impure petticoats which are old now.

In the following sections, I would like to explore Plath's psychic reality and its movement in detail.

4. Agony in Hell and on the Earth

In the first seven stanzas, her hellish agony caused by high fever is described.

The poem begins at the scene of hell where there is the horrible monster Cerberus guarding the gate. In Greek mythology, Cerberus is described as the monster which has three heads of dogs. In the light of the poem, this monster seems to be in agony. Although animals can heal themselves by licking themselves, he is unable to lick his wound to cure himself. The possible reason is that his pain does come from not a physical but an inner problem.

Then "The aguey tendon, the sin, the sin." (l7) follows. This statement makes clear why Cerberus is in agony. He is infected by a virus. His symptoms such as a high fever and shivering are caused by the virus. Usually, the body has an immunity system to protect itself. Immunity is defined as the life sustaining system that gets rid of viruses etc. which selectively invade the human body. The human body increases its normal temperature to a fever to kill the virus. Cerberus is in the same situation; he is infected by the virus and does not know how to manage his agony. He also does not know the cause of his pain.

What do Cerberus and the virus mean? They must stand for Plath and her sin. The sin is invisible. This is why it is written in the form of a minute virus. It is uncertain when one was infected, and it is even uncertain if before one was born or not. Regardless of any consciousness, through the incubation period,

one is attacked by the virus. Thus, there is nothing one can do when one recognizes one's illness. Suffering is inevitable.

The fiery cry of Cerberus connects with the desperate roar of him. The sin invading the human body is described as the indelible smell of a candle. The nature of the sin is invisible but emits a peculiar air. Thus, the sin corresponds to this smell.

Furthermore, once the smell diffuses in the air, it is difficult to retrieve it. Even if the gas is odorless, as long as it is combustible, it burns up immediately like the roar of Cerberus. The fluidity, unstableness and slipperiness suggest the nature of the sin and the guilty feeling of the sinner.

The sin which one should keep in one's bosom, wounds Plath like Cerberus and it emits an unclean smell like the smell of a candle which was just put out. The indelible smell of the sin is sent out invisibly from the sinner. Although the sin itself is a fault in the past, it is impossible to delete the fact. Moreover, the sin which should be hidden appears in the form of the smell. However, regardless of the hardship there is in living with it, there is neither a way to delete it nor throw it away. All one can do is to keep it as a part of oneself.

After the expression of the smell of the candle, the phrase of "Love, love" (1.11) follows. It makes us realize that the smell of the sin coming out from the snuffed candle is love. The smell of the sin and love is one. Smell is defined as a perception that one feels by one's nose due to a volatile particle floating after in the air which has separated from the solid. The poet describes both the sin and

love as a minute particle. The scent of love changed into the smell of the sin. It means the sin within her is the same as her love.

The particles of the smell turns into these smokes. They do not rise to the sky, but fall down to the ground. The smokes wrapped around her neck are compared to the scarf which caused the death of Isadora Duncan. It seems that Plath tries to kill herself by judging herself. The moment of the death of Isadora is written about by Fredrika Blair.

Isadora went to the door wearing her red scarf...after getting in to the automobile, she turned to Mary and Ivan and said "Adieu, mes amis. Je vais à la gloire!" ... with waving her hand ...The Bugatti burst away forward. But, it stopped suddenly. They saw Isadora's scarf caught in the crossbar of the wheel. Her larynx was crushed and her neck was broken...Isadora Dankan passed away. (Blaire, 1990)

The snuffed candle looks like a figure of a person who lost one's head. Hence, the death of Isadora, whose neck was broken, overlaps with the figure of Plath who put her head in the oven to die. This association of death darkens the sin more.

In the bottomless darkness of the sin, she sighs that she is frightened. Then, as the scarf is caught by the wheel running on the ground, the particles of the sin fall down.

The fallen sin threatens the weak people. It is as if the virus rages against those who have little resistance to the disease. There is a possibility of her having felt isolation, because

she seems to have felt the sense of guilt. She regards herself as unworthy to live with people around her. She is as ugly as fat Cerberus creeping out from hell, and she violates the innocent young child. Once she enters the hothouse, a beautiful orchid transforms into a ghastly orchid, and the pure place turns into a terrible place. In the beginning of this poem, Plath murmurs that she does not know what pure means. This murmur tells us that Cerberus does not know what pure is at all, as he was born and raised only in the impure sin of hell. That is, impureness is the normal situation for Cerberus. All he knows is the agony of the sin. In other words, being in hell where Cerberus is placed shows her condition that she is hurt by the impure sin.

