# EGER JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

## VOLUME XVIII

EGER, 2018

EGER JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES VOLUME XVIII 2018

# EGER JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

VOLUME XVIII

EGER, 2018

Editors
Éva Antal
Csaba Czeglédi

Editorial Board
Siobhán Campbell, Open University
Irén Hegedűs, University of Pécs
Janka Kaščáková, Catholic University in Ružomberok
Jaroslav Kušnír, University of Prešov
Wojciech Małecki, University of Wrocław
Péter Pelyvás, University of Debrecen
Albert Vermes, Eszterházy Károly University

Language Editor
Karin Macdonald

HU ISSN: 1786-5638 (Print)
HU ISSN: 2060-9159 (Online)

http://anglisztika.ektf.hu/new/index.php?tudomany/ejes/ejes

A kiadásért felelős:
az Eszterházy Károly Egyetem rektora
Megjelent az EKE Líceum Kiadó gondozásában
Kiadóvezető: Nagy Andor
Tördelőszerkesztő: Molnár Gergely

Megjelent: 2018. december Példányszám: 80
Készült: az Eszterházy Károly Egyetem nyomdájában, Egerben

Vezető: Kérészy László

# Modern Theories of the Sublime: The Question of Presentation[1]

Kamila Vránkova

This article considers the question of the sublime with respect to modern aesthetic and philosophical attitudes, drawing on the notion of the unpresentable. It refers to Bataille's concern with desire, Deleuze's concept of intensity, Lyotard's opposition between the sublime and nothingness, Lévinas's relationship between the self and the other, Derrida's parergon, Lacan's exploration of traumatic experience, Žižek´s connection of the sublime and ideology, Jameson's exploration of technological sublime, and also theological effort to revive the links between the sublime and the beautiful. The aim of the paper is not to provide a comprehensive overview of the topic but rather to show its complexity, ambiguity and inspiring potential in contemporary culture. As Jean-Luc Nancy points out, since Boileau´s translation of Longinus, aesthetics has not ceased to pursue the question of the sublime (Gasché and Taylor 1). The sublime constitutes our tradition as a transgressive category that is connected with philosophy, religion, literature, art, music, and architecture. The study of the sublime continues to inspire literary theory and becomes an important key to the analysis of particular themes and motifs, especially in the texts influenced by the English Gothic novels, which draw on the experience of fear and desire and highlight the role of imagination. As it has been pointed out by contemporary criticism, the postmodern revives the sublime as an important element of aesthetics. On the one hand, it retains the Romantic concern with the unlimited, on the other hand, it does not share the Romantic idea of a higher faculty of art that could synthetize and reconcile subject and object. To use the words of Philip Shaw, the difference between Romanticism and modernism with its nostalgia for the lost unity and postmodernism can be considered, with regard to their contrasting attitudes to the unpresentable. While in Romanticism the unpresentable is associated with the divine as the "religious or noumenal 'other' of human conception" (Shaw 119), postmodern culture focuses on the sense of the unpresentable as "absolutely other" (Shaw 116), and turns the unpresentable into a synonym of the sublime. In the present paper I attempt to discuss various aspects

[1] This article can be considered an attempt to delineate a brief outline of several tendencies in the development of the concept of the sublime in modern literary theory. In this respect, it will be revised and used as a part of a wider discussion of the metamorphoses of the sublime, which will be published by the University of South Bohemia in 2019.

DOI: 10.33035/EgerJES.2018.18.3

of the sublime as defined by several representatives of modern aesthetic theory and philosophy, in particular, by Bataille, Deleuze, Lyotard, Lévinas, Derrida, Lacan, Žižek, and Jameson.

The central role of the unknown in the concept of the sublime is claimed by George Bataille's influential study *Inner Experience*, discussing the question of excess and the exceptional states of mind like ecstasy, rapture or mystical experience as the "ultimate in human potentialities" (Bataille 2012, 221).[2] Discussing the role of the sensual and intellectual visions and apprehensions of God as they are described by St John and St Theresa, Bataille enters polemics with traditional Christianity. For him, both kinds of visions represent particular knowledge that does not allow the subject to enter an authentic relationship with the power of the sublime. In accordance, Bataille does not find the sublime in any religious experience based on dogma, as dogma represents a limit preventing the mind from going beyond its horizon. Moreover, Bataille's analysis of desire, especially the association of taboo and transgression, is echoed in the work of Lacan, and his influence can also be found in the texts of Foucault, Barthes and Derrida. Dealing with the inexpressible, the impossible, as well as with the missed encounter with 'the Real' as the object of anxiety defying words and categories and recalling the effects of trauma, they connect the sublime with what lies beyond the system of language and resists symbolization.

The links between modern/postmodern discussions of the sublime and the transcendental philosophy of Kant are examined by Gilles Deleuze, whose treatise *Kant's Critical Philosophy* (1983) focuses on Kant's third critique, *Critique of Judgement*—a remarkable synthesis of Kant's previous inquiries. Though Deleuze represents a different kind of thinking, his account of the Kantian conflict between imagination and reason echoes his own understanding of intensity. In a discordant accord, faculties (sensibility, imagination, memory, thought) are "capable of relationships which are free and *unregulated*, where each goes to its own limit and nevertheless shows the possibility of some sort of harmony with the others" (Deleuze 2008, xi).

According to Deleuze, this paradox, in which sensibility becomes an origin of knowledge, allows *Critique of Judgment* to be considered as the "foundation of Romanticism." (Deleuze 2008, xi). At the same time, Kant's notion of "the split between the empirical ego and the transcendental subject," involving a possibility of reconciliation of the faculties, corresponds with Deleuze's idea of the "fractured

[2] According to Bataille, excess is connected with tears and laughter, eroticism and death, sacrifice and poetry.

self" and with his concept of difference ("difference in itself").[3]

Dealing with the experience of shock or trauma, the postmodern concepts of the sublime draw on a paradoxical desire to speak about what cannot be uttered in words. In this respect, the sublime is a protest against the notion of silence as nothingness, or indifference. Corresponding with the inexpressible as an urgent presence of something (instead of nothing), it is associated with what cannot be spoken and cannot remain in silence at the same time. As, for instance, it is suggestively evoked by postmodern Gothic fiction, traumatic experience results in the collapse of the ability to describe a particular experience in a narrative (Hogle 268–9).[4] Distorted, hallucinated and nightmarish images haunt the heroes with a recurrent urgency echoing the original, and repressed, moment of terror. In this respect, the inexpressible is associated with the uncanny as defined by Nicholas Royle: with the "strange, weird and mysterious" nature of "the beginning" that is "already haunted," involving a notion of fatal coincidences and repetitions, and conveying a strong (though unconscious) sense of a "death-drive" (Royle 1–2).

It is the feature of unpresentability that permeates J.-F. Lyotard's definition of the postmodern. Drawing on Burke's idea of privation in darkness, silence and emptiness as a source of the sublime, Lyotard discusses the experience of absence in terms of terror: a "threatening void" (Slocombe 65). Fred Botting, analysing the consequences of postmodern cultural fragmentation and plurality, connects this empty space with the growing gap between human subjectivity and technological / commercial concerns. The moral authority, as well as the individual, familial, or national identity are suppressed, giving way to the intensification of anxiety sprung from the cultural exhaustion, in other words, the "black hole of horror which no single figure can fill" (Hogle 277–99). The decline of moral and paternal authority leads to the idea of transgression as a "positive act" (Hogle 286), to growing uncertainty and the loss of meaning, to "excess, waste, and uselessness" (Hogle 285), permeating postmodern culture. Lyotard's idea of the unpresentable, however, reflects the influence of Kant and Lévinas (Slocombe 64) as it involves a demand of the ethical relationship towards the other. As Will Slocombe observes, Lyotard, in fact, adds Lévinasian ethics to Kantian aesthetics, replacing the Enlightenment's rational moral code with a Lévinasian idea of the individual responsibility, which is considered a radicalization of rather than a deviation from

[3] Cf. https/plato.stanford.edu/entries/deleuze

[4] In particular, this idea is expressed in Stephen Bruhm´s chapter "Contemporary Gothic: why we need it," where he describes the Gothic genre as a narrative of trauma.

Kant's ideas.[5] The nature of postmodern discourse with its refusal of finality and totality, echoes, in a way, the ethical, face-to-face relationship between 'self' and 'other.' The desire for reunion and for knowledge – incorporating the 'other' into the 'self' – is replaced by a demand of responsibility towards the other: the demand that the other must retain its difference. Thus, the ethical aspect of the sublime is secured by the distance between the subject and object; the distance that must not be lessened but confirmed.

Renée van de Vall connects this distance with a special role of absence and silence in the postmodern sublime, considering Lyotard's concept of silence as something that is 'other' to discourse: "Silence indicates inevitable gaps in our comprehension, gaps that should be respected, rather than bridged." (Slocombe 64). According to Lyotard, silence does not lead towards expression but towards the notion of the inexpressible. In his discussion of the sublime, Lyotard uses the example of abstract painting to show that the absence of representation may result either in silence as the absence of a representative language, or in invisibility as the absence of representative symbols: "The current of abstract painting has its source, from 1912, in this requirement for indirect and all but ungraspable allusion to the invisible in the visible. The sublime, and not the beautiful, is the sentiment called forth by these works." (Lyotard 1991, 126).

The postmodern imagination searches for new ways of presentation to suggest a stronger sense of the unpresentable, for instance, the concept of infinity, to present the failure of comprehension (and of the effort to present), to put the "unpresentable in presentation itself." (Lyotard 1984, 81). In this respect, the ultimate mode of expression might be "pure abstraction" (Shaw 116), which will "enable us to see only by making it impossible to see." (Lyotard 1984, 78). In this regard, the sublime is considered a disruptive event, a shock that prevents the superiority of the rational over the real. A traumatic experience, however, can be interpreted as an "indicator of presence" (Slocombe 146–47), not of absence, and a bearer of meaning. In other words, whatever causes emotions makes the individual experience more authentic and intense. In the Gothic tales of terror, accordingly, the sublime as a disruptive event is implied by a wide range of uncanny images coinciding (as well as counteracting) with unutterable fears of nothingness and meaninglessness. In Lyotard's interpretation of Newman's paintings, the sublime counteracts annihilating terror hidden in the possibility that "soon nothing more

[5] Lyotard's *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, for example, discusses Kant's idea of the sublime, pointing out in the final chapter that, for Kant, it is resistance, not morality itself, that is sublime, reflecting a tension between a moral will and empirical desire (cf. resistance to passions, fear, temptation).

will take place," allowing us to feel that "something will happen," that "everything is not over" (Lyotard 1989, 140–149). Lyotard's analysis of the sublime moment as a point at which the self can be reconstituted, in a way, develops and modifies the Lévinasian moral demand to support the other person's right for life in its otherness, and in its continuity: Lévinas's demand not to kill corresponds, in fact, with Lyotard's command to be. It is in the acceptance and support of the other (the unknowable and the inexplicable) that the sublime can be experienced and the fullness and intensity of life can be achieved.

The question of limitlessness in the Kantian theory of the sublime is discussed in Derrida's *Truth in Painting* (1978). Analysing Kant's distinction between the beautiful (which is given form by the presence of a limit) and the sublime (which is formless and unbounded), Derrida draws on Kant's brief reference to the term "parergon" in *Critique of Judgment*, and gives it a central position in his concept of the sublime. Dealing with the meaning of parergon as a frame of the work of art, Derrida suggests that "there cannot, it seems, be a parergon for the sublime" (Derrida 127). Phillip Shaw, however, points out that the word "seems" offers a possibility that the sublime is perceived in the connection with limits, in contrast to the Romantic notion of the sublime, as wholly other or beyond.[6]

For Kant, imagination is unable to comprehend the concept of infinity (or the formless). Though the true sublime cannot relate to "any sensible form" and therefore, "refuses all adequate presentation" Derrida 124), this failure to present infinity can be presented (or bounded), in the words of Derrida, by the unbounded power of reason. In this respect, the ability to present our inability to comprehend (pointed out also by Lyotard) constitutes the sublime. At the same time, as Shaw or Botting have claimed, there is no sense of the unbounded that does not refer to the idea of a limit, and there is no limit which does not imply the notion of the unlimited. In Botting's analysis of the Gothic sublime, it is transgression that gives the limit its power (Botting 7–9). For Jean-Luc Nancy, the "movement of the unlimited" takes place "on the border of the limit," that is, at the "border of presentation" (Nancy 35). As Philip Shaw sums it up, the pleasure of the sublime arises from "the setting of, rather than the overcoming of, limits" (Shaw 118); in other words, from the activity of framing.

Nevertheless, the sublime remains a "disruptive event, forcing critical thought to a crisis" (Shaw 129). In Derrida's deconstructive concept of parergon, the sublime destroys the signifier or representer: it "expresses itself only by marking

---

[6] Shaw uses Kant's example of the pyramids, which can produce the sublime feeling only when perceived from a certain distance and a particular point, for instance, when a conceptual frame (parergon) is established (Shaw 117–118).

in its expression the annihilation of expression". In other words, the form, or the act of forming "is destroyed through what it expresses, explains, or interprets" (Derrida 125). Thus, the value of the sublime consists in its resistance to rationalist appropriation, as well as to any effort of finalization or totality as described by Lévinas and Lyotard.

It is this rejection of clearly defined forms that characterizes postmodern literature in its development from magic realism and absurdity to apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction. According to Slocombe, following Esslin's analysis of the theatre of the absurd and using Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969) as an example, postmodern fiction originates in the "absurd sublime," dealing with the conflict between what can be measured and controlled and what escapes all rules and definitions: "If totalitarianism, that which gave rise to the Holocaust, was a result of defining reality, then the promulgation of new realities […] was a way in which ontological totalitarianism could be avoided" (Slocombe 117). As Martin Procházka points out, it is the "horror of emptiness," in other words, of "the absolute otherness of death" that accompanies the departure from traditional patterns of experience and permeates the fragmentary projections of imaginary worlds (Procházka 2005, 79–106). Postmodern techniques, in correspondence with Lyotard's views, reflect the intensification of fear and anxiety as a significant attribute of the sublime, which is supported by the traumatic events of the 20th and 21st centuries. All certainties are shaken by the gradation of the meaningless outbursts of violence, and a mind tortured by this unbearable reality can be relieved only by the power of imagination.

Accordingly, postmodern interpretations of the sublime confirm the juxtaposition of the sublime and the beautiful, referring to the notions of fragmentation and disharmony, as well as to the nihilistic concerns with absurdity, meaninglessness and nothingness. Moreover, the original (pre-Burkean) idea of the sublime as a transcendental experience is repeatedly challenged by materialist concepts of sublimity in deconstructive, psychoanalytic and feminist perspectives. For Derrida or Paul de Man, for example, sublimity is an effect of signification (Antal 22), while Christine Battersby and Barbara Freeman consider the sublime experience with respect to the concept of gender. The post-Freudian critics Harold Bloom, Thomas Weiskel or Neil Hertz defend a psychological approach, which is employed also by Jacques Lacan and his interest in alienated identity.

This French psychoanalyst, before Derrida, Paul de Man or Lyotard, connects his interest in the sublime (as the excessive and the unbounded) with the problem of individual identity. Drawing on Kant, Freud, and also on the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, for example, in his "Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason since Freud," he poses a new and original approach to

Freud's psychoanalytical concerns. For Lacan, there is no extralinguistic identity of the human subject, and the unconscious is structured like a language, which makes subjectivity (and identity) but an effect of language. The desire for the unattainable "ideal I" is urged by the gap between the "I" as a subject who speaks and the "I" as an object that is spoken of. The problem of alienated identity, or the split of the self, is related to the imaginary state of being. The subjects' inability to accept this split is connected with their insistence on their "idealized mirror image" (Shaw 133) in the desire for wholeness. The violation of the sense of wholeness, according to Lacan, is rooted in the experience of a child, who, after entering the symbolic world of linguistic and social structures, recognizes the difference between the symbol (the word 'mother'), and the real thing (the particular person). It is here, "at the heart of the symbolic" (Shaw 134), that the desire for the lost object (the 'real thing'), in other words, the desire for the other, is born. The 'Real' in Lacan's theory refers to what cannot be presented or imagined, what can be felt as a gap in our effort to complete the meaning, and, in this respect, it becomes sublime.

Lacan's discussion of the links between language and the sublime can be found in his study *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1960), including his interpretation of Sophocles's tragic character of Antigone. Antigone, as a sublime object, both attractive and fearful, whose defiance goes to the limit of signification, points to "the-beyond-of-the signified," in other words, to the "fundamental emptiness" of the gap without which no signification would be possible (Shaw 135). At the same time, the sublime object as an ordinary, unattainable object of desire may contribute to the tension between the sublime and the ridiculous, as it can be seen, for example, in the films of David Lynch. Here, 'the Real' emerges as an insistent and obscure image, reflected in the recurrent, enigmatic motifs implying the heroes' obsessions.

Lacan's concept is, in fact, developed in Slavoj Žižek's analysis of the sublime as an indicator of a traumatic emptiness "at the heart of all forms of symbolization" (Shaw 138). In his study *How to Read Lacan*, Žižek explains Lacan's employment of the Freudian unconscious: "The unconscious is not the preserve of wild drives that have to be tamed by the ego, but the site where a traumatic truth speaks out" (Žižek 2006, 3). In this respect, Lacanian psychoanalysis "confronts individuals with the most radical dimension of human existence," with an "unbearable truth" they have to live with as it emerges into their reality (Žižek 2006, 3–4). Žižek uses the examples of E. A. Poe's "Descent into the Maelström" or Kurtz's reference to horror at the end of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. According to Žižek, the notion of sublimity in these texts is evoked at "the intersection of the Imaginary and the Real," where imagination is stretched to the "very boundary of the unpresentable," and "the Real" corresponds with the incomprehensible and "the most terrifying

[…] primordial abyss […] dissolving all identities" (Žižek 2006, 64). The Lacanian sublime, in its link with the disturbing and indecipherable psychic processes, supports the idea that fantasy plays a key role in the development of our attitude to reality.

Drawing on Lacan's ideas, Slavoj Žižek employs the Kantian definition of the sublime as something vast and powerful in his concept of ideology. Unlike Terry Eagleton, who in his *Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990) connects ideology with the beautiful (the presentation of harmony without dissonances), Žižek's *Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989) points out that ideology focuses on what cannot be presented but must be presupposed, i.e. hinted at in political or religious discourses so that the notion of collective integrity could be achieved. In other words, ideology requires the "sublime objects" as God, the king, the fuehrer, the race, the party, people, or the obstacles (enemies) like Demon, Jews, the bourgeois, etc. There is a transcendent idea (the divine, the state) and its materialization, or, as Philip Shaw puts it, "the object that embodies the lack that is the Idea" (Christ, the king). In this respect, the concept of the enemy, for example, "the Jew," becomes a "paranoid construction" (Žižek 1989, 127), rooted in the inability to accept the sublime in the terrifying emptiness of "the Real." It is the parallel with the idea of the sublime in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* that allows Žižek to explain why the subjects following a particular ideology cannot usually express in words what they believe in. As he points out, all successful ideologies draw on the sublime objects that should make the subjects realize the inadequacy of their perception and knowledge.[7]

Žižek's concern with the aesthetics of the sublime involves also his analysis of art, literature, film and music, in particular, of the links between the work of art and the fascination with the repressed object of desire. Concentrating on contemporary art, Žižek observes the relation between the sublime and the ridiculous, connected with the fact that "anything […] can serve as an indicator of the sublime" (Shaw 142). A detailed discussion of the above mentioned David Lynch can be found in Žižek's study *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime* (2000), dealing with doubles, immoral and rude father figures, attractive young women as sublime objects, and the female/masculine sexuality based on the Oedipus complex. For Žižek, sublimity is an effect of appearances in finite and sensible forms drawing on contradiction: a material limit that resists sublimation is necessary for the sublime to be evoked.

The revival of the concern with the sublime is reflected also in contemporary analytic philosophy, drawing on formal logic, mathematics and natural sciences.

[7] An extreme example of this situation can be found in the concluding passages of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).

Frederic Jameson, for example, reformulates the sublime in terms of technology: it is the terrifying power of technology that exceeds human abilities.[8] Tsang Lap Chuen, a Chinese analytic philosopher, in his study *The Sublime: Groundwork towards a Theory* (1998), influenced by the ideas of Freud, Lévi-Strauss and Wittgenstein, connects the sublime experience with liminal situations in life considered to be crucial moments of human experience.

Jos de Mul, a Dutch philosopher discussing the influence of hypermedia on literary theory, deals with the term technological sublime.[9] Jameson also uses the term "hysterical sublime," which becomes an important component of his analysis of postmodernism. Rooted in the fascination with the enormous potential of human intellect and in accordance with the Enlightenment discourse, the technological sublime reflects the transformation of power from divine nature to human technology, which is (as it was suggested already by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or by Victorian literary reflections on the Industrial Revolution) marked by a similar ambiguity: in the course of the 20th century, enthusiasm for the possibilities offered by new technologies, reflected, for example, in Futurism, has transformed into fear of technology as a hostile force that both controls and threatens us (De Mul 2011).

