

PREFACE



*That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple.
For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle;
In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up
on a rock.*

For any reader of Frye (1912–1991), it should be clear that the desire of one of the archetypal poets of the European tradition, the Psalmist, has to do with the source of verbal meaning. For any student of Frye, for anyone choosing him to be a guide in the verbal universe of poetry, it is clear that this desire has to do with traversing that world to the very limits of reason and language, the rewards of which quest also touch on the unspeakable. To discuss Frye is to enjoy these great treats, and the Frye symposium, “Northrop Frye 100: A Danubian Perspective”, held in Budapest between 7 and 8 September 2012, that prompted the writing of the essays included in this volume, had this very sense of a group of people sitting and communing around the table of poetic meaning, theorizing in breadth or critically anatomizing in detail, but always with a mind to ultimate concerns and informed sometimes by personal gravitas.

The studies in this book illustrate the major directions current Frye studies are taking. In theorizing, there is an obvious shift from literature to approaching Frye as a major religious thinker and a cultural theorist. Robert D. Denham’s finding the Longinian experience ultimately predominating Frye’s literary motives is a case in point. The importance of drawing the conclusions of Frye’s literary-religious journey for cultural theory obviously cannot be emphasized enough, but is also an outcome of an understanding and appreciating of Frye’s work from within (Glen). What seems theoretically new and rather compelling is the interest in and justification for Frye’s thought on language and metaphor coming from “hard-science” linguistics, neural theories of metaphor (Sinding, Feltracco).

Back in 1999, after the publication in Hungarian of the *Anatomy* (1998) and the Bible books (1996 and 1997), I lamented the irresponsiveness of Hungarian literary criticism. The Frye conference and the Hungarian material of this book have disproved my concern; indeed, Hungarian Frygian scholarship has now

obviously come of age. Not only have the old Small Fryes (Tóth, Fabiny and Kenyeres) and Frye admirers (Dávidházi) continued in their quests, but new ones have joined them. We have important theoretical contributions assimilating Frye's notion of metaphor to dialogical and narrative identity (Kovács) and critical engagements with Frye's theories that take them seriously in their own terms (Kelemen). Perhaps most importantly we have discussions putting Frye's notions to use in critical issues of Hungarian literature: the stature and profundity – the timeliness – of *Kelemen Mikes* (Dávidházi); the contrasting of Freud and Frye in nineteenth-century Hungarian national literature and its *Hamletism* (Hódosy); the rehabilitation of Jókai as a foremost writer of romance as propounded by Frye and giving the concept a broader theoretical grounding, as well (Nyilasy); the discussion of the work of the two major contemporary Hungarian novelists, Esterházy and Bodor, replete with Biblical allusions using Frye's concepts (Horváth); and the ingenious application of Frye's distinction between *epos* and *fiction* and notion of displacement to justify the term "balladistic short story", perhaps putting an end to a long-drawn generic dispute (Sinka).

We have also included in the volume a section, *Juvenilia*, to show how youths, scholars in the making, come to grips with the material of their choice, the Romanian reception of Frye (Petrașu), a Frye-aided distinction between verse novel and mock epic (Bácskai-Atkári), and a retelling of a Romanian cosmogonic myth in a Frygian frame (Dullo).

The discussions below—most in English, some, meant mainly for a Hungarian readership, in Hungarian—naturally witness to varying degrees of appropriating Frye, from a profound sharing of outlook to harnessing Frye in conceptual worlds quite different from his own. Though it might be claimed this latter that such matching would require further theoretical polish, it might be equally said that it refutes the old objection that Frye's concepts cannot be used by other theoretical frameworks. Nevertheless, all these essays in their varying outlooks and programmes make up and substantiate an authentic Danubian scholarly perspective on Frye. Yet one can only ponder how it is that two major Danubian mythographers, roughly both peers of Frye, Károly Kerényi and Mircea Eliade, have received only passing remarks in this volume. However daunting the task might seem, Frye's and Eliade's concept of time would certainly need contrasting for a proper understanding of the differences between these two great modern-day appreciators of myth. The "Danubian perspective" idea also called for a comparison with Károly Kerényi, but, alas, it would not come into being. It would have been important not only because of its many yields in understanding the intellectual history of the time and in grasping the depths of

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what Emily Dickinson called the refunding of “our confiscated gods”, Greek polytheism as Frye understood it, but also because it could have accentuated the starkly shared elements of religious symbolism that Kerényi had found in reconstructing the central ancient Greek rite, the Eleusian mystery: burnt grain turning into bread.

Péter Pásztor

I.
THEORIA

ROBERT D. DENHAM



FRYE AND LONGINUS

Dedicated to the memory of Domokos Pásztor

*There he stood on the renewing crags of time,
stood on the ringed summit of the sublime universe.*

Ferenc Juhász

The earliest reference to Longinus in Frye's work is in a 1953 review of books by Allen Tate, Herbert Read, and Francis Fergusson, where he says that the theme of Read's *The True Voice of Feeling* "is essentially the same as the problem of ecstasis or 'transport' in Longinus," adding that this "problem" had been "ably handled" by Tate. He is referring to Tate's "Longinus and the 'New Criticism'" from a collection of Tate's essays, *The Forlorn Demon* (1953). About the same time, Frye writes this somewhat riddling entry in Notebook 37:

Re the first lecture: sublime process as beautiful product (Longinus on sublime). Sublime includes self-identification (process). Interest in a convention... more congenial to the aesthetic, especially in paradoxical forms of it like T. E. Hulme's. The rhetorical relation expects to instruct & delight. (CW 23: 126)¹

The "first lecture" is most likely a reference to the first address Frye gave at Princeton in 1954. Invited by E. D. H. Johnson of the Special Programs in Humanities at Princeton to institute a new series, known as the Class of 1932 Lectures, Frye gave four talks at Princeton in 1954: "The Critic and His Public", "Symbols of Fact and Fiction", "The Language of Poetry", and "Myth and Society" (Ayre 244). In his Preface to *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye notes that much of the substance of the book came from his Princeton lectures. In any event, Frye seems intent on exploring the connection between Longinus' emphasis on the sublime process and the Aristotelian "aesthetic" approach. The opposition between "convention" and "rhetorical

¹ Internal evidence suggests that Frye began writing in this notebook in 1949, put it aside, and then picked it up again in the mid-1950s.

relation” is apparently an opposition between final and instrumental value: the aesthetic needs no justification beyond itself, whereas rhetoric is concerned with the ways and means of instruction and delight. The reference to Hulme seems to be that his call for formal restraint and concrete imagery (“dry hardness”), along with his attacks on Romanticism, means he is a “classicist” and does not belong to the Longinian camp.

FICTIONAL AND THEMATIC

The notebook entry on “the first lecture” suggests that, in his thinking about the beginning of the Anatomy, Frye has in mind two approaches the critic might take to literature, one emphasizing process and the other product. And, in fact, this opposition turns up at the end of the Anatomy’s first essay where Frye expands on the meaning of the terms “fictional” and “thematic” in his theory of modes. A “fictional” work for Frye is one that has internal characters, as in novels, epics, and plays. A “thematic” work is one in which there are no characters involved except the author and the reader, as in lyrics and essays, or in which the internal characters are subordinated to the writer’s argument, as in allegories and parables. The foundational category in the first essay is Aristotle’s ethos, or rather Frye’s expansion of this term: even though the meaning of “character” in “fictional” works differs from its meaning in “thematic” works, ethos is the constant term in both. Here is the key passage at the end of the first essay:

[T]he difference in emphasis that we have described as fictional and thematic corresponds to a distinction between two views of literature that has run all through the history of criticism. These two views are the aesthetic and the creative, the Aristotelian and the Longinian, the view of literature as product and the view of literature as process. For Aristotle, the poem is a *techne* or aesthetic artefact: he is, as a critic, mainly interested in the more objective fictional forms, and his central conception is catharsis. Catharsis implies the detachment of the spectator, both from the work of art itself and from the author. The phrase “aesthetic distance” is generally accepted now in criticism, but it is almost a tautology: wherever there is aesthetic apprehension there is emotional and intellectual detachment. The principles of catharsis in other fictional forms than tragedy, such as comedy or satire, were not worked out by Aristotle, and have therefore never been worked out since. Just as catharsis is the central conception of the Aristotelian approach to literature, so ecstasis or absorption is the central conception of the Longinian approach. This is a state of identification in which the reader, the poem, and sometimes, at least ideally, the poet also, are involved. We say reader, because the Longinian concep-

tion is primarily that of a thematic or individualized response: it is more useful for lyrics, just as the Aristotelian one is more useful for plays. (CW 22: 62–3)

Thirtythree years later Frye is still appealing to the Aristotelian–Longinian dialectic. In *Words with Power* (1990), he writes: “Traditional critical theories, from Plato and Aristotle on, look at literature within a mimetic context. We are told in both the *Republic* and in the *Poetics* that the poet’s work is imitative, though very different inferences are drawn from the principle in the two contexts. What the poet imitates is usually assumed to fall within either the phenomena of human society or the order of nature. But the Longinian conception of ecstatic response suggests another dimension of imitation” (CW 26: 108–9).

John Stuart Mill reports that “Coleridge used to say that everyone is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian” (262).² For Coleridge, there was no complementarity in this dialectic: if you are a Platonist, you cannot be an Aristotelian, and vice versa. “Dialectic” signals the presence of oppositions, and Frye is a dialectical thinker. He is forever moving back and forth between opposing poles of reference: knowledge and experience, space and time, stasis and movement, the individual and society, tradition and innovation, synthesis and analysis, engagement and detachment, freedom and concern, mythos and dianoia, the world and the grain of sand, immanence and transcendence, and scores, nay, hundreds of other oppositions. But in Frye there are few occasions that present us with an either/or choice, and the Aristotle–Longinus dialectic is no exception. Frye’s world is a both/and world. The two perspectives complement each other, or at least they appear to do so.

The imprint of Aristotle is everywhere in Frye’s work. He sets out in the *Anatomy* to develop a twentiethcentury *Poetics*, and a number of Aristotelian topoi appear with regularity: mythos, ethos, and dianoia are the material cause for much of Frye’s analysis in the first three essays of the *Anatomy*, and melos, lexis, and opsis serve the same function in the fourth essay. Frye frequently relies on the fourcause method of definition. Aristotelian terms—mimesis, spoudaios and phaulos, catharsis, hamartia, and anagnorisis—are scattered liberally throughout his writing. More often than not Frye greatly expands the meanings that these terms have in Aristotle, as already suggested, but the *Anatomy* nevertheless would have been a very different book had there been no *Poetics*.

The occasions Frye has to write about Longinus are far fewer than the Aristotelian ones, but they are frequent enough to deserve our attention. I propose

² Coleridge had written, “Schools of real philosophy there are but two,—best named by the archphilosopher of each, namely, Plato and Aristotle. Every man capable of philosophy at all (and there are not many such) is a born Platonist or a born Aristotelian” (33).

to examine the influence of Longinus on Frye and to speculate on whether or not in his both/and world, where Aristotle complements Longinus and vice versa, he finally privileges one over the other. In studying the influence of Longinus on Frye we have the class notes for his 1954 course in Literary Criticism, recorded by his student Margaret (née Kell) Virany,³ a course in which he taught the major Classical critics: Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Longinus, and Quintilian.

THE SUBLIME

Some uncertainty surrounds the translation of *Peri hypsous* as “On the Sublime.” Most agree that it conveys the sense of height or elevation. The first English translation by John Hall in the seventeenth century was entitled *Of the Height of Eloquence*. Even the etymology of “sublime,” which comes from the Latin *sublimis*, is uncertain. The OED speculates that *sublimis* probably derives from *sub* ‘up to’ plus *līmen* ‘lintel’. G. M. A. Grube says that the “English translators and editors seem to be agreed that sublime is an unsatisfactory translation... but they continue to use it; few of them given any clear idea of what Longinus is writing about” (355). One of the implicit meanings of *hypsous* is that of movement or process. Emma Gilby maintains that “Longinus gives us to understand that ‘hypsos’ is best defined as a movement, and not just a movement upward (as one might expect from a term often translated as ‘height’) but also horizontally toward others” (23).

Etymology and the uncertainties of translation aside, Longinus is relatively clear about what he means by *hypsous*. In his opening paragraph he says to his correspondent Terentianus that the first requirement of a systematic treatise is “a statement of the subject,” and he proceeds to provide just that in his opening chapter. Elder Olson is clearly correct in calling our attention to two contexts for the definition. One is that the ends and means of the sublime are contrasted with those of rhetoric; the other is that the definition is presented within the framework of the familiar triad of audience, author, and work.⁴

³ In 1994 Virany sent me her class notes for this and six other courses she had with Frye. She was assisted in her notetaking, written neatly and thoroughly, by her training in Pitman shorthand, the keys to which she generously provided.

⁴ Olson’s essay is an analytically powerful examination of the argument of *On the Sublime*. On the Longinian influence on Frye, see Cotrupi and Veggian.

From the perspective of the author, sublimity is that which has constituted the greatest poets; it is what has given them their high place, their fame. “[S]ublimity is a certain distinction and excellence in expression, and that it is from no other source than this that the greatest poets and writers have derived their eminence and gained an immortality of renown” (1.3).⁵

From the perspective of the audience, the “effect of elevated language upon an audience is not persuasion but transport [ekstasis]” (1.4). Ecstasy is stronger than persuasion because the audience can resist persuasion, but it can’t resist transport. The Greek stem for ekstasis means a being put out of its place, and in late Greek it acquired the additional meaning, according to the OED, of “withdrawal of the soul from the body, mystic or prophetic trance”.

From the perspective of the work, the excellencies of rhetoric are contextual: they emerge from the whole and are temporal. The excellencies of ekstasis emerge from the part and are instantaneous: “Sublimity flashing forth at the right moment scatters everything before it like a thunderbolt” (1.4).⁶

Thus, to summarize in a chart:

	Author	Work	Audience
Art of rhetoric	rhetorician	whole	persuasion
Art of the sublime	greatest poets & writers	part	transport

Longinus is a qualitative critic. Whereas Aristotle is interested in artistic wholes and the way the parts go to make up those wholes, Longinus is interested only in a particular literary quality, sublimity, which can be found in any number of genres, including non-literary ones. There are parallels in contemporary criticism: Cleanth Brooks’s concern, for example, with the qualities of irony and paradox or Mikhail Bakhtin’s with the dialogical and carnivalesque—qualities they discover in a variety of literary forms.

CLASS NOTES ON LONGINUS FROM FRYE’S COURSE IN LITERARY CRITICISM

Margaret Virany’s class notes for Frye’s lecture on Longinus, which are reproduced in the appendix, are mostly a rather matteroffact summary of the topics Longinus addresses. Frye does remark that Longinus “gets to the heart of great writing”, says (in regard to chapter 2) that Longinus is non-committal about

⁵ References to *On the Sublime* are to chapter and paragraph number.

⁶ Longinus uses the lightning and thunder metaphor on two other occasions: 12.4 and 34.4.

whether the sublime can be taught, notes in regard to Longinus' section on periphrasis that Molière satirized circumlocution, comments regarding diction that "beautiful words are the light of thought (not realized in England until Coleridge) / ——cf. stainedglass window and light / ——words and thought must be correlated." He also says that Longinus was the first to point out that judicial literary criticism is difficult and can come only after long experience, and he points out that the passages Longinus cites are similar to Matthew Arnold's "touchstones." Finally, he notes that Longinus' requisites for sublimity—"words, thought, conception, imagination, feeling"—make for a "rare combination."

"Otherwise, assuming that Virany's notes are an accurate record, Frye seems content simply to mention, with very little commentary, some of the topics that Longinus treats. What follows is an outline of the topics Longinus does cover. Those that Frye refers to in his lecture are marked with an asterisk."

Chapter
Number

- *1–2 Introduction
[missing text]
 - *3–5 Instances of False Sublimity: Tumidity, Puerility, "Parenthyrsus"
 - 6–7 Definition of Sublimity
 - 8 Sources of True Sublimity
 - A. Sources that are innate: common to all art; independent of words
 - * 1. Great Thoughts, Conceptions
 - * 2. Strong Passion, Feeling
 - B. Sources that are acquired
 - 3. Proper Handling of Figures
(words in connection with thought)
 - 4. Noble Diction
(words in connection with one another)
 - 5. Elevated Composition
(words by themselves)
- First Source: Thoughts (9–15)
- *9 First mode for achieving sublimity: nurturing the soul to great conceptions requires the contemplation of great objects: gods, heroes, majesty of nature, etc.
[missing text between 9.4 and 9.5]
 - 10 Second mode: selection and integration of characteristics upon which a great subject's sublimity depends
 - *11 Third mode: Amplification or Magnification

- 12 (Third mode, continued)
 [missing text between 12.2 and 12.3]
- *13–14 Fourth mode: Imitation of Great Writers
- 15 Fifth Mode: Invention or Imagination
 [Second source: Strong Passion, Feeling, Missing section]
 *Third source: Proper handling of figures (16–29)
- 16–17 Figures of thought: Adjuration (*apostrophe, oath, etc.)
- 18 Figures of thought: Questions
 [missing section after 18.2]
- 19–29 Figures of Feeling
- 19 Asyndeton (omission of conjunction)
- 20–21 Anaphora (repetitions) and diatyposis (vivid descriptions)
- 22 Hyperbaton (inversions)
- 23 Polypota (accumulations, variations, climaxes)
- 24 Plural to Singular
- 25 Past to Present
- 26 Transposition of Persons
- 27 Change in Narrative Point of View
- *28–29 Periphrasis (circumlocution)
- *Fourth Source: Choice of Words (30–38)
- 30 Introduction to Diction
 [missing text after 30.2 and before 31]
- *31 Use of Common Language
- *32 Metaphors
- 33–36 Digression on Genius (though not without fault) vs. the Commonplace
- 37 Similes
 [missing text in 37 and beginning of 38]
- 38 Hyperbole
- Fifth Source: Elevated Composition (39–43)
- *39 Rhythm
- *40 Shape of Sentence
- *41–43 Features Antithetical to Sublimity: rhythmic affectation, “cut up” style, excessive concision, trivial expression
- *Reasons for the decay of great literature (44)

If we assume that Margaret Virany gives a fairly complete account of Frye’s lecture on Longinus, there is little evidence to suggest from his rather unexceptional summary of topics that Longinus would come to represent for him one of the two central approaches to literary criticism, first articulated in “Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility”, a paper he presented in 1955, only a year after he gave his literary criticism lectures. Frye’s thesis is that Aristotle and Longinus represent complementary approaches to literature. He returns to this proposition at the end of his theory of modes in the passage quoted above from *Anatomy of Criticism* (CW 22: 62–3), written about the same time, and then again in *The Well-Tempered Critic*, lectures delivered in 1961. From these three sources we can abstract the key elements in the opposition Frye sets up between Aristotle and Longinus. These are summarized in Figure 1. Except for what Frye says in his lecture about true sublimity involving a meeting between or a union of the poet and the reader, there is nothing in the class lecture that anticipates this broad critical dialectic.

We should note that the Longinian context for the sublime is different from the eighteenth-century one in which the sublime, distinguished from the beautiful, is identified by Shaftesbury, Dennis, Burke, Kant, and others with the picturesque in nature. This is the context in which Frye discusses Blake’s view of the sublime, especially in reference to Burke, in *Fearful Symmetry*. The rhetorical context for the Longinian sublime emphasizes the effect of the qualities found not in nature but in thought and language.⁷

Figure 1. Complementary Approaches to Literature

	ARISTOTELIAN (POEMA)	LONGINIAN (POIESIS)
VIEW OF LITERATURE	Aesthetic: literature as product (“hieratic”)	Creative, psychological: literature as process (“demotic”)
NATURE OF	Techne or artistic artefact; poem as product; imitation	Poem as process; expression; creation; locus of sublime passages
CENTRAL CONCEPTION	Catharsis	Ecstasis
SPECTATOR	Detached from work of art and from author	Identification of reader, poem, and poet; individualized response, based on participation

⁷ On this distinction, see CW 17: 110–11.

CHIEF INTEREST	Fictional forms (more useful for plays)	Thematic forms (more useful for lyrics)
TYPICAL METAPHORS	Of objective order; <i>natura naturata</i>	Of organism, genesis, and elevation; <i>natura naturans</i>
NATURE OF TEXT	Text as single form; unified story	Text as sequence of epiphanies; series of ecstatic moments or points of expanding comprehension
EMPHASIS	Classical	Romantic
POETIC IMAGERY	Images of order and purpose	Images of mystery and vagueness

As already said, Frye is a dialectical thinker, frequently seeking to unify the many oppositions contained in his criticism as a matter of course. In his late work this is often achieved through the method of the great synthesizer, Hegel, who takes the contraries to another level through a process he calls *Aufhebung*. Frye almost always resists the Kierkegaardian either/or solution. But unity is not achieved at the expense of variety, and in his notebooks he never tires of insisting that opposites are never resolved by reconciliation, harmony, or agreement. Such terms relate to propositional language and are forms of what he calls “imperialistic compulsion” (CW 6: 653). In one of his notebooks from the mid-1960s Frye writes: “I have always distrusted what I call Reuben the Reconciler in thought: the syncretism that ‘reconciles’ Plato & Aristotle or St. Thomas & Marx. I think every great structure of thought or imagination is a universe in itself, identical with and interpenetrating every other, but not similar or harmonizable with any other” (CW 9: 39). At about the same time Frye wrote in his “Letter to the English Institute, “I wish we could throw away the notion of ‘reconciling,’ and use instead some such conception as ‘interpenetration’. Literature itself is not a field of conflicting arguments but of interpenetrating visions” (CW 27: 216). Earlier—in the *Anatomy*—Frye had taken a different position regarding reconciliation. The Bible, he writes, may “be examined from an aesthetic or Aristotelian point of view as a single form, as a story in which pity and terror, which in this context are the knowledge of good and evil, are raised and cast out. Or it may be examined from a Longinian point of view as a series of ecstatic moments or points of expanding apprehension—this approach is in fact the assumption on which every selection of a text for a sermon is based. Here we have a critical principle which we can take back to literature and apply to anything we like, a principle in which the ‘holism’, as it has been called, of Coleridge and the discontinuous theories of Poe, Hulme, and Pound are reconciled” (CW 22: 305).

COMPLEMENTARITY, EKSTASIS, AND THE KERYGMATIC

To reconcile means to restore to a unity, or to make things compatible or agreeable with each other. After the *Anatomy* did Frye change his mind about the possibility of reconciling the holistic approach of Aristotle with the discontinuous one of Longinus? It is difficult to see how the two ways of seeing a text—as an organic whole or as a series of ecstatic moments—can be brought together as a single “critical principle.” Frye does say in an endnote in the *Anatomy* that the “conception of Aristotelian aesthetic catharsis and Longinian psychological ecstasis... [are] complementary to one another” (CW 22: 411), complementarity suggesting that what is missing in one approach is supplied by the other. Whatever the reason for Frye’s both affirming and denying the principle of reconciliation, it is clear that as he moved beyond the *Anatomy*, interpenetration did become an increasingly important principle for him. He uses interpenetration to define a kind of experience, a way of understanding, a process of enlightenment, a religious final cause, and a visionary perception. Around the word “interpenetration” cluster a host of additional verbal formulas that help to define it, and it is a function of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, too.

“Complement” comes from the Latin meaning to fill up or complete. Two years after the *Anatomy* was published, Frye defined a “complete” theory of criticism in these terms:

There are traditionally two main centres of emphasis in the theory of criticism, sometimes described by the words *poesis* and *poema*. The former, or Longinian, centre is primarily an interest in the psychological process of poetry, and in the rhetorical relation (often arrived at by indirection) set up between poet and reader. The latter, or Aristotelian, centre is primarily an interest in the aesthetic product, and is based on a specific aesthetic judgment, detached by catharsis from moral anxieties and emotional perturbations. Any complete theory of criticism needs both, but in a complete theory the aesthetic judgment takes precedence, for the Longinian interest is in enthusiasm, or what ‘carries us away’, in other words in what uncritical feelings we may trust to afterwards. (CW 21: 277)

We encounter here Frye’s privileging, in the 1950s, the Aristotelian over the Longinian approach: the aesthetic view takes precedence over the enthusiasm of ecstasis, as the feelings generated when we are transported are not subject to critical scrutiny. But as Frye continued to reflect on the complementary critical approaches, he leaned more and more in the Longinian direction. In one of his late notebooks, he has this reprimand to himself for not including Longinus in his account of the

oracular, kerygmatic mode of language: “Longinus, you idiot. Why did you leave him out of chapter four? Most of him is the fragmentary, oracular, individualized, that’s-for-me kerygma” (CW 5: 343). Frye is referring to chapter 4 of *Words with Power*. In chapter 2 and 3 he has been exploring the relation between the rhetorical and the poetic. He then turned to the relation between the poetic and kerygmatic, mending his omission by saying this about Longinus:

[W]e need the guidance of a critic who understands what we have called the ecstatic state of response, and the difference, or contrast, between the ideological rhetoric that persuades and the proclamation that takes one out of oneself. The best of such critics is the first- or second-century writer whom we know only as Longinus. The title of Longinus’ treatise, *Peri Hypsous*, is usually translated *On the Sublime*, which refers to an eighteenth-century adaptation of his ideas. The most effective part of *On the Sublime* deals with brief passages—‘touchstones’, as Matthew Arnold would call them—which stand out from their context. This we may call the oracular or discontinuous prophetic, the passage in the text where we suddenly break through into a different dimension of response. Longinus’ examples come from Greek literature, but one—he was probably a Jew or a Christian—is the ‘Let there be light’ verse from Genesis. (CW 26: 106)⁸

The “proclamation that takes one out of oneself” is what Frye calls kerygma, a term he introduced in *The Great Code*, meaning the rhetoric of proclamation. But in *Words with Power* he expands the meaning of kerygma far beyond what it had meant in *The Great Code*. It now becomes synonymous with the prophetic utterance, the metaliterary perception that extends one’s vision, and the Longinian ecstatic response to any text, sacred or secular, that “revolutionizes our consciousness.”⁹ Kerygma takes metaphorical identification “a step further and says: ‘you are what you identify with’” (CW 26: 110). We enter the kerygmatic realm when the separation of “active speech and reception of speech” merges into unity (CW 26: 111).

Frye’s late work often focuses on ecstatic states and the revolutionizing and expanding of consciousness that results from the experience of ecstasis. Kerygma moves beyond the poetic, embracing the reader’s existential experience. The highest states of this experience are a function of what Frye calls existential or, following Heidegger, ecstatic metaphor. In one of his *Words with Power* notebooks Frye writes: “Metaphor is the attempt to open up a channel or current of energy between

⁸ The passage from Genesis is quoted by Longinus in 9.9.

⁹ For these expansions of kerygma, see CW 26: 105–8. For a more detailed discussion of Frye’s use of “kerygma,” see Denham, 65–9.

subject and object. It begins in ecstatic metaphor (Stone Age painting and ‘primitive’ music), and literature develops in proportion as the sense of a split between subject and object becomes habitual. The link with religion is there because metaphor creates a ‘Thou’ world between the ‘I’ and the ‘it,’ and the god is the stabilized metaphor” (CW 6: 537). In *Words with Power*, Frye proposes three levels of metaphorical experience: the imaginative, the erotic, and the existential or ecstatic. As we move up the ladder of metaphorical experience, the difference between identity and difference continues to lessen until we arrive at the highest level, an ecstatic state in which, Frye says, “there is a sense of presence, a sense of uniting ourselves with something else” (CW 26: 85). Such a state is Longinian ekstasis or transport—a being put out of its place. “In the ecstatic state,” Frye writes, “there is a sense of presence, a sense uniting ourselves with something else” (ibid.)

Moments of intense consciousness for Frye move us beyond time and space into a world of pure identity that is an altogether different order of experience:

Continued study of literature and the arts brings us into an entirely new world, where creation and revelation have different meanings, where the experience of time and space is different. As its outlines take shape, our standards of reality and illusion get reversed. It is the illusions of literature that begin to seem real, and ordinary life, pervaded as it is with all the phony and lying myths that surround us, begins to look like the real hallucination, a parody of the genuine imaginative world. The glimpses that I have had of the imaginative world have kept me fascinated for nearly half a century. (CW 7: 567)

If we step back from the total body of Frye’s work, we can see how the Aristotelian and Longinian complementary approaches play out in his own career. The first phase, in which the *Anatomy* looms large, is schematic, analytical, systematic, and, like the first chapters of the *Poetics*, given to taxonomy. The *Anatomy* appropriates and redefines, as indicated above, a host of Aristotle’s central terms. Its focus is on the conventions of the aesthetic product as an object. But, once Frye turned his attention to the Bible, Longinian ekstasis became the focus of his attention. Frye himself notes the change in emphasis:

[M]any of the most intense forms of human experience take some form of ecstatic metaphor. The hypothetical nature of literature, its ironic separation from all statements of assertion, was as far as I got in my *Anatomy of Criticism*, published nearly thirty years ago. The literary imagination seemed to me then, as in large part it does now, to be primarily a kind of modelthinking, an infinite set of possibilities of experience to expand and intensify our actual experience. But the *Anatomy* had led me to the scripture or

sacred book as the furthest boundary to be explored in the imaginative direction, and I then became increasingly fascinated with the Bible, as a book dominated by metaphor throughout, and yet quite obviously not content with an ironic removal from experience or assertion. Clearly one had to look at other aspects of the question, and reconsider the cultural context of metaphor, as something that not only once had but may still have its roots in ecstatic experience. (CW 18: 348–9)

In his late work Frye repeatedly explores those moments of intense consciousness that move us beyond time and space into the mythical world of pure identity. The key issue here is the experience of myth and metaphor. It is possible, Frye feels, to recapture the intensity of perception that was available to people in what Vico called the age of the gods. These are what he calls “moments of ecstatic union,” or what we refer to as peak experiences—epiphanic moments that take us away from ordinary waking consciousness. Here are two typical accounts of such experience:

The poem or painting is in some respects a “hallucination”: it is summoned up out of the artist’s mind and imposed on us, and is allied to delirium tremens or pretending that one is Napoleon. Blake would say that such creative hallucinations are spiritual visions, and that what they present is more detailed, more vivid, and more accurate than anything that normal eyesight affords. In other respects a work of art is like a dream, but it does not introduce us to the ordinary dream world, where we retreat from reality into our withdrawn selves. It takes us into the world of social vision that informs our waking life, where we see that most of what we call “reality” is the rubbish of leftover human constructs. It speaks with authority, but not the familiar authority of parental or social conditioning: there will always be, I expect, some mystery about the real source of its authority. (CW 7: 566–7)

Moments of ecstatic union... may come and go, like flashes of lightning, but some moments are... the frozen or simultaneously grasped aspects of a mythos or continuous narrative. Within the limitations of human life, the most highly developed human types are those whose lives have become, as we say, a legend, that is lives no longer contemplating a vision of objective revelation or imprisoned within a subjective dream. The New Testament presents the ultimate human life as a divine and human Logos, but the Logos has transcended its relation to logic and has expanded into mythos, a life which is, so to speak, a kind of self-narration, where action and awareness of action are no longer clashing with each other. (CW 18: 325)

Such ecstatic moments transport one into a purely symbolic world that is given to recording “portents or auguries of what life could be.” “It is worth any amount of commonplace life,” Frye says, “to purchase one of them” (CW 18: 336). He remarks that we try to capture the intensity of experience involved in the identification of metaphor with such words as “magical” and “religious” (CW 18: 294). These moments of intense perception are what Blake calls seeing with a twofold vision. When such perception takes place, Frye says, “the whole world is humanized” (CW 4: 183). Or again:

Metaphor, as a bridge between consciousness and nature, is in fact a microcosm of language itself. It is precisely the function of language to overcome what Blake calls the “cloven fiction” of a subject contemplating an object.... Language from this point of view becomes a single gigantic metaphor, the uniting of consciousness with what it is conscious of. This union is Ovid’s metamorphosis in reverse, the transfiguring of consciousness as it merges with articulated meaning. In a more specifically religious area this third order would become Martin Buber’s world of “Thou”, which comes between the consciousness that is merely an “I” and a nature that is merely an “it” (CW 18: 349)

TRANSPORT IN FRYE’S LATE WRITINGS

Longinian ekstasis has a central role to play in what Frye refers to variously as the transfiguring, the intensifying, the revolutionizing, or the expanding of consciousness. Beginning in the late 1950s he devoted a great deal of energy to designing a framework for the development of the stages of religious consciousness. He referred to these stages as the three awarenesses. He even contemplated writing a book about the topic, and he speculates about a somewhat mysterious fourth awareness.¹⁰ Awareness as a category, however, tends to disappear from Frye’s vocabulary in the 1980s. The fourth awareness of the notebooks is transformed into speculations about higher levels of consciousness. For Frye one of the central archetypal scenes of the intensity of consciousness that arises from the desire to identify is found in the Paleolithic cave drawings, references to which appear on more than thirty occasions in his work. The cave drawings represent “the titanic will to identify” (CW 18: 346).

When one considers the skill and precision of these works, and the almost impossible

¹⁰ On the three awarenesses, see Denham, 76–9, 276–81.

difficulties of positioning and lighting surrounding their creation, we begin to grasp something of the intensity behind them to unite human consciousness with its own perceptions, an intensity we can hardly imagine now. Magical motives, such as maintaining a supply of game animals by picturing them on the cave walls, seem utterly inadequate: for one thing, many of the figures are evidently human beings in animal skins. In any case such caves are the wombs of creation, where conscious distinctions have no relevance and only pure identity is left. (CW 26: 215–16)

The cave drawings at Lascaux, Altamira, and elsewhere are an example of what Lévy-Bruhl called *participation mystique*, the imaginative identification with things, including other people, outside the self, or an absorption of one's consciousness with the natural world into an undifferentiated state of archaic identity.¹¹ In such a process of metaphorical identification the subject and object merge into one, but the sense of identity is existential rather than verbal (CW 6: 503).

But what does the intensity or expansion of consciousness entail for Frye? Answering this is something of a challenge, for Frye reflects on the implications of the phrase only obliquely. But let us take the clues Frye does provide and see how they align with the Longinian perspective.

1. Expanded consciousness is a function of kerygma. Ordinary rhetoric “seldom comes near the primary concern of ‘How do I live a more abundant life?’ This latter on the other hand is the central theme of all genuine kerygmatic, whether we find it in the Sermon on the Mount, the Deer Park Sermon of Buddha, the Koran, or in a secular book that revolutionizes our consciousness. In poetry anything can be juxtaposed, or implicitly identified with, anything else. Kerygma takes this a step further and says: ‘you are what you identify with.’ We are close to the kerygmatic whenever we meet the statement, as we do surprisingly often in contemporary writing, that it seems to be language that uses man rather than man that uses language” (CW 26: 110). This is a principle that Longinus affirms in his account of the excellencies of Demosthenes, “allied to the highest sublimity and perfected to the utmost.” His “mighty gifts,” which were “absorbed bodily within himself,... we may deem heaven sent (for it would not be right to term them human)” (34.4).
2. Expanded consciousness does not necessarily signify religion or a religious experience, but it can be “the precondition for any ecumenical or everlasting-

¹¹ On *participation mystique* see CW 22: 276; CW 5: 16; CW 6: 503; and CW 18: 347. There is no evidence that Frye had read Lévy-Bruhl. His source for *participation mystique* was doubtless Jung, a considerable portion of whose work Frye knew well.

gospel religion” (CW 5: 17). Moreover, the raising of consciousness is revelation (see CW 5: 61). Longinus does not speak directly about religion, though he does say that the true sublime uplifts the soul (7.2) and elevates the spirit (33.4), and that sublimity raises human beings “near the majesty of God” and so “transcends the human” (36.1, 3).

3. Whatever the techniques used to expand consciousness (e.g., yoga, Zen, psychosynthesis, meditation, drugs), or whatever forms it takes (e.g., dreams, fantasies, the “peak experiences” described by Abraham Maslow, ecstatic music), the language of such consciousness always turns out to be metaphorical. Thus literature is the guide to higher consciousness, just as Virgil was Dante’s guide to the expanded vision represented by Beatrice (CW 6: 717; CW 26: 40–1). Still, Frye believes that language is the primary means of “intensifying consciousness, lifting us into a new dimension of being altogether” (CW 6: 717). For Longinus, language is also one of the keys to the sublime—the third source for the poet who wants his work to transport the reader—and he devotes chapter 32 to metaphor. After an extensive catalogue of metaphors in Plato, he concludes that “figurative language contains great natural power, and that metaphors contribute to the sublime” (32.6).
4. Vision is the word that best fits the heightened awareness that comes with the imagination’s opening of the doors of perception. What the subject sees may be “only an elusive and vanishing glimpse. Glimpse of what? To try to answer this question is to remove it to a different category of experience. If we knew what it was, it would be an object perceived in time and space. And it is not an object, but something uniting the objective with ourselves” (CW 26: 83). The “kerygmatic breakthrough,” Frye writes, “always contains some sense of ‘time has stopped.’ The sequential movement has become a focus, or fireplace. In intensified consciousness the minute particular shines by its own light (or burns in its own life-fire)” (CW 5: 290).

Again, ekstasis means a being put out of its place, which Longinus eloquently captures in this passage:

Nature has appointed us men to be no base nor ignoble animals; but when she ushers us into life and into the vast universe as into some great assembly, to be as it were spectators of the mighty whole and the keenest aspirants for honour, forthwith she implants in our souls the unconquerable love of whatever is elevated and more divine than we. Wherefore not even the entire universe suffices for the thought and contemplation within the reach of the human mind, but our imaginations often pass beyond the bounds of space, and if we survey our life on every side and see how much

more it everywhere abounds in what is striking, and great, and beautiful, we shall soon discern the purpose of our birth. (35.2–3)

5. The principle behind the epiphanic experience that permits things to be seen with a special luminousness is that “things are not fully seen until they become hallucinatory. Not actual hallucinations, because those would merely substitute subjective for objective visions, but objective things transfigured by identification with the perceiver. An object impregnated, so to speak, by a perceiver is transformed into a presence” (CW 26: 87). This is analogous to Longinus’ view that the sublime casts a spell over us (1.4).
6. Intense consciousness does not sever one from the body or the physical roots of experience. “The word spiritual in English,” Frye writes:

may have a rather hollow and booming sound to some: it is often detached from the spiritual body and made to mean an empty shadow of the material, as with churches who offer us spiritual food that we cannot eat and spiritual riches that we cannot spend. Here spirit is being confused with soul, which traditionally fights with and contradicts the body, instead of extending bodily experience into another dimension. The Song of Songs... is a spiritual song of love: it expresses erotic feeling on all levels of consciousness, but does not run away from its physical basis or cut off its physical roots. We have to think of such phrases as “a spirited performance” to realize that spirit can refer to ordinary consciousness at its most intense: the *gaya scienza*, or mental life as play.... Similar overtones are in the words *esprit* and *Geist*. (CW 26: 119)

Or again, St. John of the Cross makes “a modulation from existential sex metaphor (M_2) to existential expanding of consciousness metaphor (M_1)” (CW 5: 120). As in *Aufhebung*, things lifted to another level do not cancel their connection to the previous level: “ M_2 ” is still present at the higher level. Chapter 6 (“The Garden”) of *Words with Power* “is concerned partly, if not mainly, with getting over the either–or antithesis between the spiritual and the physical, Agape love and Eros love” (CW 6: 451). Still again, “spiritual love expands from the erotic and does not run away from it” (CW 26: 195).

The best account in Longinus of the uniting of soul and body is his analysis of Sappho’s “Peer of Gods” lyric: “Are you not amazed how at one instant she summons, as though they were all alien from herself and dispersed, soul, body, ears, tongue, eyes, colour? Uniting contradictions, she is, at one and the same time, hot and cold, in her senses and out of her mind, for she is either terrified or at the point of death. The effect desired is that not one passion only should be seen in her, but a concourse of the passions” (10.3).

7. Intensified consciousness is represented by images of both ascent and descent: “[I]mages of ascent are connected with the intensifying of consciousness, and images of descent with the reinforcing of it by other forms of awareness, such as fantasy or dream. The most common images of ascent are ladders, mountains, towers, and trees; of descent, caves or dives into water” (CW 26: 138). These images, which arrange themselves along the axis mundi, are revealed with exceptional insight in some of Frye’s most powerfully perceptive writing—the last four chapters of *Words with Power*. In these concentrated chapters Frye illustrates how four central archetypes connect the ordinary world to the world of higher consciousness: the mountain and the cave emphasizing wisdom and the word, and the garden and the furnace emphasizing love and the spirit. Longinus focuses on elevation, though he does remark on the sublimity of Ajax’s silence in the underworld (9.2), and he notes that we admire the imagery of both the “celestial fires” and the “subterranean fire” of the craters of Etna (35.4).

The notion of expanded consciousness, which appears everywhere in Frye’s late work, is related to many things other than Longinian ekstasis. It is linked to the thesis of his final book, *The Double Vision*, to Patanjali’s yoga, to the German mystics (especially Eckhart and Boehme), and to other forms of the visionary and kerygmatic breakthrough that was the goal of Frye’s quest. But of the two approaches to criticism—the Aristotelian and the Longinian—Frye ends up decidedly in the Longinian camp. This does not gainsay the insights of the *Anatomy*, which continues to have widespread interest and application. But the Longinian thrust of *The Great Code*, *Words with Power*, *The Double Vision*, *Myth and Metaphor*, and the three volumes of his notebooks on the Bible suggest that Frye did not try to resolve the Aristotle–Longinus antithesis with still another of his many applications of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. The two approaches remain complementary, but the final accent of Frye’s own allegiance is to Longinus.

APPENDIX

Margaret (née Kell) Virany’s Class Notes on Longinus from Frye’s 1954 Course in Literary Criticism

Dec. 10.

Longinus

—minister of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra in Africa—213–292 A.D.

- fragments only
- “Sublime”—this really means anything that can raise anything up
- written to Terentianus—to correct a lost work of Sicilius
- 1–6 and 41–43—false sublimity
- 7—grandeur of conception
 - vehement, deep feeling
- 17–29—careful manipulation of figures
- 30–38—nobility of phrase
- 39–40—word order
- 42–43 (with 1–6)
- 44—decay of eloquence
- he gets at the heart of great writing

Purpose of sublimity

—Not persuasion but transport. Appeal of writing is immediate, not reasoned out

—can it be used for teaching ?

—noncommittal

—need for some teaching

—missing section

Defects of Style

—puerility—learned trifling, insipid

—parenthyrsus—uncalled for display of emotion

—more in speaking than writing

—comes from a craze for novelty

Needed for the Sublime

—lofty thought and lofty words

—submission to great predecessors

Figures of Speech

—amplification

—rhetorical treatment of the commonplace

—images—writer has clear picture and gives it to readers

—no arbitrary devices

—artificial ring in figures—harmful

e.g., from Demosthenes and others

—apostrophe—emotional appeal

Periphrasis

—round about way of saying things

e.g., death = destined path

—warned that it could fall flat

—Molière satirized this. Popular in the eighteenth century

Diction

—lost section

*beautiful words are the light of thought (not realized in England until Coleridge)

—cf. stainedglass window and light

—words and thought must be correlated

—twenty metaphors could be good in a passage. One could spoil it; i.e.,

the number doesn't matter

Rhythm

—can be too pronounced

Literary Criticism

—difficult. First to point this out

“crowning fruit of long experience”—Can person get it by study? Thinking of criticism as judicial rather than historical. Fewer critics than creative artists.

False sublimity

—the true lifts up

—two minds meet—creator and reader

—immediate response of the reader

—what appeals to all men at all places and times. Universal appeal

“Men” = men of literary taste

—test—wanted to read it again

—suggestive powers

—test—lasting comparison with the recognized great

—e.g., Matthew Arnold's “touchstones”

Sublimity—words, thought, conception, imagination, feeling

—a rare combination

—prefers Iliad to Odyssey

—typical Greek fear of so much fantasy in the Odyssey

Faultlessness

—greatness not to be confused with accuracy. The former appeals while the latter never can. A touch of genius can overcome defects. “Faultless mediocrity” versus “genuine greatness.” Perfection annoys us in life or literature. Great poet (1) ability—feel and experience (2) ability to communicate feeling (3) great soul—imagination. Faults come from within

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KOVÁCS ÁRPÁD



METAFORA ÉS IDENTITÁS:
NORTHROP FRYE IDŐSZERŰSÉGE

[...] a szavak nemcsak egy dolgot azonosítanak
egy másikkal, hanem mindkettőt
valami olyasmivel, ami belőlünk származik
[...]

Northrop Frye

TAPASZTALAT ÉS TUDÁS KÖZÖTT

Az identitás kérdése az irodalomban sokféle megközelítést tesz lehetővé, kulturális, szociális, pszichológiai, nemi vagy egyéb nézőpont érvényesítésétől függően. Tekintettel arra, hogy az irodalom közege a nyelv, nagyon produktív elképzelések fogalmazódtak meg a szöveg létmódjára épülő identitásmódok vizsgálatában. Elsősorban a dialogikus és a narratív azonosság képletei nyertek meggyőző kidolgozást, különösen Mihail Bahtyin és Paul Ricœur jóvoltából. A magam részéről külön értekezést szenteltem egy olyan megoldás kidolgozásának, melynek középpontjába a *diszkurzus szubjektuma* került (Kovács 2004). A könyv integrálni igyekszik mind Bahtyin, mind Ricœur eredményeit, tehát a cselekvés és a dialógus, illetve a cselekvés és az elbeszélés kölcsönhatásának leírásait. Mindkét esetben más-más metaforafogalom kidolgozására került sor az említett kutatóknál. Magam az „intonációs metaforát” (Bahtyin) és az „élő metaforát” (Ricœur), azaz a jelképző és a jelentésképző alakzatokat vettem figyelembe, amikor a *diszkurzív metafora* kidolgozására vállalkoztam. Ez a megközelítés megkövetelte, hogy a szemantikai újításokat ne csak a tonális artikuláció, illetve a szemantikai feszültség szintjén elemezzem, hanem előírta azt is, hogy a diszkurzusként felfogott szöveg műfaji sajátosságait is bevonjam az identitás kérdéskörébe. Ennek a problémának szenteltem a *perszonális elbeszélésről* szóló könyvemem (Kovács 1994), melyben a személyes alanyiség a „saját nyelv”, a műfajalkotó írásmű eredményeként fogalmazódik meg. Említett kutatásaim során bebizonyosodott, hogy minden szemantikai újítás a poétikai szövegben műfaji innovációt is maga után

von. Csak ennek eredményeként jöhet létre a személyes beszédmódon alapuló – nevezzük így – *participatív identitás*, pontosabban: identitáskeresés.

Vizsgálódásaim közben ezen a ponton találkoztam Northrop Frye egészen eredeti koncepciójával. Felismerését az „egzisztenciális metafora” képződményéről értekezve fejtette ki *Az Ige hatalma* című könyvének „Azonosság és metafora” című fejezetében. Ebben a tanulmányban megkísérlem rekonstruálni ott előadott álláspontját. Továbbá szeretném bemutatni e képződmény produktivitását a drámai szövegképzés természete kapcsán. Majd kitérek röviden *A kritika anatómiája* című könyvének vonatkozó megállapításaira is, mivel a folytonosság ténye megállapítható.

A kanadai irodalomteoretikus felfogása szerint az irodalmi szövegben funkcionáló metaforát nem tárgyalhatjuk a társas beszédben rögzített, triviális alkalmazások mintájára. Vagyis – a retorikai vagy kognitív megközelítést követve – úgy, mint két jelentő vagy fogalom esetleg alogikus összekapcsolását. A költészet területén semmiképpen sem, mivel a költői művek olyan nyelvi alkotások, amelyekben nyilvánvalóvá válik, hogy minden fogalom jele, minden szó már eleve, önmagában is figurális eljárás eredménye (szarv > szarvas; fog > fogalom). Továbbá azért sem, mert nem a fogalmak, hanem a szöveg szintjén található verbális kontextusuk, ahol feltárulhat a metafora kiterjesztésének utalásiránya, igazságigénye, a narratív beszédproduktiótól eltérő szemantikai potenciálja.

Tudjuk, az irodalmi szöveg a megnyilatkozások másodfokú – látható/olvasható – státuszát képviseli; a *poiésziszt* közvetítő megnyilatkozások diszkurzust alkotnak, ahol megjelenik a ritmus két válfaja. A ritmus szerepe az, hogy a jelölőnél elemibb és a mondatnál magasabb nyelvi szinteken tagolja újra a beszéd egységeit (mint a versben), illetve minden referenciális összefüggést destabilizáljon annak érdekében, hogy korreferenciális (és dialogikus) szintre emelje a szöveg jelentéspotenciálját (mint a prózában). Éppen ennek köszönhetően az irodalmi szöveg „szemléletessé” – az olvasó számára érzékletessé és elsajátíthatóvá – képes tenni az innovatív nyelvi képződményeket, demonstrálni tudja a szemantikai újításokat. Mégpedig azért, mert a nyelvi világlátás alakzatai megelőzik a logikai vagy a lexikai szemantika formáit, a közvetlen állító kijelentéseket éppúgy, mint a figuratív kijelentések átvitelen alapuló alakzatait. A metaforával kapcsolatos fundamentális *nyelvi esemény* akkor következik be az irodalomban, amikor a jelentő-jelentett konvencionális kapcsolatát a konstitutív verbális „ősformák” (rím, ritmus, refrén, dallam, intonáció, invokáció, alakzat stb.) megbontják. Ezáltal ugyanis megakadályozzák azt, hogy a nyelv alapelemei, a szavak, illetve a jelölők az alany, az állítmány és a deixis funkciójába kényszerüljenek, s ezzel a tapasztalat közvetítését az objektum és a vele szembeállított szubjektum képzelt viszonyára, a reflexív tudat reprezentációira szűkítsék. Ily módon a dolog fogal-

mi-logikai azonosítását (predikatív kijelentésbe foglalását) meg tudja előzni a nyelvi identifikáció.

Kérdésünk mármost az: miféle inspirációt ad a költészet által felkínált létértelmezés megújításának az, hogy vagy a ritmuselv, vagy a soknyelvűség – és a következményük, a korreferenciális világtapasztalat – rátelepszik a fogalmi megkülönböztetés predikatív nyelvére vagy e logikai művelet retorikai használatára? Más fogalmazásban: szembesít a szemantikailag improduktív társas és professzionális beszédmódok hatalmi aspirációival.

Erre az identitás zavart okozó helyzetre különösen hatékony ellenszert talált metafora-elméleti vizsgálódásai során a jeles kanadai gondolkodó, aki a költészet szövegeit a személyes fölismerésre s ezen keresztül a létértelmezésre inspiráló aktusnak, vagyis az egzisztenciális megértés orgánumának tekintette. Ezzel magyarázható, hogy elméleti vizsgálódásai végső soron az arisztotelészi *anagnóriszisz* köré csoportosulnak, melynek a tragédia műfaján kívüli, általános poétikai alkalmazását látja indokoltnak. Az egzisztenciális metafora végső soron a heurézis, az egyszeri fölismerés releváns nyelvi képződményének bizonyul.

A költészet nyelvi alkotásai azért képesek az önmegértésre irányuló felismerés, az eszmélet működését inspirálni, mert a szöveg metaforikus képződményei fel tudják függeszteni a reprezentált dolog és a reprezentáló eszköz között fennálló megszakított, rögzült, konvencionális kapcsolatot. A poétikai funkció meghatározásakor Roman Jakobson is erről értekezik a nyelvi megnyilatkozás önreferenciális természeté kapcsán. Hiszen ez az eljárás – a jelentő és jelentett párhuzamosságának felfüggesztése – nemcsak a szótestet teszi kiemelten érzékelhetővé, de az általa jelölt dolgot is újra eleven tapasztalat tárgyává, sőt, az újramegnevezés impulzusává változtathatja.

Ezzel kapcsolatban indokolt a Frye által preferált Arisztotelész azon tételére hivatkozni, miszerint a cselekvés (*praxisz*) és a cselekvésből nyerhető tapasztalás egyszeri aktus, ami igaz a létrehozásra is.¹ A primordiális tapasztalat eseményszerűségét – meglehet – épp ebben kell keresni. Már csak azért is, mert az egyszeri cselekvés egyfelől maga képezi az esemény szubsztrátumát, másfelől temporalitásának *in actu* hordozójában, annak megváltozó diszpozíciójában testesül meg, amelynek megjelenítéséért már nem a narratív beszédmód, hanem a metaforikus digresszió felelős. Frye kifejtésében a figuratív kifejezést inspiráló diszpozíciónak a „mood” felel meg.

Az interpretáció feladata ebből fakadóan az, hogy keresse az esemény egysz-

¹ Ezt írta: „[...] a tapasztalat az egyes esetekre vonatkozó tudás, a tudomány pedig az általánosra vonatkozik, – a cselekvésnek és a létrehozásnak pedig mindig egyes esettel van dolga” (2002,38). Mint tudjuk, a *Poétika* szerint is a cselekvés képezi a történet konstrukciós tényezőjét, legalább is a tragédiában, persze a cselekvés itt nem más, mint az utánzás műve.

erisége és a műalkotás szövegének egyszeri nyelvi képződményei között fennálló korrelációt. Az elbeszéléselemletek többsége szerint eseménynek általában az tekinthető, ami a narratív közvetítés következtében egy történet alkotórészévé válik: az elbeszélés az eseményt történetbe integrálja, amit görög elődje nyomán Frye *müthosznak* nevez. A metafora pedig a szemantikai innovációk szférájába, a poétikus jegyekkel felruházott szöveg szintjére emeli át.

Arisztotelésznél a poétikai eszközökkel rekonstruált cselekvés (*praxisz*) eseményszerű; a cselekmény (*pragma*) itt egy tettnek más cselekedetekkel való összekapcsolásán (*szüsztaszisz*) alapul, mely megköveteli, hogy a cselekvés saját ellentétébe forduljon át (például: „bűn és bűnhődés”; „háború és béke”; „büszkeség és balítélet”; „szerelem és kolera”). Ezáltal ugyanis nemcsak egy egyszeri tett leképezésének bizonyul a dramatizált végrehajtás, hanem a „teljes és egész cselekvés” minőségére tesz szert. Ám éppen ezért már nem pusztán egy jellem, hanem az „élet utánzása”²(Arisztotelész 1997, 37). A tragédia a cselekvésben az életvilág sejtjét, létvonatkozását, egzisztenciális alapelemét ismerteti föl.

Tegyük hozzá, hogy a „teljes és egész”, tehát egy cselekménybe ágyazott cselekvés mintájához odatarozik ezen egység visszatekintő-felidéző megisméltése, amit a cselekvő magánbeszéde valósít meg a felismerés szóbeli képződményeként, egy kis elbeszélésben³. Mivel ez a rend – Arisztotelész felfogása szerint – fordulattal, felismeréssel és szenvedéssel jár, létrejön egy tragikus modalitású történet alapszerkezete. Ez a történetalkotó művelet – a *müthosz* – avatja a színpadon imitált cselekvést verbális eseménnyé, de csak akkor, amikor a szereplő saját nyelvre tesz szert az első személyű elbeszélésben. Nos, az imitált cselekvésnek ez a másodfokú – nyelvi – prezentációja, azaz a színpadterén látható cselekedetek verbális újrendezése mint *drámai beszédmű*, már nem írható le a *müthosz* fogalmával. Ezért maga a rekonstrukciót megvalósító mimézis – az, hogy a színész a cselekvésével egy másik ember cselekvését adja elő a látványban és annak értelmezésében, a szóban –, a sorstörténetre összpontosító Arisztotelésznél nem számít eseménynek, amit a cselekményalkotás szintjén közelít meg; „a történet elemei: a fordulatok és felismerések”, amelyek affektusa akkor katartikus és hiteles, „ha az események a várakozás ellenére, de egymásból következőleg történnek”. Arisztotelész ugyanakkor megengedi „a jelek általi felismerés” jogosságát is, sőt „a költő által kitalált jelek” alkalmazását nem kevésbé (1997, 67). Nem köti ugyan össze az *anagnóriszisz* váratlansági követelményét

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³ Lásd Oidipus fölismerés utáni monológját arról, ami vele megtörtént és ezt megelőzően már előadatott. A tragikus cselekvés személyes elbeszélésbe, a felismerést demonstráló önelbeszélésbe való kiftutása történetileg a modern ön-narráció műfaji előzményének tekinthető.

a jelek kapcsolatának váratlanságával, mindazonáltal a metaforáról szóló fejtegetései a *Poétikában* ezt a lehetőséget nem zárják ki. Az analógián alapuló metafora ugyanis akkor bizonyul hatásosnak, ha a jelek kapcsolata „idegenszerű”, tehát akkor, ha az esemény a nyelvi jelentésújítás szintjére helyeződik át. Gondoljunk olyan képződményekre, mint az *Oidipus király* fordításában található babitsi neologizmus: „szörny testvér-apa”⁴. Vagy József Attila címadó jelzőjére: *tószunnyadó*.

A METAFORIKUS DIGRESSZIÓ

A görög gondolkodó művének eredeti továbbgondolója, Northrop Frye határozottan felvállalja ezt a feladatot: „Kritikai gondolkodásom jórészt Arisztotelész *anagnóriszisz* fogalmának kettős értelme körül forog: »felfedezés« vagy »felismerés«...” (IH 21). Minden valódi tudáshoz hozzátartozik a felismerés, bárhoggy értelmezzük is. Frye könyve, *Az Ige hatalma* a nóvum helyett inkább az újramejelenés mellett érvel. És a megjelenés – mint *epifánia* – metaforaelméletének központi kategóriáját alkotja. Ezzel már megközelítettük azt a különbséget, amely a *mimészisz* és az *epifánia* között áll fenn: a cselekvés utánpótlása helyett Frye a cselekvés megjelenésének módját („mood”) állítja előtérbe. S míg az elsőről elmondható, hogy a cselekményszövevényben játszik szerepet, a másíkról az, hogy a metaforikus digresszió szövegeiben tárul föl, mégpedig e megnyilatkozások készíttetéseként. A cselekvés epifániája eseményként tudatosul, ha nyomon követjük, amint az alany a szöveglétesülés aktusában metaforikusra váltja a narratív beszédmódot. Frye ebben az eseményben éri tetten az egyéni identitás megvalósulását, melynek szüzséje tehát a tettből kisarjadva, a megjelenés révén a jelenbe helyeződve, egyszeri metaforikus kijelentésben testet öltő önprezenzához vezet.

Kezdem a köznapi, a mitikus és az egzisztenciális metafora különbségével.

A *köznapi* nyelvhasználat – a hasonlóság alapján – két különálló dolgot közelít egymáshoz: ez a szokványos „mint”-modell, amikor egy dolgot olyannak láttat a nyelv, mint egy másikat – valamely közös tulajdonságuk alapján.

A *mitikus azonosítás* nem hasonlóságot, hanem megegyezést feltételez: az észlelet tárgya ugyanaz, mint aminek látszik. A dolog és reprezentációja itt nem válik el egymástól.

Az *egzisztenciális metafora* esetében a két dolgot nem a hasonlóság, nem is a

⁴ A görög szöveg : πατέρας, ἀδελφούς, παῖδας, αἴμῃ ἐμφύλιον (1404), nem tartalmazza a „szörny” lexémát.

megfelelés, hanem a radikális azonosítás kapcsolja össze: nem a *mint*, hanem az *est*. Ha valaki Saulus, a logikai rend szerint nem lehet Paulus. És megfordítva. De ismerünk *egy* esetet, *egyetlen* konkrét történetet, amelyben ez mégis így *van*. Itt nem arról van szó, hogy A olyan, mint B, hanem arról, hogy azonos vele: A *est* B.

Az egzisztenciális metafora az *egyszeri esemény* nyelvi formája, mely révén az egyszeri tapasztalat az általános tudás szintjére emelkedik, s nem ritkán a kultúrába is beíródik. Épp azért, mert az egyedi eset nem értelmezhető sem a leíró, sem a retorikai megnyilatkozások nyelvén – sem állítmánnyal, sem alakzattal nem közelíthető meg –, éppen ezért releváns diszkurzusa a *történetmondás*, az *elbeszélés*. A történet középpontját alkotó konfiguráció Frye elképzelésében is fordulatra és felismerésre épül. Hangoztatja: minden valódi tudáshoz hozzátartozik a felismerés, bárhogy értelmezzük is.

Az egzisztenciális metafora azonban egy rejtett állítást is magába foglal, és pedig azt, hogy a létigével összekapcsolt két dolog egy eddig nem ismert tartományba tartozik, más világra utal, amely ugyan érzékileg és intellektuálisan nem fogható meg, de a cselekvést kísérő diszpozícióban benne szunnyad *in nuce*, csíraformában. A világ nem annyi, amennyit átéltünk eddig és átélünk most, hanem az is hozzá tartozik, ami be fog következni. A jövő már mindig is elkezdődött, vagyis a mindenkori jelenvalóság konstituense.

Az egzisztenciális metafora azt a nyelvi *lacunát* tölti ki, amely azért lép fel, mert vonatkozási tárgya nincs adva – ugyanis a dolog, melyre irányul, a megnyilatkozás pillanatában éppen a keletkezés, illetve megjelenés fázisában van. Ilyenkor a szó konstituálja – s ezzel egyúttal elővételezi – a dolgot, melyre referenciája – a kibomló szövegegész utalásrendje – vonatkozik majd. Az egzisztenciális megnyilatkozásban a szó nem jelöli a dolgot, hanem tételezi, megelőlegezi megjelenését, s ezért megkívánja azt a beszédmódot, amelyben a cselekvésnek, a cselekvés tárgyának és nevének keletkezése egyazon történetmondásban bontakozik ki. Frye szerint ilyen a költészet. Nem analitikus, nem szintetikus ítélet, hanem thetikus kijelentés: a költő a „metafora hipotetikus azonosságát alkalmazza, így legalább a lehetőségét érdemes megfontolni annak, hogy A és B ugyanaz a személy, hiába tudjuk, hogy nem ugyanaz...” (114). Ezzel a bekövetkező – a költészet által referált – világgal kiegészülve válik az élet a lét egységévé, ahol feltárul értelme. Az egzisztenciális metafora az emberi élet és a halál határain túl is fennálló lét nyelvének – az *értelem létének* – sajátosságát prezentálja.

Most ejtsünk szót a metafora kontextusáról.

Frye gondolkodásában a metafora nem a név vagy a mondat szintjén értelmezhető. Ebben a vonatkozásban eltér a szemantikai „átvitel” vagy „feszül-

tség” fogalmaival leírható típusaitól. Lényege az, hogy az alogikus azonosítást kiterjeszti a szöveg – egy teljes megnyilatkozás – egészére. Ennek következtében a szövegben szereplő minden szó a lexikai kódjától eltérő jelentésekre tesz szert. Frye szellemében például „A semmi ágán ül szívem” olyan sora a metaforikus jelentésújításnak, melyben egyetlen szó sem felel meg szótári jelentésének. Hiszen csak a metaforikus kód, a beszélő alanyának a fával és a levéllel való egyedülálló azonosításának felismerése nyomán tudjuk értelmezni.

A következő kérdés a metafora optikai nézetének, azaz *olvashatóságának* többletével kapcsolatban merül föl. Az *opszisz* a tragédiában is alkotórészét képezi a megjelenítésnek: a cselekvés teljességéhez – túl a cselekményalkotó funkción és utólagos verbális felidézésén – odatartozik a végrehajtás szomatikus-motorikus-mimikai megmutatása is.

A fenti példából az is jól kivehető, amit Frye „látomásnak” nevez, és a metafora szemantikai újításain túl annak tulajdonít, ami írásos megjelenésmódjával függ össze. A szövegben ugyanis nyomon követhetővé válik az a művelet, amely révén megképződött és a megnyilatkozásba beépült az alakzat. Olvasása során feltárul továbbá a nyelv különös működése, miközben éppen megképzí a metaforát. Nyilvánvaló, hogy ezzel a nyelvi rendszerben eseményt indukál. Az egzisztenciális metafora kontextusa a szöveg, közege az írásmű, egy olyan megnyilatkozás, amely már nem az alkotás, hanem a befogadás horizontjába helyezi át az elbeszélte történet affektusát.

A kanadai gondolkodó szerint az olvasás két aktusból áll. A lineáris olvasás a történet kibontakozását követi nyomon; az ismételt olvasás során viszont az elbeszélte eseményeket „az egész történet egyidejű látomása közvetítheti”. A Frye-féle látomás lényegében a szöveg tematikus egységének felel meg, amit Gadamer vagy Ricœur a „szöveg világának” nevez. Az egzisztenciális metafora a történetet közvetítő lineáris elbeszélést szövegművé, azaz vertikális képződménnyé transzformálja. Ez a kétszintű olvasás eredménye, minek következtében az elbeszélés nemcsak szöveggé, de *verbális ikonná*, a történet pedig példázattá lényegül át. Ám egyúttal megváltozik utalásiránya is: a hősök világa szövegvilággá, a szövegvilág pedig az olvasó világává minősül át. Utóbbi pedig a saját szöveg megképzésére irányuló késztetésnek bizonyulhat.

A bemutatott koncepció lényeges hozadéka az, hogy túllép az alakzat vagy a modell fogalmaival operáló elméleteken, a retorikai és logikai felfogásokon. Frye – mint már említettem – az olvasás felől közelíti meg a metaforikus megnyilatkozásokat, ami *A kritika anatómiájából* még hiányzott. Az olvasást pedig nem hajlandó sem a tárgy objektív ábrázolása, sem a psziché narcisztikus gyönyörködése felől értelmezni. A szöveg olvasóra tett hatását a részesedés viszonylatában értelmezi: az olvasó nem kutatóként, nem is hedonisztikus játékosként viszo-

nyul a szöveghez. Az olvasó a szöveg értelmezéséről át kell hogy térjen saját tapasztalatának értelmezésére, ami – felfogásom szerint – a saját nyelv kiművelésének igényét veti föl.

De ezzel újabb vetülete tárul fel a metafora teljesítményének, jelesül: *szubjektumképző* funkciója. Ezt írja Frye:

Így meg kell vizsgálnunk a metaforahasználatnak azt a kiterjesztését, amelyben a szavak nemcsak egy dolgot azonosítanak egy másikkal, hanem mindkettőt valami olyasmivel, ami belőlünk származik: amit nevezünk időlegesen egzisztenciális metaforának. (109)

A meghatározás arra utal, hogy az olvasás aktusában létesülő szubjektum nem azonos az ismeretelméleti *ego* vagy a deiktikus *én* alakjával, illetve fogalmával: „Az azonosulás minden ilyen esetben tagadja az énközpontú vagy szubjektív azonosságot” (116).

Az alanyi jelenlét szimbolikusan közvetített létmód, ami egyfajta külpontosítást feltételez: „Azt a fajta azonosulást, amelyet egzisztenciális metaforának nevezünk, Heideggert követve »extatikusnak« is mondhatjuk” (117). Ilyen például, amikor Hamlet egyfajta új beszédmód kipróbálása révén, szakítva „én”-azonos nyelvi identitásával, az örült helyzetébe transzponálja megjelenésmódjának alakzatait. Itt az egzisztenciális tapasztalatot az garantálja, hogy miközben önmagán kívül teremt meg a cselekvés centrumát – azaz úgy cselekszik, mintha színész volna (hiszen valójában nem örült) – eközben elsajátít egy költői diszkurzust – a drámáét. Megállapíthatjuk: a metaforikusan szabályozott gondolkodás révén kívül helyezük magunkat a test által határolt és a tudat által reflektált egyedi létezésünk keretein, s individualitásunkon. Mint például a festő, amikor önarcképet fest vagy a színész, amikor – például – Gábor Miklósként úgy tesz, mintha Hamlet volna. Vagyis magát nem központként, hanem egy másik, különálló létező jeleként működteti. Ily módon részesül a „másik” egyszeri tapasztalatából. Ebből következik, hogy az egzisztenciális metafora nem az átviteles, nem a hasonlóságot, hanem az analógiás, hanem *a participatív jelenlét* modellje. Nézetem szerint éppen ennek köszönhetően egy nagyobb, végtelen egész részeként képes láttatni magát az ember, aki tagja is meg jele is ennek a hipotetikus egésznek. A külpontosítás eseményt alkot a történelemben, amelyet a deiktikus „én”-ekkel való szakítás, az alany narratív transzcendálása hoz létre. Ennek alapján mondja Northrop Frye a szereplők metaforikusan megképzett valóságáról: „Egyének, nem ének világa ez” (124).

A külpontosítás aktusaival – a meglátással és a nyelvi láttatással – Frye összekapcsolja a jelenlét problémáját. Az egzisztenciális metafora, azzal, hogy hason-

lóként vagy éppen különmemüként észlelt két dolgot indoklás nélkül azonosít, megváltoztatja magát a befogadást. Egyrészt nem izoláltan, saját alakjára redukálva, hanem egy másik dologgal való kölcsönhatásában láttatja a dolgot, másrészt mindkettőt egy elbeszél cselekménybe és egy személytörténetbe ágyazza.

A rutinszerű észlelés, érzéki adatokra támaszkodva, egy képzetre, egy reprezentációra korlátozza a dolgot, aminek a kijelentés révén jelentést tulajdonít. Azonban, rögzítve ezt a tulajdonságot vagy minőséget, magát a dolgot – a dolog létszerűségét – éppenséggel elvéti. Visszanyeréséhez az szükséges, hogy felismerjük a dolog és észlelt aspektusa – kinézete – közötti különbséget, illetve magát az észlelési aktust, azt az érzékcsalódást, amely a hasadást okozta, s ezzel működésbe hozta a szubjektum-objektum viszony ismeretelméleti modelljét.

A metaforikus kifejezés révén – Frye szerint – a közvetlen érzéki észlelés meghaladását, a szemlélet és a felfogás dezautomatizálását, az újra-meglátás késztetését éri el az elme, mivel az érzéki benyomásokat a személyes tapasztalattal társítja. A tudós irodalmár ebben az öneszmélési folyamatban három eseményfázist különböztet meg: *a látást, a meglátást és a látomást*.

A közvetlen látás a dolog térbeli-szemléleti formáját állítja az értelem elé. Egy felhőt az égen, amely alakilag különbözik a havas hegycsúcs képétől. A meglátás nem az alakra (a részek viszonyrendjére), hanem kinézetére vonatkozik: a felhőt láthatjuk *fátyolfelhőként* vagy *báránnyfelhőként*. De ahhoz, hogy így lássuk meg, már szükség van a nyelvre, amelynek révén az azonosítást végrehajtottuk. Egy közös alaki ismérv kiemelésével: hol a *fátyol*, hol a *báránny* szavunk utalása alapján. Látomással akkor van dolgunk, amikor – váratlanul – nem érzéki valóságra alkalmazzuk ezt a képződményt. Petőfi a *Felhőkben* – például – a költői diszpozíciója metaforájaként, az alkotó invenciót serkentő valósághiány föltárulásának alakzataként használja.

Ernst Cassirer nyomán Frye azt vallja, hogy minden észlelés szimbolikusan közvetített aktus. Ilyen közvetítés az elbeszélés is. Giambattista Vico nyomán pedig azt, hogy az ember a költői elbeszélésben – azaz történetet alkotva – másképpen azonosul életével, mint a fogalmi azonosítást eredményező predikatív állítás vagy akár az egzisztenciális kijelentés esetében, mivel csak arról tud hitelesen tanúskodni, aminek ő maga cselekvő alanya volt. Vagyis nem a tudáson, hanem a személyes tapasztalaton alapul a költői történetmondás.

A metaforikus kifejezésen alapuló felismerést – mint már említettem – Frye látomásnak nevezi, ami nem észlelés, hanem *meglátás* eredménye. Az észlelés, az érzékszerv által belülről irányított tekintet produkciója a tompa nézés – ez az eltakaráó művelet, amely magát a nézés eseményét nem képes láttatni. Ezért

állíthatja Frye középkori gondolkodók nyomán: „Az ember azzá válik, amit meglát” (122). Ennek megértéséhez azonban túl kell lépni a meglátáson.

A meglátásként kezelt felismerést a jeles gondolkodó összefüggésbe hozza a dologi lét reprezentációival és prezentumával: „A dolgokat nem lehet valójában látni, amíg nem válnak érzékcsalódásossá [...] A tárgy, amelyet így, úgyszólván, áthat a megfigyelő, átalakul jelenlétté” (123). Az áthatolás arra a közvetítésre van ráutalva, ami a különmemű dolgok kölcsönhatásba emelését alkalmas biztosítani, vagyis a költői szóra mint „egzisztenciális metaforára”. Ugyanis ez az alakzat, egy egész narratívára kiterjesztett változatában, vagyis műalkotássá átalakulva, identitást eredményez: „[...] a következetes és fegyelmezett látomás olyan azonosuláshoz vezet, mint amit az egzisztenciális metaforának tulajdonítunk” (122). A látomás műfaja akkor lehet a személyes identitás közege, ha elbeszél történetbe illeszkedik, melyet olvasható médium, azaz költői műalkotásként értett szövegmű közvetít.

A CSELEKVÉS METAFORÁJA ÉS HAMLET ÖNESZMÉLÉSE

Az egzisztenciális metafora referenciája az észlelés tárgya helyett a konkrét cselekvésből származó tapasztalat világára vonatkozik – annak megtörténe, az aktus pillanatában; vagyis azt megelőzően, hogy motívuma és produktuma reflektálható lehetne. Ez általában a válsághelyzetek ideje, egyfajta abszolút jelenbeliség, amikor az időt a cselekvés maga inkarnálja. Tehát nem a megismerés, hanem a praxis.

Illusztrálandó a mondottakat, tennék egy kisebb kitérőt Hamlet nagymonológjának rekonstrukciója érdekében – a lét, az egzisztencia, a cselekvés és a kölcsönhatásuk metaforikus megjelenítésének bemutatása végett. Hiszen itt annak lehetünk tanúi, ahogyan a cselekvő a tett és a lét paradox összefüggéséről beszél, ami az ő egzisztenciális helyzetében, személyes életének válságpillanatában állt elő. A monológ szubjektuma extatikus a királyfi vagy a fiú vagy a szerelmes alakjához képest. Miközben két változatát vázolja föl e konkrét válság megoldásának létrehozása a színen a helyzet elbeszélésére alkalmazható nyelvet – a konfesszió drámai beszédmódját. E szöveg közegében teremti meg a „tett neve” helyett a tett radikális – és egészen egyedülálló – metaforáját. Miközben ezt végrehajtja a beszédben – a saját nyelv teatralizálása révén – egyúttal kiműveli személyes identitását is, mely jelen esetben a perszonális drámai monológ műfajának elsajátítását feltételezi.

