

A Lacanian Interpretation of Domestic Themes in Constance Hunting's Selected Poetry from *After the Stravinsky Concert* and Other Poems

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Abstract:

This study uses Lacanian theory to analyze domestic themes in Constance Hunting's (1925 -2006) *After the Stravinsky Concert and Other Poems* (1969) and how the poet's work addresses the Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary. Hunting's domestic imagery—kitchens, living rooms, and intimate family spaces—demonstrates the conflict between personal identity and society. Lacan's framework shows how Hunting's lyrical investigation of everyday life is infused with the "Thing," or unattainable object of love. Her criticism of established roles and the symbolic order is feminist and uses negative capacity and fractured viewpoints. Furthermore, the current study aims to explore Hunting's capacity to make the banal significant via poetic interplay between the unsaid Real and the organized Symbolic. It examines gender, creativity, and identity development in the home via Hunting's work in second-wave feminist discourse and psychoanalytic theory.

Key Words: Domestic, Female, Imaginary, Lacan, Real, Symbolic, Thing, .

Jacque Lacan (1901-1981) is a renowned French psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who conducted influential seminars in Paris from 1952 to 1980, significantly shaping the comprehension of the subjective-personal experience of the conscious mind in connection to the external world. In these seminars he discussed thoroughly variety of subjects within the psychoanalytical field, including some of his most famous concepts: The Imaginary, The Real, The Symbolic. In his first seminar BOOK I Freud's Papers on Technique 1953-1954 he talks in regard to the way concepts emerge from words and language as well as referring to language as a “poor instrument” (Lacan, 1991, p. 2) that restricts the individual in the Imaginary plane. The Imaginary is the subject’s relative experience with the world and it is the space that the individual’s ego is experienced (Lacan, 1991, p. 83). Calum Neill, a Professor of Psychoanalysis and Continental Philosophy at Edinburgh Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland, is a prominent authority in Lacanian philosophy. In his work, Jacques Lacan: The Basics, he elucidates essential Lacanian terms necessary for a coherent comprehension of Jacque Lacan’s psychoanalysis. In Neill’s analysis of Lacan’s principles, where he includes the Real, the Symbolic, the Imaginary, the big Other, and the objet petit a¹, Lacan initially describes language as a medium that envelops reality. Neill emphasizes Lacan’s theories that prior to a child's birth, parents "discuss it, talk to it, and read to it" while it is still a fetus is in the womb. He explains that language predicts the environment in which the fetus would grow up in after being born, asserting that coherent thought can only be formulated through the use of language (2023, p.38). Furthermore, he makes it clear that the endeavor to conceive an experience beyond language can only transpire within the confines of language. The modalities and processes that enable identification and insertion into the external world are encompassed by the concept of the Imaginary. The individual's self-concept, shaped and constructed by their perception of both the external environment and their internal experiences, is conveyed through language. Neill asserts that, “[t]he broad point here is that what we think, however original it might be, is constrained in numerous ways by the language in which we think it” (Neill, 2023, p. 39). Consequently, the Imaginary pertains to a realm

¹ Objet is the French for ‘object,’ and is, like the English, used to refer to both everyday objects and the specific psychoanalytic idea of an object. Lacan places a small letter ‘a’ in the very centre. This ‘a’ refers to one of the most widely known concepts from Lacan’s work, what he calls ‘objet petit a’. These days writers on Lacan usually leave this term untranslated, although you will encounter it rendered slightly differently in different texts. (See Niell, 2023, pp. 50)

that reflects the individual's interaction with the world, characterized by elements that are conceived as “made up or not real” (Neill, 2023, p. 36). The Imaginary relates to the interaction between the individual and the external environment. The external environment presents a further idea, the Symbolic.

The Symbolic pertains to the domain and dimension of social reality. Founded on the existence of the symbol, laws and contracts (Lacan, Book II, p.230) Neill's discussion of Lacan's Symbolic plane delineates the interconnected systems of regulations that govern an individual's interactions with the world, including language, legislation, moral codes, societal norms, traffic signs, financial transactions, and others. These systems embody the impersonal framework of regulations and structures that shape, limit, and manage both an individual's perception of the external world and his self-understanding (2023, p. 76). The Symbolic Order is a system of signs and symbols that interconnects and regulates human connections, shaping individual perceptions of reality. This order is essential for the development of the subject's identity, since it integrates the person into an established framework of meaning and rules. The Symbolic and the Imaginary collaborate when an individual engages with language and vocabulary, invoking the unique connections that words hold for them. For instance, if two distinct individuals were prompted to see an image corresponding to the noun “dog,” each would generate a unique representation based on their particular experiences (2023, p. 45).