Drawing on David E. Nye's study *American Technological Sublime* (1994), de Mul refers to the sublime of factories and nuclear power plants, the sublime of aviation, the sublime of war machinery, and, last but not least, the sublime of the computer: the "combinatorial explosion" echoing Kant's mathematical sublime, or the manipulative and destructive potential of our inventions as a reconsideration of the dynamical sublime. As Nye observes, since the 19th century in American tradition the enthusiasm for the natural sublime has been gradually replaced by the eagerness about the technological sublime. The 21st century is considered a period which ends the individual's choice between acceptance and rejection of technology. An attempt to re-examine the sublime against the background of new communication technologies, media and technological artistic production can also be found in the work of the Italian philosopher Mario Costa, following the ideas of James Kirwan. According to Costa, the manifestation of digital technologies influences art and aesthetics in the sense of weakening of the role of the subject in

8 See particular articles appear in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* or *The British Journal of Aesthetics,* for example, Anthony Savile's "Imagination and Aesthetic Value," in British Journal of Aesthetics, Vol. 46, No. 3, *British Society of Aesthetics,* July 2006, 248–58.

9 The term "technological sublime" was first used by an American historian Perry Miller in his study *The Life of the Mind in America* (1970), linking the technological growth of the early 19th century (the steamboat, the railroad) to the feelings of awe and wonder bordering on religious reverence.

art, as well as in the "suppression of the symbolic and the meaning."[10]

On the other hand, theology scholars, including A.J. Milbank or Elaine Scarry, try to re-examine the notion of the divine in the sublime experience and question the separation of the sublime and the beautiful, linking it to the blockage of the mind in its passage from the sensible to the transcendental. Pointing to the medieval and Patristic periods, as well as to Platonism and Neoplatonism, they try to revive the links between the beautiful and the divine, between the limited and the unlimited: the unlimited could be considered as "an unimaginable infinite fullness of beautiful form" (Shaw 151), while sublimity could be perceived as a mode of beauty. For Milbank, the influence of the Kantian sublime results in "the divine emptied of all positive content" (Shaw 151), which, according to him, reflects the growing influence of Protestantism in the Western tradition with its selfless, disinterested form of love or worship instead of passion.

Nevertheless, as Jean-Luc Nancy observes, the sublime, in all its contexts, implies an intense experience and the feeling of desire together with the notions of movement and passage. Furthermore, it is through the sublime that the beautiful, paradoxically, retains its quality of beauty. Without the disturbing character of the sublime, the beautiful would be in constant danger of sliding into the merely "agreeable," corresponding with personal liking or taste. To use Nancy's words, "in the beautiful as satisfied or satisfying, the beautiful is finished – and art along with it" (Nancy 33). The role of the beautiful, according to Nancy, consists in the limit, in a place of equivocation but also of exchange, between the agreeable and the sublime, "between enjoyment and joy." It is in the departure from itself into the sublime that the beautiful can attain "its proper quality" (Nancy 33–34).

In conclusion, the sublime permeates the history of our culture as a variety of "emotional configurations" responding to the changing social, philosophical, religious and aesthetic concepts, and defying any final definition (De Mul 2011). As with the phenomenon of Romanticism discussed by Martin Procházka in his analysis of M. H. Abrams, each period can be said to offer an opportunity to create a new space, and a new "interpretative frame," for the study of the sublime (Abrams 363). It is the ability of the sublime to question the nature of frames that turns it into a constant challenge open to new interpretations and entering various fields of research. In the area of literature, it supports comparative and interdisciplinary approaches, enlarging the potential of the textual analysis.

[10] Cf. Costa, Mario. *Phenomenology of New Tech Arts.* Artmedia: University of Salermo, 2005; or "Paysages du sublime." *Revue d'Esthetique* 39. Paris, 2001, 125–133.

**Works Cited**

Abrams, M.H. 2001. *Zrcadlo a lampa* (*The Mirror and the Lamp*). Trans. Martin Procházka. Praha: Triáda.

Antal, Éva. 2009. *Beyond Rhetoric. Rhetorical Figures of Reading*. Eger: Líceum Kiadó.

Bataille, George. 2012. *Eroticism.* Trans. Mary Dalwood, London, New York: Penguin Books.

Bataille, George. 1988. *Inner Experience.* Trans. Leslie A. Boldt, New York: State University of New York Press.

Botting, Fred. 2004. *Gothic*. London and New York: Routledge.

Burke, Edmund. 1998. *A Philosophical Enquiry.* Ed. Adam Phillips, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Costa, Mario. 2005. *Phenomenology of New Tech Arts*. Artmedia: University of Salermo.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1994. *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton, London: The Athlone Press.

Deleuze, Gilles. 2008. *Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, London, New York: Continuum.

De Mul, Jos. 2011. "The Technological Sublime." *Next Nature Network*, July 17th. https://www.nextnature.net/2011/07/the-technological-sublime.

Derrida, Jacques. 1987. *The Truth in Painting*. Trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Ferguson, Frances. 1992. *Solitude and the Sublime.* New York and London, Routledge.

Frye, Paul H. 1987. "The Possession of the Sublime." *Studies in Romanticism. The Sublime: A Forum* 26.2: 187–207.

Gasché, Rodolphe and Taylor, M.C., eds. 1993. *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Hogle, J. E. 2012. *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jackson, Rosemary. 2003. *Fantasy. The Literature of Subversion*. London and New York: Routledge.

Kant, Immanuel. 2008. *Critique of Judgment*. Trans. J.C. Meredith, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kant, Immanuel. 2003. *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*. Trans. John T. Goldthwait, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Kirwan, James. 2005. *Sublimity: The Non-Rational and the Irrational in the History of Aesthetics*. New York and London: Routledge.

Lévinas, Emmanuel. 1994. *Etika a nekonečno* (Ethics and Infinity). Ed. Miroslav Petříček, trans. Věra Dvořáková and Miroslav Reichert, Prague: Oikoymenh.

Lévinas, Emmanuel. 1997. *Totalita a nekonečno. Esej o exterioritě* (Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority). Ed., transl. Miroslav Petříček, jr. & Jan Sokol, Prague: Oikoymenh.

Librett, Jeffrey S. 1993. "Positing the Sublime: Reading Heidegger Reading Kant." *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*. Ed. Rodolphe Gasché and M.C. Taylor, New York: State University of New York Press.

Longinus. 1965. *On Sublimity*. Trans. D.A. Russel, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. 1991. *Inhuman*: *Reflections on Time*. Trans. Geoff Benningron and Rachel Bowlby, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lyotard, J.-F. 1989. "Newman: The Instant." *The Lyotard Reader*. Transl. David Macy, ed. Andrew Benjamin, London: Blackwell, 240–49.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. 1989. "The Sublime and the Avant-Garde." *The Lyotard Reader*. Trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Marian Hobson, ed. Andrew Benjamin. Oxford: Blackwell.

Lyotard, J.-F. 1984. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Brian Massumi, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Lyotard, J.-F. 1989. "The Sublime and the Avant –Garde." *The Lyotard Reader.* Trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Marian Hobson, ed. Andrew Benjamin, Oxford: Blackwell.

Man, Paul de. 1983. *Blindness and Insight*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. 1993. "The Sublime Offering." *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*. Ed. Nancy, Jean-Luc, transl. Jeffrey S. Librett, New York: State University of New York.

Procházka, Martin. 2001. "Smysl romantismu v knihách M.H. Abramse" (The Meaning of Romanticism in M.H. Abrams's Works). Abrams, M.H., *Zrcadlo a lampa*, (*The Mirror and the Lamp*), Praha: Triáda, 354–363.

Procházka, Martin. 2005. "Apocalypticism in American Cultural History 2: Revelations of the Other," *Litteraria Pragensia*. 15. 30: 79–106.

Royle, Nicholas. 2003. *The Uncanny*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Savile, Anthony. 2006. "Imagination and Aesthetic Value." *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 46. 3: 248–58.

Shaw, Philip. 2006. 1987. *The Sublime*. London and New York: Routledge.

Simpson, David. "Commentary: Updating the Sublime." *Studies in Romanticism*. 26.2: 245–58. https://doi.org/10.2307/25600650

Slocombe, Will. 2006. *Nihilism and the Sublime Postmodern. The (Hi)Story of a Difficult Relationship from Romanticism to Postmodernism*. London & New York: Routledge.

Weiskel, Thomas. 1976. *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Zammito, John. 1992. *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Žižek, Slavoj. 1989. *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso.

Žižek, Slavoj. 2006. *How to Read Lacan*. London: Granta Books.

# *From Rhetoric to Psychology: the Metamorphosis of the Sublime in Eighteenth-Century British Literary Aesthetics (1700–1740)*

Zoltán Cora

In the first half of the eighteenth century the notion of the sublime was becoming increasingly heterogeneous. It can be explained, as I have recently argued, by an intensifying psychologizing tendency driven by a growing sensitivity in aesthetic perceptions (Cora 2014, 2016). In this paper I intend to further examine the diversification of the concept through looking at the eighteenth-century British reception of Longinus' *On Great Writing* (*On the Sublime*), an open text continuously read and reread by British authors, thus tracing the genealogy of the concept from Alexander Pope to John Baillie. Samuel Johnson's *magnum opus*, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) serves as a starting point for my inquiry, as it sums up all the major features associated with sublimity in the examined period. When defining the sublime as "the grand or lofty style," Johnson cites Pope's praise of Longinus, quotes Addison and identifies John Milton's work as the best English example of sublime poetry (Wood 195). Johnson's entry on the sublime also draws attention to the fact that not only did the concept undergo a considerable alteration, but it also became widely known by the end of the examined period.

## Alexander Pope and the Longinian Tradition of the Sublime

Gaining considerable plaudits in a relatively short period, Alexander Pope, the 'national critic' and the author of *An Essay on Criticism* (1711) became an *arbiter elegantiae* besides Addison and Shaftesbury in the early eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson praises Pope's style for "exhibit[ing] every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify composition—selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression" (qtd. in Fairer 25). In relation to the *Essay*, Johnson primarily focuses on Pope's congeniality and the sublimity of his style, the latter in line with Pope's own praise of Longinus. Interpreting Pope's thought within the wider context of literary taste, Johnson evaluates stylistic merits simultaneously with their propriety and rationality, justifiably, as in Pope's work the great thought of Longinus, which inspires the sublime, also becomes coupled with Wit on the wings of Pegasus:

DOI: 10.33035/EgerJES.2018.18.17

True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance,
'Tis not enough no harshness gives Offence,
The Sound must seem an Eccho to the Sense.
Soft is the Strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth Stream in smoother Numbers flows;
But when loud urges lash the sounding Shore,
The hoarse, rough Verse shou'd like the Torrent roar.
(*Essay* 362–369)

Within Pope's system of the ethics and didactics of taste, swiftly and elegantly moving sublimity is to be joined with Sweetness and Light (11–16), Candor and Truth (562–563), as well as with Ease (362). In order to highlight the edifying qualities a good critic ought to follow and fulfill if he wishes to achieve sublimity, Pope also lists the opposites of these qualities: meanness and witlessness (36–41); lack of independence, avarice, the platitudinous and the untrue (566–583). What is more, he often plays with light, if he discusses the clear, grand and sublime style as well as criticism, and thus represents the requisites of clarity metaphorically, too:

But true Expression, like the' unchanging Sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all Objects, but it alters none. (*Essay* 315–317)

Pope is less benevolent with the 'lowlanders of Parnassus', when he further demonstrates the relevance of this view in his *Peri Bathous* (On the Profound).[1] He defends the classical grounds of the sublime by ironically instructing the reader in how to reach perfectly low expressions, literary depths and vacuity of sense. In this way Pope renders an inverse reading of the sublime: by a pendant-like logic of showing every stylistic and rhetoric aspect of the opposition between the Sublime and the Profound. If aesthetic perfection is an art, then *bathos*, the lowest possible thought and expression is also an art form.

I doubt not but the reader […] begins to be convinced of the truth of our assertion, that the *Bathos* is an *art*; and that the genius of no mortal whatever, following the mere ideas of nature, and unassisted with an habitual, nay laborious peculiarity of thinking, could arrive at images so wonderfully low and unaccountable. (Pope 2008, 205)

[1] *Peri Bathous: or, Martinus Scriblerus, his Treatise of the Art of Sinking in Poetry*. Published on 8 March 1728 in the third volume of Pope-Swift *Miscellanies*.

In his quest for achieving refined taste, writing a parody on the *Peri Hypsous* (On the Sublime) aimed to defoil the "works of the unlearned" (Rogers 2008, 630–631). Pope creates direct correspondence between himself and Longinus, "the secretary of the renowned Zenobia", even in the mock-praise of the 'profound', the 'highest' cannot stand without the 'lowest' (Pope 2008, 196). In order to demonstrate and prove this point, Pope explores all the figures and tropes to bring forth the bathos in an admirably satiric manner, using puns on adversaries to advantage (Blackmore, Curll, Cibber, Theobald, Dennis, etc.). In this aspect, it is in direct relation to *The Dunciad* as well.[2] The most essential features of the *bathos* are affectation, pertness, needless complexity, confusion and obfuscation in contrast to the ideals of simplicity, decorum, point and directness (Pope 2008, 206–230; Rogers 2008, 631–632).

In addition to this, Pope's views on the sublime—just like those of Addison and Shaftesbury—can only be understood in the wider context of his thoughts on literary taste, laid out in his *Essay* imitating Horace's *Ars poetica*.[3] Aesthetic questions in general were discussed in relation to the question of taste because art was seen to serve didactic and moral purposes. Pope's judgements of taste revolve around two key concepts: manners and the ability of distinguishing between the beautiful and the ugly.[4] "Manners" are the skill of distinguishing between good and bad, which ideally aims to create a humorous, tolerant and perceptive rapport:

> Be niggards of advice on no pretence;
> For the worst avarice is that of sense.
> With mean complaisance ne'er betray your trust,
> Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.
> Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;
> Those best can bear reproof who merit praise. (*Essay* 578–583)[5]

In this respect, Pope adhered to the intentions of the Martinus Scriblerus Club. In the congenial wording of Pat Rogers, the club "perfected a kind of high-spirited spoofing, involving parody, intellectual practical jokes, and an onslaught upon all things pedantic" (Rogers, 2008, xiv). All of the Scriblerus Club's members took pains to establish an educated public discourse, in which artistic performances

---

[2] For examples of parallels with *The Dunciad*, see Rogers (2008, 631–632). The most important authors overlapping in the two works are Addison, Aphra Behn, Cleveland, Dennis, Eusden, Nathaniel Lee, Ambrose Philips, Quarles, Steele, Theobald and Tickell.

[3] It is John Dennis whom Pope regarded as a bad critic, who provoked Pope into writing a theory of art and literary criticism in a poetic form (Rogers, 1975, 29).

[4] On the forerunners of Pope with regard to this, see Fairer (34–36).

[5] All line references are taken from a 1965 edition of Pope's *Essay*.

could be judged and assessed by a refined taste (Cora, "Pope" 18–19). In addition to manners, the other source of judgements of taste was the ability to distinguish between the beautiful and the ugly, which also helps the critic to compare works of art on the basis of their cultural contexts and artistic intentions. According to Pope, one has to strive for universality when forming judgements of taste so that Truth (in the sense of natural law) could be revealed. The uncovering of truth, however, is a personal, human as well as a moral obligation, and not an abstraction or metaphysical finiteness:

Learn then what Morals Criticks ought to show,
For 'tis but half a Judge's Task, to Know.
'tis not enough, Taste, Judgement, Learning, join;
In all you speak, let Truth and Candor shine:
That not alone what to your Sense is due,
All may allow; but seek your Friendship too. (*Essay* 560–565)

Furthermore, in order to have a universal validity, judgements have to be based upon sense and naturalness. According to Pope, sense is a moderate form of understanding, which also has decorum:

'Tis hard to say, if greater Want of Skill
Appear in Writing or in Judging ill;
But, of the two, less dang'rous is th' Offence,
To tire our Patience, than mis-lead our Sense:
Some few in that, but Numbers err in this,
Ten Censure wrong for one who Writes amiss;
A Fool might once himself alone expose,
Now One in Verse makes many more in Prose. (*Essay* 1–7)

*Ratio* is opposed to the vacuity of mind and the lack of erudition: it has to harmonize with artistic expression and is part of critical intelligence, but at the same time it is poignant and sensible:

Pride, where Wit fails, steps in to our Defence,
And fills up all the mighty Void of Sense!
[...]
Some dryly plain, without Invention's Aid,
Write dull Receits, how Poems may be made:
These leave the Sense, their Learning to display,
And those explain the Meaning quite away. (*Essay* 209–210, 114–117)

If taste is refined in due accordance with the principles of the art of poetics, while precision and decorum with the help of common Sense, as both are cognitive faculties, then, as Andrew Sanders has argued, style impresses with the sensation of naturalness (287–89).

The essence of nature is invisible, can only be witnessed in its manifestations, and it sets limitations to talent within which one's artistic lore can be perfected by art. Pope interprets Nature as divine force (l. 68–73), and as the cosmos itself, the order, symmetry and harmony of which the work of art must imitate and reflect (l. 74–87).[6] By its internal, lively essence, Nature is the opposite of artificiality and at the same time, the source of inspiration, while art provides those forms which this inspiration could infuse and through which it could create beauty:

In Wit, as Nature, what affects our Hearts
Is not th' Exactness of peculiar Parts;
'Tis not a Lip, or Eye, we Beauty call,
But the joint Force and full Result of all. (243–246)

Even if the *Essay* is the "handbook of Augustan orthodoxy" (Bronson 18), Pope, in a timely manner, corrects the seemingly rigid notions attributed to nature by balancing between great wits and gentler forms of Nature. As H. B. Bronson has noted, Pope's "pathetic tenderness" makes it possible that extravagancies and lovely descriptions of a gentler Nature appear in "Windsor Forest" (1704, 18–21). Besides a nuanced depiction of nature, it can also be argued, however, that Pope develops his ideas on sublimity in the early eighteenth-century amidst heterogeneous interpretations of the concept ranging from its definition in terms of a crisp and grand style to its association with wild nature's affective force of awe and terror. It is my contention that Pope represents the peripatetic tradition within these heterogeneous conceptualizations. Artistic intention, naturalness and creative force are therefore *sine qua non*s; however, similarly to Horace, Pope allows a genius minor mistakes, thus making ground for poetic licence (*licentia*):

If, where the Rules not far enough extend,
(Since Rules where made but to promote their End)
Some Lucky Licence answers to the full
Th' Intent propos'd that Licence is a Rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common Track.

[6] For further details on the complexity of the concept of nature in the eighteenth century, see Lovejoy (69–77).

Great Wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to Faults true Criticks dare not mend;
From vulgar Bounds with brave Disorder part,
And snatch a Grace beyond the Reach of Art,
Which, without passing thro' the Judgment, gains
The Heart, and all its End at once attains. (146–155)

The poet transforms the negative downward pressure of rules into positive compression. His concentrated energy oscillates between the poles of contraction and release. Hence, sublimity is manifested in the grand style, and only poetic Wit is able to reach true Sublime, the *par excellence* examples of which the author finds in the works of masters of classical antiquity with their perceived universal validity. Pope elaborates further on the idea of universal values in a later work delineating his moral philosophy, *An Essay on Man* (1733–1734), in which Man is represented as part of the all-pervasive harmony of the order of nature, which binds every creature according to the scheme of the "great chain of Being" with God at its ultimate source (*Epistle II, Argument* 1–15, see Hollander and Kermode 1973).

Consequently, in almost all cases, these peripatetic and formalistic elements underpinning the *genus grande* originate from the Longinian philological tradition with its extensive allusions.[7] Furthermore, Pope explicitly praises Longinus:

Thee, bold Longinus! all the Nine inspire,
And bless, their Critick with a Poet's Fire
An ardent Judge, who Zealous in his Trust,
With Warmth gives Sentence, yet is always Just;
Whose own Example strengthens all his Laws,
And Is himself that great Sublime he draws. (675–680)

Longinus' praise brings to an end a beautiful series of *enkomion*s, praising Horace (653–664), Dionysius Halicarnasseus (665–666), Petronius (667–680), and Quintilianus (669–674), which Pope rounds off by highlighting his own critical standpoint (719–746). In sum, Pope interprets the sublime as a rhetorical category relying on erudition and a refined taste; on the basic rhetorical tenets of the peripatetic tradition of the sublime since Aristotle and Theophrastus. While most of his contemporaries tended to reconceptualize the sublime in empiricist and psychological terms, Pope advocated a strand of neoclassical literary aesthetics, which springs from a wide spectrum of sensibility, and thus conjoins heterogeneous interpretations of sublimity. Pope provides a *par excellence* example of what he

[7] For further details see Cora 2014.

meant by the *genus sublime*, positioning himself as the spearhead of this tradition, inspiring others in his wake.

## The Uncommon, the Beautiful, and the Great in the Journals and Beyond

Journals were one of the crucial cultural forums where the eighteenth-century transformation of the concept of the sublime took place. As is widely known, throughout the eighteenth century clubs and coffee-houses, sites of simultaneous consumption of beverages and journals, played an important role in the formation and refinement of taste, and anticipated the nineteenth-century flourishing of the British press. Those who published in journals, like *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, wished to present their literary, philosophical and aesthetic ideas to the members and visitors of diverse clubs.