A monológ mint perszonális megnyilatkozás drámai-teátrumi artikulációja nem a „vagy”, hanem a vágy – az elementáris létvág – megnyilvánulásáról

tanúskodik. A „koponya” – a módszeres kétely szimbóluma – a reflexió hordozója. De a kétely diszkurzusát – pontosabban metanyelvét – előadó drámai monológ már másra irányul: egy bizonyos észjárás – nevezetesen a kétely – lét-jogát és az elme létstátuszát értelmezi. Végso soron azt az érlelődő kérdést közvetíti, hogy vajon tényleg a módszeres kétely karteziánus eljárására redukálható a lét értelmét feszegető gondolkodás? A színen elhangzó monológ nem pusztán egy kételkedő figura spekulációját és mentális vívódását jeleníti meg, hanem magát a beszédmódot demonstrálja annak köszönhetően, hogy a versnyelvi közvetítés – átkódolván a szóbeli megnyilatkozást – distanciát teremt a kétféle verbalitás, a filozófiai elmélkedés nyelvezete és a költői szöveg diszkurzív rendje között. Ezzel megvalósul a reflexió tudat uralkodó beszédmódjának eltávolítása. Ennek következtében itt a nyelv már nem a reflexió kifejezését szolgálja, hanem a kifejezés nyelvének reflexióját.

Ennek a hasadásnak és interakciónak azonban van még egy lényeges hozadéka, amely eseményként tudatosulhat. Tudniillik, a belülről kétszólamú drámai monológ egyúttal azt is érzékletessé teszi, ahogyan a létesülő diszkurzus, az új nyelvi azonosság alanya kibontakozik a színen, levetvén a „dán királyfi” és a „módszeres kétely” szociális, illetve intellektuális maszkját. A közönség előtt nyilvánosan elmondott szöveg a beszélőt legott saját szavainak hallgatójává, a hallható szót értelmezhetővé avatja. Ily módon Hamlet hangja, a kételyben kételkedni kezdő ember személyes artikulációja, ténylegesen magának a szkepszisnek a beszédmódját jeleníti meg és vonja be a közönséggel való párbeszédbe, miáltal egyben az elme játékát teszi külsővé, s leplezi le. A versnyelvben alkalmazott metaforikus digresszió viszont Hamlet diszpozícióját hivatott megjeleníteni, azt az egyszeri krízis-hangoltságot, amely a gondolat gondolásáról a létre vonatkozó kérdésre helyezi át az intellektuális érdeklődést.

A kételkedést eltávolító – a szkepszis fogalmait elemző – beszédalany értelmezése szerint a „lenni” hordozójának a lélek felel meg, de egy bizonyos diszpozíció jegyében: „a lélek, ha tűri”. (A „lét türelme” József Attilánál ugyancsak a lélek egzisztenciális megnyilvánulását minősíti.) Ennek terméke a beszéd végén megismételt és nyomatékosított elem, a jelen kihívásaira válaszoló létbátorság érvényességének bevallása: „inkább tűrni”. Ez az „inkább” a *lenni* vágyának és a *lenni*-vagyok felismerésének a megnyilvánulása, míg a „nem lenni” egyáltalán nem a léttagadás vakmerőségéről tanúskodik, sokkal inkább az akarás rövidesen fölismert elégtelenségéről. Ezért van, hogy a monológ szövege egyértelművé teszi: a *nem-lenni* választójának „bátorsága” valójában az akarathiányt kompenzálja; valójában a tett elmulasztásából fakad, ami viszont „Belőlünk mind gyávát csinál”. Ebben a személyes beszédben a tett – az idézőjellel kiemelt „tett” névnyelvi kontextusa, a hamleti elbeszélésben kialakuló cselekvésmodell – az, ami

valójában formálja a szubjektumot, nem a kétely. Éppen ezért tagadja meg Hamlet a „tett» nevét” a nemléte reflektáló, identitását elvesztő észlény cselekvésmódjától. Ezzel áll szemben a személyes szöveg (s egyben az elszánás) szubjektumaként, aki a *Lenni* és a *Tűrni* radikális azonosítása révén megalkotja a tragédia központi alakzatát, az egész szöveget és cselekményt generáló egzisztenciális metaforát. Hamlet – mielőtt megvalósítaná tervét – a nyelv szubjektumaként cselekszik, azaz a cselekvés aktusában a cselekvés új verbális modelljét alkotja meg, s mindjárt gyakorolja is, amikor belép a színre Ophelia.

A tett, a tett neve, a tett metaforája és a viszonyukat kifejtő drámai monológ versnyelvi demonstrációja a *tűrést* és az *elszánást* avatja cselekvésmintává, mely megszüli a lenni-vagyok tevékeny alanyát, „az elszántság természetes színével” fölruházott személyt. Ebben a felfogásban a tett létiniciatívát is jelent: „sok nagyszerű / Fontos merény”⁵ ténylegesítését. Frye szellemében azt mondhatnám, hogy az *egzisztenciális kijelentés* („Lenni vagy nem lenni”) helyére *egzisztenciális metafora* akkor kerül a szövegbe, ha a metaforaképzés, az új név keresése (itt a *türelem*) és átvitele válaszként jelenik meg egy cselekvéshiányos válsághelyzet – egyszerre gyakorlati, intellektuális és nyelvi – kihívására. Ekkor a történetben két nem kompatibilis egység összekapcsolása, a szemantikában pedig két összeférhetetlen jelentésmező kölcsönhatása válik szükségszerűvé. A személyes identitás feltétele tehát a narratív és a metaforikus jelentésképzés kölcsönhatását megteremtő diszkurzív azonosság, azaz a műfaj és a metafora nyelvi képződményeit egységesítő művészi szöveg, jelen esetben a drámai monológot manifesztáló verses írásmű.

Hamlet története egyszeri eset imitációja, cselekvése nem ritualizálható, mint ahogy – mondjuk – a példázat vagy a varázsmese esetében ez megtörténik. Frye írja: „Magát az egyedit soha nem ismerjük: az egyediség kizárólag a tapasztalathoz tartozik” (112). Az irodalmi szerkezet a tapasztalatot és a tudást egyesíti. Az egyszeri cselekvés végrehajtásnak a modellje – Frye szerint – „a személyes részvételre készítő metafora” (uo.). Az egzisztenciális metafora nem leírja, nem ábrázolja, nem elbeszéli a cselekvést, azaz nem a funkcióját mutatja be, mint a narráció, hanem konstituálja, mégpedig az extatikus, részt vállaló tett létesítésével, létbe inkarnálásával. Ily módon az egész embert, a személyt inspirálja a tett végrehajtására – nem pusztán az elméjét, a kezét és a kardját. Fordulatot és felismerést visz ezáltal a személytörténetbe.

⁵ Fontos lehet Arany János kifejezése, a *merény*, mert a merész, bátor tett, a nem kockázatmentes próbálkozás, a fenntartások nélküli vállalás jelentéskörével ruhazza föl jelöltjét.

EXKURZUS

A fentiekben *Az Ige hatalma* című könyv alapján tárgyaltam Frye felfogását, mivel ebben a művében vezeti be az egzisztenciális metafora fogalmát. Ám már a *Kritika anatómiájában* is nagy teret szentel a probléma kifejtésének. A legfontosabb különbséget abban láthatjuk, hogy korábbi könyvében a szimbólumok kapcsolatrendjének szintjén vizsgálódik, míg *Az Ige hatalmában* számba veszi a szövegmű autonómiáját, amelynek látomása verbális ikonná avatja az elbeszélő történetet. Hiszen „az egész történet egyidejű látomását” az elbeszélés olvasható nyelvi közege teszi lehetővé. Erről – Derridára hivatkozva – így ír: „ha az íráson belül megmarad a személyes beszélő konvenciója, akkor a szavakat magzati állapotukban hordozza magában a beszélő” (101). Ebből Frye levonja azt a következtetést, hogy a költészet a metafora révén „egyfajta még meg-nem-született világba kalauzol bennünket” (uo.).

De a radikális metafora csak az írott, olvasható szövegben tudja egzisztenciális hatását érvényesíteni: „a tapasztalat és a tudás egyesítéséhez nyomtatott szövegekre [...] van szükség” (109). Az írásmű olvasója saját tapasztalatának megfogalmazására alkalmas nyelvvel szembesül az elbeszélő beszédmódot metaforikus jelentésmódosításokkal társító költői diszkurzusban.

A kritika anatómiájában a szimbolikus jelentésalkotás öt válfaját különbözteti meg a szerző: betű szerintit, leíró, formait, archetipikus és anagogikus.

Az itt tárgyalt metafora az utolsó fázis alakzata, az anagogikus diszkurzus konstitutív tényezője, ahol a *dianoia* poétikai státuszra tesz szert, mivel a „szavak totális rendjét” hozza működésbe. Ez a rend különbözteti meg az előző fázis archetipikus jelentésképzésétől, mivel ez nem a nyelvi univerzumot, hanem az irodalmi konvenció és műfaj területét fogja át. Az anagogikus a „totális irodalmi tapasztalat” formája, amit a „totális Szó” garantál, azaz a teremtésben részesülő kreatív szó, amely felfogható Logoszként. De sajátos értelemben, minthogy nem a természetet, hanem „az emberi elme gondolkodását utánozza”. Itt a „természet tartalmazóból tartalmazottá válik” (104), de az élet sem tárgya, hanem alkotórésze ennek a nyelvi univerzumnak. A képzeleti tartalom az egzisztenciálisban van megalapozva, mint az álom esetén. Azaz, nem a fantázia műve. Ezért az irodalmi univerzum középpontja nem pusztán az elbeszélő történet vagy az elbeszélő szó, hanem a „szavak totális rendjének individuális megnyilvánulása” (105). A radikális metafora a szimbólumot monáddá avatja: az irodalmi univerzumban „potenciálisan minden mindennel azonos” (108).

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KELEMEN ZOLTÁN



POSZTMODERN BIBLIA:
NORTHROP FRYE MÍTOSZ- ÉS METAFORA
KONSTRUKCIÓJÁNAK KRITIKAI MEGKÖZELÍTÉSE

*There is No Natural Religion
The Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me.*
William Blake (1886; 1994, 200)

A bölcsészettudomány alapvetően metaforikusnak tekinthető: metaforákat és mitológiákat használ, akkor is, amikor nem tud róla. Ez a megállapítás jelenlegi kijelentéseimre is igaz. Az emberi tudásról és gondolkodásról való egzakt gondolkodás szeretetének vizsgálata szempontjából veszem kritika alá Northrop Frye *Bibliával* kapcsolatos két művét, a *Kettős tükört* és *Az Ige hatalmát*. Kritikán ezúttal a jelentés és az összefüggései megfigyelésének módszerét értem. Frye, jóllehet vizsgálódásai során megtartja a szakrális alapot, végső következtetéseit mégis szinte mindig esztétikai (hermeneutikaiak vagy recepcióesztétikaiak), illetve szekularizált összefüggésbe helyezi el (KT 377). A (szerinte) legalapvetőbb emberi érdekekből összeállított inerciarendszerbe illesztve próbálja megérteni, illetve sokkal inkább megértetni a *Szentírást* (IH 183-184), de ennek az igyekezetnek a klasszikus zsidó-keresztény mitológia retorikáján belül sincs biztosítéka. Pontosabban már ez az egyetlen mitológia is sokkal gazdagabban strukturált, bár a Jorge Luis Borges-féle négyes történettípológiával (illetve annak antitéziseivel) kétségkívül leírható lenne, annál is inkább, mivel Borges fölosztása esztétikai (184–186), míg a Frye-é társadalmi-biológiai. Frye első Biblia-könyvének, a *Kettős tükör*nek az eredeti címe, a *The Great Code* William Blake Laokoón-metszetének egyik sorára megy vissza: „The Old and the New Testaments are the Great Code of Art” (Konopacki 20), s bár tudjuk, hogy Frye jelentős mértékben kiterjeszti a Blake-mondat jelentését, a *Szentírás* föltehetőleg az információs kultusznak megfeleltethető elméleteknél is gazdagabb jelentéstartalmakkal bír (KT 16-17). Frye fontos megállapítást tesz a *Kettős tükör* bevezetésében, midőn az irodalom mítoszteremtő jelentőségéről elmélkedik, s Claude Lévi-Strauss bricolage-elméletét idézi, nemcsak Blake művészete kapcsán, de a *Szentírás* szerkezetét illetően is (23–24). Műve felépítésében ugyanakkor több helyen mellőzi Lévi-Strauss nézeteit, jóllehet azokkal a freudizmus gyakorta sematizáló elképzelései mellett árnyalhatta, bővíthette volna okfejtését. A semmi teológiai és

bölcseleti eszmetörténetének kifejtése Eckhart mester nézetein alapul a nyugati gondolkodás történetében, de helyette Frye Jakob Böhmét említi (*IH* 353), s akár a vízözön-, akár a kovácsmitológiák tárgyalását gazdagíthatta volna Mircea Eliade kutatásainak hasznosításával (*KT* 82, 143, 248-250; *IH* 359-361; Eliade 1997, 161-229; 2004). Főképp a kovácsmesterséghez kapcsolódó mítoszok esetében igaz ez, hiszen a zsidóság technikai civilizációval szembeni aggályai a barbár fundamentalizmus felől éppúgy értelmezhetőek, mint a vívmányokat használó, de jogosultságuk fölött alaposan eltöprengő intellektus felől.¹

A metaforát Frye eleve a mitikusból, közelebbről a mítoszból származtatja objektum és szubjektum interakcióján keresztül.²

A mi nyelvfelfogásunk szerint csak a metafora fejezheti ki azt az érzést, hogy a szubjektumnak és az objektumnak van közös energiája. A metaforikus nyelvhasználat központi kifejezése az 'isten', az a lény, amely [...] valamely személyiségformát azonosít a természet valamely tulajdonságával. (*KT* 36-37)

Érdemes kitekinteni ehelyütt például a görög mitológia, illetve tudományosság közös, kozmogonikus gyökereire (lásd Kirk 37-122), főképpen azért, hogy látható legyen: a személyiség mint a kozmosz fölismerésére tett első kísérletek formája nem általános mitologikus jelenség (illetve metafora). Ráadásul (mások mellett) a görög hagyomány a kozmosznak a viszonylag egyszerű kezdetből mint optimálisan axiomatikusból kiinduló születését *növekedésként* írja le,³ másrészt a zsidó-keresztény mitológiától és szakrális hagyománytól döntő módon különbözve az általában etikainak nevezett kérdéseket nem a kozmogóniai mítoszok között tartja számon, hanem kevésbé szakrális jellegűknél fogva a költői hagyomány mitikus emlékezetébe utalja (Kirk 39). Később, *Az Ige hatalma* című munkájában Frye is bemutat egy ehhez némileg hasonló mítoszinterpretációt (57-58, 60). Amikor az etika kilép a társadalmi interakciók viszonyából, és az absztrakció követelményét próbálja alkalmazni, a zsidó-keresztény mitológia számára is elveszti a jelentőségét: „a bizonyítás olyan igazságkritérium, amely idegen a Bibliától, és amelyet maga a Biblia nem ismer el” (*KT* 95). Amellett, hogy a mitológia episztemikus folyamatát Frye is a görög hagyományra való kitekintés segítségével írja le, következetesen alkalmazza szubjektum és objektum kölcsönösségének aktusát mint magyarázatot. Így érkezik el a platóni νόσις

¹ A közvetlen kritikai észrevételekkel kapcsolatban lásd Frye reakcióját: *IH* 7-8.

² „[A] szubjektumot és az objektumot közös hatalom vagy erő köti össze. Sok »primitív« társadalom külön szóval jelöli az emberi személyiség és a természeti környezet közös energiáját.” (*KT* 35)

³ Α φύσις, 'természet' és a φύσει, 'növekedés' összefüggése ezúttal különösen fontos.

νοησεως egyéni értelmezéséhez, mely ismét közösség és egyén kérdéseként merül föl, nem pedig episztemológiai vagy esetleg fenomenológiai szempontból (37–38).⁴ A személyiség a vízvázalstó a görög típusú mitológiák kultuszai és a zsidó-keresztény hagyomány között: az utóbbi a személyiség követelményét támasztja, míg az előbbi absztrahál (*KT* 154).

A metafora jelentése Frye érvelésében olyan retorikai alakzatokban gazdagodik – és ezáltal változik-újrafogalmazódik, mint a folyamatos próza kialakulásában szerepet játszó allegorikusság (42–43). Érvelése végén Frye visszatér az energia fogalmán keresztül a jelölő és jelölt viszonyára. Véleménye szerint az anyag illúzióját keltő energia közös az objektumban és a szubjektumban (49). Az *ένεργεια* nem más, mint megvalósulás, tehát objektum és szubjektum közös megvalósulásáról van szó, s ennek a megvalósulásnak a pillanatában jelentkezne a metafora, mely egyre inkább nyelvi és egyre kevésbé teológiai vagy szakrális jellegű (52). Ugyanakkor Frye egyértelműen utal arra, hogy Isten és nyelv viszonyában az utóbbi eszközei elégtelenek az előbbi kifejezésére, pontosabban, hogy Isten eredeti igei természetéhez hűen fogalmazva: a nyelv eszközei Istennel kapcsolatban folyamatosan kimerülőben vannak. Ennek a tapasztalatnak a leginkább gondolatébresztő kifejeződése az, hogy János evangélista Logosz-himnuszát képtelenség értelmezni a fogalmi nyelv szintjén (53–55). Tovább súlyosbítja az olvasó helyzetét, ha már csupán ennek a fogalmi nyelvnek van a birtokában. Hogy a kozmogónia és a kozmogóniai mítoszok milyen távol állnak a zsidó-keresztény hagyomány gyökereitől, az világossá válik Frye véleményéből, mely szerint a kozmogónia nem egy mitológia születésének pillanatában bontakozik ki, mint ahogy például a görög mitológiában, hanem holt emlékezetté válásakor. A *Biblia* mitológiája éppen azért áll távol a kozmogóniától, mert középpontjában nem a világ létrejötte és későbbi struktúrájának törvényei állnak, hanem az a tapasztalat, hogy „az élet elidegenedés nélküli energia” (144), pontosabban emez ideális állapot megvalósulásának látomása. Ezzel szorosan összefügg a nyelvi mozzanat, amennyiben a *Szentírás* a természet vertikális fejlődését annak megváltásaként előlegezi, a néma természet legjellemzőbb mozzanata pedig az Igében való közvetlen részesülése (175). Így a teremtés sem születésként, hanem ébredésként értelmeződik (189–190).

Egy teremtésmítosz elsősorban nem attól drámai és erőteljes, hogy valamiképpen elmondja a természet rendjének létrejöttét, hanem attól, hogy elmondja a tudatos

⁴ Később a Bibliát mint tipologikus szöveget határozza meg, szembeállítva Platón műveivel, bár a tipologikusság kérdése Platón kapcsán nem tűnik elsőrendűnek (149). Később így ír: „A platóni bölcslet legfennköltebb szárnyalásaira is lakmározás közepette került sor” (*IH* 314).

elme ráébredését a természet rendjére. [...] [A] teremtés aligha meggyőző, ha olyan eseménynek tüntetik föl, mint amely az idők kezdetén következik be, minthogy a képzelet számára az időnek nincs kezdete. (IH 201)

A természet az otthon, melyben Ábel és juhait éltek. Ábel, a jó pásztor vezetésével a juhok mehetnek bárhová, mindenhol otthon lesznek. Káin testvérgyilkosságával ez szűnik meg. Káin vándorlása száműzetés, s a száműzött mindenhová mehet, csak haza nem (235).

A mítosz mint a metafora eredete Frye számára nyelvi aktusban gyökerezik: szavak sorba rendezésének gyakorlata (KT 76).⁵ Ez tulajdonképpen maga a beszéd, az elbeszélés folyamata.

[J]elen munkámban nem tudok úgy tekinteni az irodalomra, mint a mítosz romlására: az irodalom a mítosz fejlődésének benső és elkerülhetetlen része. [...] valamely mítosz [...] egy irodalomkritikusnak [...] mindazt jelenti, amivel később az irodalom felruházta. (80)

Az irodalom, ha arra nem kizárólag mint nyelvi, hanem mint esztétikai objektumra tekintünk, láthatólag csak annyiban képezi benső és elkerülhetetlen részét a mítosz fejlődésének, amennyiben a képzőművészet, a zene, de különösen az építészet is. A mítoszok öntörvényűsége és önmagáért valósága jól beleillik ebbe az elméletbe (81),⁶ s a nyelvi megvalósulásuktól elkülöníthető megjelenésük (86–87) sem tűnik lehetetlennek. Frye a mítosz értelmében fölfogott *Biblia* megkerülhetetlen lényegének tartja a metaforát, amennyiben elsődleges jelentése (szép)irodalmi. „A Bibliában a betű szerinti jelentés megegyezik az irodalmi jelentéssel”, és ebben az értelemben nevezi egységesnek is a Szentírást, mégpedig szövegösszefüggéseinek és utalásrendszerének egész, fenségesen beláthatatlan mivoltában (121-123). Erre az utaláshálóra is igaz azonban, hogy a *Bibliának* nincs szüksége bizonyítékokra, külsőkre pedig végképp nem.⁷ Saját szövege azonban szétárad az emberiség írásbeli és szóbeli hagyományában, és minden elbeszéléstípusba beépül. Mindez a Frye által a *Bibliát* fölosztó hét szakasz esetében fokozottan igaz (186). Később, *Az Ige hatalmában* Frye már láttatja azt a

⁵ „[N]ekem e két állítás: »a Biblia történetet mond el« és »a Biblia mítosz«, lényegében véve egy” (77).

⁶ Lásd még Frye csillagászati példáját (84).

⁷ „Honnan tudjuk, hogy az evangéliumi történet igaz? Onnan, hogy igazolja az ótestamentumi próféciákat. De honnan tudjuk, hogy az ótestamentumi próféciák igazak? Onnan, hogy igazolja őket az evangéliumi történet. (...) A két testamentum afféle kettős tükröt formál, egyik a másikat tükrözi vissza, de a külvilágot egyik sem.”(146)

történeti-recepcióesztétikai folyamatot, amelyben az evangéliumok anyaga, a krisztusi tanítás, eredeti ótestamentumi utaláshálójból kiemelve egyértelműen a κήρυγμα jellegét veszi föl (157).

Frye számára elsődleges mítosz és irodalom kitüntetett viszonya, s ez az elképzelés *Az Ige hatalmában* nyeri el végső, rendkívül következetesen végiggondolt formáját (8–9). A kettős tükör metaforája ennek megfelelően jelentős változáson esett át: a *Biblia* szervező struktúrái és az irodaloméi tükrözik egymást, ahelyett, hogy a *Szentírás* két része között működne a tükrözés (19). Ugyanitt kerül sor – föltehetőleg bizonyos recenziók föltevéseit pontosítandó – a mitológia definíciójának megtisztítására mindattól az ideologikus szennyeződéstől, mely a huszadik század derekán rárakódott (52–53). „Nem arról van szó, hogy a mítosz meghamisítja a történelmet, hanem arról, hogy a történelem, az uralkodó ideológiák tetteinek krónikája meghamisítja az elsődleges érdekeket” (93). *Az Ige hatalma* egyértelmű szándéka, hogy a mítoszt fölváltó logosz paradigmaváltását a *Szentírásban* kimutassa, ilyen értelemben olvassa például János evangélista Logosz-himnuszát (61, 143). Célja a *Bibliát* mint irodalmat, pontosabban mint az irodalom „egyik” origóját vizsgálat alá venni (134).

A bűnbeesés kérdését Frye rendkívül részletesen taglalja. Értelmezését – igen problematikusán – szinte kizárólag a szexualitással hozza összefüggésbe: a bűn nem más, mint a nemiség tapasztalata, a jó és a rossz tudás is szexuális jellegű (*KT* 191–192). Pedig éppen a bűnbeesés mozzanatában mutatkozik meg az igei és a nyelvi mint probléma vagy hiány. A bűnbeesés után az ember elveszítette halhatatlanságát, ami lehetséges, hogy a halál bűnéről való tudás (bűntudat) hiánya volt. A bűn és bűnhődés pillanatában androgén paradicsomi létezőből nem pusztán férfi és nő lett, hanem az értelmi és természeti szakadás is bekövetkezett. Az első bűn éppen az ontológiai különbség felismerése volt, a tudat nem más, mint a bűn tudata, a különbözős tudata. A büntetés a halandóság, mivel a harmónia megbomlott, létrejött az idő. A helyzetet bonyolítja a bűnbeesés aktusával kapcsolatban, hogy Lucifer a szellemet jeleníti meg. A szellem ajándékai tehát a bűn forrásaivá is válhatnak. Frye különbséget tesz bölcsesség és tudás között. A bölcsesség nem képesség tekintetében áll a tudás fölött, hanem annyiban, amennyiben folyamatosan a ténylegesen megvalósuló élet változó viszonyaihoz igazítja a gondolkodást, mindig készen a megváltozó jelenségekre való gyors és megfelelő reakcióra. Ez a bölcsesség a teremtés gyökereinek megértéséhez vezetheti el az embert, ahol a fény és a levegő mint a lélek (πνεῦμα) metaforái jelennek meg. Egyiket sem tapasztaljuk magánvalóságában, viszont kettejük segítségével tapasztalunk meg egyáltalán bármit is (212–215, vö. 237). A szexuális magyarázat jogosultsága amúgy is megkérdőjeleződik a paráznság

teológiai és szakrális vonatkozásainak kapcsán (240).⁸ Sehol sem megy azonban olyan messzire a szexuálpszichológiai következtetésekben szerzőnk, mint amikor az Oidipusz-mítoszt a teremtéstörténet vagy Krisztus származásának démonikus paródiájaként olvassa (264–265). Valójában semmi sem áll távolabb ettől az értelmezéstől, mint éppen a zsidó-keresztény mitológia két említett reprezentánsa, és egyáltalán nem a szexuális vonatkozások miatt, mint ahogy Claude Lévi-Strauss kutatásai nyomán gyanítható: az eredeti Oidipusz-mítosz sem szexuális alaphangoltságú volt. Lévi-Strauss a párhuzamos antik mítoszok, valamint az azonos szimbolikájú és történetű-ikonológiájú nem-európai mitikus történetek közös vizsgálatával arra a következtetésre jutott, hogy az emberi közösségek kölcsönösségeken alapulnak, amelyeket a nők, a javak és a szavak cseréje hoz létre, szavától és tart mozgásban, vagyis őriz meg, tehát az a durván egyszerűsítő megközelítési mód, amely az incesztus pusztá tényéből indul ki, aligha tartható. Ebből az következik, hogy ezek az ősi mítoszok az emberi öneszmélés talán legkorábbi időszakából származnak. A mítosz, írja Lévi-Strauss:

[a]zt a lehetetlen helyzetet fejezné ki, amelybe az ember autokhthon voltába vetett hitet [...] hirdető társadalom kerül, ha át kell térnie erről az elméletről annak a ténynek a beismerésére, hogy valójában mindegyikünk egy férfi meg egy asszony egyesüléséből született. A nehézség leküzdhetetlen. Oidipusz mítosza azonban egy sor olyan logikai eszközt kínál, amelyek lehetővé teszik, hogy hidat verjünk a kiinduló probléma – egy vagy két lénytől születünk? – és a származékos probléma közé, amit körülbelül így fogalmazhatnánk meg: ugyanaz ugyanattól születik-e, vagy pedig mástól? Ezzel a módszerrel egy korreláció bontakozik ki: a vérrokonság túlértékelése úgy viszonylik annak alábecsüléséhez, mint az autokhthóniától való megszabadulásra tett kísérlet és annak lehetetlensége. A tapasztalat meghazudtolhatja az elméletet, ám a társadalmi élet igazolja a kozmológiát, amennyiben egyik is, másik is ugyanarról az ellentmondásos struktúráról árulkodik. A kozmológia tehát igaz. (I., 172)

Egyrészt tarthatatlanná válik a növényi vagy egyéb, khthonikusnak tekinthető eredet tételezése (ennek a kozmikus formákba történő kivetítése azonban mint mitikus feszültség tovább él, talán éppen az európai Mária-kultuszokban), másrészt a talány, a rejtély megfejtése idővel éppen a megoldás illuzórikus voltára ébreszti rá a megfejtőt, s a talány és az incesztus fogalmisága együtt vezet el a

⁸ Megjegyzem, Frye-től nem idegen a szinte már New Age-szerű magyarázat sem, ha a primitív szexualitást és szakralitást kell közös nevezőre hozni (251).

nyomozás kényszerítő erejű szükségszerűségéhez. A nyomozás lesz a megismerés egyik legfontosabb mitikus formája, s ez a tragikus megismerési forma vezet el véleményem szerint az elbeszélés megszületésének pillanatához. Tragikusnak azért nevezném, mert saját magunkat nyomozzuk, akárcsak Oidipusz, hiszen a megismerési folyamat a megismerő megismerésével fonódik egybe. A zsidó-keresztény mitológia két ideillő aspektusa: a bűnbeesés és a Krisztus megtestesülésének mítosza gyökeresen eltér Oidipuszétól, s ez éppen Frye későbbi elemzéséből derül ki egyértelműen: a patriarchátus a bűnbeesés következménye, a természet, az Éden pedig lehetséges, hogy Évával azonosítható (IH 241–242, 245, 254–255). Oidipusz mítosza ennek ellenére olyan bölceleti ihlető erővel bír, amely alól Frye nem vonja ki magát. Ennek bizonyítéka *Az Ige hatalma* Krisztus-Oidipusz párhuzama (272–273), melyet indokolatlannak tartok mind vallástörténeti, mind mitikus, mind irodalomelméleti, de legfőképpen szakrális szempontból. Esetleges, hogy miért éppen Oidipusz lenne Krisztus mitikus párhuzama. Miért nem Hélios Apollón, Dionüszosz, Zeusz vagy Mithrász? Ráadásul Frye maga a munkáiban éppen elég világosan bizonyítja, hogy a zsidóság szakrális rituáléi és a khthonikus mítoszok nemigen egyeztethetők össze.⁹ Ehhez kapcsolódhat Frye-nak *Az Ige hatalmában* kifejtett Blake-értelmezése, amely mellett, hogy nyíltan rámutat a költő-festő föl nem ismert zsenialitására, igazolásképpen(?) a huszadik század freudizmusát, illetve marxizmusát is beemeli méltatásába, holott nem mulasztja el megállapítani, hogy Blake bibliai gyökerei Miltonéhoz mérhetőek (302–303).

Meglepő módon a forradalom megjelenését Frye a *Szentírásban* a szövetségek mítoszaihoz köti (KT 198–200), pedig első olvasásra a törvény egzakt és a forradalom különös volta ki kellene, hogy zárják egymást. A forradalom definíciói közül ezúttal Bernard Lewisét idézem, mivel kellően szigorú és következetes. A francia és az orosz, illetve az iráni iszlám forradalmat tekinti mint nemük letisztult képviselőit, hozzájuk képest az összes többi forradalom – főképp a polgári forradalmak – különösek, esetlegesek. Ez a három forradalom nemcsak saját hazájának, de a világ legnagyobb részének történelmére jelentős hatást gyakorolt. Hatalmas remény- és lelkesedéshullámukat mindenütt terror és intervenció háború követte, melynek folyamán a jakobinus, bolsevik vagy fundamentalista forradalmi vezetők következetesen irtották a modernizmus és az ésszerű cselekvési lehetőségek csíráját is (48–49). Persze ha a szakralitásnak a Frye által interpretált izraelita meghatározását tekintjük, akkor az iszlám fundamentalizmus vagy a paranoid forradalmi direktíva valóban nem tűnik távolinak: „nem anny-

⁹ Ahogyan írja: „A Biblia (...) többnyire elsiklik az emberi képzelet ama területe fölött, amelyet tragédiának nevezünk”(339).

ira abban hittek, hogy az ő Istenük az egyetlen igaz isten, hanem inkább abban, hogy minden más isten hamis” (KT 200, vö. 207).¹⁰ Mindenesetre Izrael istene nem látható, de hallható, mégpedig nem azért mert láthatatlan lenne, hanem, mert látására tabu vonatkozik, s Frye számára ez a tény is a forradalmiság bizonyítéka, hiszen a hallás újfönt az Ige jelenésével vonható párhuzamba, Ezékiel látomása Isten szekeréről pedig az igei szakralitás elméletét erősíti: a szent az, ami folyton mozgásban van, pontosabban: Isten maga a cselekvés (201–202). A törvény mint alaptörvény, mely a nemzet közvetlen nemzője lesz, ebben az értelmezésben forradalmi, s itt derül ki, hogy mit ért Frye forradalmon. A kifejezést nem alapvető történeti-politikai értelmében használja, sokkal inkább a bibliai „kezdet” kifejezés egyik metaforájaként, s ennek olyan profán allúziói is kimutatja, mint az Amerikai Egyesült Államok létrejötte (206). Megjegyzem, Frye gyakran nem oszlatja el az allúziók keltette homályt, időnként még növeli is (253). A forradalom metaforája sikerrel alkalmazható a *Biblia* történeti vonatkozásaira, mint ahogy ezt Frye meg is teszi, midőn a *Szentírás* szöveghelyei kapcsán annak a hatalmas, térben és időben egyaránt hosszan elnyúló társadalmi kataklizmának szakrális vonatkozásairól ír, amely a nomád társadalmaknak a földművelés agrárforradalmával való szembesülése kapcsán következett be (243–244). A földművelés mint életforma minden kísérő szimbolika dacára a zsidóság számára idegenként, mi több ellenségesként fogalmazódik meg a *Szentírás*ban. Frye rámutat: a nomadizálás után (sőt Káin mítoszát tekintve: *előtt*) a falusi közösségek kihagyásával társadalmilag a város mint településforma jelentkezik az *Ószövetség*ben (243–246), a vegetáció szakrális kultuszának elutasítására még a hellenizmus idején is hangsúly esett, az evangéliumok szerzői esetében is (259). Izrael alapvetően törzsi jellege Frye szerint később is megmaradt, s hogy ezt a jelleget ő nem találta ellentétesnek a városi kultúrával, azt mi sem bizonyítja jobban, mint hogy a perzsák ellen sikeresen harcoló görög poliszokat is törzsi szerveződésüként mutatja be (*IH* 210). A forradalom metaforájának egyebek mellett a prófétai tevékenység látszik ellentmondani a *Szentírás*ban. Elsősorban azért, mert a szakrális által kitüntetett próféták rendre a fönnálló „forradalmi” rezsimmel *szemben*, a Szent *mellett* foglalnak állást, másrészt a tudat és a tudatalatti normálistól eltérő közvetlen kapcsolata miatt (KT 219, vö. 221). Az evangélium a próféciák különös, minősített esete:

E látomásnak [...] két szintje van: a jelen szintje és az a szint, mely ennek felette áll. Ez a magasabb szint egyaránt jelenti az eredeti azonosságot, melyet az

¹⁰ Összehasonlítául, később így ír: „egy adott vallás követője mindössze ennyit mondhat a *többi* vallásról: elmeszülemény”(379).

Édenkert [...] szimbolizál, és a végső azonosságot, melyeket az ezekhez való visszatérés jelképez az „Úrnak Napja” és Izráel helyreállítása után. (223)

Az *Ige hatalmában* Frye Ámos kapcsán a próféta és a primitív ember között von párhuzamot (83), bár ismerve *Ámos könyvét*, a nonkonformista lázadás talán pontosabb meghatározás lehetne. Végül Frye új értelmet ad a forradalomnak: az új, keresztény forradalom a soha meg nem valósuló jövőbe helyeződik (372).

Tudat és tudatalatti közvetlen kapcsolata ellentmondhat az elfojtás bevezetésének a diskurzusba, különösen akkor, ha tudható, hogy az elfojtás mint metafora a freudi pszichoanalízis révén termékenyítette meg az irodalomelméletet. További értelmezői zavart okozhat ugyanitt az apokalipszis szó eredeti jelentésének az ἀλήθεια hibás – egyébként Martin Heideggertől származó – etimológiájával történő összevetése, és nem csupán azért, mert ez további látszólagos bizonyítékokkal szolgál az elfojtás elméletének alkalmazhatósága mellett a *Szentírás* kapcsán (233).¹¹ Frye elképzelése szerint a történelmi „valóság” létrehozása azt a célt szolgálja, hogy elföldje az apokalipszis valóságát (234),¹² s ezzel a magyarázattal legmesszebb menőig egyet lehet érteni, de nem szükséges a feledés kategóriáját az elfojtásával szemben háttérbe szorítani, hiszen a közéleti magaskultúrák kulturális emlékezetét kutató szakirodalom jelentős része használja az emlékezés ellentétét, még olyan leíró esetekben is, amelyekben a társadalom kollektív tudatának emlékezőtechnikái szándékosan szelektívek.¹³ A kulturális emlékezet írásbeli jelentkezésének minősített esete Jósiás története (335–337). Ebben a történetben az emlékezés politikai, szakrális és társadalmi követelménye a történelmi formáltságtól függetlenül világosan kivehető, s talán ez lehet legfontosabb tanulsága is. Ennek az elképzelésnek messzemenő következményei vannak a *Biblia* egészének formálására vonatkozóan. Amennyiben a kanonizált szöveg létrehozása ihletett tevékenységnek tekinthető, annyiban a szöveg további formálása, gondozása szintén az (339–340). Ebből az ezredforduló irodalomelméleti iskoláinak a szerzőség kérdését kritikával illető elképzeléseivel nagyban hasonló következtetést von le:

¹¹ A hibás etimológiát az *IH* is átveszi (21).

¹² Ahogyan megjegyzi: „Bizonyos értelemben tehát Jób szabadulása szabadulás tulajdon történetéből, az időbeli mozgásból” (331).

¹³ Lásd erről a teljesség igénye nélkül: Arendt, Hannah. *Múlt és jövő között*. Budapest: Osiris és Readers International, 1995; Assmann, Jan. *A kulturális emlékezet. Írás, emlékezés és politikai identitás a korai magaskultúrákban*. Budapest: Atlantisz, 1999; Uő. *Mózes, az egyiptomi*. Budapest: Osiris, 2003.; Uő. *Uralom és üdvösség. Politikai teológia az ókori Egyiptomban, Izraelben és Európában*. Budapest: Atlantisz, 2008; Bultmann, Rudolf. *Történelem és eszkatológia*. Budapest: Atlantisz 1994; Huizinga, Johan. *A történelem formaváltozásai*. Budapest: Maecenas, 1997; White, Hayden. *A történelem terhe*. Budapest: Osiris, 1997.

Megszállottan ragaszkodunk ahhoz a modern felfogáshoz, hogy mindaz a minőség, amelyet az irodalomban csodálunk, az író egyéniségéből származnak, és ezért nehezen ismerjük fel, hogy a könyörtelen egyéniségrombolás több elevenséget és eredetiséget tudott teremteni, mint kevesebbet. (340)

Egyéniség, egyediség, különösség és eredetiség definíciói így egyre inkább magára a szövegre irányulhatnak, ez pedig a jelentés, akár metaforikus jelentés egzakt megközelítését szolgálja, egyúttal nyilvánvalóvá teszi a Máté evangélista korabeli és a jelenkori recepció közti jelentős különbségét, hiszen az előbbi fókuszában Frye számára a pszeudonímia áll, amely a szájhagyomány és az írásbeliség szakrális értelemben vehető fordulópontját képezi, és amely föloldja a szakrális szöveg szájhagyományra vonatkozó kötöttségének mitikus követelményét (341).¹⁴ A teremtő kompiláció elve *Az Ige hatalmában* további jelentésegységekkel bővül (142). Ehhez kötődik a szerző értelmezésében a szövegromlás kérdésköre, melyre továbbgondolásra serkentő, termékenyítő s egyúttal merész választ ad: „nyugodtan mondhatjuk, hogy mindaz, ami elromolhat könyvben, valahogyan el is romlott benne” (379). Legalább ilyen jelentőségű a *Biblia* rhizomatikusságának felismerése, mely amellet, hogy gyökeresen szakít a „modern” vagy újkori értelmezői elképzelésekkel, merészen *régi* (szándékosan használok a jelzőt az *új* helyett) egységbe téríti vissza a *Szentírással* kapcsolatos befogadói gondolatokat: „az egész bibliai szerkezet középpontja az a mondat, amelyet éppen olvasunk [...] eszményi esetben minden mondat kulcs az egész Bibliához” (347-348) Így válhat a *Szentírás* szövege valójában egy folyamatosan önmagát át- meg átszövő hypertextté, sőt így válik a Biblia végtelen világegyeteme gömbbé, melynek középpontja, az ember éppúgy bárhol és mindenhol egyszerre ott van, mint pereme, az Isten (*IH* 235–236).

¹⁴ . „[A] Biblia minden fordulatában megtaláljuk azt, amit a jelenlét metafizikájának neveznek, továbbá, hogy a kimondott szónak mindig elsőbbsége van az írottéhoz képest, de legalábbis mindig ott van a közelében. (...) A Biblia az írást (...) gyakran tekinti átmenetinek. Isten szól, és igéje örökkévaló: az írásba foglalás már eleve óriási engedmény, de azt, amit Isten tulajdon kezével írt még a II Mózes 32,16-ban, három verssel később, a 19-ben már el is pusztítja. Jézus azt mondja, hogy beszéde túléli az eget is, a földet is (...) de őt magát csak egyszer látjuk írni, akkor is a földre (...) és amit írt, nyilván nyomtalanul eltűnt. (...) az archetipikus próféta, Illés (...) sok mindennek volt mondható, csak írónak nem.” (356).

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NORTHROP FRYE A ROMANCE-RÓL ÉS A REGÉNYRŐL

(A FRYE-I MŰVÉSZETFILOZÓFIA ÉS A ROMANCE)

Hogy a románc fontos, hatékony irodalmi terminus lehet, hogy kiterjesztésével, megfelelő használatával az irodalom lényegi folyamataiba nyerhetünk betekintést, azt az angolszász kritika már a tizennyolcadik században sejteti, szuggerálja. 1785-ben már az első románckonográfia is napvilágot lát – Clara Reeve párbeszédese értekezésében két irodalomszerető asszony és egy férfi beszélget, disputál a *novel*ről és a *romance*-ről. S az idevágó töprenkedéseknek, tisztázó kísérleteknek azóta se szeri, se száma. 2007-ben például Corinne Saunders szerkesztésében a *romance* családfáját, ágbogait időben-térben kiterjedten feltérképező, sokszerzős, hatodfélszáz oldalas monográfia látott napvilágot.

A műfaj legeltökéltebb és leghatékonyabb apológétájának mindazonáltal alighanem Northrop Frye-t tekinthetjük. A kanadai irodalomtudós számára a *romance* kezdettől elsőrendű fontosságú műforma. Döntő szerepet játszik már az *Anatomy of Criticism* archetipikus-szkematikus műfajrendszerében, s a kutató későbbi tanulmányaiban is rendre felbukkan, legyen szó az antik hagyományról, a Shakespeare-vígjátékokról vagy a fikció alapvető formáiról (lásd még Frye 1950, 1965, 1988). A megközelítések során Frye szokása szerint sokféle ágazó, a problémásíkokat, nézőpontokat meglehetősen szabadon váltogató gondolatmenetet alkalmaz, így a románc *differentia specificája* minden írásában másként-másként mutatkozik meg. Koncepciójának bemutatásakor épp ezért célszerű válogatnunk művei között, s a választás indokoltan esik 1976-ban megjelent „románckonográfiájára”, a *The Secular Scripture*-re.

A Harvard-előadások nyomán született könyvében összegzi és foglalja össze Frye a románchoz fűződő nézeteit, s a recepció történet legkiterjedtebb, legkimunkáltabb „*romance*-apológiáját” bontakoztatja ki az olvasó előtt. A műfajt a legfontosabb fikciós formának állítja: „Romance is the structural core of all fiction [...]”(15), mondja, és előítéletként leplezi le a szűkösen elgondolt „valószerűség” körül kereskedő – sok évszázados – kritikusi meggyőződéseket. Az irodalomantropológiai alapok iránt közismerten érdeklődő tudós a művészet, az irodalom beágyazottságával, rendeltetésével kapcsolatos kérdésekre is kitér a könyvében. Az alkotás lényegi vonásait keresve a művészi képzelőerő, az „imagination” és a realitáselv, valóságelv harcára mutat rá. A teljes vágyteljesülés áté-

lésére, elgondolására képes imagináció számára a reális világ idegen vagy legalábbis elégtelen entitás, s a képzelőerő éppen az alkotás által harcol folyamatosan ezzel a világgal – fejtegeti (37). A vágytól hajtott, szabadságteremtő imagináció s a külső, determináló világgörnyezet konfliktusát megjelenítve Northrop Frye egyértelműen a képzelőerőnek ad igazat. „Reality, we remember, is otherness, the sense of something not ourselves” – jelzi, hogy a realitás mindenkor másféleség, másneműség, idegenség az emberi vágy számára. „Literature is an aspect of the human compulsion to create in the face of chaos” – adja meg a jogot az irodalomnak, hogy a mindenség, a valóságelv formátlanságába formát vigyen (60, 31), a művészet mellett egyébként a vallást, a művészetet és a tudományt is ebben az összefüggésrendszerben, egyazon humanitás analóg jelenségeiként gondolva el.

A Northrop Frye-i művészetfilozófiából, mondhatni, evidensen, logikusan következik a *romance* kultusza, hiszen a valóságérő támadásait ez az irodalmi forma utasítja el legkövetkezetesebben. A románcvilágot az idill, a beteljesült vágyak világa, a paradicsomi ártatlanság atmoszférája uralja. Hősei az ártatlanság állapotából cseppennek a káosz világába, hogy aztán a viszontagságos, erőszakos, kalandos szakaszt túlhaladva újfent visszanyerjék a harmonikus egyensúlyt. A mintateremtő (még a tizenhetedik-tizennyolcadik században is széles körben utánzott) antik románc hőse, Kharikleia a tengeri utazás, hajótörés, kalóztámadás, fogságba esés, a szerelmeztől való elválások stációin át sodródik előre. Szüzességét folyamatosan fenyegetik, s származásának talánya, identitásának bizonytalansága is állandóan kínozza, míg végül fény derül királyi származására és a beteljesítő nászban egyesül párjával, Theagenésszel. Frye is tudja persze, hogy a valóságérőt az irodalom sem háríthatja el teljesen magától, s a kutató kísérletet is tesz a fokozatok, árnyalatok jelzésére. A „naiv”, folklorisztikus románcformát, a Märchent, a tündérmesét a totális vágyteljesítés műfajaként mutatja be (a skála másik végére a naturalista regényt helyezi), egyébként pedig *displacement*ek sokaságával számol. A *displacement*, az átalakítás, átformálás már csak azért is fontos számára, mert az összekapcsolódás és különbözőzés dialektikáját jeleníti meg, s a konkrét irodalmi művek mögöttes struktúráit fürkésző tudós a fogalom által tudja szemléltetni a struktúra-összefüggéseket. „The fundamental technique used is what I call displacement, the adjusting of formulaic structures to a roughly credible context” – határozza meg a fogalmat (36).

(REGÉNYELMÉLET A *DISPLACEMENT* JEGYÉBEN)

A freudi *Verschiebung* nyomán megalkotott szakszó, az ember szellemi világából fakadó mítoszhoz (archetípushoz) kapcsolódó struktúrák és a hihető, reális világ között közvetítő *displacement* a Frye-i fikciós és regényelmélet kulcsfogalma. A terminus bemutatásakor a kutató egy kreatívírás-tanár szellemes ötletére hivatkozik. A kurzuson részt vevő diákok azt kapták feladatul, hogy egy Grimm-mesét valószerű történeté írjanak át a mű eredeti alapmotívumait megőrizve. A bevezetés után Frye mindjárt saját példával is él. Ibsen 1858-as *Helgelandi harcosokját* értelmezi a *displacement* jegyében, a Sigurd saga „átalakításaként”. A sagabeli legyőzendő sárkány-szörny, Fafnir a norvég író művében mindennapibb állattá szelídül: óriási – a hősnő, Hjördis ajtajánál őrködő, csak a lánynak engedelmeskedő – medvévé lesz (36-37). Az újkori regény születését és a realizmus kialakulását Northop Frye a *romance* és a *displacement* optikáján keresztül jeleníti meg. „It is clear that the novel was a realistic displacement of romance [...]” – bocsátja előre alaptételét. Az angol regény alapítóatyái, a *Robinson Crusoe*, a *Pamela* és a *Tom Jones* írói szerint a románcstruktúrát használják, csak éppen a mindennapi tapasztaláshoz igazítják. Austenben a kutató jóval több romantikus vonást lát, mint az irodalomtörténet általában, Scott Waverley-románcait pedig a románcba oltott realizmtikus *displacement* példáiként tartja számon. Az irodalomtörténész az új elbeszélő műfaj kiformalódásában a paródiát (Ortega és Bahtyin regényelméleteivel egybehangzóan) központi fontosságúnak tartja, de e jelenséget is a *romance*-hoz kapcsolt *displacement*ként kezeli. A paradigmateremtő *Don Quijote* a lovagi románcok paródiája, a *Joseph Andrews* a *Pameláé*, a *Northranger Abbey* a gótikus regényé – szögezi le.

(A „REALISTA” IRODALOMÉRTÉS KRITIKÁJA)

A realizmus egyoldalú képviselővel a *The Secular Scripture* lapjain Northop Frye már kezdetben, a *romance* elvi megalapozásakor vitába bonyolódott. A szerző nem fukarkodott a platóni és a keresztény esztétika bírálatával sem, mert ezek az eszmerendszerek az irodalmat, úgymond, csupán magasabb igazságok hordozójaként, s nem saját státusában, rendeltetésében méltatták figyelemre. *Romance*- és *displacement*-centrikus regény- és realizmuselméletét kifejtve azonban a kutató újabb vitára kényszerül, hiszen elképzelései sok-sok angolszász beidegződéssel, standarddal, ideológé mával ellenkeznek. Frye rendre előítéletként leplezi le a mimétikus, „valószerűségre”, „külsőleges valószínűségre” törrő tételeket, premisszákat. Meglehető iróniával kezeli a konvencióhasznála-

tot elfedő, teljes formálási szabadságot tettető realista ideologémákat, tagadja a karakterekből következő történésszervezés abszolút érvényét, a „»given these characters, what will happen?«” elvét, és rehabilitálja a mellérendelő, additív kompozíciót a célratörő szerkesztés föltétlen elsőbbségét valló vélekedésekkel szemben. (A két kompozíciós mód jelölésére szellemes kifejezéseket alkalmaz. Az előzőt "hence narrative"-nak nevezi, az utóbbit pedig az „and then” kifejezéssel konceptualizálja [47].) A tudós az irodalomtörténeti folyamatokról szólva sem fukarkodik az ironiával. Kritikusan szól arról a processzusról, amelynek során az angol irodalomértésben a realizmus (a korról és az emberi természetről tudósító, komoly fikció) elsőbbsége evidenciaként kristályosodott ki a „mesélő”, „sztori-elvű”, „populáris” románchoz képest. Ironikusan kezeli Northrop Frye azt a tény is, hogy Dickens (hosszabb ingadozás után) végül kikerült a csekélyebb minőségű, szórakoztató íróknak szánt rekeszből, s méltatlannak tartja, hogy Walter Scott viszont behelyeztetett. A realista hegemoniát kodifikáló F. R. Leavis könyvét, a *The Great Tradition* a kutató az átgondolatlan, esetleges kritikai paradigmateremtés példajaként idézi meg, s egyetértően hivatkozik Oscar Wilde *The Decay of Lying* című írására, amely realizmus kodifikációját, úgymond, elsőként rendítette meg. (A realista hagyomány elsőbbségi pozíciójához Northrop Frye szerint az is hozzájárult, hogy az irodalomkritika mindenkor szívesebben beszél az alkotások „üzenetéről”, társadalmi funkciójáról, mint a tényleges prezentációról, a mű által megjelenített irodalmi konvenciók értelméről és összefüggéséről, s e beszédmód a realista elbeszélésekhez kétségkívül jobban illik, mint a románchoz, az utóbbi ugyanis rendszerint szembeötlően konvencionizált struktúráját mutat [41-46].)

(SECULAR SCRIPTURE, CSELEKMÉNYELVŰ POPULARITÁS)

A mesélő, sztori-elvű, populáris irodalom védelmére a kutató ugyancsak gondot fordít. E gondolati ösvény már csak azért is nélkülözhetetlen, mert könyve indításakor Frye a *romance* más szempontú megközelítését is felvázolta. A tudós szerint az irodalom évszázadai során létrejött művek alapvetően két nagy csoportot alkotnak.

Bizonyos történetek, úgy tűnik, fontosabbak a többiekénél: ezek azok, amelyek a társadalom elsőrendű érdekeltségi köreit jelenítik meg. Ezek a társadalom moráljának, vallásának, szociális struktúrájának, környezetvilágának, történelmének, kozmológiájának bizonyos vonásait segítenek megmagyarázni. A többi történet, úgy látszik, kevésbé fontos, és e történetek egy részéről azt szoktuk mondani, hogy szórakoztatnak és gyönyörködtetnek. (6)

Az előbbieket, a fontosabbakat (a „magtörténeteket”) a szó eredeti jelentését kissé elmozdítva mitikus történeteknek nevezi Frye, míg a második csoportot a „*fabulous*” értelmező jelzővel látja el. Az írások egyik nagy csoportja a „*sacred scripture*”, a *szakrális írás*, a másik pedig (mint a könyv címe jelzi) a „*secular scripture*”, a *szekuláris írás* fogalmával ragadható meg.¹ A szekuláris írás maga a románc, amely tehát „világi”, „populáris”, „fabulózus”, azaz meseszerű, cselekményelvű, s ezt elsődlegesen a történet kedvéért, a szórakoztatás, gyönyörködtetés végett mondják.² A románc *differentia specificájának* e nézőpontból tehát a szórakoztató jelleg, a cselekményesség, kalandosság (az olvasói elvárásokat leginkább kielégítő szerelmi történetszál, a látványos, közvetlen izgalmi effektusok) látszanak³, s e popularitást az irodalomtörténésznek valahogyan igazolnia kell, hiszen a műfajt a fikciós irodalom magjaként, alapformájaként prezentálta. A populáris irodalom védelmében Frye először is műfajfejlődési érveket hoz fel. Az irodalom mindig a populáris, periférikus, folklór tradícióból újul meg – hangsúlyozza Mihail Bahtyin is az orosz formalizmus nyomdokán haladva, s több illusztratív példát sorakoztat fel: Shakespeare és Marlowe a populáris színházra építettek, a nagy paradigmaváltó verseskötet, Wordsworth és Coleridge *Lyrical Balladse* evidensen a népies balladákra támaszkodott, ahogyan a tizenharmadik századi angol prózában a populáris Deloney és nem az arisztokratikus Sidney mutatott utat (28).

(MÖGÖTTES STRUKTÚRÁK ÉS INDIVIDUALITÁS)

A sémaszerűség vádjának kivédésére a kutató szintén gondot fordít. A Frye-ban roppantul erős struktúrafeltáró, szkémákat, formulavariációkat felfedő érdeklődés e ponton kapóra jön. A kutató nemcsak azt hangsúlyozza, hogy voltaképpen minden fikció sémákra épül, de azt is, hogy az irodalmi elemzés elsődleges feladata éppen e „sémák” vizsgálata. „Hence in the criticism of romance we are led very quickly from what the individual work says to what the entire convention it belongs to is saying through the work” (60) A romantikus, individualitáselvű esztétikák eredetiségigényével szemben Frye tehát a „művön

¹ A „*scripture*” szó természetesen ’írást’, ’szent írást’ jelent, s Frye munkája kezdetén azt a látszatot kelti, hogy a *secular scripture* szakrális vonatkozásait, biblikus leszármazását rendre be fogja mutatni, de ez az összefüggés a későbbiekben jórészt elsikkad.

² „[P]rimarily for the sake of the story”, „to entertain or amuse” (41, 6).

³ Frye románcdefinícióiból nem is hiányzik ez az aspektus. A szerző elsődleges célja a szórakoztatás – mondja Chaucer meséiről és Shakespeare vígjátékairól, míg másutt a „love story” kifejezéssel határozza meg a *romance* műfaji karakterét (7, 83)

keresztül beszélő hagyomány” jelentőségét hangsúlyozza. „Literature is made out of earlier literature”, „[t]he work of art is made of other works of art, and other works of art are made of the mythic archetypes” – utal a kanadai tudós struktúrákeresésére, szkematikus érdeklődésére nem csekély iróniával W. K. Wimsatt is (Krieger 77, 85).

(A FRYE-I ROMANCE-ELMÉLET KRITIKAI VIZSGÁLATA)

A leíró, megjelenítő bemutatást záró utolsó mondatok ironikus hangsúlya némileg már átvezet az értékelés világába. Írásom utolsó ízületében végül is ide érkezünk; a frye-i románcelméletet ismertetve néhány latoló, értékelő megjegyzéssel még mindenképpen tartozom. Tegyük hát egy pillanatra mérlegre az értékeket, hozadékokat és az esetleges problematikuságokat! Először is ki kell mondanunk, hogy e mérleg egészében messzemenően pozitív. A *romance*-ot energikusan képviselő kutatónak nagyon sok kérdésben igaza van. A realista regény sajátjaiból elvont félígazságoknak és téveszméknek valóban van mit tanulniuk a románc felismerése, elfogadása által kialakítható (jóval arányosabb, teljesebb, korrektebb) szemlélettől. Az újkori elbeszélő irodalom formáit sem érthetjük meg csupán a realizmusból; a *novel* előtti idők (több ezredév) elbeszélései hősénekek és *romance*-karakterűek, s e tradíció a tizenhét-tizenkilencedik században sem semmisül meg, hanem változatos formákban tovább él.⁴

Rokonszenvesnek és termékenynek látszik a tudós irodalomantropológiai elképzelése is. A vágy, a teljes emberi átformálás, beteljesülés és az ellenerőt jelentő környezet kettőssége, nekem úgy tűnik, alkalmas fundamentum a művészetfilozófia számára. A harmadik évezred elején, a szélsőséges nyelvi, anyagi, környezeti determináltság fétisét mindenek elé helyező posztmodern elméletek évtizedei után különös örömmel nyugtázzhatjuk az irodalom „humánküldetését” evidensen megőrző frye-i gondolatokat.

Fontosak, helyénvalóak az irodalomtörténeti kánonképzésre utaló vagy a

⁴ A korokon áthúzódó nagyműfaj értelmében felfogott szentimentális románc Frye szerint a kései antikvitásban születik meg. Első megjelenési formája a görög regény (Héliodórosz, Longosz, Achilles Tatius, epheszosi Xenophón), majd a római Apuleius kapcsolódik hozzá. A középkori *romance*-ot a Barlám és Jozafát története, a szentek legendái fémjelzik. A tizenhatodik századi angol románcot Sidney *Arcadiájával* szemlélteti Frye, majd a gótikus regény, Walter Scott és a viktoriánus románcírók következnek. A preraffaelita William Morris az egyik legérdekesebb *romance*-szerző a kanadai irodalmár szerint, de az időben továbbhaladva Tolkiént és a tudományos-fantasztikus regényt is egyértelműen idekapcsolja. (SeS 3-4, 5). Meg kell jegyeznünk azt is, hogy a hősénekek és a *romance* elkülönítésére Frye nem fordít gondot, s az ezzel kapcsolatos nem csekély szakirodalomra sem utal.

középszintű regénypoétikához kapcsolódó Northrop Frye-i észrevételek is. A *The Secular Scripture* okos, korrekciós megjegyzései nemcsak a leavisi (George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad elsőbbségét kodifikáló) kánont érvénytelenítik, de a klasszicista, realista gondolkozásmód által oly tartósan befolyásolt magyar irodalomértés számára is sok-sok tanulsággal szolgálhatnak. A polarizáló, „fekete-fehér” kontrasztot teremtő alakformálás alsóbbrendűségét, a lélektani motivációkhoz illeszkedő cselekményvezetés föltétlen fölényét mai irodalomtörténet-írásunk is evidenciaként vallja, Jókai Mór írásművészetét is csak valamiféle infantilis naivság jegyében (enyhítő, mentegető gesztusok kíséretében) tudja értelmezni, s e premisszák a kanadai tudós útmutatásait követve nagyon is relativizálhatók, megkérdőjelezhetők.

Termékeny és tanulságos a Frye által előszeretettel használt *displacement*-nézőpont is. A szemlélő e látószögből eredetet és következményt mintegy együtt lát, a felbukkanó, megmutatkozó sajtáságot a magasabb stádium fényében, annak „deformációja”-ként ragadja meg. Korlátlan, túlfeszített alkalmazását illetően azonban már némi fenntartással élhetünk. A terminus érvényét némi szkepszissel fontolgatva azt mondhatnánk, hogy csaknem minden irodalmi struktúrát kezelhetünk egy másik, előző struktúra átalakításaként, a kérdés csak az, hogy az átformáltság fokát, mértékét miként jelöljük ki, s ez akár olyan tág is lehet, hogy a viszonylatjelző egybevetés végül semminemű tartalmas igazsághoz nem vezet. Frye fentebb idézett egybekapcsolását, a Sigurd saga–Ibsen összevetést, a sárkány–medve analógiát is alighanem e túlfeszítés példájaként tarthatjuk számon. S a kutató néhány későbbi példája is ad okot a szkepszisre. A *The Secular Scripture* harmadik részében felbukkanó egybevetések sora például (Meredith *Az Önzője* „more displaced”, mint Sheridan Le Fanu *Uncle Silasa*, bár az előbbi is kései átdolgozása a Bibliából és a görög mítoszokból is ismert szakrális áldozattörténeteknek) számomra legalábbis nem tűnik reveláló erejűnek (81).

(W. K. Wimsatt korábban már megidézett *Criticism and Myth* című tanulmányában ugyancsak számos példával szemlélteti Frye *displacement*-technikájának „vadhajtásait”. Erős ironiával utal arra, hogy a kanadai tudós Tom Sawyer és Becky Thatcher barlangi kalandját Thészeusz, Beowulf és Szent György mítoszával kapcsolja össze, a megkötözött Gulliverben Prométheuszra utaló paródiát lát, a *Fürtrablás* Belindáját pedig Proserpina elrablásához társítja [Krieger 95].)

Az eredetet és következményt együtt láttató *displacement*, nem vitás, termékeny szerepet tölthet be a műfajtörténeti alakulástörténet terepén is, de e szélesebb, átfogóbb terepemen a korlátok még markánsabban, nyilvánvalóbban ütköznek ki. Bizonyos értelemben nagyon is igaz, hogy a cervantesi, defoe-i, fieldingi, richardsoni, austeni, dickensí regény a *romance displacement*jeként

tartható számon. De az sem igen vitatható, hogy a két struktúrát egymásra vetítő látószög az eredetiséget, sajátyszerűséget már kevésbé képes feltárni. A frye-i „regényelmélet” e ponton nagyon is kiegészítésre szorul. Chrétien de Troyes és Henry Fielding között túlságosan nagy a különbség, ahhoz, hogy a *displacement*-technikát egymagában elégségesnek gondolhassuk. A modern fikció és az irodalmi realizmus az egyedítő konkretizálás, individualizálás jegyében teljesen átalakítja nemcsak az irodalmi művek idő- és térkezelését, környezetábrázolását, tárgyias, megjelenítő technikáját, de narrációját is, amint ezt már Ian Watt 1957-es, paradigmaváltásra koncentráló klasszikus regényelmélete hitelesen megjelenítette.

A struktúrákat egybemontírozó *displacement*-nézőpont s az egyediség mögött szkémákat, átfogóbb struktúravariációkat kereső, univerzalizálásra törő frye-i szemlélet nem tud egykönnyen bánni a történetiséggel sem. Az irodalmi műfajok *quest*-mítoszból való levezetése a logikai műveletek, s nem a történetiség szférájához kapcsolódik – jelezte a történetiség elsikkadásával kapcsolatos aggályait már 1966-ban is a Frye irodalmi munkásságát vizsgáló Wimsatt (97). S a történeti megjelenítés hiánya a modern fikció terepén kalandozva még szembeötlőbb, hiszen a modern regény és a realizmus nyilvánvalóan történeti fenomén. Daniel Defoe és társai azt a nagy paradigmaváltást reprezentálják, amelynek során az univerzália-elvű, tradícióhoz kötődő, „középkori” világkép empirikusabb, individuálisabb, reflektívabb gondolkozási, kifejezési formáknak adja át a helyét. Frye mindössze pár lapos „regényelméleté”-től természetesen nem kérhetünk számon részletesebb művelődéstörténeti, kulturális háttérrajzot, de *valamelyes* utalást, jelzést azért talán elvárhatnánk.

A történelmi dimenzió érvényesülhetne kissé erőteljesebben a korokon átívelő *romance*-formákat felvázoló katalógusokban, felsorolásokban s az újkori, tizenkilencedik-huszedik századi műfajváltozatok elgondolásakor is. Ha ugyanis a realizmus háttérében új művelődéstörténeti szituáció áll, akkor maga a románc is aligha marad érintetlen ennek következményeitől. Jómagam éppen ezért állítottam műfaj történeti töprengéseim centrumába a „modern *romance*” kifejezést, s mutattam be a tizenkilencedik századi elbeszélők által kimunkált műformát az évezredes műfaj legérdekesebb, legszínvonalasabb műcsoportjaként, karakteresen innovatív műfaji változataként. A modern *romance*, úgy látom, nyilvánvalóan őrzi a nagy tradíciót: a vágyelvű világteremtés pozícióit nem adja fel, az értékbizonytalanság világába nem lép át, a létnek értelmet adó próbatételhez ragaszkodik, a centrált, képességes, önazonos, magasabb entitásokkal kapcsolatot tartó pszichikum látomását nem cseréli le a manipulációktól uralt, decentralt lélektanra, a szerelem azonosságteremtő szimbolikáját felhasználja, a jól végződő történetet igényli. Ugyanakkor a műforma mélyen beágyazódik ama

kor problémavilágába, amelyben az ember végletes környezeti meghatározottságának és szabadságakarátának, a szimbolikus rendek szétesésének és a szilárd szimbolikus rend igényének, az identitásvesztésnek és identitáskeresésnek, az elidegenedett, lenyomat-létnek és az énazonosságot adó próbatétel-vágnak, a rosszul végződő történeteknek és a jól végződő emberi történet akarásának a dilemmája minden addigi korhoz képest nyíltabban, kiterjedtebben, egyetemesebben tárul fel. A negatív valóságérő és az affirmatív vágy feszültségében pulzáló modern *romance* műfaji elődeihez képest fokozottan korkifejező érvényű: ahhoz a kultúrtörténeti szituációhoz tapad, abban a korban emelkedik ki kontúrosan, amelyben a pozitív, rendező világvízió nem *adottságként, természetes lehetőségként*, hanem az *akadályok sokaságával szembekeverülő vágyként* írható le, s a kor gondolkozási, művészi lehetőségrendszerében már hangsúlyosan fölbukkan az emberrel szemben közömbös, idegen világ, a determináló környezetiség, a rendezetlen, kaotikus lét, az értékcentrumoktól elvágott pszichikum, a „rosszul végződő történet” alternatívája.

A modern *romance* feltételezése már csak azért is hasznos volna Frye számára, mert a történeti, korkifejező tartalmasság tételezésével hidat építhetne az értékelés irányába is. Az axiológiai dilemmákkal a kanadai tudós egyébként sem igen tud megbirkózni. A rá jellemző, szkémákat, struktúrákat, mítoszi alapvázakat föltáró gondolkozásmód az értékelést természetszerűleg igyekszik kiküszöbölni, félretolni, semlegesíteni. Az irodalomkritikát meg kell szabadítanunk a provinciális értékelési kényszerektől – hajtogatja mindegyre Frye, s a szkéma-mítosz- univerzália-megjelenítésekét összemosza a tulajdonképpeni értékkel. A románcos strukturális séma föllelése imígyen involválja az értéket, tartalmasságot, s kiküszöböli, nem létezővé teszi az esztétikai individualitás elvét. Az esztétikum individuális szerveződése, egyszeri, megismételhetetlen rétegg kapcsolati sajátságúsága és az ehhez kapcsolódó meditációs horizont nemigen jelenik meg Northrop Frye gondolkozásban.

Ráadásul, mint már jeleztem, a kutató a *sacred–secular, serious–fabulous*, ellentétpárok felállításával tovább nehezítette a maga dolgát. A románc voltaképpen a szórakoztató céllal elmondott történet – fejtegette könyvének alapvetésében a tartalmasság, az egzisztencialitás, a mélyebb dimenziók feltételezéséről, feltárásáról lemondva. A kanadai tudós gondolatait követve némi aggodalommal konstatálhatjuk, hogy az antik románcok, a Robin Hood-ponyva és a gótikus regény, a Conan Doyle-i detektívtörténetek, a Stanislaw Lem-i sci-fik és a tolkieni regényfolyamok, a Wordsworth-i és William Morris-i balladák egyként és egyenlő ranggal *románcok*, s hogy egyáltalán nincs módunk értékkülönbséget tételni a Jules Verne-i és Charles Dickens-i, Alexandre Dumas-i és Victor Hugo-i elbeszélések, a *Hüvelyk Matyi* s a *Diótörő és az égerkirály* grimmi és

hoffmanni meséi (a P. Howard-i légiós regények és az Arany János-i balladák) között. Nem az a fontos, hogy a detektívregény és a western a maga individualitásában szkematikusnak, sémaszerűnek tűnik, hanem az, hogy a műfaj sémáinak vizsgálata feltárja előttünk a történetek szervezésének eljárásait – fejtegeti Frye, s a detektívregény elemzésekor sem a krimi és a „komoly” irodalmi formák közötti értékkülönbségeket érzékeli, hanem azt tudatosítja, hogy minden fikció konvencionizált (60, 45). Az argumentáció, mint Frye-nál általában, ezúttal is érdekes, figyelemre méltó, de az érvek a maguk egyoldalúságában azért meglehetősen problematikusnak tűnnek.

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GLEN ROBERT GILL



THE DIALECTICS OF MYTH:
NORTHROP FRYE'S THEORY OF CULTURE

The year 2012 carried with it a number of interesting eschatological expectations. In the realm of new-age spirituality and superstition, 2012 marked the end of the ancient Mayan calendar and so was reputed to conclude with a worldwide apocalypse (a prediction fuelled, alas, by misreadings of the Mayan *Popol Voh* and other early Mesoamerican almanacs; see J. G. Macdonald and Webster). At the other end of the spectrum of rationality were the array of economists, political analysts, and technologists who, asking no suspension of disbelief, pointed to hard data that 2012 would conclude various inevitable developments in our uncontrollable social machinery (as samples, see Farrell, Gibson, MacWhirtir, and Tully), and bring economic collapse and another Great Depression, open class warfare, long-predicted revolutions in Europe and the Arab world, and/or the disappearance of biological humanity into a cybernetic union with the computer. What these divergent expectations actually represent are the two dominant attitudes and approaches toward myth in contemporary and even critical culture: the first clings against all reason to fantastic representations or interpretations of myth as actual events that will somehow resolve the vagaries of history, while the second, claiming to have nothing to do with myth, is implicitly and unknowingly arguing for events of the same type. Together these two perspectives cast a cold light on another of 2012's unique distinctions; as the centenary of the birth of the literary and cultural critic Northrop Frye, arguably the most influential intellectual in Canadian history¹ and one of the most significant theorists of myth and culture of the last hundred years. Since his death in 1991 and thus far in the twenty-first century, Frye's reputation seems to have

¹ An issue of *Maclean's* commemorating Canada Day, 1998, nominated Frye as the second most-influential Canadian in history, and placed him at the top of its list of the ten most-influential Canadian thinkers and writers. In 1980, a survey of 950 academic journals found Frye to be the eighth most-cited author in the arts and humanities, after such giants as Marx, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Lenin, Freud, Plato and Barthes (see Garfield).

suffered the same two fates as myth itself, doubtless because of his work's constant consideration of that subject. Like myth, Frye's work is sometimes regarded as hoary and far-fetched, purely literary in reference, dangerously metaphysical, and belonging in any case to a more primitive phase of critical culture (mere "genre theory", or a "structuralism" yet to develop its coveted *post*-prefix) or a marginal, retrograde subculture (often called, with pejorative simplicity, "myth criticism"); or else it has been omitted from consideration altogether by an intellectual establishment that rationalizes cultural phenomena in terms which are, unbeknownst to it, historical or political analogues of mythical events explored in his work. A realization born of the serious study of myth, and the serious reading of Frye, is that between naïve belief and dismissal lies the truth of the matter: that the study of myth and Frye enables a more profound understanding of the sources and nature of human creativity and culture, and the processes by which they develop. The centenary of Northrop Frye afforded us an opportunity to consolidate and re-assess his theory of myth, a theory which, like myth itself, is more complex, coherent and constructive than most recognize, and which clarifies otherwise obscure operations of thought, language, and culture.

The reductive repute of Frye is partly the result of an overemphasis on the singular impact of a single text—*Anatomy of Criticism* (1957)—which remains one of the most influential long treatises of literary criticism, narrowly defined, and which does indeed track the mythic origin and development of the purely literary symbol. If any one of Frye's works is cited, it is usually the *Anatomy*, and often in the mistaken impression that it represents the essence or pinnacle of his thought. Over the second half of his career, however, Frye produced a body of work which theorized more broadly and thoroughly the transformative function of myth and literature in human life and culture at large, and it is this larger, existential, pragmatically-visionary Frye and his writings that have suffered most by our contemporary myth-conceptions and the pre-eminence of his presumed masterwork. Other texts in his canon,² like *The Modern Century* (1967), *The Critical Path* (1971), his study of the Bible, *The Great Code* (1982), and the book that constitutes his *summa*, *Words with Power* (1990), amid his educational and other late essays and notebooks, have been and continue to be regarded as statements by and for specific fields and schools of criticism, when in fact they speak to the central issues in cultural theory and philosophy. Through such works, especially when taken together, one sees that Frye's great achievement was to theorize and indeed demonstrate that the whole verbal and sym-

² A canon which, as of 2012, has been completely compiled, edited, annotated and reprinted by the University of Toronto Press in the 30 volumes of the *Collected Works of Northrop Frye*.

bolic field we call culture consists of the interrelations of myth—its creation, systemization, revision, adaptation, even its opposition—so that myth itself is revealed to be the alpha and omega of human thought: a symbolic process that draws it out of its material berth in nature, and takes it through the discourses and institutions of culture to the verge of a real (which is to say, existent, because created) spiritual world. In this process, the discourse and institution of criticism, which Frye defines as the study of these interrelations of myth, takes on a special function as the increasing awareness of consciousness itself, or the development of true self-consciousness. It is through this discourse that a redemptive and genuinely apocalyptic potential, which he calls *kerygma*, is realized, presenting the possibility that this process may unfold to the greater comprehension and amelioration of culture altogether. While a single paper cannot hope to clarify all these interrelations and aspects of his thought, it should be sufficient to show that Frye's theory of myth may be the closest the humanities have come to producing what could be called, paralleling a development in the sciences, a unified field theory of culture.