5. The Instant Death

In the eighth and ninth stanzas, the instant death caused by high fever is narrated.

Just as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire in an instant, Plath is also punished with the fire. It seems that she believes she is so guilty that God destroys her. An evil leopard which suddenly appears must be embodiment of the sin. Once the leopard appears, the radiation burns it out like the fire of the punishment. This fire is described as that of the atomic bomb released on Hiroshima. This intense punishment puts an end to the agony of the sin as a normal situation.

After this punishment, her agony is transforming. It becomes the conflict between

pureness and impureness.

After the purification with fire, the scene of the penitence appears. The description of greasing to adulterers' bodies is the penitence before the death. How can we understand this change? Where she was in the middle of her sin described as the hell, she never knew the cause of her agony. However, the punishment makes her realise that she is impure. The recognition of her impurity brings about her awareness of the sense of pureness. In other words, the sense of the sin brought her the sense of holiness at the same time. These two are the name of one thing seen from different aspects.

In the context of the sin and the holiness, adulterers reminds us about Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. This is a work describing a woman called Hester who committed a crime of adultery in the American Puritan society in the seventeenth century. She had to put the scarlet "A" on her bosom. What "A" stood for was "Adultery". Furthermore, not only the scarlet letter, but also her infant what was born from her sin was a token of her guilt. She stood in the court of public opinion with her new born baby as the penalty. The author writes that woman, who is a sinner, is like a young virgin with the holy infant.

Had there been a Papist among the crowd of Puritans, he might have seen in this beautiful woman, so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom, an object to remind him of the image of Divine Maternity, which so many illustrious painters have vied with one another to represent; something

which should remind him, indeed, but only by contrast, of that sacred image of sinless motherhood, whose infant was to redeem the world. Here, there was the taint of deepest sin in the most sacred quality of human life, working such effect, that the world was only the darker for this woman's beauty, and the more lost for that she had born. (Hawthorne, 1970)

Why are the sin and the holiness appearing together as above? During her penalty, Hester was told by her priest to confess the name of the man who is also the sinner.

"...Speak out the name! That, and thy repentance, may avail to take the scarlet letter off the breast."

"Never!" replied Hester Prynne, looking, not at Mr. Wilson, but into the deep and troubled eyes of the younger clergyman. "It is too deeply branded. Ye cannot take it off. And would that I might endure his agony, as well as mine!" (Hawthorn,1970)

Hester never confessed his name. Instead, she decided to be stigmatized as the sinner. I do not intend to glorify the sin, however it is likely to say that the sin seems to have its own meaning for the sinner, as long as the sin would be called as love. Those who criticized Hester never understood the meaning of the sin she committed, nor did they understand that the sin was inevitable for her no matter how silly it looked. They never understood that her life became valuable because of the sin.

The overlapping of the sin and the holiness

can be seen in another work. In Hugo's *Les misérables*, Fantine sold her beautiful long hair and her bright front teeth to save her young daughter. At last, she said "*vendons le reste*." ("I will sell what is left.") (Hugo, 1963; 1968) and she became a prostitute. Who understood her love for her daughter? People only presumed of her as being an unclean and unimportant prostitute. Regardless of this, she could not live without loving her daughter. However, people could be cruel, like the crowd who ridiculed Jesus walking to Golgotha with his cross. Therefore, "Do not judge" (Matthew 7:1), for you do not know what you are doing (cf. Luke 23:34)²⁾. The overlapping of the sin and the holiness leads Plath into heavy conflict.

6. Impurity and Purity

From tenth to twelfth stanzas, Plath describes the intermitted fever with the sensual expressions uniting them with the impure physical senses.

During the night, the high fever tortures Plath. Her body increases the fever to extinguish the virus. The description of intermitted fever shows the conflict within her between the sin and the holiness. The sheets are growing heavy due to the tear of the repentance or due to the perspiration of the high fever. Thereof, the bed to repose in becomes impure as the kiss from the lecher.

That she has been in the intermitted fever

2) Originally Luke 23:34 is as follows "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

for three nights is a metaphor to imply her having such an inner experience for a long time. These impure days for her are represented as lemon water and chicken broth, namely the water containing impurities. It seems that the characteristics of her conflict are the repetition and the sense of impurity. This conflict is caused by the recognition of the sin and the holiness. When she was only in the sin, she did not know neither the sin nor the holiness, therefore she did not have a conflict.