It was *The Spectator* (launched by Richard Steele and John Addison in 1711) that made the greatest breakthrough in the "market of tastes," but minor journals and periodicals were also engaged in shaping public taste and discussing, among numerous other fashionable topics, Longinus and the sublime. In line with literary and critical works, these newspapers use the notion of the sublime in an astounding variety. In one of the articles of *The Free Thinker*, sublimity is described in terms of distraction, separating the human being from everyday, practical things, as is explained by the editor, Ambrose Phillips:

> It is generally thought, the student is so deeply immerst in Contemplation on the Philosophy and Transactions of Former Ages, that he can give no Attention to the Affairs of the Present; or, that *he is so intent upon General and Sublime Truths, that his Observation stoops not to the minute and trifling Occurrences of Life*: And that, notwithstanding the comprehensive Rules of Wisdom he may have formed in Theory, he has not the Skill and Dexterity to apply those Maxims to the particular Circumstances of Action, in which he may be engaged. (*The Free Thinker*, No. 89. Monday, January 26, 1718) (Wood 138).[8]

Yet another newspaper, *The Plain Dealer*, presents the sublime variably as "the greatest," as well as in the original Longinian sense of simplicity, the greatness of an idea and moral sentiment. The editors, Aaron Hill and William Bond, discuss the question of sublimity in the following way:

---

[8] If otherwise not indicated, some parts of the quotations are italicised by the author in order to highlight the relevant sections.

> But, though this venerable, undress'd Nature, is seldom to be met with now, and has, indeed, been lost among us, for above a Century, it was so frequent Two or Three hundred Years ago, that their lowest Class of Poets, and the Composers of our good Old Ballads, have left us some of *the noblest Examples of the Sublime, in its most striking Energy*. [...] Among the Beauties of Magnanimity, there is none, of a nobler Quality, than the Power of forgiving Injuries. – – *It throws a Majesty over the Mind*, and illustrates the Person, with an Air of Sweetness, and Serenity. – – *We ought the more to admire it, since, where-ever it is found, it is in Company with the Sublimest Virtues: There not being Room for it, in a narrow, vulgar, Soul; because, overfill'd with Little Sentiments, such as have their Rise, and Revolution, within the Circle of Self-Interest* (*The Plain Dealer* No. 36. Friday, July 24, 1724; No. 72. Friday, November 27, 1724; qtd. in Wood 141, 145).

Most importantly, however, the sublime was also discussed by Mr. Spectator—the fictional protagonist of The Spectator Club, founded by Steele and Addison in 1711—a key figure in forming public taste in London, which became the emporium of the contemporary world (Sanders 296–97). Mr. Spectator was a man of broad education; he was well-travelled and politically alert. Samuel Johnson later pointed out that *The Spectator* exercised enormous influence on contemporary readers. Its sizeable reading public enabled the authors to induce balanced norms of taste in mundane as well as in literary communication (Sanders 295). Dr. Johnson went as far as describing Addison as England's Petronius:

> *The Tatler* and *Spectator* had the same tendency; they were published at a time when two parties, loud, restless, and violent, each with plausible declarations, and each perhaps without any distinct terminations of its views, were agitating the nation; to minds heated with political contest they supplied cooler and more inoffensive reflections; and *it is said by Addison, in a subsequent work, that they had a perceptible influence upon the conversation of that time* […] they superadded literature and criticism, and sometimes towered far above their predecessors; *and taught, with great justness of argument and dignity of language, the most important duties and sublime truths. All these topics were happily varied with elegant fictions and refined allegories, and illuminated with different changes of style and felicities of invention* (Johnson 205).

In Addison's view, taste is "that Faculty of the Soul, which discerns the Beauties of an Author with Pleasure, and the Imperfections with Dislike" (*The Spectator* No. 409).[9] For Addison fine taste is the edifying understanding of works of art, a refined

[9] All references to The Spectator are taken from a 1982 edition.

skill of making aesthetic distinctions and the recognition of beauty (Sanders 295). The 'critic' has to be able to judge the individual stylistic traits of an author and those "Specifick Qualities" which are only characteristic of the author: "For there is much difference in apprehending a Thought cloathed in Cicero's Language, and that of a common Author, as in seeing an Object by the Light of a Taper, or by the Light of the Sun" (*The Spectator* No. 409.). In line with Longinus, Addison originates judgement of taste and literary taste from various sources. First of all, good taste is an inborn talent. Secondly, it is a knowledge gained by perusing works of "Polite Authors," and third, it is a conversation with a "Polite Genius." The fourth source, astonishment, is perhaps the most important of all, because this psychological state is conventionally associated with sublimity:

> Thus altho' in Poetry it be absolutely necessary that the Unities of Time, Place and Action, with other Points of the same Nature, should be thoroughly explained and understood: *there is still something more essential to the Art, something that elevates and astonishes the Fancy, and gives a Greatness of Mind to the Reader, which few of the Criticks besides Longinus have considered* (*The Spectator* No. 409.).

Addison argues that, among the five human senses, sight is "the most perfect and most delightful [...] [since it] furnishes the Imagination with its Ideas" (*The Spectator* No. 411.). So, when perceiving reality, images fill our Fancy which "arises from visible Objects, either when we have them actually in our view, or when we call up their Ideas into our Minds by Paintings, Statues, Descriptions, or any the like Occasion" (*The Spectator* No. 411). However, sight is the source of not only the instinctual ability to form images, but it is also the basis of an active and wilful characteristic of the human being, namely, Imagination. The creative resource of Imagination enables human beings to bring forth new and as yet non-existent combination of images that can be more sophisticated and beautiful than the creations of nature.

Addison distinguishes the "Pleasures of Imagination" from the "Pleasures of Sense and Understanding." The former always acts upon our emotions and fancy, while the latter on our intellect and mind. If Imagination is guided by refined taste, it may expand human sensation, and it might disinterestedly attract the observer to beauty and thus fill him/her with joy:

> It is but opening the Eye, and the Scene enters. The Colours paint themselves on the Fancy, with very little Attention of Thought or Application of Mind in the Beholder. We are struck, we know not how, with the symmetry of any thing we see, and immediately assent to the Beauty of an Object, without enquiring into the particular Causes and Occasions of it. A man of a Polite Imagination is led

> into a great many Pleasures, that the Vulgar are not capable of receiving. He can converse with a Picture, and find an agreeable Companion in a Statue. *He meets with a secret Refreshment in a Description, and often feels a greater Satisfaction in the Prospect of Fields and Meadows, than another does in the Possession. It gives him, indeed, a kind of Property in every thing, he sees, and makes the most rude uncultivated Parts of Nature administer to his Pleasures* (*The Spectator* No. 411.).

The so-called 'primary qualities' inspire Imagination the most: the Great (conventionally associated with the sublime), the Uncommon, and the Beautiful. By Great, Addison understands the "Largeness of a whole View":

> Our Imagination loves to be filled with an Object, or to grasp at any thing that is too big for its Capacity […] We are flung into a pleasing Astonishment at such unbounded Views, and feel a delightful Stillness and Amazement in the Soul at that Apprehension of them […] a spacious Horizon is an Image of Liberty, where the Eye has Room to range abroad, to expatiate at large on the Immensity of its Views, and to lose it self amidst the Variety of Objects that offer themselves to its Observation (*The Spectator* No. 412.).

Infinity and greatness draw our attention instinctually, and if this free sensation is accompanied by the Uncommon and the Beautiful, then the pleasure felt when sensing these is all the greater. The Uncommon is usually variety and refreshment, which ensures that we receive the "Imperfections of Nature" with joy. The Beautiful, in turn, is the combination of "Satisfaction," "Complacency," and "inward Joy" in our Fancy, which "immediately diffuses a secret Satisfaction and Complacency through the Imagination, and gives a Finishing to any thing that is Great or Uncommon" (*The Spectator* No. 412.).

When discussing the notion of the Beautiful, Addison partly draws upon Anthony Ashley Cooper's (the third Earl of Shaftesbury) ideas on the Beautiful. Lord Shaftesbury, who worked out his theory of the Beautiful on a Lockean basis, embedded his theory of the Beautiful in a wider concept of taste (Monk 59; Townsend 205–13). Shaftesbury thinks that taste is the result of value judgements. He claims that the unreflected and direct sensual information gained by perception through the senses is misleading, because they are not filtered and structured by morally acceptable value judgements. Therefore, all value judgements aim at correcting and perfecting these pieces of perceptual information in order to provide for our taste by simultaneously taking beauty, virtue and other moral and aesthetic notions into account, as 'uncontrollable Fancy' necessarily leads to morally inadmissible and unedifying results. Thus, fine taste is built upon principles of moral philosophy, and thereby, it can be learnt, brought forth and developed (Townsend 209–10).

In this respect, Shaftesbury's theory is similar to that of Alexander Pope, as it locates the sources of taste and aesthetic sensation in the realms of formalistic and peripatetic traditions.

However, in order to better understand how aesthetic notions are linked to taste, it is also worth exploring the relationship of beauty and sublimity to taste. In Shaftesbury's system of aesthetics two kinds of beautiful are possible: the pleasures gained from the beauty of sensation and of rational reflection. He examines the former in *The Moralists* (1709), and the latter in his *Reflections* (1711). Shaftesbury claims that "disinterestedness" can be realized in aesthetics, a clear indicator that aesthetics as a system of thought as well as a discipline was embedded in the rational philosophical milieu of the eighteenth century. Contrary to other authors, including Thomas Hobbes, Shaftesbury believed in disinterested value judgements that are grounded in solid morality (Townsend 211).[10]

Shaftesbury's views on aesthetics neatly conjoin the Neoplatonic thought of Plotinos and Lockean empiricism. He draws upon Neoplatonism in proposing that discovering and acting upon Beauty, which, in a pre-existent form was implanted in human beings and nature through the emanation of the Superior Being, necessarily serves the perfection of the morals and the taste of the individual (Townsend 208). Consequently, the basis of aesthetics can only be the true and the allegorical. Shaftesbury's empiricism, in turn, is attested by his claim that one has to find and assort the empirical forms that feed aesthetic sensation in this earthly realm in order to perfect one's taste. One needs to mend these forms, however, in compliance with inner Beauty, as he suggests in *The Moralists*:

> No sooner are actions viewed, no sooner the human affections and passions discerned (and they are most of them as soon discerned as felt) than straight an inward eye distinguishes, and sees the fair and shapely, the amiable and admirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious, or the despicable (326).[11]

This idea shows an affinity not only with Addison, but also with Giovanni Pietro Bellori's ideas (*L'Idea del Pittore, dello Scultore, e dell'Architetto*, 1664), with whose work both Shaftesbury and Addison were familiar. According to Bellori, the artist carries within himself the idea of 'undisturbed' Beauty, in relation to which natural forms could be perfected in artistic representations. In other words, the artist has to draw his examples from sensual perception, but unite them with inner Beauty,

[10] The idea of "disinterestedness" was developed into a complex philosophical and aesthetic concept by Immanuel Kant when discussing the notion of pure beauty (1790).

[11] The wording of Shaftesbury is very similar to Addison's rhetoric. See Shaftesbury (326).

this way creating more sophisticated and sublime artistic forms than what could be found in nature (Panofsky 59–60).[12] Bellori's principle provided the basis for subsequent perfectionist and idealist aesthetics. It is my contention, however, that in Shaftesbury's and Addison's view, the imagination, which draws upon another source of beauty, sensual pleasure, neatly complements this classicist aesthetic paradigm in early eighteenth-century British literary criticism.

In line with Bellori and Shaftesbury, according to Addison, the essence of aesthetic joy and sublimity cannot be entirely known, since it originates from God. This is suggested by a line from Ovid quoted in *The Spectator* by Addison: "Causa latet, vis est notissima" [The cause is hidden, but the result is well-known] (*Metamorphoses*, 4, 287; *The Spectator* No. 413.). Such a view is consonant with the Aristotelian *causa finalis*, namely that one can only understand the origin and nature of a phenomenon by studying the purpose for which it was conceived (Bolonyai 37–53).[13] The sensation of joy is brought forward by the imagination, which is seen by Addison as a gift from God. This idea, however, was not unique to Addison, as it was a contemporary understanding that God implanted in humans the desire to search for the infinite, the uncommon and the beautiful because he wanted us to share the joys of creation (Sander 296; Pappas 17–27). In addition to the Uncommon and the Beautiful, the Great (the Sublime) is God's manifestation in nature; therefore, it is infinite and cannot be described either in space or time. Addison argues that our wonder originates from perceiving these qualities of greatness (*The Spectator* No. 412.).

Nature is more sublime, greater and more majestic than the arts, yet, one can gain double joy from the arts, since one can simultaneously admire the original and the imitated Beauty.[14] The idea of double aesthetic joy through mimesis provides the basis for the so-called 'Secondary Pleasures of Imagination' which are produced by the operation of imagination and analogy (especially a comparison between the original and the represented). Addison argues that this simultaneous operation of imagination and analogy explains why in both poetry and prose one can depict something more precisely, sharply or beautifully than observing the same in nature:

---

[12] See Bellori's comments in detail: "alla cui immaginata forma le cose che cadono sotta la vista […] originata della natura supera l'origine e fassi l'originale dell'arte" (Panofsky 59–60).

[13] Aristotle *Physics* II 3 and Metaphysics V 2.; for the relationship of sublimity and the Aristotelian *causa finalis*, see Bolonyai (37–53).

[14] The theory of mimesis was widely accepted in the eighteenth century. Both the neo-classicists and the pre-romantics subscribed to it, even though they arrived at different conclusions. See, for example Friedrich Schlegel's note: "die romantische Poesie wie eine progressive Universal Poesie" (qtd. in Lovejoy 69–77).

> the Poet seems to get the better of Nature; he takes, indeed, the Landskip after her, but gives it more vigorous Touches, heightens its Beauty, and so enlivens the whole Piece, that *the Images which flow from the Objects themselves appear weak and faint in Comparison of those that come from the Expressions* (*The Spectator* No. 416.).

Therefore, Addison's sublimity has two preconditions: the ingenious artist/ poet and vast, awe-inspiring nature. Addison systematically applied the notion of the sublime to nature and the huge reading public of *The Spectator* considerably contributed to the dissemination of the notion of the sublime in such terms (Monk 58–59). However, the concept of the 'sublime' never completely shed the merits and faults of its rhetorical origins, and with the implication of the idea of the genius, it conformed to neo-classicist conventions. Primary pleasures (Great, Uncommon, Beautiful) are united in the sublime, which, according to Addison, is best exemplified by John Milton's poetry, as it combines the greatness of Homer, the elegant style of Virgil and the variety of Ovid, even if, Addison adds, Homer, Virgil and Ovid outdid Milton in the respective above mentioned qualities: "I must also observe with Longinus that the Productions of a great Genius, with many Lapses and inadvertencies, are infinitely preferable to the Works of an inferior Kind of Author, which are scrupulously exact and conformable to all the Rules of correct Writing" (*The Spectator* No. 291.).[15]

In the wake of Addison, later authors tended to regard Milton, next to Shakespeare, as the first representatives of English sublimity, in spite of the fact that the rhetorical interpretation of the sublime could hardly take Shakespeare's and Milton's works into consideration due to their *blank verse* (Monk 56).[16] Indeed, the sublimity of Shakespeare—denounced by numerous men of letters in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for violating the neoclassical convention of decorum—was not conceived in rhetorical terms. It was rather identified with the loftiness of his thought and emotions with reference to the ninth chapter of Longinus' text. An excellent example of this kind of interpretation is John Upton's 1746 study, *Critical Observation on Shakespeare, By John Upton, Prebendary of Rochester* (Wood 133–37). In contrast to this, however, in his *Explanatory notes and remarks on Milton's Paradise Lost* (1734), Jonathan Richardson discusses John Milton's poetry in terms of the whole Longinian spectrum of the sublime, even though he underlines the predominance of divine inspiration and revelation in the case of Milton's sublime. John Douglas in *Milton vindicated from the charge of*

---

[15] See Longinus' *On Great Writing,* 36.

[16] Several quotations are taken from an anthology by Theodore Wood and the seminal work of Samuel Holt Monk.

*plagiarism, brought against him by Mr. Lauder* (1751) also refers to Longinus when defending Milton's "mimetic art" against the charges of William Lauder set forth in *An essay on Milton's use and imitation of the moderns in his Paradise Lost* (1750). Richardson argued that imitation (*mimesis*) could not be considered plagiarism. On the contrary, it is one of the sources of the sublime, since erudition and cultural refinement could be neatly combined with congeniality (Wood 118–19, 129–30).

As it has been pointed out, the idea that in relation to sublimity the human mind could transcend nature in conceiving greatness could already be witnessed at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Monk 17). This idea was neatly linked to the earlier, rhetorical tradition of the sublime through a selective reception of Longinus' work, which opened up the interpretation of the notion of sublimity towards the imagination. Addison gained decisive experiences when ascending the Alps, and the lines in *A Letter from Italy* describing the Colosseum in Rome also attest to this altering conception of the sublime: "an amphitheater's amazing height, / How fills my eye with terror and delight" (Monk 56). Consequently, Addison finds the sources of the sublime in the spark of genius on the one hand, and in certain natural phenomena on the other: mountains, fast-flowing rivers, oceans, huge valleys, storms, deserts, and so forth.[17]

Addison argues that the human imagination could not fully comprehend these phenomena, as it is "astonished," "amazed," and "awed" by them. Nonetheless, as it is also explained in *A Letter from Italy*, the human intellect intervenes and elevates the mind to loftiness so that it could become equal with nature's greatness and due to this increase, one could enjoy contented pleasure (Monk 56). In this respect Addison foreshadows the empirical and psychological interpretation of the sublime by Edmund Burke, and its later metaphysical refinement by Immanuel Kant.

Moreover, sublimity is related to immense personal sensations and experience, so, it incites joy if one intuitively 'lives through' the situation of the 'hero,' and the comparison of this experience with one's own real situation yields an opportunity to learn and develop emotionally. In my view, this aspect is very important to understand, and it also partly explains the psychological and affective shift in the interpretation of the sublime in early eighteenth-century literary aesthetics. In this regard, Addison builds upon Aristotle's theory of catharsis, where tragedy arouses terror and pity, and effects catharsis with the emotive purification of these emotions. Thus, the Aristotelian categories of fear, sympathy and absolution are intricately woven into the elevated notion of sublimity:

[17] For similar observations concerning the affective powers of nature in the oeuvre of John Dennis, see Cora 2014.

> There is yet another circumstance which *recommends a Description more than all the rest, and that is, if it represents to us such Objects as are apt to raise a secret Ferment in the Mind of the Reader, and to work, with Violence, upon his Passions*. For, in this Case, we are at once warmed and enlightened, so that the Pleasure becomes more Universal, and is, several way, qualified to entertain us […] *The two leading passions which the more serious Parts of Poetry endeavour to stir up in us, are Terror and Pity* (*The Spectator* No. 418).

The poet/artist creates the conditions of the sublime with the use of phantasy and fictionality, provided he does not transgress the limits of absurdity (*decorum*). On the basis of Longinus, Addison developed a psychological answer given to sublimity, also emphasizing the affective power of nature. From a philosophical perspective, however, his view of the sublime remained relatively superficial, especially if compared to Burke's and Kant's complex treatment of the concept.

**Affections and Astonishment: From Akenside to Baillie and Johnson**

Addison was not the only one to shift the interpretation of the sublime towards a more empiricist and psychological basis. Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744) is inspired by Addison's essay, but offers a closer reading of Longinus. The sublime of Akenside is built upon the analogy between the greatness of the mind and natural greatness. Akenside holds the beautiful to be useful, soft and gentle, as it represents the classical (Platonic) unity of goodness and truth, while sublimity pertains to the immortality of the human being, hence it strives for infinity which, at the same time, produces an astonishing effect, as the following quote, haunted by Longinus, illustrates:

> Who but rather turns / To heav'n's broad fire his unconstrained view / Than to the glimm'ring of a waxen flame…? [Nobody would turn away from the magnificent sight of the Nile or the Ganges in order to] "[...] mark the windings of a scanty rill / That murmurs at his feet" (*The Pleasures of Imagination*, 1, 2, 174–176) (qtd. in Monk 71–72).[18]

The passage clearly shows a shift in the interpretation of sublimity towards affective and astonishing characteristics, which were increasingly associated with nature and natural phenomena. Along with the explicit or implicit reflections on

[18] Akenside refers to Section 4 in Chapter 35 in Longinus' *On Great Writing,* replacing Longinus' reference to the Danube and the Rhine with a reference to the Ganges.