The cornerstone of Frye's theory is the recognition that the birth of consciousness, the origin of culture and the genesis of myth are one and the same moment: the moment the human animal, uniquely abled with language, realizes its state of Heideggerian *geworfenheit*,³ its inexplicable alienation in objective nature, and speaks over and against it. The motivation for this, Frye says even in the *Anatomy* (following Freud and others) is *desire*, specifically for the objects and goals of survival (97), which the word then comes to represent in and to what is a new dimension of thought, an extended subjectivity consisting of verbal and symbolic relations. This primal word is thus a metaphor, which Frye defines in one of his notebooks as a "verbal energy-current carrying out the first act of consciousness, trying to overcome the gap between subject and object" (*LN* 426). When an object "is given a name and made a noun, it becomes a potential object of perception", Frye writes, which accumulate to create a "radius of verbal information...run[nin]g between the human body and its environment as perceived and experienced by that body" (*WE* 252). This creates a new realm *between* physical subjects and objects consisting of expressions of the perceived and, indeed, desired relations between them. This metaphoric extension of the conscious body is thus the verbal "big bang" out of which the entire symbolic universe of consciousness and culture emerges.⁴ It is mythic because its first stable,

³ See Heidegger *passim*. In *Words with Power*, Frye uses its accepted English translation, "thrownness" (34).

⁴ "Every creation myth is some form of big bang theory", Frye writes; "the something-nothing

shared unit is invariably the god, a metaphor which not only symbolizes but personifies some element of nature in the hope that a personal relationship (which Frye, following Buber, calls a "I-Thou" dialogue⁵) can be established, in which desire can be expressed with the prospect of reciprocity. This not merely amends the original alienation of nature but projects upon it or discovers in it (the difference will ultimately become irrelevant) an intelligible, numinous quality, and a spiritual dimension of existence in which narratives and the lineaments of eternity (the so-called archetypes) are imagined. The key point is that the symbolic creations and relationships that emerge from this, the founding mode of consciousness and discourse of culture, are myths proper. As metaphors their meaning is neither true nor false; their validity extends simply from being potent verbalizations of desire, which through the elaborations of consciousness become what Frye in his later work calls (borrowing a term from existential theology) expressions of *concern*.⁶ "A myth... is an expression of man's concern about himself, about his place in the scheme of things, about his relation to society and God, about the ultimate origin and the ultimate fate, either of himself or of the human species generally", Frye writes; "the language of concern is the language of myth", and myth "is thus a product of human concern", becoming "the structural principle... that enters into and gives form to the verbal disciplines where concern is relevant" (*NFMC* 59; *WE* 275). These consist chiefly of the humanities, and particularly religion, art and literature, but can include empirical philosophy and the sciences.

Myth, then, expresses "what is particularly urgent for the community", in the form of "the recognized gods, the legendary history, the origins of laws, class structure, kinship formations, and natural features" (*SeSCT* 313). The first major development in the cultural process is when myths "expand into a mythology" and develop "an encyclopedic quality" so that it can "cover all the essential concerns of its society" (*GC2* 69). In doing so, a "huge mythological structure" (*WE* 275) is created; "a *temenos* or magic circle is drawn around that culture" which then "develops historically within a limited orbit of language, reference, allusion,

explodes into manifestation or phenomenal existence" (*LN* 58). For a more detailed discussion of this process, see Gill 107-121.

⁵ See Buber. In *Words with Power*, Frye writes: "Gods repeople, so to speak, nonhuman nature: sun-gods and sea-gods and storm-gods being nature back to a personal habitation, and provide it with what has been called...an 'I-Thou' relationship, in place of the environment of ordinary consciousness where everything is an 'it'" (36).

⁶ Frye appears to have adopted the term "concern" primarily from theologian Paul Tillich, much of whose work is founded upon the concept of "ultimate concern" (see Tillich 211-215). Frye's reduction of this to just "concern", or "primary concern" in *Words with Power*, implies a physical or material grounding of the concept.

belief, transmitted and shared tradition" (*CPCT* 22). This mythology soon develops a basic religious function, in the original sense of the word as "*religio*, the binding together of the community in common acts and assumptions", a "social contract with gods, ancestors, and the order of nature" (*CPCT* 23, 240). The Biblical genres of law and wisdom, which Frye sees also as elements or phases in Judeo-Christian culture at least,⁷ develop from this aspect of mythology, and suggest something of the seriousness with which it is approached. The problem, however, is that "the more seriously the mythology is taken, the more it acts as a conservative braking force on social change" (*CPCT* 240); "it is quickly discovered", Frye writes, "that a unified mythology is a powerful instrument of social authority and coercion" (*GC2* 69). The inevitable tension between the authority of mythology and the need for social change is a dynamic which Frye has often been accused of ignoring,⁸ but which is actually central to his theory of myth and culture, in which it is shown to be contentious but ultimately productive.

In *The Modern Century*, Frye calls the culture of compulsory belief and action that results from the authoritarian use of mythology a "closed mythology". Its statements are presented as both "what is believed to be true and what is going to be made true", "a body of premises which is superior in authority to scholarship and art". A closed mythology, Frye writes, "already contains all the answers, at least potentially; whatever scholarship and art produces has to be treated deductively with the mythology, or if irreconcilable, suppressed" (*NFMC* 66). A closed mythology, in other words, transforms mythology's expressions of concern into religious doctrine and ideology. Frye cites scholarship and art, conversely, because when it is conceded that other discourses speak the mythic language of concern, and when it is acknowledged that this "may alter the whole mythological structure at any time and must be allowed to do so", it instead creates an "open mythology", which ensures the continued creative expression of concern. Frye sees this as the great corrective that the liberal political, philosophical and artistic revolutions of the Romantic period applied to the closed mythology of the conservative Christianity of the Middle Ages.⁹ Through such

⁷ Discussions of the Biblical genres or phases of law and wisdom are found throughout Frye's writings, but chiefly in *The Great Code*, and specifically 138-145.

⁸ See, for instance, the influential critiques of Frye: Eagleton 80-92 or Lentricchia 9-16.

⁹ In *A Study of English Romanticism*, Frye writes: "The Christian mythology of the Middle Ages and later was a closed mythology, that is, a structure of belief imposed by compulsion on everyone. As a structure of belief, the primary means of understanding it was rational and conceptual, and no poet, outside of the Bible, was accorded the kind of authority that was given to the theologian. Romanticism, besides being a new mythology, also marks the beginning of an 'open' attitude to mythology on the part of society, making mythology a structure of imagination, out of which beliefs come, rather than directly one of compulsory belief... [T]he new mythology

a process, mythology retains or resumes its function as “an imaginative structure which, whether true or not, has imaginative consistency and imaginative informing power”, and makes it possible for religion to continue to “make its essential appeal as myth or possible truth” (*NFMC*, 67). Additionally, it permits the common descent of art and religion from mythology to be recognized, and the connection between them: “The alliance of religion and art is based on the fact that religion deals with transcendent conceptions and that the arts, being imaginative, are confined, not by the limits of the possible, but by the limits of the conceivable.” Art and religion are thus able to continue speaking the same mythical language of concern, and, Frye says, “perhaps, if we think of the reality of religion as mythical rather than doctrinal, religion would turn out to be what is really open about an open mythology: the sense that there are no limits to what the human imagination may conceive or be concerned with” (*NFMC* 68).

In *The Critical Path*, Frye theorizes this paradoxically self-corrupting and self-correcting quality of mythology in an even broader cultural context. There he calls the vast verbal *temenos* of mythology simply “the myth of concern”, and reiterates that it will inevitably become a tool of authoritarian compulsion; the result, he now specifies, of its creative expressions of concern becoming expressions of “anxiety”. At the same time, however, myth contains within itself the seed of an opposition to this tendency, a compensatory counter-impulse that ensures the annunciation of concern. In its very nature, Frye reminds us, myth possesses a hypothetical quality that can be allied to and even be central to scientific and technological interests, and which allows them to interrogate the myth of concern from an external, objective perspective, as well as creating subversive political, philosophical and artistic movements within it. In his early writings on education, Frye calls this impetus simply “speculation”,¹⁰ but in *The Critical Path* he sees it as producing an opposed structure called “the myth of freedom”. There and in his late essays on education, he sees the cultural tension between these factors as a necessary process, which he refers to as “the dialectic of concern and freedom”:

“When we look at whatever it is in our own world that makes it not quite [an] abhorred world, but something we can live with in the meantime, we find that one of the most important elements is the tension between concern and freedom. When a myth of concern has everything its own way, it becomes the most squalid of tyrannies, with

caused old things to be believed in a new way, and thus eventually transformed the spirit of their belief. It also made new types of belief possible, by creating a new mythical language that permitted their formulation.” (*CW* 17: 102) See also *CW* 29: xxxv-xxxvi.

¹⁰ See particularly “Speculation and Concern” (*CW* 7: 242-260). See also *WP* 2 26.

no moral principles except those of its own tactics, and a hatred of all human life that escapes its particular obsessions. When a myth of freedom has everything its own way, it becomes a lazy and selfish parasite on a power structure....They both must be there, and the genuine individual can only exist when they are." (CPCT 37)

In addition to creating a more equitable social contract which shares authority (usually in the form of democracy), this dialectic limits the authoritarian compulsion of belief in the myth of concern by ensuring that an aspect of mythology remains free to continue formulating and articulating metaphors of concern. Initially, this allows mythology to develop socially-cohering religion on the one hand, and creative art and literature on the other. Later, in the area of religion itself, for instance, it allows theology and mysticism to develop while religious doctrine goes its own way. When it comes to the function of literature in a mature society, this dialectic allows literary criticism to discern between an aspect of literature that endorses belief in the closed mythology of concern and an aspect which invites us to recognize the metaphors of the open mythology of freedom, with our possession of (and our possession by) the latter as such opening new possibilities of experience:

"Literature expresses the preoccupations of the society that produced it, and it is pressed into service to illustrate other social values, religious or political... But when we pass from the study to the possession of [it] a dialectical separation of a permanent imaginative structure from a mass of historical anxieties takes place." (CPCT 159)

Recognizing the presence of such a dialectic in culture deepens our understanding of how myth functions in it. In short, the loss of unified social authority and belief and a unified perspective on nature—which conservatives, reactionaries, royalists and religious apologists of all kinds have often interpreted as the historical analogue or equivalent of an exilic myth, a "fall" into the unguided vagaries of history—is shown in Frye's work to be rather a sort of cultural *felix culpa*; merely a phase in a purgatorial progress of myth in culture, suggesting a possible redemption from the limitations of the historical perspective in later developments of myth in culture.

In *Words with Power*, Frye aspires to fully theorize this process, working out his suspicion that the workings of myth in culture, and misunderstandings of it, are ultimately "of a linguistic origin" (9). Since the *Anatomy*, Frye had pursued his intuition that most critical problems are the result of misconstruals of the polysemous nature of words, the literary contexts of which he delineates in that book's "Second Essay". Later in his career, this task was also broadened to culture

at large, resulting in the three contexts or types of word-usage that he discusses in *The Educated Imagination* (1962), and the three modes or phases of language in *The Great Code*. In *Words with Power*, Frye begins by providing a detailed excursus of the linguistics of the cultural process, which sees it as developing four modes of language with the possibility of a fifth; a prolegomenon to his overall theory that remains one of the unheralded triumphs in the history of semiotics.

Frye's use of a typology of language to examine the cultural process is, of course, adapted from Giambattista Vico's *The New Science* (1744), and, like Vico's scheme, is intended less to explain the evolution of language-types than to plot the sequence of their historical ascendancy (very likely all the types are always present in some form). Culture emerges, as Frye had argued previously, through the *metaphoric* or *imaginative* mode, which produces myths and mythology. Its content is not merely concern, but what Frye now specifically calls *primary concern*, which:

“may be considered in four main areas: food and drink, along with related bodily needs; sex; property (i.e. money, possessions, shelter, clothing, and everything that constitutes property in the sense of what is ‘proper’ to one’s life); liberty of movement. In origin, primary concerns are not individual or social in reference so much as generic... The axioms of primary concern are the simplest and baldest platitudes it is possible to formulate: that life is better than death, happiness better than misery, health better than sickness, freedom better than bondage, for all people without significant exception.” (WP2 52)

The metaphoric extension of the physical body sees these material needs develop, or develop into, imaginative or spiritual dimensions or ideals on the cultural plane. Essentially, the concern for food and drink develops (through rituals of consumption or “communion”, for instance) into a sense of community; the concern for sex expands into love; the concern for shelter and property creates the processes or institutions of technology, education, and the arts; and the concern for freedom of movement yields communications and intellectual and religious freedom. These physical needs, and the cultural aspirations and ideals they create, are what is expressed in myth and in the mythic dimensions of art and literature, if they can be discerned.

A social authority anxious to compel belief in some aspect of myth, however, cannot present it merely as an imaginative or spiritual dimension or ideal; it must rationalize or even literalize it as truth, even fact. This means dividing mythology into *mythos* or narrative, and *logos* or truth, and insisting only on the

latter. This in turn means translating metaphor into another language which still figuratively addresses the human subject, but points to a separate, *a priori* or *in futuro* (hence objective) reality. The result is the ascent of the *ideological* or *rhetorical* mode, which has the effect of subordinating the goals of primary concern to what Frye calls *secondary concern*, which “arise from the social contract, and include patriotic and other attachments of loyalty, religious beliefs, and class-conditioned attitudes and behaviour” (WP2 51). In other words, mythology is transformed into the discourses of ideology and religion (which Frye thus refers to as “applied mythology”). These serve a cultural function, of course; the problem lies in their tendency to obscure or at least rationalize the deferral of primary concern:

“An ideology normally conveys... ‘Your social order is not always the way you would have it, but it is the best you can hope for at present, as well as the one the gods have decreed for you. Obey and work.’ Persecution and intolerance result from ideology’s determination, as expressed through its priesthood, or whatever corresponds to its priesthood, backed up by its ascendant class in general, to make its mythological canon the only possible one to commit oneself to, all others being denounced as heretical, morbid, unreal, or evil.” (37)

In presuming the possibility of attaining truth in language, however, the ideological mode enables another that genuinely aspires to truth apart from the anxieties of social authority; the “speculation” Frye spoke of in his educational writings. This results in the ascendance of the *conceptual* mode, which claims to articulate whatever objective truth exists beyond the problematics of human subjectivity. This produces the discourses of philosophy and the sciences, greater and lesser systems of physics and metaphysics which, explicitly or implicitly, either support or refute the secondary concerns of ideology. In doing so, however, they assume the existence of a truth over and above the world of actual objects and attainable only through abstraction. When it is emphasized that abstractions cannot be aligned with such objects, it prompts the ascendancy of the *descriptive* mode, the use of language as a utilitarian lowest-common-denominator of reference to create a discourse of “common sense”. Words in this mode are presumed to function accurately as “servomechanisms of reality” (GC2 245) and to have finally attained their necessary relationship with the objective world (a type of meaning we paradoxically call “literal” even as it rejects the inherent ambiguity of letters for the supposed clarity of things). Despite the fact that, as the theories of post-structuralism have shown, the nature of words precludes their alignment with objective reality (and that expecting as much undermines

the concerns and truths expressed in the other modes), the descriptive mode nevertheless remains the dominant mode of language in our culture at present. From its perspective, the myths of the metaphoric mode are absurdities, and the derivation of the other modes from it is obscured: hence the opposition noted at the outset of this paper, the contemporary misconceptions that myth is either irrational or irrelevant.

There is, however, another element in the cultural process; a catalytic element, for as Frye remarks at the outset of *Words with Power*, "if those who [held these] views... were to turn their conceptions of language inside out, something quite interesting might happen" (11). This catalytic element is *criticism*, which, Frye says, begins in the awareness of language itself, and that while "the awareness of language may begin with ordinary consciousness... it soon becomes clear that language is a means of intensifying consciousness" (40). As its awareness of language develops, criticism becomes "both the controlling and directing force within each verbal mode and the power that enables us to travel between the modes in both directions, until we reach the limit of what words can do" (41). Such movement allows criticism to tend to what Frye sees as its main ethical obligation: "to distinguish ideology from myth, to help reconstitute myth as a language, and to put literature in its proper cultural place as the central link... between society and the vision of its primary concerns" (*NFR*, 355). How precisely does criticism accomplish this? It does so, essentially, by demonstrating that the descent of the modes of language from the metaphoric does not obviate myth and is in fact reversible, and therefore that the consciousness or experience of myth remains accessible.¹¹ This requires the use of a principle that Frye, adapting what would seem to be a potent tactic of post-structuralism, calls the *excluded initiative* (see *WP2* 25). Its operation makes use of the subverting logic of deconstruction in order to move beyond it: each of the modes of language, in descending from the previous, claims ascendancy over it, but in emphasizing or extending some aspect of its usage actually affirms it even as it aims to supplant it. Identifying the excluded initiative of one mode thus reveals the efficacy and necessity of the previous one.

This creates a counter-dialectic, which "progresses from the less to the more inclusive" (22) as it reveals that each antecedent mode is actually a fuller realization of language's creative potential. A critical approach to the descriptive mode, in which language is used to create an accurate verbal replica of a reality assumed to exist outside it and to which it ostensibly refers, recognizes that its excluded

¹¹ "Myth is the unfolding of enfolded metaphor", Frye writes; "criticism tries to reverse the process and reconstitute the 'original' undisplaced form" (*LN* 108).

initiative is the reconstitutive word-ordering process of language itself; the fact that language really does require us to “put things *into* words”, and that our perception of reality actually depends on its presentation in language. A critical approach to the conceptual mode then observes that, by withdrawing from the world of objects to engage in an abstract word-ordering process, its excluded initiative is the human subjectivity that it necessarily conceals behind its presumably objective posture (but reveals, “on the other hand”, in subtle orientating expressions, verbs, even simple prepositions). A critical approach to the *rhetorical* or *ideological* mode then notes that this hidden subjectivity is its focus, as language is used to articulate and rationalize structures of social authority to the subject, but that its excluded initiative is, of course, myth, the metaphors of which ideology manipulates and selectively literalizes, but thereby preserves. Through this dialectical process of criticism, myth is finally revealed to be present and potentially operative in culture and consciousness at any time.

This conception of myth as accessible and representable by criticism at any point distinguishes Frye’s work from most if not all other theorists of myth, who tend to locate it, like Mircea Eliade or Claude Lévi-Strauss, in primitive culture, or, like Freud or Jung, in primitive psychological processes. While these thinkers also theorize the recognition or recovery of myth in culture, often in productive and even epiphanic breakthroughs or discoveries, what is discovered or recovered is conceived as the remnant of a fading,¹² problematic,¹³ or elusive¹⁴ discourse or mode of thought, not the emergence or fulfilment of one: thus their theories ultimately reassert the notion of myth as retrograde and render it the broken object of cultural salvage. For Frye, “the real meaning of a myth is revealed, not by its origin, which we know nothing about, but by its later literary career, as it becomes recreated” (*SeSCT* 251). There was no “golden age of pure mythology and primary concern”, he writes in his notebooks (*LN* 86), and that “myths complete themselves as they go on” (605). “Myths are not merely ‘tales of the fathers’... but confrontations with a present significance”, Frye explains also stating that “myth exerts a counterbalancing force to... history” by “repeating... ancestral myths” and “working out their decreed meanings” (*WP2* 39).

To fully represent myth as this counterbalancing force to history and work out its meanings, however, one further critical act is required, which reveals the potential for a fifth mode of language, and constitutes the zenith of Frye’s theory of culture. In revealing the presence of myth in culture, criticism resurrects

¹² As, for instance, in Eliade or Lévi-Strauss.

¹³ Or more, specifically, neurotic, as per Freud.

¹⁴ As in Jung’s complex process of individuation (1921, 1958, and 1959).

the metaphoric mode and must necessarily ask the question: what is *its* excluded initiative? In articulating the primary concerns in the imagined relations of metaphor, myth consists of the hypothetical (and, as per the myth of freedom, must remain so in literature for it to thrive amid the other modes). But what efficacy does this hypothetical condition conceal? The excluded initiative of myth can only be that its metaphors are posed not merely as hypothetical, but with the intention of some aspect of them being made "real". Such a notion seems radical if not impossible until we recall our critical first principle that the perception of reality is actually dictated by our arrangement of and approach to words. A critical process that began with an act of deconstruction thus proceeds to an act of recreation.

This final, existential or phenomenological, leap can be taken only by the subject as such; the critic only guides the counter-historical process of increasing self-consciousness that leads to it. But in doing so, and in pointing to its destination, criticism performs a sort of Mosaic function in culture, leading it through the labyrinthine wilderness of history and manipulated or deferred concern. One of Frye's late essays, "The Responsibilities of the Critic" (1976), specifically focuses on this issue, and suggests that both the role that criticism plays, and the creative power it seeks to reveal, should be understood as *prophetic*. In Western culture, at least, Frye writes, we develop "three elements of mythology": "the two centrifugal elements of law and wisdom", which are adapted in religion and ideology, and "an inner imaginative restructuring of the original myth in prophecy".¹⁵ While the former "assume... great differences of wealth and station in society... the prophetic insistence on preserving the form of the original direct relation to the god exerts an equalizing force" (*SeSCT* 162). Frye reminds us that:

"The word 'critic' is connected with the word 'crisis', and all the critic's scholarly routines revolve around a critical moment and a critical act... This act, I have so often urged, is not an act of judgement but of recognition. If the critic is the judge, the community he represents is supreme in authority... all human creation must conform to the anxieties of human institutions. But if the critic abandons judgement for recognition, the act of recognition liberates something in human creative energy... If the critic is to recognize the prophetic, of course, he needs to be prophetic, too:

¹⁵ In *The Great Code*, Frye writes: "Tolerance for creative minds as potentially prophetic, even without ready-made standards and certainly without any belief in their infallibility, seems to be a mark of the most mature societies. In the modern world, therefore, what corresponds to prophetic authority is the growth of... a cultural pluralism, where, for example, a scientist or historian or artist may find that his subject has its own inner authority." (148)

his model is John the Baptist... whose critical moment came with recognizing a still greater power than his own." (166)

Frye concedes that "every body of words is an ideological document, a product of the specific social and historical condition", and that "[i]n this context, there is nothing really prophetic about any human utterance". But the word "crisis", he wants us to recall, means "turning point", and thus:

"What the critic tries to do is to lead us from what the poets and prophets meant, or thought they meant, to the inner meaning of what they said. At that point, the verbal structure turns inside out, and a vortex opens out of the present moment, from the world of the [historical] cycle to the created world... It thereby suggests that the real course of human life may be neither a closed circle or a straight line going off into unknown directions... but an expanding and open-ended cycle... [The] prophetic keeps echoing the sense of the infinite and the eternal, not as what is meant, but as what is said in spite of what is meant." (168)

The prophetic potential of the critical act is why Frye claims, as he often did, that "Vico's axiom *verum factum*, that what is true is what we have made true" is the "essential axiom of criticism" (WP2 124); culture, ultimately, "ought to be totally intelligible to criticism [as] a cosmos of human phenomena" (137). It is little wonder that Frye would inquire in one late notebook entry "[w]hy I am I so respected and yet so isolated?" and realizes that it is "because I take criticism more seriously than any other living critic" (LN 120).¹⁶

This final mode or power of language that a prophetic criticism enables is what Frye in *Words with Power* calls *kerygma* (Greek, "proclamation") or the *kerygmatic*. "[T]he principle that opens the way to the kerygmatic", Frye writes, "is the principle of the reality of what is created in the production and response to literature." Such a reality "would be neither subjective nor objective, but essentially both at once, and would, of course, leave the old opposition of idealism and materialism a long way behind", as well as "abandon the schizophrenic efforts at faith in the... sense of a simulated knowledge,... [of] 'believin' what you know ain't so'" (119). Kerygma is instead the successful conclusion of the disciplined

¹⁶ The rest of this notebook entry leading up to these remarks is worth considering in the context of the present paper: "I'm told that the structure of the Anatomy is impressive but futile... People don't realize that I'm building temples to—well, 'the gods' will do. There's an outer court for casual tourists, an inner court for those who want to stay for communion (incidentally, the rewards for doing so are very considerable)... It's not a tower of Babel: that tries to reach something above itself: I want to contain what, with a shift of perspective, contains it." (LN 120)

critical effort to reunite *mythos* and *logos*, myth and truth; it amounts to a reacquainting or fulfilment of the creative Word that humanity has traditionally attributed to God, the culmination of a process Frye elsewhere calls "the recovery of projection" (*ENC* 100). The substantiation of metaphor in kerygma reveals language to be "an instrument of spirituality" that allows "the direct transmutation of desires and emotions into presences and powers that become realities in themselves" (*WP2* 119¹⁷); kerygmatic metaphor "extend[s] bodily experience into another dimension", thus developing the subject's being into what St. Paul in Corinthians calls the *soma pneumatikon*, the spiritual body, and creating a state in which the spiritual dimensions of primary concern can be realized (114-119). In kerygma, myth ceases to be an abiding or informing structure and becomes a "myth to live by", and the cultural "dialectic of concern and freedom" becomes what Frye calls "the dialectic of Word and Spirit" (*LN* 100), as the call of myth's creative power finally meets with a spiritual response, and the "I-Thou" dialogue with the numinous Other begins (*WP2* 232). In the last half of *Words with Power*, Frye explains that four such dialogues are possible, produced by the distinctive metaphors of the four primary concerns, which realize the four levels of the traditional *axis mundi* of myth in the vast imagistic clusters he labels the Mountain, the Garden, the Cave, and the Furnace.¹⁸ The last of these, significantly, presents the revelation that our vast social and technological machinery is not objective to us but a collective self-extension (born of the power Frye calls "the titanic", see 236-65), and thus enables our seizing and reversing of its mechanistic wheel of fortune, so that it serves our needs and drives the spiral ascent of the infinite and eternal mentioned earlier.¹⁹ All of the dialogues combine to transform nature and culture into an "apocalyptic...cosmos constructed according to the categories of human creative energy" (99), demonstrating finally that the real apocalypse is not some objective event in an imminent future, but the moment, which could be any, that our true creative potential is realized. It hardly matters that it would require a worldwide paradigm-shift in cultural and

¹⁷ Frye is quoting a phrase of Mallarmé here.

¹⁸ Frye calls these clusters or arrays of metaphorical images "variations", and devotes one chapter to each in the second part of *Words with Power*. In general, the images of the Mountain variation express the primary concern for freedom of movement, the image of the Garden express the primary concern for sex and love, the images of Cave to the primary concern for food and drink, and the images of the Furnace express the primary concern of shelter and property. Frye's organization and discussion of these huge patterns of imagery, which is one of the more impressive feats in the history of comparative mythology, does much to substantiate the theory presented in the first part of the book. For a fuller summary, see Gill 195-199.

¹⁹ "Myth contracts time: metaphor contracts space," Frye writes. "They lead 'upward' in a narrowing spiral." (*LN* 46)

linguistic consciousness to bring this about; the significance of Northrop Frye may be that his work, like that of quantum physics on the black hole, demonstrates that the disappearance and transformation of objects into such an event-horizon is a theoretical possibility, if not a likelihood, given our understanding of the phenomena involved and our observation of their apparent inclination toward it.²⁰

If Frye's extensive *theoria*, produced over fifty years in a career unparalleled in Canadian letters, were distilled into one central idea, it would be, as he put it in *Words with Power*, this: that "mythological thinking cannot be superseded, because it forms of the framework and context of all thinking" (11); likewise metaphor is "a primitive form of awareness, established long before the distinction between subject and object became normal, but when we try to outgrow it we find that all we can do is rehabilitate it" (16). Turning and returning to Frye's work serves to remind us of this fact, and that even efforts to deny it may play a role in its process. And while Frye was constrained by our objective predilections to use spatial terms, to speak of myth as creating an "order of words", of becoming "total mythopoeic structure of concern" (*SeSCT* 254), he saw it as much as a process, at one with that of culture. Myth, for Frye, is the Word in all its contexts, descending into a structure of culture and history that it itself creates, until it unites with it in a fusion of process and product, and ascends to create something else again. The obvious analogy with religion only reflects its mythic origin and the shared aspiration of myth and religion for the infinite and the eternal. Frye had no qualms, therefore, in admitting that while "[n]ot all of us will be satisfied in calling the central part of our mythological inheritance a revelation from God... I cannot claim to have found a more acceptable formulation" (43). Given all this, it is safe to say that the misunderstandings of myth and the aggressive contestation of discourses, even the dismissal of Frye's own work, that characterizes our present cultural milieu would not have vexed Frye, so long as there remained the words of myth itself, a criticism that explores the nature of language and thought, and the ability to speculate that a dialectical relationship between them could be unlimited.

²⁰ The quantum singularity or "black hole" cannot, of course, be directly observed or demonstrated since it permits the escape of no light. It can only be inferred by the observation of physical phenomena inclining toward it by virtue of its intense gravity. Interestingly, the first observation of the presence of a black hole is attributed to another University of Toronto professor, Tom Bolton, who did so at the David Dunlop Observatory north of Toronto in 1971. See Bob MacDonald. Physicist Stephen Hawking theorizes that matter drawn into a black hole emerges in a different form in a "white hole" in an alternate universe, see Hawking.

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MICHAEL SINDING



THE SHAPING SPIRIT AND ROUSSEAU:
LITERARY COSMOLOGY, COGNITION, AND CULTURE

Northrop Frye had a remarkable talent for connecting the very large with the very small, the macrocosm with the microcosm, and the encompassing spans of histories of cultures and worldviews with the details of particular works of literature, even particular lines of poetry. Indeed he insisted, against those who disliked either end of this spectrum of focus, that the two were inseparable. I would like to explore ways to connect large-scale cultural history with small-scale textual analysis more fully and explicitly, by developing principles for studying both cultural and cognitive aspects of what Frye calls “literary cosmology”. As an example of the big end of the spectrum, here is a key step in Frye’s cultural history of the Western world picture:

Rousseau is a herald of the collapse of the old dominant four-level structure [of the *axis mundi*], the ideological adaptation of the symbolism of a world “up there”, and the coming into being of a more revolutionary cosmos where the driving energy comes from below, and thrusts upward from suppressed elements in man’s nature. (WP 241)¹ At the small end of the spectrum, here is the conclusion of Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, an apostrophe to Virtue: “O virtue, ... are your principles not engraved in all hearts? To learn your laws is it not enough for us to withdraw into ourselves and listen to the voice of our conscience while our passions are silent?” (227). I suggest that we may develop a cognitive approach to cultural cosmology that would show how the second passage illustrates the first by integrating Frye’s theories of literature and culture with those based in recent cognitive linguistics. I begin with the notion of “literary cosmology”, discussing what it is and why it’s important. I then offer a primer in “poetics of mind” as a promising source of concepts and methods for studying literary cosmology. Here I emphasize analysis of metaphor in experience,

¹ As Marx and Freud would consolidate the political and psychological aspects, respectively, of this revolution (WP 241-42).

conceptualization, language, reasoning, and culture; and focus on “image schemas” and “force dynamics” as key conceptual structures of metaphor. Finally, I synthesize cosmology, cultural history and text analysis by tracing how image-schematic metaphor patterns in Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* register the large-scale eighteenth-century reorganization of Western cosmology that Frye describes.²

LITERARY COSMOLOGY: WHAT & WHY?

Defending the *Anatomy*’s critical principles against charges of over-systematicity, Frye said he thought of it as schematic rather than systematic, because “poetic thinking is schematic. The structure of images C. S. Lewis called ‘the Model’ in *The Discarded Image* was a projected schematic construct which provided the main organization for literature down to the Renaissance: it modulated into less projected forms after Newton’s time, but it did not lose its central place in literature” (1966 136). This encapsulates some of the major concerns Frye held pretty consistently throughout his career. He wanted to describe the “total form” of a “grammar of literary symbolism”—that is, the underlying basis of all cultural thought and expression; including art, philosophy, science, and everyday life.

The *Anatomy* details Frye’s sense of this schematology as a “coordinating principle” (16) for literary criticism. “Poems of immense scope” like Dante’s *Commedia* or Milton’s *Paradise Lost* are central to literary and cultural meaning, and lead us into studying cosmological thinking as a “schematism of correspondences” which may be “a branch of myth” and hence “a structural principle of poetry”. It is a “whole pseudo-scientific world” that:

[B]elongs in fact, as it does in practice, to the grammar of literary imagery. It has long been noticed that the Ptolemaic universe provides a better framework of symbolism, with all the identities, associations, and correspondences that symbolism demands,

² Hamilton’s *Anatomy* shows how Frye’s approach reacted against two main critical approaches of his time, the historical approach that tended to reduce texts to the contexts of literary-cultural sources and influences, and the New Critical approach that tended to ignore such contexts, instead reading individual literary experiences in terms of their linguistic-rhetorical intricacies. Cognitive poetics, in turn, reacts against tendencies in post-structuralism to see language or discourse as autonomously constructing subjects and their worlds, free of relation to the realities of the body, the brain, and the world, and tendencies in new historicism and cultural studies to reduce language and literature to some form of ideology. Both Frye and the cognitive poetics stress that analyses of literature and culture must integrate bodily, cognitive, semiotic, social and historical factors.

than the Copernican one does. Perhaps it not only provides a framework of poetic symbols but *is* one, or at any rate becomes one after it loses its validity as science, just as Classical mythology became purely poetic after its oracles had ceased. The same principle would account for the attraction of poets in the last century or two to occult systems of correspondences, and to such constructs as Yeats's *Vision* and Poe's *Eureka*. (160–161)

Thus Dante and Milton share a schematic overall “ground plan”: “The conception of a heaven above, a hell beneath, and a cyclical cosmos or order of nature in between” (161). Comparable studies contextualize texts in specific cosmological-cultural “backgrounds”, but Frye broadens the idea, specifying a *generic* poetic cosmology (a “ground plan”) and the organizing *principles behind* total forms (“identities, associations, and correspondences”).³ This is fundamental scaffolding, which creates locations, relations among locations, and directions within which many other myths may unfold and metaphors may take form. In the Notebooks, this is Frye's Holy Grail:

All my critical career has been haunted by the possibility of working out a schematology, i.e., a grammar of poetic language... the kind of diagrammatic basis of poetry that haunts the occultists & others... I have a hope of reviving or making precise and detailed suggestions about—let's say the diagrammatic basis of schematology. (NB12, 335, 1968-70, quoted by Dolzani 23)

The search is still going strong in *Words with Power*. As in the *Anatomy's* concluding remarks on “conceptual rhetoric”, we move from the Western cosmos to cosmology in general, then from conceptual systems to their “diagrammatic” principles.⁴ Specific cultural mythologies create cultural cosmologies, mental frameworks or “envelopes” through which all members of a culture perceive and act on the world. It is very difficult to see around, or even see, such envelopes,

³ Frye traces the general project of a grammar of symbolism back to Vico, and associates it with scholars exploring links among psychology, myth and ritual, such as Jung, Robert Graves, Joseph Campbell, James Frazer, Oswald Spengler, and Ernst Cassirer. Prominent studies of how the Western world picture serves as the background for philosophy, art and literature include Arthur O. Lovejoy's *Great Chain of Being*, Émile Mâle's *Gothic Image*, Lewis's *Discarded Image* and Tillyard's *Elizabethan World Picture*.

⁴ For cognitive studies that echo Frye's ideas about conceptual rhetoric, see Turner's proposal for a “cognitive rhetoric”, worked out in studies of how metaphor and other figures inform argument, categories and conceptual connections, and cultural literacy (*Reading*); Sweetser's studies of image-schematic metaphor in etymological history and in mythology; and Lakoff's proposals for a view of rationality that recognizes its imaginative aspects (e.g. *Thinking* 39-41).

because they are also what we see *with*. To illustrate, ask yourself how far it is possible to avoid using metaphors of some form of location or motion in space when talking or thinking about temporal processes (time *passes*, *flies* or *drags*, times *come* and *go*, time can be *out* or *up*), or human values (we *look up to* or *follow* ideals, regard them as *advanced* or *foundational* or *original*). Frye insists that such cosmologies are central to human thought and experience, and hence to history: “very few people even today understand how much of what has happened in the last two centuries was an effect of a change in man’s mythological and metaphorical picture of reality” (WP 245). Presumably Frye is thinking of what other scholars call the transition from “traditional” to “modern” culture, including the very widespread revolution in political thought and practice (towards democracy) beginning in America and France, and its ramifications through twentieth-century wars involving fascism and communism (arguably perversions of democracy, in which dictators ruled under claims to embody the will of the people, instead of the will of God). Beyond culture-specific cosmologies there are cross-cultural patterns of cosmological structure. Literature is intelligible overall because it presents a coherent human cosmos (epitomized in the Bible in the West), not a mere map but “a world of powerful conflicting forces” (xxii). “Literary cosmology” is then generalized to all schematic thinking: “naked formal systems” may grow out of spatial (diagrammatic and connective) metaphors, as with the divided line of Plato’s metaphysics. Frye suggests the basis of such spatial metaphors is the human body’s spatial orientation, and he specifies their main dimensions or types: “the metaphors that lift us up or bring us down, that oppose one hand to the other, look in or out, go forward or back” (150).

Critics should “look into” these conceptual systems and their spatial schemas, Frye advises, and his studies of the *axis mundi* provoke the question of how those other schemas play roles in cosmologies, literature and beyond. Frye gives some hints. *Words with Power* considers how in/out spatial relations interact with up/down spatial relations in cosmological structure. The Romantics finalized a revolution in the cosmological model, locating divinity not at the upper and outer limit of human reality, but as a force buried within, held down by worldly forces (inner and outer)—we find this in Blake, Rousseau, Marx, Freud, Darwin and others (172-74; 239-52).⁵ We may examine how such cosmological struc-

⁵ For an earlier analysis of this pattern, see Frye’s “Drunken Boat” (StS 200-217). It may be worth elaborating on Frye’s account of his approach to cosmological patterns (WP 242-43). He recognizes that “bald summaries of complex thinkers” may sound “glib” and is frustrated with the “academic tunnel vision” that sees them only as “sweeping generalizations”. He is identifying similar underlying “shapes”, not similar messages. We should note that summary schematic

tures operate in texts, with help from recent “poetics of mind”, where Frye’s “diagrammatic principles” of thought are addressed explicitly and studied directly and in intriguing detail.

POETICS OF MIND: A PRIMER

Research in the cognitive sciences has exploded recently, and there is now a small mountain of scholarship devoted to cognition and the arts. I cannot adequately summarize this mountain into a molehill, but in essence, cognitive poetics uses recent discoveries about the mind to illuminate the literary imagination. The main inspiration for this endeavour is the fairly recent branch of linguistics known as cognitive linguistics, but critics also use research on categorization, mental models, framing, perception and imagery, simulation, emotion, social cognition (e.g. Theory of Mind), consciousness, philosophy of mind, evolutionary psychology, various levels of brain structure, and more.

Metaphor became a cornerstone of cognitive linguistics with the publication of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By* in 1980. This “conceptual theory of metaphor” was applied to literature by Lakoff and Mark Turner in *More Than Cool Reason* in 1989. The key idea is that metaphor is a matter of thought more than of language: “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 5). A metaphor is a “mapping” from a “source” conceptual domain to a “target” conceptual domain: language, imagery, and inferential structure are projected from one to the other. Thus the basic metaphor “Life is a Journey” looks something like this:

- The person leading a life is a traveler.
- His purposes are destinations.
- The means for achieving those purposes are routes.
- Difficulties in life are impediments to travel.
- Counsellors are guides.
- Progress is the distance travelled.
- Things you gauge your progress by are landmarks.

models are psychologically real, commonplace, and necessary for thinking about complex realities (experience, ideas, and representations). The study of such “folk models” of various domains (e.g. physics, biology, psychology) is a major endeavour in cognitive science. These models are highly simplified, approximate reality only as far as needed for the thinker to get something done, and even experts use them.

- Choices in life are crossroads.
- Material resources and talents are provisions. (Lakoff and Turner 3-4)

The mapping underlies many expressions: “we’ve come a long way”, “we’re at a crossroads”, “stop and smell the roses”, etc. Different expressions focus on different aspects of source and target, but they all draw on experiences of journeying and knowledge of how that can connect with life. Different metaphors for the same target are coherent to the extent that their source domains have overlapping structure. Lakoff and Turner show how in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 73 metaphors of life as a day, a year, and a fire cohere by virtue of sharing a structure of waxing and waning cycle of light and heat (88).⁶

Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner referred to the quasi-spatial conceptual structures of metaphor as “image schemas”—that is, “recurring, dynamic pattern[s] of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that give [...] coherence and structure to our experience”, consisting of “a small number of parts and relations, by virtue of which they can structure indefinitely many perceptions, images, and events” (Johnson 1987, xiv, 29). For example, the *path* image schema has a source, a goal, and a linear trajectory from one to the other. The *container* image schema is a bounded space with an interior and an exterior. These schematic concepts structure more complex concepts. The *path* schema is central to the concept of journey, a sequential linear movement following a trajectory from a source to a goal. The *container* schema is central to the concept of a body (human or otherwise), a physical object with a boundary containing substance, which can encounter other bodies (which may move in and out of one another). Lakoff and Johnson’s *Philosophy in the Flesh* argues that image-schematic metaphor is central to human conceptual systems, hence central to rationality, basic philosophical concepts, and philosophical systems. For example, we infer that if you’re moving along a path from A to Z, you have to pass through B, C, and D before getting to E. Once you start moving, you’re no longer at the source; once you reach the goal, you stop moving; and so on. This applies to concepts that are metaphorically paths, such as time (to get from time A to time C, we must pass through time B), and reasoning itself (to get from premise A to conclusion B, we must interpose the premise “if A then B”). To take another example, if container B is in container A, and container C is in container B, then C must also

⁶ Further work in this linguistic vein often goes under the name of cognitive poetics or cognitive stylistics (and has tended to be European: see Stockwell; Gavins and Steen, ed.; Semino and Culpeper, ed.; Semino and Steen; and Fludernik, ed.). Studies addressing a broader range of literary and cognitive subfields often go under the name of cognitive criticism or literary or cultural studies (and has tended to be American: see Zunshine, ed., Jaén and Simon, ed.).

be in A. This applies to categories, since categories are conceived as metaphorical containers. Subcategories are “inside” larger categories; so a bulldog must be a dog, a dog must be an animal, and an animal must be an entity. There is a quasi-standard list of image schemas, also including *scale*, *link*, *force*, *balance*, *centre/periphery*, *near/far*, etc. But the list of image schemas and the analyses of their roles are starting points: more such structures are out there, and there is much more to discover about just what they are and how they work (see Hampe and Johnson 2007 for recent perspectives).⁷

Consequently, image schemas start looking like Frye’s spatial/diagrammatic metaphors, especially in accounts of how they interconnect in patterns of force-relations to give shape and meaning to experience:

By virtue of [image-schema] superimpositions our world begins to take shape as a highly structured, value-laden, and personalized realm in which we feel the pull of our desires, pursue our ends, cope with our frustrations, and celebrate our joys. Much of the structure, value, and purposiveness we take for granted as built into our world consists chiefly of interwoven and superimposed schemata [...] (Johnson1987, 125-126)

In a remarkable parallel, we hear that a class of *orientational* metaphors guides this interweaving, and

organizes a whole system of concepts with respect to one another. [...] [M]ost of them have to do with spatial orientation: up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral. These spatial orientations arise from the fact that we have bodies of the sort we have and that they function as they do in our physical environment. (Lakoff and Johnson 2003, 14)

To take just one example of an orientational metaphor, *up* is conventionally associated with an interrelated set of metaphorical targets: *happy*, *conscious*, *health*, *life*, *control or force*, *more*, *good*, and *reason*; while *down* conventionally means *sad*, *unconscious*, *sickness*, *death*, *lack of control or force*, *less*, *bad*, and *emotion* (15-17). The reader may share my sense that, in conjunction with the Frye passages above, this has a very familiar ring (perhaps “Déjà vu all over again” if not Kierkegaardian “repetition”). Hence my conviction that research into image-schematic conceptual structures and their uses shows considerable promise for

⁷ Concepts of force often interact crucially with what I am calling spatial schemas, as we shall see below. See Talmy’s study of “force dynamics” in language and thought.

adaptation to the study of mythology and cosmology. Image-schemas appear to be an important part of the “diagrammatic basis of schematology”, the nuts and bolts of formal systems and literary cosmologies. But how exactly can we better integrate them, to work towards fulfilling that promise?

LITERARY COSMOLOGY AS CULTURAL HISTORY

I propose the following rapprochement for analyzing the interplay of cognition, cosmology, and culture. First, we can use Frye’s analyses to specify: 1. image schemas relevant for cosmological structure and organization; 2. patterns of image schemas that define particular cosmologies and cosmological shifts in cultural history; and 3. how particular texts register those cosmologies and shifts. Second, we can bring in cognitive linguistics and poetics to refine how we identify and interpret image schemas in language—that is, 1. how they appear and operate in words; 2. how they form patterns in texts; and 3. how those patterns function to conceptualize and reconceptualize worldviews. Accordingly, bringing these two frameworks together, I suggest that to analyze how a text like Rousseau’s *Discourse* engages with cultural history, we examine the language of key steps of the argument for image-schematic metaphors, and consider how the trajectory of those metaphors relates to organizing elements of the cosmology.

There are a number of ways to carry out this kind of analysis of image schemas in discourse. In order to be relatively clear and explicit about how I identify image schemas, and how I analyze their operation in this text, I will underline terms in the quoted passages whose meanings have image-schematic qualities, and I will italicize terms in my own interpretations that translate the terms from the passage into more explicit image-schematic patterns. However, image schemas are primarily mental entities with which we structure perception and thought, and they are more analog than digital. So they are not directly “in” words, but rather are evoked by words, and are manipulated, combined and transformed by other words as discourse proceeds. Thus I caution that this is a convenient means of clarification, not a well-developed method for image-schema analysis, and there is room for reasonable disagreement over analytical judgments.

The full title of Rousseau’s discourse supplies some of its basic context: *Discourse Which won the Prize of the Academy of Dijon in the year 1750, on this question Proposed by the Academy: Has the restoration of the arts and sciences [i.e. since the Renaissance] been conducive to the purification of morals?* To summarize, Part I gives the basic argument about how the arts and sciences are

corruptive rather than beneficial; then adduces historical examples of cultures that either indulged in the arts and sciences, lost all their virtues and were enslaved; or rejected them and were virtuous, strong and free. Part II presents a deeper “philosophical investigation” (216) elaborating on the origins, objects, and effects of the arts and sciences. For purposes of demonstrating how image-schematic metaphor in argument registers cultural cosmology, I will focus on the more detailed argument in Part II, which sets out the psychosocial mechanism of how the arts and sciences are corruptive. In particular, I consider a passage early in Part II answering the essential question: “Is it better for an empire to be brilliant and short-lived, or virtuous and lasting?” (219). I then tie this into the opening historical-mythical account of the social dynamics of civilization, and the concluding apostrophe to virtue.

Answering the question he sets himself, Rousseau says, paradoxically, that individual brilliance is impossible in an empire that favours brilliance. Once brilliance becomes a popular and rewarded value, it becomes trivialized, as a “taste for ostentation [...] excludes a taste for honesty”: “souls that have been degraded by a multitude of trivial concerns can never rise to anything great; and even if they had the strength, they would lack the courage to do so” (219). The argument is a metaphorical image-schematic myth: the soul’s *energies* are *pulled down* and *away from attachment* to its true *inner* feelings (honesty) by *many small attachments* to *external surfaces* (ostentation). By contrast, *rising to greatness* by *strength* involves a *unified energy breaking from attachments* that would *disperse* it. Rousseau then links this scenario with what I’ll call other-orientation. The artist’s need for applause is directly connected to bodily power and thus to a social hierarchy based on sex. In civilized cultures men defer to the “faint-heartedness” of female taste. To win praise, therefore, artists sacrifice “strong and manly beauties” to “false delicacy”, and “great things” to “small ones” of “the spirit of gallantry”; he “lower[s] his genius to the level of his age”. That is, *giving in* to the *pull* of the preferences of *outside* others for the *small, fine* and *faint* also leads to *weakness* and *lowering* of *inner energies* (linked to femininity), which leads to *dependence on* those *outside* opinions. Thus “the dissolution of morals, the necessary result of luxury, in turn brings about the corruption of taste” (219).

The argument indicates that even concepts like “luxury” and “corruption”, while not self-evidently image-schematic in the way that words like “rise” and “lower” (and to a lesser extent “trivial” vs. “great” as *small* and *low* vs. *large* and *high*) are, appear to have image-schematic interpretations not too far away. This is because they are causally connected with more clearly image-schematic terms like “dissolution”, which evokes something like a *solid mass melting into fluid* or

breaking apart into many small pieces. Those imagistic interpretations are powerful aspects of word meanings, guiding how words may be connected with other words, in thought and in discourse (and presumably in other modalities, such as the visual). And “luxury” and “corruption” are key concepts in the cultural vocabulary of the period, and played major roles in the discourses (in the Foucauldian sense) and symbolism that drove major cultural and political change.⁸

We may now put this psychosocial argument in the context of the opening and concluding discussions of various types of people. The opening attacks the source and effects of this other-orientation for non-artists. The supposed advantage of the arts in making men more sociable “by giving them a desire to please one another with works” (207) is actually a liability. Society’s needs are bodily; only its amenities are mental. The arts and sciences only “civilize” people by strewing “flowers on the iron chains that bind them”, making them forget their “original freedom” and causing them to “love their slavery”. A “delicate, refined taste”, a gentle character and urbane manner provide only a false “appearance of all virtues” (208). It would be pleasant if “our outer appearances always mirrored what was in our hearts, if decorum were virtue” (208). But virtue dislikes pomp: “Luxurious clothes may indicate an opulent man, and elegant ones a man of taste, but a healthy and robust man is recognized by other signs: It is beneath the rustic attire of a plowman, not the gold braid of a courtier, that bodily strength and vigor are to be found.” (Here I also underline terms for images that are conventional markers for image-schematic metaphors, such as “heart” for *inner* self or feeling, and “clothes” and “attire” for *external surface* properties and behaviour that *cover up* self/ feeling to present a crafted public persona to the world.) He makes the moral metaphor explicit: “Finery is equally alien to virtue, which is the strength and vigor of the soul.” Thus the “upright man is like a wrestler who prefers to fight naked: He scorns all those vile trappings which would hinder the use of his strength and were invented [...] only to hide some deformity” (208). The image-schematic complexes of *inner* body *substance* with an *inner source* vs. artificial *surface applied from without* are predominant here. But there are also the axial aspects that Frye emphasizes: virtue-strength is “upright”; and there is a contrast of gentle slavish deception vs. strong honesty

⁸ For example, Maza argues that the concept of “luxury” was crucial for French revolutionary polemics against the ruling classes. Luxury was a selfish mentality resulting from commerce. It started at the top of society and flowed to the bottom, leading to moral decay and decomposition of the bonds of love and duty holding society together. The fear of social dissolution was heightened in an age when “desacralization” was destroying traditional belief in the monarch as the unifying heart of society. I find strong image-schematic qualities in Maza’s account of luxury, which might help account for its easy communicability and emotional power.

that is linked with a wealth/class *scale* (*upper* vs. *lower*) via images of clothes and body.

The conclusion accepts that a few great talents can and should pursue knowledge on their own, those who can “cover [...] immense distances”, who are “strong enough to follow their predecessors’ footsteps alone, and go beyond them” (226) regardless of praise and blame. But “ordinary men” should break their other-orientation by ignoring the arts and sciences that foster it. “Why should we seek our happiness in the opinion of our fellow men if we can find it in ourselves? [...] [We should] limit ourselves to fulfilling our own [duties].” Again, virtue’s principles are “engraved in all hearts” so let us “withdraw into ourselves and listen to the voice of our conscience while our passions are silent” to find them (226-27). Those with extraordinary *force* are encouraged to *follow paths* of achievement, *beyond the limits* and *goals* others have *arrived at*. The ordinary should, by contrast, renounce the urge to *move outwards* for others’ goals, and *stay within limits* of the self, *moving inwards* to perceive *direction* (read virtue’s engraving, hear conscience’s voice) and *pursue goals* of duty and happiness.

CONCLUSIONS

The schematic imagery in the text’s language and argument focuses on the inner/outer contrast more than on an axial above/below contrast. Causal relations among souls depend primarily on the attachment or detachment of inner substance to outer surfaces: attached soul-substances get pulled apart, weaken, decline, and dissolve; while the detached soul, contained in and oriented to itself, remains solid (integrity) and (if ordinary) attends to words within, or (if extraordinary) rises up strongly and attaches to great things above and beyond. The axis is there, but axis-inversion is only implicit, in Rousseau’s elevation of lower classes over higher classes: praise of hardy, substantial, ignorant, pure rustic forebears as more virtuous than luxuriously corrupted, superficial, and flimsy but sophisticated upper-class contemporaries. (The lower have purity of heart, while the upper have deceptive fancy dress.)

It would be worthwhile to analyze other texts in the revolutionary tradition in these terms. One would expect to find a range of variation of the overall schematic structure, within a broader coherence of “world picture” (as with Frye’s comparison of Rousseau and Blake with other thinkers). But we might use the analytical framework and terminology of image schemas and conceptual metaphors to specify both the coherence and the variation between the structures analyzed. More importantly, this reading shows, I hope, that the diagram-

matic principles used to structure images, word meanings, concepts, and discourse (both narrative and argument) are connected to one another—for example, upwards is also outwards and downwards is also inwards, and they change in tandem. It also shows that powerful and flexible tools are available for analyzing image-schematic and diagrammatic structure in texts and cosmologies, and that such analyses may be geared to one another for purposes of cultural history—for tracing the development of literary cosmologies across textual traditions.

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NORTHROP FRYE
AND THE NEURAL THEORY OF METAPHOR

The main objective of this paper is to examine how the concept of metaphor in Frye's theoretical architecture can be related to the recently emerging neuroscientific studies. In particular, I suggest analyzing Frye's theoretical statements on metaphor in *Anatomy of Criticism* and the *Late Notebooks*, and relate them to the current stream of innovative research viewing rhetoric—and some of its key concepts, such as the metaphor—as a neural-based complex system. To this purpose, I will examine Frye's fundamental concepts searching for elements contemporary scholars—such as George Lakoff—have grounded their theories of neurorhetorical on.

The concept of metaphor as identity is one of the tenets in Frye's theoretical architecture. It is therefore apposite to consider the definition given in the "Glossary" of his *Anatomy of Criticism*. According to it, a metaphor is a relationship between two symbols, and it can be literal (based on juxtaposition and stating that A is B), descriptive (based on similarity and stating that A is in some respects comparable to B), formal (based on four terms and stating that A is to a certain quality as B is to the same quality), anagogic (based on the potential global identity of everything within the frame of literature) (366). This universal aspect of metaphor seems to lead to a clearer understanding of the connection between Frye's concept of metaphor and the neuroscientific analysis of metaphor. More deeply, if we read his speculations in his *Late Notebooks*, we find an illuminating explanation as he specifies the steps leading to the definition of the *Anatomy*:

Metaphor is the statement "A is B" which carries with it the realization that A is not in the least B. It is logical & a statement of difference in what it expresses; it is anti-logical in what it asserts. So it's counterlogical, creating an identity, opening a current of energy between personal (subjective) and impersonal (objective) worlds. (3-4)

Frye investigated and defined metaphor essentially as a linguistic phenomenon,¹ while some scholars have recently tried to demonstrate that metaphor lies at the basis of our thought: in other words, metaphor is thought itself—not merely a linguistic element, but a neural process of human understanding. Frye maintains the controversial and exceptional nature of metaphor, its extraordinary status as a figure of speech with a special, inherent quality. In the in the *Late Notebooks*, he himself points out:

Every one of the standard figures of speech, except metaphor, draws attention to the fact that it's "just" a figure. The simile has its reassuring "like", the oxymoron draws attention to its self-contradiction; the hyperbole to its excess; the synecdoche to its deficiency; the metonymy to its "signified". Only the metaphor says "This is {not}". Juxtaposition of two images suggests identity, whether asserted by "is" or not; the fact that there are two images to be juxtaposed suggests the "is not" counterpoint. (171)

In other words, metaphor as a concept encompasses the linguistic terms, but covers a wider field of knowledge. It is precisely at this point—the point of the cognitive status of metaphor—that the neuroscientific perspective comes into play. In particular, George Lakoff and some fellow scholars based at the University of Berkeley, California, have recently delved into a neural theory of metaphor. Starting from a cognitive approach, they have identified *root* (or *primary*) *metaphors* as conceptual instruments the individual uses to encode and organize knowledge about the external world. In other words, they state that metaphor is a tool of knowledge, or that the individual knows through metaphor. In these terms, metaphors are essential to the individual's processes of conceptualization of abstract domains. To summarize their theory: metaphor is an instrument for knowledge and especially of generalization from a concrete, material element leading to an abstract idea of that (Knowles and Moon 54)². In fact, considering the importance of basic sensorial experiences in the individual's early life, there are some equally basic metaphorical processes that everyone activates to build some knowledge along a path leading from the materiality of the senses to the abstraction of the concepts. "Purposes are destinations, Difficulties are impedi-

¹ "Metaphor, then, suggests a state of things in which there is no sharp or consistent distinction between subject and object. [...] Metaphor, as a bridge between consciousness and nature, is in fact a microcosm of language itself" (*MM* 7, 115).

² Comparing the processes underlying metonymy and metaphor, Knowles and Moon explain that "metonymy is about *referring*: a method of naming or identifying something by mentioning something else which is a component part or closely or symbolically linked. In contrast, metaphor is about understanding and interpretation: it is a means to understand or explain one phenomenon by describing it in terms of another". (54)

ments to motion, Intimacy is closeness” (Lakoff) are some of the most familiar primary metaphors that have been accounted in an inventory. Such conceptual metaphors are mainly learned and used automatically by the individual who uses them to define reality. This is to say that they are universal and independent of human control.

Even more recent realizations in the field of neurosciences have shown that complex metaphors are made up of simple metaphors. In his 2009 paper “The Neural Theory of Metaphor”, Lakoff discusses the example of the “Love is a Journey” metaphor as a compound of conceptual metaphors and commonplace knowledge. He emphasizes that each element of the compound represents a *node*, that is to say a group of neurons that activates or inhibits the function of other neuronal groups. The production of “Love is a Journey” entails the activation of complex neural circuits as “a given node may occur in many circuits made active by the metaphor”. He then goes on to state that “a metaphor mapping is a complex circuit which, when activated, activates many other circuits via linking and binding circuitry”³.

According to Lakoff, a complex mapping corresponds to the basis of the processes of human understanding and coincides with the complex net that underlies also metaphor production. We could simplify this by saying that we know through metaphor. It is precisely this special status of metaphor that was recognized in the seventeenth century by the Italian scholar Giambattista Vico and subsequently revived by Frye. In her *Northrop Frye and the Poetics of Process*, Nella Cotrupi makes it clear that:

According to Giambattista Vico the world is not discovered through language; it is called into being in language in the metaphorical identifications of the poetic genera, and gradually, through the animation and nomination of matter into a heap of “unrelated synechdochies and metonymies”—by the invention of a “god for each identified aspect of nature or experience”... Vico underscores the corporeal, sensory, and concrete ground of language and thought by noting that “in all language the greater part of expressions relating to inanimate things are formed by metaphors from the human body and its parts and from the human senses and passions. Thus, head or top for beginning; the brow and shoulders of a hill” and so on. (73)

³ Moreover, Lakoff underlines that such a tightly integrated neural system helps us define metaphorical inference as new activations that happen through prior activations.

Vico's words point to the cognitive status of metaphor and the process of generalization from the concrete to the abstract level, which much of Frye's critical studies revolved around. Indeed, the *Late Notebooks* echo Vico:

Metaphors are not attempts to force identity through overstrained analogies that leave out everything important. They are verbal energy-currents carrying out the first act of consciousness, trying to overcome the gap between subject and object. Creation wasn't necessarily made for the sake of human consciousness, but consciousness is the human response to creation. (426)

I know that the theory of metaphor is very complex, or has been made so by exuberant philosopher-critics, but I want to explain its basic principle very simply. A statement of identity like A is B introduces us to a universe in which unity and multiplicity are alternating aspects of the same phenomena. (619)

Though no definite conclusions can be drawn from considering Frye's theory of metaphor in the light of recent neuroscientific achievements, the subtle *fil rouge* connecting Frye's—and Vico's—meditations on the complex processes of understanding and the creation of knowledge might be recognized in current neuroscientific research. We could even dare to consider Frye and Vico as *ante litteram* cognitive scholars.

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II.

PRAXIS

PÉTER DÁVIDHÁZI



A TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT CODE

Voltaire's Lisbon Poem, Mikes's Letter CXCVIII and the Book of Job

Comprehensive as his view of art is, Blake does not exactly say that the Bible is a work of art: he says "The Old & New Testaments are the Great Code of Art." The Bible tells the artist what the function of art is and what his creative powers are trying to accomplish.

Northrop Frye, 1951

"The Old & New Testaments are the Great Code of Art," Blake says, and he thinks of the framework of the Bible, stretching from Creation to Last Judgement and surveying the whole of human history in between, as indicating the framework of the whole of literary experience, and establishing the ultimate context for all works of literature whatever.

Northrop Frye, 1963

But the Bible is just as obviously "more" than a work of literature [...] Even Blake, who went much farther than anyone else in his day in identifying religion and human creativity, did not call it that: he said "The Old and New Testaments are the Great Code of Art," a phrase I have used for my title after pondering its implications for many years.

Northrop Frye, 1982

Referring to "the Great Code" is not the same as talking about *The Great Code*, but using that resonant phrase in any way one is paying tribute to the Bible, to William Blake and, inevitably, to Northrop Frye. No matter how often Frye's specific views have been contested in literary criticism and biblical scholarship, or how persuasively his conclusions have been refuted in some particular instances, on the centenary of his birth his legacy is still as inspiring as ever, and his methodological innovations are still applicable when we are trying to explore the biblical connections of a literary text or the literary connections of a biblical

text. In order to demonstrate the relevance of his œuvre from the “Danubian perspective” of a Budapest conference in 2012, and to attempt yet another answer to the question “what work might scholars now take up in light of that legacy?” (Kee 2002, 1), this case study investigates how much a scholar may benefit from applying Frye’s insights to a comparative analysis of two classic literary works with a common, if latent, biblical subtext. Both Voltaire’s *Poëme sur le désastre de Lisbonne ou examen de cet axiome: tout est bien* and Kelemen Mikes’s letter CXCVIII in his *Letters from Turkey* were prompted by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 (Voltaire 2009, 335–349; Mikes 2009, 248–249), both responded to the problems of theodicy, and both alluded to the Book of Job. However, the archetypal method is adapted here so as to reveal not only similarities, but also to highlight (and celebrate) characteristic differences that may refine some of our expectations about Voltaire and, even more surprisingly, may also refute the usual classification of Mikes as the foremost Hungarian representative of early Enlightenment literature. They reveal another Mikes, but one who is no less worthy of the Europe-wide scholarly attention he has just begun to receive.

RETRIEVING A MUCH-DISPUTED METHOD:
HOW TO USE ARCHETYPES FOR INTERPRETATION

Though originally Frye’s archetypal method was not meant to substitute for other approaches to literary texts, and indeed it was humbly suggested as merely one of the diverse methodologies peacefully complementing each other for the benefit of the discipline (Frye 1963a), it has become customary to ignore the fact that a distribution of labour was intended, and to chastise archetypal criticism for being too devoted to abstractions to cope (*alone*) with all the significant textual details of literary works. Moreover, Frye’s remark that “[t]he literary universe [...] is a universe in which everything is potentially identical with everything else” was often and triumphantly paraphrased with complete disregard to its context in *Anatomy of Criticism*, a carefully guarded argument which was meant to expound “A is B” so as to epitomize the radically metaphoric nature of poetry (124, 136), and it was taken invariably as a give-away of Frye’s own disregard of concrete particularities. When levelled against his last three books that were focusing on biblical matters (*The Great Code*, 1982, *Words with Power*, 1990, *The Double Vision*, 1991), the charge sounded plausible enough partly because his expertise in the minutiae of ancient cultures and languages was admittedly inadequate for autonomous biblical scholarship. “I don’t know how much Greek & Hebrew I’m going to have to pretend to know” (2003, 251), Frye wrote in his

notebook in the mid-1970s when planning the chapter on biblical language for *The Great Code*, and the book's introduction makes no less sincere admissions of his own "lack of scholarly competence in the primary fields" (xiv), which his critics were quick to corroborate, mercilessly exposing the flaws of even Frye's notebooks from the period when he wrote the book (Munk 570–572).

But the charge of insensitivity to concrete details sounded plausible also because it had a familiar ring. Robert Alter, eminent scholar and translator of the Hebrew Bible, complained recently that "[t]he essential weakness of Frye's critical system, which is particularly transparent in his treatment of the Bible, is that it is interested in the individual literary text chiefly as a confirmation of the general pattern, and hence it has no adequate instruments of attention for the compelling or surprising peculiarities of the individual text" (2002, 14–15). This critique was freshly documented, more amply and perhaps with more expertise than ever before, yet it revives and recontextualizes the objection of the New Criticism, formulated most succinctly by W. K. Wimsatt half a century ago, to Frye's tendency to study each literary utterance "under the most universal aspects possible", and to his penchant for a schematism that unifies diverse and disparate elements, as well as to his over-reliance on "this ruthless, categorizing, assimilative, subsuming drive of his theory" (90). Though *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) was quickly and widely acknowledged as a milestone in the history of the discipline, and enraptured reviewers called it the first book that opened up new perspectives since Aristotle (Raditsa 18, Corke 81), several major historians and theorists of literature spelled out their serious reservations about Frye's method. David Daiches admitted that his categorizations and classifications were "fascinating", but he hastened to add that ultimately "such a method is bound to be reductive, subsuming different works in a class, [...] always pointing to what a given work has in common with others rather than revealing its special differentiating qualities" (345, 349, cf. Kenyeres 92–93). René Wellek likewise noted with dismay that Frye's speculations are "completely uncontrollable" (meaning that they are both unverifiable and unfalsifiable), and he castigated several manifestations of the levelling tendency: "all distinctions of artistic value disappear: the simplest folk tale will fit just as well as *Hamlet*" (1963, 337–338), in this grand scheme "all distinctions between periods and styles are abolished" and "the old distinctions between myth, symbol, and allegory disappear" (1970, 102–103). Ironically, Wellek, whose opinion is the final proof of how diverse the critics were who opposed this aspect of Frye's method, at the beginning of his own career, back in 1937, had been similarly castigated by F. R. Leavis for the same methodological heresy, that is, for being too much of a systematizing philosopher to recognize the ultimate concreteness of any work of art, and for overlooking the

essential difference between the respective kinds of reading suitable to poetry and to philosophy. The literary critic, riposted Leavis in their *Scrutiny* debate on literature and theory, “must be on his guard against abstracting improperly from what is in front of him and against any premature or irrelevant generalizing” and should not forget his first and foremost concern, that is, “to enter into possession of the given poem (let us say) in its concrete fullness” (32). As Frye’s opponents reverberate these charges up to this very day, and their truth is taken so much for granted that his defenders look for compensating merits elsewhere in his work (cf. Cording 161, Kenyeres 44, 92–93), it is time to reverse the logic of reassessment and look for the saving grace in the much-disputed frailty itself.

If lack of concreteness is the malady, it can also be used as a recipe for the cure. Surprisingly, there may be great potential in what is usually considered the most disabling aspect of archetypal classifications: their obsessive, almost exclusive focus on similarities. Undeniably, such a predilection for resemblances requires a relatively distant point of view: the closer we look, the more differences become discernible, and our refined methods of seeing would magnify these inequalities even further, as Coleridge’s haunting metaphor reminds us: “[t]he razor’s edge becomes a saw to the armed vision” (68). No wonder that Frye called our movement towards the archetype a “backing up” from analyzing verbal structure, a step-by-step growing of our distance from the concrete surface, just like when we back up from studying the brushwork of a painting to see its overall composition. Using Frye’s own example, the grave-digger scene in *Hamlet*, this process of gradual distancing leads through a series of stages belonging to their respective methodologies: first we may study the scene in its actual words and gestures, then we back up to look at its imagery, we back up further to its psychological relations, even further to its genre, finally to its archetype (1963a). But if so, one may add, then of course none of these methodologies can be expected to deliver all we need to know. The microscopic view of a study of verbal meaning (aptly called “close” reading) cannot move far beyond the immediate local texture; the other extreme, an account of the archetype of a literary work can rarely, if ever, be expected to match up completely with the whole array of minute details, and it always will, inevitably, skip some of them. This is not to say that anything goes; evidently, whenever a supposed archetype would be *incompatible* with a relevant lexical item, we would insist on its use at our own peril.

But sheer difference is not necessarily incompatibility. If chosen well and applied carefully, an archetype can be a good heuristic device precisely because of its shortcomings: when juxtaposed with the text, it can reveal the extent and, more importantly, expose the limits of similarity, thus it can highlight those

ultimate differences that could not have been perceived and analysed in any other way. As T. E. Hulme once noted, the variety of curvatures offered by the wooden set called “the architect’s curves” can only approximate “the exact curve of the thing” that any real artist would uncompromisingly want (132–133); but, one should add, in literary scholarship we have good reasons to choose the archetype closest to the exact curve of the work of art in question, not as a compromise but as the best means to reveal the residual differences that characterize the work. The archetype is always to be chosen from several possibilities and for specific purposes, hence to some extent it is always self-serving and even arbitrary, but if well-chosen, the similarities and differences it exposes are equally relevant for the ensuing interpretation. Sometimes a sheer discovery of competing rival archetypes may lead to an insightful interpretation; a good example is Frye’s contention that Job misreads the nature of his situation: whereas Job assumes that he gets his ordeal due to a retrospective trial, in which case his suffering must be punishment to make any sense at all, his ordeal is much more probably due to a prospective, forward-looking trial that is meant to precipitate his improvement in the future. “Job does not know either that there are two kinds of trial, the purgatorial trial which is a testing and refining operation, and which is directed toward what one can still be, and a trial of accusation like the ‘last Judgement’, which pronounces on the past. It is the former that he is really involved in, not the latter as he thinks.” (1990, 310–311, cf. 2003a, 559, 562) In this case the actual phrases, similes and metaphors in the Book of Job support the testing and refining trial as the archetypal situation chosen for comparative analysis. But in other cases, when we see minor discrepancies between word and archetype, we may find them worth studying because they can provide, at the very least, a basis for negotiation, which, in turn, tells us more about the text in question than any (seemingly) neat correspondence and (seemingly) flawless interpretation ever would.

Hence any critique is welcome because it refines rather than discredits. Users of the archetypal method should be grateful to Alter’s objections and cannot afford to ignore them; indeed “[h]is argument may inspire Frye’s readers to articulate how precisely identities discerned relate if at all to the differences adduced; they will need to consider how to make those identities palatable to those who find the differences paramount” (Donaldson 13). True, Frye’s reference to the Leviathan in his account of the Book of Jonah does not exactly dovetail with the *dag gadol* (גדל דג) meaning simply “a big fish” in the Hebrew text (Alter 16), and Frye was either not aware of the discrepancy or did not consider it serious enough to worry about its consequences. The same applies to the *ketonet passim* (כִּתְנוֹת פַּסִּים) in the story of Joseph, a phrase in Gen 37,3 that Frye, following the King

James Bible, translates as a ‘coat of many colours’ and takes as belonging to fertility-god imagery (1982, 176), which Alter considers arbitrary, partly because he does not see any evidence for this connection, partly because the Hebrew term, translated as “a coat of *many* colours” in the King James Bible, probably refers to ornamental strips and not to colour. Alter recalls that in 2 Sam 13,18, where Tamar wears it, the narrator notes that “the virgin princesses did wear such robes”, so the tunic, whether coloured or ornamental, “is thus identified by the Bible itself not with pagan ritual but with social status” (2002, 15). But the either/or is slightly misleading here, and much as we have to be grateful for Alter’s austere positivist question (“Is there really a documented correspondence between fertility gods and particoloured coats?”), it turns documentedness into an absolute criterion that would make any interpretive statement well-nigh impossible. One of the questions we should ask in the light of Alter’s philological correction is whether the *ketonet passim* even as an indication of the social status of royal virgins might not also signify (on another level) a promise of fertility as well. Maybe the two interpretations are compatible because the robe’s ornamental strips or colours could also herald or indeed celebrate the future fertility of those virgin princesses. By the same token, shouldn’t we ask whether the big fish, despite (or because of) the generic universalism of the term, and (let me add) by the playful yet fearful symmetry of the chiasmic consonants in *dag gadol*, may also be taken as a metaphor of the sea monster? Are they simply different or are they incompatible as well, even on different levels? Trying to answer these questions may improve our method because it can reveal (or refute) the heuristic propriety of the archetype chosen. Although there is much truth in Alter’s complaint that “[t]hrough centuries of Christian supersessionism, Hebrew Scripture was systematically detached from the shifting complications of its densely particular realizations so that it could be seen as a flickering adumbration of the Gospels that were understood to fulfill it” (2002, 21), identifying this strategy of appropriation with Frye’s method is a little unfair, and the flat dismissal of both as “hardly a reading practice we want to revive, either for the Bible or for secular literature” (2002, 21) would throw out the baby with the bathwater. Critical remarks about the residual discrepancies between an archetypal interpretation and the verbal details of the text are always welcome correctives, but one could also argue that those discrepancies are inevitable consequences of the very nature of archetypes and may provide an opportunity to refine our understanding.