The Real is another dimension characterized by its resistance to assimilation within the Symbolic Order. According to Sean Homer, a prominent Lacanian theorist, the real, as stated in his work titled Jacques Lacan, is difficult to comprehend primarily because it is neither a tangible object nor a definable concept, nor is it symbolizable, rendering it unimaginable within the Symbolic Order. The individual's socio-symbolic reality restricts his understanding of the unknown. The Symbolic and the Imaginary are perpetually in flux, expanding and transforming, but the Real stays static and unmodified. It endows the real with the quality of omnipresence. It is neither an item nor a tangible entity, but rather a suppressed phenomenon that operates at a subconscious level (p. 81). The Real is elusive and perpetually obscure, nonetheless, it is self-imposed, persistently existing while the individual navigates the symbolic and the imaginary: “For Lacan, it is the insistence on the real that offers the possibility of a truly subjective engagement with the world. Without the real, all is preset” (Neill, 2023, p. 48).

Regarding the Real, a confrontation may occur between the external stimuli² and the individual's response. In such instances, the individual is unable to see and grasp external stimuli, nor can they regulate these excitations. This obstructs the growth process, as the concept of trauma suggests a specific impediment or fixation in the process of signification. Trauma halts the process of symbolization and confines the individual to a prior developmental stage (Homer, 2004, p. 84). The interaction among the three modalities can be succinctly articulated as follows: the realm of the Real engenders a persistent and unsymbolizable need or desire, which seeks fulfilment through an object. This object is conceptualized and varies among individuals, thereby residing in the dimension of the Imaginary. Nevertheless, that specific material object exists within the Symbolic dimension (p. 83).

This object-cause of desire is anchored in reality, described by Lacan as the *objet petit a*, the impenetrable core that is suppressed. It occupies a paradoxical state, as it is both a lost, significant object and simultaneously never having existed, akin to an unfillable void (2004). From this pre-symbolic realm arises a hunger—a primal need that Lacan refers to as “The Thing”. It is what persists when language and symbols falter, representing an engagement with the unrefined, direct facet of existence. Between the three dimensions exists a void, a distinct sense of exclusion that delineates the individual from the symbolic order. The individual possesses a distinct comprehension and arrangement of linkages and experiences, leading to a distinctive identity with the symbolic. This concept is referred to by Lacan as the “Big Other” (Neill, 2023, p. 44). Identity formation is a process that is ever evolving, flexible, and never static. These processes generate “the other we experience in the mirror and form the foundation for “identification, difference, anticipation, and antagonism” (Neill, 2023, p. 35).

Lacan elaborates on the notion of trauma by characterizing it as “real,” indicating its resistance to symbolization and resulting in a continual dislocation at the subject's essence. This indicates that the real is intrinsically irreducible to the symbolic order or social reality. Attempts to express sorrow and suffering through language are fundamentally inadequate, invariably omitting an ineffable residue that defies verbal articulation. Lacan designates this residue as the “X,” which embodies the real. He correlates the real with the Thing

² Here, the external stimuli refer to the Symbolic Order, as in the images and signs that makes the external dimension

and objet petit a, underscoring its intrinsic inaccessibility—it cannot be completely encountered or comprehended. Nonetheless, the real can profoundly impact individuals' lives, even as it transcends traditional notions of reality (Homer, 2004, p. 84).

Lacan's theorization of the real, characterized by its resistance to symbolization and its continual disruption of subjective coherence, finds a nuanced parallel in poetic expression. As a form that often seeks to articulate what eludes conventional language, poetry functions as a conduit for conveying the ineffable dimensions of trauma and loss. Constance Hunting's body of work, shaped by her sustained engagement with literature and her profound connection to place, particularly Maine, exemplifies this dynamic. Her poetry, most notably *After the Stravinsky Concert and Other Poems* (1969), reflects themes of displacement and transformation, illustrating the inherent tension between linguistic representation and the inaccessibility of the real. Constance Hunting, who was engaged with poetry since the age of seven, frequented the libraries of Rhode Island. A tendency that persisted throughout her adulthood and influenced her profession. She resided in West Lafayette, Indiana, until 1968, when she relocated to Orono, Maine, with her husband, Robert (Hunting, *Collection*, n.d.). She authored multiple poetry collections, the most renowned of which is *After the Stravinsky Concert and Other Poems* (1969). Relocating to Maine has not only altered the landscape for Hunting but has also become a focal point that harmonizes her artistic and professional trajectory (Walker, n.d.). Maine consistently occupies a position in Hunting's discourse. She attributes her poetic and professional endeavors to it. Hunting's essay "Eliot Among the Nightingales" featured in the *Eloquent Edge: 15 Main Women Writers* articulates the poet's introspections and sentiments towards Maine:

To live in Maine, not necessarily to have been born in Maine, and to write, not necessarily about Maine, is to be permitted a freehold in what is essentially an alien place..., the denizens stubbornly, sometimes tragically, sometimes comically individualistic; eccentric, borealistic. The rest of the world can often go hang. So it is in Maine; so it is with art. Hence, in this alien place, we feel, as artists, always tenuously, at home. Oddly, diffidently, perennially, exiles at home. (Lignell & Wilson, 1989, p. 79-80)

Constance Hunting discusses her writing style by examining Maine's geography and landscape as a guiding influence on her creative pursuits. Although residing in Maine is not entirely idyllic—"part of it is crazy"—the State offers a supportive environment that facilitates personal and creative reflection, allowing for "space

between the faces" (Walker, n.d., p. 44). Maine's essence is evident in her work, particularly in her experimental poetry, which straddles both traditional and chaotic forms. Hunting conveys a true sense of familiarity while yet introducing an unwavering and undeniable novelty into her poetry. In a *Maine Times* piece, she informs Jack Barnes, "I do anything the poem seems to want, I have no set in mind when I begin to write a poem. I listen to it, and the poem announces itself" (Barnes, 1993).

Hunting's notable strength lies in her perceptiveness and attunement to her environment, be it in New England or Maine. She adeptly crafts poetic depictions of mundane and everyday existence. She dons the romantic 'observant hat' (Walker, n.d., p. 42) and employs Keats's concept of negative capability in the urban environment. Examples from *After the Stravinsky Concert* include: *The Ride*, *Conversations: Late Day*, *The Gathering*, *Afternoon of a contemporary poet*, and *At Mrs. R*. Her second collection, *Nightwalk: Poem overhead in a Maine doctor's waiting room*, *Staying Over*, and *The Community* also reflect similar themes. The poems mentioned provides a feeling of randomness, ambiguity in meaning, and moral nuance in word arrangement. The internal space of the home evokes a genuine and intimate language in poetry, frequently featuring imagery of kitchens, living rooms, domestic life, and children, reflecting the poet's close surroundings. In her poem "Bird in Hand," home imagery pervades the text. It commences with a most intriguing assertion:

The way a poet eats the hard-boiled egg is this: he first chips delicately all-round the thin resistance of the shell of fact. (Hunting, 1969, p. 6)

The poet is positioned as the subject, while the hard-boiled egg it is in its hardened and cultured state reflects the symbolic plane. The detail of the cooked egg signifies that it is not an ordinary egg, but enveloped with a certain veil, the poet [the subject] mentioned in the poem serves as the spark whose purpose is to unveil something concealed "By his dactylic finger, to reveal/ the gleaming nacreous shape" (Hunting, 1969, p. 6). The poet must subtly unveil the underlying complexities. This veil is a representation of how the Imaginary works, it is a barrier that constructs the subject from directly relating to the other side, the plane of the Real. The 'nacreous shape' that shines like a formidable 'pearl' mirrors the poet's domestic circumstances, with the egg possibly serving as a central symbol that directly relates to her identity as a mother and housewife. The notion here perhaps replicates Lacan's own interpretation of the Real as navel, and the impenetrable core that is repressed (Homer, 2004, p.

84). Hunting's egg embodies the concept of inquiry, seeking to uncover 'the real thing' residing at the core of the egg, an entity of significant worth that "might once spring a phoenix to confound/ the ovoid gape of his astounded stare" (Hunting, 1969, p. 6). The subject is ostensibly a female figure in her symbolic natural environment, the 'kitchen,' engaging in symbolically appropriate activities for her role, yet internally experiencing a void and yearning for a profound revelation that could fill this emptiness.

The poem's title prompts inquiry into the "Bird," which is consumed in its pre-image as the egg remains. Their inception has been halted during formation, which may illustrate the manner in which a poet captures a moment in the midst of expression. The egg imagery extends beyond the poet's rhyming poem and is also present in her academic works³, Humpty Dumpty appears in Hunting's 'Morality of the Word,' where she depicts the egg-man as a representative of interpretation and meaning (Hunting, n.d., p. 8 Morality of the Word).