Longinus' work and the rhetorical sublime, other emerging interpretations of the sublime conceived of it as a mode of sensation and passion. Henry Pemberton, for instance, welds rhetorical and natural sublimity in the notion of the sublime of sensitivity (*Observations on poetry, especially the epic: occasioned by the late poem upon Leonidas* (1738) (Wood 60).[19]

Most rhetorical works broadened formalistic interpretations of sublimity, shaped by the knacks and rules of French 'rational' classicism. They dwelt upon the sensible aspects of sublimity by highlighting and dissecting its affective nature. Consequently, the discussions of stylistic and rhetorical features were extended to explore the sensual and psychological features of perceiving sublime phenomena as well. Most importantly, in poetics and literary criticism the Beautiful and the Sublime became increasingly separated during the 1730s and 1740s, and Longinus' reception played a crucial role in this process. In his translation of Longinus (1739), William Smith expands the Longinian text with selected excerpts from Milton and Shakespeare; for instance, the storm scene in *King Lear* as a *par excellence* example of sublime greatness. He interprets terror as the key factor in sublimity, which underpins the separation of the beautiful and the sublime, since beauty cannot be reconciled with any negative sensation, thus foreshadowing the graveyard poets:

> It is not the blue sky, the cheerful sun-shine, or the smiling landskip, that gives us all our pleasure, since we are indebted for no little share of it to the silent night, the distant howling wilderness, the melancholy gnot, the dark wood, and hanging precipice. *What is terrible, can be described too well; what is disagreeable should not be described at all, or at least should be strongly shaded*. (Smith qtd. in Monk 67)

Similarly to Akenside in his *The Pleasures of Imagination*, in *An Essay on the Sublime* (1747) John Baillie also refutes to view sublimity solely from the rhetorical standpoint, as he regards sublime style as an expression of natural sublimity. Consequently, he examines poetic sublime along with the natural sublime, in line with his thoughts on sensation:

> But as a Consciousness of her [the soul's] own Vastness is what pleases, so nothing raises this Consciousness but a Vastness in the Objects about which she is employed. For whatever the Essence of the Soul may be, it is the Reflections arising from Sensations only which make [sic] her acquainted with Herself and

[19] For further examples (for instance, John Lawson: Lectures concerning oratory. Delivered in Trinity College, Dublin (1759); Isaac Hawkings Browne: An Essay on Design and Beauty (1739), see Wood 79–86, 109–12.

> know her Faculties. *Vast objects occasion vast Sensations, and vast sensations give the Mind a higher Idea of her own Powers – small scenes (except from Association…) have never this Effect;[…] the Soul is never filled by them*. (qtd. in Monk 74)

Pointing out that Longinus does not specify the essence of sublimity, Baillie identifies three major sources: (1) Vastness; (2) Uniformity; (3) Novelty (Ashfield and de Bolla 87–100). Uniformity enables human imagination to perceive and systematize visual stimuli, even if it has sensual access to only part of the whole view, hence Baillie attributes a high aesthetic value to uniformity:

> For what a different Conception must the Soul have of herself, when with the greatest Facility she can view the greatest Objects, and when with Pain she must hurry from part to part, and with Difficulty acquire even an incomplete View? [...] *When an Object is vast, and at the same time uniform, there is [sic] to the Imagination no Limits to its Vastness, and the Mind runs into Infinity, continually creating as it were from the Pattern*. (qtd. in Monk 75)

Therefore, for Baillie sublimity is an objective quality, but it involves emotion and is realized through perception. The objective qualities of the sublime generate awe, but they do not move. Similarly to Hume (Neill 246–59), Baillie thinks that the subjective shocking effect of the sublime originates not only from the affective and astonishing power of nature, but also from contemplating exceptional people's acts, characteristics, or, for instance, will, which surpass average people's respective qualities. If this subjective sublimity is aimed at, then heroism, power, the desire for fame, and even a "ruthless conqueror" can be seen as sublime. This idea by Baillie also shows that astonishment and its relation to the effect of sublimity not only appeared more frequently in these discourses but it also encompassed aesthetic features beyond the conventional affective characteristics of natural phenomena. According to Baillie, these two oppositional states, namely the objective and subjective sources of the sublime do "succeed each other by such infinitely quick Vicissitudes, as to appear instantaneous" (qtd. in Monk, 76–82). Unlike earlier neo-classical interpretations that located the origin of Aristotle's tragic paradox (especially in relation to the puzzle of explaining why we enjoy tragedies) in cognition (recognition and learning), Baillie in the eighteenth century and practically all theoreticians of the sublime thereafter identified sensation as its source. By envisioning the sublime as qualitatively determined by sensual associations, Baillie reinterprets the concept in psychological terms.

I bring this investigation to an end by way of returning to Samuel Johnson's *magnum opus*, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), demonstrating all the features of the sublime so far discussed. Johnson defines sublimity primarily

as "the grand and lofty style," noting that the term was originally a Gallicism, but by his time it has become a 'neutral' notion. He first cites Pope's praise of Longinus (*An Essay on Criticism*, lines 675–680), then quotes Addison to illustrate the astonishing and moving effect of sublimity: "The sublime issues forth from the nobleness of thoughts, the magnificence of the words, or the harmonious and lively turn of the phrase; the per-sublime arises from all three together" (qtd. in Wood 195). He explains the French word, *sublimer*, as "to raise on high," alluding to John Milton along the way as the most appropriate English literary example of sublimity challenging the maxims of classicist poetry (smoothness, regularity and simplicity): "Milton's distinguishing excellence lies in the sublimity of his thoughts, in the greatness of which he triumphs over all the poets, modern and ancient, Homer only excepted" (qtd. in Wood 195). Milton also represents a shift from stylistic and formalistic approaches to essential and affective ones in relation to sublimity.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the Longinian sublime began to be transformed and reinterpreted in various fields of British literary aesthetics by the 1730s and 1740s, well before Burke, even though the reputation of Longinus' work remained immaculate. The texts analyzed show a motley picture of how literary sublimity was perceived, yet certain tendencies are apparent. Almost all the sources define the sublime—implicitly or explicitly—against the beautiful, situating the sublime in the domain of the sensual and psychological. Stylistic and rhetorical considerations, in other words, the formalistic aesthetic grounds of sublimity, *expression*, are gradually rendered secondary. Instead, the effect on the viewer, the *impression* comes to occupy the centre stage of critical attention. This development is encapsulated in Samuel Johnson's dictionary, which, in my view, also highlights the major reasons why the most striking form of the representation of sublimity, the natural sublime advances to the forefront of aesthetic *topica maiora*.

## Works Cited

Ashfield, Andrew, and Peter de Bolla, eds. 1998. *The sublime. A reader in British eighteenth-century aesthetic theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bolonyai Gábor. 2007. "Fenség és nézőpont." *Antik Tanulmányok*, 54(1): 37–53.

Bronson, B. H. 1967. "When Was Neoclassicism." In: Howard Anderson and John S. Shea, eds. *Studies in Criticism and Aesthetics, 1660–1800. Essays in Honor of Samuel Holt Monk*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 13–35.

Burke, Edmund. 2008. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. 1757. Ed. Adam Phillips. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cora, Zoltán. 2014. "From the Rhetoric of Longinus to the Poetics of John Dennis. The Role of Terror in the Theories of the Sublime in the 18th Century." In: György Fogarasi, Zoltán Cora, and Ervin Török, eds. *Terror(ism) and Aesthetics. Et al. – Critical Theory Online*. Szeged: Department of Comparative Literature. Available at URL:http://etal.hu/en/archive/terrorism-and-aesthetics-2015/cora-from-the-rhetoric-of-longinus-to-the-poetics-of-john-dennis/ (last accessed: 01.10.2018)

Cora, Zoltán. 2016. "Alexander Pope and the Longinian Tradition of the Sublime." *Eger Journal of English Studies*, 16: 5–25.

Fairer, David. 1989. *The Poetry of Alexander Pope*. London: Penguin.

Hollander, John and Frank Kermode. 1973. eds. *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*. Vol. III. The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century. New York – London: Oxford University Press.

Johnson, Samuel. 1975. "Joseph Addison, Periodical Essays." *Lives of The English Poets*. Ed. John Wain. London: J. M. Dent, 200–205.

Kant, Immanuel. 2000. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. 1790. Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804656

Longinus. 1991. *On Great Writing.* Ed. and trans. George M. A. Grube. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. 1960. "Nature as Aesthetic Norm." In: Arthur O. Lovejoy, ed. *Essays in the History of Ideas*. New York: Capricorn, 69–77.

Monk, Samuel Holt. 1960. *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Neill, Elizabeth. 1997. "Hume's Moral Sublime." *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 37(3): 246–259. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjaesthetics/37.3.246

Panofsky, Erwin. 1998. *Idea. Adalékok a régebbi művészetelmélet fogalomtörténetéhez*. Trans. Szántó Tamás. Budapest: Corvina.

Pappas, Nicholas. 2005. "Aristotle." In: Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. New York: Routledge, 17–27.

Pope, Alexander. 1965. "An Essay on Criticism." In: John Butt, ed. *Alexander Pope's Collected Poems*. London: J. M. Dent, 180–215.

Pope, Alexander. 2008. "Peri Bathous: or, Martinus Scriblerus. His Treatise of the Art of Sinking in Poetry." In: Pat Rogers, ed. *Alexander Pope. The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 195–239, 630–635.

Rogers, Pat. 1975. *An Introduction to Pope*. London: Methuen.

Rogers, Pat, ed. 2008. *Alexander Pope. The Major Works*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ross, Angus, ed. 1982. *Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator of Steele and Addison*. Aylesbury, Penguin Books: Hazell Watson & Viney.

Sanders, Andrew, ed. 1996. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Shaftesbury, Third Earl of. 2003. "The moralists, a philosophical rhapsody, being a recital of certain conversations on natural and moral subjects." *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. Ed. Lawrence Klein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 231–338.

Shelley, James. 2005. "Empiricism: Hutcheson and Hume." In: Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes, eds. *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*. New York: Routledge, 41–54.

Townsend, Dabney. 1992. "Shaftesbury's Aesthetic Theory." *The Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, 41(2): 205–213. https://doi.org/10.2307/430270

Wood, Theodore E. B., ed. 1972. *The Word 'Sublime' and Its Context (1660–1760)*. The Hague and Paris: Mouton.

# Preventing Collapse of Race in *Kim*

Dániel Nyikos

The novel *Kim* is, perhaps, the most complete elaboration of Kipling's production of colonizing texts. These texts ritualistically open ideological space for the purpose of exposing gaps in colonizing representation, seeking to suture the potential for a breakdown in signification in order to preserve the colonial enterprise to British colonizing subjects. The importance of *Kim* in Kipling's oeuvre can, perhaps, not be overstated. Its centrality in his writing and especially in his writing about India is summed up by Charles Allen (2007): "Of the fiction, if we exclude his writing for children there are plenty of well-crafted stories but very little that really holds the imagination except in fits and starts, and absolutely nothing of worth linked to India. With *Kim* he had said it all" (Kindle locations 6201–6202). Kipling wrote Kim after leaving India. It was first published, in serial form, from 1900, and represents the last of Kipling's fiction about India. It might be seen as a culmination, and as such has a unique place in Kipling's oeuvre. Unlike Kipling's previous fictions, *Kim* is not chiefly addressed to the colonizer in the colony. Eddy Kent (2014) confirms this: "If the short fiction of the 1880s and 1890s addressed the tastes and reading habits of the Anglo-Indians, *Kim* was written for the empire by a man interested in Britain's place in the world" (142). Thus, *Kim* plays a central role in locating Kipling's ideology of racial hegemony, in which a white character can experience and enjoy the potential for adopting a multiplicity of ethnic identities without endangering the white identity that bestows this power upon him.

*Kim* demonstrates that race is not fixed, but reserves the ability to take on new racial signification for the colonizing white characters. This plays a crucial role in the novel, such as in the climax, when the protagonists are separated from the world of familiar signification, only to choose to return to the same regime of truth, cancelling the potential for change and closing the representational gap exposed by the reality of life in the colony. As such, *Kim* exemplifies the cynical move of demonstrating the limitation of colonizing ideology and then denying the possibility of change, addressed now not only to colonizers with firsthand experience in the colony but to all who could potentially enter that space. Christensen (2012) argues that in *Kim* "Kipling demonstrates conclusively that a hybrid identity based on the recognition of self-differentiality can, and has, been successfully deployed in the imaginative service of racism and imperial power" (26). Even while demonstrating that racial boundaries can be crossed, the hegemony of whiteness is reified.

DOI: 10.33035/EgerJES.2018.18.37

In the text, the racial ideology that is so essential for the colony's existence is presented as absolutely fixed, as characters are endlessly referred to in terms of their race and ethnic identity, which are treated as determining almost every aspect of their identities. The plot of the novel, however, relies on the ability of characters to fool others into reading them as members of other identities. That is to say, the success of each side in the colonial conflict depicted in the novel depends on the ability of agents to successfully adopt the signifiers of other identities. When the colony depends on the perfect separation of colonizer and colonized, "White" and "Black," this fluidity of identity seems to belie both the racial essentialism of the rest of the novel and the ideology at the heart of the empire itself.

The first chapter of *Kim* depicts a scene that quickly establishes its cynical perspective on British colonial rule through its frank depiction of the successive regimes of imperial control over India as well as the military power required to establish these.

The novel opens with the protagonist, Kimball O'Hara, sitting "astride the gun Zam Zammah" (Kindle location 20). It makes an explicit connection of control of the gun with control of India: "Who hold Zam-Zammah, that 'fire-breathing dragon', hold the Punjab, for that great green-bronze piece is always first of the conqueror's loot. There was some justification for Kim… since the English held the Punjab and Kim was English" (Kindle location 21–22). Kim mocks a Muslim and a Hindu boy in turn who demand he get off the cannon, telling them "All Mussalmans fell off Zam-Zammah long ago!" and "The Hindus fell off Zam-Zammah too. The Mussalmans pushed them off" (Kindle location 64–65). The cynicism of this exchange is particularly driven home by the description of the Hindu boy, as the narrator writes, "His father was worth perhaps half a million sterling, but India is the only democratic land in the world" (Kindle location 65). The suggestion that democracy is not even present in the United Kingdom, of course, draws attention to the absurdity of this claim, as does the situation of the scene: a boy, drawing authority from shared racial identity with the military conquerors of India, establishes his claim on the symbol of control of the city that is, itself, an instrument of war. This model of "democracy," based in race and military supremacy, offers a cynical perspective on the colonizing ideology of the British, suggesting that the only democracy existing in the world is that contained in the most brutally simple arithmetic of soldiers and battlefields. It does not matter which of the children has the most wealth, so long as one is of the race of the colonizers, who control the military. In this, we can see a very model of Foucauldian hegemony in action: Kim enjoys the dominance constructed for him by the signifying system that India is part of.

Just as it draws back the veil from how the British control India, the first scene illustrates a truth that the British colonizing ideology must suppress: the idea that, in time, the British, too, might "fall off" Zam-Zammah; in other words, that British colonial rule in India might end, and another group might take over. Much of the plot of the novel revolves around the "Great Game," the "Indian Survey Department" acting as a secret service makes moves and counter-moves against both Indians resisting British rule and foreign agents desiring control of India for their own countries. The work of the survey department in combining geography, ethnography, and espionage richly demonstrates how knowledge of the Orient functions in establishing both control and justification for domination. The Colonel explains the work of the agent thus: "I will give thee a hundred rupees for knowledge of what is behind those hills—for a picture of a river and a little news of what the people say in the villages there" (Kindle location 1709–1710). By engaging in the "Great Game" at all, British agents implicitly acknowledge that there is a chance of one of these forces gaining supremacy: all the parts of India could become no longer subject to British rule. In the novel, the Russian agents fail in their mission because they lack understanding of India. This is the privileged domain of only the British.

It is vital to understanding the role of a text like *Kim* in shaping and buttressing colonizing ideology, that every move of the "Great Game" is played out with disguise and duplicity, in which control over signification—especially being able to adopt the signifiers of non-white races and ethnic castes—is key to success. Bhabha (1994) demonstrates the importance of the stereotype to the subjectification of both colonizer and colonized. As he writes, "The stereotype… is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixed form of representation that, in denying the play of difference…, constitutes a problem for the *representation* of the subject in significance of psychic and social relations" (75, emphasis in original). As he shows, the stereotype is not incorrect so much as fixed, lacking in the nuance and capacity for change that all representation contains. To create a disguise to alter what one is signified as, is to acknowledge that race is constructed and that signification is malleable, even to the point that one person can be signified as different identities, when of course the very stability and permanence of race are essential to the racist hierarchy on which the represented superiority of the British colonizer depends.

It is important at this point to also acknowledge the anxiety-producing potential that the free adoption of non-white identities opens: the threat that a person of colour could adopt a white identity. As has been discussed, if the colonized were to be able to erase the markers of difference in signification and become the colonizer, this would lead to the complete collapse of the colony and of white identity. This is the threat that the text must contain.

In marked contrast to the suggestions of racial mutability opened by the events Kim experiences, the novel's narrator employs a very deterministic representation of race, insisting that characters' behaviour and attitudes are shaped by their racial identities. In doing so, the novel creates a nominal separation in race that it represents as visible, permanent. and essential. One example for this is in the narrator's description of Kim's fear of the snake he and the lama encounter in a farmer's field. While the lama responds with peace, Kim's response, according to the narrator, is determined by his race: "'I hate all snakes,' said Kim. No native training can quench the white man's horror of the Serpent" (Kindle location 632–633). The novel has countless examples of this racial essentialism delineating and determining the behaviours of non-white characters, and it is important to note how many times it does the same for white characters. This appears to firmly fix the racial signification that white supremacy depends on.

Kim's whiteness becomes a point of discussion at several points in the novel. The phrase "a Sahib and the son of a Sahib" is used to describe him four times in the novel. Its final use is by Kim himself, who uses it to describe his own positionality. Hubel (2004) stresses that "*Kim* assures those readers that Kim is fully white: the borders that protect white rule haven't been breached" (239). The first time it is employed, the lama uses it to express his shock that Kim could be white; it is Kim's knowledge of India and its people that the lama finds difficult to correlate: "'A Sahib and the son of a Sahib—' The lama's voice was harsh with pain. 'But no white man knows the land and the customs of the land as thou knowest. How comes it this is true?'" (Kindle location 1315–1316). This contrast suggests the difference between colonizing knowledge produced by the ignorant English colonizer and Kim's casual, even playful familiarity with the identities he encounters. Of the novel's construction of the proper English sahib, Hubel notes that "in this vision of imperialism, [...] a Sahib is not always a Sahib and not all Europeans have an equal right to rule" (235). Kim must learn, through his experiences in the novel, the right way to employ his whiteness and the privileged access to knowledge of India that it brings.

Despite the lama's surprise, Kim's knowledge of India echoes the colonizing knowledge used by the British to establish and justify their control over the colonized space. Kim's experience growing up on the street has given him a familiarity with the place that he exploits throughout the novel, whether cheating ticket sellers or knowing how to flatter potential donors for the lama. He demonstrates the ability of the Englishmen he is with to control signification, even his own. He describes himself as though there were no difference between him and the colonized. He tells the lama, "I am not a Sahib. I am thy chela" (Kindle location 3915). By defining himself in his relationship with the colonized rather than acknowledging

his privileged position as a white Englishman, he uses his connection and service to the colonized as justification for his presence, echoing the Victorian ideal of the altruistic colonizer. According to Hubel (2004), *Kim* reflects the English colonizer's attempt to claim Indian identity and thus to totalize their power over and access to India. According to her, "*Kim* is Kipling's one attempt to cross the racial boundary between the Indian and the British and envision an Indian identity for the white person" (248).

Kim himself doubts that his racial identity is fixed and essentialized. When Kim is asked what the English will do, he replies, "Make me a Sahib— so they think" (Kindle location 1345). In his doubt is the budding of his cynicism, in which two possible meanings can be read which both contribute to this cynicism. He acknowledges the impossibility, in this representative system, of creating an identity that should nominally be fixed by the circumstances of birth. If it is possible to "make" a Sahib, then it is also possible that someone born to that role might not become one, which belies the entire system of racial essentialism. He also suggests that they might fail, and he might not become a "Sahib" as defined by their system after all.

The scene on the train shows how each ethnic and gender role is played, as each character described falls into a separate identity, whose interplay becomes the basis of a series of interactions that take on an ethnographic cast. As such, they recall arguments made by Young (1995) and Fabian (1983) about the use of rational science to create the narrative of racial separation. The character includes a Sikh artisan, a "Hindu Jat" and his wife, "an Amritzar courtesan," "a fat Hindu money-lender," and "a young Dogra soldier going home on leave" (Kindle location 405, 406, 408). An excellent example of the anthropological quality of their conversation is in their discussion of the service of soldiers of different castes, in which each character expresses their caste's ostensible opinion of the other castes, seemingly in turn. The conversation serves to illustrate and thus establish the narrator's complete and academic knowledge of India and its people, playing the role of the colonizing text purporting totalizing knowledge, and it also plays out the separation of identities, as discussed.

Building on the effect of the carnival, the potential of change in the novel is represented beside the impossibility of it. The idea of a fixed race determined by racial essentialism is key to the identity of the colonizer. Bhabha (1994) employs Freud and Fanon to demonstrate how the stereotype functions as a fetish, covering up the clear limitations of the idea of the single race. He argues that stereotype functions as part of the timelessness and separateness of the colony, to defuse the anxiety of the colonizer. In Bhabha's words, "The fetish or stereotype gives access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and

defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it" (75). Thus, the subject is pushed towards embracing an activity contrary to their stated values, turning on axes of anxiety and mastery together. The colonizer at once recognizes the limitation of their racial imagination and buries it.

