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**Prosopopoeial poetry of a visual prophetic transfiguration -
Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus" and David Bowie's "Lazarus"**

Abstract

Prosopopoeia, as a literary device is not uncommon in American literature, since authors have been using it throughout literary history in order to introduce a manufactured and contrived presentation of characters or personified things, that is, a feigned *sub specie personae*. However, it seems as if prosopopoeia has been neglected, misinterpreted and even disparaged for so long. This paper examines the importance of the usage of prosopopoeia as a literary device in revealing certain deeply personal and prophetic visions in poetry and art, through which the poet or artist announces or anticipates one's own imminent, expected death. Through the impersonation of the absent speaker or a personification, the language of the prosopopoeia has a purpose of transfiguration through a process of revealing the staggering horrors of inner struggles, thus becoming the enabling device through which one speaks about one's forthcoming, projected death. In this manner, this paper focuses more specifically on the adoption of such voices of the imagined Biblical figures in Sylvia Plath's poem "Lady Lazarus" who publicizes the approaching of her own personal tragic doom and resurrection by depicting an intense visual presentation of the horrors of the Holocaust's imagery. In addition, the paper will also refer to David Bowie's song lyrics and video "Lazarus" which similarly express a prophetic vision of the dead personal self, as well as the predictive resurrection and life after death through one's own immortal artistic legacy and output.

Key words: prosopopoeia, Bowie, Plath, Lazarus, transfiguration