In her essay, Hunting portrays Humpty Dumpty as a figure capable of organizing chaos into coherence. She contends that the process of word formation is intrinsically moral. She asserts that words emerge from necessity, serving to reveal the concealed and articulate the voiceless (Hunting, n.d., p. 9 Morality of the Word). Humpty Dumpty capitalizes on the flexible and arbitrary nature of language. He serves as a metaphor for a black hole or an alchemical machine that transforms iron into gold, figurative into symbolic. He functions as a vacuum that absorbs arbitrariness and extracts nuance. This process parallels the Lacanian concept of the 'Real,' as it occupies the void and generates symbolic materialization that aligns with consensus. The speaker of the poem likely engages in a similar process; the poet devours the infant state of the word (Hunting, n.d., p. 10-11 Morality of the Word).

The poet grabs this 'Monstrous' fluid as if it's the river of creation and within this muse's pollen is 'the genuine thing' (Hunting, 1969, p. 6). The poem employs intricate imagery, illustrating how something is consumed before reaching full ripeness. Her symbolic use of imagery, such as the egg in "Bird in Hand," encapsulates themes of transformation, tension, and revelation, bridging the personal with the philosophical. By aligning with Lacanian frameworks, Hunting reclaims the mundane as a site of poetic introspection. Her work

³ Provided via E-mail by Sarah Baker Curator, Maine Women Writers Collection University of New England

underscores the power of language to traverse ambiguity, inviting readers to uncover hidden truths within ordinary experiences.

The image of the veil manifests in another poem by Hunting that focusses on home scenarios, "Miss Dickinson," evokes more profound mundane implications:

She cut the wrapping paper neatly
into rectangles—no one would ask why,
it was New England's way—you saved
against the day. No matter what. (Hunting, 1969, pp.7)

At first glance, the poem narrates the experience of Massachusetts women engaging in the practice of 'thrifting' and repurposing objects. The ladies of Amherst, peculiar individuals, are exceptional housekeepers (Hunting, 1969, p.7). They are equipped, ingenious, forward-thinking, and proactive in addressing requirements. Painting a symbolic portrait of tradition. All are essential attributes of the exemplary homemaker. The New England reference is an intrinsic element of Hunting's poetry; she contemplates her surroundings and discovers narratives and connections. "Miss Dickinson" possibly serves as a distinct tribute to Emily Dickinson, as the Maine poet expresses admiration for her and acknowledges significant influence from her work (*Bangor Daily News*, 1996). The poem transcends simple name-dropping, embodying the characteristics of a quintessential Dickinsonian work, with interspersed dashes that foster open-ended interpretations, brief stanzas, and an overall succinct composition. Nonetheless, the resemblance extends beyond just style. The poetry of Dickinson has distinctive traits, notably its capacity to convey philosophical and universal enquiries and insights via concise and well-chosen language:

Several of Nature's People
I know, and they know me
I feel for them a transport
Of Cordiality
But never met this Fellow
Attended or alone
Without a tighter Breathing
And Zero at the Bone. (Dickinson, 1924, p. 460)

In a 1996 *Bangor Daily* interview, Hunting praises Dickinson's poem, stating, "Not that she's [Emily Dickinson] simple, but there's a simple way about her." In the poem, Dickinson expresses her dread of snakes in a subtle and transparent manner. Dickinson conveys dread and hesitation via descriptions of the body's responses to this

experience (Parks, 2013, p. 21). Therefore, when Hunting writes in Miss Dickinson:

...but she,
compound of thrift and greed
in primstitched white,
preferred to catechize mortality
in the side year,...

And other lines:

...Thrift
may have special uses--
likely the household's
other women saved the string. (Hunting, 1969, p.7)