As has been shown, identity in *Kim* is repeatedly represented as fixed, visible, and essentialist; however, one of the major themes of the novel is the ability to alter how one signifies one's subject position, even to the point of adopting other identities. When asked about his own race, Kim casts doubt on a white priest's, Father Victor's, belief in the permanence of race: "He thinks that once a Sahib is always a Sahib" (Kindle location 1281). Characters adopt the costumes of different identities and play the part to varying degrees of skill, some perfectly, suggesting that not only can identity be altered but that one subject position can be performed perfectly by one whose own background should not, in contemporary racial theory, allow them to do so. The lama expresses this mutability of identity when describing the identities he has encountered Kim in: "As a boy in the dress of white men— when I first went to the Wonder House. And a second time thou wast a Hindu. What shall the third incarnation be?" (Kindle locations 1317–1318). Kim's own racial identity appears mutable, and the way India is represented in his eyes shifts depending on how he sees himself. Sullivan (1993) explains how Kim's relationship with India depends on his own understanding of his race:

> Kim's numinous celebration of his journey on the multicolored, musical and jewelled Grand Trunk Road, "broad, smiling river of life," for instance, is made possible by his chosen, temporary identity as Indian and beloved "chela" (disciple) to his lama; but that position is later reversed by his confirmed identity as an Englishman whose "fettered soul" will see only a "great, grey, formless India." These contradictory images of shifting identities that construct different Indias are repeated in a series of other historically inscribed contradictions, chief among which are Kim's desire to be loved by India as "little friend of all the World" and to be its master-sahib-imperialist. (11–12)

This relationship demonstrates both the changeability of racial identity and, paradoxically, suggests that this identity, while potentially self-defined, is just as essentializing as the set racial identity defined earlier.

One of the clearest examples of the shifting of race is the incident on the train when an agent of the "Indian Survey Department," fleeing from those who have discovered him, reveals himself to Kim. The agent's identity is represented even by the narrator as being one with how he signifies himself. The narrator calls him "the

Mahratta" after he enters the car and is taken for one by Kim: "a Mahratta, so far as Kim could judge by the cock of the tight turban" (Kindle location 2868–2869). Because this is the way Kim reads him, it is the way the narrator names him, even after he reveals himself. The man's comment about his means of putting on an identity also reveals the fundamental connection between representation, cynicism, and violence. When Kim urges him to turn to the government for help, the man replies, "We of the Game are beyond protection. If we die, we die. Our names are blotted from the book. That is all" (Kindle location 2902). In this statement, the agent called E.23 pairs a cynical acceptance of the violence of the Great Game with an explicit connection of existence to representation: death, to an agent of the "Indian Survey Department," is no different from being removed from a list of names in a written text. In a list of names of the living from which the names of the dead are removed, there is a tangible demonstration of the controlling and totalizing power of colonial texts of knowledge of the Orient as Said spoke of them. The book, no doubt on the desk of some white official in a governmental office, both records information about and shapes human life itself in the colony.

Immediately afterwards, the agent explains that he was able to "change his face" and thus assume another identity. He says, "At Bandakui, where lives one of Us, I thought to slip the scent by changing my face, and so made me a Mahratta" (Kindle location 2903). As mentioned, the fact that a subject crafted his own position (made himself a Mahratta) and this is echoed by the narrator, who refers to him as "the Mahratta," reveals the success of this moment of self-creation. By saying that changing his face made him something else, he explicitly connects appearance with signified identity. By successfully representing himself with the visual markers of identity, most of all race, he is able to make himself something else. Kim expresses this basic contradiction in his own words thus: "I do not understand how he can wear many dresses and talk many tongues" (Kindle location 2308–2309). As Bhabha's (1994) theory of hybridity reminds us, the very possibility of this undermines not only the ideological basis of colonization but English identity itself, which relies fundamentally on the constructed separation of races. In the demonstration of cultural difference, what is represented as past and present meet, which "undermines our sense of the homogenizing effects of cultural symbols and icons, by questioning our sense of the authority of cultural synthesis in general" (35). Multiplicity of cultures, all of which are accessible, threaten the sense of one superior culture that can make all others like itself.

The idea that blotting a number from a book signifies the death of a British agent further underscores how this play of putting on and taking off identities destabilizes the representation of self and subjecthood in *Kim*. A number in a book is, perhaps, the most stripped of identity any individual can be, signified only by

an arbitrary signifier which in itself denotes only pure difference from other subjects. The number, after all, says only that the described entity is neither the thing before it or after it, separated only by this very act of separation. Thus, the roster book establishes itself as the ultimate authority of difference and fixes the agent in relation to its own function in controlling British power in India.

Like E.23, Hurree Chunder Mookherjee is described by a colonizer, Lurgan Sahib, as nameless. Lurgan Sahib tells Kim, "He is a writer of tales for a certain Colonel. His honour is great only in Simla, and it is noticeable that he has no name, but only a number and a letter— that is a custom among us" (Kindle location 2309–2310). While the events of the rest of the novel reveals that "Hurree Babu" *does* have a name, Lurgan Sahib's description stresses that his name is separate from his subject position in the eyes of the colonizing power. In the fight over the control of the colonized space of India, the individual subjecthood of the colonized is irrelevant.

In fact, to give a name might even hamper the function of an agent, as to confer any form of representation to an agent would be to acknowledge their place within the racialized system constructed by the Europeans and thus make them subject to the fixity of race that that system demands. The number and letter—and nothing else—open the possibility for change, as a number and letter can be assigned to anyone, regardless of race, gender, age, or social status, and can represent with equal power any different point of positionality in those areas of representation. In this, the novel recognizes the limitation of racialized representation and affirms the vital importance of its maintenance.

The fact that never in *Kim* does a person of colour play a white role demonstrates in this absence just how dangerous to imperialist ideology the revelation about the permeability of constructed boundaries in *Kim* is. Even amidst all the changing of costumes and painting of skin, which sees Kim take on the identity of an Indian, there is no movement in the opposite direction. While the novel opens the space for this possibility by demonstrating the potential for crossing all other boundaries of identity, never does it suggest the most destabilizing act that this could lead to. Christensen (2012) notes that "the limitations of essentialist notions of identity are projected onto racial others, while the freedom of self-creation derived from a performative notion of identity becomes the exclusive privilege of whites" (10). That the boundary between races is permeable only from the side of the privileged colonizer.

As has been demonstrated, the justification for the British Empire required a racial hierarchy that would have been torn up root and branch were it possible for a colonized subject to be successfully represented as a colonizer. This potential opening of the gap in colonial ideology is not explored on the page even in a colonizing

text setting up an ideological position for the reader to be able to effectively take in the colony. The changing of one identity for another demonstrates that identity itself is constructed and permeable, though each is required to be unchanging for the ideology of the colony to work. This opens the potential for a breach in the system of signification upon which the colony is based, one which must be controlled.

The final scenes take place where the border between the British Empire and the uncolonized space that lies beyond is unclear. It is partially to map and thus define this space, to fill in this *terra incognita* on European charts, that the characters come there. In this space between empires where a border prince threatens rebellion against the British Empire, the potential for the destabilization of the colonial system is particularly high. Corinne Fowler (2007) shows how this space is used as a threat to colonial stability, writing that "[i]n Kim at least, merely stepping across the border entails entering a space where Afghans habitually, and with a quiet conscience, violate all that British colonials apparently hold sacrosanct" (58). By sending its agents, including Kim, there to stop the activities of a French and Russian foreign agent, the British intelligence service simultaneously inserts them into a zone of undefined identity and a place where that identity must be particularly shored up and fixed. It is here, amidst the violence and chaos created by the function of the borderland, that the lama achieves the goal he has sought from the start of the novel, to find the river which brings him to enlightenment.

Victor Turner (1990) examines this liminal zone and its possibilities in challenging and simultaneously reifying representational systems. As he describes, the liminal space of ritual and drama—and, it might be added, literature as well—creates a possibility for change and renewal, breaking from familiar norms and constancy. He writes that

> [l]iminality can perhaps be described as a fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities, not by any means a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structure, a gestation process, a fetation of modes appropriate to and anticipating postliminal existence. (12)

Thus, the function of the text itself doubles the function of the space beyond the border of the Empire. In both, action takes place outside the limit of the laws, and the breach is simultaneously a trauma and a potential for change and redress. It is a trauma, as Bényei (2011) explains, because it forces the white individual to come into contact with the forces that constitute its subject position, those of intersubjectivity with the Other. It opens the possibility for redress, as previously noted, as part of the human encounter, demonstrating the violence at the heart of

the colony. Thus, moving outside the Empire and its representational system opens the potential for either the dissolution of the self and the Empire itself.

This potential, later, is not only contained but redirected. Rather than changing the colonial system, the subject—in both text and the reader—is reincorporated into the regime of truth. Recognizing the damage caused by the subject's own actions goes on to shift one's beliefs, a movement echoed by the ideological work *Kim* performs on its reader. Thus, the novel represents the crisis of a white subject when experiencing the margin of a colonized space, an area that is nominally subject to the British Empire's regime of truth but also falls partially outside this control. The potential for a breach of that system of signification must be controlled.

Kim and the lama come through this experience in the liminal zone with their identities scrubbed clean of signification. Kim experiences this as a crisis of identity, questioning his own role in the colonizing enterprise as well as his entire selfhood. During the violent exchange between the British and the Russian agents, the lama is badly injured, and Kim carries him away and finishes the mission successfully. Left in the village and recuperating along with his master, Kim reflects that his next step would be to leave this idyllic place where the power of the British Empire is not felt.

The failure of British colonial power in this place is demonstrated through the woman at whose house he is staying. She expresses that she has met only one white man before, who said he would return to her and never did, suggesting the promise of progress the self-proclaimed virtuous colonizer makes to the colonized. It is telling, therefore, that the man never returned, neither to prove that what he represented as true—his promise—was accurate nor to symbolically return her to a place in the symbolic order of the Empire. If she is Lispeth from the short story of the same name, as the details of her life suggest, this further adds to the cynical positioning of her role: wronged by the racial hierarchy of British India, she nevertheless provides unquestioning aid to Kim. Likewise, her own position as neither colonized nor colonizing, as discussed earlier, further deepens the liminal nature of the space Kim finds himself at the moment of the undoing of his subjecthood. In this peaceful place, Kim thinks with regret, "I must get into the world again" (Kindle location 4084). To return "into the world"—the white-represented space in this case is represented as the entire world itself—would be to return to a place where separations are easy and clear, unchallenged by the destabilizing effect of the border zone. However, he does not go immediately.

Instead, Kim falls into self-doubt, repeating to himself his own name, become strange to him. In this border place, he faces his own self, come back strangely to him, echoing the "existentialist agony that emerges when you look perilously through a glass darkly" (Bhabha 1994, 48). Kim seems to have lost his ability to

make meaning at all, looking at things as though he had no context to assign them signification. The narrator writes that he looks with "strange eyes unable to take up the size and proportion and use of things" (Kindle location 4090). He is unable to represent even his own thoughts, and has become a stranger to himself as well as to the most simple things around himself: "All that while he felt, though he could not put it into words, that his soul was out of gear with its surroundings— a cog-wheel unconnected with any machinery" (Kindle location 4090–4091). Interestingly, in the metaphor of the unconnected cog-wheel, there is the suggestion that Kim has not ceased to be potentially a part of a machine, but rather that the machine he properly fits is somewhere else. It is his context that is wrong, not Kim himself, who is out of place in a way that is simultaneously and equivalently geographical and ideological, removed spatially and mentally from the representational system that had previously given him meaning.

Thus, Kim ends up questioning even his own name and identity: he thinks "'I am Kim. I am Kim. And what is Kim?' His soul repeated it again and again" (Kindle location 4093–4094). As also occurs in *The Man Who Would Be King*, the English colonizer, having been exposed to a world in which the hard representational barriers constructed by the colonial system do not exist, faces a breakdown in his own identity. Kim has appeared to shift identities, and he is able to do so as long as he knows he does it for a power that understands the rules of the Great Game, a game he himself only vaguely guesses at even at the end of the novel.

The question Kim asks at the end of the novel as he experiences his semiotic break is precisely the same he asks earlier, when he is told that he is white and must be trained to be a Sahib.

> 'Hai mai! I go from one place to another as it might be a kickball. It is my Kismet. No man can escape his Kismet. But I am to pray to Bibi Miriam, and I am a Sahib.' He looked at his boots ruefully. 'No; I am Kim. This is the great world, and I am only Kim. Who is Kim?' He considered his own identity, a thing he had never done before, till his head swam. He was one insignificant person in all this roaring whirl of India, going southward to he knew not what fate. (Kindle location 1696–1699)

For Kim, it is enough to misattribute the source of his distress at encountering the fluidity of his identity to the general confusion that is, to his mind, India. By ascribing his feelings to the colonized space itself, which, as has been shown, is represented throughout the book as unchanging and unchangeable, Kim is able to open himself to accepting without further threat the identity offered to him. At this point, his question is answered by the Colonel, who gives him work spying for

the British as part of the Survey. Having been invested with a subject position by the representative of the colonizing power, Kim is able to keep this anxiety at bay. It is only when he moved beyond that imperial power that he comes to a crisis.

Kim does not understand the mechanisms of this signifying system. It is when he is removed from that system, finding himself in a place where the color of his skin makes no difference, that the threat of dissolution that has followed him comes to bear. Thus, the anxiety that emerged from the colonial encounter is shown to result from a function of the space itself. Kim, physically exhausted and overwhelmed by the fight with the Russian agents, finds himself coming apart on the borders of the Empire.

Yet Kim's potential to take on multiple ethnic identities and clear enjoyment of it is rooted in a subject position that he never truly loses, for it is the thing that allows him to adopt these different significations. As Christensen (2012) demonstrates, "Rather than fixing Kim's identity within ethnic boundaries, or even multiple ethnic boundaries, the statement 'thou art a Sahib' apparently opens up endless possibilities. To be a Sahib is to be irreducible to any ethnic identity, or even any list of ethnic identities" (25). Thus, the gap in colonial representation is closed by power. Race is demonstrated to be mutable, but only to the colonizer, and the colonizer, even while shifting identities, remains ever the sahib.

Kim returns to himself through an expression of the anxiety and pain that this moment creates for him. The thing that brings Kim back to himself is crying, though he himself does not understand why he cries. As he expresses the trauma of the recognition this moment creates in him, he is pushed back into the system of signification that creates that trauma in him:

> He did not want to cry— had never felt less like crying in his life— but of a sudden easy, stupid tears trickled down his nose, and with an almost audible click he felt the wheels of his being lock up anew on the world without. Things that rode meaningless on the eyeball an instant before slid into proper proportion. Roads were meant to be walked upon, houses to be lived in, cattle to be driven, fields to be tilled, and men and women to be talked to. (Kindle location 4094–4097).

The colonizer, glimpsing that the system is flawed and damaging, embraces it and the privilege it grants him. Kim signifies everything exactly as he did before his experience on the edge of the empire, re-establishing the same meanings. As Sullivan (1993) points out, the ideologies of the novel "draw Kim away from the margins and return him to the centers of imperial surveillance and power as a spy" (26). It is particularly significant that he does so according to himself, using his

own positionality as a starting point from which to define everything else around him: "They were all real and true— solidly planted upon the feet— perfectly comprehensible— clay of his clay, neither more nor less" (Kindle location 4097–4098). Hagiioannu shows that he does this through deploying the European knowledge that plays such a key role in imperialism, as "Kim reasserts his 'Anglo-Irish' self by sheer force of will, and, in a gesture that seems to reassert the dependability of European knowledge and learning, seeks refuge in the mental recitation of the multiplication table in English" (31). He returns unchanged to the representational system he left even though, as has been shown, this system is that which creates the oppressive regime of the colony, which embeds hierarchical identities in every subject it creates. Kim has found that the identity the system grants him uniquely allows him the pleasure of adopting any of those ethnicities without abandoning the power of abandoning his own.

Sullivan demonstrates this ideological contradiction at the end of the novel, pointing out that Kim's return as a reborn colonizer is "a colonial fantasy that suggests an impossible origin for a new colonialist, one with a split sense of the constitution of self, who disavows difference from the native, yet knows otherwise" (177). Kim knows that an oppressive colonial relationship exists in which his positioning is that of the colonizer, though he continues to claim kinship with the colonized. It is through this kinship that he gains legitimacy, as it connects him with India and with those that, as an Englishman, he is in a position of rulership over.

Kim's movement out of and then back into the colonial system of meaning is contrasted in the novel against the lama's attaining of and then giving up of enlightenment. When the lama achieves his quest of finding enlightenment, it is described in explicit terms of breaking free from the system of difference that defines human thought. The lama describes this as finding freedom from "the Wheel of Things," a freedom that separates him from the regime of truth that constructs all knowledge, even from the first moments of awareness in which the self is separated from the Other. He describes the movement of his Soul beyond all things: "By this I knew the Soul had passed beyond the illusion of Time and Space and of Things. By this I knew that I was free" (Kindle location 4178–4179). The closer the lama's soul approaches to the Great Soul, the more his connection to all other things seems to fade, until he becomes one with all things, eternal: "Then my Soul was all alone, and I saw nothing, for I was all things, having reached the Great Soul. And I meditated a thousand thousand years, passionless, well aware of the Causes of all Things" (Kindle location 4181–4182). At this moment, he has become removed completely from the systems of language and meaning-making that define his life, to the point that speaking of his awareness or consciousness is even inaccurate, because even this has been belied by his removal.

The lama's experience seems to be phrased in terms of escape from the system of *différance* as described by Derrida, in which the very essence of Being and meaning is based in the complex construction of what Derrida (1982) calls "the play of the trace," which predates Being. As Derrida describes it, *différance* "can be called the play of trace. The play of a trace which no longer belongs to the horizon of Being, but whose play transports and encloses the meaning of Being: the play of the trace, or the *différance*, which has no meaning and is not" (22). The lama experiences a state removed from even this "play of trace," in which nothing is differentiated and everything is actually pure Being. As has been discussed, the fundamental grounds of colonial philosophy is the separation of races from each other: thus, the lama choosing to return to the world as it is simultaneously chooses to reintegrate himself into that system.

The lama chooses to return from enlightenment for the sake of Kim, whom he loves. In his description, he does this because he fears Kim will lose himself rather than remain on the path to good: "Then a voice cried: 'What shall come to the boy if thou art dead?' and I was shaken back and forth in myself with pity for thee; and I said: 'I will return to my chela, lest he miss the Way' (Kindle Location 4182–4183). It is not Kim's body that the lama worries about but his soul; he believes that only through his guidance can Kim eventually "gain merit." Thus, the novel not only suggests that the experience of the Other and the colonized space serves as a means to moral improvement for the white colonizer, but also presents that to serve as a means for this can be the most important motivation of a colonized subject. As such, the relationship between colonizer and colonized is shown to be the most defining system of difference in the novel.

The way the lama returns to his own body reflects the process by which the signifying system is re-established in him, mirroring the universal way the self is separated from what becomes signified as the Other, the world outside the self: "Upon this my Soul, which is the Soul of Teshoo Lama, withdrew itself from the Great Soul with strivings and yearnings and retchings and agonies not to be told" (Kindle location 4183–4184). The retchings and agonies are particularly interesting as they reflect Kristeva's (1982) description of the way the "I" is formed by the violence of expulsion from the body of that which is subsequently not signified as part of the "I": "During that course in which 'I' become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit" (3). Through pain and expulsion, the lama returns to himself and the regime of truth he has known all his life, one controlled by and in the service of the white colonizing hegemony.

The process of personal dissolution followed by reincorporation closely follows the anthropological model of the rite of passage first described by van Gennep (1908) and elaborated on by Turner (1967). Turner describes the liminal stage's

importance in the rite of passage from one status in a community to another, a stage in which "Undoing, dissolution, decomposition are accompanied by processes of growth, transformation, and the reformulation of old elements in new patterns" (99). Symbolically in these rituals it is important for the old identity to be removed so that the initiate can take on a new identity. Like Kim and the lama, the initiate loses the signifiers that fix their subject position, becoming no longer one thing and not yet another. Van Gennep (1908) describes initiation rituals of young men in which the subject "is considered dead" and weakened in a way that is "intended to make him lose all recollection of his childhood existence" (75). At the end of the ritual, "he is resurrected and taught how to live, but differently than in childhood" (75). Through this series of acts, the subject dies to one identity and re-enters the signifying system inscribed as another.

The ritual is at once full of potential and threat. This liminal state, as Turner demonstrates, is an intentional crisis of identity and subjecthood. As he writes, "They are at once no longer classified and not yet classified" (96). This status is accompanied by an opening of possibilities and a transgression of boundaries: its purpose is to ease the trauma of change from one status to another, to make possible the violation of boundaries between identities that would normally be taboo. In a later article, Turner (1990) writes that this experience represents "a no-man's-land betwixt-and-between the structural past and the structural future as anticipated by the society's normative control of biological development. It is ritualized in many ways, but very often symbols expressive of ambiguous identity are found cross-culturally" (11). At the end of *Kim*, the same language of the loss of self and the opening of ambiguity is used, and the ritual connection with the lama's quest for freedom and merit is clear.

The lama's decision to return to Kim and the material world, then, can be interpreted as a failed rite of passage, or, more precisely, a defeated one. Rather than moving from one identity and life stage to another, the lama, like Kim does at the same time, moves into a liminal space and then returns to the same identity he had before. For the space of time in which he divided his sense of self from his body and conscious mind, the lama wins a sense of unmediated and unsignified experience with reality that transcends one of language and ideology; however, in order to be able to communicate this information to Kim, the lama must reincorporate himself into the same system of signification from which he briefly won his freedom. This demonstrates the contradiction of escaping from ideology Derrida demonstrates, in which one must use the very signs of the signifying system in order to attempt to demolish it, making completely escaping from it very problematic.