“WHAT DREADFUL NEWS HAVE WE HEARD?”
 IN SEARCH OF THE BEST HEURISTIC ARCHETYPE

On November 1, 1755, the Lisbon earthquake devastated a huge part of a population mostly in the churches for the mass of All Saints Day. The horrible news reached Voltaire in Geneva in about three weeks, and Mikes in Rodosto, Turkey, in more than two months. Both authors started to work on their respective works soon enough, and although we don't know (and most probably they did not know) just *when* their spontaneous responses to the news turned into the planning and writing of their respective literary compositions, their finished works seem to be very near to what was (or may have been) the gist of their spontaneous responses. Of course one should not hasten to identify the emotions of Mikes's fictive letter (addressed to a non-existent aunt) with the actual responses of the author himself, and we don't know whether the date of the letter, “Rodostó, 1756, 15. Januarii.”, can be considered reliable at all, yet the account given in Mikes's letter is so vivid that it seems to be very near to what it pretends to convey, that is, the spontaneous thoughts, feelings and associations evoked by the reported events.

Dear Aunt, what dreadful news have we heard? That on the first of November the city of Lisbon sank in a terrible earthquake and was destroyed. A large part of it was consumed by the fire of the earth. The churches were full of people, for it was a feast-day, and they fell on them. The whole city was changed in an hour into a cemetery, and buried its inhabitants. Carriages with men and horses sank in the streets. What a terrible scourge did God wield against that city? For not only was there the movement of the ground, but also the subterranean fire erupted into the streets. Therefore the tremendous wealth of that rich city is lost for ever. We are of the earth, and earth we must become. (2009, 248–249)

Whereas this fictive letter in Mikes's *Letters from Turkey* is the only extant text by him about the Lisbon earthquake, in Voltaire's correspondence we have ample evidence to prove that his immediate reactions anticipated the main themes of his poem to come, *Poëme sur le désastre de Lisbonne ou examen de cet axiome: tout est bien*. The first letter, on November 24th, in which he responded to the news alludes to Leibniz's doctrine: “On sera bien embarrassé à deviner comment les lois du mouvement opèrent des désastres si effroyables dans le meilleur des mondes possibles” (Voltaire 1978, 619). Four days later he refers to Pope's thesis: “Si Pope avait été à Lisbonne aurait-il osé dire, *tout est bien?*” (1978, 620). In subsequent letters he keeps returning to his attack on optimism (622, 625), still questioning the validity of Leibniz's dictum but targeting mostly Pope's formula (624, 626, 695). His passionate dissatisfaction with the latter dovetails with his marginal note in his copy of *An Essay on Man*, opposite the line “One

truth is clear, Whatever is, is right”, summing up his main query in a simple rhetorical question: “What can I hope if all is right?” (Niklaus 1970, 181). If Leibniz justly calls this the best of all *possible* worlds, and if Pope justly thinks that here everything is right, what space is left for hoping anything better than *this*? Voltaire’s poem is a series of eloquent variations of this objection, partly to Leibniz (“Leibniz ne m’apprend point par quels noeuds invisibles, / Dans le mieux ordonné des univers possibles, / Un désordre éternel, un chaos de malheurs, [...] Ni pourquoi l’innocent, ainsi que le coupable, / Subit également ce mal inévitable”), partly to those who accept Pope’s answer (“Vous criez »Tout est bien« d’une voix lamentable, / L’univers vous dément, et votre propre cœur / Cent fois de votre esprit a réfuté l’erreur. [...] Il le faut avouer, le *mal* est sur la terre”). The main concern of the speaker in this poem, a witness of the disaster, is how to retain or retrieve the possibility of hope after Lisbon; this problem and desire surfaces in several parts of the poem and culminates in its very last line, implying that the answer can not be taken for granted any longer.

The responsive nature of both Voltaire’s poem and Mikes’s letter calls for a suitable biblical archetype, one that is more than a mere description, however fitting in scope or imagery, of an earthquake. Of course we need something more articulate here than just a fleeting reference to an earthquake, and more situational than the general image of an earthquake whereby Job illustrates God’s mighty power: “He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered? Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.” (9,4–6) We could easily find a more detailed narrative that would be much closer to Mikes’s account of how the earth opened up in Lisbon and swallowed houses full of people. One could find a passage that implies the usual notions of divine trial and punishment, hence it would provide an archetypal situation close enough to be used in a comparative analysis so as to ascertain some characteristic similarities and differences. One could take the memorable scene from Numbers where Moses tells the people that the Lord wants them to turn away from the wicked Dathan and Abiram who worshipped Korah, and adds that if those two die a natural death, his message was not from the Lord.

But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their

houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. (Num. 16,30–33)

Close enough in some sense, and an obvious text to associate (cf. Georgi 2005, 89), but unlike Mikes's letter or Voltaire's poem, this narrative lacks the commentaries or symbolic gestures of the viewer, it abstains from expressing subjective emotions, and it is devoid of any explicit reflection or value judgement, be it a statement, a qualifying simile or a mere adjective. It depicts what happened but it takes its implied divine justice so much for granted that it does not allow us to hear the voice of those doomed to being buried alive, or to see the expressive body language of the suffering human subjects, or anything that could in any way make us sympathize with their point of view and problematize the issue. Although the Old Testament narratives rarely and sparingly use similes or even adjectives, they have their own subtle means, as in 2 Sam 3,16, of indicating the human cost of any event (Alter 1999, xxiii–xxiv), so we can hope to find an archetypal situation in the Bible where an earthquake is represented together with the reaction of the sufferer. As both Voltaire and Mikes received the unexpected news of the Lisbon earthquake and they responded to the unprecedented large-scale destruction by expressing their feelings, we need a similarly complex biblical account of somebody responding to the news of an earthquake, a well-known and emblematic biblical narrative that can be used as a *tertium comparationis* for revealing the differences between our two literary narratives of what happened in Lisbon. What is more, for a truly heuristic archetype we would need a biblical narrative that raises (or prompts us to raise) the crucial problems of evil, justice, origin and responsibility (human and/or divine), to serve as a foil enabling us to discern Voltaire's and Mikes's respective takes on matters that had been highly debated in the eighteenth century and became especially relevant after Lisbon. For these purposes the most suitable biblical passage is Job 1,18–22:

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

On receiving the news that the great wind made the house collapse and bury all his children Job is shown here trying to respond, in words and ritual, to his enormous loss, and trying to cope with it by searching for (or inventing) the most efficacious consolatory idea offered by (or compatible with) the tradition of his faith. In the end we hear the narrator's explicitly approving comment on Job's response, a final validation of his choice at this particular stage of the story, a declarative authorization not directly from, yet on behalf of, the divine authority that is the ultimate standard of judgement in the text. However, the heuristic value of this passage taken as the archetypal situation whereby we can discern the characteristic divergences of Voltaire's and Mikes's texts comes not only from what Job says but also what he conspicuously abstains from saying: though acknowledging (and accepting) that it was the Lord who took away all his beloved children, at this point he is not asking why, and not trying to attribute any meaning to his great loss.

FROM ALLUSIONS TO SUBTEXT:
THE BOOK OF JOB IN VOLTAIRE'S POEM AND MIKES'S LETTER

Job 1,18–22 is especially appropriate for providing the *tertium comparationis* because both Voltaire's poem and Mikes's letter CXCVIII (and other passages in his *Letters from Turkey*) allude to Job at key points, and although they interpret the Jobian problem differently, we can consider the Book of Job as their common subtext here and a mutual point of reference in some other works of theirs. The most conspicuous difference here and elsewhere is that whereas Mikes's Job is an example to follow, Voltaire's Job is an example to contest. The first explicit reference to Job in Mikes's *Letters from Turkey*, in letter LXIV dated 23 September 1725, is elicited by the sight of Lord Bercsényi's painful gangrene and points towards a saintly ideal to live up to.

God preserve us from that. But, if God does visit that upon us, we must follow the example of Job. How many sufferings and illnesses did God send upon the saints, who loved and served Him, in order that the wicked like myself might see that if such saints were made to suffer, what suffering do I not deserve? They suffered in order to be an example, and that they might be better purified, like gold in the fire, but I must suffer in order that even against my will I may make an end to my wickedness. (2009, 93)

Mikes interprets Job's ordeal as a parabolic exhortation for sinful human beings to accept their own suffering as a God-given means of purification; the justifying

logic of his argument is akin to the reasoning of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theodicy (Dávidházi 2002), and it anticipates Frye's contention that Job is involved in a "purgatorial trial which is a testing and refining operation" instead of the trial of retrospective accusation Job assumes it to be (1990, 310–311; 2003a, 559, 562). The notion of testing or purifying gold or silver is used in several books of the Bible, but in the context of Mikes's letter his simile "like gold in the fire" points to the Book of Job, where gold figures in various contexts (3,15; 22,24; 23,10; 28,1–6; 28,15–17; 28,19; 36,19; 37,21; 42,11), most relevantly in chapter 23 when Job, confident in his innocence, is longing to appear before God and let his worth be severely tried. *Trial* or being *tried* is meant here in the legal sense of the word, fitting the lawsuit metaphor that plays a crucial role in the book (cf. Segal 146–153); nevertheless, it is coupled with the analogy of gold in fire, implying the value of endurance. "But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23,10). The last phrase (quoted here from the King James Bible), need not suggest that the only outcome of the trial is the proof that Job's character is like gold (and not some baser metal): his claim in its original Hebrew (Brown and Smith 2008) יִנָּהֵב בְּהוֹכ אֶצְא may mean not only that he would *come out* of the examination as gold but also that he would *shine forth* like gold, which some translators rightly associate with *pure* gold or gold *purified* by fire (Saadiyah 312.; Gordis 272; Pope M. 170, 172). The image lurking in the background of this verse would make no sense without fire, and the missing element had been interpolated by the Vulgate, a translation Mikes used alternatively with a Hungarian Bible first published in 1626 by János Káldi (cf. Fröhlich 246), thus completing the simile Job is supposed to have had in mind: "ipse vero scit viam meam et probavit me quasi aurum quod per ignem transit" (Weber and Gryson 2007). Mikes may have found the same in Káldi's Hungarian version, most probably in its 1626 first edition, which follows the Vulgate and renders the simile as closely as possible; hence it leaves the notion of purity implicit: "Ő pedig tudja az én utamat, és megpróbált engem, mint az aranyat, mely átmegy a tűzön" (Káldi 1626). Unlike in the King James version where the second half of the verse is conditional (even if its *casus realis* type) and Job is just yearning for a purgatorial trial instead of the trial of retrospective accusation, the Job of both the Vulgate and Káldi's translation claims that his character has already been tried by God as gold is tried when it has gone through fire. All in all, their version is much closer to Mikes's notion of pain as purification, an interpretation that he continued to explore in letter LXVI, dated 29 October 1725, using the theological concept of Purgatory.

Today we visited poor Lord Bercsényi, who is now in such a state as was Job, except that he is lying in bed and not the midden; for there is no part of his body that is sound in the least. The fluid has run out of his legs and putrefaction set in. One's heart goes out to him when one sees how the rotten flesh is cut from his legs. And as we hear him groan and cry out in agony it seems that I see the martyrs of old in their pain. Truly, I cannot express to you how repulsive it is to see it; and yet in what pain is he that suffers it? But the soul is cured by the pains of the body, and God the merciful has put Purgatory into his legs, wishing to save him from that in the next world. (2009, 95–96)

The sight presumably evoked Mikes's memories of the emblematic scene in Job 2: "So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes." (7–8) Compared to this, however, the new element introduced by Mikes is the sufferer's otherworldly reward, that is, his escaping from the Purgatory of the next world, a theological interpolation taken from a different tradition, or a different stage of the same tradition, because Purgatory, a realm of space and time after death where suffering may purge us of our sins before we can ascend to Heaven, is alien from the Book of Job where Job does not believe in life after death (although he is yearning for it), and at the end of the story we read that the compensation for his suffering and bereavement is granted to him in his lifetime.

Mikes's letter CXCVIII does not refer explicitly to Job's name, but its argument points towards the same example to follow, and one can find several latent correspondences with the Book of Job, culminating in the final sentence which comments on the loss of the great wealth of that city in a Jobian manner, spelling out the moral of unconditional acceptance. "We are of the earth, and earth we must become" (2009, 248–249). This may remind us of several verses in the Book of Job, such as Elihu's sentence about death: "All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again into dust" (34,15). Mikes's closing formula, "We are of the earth, and earth we must become", sublime and familiar as it is at the same time, foregrounds the image of earth for the last time in the passage (the Hungarian word "föld" figures no less than six times in this letter, cf. Mikes 1966, 289), and evokes further biblical associations of dust and ashes, several of which play important roles in Job. In Hebrew the two words, אָפָר (*afar*) and עָפָר (*éfer*), sound almost like variations of the same idea; they are often mentioned together (as in Gen 18,27) and have a similarly symbolic role in grief and especially mourning "and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes" (Ezek 27,30). More to the point, they become dominant in Job's speeches, whether he is asking for mercy ("Remember, I beseech thee, that thou

hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?”,10,9), or is talking about his origin (“He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes”, 30,19) or his repentance (“Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes”, 42,6). More importantly, however, Mikes’s closing sentence can remind us of Job 1,18–22, the passage I chose as the most telling archetypal subtext of Mikes’s letter, the narrative about Job’s response to the news that his children died under the collapsing house in the storm. Here, because of its similar ideal of resignation, the most relevant part of the passage is the response itself: “And said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD” (1,21). It is *this* Job, the paragon of resignation, that Mikes uses as the final arbiter of how to respond properly to the sudden devastation of Lisbon.

By choosing this piously resigned attitude for his ideal when contemplating the fall of a great city, Mikes is eager to defuse any latent theological problem of the disaster, and, unlike Voltaire, to re-establish the transcendental framework in such a way that would immediately preclude contesting voices of doubt or despair. There is no room left here for the objection that Mikes’s last sentence, for all its biblical or liturgical solemnity, is too general in this context to provide any consolation for the bereaved. Silenced is the obvious retort that even if everything of earth is bound to return to earth there is a great difference between having to return to it late in life (as Eliphaz says to Job: “Thou shalt come to *thy* grave in a full age”, 5,26), as eventually Job himself was allowed to die, “being old and full of days” (42,17), or in infancy, as many of the Lisbon victims. Moreover, the general and universal character of the rule cited by Mikes’s last sentence reveals that for him the Lisbon earthquake could seamlessly fit into the usual scheme of life, and could be seen as no more than yet another example of the universal law of mortality. This view is very far from considering such an earthquake something extraordinary, an exceptional divine intervention to punish those who provoked the Lord (as in Numbers 16,30), but had Mikes’s response adopted that view, he, too, would have had to face the question *why* the Lord wanted to intervene. Mikes is doing his best not to blame the earthquake on the victims, and stops short of explicitly blaming the “terrible wealth” of that city as the sin that resulted in due punishment, yet he does not find the annihilation of that prosperous city theologically scandalous either.

For Voltaire, on the other hand, the Lisbon earthquake is a baffling, extraordinary event, a problem that offers no easy solution and cannot be explained away. Although the analogy of man and worm, discussed in the Book of Job, is used by Mikes, too, long before the Lisbon earthquake, he employs it only to

demonstrate the insufficiency of human beings without divine aid. As he says in Letter LIV, dated 19 July 1724, “we are of such wretched worms that we cannot bring anything to a good conclusion unless we receive help from Heaven” (2009, 72). He must have remembered the argument of Bildad who tried to console Job by reminding him that man is but a *worm* and there is no chance for human beings to attain perfection in God’s eyes: “the stars are not pure in his [God’s] sight. How much less man, *that is* a worm? And the son of man, *which is* a worm?” (Job 25,5–6). But for Voltaire, trying to secure hope for mankind against all the odds, this simile was more controversial, probably because Job’s own point that to accept the idea of such a kinship can be self-destructive: “I have said to corruption, Thou *art* my father: to the worm, *Thou art* my mother, and my sister. And where *is* now my hope?” (17,14–15). Both sides of this debate are echoed in Voltaire’s Lisbon poem. First it is part of a dubious consolation to the victims (“Dieu vous voit du même oeil que les vils vermisseeux / Dont vous serez la proie au fond de vos tombeaux?”), but then it is promptly dismissed by the narrator as an insensitive idea. A similar polemic is repeated in greater detail later in the poem: “Ce malheur, dites-vous, est le bien d’un autre être.’ / De mon corps tout sanglant mille insectes vont naître; / Quand la mort met le comble aux maux que j’ai soufferts, / Le beau soulagement d’être mangé des vers!” Right after this Voltaire’s *ad hominem* retort resembles that of Job when refusing his comforters: “Tristes calculateurs des misères humaines, / Ne me consolez point, vous aigrissez mes peines”. Voltaire’s poem claims like Job that in such a disaster the complaint of the victim is innocent and his or her cries are rightful (“Croyez-moi, quand la terre entr’ouvre ses abîmes, / Ma plainte est innocente et mes cris légitimes”), and refuses the pathetically speculative consolation that adds insult to injury: “A des infortunés quel horrible langage! / Cruels, à mes douleurs n’ajoutez point l’outrage”. This refusal of the comforters as *cruel* was to be refused by Rousseau in his letter to Voltaire on 18 August 1756, arguing that Pope’s and Leibniz’s optimism was much less cruel, and much more consoling, than Voltaire’s description of the horrible scenes (Larrimore 210–215). Although Voltaire depicted the infants on their mothers’ breast in shocking detail (“Quel crime, quelle faute ont commis ces enfants / Sur le sein maternel écrasés et sanglants?”), these pictures were meant to demonstrate the innocence of the sufferer, the very claim Kant’s 1791 critique of theodicies admired as an indication of Job’s intellectual honesty as opposed to the servility of the comforters (Kant 194–225). Similarly, Voltaire refuses the arrogance of the comforting arguments in his article on Job in his 1764 *Dictionnaire philosophique* (2010, 352–356).

It is in the context of these controversial sentiments that Voltaire comes close to Mikes’s (Jobian) idea that God tries man. Although Voltaire does not compare

the human condition to the trying of gold in fire, he points towards a transcendental framework, implying the possibility of a final compensation: “Ou bien Dieu nous éprouve, et ce séjour mortel / N’est qu’un passage étroit vers un monde éternel.” Voltaire’s readiness to let the troubling latent implications surface is no less conspicuous when it comes to the relation between man and his maker, and he uses the biblical simile very differently from Mikes’s handling. The potter’s making, destroying and remaking a vessel is used as an analogy of God’s treatment of men in the Book of Jeremiah as well (18,1–17), and a part of the same metaphor of man as a pot created by God is discernible in Job 17,7 (“all my members *are* as a shadow”; here the Hebrew word for limbs or members יצרי or יצריים means form and is cognate with the verb יצר that denotes the shaping work of the potter and with the participle or noun יצר denoting the potter himself). Yet the relevant subtext of Voltaire’s passage is Job 10,7–9, where man, visualized as the vessel made by God, *does* speak: “Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and *there is* none that can deliver out of thine hand. Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again.” When Mikes reveals the limits of this metaphor in his letter dated 17 December 1717: “Dear Aunt, the pot must conform to the will of the potter, and cannot say to him: why have you sent me to Adrianople? I would rather have been a cabbage pot in Transylvania than any coffee cup of the Sultan’s” (2009, 259), his text alludes to several biblical places, including Job 10,7–9, but his lighthearted tone responds to the similarly ironical rebuke of the Lord in Isaiah 45,9: “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! [...] Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?” Isaiah’s God is briefly and sarcastically playing with the absurd idea, and Mikes’s brief variation is similar in length and tone, but Voltaire’s poem seriously challenges the justice of it all, and resembles Job’s appeal to, and his protest against, the potter.

Instead of using pottery as a momentary image, Voltaire turns it into a sustained conceit that is able to highlight the ultimate difference between the vase, mute and insensitive as it is, and human beings who feel and express their torment. First Voltaire is setting the scene of the creature appealing to the creator, and although here it is only the notion of shaping that prepares us for the potter-simile to come, the text is hinting at the basic contradiction between divine omnipotence and human misery. “Mais je vis, mais je sens, mais mon cœur opprimé / Demande des secours au Dieu qui l’a formé. / Enfants du Tout-Puissant, mais nés dans la misère, / Nous étendons les mains vers notre commun père.” Then, comparing the fragility of man to a pottery created by its craftsman,

Voltaire's poem adapts Job's simile for spelling out its controversial implications in the argumentative style of his philosophical poetry. "La vase, on le sait bien, ne dit point au potier: / »Pourquoi suis-je si vil, si faible et si grossier?« / Il n'a point la parole, il n'a point la pensée; / Cette urne en se formant qui tombe fracassée, / De la main du potier ne reçut point un cœur / Qui désirât les biens et sentit son malheur." Thus, while Mikes uses the imaginary speech of the created vessel to its maker just in order to ridicule its absurdity and thereby (indirectly) approve of God's dispensation, for Voltaire it is a means of protesting, at least until the poem's final gesture of resignation. Just as Job is trying to secure an explanation from God himself (13,18; 13,22), insisting that He must listen to him because only He could answer him, Voltaire's poem depicts a situation in which only God could give a satisfactory answer to the great riddle of the Lisbon disaster in the world He created, otherwise men, abandoned, would be lost in doubt and error. "Quelque parti qu'on prenne, on doit frémir, sans doute. / Il n'est rien qu'on connaisse, et rien qu'on ne redoute. / La nature est muette, on l'interroge en vain; / On a besoin d'un Dieu qui parle au genre humain. / Il n'appartient qu'à lui d'expliquer son ouvrage, / De consoler le faible, et d'éclairer le sage. / L'homme, au doute, à l'erreur, abandonné sans lui, / Cherche en vain des roseaux qui lui servent d'appui." Yet just as Job, humbled by God, ceases to protest at the end and silently submits himself to God's authority with the ritual of repentance ("now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes", 42,5–6), the speaker in Voltaire's poem eventually submits himself to suffering and does not want to oppose God any more: "Les sages me trompaient, et Dieu seul a raison, / Humble dans mes soupirs, soumis dans ma souffrance, / Je ne m'élève point contre la Providence. [...] Dans une épaisse nuit cherchant à m'éclairer, / Je ne sais que souffrir, et non pas murmurer." These lines, originally intended to be the closing passage of the poem, were made all the more significant by the contrast of the preceding passages of problematization and protest. Whereas Mikes's response to the Lisbon news is dominated by resignation from start to finish, Voltaire's final resignation has been earned by a long and fierce protest.

THEODICY IN A METAPHOR:
THE LISBON EARTHQUAKE AS THE SCOURGE OF GOD

"What a terrible scourge did God wield against that city?" (Mikes 2009, 248–249) Crucial as it is in this post-Lisbon context, the scourge of God is one of those familiar images Mikes would often use with implications of divine justice con-

sidered so unquestionable that it does not require any explicit theological reasoning. As he takes God's justice for granted, Mikes does not feel the need for theodicy proper, that is, for argumentative justification, and he need not try to elaborate any reasonable explanation for the deaths of those multitudes praying in the Lisbon churches or the deaths of their children. He simply mentions, albeit with great trepidation, that the churches fell on the congregations, and he uses the scourge of God metaphor as well-known shorthand for a ready-made answer that precludes any problematization of the event. It is by sheer repetition ("föld", the Hungarian word for "earth" or "ground", is repeated no less than nine times in the passage) and by a few choice adjectives ("what dreadful news", "a terrible earthquake"), that he pays tribute to the unprecedented scale of the disaster, adjectives that depict and dramatize the impact of the event on the receiver of such news (this is even more so in the Hungarian: "irtóztató" news is news that makes you horrified, "rettentő" is something that makes you terrified, frightened or overawed). Moreover, instead of using "terrible" only twice ("a terrible earthquake", "a terrible scourge" and "tremendous wealth"), in Mikes's Hungarian text "rettentő" ('terrifying') is used at all the three places, silently pointing to the extreme wealth of that city as the unnamed but inevitable sin that must have called for the punishing scourge of God (Mikes 1966, 289; Mikes 2009, 248–249).

In *Letters from Turkey* Mikes uses the scourge of God metaphor in various contexts, even its key-words differ (ranging from the Hungarian noun *ostor*, 'whip' and the verb *ostoroz* 'whips' to *vessző* 'cane or rod') but its reference to divine justice is always evident. In letter XXXVI, dated 24 April 1720, an anagram of Rodosto, the name of the little Turkish town, makes him ponder on the noun, indirectly associated here both with providential care and divine punishment. "Suffice it to say that God has brought us all hither in safety. And as soon as Lord Bercsényi arrived, he straight away made an anagram of the name of the town, and it came out as: Ostorod. That is eminently suitable for exiles. Suffice it that one could philosophise at length about that, but I will leave it for another occasion [...]." (2009, 40) The Hungarian "ostorod" means "your whip" or (as here) "the whip for you". Mikes postpones the philosophical answer to the obvious implied question *why* he thought this anagram "eminently suitable for exiles", and although he will often return to the special fate of exiles in this work, this anagram is not mentioned ever again. When confronted with Bercsényi's painful disease and death, Mikes meditates on his life at considerable length, and refers to Job as a parallel, but he does not mention the whip of God, does not interpret Bercsényi's torment as divine punishment, nor does he say that it fulfilled the prediction implied in Bercsényi's ominous anagram. In other contexts, as in letter LXXXV dated 8 November 1727, he is trying to reconcile

himself with his own lifelong exile by interpreting it as the rod (“vessző”) of God. “But I have been an exile all my life, and left my native land for ever at the age of 16, and it is certain that the search for freedom was not then in my mind, and if my exile has lasted until the present, truly, it is blind love for my lord that has caused it. So I may say according to my nature; but in Christian terms it is the dispensation of God, and I must kiss the rod with which He beats me.” (2009, 130) After Rákóczi’s death the metaphor becomes more badly needed than ever. In letter CXIV on 17 May 1735, it becomes part of a perfectly balanced scheme of divine justice. “For more and more we are aware of what a father we have lost, and what a shepherd has deserted us. But if our good Lord holds in one hand the rod [“vessző”], in the other He holds consolation.” (2009, 172)

Vintage Mikes, the metaphor occurs in the same spirit not only in his *Letters from Turkey* but in one of his most revealing personal letters as well. Addressed to Baron József Huszár (Boér) on 25 March 1760, this text turns the rod of God metaphor into the core of Mikes’s most elaborate spiritual formula for his entire life. Wanting to explain why he does not appeal for mercy to Maria Theresa again (after her previous refusal with the memorable phrase “ex Turcia nulla redemptio”, “from Turkey there is no return”), he starts with the admission that although personally he had never sinned against his revered monarch either in thought or deed, “the gate of mercy” was justly closed in front of him because of “the original sin so to say”, that is, his participation in the Rákóczi uprising, hence this life-long exile is his due punishment coming ultimately from God. “My punishment by her Majesty, which is temporary, must be respectfully considered the will of God the Sacred Sovereign, His scourge [“ostorának”] for my sins, and I ought to keep kissing that scourge until I die, hoping that He will turn this cross to my salvation. He did not take anything from me after all, and as He possesses the whole earth, I am on His ground even here, and if He will give me eventually a few feet of that, it will suffice.” (1966, 307–308; my translation – PD.) Thus Maria Theresa’s verdict, as any other event (including the Lisbon earthquake), is but a stroke of God’s scourge or rod, intended to distribute moral justice in the universe. The matter-of-fact tone and habitual application of the phrase “His scourge for my sins” (“bűneimért való ostorának”) here and elsewhere reveals Mikes’s firm conviction that in God’s created world there can be no such thing as undeserved punishment, though he claims that his own sin was indirect and unintentional.

As was pointed out by a pioneering study, he fully accepted Saint Augustine’s tenet that under the just God nobody can be miserable without having deserved it (Zolnai 1924–1925, 39), or as Leibniz quoted Augustine’s formula in his *Theodicée*: “neque sub Deo justo miser esse quisquam, nisi mereatur, potest” (Leibniz

1996, 300). Ironically, the whip of God, a metaphor that used to be applied to the formidable barbarian forces of Attila the Hun all over civilized Europe, is applied here to a verdict coming from the very European reign of Maria Theresa; nevertheless, Mikes's implied (and most probably unintended) parallel highlights the same instrumental function of *any* ruler in God's hands. Moreover, here the scourge of God is no longer a solitary metaphor; it is used as one of the key images (and basic concepts) in a systematic Christian allegory, together with the cross and salvation, all the three belonging to the same theological pattern. Mikes's ultimate interpretation of exile is thoroughly religious: for him exile, as everything else, is of transcendental origin, in sharp contrast with the modern view "that exile is irremediably secular and unbearably historical; that it is produced by human beings for other human beings" (Said 2000, 174). Probably this is why his letters, far from the stubborn unpleasantness and wilful exaggerations that Edward Said claimed to be the characteristic style of exiled authors, can achieve what Said least expected of exiles: composure, serenity, and genuine contentedness – traits rarely found among exiles who are the nay-sayers of society, "adept mimics and secret outcasts" (2000, 182; 1994, 49, 52–53). Though exiled because of taking part in an uprising against the Habsburg Empire, Mikes is ultimately a resigned but resolute yea-sayer, both socially and cosmically.

Moreover, calling the Lisbon earthquake the scourge or rod of God, Mikes uses an image that figures in several books of the Bible and becomes crucial in the Book of Job. The same differences of phrasing survive in most translations of the Old Testament and can be traced back to the Hebrew Bible. There we can find both the *scourge* (שׁוֹט) of God (Isaiah 10,26; 28,15; 28,18) and the *rod* (שֶׁבֶט) of God (Isaiah 30,31), and both were used figuratively for the chastisement of the nation or an individual. The metaphorical sense of these phrases was so widespread and inevitable that the Old Testament has to specify when it is used in a somewhat more (yet not entirely) literal meaning of the word, for example in 2 Samuel 7,14 where the Lord promises David that after his death He will chastise his son as a father would, with the rod of men (אֲנִישִׁים בְּשֶׁבֶט) and the blows of mortals. (The same implied domestic scene gets spelled out in Greek by Paul in Hebrews 12,6, pointing to a stern yet loving divine father: "For when the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.") Seamlessly continuing this biblical tradition, Mikes often declares or implies that some misfortune is but a due chastisement by a loving God, yet it is more relevant to his application of the scourge of God metaphor in letter CXCVIII that the phrase figures in Job 9,23 and 21,9, used by Job himself in close connection with the ultimate question of divine justice. Answering Zophar (21,9), Job talks about the

anomaly that the wicked may prosper and their sins go unpunished. “Their houses *are* safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.” Here Job explicitly refers to “the rod of God” (אלוה שׁבט), but uses the phrase so as to confront its implication of justice with his actual experiences in the world. As can be inferred from the previous verse (8), “houses” here mean ‘families’, hence the image of God’s rod being or not being *on people* resembles Mikes’s response to the Lisbon earthquake. Although the English translation uses a different preposition and hence a different spatial arrangement (“What a terrible scourge did God wield against that city?”), Mikes’s Hungarian text is talking about the terrible whip of God being *on* the town, just as Job 21,9 in Káldi’s Hungarian translation of the Bible, used by Mikes, tells us that the houses of the godless are safe and God’s rod is not *on* them. (“Házaik biztosak, és békében vannak, és nincs az Isten vesszeje rajtok.”) In 9,23 Job is less explicit, comparing the unexpected blows of fortune to the way a scourge lashes the good and the evil alike, but here, too, the implication is that the scourge is wielded by God. “[...] He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent” (9,22–23). (In Káldi’s Hungarian translation the last sentence is conditional and expresses desire: “[...] ő mind az ártatlant, mind az istentelent megemészti. Ha ostoroz, bár ölne meg egyszerre, és ne nevetne az ártatlanok büntetésein.”) Here the scourge (שׁוֹט) is applicable to any disaster, including those that are not man-made; yet a commentary is right to insist that here Job attributes even the natural disasters to God (Reichert 43). This verse stirs indignation in pious commentators even today (cf. Peters 129), mainly because it insinuates that God is amused by human suffering, but for Mikes the real stumbling block would be the mere assumption that the scourge of God can be anything but just.

Mikes’s firm belief in the inevitable justness of the scourge of God precludes the Jobian insistence on innocence and evokes the opposite motif of the Book of Job: the questioning of the very possibility of human innocence. Admitting that “the gate of mercy was closed in front of me just as I deserved” (1966, 307), Mikes is ready to acknowledge his own culpability as the ultimate cause of Maria Theresa’s inexorable refusal of clemency, ready to search for a latent sin, however indirect and unintended, behind his own apparent goodwill, and ready to confess it when found. Unlike Job, he is ready to accept the counterarguments of the four friends; like them, he would always doubt the assumption that a human being can be entirely innocent. At Count Bercsényi’s bedside it was probably out of sheer tact that he was trying hard to suppress the issue, although it surfaced irresistibly in his remark that God ordained this extremely painful disease for Bercsényi’s purification and to exempt him from the even greater pain of Purgatory (2009, 95–96); probably it was for the same reason that he had to refrain

from vitriolic comments even when he learned, right after Bercsényi's death, that the Count (who had snatched his beloved Zsuzsi) bequeathed to him *the riding cane* of his former wife. Mourning over the deceased was not the right moment to ponder upon the possible justness of his fate, but one feels that Mikes could not avoid such conclusions for long. He was firmly convinced that such a painful disease and death must have been the deserved scourge of God. His Augustinian tenet that under a just God there can be no undeserved misery is complemented by Eliphaz's conviction that it is not possible for a mere human being to be utterly sinless in front of his maker and to deserve no punishment. In Job 4,17, Eliphaz, in great trepidation, hears the still voice of a spirit raising the issue in a rhetorical question: "Shall mortal man be just before God? Shall a man be pure before his Maker?" (Reichert 1965). The implied answer is no (see 4,18–19; 15,14–16), and judging by Mikes's characteristic comments on human life, he could not agree more.

Much as Mikes tried to be impeccable in all his dealings, he was always willing to blame himself for any ultimate imperfection. His humble resignation in front of God resembles that of Bildad when (in Job 25,4) asking another rhetorical question with a similar implication: "How then can man be just with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" He simply cannot, because in God's sight even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure, how much less can be attained by a man, who is but a worm (25,4–6). Both Eliphaz and Bildad think that the blows of misfortune cannot be anything but due punishment, hence Job must have committed something grave to deserve such harsh measures. Even Job himself, wavering between the persuasive logic of this general principle and the persistent awareness of his own innocence, accepts that his guiltless conscience may not suffice and God is bound to see him differently. "Of a truth I know that it is so; And how can man be just with God?" (9,2) "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (14,4) Job accepts these as general philosophical or theological truths from God's superhuman point of view, yet in his particular situation he clings to the conviction of his own innocence, come what may (9,20–21), because to give up this without being persuaded would be to betray himself (27,5–6). It is this integrity, both intellectual and moral, that Kant admired in Job (1791, 194–225), but Mikes's attitude to the same dilemma is different. When he applies the whip of God metaphor to the Lisbon earthquake, his implication is that the disaster must have been a just punishment, *unlike* the way this image was problematized in Job 21,9, where "the rod of God" was mentioned so as to confront its virtual implication of justice with the injustice of its actual wielding. For Mikes the meaning of the earthquake

as punishment is as firm as in Numbers 16,30 where being swallowed by the earth is taken as a supernatural indication of sins duly punished by death.

Unlike Job, Mikes refers to the scourge of God without bitter irony, and this in itself signals his great distance from Voltaire and from other sarcastic contemporaries. He is far from Swift who used to read the desperate Job of chapter 3 on his birthdays (1963–1965, vol. 5, 128), and in *Verses on the Death of Dr Swift* he resorted to the ominous metaphor when deploring the hypocrisy of the pious: “When *We* are lash’d, *They* kiss the Rod; / Resigning to the Will of God” (1966, vol. 2, 561). Whereas Mikes is promptly trying to explain away the problem of the Lisbon earthquake with ready-made formulaic solutions (ranging from this metaphor to the pious sentence that whatever comes from the earth must return to it), in Voltaire’s Lisbon poem the image of the whip is evoked for its visual associations of cruelty. The contrast between their uses of the image is enhanced by the same adjective attached to the nouns “ostor” and “fléau”: Mikes calls it “rettentó” (terrifying), Voltaire calls it “terrible”. Whereas in Mikes’s letter CXCVIII the terrifying scourge represents a punishment of divine origin and unquestionable, if unfathomable, justness, in Voltaire’s poem it is but a formidable instrument to inflict sheer pain. “Quand l’homme ose gémir d’un fléau si terrible, / Il n’est point orgueilleux, hélas! il est sensible.” For Voltaire the idea that God punishes mankind (“et Dieu punit sa race”) is no more than a bitterly ironical hypothesis, indeed his whole poem is protesting against such routine interpretations of the disaster. The scourge, or its even more cruel version meant by the French *fléau* (also the French name of a medieval weapon, coming etymologically from the agricultural instrument of flailing), looms large in Voltaire’s poem and is emblematic of the human condition: “O malheureux mortels! ô terre déplorable! / O de tous les fléaux assemblage effroyable! / D’inutiles douleurs éternel entretien!” To demonstrate how far this is from any serious identification of an earthquake with the scourge of God, let it suffice to quote Voltaire’s *Candide*, where the frame of mind responsible for such interpretations of a disaster as *fléau* is ridiculed as both hypocritical and manipulative, serving the worst practices of the Inquisition. “Enfin, pour détourner le fléau des tremblements de terre, et pour intimider don Issacar, il plut à monseigneur l’inquisiteur de célébrer un auto-da-fé” (1836, 383).

The contrast between their uses of this key motif is even more telling when viewed in the context of eighteenth-century theodicy, not only theodicy proper as a specific genre in theological and philosophical discourse, but also some related arguments in diverse literary genres from fictive letters to philosophical poems. The great difference between Mikes’s work and the theological or literary theodicies of the eighteenth-century is that whereas they employ the scourge of god

metaphor as part of a rational argument, Mikes does not feel the need to persuade himself by argumentative devices any more. Like Mikes's letter CXCVIII, William Warburton's sermon responds to the Lisbon earthquake in terms of the scourge of God, but he hastens to add that the Lisbon earthquake was meant to be a scourge of moral disorders in order to make an example that would warn and deter potential sinners. "The teacher of religion [...] will be naturally led to inculcate this truth, that general calamities, though events merely physical or civil, were [...] ordained by the Author of all nature to serve for the scourge of moral disorders". Warburton argues that not to consider an earthquake like this the divine scourge of moral evils would be to suppose that the Almighty is incapable of making the natural world an instrument for the regulation of the moral system; according to this reasoning the victims of Lisbon or of any such earthquake are meant to be "exemplary warnings", their death is not a punishment for their own sins but an example for others not to break God's law (Warburton vol. X, 2; cf. Lamb 1995, 91). A different but no less detailed argument occurs in Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man*, written two decades before the Lisbon earthquake yet referring to the scourge of God in the context of diverse harmful forces such as devastating earthquakes and ferocious rulers. "If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design, / Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline? / Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning forms, / Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the storms, / Pours fierce Ambition in a Caesar's mind, / Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?" (Epistle I, lines 155–160, Pope 1950–1951, 34–35) This passage alludes to the Book of Job, too, because the line "Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning forms," refers to God's unfathomable design in much the same terms as does verse 28,26 there ("When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder") and verse 37,3 ("He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth"), as well as echoing Psalms 97,4 and 135,7. As was rightly observed, the "appropriateness" of such allusions to the Old Testament God are remarkable throughout the poem (Pope 1950–1951, 35). Likewise, the scourge of God metaphor in the line "Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind" is akin to the scourge used in Job 9,23 ("If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent") and the rod of God used in 21,9 ("Their houses *are* safe from fear, neither *is* the rod of God upon them"), because the obvious difference between these statements cannot obliterate the same *expectation* of divine justice.

Yet it is more relevant to note that Pope's stance is similar to Mikes's and both differ greatly from Voltaire's. The conciliatory logic of Pope's argument exhorts us to accept the contradiction between our shock at the sight of raging human monsters and a devastating earthquake or plague that does not break God's

design. This logic is familiar for its biblical lineage as well; it is built on the same assumption as the ultimate lesson taught to Job: the human mind cannot fathom either the motives or the consequences of God's measures. Pope (like Mikes) is convinced that we have to resign to being scourged by God even in cases when we cannot understand it, that is, in *all* cases. If we read Pope's above quoted passage in its wider context in *An Essay on Man*, we see that they (especially the lines "Who knows but he, whose hand the light'ning forms, [...] Or turns young Ammon loose to scourge mankind?") lead to the conclusion that in all things moral or natural "to reason right is to submit" (Epistle I, 157–164). This argument is very close to God's ultimate point in the Book of Job, and the exhortation to accept our place, whatever and wherever it may be, is Pope's final practical conclusion at the end of the first epistle: "Submit — In this, or any other sphere, / Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear: / Safe in the hand of one disposing Pow'r". These lines by Pope would perfectly encapsulate Mikes's philosophy of resignation as thematized and reiterated many times and in various forms throughout his *Letters from Turkey* and other writings. But for Mikes, characteristically, the terrible news of the Lisbon earthquake did not call for elaborate arguments of theodicy, only for a metaphorical reminder of divine justice, and a final sentence, hardly an argument either, about the return of everything to dust. Theodicy had become his second nature; he felt no urge any more to convince himself of its truth or to spell it out for others.

USES OF JOB AFTER LISBON:

UNLIKE VOLTAIRE, MIKES DOES NOT REPRESENT THE ENLIGHTENMENT

To conclude, both Voltaire and Mikes considered Job the archetypal sufferer but they used (and implicitly interpreted) this archetype in different ways. Whereas for Voltaire it posed a challenging problem, for Mikes it was a sublime parable about a saintly figure suffering for his (further) purification and setting us, fallen men, an example. The same applies to the 1755 Lisbon earthquake: whereas for Voltaire it was a problem too troubling for pious ready-made solutions; for Mikes it was too obviously divine to leave room for any crucial problem, and it was yet another example to demonstrate that nothing but due punishment can come from God's inevitable, if inscrutable, justice. Calling that disaster the whip of God, he implicitly attributed divine meaning to the great destruction it had caused, and thus he shrugged off the great dilemma that would haunt, albeit in different guises, many generations up to our own day. Two centuries later the question was whether one should attribute any meaning to a very different kind

of mass-destruction, yet in 1946 a funerary oration over the Hungarian Jewish victims of the Nazi concentration camps still referred to the Lisbon earthquake as a parallel, concluding that after such horrors, whether caused by geological forces or human cruelty, one should *not* seek consolation in the ultimate meaningfulness of a harmonious divine order (Komlós 312–313, 317–318). Historically speaking, Mikes’s immediate and resolute insistence on the reassuring divine meaningfulness of the Lisbon earthquake and his unwillingness to problematize the issue separates him not only from Voltaire but also from the whole epoch Voltaire is thought to epitomize: the Enlightenment.

This is all the more surprising because Mikes has always been studied under the aegis of some general terms, making his work a representative of trends, movements or epochs in intellectual history, and one of the most routinely applied labels has claimed that his oeuvre can be best understood in terms of the Enlightenment. Characteristically, a recent (2010) survey of Mikes scholarship started with declaring Mikes “one of the first and artistically the most impressive representative of the literature of the early Enlightenment” in Hungary (Tüskés 2010, 291; cf. Tüskés 2011, 299). This method of making Mikes a *representative*, whether of the Rococo, of Jansenism, or indeed of the Enlightenment, has often been productive, yet its drawbacks are no less conspicuous. It was very fruitful to invite papers on Mikes “in the context of European Enlightenment” (Tüskés 2012), but to define him as a representative of the Enlightenment is an opening gambit with far-reaching consequences for research. Starting with a foregone conclusion about the character and especially the affiliation or provenance of Mikes’s work, we are prone to adjust his texts to the criteria of the generic term they are supposed to represent. Viewed from the perspective of a movement, be it intellectual, artistic or religious, the overall character of Mikes’s works would often seem to dovetail with it if only because one tends to look for elements that justify one’s hypothesis and may easily disregard the rest. When Mikes’s *Letters from Turkey* is called (with a praise slightly condescending) “the best work of Hungarian rococo literature”, representing “the rococo of the Hungarian nobility”, a rococo that is primarily “hedonistic”, then of course we are told that Mikes’s work is geared towards entertainment, it abounds in the anecdotal, uses its Biblical elements as sheer curiosities, and even the author’s narrative talent cannot prevent it from being a little superficial (Hopp 1964, 516, 522–523, 526). The blind spot of this method will be obvious as soon as we read those Biblical allusions and Mikes’s own religious statements in their context: in most cases, whatever their tone, they are indications of a deep religious desire to maintain faith by justifying the ways of God. A pioneering study convincingly argued that the fountain of Mikes’s religiosity was the

Bible, compared to which any spiritual movement or any influence of his environment could be of secondary importance only (Zsoldos 81); yet this approach can just as easily harden into yet another deductive method that would preclude any in-depth analysis and tempt the researcher to look for nothing but Biblical correspondences and hence the Biblical aspect of Mikes's texts. As it is more productive (taking Paul de Man's advice) to look first at the way meaning is generated by the actual language of a work, and only afterwards historicize and classify the meaning thus generated (1987, 21–26), in our case it is more revealing to have started with Mikes's actual wording of the Lisbon disaster and his special use of the Jobian archetype before trying to infer what his work as a whole may *represent*.

This is especially true when it is the Enlightenment he is supposed to represent. As seen in his responses to almost any news in *Letters from Turkey*, Mikes was so unwaveringly devoted to religion above everything else that he can be sooner considered a seventeenth-century figure than a character shaped by the Enlightenment. Occasionally he may look simple-minded to a modern reader (Cs. Szabó 270), and those who praise his character usually do it with some condescension, but he was far from naive or shallow. He could face any disaster without despair because his faith was resolutely trying to unproblematize it, not because his own vision was narrowmindedly unproblematic. The workings of his deep religiosity may remind us of Alfred North Whitehead's insightful, if sweeping, generalization about the decisive differences between the 17th and 18th centuries in England, and may at least partly corroborate his daring thesis that seventeenth-century Englishmen had more depth. "Their dominant interest was religion, as against the 'debunking' of the eighteenth-century rationalists. 'Debunking' is a good thing to have done, but is comparatively shoal water. Johnson, a sturdier figure, was still in essence of the seventeenth century. If he and Voltaire had met, they wouldn't have had much to say to each other." (102–103) This last statement about the imagined (counterfactual) meeting of Samuel Johnson and Voltaire may not be entirely truthful, because we can discover intriguing similarities between Voltaire's indignant treatment of theodicy in his Lisbon poem and Johnson's scathing review on Soame Jenyns' *Free Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (1757), a book-review once rightly considered a clue to the interpretation of Johnson's entire *oeuvre* (Hinnant vii–viii, 1–10, 126–131). Yet if not about Johnson and Voltaire, the hypothesis would turn out to be true when applied to Mikes and Voltaire: their respective answers to the Lisbon disaster (and human suffering in general) were poles apart, and had they met, they would not have understood each other. When one thinks of Mikes's expressed views on history, his tacit assumptions, the long decades he spent in translating seventeenth-cen-

tury and early-eighteenth-century religious works, the language and the whole atmosphere of his letters fictive or real, one understands why he was called the last swallow of seventeenth-century Transylvanian literature, and why it was thought that the best pages of his *Letters from Turkey* constituted an epilogue to seventeenth-century Transylvanian historiography, although without its combatant nationalism and religiosity (Beöthy 68–69).

Endorsing this view, and thinking that Mikes belongs to the rear-guard of the seventeenth century rather than to the avant-garde of the Enlightenment, I am not replacing the usual condescending praise with another type of tongue-in-cheek adulation or thinly veiled criticism. Saying that his staunch seventeenth-century religiosity has nothing to do with the early Enlightenment is not the same as making him a reactionary. Progress in history is not linear, later epochs are not necessarily better than their predecessors, neither is any backward movement an obvious symptom of degeneration. True, Mikes would lose the distinction of being the most impressive Hungarian representative of early Enlightenment literature, “who, together with Ferenc Rákóczi II, was ahead of the development of Hungarian intellectual life by at least half a century” (Tüskés 2010, 291). But he can be seen as much more ahead of his time, as a predecessor of our own age, as an early advocate of facing any disaster without the complacent self-deception that would assume that we could run the universe any better. It is no mere coincidence that this pretentious claim, which Leibniz had castigated, in 1686, as the rash pronouncement of our own ignorance (1957, 39), was no less critically glossed by Northrop Frye regarding both the ordeal of Job and the Lisbon earthquake. In a lecture on Job, he commented on this empathically but dismissively: “We have there, as we have so often in the Jewish and Christian and Islamic religious traditions, the sense of God as being in charge of the order of nature, but without interfering in it. There is always something of a very human feeling that if we were God, we would work harder to earn our keep; that if we were in charge of what happened, we wouldn’t make such appalling bungles as God appears to be making.” (2003a 575) In a note referring explicitly to the Lisbon earthquake, he pilloried the same attitude more sarcastically because here he wanted to expose its latent European hypocrisy as well. “But human paranoia is so great: an earthquake in China, if we’re in Europe, doesn’t raise any questions, but in the Lisbon 1755 earthquake everybody ran around in circles screaming: How can God let this happen? Man always thinks that if he were Providence he’d do more to earn his keep, interfere more & push people around, in short, create romances.” (2003, 324–325) It is precisely this unpopular insight, whether voiced in the seventeenth century or in the twentieth, that Mikes was advocating in his works, humbly, patiently, yet resonantly.

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CLAUDE LE FUSTEC



THE KERYGMATIC MODE IN FICTION:
THREE EXAMPLES FROM THE UNITED STATES

What makes a work of fiction “great”? In Northrop Frye’s definition, great works of literature are “powers to be absorbed”:

Great literature doesn’t simply present beautiful forms or constructs, but releases articulate power. Using literature to tune in to that power and to shape one’s own articulateness is the end of a literary education. (2008 461-2)

In this light, theorizing such “articulate power” might be the end of a critical education. In any case, such a challenge definitely calls for a spiritual kind of literary criticism, both encompassing and transcending traditional religious criticism with its comparative focus on theological doctrine and literature. In a significant remark regarding the difference between a religious type of literary criticism and what might tentatively be labelled “spiritual criticism”, Frye notes:

Word and Spirit have nothing to do with doctrine and everything to do with experience. (LN 704)

Besides, as Ian Sloan remarks, the interaction in man of Word and Spirit is “what Frye means by kerygma” (Sloan 111).

As critics have pointed out, kerygma is an elusive concept, particularly when applied to literature. Northrop Frye himself seems to have been hesitant about applying it to secular works, though he did come to recognise that “every work of art is a possible medium for kerygma”.¹ Remembering that, for Frye, myth

¹ LN 643. Also quoting this passage, O’Grady notes: “In his notebooks jottings while composing *Words with Power*, Frye remarked that he had been ducking the point that the poetic has an oracular aspect that merges into kerygma [...]” (238). Though not unaware of the theological debate surrounding Frye’s use of the word “kerygma”, which is based on a definition of myth contradicting Bultman’s, I am turning to this concept in a strictly literary perspective.

was both “*mythos*, plot, narrative” (GC 31) as well as the vehicle of kerygma or Revelation, the concern of the present study is to examine how the kerygmatic experience might be mediated in secular plots or narratives.

Regarding this possible link between literature and transcendence, US fiction is a particularly interesting field of study, which is probably due to the considerable influence Puritan thought has had on it. Following Frye’s cyclical vision of culture, as analyzed by Glen R. Gill in *Northrop Frye on Twentieth Century Literature*, I will be focusing on three canonical novels, written in the romantic, modernist and postmodernist periods respectively. Indeed, for Frye, twentieth-century literature implied a descent into modernist irony but also a subsequent ascent towards spiritual vision:

Frye [...] deduced that what ultimately distinguished Romanticism from modernism was the latter’s scepticism toward the possibility of the subject-object union that made imaginative creation or spiritual revelation, what Frye would later call *kerygma*, possible [...]. The second half of Frye’s career, which saw him increasingly theorizing the spiritual significance of literature, was an effort to hasten another turn of the Spenglerian wheel, ideally creating such a consciousness of its cyclicity that it would on its next turn acquire a third dimension and become the spiral ascent that was his later apprehension of real cultural process. (Gill xxxvii)

Our analysis purports to examine this suggested succession of a romantic emphasis on kerygma superseded by a modernist descent into alienation and despair before an ascent back from the demonic pit in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) and *Beloved* (1987). In a way, this means following the route of kerygma, or rather the “kerygmatic mode”, in US fiction.

Frye defines verbal modes as the “variants” into which the relation of signifiers to signifieds develop (WP 3). “Verbal modes” appear to answer his wish to capture “the positive linguistic force [...] cutting across the variety of *langues* employed” (GC 5).² In *Words with Power*, they are presented as a progression from “the less inclusive to the most inclusive verbal mode” (4) in terms of the

² Frye describes this conception of language in *The Great Code* as follows: “To use a convenient French distinction: there is in addition to the *langue* that separates English and French and German, also a *langage* that makes it possible to express similar things in all three languages. [...] Human creative expression all over the world has some degree of mutual intelligibility and communicating power. [...] What we call *langage*, then, is a very positive linguistic force. One wonders whether it is substantial enough for there to be such a thing as a history of *langage*, a sequence of modes of more or less translatable structures in words, cutting across the variety of *langues* employed, affected and conditioned but not wholly determined by them. (5, italics in the original)

relationship of these modes to human consciousness. Culminating in the kerygmatic, Frye's sequence of modes ends on the distinction between this mode and all those he has detailed before. In his view, all modes but one affect the psyche, whether through mainly the senses, reason and emotion (referred to as the descriptive, conceptual/dialectic and rhetoric/ideological modes respectively) or the subconscious (the focus of the imaginative—or literary—mode). Encompassing all of these, however, is one mode that addresses what Frye refers to, in Pauline terms, as “the *soma pneumatikon*, the spiritual body (I Corinthians 15:44)” (124). In other words, the kerygmatic mode refers to the way words may affect us spiritually.

This issue of the spiritual power of words might seem to contradict prevailing contemporary views presuming the total arbitrariness of words as signs. This analysis is thus a rebellious endeavour to turn to literature as not only meaningful but as a possible secular means of encountering transcendence.

The Scarlet Letter, first, presents itself as the very dramatization of kerygmatic power. When the narrator chances upon the object that will spark the narrative, a red piece of cloth shaped like an A among forgotten documents in his office, he describes his experience in the following terms:

My eyes fastened themselves upon the old scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly there was some deep meaning in it most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind.

When thus perplexed [...] I happened to place it on my breast. It seemed to me [...] then, that I experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat, and as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. (42)

The subsequent narrative will then unfold from this original experience, as the narrator will try to evoke the story linked to the piece of cloth, basing himself on the accompanying written document summing up the life of its late wearer. The genesis of the narrative is thus particularly significant as regards the kerygmatic dimension of the story: as the first letter of the alphabet, the alpha of the novel, this letter, with its implicit connotation of primeval literary creation, appears in the text as simultaneously full of meaning and yet “evading the analysis of [the narrator’s] mind”. What “deep meaning” it holds “streams forth” from it, “subtly communicating itself to the narrator’s sensibilities” in “a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so” This reads as the very definition of the kerygmatic power

of language, one that is both verbal (uses letters) and beyond words (escapes mental analysis). Mainly, it affects the narrator's spiritual body ("a sensation not altogether physical"), implying a relationship to symbolic meaning that is a matter of direct experience. This cannot but recall Frye's definition of the symbol in *Words with Power*:

Originally, a symbol was a token or counter, like the stub of a theater ticket which is not the performance, but will take us to where the performance is. It still retains the sense of something that may be of limited interest or value in itself, but points in the direction of something that can be approached directly only with its help. A symbol may be purely arbitrary ("extrinsic", as Carlyle calls it), but as a rule it has or develops some analogous or other connection with what it points to, so that it can expand in that direction, taking us with it. Practically all techniques of meditation, for example, work with symbols, verbal or pictorial, that expand toward an identity, however defined, with what they symbolize. (109)

As Frye suggests, the identity between subject and object mediated by the symbol is the hallmark of the kerygmatic experience. In other words, in the case of Hawthorne's novel, the kerygmatic experience is what prompts the narrative. It is the source of the *mythos*, the verbal sequence that the narrative then opens out and the object of the long prologue detailing the circumstances of the discovery of the letter. What the narration appears to be after, in the end, is what no Puritan mind could have suffered: the recovery of the kerygmatic power of the letter.

Besides, the prologue also happens to be the moment when Hawthorne's narrator gives his famous definition of romance: "somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (47). This bears a striking similarity with Frye's meditation on kerygma in *Words with Power* as a "principle of reality" that is "neither objective nor subjective" (128). This "principle of reality", which he also translates as "the reality of hope and illusion", is a "spiritual presence" that, as Professor Denham observes, "goes beyond the conventional formulations of dialectic and doctrine" (66). The meeting point between Hawthorne's romance and Frye's kerygma thus has to do with what Frye calls "the positive illusion which is a potential, a something hoped for that can be actualized by a creative effort" (*WP* 131), its vehicle being the symbol:

The more significant the symbol, the more quickly it is transformed into the next stage of symbolism, the stage of epiphany or manifestation of a divine presence, a real presence appearing as a symbol of itself. (109-10)

This precisely seems to be what the scarlet letter stands for: “a real presence appearing as the symbol of itself”. However, what the letter symbolizes exactly is an issue that the novel works hard to make ambiguous. One would initially be tempted to read the letter as the symbol of evil: when the narrator puts the scarlet letter on his breast, his experience is that “of burning heat, and as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron” (Hawthorne 42). Yet, as the narrative seeks to show, the meaning of the symbol is unstable, as its wearer evolves from being considered a sinner to being looked at as an angel of mercy. This suggests that the scarlet letter may transcend moral meaning and should rather be looked at as a kind of sacred vessel containing its former holder’s heart experience, an experience of suffering so intense as to scald the narrator’s own breast two centuries later. In turn, the narrator will strive to resurrect the characters linked to that kerygmatic letter:

On Hester Prynne’s story, therefore, I bestowed much thought. It was the subject of my meditations for many an hour, while pacing to and fro across my room [...]. My imagination was a tarnished mirror. It would not reflect, or only with miserable dimness, the figures with which I did my best to people it. The characters of the narrative would not be warmed and rendered malleable by any heat that I could kindle at my intellectual forge. (45-6)

The reality of creative illusion or the kerygmatic power of literature thus seems to be what Hawthorne’s romantic narrator is after. In the end, it might be the secret that lends the letter its scarlet hue, especially when considering the narrator’s Puritan forebears, who would not countenance art, precisely on account of its hubristic claim to rival the Word of God:

A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation—may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler! (16)

This being said, throughout the story, one both feels the desperate narrative attempt to claim kerygmatic power and the relative failure to do so owing to the theatricality surrounding the revelation of the scarlet letter. In the first instance, after the discovery of the letter, the story starts with the staging of it as “fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon Hester’s bosom” (68), as she is about to be exposed to public infamy on a scaffold also described in rather elaborate terms as “the very ideal of ignominy” (70). Likewise, at the end of the story, when her partner in crime decides to reveal his own letter, which the power of his guilt and repentance has mysteriously imprinted on his very breast, the

scene is couched in heavy theatrical rhetoric. While the theatrical writing of the scene undoubtedly aims at creating cathartic terror, its spectacular character also results in a distance that takes away some of the kerygmatic power that the scene could have had.

In other words, *The Scarlet Letter's* hyperbolic romanticism might seem to work against its potentially kerygmatic power. On the other hand, the perceived tension between the genre of the novel and its dramatic frame reflects the tension between two representations of transcendence: the Puritan one, a religious vision dominated by fear of divine law, requires the ritualistic form of drama, while the romantic approach, for its part, is a secular one, defined in ontological rather than doctrinal terms as the law of the heart, the law of love, best expressed through the form of the novel, which allows intimacy with the characters' inner worlds. In terms of verbal modes, Hawthorne's piece of fiction thus appears to rely on a confrontation between religious rhetoric and a spiritual (kerygmatic) type of revelation, relocated within man's heart. This heralds what will be a definite tendency of subsequent fiction: looking for kerygma as an immanent experience.

Published in 1939, during what is generally considered as the age of modernism, *The Grapes of Wrath* would seem to share the trademark of its period, *angst*, particularly in view of its topic: the miserable plight of the hundreds of Oklahoma farmers forced to migrate to California in the 1930s. Still, far from giving vent to feelings of despair and alienation, as it could have been expected to, its story is cast as a secular version of the crossing of the desert, illustrating the indomitable march of mankind's Spirit. Interestingly, the novel calls this capacity of mankind to transcend itself, whereby "man, unlike any other thing organic or inorganic in the universe, grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts, emerges ahead of his accomplishments" (151): Manself, suggesting the utterly secular way it conceives of spirit :

The last clear definite function of man—muscles aching to work, minds aching to create beyond the single need—this is man. [...] For man, unlike any other thing organic or inorganic in the universe, grows beyond his work, walks up the stairs of his concepts, emerges ahead of his accomplishments. [...] And this you can know—fear the time when Manself will not suffer and die for a concept, for this one quality is man, distinctive in the universe. (151)

However, despite the insistently secular frame of the story, as illustrated by this concept of Manself—rather than Spirit—to refer to mankind's spiritual strength,

the biblical hypotext³ remains omnipresent, though adapted to suit the secular requirements of the novel. Indeed, the omnipresence of the Bible is visible in the very narrative project, delineated by Steinbeck himself when he spoke of his novel. As he famously wrote in a letter to his editor Pascal Covici, out of the five layers of meaning in *The Grapes of Wrath*: “A reader will find as many as he can’, and ‘what he takes from it will be scaled entirely on his own depth or hollowness’ (quoted by French 82).

This obviously suggests the traditional four levels of the *lectio divina*, adding an enigmatic fifth level that critics generally fail to address. The relatively few who have addressed this enigma turn to Dante’s exposition of the “levels of meaning” in literature. Interestingly, Frye drew an explicit parallel between his theory of verbal modes and Dante’s theory of polysemous meaning:

In the medieval theory of polysemous meaning, or at least in Dante’s exposition of it, there is nothing that directly corresponds to our conceptual mode, but there are two levels of what I am calling the rhetorical one. The first is “allegorical” (better called analogical or typological); answering the question *quid credas*, what you should believe; the other moral or tropological, answering the question *quid agas*, what you should do. We can call these the theory and practice respectively of Christian ideology. (*WP* 16)

Frye’s explanation suggests an intriguing line of inquiry into his own fifth layer of meaning. For, if his descriptive mode corresponds to the literal level of medieval theory, the preceding quote appears to settle the matter of the equivalence between his first three verbal modes—descriptive, conceptual and rhetoric—and those of medieval theory. The question then remains as to the relationship between the medieval fourth—anagogical—level of meaning and Frye’s fourth and fifth modes: respectively the “literary” and “kerygmatic” modes.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the anagogical level would correspond, critics generally agree, to the Emersonian concept of the Oversoul. Clara Mallier points out however that, though this key transcendentalist concept might seem to tie in with the spiritual level of meaning in the novel, it cannot “be apprehended through intellect alone”, but is rather “conveyed to the reader through devices closer to representation than abstract ideas”. However, as she perceptively observes, if this spiritual meaning is encoded in the book’s style,⁴ “an important

³ In *Palimpsests* (1984), Gérard Genette examines the various types of relationships a text may have with prior texts: “By hypertextuality I mean any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (5, italics mine).

⁴ Mallier lists a number of devices that serve to encode spiritual meaning in the text, notably

difference still separates the analogical dimension of sacred texts from that of Steinbeck's novel, for the former is esoteric":

According to the *lectio divina*, the spiritual meaning of sacred texts is ciphered, encoded through symbols that only the exegete can decipher. Now, the spiritual meaning of *The Grapes of Wrath*, on the contrary, is exoteric: Casy gives the keys to it through his words, which make up a pedagogical palimpsest of Emerson's writings.

Concluding that such an exoteric strategy is in keeping with the novel's political egalitarian ideal, which means to give equal access to its hermeneutic wealth, Mallier still leaves unresolved the issue of Steinbeck's fifth layer of meaning. This is where Frye's kerygmatic mode might be offered as a convincing answer.

Actually, one constant narrative device in the novel is to associate a literal level of meaning with a figurative one—as can be seen in the title, *The Grapes of Wrath*, which designates both God's apocalyptic anger and the literal grapes that the farmers would like to harvest to make a living in California. By dint of this constant association throughout the novel, the reader is gradually taught to see through ordinary reality, as depicted by the literal level of the story, to its symbolic significance. The personal, historical situation is thus made symbolic of humankind's and the narrative gradually operates a true conversion in the reader, reflecting the main characters' own progressive awareness of the collective dimension of their individual plight. Such an opening up of consciousness is achieved through a number of narrative devices. The most visible one is the modernist structure of the novel, which alternates a realistic and empathetic focus on the Joads' specific odyssey with a rhetoric-cum-philosophical and poetic depiction of the historical and collective situation in the so-called interchapters. The narrative *telos*, then, is to have the reader pass from a sequential reading of the link between the individual and the collective to a metonymic (Emersonian) experience of their oneness (the analogic level). But this is only one step in his progress towards the full symbolic—Christian—spiritual experience of their interrelatedness—or interpenetration, to take up a Frygian notion. This climactic experience of communion is particularly striking in the contemplative mood that permeates the final scene, where Rose of Sharon acquires the full symbolic power of saintly maternity in the barn where she suckles a dying man, in an implicit rewriting of the Nativity. This in turn points to one level of signification in the novel that may not be reduced to an exoteric encoding of

Steinbeck's biblical style, the way he resorts to a metonymic characterization so as to convey the sense of an organic unity between people or the way he links cosmic and human time.

Emersonian philosophy but rather ultimately seeks to address the reader's *soma pneumatikon* as the locus of a subtle, transformative exchange through a rewriting of biblical symbolism. The arguably fine-art allusions of the final tableau in the barn—which, Ditsky notes, “is a Louvre of mixed subjects: a Nativity, a *Mona Lisa*, an immense and heroic Delacroix” (122)—produce less aesthetic distance than a mood of contemplation referring the reader back to his/her own inner world.⁵ The meditative state thus portrayed and achieved, however, is no ecstatic rapture towards immortal realms but such an immanent, bodily experience as to have initially shocked some readers. Its conjunction of the traditionally opposed realms of spirit and flesh in a still explicitly Christian frame suggests the incarnated and realistic character of kerygma in the novel. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, the deliberately polysemous narration—with its historical and naturalistic basis, but also rhetorical, poetic and spiritual dimensions—lends the novel its prophetic and visionary effect, the result of its kerygmatic realism.

As compared with the narrative strategy of the first two novels discussed, *Beloved* would nearly read as straight realism but for the use of a supernatural character: Beloved herself, who turns up as the young adult she would have been had her mother not murdered her eighteen years before. Besides, *Beloved* is a historical novel, the story being a fictive version of the life of a fugitive slave, Margaret Garner, who tried to kill her children rather than witness their return to slavery. In this novel, the way the narration treats the supernatural, putting Beloved on an equal footing with perfectly ordinary characters, shows an even greater degree of integration of what transcends daily reality than in *The Grapes of Wrath*. To be sure, there is an allegorical quality to the novel, as Morrison herself said that she wanted to create a situation where the past (of slavery) would sit at the table with the present and demand to be heard. Still, the recognized narrative power of the novel far exceeds its allegorical dimension, which has to do with the realistic treatment of the non-secular aspect of experience that Beloved represents. One clue as to the reason for that treatment of the supernatural as commonplace may be the belief, expressed by Sethe—the character standing for Margaret Garner—that “nothing ever dies”:

⁵ In this sense, our analysis is at odds with Kocela's reading of the final scene as “emphasizing the constructedness of meaning in self-conscious role-play” (262). If this final scene “explodes the allegorical frameworks of [the] novel” (ibid.), we would rather see it as the effect of blurring the difference between the literal/realistic quality of the scene and its symbolic dimension than the result of an increased awareness on the part of the character (and reader) regarding the presumed heterogeneity of those two levels. Just as Rose of Sharon *becomes* a Madonna, so we are made to *experience* her silent and intimate revelation by watching it. Such, in any case, seems to be the aim of Steinbeck's kerygmatic realism.

Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. [...] But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. [...] Where I was before I came here, that place is *real*. It's never going away. Even if the whole farm—every tree and grass blade of it dies. The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there—you who never was there—if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. (36)

As is apparent from this conversation between Sethe and her youngest daughter eighteen years after her escape from slavery, the “reality” that she speaks of, the reality of the past, is neither physical (the actual place may have burnt down) nor only psychological (“I used to think it was my rememory. [...] But it's not”). Its actuality is spiritual, a matter of presence that is both subjective and objective, beyond what the senses and memory may grasp. This spiritual presence is, at heart, what the “ghost” of *Beloved* represents, as can be seen in the short epilogue concluding the story, after the ritualistic scene that definitively frees Sethe from *Beloved*'s clutch.

Viewed from a metaliterary perspective, these last two pages epitomize the story of the genesis, birth and death of *Beloved* as the existential metaphor or literary embodiment of the collective trauma of slavery, leaving in its place the shared feeling of a spiritual presence expressed through the last seven letters of her name, printed, alone, at the end of the text. In very poetic prose, *Beloved*'s birth is described as the incarnation of an initial feeling of “loneliness”. It is then given “arms and knees”, but fails to acquire an individual identity: for “everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name” (274). Swallowed by the “chewing laughter” and forgotten “like a bad dream”, her anonymous physical presence gradually dissolves as collective memory absorbs it. Remaining as mere “weather”, “not the breath of the disremembered and unaccounted for, but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly” (275) and the bare suggestion of a “clamor for a kiss”, her haunting presence is converted into a peaceful epitaph (“*Beloved*”). In the end, the letters of her name are like her mother's house, which she used to haunt: “unloaded” and “quiet” (264).

In a way, the epilogue would thus seem to consecrate the death of metaphorical language as the language of possessive identification. In an earlier passage, *Beloved* had brought this type of language to a pitch in her famed monologue celebrating the only type of love she could know as a pre-*C*edipal child: fusal love. In her words, addressed to an unnamed, motherly presence: “You are my face; you are me” (216). Indeed, the whole story is about *Beloved*'s initial

haunting of her mother as a ghost, only to turn up as a young adult who is going to threaten Sethe with annihilation on account of a boundless demand for love, recognition and impossible reparation. In the epilogue, with this demonic bond severed, the narrative becomes free to coin a new kind of language, evoking a paradoxical sense of presence through absence, collectively shared:

So they forgot her. Like an unpleasant dream [...]. Occasionally, however, the rustle of a skirt hushes when they wake, and the knuckles brushing a cheek in sleep seem to belong to the sleeper. [...]

Down by the stream in back of 124 her footprints come and go [...]. They are so familiar. Should a child, an adult place his feet in them, they will fit. Take them out and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there.

By and by all trace is gone, and what is forgotten is not only the footprints but the water too and what it is down there. (275)

This sense of a collective communion with Beloved's spiritual presence, where self and other merge in a paradoxical experience of absent presence, is curiously reminiscent of Frye's description of interpenetration in *Words with Power*:

The spiritual body [of the risen Christ] is everywhere and in everyone [...]. The *soma pneumatikon* then suggests a certain fluidity of personality. [...] In *The Great Code* I used the word interpenetration to describe this fluidity of personality. [...] It seems impossible to dissociate the conceptions of spiritual personality and love. The capacity to merge with another person's being without violating it seems to be at the center of love, just as the will to dominate one conscious soul-will externally by another is the center of all tyranny and hatred. (126)

Beloved could then arguably be considered as the redemptive effort to convert love as psychological possession (the model of which is Beloved's haunting of her mother) into spiritual love or interpenetration, the model of which is Paul D's final offer of love to Sethe. In keeping with his name, recalling the biblical apostle of Charity, Paul D's is a romantic and liberating offer to turn to the future, as opposed to the haunting presence of the past that Beloved represented:

"Sethe," he say, "me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow."

He leans over and takes her hand. With the other he touches her face. "You your best thing, Sethe. You are." His holding fingers are holding hers.

"Me? Me?" (273)

As this quick perusal of three canonical U.S. novels has shown, the kerygmatic mode in fiction may rely on a variety of narrative devices: romantic dramatization, polysemy, metaphorical immediacy, each bringing out the awing, prophetic and compassionate aspects of kerygma. This potentially opens up new avenues for thought pertaining to the multifaceted aspects that the spiritual power of literature may take. Nonetheless, should such a critical path ever be seen to develop, kerygma itself would prove in dire need of theory. Jean O'Grady quotes Frye saying: "I'd need a distinction between specific (Biblical) and general kerygma" and goes on to comment: "a distinction one wishes he had pursued (LN 415)" (O'Grady 240). We hope this paper will have suggested some of the forms "general kerygma" may take in literature as well as brought us a few steps further towards what Frye seems to have envisioned as a "criticism of Charity".

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FRYE VS. FREUD ON NATIONALISM: OEDIPUS, HAMLET,
BÁNK BÁN AND THE “MOTHER-CENTRED MYTH”

I. FREUD AND THE OEDIPAL STRUCTURE OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY HUN-
GARIAN PATRIOTIC POETRY

In the year of the breakout of the Hungarian war of independence, 1848, a major writer of the forthcoming era, János Vajda, wrote a poem entitled “Gonosz házasság” (Evil marriage). The poem is an open allegory describing Hungary as a beautiful widow of the much loved Hungarian king Mathias, seduced, married and abused by the villain Austria who had been promising marriage to several countries simultaneously. The marriage is so unfortunate that the sons of Hungary—the nation—eventually decide to take arms against the wicked stepfather. Pamphlet-like, the poem is interesting for two reasons.

