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Autore	Heywood Leslie
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Nota di bibliografia

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Nota di contenuto

Claire got her gun: tracking the anorexic horizon. Personal bodies, struggles, contexts, legends -- Historical contexts, limits, positions, anorexic philosophy: Descartes, Plato, Hegel, Freud -- Consumer culture, Nike, the relentless logic of the gym -- Philosophical anorexics: the flip side. From female disease to textual ideal, or what's modernism got to do with it. Inside every fat body there's a thin body struggling to get out: more historical contexts -- The metaphysics of the flame: Fasting Girls, Kafka's Letters to Felice, and "A Hunger Artist" -- "The Female is a chaos": male anorexia in Eliot and Pound -- He who embraces the flesh: anorexia and gender in Williams. "Should be out of it": starving the feminine in Joseph Conrad. Text over flesh: Heart of Darkness and the fat man -- Fat is primitive: anorexia as historical progress in Falk. Missing persons: the black hole of the feminine in Jean Rhys. Rhys's life: booze and black holes -- The "Problem with no name" (reprise): the constitution of female subjectivity in the black hole -- Jean Rhys, sexual harassment and the academy: manifestations of the "First Death", or "Clipping your students wings -- Beyond negation (?): Wide Sargasso Sea.

Sommario/riassunto

In this passionate merging of personal history and scholarship, Leslie Heywood reveals the "anorexic logic" central to Western high culture. This logic privileges mind over body, masculine over feminine, individual over collective, control over emotion, and a realm of transcendence over the haphazardness of daily life. As clinical studies of anorexia show, this is the very logic adopted by millions of young American women today, to devastating effect. In literature this anorexic logic is embodied in high modernism, as Heywood shows in discussions of Kafka, Pound, Eliot, William Carlos Williams, and Conrad. In a compelling chapter on Jean Rhys, Heywood reveals an author struggling to develop a clean, spare, "anorexic" style in the midst of a shatteringly messy emotional life. As Heywood points out, students are trained in the aesthetic of high modernism, and academics are pressured into its straitjacket. The resulting complications are reflected in structures as diverse as gender identity formation, sexual harassment, and eating disorders. As Heywood reveals in an analysis of Nike ads and in a startling discussion of female bodybuilding, under the guise of individualism and self-determination the anorexic aesthetic confronts us every day in contemporary consumer culture.