The lama attributes his actions to his love for Kim and expresses his hope that, because of his decision not to embrace his freedom yet, he will be able to guide Kim to it as well. Though he knows enlightenment is freedom from attachment, his attachment to Kim—represented clearly as that of the colonized to the colonizer—causes him to call his internalized racism and oppression love. A further source of dissonance is the lama's insistence that Kim needs him, while Kim has demonstrated repeated superior understanding of circumstances and ability to gain the advantage over others, mirroring the frequent representation of the relationship of colonizer and colonized as being that between parent and child. Landry and Rooney (2010) argue that "the lama seems to signify that which Kim is supposed to leave behind or, at least, separate himself from" (63). In this final scene, Kim distances himself from the figure who has been his father and mother, thus ending a relationship contradictory to his intended role as colonizing patriarch.

There is an interesting note about this final exchange that casts a shadow of complication on the idea that the breach is closed and the danger of destabilization is averted. At the end of the text, it is not clear whether Kim will continue on his path and become an agent of the British Empire. The lama, who is the last character to speak in the novel, says he will help Kim to the same freedom he has known. "'Son of my Soul, I have wrenched my Soul back from the Threshold of Freedom to free thee from all sin— as I am free, and sinless! Just is the Wheel! Certain is our deliverance! Come!' He crossed his hands on his lap and smiled, as a man may who has won salvation for himself and his beloved" (Kindle location 4195–4197). If, as I have suggested, freedom in *Kim* is represented as freedom from the signifying system upon which the British Empire's system of racial hierarchy is based, then the lama suggests that he might yet be able to help Kim achieve this and remove himself. Salvation, in this case, would be salvation from the limitation and control placed on them by the imperial system, which forces them into certain prescribed roles.

If truly freedom from the signifying system of the colony is thus made possible, it suggests Kim will not only stop being an agent of the British, he will also shed his sense of self. Since identity is mutable and dependent on one's exterior and actions, his whiteness could also be abandoned. In order for him to find the same enlightenment the lama has, it would have to be. The one element standing in contrast to this reading is, however, the essentialism described above: if the qualities of whiteness come out in Kim without ever having been taught or even represented to him, race can never really change. Thus, any fear of destabilization of the racial system of the colony is contained in the fictional separation of races in the novel. Zohreh T. Sullivan agrees that at the end of the novel Kim is implied to embrace his future in the Civil Service, explaining that "this end is also a beginning, or

rather a colonial fantasy that suggests an impossible origin for a new colonialist, one with a split sense of the constitution of self, who disavows difference from the native, yet knows otherwise" (177). Kim's experiences have served to make him a better colonizer.

At the end of *Kim*, the colonized and the colonizer return to the system of meaning that signifies them as such. The novel ends with an ostensible gesture of love that is also a gesture to a basic and cynical truth: that, for the sake of the colonizing system, one must learn to privilege the ideal of racial separation and superiority over experiences that suggest the opposite. At the end of the novel, even the colonized subject learns to embrace their position, as the lama chooses to return to the signifying system of the colony after having left it, doing so out of love for a white boy and the regime of truth that he serves as an agent of the British Empire. Kim himself, having experienced and experimented with the capacity for altering his racial identity, has gained knowledge that will be valuable to him in fully embracing the waiting role of white sahib.

**Works Cited**

Allen, Charles. 2007. *Kipling Sahib: India and the Making of Rudyard Kipling*. London: Abacus.

Bényei Tamás. 2011. *Traumatikus találkozások: Elméleti* és *gyarmati variációk az interszubjektivitás témájára*. Debrecen: Debrecen UP.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Christensen, Tim. 2012. "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Misrecognition, Pleasure, and White Identity in Kipling's Kim." *College Literature* 39 (2): 9–30. https://doi.org/10.1353/lit.2012.0014

Derrida, Jacques. 1982. *Margins of Philosophy.* Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: Chicago UP.

Fabian, Johannes. 1983/2014. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object.* New York: Columbia UP.

Fowler, Corinne. 2007. *Chasing Tales: Travel Writing, Journalism, and the History of British Ideas about Afghanistan*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Hagiioannu, Andrew. 2003. *The Man Who Would Be Kipling: The Colonial Fiction and Frontiers of Exile*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230287815

Hubel, Teresa. 2004. "In Search of the British Indian in British India: White Orphans, Kipling's Kim, and Class in Colonial India" *Modern Asian Studies* 38 (1) 227–251. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3876501. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X04001064

Kipling, Rudyard. 1901/2009. *Kim*. Urbana, Illinois: Project Gutenberg. Retrieved March 20, 2018 from http://www.gutenberg.org/ ebooks/2226.

Kent, Eddy. 2014. *Corporate Character: Representing Imperial Power in British India, 1786–1901*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442617018

Kristeva, Julia. 1982. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP.

Landry, Donna, and Caroline Rooney. 2010. "Empire's Children." In *Kipling and Beyond: Patriotism, Globalisation and Postcolonialism*, edited by Caroline Rooney and Kaori Nagai. London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230290471_4

Sullivan, Zohreh T. 1993. *Narratives of Empire: The Fictions of Rudyard Kipling*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511519246

Turner, Victor. 1990. "Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual and Drama?" in *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual*. Eds. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Turner, Victor. 1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell UP.

van Gennep, Arnold. 1908. *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. Chicago: U of Chicago P.

Young, Robert J. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. Routledge: London.

# Myth versus History in Contemporary Irish Poetry

Péter Dolmányos

In the poem entitled "Outside History", Eavan Boland's speaker makes an assertion that is the expression of a rather clear-cut choice: "I have chosen: // out of myth into history I move" (Boland 188). The poem initially focuses on the state of stars as being "outside history", indicating the speaker's interest in experience that is marked by time, and as the poem is the closing piece of a sequence with several mythic figures, the contrast is established not between the celestial and earthly realms but between human constructs that would be marked by different relations to the concept of time, namely myth and history. The temporal situation of myth retains an element of ambiguity: as a narrative it refers to an undefined time yet its internal logic of timekeeping is comprehensible in human terms, akin to history. At the same time, it provides a contrast with history as its implication of the divine creates the impression of time distanced and suspended, thus its relation to human experience represents another type of approach compared to that of history. It is rather this difference between what could be best termed the timeless versus the temporal that is emphasised by the explicit choice in the quotation.

On the surface, the assertion of the speaker does little more than indicate the presence and validity of both these concepts in Irish poetry as elements in relation to which a particular instance of human experience can be measured. On closer scrutiny, however, the contrast that exists between them and the importance of the choice and preference of the one over the other reveal certain concerns regarding the type of analogy these two terms may provide for assessing experience. The direction of the move expressed by the speaker is from myth to history, which suggests the intention of a tangible and precise location of the experience portrayed both in terms of time and agency. The speaker of the poem insists on the lived quality of what is described and a humanly comprehensible timescale that goes with it, thus a stance is made for a concrete and determined position.

As Edna Longley observes, "[i]n Irish literature the past as a continuum looms larger than the past as mortality" (E. Longley *The Living Stream*, 150). The statement calls attention not only to the presence but the presentness of the past, since the idea of a continuum suggests a sense of permanence as opposed to the finiteness implied by the word mortality. Once the significance of the past is acknowledged, history becomes an integral part of the literary tradition. In the wake of James Joyce calling it a nightmare, history has indeed been a frequent element

DOI: 10.33035/EgerJES.2018.18.55

of Irish poetry, in various forms and with the frequent realisation of the close interconnectedness of the personal and the communal dimensions. The communal often exerts a constraining, occasionally even paralysing effect on the individual and his choices, which results in a menacing direct experience of history. History is not only something of which the individual can be a part but *is* a part—it is experienced from within. Myth, however, offers a different approach to experience as it is a stylised narrative of an elevated register that remains external and is contemplated from without, thus there is no direct experience of this on the part of the observer. This difference serves as a means of distancing, since as Roland Barthes claims, "[m]yth deprives the object of which it speaks of all History" (Barthes 152). The use of myth thus can act as a liberating move as it relocates the temporal element in a particular context, creating a general sense of the pastness of the past, paradoxically by the suspension of its exact determination.

The observation that male poets use myth "to create a 'usable past'" and it indicates "a tendency to remove history from the realm of the every day" (Sarbin quoted in O'Mahony 138) is in concord with this idea. There is, however, an important emphasis on "male poets" here since female poets use myth or legend for a different purpose as their aim is "to move away from a 'distant idealized object to the real'" (ibid). This difference in approach results from the conviction that Irish literary history leaves little space for women, so there is an observable preference for myth as opposed to that type of history (cf. Meaney 100). Rather than considering myth as a means of refining experience out of a definite timescale, myth becomes more of a concretising device for women poets than a means of abstraction, thus the choice of myth or history represents a different type of decision for them.

Whereas myth is understood as a narrative whose referent may be taken either literally or symbolically, the case of history is considered to be simpler as it is commonly regarded to be based in "fact." Yet history has its inherent dilemmas as well since the narrative that arises in the wake of the historian's effort has its own dubious implications: "[t]he linear ordering of events into a narrative creates an illusion that it is possible to turn back and return to past events, which by virtue of their continuity in the *hic et nunc* acquire the status of mythical origins" (Jarniewicz 84). This renders historical narratives as capable of becoming the past itself, which is in strong contrast with the postmodern concept of history as discourse:

> History is arguably a verbal artefact, a narrative discourse of which, *après White*, the content is as much invented as found, and which is constructed by present-minded, ideologically positioned workers (historians and those acting as if they were historians) operating at various levels of reflexivity… [The] past, appropriated by historians, is never the past itself … the cogency of historical work

> can be admitted without the past *per se* ever entering into it – except rhetorically. In this way histories are fabricated without 'real' foundations beyond the textual […]. (Jenkins quoted in E. Longley *Poetry and Posterity*, 289)

This approach to history gives the impression of being deprived of the past itself since being regarded as a purely rhetorical construct with only textual foundations it calls into question its very referent. While its nature as discourse may be acknowledged, history appears to retain its factual affiliations in general in the work of several poets, and the distinction between myth and history persists as a result.

The importance of the past in Irish literature becomes explicitly apparent when the expectation towards poets and writers is formulated on the occasion of certain events of generally acknowledged significance. One such example is the Northern Troubles, the instance when history becomes everyday reality and embodies the Joycean nightmare. From the outbreak of violence, the pressure, especially on Northern poets to address the situation and provide some form of assessment of it became tangible. As Seamus Heaney would remark, in the wake of the events of 1969, "[f]rom that moment the problems of poetry moved from being simply a matter of achieving the satisfactory verbal icon to being a search for images and symbols adequate to our predicament" (Heaney *Preoccupations*, 56).

Heaney's own response to the adversities of the Northern situation took the form of a tentative mythic framework in the collection *North*. Taking John Montague's *The Rough Field* as an example of the modern sequence-as-long-poem, Heaney made an attempt of locating the Northern conflict in a composite myth of a rather broad sweep, with a distinguished place reserved for a parallel with an Iron Age fertility cult based on P. V. Glob's account in *The Bog People.* The group of poems focusing on these figures has its own dynamism and is emblematic in itself of the evolution of Heaney's position as it contains its own deconstruction and explicitly admits its failure as an analogue. The structure of the whole volume reflects the latent doubt the possible mythic parallel involves as the myth-oriented first section is balanced by a personal-oriented second one, pointing towards not only the possibility but the necessity of revision. As a result, several poems in the subsequent volume *Field Work* dispense with the mythic dimension and employ figures of individuals, reflecting a shift of approach from myth to an explicitly private experience of "history."

This shift from myth to history in Heaney's assessment of the Northern conflict can be properly observed in the difference between the poems "The Tollund Man" and "Casualty". "The Tollund Man" is firmly anchored in myth and local legend—the Iron Age fertility cult exposed by the figure of the title becomes the imaginative analogue of the sectarian conflict evoked through figures of the local

lore, culminating in an invocation to the sacrificial victim in the context of a proposed pilgrimage to his final resting place:

I could risk blasphemy,
Consecrate the cauldron bog
Our holy ground and pray
Him to make germinate

The scattered, ambushed
Flesh of labourers,
Stockinged corpses
Laid out in the farmyards,

Tell-tale skin and teeth
Flecking the sleepers
Of four young brothers, trailed
For miles along the lines. (Heaney *New Selected Poems*, 32)

The poem is tightly structured, the short and neat stanzas reflect the sombre mood of the myth and the speaker even acknowledges the potentially blasphemous act of drawing a parallel between the old pagan cult and the contemporary sectarian element. The closure of the poem eventually steps out of the public sphere of the suggested parallel and provides a more low-key personal conclusion:

Out there in Jutland
In the old man-killing parishes
I will feel lost,
Unhappy and at home. (ibid)

The situation of "Casualty" is markedly different since the apropos of the poem is the death of an acquaintance in an instance of sectarian violence. The personal dimension is indicated by the looser form as the poem is composed of paragraphs rather than of stanzas, and the language is close to the conversational. The construction of the image of the figure is circular as the speaker's recollection of his relation with the victim keeps shifting between the time preceding the death of the man and its aftermath. Although the brutally ironic phrasing of the outcome of Bloody Sunday recalls a public perspective, the poem essentially moves within the private domain of the speaker's own experience. Similarly to Heaney's tactics in "The Tollund Man", the poem contains an invocation to the victim yet there is still a marked difference between the two poems. The final act of commemoration, a recollection of a shared moment with the victim instead of taking part in his

funeral, indicates a very different approach on part of the speaker as it reflects the speaker's act of 'breaking faith with the tribe', the eventual 'sin' of the victim, and the language rises to a more elevated register to communicate what is essentially an impossible wish that at once reflects an act of absolution on the part of the poet as a public speaker:

[…] that morning
When he took me in his boat,
The screw purling, turning
Indolent fathoms white,
I tasted freedom with him.
To get out early, haul
Steadily off the bottom,
Dispraise the catch, and smile
As you find a rhythm
Working you, slow mile by mile,
Into your proper haunt
Somewhere, well out, beyond. . .

Dawn-sniffing revenant,
Plodder through midnight rain,
Question me again. (Heaney *New Selected Poems*, 103)

One particularly important moment of public expectation for assessment was the 1994 IRA ceasefire announcement, leading to highly different responses by Heaney and fellow Northern poet Michael Longley. Heaney's answer was "Tollund", a poem with a contemporary setting relating a simple and straightforward account of a tourist visit to the place referred to in the title. The name, however, contains the unmistakeable allusion to the earlier poem focusing on the myth and the subsequent historical content that is brought together with it. The poem is an intriguing pair to the earlier one as its more leisurely moving longer lines group together into stanzas with rhymes, and the elegant allusion to a Shakespearean scene at the end broadens the field of reference to provide not only a contrast with "The Tollund Man" and its context but to reflect the optimism contained by the historic moment of the occasion of the poem. The tone is more relaxed and personal, and the resulting atmosphere of the poem is devoid of the claustrophobia of the tightly built and laconic earlier pair, as it is indicated in the closure of the poem:

[…] it was user-friendly outback
Where we stood footloose, at home beyond the tribe,

More scouts than strangers, ghosts who'd walked abroad
Unfazed by light, to make a new beginning
And make a go of it, alive and sinning,
Ourselves again, free-willed again, not bad.
(Heaney *The Spirit Level*, 69)

While Heaney's response was essentially based in his own private experience, Michael Longley's poem "Ceasefire" is built on a different perspective as it recalls a scene from the *Iliad*. The poem focuses on the episode of Priam asking for the body of his deceased son from Achilles, an act of self-imposed and self-negating humbling in front of the enemy: "'I get down on my knees and do what must be done / And kiss Achilles' hand, the killer of my son'" (M. Longley 225). The story shows the encounter as a moment of recognition: the enemies are transformed by the personal encounter, the humanity of the other is mutually recognised and though the tension is palpable, there is a sense of suspended time as the domestic event of dinner renders the broader context of the war a mere background element. The old king mourning his son moves the invincible hero out of his established zone to reveal his humanity, and though the context is never fully out of sight, the suggested domestic interior provides a strong sense of contrast with the harsh reality of the war within which the scene functions as an episode. The form of the poem serves as a reminder of this ambivalent situation as Longley transfers the epic scene into the world of the lyric, and the relocated experience is presented in the form of a sonnet, yet the rhyme scheme is curtailed, so the harmony implied by the self-enclosed form of the sonnet as a type of poem is deliberately avoided.

Longley's understanding of the public expectation towards poets to comment on the present conflict creates an uneasy situation for him. His need for the authentication of his position takes the form of either relying on the individual history of his father or on the modern rendering of classical myth. Rather than attempting an all-encompassing approach, his careful selection of specific episodes of the Troubles provides a more intimate perspective and thus requires a likewise more narrowly focused analogue. His renderings of some contemporary events employ the figure of his father understood as a belated casualty of war, which enables the poet to address victims of the contemporary conflict through the direct experience of the tragedy of his own relative. The objective correlative of the father locates the present in relation to the personal history of the speaker which is eventually linked to and determined by the communal experience of the world war. This perspective is employed in the poem "Wounds", which renders side by side memories of the participation of the father in the war with quick images of casualties of the recent conflict. The historical dimension serves a double aim as it authenticates the pri-

vate speaker's voice for commenting on the communal present and at the same time it also reveals the tragic absurdity of the contemporary violence.

Longley widely used allusions to myth and classical literature already at the beginning of his career yet these did little more than reflect his interest in the classical tradition. In the course of the 1990s explicit references to such material return to his poetry, as an alternative to the figure of the father as a motif in his response to the present. The most notable instance of this is "Ceasefire", yet the closing poem of the collection *Gorse Fires*, entitled "The Butchers" is a similar construct. That poem recounts the closing of the *Odyssey*, when the returning Odysseus dispenses with the suitors, yet Longley resituates the story by turning it into a lyric piece. In the light of contemporary experience, the result is a subversion of the mythic, the calling into question of the accepted "justice" of the original story, which is already marked by the title of the poem. Although there is no explicit linking of past and present, the contemporary is hinted at by such phrases as "disinfectant" (M. Longley 194) or the unmistakeably local terms "sheughs", "bog-meadow" and "bog-asphodel" (ibid). Longley's decision to render the story in the form of one single sentence has a rather particular effect on the sense of time as it is stretched out and is seemingly suspended as a result, which is an act of recreating the timeless atmosphere of myth, as well as providing a comment on the ongoing conflict of the present of which it thus also functions as an analogue.

Whereas the choice between myth and history is closely related to the present conflict for the two Northern poets, it is motivated by a very different reason for Eavan Boland. The woman poet's personal experience of the sense of being excluded from history prompts an interest in myth instead—the association of the concept of history with that of Irish literary history and its hostility towards women does not prove an attractive element. Myth, however, is devoid of similar constraints, and by its status as a narrative of undetermined time it offers a range of possibilities as an analogue for the poet, yet in a different way than it would for her male contemporaries. For them myth points beyond the concrete and defined temporal dimension of past events and thus lends a different degree of dignity to the experience assessed with the help of myth, creating the sense of the general rather than that of the particular in relation to it. The challenging of this tradition on the part of women poets leads to that unusual approach that is mentioned by Deborah Sarbin, that myth serves rather as a device of concretising and the distancing of an abstract ideal than the detachment of the past from the present (cf. Sarbin quoted in O'Mahony 138).

In spite of the specific problem of history, there is a definite moment when it is favoured over the mythic. In the poem "Outside History" the word 'history' becomes synonymous with being involved and participating, and it appears as

the expression of existence in time. The contemplation of the stars takes an unusual turn as it is not their sublime existence that is noticed but their irrelevance to human matters by virtue of their incomprehensible distance both in terms of space and time. It is the latter idea that drives the rest of the poem forward, which introduces the concept of myth into the poem as an analogue to the timeless. The speaker makes a choice in favour of the temporality of history based on the implied contrast of the temporal versus the timeless: the choice is motivated by the understanding that human life is inescapably temporal therefore its proper frame has to be history as myth cannot adequately express human experience.

In the poem "Time and Violence" the temporal is likewise fronted to contrast with a specific tradition of stylised timelessness. The matter-of-fact description of a usual spring evening is disrupted by the visionary appearance of two figures, a shepherdess and a mermaid, and it is their experience of timelessness which is focused on as opposed to the one imposed on them by the traditions that they are a part of. The shepherdess is a representative of the pastoral, whereas the mermaid is associated with myth, and although the two traditions diverge, they share the association with the timeless. In Boland's poem the speaker's experience of these two figures is radically different from the commonly assumed one as they are seen from a human position, which makes the effects of the passing of time visible even for these supposedly timeless figures. The shepherdess is bruised, "her smile cracked / her arm injured from the mantelpieces / and pastorals where she posed with her crook" (Boland 238), and the mermaid likewise shows explicit physical consequences of the effects of time, "her breasts printed with the salt of it and all / the desolation of the North Sea in her face" (ibid). The voice heard at the end of the poem makes language responsible for this situation, the encrypting of these two figures into traditions that seek to eliminate the temporal constraints from experience and thus make it universal. Yet the timeless figure essentially falsifies human experience by the illusion of suspended time, and Boland calls attention to this by a rather ingenious manoeuvre as here the suspension of time is only partial, and consequently the sensory experience is only partly present as some of the external effects of passing time are shown, yet their human emotional content is missing. In this way the commonly regarded image of timelessness is subverted, these figures are not changeless either but their change is not complemented by "mortal pain" (Boland 239), and consequently by mortal joy either. The implied preference is thus for history, personal and private as it may be, yet the begging of the two figures reinforces the choice of the earlier poem in favour of a humanly comprehensible temporal framework for experience.