First, it is an unusually clear articulation of a usual trope of contemporary national poetry that spurred Hungarians to rise against foreign rule. By representing the “usurpation” of Hungary by Austria as an “evil marriage”, Vajda’s poem highlights the otherwise oblique fact that the master narrative of patriotic poetry is the “family romance”. In the contemporary politico-literary discourse, the Austrian ruler, the Habsburg dynasty, is mostly staged as the representative of an alien, aggressive and disingenuous force responsible for (literally) murdering the Hungarians’ “ancient *fathers*”—their former “native” political leaders—in order to seize Hungary, which is usually personified and presented as the *mother* of the people making up the Hungarian “nation”. The *sons* are usually upbraided for their idleness and incompetence as opposed to the ancient fathers who were famous for wielding their swords and arms mightily, as Dániel Berzsenyi’s great poem:

How diff’rent rang the thunder of Hungary
Amidst the blood-soaked battles of Attila,
Who boldly faced half of the world in
Punitive anger against the foul West!
(translated by Adam Makkai, 176)

As Michael Herzfeld notes, “perhaps people everywhere use the familiar building blocks of body, family and kinship to make sense of larger entities” (5). However, the articulation of the hatred of foreign rule and the ensuing need to defend the country, a *specific* “family problem”, may be worthy of a deeper examination.

Second, through forming an allegory from the usual metaphors and allusions, the plot of Vajda’s poem transforms this familiar-familial narrative into a strange hypertext of *Hamlet*. The appearance of Shakespeare’s play in this context may be surprising at first sight, but *Hamlet* in Hungary was often alluded to on account of its having a particular political relevance for contemporary Hungarian audiences. Far from being a conscious rewriting of the play, the master narrative of Hungarian patriotic poetry may have been influenced by a “social representation” of *Hamlet*, of which József Takáts contends:

In some texts the allusions to *Hamlet* imply that the tragedy or at least its version created in the act of interpretation was understood as a political work of art. In a 1790 letter, Ferenc Kazinczy writes: “It is well known that the horror the character of *Hamlet* and the ghost awaken in the viewers is akin to the not so rosy feelings of our nation...” Even more interesting is the *Hamlet* interpretation—or rather, a comment on the closing scene—by Ágost Greguss, who also foregrounded the political aspects of the tragedy. His comment informs us that contemporary Hungarian performances of the play usually omitted the last scene, which—according to Greguss—made the final reconciliation ineffectual. (...) Greguss’s opinion relies on the assumption that the exclusion of the closing scene obscures the fact that the play is about a polity and not a person. (166–167)

The framing of the assumed social-political situation of the Hungarian nation as a family tragedy and its implied comparison with *Hamlet* raises several questions. Why is the political situation imagined in this fashion? Is the allusion to *Hamlet* completely arbitrary? Is there anything in *Hamlet* that encourages such a “political” reading? Does the interpretation of the play provide any explanation for the family tropology used in national poetry? Can the family romance of the national myth of nineteenth-century Hungarian poetry unfold potential political meanings in *Hamlet*?

In what follows I would like to demonstrate that the connection between *Hamlet* and nineteenth-century Hungarian patriotic poetry is based on a tacit understanding of the political implications of Shakespeare’s play. First, I would like to show that the literature in question manifests several elements which invite the psychoanalytical interpretations of the situation of the Prince of Den-

mark.¹ But this is only the beginning: my central aim is to show that Frye’s notion of the “mythic grounding of literature” can offer an alternative explanation for the familial master narrative of Hungarian patriotic poetry. I am trying to prove that the “archetypal criticism” that Frye introduces to explore the most basic levels of art (and perhaps any kind of discourse) may question the validity of the Freudian notion of the Oedipal conflict in this national context. Instead of being seen as a psychological phenomenon, the family tropology of the conflict should be interpreted as the consequence of the rise of romantic “mother-centred” myths, which contributed to the increasing popularity and prevalence of the metaphor of the *motherland* in the nineteenth century.

In the last part of this paper, I would like to show that the widespread allusions to a political *Hamlet* in the national discourse of the era do not only spring from the romantic context and its ensuing reinterpretation of the play. The family romance of *Hamlet* is already political in Shakespeare’s play, and although it is more than 200 years older than the Hungarian literature in question, it is among the first manifestations of the reappearance of the mother-centred myth that Frye calls Romantic.

The Oedipal problematic in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* has been a commonplace in literary theory for over half a century. Based on an idea of Freud, Ernest Jones was the first to present this dramatic problem as a psychological one. Accordingly, both Laurence Olivier and Franco Zeffirelli would take it for granted that

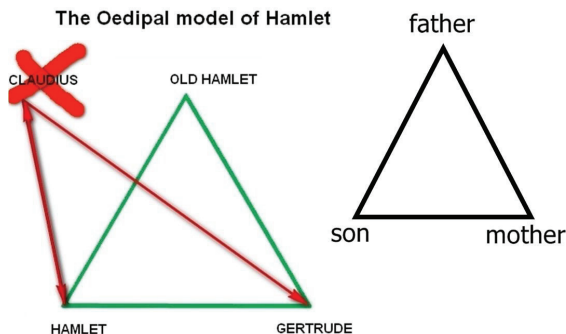
¹ With the rise and rule of new historicism, cultural materialism, and the cultural analysis of Foucault, Freud has been heavily historicized, which may also support my arguments. In Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, for example, psychoanalysis is seen as the representative of the ideology of the new bourgeoisie to control its own existence and production by enforcing a discourse on sexuality that pathologizes and thus isolates certain forms of this sexuality. In this context, the Oedipal conflict, instead of being an eternal truth of human nature, is seen as a kind of fiction that is disseminated to influence and control the self-image of people and make them conform to bourgeois ideology (Foucault 108.) The exact connection between this ideology and the complex itself is most famously expressed by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti-Oedipus* (298-302), that meticulously shows how the heuristic notion of the Oedipal complex stimulates the production of capital and the compliance with related state institutions that in turn deeply influence the ruling family structure and relations. In this context, both an Oedipal interpretation of the Hungarian national poetry and the Freudian interpretation of the French revolution seem to be correct, as far as they are treated as symptoms of the new “capitalist” spirit. These revolutionary movements are known to be the manifestations of the urge to change into a new bourgeois political order that was necessitated by economical changes. If bourgeois ideology and the Oedipal structure of the family are as complicit as cultural studies today insists, the underlying Oedipal motives are themselves the “invention” of the era. Even the Oedipal interpretation of *Hamlet* may be historicized as a manifestation of the new family relations in the Early Modern Age—which is of course the very age of the appearance of capitalism and the first nation states.

Hamlet is in love with his mother, and hates his uncle not only because he murdered his father, but rather because he wedded his mother:

Hamlet had, “as a child, bitterly resented having had to share his mother’s affection even with his own father, had regarded him as a rival, and had secretly wished him out of the way” (Jones 1954, 78). Such thoughts have been driven into Hamlet’s unconscious by his filial loyalty and the social taboo against incest. But the actualization of his infantile wish in the murder of his father by a jealous rival produces an obscure and depressive memory of his childhood conflict. (Harris 86)

The reason for Hamlet’s famous hesitation follows from the ensuing ambivalence: Claudius commits the crime Hamlet “unconsciously” desires to commit, so, on the one hand, killing Claudius would stand in for killing “himself”; punishing him therefore would be punishing himself. A further problem is that the revenge would be just another *repetition* of the original “crime”, given that Claudius, being the husband of his mother, now also becomes a father figure:

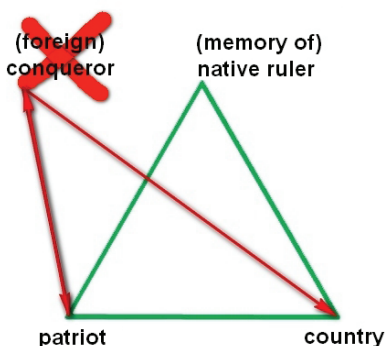
The two contrasting elements of the normal ambivalent attitude towards the father were expressed towards two sets of people: the pious respect and love towards the memory of his father, and the hatred, contempt and rebellion towards the father-substitute (...). In other words, the original father had been transformed into two fathers, one good, the other bad, corresponding with the division in the son’s feelings. (Harris 86.)



Similarly, in the patriotic poetry of the nineteenth century, the nation seems to suffer from a communal Oedipal complex. The country is taken over by a wicked false ruler or “father”. The ancient fathers are dead just like old Hamlet, while the “idle” sons are expected to save and regain the country and punish the

usurpers. The avenging spirit of old Hamlet in Shakespeare’s play is present in Hungary in part in the spirit of the ancient fathers and in part is represented by the very spirit of the *poetry* of the age. Last but not least, the Oedipal motives of the prince that are so manifest in modern interpretations of *Hamlet*, can be seen not only in the excessive love of the sons for the country, but also in their willingness to die on the battlefield. This is understood not only as a sacrifice to save the country and to avenge the ancient fathers, but also as an act of spilling blood *onto the field* and so as to be buried *in the earth* that is emphatically the *mother-land* of Hungary.

The Oedipal model of Hungarian nationalism



All this is illustrated with many excerpts from Hungarian poetry in a study I wrote twenty years ago in 1993. A year earlier, Lynn Hunt had published a book that examined the Freudian ‘family romance’ and related phenomena—primarily the Freudian notion of the (Oedipally motivated) revolt of the sons in *Totem and Taboo*—as manifested in the beheading of the king, the “father” of his people, and the subsequent “freedom” of the democratic “brotherhood” of the nation in the discourse on the French Revolution.

The Oedipal hypothesis may be tested on József Katona’s famous 1819 tragedy, *Bánk bán*, translated as *The Viceroy* (2003). This emblem of patriotic feeling, a play based on historical facts, has been canonized as an outstanding literary achievement of the Hungarian pre-romantic movement, and remains well-known by all Hungarians, being compulsory reading in the school curriculum.²

² The main storyline is based on the assassination of Queen Gertrudis, wife of Andrew II in 1213 by Viceroy (‘bán’ = ‘duke’) Bánk. The King is fighting abroad while his queen, who is of foreign birth, feasts with his foreign friends and relatives. Bánk, the king’s deputy, is touring the poverty-ridden country while Otto, the Queen’s younger brother, is trying to seduce Bánk’s beautiful wife, Melinda. A group of angry Hungarian nobles are plotting a conspiracy against the

As an opening move, I wish to compare the play with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Some thematic parallels stand out: the queen of this political drama is called Gertrudis, and, in the opera version, the heroine, Melinda, commits suicide by drowning herself like Ophelia. But correspondences run deeper than that. To understand the analogies, it is important to consider that although the play is situated in the past, the tragedy has always been read as an allegory of the situation of Hungary in the writer's time and a manifestation of the urge to rise up against foreign rule, the root cause of all problems in the country.

The Oedipal problematics are easy to assess. We find many similarities between the structure of the conflict in *Bánk bán* and in *Hamlet*. Besides the political trouble, the central personal conflict of the play is the one between Bánk, a Hungarian magnate, and the wicked Otto, the brother of the queen who successfully seduces Melinda, the wife of Bánk bán. In *Hamlet*, the protagonist is opposed to a usurper who in the Freudian interpretation is a replacement of the dead father figure. In Katona's play the usurper is the foreign Otto who might also be treated as the replacement of the legal father figure, the king, who is again missing (although he is not dead, but waging a war in a far-away province).

Along the same lines we find that the mother figure of this interpretation is just as doubled as the father figure. It is either the good and innocent Melinda, wife of the king's deputy, seduced by the usurper, or the wicked Gertrudis, the wife of the king himself, who is identified in the beginning as the mother of the Hungarian nation; Mikhál, a Hungarian noble describes the revolt as follows:

Shall children then their mother trample down
Because their father in a foreign field
Is seeking fortune? That is wickedness!" (71).

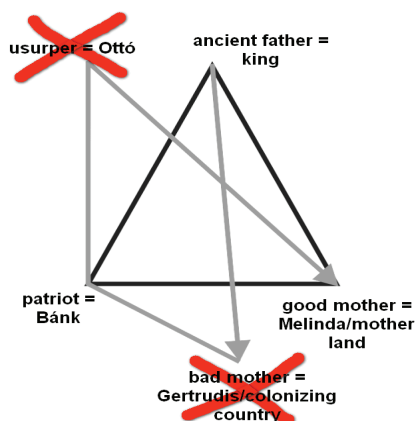
In psychoanalytic interpretations of narratives, the duplication of the object of desire is just as frequent as the duplication of the threatening rival in order to displace aggressive sentiments. As Bruno Bettelheim argues, the wicked step-mother replaces the good dead queen in tales like *Snow White* (282), while in *Little Red Riding Hood* both the rival mother figure and the father figure are

queen and they send for Bánk, hoping to recruit him for their cause. The duke arrives and is first outraged at the idea of the revolt. However, when he is informed of Otto's advances to Melinda, his stance begins to waver. Meanwhile, Otto, encouraged by the Queen's open approval, drugs and rapes Melinda. Bánk then calls to the Queen, and after a bitter quarrel, he stabs her. When King Andrew returns, Bánk admits his deeds, convinced of her guilt and his moral innocence. He is sentenced to death, when suddenly it turns out that Melinda was killed by the servants of Otto, who fled from the country. The king allows Bánk to leave freely believing that life would be his greatest punishment.

doubled (239.) In *Bánk bán*, Oedipal motives for the murder of the queen can also be found. While the seduction of Melinda creates unsatisfied desire, the killing of Gertrudis satisfies it in a sublimated way, by the very act of stabbing.

Because of the obvious *parallel* between the private family problem and the political one presented in the play, psychoanalytical motifs should be sought in the thematic public sphere too. The private problem consists in a love triangle, in which Otto wants to seize Melinda from Bánk, while the political problem is presented as the occupation of the homeland of Hungarian nobles by foreigners. Bánk is a native, while Otto is a representative member of the foreigners, so the parallel may even become allegory if we contend that Melinda may represent Hungary itself.

First, in the play both are raped and destroyed by the foreign usurpers. Second, in the national discourse I mentioned above, the homeland is usually treated not only as a woman, but as the mother of sons and a wife of ancient Hungarian lords, two roles Melinda fills. “Much is at risk – our land / And Melinda” – a Hungarian Lord presents the problem (29). Not much later, Bánk conjoins his greater griefs, the tragic fates of his country and his wife: “My love for Hungary inspires revolt, / My love for Melinda restrains again” (57). He seems unable to decide which tragedy strikes him more; he muses and *hesitates* about what he should do. Later on, he actually mixes up the two problems when he describes Otto and Gertrude as those who “murdered my good name” (140) in a line where *his* lost manly reputation (due to the rape of his wife) becomes identified with the reputation of “all my kin”, which is associated with the ‘nation’ as ‘nemzet’ etimologically meaning ‘kindred’. He laments alternately both and eventually avenges both.



As a consequence of the family problem, *Hamlet* seems to have the political problem present in the background. In contrast, the Hungarian national poetry of the nineteenth century uses the family romance as a metaphor of the political problematic. In *Bánk bán*, however, both problems are *literally* manifest and exist side by side: they mutually represent each other. Should we think of a “collective” desire in Jungian fashion? Indeed, the archetypal theory of Frye may offer an *alternative* explanation, questioning even the Oedipal nature of the problem.

II. FRYE AND THE “MOTHER-CENTRED” RHETORIC OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY HUNGARIAN NATIONAL DISCOURSE

In *A Study of English Romanticism*, Frye attributes the well-known Romantic interest in nature to the re-emergence of what he calls the mother-centred myth that replaces the father-centred myth dominating the preceding centuries. As he says:

It is probable that the earliest creation myths were sexual and cyclical in shape, assuming that man and the world simply came into existence in the same way that babies are born and seeds grow in spring. The etymology of the Latin *natura* and the Greek *physis* connects them. Such myths tend to become mother-centred myths, where nature is an earth-goddess renewing her vitality (in more sophisticated versions her virginity) every spring. If the role of the male in conception is understood, the earth-goddess may be thought of as impregnated by sun or wind or rain, or she may be attended by a subordinate male figure who is successively her son, her lover, and eventually her sacrificial victim. (5–6)

As implied, graveyard poetry and odes on Nature are just two sides of the same coin and both are directly connected to the ancient mother-centred type of myths. Death in this romantic worldview is not a new life in a higher dimension (as in the father-centred myths of the previous ages), but rather a return to the beginning, metaphorized as the womb of the mother “who” on the cosmic level is mother Nature or mother Earth.

As I have mentioned, romanticized and sexualized heroic death is also the recurring theme of Hungarian national poetry. In a famous and often-cited poem, the most prominent Romantic poet of Hungary, Sándor Petőfi, writes “I’m troubled by one thought – to die / in bed, among pillows stacked high” and prays God to “let me drop my shield/on the battle field / let youth’s river flow from my heart as it’s bleeding” (translated by Adam Makkai, 312)(a desire that eventu-

ally came true). In Ferenc Kölcsey’s 1823 “Hymn”, which would become the Hungarian national anthem in 1844, the civil wars of the past are seen as a feud of brothers hurting their mother associated with the earth:

Often ‘gainst you, Hungary,
 Did your very sons rave:
 Thus the fairest Mother Earth
 Did become her sons’ grave!
 (translated by Watson Kirconnel; Makkai 194)

All this suggests that the collective “oedipal” desire of the nation might be a psychological misinterpretation of a sentiment manifest in culturally specific rhetoric. It is not only the feminized personification of the land, but also the “oedipal” narrative which can be explained by the mother-centred myth of the emerging Romantic ideology of the age. In the *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye detects the presence of myths in almost every literary creation, like a kind of skeleton. This theory enables the critic to explain the basis of the narrative structure in terms of the order and ritual manipulation of nature. As he explains:

Narrative is studied by the archetypal critic as ritual or imitation of human action as a whole (...) In its archetypal phase, the poem imitates nature, not (as in the formal phase) nature as a structure or system, but nature as a cyclical process. The principle of recurrence in the rhythm of art seems to be derived from the repetitions in nature that make time intelligible to us. Rituals cluster around the cyclical movements of the sun, the moon, the seasons, and human life. (...) Ritual is not only a recurrent act, but an act expressive of a dialectic of desire and repugnance: desire for fertility or victory, repugnance to drought or to enemies.” (105–106)

The hero, Frye suggests, may be the descendant of the agent in the ritual who must fertilize the barren earth, dispelling winter and bringing spring and summer. His death likewise is associated with autumn and general decay, which is seen as a failure of man’s efforts to manipulate the greater powers of nature. If we return to the drama, such a mythic structure is not impossible to find. The country ruled by the usurpers represents the threatening winter personified by cold Otto, while the associated barren earth is embodied by the “bad” mother of the people, the wicked and unwomanly—“unnatural”—Gertrudis.

These roles are opposed to the function of those who want to revive the earth and bring forth spring, represented by the young and beautiful Melinda, who should be fertilized by the powers of life represented by Bánk, the (messianic)

Son of this play, the human representative of the (godlike) king. Bánk and his entourage of Hungarian nobility represent the positive male principle by being associated with the (life-giving) Sun both by their position and by their sudden returning from disappearance, not to mention the symbolism of the hope attributed to Bánk as the head of the *rising* nobles. The causes of the revolt mentioned in the play are strongly associated with natural *dysfunction*: the people suffer from famine; Gertrudis behaves unnaturally, like a man (miming her husband); and Melinda's castle is burnt down. In the end Bánk justifies his deed by the necessity to literally *sacrifice* the queen in order to save the country from devastation.³

The application of Frye's archetypal theory to this kind of literature is rather unproblematic, since this is the very age of Romanticism in Hungarian literature. In *The Anatomy of Criticism* however, Frye treats these associations as basic elements in any literary work. What specifically does this mean for the nineteenth-century Hungarian poetic discourse in question? If, as the Romantic Myth implies, it is the earlier cyclical myth that tends to return in the Age of Romanticism, is there a political equivalent of the "father-centred" myth that is overthrown in this era?

The word "nation" comes from the Latin word 'nasci', 'to be born', which is very close to the archetypal associations in question, being an expression emphasizing the "genetic" bond between the *feminized* land and the people living on it. The Hungarian version, however, emphasizes the *paternal* ancestry: the word 'nemzet', which is a translation of the Latin 'gens', 'gentis', is a shortened form of 'nemzetség', meaning 'clan', connecting people not only genetically but through their *patrilineal* descent. The root of the word 'nemzet' is 'beget', 'procreate', 'inseminate'. The word 'haza' has a roughly similar semantics to the word 'homeland' and 'motherland' from the early nineteenth century up to now (Bańcerowski and Bárdosi 7), and seems to provide a matrilineal complementary to the patriarchal bonds implied by the word 'nemzet', and has nothing to do linguistically with 'birth', 'mother' or 'mothering'. Rather, 'haza' comes from the sexually neutral root 'ház', meaning 'house' and 'home'.

On closer look, it becomes clear that the word 'ház', 'house', is not neutral either. Beside one's physical place of living, it also meant 'household', the people living in one's house, including servants, vassals, clients, relatives, etc. (2), but—

³ As Bánk says: Rebellion / Was seething everywhere, and she alone / The hated object; no Hungarian / That loved his [mother]land would have refused / To make this sacrifice on its behalf" (173). In this case I corrected the translation, which used the term "fatherland" in the German fashion. In my view, the Hungarian nationalist sentiments were against not only the Austrian rule but also the Habsburg idea of the realm as "fatherland" as well.

obviously in line with the concept of clan—first of all, one’s blood relatives and descendants in a *patrilineal* network (as in the expression ‘királyi ház’, meaning ‘royal dynasty’ or ‘house’). The associations of the root of the word ‘haza’ were almost the same as those of the ‘nemzet’. The ‘fatherland’ of Germanic languages, seems to remain closest to the traditional concept of the body politic, the state, which was imagined as a male body with its head being the (male) monarch and as a family with the father as the head, the central and most important “organ” governing his realm.

It may be clear now that the process of the feminization of the “country” in the nineteenth century as a maternal entity separated from the male cultural network of the state not only squares with Frye’s mother-centred myth but perfectly represents the mytho-political *process* of the mother-centred myth gaining precedence over the father-centred version. In this process, the members of the nation called ‘nemzet’, that is, the descendants of an ancient male monarch were expected to become ‘hazafi’, that is, sons of the maternal ‘haza’, which is both a linguistic and poetic manifestation of the change. It is definitely this figurative ‘mother’ around whom the new revolutionary universe was structured. The process is in accord with the phenomenon of the growing merit of the (feminine) affection within the family surpassing and even replacing the (masculine) parental authority over children from the eighteenth century. The newly discovered importance of this maternal love creates the bonds within the—newborn—“nations”. The invention of these, as Sarah Maza put it:

was an attempt to promote new forms of spiritual fulfillment in one’s sense of connectedness to a community of fellow human beings. The family occupied a towering place in this ideological system. As a natural unit and the embodiment of a feeling rooted in nature, it was both the origin of one’s moral sensibility and a model for all other social connections. A passage in the historian and social critic Gabriel de Mably’s much read *Entretiens de Phocion* (1763) is typical: “(...) It is only through the practice of domestic virtues that a people prepares itself for the practice of public virtues (...) Domestic morality determines, in the end, public morality.” (59)

As the family model turns to be more and more affectionate, so the love for the country seems to surpass and even overcome the loyalty to the father, the “head” of the state, the place of the rational wisdom needed to govern a country. The nineteenth-century Hungarian image of the nation with its excessive love for its “motherland” is a revolutionary political version of both the contemporary official Austrian concept of the realm and the “father-centred” myth of the pre-romantic era.

4. POLITICAL HAMLET

The Romantic myth of Frye seems to offer an explanation for the nineteenth-century Hungarian political imagery. Does this mean that the allusion to *Hamlet*, if it exists at all, is completely superficial? Should we assume that while the characters and the plot may serve as models for the roles in the master narrative of Hungarian patriotic literature, those do not signify a deeper understanding of the play itself? May we contend that there is nothing in *Hamlet* that encourages such a “political” reading of it? If Hamlet’s problem is Oedipal, it cannot be true to the national sentiment of the nineteenth century, and, vice versa, Hamlet’s family problem surely cannot be a political allegory. Can it not?

The kingdom of Denmark in the play is usually treated as a characteristic representative of the body politic. The well-known phrase “something is rotten in Denmark” seems to be a perfect manifestation of the concept that the perversion and vices of the ruler and his family are mirrored in the state which they are the microcosmic representative of. Indeed, this idea is prevalent in *Hamlet*, invoking the correspondence of not only the state and the ruler but also the parallel of these and the body. First, it is Laertes who muses about the duties of Hamlet and the improbability of his marrying a humble girl, which can be understood in the context of the duality of the “sacred” and the human body of the royal person. Later on, Horatio vividly describes the wheel of fortune the rolling of which destroys not only the king but the whole *socius*, as well. In both cases, it is the identification of the royal body and his realm that frames his philosophizing.

Although these suggestions would make the nature of the connection between the public and the private, i.e. the political actions in the “background” and the private problems in the “foreground” of the play, be worth investigating, it usually remains untouched. There is no correlation noted between the private and public events beyond immediate cause and effect. Naturally, there are many approaches to *Hamlet* that place the tragedy in a referential or quasi-referential relationship with the actual politics of Shakespeare’s days,⁴ but these readings

⁴ “The international dimension is crucial for an appreciation of the politics of *Hamlet*, particularly when considered in the context of the uneasiness surrounding the late Elizabethan succession question. This is not to say that there are specific correspondences, that the militaristic Fortinbras is meant to represent James IV on stage. (Nor is Denmark Scotland, as Winstanley maintained, or Hamlet Essex—and James.)” (Kurland 291) With a loose parallelism, Andrew Hadfield similarly contends that the play “demands to be read in terms of the political anxieties of (very) late Elizabethan England, ruled by the decrepit, dying Queen who could no longer command the respect of many of her subjects, with the uncertainty of being ruled by a new dynasty

do not imply a correspondence between the private and public problems within the play. Rather, they emphasize the correspondence of these problems with historical events. Apart from these references, politics seems to remain in the background in *Hamlet*. The influential E. M. W. Tillyard comments that “the first scene of the preparation for war” is “unnecessarily particularized for the requirements of the plot”, its only function being “to bear in our minds the notion of ordinary physical life going on behind the heightened passions of the main actors” (Tillyard 35).

Should this be blamed on the interpretations of *Hamlet* ruling the public mind of the twentieth century? Although it is far from being the only way of reading the play, the Oedipal-complex theory brings to its extreme the tendency of seeing the play as dealing with *personality problems*. Even if the main character is not treated as the subject of Freudian pathology, he is usually taken for the representative of early modern “personality” traits, for example, as an individual whose “melancholic” disposition makes him unable to carry out the task demanded by his father. But the play, instead of concentrating on the private and the personal *only*, does create a constant metaphorical relationship between the private and the public. After all, this is a basic feature not only of Romantic, but of Renaissance political imagery as well.

The play starts by introducing a threatening political situation. It might be important that “both Horatio and Marcellus interpret the ghost’s appearance in political terms, as a sign that the state is troubled” (Kurland 288). Since Old Hamlet is in the armour he wore in the war against Norway, Horatio decides that the ghost signals trouble in Denmark’s *foreign political* situation, which is highly supported by the actual danger of the enemy approaching. What Old Hamlet says to his son seems to confute this hypothesis taken as evident by almost all readings. “Between the ghost’s appearances, the scene shifts to the court, the source of trouble” (288), Kurland declares, believing that the first impression is not right. It is not so obvious though.

It is also Horatio who lets us know that the reason for the invasion is that a part of Norway had become the territory of Denmark through a combat between Old Hamlet and Old Fortinbras, in which the latter had lost. Now that the winner has died, young Fortinbras comes “to recover of us, by strong hand / And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands / So by his father lost claims back his inheritance.” (1.1.105–107) In a much later scene Hamlet—who wears the name of his father *just like* Fortinbras—articulates an opposition between himself and

in prospect, surrounded by enemies (France, Spain, Ireland), divided in religious affiliation, and driven by factions at court.” (97)

the foreign enemy, which serves rather to emphasize a *similarity* between them, creating a parallel between his private tasks and Fortinbras' public goals. In the following scene, Hamlet talks about Fortinbras and the "men" in his army as admirable people, who, unlike himself, are able to act:

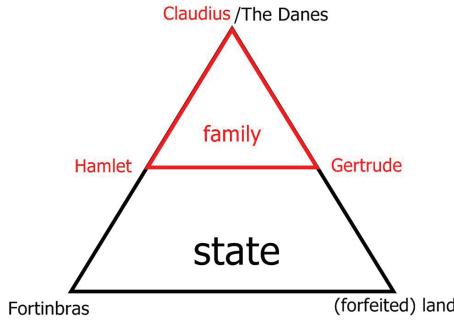
How stand I then,
 That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
 Excitements of my reason and my blood,
 And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
 The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
 That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
 Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
 Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
 Which is not tomb enough and continent
 To hide the slain? (4.4.56-65)

In what exactly do the Norwegians excel? Even Hamlet considers their fight to be symbolic: they fight for a small piece of barren land hardly worth the trouble. The goal of Fortinbras is not the cultivation of the land, but the endorsement of his father's rights of its possession. The grievances and desires of Fortinbras constitute the public counterparts of the "personal" problems of Hamlet who must "take back" the queen, who is also "unworthy" and probably just as "barren" as the land desired by the Norwegian men.

The "correspondence" between the public goal of the enemy and the private one of Hamlet becomes manifest as soon as the concept of land, queen and mother are regarded as the interchangeable terms they were actually becoming in the political discourse of the day (cf. Vanhouette 234). The (lawful) king and his wife, Gertrude, may plausibly refer to a king and *his country*, in the way James I used the marital image in a speech to his first Parliament: "I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull Wife; I am the Head, and it is my Body; I am the Shepherd, and it is my flocke" (Harvey 24). In this view, the Gertrude of the play is also a *rhetorical* figure, who also refers to something beyond herself, symbolizing the country, in this case Denmark, as well. Politics thus seems to be an integral part of the play, instead of providing vague references to certain actual events or expectations.

If so, it also becomes clear why it is important to describe the political situation of Denmark before turning to the family drama. Considering the metaphorical relationship of mother and country as axiomatic, the anger of Hamlet for his uncle, who killed his father and married his mother, appears as a *familial*

version of the anger of Fortinbras for the Danish king who “did slay this Fortinbras; who [...] Did forfeit, with his life, all those his lands / Which he stood seized of, to the conqueror” (1.1 89–93). The political aspirations of Fortinbras thus can be understood as the public counterpart to the private family problem of Hamlet. In this sense, the two royal heirs are alter egos, and so it is no wonder that Fortinbras is welcome as the one who takes on Hamlet’s political duty.



If the royal pair is interpreted in this Jacobean way, Hamlet with his special problems may indeed represent “us”, that is (modern) people with national feelings. Whose political conviction is that their country should not be ruled by despots, rulers with “illegal” claims to leadership, abusing the land as well as its inhabitants—aptly symbolized by Claudius. In this context the “Oedipal complex” of Hamlet is *only* metaphorical, an allegorical representation of the anger against a probable political conqueror and the desire to defend the *motherland*. What is more, it is not the traditional “body politic” that seems to be stressed in this allegory, but a new “participatory relationship” (Frye) between one and one’s place of birth.

Imagining England as a wife of the monarch is a good example of the rise of the new concept of the political family and also a gratifying endeavour to reconcile the old paternal rhetoric with the new one. Although the people were traditionally imagined as the “children” of the king—and his queen, the country was not associated with the queen, and vice versa, the queen was not associated with the land. In *Hamlet*, however, the mother is given a symbolic role that goes beyond the framework of the body politic and represents a *new* kind of social ideology, which places the family in the centre instead of the royal body, and initiates the notion of the ‘political family’ with the mother in its centre,—this indeed being the master trope of the modern nation state.

The image of the ‘motherland’ appears in *Henry IV*, which, as Moseley main-

tains, is derived “from the idea of the body politic” (102). This, however, seems to be a misunderstanding based on the underestimation of the significance of the gendered nature of the concept. “The image of the state as a body remains with us throughout the next three plays”, Moseley contends (*ibid.*), forgetting that while the traditional “body politic” is male, the lands of England are emphatically female in the play:

No more shall trenching war channel her field,
Nor bruise her flowerets with the armed hoofs
Of hostile paces. (*Henry IV* 1.1.7–9)

The gender trouble of Moseley’s interpretation becomes most striking when he talks about the images of bloody war as “the literal dismemberment of Mother England” (110), instead of the (sexual) violation of the country. The latter, however, is unimaginable in the framework of the body politic. The somewhat earlier, 1561 play *Gorboduc* presented similar female images of Britain seen as “the common mother of us all” who must be saved and controlled by her sons, as “the vulnerability of the nation’s body incites equally the transgressions of the traitor and the unsavory desires of foreigners” (Vanhouette 234). It is undeniable that the ‘body politic’ of the state is split in two. While its land (re)appropriates feminine features, the people remain male as the newborn body of the ‘nation’.

HAMLETISM, NATIONALISM, DESIRE

All these may validate both the political significance given to the play in nineteenth century Hungary and the “Hamletism” of Hungarian patriotic literature. But while the “Romantic Myth” is undoubtedly suitable for informing the political ideology and literature of the Romantic era, the same may seem anachronistic in an early modern play. However, the Mediaeval and Renaissance concepts of authority were breaking down, and along with them the father-centred myth, the “body politic” conceived of as a male body, was waning, too. As Frye writes: “The universe of this myth was a projection of Man’s own body: the rational design was visible on top, just as the reason is on top of the human body” (1983, 9). The transformation of the concept of this masculine “body politic” seems to correspond with the emergence of a feminine principle shaping the political thinking of the age. The transformation begins with the displacement of the maternal role of the queen to the country and ends with the displacement of the paternal role of the king to the government. Why did this happen? The new “political family”

rhetoric suggests new possibilities for the subjects of the state, guarantees greater mobility in the power-structures it represents and promises new sources of the social cohesion in the “love” of the nation for their motherland. As the role of the people as “children” remained similar to their previous role, the change was not overtly traumatic. However, the radically new opportunities given to these „children” are clearly obvious and conform with the emerging capitalist system of production.

The feminization of the “motherland” was surely inspired by the translations of Bible and the reformation movement that disseminated the term ‘nation’ (Hastings 16-17), as well as the metaphor of the marriage as “a symbolic wedding of the king with the land over which he rules” (Frye 2004, 51-52) and its application to the view of the “chosen nation” (now England) as the “bride” of Christ. But the motivation for the adoption of this symbolism in such a way that tended to differentiate the feminized land from the nation as her “sons” lay in the new (secular) social potential hidden in this image. In the feudal model, the father-child “relationship between ruler and subject allows little room for political intervention by the subject, who can never grow to meet the monarch on anything like equal terms and will always be a minor” (Hadfield 100.) As opposed to this, the individuals in the modern nation built upon the model of the new, love-centred nuclear family have no such fixed and subordinate places. Meanwhile (in theory) order is kept not by the authority of the fatherly ruler but by the familial love of the members of the nation towards each other and their mother-country.

“Family imagery thus served as a transitional metaphor, initially involving traditional obeisance to the king as good father, while allowing for revolutionary brotherhood to take shape and later break free of paternal authority” (Maza 73.) In the account of Benedict Anderson, the concept of the modern ‘nation’ emerges in the process:

[N]ationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which—as well as against which—it came into being. For the present purposes, the two relevant cultural systems are the religious community and the dynastic realm. For both of these, in their heyday, were taken-for-granted frames of reference, very much as nationality is today. (12)

Anderson’s theory of the symptoms and causes of emerging nationalisms⁵ is

⁵ Among many other factors the relativity of universals and the spread of written vernacular

approved by Adrian Hastings⁶, who (opposing other theorists of nationalism) argues that English nationalism could and did develop quite early, and “the greatest intensity of its nationalist experience together with its overseas impact must undoubtedly be located in and after the late sixteenth century” (5). Greenfeld also posits the beginnings of English nationalism in this era: “In the seventeenth century the sense of English nationality was a novel phenomenon. This novelty, more than anything else, distinguished the England of this age from other contemporary and past societies” (44). English patriotism, which

in the sixteenth century centred mostly around the figure of a monarch, also had a tendency to praise the nation as such. There were few as outspoken as the Bishop of Winchester John Poynt (1516–56) who wrote: “Men ought to have more respect to their country than to their prince, to the commonwealth than to any one person. For the country and the commonwealth is a degree above the king.” “Kings and princes,” he added, “be they never so great are but members, and commonwealths may stand well enough and flourish albeit there be no kings.’ The idea of national loyalty and of the nation itself had a firmer basis than it seemed to have had on the Continent. In England the nation was becoming the focus of loyalty. (46)

The first symptoms of the change in this “focus of loyalty” from the king the father, to the country the mother, can be discovered exactly in the era of Shakespeare, the time he wrote *Hamlet*. What is more, it is not impossible that, within the immense historical diversity of early and later nationalisms (as Anderson sees them) and in the face of the impossibility of a definition that would apply to all (as Hobsbawm sees them), it is this mother-centred family imagery that creates the common ground.

As for the motivations for “imagining” the nation and nation-ness, Anderson contends that

(print literacy) serving capitalist ends.

⁶ As Hastings expounds: “What is a nation? Anderson makes another valuable point when he suggests that what is most characteristic of a nation is a felt horizontality in its membership ‘the nation is always conceived of as a deep horizontal comradeship’. Horizontal images are something we will come back to from time to time as one yardstick of the presence of this sort of society. What we have to look for in nation-spotting is a historico-cultural community with a territory it regards as its own and over which it claims some sort of sovereignty so that the cultural community sees itself with a measure of self-awareness as also a territorial and political community, held together horizontally by its shared character rather than vertically by reason of the authority of the state. Even when it is the state which has created the nation, it is not a nation until it senses its primacy over and against the state.” (27)

The great merit of traditional religious world-views (...) has been their concern with man-in-cosmos, man as species being, and the contingency of life. (...) With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear. (...) What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning. (...) Few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation. If nation-states are widely conceded to be “new” and “historical”, the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immortal past, and, still more important glide into a limitless future. (10–11)

Moseley opines that the “radical religious ideas” of the Elizabethan era left “men, however devout, with a world to be explained”, with the consequence that “they had to put something in the place of the intellectual systems they had destroyed” (21). That something, in part, was apparently the concept of the nation itself.

Last but not least, the “mother-centred” theory of the ‘nation’ outlined above may modestly intervene in the debate that hopelessly tries to decide whether nationhood depends on the fact that ‘nation’ has or has not got a state of its own or has or has not got a territory of its own. If we examine the “Oedipal” situation of the metaphorical nation, we should say it exists by its *desire to be* a nation state. A desire to have a territory of its own, its nostalgic grief for a state that used to be its own and its antagonism to the actual state which is denied to be its own and should be replaced with its own. Desire is the (ever) unsatisfied surplus of needs, as Lacan defined it. But it can also be “the force”, as Frye eloquently expressed it, that impels “the process of making a total human form out of nature” (105). Which seems to be the very force of making a nation out of a people.

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BRIAN RUSSELL GRAHAM



CHAPTER SIX OF WORDS WITH POWER AS INTERVEN-
TION INTO THE DEBATE ABOUT THE METAPHORICAL
IDENTIFICATION OF WOMEN WITH NATURE

Baudelaire's "La Géante" deals with the speaker's fascination with a female giant, and in the poem the natural environment and her body are brought into metaphorical identification with one another. She is spoken of as though she were separate from "Nature", but she is of course easily identifiable with the whole of the natural world:

At the time when Nature with a lusty spirit
Was conceiving monstrous children each day,
I should have liked to live near a young giantess,
Like a voluptuous cat at the feet of a queen.
I should have liked to see her soul and body thrive
And grow without restraint in her terrible games;
To divine by the mist swimming within her eyes
If her heart harbored a smoldering flame;
To explore leisurely her magnificent form;
To crawl upon the slopes of her enormous knees,
And sometimes in summer, when the unhealthy sun
Makes her stretch out, weary, across the countryside,
To sleep nonchalantly in the shade of her breasts,
Like a peaceful hamlet below a mountainside.

(Baudelaire 45)

In this article, I flesh out Frye's perception of the *nature-as-woman* metaphor, reading the sixth chapter of *Words with Power* as a contribution to the debate. From this point of view, what is interesting is Frye's perception of what the metaphor brings to society. Sherry Ortner argues that the *nature-as-woman* metaphor is the main causal factor in the historical subjugation of women. As I shall point out, in contrast to Ortner, Frye argues that the metaphor is part of an

image of a particular relationship between mankind and nature. Interestingly, the same metaphor is, in Frye's view, also part of an image of possible relations between men and women. As I shall explain, Frye courts controversy when making this last point, though, as I shall demonstrate, it is possible for a sympathetic reader to mount a defence of his viewpoint.

In *Words with Power*, Frye distinguishes between the authentic myth and the demonic parody of myth. He speaks of the metaphor identifying a symbolically female figure and "nature" (nature as non-human world) within the context of demonic parody. Here nature is represented by a woman who, as Frye says, tyrannizes over a man. He fastens upon the figure of the *femme fatale* as the ultimate image of this "cycle of nature":

Romantic and later poets are also preoccupied with *femme fatale* figures: Medusa in Shelley and Salome in Oscar Wilde and elsewhere, the latter holding the severed head of John the Baptist, dramatize their castrating proclivities. Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, which takes its title, though not its theme, from a fairly harmless medieval poem, presents us with an inferno of damned lovers in the setting of a bleak landscape of exhausted fertility. The dark and gigantic females in Baudelaire assimilate the figure to the vast unconsciousness of the natural environment. Gérard de Nerval's poem *Horus* takes us back to Graves's mythological context: the goddess Isis, finding herself in bed with an old king, flings away from him and goes to look for a younger partner. As we should expect, the *femme fatale* is sometimes associated with Eve after the fall: such an association turns up in Valéry's long poem *Ébauche d'un serpent* (it is also one of the strands in the complex weave of *La jeune Parque*). (WP 219-20)

In his discussion, Frye contrasts this metaphor with what he calls the "bride-garden" metaphor. The "bride-garden" metaphor, he suggests, is a sacred marriage "in which the Bridegroom represents humanity and the Bride nature" (WP 224-5). Here, the bride represents unfallen nature. The identification of Eve with Eden belongs to this context, but Frye has an even greater interest in the presence of this metaphor in the Songs of Songs. In the Song of Songs, "sexual union suggests fertility, and the bride's body is metaphorically identified with vineyards, gardens, flowers, and the awakening of nature in spring" (WP 196). The "bride-garden" metaphor belongs to the larger context of the chapter. In the context of "the garden", authentic myth and parody are structured around the image of the hierogamy or sacred marriage, and the "bride-garden" is one aspect of the hierogamy. The complete list of sacred marriages runs as follows:

- the sacred marriage of Adam and Eve;
- “the real New Testament hierogamy”, in which “the risen Christ is the Bridegroom and his redeemed people the Bride” (WP 224);
- the Book of Revelation hierogamy, in which Christ as Bridegroom represents “the principle of unity or individuality” and the Bride is “the principle of community” (ibid.);
- “the bride-garden metaphor, in which the Bridegroom represents humanity and the bride nature” (WP 224-5);
- the sacred marriage, in which “the Bridegroom is love and the Bride beauty” (WP 227).

The demonic parody presents us with a related image and a therefore sixth element:

- “the sadomasochistic cycle, in which the female may tyrannize over the male or vice versa” (WP 218).

Of course, we now customarily conclude that the woman-as-metaphor implies the subjugation of women. In “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?”, Ortner, following on from De Beauvoir, argues that the metaphorical link between a symbolically female figure and such a nature is a causal factor in the subjugation of women. Of course Ortner’s article, along with Edwin Ardener’s “Belief and the problem of women”, was critically engaged with in the volume *Nature, Culture and Gender*, in which a number of social anthropologists challenged her belief in the universality of the association of nature with women, and even the universality of the culture-nature opposition, amongst other relevant issues. However, Ortner’s argument is still considered the central statement of the male-female culture-nature analogy.¹ In her article, she argues that “cultural language and imagery continue” (Ortner 74, 87) to serve to establish an association between nature and women; that, in turn, automatically leads to a situation in which women are assumed “to be closer to nature than men, men being seen as more unequivocally occupying the high ground of culture” (Ortner 74, 83-4); and this

¹ In “Heroines of Nature”, Vera L. Norwood speaks uncritically of Ortner’s thesis: “As Sherry Ortner posits in her essay on the subject, the issue is not a belief that women *are* nature but that they are closer to nature than men. Using Simone de Beauvoir, Ortner argues that woman’s physiology, social roles and psychic structure combine to place her to be nearer nature than man. Although Ortner has been criticized legitimately for her attempt to defend her thesis as universally true, her conclusions as to its results remain unchallenged if one limits them to Western traditions.” (Norwood 1996, 324)

factor leads ineluctably to the “the universal devaluation of women” (Ortner 74, 83).

Frye sees the matter differently. The imagery relates to mankind and nature. The exploitation of the natural world represents an attempt to dominate that world, but it is never successful: nature only enslaves humanity as a consequence of such endeavours, pulling mankind down to a lower level of existence. Frye clarifies his point in relation to the second half of Blake’s *The Mental Traveller*.

The mysterious second half of this poem may be partly understood from the more detailed treatment in the prophetic books. Blake saw not only that the exploitation of human labour was morally wrong, he also saw that the unlimited exploitation of nature was wrong, and that the same master-slave paradoxes operated there as well. The more man achieves “mastery” over nature, the more he becomes a slave to an enclosing natural order which eventually will, in Blake’s phrase, “him to infancy beguile”, and start the whole elusive and frustrating cycle over again. (WP 221)

The narrative dealing with the *femme fatale* and her victim points to the exploitation of nature and nature’s capacity for tyranny when exploited. The myth, then, is innocent of the kinds of charges levelled against it by Ortner and critics who buy into her argument: it doesn’t refer to women in society.

At this stage, the reader might expect the argument of the remainder of this article to run as follows: “Myth does not effect the devaluation of women. If myth is connected to that devaluation, the responsibility lies with the societal power which ‘adapts’ the myth, associating women with nature but men with culture. Myth is innocent.” It would, however, be disingenuous if we were to conclude that in Frye’s view this area of imagery has no relation whatsoever to women in society. Ultimately what separates Frye from a critic such as Ortner is not simply a matter of the innocence or culpability of myth, but also of different perceptions of the *representative power* of the myth.

Frye does have an interest in the myth’s applicability to women, a factor which will, for some readers, point to a residual sexism in his thinking. Rather remarkably, Frye speaks of the situation in which one should indeed associate fallen nature with women in society, if not ideologically adapting the myth, then exploring its representative power in relation to society. Blake’s “female will” is a version of the *femme fatale* archetype, and Frye often speaks of the representative power of the figure “female will” in his Blake criticism. Referring to Ulro and Generation (“the first two worlds”) and Beulah and Eden (“the second two”), he states that the female figures of those worlds possess representative power:

In the first two worlds, nature is a remote and tantalizing “female will”; in the second two she is an “emanation”. Human women are associated with this nature only when they dramatize its characteristics. (Frye 2005, 351-2)

If, within the context of Blake, Frye speaks of nature as “viciously wilful” (*FS* 75), the apparently uncomfortable inference is that women in society at times exhibit such wilfulness in their actions.

Such language is confrontational and some readers will undoubtedly turn away from Frye at such a moment. But two important points must be made. Firstly, if Frye uses or even “adapts” the metaphor here, his interest is not in associating amoral and natural behaviour with women, on the one hand, and cultured and moral behaviour with men, on the other. Far from it. Crucially, the implicit image of men in society is equally ironic. After all, the male figure corresponding to the “female will” is the “spectre,” a Blakean figure which gets appropriated by Frye in his own work. If the *femme fatale* is a female figure representing fallen nature, the spectre is a male figure representing fallen humanity. The inference is clear: if women may dramatize the characteristics of fallen nature in their behaviour, men may dramatize the characteristics of such a humanity, which Blake presents as “a Male Form howling in Jealousy” in *Milton* (3:36, Blake 97). Rather than cultured and moral behaviour, it is this kind of psychology which may be associated with men in society through the imagery in question.

Of course, while this observation represents something of a defence of Frye, it must be followed up by additional important points. After all, as it stands, it is as though men and women exhibit utterly different types of human weakness. Frye, however, ultimately deconstructs the opposition. In *Words with Power*, he states that literature is concerned not just with *femmes fatales* who lord it over their male counterparts, but with male figures who tyrannize over female figures with all the callousness of the *femmes fatales*:

the sadomasochistic cycle is readily reversible, and if we have Delila and Deianeira, we also have Iphigeneia and Jephthah’s daughter, women sacrificed to what it seems fair to call male whims. The conclusion of the episode of Jephthah’s daughter (Judges 11:40) tells us that her grave became a cult site for women lamenting her yearly – a significant social expansion from a stock rash-vow story. Male-dominated as the Western literary tradition has been, it is still strewn with heroines whose lives have been betrayed and blighted by callous lovers. Their reactions range from the ferocity of Medea to the quiet self-obliteration of Ophelia. (*WP* 222)

If female figures in literature often symbolize non-human nature, it seems as though parallel male figures, guilty of destructive whims, may *also* symbolize that nature. And men in society may no doubt be associated with such a nature when in their acts they dramatize its characteristics.

If one knew nothing about Frye beyond this level, one could feasibly move on from the notion that Frye's thinking is sexist or essentialist to the extent that it is misanthropic; but again the conclusion is erroneous. Following on from Blake, Frye is a fourfold thinker, and he thinks in terms of four levels of sexual symbolism. If this area of imagery relates to the lowest level of human experience in terms of *desire*, literature provides us with imagery of ever-more desirable relationships between mankind and nature, as well as relationships between lovers. As Frye clarifies in his Blake criticism, in the imaginative world (the upper levels of the world as it is seen by the imagination) the symbolically male figure is a lover and the symbolically female the beloved. This is the level of the "bride-garden metaphor". Here the primary reference is to mankind and nature again, but just as the human figures on the lower level have representative power, so do these figures, and we might say that in so much as the lovers dramatize the characteristics of a risen humanity and a renewed nature they may be associated with them.²

Frye does dwell on the ideological adaptation of myth, and he speaks authoritatively of the adaptation of the hierogamy, pointing out that it traditionally takes:

the form of a social institution dominated by incest-taboo imagery and metaphors of paternal and maternal authority, where as much spiritual activity as possible is withdrawn from physical sex. What sexual life is permitted is regularized by strict monogamy and is regarded as existing primarily for the begetting of children (although sometimes the remarkably repulsive phrase "for the relief of concupiscence" is included). (*WP* 223)

Though the nature-as-woman metaphor is an integral part of the hierogamy, it is not the ideological adaptation of that metaphor in particular that Frye is interested in. Rather, his emphasis is upon the literary value of the metaphor:

² Though it is excluded from the sixth chapter of *Words with Power*, in his Blake criticism and elsewhere, Frye speaks of the sexual symbolism of the upper part of the imaginative world: "The highest possible state [...] is not the union of lover and beloved, but of creator and creature, of energy and form" (*FS* 49).

the way in which it projects one level of possible relations between mankind and nature and one level of relations between lovers. The projection for “relations between lovers” may stick in the craw of some readers. But, as I have tried to show, when viewed in its proper context, the *femme fatale* image is less offensive than it might at first have seemed.

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BÁNKI ÉVA



A KÖLTÉSZET SZÜLETÉSE: SÁMUEL I. KÖNYVE

A zenélést már a Teremtés könyve a legősibb foglalkozások közt említi: „[Ada] Testvérét Jubálnak hívták, ő lett az ősatya azoknak, akik gitáron és fuvolán játszanak” (Ter 4,21). És bár a legelső költemény Lámeché (Ter 4,23–24) a zenei-költői önkifejezés női kifejezésformának is számított. Miután az egyiptomiak a tengerbe vesznek, Mirjam prófétanő Mózes hálaadó költeménye után így énekel:

Magasztaljátok az Urat,
mert dicsőség övezi,
a lovat és a lovast a tengerbe vetette.
(Kiv 15,21)

Debora pedig így dicsóítja Bárákkal Kánaán királyának vereségét és persze saját győzelmét:

Jáel napjaiban
néptelenné váltak az utak.
Akik útra keltek, rejtett ösvényekre tértek.
A falvak kihaltak Izraelben.
S kihaltak is maradtak,
míg te, Debora, nem jöttél,
föl nem keltél, Izraelnek anyja.
(Bír 5, 6–7)

Ezek a prófeta- és katonanők igazi nőköltők, de mi mégsem beszélhetünk a mi fogalmaink szerinti nőköltészetéről. Nem feltétlenül azért, mert ezeket a harci dalokat is (esetleg) férfiak szerezték, hanem mert ezt a nőknek tulajdonított lírai beszédmódot a Biblia nem is próbálja a férfidalokétól megkülönböztetni. (Pedig van ilyen hagyományra is példa: a középkori portugál líra például a férfi- és a női

beszédmód világos megkülönböztetésén alapul: *cantiga de amor* – *cantiga de amigo*, lásd Bánki 105-120). Mózes és Debora hálaadó éneke viszont se formai tekintetben, se harcias tematikájában nem nagyon különbözik – mind a kettő katonai-vallásos győzelmi ének.

Ámde azért az Ószövetségben sem minden női dal ilyen harcias apropóból született.

Az utolsó nagy, önálló női énekszerző – talán a Biblia legjelentősebb költőnője – nem világraszóló katonai győzelmet ünnepel, hanem egy kisgyermek világra jöttét. Sámuel édesanyja, Hanna nem diadalmas katonanő vagy prófétanő, hanem egy meddőnek kikiáltott, sokáig háttérbe szorított feleség. Ámde bármilyen nőies és konvencionális is a költeményének apropója, ez a hálaének (1Sám 2,1–10) talán még különösebb, mint a prófétanők versei. Hanna a gyermek megszületése kapcsán Isten – Northrop Frye kifejezésével – „forradalmi tevékenységét” (*KT* 306) dicsőíti: az Úr felforgatja a társadalom megszokott rendjét, átírja a történelmet, a jelenben és nem a távoli jövőben szolgálat igazságot.

Az Úr adja a halált és az életet,
letaszít az alvilágba, és felhoz onnan.
Az Úr tesz szegénnyé és gazdaggá,
megaláz és fölemel.
Fölsegíti a porból a gyöngét
és kivezeti a szennyből a szegényt.
A fejedelmek mellett ad nekik helyet,
díszhelyet jelöl ki nekik.
Az Úr tulajdona a föld minden pillére,
ő helyezte rájuk a világot.
(1Sám 2, 6–8)

A kis Sámuel még csak meg sem említetik: Hanna mindvégig Istent, a Történelem Urát ünnepli. Isten mindvégig a „szokás” ellenfele, maga a *dünamosz*, az örökös, a kérlelhetetlen változás. Bármennyire egzaltáltan is áradó ez a (a lukácsi Magnificatra is ható) költemény, bármilyen gyakran ismétli is Hanna Mirjam és Debora harcias frázisait, a mi fogalmaink szerinti „legversszerűbb vers” a zsoltárok előtt a Bibliában. A korábbi énekek katonai frazeológiája itt mintha már metaforikussá lényegülne, hiszen Hanna nem egy eseményről vagy győzelemről beszél, hanem az egész emberi történelem dinamikájáról. Maga a költemény előadása beleilleszkedik valamilyen szertartásba (a kis Sámuel bemutatják Silóban), de az alkalmi jelleg már egyáltalán nem érződik.

Hanna költeménye a felkent király említésével zárul. A költemény tehát a

jövőbe íródik. Hiszen Izraelnek ekkor még nincsen királya – az Ószövetség következő nagy költője, sőt *a* költője az a Dávid király lesz, akit majd Hanna fia, Sámuel ken fel. Az ének egy megtörtént és egy eljövendő születés között helyezkedik el. Nemcsak látomás a történelemről, Istennek a történelemben betöltött szerepéről *általában*, hanem aktuális utalásokban is bővelkedő prófécia, amelynek apropóját egy múltbéli esemény, Sámuel megszületése biztosítja. (A költemény mágikus szerepéről csak akkor beszélhetnénk, ha Hanna a dalt a fia fogantatása *előtt* énekelné, nem pedig utána.)

Sámuel könyve nem művészeletrajz, de azért a költészet születése (a zsoltárforma műfajjá kristályosodása) és a királyság megalapítása mégiscsak egybeesik a zsidó hagyományban. Az archaikus kultúrák gyakran a törvény és a tudás hordozóiként tekintettek a költőkre, ámde Dávid nemcsak a kultúra révén örökölt tudás, hanem egyben a politikai hatalom letéteményese is. Míg Hanna, Mirjam és Debora (nyilvános, közös vagy éppen magányos) éneke egyszeri alkalom, a „szokás” megszakítása (azt se tudjuk, bárki elismételte-e Hanna hálaénekét, azaz hogy a dal az egyszeri eseménytől elszakítva „költeményként” funkcionált-e), addig a zsoltárokat a közösség tagjai meghatározott alkalmanként énekeltek, tehát „megidéztek”. A dávidi ének megszenteli Isten idejét. *Szokássá* válik.

Bár az Ószövetség nem rajzolja meg Dávid költői portréját, de rávilágít az általa képviselt művészet gyógyító, kiegyensúlyozott, már-már „apollói” jellegére. Saul búskomorságát, „rossz szellemét” elűzi Dávid lantjátéka, ahogy Saul tanácsadói ígérik: „Aztán, ha rád tör Istennek a gonosz lelke, megpendíti a húrokat, és jobban leszel” (1Sám 16,16). E szerint a dávidi költészet nagyon távol áll attól az önfeledt, extatikus, beavató jellegű zenétől, ami ebben az időben (mint Pávich Zsuzsanna kitűnő, az Ószövetség korának „zenei életét” bemutató írásából és disszertációjából is tudjuk) a prófétálást kísérte. És mégis: a zenét hallgató Saul menthetetlen és nemcsak menthetetlen, hanem megválthatatlan is. A vágy és a gyűlölet egyetlen mozdulatával a vele szemben ülő, lanton játszó, tehát védekezésképtelen Dávid felé hajtja a lándzsáját (1Sám 19,10).

Mert a harmóniát teremtő zenének is megvan a maga erotikus, csábító aspektusa – ahogy magának Dávidnak. Épp Dávid személyes vonzereje az, amely oly féltékennyé teszi Sault, miközben ennek a tüneményes vonzerőnek ő maga sem tud ellenállni. Ez a típusú (Dávid esetében már-már ellenállhatatlan, az ellenségeit is halálosan megalázó) vonzerő a költőnk esetében egyáltalán nem hangsúlyozódik. Jellemző módon a Biblia csak Dávid, nem pedig a „költőnk” „csinosságát” és ellenállhatatlan vonzerejét emeli ki. Dávid zenéje és költészete – bármilyen őszinte és páratlanul méltóságteljes – elválaszthatatlan a hatalomtól, a rendtől és a csábítástól.

A három női dalszerző közül csak Sámuel anyjának, Hannának a társadalmi

kapcsolatait ismerjük. Hanna (Dáviddal ellentétben) nem bűvöl el senkit és semmit – a legkevésbé Izrael szakrális vezetőjét, Éli papot, aki a silói szentélyben imádkozás közben durván megleckézteti: „Meddig akarsz még itt maradni ilyen részegen? Igyekezz kijózanodni!” (1Sám 1,14). A némán elmondott ima, a szív és Isten párbeszéde gyanús, hiszen a közösség spirituális vezetője számára is ellenőrizhetetlen. De még ez a maga korában szokatlan imádkozási forma sem indokolja, miért ilyen szálla az Úrhoz fohászoló Hanna a főpap szemében.

Vagy ebben a megalázó rendreutasításban talán a papság által képviselt kultusz és a próféta közötti konfliktus nyomát kell látnunk? A próféta nem kötődött Silóhoz, míg a papság által gyakorolt kultusz igen. Éli talán úgy gondolja, hogy az extázisnak nincs helye a kultusz helyén, másrészt pedig – ingerültsége erre enged következtetni – talán azt sem tartja helyénvalónak, hogy az extázist épp egy nő élje át. Hiszen Hanna imádkozik a gyermekéért ahelyett, hogy áldozatot mutatna be, tehát a szóra bízva, amit állatok vére árán kellene megkapnia. Hanna mégis megpróbálja az ekstázist a hivatalos kultusz helyén gyakorolni. De mint Éli reakciójából is látható, csak Dávid, a „felkent” működése révén válhatnak ezek az ekstatisz gyökerű szent énekek a kultusz részeivé.

A kiegyensúlyozott, apollói jellegű, mértékadó dávidi költészetnek tehát vannak extatisz gyökerei. És más tanulsággal is jár, ha Sámuel könyvét a költészet „megalapításaként” vagy keletkezéstörténeteként olvassuk. Eszerint az imádkozás, a szavakba vetett hit és maga a líra is kompenzáció: a földi igazságtalanságok kiküszöbölésére szolgál. A társadalmi rendet újra és újra felforgató Isten igazolásul is szolgálhat az ilyen extatisz költészet szociális töltetere. A költő(nő) hangot ad azoknak, akiknek nincsenek saját szavaik, így közvetít Isten, az igazságszót és a nép között.

Amúgy a karizmatikus, még az ellenségei vonzalmát is elnyerő Dáviddal szemben Hanna szinte megtestesíti a kizsájtottságot és az alávetettséget. Nemcsak asszony, hanem terméketlen asszony – és nem elég, hogy terméketlen, a vallási hatalom szemében furcsán, már-már extravagánsan is viselkedik.¹ De a szavak fölötti, az imában és a költészetben is kifejeződő hatalom a Bibliában elválaszthatatlan nemcsak a gyermeknemzéstől, hanem a politikától. A Sámuel könyvében azok győzedelmeskednek, akiknek vannak szavaik – *saját* szavaik. Mert hiszen nem érdekmentes sem a Hanna-féle extatisz, sem a dávidi mértéktartóbb

¹ Hanna változatos módon érzékeltetett, más bibliai hősnőkhöz, pl. Sárahoz, Ruth-hoz, Máriához hasonló, kiszolgáltatott helyzete rendkívül nagy nyomatót kap a szövegben. Talán mert „a nők bibliai történelemben elfoglalt helyével kapcsolatos motívumoknak, mint a levirátusnak és a csodás kései gyerekáldásnak, van egy olyan dimenziója, amely szerint a nő képe kiszélesedik egyfajta proletáriátussá, állandó, folytonos kiszolgáltatottságban tartott, az ellenséges világban a szabadulást váró emberiséggé...” (HI 268).

költészet sem. A megalázott Hanna fiában, Sámuelben és Sámuelen keresztül sújt le Élire és házára az Úr. (A Sámuel könyve amúgy is mindvégig párviadalra épül: Saul és Dávid „játszmáját” megelőlegezi az Éli fiai és a kis Sámuel szembeállítás, de a termékeny és a terméketlen feleség, Peninna és Hanna rivalizálása is.)

Hanna pályafutásának csúcsa persze nem egy világra szóló csata vagy éppen az Izrael fölötti politikai hatalom megnyerése, hanem Sámuel, a próféta világra hozása és egy különös, az Úr mindent felforgató, de egyben igazságosztó szerepét dicsőítő költemény megalkotása. A legnagyobb elfogultság és szubjektivitás itt egyfajta lírai univerzalizmus forrása lesz. Az ének konklúziója szinte megidézi a Sámuel könyvének sorsdöntő párharcait, miközben hömpölygő párhuzamokban állítja elének a minden megszokást felforgató Történelem Urát. És talán ez a kozmikus látásmód magyarázza, hogy a zsidó királyság intézményesülésének története, a Sámuel könyve miért kezdődik egy szokatlanul viselkedő édesanya történetével (*nem* Dávid édesanyjával, hanem Sámuelével), és miért jelenik meg itt – egy költőkirály uralomra jutásáról szóló bibliai könyvben – teljes terjedelmében a Saul és Dávid prófétájának megszületését ünneplő hálaének.

Hanna nem meghal – hiszen ahogy születéséről, úgy a haláláról sem számol be a szöveg –, hanem szertefoszlik, szinte „felitatódik” a szövegben. Hiszen az ő öléből próféták származnak, és nemcsak *egy* nagy próféta, hanem az Úr és a közösség viszonyát átformáló költészet is.

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TIBOR FABINY



NORTHROP FRYE AND BÉLA HAMVAS

1. WHY COMPARE BÉLA HAMVAS AND NORTHROP FRYE?

This paper aims to focus on comparing a motif that is common to the writings of Northrop Frye (1912-1991) and the Hungarian writer, thinker and philosopher of religion Béla Hamvas (1897-1968). Studying their works I was struck by the similarity in the structure of their thinking. There is no sign of any “anxiety of influence”, as Hamvas’s works were, of course, not translated into English, and, to my knowledge, there is no allusion to Frye in any of Hamvas’s books. They are equally unusual, idiosyncratic thinkers whose works are not easy to catalogue or classify. The prolific intellectual output of the two has had a rather controversial reception. Readers of both Frye and Hamvas become either friends or foes, neutrality is not an option. Not only is the content or the structure of their thinking similar, but one can notice similar features in their styles, as well. For example, both of them were fond of scribbling in notebooks before shaping the final versions of their books and both of them were attracted to the genre of “anatomy” as practised and promoted by the seventeenth-century English scholar Robert Burton (see Hamvas 1993, 24–28; *GC* xxi).

Northrop Frye’s literary career needs no introduction: his books on Blake, Shakespeare, the romantic tradition, modern poetry as well as his literary critical opus, *Anatomy of Criticism*, and, last but not least, the great Bible books, *The Great Code* and *Words with Power*, have received much critical attention.

This, however, is not the case with Béla Hamvas. Indeed, intellectual achievements of small countries tend to be unrecognized by the cultural currents of politically stronger nations, and the likelihood of remaining unknown and invisible to the wide world is even stronger when somebody has spent most of his creative life behind a certain “curtain”. During his life in the Communist era, an official hush surrounded him proscribed as he was from publishing, but copies of (very frequently mistyped) manuscripts changed hands at high prices on the Hungarian intellectuals’ black market in the seventies and eighties. Some of his works were not printed until just before the political changes in 1989, and now

his complete works are being published in a series (so far twenty-five volumes have come out). Rigorously attacked and passionately defended, Hamvas was indeed “hushed up to become a legend” as a contemporary critic said. Hamvas, the first Hungarian interpreter of writers and poets like Joyce, Eliot, Powys, Huxley, Dos Passos; of philosophers like Jaspers and Heidegger and of theologians like Barth and Bultmann, responded with great insights to the “sense of crisis” these outstanding artists and thinkers shared in the wake of World War I. Moreover, similarly to Eliot, he also found remedy for the crisis of modern civilisation in “tradition” or, more precisely, the traditionalism of archaic cultures. At the beginning of his intellectual journey is the recognition of the total crisis of the world and at the terminus of the journey is the unconditional yes to, the approval of, the sacred texts of humankind. But he was much more than a sensitive reader or reviewer of contemporary Western European artists, philosophers and theologians. In fact, he was a universally oriented mind steeped in the cultures of the archaic, classical and modern ages. This encyclopaedic concern explains why he frequently became (and still becomes) a stumbling block for pure specialists. By being an artist himself, he was able to open up new intellectual horizons for his readers. He was a prolific writer, turning out almost three hundred publications between 1930 and 1948 and a huge quantity of manuscripts in the last twenty years of his life. Now, forty-four years after his death, most of his works have become available.

To briefly summarize his life’s journey, Béla Hamvas was born in 1897 as the son of a Lutheran minister and later a secondary-school teacher in a provincial town of Upper Hungary, now Slovakia. After finishing his school, he found himself fighting in World War I. Wounded on the battlefield, he went through the total physical and psychological shock caused by the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the war, he studied Hungarian and German literature at Budapest University. During these years he voraciously read the great masterpieces of world literature and philosophy, especially those by his favourites: Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Dostoyevsky just as the medieval mystics or the authors of classical antiquity. He began his career as a journalist but soon became disillusioned with what he called the “superficial nature” and “pseudo-culture” of journalism. In 1927 he became a chief librarian and he remained so for more than twenty years not only in a literal but also in a metaphorical sense of the word: a “gardener”, “preserver”, and “cultivator” of accumulated human wisdom similarly to his great predecessors and inspiring masters, Lao-tzu, the author of *Tao-te-Ching*, and Robert Burton, the writer of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. In the early thirties he devoted his energy to the study of classical Greek culture, mythology, philosophy and tragedy. He founded the

so-called “Island Circle” with his friend, the famous historian of religion, Károly Kerényi (1897-1973).

The second half of the thirties was a most stimulating period for him, writing essays on the great but yet uncanonized works of modern literature and on the great texts of the tradition he located in ancient Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew, Iranian, Hindu, and Greek cultures. His great but not yet fully published encyclopaedic work about the spiritual heritage of archaic humankind, *Scientia Sacra* (its first volume was published in 1988) goes back to this period.

The first collection of his essays entitled *A láthatatlan történet* (Invisible History) was published in 1943. During World War II, he was drafted three times. He even served on the Russian front. When his company was ordered to go to Germany in 1944, he managed to escape. He arrived in Budapest only to find his home totally destroyed by a bomb. His library, all his manuscripts, all his notes, all his work he had identified himself with, perished.

In the three years following the end of the war, his intellectual activity was rejuvenated: he became the editor of a series on contemporary thinkers, published a unique anthology about the wisdom of five thousand years entitled *Anthologia Humana*, and wrote a book on modern art with his wife, Katalin Kemény (Northrop Frye’s wife was also an art historian). The pluralistic political climate of those coalition years formed a highly stimulating background for his creative activity. In 1948, however, the Communists took over, and Stalinist totalitarian dictatorship set in. On the eve of this political outcome, his book on modern art was severely denounced as “modern snobbism” by the well-known Marxist critic and philosopher, György Lukács (1885–1971). He was also attacked by minor figures of the now official ideology. As a result, not only was he completely banned from publishing, but he was sacked from his job as a librarian and was forced into early retirement at the age of fifty one. For the remaining twenty years of his life, he had to struggle to earn a living. He became a blue-collar worker, finally a storeman at an industrial plant more than a hundred miles away from his home. During the day he worked and during the night he polished his knowledge of Hebrew and Sanskrit. These two decades of “exile” did not pass in a spiritual vacuum. On the contrary, they proved to be his most fertile writing period. He composed collections of essays, he even wrote novels, the most famous one being a so-called “catastrophe novel”, *Karnevál* (Carnival), which would eventually be published in 1985. He wrote without the slightest hope that his books would ever be published. However, when at home, he was surrounded by poets, painters and artists of all sorts who went to listen to the “master” and ask him for new and inspiring manuscripts.

It was a world turned upside down. One of Hungary’s most erudite minds and

authors was employed as a blue-collar labourer while he was creating his outstanding literary and intellectual oeuvre. Life and work remained inseparable for Hamvas. For him crisis, apocalypse, and salvation were not well-constructed intellectual doctrines far from experienced reality. Whatever he created was sealed and authenticated by his moral refusal to adapt his ideas to the world around him, to compromise with spiritually alien powers or to participate in what he called “the modern corruption of existence” just for the comfort or the pleasures of this life. Having retired for the second time in 1964, he died in November 1968 at the age of seventy one.

2. CRISIS, APOCALYPSE AND “TRANSPARENCY” IN HAMVAS

As the central motifs of Hamvas’s thought, a critic has recently identified “crisis”, “tradition”, Christianity, and art. Yet these are all united by his stress on “universal orientation” and “transparent existence”. In the mid-thirties, he published three essays entitled *A modern apokalipszis* (Modern Apocalypse), *Krizis és katarzis* (Crisis and Catharsis) and *A világválság* (World Crisis). As a librarian he even compiled an inventory and an annotated bibliography of the literature of crisis. He described his project as “criseology”, the study of the literature of crisis. The vast and still useful bibliography covers the literature of spiritual, cultural, scientific, artistic, literary, political, and economic crisis. Hamvas was astonished that none of these documents of human erudition could touch the real root of crisis. He became all the more keen to find the cause, the origins of crisis. It seemed to him that each crisis was apparently a consequence of an earlier crisis that had remained essentially unsolved. Where is the beginning of crisis, the first lie, the dark point, the *proton pseudos*? he asked. He then set out to explore chains of crises through history: from the twentieth century he went back to the nineteenth century, from there to the French Revolution, then to the Enlightenment, to rationalism, to Humanism, to the Middle Ages, to the Greeks, to the Hebrews, to the Egyptians, and to Primitivism. Reading history backwards, he found that crisis had always been present throughout history, moreover, its location proved to be deeper and deeper. Unable to grasp “the beginning” of crisis in history, he became aware of the fact that he had committed the typical European mistake of trying to locate this dark point in the outside world and not within one’s own self. Having realized this, he came to believe that corruption was an ontological event, i.e., affliction has always been at the very heart of human existence.

From here onward he defined crisis as the disturbed and corrupt existence

that is not primarily of horizontal (historical) but rather of vertical (metaphysical) nature.

Crisis-consciousness in history, i.e. subjective anxiety about the total collapse of the world, appears however, in its most concentrated form in the twentieth century, which Paul Tillich later called the age of anxiety. All the antidotes offered by previous ages and cultures to forget about crisis appear all of a sudden ineffective. In fact, they turn out to have been tricks: refined and cunning techniques of escaping reality.

Hamvas found that Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Spengler were the great masters of “prophetic criseology” as they all explicitly shared the “crisis-consciousness” resulting from perceiving all the threatening possibilities. Kierkegaard observed that the discrepancy between the Gospels and historical (European) Christianity was so huge that Christianity as such simply did not exist any more. And Nietzsche, also justifiably, burst out against historical Christianity: it was not the human heart that corrupted Christianity but Christianity (in its perverted historical version) that corrupted the human heart. Hamvas came to note (following Rozanov) that Nietzsche’s cry was but an echo of the howling of the Apocalypse.

The solution of the problem, according to Hamvas, lies partly in the idea of “transparency”. “Transparent”, according to the dictionary, means “allowing light to pass through so that objects (or at least their outlines) behind can be distinctly seen” (Hornby 919), it is the opposite of “opaque”, which does not allow light to pass through or allow unilluminated objects to be distinctly seen. Transparency has to do with apocalypse, revelation, being uncovered, removing the curtains of forgetfulness or any disguise: it anticipates the ultimate seeing “face to face”. In his most famous work, *Scientia Sacra*, Hamvas writes that “transparency” pertains to *aletheia* (truth):

[W]hoever opens himself to the whole he himself becomes transparent. Whoever is willing to step out from his hiding place is giving up his self-security... He stands uncovered without trying to conceal anything. Being ready and open for anybody all the time. *Aletheia* means being uncovered. Participating in truth which is itself open all the time. Only whoever has opened himself can reveal. (Hamvas 1996, 123)

Tradition, *aletheia*, apocalypse, and transparency are almost synonyms for Hamvas. As Antal Dúl, the editor of his works, puts it: “Béla Hamvas considers tradition (i.e. revelation) the authentic information of human existence. Its language does not prove anything, it does not argue, but, addressing their most burning issues, it touches human beings, and compels them to respond.” (Dúl 877)

In the course of history, this open existence has become corrupted, and this has resulted in the split of theory and practice. The tragedy of modernity and its philosophy that “it that it tries to realize transparent existence without universal orientation and science tries to realize universal orientation without transparent existence.” (Hamvas 1996, 146).