It ceases to remain a poem about household rituals and habits exchanged between Amherst women, in the Dickinsonian lens, the soul at the white heat as she refers to herself (Dickinson, 1924, p.173), might be interpreted as inquisition on the concept of mortality, she 'catechize[s]' adding to it a layer of religion and spirituality. Therefore, this knowledge in its description is esoteric, and is parallel to the plane of the Real, similar to the egg mentioned in the previous poem. This knowledge is preserved within households [the Symbolic], where it may possess unique applications [the Imaginary], particularly as other women accumulate string, culminating in a process of community and collaboration. This suggests that the discoveries made through thrifting and preservation are a shared endeavor among all women engaged in this pursuit, who regard their findings as sacred knowledge akin to scripture: "only an oracle of Amherst,/ Massachusetts, could command/ the gist of the matter..." (Hunting, 1969, p.7). The subject in the poem cherishes the veil, preserves it, and retains it for future use. they demonstrate an approach to the present's wrapping, stating, "...tear the wrapping paper precisely" to guarantee its preservation for future use. 'The wrapping paper' embodies the veil's meaning. The indescribable or the unknown has two elements: 'Thrift' and 'essence of the matter.' The need to save signifies the expectation of deficiency. Thrift seems to embody a mindset of using available resources in contingency situations. The essence of the matter can only be disclosed to an oracle (the subject's demise); this oracle, adorned in 'primstitched white' and interrogating mortality in the 'yard,' is not only deceased but strongly suggests her identity as the late poet Emily Dickinson, as indicated by the 'tittle.' White refers to Emily Dickinson, who is historically recognized as the lady in the white heat and is believed to have worn a distinctive white garment, currently preserved in the Emily Dickinson Museum in

Amherst, Massachusetts. Secondly, 'white' serves as a universal emblem of mortality, regeneration, and purity. Additionally, it evokes the Victorian-era concept of the "Angel of the House," symbolizing women as ornamental figures tasked with upholding the household's morals and embodying heavenly virtues: "the housewife became an unpaid worker, her presence in the home a spiritual...forced to play hostess to male inventions" (Seifert, 1980-1981, p.1).

The poem, "After the Stravinsky Concert" starts with a pierglass collapsing and having its 'cherub' section removed, the speaker quickly relates to the incidence to the death of their aunt's death, generating a figurative, and subconscious connection between the comparable roles of the Aunt and the pier glass:

One day the pier glass in the entrance hall
 swayed slightly, shuddered, and slid down the wall.
 Just so an aunt of mine
 was found once, sitting on the parquet
 in the same place near dawn, her wreath awry
 and roses on her breath; but that perhaps
 is neither here nor there, the glass uniting both
 having long since been carried to the lumber-room,
 leaving us nothing to reflect upon.
 The gilded frame
 was loosened and the mirror cracked. A cherub lost
 a flying ribbon and whatever
 had been underneath was only plaster. (Hunting, 1969, p. 17)

During her televised PBS interview with Sanford Phippin, Hunting articulates the profound impact of attending an all-Stravinsky concert: "When I was in college, I attended an all-Stravinsky concert⁴, which was my initial exposure to much of his work, and I emerged feeling that he transformed the world." "Following this concert, the world will be irrevocably altered" (2009). During Hunting's undergraduate years in the 1940s, her unmistakably progressive style and comparatively avant-garde gender insights undoubtedly position her as a poet ahead of her day. The poem "After the Stravinsky Concert" is structured as a poetic concerto comprising five sections, each corresponding to a movement in a concerto: *Introduzione: voce principale, Larghetto indeciso: vocina, Andante sostenuto: voce principale, Scherzo,*

⁴ An **all-Stravinsky concert** is a performance program dedicated entirely to the works of Igor Stravinsky. These concerts often feature a selection of his most famous compositions, showcasing his evolution as a composer across different styles, from Russian nationalism to neoclassicism and serialism.

mancando poco a poco: voce principale, Finale: grave assai: coro (Kennedy et al., 2024). The poet employs musical terminology to influence the poem's rhythm and mood, establishing a correlation between the experience of listening to a concerto and engaging with the poem. This form highlights the poem's rhythm, mood transitions, and theme development, akin to the flow of a concerto from introduction to conclusion. It perplexes the reader to question why, after experiencing this purported transforming spiritual milestone, the poet reflects on earlier occurrences that significantly pertain to home scenes and gender conflict. The line: 'girl though I was then, not yet risen/ from the kitchen' (Hunting, 1969, p. 17) creates a visual illusion suggesting the meaning concludes there; yet, in accordance with the rhyme and rhythm of the poetry composition, it becomes evident that the phrase is open-ended, with its significance extending into the following line. The enjambment word 'not yet risen' underscores the specific notion; it indicates that she has not departed from the kitchen, having not yet been introduced to it. 'Risen' signifies an angel ascending, reflecting the Victorian ideal of the angel in the home for women. It perpetuates the existing symbolic traditions. Additionally, it alludes to the pre-signification state, where the subject has yet to adopt the Symbolic traditions and rules into their consciousness.