Both myth and history serve as analogues for Heaney and Longley for addressing the Troubles, in general terms as well as in relation to particular events. The

two poets rely on both elements in their repeated assessments of the contemporary situation, yet they take different approaches: Heaney moves from myth to history, whereas Longley exchanges the personal historical dimension for a mythic one. Heaney's attempt of placing the events and the ethos of the Troubles in a broader mythic framework would eventually deconstruct itself to admit the unsatisfactory parallel between the envisioned past and the actual present, thus a turn to a more tangible experience of the latter would take the form of substituting history for myth, and the scope of the poems becomes narrower as the personal dimension is foregrounded. Longley's path is the opposite as he focuses on particular events with the historical analogue of his father's figure and moves on to a broader focus through allusions to classical literature and myth.

Eavan Boland is less concerned with an immediate present reference when using myth or history, as her choice is principally motivated by her position in relation to the Irish literary tradition. Her choice of history is a defiant act of revision in relation to the tradition that marginalises her as a woman poet as well as a careful reconsideration of the function of signposts for relating experience expressed in poetry. Though myth provides the opportunity of challenging the marginal position assigned to her as a woman poet, the contrast between myth and history eventually becomes the general antagonism between the timeless and the temporal. In this way her preference lies with history since her poems always carefully frame experience as a function of time and it is history that provides the adequate temporal framework for human experience. The timeless suggestion of myth may be tempting but critical observation and recording are entangled with the notion of history both as expression of a humanly comprehensible timeframe and a liveable experience of chronology.

**Works Cited**

Barthes, Roland. 1972. *Mythologies*. New York: The Noonday Press.

Boland, Eavan. 2008. *New Collected Poems*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Heaney, Seamus. 1990. *New Selected Poems 1966–1987*. London: Faber.

Heaney, Seamus. 1981. *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968–1978*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Heaney, Seamus. 1996. *The Spirit Level*. London: Faber.

Jarniewicz, Jerzy. 2002. “Derek Mahon: History, Mute Phenomena and Beyond. In *The Poetry of Derek Mahon,* edited by Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, 83–95. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Limited.

Kirkland, Richard. 1996. *Literature and Culture in Northern Ireland Since 1965: Moments of Danger*. London: Longman.

Longley, Edna. 1994. *The Living Stream. Literature and Revisionism in Ireland*. Newcastle: Bloodaxe.

Longley, Edna. 2000. *Poetry and Posterity*. Newcastle: Blooadaxe.

Longley, Michael. 2006. *Collected Poems*. London: Cape Poetry.

Meaney, Gerardine. 1995. “History Gasps: Myth in Contemporary Irish Women’s Poetry.” In *Poetry in Contemporary Irish Literature*, edited by Michael Kenneally, 99–113. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe.

O’Mahony, Nessa. 2017. “‘The only legend I have ever loved’: Classical Mythology and the Ceres Legend in the Poetry of Eavan Boland.” In *Eavan Boland: Inside History*, edited by Siobhan Campbell and Nessa O’Mahony, 137–152. Dublin: Arlen House.

# "Fake News": Harry Potter and the Discourse about Reality[1]

Csaba Onder

"Of course it is happening inside your head, Harry,
but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?"
Albus Dumbledore, 1998, on King's Cross, London
(J. K. Rowling 2007, 723)

From among the several possible approaches to the novel,[2] I would like to highlight one at the moment, the one that I will designate as the discourse about reality. More precisely, I would be interested in the ways the novel represents the problem of reality for the reader. First of all, two brief samples from Hungarian newspapers:

> An extraterrestrial being has been spotted in Thailand by several peasants; first in a rice field, then the ET became ERL (extra-rice-land): it climbed on a tree, then flew away. The ET was described as being 27.5 inches tall, having a fairly big head but small mouth, its skin was yellow and its breast flat. It was bald, its eyes and ears were big and what was strange about it was that it left no footprints. According to the peasants' report, the ET was rambling on the rice field for about an hour, seemingly being unaware of the humans, then suddenly floated up onto a tree. Authorities have interrogated about ten peasants and each of them told the story of the encounter with an alien civilisation in the same way, and they described the alien identically. [...] An English gentleman was walking naked for unknown reasons in the historical downtown of Bratislava for unknown reasons on Sunday evening. The deed of the young man in his twenties caused general astonishment. According to the Slovakian news agency TASR, the nudist tourist is facing a fine of 1,000 korunas. The man was holding his clothes in a bag under his arm. (MTI 2005)

[1] The author's research was supported by the grant EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00001 "Complex improvement of research capacities and services at Eszterhazy Karoly University"

[2] The label "novel" here refers to the reading of J. K. Rowling's series about Harry Potter, the parts of which are interrelated but might be read separately as well, as one single text—which, though, cannot be fully consistent.

DOI: 10.33035/EgerJES.2018.18.65

What happened, *in fact?* The question itself is quite laden with preconceptions, because it supposes that real events are indeed intelligible, as if it were intelligible what is commonly called "reality." What can be supposed on the basis of the articles above is that something happened. These simple Thai peasants indeed saw something and this honourable English tourist got rid of his clothes for some reason in Bratislava. Since both pieces of news are unexplainable on a rational basis, we describe them as irrational in an ironic discourse. Nevertheless, something happened, and our bewildered or sceptical approach to it marks the boundaries of understanding and cognition.

It seems that in what we presuppose as reality there is a fair amount of incomprehensible things. It is just the strange, bizarre and absurd things that seem to form our sense of reality. Our reticence or irony about phenomena that belong to the sphere of reality and appear in its situation or context but that cannot be explained rationally does not deny the complexity of reality but still limits it and refers what is incomprehensible for it to the domain of the unbelievable, and explains it as fabulation, tale or madness.

Let us surmise (and this would be our trivial premiss) that reality in itself is unintelligible. More precisely it is way more complex and complicated than we would think. The world is composed of so many narratives and choosing from these, we decide what we accept or do not accept as so-called reality, as true, factual, and we compose our reality from these choices.

Our second proposition, to move forward the narrative a little bit, is this: only narrative fiction is suitable for representing the (complex, differentiated, relative) reality. More exactly: narrative fiction seems appropriate for somehow (re)presenting the elaborate complexity, the diversity composed of innumerable narratives, of the world.

As an instructive and entertaining narrative example of this, I would like to mention Gogol's short story *The Nose*. Here, reality (that is, what exactly happened to Major Kovalyov's nose) is not intelligible either for the characters or for the narrator(s) of the story. What is available for those (for example, the reader) who wish to fit the bizarre events into some kind of real (that is, plausible) pattern is merely hearsay, gossip, rumours, legends, that is, a set of unverifiable stories that contradict each other and themselves. In the final analysis, from all these stories, another, $n+1^{th}$ narrative could be constructed, which, therefore, does not present itself as the credible version of true events but as the ultimate vanity of the final intelligibility of reality, the failure of all positivist and Cartesian narratives aiming to reach this, representing the schizophrenia of narrators who wish to achieve this aim.

Then what about the *Harry Potter* novels? How and why can the questions of talking about reality arise in relation to these stories? Can such a question be asked at all? (See Granger and Bassham 2010.) It seems that the situation is simpler in this case, for it could be assumed that the *Harry Potter* story is, after all, not reality, *only a tale*. On the basis of our generic prejudices, these novels are fairy tales, which means that the reading experience here is not particularly provoked. A fairy tale is not reality. Fairy tales are *a priori* read and interpreted metaphorically. Using Wolfgang Iser's categories (See Iser 1993, 1–21), narratives such as tales are implausible, incredible, imaginary for the simple receiver (for instance, a child), that is, they are clearly separable from "real" narratives but they are different from fictive narratives as well, because, in contrast to them, in this case, the feeling of the semblance of reality does not even occur.

There is still a certain hostility towards this type of novel. This can be taken as a global semantic attack against humanity, which states outright that we are not alone; that the social, political, philosophical, physical and natural scientific order in which we live and acknowledge as real is not totally valid. That there is a world parallel to ours which is entirely similar to ours (mostly, of course, in its ethical aspects, because *the magician is also human*, the evil is evil everywhere, and the good is good everywhere). In the novel, the two worlds are penetrable. Maybe that is the problem. A tale which seems to be stubbornly and cunningly transgressing the frame of imaginary designated for it, a tale which questions the order of narratives about reality. The merging of appearance and reality is a dangerous thing, especially for the seemingly unprofessional and uninitiated readers like children. One of the characteristic ideological objections against the *Harry Potter* novels is precisely this: they disturb the child reader, who (caution!) is going to treat *the imaginary as fiction*. One of the instructive writings of Umberto Eco's is exactly about the real uncertainty of this boundary, that is, why the polar bear of Central Park in New York could fatally wound two children that dived into its tank:

> Instead, our children are raised with whales that talk, wolves that join the Third Order of St. Francis, and, above all, an endless array of teddy bears. Advertising, cartoons, illustrated books are full of bears with hearts of gold, law-abiding, cozy and protective – although in fact it's insulting for a bear to be told he has a right to live because he's only a dumb but inoffensive brute. So I suspect that the poor children in Central Park died not through lack of education but through too much of it. They are victims of our unhappy conscience. To make them forget how bad human beings are, they were taught too insistently that bears are good. Instead of being told honestly what humans are and what bears are. (Eco 1994, 215–216)

The kind bear of cartoons is just fiction, an illusion, zoo reality is much more dramatic and horrific. “Warning! Dangerous animals! Please do not tease or touch”, as it is stated.

Rowling’s novels are indeed dangerous inasmuch as they claim that the boundary between imagined and real things is artificial and the transgression of which is possible, what is more, natural. Rowling’s novels also undermine the moral and educational system of several centuries, but not by representing witches as living and benevolent creatures. The greatest offence of a *Harry Potter* novel is that it subverts European metaphysical and Cartesian logic in that it does not confront fantasy with rationality but the 20th-century postmodern experience of reality:

> Ever since the Cognitive Revolution, Sapiens have thus been living in a dual reality. On the one hand, the objective reality of rivers, trees and lions; and on the other hand, the imagined reality of gods, nations and corporations. As time went by, the imagined reality became ever more powerful, so that today the very survival of rivers, trees and lions depends on the grace of imagined entities such as the United States and Google. (See Harari 2014, 34)

The relative experience of reality posited in the place of imaginary makes the novel a part of “reality”: the world of Hogwarts, in this sense, is a part of our reality, another narrative that sounds incredible among the others, improbable, yet difficult to refute. The fact that we cannot see Hogwarts or Platform 9 and ¾ will not make them implausible. They might exist despite the fact that we do not talk about them. This novel shows the end of the unambiguousness of talking about reality, something that adults might know or suspect and which is becoming natural even for child readers.

Let us look at *Harry Potter* as a fictional (and not merely imaginary) narrative, in which one of the main themes of the novel is the questioning of the boundaries of reality, fiction and imaginary; more precisely the highlighting of the insufficiency of narratives constructing reality. How do they speak about Hogwarts and how do they remain silent about it? How does the discourse about this raise the questions of reality, tale and fiction? The *Harry Potter* novels abound in imaginary creatures, while the problem of the contact with reality is heavily reflected, for the novel does not claim that it is a tale, what is more, the text informs us about the fact that Hogwarts, a parallel world with ours, is very much real. That is, the novel does everything to present itself as a part of reality. It is ironic that the Ministry of Magic repeatedly clears the traces in a way that it shows them to be merely imaginary—that is why we do not know about the world actually. But why is removing traces necessary in a non-existing world? Eradicating traces and the ban of talking about

Hogwarts and diversifying it creates the illusion that this is a world that is very much existent but about which one has to be silent; in other words, it is not imagined but rather incomprehensible and dangerous.

There is a similar procedure in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*: Woland's entourage spends most of its time in Moscow clearing the traces after itself (just like the employees of the Ministry of Magic). Its aim is to prevent the investigating authorities from offering a reasonable, rational explanation for the confusing events that it brings about. What is more, these events are supposed to be found meaningless and the ones afflicted by them should be declared mad only to construct a narrative from the fragments of traces that has nothing to do with reality at all, still, it should sound more plausible and credible than any absurd, yet, true story.

Woland and his crew perform paradoxical things in Moscow: they wish to deprive their victims of their actual experience of reality. They offer the experience of reality of illusions, then, making it disappear, confuse their victims. What is absurd for the victims turns out not to be. Reality is something else, which, however, cannot be proven, because Woland's entourage made the pieces of evidence neatly disappear. Thus, reality turns out to be something extreme, unexplainable, unreal, paranormal, grotesque and absurd. What remains is the individual, hence non-sharable and non-collective experience, which causes the characters to flee: they turn into themselves and become insane. Perhaps it is not by chance that Homeless, as he calls himself, the poet, is the only one who survives (with a sane mind—committed to a psychiatric clinic), for only he has some idea about literature and fiction. Homeless understands that what he has done so far is worthless, that reality is practically unrepresentable in poetry, so he becomes a historian-philologist, paradoxically and ironically, as an expert who deals with facts. In Bulgakov's novel, reality, or more precisely, narratives credibly representing real events are only accessible for initiates, and that only as mere receivers.

Obviously, fairy tales also offer readers this kind of experience of being initiated. The participation in this experience is at the same time a sort of bargain as well, in a restrictive sense, inasmuch as receivers might be participants of events but not their authentic shapers and mediators. Making the discourse about reality uncertain, and the reading experience of this at a different level of the novel does not so much happen to Woland and the things he does but rather to the experience of the novel inscribed into the novel, for instance to the narration about the events with Pilate, what Jesus said and what eventually became of Judas. In fact, we do not get to know these exactly, but it does not matter, for all this is (caution!) literature. In this sense, Hogwarts is not fiction either, but a different form of reality which can

be accessed with the help of narratives that seem real. Hogwarts does not exist in the past, in what is declared imaginary, or in the future for that matter, because if it were so, its category would be absolutely obvious. This world is besides us, in the same time and space as ours, and it could be possible even here and now. It could be intelligible but the problem is that reports, tales, narratives about it are deemed mere fiction by us and are treated as such. The Thai peasants did not spot an alien creature, the good young Englishman was indeed drunk and Londoners in the novel were not astounded when an old Ford flew above their heads. We divide narratives into two groups (credible – incredible) and we name one of them "reality."

From the aspect of real – fictive – imaginary, one of the interesting characteristic features of *Harry Potter* novels, then, is the presupposition of a parallel reality. The novel does not intend to stay within the limits of tales but works as a fictive narrative creating the sense of verisimilitude. These novels claim that there is no firm demarcation line between reality and fiction, since it is rather de-marcating in its nature: it moves, it is diffuse and changing. Let us take the example of Hermione Granger, who is Muggle-born. This position, above all, raises the problem of discrimination (that of between the Pureblood and the Mudblood), but it also silently informs us about the fact that, for Hermione, the transition between the two worlds is more than natural. Her dentist parents have no objection to their child having exceptional, though unusual, talents. She attends a special school because she is different from others. The Dursleys tell the neighbours about Potter that he goes to St Brutus' Secure Centre for Incurably Criminal Boys. The seemingly real, though non-existent, institution is still a more believable explanation than Hogwarts. The Dursleys will not talk about things they do not want to know about. They would like to push the problem aside with the false appearance of truth or the gesture of reticence and silencing, which is obviously a typical motif here, that of hypocritical Victorian concealment, the fear of cognition and the unknown and the total indifference and rejection towards otherness. The common denominator, then, of acceptance and rejection is that one must be silent about certain topics, either because they are *incredible* or *shameful*.

The *Harry Potter* novel can be regarded as an imaginary tale as far as there are incredible beings and things at work in it which are in contradiction with our empirical world that can be described in a Positivist manner. The world of Muggles is, naturally, not the more incredible for them. Any other (social, cultural, ethical, etc.) problem is fully similar. Looked at from Hogwarts, however, reality (that is, our Muggle reality) is not a fairy tale, even if it is sometimes bizarre and unfathomable. The Hogwarts experience of reality is liberal and relative: diverse worlds can live beside each other comfortably. We can imagine that there is a little

colony of aliens living in Thailand peacefully, about whom we know (on the basis of the cited article) but we will not disturb them, will not interfere into their lives and transgress their closed little world for we wisely tolerate otherness and enjoy its diversity, etc.

The question of reality viewed from Hogwarts does not arise in the same way as Hogwarts does for us but in a way we relate to narratives constructing and shattering reality. This communicative similarity is nonetheless remarkable. In other words, what is unbelievable is not the question of *pros* (do giants or hippogriffs exist?) or *cons* (do toasters or petrol-powered cars exist?) but of what really happened to Harry Potter at Hogwarts. That is, the question is whether Harry Potter's stories or stories, narratives, gossip, hearsay, newspaper articles about stories that report about the return of Lord Voldermort are true or not. Hogwarts' reality is, in fact, provoked by Potter's implausible, fairy tale-like, insane narratives about the return of Lord Voldermort. (On more of this, see Dunbar 1998) Truth is essentially known by nobody (let us remind ourselves that Potter goes through most of the adventures *alone*), therefore, reality is even inscrutable for magicians, and for us, too. Apart from a few exceptions, Potter is looked at in the same way that we look at the poor Thai peasants who claim to have seen an alien: with gentle irony and a sarcastic smile. Potter is more like a celebrity of the tabloid press (let us think of the role and figure of Rita Vitrol and the Harry Potter image formed by her). The one who reports about the encounter with Voldemort is the most downright incredible medium of the sorcerer world, the magazine *The Quibbler*, edited by Luna Lovegold's father, which appears esoteric even in that world. The common magician-reader, in fact, is reading Potter's report about the Lord Voldermort encounter together with the usual everyday nonsense news.

What should the (magician) reader then believe? What indeed happened at Hogwarts? The dilemma of speaking about reality is, in fact, not about the existence of magicians of the Muggle (yes, they do exist) but about whether we can believe Potter. This is a question hardly decidable for the inhabitants of the magician world. In this sense, Potter appears to be losing the game: almost no-one believes his tales.

**Excursus: Nineteen Years Later**

> "And you don't want to believe everything he [James] tells you about
> Hogwarts," Harry put in. "He likes a laugh, your brother."
> Harry Potter to Albus Perselus Potter,
> 1st of September, 2017, King's Cross, London.
> (J. K. Rowling 2007, 754)

It seems like a great series has come to an end with the novel, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. However *Harry Potter* has been judged in the last few years, there can hardly be any doubt that Rowling has written herself into the history of literature once and for all, providing nourishment for the anthropologists of culture, education researchers, philosophers or even sociologists. With the birth of the *Harry Potter* novel not just a new hero, a new story, a new myth was born, but it can be taken as the first significant event in the globalised world of reading.

The closing piece of the novel-cycle, consisting of seven parts, is an interesting part of the series, from several points of view. Not only because the great story, rounded up from the independently readable novels, comes to a resting point at last, offering a solution and explanation for all that was bending the curiosity of the reader with a more and more vexing force, but rather because Rowling's concept is being completed here: a *Bildungsroman* that is changing and forming together with the ideal reader.

This type of synchronity, which comes from the experience of the intense overlap of novel time and the real time of the reader (namely: what we read is happening right now), is not a new phenomenon in itself. But there are not many examples for its conscious thought-out application on the level of a novel-cycle. One of the most well-known projects is the Rougon-Macquart cycle of Émile Zola, from the French literature of the last third of the 19th century. Zola wished to create the natural- and social-drawing of a French family, living during the second Empery, legitimating the fundamental determinational principle of naturalism with their story, according to which the hereditary features and the factors of the actual living-world (nature) exclusively specify our deeds and essentially our fate. Zola wrote the multeity of the novels of this cycle for about two decades (1871–1893) in terms of this scientifically founded concept, accordingly forming the characters' fatal life as well.

I'm not going to compare the cycles of Zola and Rowling, I would just like to reflect on the temporality of writing, publication and reading here. First of all, essentially in both of the cycles, only the last novels give a clue to the retrospective

clarification of the putative or concrete synchronity between the novel-time and the real time of the reader.

Upon the publication of the first book (*The Fortune of the Rougons*, 1871), which the contemporary French could have read, all the heroes of the narrated family-story are virtually dead. Yet the reader has no idea about all of this. Then the novels published in sequence obviously brief the reader, that the plot happens in the recent past. At the same time only the last part of the novel-cycle, published in 1893, titled *Doctor Pascal,* reveals in its full transparency the dated history of the three generations of the Rougon and Macquard family, with a correctly drawn family tree. Dr. Rougon Pascal, during the creation of the family tree, made discoveries that had illuminating force from a "medical" point of view, and at the same time realised his own destiny: his incestive relationship with his niece, from which a baby boy is conceived, who will be born in 1874, thus out of the time-frame contained in the novel-cycle. His other fundamental discovery is, that the family logically has an ancestress as well, Tante Dide, who can be found at the bottom of the family tree, married to the quiet Rougon first, then, after his death, married to the drunkard Macquart, having a child from both men, thus initiating a story that determines three generations. Tante Dide otherwise was born in 1768, and died at the age of 105 in 1873, in an asylum. (Namely, according to the diagnosis of Dr. Pascal, Tante Dide was a born neurotic, which was more or less inherited by everyone). At the moment of the publication and the actual affiliation of the first book, and in synchron with that, exists the beginning and the ending (the birth of the unbeknown child, representative of the new generation of the family, and the death of the ancestress of the family, Tante Dide) at the same time—as yet unknown to the contemporary reader.