According to Hamvas, historical Christianity is only a corrupted, depraved form of evangelical Christianity (1996, 149). Historical existence has perverted Christianity and turned it into Pharisaism, clericalism and the Antichrist.

For Hamvas, the Antichrist is the total opposite of transparency or the spirit of truth; it is the embodiment of disguise, fraudulence and deception:

The Antichrist can be conceived as the opposite of the Holy Spirit because the Spirit wants to reveal what is concealed and the Antichrist wants to conceal what has been revealed. Hiding and disguise is an endless process of the Antichrist which can only be balanced by the endless illumination of the Holy Spirit. (1996, 173)

3. “TRANSPARENCY,” “KERYGMA” AND “APOCALYPSE” IN FRYE

For Northrop Frye, “transparency” was a category he frequently used but never explicitly discussed. He adopted the term in two, not totally unrelated contexts: (a) as a principle of pedagogy, and (b) as a principle of language.

a) As a Principle of Pedagogy

Frye emphasised many times, especially in his pieces on education, that a proper teacher ideally extinguishes his personal ego, and it is only his subject that is present in the classroom:

If I’m lecturing on Milton, for example, the only presence that has any business being in that room is Milton. If I become an opaque presence and people listen to me instead of listening to Milton through me, then I’m becoming some sort of fake priest...When I teach, I try to transmute myself into a kind of transparent medium so that the room is full of the presence of what I am teaching. It’s a long process for the students to realize that they are in effect within the personality of Milton and not being talked to by me... The only authority in the classroom is the authority of the subject taught, not the teacher. (Cayley 147 –149)

It is very easy for the teacher to turn himself into an opaque substitute for literary experience, presenting himself and his personal influence as the substitute. This is a subtle and insidious temptation he must fight against every moment in the classroom. His ultimate goal is the abolition of himself, or the turning of himself into a transparent medium for the subject, so that the authority of his subject may be supreme over both teachers and students. (Frye 1988, 20)

b) As a Principle of Language

In the first chapter of *The Great Code*, Frye developed his Vico-based idea concerning the three phases of language: the first, metaphorical phase is imaginative, characterized by a plurality of “gods”; the second, metonymic phase is abstract and metaphysical, the language of reasoning and logic; and the third, demotic phase, closely related to the age of science, is descriptive or denotative language. Which phase of language would the language of the Bible belong to? To the first or to the second, to both or to none? Frye maintains: “The origins of the Bible are in the first metaphorical phase of language, but much of the Bible is contemporary with the second-phase separation of the dialectical from the poetic, as its metonymic ‘God’ in particular indicates” (GC 27). But on the whole there is not much abstraction nor many “true rational” arguments in the Bible. Biblical Hebrew is an “almost obsessively concrete language”. Nevertheless, Frye’s final conclusion is that “the Bible fits rather awkwardly into our cycle of three phases” (ibid.).

In his quest to identify the specific nature of biblical language, Frye recognizes its oratorical or rhetorical character. Indeed, sometimes it has been “assumed to be the rhetoric of God, accommodated to human intelligence” (GC 29). But it is different from human rhetoric, which tries to win over an audience by means of manipulation. The specific linguistic idiom of the Bible is indeed beyond the three phases of language, it is, in fact, a fourth phase: *kerygma* or proclamation. Frye defines it as follows:

Kerygma is a mode of rhetoric, though it is rhetoric of a special kind. It is, like all rhetoric, a mixture of the metaphorical and the “existential” or concerned but, unlike practically all other forms of rhetoric, it is not an argument disguised by figuration. It is the vehicle of what is traditionally called revelation, a word I use because it is traditional and I can think of no better one. But if we take this word to mean the conveying of information from an objective divine source to a subjective human receptor, we are making it a form of descriptive writing... The Bible is far too deeply

rooted in all the resources of language for any simplistic approach to its language to be adequate. (*GC* 29–30)

So biblical language, i.e. *kerygma*, is “not an argument disguised by figuration”. Let us dwell on this unique and significant insight for a while! Rhetoric, the art of persuasion usually tries to “sell” a rational argument with the help of tropes and figures. According to Frye, biblical rhetoric is just the opposite. Here we must mention that Frye’s literary criticism has frequently been attacked because it dismisses value judgement, so important for other literary critics. Frye, however, consigned value judgement to the history of taste because of its transiencefickleness. But this rejection of value judgement was also rooted in his notion of reason and argumentation being aggressive. “The language of reason is implicitly aggressive”, he said in his sermon on symbols in 1967 (*RW* 253). This is how he contrasts argument with literary or poetic language in an interview:

I detest argument. The actual technique of argumentative writing is something I avoid as far as possible... an argument is always a half truth... It is a militant way of writing, and I’m not interested in militancy. Literature, you see, doesn’t argue within itself. That’s the principle of Shelley’s *Defence of Poetry*, that literature cannot argue. As Yeats says, you can refute Hegel but not the “Song of Sixpence”. (Cayley 94)

This is exactly the nature of biblical *kerygma*. In “The Double Mirror”, an essay written in 1981 when he was about to finish *The Great Code*, he writes: “The rhetoric of proclamation is a welcoming and approaching rhetoric, in contrast to rhetoric where the aim is argument or drawing the audience into a more exclusive unit” (*MM* 236).

Biblical language is characterized by a kind of “transparency” as it can be “seen through”, it has nothing to hide, no hidden agenda. In his still unpublished *Notebooks*, Frye contrasts the language of the gospel—to our astonishment—with that of the church and her creeds:

The language of the gospel is mythico-metaphorical, transparent, with the *kerygma* sounding through it. What about the language of the Church? The language of the anathema-creeds is of the devil, but there must be something in it to rescue. (*LN* 630)

Kerygma is not only something “transparent” but also linked up with another term Frye frequently used: “interpenetration” (Denham 154). For Frye “spiritual language is interpenetrative... discursive language, being militant, aims at agreement and reconciliation” (*LN* 660). In his posthumous work on the Bible, *The*

Double Vision, Frye, based on Paul's distinction of spiritual and carnal understanding, makes a crucial distinction between "imaginative" and "demonic" literalism:

I am not trying to deny or belittle the validity of a credal, even a dogmatic, approach to Christianity: I am saying that the literal basis of faith in Christianity is a mythical and metaphorical basis, not one founded on historical facts or logical propositions. Once we accept an imaginative literalism, everything else falls into place: without that, creeds and dogmas quickly turn malignant... Demonic literalism seeks conquest by paralysing argument; imaginative literalism seeks what might be called interpenetration, the free flowing of spiritual life into and out of one another that communicates but never violates. As Coleridge said... "The medium by which spirits understand each other is not the surrounding air, but the *freedom* which they possess in common". (DV 17 –18)

Thus *kerygma* as "divine rhetoric" is characterized by the lack of argument, aggression and its attributes are transparency, interpenetration and freedom. Perhaps the characterization of this language is most powerful and overwhelming in an oral lecture which is the last in a thirty-part series recorded for the video and transcribed by the Toronto Media Center, later on published also in *Biblical and Classical Myths*:

The Bible is not interested in arguing, because if you state a thesis of belief you have already stated its opposite; if you say 'I believe in God', you have already suggested the possibility of not believing in him... the language of the Bible has to be a language which somehow bypasses argument and refutation... So the Bible uses the language of symbolism and imagery which bypasses argument and aggressiveness and at the same time clearly defines the difference between life and death, between freedom and slavery, between happiness and misery, and is in short the language of love, and according to Saint Paul, that is likely to last longer than most other forms of human communication. (Frye-Macpherson, 2004,250)

4. CONCLUSION

It is outside the scope of this paper to illuminate all the aspects that are strikingly in common in the thinking and writings of the well-known Canadian critic and the so-far little-known Hungarian writer Béla Hamvas. Further comparison would indeed deserve a dissertation.

Apart from introducing the figure and phenomenon of Hamvas, a thinker largely unknown beyond the borders of Hungary, I have chosen to concentrate upon the motif of “transparency” and its satellite ideas of apocalypse, *aletheia* or kerygma.

Despite the contrast between the fame and reputation Frye managed to earn during his lifetime and Hamvas’s total lack of a visible worldly career, there is also much in common in their attitudes to established academic institutions. Northrop Frye is said to have declined invitations to prestigious academic institutions to the United States and remained loyal to his Victoria University in Toronto saying that “one has to remain provincial in order to become universal”. Béla Hamvas was also a provincial Hungarian living in total isolation throughout the first seven decades of a troublesome twentieth century but, as we have seen, he was entirely committed to universalism. Both Hamvas and Frye advocated and adopted a language that is unusual in the context of discursive argument and logical discourse. Both of them, therefore, chose to be extravagant outsiders, even stumbling blocks, for their contemporaries. Such lonely men of genius are usually first rejected, then forgotten, but eventually, one day, they come back again.

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FÜLÖP JÓZSEF



ÉRINTKEZŐ ÉLETMŰVEK:
NORTHROP FRYE ÉS RUDOLF KASSNER¹

Kezdetről fogva a holizmusra való igény jellemezte működését, amely tágabb és szűkebb szakmáján belül meglehetősen ritka jelenség. Gondolatvilágában irodalom és biblikum komplementer módon váltak egységessé. Vallástudós-nak túlságosan irodalmár, irodalomtudós-nak túlságosan vallásos. Vallásfelfogásában sokkal inkább aufklérista, mint dogmatikus, a vallás formája inkább foglalkoztatja tartalmánál – akár egy *katekumen*, kezdő hitgyakorló. Modern mítoszkatatóként nem állná meg a helyét: az irodalmat mítoszként olvassa, a mítoszt irodalomként. Ezért lát Platónban vízvázalasztót, olyasvalakit, aki ki- és átvezette a nyugati gondolkodást mai állapotába: ennél fogva nagy tisztelője, de a szívéhez a preszókratikusok közelebb állnak. A filozófián, valláson, irodalmon túl a művészet is izgatja: bár az érzéki tetszésben felfedezi a tapasztalati tudást, esztétának túlságosan etikus. Antidogmatikus, mégsem egészen liberális, ahhoz túlságosan konzervatív. Az ökuméné csillaga vezeti kezét, uralja szándékait: a kettéhasítottág ellen ír, a világnézet dualizmusa és szétszakítottága ellen. Krisztológiája éppoly radikális és metaforikus, mint *kevés* elődjéé, pl. Dosztojevszkijé. Történelemszemléletében nem sok modern elem van, mivel mitikus. Mégsem fordul el korától, éppen ellenkezőleg: hangja nem ritkán didaktikus, szelíden kinyilatkoztató. Változatos műfajú szerző: amit ír, inkább esszéjellegű beszámoló, semmint karteziánus értekezés. Szavaiból és fogalmaiból nem rendszert épít, hanem organikusan szerveződő jelentésrétegeket simít egymásra. Szövege nem attól válik építménnyé, hogy, akár egy rendszerben, elemei aládúcolják egymást, hanem attól eleven, hogy a teremtő képzelet megjelenítő-ereje működteti. Fiatalon William Blake ihleti meg: hosszú élete egészére a látomásos költő-festő tanítványául szegődik.

¹ Köszönettel tartozom Tóth Sárának, *A képzelet másik oldala – Irodalom és vallás Northrop Frye életművében* c. kötet (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2012) szerzőjének, mivel jelen tanulmány a vele való beszélgetés nyomán született meg.

Azok előtt, akik Northrop Frye és Rudolf Kassner életművét és -útját egyaránt ismerik, nem titok: az iménti felsorolás az azonosságok sora volt – ez indokolta az egyes számot. Tömören ezzel a bevezetővel adható meg a válasz a kérdésre, mi (minden) fűzi egybe és rokonítja Frye-t és Kassnert.

A morvaországi születésű osztrák író és filozófus, Rudolf Kassner közvetlen megidézése előtt először is arra tegyünk kísérletet, hogy Frye világnézetére, irodalomértésére germanista szemmel pillantsunk rá, így befogva látómezőnkbe a két interkontinentális rokont. E rápillantásunknak még akkor is van jelentősége, ha a nagy tudású és az angolszász művelődésben is otthonos Kassnerről van szó. Ő ugyanis, amennyire széles látókörű gondolkodó, legalább annyira és kifejezetten német, illetve osztrák: elsősorban rendkívüli nyelvi univerzuma okán, amelynek gyökérszete egészen Eckhart mester misztikus nyelvhasználatáig nyúlik vissza. Kérdésünk ezért így szól: vajon a német nyelvű kultúra mely elemei fedezhetők fel *annál* a kanadai irodalomtudósnál, akit az angolszász kritika egyik legjelentősebb alakjaként tartanak számon? Ha e kérdést komolyan fontolóra vesszük, akkor válik igazán izgalmassá a két gondolkodó összevetése.

Kézenfekvő az irodalommal kezdeni, még közelebbről az olvasással. Az *Ige hatalmában* több helyütt, de a *Kettős tükörben* is találunk fejtegetéseket az olvasás mibenlétéről (lásd például *KT* 116, 119). Az előbbiben Frye ugyan egy franciára, Roland Barthes-ra hivatkozik, amikor az újraolvasás elodázhatatlan feladatáról beszél, de mindkét helyen Friedrich Schleiermacher hermeneutikai megfontolásai juthatnak eszünkbe. A teológus és Platón-fordító ugyanakkor a divinációt részletesebben és pontosabban elemezte, illetve a hangsúlyt nem kifejezetten a korábbi olvasmányélményekre helyezte (vö. *IH* 108, 186; *ABI* 95), így hatása legfeljebb közvetett lehet. Továbbá Frye azon megfogalmazása, miszerint „igazában a nyelv használ bennünket, nem pedig mi a nyelvet” (*KT* 109), több rendelkezési jogkört ítél oda a nyelvnek a mindenkori beszélő, azaz a szót kérő ember kárára, míg Schleiermacher kiegyensúlyozottabban mérte ki az illetékeségeket: *A fordítás különféle módzatairól* c. nevezetes előadásában a nyelv és a nyelvvel élő ember kapcsolatát oldás és kötés kettősségében látta megvalósulni.²

A hermeneutikai kör frye-i megfogalmazását inkább Hans-Georg Gadamernél tanácsos keresnünk, aki *Az igazság és módszer* vonatkozó fejezetében többször is bizonyos méltánytalansággal kezeli Schleiermachert. Gadamer a műalkotás létmódjának módszertani segédfogalmául a játékot választotta, művészetontológiai elemzése pedig (hol részleteiben, hol egészében) visszhangra

² „Minden embert egyfelől a nyelv ural, amelyet beszél; ő maga és egész gondolkodása annak terméke. Teljes bizonyossággal nem tud semmi olyat elgondolni, ami azon kívül helyezkedik el. [...] Másfelől azonban minden szabadon gondolkodó, szellemileg tevékeny ember maga is alkotja a nyelvet.” (Schleiermacher 124)

talált Frye-nál: a *játék* kapcsán mindketten az önmagáért való energiáról értekeznek, a lélek kötetlen mozgásáról, a külső céloktól való mentességről és az éber elme szabad játékáról (vö. *IH* 69, 72; *ABI* 36, 26–27). Hasonló áthallásról tanúskodik az *ünnepek* frye-i fogalma is (vö. *ABI* 36). A műalkotás ontológiáját megíró Gadamer *Az igazság és módszerben* nagy, revizionista érvrendszert működtet, amellyel jelentősen korrigálja a Kant óta tartó filozófiai és esztétikai hagyományt. Ugyanakkor a német idealizmus egyik alapgondolatát is átmenti, amikor a költészet primátusát hangsúlyozza a többi művészettel szemben: „... a költészet az egyetlen olyan művészet, amelyik úgyszólván kezdettől fogva az újfajta »szabadság« felé vezető úton halad” (42).

Miként a protestáns teológus Schleiermacher, úgy egy másik protestáns indítatású német, a fiatal klasszika-filológus Friedrich Nietzsche sincs jelen közvetlenül Frye írásaiban. Ezzel szemben az érett gondolkodó, az *Így szólt Zarathustra*, *A morál genealógiájához* vagy *Az Antikrisztus* kései Nietzscheje annál inkább, értelemszerűen. *A tragédia születésének* titáni szerzője Frye szellemi horizontjának, világnézetének előkészítőjeként is felfogható. Idézzük fel egy pillanatra, mit is mond Frye *Az Ige hatalmában!* Megállapítja, hogy a mitologikus-költői gondolkodásmód Platón *Állama* óta alá van vetve a dialektikus nyelvnek. A Platón-féle „forradalom lényege az volt, hogy a *müthoszt* felváltja a *logosz*” (*IH* 60; lásd még *KT* 228). Nietzsche, a szakadár tudós, *pontosan* ezt, a leíró nyelv elúrhadását és a mítosz elsorvasztását nevezi *esztétikai szókratizmusnak* – Szókratész és Platón mellett Euripidészt állítva pellengérré. Ahogyan a *müthosz* Platón ítélőszéke előtt rajtavesztett a *logosz* előnyhöz juttatásával, úgy húzza az eredeti, apollóni-dionüszoszi művészet is a rövidebbet a telhetetlenül optimista megismerésvágygal és a végtelen tudálékossággal szemben (Nietzsche 127). Így kerekedik felül a tudomány a művészetben.

Amikor Nietzsche a hűvösen számító Euripidészt ócsárolja, amiért a görög tragédiában művészietlen naturalizmust honosított meg, és üres, kiszámított, jól célzott hatásra törekedett, nem nehéz *nem* gondolnunk Frye roppant vonzalmára választott lélekvezetőjének, Blake-nek anti-euripidészi művészete iránt. És megfordítva: amikor a modernitás kritikusa Blake felé fordultak, valójában éppen azzal az értetlenséggel szemlélték a látomásos művészt, ahogyan annak idején Euripidész az őt megelőző, a hagyományból táplálkozó mitikus görög tragédiát. A három főkolompós ténykedésének köszönhető, toldja meg kritikáját Nietzsche, hogy a vallások „alapjaikban maguk is tudós vallásokká fajultak”, és hogy „minden vallás szükségszerű előfeltétele, a mítosz már mindenütt megbénult, hiszen a mítosz területén is” (149) ugyanaz a szellem uralkodott el. A leíró nyelv felülkerekedése azonban nem volt végzetes hatású, mert az irodalom megállította (kevésbé optimistán: késlelteti) a metaforikus nyelv elapadását,

amiként a *Biblia* és bizonyos fokig az irodalom átmentették a mítoszt a Platón utáni nyugati gondolkodásba.

Frye gondolatvilágának további német forrásvidékei: az érvelési stratégiában nem ritkán a hegeli logika és dialektika alkalmazása; szellemtörténeti áthallások *poco pianó*ban; gondolati és irodalomelméleti mélyrétegeiben Jung archetípusa, nem kevésbé jelentősen Ernst Cassirer³; a költőség, költőiség kitüntetett fontossága okán leheletnyi Heidegger⁴; végezetül *A lélek és a formák* Lukácsa a maga ambiciózus kritikafelfogásával.

*

Rudolf Kassner hat évtizedet és tízszer ezer oldalt felölelő életműve⁵ változatos műfajú szövegeket kínál: szépirodalmi ihletésű nagyesszét, platóni hagyományon nyugvó dialógust, angol előképekre hagyatkozó imaginációt, koanjellegű mondásokat és így tovább. A századforduló szecessziójának cizellált formakultúráján nevelkedett Kassner klasszikusan vagyonos író, aki bőkezűen bánik poétikus szövegeivel. Mindebből már elég világosan kitűnik, hogy az osztrák mennyire egyívású a kanadaival – sőt, hogy kettejük alapfogalmai, mint arra a bevezetőben már utaltam, egyaránt Blake-től eredeztethetők. Most tehát, amennyire ez lehetséges, szálazzuk ki a tízezer oldalból a Blake-fonalat!

Kassner Blake-vel, illetve Blake autográf nyomataival először a *British Museum*ban találkozott 1897 körül, első londoni tartózkodása idején – és a felfedezés valósággal szíven ütötte (VI: 517–8). Fiatalkori barátjának szóló leveleiből kiderül, hogy intenzíven kezdett el Blake-vel foglalkozni. Így ír: „Blake, misztikus, festő és költő, az emberiség egyik legsajátosabb szelleme” (1979, 45). Alig másfél évvel később, Houston Chamberlain és Maurice Maeterlinck ösztönzésére kezdett bele első könyvének megírásába, amelynek eredeti címe *Die Mystik, die Künstler und das Leben (A misztika, a művészek és az élet)* és 1900-ban, Lipcsében látott napvilágot.⁶ 1920-ra jelentősen átdolgozta, és a címét is megváltoztatta *Englische Dichter (Angol költők)*. Kassner később jól látta, mennyire

³ A releváns utalást ezúton is köszönöm a Frye-konferencia egyik szekcióelnökének, Kovács Árpádnak.

⁴ Egyik kiemelt argumentációs helyén Heideggert említi (IH 120).

⁵ A referenciamű: Kassner 1969–1990. A továbbiakban ennek egyes kötetekre hivatkozom, saját fordításomban közölve az idézeteket.

⁶ W. B. Yeats Blake-interpretációja alapvető segítségére volt Kassnernek a *Misztika*-könyv megírásakor. Yeats értelmezését „egyenesen zseniális kritikának” tartotta (IX: 897). 1908 nyarán közös barátaiknál személyesen is találkozik Yeatsszel, akinek szellemes Blake-értelmezései inkább felkeltették a kíváncsiságát, mint a költő saját művei. Ahogyan Kassner megfogalmazta: szép ember volt, szép arccal, aki elfekről és elfkirálynőről beszélt, amelyekben valóban hitt is; „olyan

ösztönzően és sorsdöntően hatott szellemi fejlődésének egészére a portrékat tartalmazó sorozat: „A könyv értéke nem is annyira a 25 éves ifjútól származó kritikában van, hanem az eljövendő műveket előzetesen meghatározó, előre meg-látó össz-szemléletben. Teljes egészében egy látó ember műve, nem pedig egy ítéelő.” (III: 466) Később úgy vélte, esszégyűjteményének egyes portréi, így pl. Shelleyé vagy Swinburné, veszítettek jelentékenységükből, ám Keats- és Blake-portréjának igazságait megerősítve látta (IX: 354).

Könyvében Blake-ről többek között megállapítja, hogy számára a Biblia az emberiség és az egyén életének nagy szimbóluma, hozzátéve: bizonyos tekintetben mindannyian a Bibliát éljük (I: 30–31); különös figyelmet szentel Blake nemi vagy nemekkel kapcsolatos misztikájának, és úgy fogalmaz, hogy nála a szellem a természetbe, az örökkévalóság pedig az időbe emanált. Már ennyiből is nyilvánvaló, hogy Kassner 1900-as Blake-esszéje számos ponton megelőlegezte az 1947-es *Fearful Symmetry* (*Rettentő szimmetria*). Barátja, Hugo von Hofmannsthal a könyv megjelenésekor úgy vélekedett, hogy abban a képzelőerő új filozófiája szunnyad (lásd IX: 355). Valóban: Kassner világméretű, világszemléletének egyik alapfogalmává válik a *képzelőerő*, amelyet ténylegesen a Blake-kel való találkozásnak köszönhetett. Itt azt is érdemes megjegyeznünk, hogy Kassner volt az első, aki német nyelven írt Blake verseiről (IX: 911).⁷ Egy emberöltővel később Kassner a *Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert* (*A tizenkilencedik század*) c. könyvében, annak is az *Egyensúlyzavar* címet viselő fejezetében ismét hangsúlyos helyen és összefüggésben említi Blake nevét: a minden impulzusával a 18. századhoz tartozó költőt az „utolsó látnoknak” és „misztikus Ádámnak” nevezi (VII: 273).

Kassner, Blake nyomán, szintén azt vallotta, hogy a *költői* „nem okfejtő szerkezet”, hanem a „képzelet világába tartozik” (IH 63). A *Kettős tükörben* sem kisebb feladat hárul a költészetre, mint az, hogy a nyelv metaforikus szakaszát folyamatosan újraterejtse (KT 63). Amikor Frye éles különbséget tesz a leíró nyelv és a metonimikus írásmód között, utóbbiról azt mondja, hogy egyetlen kifejezés sokoldalúsága „egy teljes gondolati rendszernek lehet a nyitja” (KT 112). A metonimikus írásmód jellemzői persze nem vagy csak részben állnak, példának okáért, a francia szimbolizmusra, Rilke költészetére vagy Ady kifejezésmódjára, és Frye nyilván azt sem gondolja, hogy *általában* az irodalmi beszéd, csak azért,

volt és olyan [ma is], mint egy hangszer, egy hárfa, amelyen visszhangzik az egész kelta-ír mondanivaló” (X: 896; vö. IX: 326).

⁷ Korábban csak Henry Crabb Robinson tanulmánya (*William Blake, Künstler, Dichter und religiöse Schwärmer*) látott napvilágot németül, igaz, még jócskán a költő életében, 1811-ben (Cha 185). Egyébiránt Søren Kierkegaard nevét, Georg Brandes mellett, szintén Kassner tette igazán ismertté.

mert előszeretettel használ szóképeket, metonimikus. De e nyelvezet értő működtetése, ez a nyelvfelfogás éppen Kassner szövegeiben figyelhető meg krisztálytisztán, mivel ő maga is közel ugyanazokra a végkövetkeztetésekre jutott az irodalmi nyelv, sőt a Biblia nyelvezete kapcsán: ezért lehetséges, hogy egy-egy *par excellence* kassneri kifejezés nem csupán megfeleltethető valamely műve egy-egy gondolati rétegének, de szavainak helyi értéke azok valamennyi jelentésvetületét. Álljon itt néhány sarokfogalom Kassner irodalomkritikai, valláselméleti és filozófiai műveiből: „szám”, „mérték”, „határ”, „ábrázat, arc, látvány” (tehát a *Gesicht* fogalmának egyes jelentésváltozatai), „fiziognómia”, a „közép”, „képzelőerő”, az „istenember” és így tovább.

A „költői látomás integritását” (IH 67) Kassner mindvégig és következetesen fenntartotta magának, legyen szó mások művészetéről írt esszéiről, tanulmányairól, avagy saját írásművészetéről, amelyet gyakran „álomprózaként” emlegetett. A látomásosság, az álom vagy a képzelőerő hamar döntő szerephez jutott nála, és maradt is vezérlő csillaga egész munkássága során. A fiatalkori gyűjtemény után most vegyük szemügyre időskori, zenei tárgyú esszéit!

Kassner zene iránti vonzalmának sokszor és sokféleképpen adott hangot: az 1905-ös, csodálatos nyelvi megformáltságú nagyesszé, a *Die Moral der Musik* (A zene morálja) még a zenét tartotta omnipotens művészetnek, ám ezt idővel, a fiziognómia alapjainak letételekor meghaladta: „Az ember birodalma nem a szimmetriáé vagy a ritmusé, hanem a mértéké. [...] A szó ennek a mértéknek a kifejezése. A szó: mérték. Ezért a költészet az ember voltaképpeni művészete, a művészet a mérték birodalmában” (IV: 71–72). Ennek ellenére az ötvenes évekre öt olyan esszét is írt Kassner, amelyek közvetlenül a zenét, illetve a hallást állították a középpontba – és kivétel nélkül és tökéletesen ismeretlenek. Kettőt emelek ki, a Mozarról és a Beethovenről szólót. E két zeneköltő illusztrálja ugyanis Kassnernél azt a két világréndet, amelyet a lélek és a szellem határoz meg.

Frye *Az Ige hatalmában* tisztázza, mit is jelent az irodalom *története*, azt, hogy annak csak az egyik részét képezi a tényleges történelmi idő (IH 78). Kassner is gyakran folyamodott ahhoz az módszerhez, hogy elemző műveiben az irodalom, a zene vagy általában a művészet jelenségeit az e módon felfogott (meta)történelem szerint elemezze – esetünkben Mozartot Caesarral, Beethovent pedig Mozarttal állítva párhuzamba. Mozarttal, mint írja, a „nagy művészet” ért véget, melyben lélek, hang és dallam együtt található meg, de Mozart azért csúcspontja és vége is a nagy művészetnek, mert az ő zenéje volt képes feloldani a rációval megzabolázott művészet merevségét, és ő rázta le magáról a már Platón *Államát* is meghatározó dogmatikus igazság- és értelemfogalmat. Összefoglalóan mondja: „Mindennek a szellem vetett véget, amely ott fúj, ahol csak akar.” Bibliai utalása, a János 3,8 („A szél fú, ahová akar és annak zúgását

hallod, de nem tudod honnan jő”) Frye számára is központi jelentőségű *A kettős tükörben* (KT 33).

Míg a Mozart-esszé: lélekrajz, lélekportré, addig a *Beethoven arca* című esszé hamisítatlan fiziognómiai leírás. Kassner képsorozatokkal és „ábrázatokkal” dolgozik, a maga kifejlesztette módszer jegyében. A meditatív szemlélés⁸ során, mint több helyen megírta, a dolgokat nem megérinteni kell, hanem hagyni, hogy lesüllyedjenek bennünk, hogy azután hasonlatokként, látványként, ábrázatként (*Gesicht*) merüljenek fel ismét. A kassneri esszé rendkívüli stíluskultúrája és nagy értéssel egybefűzött szóképei révén állandóan mozgásra bírja az olvasó képzelőerejét: fedezze fel magában azt a bizonyos goethei „belső színpadot”, ahol a szöveg magától kezd el működni, mozgalmassá válni, „játszani” – éppen ezért Kassner szövegei mindig az olvasás összetett mechanizmusára, belső, imaginatív erejére, mindenekelőtt pedig dinamizmusára emlékeztetnek. Kassner műveinek megfelelő olvasásáról különféle instrukciókkal is ellát bennünket: a szöveget olvassuk el többször, és hagyjuk hatni, ne rontsunk neki észérveinkkel, ne alkosunk azonnal ítéletet, medítaljunk fölötte, olvassuk fel maguknak hangosan, mintegy előadva. Ekkor feltárulhat a szöveg imaginárius tartalma, kivilágosodhatnak boltozatai. Kassner azt várta el az olvasótól, amit Pál a hit gyakorlójától: a mondanivalót „lelkiképen” (KT 112–13; IH 160) kell megragadni.

Csak hogy a vizuális gondolkodás e két szerzője, Frye és Kassner egyaránt a hallásra helyezi a hangsúlyt (ABI 41, 72). Kassner egészen közvetlenül is, amikor Beethoven fiziognómiáját elemzi.

Beethoven arcára Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller híres festménye közvetítésével pillant rá, akinek a zeneköltő süketen és egyetlen alkalommal ült modellt. A portréra tekintve Kassner hasonlatok egész sorát említi – Marszúaszt, Tolsztojt, az Otricoli Zeuszt, Bachot és Wagnert hozva fel példaként. Sajátos fel fogásának megfelelően elemzi előbb a Beethoven-portré orrát, ahogy ő nevezi: „a dac fénytelen tövét” (IX: 692), aztán az állát, amelyről megállapítja, hogy „az többé nem a merő önfejlőség helye, hanem valami igen magasnak, kimagaslónak az alapja vagy pusztá talapzata” (IX: 693). A leírás utolsó állomásaként a Beethoven szemei és fülei közötti kapcsolatot mutatja be. A süket zseni a szemével pótolja azt, amit hallásával együtt elveszített: a pillantás révén világosodhat meg. Beethoven a szenvedő ember képét tárja elénk, süketsége és élénk szeme közvetlenül a kettéhasadt világot jeleníti meg. A külső és a belső, a kint és a bent hadakozik Beethoven arcán. Míg Mozart a „nagy művészet” korának végső megnyilvánulása volt, addig Beethoven a „posztmozart” világrend alakja.

⁸ Nem minden jogalap nélkül való az a megállapítás, hogy Kassner a zen alapállását érvényesíti minden művében (Spoerri 55).

Kassner kései szövegeiben fenntartja a művésznek odaítélt próféta szerepet, Beethoven fiziognómiai leírásából ez egyértelműen kiderül: „A szem és a fül bizonyos értelemben úgy viszonyulnak egymáshoz, mint a művész és a próféta. A művész egy örökké jelenvaló világ próféta.” Ezután a Sixtus-kápolna mennyezetfreskójának egyik legismertebb részletét idézi fel, hogy a prófétaarcot a művészarc mellé helyezhesse. Ézsaiás arcában a hallás legtökéletesebb ábrázolását véli felfedezni. E látomásra hívó rámutatásban egymás enharmónikusává válik a *Hammerklavier-sonáta* Beethovenjének művészarca és Michelangelo Ézsaiásának prófétaarca:

Miként a művész esetében a feszültség a fültől a szemig vezet, úgy a prófétánál megfordítva, a szemtől a fülig. Miután kellőképpen megvizsgáltuk Beethoven, a művész arcát, forduljunk Michelangelo Ézsaiásához, ha a prófétaarcot akarjuk megkapni: a próféta arca a fülhöz vezet – felemelt ujjával vezérlőn –, az idők zengő teljességéhez. (IX: 696–97.)

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SÁRA TÓTH



A FRYGEAN PERSPECTIVE ON EUROPEAN IRONY:
THE GREEN BUTCHERS

In this paper I will attempt to apply what I believe is Northrop Frye's perspective on a significant feature of European élite culture. I am using the term European not in a geographical but in a sociological sense, having in mind the culture of the secularized élite all over the Western world, which, according to Peter Berger, constitutes, as it were, a European island even in America (11). This feature happens to be an attitude of extreme irony, more precisely, the tendency of interpreters to overlook textual data that may counterpoint or call into question the predominance of the ironic vision of alienation. The concept of irony is thus brought into play not simply in the traditional sense of a rhetorical trope, but in a philosophical or existential sense, first theorized by Romantic philosophers, and afterwards by thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Paul de Man or Frye himself.

1.

It is well known for readers of *Anatomy of Criticism* that irony, coupled with satire, is a very important point of orientation in Frye's literary universe. In his circle of the four pregeneric plots or *mythoi* (comedy, romance, tragedy, and irony/satire) or in his U shaped quest, irony is the lowest point. Whereas tragedy, associated with autumn, implies the downward movement of a hero of great power of action, irony implies the lack of action. Characters are not travelling downward because they are already down, totally paralyzed as it were. This scheme corresponds to Frye's historical modes which proceed from myth through romance, through the high and low mimetic to the ironic mode. Whereas in the mythic mode the "hero" is superior to us, normal beings in degree and kind, at its opposite, in the ironic mode he or she is worse than us and has the least power of action. Whereas in Frye's polarized world of imagery the apocalyptic group of images belong to the mythic mode and present a world of fulfilled desire, its

opposite, demonic imagery belongs to the ironic mode, a repudiated world of unfulfilled desire, of unrelieved suffering and alienation.

In short, Frye, in the *Anatomy of Criticism*, suggests that irony has a demonic quality to it, and later, in *Words with Power*, he calls the pole of irony quite consistently “hell world” and its opposite—referred to in *Anatomy* as the mythic and apocalyptic—the paradisaic pole. Quite logically, Frye’s world of irony and satire, being the *mythos* of winter, is a cold hell, a frozen and motionless sphere. (Not all together accidentally, the film I am about to discuss has some important scenes in the deep-freezer room of a butchery.) The positive energy in Frye’s universe is human desire, which transforms nature into a home, helping us achieve oneness with other people, with the exterior world and with God, and thus finding true identity. At the other pole, action and motion are absent, no transformation takes place, which leaves us in the hell world of alienation: from nature, from other people, from God, and from ourselves. As opposed to identification with who and whatever is other, in the hellish state of irony we experience extreme detachment and objectivity to the point of being overpowered by the objective world we cannot change, even being turned into objects ourselves.¹

This account is very similar to Paul de Man’s ironic vision of language and of the human condition, with the substantial difference that for de Man irony is not one pole but it is the only authentic interpretation of existence. For de Man words do not have the power to unite subject and object, self and world, language being a network of signs referring endlessly to other signs and never achieving oneness with something other and real. Neither can the self achieve oneness with the non-self or with itself for that matter. In an endless series of acts of consciousness attempting to grasp its own reality, the self is doubled, multiplied and is finally dissolved in the “narrowing spiral of a linguistic sign... more and more remote from its meaning” (De Man 222). De Man picks up Baudelaire’s example of a stumbling and falling man laughing at himself falling, and invests this scene with philosophical significance, turning it into a symbolical Fall, in the course of which the divided or split self comes to view himself as an object, treated by Nature “as if he were a thing ... whereas he is quite powerless to turn the smallest particle of nature into something human.” (214)

¹ “The *descent* of the visionary ladder would take us into a world where subject and object grow steadily further apart, and end by the subject’s becoming an object too” (WP 87). Analyzing *Waiting for Godot* in a Frygian perspective, Diane Dubois claims that the extreme ironic mode of the play is a result of the characters being trapped by the objectively real and unable to use the transformative power of their imagination to give sense and meaning to the chaos of external reality (116, 119, 121).

Decisive thinkers of the last century, such as Paul de Man, tend to absolutize or essentialize the hell-like world of irony and satire, the state of alienation and split. To mention another towering figure, Jacques Lacan's vision of the self and its relation to the world is dominated, as Frye would say, by the archetype of satire, which is *sparagmos*: fragmentation or tearing to pieces. The self or ego as seen by Lacan is always already fragmented, in bits and pieces, the integrated *imago* being the deceptive result of an imposition of a rigid and artificial unity on this chaotic turbulence (97). According to one of his critics, Joel Whitebook, in Lacan's work synthesis and integration are suspected as inauthentic, and contrary evidence tends to be overlooked. Lacan, Whitebook argues, tendentiously misrepresents Freud by placing almost sole emphasis on the death drive as opposed to the integrating Eros (see Whitebook 122–128).

Of course, the onset of an age of extreme irony in the post-war era is understandable. Europe had been through one of the most horrible times humankind had ever experienced, with our societies coming as close as possible to experiencing the “hell world” Frye describes in such a chillingly precise manner as “a world of power without words, where the predominant impulse is to tyrannize over others” (WP 88). The tendency to interpret existence in terms of irony and irony only and to suspect discourses of integration and synthesis is also understandable. What is less understandable is when interpretive practices begin to turn into a futile enjoyment of irony for its own sake. The most precise account of this attitude I have found comes from Hungarian writer Mihály Kornis, who uses images of cold and frost to describe the extreme ironic mode:

In its final stage, irony turns into a sort of Satanism. It rejoices in being free, free to do anything, but its joy lacks serenity. Rather, it is frozen and shrunken; it has become lucid, but it is only capable of wit. The warm serenity of humour shines with the ability to suffer, the “serenity” of irony shines only with the inability to suffer. (137)

Northrop Frye, on the other hand, is known to be a critic with a preference for comedy and romance over tragedy and irony. The reason for this, I believe, is not the lack of understanding of the latter, but his sharp vision of its ultimately hellish nature. And to see hell for what it is, it is necessary to see it in context. Without something else to compare it with, without an opposite to measure it up to, absurdity would cease to be absurd because it would be all there is. In his vision of the whole of literature Frye relativizes the *mythos* of irony and satire by turning it into one of the four pregeneric narratives and by contrasting its demonic imagery with the apocalyptic or paradisaic group of images. His

strongest statement about the relativity of irony comes, however, from *Words with Power*:

[I]n proportion as we try to approach literature with a sense of personal involvement or commitment, one pole of it begins to look like the revelation of a paradisaal state, a lunatic, loving, poetic world where all primary concerns are fulfilled. It is a world of individuals but not of egos, and a world where nature is no longer alien but seems to be, in the medieval phrase, our “natural place.” It is one pole only: the other pole is the imaginative hell explored in tragedy, irony, and satire. The hell world may be described as the world of power without words, where the predominant impulse is to tyrannize over others so far as one’s ability to do so extends. *But it is the paradisaal pole that gives us a perspective on the hell world, or, in our previous figure, provides the norm that makes irony ironic.* (88, emphasis mine.)

However, Frye does not only relativize irony structurally, but also historically. In his essay on the successive historical modes of literature, he describes how in our own age the ironic mode, as the last in the series of modes, follows the low mimetic mode (the age of realism), showing also signs of a return to the mythic. He says that “during the last hundred years, most serious fiction has tended increasingly to be ironic in mode” (AC 34–35). Although he does not spell this out explicitly, one aspect of the irony in modernity seems to be the split between high and low culture, between educated, ironical readers and mass consumers. Thus the interpreting habits of cultivated readers or receivers (the *élite*), even when applied to popular culture, may sharply differ from the approach of its regular audience. In contrast, the description of irony in the earlier, low mimetic phase actually sounds like what Wayne C. Booth calls “stable irony” (see 1–32). As Frye explains, “the reader is invited to share in the irony, because certain standards of normality common to author and reader are assumed. Such assumptions are a mark of a relatively popular mode: as the example of Dickens indicates, the gap between serious and popular fiction is narrower in low mimetic than in ironic writing.” (AC 49)²

By implication, in the ironic mode proper irony becomes “unstable”, and in its extreme infinite, or, as we have seen in de Man’s more philosophical account,

² Advertisement and propaganda, the major arts of our ironic age, says Frye in the 1950s, build on an exaggeration of this gap, pretending “to address themselves seriously to a subliminal audience of cretins, an audience that may not even exist, but which is assumed to be simple-minded enough to accept at their face value the statements made about the purity of a soap or a government’s motives. The rest of us, realizing that irony never says precisely what it means, take these arts ironically, or, at least, regard them as a kind of ironic game.” (AC 47)

“the dialectic of the self-destruction and self-invention which characterizes the ironic mind is an endless process that leads to no synthesis” (220). In infinite ironies, Booth says, “the clear implication is that since the universe (or at least the universe of discourse) is inherently absurd, all statements are subject to ironic undermining. No statement can really ‘mean what it says.’” (240–241) Unlike de Man however, Booth and Frye make a distinction between stable and unstable ironies, and Frye does this by pointing out the difference between “the ironic tone that we may find in low mimetic or earlier modes and the ironic structure of the ironic mode itself” (AC 49). The ironic structure does produce endless, hellish irony for Frye, yet, as we have seen, not only is it confined to one phase of history, ultimately it is also only one pole of a polarized vision. Not even the most unrelenting poststructuralist ever experiences existence as permanently and absolutely alienated, and, except for geniuses as intent as William Blake, not many of us can claim to be “in God’s presence night and day”. The polarized vision of an ideal world of fulfilled desire and its opposite, a hell world repudiated and rejected by people, is not reality in the ordinary sense, but in an intense sense: the kind of reality T. S. Eliot believes humankind cannot bear much of. It is a vision of the world in imaginatively sharpened contours. None of us lives in either world, but we need both as points of orientation.

The implication seems to be that, in Frye’s vision, the bleakest and darkest ironical work contains in itself the totality of the literary universe. A narrative of the most extreme tragical or ironical descent can conjure up its opposite, the comic ascent, and thus echo the entire U shaped story of loss and recovery, of alienation and redemption. In the ironical mode, in the world of experience the vision of innocence has been lost. Yet this vision, called by Frye “a permanent integration or unity of being” in an essay on Paul de Man, is something “we can neither attain nor leave alone” (2005, 224). This is exactly what Frye goes on to say to conclude the previously quoted passage in *Words with Power* about the ironical and the paradisaal pole:

[W]hile there is no human society where we do not find all the horrors of psychotic humanity, we seldom fail to find something in the *culture* of a society that is congenial. The sense of the congenial, of a genuine human communication through words, pictures, textiles, ceramics or whatever, comes from the innocent vision at the heart of all human creation and the response to it. Such a vision is a presence created by an absence, a life that remains alive because the death that was also in it has gone. (88)

2.

In the following brief discussion of the Danish film *Green Butchers*, I will be looking for hints of what Frye calls the innocent or paradisaical vision, an aspect of the film almost entirely overlooked by reviewers.

In Anders Thomas Jensen's macabre satire two frustrated, freakish young men set up their own butchery in a small Danish village. Haunted by a past history of emotional injury and loss, insecure in several ways, they both hunger after social recognition and psychological fulfilment. Bjarne lost his wife and parents in a car accident caused by his mentally handicapped twin brother who tried to avoid a deer while driving. Bjarne is now obsessed with killing animals and collecting skeletons, and he is trying to pull his comatose brother off the life support system in order to raise money for the butchery business. Initially, no one seems interested in the new shop, which only confirms a pattern of rejection in the life of the uptight and weird-looking Svend, abused by his parents as a child and predictably not very successful with the other sex as an adult. One night he accidentally locks up an electrician in the deep-freezer room only to find him frozen to death the following morning. Panicking, he slices up the man's thigh and sells it in a special marinade as "Svend's chicky-wickies". News of the exquisite meat product spreads, and locals line up in front of the shop. For the first time in his life, he feels loved and respected by the community. To supply the growing demand, Svend gets entangled, with Bjarne's reluctant help, in a series of grisly murders, trapping and butchering people in the deep freezer. Bjarne, however, is not only a helper, the life-support machine he turns off to lay hold of his brother's money appears as a visual parallel to Svend's freezer.

Having looked through more than thirty online reviews³ in English, Spanish, Hungarian, and French, my impression is that besides complaining about the fairly high gore quotient and warning sensitive vegetarians, the majority of reviewers do not see much more in the film than one more exploitation of the hackneyed theme of cannibalism. Interestingly, few try to interpret the Danish director's work in terms of its genre, satire, although the motif of cannibalism is strongly related to what I have already mentioned as the core archetype of satire and irony in Frye's vision: *sparagmos* (tearing to pieces). In Frye's arche-

³ Out of the 30 reviews surveyed, 25 do not mention the old priest and the garden at all (15 reviews in English, 1 in Spanish, 7 in Hungarian and 2 in French); the old priest is mentioned, but not his garden, or not as a positive contrast, in altogether 4 of the reviews surveyed (3 in English; 1 in Hungarian); and, finally, the priest's story is mentioned and related to both sacrifice and satire in 1 Hungarian review written by Gábor Toldi, an aesthetics academic at the Roman Catholic University in Hungary (see Toldi).

typal perspective satire shocks us into seeing “the world as it is before the imagination begins to work on it” (AC 147). It is the world of one diseased ego feeding upon the other to repair the loss that cannot be repaired, to fill up the gaping hole in one’s existence. To put it in a Lacanian manner, it is a world where the metonymic sliding of desire is endless, the killing cannot stop. There is also a strong sense of arbitrariness Frye generally associates with tragic irony (AC 41): the deeply injured Svend is totally deprived of the power of action, the first murder, as it were, happens to him accidentally, both murderer and victim being playthings of circumstance, reduced to the status of helpless, driven objects.

My contention, however, is that while the majority of online reviews essentialize the murderously dark satire of the two cannibal butchers who sacrifice others to feed themselves, they overlook certain visual and narrative hints of the opposite, paradisaic pole: a Eucharistic vision of love nurtured by sacrifice.

Several reviews mention the so-called Romantic subplot, Bjarne’s slowly blossoming love affair with the lovely orphaned Astrid, but the good-hearted local priest who raised her and gives her a job, is only mentioned in passing, and only once or twice in a positive sense. No importance is attributed to the strong counterpointing relation between the priest and his surroundings and the world of the butcher shop. In sharp contrast with the cold, grey colours of the butchery and the frozen atmosphere of the freezer full of chopped-up lifeless corpses, the old priest has a hothouse in which he cultivates a garden teeming with green life. It turns out that the old man was sole survivor of an airplane-crash in which he only stayed alive by eating the flesh of his dead wife, a wife whose memory he has not ceased to cherish. The morbidity of the priest’s story establishes a link with the narrative of the butchers. The common motif is sacrifice: the cannibal butchers sacrifice others to feed themselves, but a truly loving relationship also involves sacrifice in that the partners give away part of themselves to nurture the other. The priest in the film, quite simply, stands for love. Whereas the butchers spread death, the priest has been nurtured and enlivened by the love he and his wife had for each other, so now he himself can spread life by taking care of Astrid and growing a garden. In this perspective the story of the priest has unmistakably Eucharistic overtones.

I know of no better interpretive tool in order to make sense of this weird connection between cannibalism and the Eucharist than Northrop Frye’s notion of demonic parody. To quote Frye, “the Eucharist symbolism of the apocalyptic world, the metaphorical identification of vegetable, animal, human, and divine bodies, should have the imagery of cannibalism for its demonic parody” (AC 148). No-one would take the Lord’s Supper to be cannibalism. No-one would call it cannibalistic when we nurture and support one another by giving from our-

selves. Cannibalism, however, with its images of torture and mutilation, is a demonic parody of the Lord's Supper. And in the Bible, the Lord's Supper appears as the type of the apocalyptic feast at the end of times.

The apocalyptic world is a world of union, and union brings life and fertility. "Fertility," Frye says, "means food and drink, bread and wine, body and blood, the union of male and female" (AC 193). Eucharist symbolism is apocalyptic because alongside sexuality, eating is the most ancient and the most intensive expression of union both literally and symbolically. In the priest's story both of these aspects of union are present, and in Bjarne's approach to Astrid the hope of a redemptive love relationship appears. Furthermore, a strong desire for a harmonious relationship with animals also surfaces. Most of these positive motifs revolve around the church which stands on a hill above the village, thus providing a perspective, a vantage point both visually and in terms of interpretation. Approached this way, I find it significant that it is the priest who exposes the crime of the butchers because he recognizes the special flavour of the meat. The term "demonic parody" does suggest a connection between the apocalyptic image and its demonic counterpart, but it also implies that it is the apocalyptic which provides the norm. The linking motif, as we have seen, is sacrifice. Love always has a cost. Even in the Garden of Eden, as the Benedictine theologian Ghislain Lafont suggests (458), love meant giving up something of oneself for the sake of the other. In a fallen world of demonic parody this giving, this sacrifice, turns into butchery. Yet we know it is only a parody and not the real thing: this is why satire provokes such a nervous laughter.

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HORVÁTH CSABA



KETTŐS TÜKRÖK – TÜKÖRSZERKEZETEK
ÉS BIBLIKUS OLVASATOK A KORTÁRS MAGYAR
IRODALOMBAN

(Esterházy Péter: *Harmonia caelestis*, Javított kiadás;
Bodor Ádám: *Sinistra körzet, Verhovina madarai*)

„Nincsenek tisztán meghúzható határok”, írja Frye „A metafora táguló világa” című tanulmányában, „csak érdekeltségi központok. Sok író van Platóntól Sartre-ig, akiket nehéz, vagy hogy még pontosabban fogalmazzunk, szükségtelen besorolni vagy az irodalomhoz, vagy a filozófiához”(1997a 57).Sőt, mintha a szépirodalom és a bölcelet nyelve között éppen „a metafora táguló világának” szellemében átjárható volna a határ. Frye munkásságának egyik legfontosabb hozadéka, hogy ezt az átjárhatóságot a Biblia esetében és hatásában felmutatta.

A Könyvnek – illetve könyveknek – a tükörhöz hasonlítása önmagában metafora, a kettős tükör pedig magasabb szintű nyelvhasználatot mutat: már nem csupán a hétköznapi, informatív nyelvnek a szintjén, hanem a reflexív és esztétikailag értelmezhető létértelmezés szintjén vagyunk. A Biblia kettős tükör, mely önmagát mutatja.¹

Frye szerint a nyelv metaforikus, ám ezt a metaforikusságot az emberi tudat lehetőségei teremtik meg, miként írja:

A metafora tehát olyan társadalmi állapotban tűnik fel, amelyben az észlelő szubjektum és az észlelt tárgy közötti szétválás még nem megszokott, és ebben a kontextusban nem tesz egyebet, mint hogy egy csatornát vagy egy energiaforrást nyit meg az emberi és a természeti világ között. Az istenek nem egyszerűen az emberi értelem kivételései a természeti világra: egyben a természeti erők előidézői is. A metafora kiindulópontja így hát, úgy tűnik, az, amit úgy hívhatnánk, Heidegger terminusát átvéve, hogy eksztatikus metafora (*ecstatic metaphor*), az azonosság érzékelése az egyén öntudata és a természeti világ között.” (1997a 59)

¹ Ahogy maga Frye írja: „A két testamentum afféle kettős tükröt formál, egyik a másikat tükrözi vissza, de a külvilágot egyik sem” (KT 146).

Az Ige hatalma bevezetésében Frye a *Kettős tükör* célját abban jelöli meg, hogy megmutassa, a „Biblia elbeszéléseiből és képeiből kitűnő szerkezet miként rokonítható a Nyugat irodalmi műfajaival és konvencióival” (7).

Tanulmányom e Frye-i gondolatok metszéspontján elhelyezkedve két kortárs magyar író több könyvből álló, tükörszerkezetű alkotásaival foglalkozik, amelyek igénylik az egymást tükröző biblikus és profán olvasatot, s amelyekben az önmagában is tükörtermészetű nyelv metaforarendszerré épül fel. Esterházy *Harmonia caelestis* és *Javított kiadás*, illetve Bodor Ádám *Sinistra körzet és Verhovina madarai* című művei egy-egy alapvető metaforán alapulnak.

Amikor Esterházy Péter a *Harmonia caelestis* című regényét -2000ben megjelentette, a recepció szinte azonnal az egyik főművének tartotta. Pályafutása során az író átalakította a történetmondás, a világot leíró nyelv és az irodalom referencialitásáról gondoltakat. Ez a könyve, miközben „minden ott van benne, amit a *Bevezetés* tudott (idézetek helyzetbe hozása, a tradíció újragondolása, többnyelvűség, nyitott mű stb.), de ott van benne a történet, a történelem, a huszadik század nagy, kijózanító meséje is” (Selyem). Bár Frye szerint „nincs a világon még egy könyv, melynek szerkezete akár csak távolról is hasonlítana a keresztény Bibliához” (KT 148), a *Harmonia caelestis* éppen struktúrájában idézi meg a Bibliát. A két nagy részre osztott könyv első fele a távoli múlt, mely a tizenhetedik századi táj érzékeny leírásától, a család teremtésétől tart az apa történetének kezdetéig. Az első rész szerkezete után mind térben, mind időben szűkebb területet ölel fel, stílusosan pedig erősödik a realista leírásra való hajlandóság. S a második részben az ősök hosszú leírásai után az apa alakja immár fiúként jelenik meg. Ez az apává váló fiú könyve, ahol a fiúkból apák lesznek, az apák pedig belerajzoltatnak az apa-képbe. Ezt találjuk meg az utolsó mondatban, amikor a Hermes Baby írógépet verő apafigura már íróvá, az íróvá lényegül át. S ezért lesz az apa a *Harmonia caelestis* legalapvetőbb metaforája.

Az első rész, az „Édesapámok könyve”, az Ószövetség szerkezetét idézve mind térben, mind időben meglehetősen sokrétű. A 371 rész, amelyet az olvasási konvenciók miatt „hagyományosan egységként olvasunk”, a könyv második felében sokszor tematikusan ismétlődik vagy parafrázeálódik. A futballozó „édesapám” motivikusan ismétlődő leírása (241, 486) a következőképpen éri el a csúcspontját:

Klasszikus apa–fiú ikon, jártam meccsre apámmal.[...] A szünetben megszerzett virslit meg sült kolbászt a nagy plecsni mustárral vittük vissza a helyünkre. Szívesen néztük az üres pályát is. Szép. [...]

Lent meg az a gyönyörűsége zöld négyzög, benne a fehér vonalak, körök. A mennyország lehet ilyen, apa, finom ennivaló, szépség, gondoltam. (546–547)

A második rész Újszövetség-jellegű: a fiúból apává váló figura Krisztus-allúziója egyértelmű. Freud azt írja, hogy „a zsidóság apavallás volt, a kereszténység fiúvallás lett. A régi istenapa a háttérbe vonult Krisztus elől, helyébe Krisztus, a fiú lépett.” (138) Esterházy pedig így jellemzi az apát: „[...]nincsen semmije, csupán mi. Tényleg semmi. A semmi grófia.” (348) Ez persze összecseng a krisztusi mondással: „Az én országom nem e világból való” (Jn 18,36), ahogyan a következő apajellemző mondat is: „évszázadok óta édesapám volt az első Esterházy, ki rang és mód nélkül született” (368).

Esterházy írásmódját kezdetben barokkosnak kezdik tartani, de a barokk nála nem pusztá stílusimitáció, hanem a legmagasabb szintű genette-i parafrázis. A barokk építészek gyakran éltek a térnövelő illúziókeltéssel; ekkor terjednek el a kastélyok tükörtermei, melyek bizonytalanra teszik az embert. A könyv még a barokkra is utalást tesz:

Egyáltalán semmije nem maradt, se háza, országa (hazája), se családja, se Sohn, se Vaterland, egyszer csak semmi, és még az sem maradt, aki emlékeznék mindenre. Ez is olyan barokk benne, ez az oscillálás a semmi és a minden közt, az ég és a föld közt (a föld a minden, az ég a semmi). A barokk a legteljesebben üres: az édesapám. (36)

A tükör, miközben visszaigazolja a tükörbe néző létét, egyben el is bizonytalanítja a benne magát szemlélő embert: láthatóvá teszi önmaga számára, egyszerre megtestesíti és felszámolja az Isten képmására teremtett egyediségét és a heideggeri egyetlenségét (*Einheit*).

Az apa alakja a *Harmonia caelestis*ben a már nem gondoskodó, de még jelenlévő Istent idézi. Ezt a megszenvedett, de elérhető nyugalmat, összhangot mutatja a cím: a harmónia ugyan idea, s nem a földön található meg, létezéséhez azonban nem fér kétség.

Esterházy könyvének metaforarendszere az „édesapám” szóra épül. Az apaság képzete a világ kronologikus folyamatosságának, a család és a világ kontinuitását tükrözi egymásra. Az egyéni élet, a közösségi élet és az időbeliség összekapcsolódik a világ rendjéről alkotott képzetel: hiszen „a metafora nem más, mint híd a tudat és a természet között, és így lényegében a nyelvi mikrokozmosz maga” (Frye 1997a).

2001-ben még úgy nézett ki, hogy Esterházy a *Harmonia caelestis*szel létrehozta a nagy szintézist. S aztán belenéztünk egy újabb tükörbe. A *Javított Kiadás*ban mindent tükörből látunk. A *Harmonia caelestis*ben felépített és elsíratott apafigurát nem lehetett sem elfelejteni, sem eltemetni. A könyv ellenében látszik állni mindazzal, amit Esterházy pályája során a szöveg és alkotója, a nyelv és a valóság, referencialitás és irodalom kapcsolatáról gondolt. A *Javí-*

tott kiadás módosít Esterházy megszokott nyelvhasználatán. Pirossal szedve jelöli a vendégszövegeket, legyen szó a dossziék tartalmáról, Kemény István verséről vagy akár a *Harmonia caelestis* mondatairól. Esterházy maga hatalmazza fel az olvasót, hogy átgondolja a könyv és a valóság kapcsolatát.

Ha a *Javított kiadás* regény, akkor annak érvényessége Kunderával szólva a könyv lapjaira korlátozódik: „Egy regény egyetlen létjogosultsága az, hogy olyat mond, amit egyedül a regény tud elmondani” (52–53). S ez a kunderai definíció esetünkben párhuzamba állítható Frye már idézett mondatával: a Biblia kettős tükör, mely önmagát mutatja.

A bibliai párhuzamokat folytatva a *Harmonia caelestis* Ószövetségre – és Újszövetségre – való felosztása után a *Javított kiadás* az *Apokalipszis* lehetne. A *Javított kiadás* elejének a vendégszövegekhez vagy a szójátékokhoz való viszonya a mű végére megváltozik, s visszatér a könyvnek mint konstrukciónak a lehetősége. János jelenéseinek az egyik utolsó mondata is egymásra csúsztatja a világot és a könyvet: „És ha valaki elvesz e prófétálás könyvének beszédeiből, az Isten annak részét eltörli az élet könyvéből, és a szent városból, és azokból, a mik e könyvben megírattak” (22, 19). A *Javított kiadás* a dossziék, a könyvek leírásával ér véget:

Az első rózsaszínes, erősebb papír, a második fényes barna, a harmadik világosabb, a negyedik matt. Fekete szalaggal lehet összekötni őket, illetve a harmadiké fehér. [...] Apám élete közvetlen (és viszolyogtató) bizonyítéka az ember szabad voltának.(281)

Az árulás könyvei az életről, a létezésről alkotott keserű tudásnak, az ártatlanság elvesztésének metaforájává lesznek. Az ember szabad voltának említése szintén összefügg a metaforával: ahogyan a szabadság egyszerre az Isten által az embernek adományozott állapot és a választás lehetősége, a metafora erejét is az intellektuális halandóságnak való fölötte állás és az értelmezés réseiben megnyilvánuló szabadság kettőse adja: hiszen ahol a nyelv funkcionális eleme a metafora, ott „föl kell adnunk a pontosságot a rugalmasság kedvéért” (KT 112)

Bodor Ádám majdnem húsz évvel a *Sinistra körzet* után írta meg a *Verhovina madarai* című regényét. A *Verhovina madarai* ugyanúgy egy telep köré rendeződik, ahogyan a *Sinistra körzet* is. Húsz év alatt nem változott a táj. S az olvasó pedig, kit a narrátor Vergiliusként kalauzol végig az egyszerre hiperrealista és álombéli Poklon és Purgatóriumon, hogy a könyv végén talán a Feltámadás reményében búcsúzzon el tőle, azt látja, húsz év után minden másképpen van, mégis ugyanúgy: idővé alakult tükörbe néz. Ugyanakkor a *Verhovina* a *Sinistra*

körzettel szemben valóságos földrajzi helyet is jelöl. A „felföld, hegyes vidék”, amit a ruszin szó jelent, nem is lehetne máshol, csak itt, valahol Kelet-Közép-Európában. A földet az éggel összekötő szakrális hegy metaforájának *Az Ige hatalma* egy egész fejezet szentel: a Bodor-művek egymást visszatükröző mindensége ebbe a nem evilági térbe hatol át.

Bodor könyveinek alapmetaforája a táj, a *Verhovina madarai* esetében azonban a madarak. Az emberek úgy élnek egymás mellett, ahogyan az egy léttérbe került állatok az erdőben: számon tartják egymást, valójában mégis egyedül vannak.

Verhovina természeti-biológiai környezetében az ember nem elsősorban társadalmi lény. Az évszakok körforgása, a hideg, az éhség, a tárgyi szűkösség biologikum a társadalmi, sőt az ontológiai szintnél erősebb létet idéz meg. Bodor ezzel a civilizációtól elzárt teleppel túlhalad a kulturált–barbár ellentétpáron. Verhovina egyszerre természeti és ipari táj: „távol a város kísértésétől, imbolygó ködök, kénzágú melegforrások, elhagyott tárnák és meddőhányók közelében” (6).

Verhovina lakói közel kerülnek egymáshoz, eltávolodnak egymástól, de nyelvtelenségük állapotában nem reflektálhatnak a világra, csak elszenvedhetik azt. Egyszerre vannak az ártatlanságon túl és a reflexión még innen.

A címben megelőlegezett, a folyamatosan hiányzó s a végén mégis megjelenő madaraival együtt Verhovina a létezés metaforája, amellyel szemben lehetnek esztétikai, etikai, sőt akár vallási érveink is, de egyrészt hatástalanok maradnának, másrészt a létezés súlyos félreértéséről tennének tanúbizonyságot. Nem várható el, hogy a világ a mi törvényeink szerint működjön. Istennel és így a létezéssel szemben soha nincs igazunk.

Bodor szövegei közelebb állnak a metaforikus, mint a metonimikus nyelvhasználathoz.² Könyveiben a nyelvi szegénység nem negatívum. Azt tudatosítja, hogy a szavak nem leplezhetik el, legfeljebb leleplezhetik, mennyit ér a nyelv metonimikus vagy leíró szintje. Verhovina lakóinak szava hazátlanabb a szónál: Bodor nyelve nincsen messze Pilinszky stilizált némaságától, a metafora erejére épülő költői nyelvtől.

Verhovina madarai a telepen élők metaforájának tekinthetők. A brigadéros a telepre hívott intézetiseket hívja madaraknak: „madaraknak hívta őket, tudván, hogy a vége mindig az, hogy egy szép napon elrepülnek” (6). S a *Verhovina madarai* legfontosabb bibliai utalásai a madarakkal kapcsolhatóak össze. A

² „A metaforikus szakasz szómágiája, mint említettük, abból származik, hogy a dolgoknak és szavaknak közös energiájuk van, melyet azonban a szavak testesítenek meg és urálnak. A metonimikus szakaszban a szómágia szublimálódik, amolyan látszatmágia lesz belőle, mely hozzátartozik a szekvenciális vagy lineáris elrendezéshez.” (KT 44)

halottakat feltámasztó Nika Karanika³ ruháját madarak díszítik⁴. De az elhagyatottság reménytelenségének állapota és a remény visszatérésének ígérete egyaránt a madarakhoz kapcsolódik:

Először a kakasokat lehetett hallani, kattogásuk mint egy üres templomban, viszhangzott a Néma erdő fatörzsei között, aztán a korai rigófütty is át- meg átszótt a távoli tisztásokat. De a hang, ki tudja, honnan, talán egy másik országból érkezhetett. Az is lehet, Hanku csak képzelődött. (49)

S a regény végén feltűnő madarak a Noéhoz visszatérő galambként hozzák magukkal a reményt: „Csőrükben ágacskákkal [...] Megjöttek a rozsdafarkúak” (255).⁵

Az utolsó oldalon a gyilkossá váló Adam nevű főhős tiszta ruhát vesz, magára ölti új énjét, mint mindenki, aki Verhovinán halni készül. S a megérkező madarokról nem tudhatjuk biztosan, hogy a halál nyugalalmát vagy a feltámadás fényességét hozzák-e magukkal.

Verhovina reménysége a reménytelenségben gyökeredzik. Ez a reményég irracionális, ésszel megérthetetlen, az ember számára irányíthatatlan. „A hit minden értelmet meghalad, s megmarad azután is hogy az értelem csődöt mondott. [...] A kereszténység hagyományos és központi tantételeit csak metaforákkal lehet kifejezni” (111). Ám nem csupán a kereszténység, de az európai filozófia koncepcióit is.

Bodor nem pusztán tájat és nyelvet talált ahhoz a világhoz, melyben az ontológiai és a történelmi viszonyok befolyásolta nyomorúság nem válik külön, hanem metaforává is tette azt a világot, melyben éppen az ontológiai nyomorúság elsődlegessége miatt nem működik a történelem illúziója. A negatív *Weltgeschichte* a nem észlelhető *Heilsgesichtét* tükrözi vissza.

A *Harmonia caelestis* regény, a *Verhovina madarai* pedig közelebb van a regényhez, mint a novellafüzérhez. S ez a műfajkijelölés azért fontos, mert mintha Frye éppen a modern irodalom talán legfontosabb műfajáról, a regényről beszélne a legkevesebbet. A *kritika anatómiájában* az arisztotelészi hármas műnemi felosztást követve az epikával számottevően foglalkozik, illetve többször is szóvá teszi, hogy az irodalomkritika nem tudja teljesen feltérképezni az irodal-

³ „Kettőt feltámasztott, azt mondják. Hogy a fenébe csinálta?” (59)

⁴ „Kék selyemköpeny volt rajta, melyre fénylő fonallal szálldosó madarak, pintyek, süvöltők, kenderikék és cinegék voltak hímezve”(71).

mi műfajokat. Sőt az epikus művek hőseinek osztályozásánál sem említi a regényt.

Valószínűleg nem véletlen, hogy a *Kettős tükör* bevezetésében azt olvashatjuk, hogy a teremtő képzeletnek a Biblián alapuló kerete a tizennyolcadik századig határozta meg a Nyugat irodalmát. A regény műfajának a megszületéséig. Ha René Girard és Derrida nyomán azt mondanánk, hogy a regény apokaliptikus műfaj, ezzel a műfaj bibliai gyökereit hangsúlyoznánk. De Kundera szerint is a regény az egydimenziós, tehát az Istentől elhagyatott világ műfaja, mely akkor született meg, „amikor Isten lassan elvonult arról a helyről, ahonnan a világegyetemet és annak értékrendjét irányította, ahol elválasztotta egymástól a jót meg a rosszat, és értelmet adott mindennek” (16).

Esterházy és Bodor apokaliptikus világokat teremt. Esterházy egyszer a *Harmonia caelestis*en belül, majd a *Harmonia caelestis* és a *Javított kiadás* között hozott létre tükörrendszert. Bodornál a két könyv tükrözi egymást; egy másik szinten pedig mind a *Sinistra körzet*ben, mind a *Verhovina madaraiban* a telepek összes egyéni vagy kollektív története visszatükrözi azt az eget, amelynek üres a trónja.

Slavoj Žižek egy írásában azért tartja a posztmodern hiányt a modern hiánynál sokkal felkavaróbbnak, mert a posztmodern a központi ürességet nem a „hiányzó Isten” távollétében, hanem a „hiányzó isten” nézőpontjából képzelel el. A modernség szerint „a struktúra, az interszjektív gépezet akkor is jól működik, ha a *Dolog* hiányzik, ha a gépezet egy üresség körül forog; míg a posztmodern kifordítás megmutatja a Dolgot magát mint megtestesült, materializált ürességet” (8). Belenézünk a tükörbe, s nem látunk ott semmit. Illetve a semmit látjuk ott.

Kettős tükör, metafora, biblikus olvasat. Valószínűleg a mi kultúrkörünkben nem létezik ezek nélkül irodalmi mű, sőt, ezek lehetősége adja, jelöli ki a kultúrkör amúgy elasztikus és képlékeny, de mégis létező határait. S a kettős tükörben ott áll az ember, aki reflexív képességével mint tárgyat szemléli a világot s benne önmagát; a szükségszerűen metaforikus nyelvet használó olvasó, aki legyőzni igyekszik „azt, amit Blake a tárgyat szemlélő szubjektum »kettéhasadt fikciójának« (»cloven fiction«) nevez” (Frye 1997a 62). Azt az egységet keresi, amit már csak a nyelv hármában találhat meg: az immanencia metaforikus nyelvének nosztalgiájában, az értéket hiányként felmutató metonimikus nyelvben és a valóság tapasztalatát leíró nyelv kizárólagosságában. S ez a három nem zárja ki, hanem felerősíti és megsokszorozza egymást, mint két tükör a közük helyezett gyertya fényét.

Aki tükörbe néz, saját képét látja benne, aki két tükör közé áll, megsokszorozva látja ezt a képet.

S „Létezni valójában annyit tesz, mint látva lenni.” (Lacan 83) Sartre-ot idézve: „[...] látom magamat, mert valaki lát.” (Sartre 322) Kerényi Károly definíciója szerint a mítosz „akár így, akár úgy formálták meg, alapjában véve mindig egy magamagát formáló, kibontakozó és összes változataiban félreismerhetetlen alapszöveg. Ennek az alapszövegnek a szavait nem lehet rekonstruálni, csupán a variációk szavait lehet elismételni. De különbségeik mögött mégis föl lehet ismerni valami közöset: egy történetet, amit sokféleképpen lehet elmondani, mégis ugyanaz marad.” (12) A Bibliát újraíró szövegek úgy írják meg a jól ismert történeteket, hogy közben azzal is szembesítenek, az újraírás csakis metafora lehet.

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JÁNOS KENYERES



THE CRITIC AS WRITER, THE WRITER AS CRITIC:
THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION
IN NORTHROP FRYE'S WORK

There are several areas in which the concept of the creative imagination is relevant to Northrop Frye's work, extending to his theory of literature, his views of religion and the Bible, and his social thought. Thus the concept of an imaginative space is an overarching principle in Frye, offering a ground on which his wide-ranging ideas are linked. In the following pages I wish to survey the role of the creative imagination in Frye's method and thought, point out some features of his critical language, which often verges on the language of literature, and then move on to some of his "creative writings" to reveal some important connections between his fiction and later theories.

Frye's literary theory evolved from his view of literature as forming a unity, an "order of words" within a mythical framework, made up of metaphors and typological connections. As he stated, "It is evident that criticism cannot be a systematic subject unless there is a quality in literature which enables it to do so. We have to adopt the hypothesis, then, that just as there is an order of nature behind the natural sciences, so literature is not a piled aggregate of 'works', but an order of words" (1957, 17). The unitary theory of the imagination is one of the most essential elements in Frye's concept of literature and his exegesis. He extended Blake's proposition: "Every Poem must necessarily be a perfect Unity" to the whole of literature in the heuristic principle that literature forms a coherent whole, an idea expounded in *Anatomy of Criticism*. This unity of literature is a reality the critic must achieve consciously, by using his imagination in making connections between different works. Frye's whole critical output incorporated in his complex theories can be seen as an attempt at demonstrating the cohesion of all literature and, as a result, the possibility of establishing a unified theory of literature as well. Throughout Frye's books, this unity and coherence of literature is verified through a compelling combination of literary examples and theoretical investigations, and, in this way, the hypothesis is shown to be true.

Analysing Frye's Blakean epistemology, Joe Velaidum notes the following:

For Frye, perception has the possibility of creating three types of reality: a reality based on the passive perception of objects, which Frye equates with nature; a reality based on the active perception of nature as material shaped into human form, which is equated with civilization; and finally, a reality based on the imaginative perception of unity, which aligns with the greatest visionaries and is ultimately the perception of God. (26)

Frye believed in the possibility of constructing a "spiritual" world, the world of art, made by the creative imagination on the basis of the perception of the everyday world around us. The "spiritual" world, for Frye, is a "physical" world, which is not detached from the world in which man lives and ordinarily perceives, but it is constructed by a conscious effort using the creative imagination. This spiritual world, in turn, is highly organized and reveals the hidden significance of our ordinary world. Frye's works, however complex or complicated some of them may seem, rest on this concept of the creative imagination reaching the level of a unified vision of the object of investigation, in which, eventually, the subject-object distinction ceases to exist. In order to reach the spiritual world by vision, one needs to creatively perceive the surrounding world, with some effort on one's part. As he claims: "[t]his is the world as it really is, not the world as our lazy minds and senses perceive it" (Cayley 55). Therefore, art does not represent a fake, illusory world, but one which is absolutely real. As Velaidum points out, for Blake, drawing on Berkeley, "nothing can exist that is not perceived", and "the perceiver possesses the innate ability to perceive and create reality" (27-28). In Frye, too, the world of vision is "a world of creators and creatures" (1947, 26), in which man is capable of seeing what he wants to see (a point to be discussed in another context below). The creative imagination used by the artist and the creative imagination employed by the critic stem from the same ground and are therefore linked.