In the middle of her conflict, she compares her agony to that of Jesus Christ. Although he was born without the original sin, he carried the sin of the world and was crucified. It is possible to say that Plath regards herself as too pure to live on the earth while containing impurities within her. Additionally, she compares herself as a lantern. This allegory originates in the words of Jesus, "I am the light of the world." (John 8:12) Nevertheless, her light is different from that of the lantern which Jesus intended, as hers is the light of the sinner.

7. Separation of the Fever from the Body

In the thirteenth stanza, it is described that her fever is getting to calm down and starts to go outside of her body as the form of the moon.

My head a moon
Of Japanese paper, my gold beaten skin
(ll.37-38)

Her light is the moonlight. Generally, the light of Jesus Christ is compared to the sunlight, therefore her light differs from his. The moon shines by reflecting the sunlight. As the light of the lantern makes a dark shadow, the sunlight also makes night and shadow. But the moonlight softly illuminates the darkness of the night. Her light wraps everything around her blending with darkness.

"Moon/of Japanese paper" (ll.37-38) tells us that what she meant was the Japanese lantern. "[M]y gold beaten skin" (l.38) means "gilt". The moon wrapped with the gilt, like the Japanese lantern, shows her graceful face through the clouds. Her light is not that of the sun, nor that of the ordinary lantern. What makes her light so tender? It is because of the sin. Gilt is the homonym with "guilt". The moon wrapped with gilt was literally enshrining the sin within. To understand the moonlight enshrining the sin, it is suggestive for us to refer to the words of Nishida Kitaro.

One who does not know sin cannot truly know the love of God. One who is without dissatisfaction and without suffering cannot comprehend deep spiritual tastes. Sin, dissatisfaction, and suffering are the necessary conditions for the spiritual advancement of us human beings; thus it is that in these things that truly religious men do not see the denial of God but see instead the fathomless grace of God. Because these things exist, the world to that extent does not become imperfect, but on the contrary it becomes abundant and profound. (Nishida, 1960)

As above, we can say that the sin makes the moonlight tender. In the poem, the gilded moon is described as eternally delicate and valuable. This means that the sin is as fragile as the gilt and requires a high price. In exchange for the distress of the sin, Plath is given the gold, while Hester is given Pearl.

But she named the infant "Pearl," as being of great price, —purchased with all she had, — her mother's only treasure!
(Hawthorne, 1970)

The moonlight given in exchange for the high price, does not show a keen light. This is because the moon understands the bitterness of one's sin being exposed and judged with superficial benevolence and justice. The light of the lantern is too strong and the light of the sun is too hot. Nonetheless, neither the sun nor the lantern ever notices that their light hurts people. On the other hand, the moon illuminating through the clouds is mild because it knows the bitterness of having the guilt. Moreover, it is even enshrining the fact that it knows the bitterness.

8. The Ascension of the Fever

In the last five stanzas, the fever is going up to the sky.

The golden moon with the gilt becomes a red camellia, increasing its body temperature. Here, no sign is found which shows her conflict between two abhorrent opposites. Plath seems to decide to burn out the sin. She is trying to kill the virus in her by increasing

her body temperature. In parallel with it, boiling water is described. When water boils, it evaporates from its surface, and the impurity blended with the water is left. Therefore, only pure steam can rise into the air. It is also possible to understand that her body is sublimating from the solid into gas by an extremely high fever.

The description of flying beads of heated metal in the air is the situation in which the substances constructing her body begin to break apart and diffuse in the air. When she was a solid, the particles of her body were connected to each other. This connection makes it possible for her to live on the earth as a certain solid figure. As I have already mentioned, one cannot live without keeping the sin, namely impurity. Therefore, her decision to exclude the sin means her leaving the earth. It is also called death.

The hot metal flying in the air makes the reader associate this with the beads of a broken rosary coming apart. The rosary connects a prayer to a prayer as one circle which never ends. Losing the connection of a never-ending circle, she intends to leave the earth and aims at the place where she wishes to put herself.

The phrase, "I, love, I" (1.45) is also the sign of her departure from temporal life. As love is the altered name of the sin, love is also the connector to keep her stay on the earth as well as the sin. To exclude the sin is to exclude love. When she stays on earth, she was with the sin and love together, but now she makes herself separate from both of them.

As above, she intends to abandon her life, strictly speaking, her sin and love. With the

scene of ascension, this poem is concluded.