From all this, the following conclusions can be drawn, regarding the temporality of the cycle:

1. The contamporary reader, in fact, starts to read an already closed story in 1871. (The first novel, according to the foreword of Zola, is nothing else, than *The Origin*.) The beginning and ending of the great story that is to be told (namely: the death and birth of its first and last hero) is in the narrow interval of writing, publication and the first reading.
2. The ancestress (Tante Dide) is born some hundred years before (1768) Émile Zola starts to write his first book in 1869.
3. The ancestress (Tante Dide) survives every member of the family: she dies at the age of 105, in 1873, nine months before the birth of "the newer link", the youngest heir (a child from Pascal Rougon's incestive relationship), so not so much after the publication of the first book. Thus she is present in the complete time of the story: allegorically connected to the reading and the writing.

4. At the publication of the last piece of the cycle (1893) the last Rougon boy is almost twenty years old: we do not exactly know his name, and if he is alive, presumably before raising a family, probably this way restarting the chain of the "clan's degeneration" determined by neurosis and environment, the fateful DNA-spiral. Probably (unlike the reader), he is not, and will not be aware of this. However, his story played in the future is unwritten, it can certainly be foreseen.

Harry Potter, similarly to Pascal Rougon, got an answer to his great question in the last piece of the novel-cycle: who is he exactly? The novel-cycle, which can be understood, as a progressional novel, unfolds the story of seven school years, during which its hero matures from an 11 year old boy to an 18 year old young adult.

But when is Rowling's novel-cycle laid, and how can the reader relate to this? It was unravelled from the first six books, that *parallel and synchronous* realities exist. The material construction of the non-magic (muggle) world allows the conclusion that the events in the novel happened more or less in the time now. Ergo Harry Potter lives here and now amongst us. But still, when was he born, and how old can he be right now? This legitimate curiosity is resolved in Part 7. Harry Potter's visit to Godric's Hollow is the first (and the last) time, when a *direct* stronghold is aroused for the reader, for the temporal comparison, thus clarifying the expression „our days", between the time of writing, publication, the story and act, or the own time of the reader, etc. In the graveyard Harry finds the grave of his parents, on it a possibly coded message, the reader in turn realises the *only date* in the canvas of the novel:

> The headstone […] was made of white marble, just like Dumbledore's tomb, and this made it easy to read, as it seemed to shine in the dark. Harry did not need to kneel or even approach very close to it to make out the words engraved upon it.
>
> James Potter Born 27 March 1960 Died 31 October 1981
> Lily Potter Born 30 January 1960 Died 31 October 1981
>
> *The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*
>
> Harry read the words slowly, as though he would have only one chance to take in their meaning, and he read the last of them aloud. (J. K. Rowling 2007, 328)

The narrator uses refined irony for the motivation of her hero, and the reader is to solve the awaiting hermeneutic task, to which she has just been given a key. Not passing the only moment (and flipping through the previous volumes), the reader, thanks to the *dating of the epitaph* (which reports from the beginning and end as an authentic medium) can easily calculate the most important facts:

1. Harry Potter was born in July 1980. (According to the related article from Wikipedia, he was born on the 31st of July; this is in fact also the birthday of the writer, J. K. Rowing; and on the 27th of July, her first daughter, Jessica, was born.) His parents could have married at the age of 20, at a pretty young age.
2. He ended up in Privet Drive 4 on the 31st of October 1981, at his kind relatives, where he moodily spends almost ten years.
3. The last novel of the cycle is laid in the school year of 1997–1998, and ends a few months before Harry would become eighteen in July 1998.
4. Harry receives an invitation from Hogwarts in July 1991 (when he became 11 years old), where he travels on the 1st of September.
5. The book, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* was published on the 30th of June, 1991 at the publisher Bloomsbury, more or less after the death of Dumbledore. Essentially, all that we have read about, has already happened, those were recent events, in fact the 90's. But when the ideal reader (who is a young teenager at that time) finishes the first book in 1997, that time Harry Potter is pretty close to conquering You Know Who, and to finishing his school years.
6. The chapter, *Nineteen Years Later* is created on the 1st of September, 2017. Actually *it did not happen yet*. Harry's middle child, Albus Perselus is going to Hogwarts at this time, with his 11 years, meaning he was born in 2005. In 2017 Harry is over 37. At the same time, 1st of September, 2017 is an event on the World Wide Web. Supposedly, unhallowed Potter-fanatics are going to gather together near the 9th and 10th platform of King's Cross station in London, certainly at this time and place the members of the Potter family, Harry, Ginny, James, Albus Perselus, the small Lily will surely show up, and of course there will be the redheaded children of Ron and Hermione as well…

What's the use of all this? In fact this is also part of the interpretation—a previously uncertain piece of puzzle finds its place, the ages can be calculated, the events can correlate, thus not only on the level of act, but on the level of the complete story. (The fans on Wikipedia have already created the complete profiles.) We have to note (as the similar process of Zola's cycle warns us) that the dating of the act typically happens in the last part of the novel cycle. The revealing of the date permanently fixes the events, quasi giving all that to the passing time. The cycle is closed, the act is closed, and "our days" illusion finally becomes past

time in the reader. Only the story told in novels of heroes seeking and finding identity is finished, their lives not necessarily ending. As an epilogue for the *Deathly Hollows*, the last chapter (*Nineteen years later*) is finished in the future: we can see our favourite heroes already as adults, with their children, who are wearing the talkative names of departed heroes, thus eternalizing and carrying the past. The always familiar interconnection of beginning and end can also be found in the end of Zola's novel-cycle, but only as an implied possibility, unwritten, leaving the "ending" to the reader. But Rowling, with the last chapter of the 7$^{th}$ part, in a paradoxical way, shows us the future, thus does not open, but, on the contrary, irrevocably closes her hero's narrative story. Moreover, the narrative creation of the future, in addition to not giving more possibility to the reader's imagination, also divests of the parallel and the concurrent images of realities. The clear fixation and revelation of the future also folds up the metaphysical thrill, which was meant by the possibility of this concurrence. With this movement, Rowling pushes her novel-world from the barrier of reality and fiction to the imaginary (simply: fairy tale) dimension. It is, of course, not a problem, only less exciting. And this is not changed much by Dumbledore's verbal truth, when he tells Harry in the bizarre place of King's Cross: "Of course *it is happening inside your head, Harry, but why on earth should that mean that it is not real?*"

## Works Cited

Dunbar, Robin. 1998. *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Eco, Umberto. 1994. "How to Speak of Animals." In *How to Travel With a Salmon and Other Essays*, trans. William Weaver, 213–215. New York: Harcourt Brace.

Granger, John, and Gregory Bassham. 2010. "Just in Your Head? J. K. Rowling on Separating Reality from Illusion." In *The Ultimate Harry Potter and Philosophy Hogwarts for Muggles*, edited by Gregory Bassham, 185–197. New Jersey: Wiley.

Harari, Yuval Noah. 2014. *From Animals into Gods: A Brief History of Humankind*. London: Vintage Books.

Iser, Wolfgang. 1993. *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Mti 2005. News of the Hungarian news agency MTI. In *Népszabadság*, 13 September 2005, page 20. https://adtplus.arcanum.hu/hu/view/Nepszabadsag_2005_09/?pg=287&layout=s (Last accessed 15 February 2018)

Rowling, J. K. 2007. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows.* Illustrations by Mary GrandPré. New York: Arthur A. Levine Books.

# A Glimpse of the Body in the Nineteenth Century: A General Paralysis

Soukayna Alami

**Wallis, Jennifer. *Investigating the Body in the Victorian Asylum: Doctors, Patients and Practices.* Callaghan, Australia: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 276 pages. ISBN 978-3-319-56713-6. Ebook. $31.00**

A close look into the body and its parts in patients of asylums has been the focus of pathologists. Cultural historians doing medical humanities like Jennifer Wallis, in turn, take an interest in how pathologists look at the patients and how they interpret their symptoms. Her book *Investigating the Body in the Victorian Asylum: Doctors, Patients and Practices*, addresses the practices of doctors with respect to the body examination of asylum patients in nineteenth-century asylums, specifically West Riding Asylum in Wakefield, West Yorkshire. The book can be classified as a contribution to medical psychiatry as the writer uses clinical, historical and pathological approaches to explore and report the practices of doctors on asylum patients in the nineteenth century with which they wanted to define the role of the brain in determining the connection between mental illnesses and physical diseases. Wallis's monograph is the result of her long-time engagement with this topic, and as such shows her evolution as an academic. There are several articles of hers leading to, and incorporated in, this monograph, mainly related to the field of anatomy and medical psychiatry since the focus of her research falls on the diseased body of mental patients in nineteenth-century Britain. One of her earlier studies "The Bones of the Insane" (2013), introduces the concept of "fracture death," which occurs in many patients due to falls that happen as a consequence of negligence from the nurses' side. This example of her early research, which has been integrated into the monograph, shows her general approach to her topic. She creates new concepts to describe phenomena like general paralysis among mentally ill patients; her focus, however, is much more on the physical body, on medical and care taking practices concerning the physical body than what she promises in her introduction, namely, the investigation of the relationship between physical and mental illnesses (1, 2, 10).

The book begins with a brief history of the body and mental disease, a term the author uses instead of "mental illness" to refer to the state of the physical illness in connection with the mind. Wallis's focus is concerned with mental illness only

DOI: 10.33035/EgerJES.2018.18.79

in the sense of a brain damage or some alterations in the structure (tissues) of the brain, but there is no reference to insanity or madness as a *cultural concept* in the main, analytical part of the text. It is only in her introduction to the topic that she mentions how madness is not solely examined in psychiatry but also in literature, and she refers to some scholars who did analyze the representations of madness in fiction. By including such aspects in the introduction, the author gives a misleading idea about the contents of the book. The reader, nevertheless, might direct their attention from the main theme of the book—which is the examination of the body in the nineteenth century, employing methods such as photography, the preservation of the brain and the documentation of records, related to the investigation of the living and the dissection of the dead body of mentally ill patients—to reflecting on mental illness from a psychological perspective. In this sense, the clinical psychiatric thread that the book seems to suggest and follow is but a pathological analysis of the diseased body. Hence, the mentally diseased patients' brain or all the other illnesses (syphilis, general paralysis, etc.) were not investigated in a way that one could get closer to the relationship of the mental issue and its traces in the body but other, not mental illnesses were examined instead. Mental illnesses that were supposed to be scrutinized by doctors in order to find the connection between mental illness and physical disease were not the core of the examination but rather bodily diseases were examined in patients who suffer from a mental illness.

Wallis argues that the medical practices of the nineteenth century can transform the body into a scientific object. At the beginning of the book, her argument suggests that the body is under-explored in the history of medicine but at the same time she contends that throughout history bodies have proven to be the focus point of researchers in the field of medicine and psychiatry (3). In fact, Wallis's opinion oscillates between the importance of the physical examination of patients' bodies (alive or dead) and the contribution of nineteenth-century scientific research to the discovery of the medical bond between the body and the mental status of patients.

Each chapter of the book tackles a different body part of the diseased patients and the medical practices that were executed on the bodies of mental patients to reach scientific discoveries. The first chapter, entitled "Skin," reveals the importance of photography as a source of information for doctors to get to know the internal workings of physical illnesses that reveal themselves on the skin, such as red spots on the body in the case of syphilis. After the exploration of the skin, the muscular system is addressed in the second chapter. Her focus is specifically on general paralysis both before and after death, on the difficulties in speaking and moving, and also on the socio-economic consequences of the loss of physical strength. In the following chapters, Wallis concentrates on the technological innovations that

doctors incorporated in their practice to detect bone fractures before and after the patient's death, based on the assumption that the bones of general paralytic patients would be weaker than those of non-paralytic patients. She also emphasizes the importance of the brain in the Victorian asylum because it is considered the most important body part that allows researchers to see the impact of general paralysis on the brain of the patient and to conduct further postmortem research by resorting to brain preservation. In this regard, doctors had to figure out new scientific methods and invent new devices such as the microscope to investigate "the physical evidence" of mental disease in order to discover the causes of general paralysis. The last chapter, "Fluid" describes how fluids such as blood and urine were used and analyzed by researchers to understand the mechanisms of general paralysis.

Considering the brain, Wallis asserts that clinical and pathological methods were used by doctors to spot the softening of the brain as an indicator of mental disease. However, the author's exploration of the institutional practices is not thorough in the sense that she solely reports what was examined on patients in nineteenth-century asylums, instead of stating the extent to which these practices are effective in finding the connection between mental disease and physical health. Moreover, she seems to be lost between providing a social history of psychiatry—which does not primarily focus on the body—and those experiences of diseased patients that are related to mental illness and physical disease.

Reading the title from the perspective of what is argued for in the introduction, the title might be slightly misleading because the preface explicitly states that the monograph will investigate the physical relationship between the body and the mental disease of patients, and so the title might be somewhat ambiguous as it can be both read as an investigation of the body without delving into the relation between the body and mental illness, and as a historical reading of mental problems in the Victorian period, especially as the phrase "mental health in historical perspective" precedes the main title on the cover page of the book. But because it is an examination of pathological and anatomical practices carried out on asylum patients' body parts, one might also form another assumption based on the introduction. In addition to that, syphilis and general paralysis are the most widely discussed diseases in the book, however, the title does not include general paralysis, which is after all the main topic and the most highlighted illness discussed throughout the investigation. The same thing applies to West Riding Asylum as the main institution chosen for the study, where the examinations of patients took place. Scholars interested in mental illnesses from biopolitical, cultural or socio-cultural perspectives may be disappointed since the book delves into the examination of the body in its medical and physical aspect more emphatically

than into the field of mental illness as a psychological or psychosocial disease. Approaching the topic from both psychosocial and medical perspectives would diversify the type of readership and attract researchers in the field of humanities and social sciences as well as widen the horizons in the sense of moving from the patient's body and diseases to its effects on human psychology and society. Besides this, the book has a conclusion which seems to be a summary of previous chapters with the author's comments. In this way, the conclusion is as limited in scope as the monograph: it does not inspire new directions, it does not offer potential links to other areas of Victorian studies or the medical humanities, nor does it invite, or get engaged in, a dialogue with other fields.

While the writer answers a lot of questions, the exploration of bodily diseases in asylum patients shows some gaps; for instance, she fails to consider the gender perspective in her investigation given the fact that men's and women's physiology is different. And whereas the monograph has undeniable merits that deserve acknowledgement, namely that Wallis provides a historically informative account of the "neglected aspect of asylum history: the clinical and pathological investigation of the body" (16), the reader may miss the analysis of the institution's practices, or the outcome of doctors' investigations in finding physical proofs of mental illness that the author rhetorically promises and proposes to do from the beginning as the subject of inquiry.

Nevertheless, Wallis's refined style and careful choice of words make her writing comprehensive and subtle. She provides examples of real cases of patients in every chapter with illustrations and photos to explore the various practices carried out on patients with different diseases. Through the investigation of the records, practices, methods and concepts of the contemporary medical practice, Wallis not only focuses on asylum patients but she also considers the other side of this duality, the asylum doctor. It is true that patients are the backbone of the scientific study and without their bodies there would be no discovery, but doctors are keepers of the professional tradition by making portraits archived in West Riding hospital. Doctors are also the maintainers of balance in the sense that the author explicitly argues that there was a co-operation between patients and doctors, by giving the example that doctors recorded patients' feelings and delusions in order to study general paralysis. Mentally ill patients could spell out to doctors their concerns and sufferings, which were sometimes traumatic, especially in the case of chronic diseases.

Overall, Wallis's book is a window into the world of Victorian asylums not only as a space for isolating mentally ill patients but also as scientific spaces where the discovery of physical diseases in relation to the brain is made and the medical interaction between doctors and patients in physical examination to establish

relationships of care is constructed. It is a significant contribution to body studies and Victorian studies since with its scientific terminology it can please specialists in the field of anatomy and medical psychiatry as well as students of medical sciences. I can recommend it to researchers and scholars who are interested in the clinical and pathological practices of nineteenth-century asylums and in the investigation of the body, as well as to readers who enjoy reading (about) human anatomy.

# ***Michael Osborn. Michael Osborn on Metaphor and Style.***

Krisztina Magyar

East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, cop. 2018, xxvi, 357 ISBN 9781611862874 (paperback)

The book is a collection of essays that consider metaphor to be preeminent in the study of rhetorical discourse. In addition, the essays reveal their author's intense preoccupation with questions of style. Part 1 gathers updated and extended versions of four pieces that were published independently during the 1960s and 1970s. Part 2 features more recent, previously unpublished works. More than simply publishing seminal writings on metaphor and style in one place, Osborn discusses the place of the essays within his career trajectory as a communication scholar in the United States. Overall, publication of the essays allows Osborn to trace both the evolution and refinement of his conception of what he terms rhetorical metaphor and to show his commitment to working toward a more nuanced understanding of style.

The aim of the first essay, "The Metaphor in Public Address," is to redefine the role of metaphor in public discourse in order to "make its significance more comprehensible" (5). To that end, the author makes an attempt to provide a definition of metaphor that might contribute to our understanding of the emphatically *pragmatic* work of the rhetorician. Osborn "relocate[s] rhetorical metaphor within audience experience" (22) and rescues it from the narrow confines within which ancient rhetoric placed it – namely, the study of style. Instead of treating metaphor as having a merely decorative function, we should, Osborn argues, recognise its inventional potential – that is, its power to generate ideas. Metaphor, in this view, aids both the speaker's thinking and the listener's interpretation, and "the speech becomes an exercise in exploring the analogical resources of the metaphorical insight" (26).

The second essay in the volume, titled "Archetypal Metaphor in Rhetoric: The Light−Dark Family," is frequently referenced by scholars. In this essay, Osborn identifies essential characteristics that he believes set apart what, in his view, constitutes a specific family of metaphor from other figurative resources: the archetypal metaphor. The essay discusses in turn four "sources of archetypal metaphor": light and darkness, the sun, heat and cold, and the seasonal cycle (63).

In "The Evolution of the Archetypal Sea in Rhetoric and Poetic," Osborn contends that it is possible to detect "the gradual emergence of two separate

DOI: 10.33035/EgerJES.2018.18.85

patterns of meaning" (99) for the sea metaphor in the history of poetry and that of public address. This separation of meaning, he argues, makes possible a more profound understanding of the nature of both rhetoric and poetry, and offers some insight into the workings of the rhetorical archetype of the sea.

The fourth essay, "Rhetorical Depiction," focuses on the use of particular stylistic devices with a view to shaping one's perception (142). Osborn finds it important to study rhetorical depiction because, in his view, rhetorical critics cannot, at the present moment, satisfactorily explain "that peculiar *fusion*[1] of reason and the imagination that Francis Bacon argued constitutes the essential rhetorical function" (137). The author highlights the need to enhance the potential of criticism so that it can deal more satisfactorily with how depiction works in contemporary rhetoric. He argues that it would be "profitable" to reconsider traditional figures with a view to gaining more insight into how they "advance the various depictive functions" identified previously in the essay (179). However, the author contends, it would be advisable to include in the list of figures "newly identified forms of figuration" (179). Here he has Michael Calvin McGee's influential concept of the ideograph in mind, as well as his own concept of the culturetype, which he discusses at some length in "The Metaphor in Public Address." Ultimately, Osborn's theory of depiction as outlined in the essay erases the distinction between literary and public discourse: in exploring the various functions that he attributes to rhetorical depiction, he discusses two literary works, Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

In the essays included in the second part of the book, the author offers illustrations of how rhetorical metaphor actually works. In "Lessons from Demosthenes," he discusses how the Greek orator used metaphor throughout his career. In "Progeny and Personification: Metaphors of Disease and Rebirth," he explores how the disease metaphor, which he considers to be an instance of "archetypal figuration," (234), has evolved through the centuries. In the essay he also explores in some detail the "rich figurative fabric" (261) of Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi propaganda film "Triumph of the Will." The last essay in the collection, "Space and Power: Vertical and Horizontal Orientations in a Rhetorical Universe," highlights the rhetorical potential of vertical and horizontal spatial orientations in public address by comparing Edmund Burke's use of spatial metaphors with more contemporary uses, among them those of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Barack Obama.

The volume is an ambitious, dedicated and imaginative collection of essays on questions of style and the rhetorical work that metaphor can be capable of performing. It is highly recommended as a resource for both students interested in

---

[1] Italics by Osborn

the human rhetorical impulse, and scholars working in various academic disciplines, including communication, cultural and literary studies. Indeed, anyone with the ambition to produce imaginative rhetorical criticism with regard to metaphor is well advised to consult Michael Osborn's fine volume of essays.

**CONTENTS**

KAMILA VRÁNKOVA
Modern Theories of the Sublime: The Question of Presentation ..........................3

ZOLTÁN CORA
From Rhetoric to Psychology: The Metamorphosis of the Sublime
in Eighteenth-Century British Literary Aesthetics (1700–1740) .......................17

DÁNIEL NYIKOS
Preventing Collapse of Race in *Kim* ..................................................................37

PÉTER DOLMÁNYOS
Myth versus History in Contemporary Irish Poetry ..........................................55

CSABA ONDER
"Fake News": Harry Potter and the Discourse about Reality.............................65

***

**REVIEWS**

SOUKAYNA ALAMI
A Glimpse of the Body in the Nineteenth Century: A General Paralysis ...........79

KRISZTINA MAGYAR
Michael Osborn. *Michael Osborn on Metaphor and Style* ...................................85