Frye criticism has been for long preoccupied with the question of whether his religious views had a decisive impact on his critical thinking or it was the other way round, his notions of literature and culture influencing his thoughts concerning religion. This question cannot be answered objectively; all that can be asserted with certainty is that he strongly believed in the human power to create a better world—whether in art, scholarship, or in our everyday lives—whose ideal form is traditionally represented as the Garden of Eden, Heaven and similar mythological places. His "assumption of total coherence" (1957, 16), may have derived from a religious belief but what can be known for a fact is that it was a

working hypothesis, something imagined, an idea Frye had to believe in before he could start his enquiries into literature.

Regarding Frye's interpretation of the Bible and its connection with the creative imagination, it is important to observe that the underlying pattern of his analysis consists of a series of de-creations of the Bible and of its imaginative re-creation, aiming to form another, heightened sense of unity, a newly constructed spiritual vision. The de-construction of the Bible involves the rejection of the relevance of its literal meaning and historical truth, both being highly restrictive, bound to a single vision of the world, manifested in ideologies, fundamentalism and the limitation of human freedom. Instead, Frye maintains that the main building blocks of the Bible are its inherent metaphors, and it is their combination that must be taken into consideration when analysing, and indeed establishing, its unity. Consequently, he replaces literal meaning with metaphorical meaning and the concept of historical truth with the idea of the Bible representing sacred history. In Frye's imaginative recreation of the Bible, metaphor and sacred history are both seen as being incorporated in the language of myth, which in the Bible turns into what is traditionally called *kerygma*. According to Frye, *kerygma* unites the metaphorical and concerned aspects of all rhetoric; however, the nucleus underlying it is not an allegorical argument but "what is traditionally called revelation" (1982, 29).

Taking one step further, it is obvious that Frye's social thought and his ideas of the role of education in society are also based on the creative imagination, the model of the artist who, using his imagination, recreates the world to make it more real, as well as a better place. If Western culture and literature are intricately connected to myth in general and the Bible in particular, then they must retain something of the concerned or "caring" aspect of the *kerygma*. Frye discusses this idea in relation to Shakespeare, saying that he becomes an "aspect of our own imaginative lives" because of the "quality of *care*" in his poetry (1982, 220). Frye's social thought is, in this way, tied in with the "concerned" or "engaged" aspect of myth and literature, a term that he uses in various contexts in his works.

Therefore, in Frye's conception, the creative imagination is a function which is shared by both the artist and the critic. There is, however, another aspect of Frye's work which draws it close to the realm of art: his critical language. Even though Frye endeavoured to write in a clear and unambiguous language so as to be understood even by the general public, not just a handful of theorists, his literary theory has given rise to various interpretations. He provoked contrasting responses from various scholars and critical groups throughout his life and his works have continued to elicit diverse analyses since his death. These divergent

interpretations concerning Frye are, no doubt, related to his language. This is indicated by W.K. Wimsatt's remark, who, in 1966, complained about Frye's "frequently shuffling associational logic and syntax, which at the worst I would describe as a kind of verbal shell game" (84) and that in *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye "achieves some sort of maximum of hyper-Aristotelian, minutely subdivided conceptualization, rampant pigeonholing, an earnest proliferation, a superfoetation of archetypal phantoms, of heroes, myths, modes, cycles (qtd. in Hamilton 231). Frank Kermode went as far as to claim that "Frye offers you a choice of thinking him entirely right or entirely wrong" (qtd. in Hamilton 7). Frye himself often complained that he was completely misunderstood. However, he rarely responded specifically to any criticism of his work, and when doing so, he reacted only in general terms. He usually defended himself by claiming that he had more refined ideas than his critics had assumed. In *Spiritus Mundi*, for example, he remarked that "the most serious adverse criticism of me still seems to me to be based on assumptions too remote from mine for revision to meet them" (100).

The question as to what prevented Frye from setting out his theory clearly and without confusion is related to his language. The point at issue involves the dichotomy of form and content, expression and thought. Understanding literature, for Frye, is connected to the eye, as much as to the ear. Anagogy, as the most complex level of meaning in Frye's theory, virtually transcending meaning, takes the form of a vision, which Frye attempted to describe with language. Hence Frye's distrust of argument, for a vision does not argue but supersedes argument by revelation. In a sense, therefore, his criticism was an attempt to communicate that which is beyond language, which is very difficult to communicate precisely—to describe what is primarily visual. Consequently, Frye was more concerned with presenting a vision than putting forth an argument. In this way, Frye's constant visualization (his predilection for metaphors like "insight", "vision" and "shape"), and his suggestion that anagogy takes the form of something to be seen, points in a direction which shifts Frye's thought beyond ordinary scholarly language.

This explains why Frye's critical language is sometimes poetic (primarily metaphoric), for it is the language of poetry that is capable of transmitting images for the eye. And since Frye's language is, at least partly, poetic, it evades definite meaning, unless the metaphoric ideas are consistently put together to form a large synthesis. Metaphor brings about a synthesis different from the disparate individual complexity of the two things brought together. The "more" in the meaning of a metaphor includes the likeness constructed between the two

things, and because there is no definite meaning expressed by metaphors, Frye's aphoristic-metaphoric ideas may be interpreted in different ways.

Frye's poetic language can also be linked to his concept that literature does not denote a reality or a system of thought outside itself, and that the principles of literary criticism should derive from the principles of literature itself. Thus, Frye placed creative imagination, as the most basic element of all art, at the centre of his criticism and his work is "creative" in the sense that it imaginatively builds up a system which reflects the arts from the inside, which explains why the linguistic forms that he used are close to the ones found in literature. So much so that Frye's language occasionally assimilates into its subject matter to the extent that it actually expresses itself as poetry. Some of his sentences are open to scansion. As A.C. Hamilton has demonstrated the statement: "A platitude may be true, even universally true; but it would not occur to us to call it profoundly true", consists of two hexameter lines (cf. 207-208). And, as Robert Denham has pointed out, some of Frye's sentences can be read as poems (cf. 1984, 8-9).

Whereas the role of the creative imagination in Frye's theories is generally acknowledged in literary studies, it is much less known that Frye was not only a literary critic, social theorist and cultural thinker but a writer as well. To be more precise, as a young man in his twenties, he tried his pen as a writer, an ambition which he never entirely abandoned in his later career. The following pages are intended to map out this hitherto rather neglected part of his writings and to show, more specifically, that some of the basic ideas of his literary theory first appear in a rudimentary form—albeit quite explicitly—in the creative writings produced in his early years.

Six of Frye's eight pieces of short fiction were published between 1936 and 1941 in *Acta Victoriana* and *The Canadian Forum*; two remained manuscripts for decades before their publication in the Winter 1992/1993 edition of the *Northrop Frye Newsletter*. Frye also wrote short poems, a limerick and a four-line poem, both published in *Acta Victoriana* in 1931 when he was nineteen, as well as a sonnet on his twenty-third birthday (cf. Hart 293). In addition, Frye is also the author of an unfinished novel, entitled *The Locust-Eaters*; the plan of a novel was conceived in 1935 but actual work on it started only in the 1940s. Today Frye's fiction is available in volume 25 of the *Collected Works of Northrop Frye*, published in 2007.

As Robert Denham and Michael Dolzani, editors of the volume, predict in the "Introduction" with a pinch of irony, Frye's stories "will turn out for most readers to be not altogether successful" (xxviii). True as this nicely put euphemism might be, Frye's fiction has a firm place in his oeuvre; it reveals the interests,

concerns and frame of mind of the scholar and sheds light on his critical works from the “other” pole, the pole of literature, which was the permanent subject of his theoretical investigations.

The plotline of the eight stories is quite simple; these short fictions predominantly focus on the intellectual questions arising out of the mythological universe in which their author was so much engaged in his scholarly writings. At the time of the creation of these stories, Frye was very far from the established literary scholar which he became later in life; most of these stories were written well before his first major essay, “The Anatomy of Prose Fiction”, appeared in the *Manitoba Arts Review* in 1942. *Fearful Symmetry* was already under way, but years away from publication.

Below I will briefly discuss the story-lines of Frye’s short fiction and then move on to some connections between the stories and his later theories.

The short story entitled “The Ghost” describes the visitations of the title character; his first visit takes him to his “enemy”, a rival who defeated him by winning the heart of Margaret, the beloved one; his second visit is made to Margaret, and the third to a priest. The emphasis is put on the ideas and arguments represented in the dialogues. The punchline of the story suggests that the ghost does not merely exist but has come back as a living human being: “‘Excuse me,’ said the ghost. ‘Could you get me a drink? I am very thirsty’” (2007, 62). The next story, entitled “Fable... in the Nineteenth-Century Idiom”, is a dialogue between “a man who wished to be a great writer” and “his daimon”, who promises to bring him “the seven spirits who hold the seven great secrets of writing” (62). The point of this one-and-a-half page story is that the spirits holding the key to great artistic achievements are the seven deadly sins. The story “Face to Face” is a first-person narrative somewhat in the manner of Joseph Conrad with a short introduction followed by a dialogue between the narrator and a supposedly unreliable traveller who recounts his experiences on a strange island. The plot of “Affable Angel” takes place in London, where the dialogue between the two locals about the similarity between a gyroscope and the human brain becomes a colloquy with the unexpected descent of an angel. The angel’s appearance hardly surprises the Brits, who, in this shabby part of London, are “expecting something more out of the way... Something really disturbing. Devils, yes; angels, not quite” (67). A policeman appears and vanishes, there is some talk of heaven and hell, and the three go for a beer. At the crux of the story the angel returns to the sky, but on his way sends what turns out to be a Nazi bomber crashing into the Thames. The language of this story is very British (“Blimey”, “not bad chaps”) and also very colloquial as demonstrated in the last lines: “‘NICE WORK, ANGEL!’ yelled Augustus at the top of his voice. ‘Break it up, boys; break it up,’

said the policeman, reappearing.” (69) Frye’s next piece of fiction, “The Resurgent”, is a six-page story about the painful and maddening struggle of a young painter torn between artistic freedom, manifesting itself in the desire of creating paintings in the avant-garde style, and what he believes to be his patriotic duty to conform to the demands of his country, to depict nationalistic themes in the genre similar to both socialist realism and the Romantic realism favoured by the Nazis. “The Resurgent” was published in 1940, and the political implications of this dystopia are not difficult to see. The story is narrated by the painter’s sister on the basis of her late brother’s diaries. The sister is a staunch believer of the false ideals of this totalitarian state, emerging as a result of the Resurgence, and is unable to understand her brother’s struggle for artistic freedom, exhibiting itself in violent trances during which he reverts to his old style of abstract art, while actually working on a realist painting. She is also unable to grasp the real causes of her brother’s final suicide. The story “Prelude” is a retelling of the Judgment of Paris, while “Incident from the Golden Bough” takes its theme from Frazer’s account of “The Myth and Ritual of Attis”, Chapter 34 of the *Golden Bough*. “Interpreter’s Parlour” contains the interpretation of a poet’s seemingly nonsense poem by the poet himself; the story as a whole is a witty parody of exaggerated literary interpretations. In a sense, it is a complicated, intellectualized version of Humpty Dumpty’s explication of “Jabberwocky” in *Through the Looking Glass*; although Frye’s poem is more difficult and more abstract than that of Lewis Carroll. According to the poet’s somewhat ambitious remark, “it’s an entire essay on comparative religion” (85):

ARX
 A
 gold Ra-
 diance, di
 Vine, -in (e)
 Prunes and prisms. (84)

Frye’s irony is evident in the last line of the story. When the poet is done with his long and laborious interpretation, illuminating the important message of the poem, his interlocutor expresses his appreciation with these words: “Thank you very much. It must be very interesting” (86).

The plot of Frye’s unfinished novel, *The Locust-Eaters*, is set in Canada and revolves around the life of a family in an imaginary province; it contains characterizations, as well as biographical references to Frye’s own life; however, in its current form it is too short and too fragmentary to be dealt with as a novel.

The earliest title for this projected novel was *Quiet Consummation*, the phrase coming from *Cymbeline* (cf. "Introduction", *ibid.*, xxxv), and originally planned to be "laid out to be in sonata form".¹ On the evidence of his Notebooks, in addition to the unfinished novel, there were other forms of fiction which Frye intended to experiment with: the fantasy, the detective story, an academic novel in a university setting, and the bardo novel, among others (cf. *ibid.*, xxxiii). Another plan was to write "a sequence of eight definitive novels", and as Denham and Dolzani observe, while "he abandoned his brief anatomy experiment, he never really abandoned his fiction-writing dream" (xxxiii).

Regarding his short fiction, as is obvious from the above plot summaries, the action presented in Frye's stories is limited; they are mostly dialogues or colloquies between the characters. In this respect, most of them can be interpreted as scenes that offer themselves to be performed on stage, the narratives serving as stage directions. Also, as some of the stories present supernatural beings and have a thrilling, eerie aspect, these can be brought into connection with the Gothic, especially with what later came to be known as the Southern Ontario Gothic in Canadian literature. Using Frye's own system, however, as Denham and Dolzani point out, these "stories are fundamentally brief anatomies" in the sense that they are "brief Menippean satires" (xxv). As Denham and Dolzani observe, "In Frye's system, the tale is a short form of romance, the short story, a terse form of the novel, the essay, a short version of the confession; and the dialogue or colloquy, a brief Menippean satire or anatomy" (xxv).

As is obvious from the above story-lines, in his twenties Frye was already greatly preoccupied with the mythological and religious themes which later formed the basis of his literary theory. In the following pages I will point out some specific ideas in Frye's fiction which resurface in his later scholarship in a refined, modified and extended form. This, in a sense, is a typological reading of Frye, where the story elements serve as the types and the subsequent theories as the antitypes. The ideas raised in the stories are mostly rudimentary, mentioned in passing; yet, what should be noted is that some theoretical conceptions appear in one form or another as early as these works; in fact, they are probably their earliest written occurrences in Frye's work.

In Frye's first story, "The Ghost", published in 1936, Margaret's lover tells the following inhospitable words to the title character (who, as we remember, has come to haunt him): "I am not at all impressed by the fact that I see you. *Enlight-*

¹ Frye's letter to Roy Daniels dated 14 July 1935, quoted in Hart 267-268. In the same letter, Frye claims that "the relation of religion and art in symbolism... will require fictional and dramatic treatment".

ened people see what they want to see. Superstitious people see what they have to see" (60, italics mine). Upon closer analysis, this statement amounts not only to what is an unfriendly welcome of the ghost; it also entails a good deal of self-criticism, implying that the lover is not an enlightened person; if he was, he would not see the ghost.

The core of this idea, in a different context and a more elaborate form, reappears in *Fearful Symmetry*, eleven years later. In analysing the major differences between Lockean and Blakean epistemology, Frye concludes:

there are not only two worlds, but three: the world of vision, the world of sight and the world of memory: the world we create, the world we live in and the world we run away to. The world of memory is an unreal world of reflection and abstract ideas; the world of sight is a potentially real world of subjects and objects; the world of vision is a world of creators and creatures. *In the world of memory we see nothing; in the world of sight we see what we have to see; in the world of vision we see what we want to see.* These are not three different worlds, as in the religions which speak of a heaven and hell in addition to ordinary life; they are the egocentric, the ordinary and the visionary ways of looking at the same world.

The fact that *in the world of vision or art we see what we want to see* implies that it is a world of fulfilled desire and unbounded freedom. (1947, 26, italics mine)

It is interesting to note that in *Fearful Symmetry* Frye further refines his theory and finally distinguishes between four levels of vision. The first is represented by generalizations and abstraction based on memory (the Lockean universe), or by Blake's Ulro. The second is the world we live in, the physical world, which Blake called Generation. Above it lies the world of imagination, represented by a vision of love and wonder, lifting man from the "world of subject and object" but still unable to produce art. Blake calls this level Beulah. The fourth level is an intensification of the third, "the highest possible state", the "union of creator and creature, of energy and form", which Blake names Eden (48-50). The idea first appearing in "The Ghost" once again emerges in Frye's posthumous book, *The Double Vision*, where the distinction lies primarily between the second level, representing our "normal vision" of the world, and the third and fourth visions, contained in one.

Another interconnection between ideas discussed in Frye's short fiction and his subsequent literary theory can be found in his story entitled "Prelude" and his book *The Great Code*. In "Prelude", an account of the "Judgement of Paris" myth, Minerva condescendingly explains to Paris, "But *deities don't think quite*

on your plane, lofty as that may be for a mortal. *It's very difficult to approximate divine conceptions with human terms, but I'll try*" (2007, 77, italics mine).

The above idea recurs in the "Introduction" to *The Great Code*, where Frye asserts: "To answer a question (a point we shall return to later in the book) is to consolidate the mental level on which the question is asked" (1982, xv). This "later point in the book" is the interpretation of the Book of Job, more precisely, God's answer to Job's questions about the cause of his calamity:

The fact that God's speech is thrown into a series of rhetorical questions to which "no" is the only answer seems to give it a bullying and hectoring quality, and certainly there is no "answer" to Job's "problem." But did we ever seriously think that so great a poem would turn out to be a problem with an answer? *To answer a question, we suggested at the beginning, is to accept the assumptions in it, and thereby to neutralize the question by consolidating the mental level on which the question was asked.* Real questions are stages in formulating better questions; answers cheat us out of the right to do this. So even if we remain dissatisfied with God's performance, a God who was glibly ready to explain it all would be more contemptible than the most reactionary of divine bullies. (196, italics mine)

It should be mentioned that while in "Prelude" Minerva finally explains the concept of beauty on the human level by reference to aspects of the world which can be experienced and desired by Paris, in the interpretation of the Book of Job Frye clarifies why this is necessary. He states that God's reply cannot be comprehended exactly on account of the fact that the things he projects before Job from the time of the creation are beyond Job's experience; Job (and the reader) did not participate in the creation. Why the creation? Because "any causal explanation takes us back to a First Cause, that is, the creation" (1982, 196). Another, extended aspect of this train of thought is the principle of *verum factum*, namely, that man knows only what he has made, which is a central tenet of Frye's thought, exemplified in such works as *The Great Code*, *Words with Power*, *The Double Vision*, and his essays "Cycle and Apocalypse in *Finnegan's Wake*" and "Expanding Eyes".²

In "Affable Angel", originally published in 1940, the Angel describes the place of devils in the following way: "where do they fit in? *They're above you in power, below you in morals, I hope; below you perhaps in intelligence*" (2007, 68).³

² For a detailed analysis of the *verum factum* principle in Frye's work, see Cotrupi, 286-295.

³ Italics mine.

The above concept re-emerges in Frye's classification of the types of fiction by the relative position of the reader in comparison to the protagonist, as explained in the First Essay of *Anatomy of Criticism*. "Power", "morals" and "intelligence" are all factors to be taken into account when defining one's place in relation to devils according to the short fiction. However, only the "hero's power of action" remains as a category to be considered in the classification of literature in *Anatomy of Criticism*, since morality is expressly rejected and intelligence is not mentioned. As Frye claims seventeen years after the publication of "Affable Angel":

Fictions may be classified, not morally, but by the hero's power of action, *which may be greater than ours, less, or roughly the same. Thus:*

- *If superior in kind both to other men and to the environment of other men, the hero is a divine being, and the story about him will be a myth in the common sense of a story about a god. ...*
- *If superior in degree to other men and to his environment, the hero is the typical hero of romance, whose actions are marvellous but who is himself identified as a human being. ...*
- *If superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment, the hero is a leader. ... This is the hero of the high mimetic mode, of most epic and tragedy, and is primarily the kind of hero that Aristotle had in mind.*
- *If superior neither to other men nor to his environment, the hero is one of us ... This gives us the hero of the low mimetic mode, of most comedy and of realistic fiction. ...*
- *If inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity, the hero belongs to the ironic mode.*

Looking over this table, we can see that European fiction, during the last fifteen centuries, has steadily moved its center of gravity down the list.⁴ (1957, 33-34, italics mine)

The above excerpts demonstrate how a seemingly unimportant remark in Frye's early short fiction assumes relevance by its reconsideration for a theory of literature, revealing Frye's memory and imagination at work over the span of almost two decades.

It is also worth invoking an excerpt from another early story of Frye which can be interpreted as reflecting his own lifelong effort of finding unity in art and

⁴ With the exception of "myth", "romance", "high mimetic", "low mimetic", and "ironic".

literature. The hero of “The Resurgent” writes the following lines in his farewell letter before his death:

(Oct.11.) Working normally all day until I settled down for the evening after dinner. I had the old dizzy feeling back again stronger than ever and finally everything went black and I was in a stupor for some time. When I became conscious again I saw that I had covered the canvas with a network of lines, drawn in such a way that wherever one looked one’s eye seemed to be on the point of getting some sort of unifying pattern, only to see it dissolve again in chaos. But no: that doesn’t give the least idea of the picture’s effect. It sent your eye frantically scurrying all over the canvas in search of that missing clue that would bring the whole scheme together: you got into a panic when you couldn’t find it and would start over with the same result. (2007, 74-75)

Instead of juxtaposing the above with a passage from a theoretical work demonstrating a pattern of unity in literature (for which *Anatomy of Criticism* would offer multiple examples), I wish to invoke a biographical reference from Frye’s diary, showing the difficulties he went through while writing *Fearful Symmetry*. In 1940, when the story “The Resurgence” was published, Frye’s first book, *Fearful Symmetry*, was well underway. Therefore, the above lines of the imaginary painter could have been modelled on Frye’s own strife, especially in view of his heavy emphasis on the unified vision of Blake’s art. In his 1942 diary, Frye described the struggle of writing the book with lots of irony. On July 21, he remarked:

Chapter Five. The Blake takes all my time & energy: I shall never write a book under such conditions again. I’ve stopped playing the piano & stopped reading. And every once in a while I suspect I’m writing shit. If the public doesn’t like it I shall write a novel which shall earn me a million tax-free dollars, exclusive of movie rights, & lose me my job. (1996, 6–7)

On July 23, he wrote:

Oh God, when I finish this book I shall learn to compose music. I shall get my teeth fixed. I shall go to a horse race and bet on the horse that looks most like Aunt Dolly. I shall go to the Riverdale Zoo and sneer at the Great Crested Macaw (*Accius Pacuvius*). (7)

As is well known, *Fearful Symmetry* was a success and established Frye’s name in criticism. A significant career was on the rise and Frye continued to produce

major ideas and theories for over four decades. In the meantime, his short fiction remained almost completely unknown, overshadowed by the scholar's output.

However, it is well worth recalling these small pieces to see where he came from and to be reminded of the fact that there was a period in his career when it was not clear whether he wished to express his ideas in creative or theoretical writing, that is, whether he would become a writer or a scholar. As he himself noted, "I came to college, barely seventeen, convinced of the superiority of creative to scholarly work, never dreaming I was cut out to be a scholar, critic & professor, though other schoolboys called me professor as a nickname at the age of twelve at the latest" (2007, 27).

The above discussion of Frye's short fiction, demonstrating his creative imagination at work in his early years, started with "The Ghost" and its strange title character, and then moved on to some other creepy, funny and ironic stories, some of them containing ideas which resurface in Frye's profound theories in an extended form. Now we have arrived at the Riverdale Zoo and the Great Crested Macaw, which, like the Ghost, is another strange creature; strange, because in reality it does not exist, and its Latin name, *Accius Pacuvius*, refers not to a bird but two tragic dramatists of Ancient Rome.⁵

From the Ghost to the Great Crested Macaw, therefore, we have come full circle.

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⁵ Lucius Accius (170 – c. 86 BC), Marcus Pacuvius (ca. 29 April 220 BC – 7 February 130 BC). See Robert D. Denham's comment in footnote 24 in Frye 1996, 28.

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REBEKAH ZWANZIG



MOUNT 'ARAFAT AS A SITE OF RECOGNITION: ANAGNORISIS IN NORTHROP FRYE AND THE QUR'AN¹

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam—from their loins—their descendant, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): “Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?”—They said: “Yea! We do testify!” (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: “O! this we were never mindful.”

Qur'an 7:172²

[A] recognition scene transforms a story into a kind of game. That is, the story becomes a puzzle, of which the recognition scene is the solution.

(Northrop Frye, *SeS*, 130)

In the Introduction to *Words with Power*, Northrop Frye states that a large portion of his critical thinking revolved around the double meaning of the Aristotelian term *anagnorisis*. The play between the double meaning of 'recognition' and 'discovery' can be found throughout his work, and is perhaps most apparent in his articulation of the interplay between identity and metaphor starting in *The Great Code* and carrying through to *The Double Vision*. Frye's concept of the existential metaphor hinges on the reader's discovery and subsequent recognition of a "that's for me" element in the text. My paper explores this framework in Frye's reading of the Qur'an by analyzing some of the annotations he made in a copy of the Qur'an in his personal collection. In the course of this analysis my paper will explore the Arabic root *'arafa* (to recognize, to know) as the framework for understanding a larger Qur'anic narrative of recognition and the Qur'anic image of Mt. 'Arafat as both etymologically connected to the root *'arafa* and as a site of numerous Qur'anic and extra-Qur'anic recognition scenes. The narrative in the Qur'an begins on the Day of the Covenant (7:172), continues with

¹ I would like to thank Todd Lawson for his guidance and comments while writing this paper, and Robert Denham for sharing his knowledge on Northrop Frye and *anagnorisis* and for his comments on an early draft of this paper.

² All quotations of the Qur'an are from the A. Yusuf Ali translation, except for citations of the verses that Frye annotated.

the imperative to recognize the signs of God (41:53), and culminates on the Day of Judgment (10:46; 64:9; 82:5; 99:6-8). Mt. 'Arafat is mentioned in the Qur'an and in Islamic exegetical literature in connection with all three, the beginning, middle and end, points in the narrative. The connection between Mt. 'Arafat and *anagnorisis*/*'arafa* arises from Frye's annotations, and my analysis uses Frye's published works to investigate how the annotations can be understood in the context of Frye's broader inquiry into *anagnorisis*. In a 17 May 1949 entry of his published *Diaries*, Frye records that he purchased a copy of John Rodwell's 1861 English translation of the Qur'an in Toronto, one of the two Qur'ans in his collection of books he annotated:

On an impulse I bought two Everymans, the Koran & George Macdonald's Phantastes, & a rather dubious Jungian book. The Koran still baffles me: I can't figure out why the hell anybody went for that book. It probably makes a lot more sense in Arabic as a prose-poetry synthesis of the Word in which rhetorical & dialectic aspects are indistinguishable. (2001, 207)

The entry indicates that this was not his first encounter with the Qur'an. The purchase of the Qur'an occurs two years after the publication of his first book, *Fearful Symmetry*, in 1947. While it has not been possible to pinpoint when he first encountered the Qur'an, this "second" encounter with the Qur'an occurred around the time he was first envisioning "a big book on the Bible", a vision which was at least partially realized many years later in *The Great Code* and *Words with Power*. The diary entry, in conjunction with other entries from the published diaries and notebooks, indicates that Frye's concern with the Qur'an began early and was a concern that continued throughout his career. His claim in 1949 that he is still puzzled by the Qur'an suggests that the annotations in his copy of Rodwell's translation can and perhaps should be read as a continued effort to "figure out why anyone went for this book". One of the ways the annotations can be approached is through the literary convention and hermeneutic framework of *anagnorisis*. In the Introduction to *Words With Power*, Frye claims that much of his "critical thinking has turned on the double meaning of Aristotle's term *anagnorisis*, which can mean 'discovery' or 'recognition', depending on whether the emphasis falls on the newness of the appearance or on its reappearance" (14). For the purposes of this paper I am using the Arabic verb *'arafa* (to know, to recognize, to discern) as an Arabic equivalent of Aristotle's term. My use of *'arafa* is based on Frye's annotations and the analysis they generated rather than on the Arabic translations and commentaries on Aristotle. The verb comes from the root *'ayn-ra-fa*, which occurs over 70 times in the Qur'an. Some of the

other meanings it conveys in the Qur'an in various other grammatical forms are: knowledge (47:6), confession (9:102), rampart/barrier (7:46), and honourableness (2:231-36). Although Frye had no knowledge of Arabic, we know that he was at least aware of this verb due to a highlighted footnote on the word *al-'araf* (barrier or wall) in his copy of the Qur'an. The footnote is given in reference to the mention of *al-'araf* at 7:46: "And on the wall AL ARAF shall be men who will know all." The footnote explains that the wall's "name... is derived from *'Arafa*, 'to know'". The wall/barrier *al-'araf* is popularly understood to be an intermediary location between the garden/Paradise (*al-jannah*) and the fire/Hell (*al-nār*). In this passage from Sura 7, the people on *al-'araf* look first at the companions of the Garden, then at the companions of the Fire, and speak to them from their intermediary location. In such a position *al-'araf* functions as a *barzakh*, an isthmus between two things, e.g.: "It is He Who has let free the two bodies of flowing water: one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter: yet has He made a barrier (*barzakhān*) between them, a partition that is forbidden to be passed" (25:53). This site might also be considered symbolic of the reader's position of "knowing all", that is, of being able to "see" the entire Qur'anic narrative, the nature of both Paradise and Hell, and the actions that lead to the one or the other. At this point we need to distinguish between two different uses of recognition. The first sense, as a "recognition scene", falls under Aristotle's definition of *anagnorisis* as "a change from not-knowing to knowing" (87). This is something that happens to literary characters and, in many cases, reverses their course of action. Examples of this type in the Qur'an would be the scene between Joseph and his brothers in Sura 12 and the final conversation between Moses and Khidr in Sura 18. The second sense is something that happens to readers, and is an event that is connected to Frye's concept of the existential metaphor, when the reader begins to identify with what is being read. This type of recognition will be discussed in more detail below. For the moment what is important is to highlight the difference between these two uses of the concept of recognition. Before discussing the formal structure of recognition (*anagnorisis*) in the Qur'an and the images associated with it, we need to outline the creative play that occurs in recognition associated with readers. We must also grasp how recognition affects readers before we look at how recognition affects characters in what is being read. In *The Secular Scripture*, Frye writes, in connection with comic works, that the recognition scene: "transforms a story into a kind of game" (130). The recognition in this context is connected to a riddle or the explanation of a mystery, something that was hidden or obscured, and then, with the right key, is finally revealed. Such a key in the Qur'an can be found at 41:53: "Soon We will show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their souls,

until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?" This verse or *aya* (Arabic *aya* pl. *ayāt*), a term that can refer to a verse of the Qur'an as well as a 'sign', indicates that the world, rather than being simply a place in which to live or exist, holds an inner meaning. Understood in this way, the world itself becomes a text to read. The inner meaning and symbolism of the world as text become more significant once the reader arrives at the recognition scene. The events leading up to the recognition scene must be discovered anew or recognized in light of the new information given. In the context of re-discovery or re-cognition events and object are read with new meaning. The revelatory nature of the recognition scene means that all previous events must be re-traced or traced back from the recognition scene. In Arabic this hermeneutic task is encapsulated by the term *ta'wīl*, commonly translated as interpretation, but literally meaning 'tracing back to the source'. The thing recognized must be traced back to the original moment of knowing, thus the reader must embark on a metaphorical journey in the act of interpretation. This journey involves a figurative seeing that pulls the story/narrative into the consciousness of the reader. The reader can go back and discover the clues or path that lead to the recognition scene. This game continues indefinitely, and a new game is put into play at every reading. There are new pieces of the puzzle to be discovered with each new reading. The reader is constantly drawn back into the story in search of new and better understandings or recognitions (see *MM* 6). The reader is repeatedly drawn up from the lower world (world of nature) into the higher verbal (spiritual) world. Two Qur'anic terms that are associated with this type of movement are *zāhir* and *bātin*, "exoteric"/"esoteric" or outer/inner. This movement is also the movement associated with Frye's existential metaphor—the moment readers recognize or discover themselves in what is being read and the subject/object distinction is blurred. In *Words with Power*, Frye explains that "the type of identification we have been calling existential metaphor...[is] standing outside oneself: a state in which the real self, whatever reality is and whatever the self is in this context, enters a different order of things from that of the now dispossessed ego" (85-6). The reader is drawn out of the world of ego-centrism, where all thought and concern revolves around what directly affects the desires and wants of the individual, and into a higher social world where the wants of the individual are subsumed into the wants of a larger community. It is important to emphasize that the creative play or game associated with this type of recognition produces a lens through which the reader views the world.

Before going on to discuss in more detail how the recognition scene sets this game of reader recognition into motion, the literary structure of the Qur'an needs to be outlined. When dealing with the idea of a Qur'anic "narrative of

recognition”, it should be borne in mind that the Qur’an as a whole is not a proper narrative. The Qur’an is comprised of 114 Suras (chapters) of varying length—each one comprised of revelations orally given to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel over a period of approximately 23 years (610–632 C.E.). The Suras were gathered together after the death of Muhammad, and the current form of organization, roughly by length rather than chronological order, was produced by the community of his followers. This organization began around 633 C.E., when Abu Bakr instructed that the revelations orally memorized and written down by Muhammad’s companions be brought together to form one text, and continued with ‘Uthman who had multiple copies made of the collected revelation.³ Sura 12 (*Yusuf*) is the only proper narrative; the other Suras contain exhortations, warnings, proscriptions, references and allusions to other prophets, and stories from the Jewish and Christian sacred texts, as well as other Near Eastern sources. Norman O. Brown writes about the style of the Qur’an: “Historical material is fragmented into its archetypal constituents, and then subjected to displacement and condensation, as in dreams. It is a rebirth of images, as in the Book of Revelations, or *Finnegans Wake*.” (167) Brown is pointing out that people, places, and events are not discussed in terms of linear/historical cause and effect, instead, all of time and history is condensed into the moment. In this typological and apocalyptic style, each image or word points towards a meta-historical plane that gives them meaning. Frye discusses this in connection with Sura 3: “the third Sura of the Koran appears to be identifying Miriam and Mary; Christian commentators on the Koran naturally say that this is ridiculous, but from the purely typological point of view from which the Koran is speaking, the identification makes good sense” (*GC* 172). The identification makes sense when considered from a non-linear perspective. On the meta-historical level Miriam and Mary are both types that link Moses and Jesus into one prophetic sequence. This meta-historical plane is connected to the higher verbal/spiritual world discussed above. Historical events and people are used as signs that simultaneously point outwards towards the recognition of this meta-historical plane and inwards to the discovery of them in the life/consciousness of the reader. Meaning is generated through this creative play associated with tracing each word and image back to the meta-historical plane, a play connected to the Arabic concept of *tā’wil*. This play then leads us back to the existential metaphor. The tracing that occurs might also be considered a mental process whereby the reader organizes the fragmented material into a cohesive narrative form. This process of organization is situated within Frye’s distinction between

³ For a detailed introduction to the historical and exegetical study of the Qur’an, see von Denffer.

the panoramic and participating apocalypse. The panoramic apocalypse is the revelatory narrative from creation through to the judgment at the end of time. The participating apocalypse takes place in the reader's mind after reading. The narrative presented by the panoramic apocalypse invites the reader to join in this vision, to make it the lens through which they view the world. Joining in this vision leads the reader into a new life, a new way of seeing the world, and the world as text is read with added meaning, new re-cognition. Frye writes at the end of the section on the two types of apocalypse, "the [participating] apocalypse is the way the world looks after the ego has disappeared." (GC 138) The disappearance of the ego is similar to the dispossessed ego mentioned above, thus the recognition associated with the reader and reading transforms individuals and creates a new verbal/spiritual world for them. Such a tracing of words and images gives us a framework with which to outline a Qur'anic narrative of recognition that takes place in meta-history. Frye identifies two recognition scenes in the Qur'an in his annotations: first, as "recognition scene", "On that day shall men come forward in throngs to behold their works, and whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of good shall behold it, and whosoever shall have wrought an atom's weight of evil shall behold it" (99:6-8); and second, as a "negative recognition scene": "The day when He shall gather you together for the day of mutual gathering, will be the day of MUTUAL DECEIT." (64:9) He also highlights two other references to these scenes of judgment and recognition. First, "They shall recognise one another! Now perish they who denied the meeting with God, and were not guided aright!" (10:46), where Frye underlines the word "recognise". And the second one he underlines and marks in the margin is: "Each soul shall recognize its earliest and its latest actions." (82:5) These are connected to a larger narrative in the Qur'an that begins on the Day of Covenant, when God gathered all creation together before time and history began:

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam—from their loins—their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"—They said: "Yea! We do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful." (7:172)

Frye does not annotate this verse, but he does highlight an allusion to it: "Verily, we proposed to the Heavens, and to the Earth, and to the Mountains *to receive* the Faith, but they refused the burden, and they feared to receive it. Man undertook to bear it, but hath proven unjust, senseless!" It is because of this Covenant that the signs (*ayāt*) are placed in the world—so that humanity may remember (*dhikr*) or recognize (*'arafa*) the covenant they made with God.

The Qur'an itself provides hints or clues within its Suras to aid the process of remembrance/recognition. (33:72) Each Sura, aya, and word/image (sign of God) is *totum simul*—contains this entire narrative from the Day of Covenant to the Day of Judgment within itself. The levels of reading or the journey of reading as *ta'wīl*, tracing back to the source, involves discovering each sign's place in the outer, meta-historical narrative as well as in an inner personal narrative. Frye explores this journey through the images of ascent and descent associated with mountains, ladders, and caves, gardens and furnaces— all images that he highlighted and/or commented on in his Qur'an. They symbolize the movement from the natural world to the higher verbal world. In connection to the Arabic terms *zāhir* and *bātin*, each image is a sign with an outer (*zāhir*) appearance and an inner (*bātin*) meaning ascertained through *ta'wīl*, tracing each back to the spiritual or meta-historical realm. It is through this movement that the existential metaphor is played out, that the reader starts to identify with what is being read. Mount 'Arafat is symbolic of this journey, not only as a point of contact between the lower and the upper worlds⁴, but also because its very name comes from the same root as *'arafa* (recognition). However, the link between the Mount and the structure of recognition is not philological, but literary and inter-textual rather. Mount 'Arafat is an important site on the Hajj, and, in what follows, I will show how it is one of the most important images/symbols of this narrative, not only because it comes from the same root as *'arafa*, but also because it represents the movement or journey associated with this narrative of recognition. Mt. 'Arafat is only mentioned once in the Qur'an: "When ye pour down from (Mount) 'Arafat, celebrate the praises of God at the Sacred Monument, and celebrate His praises as He has directed you, even though, before this, ye went astray." (2:198) The longest Sura, *Surat al-Baqara*, mentions the root 20 times, the largest number of occurrences in any sura, and uses it in forms pertaining to honour and goodness as well as recognition,⁵ and it sums up the entire Qur'anic vision of history, from the Creation of humanity and the Covenant, to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise and the history of the People of the Book, to the call to remember the Covenant, the description of the right path leading to the final recognition on the Day of Judgment, and nature of Paradise and Hell. It mentions Mt. It mentions 'Arafat in the section that outlines the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. In a sense, the Hajj can be seen as a type of the larger historical narra-

⁴ For more on the importance of the image of the mountain in connection with ascent and descent, see *WP* chapter 5.

⁵ The Day of Covenant is also connected to this etymological structure of recognition. Sura 7, *al-A'rāf*, derives its name from this root and also contains the second most frequent mention of the root, 6 times, along with Sura 4, *al-Nisā'*.

tive of recognition outlined above; it is symbolic of the movement from the Day of Covenant to the Day of Judgment and the cultivation of remembrance that leads to a final (positive) recognition scene rather than a negative recognition scene. If we trace the place Mt. 'Arafat has in each part of this narrative, we see it constantly appearing as the site of a recognition scene. According to al-Tabari, Mt. 'Arafat was the site where the Day of Covenant took place: Then God rubbed Adam's back at Na'mān of 'Arafah and brought forth his progeny (*dhurriyyah*). He scattered them in front of him like tiny ants (*dharr*). He made covenants with them and "had them testify against themselves: Am I not your Lord?" And they said: "Yes," as God says. [Q 7:172] (al-Tabari 304)

Because of this it can be considered the prototype of all other recognition scenes. It is also the site where Gabriel taught Abraham the rites and ceremonies surrounding the hajj, and on the hajj it is where the pilgrims gather in "a symbolic act meant to bring to mind the ultimate gathering on the Resurrection Day". (Asad) Edward Lane, in his *Arabic-English Lexicon*, adds to this when he mentions the possible reasons for the naming of Mt. 'Arafat: "Because it is a place sanctified and magnified, as though it were rendered fragrant: or because the people know one another there." Each scene either implicitly or explicitly refers back to the Day of Covenant and the narrative that develops from it. Each of these scenes on Mt. 'Arafat can be labelled a recognition scene in themselves, or a sign alluding to the final recognition scene on the Day of Judgment. It is also relevant at this point to note that the fragrance mentioned by Lane in the passage from his Lexicon is *'arf*, also a cognate of the *'ayn-ra-fa* root. The association of scent/perfume and knowledge further forges a link with Frye's concept of the higher verbal/spiritual world. Fragrance is an ephemeral sign or clue that at first reading or experience may not stand out, but becomes an important symbol upon re-reading and engaging with the game set in motion by the recognition scene. In conclusion, the journey that is associated with this narrative of recognition is the journey to "see" the significance of the entire narrative both outwardly in the rhythm of religious life and inwardly in consciousness. It is a continual repetition and creation of meaning, and the outer and inner puzzles both have an existential pull at the core of their movement. The reader places this higher verbal world onto the natural world and it becomes the lens through which they navigate and live in the world. Inwardly this narrative is an inner cycle or *hikāya*—an Arabic term meaning simultaneously performance, narrative, mimesis, history, and re-creation—that occurs at every reading of the Qur'an. The French philosopher Henry Corbin tells us that all the communities of the Abrahamic religious traditions face a fundamentally hermeneutic task—the task to understand the true meaning of their revealed scripture. This task is

shaped by the consciousness of the individual, by, in Frygian terms, how much of the “that’s for me” element they recognize in what is being read. Corbin explains:

Everything depends therefore on the initial act of consciousness which establishes a perspective, together with the laws that will henceforth govern it. The act whereby consciousness reveals to itself this hermeneutical perspective, at the same time reveals to it the world that it will have to organize and structure on a hierarchic basis. From this point of view, the phenomenon of the sacred Book has given rise to corresponding structures in the Christian and Islamic worlds. (2)

For Corbin, the world that is created for a community out of a revealed scripture arises from the individuals within the community reading and seeking to understand the text. This understanding is formed through the readers’ recognition of themselves in the text, similar to the process outlined above in connection to the panoramic and participatory apocalypses, and through this recognition they begin to form a teleology and verbal/spiritual world in which to live. Frye expresses a moment similar to that described by Corbin in the last two sentences of *The Double Vision*: “In the double vision of a spiritual and a physical world simultaneously present, every moment we have lived through we have also died out of into another order. Our life in the resurrection, then, is already here, and waiting to be recognized.” (85) In essence this structure of recognition that is associated with the reader is also a type of world building. Both Corbin and Frye are describing the process whereby a sacred text becomes the lens through which the individual sees the world, the process whereby the text becomes the basis for the verbal/spiritual world in which the community lives. The task now is to look further at this structure of recognition and Mt. ‘Arafat, and other mountains typologically associated with it, such as Mt. Sinai and Mt. Qāf and how the cognates of the root *‘arafa* are used in connection with them. Thus, this paper is just one step towards uncovering how the Qur’an might be considered the “great code” of Islam, and why, in the words of Frye, “anyone went for this book.”

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SÁNDOR KLAPCSIK



MYTHICAL JOURNEYS IN AGATHA CHRISTIE'S CROOKED HOUSE AND ORDEAL BY INNOCENCE

It is almost a truism that detective fiction functions as the showcase for various literary theories. Critics can exemplify their relatively complex theories with the help of this “simple” genre, since detective fiction is based on clear-cut rules, formulaic structure, and a straightforward language and transparent style. Certain thinkers use the investigation process in the traditional whodunit to explain narratological theories and the differences between fabula and syuzhet (Todorov 44-45; Brooks 23-36). Others focus on the genre to demonstrate psychoanalysis, poststructuralism or deconstruction – it is enough to mention here Jacques Lacan’s and Jacques Derrida’s interpretations of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” and the far-reaching theoretical discussion that they provoked (Muller and Richardson).

In this essay, I interpret Agatha Christie’s detective fiction in the mirror of anthropological and mythical theories. Based on Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* and his essay “The Journey as Metaphor”, I argue that Christie’s *Crooked House* (1949) and *Ordeal by Innocence* (1958) demonstrate various aspects of the rites of passage and liminality, phenomena that are closely related to Frye’s views on the mythical hero’s circular or spiral journey. I also intend to demonstrate that the investigation process in the two novels closely follows mythic rituals, such as the ancient ritual of the scapegoat or pharmakos.¹

Defining liminality, Victor Turner draws on Arnold van Gennep’s description of “rites of passage”, in which three separate phases are distinguished: separation, liminality, and re-incorporation. The notion of liminality is a period of social transition, either that of the tribal subject or that of the community itself,

¹ Although it would be difficult to argue that these two stories are the most famous or most significant works of the author, Christie claimed in her autobiography that her own favourites were exactly these two novels (Knight 90-91). Thus, the texts can be considered as paradigmatic works in Christie’s oeuvre. For a detailed analysis of these and other Christie novels, see also Klapcsik (31-53).

when “the ritual subjects pass through a period of ambiguity, a sort of social limbo” (24). This process is often reflected in “spatial symbolism”, as the transition in status is accompanied by spatial transference or “a geographical movement from one place to another. This may take the form of a mere opening of doors or the literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas” (25). Thus, the rite of passage is not only symbolic, but it also literally involves a passage, a movement, and a journey.

It is important to note, however, that liminality and the rite of passage should not be imagined simply as a horizontal journey, a mere shift from point A to point B. Instead, anthropological and mythical theories describe a system of composite movements and diverse paths that the initiand or mythical hero follows.

First, Frye and Turner underline that such horizontal journeys almost always indicate a *vertical* movement or hierarchical repositioning. The spiritual journey of the rite of passage involves a movement from a primary to a more mature status: from the dwelling of the uninitiated novice to that of the initiate, the fully-fledged member of the tribe. Thus, point B indicates a more elevated, privileged and superior position than point A. An initiated adult has typically more rights than an uninitiated child; the end of the journey should find the traveller more experienced, wiser and more widely recognized, which results in a more pivotal status.

The overall presence of such paradigmatic vertical movements is based as much on sociological principles as on mythical beliefs and religious views. As Frye says in his “The Journey as Metaphor”:

So far we have been speaking of journeys over the surface of the earth. But in mythology our world has always been a middle earth, with different forms of above and below it... The symbol of ascent may be a tree, or a mountain, or a ladder... The Greek word for ladder, *klimax*, and the Latin word, *scala*, will give us some notion of the immense proliferation of this image... and it was a common view not many centuries ago that scale and degree were essential to the form of human society as well. (216-17; emphasis in original)

Somewhat analogously, contemporary theories, especially poststructuralism, also question the possibility of solely horizontal linear movements. They argue that linear processes indicate the presence of a dualism in the form of point A as a starting point and point B as the goal, and such a dualism almost always correlates with a hierarchical binary opposition. As Jacques Derrida argues, “in a classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coex-

istence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms controls the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), holds the superior position" (41; emphasis in original). Point B usually holds the superior position in spiritual and religious journeys, since the final destination is placed on a more elevated level than the starting point (Klapcsik 7-9).

Second, Mircea Eliade, Frye, and Turner frequently emphasize the omnipresent tradition of the image of *cyclical* or circular movements in rituals, myths, literature and arts. The mythical or fantastic journey involves a full cycle when, for example, the hero undertakes a quest, which is followed by the act of returning home. As Frye puts it,

the containing way or direction is cyclical. When the cyclical movement enters the individual life, we have the form of journey we call the quest, where a hero goes out to accomplish something, kill a dragon, deliver a heroine from a giant, help destroy a hostile city, or what not. The hero of a quest first goes "away": that is, there must be some direction for his movement... If the quest is successful, he normally returns home, like a baseball player, the great model for this returning journey being of course the *Odyssey*. (1990, 213)

It is important to note that after the journey is completed, the home where the hero arrives will not be exactly the same as it was before: "the starting point [is] renewed and transformed by the quest itself" (214). As mentioned before, the journey transforms the hero and elevates his position in society, and so his home will also become more valued, elevated and decorative than before. Thus, as Frye indicates, possibly the most archetypal form of journey is helical, forming a "spiral climb" or a "spiral path going around a mountain or tower" (217, 218).

Such journeys are openly reflected in various literary genres; most notably, perhaps, in fairy tales and children's fantasy stories. According to Vladimir Propp's formalist theory of fairy tales, the first function (β) describes the event when the protagonist or his relative absents himself from home. His ninth function (B) describes the moment when the hero is allowed to go or he is dispatched. Later, during function XI (\uparrow), the hero leaves home. Functions XX (\downarrow) and XXIII (o) describe the episode when the hero returns home, followed by the events when the hero rises in the social hierarchy: he is given a new appearance under function XXIX (T), which may involve him building a marvelous palace (T2). Thus, in these fairy tales the starting point or home of the hero is literally transformed at this point, demonstrating the more elevated status of the character. Eventually, the hero becomes married and ascends the throne, forming function

XXXI (W), where the word “ascend” clearly indicates the progress from a lower to a higher social position (see Propp 25-65).

Maria Nikolajeva also emphasizes the role of the journey in fantasies and fairy tales, especially in children’s stories, where the “purpose of the journey is the maturation of the child (protagonist as well as the reader)” (46). Nikolajeva uses the differentiation between linear and circular journeys for her categorization and historical survey of children’s literature. She argues that more recent and subversive fantasies may form linear or open-ending journeys, but the majority of traditional children’s fantasies involve circular journeys, since these are more reassuring for a child: “the return home is a matter of security: whatever hardships and trials are endured, safe home is the final goal” (46).

So how are such circular journeys and spiral climbs related to classical detective fiction? How are these motifs manifested in Christie’s stories?

Interestingly enough, Christie’s fictional murders frequently indicate the metaphor of the journey. Certain stories evoke the journey literally: murder cases often involve commuters or tourists who travel to exotic places by plane, ship or trains. Enough to mention here *The A. B. C. Murders* (1936), which is set in various parts of England and where a railroad guide and a traveling salesman play crucial roles; *Death in the Clouds* (1935), which is set on an airplane; *Death on the Nile* (1937), set on a ship on the river Nile; the train journeys in her *4.50 from Paddington* (1957); and *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934).

It is even more significant, however, that many times the *murder per se* can be interpreted as a journey. Christie’s works foreground the period between the murder and dénouement and describe it as a journey or liminal phase in the life of a family. The primary social situation before the murder takes place becomes point A, the initial situation. The investigation forms the liminal process or chaotic interlude in the life of the family. Finding the culprit at the end of the novel coincides with point B. Revealing the murderer is the final goal of the detective’s and reader’s journey, the return home and security when the characters reincorporate into an orderly, peaceful and well-established society.

Accordingly, Christie’s murder mysteries often meticulously portray the spiritual journeys and hierarchical relations of the family and the isolated rural community. Especially in her early fiction, for example, *The Murder at the Vicarage* (1930), Christie’s characters “inhabit comparable enclosed domestic spaces, consisting of a tight-knit, class bound, and hierarchical community of a village or parish” (Mezei 105).² In these cases, detective fiction can be charac-

² Even in Christie’s stories of the 1930s, middle-class and working-class characters appear and sometimes transgress social levels, especially in the form of liaisons. For example, in the short

terized with the help of Frye's low-mimetic and ironic mode. Low-mimetic works, which include many comedies and nineteenth-century realistic fiction, focus on everyday characters, especially their hierarchical positions and usually futile attempts to reach a higher social level (AC 34). As Frye puts it, the main idea in low-mimetic texts is "the exclusion of an individual on our own level from a social group to which he is trying to belong... [and the character's] mania or obsession about rising in the world" (39).

In Christie's works, such attempts are clearly recognizable when the head of a wealthy and powerful family becomes the victim, "a tyrannical figure and husband whose death is eagerly desired by the family" (Mezei 105). In this case, the crime is followed by the relatives' "jostling for positions of power" (106), since many characters try to take the former position of the victim. For example, the narrator in *Crooked House* stresses that due to the murder of the head of the Leonides family "[t]he old order changeth" (109). The new order, however, cannot commence before the guilty party is found: the place at the top of the social and financial pyramid needs to be filled, and it has to be filled by an "innocent" character. The culprit needs to be found; or rather *a* culprit, since the indicted criminal does not even have to be the actual murderer, just somebody who is a suitable scapegoat for the family.

Thus, the liminal period of the investigation evokes another ritual, namely, the "sacrificial rite" (Moretti 137), the rite of the scapegoat when the individual is sacrificed for the sake of the community, which is a typical characteristic of Frye's low-mimetic and ironic mode (AC 41-42). Detective fiction becomes, as Frye says, "a ritual drama around a corpse in which a wavering finger of social condemnation passes over a group of 'suspects' and finally settles on one. The sense of a victim chosen by lot is very strong, for the case against him is only plausibly manipulated" (46). In other words, the genre evokes "the formula of how a man-hunter locates a *pharmakos* and gets rid of him" (46; emphasis in original).³

story "The Tuesday Night Club" published in *The Thirteen Problems* (1932), the young maid Gladys Lynch is the culprit, who has a secret liaison with the master of the house, "who had got Gladys Lynch into trouble, as the saying goes" (18). In Christie's Poirot novels the setting of the English country house is often transferred to London where the class-bound society and hierarchical structure of old England—especially in late novels such as *Third Girl* (1966)—is more openly reformed and significantly loosened. In the late Miss Marple stories—for example, *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* (1962) and *Nemesis* (1971)—even the countryside has changed and become less socially conservative. A new housing estate has been built in St. Mary Mead and, as Gillian Gill observes, the countryside characters seem to "have been left behind by life and watch helplessly as the fabric of their house and their lives falls in pieces about them" (199).

³ Analogously, Christine A. Jackson argues that the "confrontation between the sleuth and vil-

In Christie's *Crooked House*, everybody would prefer the young second wife, the stepmother Brenda, to become the pharmakos or the murderer. A member of the family openly reveals that the incident "won't matter—as long as the right person killed him" (18). The narrator/detective/Watson-figure also experiences the effects of sacrificial rite when he admits that "the Crooked House was having its effects upon me also. I, too, wanted to find, not the true solution, but the solution that suited me best" (190). A servant, a foreigner, an insane stepmother or stepchild would be the ideal culprit who would suit the family the most, making it possible for them to start a new order of spotless innocence.

In *Crooked House*, the family's wish does not come true, and the dénouement is hardly reassuring when a juvenile family member turns out to be the murderer. In other novels—*Ordeal by Innocence*, *Appointment with Death* (1938), *4.50 from Paddington*—the family can start the new era without losing their innocence, since the culprit turns out to be an outsider. But no matter what it takes, finding any kind of murderer is still better than lacking the solution.

Therefore, the murder in Christie's stories usually does not entail a gruesome act; in fact, the murder becomes, quoting Frye, "an ironic game", as the reader is hardly shocked even by the sometimes gory details of the case: "we read murder stories with a strong sense of the unreality of the villainy involved" (AC 47). The reader is distanced from the physical effects of the homicide because the case becomes a formula and metaphor for a mythical journey or social ritual.

Another Christie novel, *Ordeal by Innocence*, also emphasizes that the old order and hierarchical relations of the family come to an end with the murder. The new order commences only after the characters go through a mourning period, that is, the temporary era of the investigation. The characters live in tranquility after the arrest, indictment and death of the son "Jacko", who was found guilty of the murder of the tyrannical stepmother. However, two years later an unexpected outsider named Arthur Calgary turns up, reveals the alibi for Jack Argyle and proves his innocence, which is accepted with little delight in the family. Calgary subverts the stable relationships of the family that were formed after the alleged murderer—the perfect scapegoat, the mentally unstable stepson—had been found guilty, and so he creates the situation of "anti-structure" (Turner 28).

Until the new murderer is found, the family needs to go through a second

lain... takes on the scapegoat ritual significance... [when t]he investigation, a search for the aberrant personality, can be seen as a ritual hunt to override the original murder. The detective goes after the criminal, the one who committed the murder and lied to cover it up. In doing so, the sleuth may commit a similar kind of murder, but we condone this taboo, because the killing is an act of nature, a cleansing of the culture" (16).

unpleasant liminal period—their first liminal period having taken place between the murder and the indictment of “Jacko”. During this time, the faces are masked and the social positions are flexible, since the family members try to define their own and other’s roles, positions and duties. As Christie’s characters often wear masks to hide their real nature, the stories evoke Mikhail Bakhtin’s carnival, a festivity that “marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions” (10).

In Bakhtin’s description, the medieval carnival functioned as an intermediary phase of ambivalence, a playful period of reversed hierarchies and “temporary liberation” from the social order: “Carnival was the true feast of time, the feast of becoming, change, and renewal” (10). Turner characterizes liminality analogously: liminality forms a playful “weird domain” in space and time, in which “ordinary regularities of kinship... are set aside, where the bizarre becomes normal, and where... [the participants] are induced to think, and think hard, about cultural experiences they had hitherto taken for granted” (27, 42; see also Klapcsik 44-46).

Ordeal by Innocence candidly describes this carnivalesque liminal situation when a character says:

I just don’t know. ... I’m frightened of everybody. It’s *as though behind each face there was another face*. A – sinister sort of face that I don’t know. *I don’t feel sure that Father’s Father*, and Kirsten keeps saying that I shouldn’t trust anybody – not even her. And I look at Mary and I feel I don’t know anything about her. And Gwenda – I’ve always liked Gwenda. But now I’m not sure about Gwenda anymore. *I see her as somebody different*, ruthless and – and revengeful. I don’t know what anybody’s like. (148; emphasis added)

One can, of course, realize here without difficulty that the Bakhtinian joyful laughter of the carnivalesque crowd is entirely missing in Christie’s fictional family. Instead, the characters undergo a painful and enforced situation and they rather experience the mask in its relatively modern “Romantic” form, which “is stripped of its original richness and acquires other meanings alien to its primitive nature: now the mask hides something, keeps a secret, deceives. Such a meaning would not be possible as long as the mask functioned within folk culture’s organic whole. The Romantic mask loses almost entirely its generating and renewing element and acquires a somber hue. A terrible vacuum, a nothingness lurks behind it” (Bakhtin 40).

The stressful and obligatory nature of the family’s temporary period corresponds with Turner’s liminal stage, which differs from the carnival in the sense

that “the carnival is unlike a tribal ritual in that it can be attended *or* avoided, performed or merely watched, at *will*... To the contrary, in tribal ritual even the normally orderly, meek and ‘law-abiding’ people would be *obliged* to be disorderly in key rituals” (Turner 43; emphasis in original). Frye also states that in the majority of ritual journeys “the journey is seldom regarded as a good thing in itself. It is undertaken because it must be: if the journey is a metaphor for life, life has to be followed to the end” (1990, 221).

The chaotic interlude, the transitory period without patriarchal rule and hierarchy, repels and frightens the family members in *Ordeal by Innocence*, who would otherwise gladly follow community rules and maintain the established social structure and family hierarchy. The behavior of such characters foregrounds a major contradiction in detective fiction: the genre presumes and portrays desire for a stable social structure and hierarchical order, but the murder and the following investigation necessitates and embodies a liminal stage, a disturbing intermission in the rule of rationality and that of financial or feudal hierarchy. Thus, for a short period the shocking or supernatural becomes believable and even a butler or a ghost can be suspected of the murder of a wealthy and noble victim.

Eventually, of course, social stability returns and the reader realizes that it was neither a ghost nor the butler who had murdered the master of the house. Analyzing *The Murder at the Vicarage*, Mezei also underlines the recurrence of order in Christie’s fiction: “[a]lthough positions of power have been temporarily altered or undermined... the veils of tradition and authority once more descend over the households” (116).

Such works by Christie closely resemble Frye’s comedies, which are centered around the rebirth or “the integration of the society... idealizing a simplified life in the country” (AC 43).⁴ The purpose of the detective in these novels is to reinstate a situation that “the audience has recognized all along to be the proper and desirable state of affairs” (164). After the characters endure the ordeal of the murder case, the ritual of liminality and that of the *pharmakos*, they regain a stable identity and power structure, and they can return to a structured and hierarchical society. As Shaw and Vanacker observe, “a more secure world than ever before is created because the truth about everyone has been ascertained

⁴ Both novels are set in an English country house where the peace, simplicity, lucidity, and order of innocent rural life forms a sharp contrast with the brutality and opacity of murder. As Julian Symons argues, “the most satisfying detective stories are those set in idyllic and preferably rural conditions”, because in this environment the corpse appears shockingly out of place (15; see also Klapcsik 39).

and any unease and doubt has been located and expelled in the figure of the murderer" (21).

When the new order is instated, a stabilized social life commences, in a way similar to traditional comedies. What Frye says about comedies may equally well apply to Christie's stories: the events cause "a new society to crystallize around the hero... The appearance of this new society is frequently signaled by some kind of party or festive ritual," and so "[w]eddings are most common, and sometimes... many of them occur" at the end of the play or story (AC 163). *Crooked House* ends with the realizations of the marriage plans between Charles Hayward and Sophia Leonides; in *Ordeal by Innocence*, two couples split up during the investigation process (Leo Argyle and Gwenda Vaughan separate temporarily, whilst the relationship of Hester Argyle and Dr Craig dissolves permanently) but a new relationship between Michael and Tina Argyle is formed. Furthermore, almost all Christie novels end with sudden engagements, new romantic relationships or definite marriage plans.

To sum up, the investigation process in Christie's *Crooked House* and *Ordeal by Innocence* manifests Turner's rite of passage and Frye's circular or spiral journeys in that the initial status quo in the family and British society is temporarily questioned and disrupted, but, eventually regained, the hierarchy becomes even stronger and presumably uncontested for good. Christie's other works differ from these novels in several aspects—she is, of course, famous for her genre innovations and subversive narrative techniques—but, at least in those cases where the head of the family is the murder victim, they tend to follow the pattern described here to a greater or lesser degree. For example, in *Five Little Pigs* (1942), Poirot needs to solve a mystery sixteen years after the murder of Amyas Crale and so the investigation process differs from the liminal stage in the sense that seemingly everyone has forgotten about and overcome the consequences of the murder. And yet, Poirot investigates because the daughter of the alleged murderer and the victim, Carla Lemarchant, is engaged to be married but she is afraid that her fiancé might suspect her of murderous tendencies. Poirot needs to metaphorically travel back in time to find the culprit before the new family and social structure can commence, in a way similar to the novel *Elephants Can Remember* (1972), where Celia Ravenscroft's forthcoming marriage is in danger because of an unsolved mystery from the past. Needless to say, Poirot reveals the actual murderer in both cases and the wedding can eventually take place in both novels.

Thus, Christie's works often manifest the *temporary* and *re-constitutive* nature of liminality and the mythical journey: such events "invert but do not usually subvert the *status quo*, the structural form, of society; reversal underlines

to the members of the community that chaos is the alternative to cosmos, so they'd better stick to the cosmos, i.e., the traditional order of culture" (Turner 41).⁵ In other words, the evoked and then eliminated doubts reinforce the traditional world order: the provisional uncertainties liberate the reader from the monotony that derives from the rigidity and predictability in the fictional universe of detective fiction.

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⁵ Pierre Bourdieu's complex criticism of Turner's theory further emphasizes the re-constitutive and discriminatory nature of the rite-of-passage and liminality. Bourdieu claims that Turner's ideas rather conceal "one of the essential effects of rites, namely that of separating those who have undergone it, not from those who have not yet undergone it, but from those who will not undergo it in any sense, and thereby instituting a lasting difference between those to whom the rite pertain and those to whom it does not pertain" (117).

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LARISA KOCIC-ZÁMBÓ



FRYE AND THE MUSICAL POET

It is a well-known fact that Frye was a lover of music to the point that he considered it an “alternative career”. Yet, the role of music has been left largely unexplored in the conceptual framework of his literary theory (Bogdan 57). Perhaps for the same reason, his preoccupation with Milton had never enjoyed such eminence as his writings on Blake, because it is in terms of music and musical poetry that the importance of Milton to Frye stands out (Fletcher 750–1). Hence, my aim is to explore how Frye’s knowledge of music, and his theoretical use of musical form—particularly in his exposition of *epos*—sheds new light on Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and can, therefore, contribute to the recently rekindled debate among Milton scholars about the oral/aural significance of Milton’s poems.

Revisiting Frye’s notions on music in poetry in connection with Milton studies seems particularly relevant in light of the obsession the majority of Milton’s scholars bestow upon the poet’s thought and thought only. Beverley Sherry—who has recently been expounding benevolent possibilities lying dormant in T. S. Eliot’s legacy to Milton studies (see 2010 and 2010a) encapsulates this obsession in an introduction to John K. Hale’s *Milton as Multilingual* as follows:

In the past sixty years, since the work of, say, C. S. Lewis, Rosemond Tuve, Arnold Stein, F. T. Prince, Frank Kermode, Joseph Summers, Christopher Ricks, there has been a general move away from formalist study, which includes verbal criticism, towards an emphasis on Milton’s thought—moral, religious, philosophical, and political. This development has overtaken the close study of Milton’s handling of words, resulting in a neglect of his minutely sensitive and endlessly creative genius with decorum, which remained for him “the grand master peece to observe”. (17)

Stanely Fish too, in his article “Why Milton Matters; or, Against Historicism” (2005) criticizes the current trend in Milton studies, echoing Ellen Rooney’s concern that “once the category of form has been attenuated every text is reduced

‘to its ideological and historical context’ and ‘reading has been displaced by a project of sorting by theme’’. Milton scholars, says Fish, “pick up the stick from the wrong end”, and proceeds to use the stick to rap them for their practice of historical criticism and for forgetting that criticism focusing on aesthetic form “is no less historical than any other” because, he adds, “literary forms are, more often than not, their vehicles [i.e. of social and political concerns]”. (8)

It is quite interesting that despite the similarity of their assessment, Sherry singles out Fish’s *How Milton Works*—albeit in a footnote—as “typical in its minimal concern for the way Milton works with formal elements of writing” (Hale 17n11). But instead of delving into this curiosity further, I will presently heed Sherry’s advice, although with a twist: instead of reassessing “a poet-critic [Eliot] who *heard* Milton” (Sherry 2010a, 35), I will revisit a critic with a keen ear for Milton who considered Eliot a “must read” (Frye 2010, 183), and thus echoed many of Eliot’s observations on Milton’s aural prowess, yet did so without Eliot’s anti-Miltonic sentiments.¹

According to Warkentin, Frye’s notions on music in literature grew out of a student essay focusing on Robert Browning, which he wrote as an undergraduate in 1932–3 (Frye 2006, 9). Published in the *University of Toronto Quarterly*

¹ Eliot’s earliest remarks on Milton are from his 1919 essay on Marlowe and his two 1921 studies on the Metaphysical poets, Marvell and Donne (Eliot 1934, 118–125, 281–304). However, his most substantial treatment of Milton is the essay “A Note on Milton’s Verse” published in *Essays and Studies* (1936) and his lecture on Milton to the British Academy (1947). The essay and the lecture were entitled “Milton I” and “Milton II” respectively and published in Eliot’s collection, *On Poetry and Poets* (1957). [I had recourse to these texts in Kermode’s edition of Eliot’s essays (Eliot 1980) and in an online edition of Eliot’s *Milton: Two Studies* (1968), and choose to cite the latter as it provides a more complete text.] The gist of Eliot’s complaint against Milton is that “the sensuous effect of [his] verses is entirely on the ear” (11). Milton’s syntax, which Eliot considered to be primarily of musical significance and not beneficial to the development of thoughts, confirmed his theory of the “dissociation of sensibility”, namely, that in England there occurred in the seventeenth century a dislocation of thought and feeling for which Eliot blamed Milton and Dryden (33). In Eliot’s view, Milton, though a great poet, “could only be an influence for the worse, upon any poet whatsoever” (31; Frye 2010, 193). The attack initiated by Eliot, was abetted by Ezra Pound in a 1934 diatribe against “the gross and utter stupidity and obtuseness of Milton” (103), which had been influenced by Middleton Murry, and lent academic force by A. J. A. Waldock and F. R. Leavis, to whom Milton exhibited “certain sensuous poverty” (Leavis 47) and “a feeling for words rather than capacity for feeling through words” (51). The ensuing “Milton controversy” was termed by James Thorpe “a unique phenomenon in the history of literary criticism” (19). For an overview of Eliot’s criticism covering 1919–1947 see Bollier (165–192). For a larger-scope study of the twentieth century’s “Milton Controversy”, tracing it back even to Milton’s earliest critics, see Bergonzi (162–180). See also Ricks, especially pages 1–21. Frye, reflecting on the persistence of anti-Miltonic and anti-Romantic sentiments in his contemporaries, claimed that Pound’s [and presumably Eliot’s] depreciation of Milton’s achievement “should not be taken today as a serious dictum [...] but as a quite funny parody of the sort of pedantic nonsense that historicism unchecked by taste will fall into” (2010, 101–2).

in 1942 (11:2, 167–79) under the title “Music in Poetry”, it was Frye’s first major piece of critical writing, and a significant one too, for its major tenets were incorporated in a systematic discourse on genres in his seminal *Anatomy of Criticism* in 1957. For this reason, I will mostly have recourse to the latter work when referencing his interpretation of *melos* and (to a lesser degree) *opsis* in literature and how these affect our reading and understanding of Milton.

According to Frye, literature predominantly “appeals to the ear, and so partakes of the nature of music”, however, it also appeals to the (inner) eye, thus partaking of the nature of the visual/spatial arts too (2000, 244). Depending on the inclination and technical skill of the individual poet, one will either emphasize the *melos*, the musicality of the work, or the *opsis*, the spectacle of the same, although in Frye’s reading this too will turn out to be predominantly an aural quality. In both instances, Frye is adamant to distinguish the technical, Aristotelian meaning of the two terms from their sentimental applications. Musical poetry, claims Frye, is “poetry which resembles in its structure the music contemporary with it”; this technical use of the word musical is at odds with the sentimental use that calls “any poetry musical if it sounds nice” (255). He blames this sentimental use on a misconception of the word “harmony”, that is, applying its common sense meaning to the one pertaining to music, and in the initial essay even blames Milton (though indirectly) for it:

The ancient doctrine that the music of the spheres was a harmony is perhaps the oldest source of this confusion. In *At a Solemn Musick*, Milton makes the discordant music of earth the symbol of the life of fallen man: in heaven there will be “perfect Diapason”, which in terms of music we know means spending all eternity on one note. (Frye 2006, 13)

As he elaborates further in the *Anatomy of Criticism*, “[i]n this figurative sense of the word harmony, music is not a sequence of harmonies at all, but a sequence of discords ending in harmony, the only stable and permanent ‘harmony’ in music being the final resolving tonic chord” (256). He goes into a more technical elaboration in “Music in Poetry”, wherein his blaming reference to Milton seems quite quixotic and paradoxical because just a couple of lines later he quotes two lines from Milton’s *L’Allegro* (143–4) as a proper definition of music as such.² It is also somewhat disappointing from a Miltonist point of view that Frye does not refer-

² “Music is not a sequence of harmonies: the word ‘harmony’ in music ought always to be in inverted commas. Music is a sequence of discords ending in harmony... In other words music is a process of ‘Untwisting all the chains that tie / the hidden soul of harmony’” (2006, 11).

ence the “regular / [...] when most irregular” dance of the angels,³ when clarifying that the music most closely analogous to extended poetry in continuous metre is “music in its more extended instrumental forms, in which the organizing rhythm has descended more directly from dance than from song” (255).

Disappointing as this omission might be, it is nevertheless understandable since Frye’s study on musical poetry is not a case study—as one might term Eliot’s study on Milton—but a general attempt at a theory/rhetoric of genres. However, whenever Frye references Milton, he does so in terms reminiscent of Eliot. Thus, he claims that “Milton must be read with a myopic eye and a keen ear” (2006, 20). In Eliot’s words, *Paradise Lost* exerts a “peculiar demand for a readjustment of the reader’s mode of apprehension” in which emphasis is “on the sound, not the vision, upon the word, not the idea” (1968, 41). One should, however, quickly add that it is not emphasis on a single word that Eliot is referring to, but a string of words. As he notes, “Milton’s verse is especially refractory to yielding up its secrets to examination of the single line” or the single word for that matter (42). The unit of Milton’s verse is “the period, the sentence and still more the paragraph” for “[i]t is only in the period that the wavelength of Milton’s verse is to be found” (42). Frye concurs when he states that musical diction “employs a long cumulative rhythm sweeping the lines up into larger rhythmical units such as the paragraph,”⁴ listing two additional features: the irregularity of its metre and the heavy reliance on enjambment (2000, 257). It is here that he references Milton as employing the word musical in its proper sense: “When Milton says that rhymed heroic verse is ‘of no true musical delight’, because musical poetry must have ‘the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another’, he is using the word musical in its technical sense” (257).

Let us, therefore, take a look at one of those “wavelength”, paragraph-long passages of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* that particularly exemplifies the features Frye associates with musical poetry: “sharp barking accents, crabbed and obscure language, mouthfuls of consonants and the bite and grip of many monosyllables” (2006, 12). The passage in question describes bands of fallen angels bent on discovering their new dismal world in Hell:

³ “Mystical dance, which yonder starrie Spheare / Of Planets and of fixt in all her Wheeles / Resembles nearest, mazes intricate, / Eccentric, intervolv’d, yet regular / Then most when most irregular they seem, / And in thir motions harmonie Divine / So smooths her charming tones, that Gods own ear / Listens delighted” (*PL* 5.620–7).