9. Heaven and Earth

When we study this poem in total, the comparison of heaven and earth is found³⁾. This leads me to connect this poem to "The Tale of Hagoromo". In the poem, though everything on earth is described as ugly, the more she rises to heaven the less ugly the description becomes. This comparison of heaven and earth is represented as two women, Isadora and a virgin. Isadora is a woman who belongs to the earth. She danced wearing the ancient Greek robe. She seems to be a celestial nymph in "The Tale of Hagoromo", who could not return to heaven by losing her robe on the earth. Despite her wish for heaven, her red scarf, her fairy robe, was caught and anchored in the wheel of an automobile. A wheel also belongs to the earth as it rotates directly on the ground. This image suggests the sorrow of Plath who is not leaving the earth.

A heavenly woman, a virgin, rose to the skies with her dissolving petticoats which imply the scarf she was caught by. Her ascension also corresponds with the end of "The Tale of Hagoromo". Although a celestial nymph was married to a man, during her stay on earth, finally she found her robe and returned to heaven. Thus, Plath's rising

resembles the nymph's return. Additionally, in the poem Plath describes herself as a moon. The goddess of the moon, Artemis, is also a virgin. Above all, the heavenly virgin is the Virgin Mary. The view of Plath's rising seems to be that of the ascension of the Virgin Mary.

Now it will be revealed that the construction of this poem is as follows. The Virgin Mary is rising attended by roses, kisses and cherubim. These three heavenly elements are paralleled to an orchid, a kiss of lecher and an evil leopard on the earth. Cerberus protects the gates of hell, and cherubim protect the gate of the heaven. The comparison of heaven and earth indicates how much Plath had felt the difficulty to adapt to the real world. In spite of such difficulty, she must have lived since she was born, as there is nowhere to live except on the earth. The causal reason of her discomfort for living is that there were impurities to omit. It is impossible to live, omitting them as long as she lives there. The impurity is love and sin. It is not two different things, but one thing. Love sends out a sweet odor but later, as the time passes, it sends out the smell of sin. Sometimes love could be a mighty help, and sometimes it becomes a heavy burden, and sometimes an act of love might become indelible sin. Both love and sin, for Plath, is the inner fetter. However, we could say that love and sin enable her to live on earth. In so far as she keeps this inside, she could stay on the ground. Finally, she cannot stand the uncleanness of the impurity and attempts to eliminate it from her body in two ways. One is to increase her body temperature to

3) The comparison of heaven and earth is also found in Plath's other poems. To give an example, "Nick and the Candlestick" (1962) describes that icicles in a limestone cave grow from the ceiling (heaven) and from the ground (earth). The poem ends with the scene in which these two icicles become one stone pillar.

destroy all the foreign objects described as a virus, and the other is to boil water, comparing her body to water including impurities, to become pure steam to rise to the sky.

Finally, it becomes clear to us that the title of this poem, "Fever 103", is used in both Celsius and Fahrenheit temperature. 103F is 39.444...°C. This is a high fever for a human body to destroy a virus. While, 103°C shows the boiling point of water. Generally speaking, it is considered that the boiling point of water is 100°C, but it is only under limited condition when water is completely pure and the air is at 1 unit of pressure. In the case of this poem the boiling point is increased because water includes invisible and small impurities. As above, the fever of 103 degrees is meant to be in both Celsius and Fahrenheit. Therefore, this is why Plath named this poem just "103" without °C nor F.

10. Conclusion

Plath calls something that invaded her as sin and love. The reason why Plath calls it sin is because she felt it as sin, and the reason why Plath calls it love is because she felt it as love. It seems to be the same difficulty to describe this one thing in one word as that of naming a God that Nicolaus Cusanus mentioned.

A name is given by reason which is inferior to intellect to distinguish. Yet reason cannot transcend contradiction, as long as reason works, there is no name

which does not oppose to others,···When God is named as truth, false opposes. When He is named as virtue, vice opposes, and in case of as substantial, insubstantial opposes. (Cusanus, 1979)

As in Cusanus's opinion, both the sin and love seem to be the appearance of certain aspects of one thing. No matter how I endeavor to describe it as correctly as possible, it would be impossible to find one right word. However, without being afraid of these hardships, it could be said that what Plath called love and the sin seems to be the work of her life.

From an analysis of the poem, I find that Plath feels a strong sense of impurity towards living in the real world. It would be possible to say that for her sin and love have special meaning and she feels them as one and the same thing. These findings suggest that there might be a significant event in her life which makes her feel love and sin at the same time, causing the sense of impurity. However, this assumption would require further extensive analysis of her poems and biography. So I would like to pursue this in my future research.

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4) Blair, F. (1990) In this paper, this citation is used through a translation from the Japanese into English by the author, because of the unavailability of the original text.

5) Cusanus, N. (1979) In this paper, this citation is used through a translation into English, referring to the original Latin text as well as German and Japanese translations.