The fractured mirror symbolizes a fracture in the Symbolic framework, lamented in the third line by the grandmother, who "...crowned herself/ innocent patroness of place and time" (Hunting, 1969, pp. 18), suggesting her fixed existence inside the mirror realm. The pierglass is encased in a golden frame, which the grandmother instructs to be preserved for future use, as it "...might someday be of use" (Hunting, 1999, pp. 18). This tendency to save parallels Miss Dickinson's wrapping paper, which has been seen as a symbol of the veil. Analogous to the frame, particularly depicted as 'gilded,' it encapsulates the symbolic essence, tradition, and inherited roles, such as the angel of the house. If this 'crack' jeopardises the symbolic structure, enquiries must be directed towards the grandmother's demeanour, who embodies this structure and the traditions it conveys, in light of her composed and accepting response: "Not half an hour before the fall, my grandmother/ had stood impaling with the perfect calm." The grandmother observing her reflection as the epitome of image: "The mirror gave her back her face/wondrously like: she knew/exactly where she was within the frame." She perceives time as 'frozen' and unaltered, providing her solace and possibly fortitude. The fourth section of the poem starts with a beautiful ambiance. Lucid depictions of 'garlands of light and flowers' that are 'unfurled' in a

'chiaroscuro' of green leading to a 'water' encapsulate a Wordsworthian essence:

Beyond, the ground-flowers in the meadows fairly hiccupped out of the grass, and the gilt-edged sun beat like a gong about the rooks all summer long wheeling and wheeling in the burnished sky.

(Hunting, 1969, p.19).

Following the vibrant and striking depiction of the garden's former condition, a sudden transition to a void ensues:

Something had altered by the time we came, something we could not put a finger on but felt insensibly the absence of (Hunting, 1969, p.19).

A feeling originating from an unidentified source. This passage is titled 'Sherzo mancando poco a poco,'⁵ indicating a joyful, vibrant segment in a concerto that progressively diminishes in intensity or loudness. The atmosphere stays buoyant, although the sound or speed gradually declines. The author may have meant for the poem to be seen as a musical composition, with each segment mirroring the speed and character of the musical elements. Childhood memories are recalled not solely through images but also through sensations; the feelings experienced in the past have dissipated, leaving only traces of memory to remind the speaker of what once existed. The vibrant realm of the past fades as she disengages from the memory and immerses herself in the present. This movement might be articulated as a detachment from the kid, who is more attuned to reality than a socialized adult, and therefore unable to see the 'chiaroscuro' of the scene with clarity, appearing instead 'veiled'. The poet skillfully contrasts truth and illusion, as the speaker reflects on the discovery of the pier-glass, contemplating if it has been fractured from its authentic 'shape' into a deceptive condition. Returning to the 'pier-glass' seen as a mirror that embodies a symbolic framework, the significance becomes far more profound. It analyses whether the 'crack' in the symbolic frame has shattered reality in the sense that the symbolic reality is parallel with the realm of the real, or if the 'crack' has removed a false veil, and exposed the Real:

⁵ Based on musical terminology, "**Scherzo**" – means a lively, playful piece of music, often in triple meter. While "**Mancando**" is an Italian term meaning "fading away" or "dying away" (gradually getting softer and slower), and "**Poco a poco**" is "little by little" or "gradually."

When we first found the pier-glass in the lumber-room we were amused a while to see how true had cracked so easily to false, or, it might be, from false to true; and minced and mimed,

(Hunting, 1969, p.19).

Utilizing Lacanian frameworks, the domestic imagery in Constance Hunting's poetry transcends mundane representations, revealing a psychological tapestry that conceals the intricacies of femininity. This exploration of female experience, characterized by its domestic universality, is conveyed across both space and time; indeed, the act of kneading dough or measuring ingredients may be more pertinent to a profound, universal experience than previously assumed. The cooking of an egg and the preservation of 'wrapping paper' exemplify connections between little, overlooked activities and enduring feminine inclinations to conserve, safeguard, and sustain. Lacanian psychoanalysis facilitates extended observation and elucidates the dynamics of desire and the constraints governing an individual's consciousness. When applied to poetic texts, particularly those that accommodate pre-lingual gestures, voids, repetitions, dashes, and unconventional grammatical structures, it reveals an underlying reservoir of surplus; an abundance of non-reiterated symbols, providing a glimpse into the 'real' that has long been obscured and concealed within dreams.

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