⁴ Similarly, C. S. Lewis writes in *A Preface to Paradise Lost*: “We must not be allowed to settle down at the end of each sentence. Even the fuller pause at the end of a paragraph must be felt as we feel a pause in a piece of music, where the silence is part of the music, and not as we feel the pause between one item of a concert and the next” (45). Note that Lewis too puts an emphasis on sensing Milton’s larger, epic units, implying hearing in his reference to musical pause.

... Thus roving on
 In confus'd march forlorn, th' adventurous Bands
 With shuddring horror pale, and eyes agast
 View'd first thir lamentable lot, and found
 No rest: through many a dark and drearie Vaile
 They pass'd, and many a Region dolorous,
 O'er many a Frozen, many a fierie Alpe,
 Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death,
 A Universe of death, which God by curse
 Created evil, for evil only good,
 Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
 Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
 Abominable, inutterable, and worse
 Than Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,
Gorgons and *Hydras*, and *Chimeras* dire. (2.614–628)

The predicament of the devils, their inability to find rest in this “Region dolorous”, is highlighted by the “bite and grip” and rapid succession of many monosyllables (“Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens...”) emphasizing both the debased nature of the variety offered in Hell and the musical experience of reading the passage. In addition, as a monosyllable “always demands a separate accent, however slight” (Frye 2000, 261), the accumulated stress of the monosyllabic line makes “the reading of Hell analogous to exploring it” (Forsyth 204), as the passage describing Satan’s flight across Chaos recreates in reading the turbulent bumpiness of his course: “Ore bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare, / With head, hands, wings, or feet pursues his way, / And swims or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies” (2.948–950).

The previous passage also reveals some slight discrepancy between Eliot’s and Frye’s assessment of Milton’s verse, and the eventually impossible task of distinguishing between the working of *melos* and *opsis* in the technical use of the terms Frye prefers.

Eliot, who persistently emphasizes the limitation of Milton’s visual powers, is somewhat relenting when it comes to “imagery suggestive of vast size, limitless space, abysmal depth, and light and darkness” for this he considers “the kind of imagery in which he [Milton] excelled, or made less demand upon the powers of visual imagination which were in him defective” (1968, 40). An observation that might be justified in theological terms, as Milton applied the imagery described by Eliot predominantly to scenes of Hell and its horrors, thus, emphasizing the

visual nature of the Fall, while contrasting it with the aural nature of faith and Eden.⁵ And while for Eliot Milton excelled in *depicting* Hell, Frye claims that “[t]he musical, or cacophonous, diction is better fitted for the grotesque and horrible, or for invective and abuse” (2006, 12; 2000, 256–7), yet again evoking Milton’s Hell, the epitome of grotesque and horrible but not in a pictorial sense. For indeed, despite the multitude of words displayed in the passage we get no sense of what the devils see in particular; it is rather the sense of what they feel while seeing it that we gather. Not only cannot the devils find rest, the reader too is denied a rest and is particularly out of breath by the time s/he reaches the period of Milton’s paragraph. In the passage Milton makes the most out of the structure and texture of English, particularly with the cluster of monosyllables that accentuate, as Milton’s schoolmaster would say, “heaviness and slowness” (Jones 238). Another contemporary of Milton, Richard Flecknoe in his *Miscellania* (1653), claims that the unpopularity of English in Europe is due to “its monosyllables, and short snapping words [...] which render the sound harsh and unpleasant unto Strangers ears... render[ing] it ragged and disjointed” (Jones 238n6), a description perfectly corresponding to the ragged bands of Milton’s fallen angels “in confus’d march forlorn”. And yet, does the impossibility to visualize Milton’s sonorous description of the devil’s exploration render this passage devoid of *opsis*?

As it turns out, what Frye consider analogous to *opsis* in its technical, true sense is the rhetorical device of onomatopoeia, i.e. of imitative harmony, and quotes from Pope’s *Essay on Criticism* to describe and exemplify the phenomenon:

‘Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
 The sound must seem an echo to the sense...
 When Ajax strives some rock’s vast weight to throw,
 The line too labours, and the words move slow;
 Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,
 Flies o’er th’ unbending corn, and skims along the main.
 (Frye 2000, 258)

So, for Frye *opsis* basically boils down to sound-effects that correspond with the sense of the words in the poem, much like in the passages from *Paradise Lost*

⁵ E.g. Milton stresses the role visual perception has in the Fall when describing Eve’s reaction to Satan’s reasoning in the temptation scene of Book 9: “Fixt on the Fruit she gaz’d, which to behold / Might tempt alone [...] / [...] which with desire [...] Solicited her longing eye” (9.735–736, 741, 743). Also in Eve’s musing to herself, paraphrasing Gen 3:6 (cf. 1Jn 2:16): “Here grows the Cure of all, this Fruit Divine, / Fair to the Eye, inviting to the Taste, / Of vertue to make wise...” (9.776–778).

I have quoted.⁶ English, according to Frye, excels in imitative harmonies and, although, some of them inevitably get lost with the passage of time, new ones are perpetually being “recreated in colloquial speech” which is itself, if good, termed “picturesque” or “colourful” (259). Consequently, the difference between *melos* and *opsis* is not based on the sensory effect they create, since both are elements of poetry (literature) and as such primarily appeal to the ear (243–244). Nor do they seem to work by mutual exclusion but in a complementary way: the passage in mention employs both *melos* and *opsis*, thus, both contributed to the most valued and often cited strength of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, namely, its kinetic effect on the reader. A further telling example of this effect is, still within Book 2, when Sin opens the Gate of Hell and before her, Satan and Death “in sudden view appear / The secrets of the hoarie deep” (2.890–891). Yet again, the reader has no access to their “view” in terms of visual description, for everything Milton lists defies visual imagination and references sound instead:

[...] a dark
 Illimitable Ocean without bound,
 Without dimension, where length, breath, & highth,
 And time and place are lost; where eldest *Night*
 And *Chaos*, Ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal *Anarchie*, amidst the noise
 Of endless Warrs, and by confusion stand.
 For hot, cold, moist, and dry, four Champions fierce
 Strive here for Maistrie, and to Battel bring
 Thir embryon Atoms; they around the flag
 Of each his Faction, in thir several Clanns,
 Light-arm’d or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift or slow,
 Swarm populous, unnumber’d as the Sands
 Of *Barca* or *Cyrene’s* torrid soil,
 Levied to side with warring Winds, and poise
 Thir lighter wings. To whom these most adhere,

⁶ The *opsis* in this sense is even more pronounced if we consider that the adjectives in the passage under consideration (*PL* 2.614–628) are dominated by the sound of *R*: dark, drearie, dolorous, frozen, fierie, perverse, monstrous, prodigious, inutterable, worse; even the prodigies imported from classical antiquity resound with *R*’s: Gorgons, Hydras, Chimeras. According to John Aubrey (1626–1697), Milton “pronounced the letter R very hard” (Hughes 1023). In a parenthesis Aubrey refers to *R* as the *litera canina* (i.e. the canine letter), so the hard pronunciation of *R* might sound something like a growl, or a snarl. Read in such an onomatopoeic manner, the passage almost creates the sense of “wailing and gnashing of teeth”—a recurring figure in the gospel of Matthew to describe the anguish of the damned (see also *PL* 6.339–343 of Satan).

Hee rules a moment; *Chaos* Umpire sits,
 And by decision more imbroiles the fray
 By which he Reigns... (2.891–909)

The invocation of a battle scene with the notion of armies grouped around flags, in clans according to their light or heavy armoury only serves to highlight the futility of our attempt to imagine such a scene (for picturing it would entail a sort of ordering, especially in a martial scene like this). What we get instead is anarchy, in which we cannot make head or tail of an army of such insubstantial champions as hot, cold, moist, and dry (monosyllables again). Like the victory of the elements and their “embryon Atoms” it is but for a moment that we get an image, only to discard it in the following moment. As on torrid soil, we get no solid footing and we stand in confusion if we stand at all.

It is at the brink of this abyss that Satan pauses, lingering and postponing his flight:

... Into this wilde Abyss,
 The Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave
 Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
 But all these in thir pregnant causes mixt
 Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight,
 Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain
 His dark materials to create more Worlds,
 Into this wild Abyss the warie fiend
 Stood on the brink of Hell and look'd a while,
 Pondering his Voyage... (2.910–919)

The eighteenth-century commentator, Jonathan Richardson lauds this passage as “very Artfull!” for in it “the Poet Himself seems to be Doing what he Describes, for the Period begins at 910. Then he goes not On Directly but Lingers, giving an Idea of Chaos before he Enters into it” (81). But Milton is not merely artful in postponing our initial anticipation of Satan’s flight or jump “into this wilde Abyss” for the reader’s expectation is thwarted yet again at the repetition of “into this wilde Abyss” as “the warie fiend” merely “stood on the brink of Hell and look'd a while / Pondering his Voyage”. It is ten lines later that he will actually spread “his Sail-broad Vannes” for flight and spurn the ground (2.927–929). Again, the kinetic effect, making the reader experience rather than picture what the poet describes is achieved by the long cumulative rhythm of the paragraph

long passage, which, to reiterate my point, is characteristic of musical diction according to Frye.

In conclusion, I wish to bring up a point in Frye's argument with which I strongly disagree. When identifying the "radical of presentation" as the basis of generic distinction—"in the sense that the genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public" (2000, 247)—and acknowledging that certain works might have more than one radical of presentation connected to it, he makes the following remark on Milton

Milton, for example, seems to have no ideal of reciter and audience in mind for *Paradise Lost*; he seems content to leave it, in practice, a poem to be read in a book. When he uses the convention of invocation, thus bringing the poem into the genre of the spoken word, the significance of the convention is [merely] to indicate what tradition his work primarily belongs to and what its closest affinities are with. (247)

For Frye, Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an *epic* and not an *epos*, a difference he maintains throughout his essay, using the word *epos* "to describe works in which the radical of presentation is oral address" (i.e. "poems intended to be recited") and using the word *epic* "for its customary use as the name of the form of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid* and *Paradise Lost*" or, in other words, "epics of the conventional jumbo size" and therefore, one assumes, not convenient for recital (248). And yet, as Walter J. Ong claims, "In all the wonderful worlds that writing opens, the spoken word still resides and lives. Written texts all have to be related somehow, directly or indirectly, to the world of sound, the natural habitat of language, to yield their meaning" (8)⁷. This is especially true when considering Renaissance texts, Milton's included. We need to remember, Neil Rhodes urges, that Renaissance culture "was still highly oral in character, where reading aloud was common, and where sound effects were as important in the reception of poetry as they would have been in the more obviously spoken forms of drama, sermon and oratory" (32). As Milton scholars, we need to remember this not merely to retrieve "a vital element [...] of cultural history" marginalized with the rejection of formalism in favour of historicism in the 1980s (*ibid.*), but because of the growing popularity of Milton marathons, that is, the public reading aloud of Milton's works (mostly *Paradise Lost*). These marathons are gaining world-

⁷ As a matter of fact, in an attempt to come up with an alternative to the anachronistic and self-contradictory term, "oral literature", Ong himself, in his seminal study, adapts Frye's terminology and opts to refer to all purely oral art as *epos*.

wide momentum, performed within many academic communities and nowadays regularly reported on the Internet.

Therefore, while disagreeing with Frye's reductionist view of *Paradise Lost's* radical of presentation, I do believe Frye's theory of genre, and particularly his reintroduction of *melos* and *opsis*, can have an important part in readjusting our mode of apprehension of Milton, allowing the aural and oral features of his work to reenter the arenas of conflict of his thought. In Hale's words, *Paradise Lost* is "oral in conception, execution and first reception; so why not also in present-day reception?" (17).

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SYLVA FICOVÁ



NORTHROP FRYE, WILLIAM BLAKE
AND THE ART OF TRANSLATION

I must create a System, or be enslav'd by another Man's.
William Blake.

As far as we know, Northrop Frye did not study the theory of translation, nor did he practice it. It even seems he believed that “translation” of ideas and concepts is quite impossible—that “an intellectual and cultural synthesis that gets everything in and reconciles everyone with everyone else is an attempt to build a Tower of Babel, and will lead to confusion of utterance” (CW 11, 200) Yet the interest in the history of literature and oriental culture inspired Northrop Frye and helped him understand and cultivate the art of interpretation and recreation of ideas, particularly in his study *Fearful Symmetry*. Originally, I wanted to discuss the importance of Frye’s work for the translation profession and how it influenced my translation of his *Anatomy of Criticism* and William Blake’s *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. But my concept changed on the day I arrived in Budapest when I decided to visit the Orthodox Synagogue in Kazinczy utca. The man who was selling the tickets at the front door suddenly decided to give me and five American tourists a guided tour. He started pointing to the items in the interior with excitement and explaining the history and importance of the place. But the language he spoke was an ultimate example of chaos: an English word here, a German phrase there, Hungarian padding everywhere. I liked it though: I did not understand the whole sentences, but somehow I knew what he was trying to say and what he meant. He was an interpreter from the *hell* of Babel, and yet he represented the *heaven* of deeper understanding.

In my mind, I started comparing this experience of chaos to the idea of order celebrated and promoted by Northrop Frye, comparing chaotic interpretation of the spoken *now* to systematic translation of the written *then*. I pondered on various views of translation. In his annotation to the English translation of Dante’s *Inferno*, William Blake wrote, “It appears to me that men are hired to run down the men of genius under the masks of translators” (1957, 413). Northrop Frye said: “Everyone concerned with language is aware of the extent to which reading a translation is a settling for the second best” (GC 4) So, what is the role

of the translator? Is she supposed to be a traitor? The master of confusion? An architect of another Tower of Babel? Or is she a competitor who will never win? An ambassador? A mediator? A re-creator of the original message?

When János Kenyeres in his inspiring lecture “Northrop Frye as Creative Writer” reminded me (again) of Northrop Frye’s *Fearful Symmetry*, all the pieces suddenly fell into place and my blurry ideas started to make sense. I realized that if Northrop Frye studied translation more deeply, he could see the realm of translation as a kind of 3D universe. The first dimension (“the world of memory [where] we see nothing”) would be *vocabulary*: the words and phrases the translator has to learn or look up in dictionaries. The second dimension (“the world of sight [where] we see what we have to see”) would be formed by *grammar, syntax*, and the rules we have to follow to make ourselves understood. The third dimension (“the world of vision [where] we see what we want to see”) would be the translator’s *inspiration*, enlightenment, insight, connection and relationship with the author, the *art* of translation (FS 33). An ideal world would also have the fourth dimension, *time*, not the time, which along with space, has “no absolute existence” as perceived by our limited senses in this world of matter (Damon 404), but *eternity*, when “we see things for what they really are” as if we had already “cleansed the doors of [our] perception” (Blake 1994, 36). Such an ideal world is an ambition and aspiration of most translators. Unfortunately, it’s only a *dream*—in reality, the translator’s time is only the Buddhist *now*. She drowns in the sea of meanings, forgets the associations and cannot reach the future. *Now* is the time when the translator sees what she *can*. That is probably why old translations always become obsolete and why the classic works of literature, including the Bible, are and have to be translated again and again.

William Blake’s vision of translation seems to be bipolar, more of a 2D world. On the one hand, there is *Heaven*, Passivity, Reason represented by the Angels, interpreters, teachers, universities, and abbeys—the dimension of interpretation, explanation, and support. On the other hand, there is *Hell*, Activity, Energy, Creativity and passion represented by the Devils, prophets, poets—the dimension of provocation, questions, and emotions. C. S. Lewis, the author of *The Great Divorce* would have probably liked this polarity. But what about translators? Are they interpreters, aspiring poets or both? Perhaps we need the third dimension again, *Limbo*, “the region supposed to exist on the border of Hell”, the realm of ghosts who are not seen but who are present and powerful, ghosts with *compassion* who can reach both Heaven and Hell by entering their universe *in time*.

My own vision of translation seems to be bipolar, too. To me, the original is the work of a *Poetic Genius*, the *creation* of something out of nothing. Transla-

tion is the work of an *inspired ghost*, the *recreation* of something out of something. If this reminds you of the Book of Genesis and the “beginning of beginnings”, it might not be a coincidence.

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III.
JUVENILIA

SINKA JUDIT ERZSÉBET



A „BALLADISZTIKUS NOVELLA”
MINT ARCHAIKUS TAPASZTALATOK MEGJELENÍTŐJE
A MODERNSÉGBENI¹

A tizenkilencedik század második felének magyar irodalmában a novella sok új változata mellett egyben a ballada műfajából ismert témák, jegyek jelentek meg. A szakirodalom e forma balladával rokonítható jegyei miatt legtöbbször a „balladisztikus novella” vagy „balladás novella” terminussal illeti ezt a változatot. Ez az elnevezés azonban – ahogyan a századvég többi novellaváltozatának szakirodalomban használt elnevezése is (pl. lírai, drámai novella) – problematikus, hiszen legtöbbször csak metaforikus értelemben használható. Sőt magának a műfajváltozatnak a megléte is tisztázatlan. Tanulmányomban e poétikai interferencia leírását, illetve a „balladisztikus novella” fogalmának újbóli értelmezését kísérelem meg.

A novella elmozdulása a ballada felé megtalálható több századvégi-századfordulós életműben is, pl. Mikszáth Kálmán vagy Tömörkény István elbeszéléseiben, de legmarkánsabban Petelei István rövidprózai írásaiban jelentkezik, ezért az irodalomkritika legtöbbször az ő írásinak elemzésekor vet fel kérdéseket a balladisztikus novellával kapcsolatban.

A ballada novellára gyakorolt hatására, az elbeszélésekben való jelenlétére a kritika már a kezdetektől felfigyelt. Ezt a századvég mértékadó kritikusa, Péterfy Jenő szellemében a tragikum iránti fogékonyság egy újabb megnyilatkozásának tekintették. Kozma Dezső Peteleiről szóló kismonográfiájában a székely népballadák megtermékenyítő hatását hangsúlyozta, és konkrét népballadák motívumait mutatta ki elbeszéléseiben (32). Németh. G. Béla, akinek olvasata sokáig meghatározta az íróról való gondolkodói horizontot, a századvégi társadalmi viszonyok realista tükrözőjének, a „válságba jutott kisember” írójának tekintette Peteleit, s novelláinak elemzésekor főleg a lélekrajzra, a mélylélektanra helyezte

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a hangsúlyt. Arany János hatását is felfedezte, amelyet a későbbiekben többféle szempontból értékelték, főleg konkrétan, Arany műballadáival keresve a kapcsolatot. De még ha Németh G. Béla esztétikai-értékelő szempontból értelmezte is az író életművét, megemlítette azt is, hogy Petelei „szereti az ősi toposzokat a maga világába helyezve újraformálni” (136). Többek közt Ophelia, Rómeó és Júlia, Don Quijote motívumait hozta fel példának. Györke Ildikó 1992-es tanulmányában a „balladaszerű novelláról” már mint létező, elfogadott novellatípusról értekezik, Peteleit tartva e típus egyik megteremtőjének (27–39). Ballada és novella találkozási pontját főleg a tematikában látja, s csak a témához kapcsolódónak az elbeszélés tudatos szerkesztését. A balladai téma jelenléte azonban nem elegendő ahhoz, hogy önálló novellatípust különítsünk el – ugyanannak a témának a felhasználása vagy ugyanannak a motívumnak a megjelenése önmagában nem jelenthet műfaji rokonságot. Dobos István novellatípusokkal foglalkozó monográfiájában tárgyalta a balladisztikus novella kategóriáját is (89–96). Felhívta a figyelmet arra, hogy a kritikátörténet már számos alkalommal utalt ballada és novella rokonságára, főleg a századvég irodalmával kapcsolatban. Szerinte azonban a ballada kompozíciója megvalósíthatatlan a novella formájában, ugyanakkor elismeri, hogy a századvégi novella különböző balladatípusok jellegzetességeit hasonította át (93). Petelei ilyen típusú elbeszéléseit ezért balladás hangulatú elbeszéléseknek nevezi. Novella és ballada mediális különbségét azonban oly mértékben véli különbözőnek, hogy elutasítja a balladisztikus novella kategóriáját.

II.

A BALLADISZTIKUS NOVELLA MINT AZ EPIKA FIKCIÓBA VÁLTÁSA

Ahogy a recepciótörténet témához tartozó nagyon rövid felelevenítéséből kitűnik, a korábbi elemzések már sokat foglalkoztak ballada és novella sajátos ötvöződéssel, de eddig még nem született kielégítő magyarázat kapcsolatukra a balladisztikus novellának nevezett formában. A klasszikus, Arisztotelész rendszerére épülő, azt továbbgondoló műfajtipológiák műnemi hármasságából kiindulva a balladának már az elhelyezése is kétséges, hiszen az általánosan ismert megállapítás szerint is a ballada olyan verses formájú mű, amely epikus, drámai és lírai elemeket egyesít magában. A ballada azonban nem az arisztotelészi eredetű műfaji rendszer része – a magas irodalmiságtól elkülönülő orális költészet egyik formája lévén –, a benne található „lírai” és „drámai” jegyek elkülöníthetetlen részei, alkotóelemei. A novella műfaja ugyanakkor, bármelyik meghatározását vesszük is alapul, jellegzetesen a magas irodalmiság elbeszélő műfaja.

Míg a hagyományos műfajelméleti megközelítés nem vezetett eredményre, Northrop Frye és a mítoszkritika eredményeit felhasználva új irányból közelíthetjük meg a kérdést. Frye eredményeit eddig még sem a balladisztikus novella műfajtipológiai vizsgálataiban, sem Petelei ilyen típusú elbeszéléseinek értelmezésében nem alkalmazták. *A kritika anatómiája* című munkájában Frye abból indul ki, hogy a műfajok kritikai elmélete Jószerével Arisztotelész után megrekedt. Az antik irodalom nem osztályozta a prózai műveket, az elmúlt évszázadok „új” műfajai viszont ezt szükségessé tették. Frye az „epika” szót alkalmazza minden olyan műre, amelynek előadásformája szóbeli, ezáltal „az irodalom minden fajtáját jelenti, akár verses, akár prózai, amennyiben őrzi magában az élőszóbeli recitálással és a művet hallgató közönséggel kapcsolatos konvenció fenntartásának igényét” (209). Ez alapján minden olyan mű, amely megszólítja, elképzeli hallgatóközönségét: epika. A régi, archaikus módon működik, elmondja, nem pedig megírja a történetet. Az „epika” szót én is ilyen értelemben használom a továbbiakban.

A könyvnyomtatás megjelenése és elterjedése az irodalom új létmódját hozta létre. A közönséggel közvetlen kapcsolatot nem tartó nyomtatott irodalmi formákra Frye a fikció terminust használja. Ennek megfelelően a ballada az epika, a novella a fikció közegébe tartozik. A modern irodalmiság fő mediális jellegzetessége, hogy esetében már nem beszélhetünk orális irodalmi kultúráról. Frye az irodalom létmódjának változását egy történeti példával illusztrálja: „A beszélő költő és az őt hallgató közönség közötti kapcsolat még valóságosan fennállhatott Homérosz vagy Chaucer esetében, de hamarosan mindinkább elméletivé vált, s ezzel párhuzamosan az epika észrevétlenül átment fikcióba” (210). Ez az a folyamat, amely által – megítélésem szerint – megfogható a novella balladisztikus változatának születése is; ha Frye fenti gondolatait vesszük alapul, akkor a ballada epikus, azaz szóbeli jellegének a novella fikciójába való átváltása hozhatja létre ezt a novellaváltozatot. Ennek tükrében nem is a két műfaj keveredésének, hanem egy meglévő tapasztalati struktúra (a ballada) átalakulásának lehetünk tanúi. A ballada műfaja újjászületik a novella keretein belül, az alapjául szolgáló egzisztenciális tapasztalat lényegét megőrizve, de a modern gondolkodáshoz és társadalmi meghatározottsághoz alkalmazkodva. Fontos, hogy a ballada nem lassan alakul át „balladisztikus novellává”, hanem tudatos, írói szándékról van szó, amelynek itt fő törekvése az ősi tapasztalatok, törvények működésének megmutatása a modern kor olvasójának. Az átalakulás poétikai sajátosságait pedig az határozza meg, hogy a közlés itt már nem elmondásra, hanem olvasásra szánt.

III.

BALLADA – MŰBALLADA – BALLADISZTIKUS NOVELLA

Az epika fikcióba váltását megvizsgálhatjuk a ballada, a műballada és a balladisztikus novella mediális szempontú összevetésével. A népballada népköltés, orális közegben létezik. Történetet mond el a közösségnek a közösségről. A benne található transzcendens (csodás) elemek maguktól értetődően működnek benne, nem szorulnak magyarázatra. A műballadák megjelenése értelmezhető annak a fordulópontnak, amely az addig csak szóbeli műfajt átmozdította az írásbeliség, a fikció területére. Csakhogy már a népballada sem epika (frye-i értelemben), ha le van jegyezve, mert médiumváltás történt, már nem eredeti közege a befogadás helye. Ezzel tulajdonképpen az történik, hogy az írásbeliség felszámolja azt a szoros és reflektálatlan közösségi konszenzust, amely az orális költészetben a „transzcendens” jelenségeket valóságos tapasztalatként rögzíti. (Ez a műfaji transzformáció alapvető oka).

Az átmenet epika és fikció közt a transzcendens-mágikus jelleg megjelenítésében a legszembetűnőbb. A népballadában ezt még semmi nem relativizálja, a fikcióban a csodás elem viszont a szereplők tudatára korlátozódik. Igazi határhelyzetet képeznek az olyan kétértelmű szövegek, mint Goethe „Erlkönig”-je („A tündérr király) vagy Arany János „Bor vitéz”-e. Goethe az egyik szereplői tudatba helyezi az archaikus struktúrákat: a természetfeletti jelenségek a kisfiú számára láthatóak vagy a tudatában jelennek meg. Goethe tökéletesen játszik a transzcendens és az immanens váltogatásával:

‘Hát nem látod ... ott - nem látod, apám:
a tündérlányok már várnak reám. –’
”Fiam, fiam, én jól látom: amott
A nedves fűzfák törzse ragyog.”
(Képes Géza fordítása)

A szöveg az olvasót teljes bizonytalanságban hagyja a természetfeletti képzetek igazságát-hamisságát illetően. Ilyen elven működik Arany „Bor vitéz”-e is; a ballada végén Bor vitéz menyasszonya meghal, s szintén eldönthetetlen, hogy valóban a vőlegény kísértete vitte magával a halálba kedvesét, vagy a lány tudata hasonlott meg. Az olyan balladák viszont, amelyekben a transzcendens jelenségek mélylélektani magyarázatot kapnak, például az „Éjféli párba” vagy az „Ágnes asszony” – ez utóbbiban a lélektani magyarázat, hogy Ágnes megháborodott – már egyértelműen a fikció és a realizmus, a valóság logikája felé haladnak.

Mivel a modernségben az orális kultúra elveszti életerét, a ballada sajátosságai

is átalakulnak, módosulnak. Már nincs költő, aki elbeszéljen, s nincs közösség, aki meghallgassa. A befogadás gyakorlata megváltozik, az elbeszélő és a közönségviszonya átalakul írásbeliség és egyedi befogadó kapcsolatává. A századvégi fikciós irodalom érdeklődése a ballada iránt azonban tagadhatatlan. Archaikus struktúrák, mitikus motívumok, így a balladából ismertek is megjelennek a fikcióban. Az archaikus, csodás elemek azonban itt már nem működnek, nem működhetnek közvetlen módon, a modern irodalom valóságigénye miatt. Működhetnek azonban átvitt módon, amelyet Frye a *displacement* terminussal határoz meg: „a mítosz és a metafora adaptálása az erkölcsiség és a hihetőség kánonjaihoz”, azaz a modern olvasó elvárásaihoz (301).

IV.

EGY PÉLDA A *DISPLACEMENT* MŰKÖDÉSÉRE

Befejezésül egy példával szeretném bemutatni, hogy a balladisztikus novella hogyan működött egy a balladából átvett archaikus elemet, azaz hogyan működik a *displacement*, az átvitel.

A balladisztikus novellában például a rítus, a látomás és az álom már csak *displacement*-elemként jelenhet meg. Petelei talán legtöbbet elemzett novellája, az „Őszi éjszaka” egy balladában látott rítus, a tetemre hívás retorikájához nyúl vissza, ugyanahhoz, amit Arany János „Tetemre hívás” című balladájából ismerünk: a vérébe fagyott halott sebe megint vérezni kezd, így leleplezi a holttest előtt megjelenő gyilkost. Ahogy Kund Abigél, az „Őszi éjszaka” szereplője is közvetetten okozója a halálesetnek. Arany balladájával ellentétben viszont a novella törli a külső transzcendens szempontokat, itt a rítus a lélekben fejt ki hatását. A Petelei-novella asszonyszereplője vétkes fiatal szeretője halálában. A holttestet itt a gyilkosság helyszínén hagyják, ami történetesen az asszony háza közelében van. A nő nem tud szabadulni bűne súlyától, a holttest folyamatos jelenlétében felőrlddik. Ez tehát az átvitel vagy *displacement*, amellyel a „tetemrehívás” a racionális nyomozási pszichológia elemévé válik. S mint a balladában, a novellában is eléri célját, a bűn bevallását, leleplezését. Nem kell már a természetfelettnak beavatkoznia, nem is avatkozhat be a modern élet szemlélete, a realizmus tapasztalata miatt, de ehhez mégis elengedhetetlen, hogy az asszony a transzcendens erőterben ítélje meg saját tettét, azaz a transzcendens büntetés reális az ő számára, így az ő tudatában, a lelkiismeretében mégis működik, s lezajlik a folyamat. A rítus eléri tehát célját a balladisztikus novellában is, a nő bevallja a bűnt. Ehhez már nincs szükség transzcendens beavatkozásra, de a természetfeletti erő mégis jelen van, ugyan már nem a mű által feltételezett

tárgyi valóságban, hanem a szereplői tudatban. A rítus tudati szinten játszódik le s működik.

Az archaikus elemek azonban nem csak a századvégi novellában érvényesülhetnek tudati szinten. A „Tetemre hívás” és az „Őszi éjszaka” sorába állíthatjuk Móricz Zsigmond „Barbárok” című novelláját is, ahol a kilincstre akasztott gyilkos eszköz látványa töri meg a bűnöst. Az őv és a megölt ember között metonimikus viszony teremődik, s itt már nem is a tetem látványa készlet a vallomásra, hanem a gyilkosság eszköze. A *displacement* itt viszont már sokkal rejtettebb módon érvényesül, a Petelei novellákban még erősebb az átvitel felismerésének lehetősége. Frye maga is említi, hogy az olvasón is múlik, meglátja-e az átvitelt, vagyis a realista szöveg mögötti mitikus struktúrát.

A századvégi novella egyik változata tehát a balladából ismert elemeket, struktúrákat jelenít meg. Ez tekinthető szerintem a „balladisztikus novellának”. Feltehető azonban a kérdés: mi lehet a balladisztikus novella célja, létének értelme? Valóban csak a századvég irodalmának tragikum iránti fogékonysága hozta volna létre a novella e változatát, a balladai tragikus témákat, hangulatot kihasználva? A ballada komplex, sűrű jelentéstartalmú jellegét az adja, hogy szorosan kapcsolódik az ember legősibb tudásához, évszázadok, sőt valószínűleg évezredek átszűrt egzisztenciális tapasztalatát jeleníti meg. A ballada azonban már nem életképes műfaj, mert az, ahogyan megjeleníti az általános emberi tapasztalatokat, elvesztette hihetőségét. Az ebben az orális formában rejlő archaikus tapasztalatok dialogikus elsajátítására, felidézésére, ismerőssé tételére a novella tágabb kerete mégis lehetőséget ad. Az archaikus tartalom a novella formájában szólíthatja meg a modern kor olvasóját. A balladák olvasása szép, de idegen, mert már nem egyezik a modern olvasó közegével. A novella világa azonban ismerős.

A balladisztikus novella legfontosabb jellemzője tehát, hogy a ballada archaikus tapasztalatait jeleníti meg, azonban a természetfeletti elemek már nem természetfelettként működnek, hiszen a modern gondolkodás ezt már nem engedi meg, vagy ha igen, csak a hősök tudatában megjelenő képzetekként. Azt a következtetést szűrhetjük tehát le, hogy a balladisztikus novella azért tekinthető létező, külön novellaváltozatnak, mert a balladából ismert archaikus struktúrát alakítja át, idomítja saját szerkezetéhez, a modern kor olvasójának tudatához. A hangsúly nem azon van tehát, hogy a novella átvesz-e elemeket a balladából, hanem azon, hogy hogyan teszi ezt. A balladában kötelező struktúrák azonban a novellában feltételelessé válnak. Az átformálódás mozzanata tehát legalább olyan fontos, mint a megőrzés mozzanata. Ez követhető nyomon Petelei István novel-

láiban is. A balladisztikus novella kérdésköre azért is érdemel külön figyelmet, mert jelzi, hogy az írott modern irodalmat a népiesség mozgalmán túl is mélyen foglalkoztatta az orális költészettel folytatott dialógus; a modern prózai elbeszélés szövegközi kapcsolatai sem korlátozódnak írott előzményekre. Ennek egyik szembeötlő változata a balladisztikus novella.

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ANA-MAGDALENA PETRARU



NORTHROP FRYE IN ROMANIA:
TRANSLATIONS AND CRITICAL STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

A professor of literature at the English Department of Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania, once remarked that Northrop Frye was known in Romanian literary circles not as a Canadian, but an American. As I was working on a doctoral thesis about the Romanian reception of English Canadian authors in general and novelists in particular at the time, this rang a bell about the misconceptions affecting Frye's reception in our country ever since its beginnings: Stephen Leacock, hailed as Canada's Mark Twain, was considered an American humorist by periodicals such as *Adevărul literar și artistic* (Literary and Artistic Truth) in the inter-war years.

1. NORTHROP FRYE IN THE COMMUNIST ERA

This particular historical period is very difficult to account for in any reception study, especially one concerning a critic. Romania has several bibliographies on the relation of our literature with other literatures of the world (see Ion Lupu and Cornelia Ștefănescu's two-volume *Bibliografia relațiilor literaturii române cu literaturile străine în periodice* [Bibliography of Romanian Literature and Its Relations with Foreign Literatures in Periodicals] published in 1997), but usually these go only as far as the pre-communist period. There is also a dictionary of novels in translation up to 1989 edited by the Romanian professor and critic Aurel Sasu, but the lack of a centralised database makes any endeavour to research the reception of a literary figure quite difficult. As far as critics are concerned, things are even more complicated. Comprehensive information can only be found after the fall of the communist regime even though Romanian national libraries have started to develop online databases. Contents of periodicals that

came out under the communist regime remain a mystery, and anyone interested needs to devote a lot of time to researching sources the old way.

During my doctoral thesis at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University and York University I came across Toma Pavel's 1964 review of the *Anatomy of Criticism* among the criticism on Canadian authors in periodicals publishing on foreign literature such as *România literară* (Literary Romania) and *Secolul XX* (The twentieth century). Following this review, Frye would often be mentioned in the communist period, and the book itself would also come out in Romanian in 1972.

In his article, "Northrop Frye și ambițiile sistemului" (Northrop Frye and System Ambitions), Pavel first speaks about 'structure' and 'structuralism' as fashion of the time, calling the former one of the magic words of American cultural life. So no reference to Canada or Frye's national appurtenance is made at this stage of (communist) Romanian culture; the critic is simply assimilated to the American space in general with no reference to Canada in particular, as it had happened to Leacock in the pre-communist years.

After discussing structure, structuralism and the fields in which they became relevant (structural linguistics, structural sociology, structural pedagogy, structural study of folklore, structural music, structural painting), referring to France and its attempts to define the term structure and its relevance for the humanities and going as far as asking whether "Dieu est-il structuraliste?" (98, *passim*), Toma Pavel brings Frye's work into play. He argues that, in *The Anatomy*, Frye attempts "to build the perfect theory of a field, starting from definitions and theorems which he then combines as in logic to enhance transparency in structure and all its secrets" (*ibid.*). Further on, the Romanian critic argues that Frye's system tries to encompass the variety of recent developments in literary criticism in a fabulous network, an interesting baroque construction under the sign of 'structure'. In Pavel's account, Frye first examines a literary work not by connecting to its universe but by modes he classifies according to the moral strength of the 'hero', and goes on to develop his myth criticism, his Dionysiac myth of tragedy reflecting the god's death, the myth of comedy corresponding to Hercules' acceptance in the society of gods', romance where the hero is brave enough, and the low and high mimetic modes.

Toma Pavel criticises Frye's complicated construction for not being as round and as perfectly chronological as Frye had intended, and indeed being irregular. To support his claim, he refers to Petronius's *Satyricon*, Lope de Vega's and Calderon's tragedies being synchronous with picaresque novels, and the works of Romanian poet Stefan George or Claudel's tragedies reaching the highest highs of mimesis.

Frye however, Pavel concedes, is not concerned with the structure of the iso-

lated literary work but *all* literature, the stress falling on literary convention (99, *passim*). His system based on repeated imagery and archetypes, is easy to apply to conventional literature aiming at recurrence and ritual. Pavel's further criticism is that Frye draws too heavily on comparative mythology (Frazer) and psychology (Jung), and is enslaved to neighbouring disciplines' archetypes that are non-literary. Frye's terminology is also inappropriate and arbitrary including far too many different things, and this has a simplifying effect. The Romanian reviewer regards Frye's psychoanalysis-like discussion of *Le Malade Imaginaire* as "far-fetched" (100).

Pavel holds against Frye that he, unlike Curtius in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, "postulates a unity of literature which he illustrates by symmetric deductions from data in ethnology and psychoanalysis, opening 'fake windows' to no rooms, not to literature anyway, but to neighbouring fields of study" (100-101). At this point, Pavel falls back on Marxist grids declaring that Marxist criticism put literature in the right relation with neighbouring fields, the 'real' and 'fundamental' products of superstructure and social life, not 'coincidences' invented by the researcher as in the case of Northrop Frye. Including mythology in literature, according to Pavel, has no justification. Resorting to Bible criticism is not literary criticism, and compressing everything 'narrative' (religion included) into literature is to weaken criticism. One might wonder to what extent Toma Pavel merely rehashes communist ideology or it is also driven by e communist anti-religious zeal.

Nevertheless, he concludes by criticising Frye's construction for its rupture between the mythical and mimetic modes, for being a method that cannot be applied by and is of no use to the reader, and for making reference almost exclusively to ancient Greek and English literature. Frye's systematic thought, Pavel maintained, is a slave to 'fanatic structuralism' (100).

For all Pavel's criticism, Romania was the first country behind the Iron Curtain to publish Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* in 1972. In her preface, the notable Romanian critic Vera Călin praises Frye's book as "an initiation in the art of criticism or a didactic account of a system, the proposal of a way to read literature... The premise of Frye's *Anatomy* is that myth criticism—by way of old myths (pagan, Judaic, and Christian), an extreme schematisation of action and conventionalisation of character—has provided a genuine grammar of literary archetypes" (vi). One may agree or disagree with Frye's perspective on literature, Călin notes, but the composition of his work is "imposing" and his interpretations are "brilliant", not to mention his outstanding erudition in the history of culture. The reader, she recommends, should acknowledge the power of a conception that rejects the idea of literature as a baggage of isolated units.

The *Anatomy* was brought out by the publishing house Univers in a significant and sustained effort to make the achievements of Western criticism (e.g. Roland Barthes, Paul Ricoeur, Gerard Genette, Jean Starobinsky, Georges Poulet, and George Steiner, etc.) available to Romanian readers in good translation.

Frye thus not only did not escape the attention of Romanian critics during the communist era, but also contributed to unofficial, non-Marxist thought, his myth or archetypal criticism concentrating on the literary text “as a junction between the temporal and the permanent” and being “aware of the great TEXT”, as Rodica Albu pointed out at the First Symposium of English and American Studies in 1982 (117). Though some critics, such as Radu Șerban, complained that seminal works like Frye’s had little bearing outside small circles of philologists. This was although some Canadian novelists, including Mazo de La Roche and Louis Hémon, who had been translated into Romanian were not quickly forgotten (see Virgil Teodorescu and Petronela Negoșanu).

2. THE POST-COMMUNIST YEARS

After the fall of the communist regime, *The Double Vision* and *The Great Code* came out in Romanian translation in 1993 and 1999 respectively. The latter contains a chronology based on John Ayre’s biography, and Frye’s works are regularly referred to in critical journals such as *România literară*, *Sfera politicii* (Political Sphere), *Contrafort* (Abutment), and *Cultura*, to name but a few. In *Cultura*, Alex Goldiș reviewed the renowned Romanian critic Adrian Marino’s 1968 *Introducere în critica literară* (Introduction to Literary Criticism) which mentioned Frye as among the world’s important literary critics: Murray Krieger, Tudor Vianu, Leo Spitzer, Lucian Blaga, Mihai Ralea, I. A. Richards, Roman Jakobson, Roland Barthes, Mihail Dragomirescu, William Empson, E. Lovinescu, C. G. Jung, Jean Ricardou, Eugen Simion, G. Calinescu, Mircea Eliade, Sainte-Beuve, Benedetto Croce, Charles Mauron, Gaston Bachelard, G. Ibraileanu, Cl. Lévi-Strauss, Umberto Eco, Lucien Goldmann, Roman Ingarden, Titu Maiorescu, Nicolae Manolescu, Mihai Ungheanu, René Wellek, Matei Calinescu, Maurice Blanchot, Paul Valéry, Gaëtan Picon, Serban Cioculescu, Francesco de Sanctis, Perpessicius, and Jean Rousset.

In his study of irony and the rise of Romanian postmodernist criticism in the 1980s, which was frowned upon by the communist regime, Gheorghe Grigurcu (2003) refers to Frye as following in Aristotle’s and other major theorists’ footsteps. Again in *România literară*, Grigurcu (2004) reviewed the reputed critic Ion Bogdan Lefter’s book on Romanian criticism between 1960 and 1990, who,

like some others, saw criticism as *sui generis* form of literary creation and pleaded for the critic's need for subjectivity. Lefter found that Frye's approach squared with Georges Poulet's dictum that criticism is not a "zero" but a "superior degree" of literature, and that the critic as artist is a transmitter, evoker, and stimulator of sensibility for future tasters. At last, Frye is also recognised as a Canadian in a discussion of Blake studies and the importance of his *Fearful Symmetry* (see Mihăieş).

Northrop Frye has by now found his way into Romanian university curricula. At the University of Suceava, for instance, professor Mircea Diaconu lists Frye's works in the compulsory reading for his courses "Theories and Doctrines in Literature Sciences" (*Anatomy of Criticism* and *The Double Vision*) and "Literature and Philosophy" (*The Secular Scripture*). At the same university, Frye's *Anatomy* is also recommended to distance-learning students taking up professor Ovidiu Morar's course in literary theory. At the University of Craiova, optional distance-learning course material by Cătălin Ghiță, "Introduction to the work of Mircea Eliade", mentions Frye in a footnote as belonging among the most 'serious critics', along with Lord Raglan, William A. Lessa and Thomas J. Altizer. A number of recent doctoral theses in the humanities have also drawn on Frye's works, especially the *Anatomy* and *The Great Code*.¹

Interestingly enough, despite the blossoming of Canadian Studies and Canadian Studies Centres throughout Romania especially after 2000, Northrop Frye is given little credit as a Canadian scholar. His most quoted and reputed work in Romanian academia remains the *Anatomy*. I myself referred to *The Bush Garden* and *Divisions on a Ground* in my thesis on *The English Canadian Novel in Romania, Translations and Critical Studies* when dealing with issues of Canadian identity.

To assess the influence of Frye on post-communist Romanian criticism, we might mention a tribute to his work by the comparative critic Corin Braga in his volume on "Archetypology": "Frye projects an *anatomy of criticism*, a true image of invariants that can be found in all literary words since antiquity" (16). Braga likens Frye to Adrian Marino who envisaged "a project in which comparative

¹ See e.g. Gianina Todirică. *A Race of Giants on the Westward Trails: A Study of The Great Narrative of the American West*. Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, 2010; Simona Marusceac Laurean. *Aesthetic and Educational Valences in Children's Literature*. Oradea University, 2010; Anca Tomoiogă. *Metamorphosis of Psalms in Modern and Postmodern Romanian Poetry*. Oradea University, 2011; Ruxandra Marilena Zamfira Coman. *Satirical Prose in the 19th Century (1830-1870)*. University of Bucharest, 2012; Cristina Timar. *The Novels of Transition*. Petru Maior University of Targu-Mures, 2010; Emilia Georgeta Ivancu. *Games of Identity and Alterity in the Novels of Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul*. Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca, 2010.

literature is ‘recapitulated’ in a theory and poetics of world literature by extracting invariants common to all European, Asian, African literature” (*ibid.*). Also, what was overlooked during the communist era, Frye’s studies of the Bible and literature, came to the fore with the publication of the *Great Code*, which Constantin Jinga soon assimilated in his 2001 book on the Bible and the Sacred in Literature.

CONCLUSIONS

Northrop Frye has moved from margin to centre on a diachronic path from communist to post-communist Romania. If he was mistaken for an American author during the communist regime, his citizenship was restored after 1989. Moreover, the Marxist grids in the paratext of the 1972 translation of *Anatomy of Criticism* are no longer felt. He is now an accepted critic, and *The Double Vision* and *The Great Code* have also been translated into Romanian. There are several periodicals that mention Frye when discussing various topics, university professors list him in their course bibliographies and PhD students cite him in their theses. Yet he has not had the influence in Romania to call for a systematic investigation comparing his and Mircea Eliade’s work. In contrast to his writings mentioned above however, his works pertaining to Canada are still untranslated and little discussed in Romanian academia.

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JÚLIA BÁCSKAI-ATKÁRI



FRYE READING BYRON

In the third essay of the *Anatomy*, “Archetypal Criticism” Northrop Frye interprets Byron’s *Don Juan* as a clear instance of satire, belonging to the “mythos of winter” (1957, 223–242). As he points out, satire in *Don Juan* is to a large extent achieved by a strong self-parodying tendency and by constant digressions—both leading to the partial marginalization of the hero (1963).

I intend to show that Frye’s analysis can be extended to the genre of the verse novel as such. First, Frye’s approach helps capture the chief difference between the verse novel and the mock epic, namely that the latter type of satire fundamentally lacks the two features mentioned. Second, it shows that, in the verse novel, the parody of other genres, which typically belong to Frye’s “mythos of summer”, and the self-mocking tone reach a higher level; the verse novel is a genre which is by definition a literary response. As such, it is also self-responsive: verse novels after Byron tend not only to be self-reflexive as texts but they emphatically reflect on the genre itself, either by distancing themselves from (certain aspects of) previous verse novels, as did many Hungarian examples in the second half of the nineteenth century, or even by parodying previous ones, as does Térey’s 2001 work, *Paulus*, with Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*. Contemporary instances of the genre, including the latter and Anthony Burgess’ *Byrnie* (published posthumously in 1995), show that Frye’s analysis is very much of a current issue.

1. FRYE ON BYRON

First of all, let us consider in more detail what Frye writes about Byron and how this fits into his larger framework. As is known, Frye distinguishes four main types of mythical movement to define the pregeneric elements of literature, *mythoi* or generic plots. These are the romantic, the tragic, the comic, and the

ironic or satiric, which he associates with summer, autumn, spring, and winter respectively. (1957, 131–242).. As he says, “ironic myth is best approached as a parody of romance: the application of romantic mythical forms to a more realistic content” (223).

According to Frye, Byron’s *Don Juan* is a “second-phase satire”, where “second phase” means literal, descriptive or realistic in intent, and also an “intellectual satire”; this subtype of the satire is characterised by a clear stance against established beliefs in society and in literature by a deconstruction of the romantic idea of “the beauty of perfect form”. As Frye describes:

Tristram Shandy and *Don Juan* illustrate very clearly the constant tendency to self-parody in satiric rhetoric which prevents even the process of writing itself from becoming an oversimplified convention or ideal. In *Don Juan* we simultaneously read the poem and watch the poet at work writing it: we eavesdrop on his associations, his struggles for rhymes, his tentative and discarded plans, the subjective preferences organizing his choice of details [...], his decisions whether to be “serious” or mask himself with humor. (232–233)

The strong presence of the narrator throughout the text has a further consequence, pointed out by Frye: Don Juan is a secondary character in the text of *Don Juan* (Frye 1963). As Frye describes, Don Juan never actually emerges clearly as a character and there is no sense of engagement or participation to be perceived from his part—in other words, Don Juan is never an active agent. From all this it follows that since “*Don Juan* is not Don Juan’s poem but Byron’s poem, it could hardly have been ended, but only abandoned or cut short by its author’s death” (185).

2. THE BYRONIC VERSE NOVEL AS INTELLECTUAL SATIRE

Having pointed out all this, I would like to elaborate on how Frye’s analysis can be extended to the genre of the Byronic verse novel and how it can be related to the narrative structure of *Don Juan* and other verse novels.

First of all, let us consider the issue of parody and self-parody. Though there is large variation in what is parodied in *Don Juan*, there are typical tendencies to be observed. Using Frye’s terms, the parodied genres fall into the category of the “mythos of summer”—such as the epic, romantic novels, and romantic poetry (mostly the Lake Poets). The way parody is achieved is that allusions to these genres are inserted in the context of experience and hence measured against it.

As far as the nature of this experience is concerned, it is markedly literary experience.

At the end of Canto I (stanza 222), *Don Juan* exhibits a typical section parodying the Lake Poets and Robert Southey in particular:

*'Go, little book, from this my solitude!
I cast thee on the waters, go thy ways!
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.'
When Southey's read, and Wordsworth understood,
I can't help putting in my claim to praise.
The four first rhymes are Southey's every line;
For God's sake, reader, take them not for mine.*

The way parody works here is quite clear: the narrator quotes the first four lines from one of Southey's works, taking them out of their original context and putting them into his own text. The difference between the two kinds of literature is explicitly highlighted by the narrator himself in the second half of the stanza where he distances himself from the first four lines and hence from the kind of poetry associated with Southey (and Wordsworth). This alienating gesture is accompanied by a strong value judgement as the narrator clearly considers his kind of poetry superior to that of Southey and Wordsworth.

Apart from romantic poetry, epic conventions are also often subject to parody in *Don Juan* (Bácskai-Atkári 95–103). The following example is from Canto I (stanza 207):

*Besides, in Canto Twelfth, I mean to show
The very place where wicked people go.*

This is part of an argumentation in which the narrator tries to convince the readers that his poem is not the least immoral and here refers to the epic tradition of the hero's journey to hell (note that there are other references to this in the text as well). However, his ironic tone reveals that although the epic tradition will be kept, he does not fully take it seriously and the chief aim is not to comply with certain established rules but to satisfy the needs of certain readers, about whom he is similarly ironic and considers their need to see "wicked people" sent to hell as childish.

Such gestures lead us to the second major narrative feature of *Don Juan* and the verse novel, which is the large number of reflections on writing as such. In

the quotation above, the narrator partly talks about his work in general and partly refers to specific plans concerning the text yet to be written. This is even more emphatic at the end of Canto II (stanza 216):

*In the meantime, without proceeding more
In this anatomy, I've finished now
Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
That being about the number I'll allow
Each canto of the twelve or twenty-four;
And laying down my pen, I make my bow,
Leaving Don Juan and Haidée to plead
For them and theirs with all who deign to read.*

As can be seen, the narrator here explicitly makes reference to his plans concerning his work, abandoning the actual narration of the story. Note also that his plans are relatively vague since he talks about writing twelve or twenty-four cantos; again, the numbers are references to the revered epic tradition: the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have 24 and the *Aeneid* has 12 cantos. This reference is again ironic since it is the narrator's personal decision to establish the number of cantos, and it does not follow from the nature of the text being a proper epic otherwise.

It is worth mentioning that the reflections on the extradiegetic level may be more emphatic than the ones on the diegetic level. This naturally results in an increased tendency of stepping away from the story itself and it is quite typical that the narrator leaves his characters while digressing on other topics; when and how he does this is fully arbitrary.

The third fundamental feature of the narrative structure of *Don Juan* regards composition, which is characterised by a certain kind of infinity, as was also pointed out by Frye. This is not accidental as the form is constantly being revised throughout the entire text and there are several plans mentioned concerning the length, but any two of these are at least partially in conflict with each other—moreover, the planned length also increases as the text proceeds. Recall that the narrator promised twelve or twenty-four cantos altogether in Canto II (see the quotation above); in Canto XII, however, he says the following (stanzas 54–55).

*But now I will begin my poem. 'Tis
Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
That from the first of cantos up to this
I've not begun what we have to go through.
These first twelve books are merely flourishes,*

*Preludios, trying just a string or two
 Upon my lyre or making the pegs sure;
 And when so, you shall have the overture.
 My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin
 About what's called success or not succeeding.
 Such thoughts are quite below the strain they have chosen;
 'Tis a 'great moral lesson' they are reading.
 I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
 Cantos would do; but at Apollo's pleading,
 If that my Pegasus should not be foundered,
 I think to canter gently through a hundred.*

Here the narrator explicitly refers to the fact that he has changed his plans regarding the length of the work. This creates the impression that that the text is actually not born out of a concept set in advance (cf. Christensen 215) but it is rather created when narrating, and in this sense it is possible infinite, inasmuch as there is no text-internal reason that would bind it to a given length.

Apart from this, infinity is also reinforced by the fact that the main focus is not on the hero but on writing about the hero hence the primary concern of the narrator is not to round off the story of Don Juan but rather to prolong it as much as possible.

All of these characteristics pertain to the verse novel in general and contribute to the distinctive narrative structure thereof. Hence these can be considered as structural characteristics of the genre and as such they are fundamentally in line with Frye's analysis presented in the previous section. There are a number of examples for the Byronic verse novel in Hungarian literature as well, mostly dating from the second half of the nineteenth century and the 1870s in particular. A prototypical example would be László Arany's *A délibábok hőse* [The Hero of Mirages].

Naturally, when considering general features of the verse novel, it must be kept in mind that there are considerable differences as well with respect to the actual realisation of the features mentioned above. For instance, while infinity is truly prototypical for verse novels, it is generally due to abandonment rather than the death of the author, as was the case with Byron. For instance, Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* also lacks a rounded-off ending but this is due to Pushkin's abandonment of the text and is paired up in the text with a gesture from the narrator that clearly indicates the arbitrary decision to abandon the story at a given point; that is, the narrator leaves his hero in a very uncomfortable situation and instead

of narrating his story further on, he explicitly says that he prefers to leave the situation there as it is.

Apart from offering valuable points of consideration for the characterisation of verse novels, Frye's analysis also helps highlight some crucial differences from the mock epic. This is especially important because *Don Juan* is partly also referred to as a mock epic in the relevant literature. However, mock epics lack the self-parodying tendency and digressions that are central in verse novels. In other words, the verse novel fundamentally deconstructs established literary norms, which is not true for the mock epic.

3. EXTENSIONS

There is yet one more important extension line of the analysis presented so far, also built on Frye's insights. I have argued that the verse novel is a strongly self-reflexive genre, in that verse novels tend to have self-reflexive texts that may also reflect on questions concerning the essence of the genre itself. In addition, the verse novel is also self-reflexive on the genre level: besides the individual text being aware of their textual nature, the verse novel as a genre is also markedly aware of itself.

This becomes evident when considering contemporary verse novels, which contain reflections on nineteenth-century verse novels. Apart from explicit reflections and references, there are of course similar characteristics too; for instance, János Térey's *Paulus* has a dominant narrator, who occasionally interrupts narration in order to reflect on his personal concerns and who also devotes considerable time to disclosing his plans concerning the text.

In *Paulus* there are actually three storylines: that of Pál 'Paul', who is a geek at the turn of the 21st century, the one of the German officer Friedrich von Paulus, taking place during the Second World War, and finally the story of the biblical Paul, which is mostly present in underlying form. Thus the genre of the verse novel is further deconstructed, in that any of these storylines is interrupted not only by the narrator's personal concerns but also by the other two storylines—obviously, the three are interconnected in a number of ways and apart from interrupting each other, they also reflect on and reinterpret one another.

Térey's *Paulus* is also a good example for postmodern verse novels reflecting on the history of the genre since it rewrites Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (Margócsy 37–45). This can be observed in the story of Pál and Ludovika, which is built on that of Onegin and Tatiana, that is, the former is similar to but is also mark-

edly different from the latter. For instance, when she meets Pál, Ludovika is already married: nevertheless, they have an affair, albeit a rather short one. These features are excluded in *Eugene Onegin*: neither Onegin or Tatiana is married when they meet, which is precisely the reason why there is some chance of them getting together—however, when later on Tatiana is married to someone else, it is her marriage that acts as a barrier to Onegin’s advances.

Another point of difference is the letter written by Ludovika, which is actually a virus. Naturally, the text itself differs markedly from the one written by Tatiana, e.g. it contains explicit sexual references; still, the underlying gesture is similar in the two cases, and Ludovika’s letter strongly evokes Tatiana’s. Besides the text being different, the form of the virus indicates that Ludovika’s text is in a way fundamentally destructive—this is in line with the entire text of *Paulus* being destructive, indeed a deconstruction, of the genre of the verse novel. Similarly to Onegin, Pál also realises later (and in fact too late) that he should not have rejected Ludovika, who in turn finally rebuffs him—in doing so, however, she is clearly harsher than Tatiana (that is, she basically sends him to hell, rather colloquially).

The differences and similarities between *Paulus* and *Eugene Onegin* could of course be further examined as they constitute an intricate network of intertextual references. The point here is to stress that this is true for postmodern verse novels in general, though different texts may exhibit such reflexive characteristics to different degrees.

The fact that postmodern verse novels tend to reflect on previous ones in a similar way to how self-reflexivity is attested within the individual texts shows that reflections are indeed fundamentally important when considering verse novels and that Frye’s way of reading Byron is thus also productive on the genre level.

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ANDREI DULLO



A ROMANIAN COSMOGONIC MYTH
IN THE LIGHT OF NORTH FRYE

Northrop Frye's theories can be applied to any Christian-influenced culture. Romanian culture is an amalgam of older pagan elements fused with Christianity. On the ancient strata, the Dacian and Thracian cultic worship of Zamolxis-Gebeleizis, Dionysos-Zibelthiurdos, Mithras and various Greek and Roman deities, a Byzantine, Eastern Christianity is superimposed.

This fusion is fascinatingly evident in the world of Romanian folk mythology. I'd like to consider just one of these myths here—a cosmogonic one—which, despite all its many variants, preserved its broad unity. At the centre of the story are two twin-like figures—God and the Devil—which at the creation walk together, addressing each other as 'Fellow' (God) and 'Unfellow' (the Devil). God is naïve, unaware of his demiurgic powers, he at first doesn't know how to initiate creation. He eventually discovers that he can create in the moment when he throws his stick (or axe, in other variants) into the primordial waters. When he does so, a fir tree rises from the waters, and among this tree's branches, he finds the Devil. In the moment when they first see each other, the Devil feigns friendship, calling God 'Fellow', and suggesting that they be friends and brothers. God accepts the Devil as a friend but cautiously rejects the offered brotherhood, calling the Devil 'Unfellow'.

The two of them start to travel above the primordial waters until the Devil suggests that God create something else. God accepting, asks the Devil to dive into the waters and bring back sand in his name. On being asked, God explains he intends to turn the sand into dry land using the power of his name. The Devil retrieves the sand, but deciding that he wants to be the one who creates the dry land, takes it in his own name. Before the Devil succeeds in getting the sand to the surface it becomes burning hot, scorching him and forcing him to release it and dive again. After stubbornly persisting through many unsuccessful attempts, his skin becomes permanently darkened (Vulcănescu 241). Finally God, seeing the Devil's changed colour and realizing what has been happening urges him to

fulfil the task. The Devil, diving again, takes the sand saying “I take this sand in the name of God” but right before surfacing, adds “and in my name, too”. The sand immediately seeps between his fingers, and is lost, but God, by taking the scrapings from under the Devil’s nails, is able to gather sufficient material to create a small island with enough space for the two to lie down on. God explains he will leave the sanctification of the new creation till the next day, and the two lay down to sleep. After a while, convinced that God has fallen asleep, the Devil tries to roll God into the water, but God, suspicious of his intentions, has too only feigned sleep: as the Devil rolls God forward, the land extends under him; the Devil then tries to roll him in the opposite direction with the same effect, and then rolls him crosswise until he has rolled God in all four cardinal directions, creating the earth. On the next day, the Devil pretending that nothing has happened, asks God about sanctifying the land. In answer, God laughs, informing the Devil that the land was already sanctified in the night, by the cross-form in which Unfellow had rolled God over the land. Thus exposed, the Devil plants himself under the tree and claims the new-created land, suggesting God find somewhere else for himself. God, his patience understandably exhausted, denounces Unfellow as an evil friend and summons a huge bull that takes the Devil away. From the fir tree, under which the Devil had taken his stand pieces of meat start to fall and from its leaves humans appear.

After Unfellow’s unceremonious departure, God realizes that the land is too wide and plain, but that he has no idea how to improve it. He turns to the hedgehog for help who grumpily declines. It is only with the help of the bee who overhears and reports hedgehog’s mumblings that God understands that by stretching the lands he can make mountains, plains, hills and valleys and the world is saved from the tedium of the primordial landscape (Olinescu 44).

As we can see, the Romanian view on the genesis of Earth and humankind is the product of multiple influences. Of course, we have the primary Christian element of the cross. The primordial waters and the role of speech in the act of creation are recognizable from Genesis. The fir tree of our story is a recognizable kin to the cosmic trees of various pagan mythologies—from the fir tree that appears in Turkish mythologies (Vulcănescu 242), to the better known world ash of the Scandinavians, and the giant cedar of the Gilgamesh story—though perhaps there is more than an echo of Eden’s tree of *knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill* in Unfellow’s appearance among its branches. We can also identify motifs from the Greek-Latin legends in the bull that takes the Devil. The possibly unique feature of the Romanian story is the naiveté of God—omnipotent but, as evidenced in his clumsiness in initiating the creation, clearly not

omniscient. Though God's knowledge seems to grow with his creation, even after he has realized the Devil's true nature, he finds himself still at a loss.

To illustrate Frye's theory about mythology as drawing a line around the community and strengthening it, we can point to the continuing special significance of the bee and the hedgehog in Romanian peasant consciousness attested by the persistence of taboos against harming them. There are echoes too of the fir tree's once sacred significance in its role in many traditional poems, fairytales or ballads. Traces of the omnipotent but not omniscient god are found in many fairy tales with the figure of a young hero who is helped by an old wise man or hag—in Christian terms God the Son and God the father.

The Orthodox-Christian basis of Romanian mythology makes it very instructive to compare with Biblical mythology and thus enrich our understanding of each. As Frye says in *The Great Code*: "If we read the Bible sequentially, the Bible becomes a myth, first by tautology, in the sense in which all verbal structures are metaphorical by juxtaposition, and second, in a more specific sense of containing a structure of significantly repeated images. [...] Traditionally, the Bible's narrative has been regarded as 'literally' historical and its meaning as 'literally' doctrinal or didactic: the present book takes myth and metaphor to be the true literal bases." (63–64)

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ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE



1. BÁCSKAI-ATKÁRI, JÚLIA

Frye Reading Byron

In his influential essay *Archetypal Criticism*, Northrop Frye interprets Byron's *Don Juan* as a clear instance of satire, belonging to the "mythos of winter" (Frye 1957). As he points out, satire in *Don Juan* is to a large extent achieved by a strong self-parodying tendency and by constant digressions—both leading to the partial marginalization of the hero (Frye 1963). I will show that Frye's analysis can be extended to the genre of the verse novel as such: first, it captures the chief differences from the mock epic, which is satire fundamentally lacking the two features in question. Second, the parody of other genres—which typically recall Frye's "mythos of summer"—and self-mocking tone are present on a higher level too: the verse novel is a form which is by definition a literary response. As such, it is also self-responsive: verse novels after Byron tend not only to be self-reflexive as texts but they emphatically reflect on the genre itself, either by distancing themselves from (certain aspects of) previous verse novels, as did many Hungarian examples in the second half of the nineteenth century, or even by parodying previous ones, as does Térey's *Paulus* with Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. With the appearance of contemporary instances of the genre (e.g. *Byrne* by Burgess), Frye's analysis is very much of a current issue.

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genre in Hungarian and English literature, with particular interest in Byron's oeuvre and reception.

2. BÁNKI, ÉVA

A költészet születése—Sámuel I. könyve

Az Ószövetség női dalai (Debora, Mirjam, Hanna hálaéneke) nem hagyományos szerelmi énekek, nem tipikusnak mondható női szerepversek, hanem az ószövetségi zoltárköltészetet megelőző profetikus énekhagyományba illeszkedő lírai megszólalások. A fenti énekköltők mindegyike az Úr történelemben betöltött szerepéről vall, emellett sajátos társadalomképet is közvetítenek. („Isten mint forradalmár”—Northrop Frye is kitért a Hanna-ének különös társadalmi szemléletére.) Ámde ezek a szokatlan női dalok a zoltárokkal ellentétben mindig valamilyen epikus szituációba helyeztetnek bele, alkalmiak, „történelmi”—abban az értelemben is, hogy elszakíthatatlanul kötődnek valamilyen történelmi vagy magánéleti eseményhez, tehát nem is illeszthetők bele a zoltárok liturgikus körforgásába. Ez azért is különös, mert a Sámuel I. könyve—amelyet Dávid személye miatt tekinthetünk akár egy, a lírai megszólalás eredetét, a „költészet születését” tárgyáló szimbolikus elbeszélésnek is—egyetlen nagy ívű cselekménysorba illeszti bele a dávidi és a hannai költészetet. Előadásomban a Hanna-féle hálaének (1Sám 2,1–10) epikus funkcióját, motivikus kapcsolódásait, történelemkoncepcióját, a dávidi zoltárköltészettől való szignifikáns eltéréseit fogom vizsgálni.

The Birth of Poetry—Samuel I

The female songs of the Old Testament (Deborah's, Miriam's and Hannah's hymns of praise) are far from conventional love songs, and cannot be said to be typical female role poems either; rather, they are lyrical utterances belonging to the prophetic song tradition preceding the poetry of the Psalms. All the hymn writers mentioned witness to the role of the Lord in History, and they also convey a characteristic view of society (“God as revolutionary”—as Northrop Frye also touched upon the unique social attitude of the Song of Hannah.) These unusual female songs however fit into some sort of epic situation, they are incidental, “historical” pieces—in the sense that they are inseparably related to some sort of historical or private event, i.e. they do not fit into the liturgical cycle of the Psalms. Why this is extraordinary is because Samuel I, which can be seen as a symbolic narrative discussing the origin of lyrical utterance, indeed the “birth of poetry” due to the person of David, places the poetry of Hannah and David

into a grand sequence of events. The paper examines the epic function, the motif links, the concept of history of Hannah's Song, and its major differences from the poetry of David.

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BÁNKI ÉVA negyvenöt éves regényíró, tanár, irodalomtörténész. PhD-dolgozatát romanisztikából, a középkori nőköltészet és trubadúrlíra kialakulásának témájából védte meg. Tanítványaival két nagyszerű trubadúr-antológiát állított össze. Kreatív írást és galego-portugál irodalmat tanít az ELTE-n, világirodalmat, kreatív írást, műfordítástudományt a Károli Magyar Irodalom Tanszékén. A Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem bölcsészkarának docense.

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Éva Banki (45), novelist, teacher, literary historian, wrote her PhD thesis in Romance philology, on the rise of mediaeval female and troubadour poetry. With her students, she published a highly successful anthology troubadour poetry. She teaches creative writing and Galician-Portuguese literature at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and world literature, creative writing, translation at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Budapest, where she is an associate professor.

3. DÁVIDHÁZI, PÉTER

A Tribute to The Great Code: Voltaire's Lisbon Poem, Mikes and the Book of Job

Being a tribute to Northrop Frye's work on the Bible, the paper is meant to demonstrate how a present-day scholar may benefit from applying Frye's insights and methods to a comparative analysis of two literary works with a common, if latent, biblical subtext. Both Voltaire's "Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne ou examen de cet axiome: tout est bien" and Kelemen Mikes's letter CXCVIII in his *Letters from Turkey* were prompted by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, both responded to the problems of theodicy, and both alluded to the book of Job. In constant dialogue with Frye's ideas, the paper reveals these similarities, but only to highlight (and celebrate) some characteristic differences that are incompatible with the usual classification of Mikes's work as a typical representative of early Enlightenment literature.

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PÉTER DÁVIDHÁZI, Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, is Head of the Department of nineteenth-century Hungarian Literature at the Research Centre for

the Humanities, and he is Professor of English Literature at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. As a visiting professor he taught at the University of California, Irvine, and the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Published in Hungary, England and the US, his books include *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare: Literary Reception in Anthropological Perspective* (London: Macmillan, 1998). His latest book is *Menj, vándor: Swift sírfelirata és a hagyományrétegződés* [Go, Traveller: Swift's Epitaph and the Strata of a Tradition], (Pécs: Pro Pannonia, 2009). His recent work focuses on the uses of biblical allusions in modern English and Hungarian Poetry.

4. DENHAM, ROBERT. D.

Frye and Longinus

The paper examines the question of whether or not the two essential thrusts in Frye's critical vision are more or less incommensurate with each other and therefore not subject to Frye's usual tendency of bringing together oppositions, such as Aristotle versus Longinus, by way of their interpenetration or their being subjected to the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. The question is approached by way of Frye's commitment to both Aristotelian and Longinian perspectives. Denham concludes that Frye finally privileges Longinus over Aristotle.

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ROBERT D. DENHAM is the Fishwick Professor of English, Emeritus, Roanoke College, Salem, VA. He was formerly Director of English Programs for the Modern Language Association and formerly chair of the English department at Emory & Henry College. He has written and edited 28 volumes by or about Northrop Frye, including eleven volumes of *The Collected Works of Northrop Frye*. His most recent book is *The Northrop Frye Handbook*.

5. DULLO, ANDREI

Application of Frye's Analysis of Christian Symbols to Romanian Mythology

Northrop Frye is known as one of the greatest literary critics in the contemporary period. His approach can be applied to anything related to literature all over the world. His contribution to understanding cultural environment can be sensed even in the Danubian space. My aim in this paper is to apply Northrop Frye's analysis of Christian symbols to Romanian mythology, especially to myths referring to the creation of the world. Our tradition is rich in mythologi-

cal beings and stories that follow a pattern easily found in the Bible. Filtered by the ancient Romanian mentality, these myths consist of Christian motifs that emerge together with other kinds of influences at work in the Danubian region where adaptations of the Bible are widespread. Frye's study of biblical symbols (in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*) can be successfully applied to our Christian mythology. Therefore, my paper is aimed at enriching the way in which Northrop Frye is perceived, both in Romania and in South-Eastern Europe, and providing an alternative interpretation of native mythological motifs.

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 ANDREI DULLO (born in Cluj-Napoca 1991) is a student in the bachelor second year at the Faculty of Letters of Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca. He is vice-president of the writing circle held at the Students House of Culture, Cluj-Napoca Municipality (2008—present). He has published in *Steaua* cultural magazine of Cluj-Napoca, *Bucovina Literară* cultural magazine of Suceava, *Semn* cultural magazine of Cluj-Napoca, and in *Avangarda Literara* cultural magazine of Galaţi.

6. FABINY, TIBOR

Northrop Frye and Béla Hamvas

The paper focuses on the common features, and especially one common motif, “transparency”, in the writings of the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye (1912–1991) and the Hungarian writer, thinker and philosopher of religion Béla Hamvas (1897–1968). Both of them were unusual, idiosyncratic thinkers whose works are not easy to classify; and the intellectual output both has had a rather controversial reception.

Hamvas was a chief librarian and a prolific essayist in Budapest between the two world wars. On the eve of the Stalinist totalitarian takeover, Hamvas's book on modern art was severely denounced as “modern snobbism” by György Lukács. Being employed as a physical worker for several decades, Hamvas's works were prohibited to be published, but his manuscripts were copied and were circulated by his followers.

A common motif in the works of Hamvas and Frye is “transparency”, which, according to the dictionary, means “allowing light to pass through so that objects (or at least their outlines) behind can be distinctly seen”. In his most famous work *Scientia Sacra* Hamvas writes that “transparency” pertains to *aletheia* (truth). For Northrop Frye “transparency” was a category he frequently used but never explicitly discussed. He adopted the term in two, not totally unrelated

contexts: (a) as a principle of pedagogy, (b) as a principle of language. Biblical language, says Frye, is characterized by a kind of “transparency” as it can be “seen through”, it has nothing to hide, no hidden agenda..

Despite the contrast between the fame and reputation Frye managed to earn during his lifetime and Hamvas’s total lack of a visible worldly career, there is also much in common in their attitudes to established academic institutions. Northrop Frye is said to have declined invitations to prestigious academic institutions to the United States and remained loyal to his Victoria University in Toronto saying that “one has to remain provincial in order to become universal”. Béla Hamvas was also a provincial Hungarian living in total isolation throughout the first seven decades of a troublesome twentieth century but, as we have seen, he was entirely committed to universalism. Both Hamvas and Frye advocated and adopted a language that is unusual in the context of discursive argument and logical discourse. Both of them, therefore, chose to be extravagant outsiders, even stumbling blocks, for their contemporaries. Such lonely men of genius are usually first rejected, then forgotten, but eventually, one day, they come back again.

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TIBOR FABINY is Director of the Institute of English Studies and the Centre for Hermeneutics at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Budapest. He teaches early modern English literature and culture, including the works of William Tyndale, William Shakespeare and John Milton, literary theory and the history of biblical interpretation. He is the author of several books in Hungarian; his book in English (*The Lion and the Lamb. Figuralism and Fulfilment in the Bible, Art and Literature*, London, Macmillan, 1992) on biblical typology and literature was inspired by Northrop Frye’s insights on the subject.

7. FELTRACCO, DANIELA

Northrop Frye and the Neural Theory of Metaphor

The main objective of this paper is to investigate the concept of metaphor within Frye’s theoretical architecture and in connection with the recently emerged neuroscientific studies. In particular, I will analyze Frye’s theoretical statements on metaphor emerging from the *Notebooks*. Then, it seems interesting to investigate the current streams of innovative tendencies viewing rhetoric—and some of its main key concepts, such as the metaphor—as a neural-based complex system. To this purpose, I will examine Frye’s unshakeable fundamentals searching for

the elements that contemporary scholars—such as George Lakoff—have drawn to ground their theories on neurorhetorics.

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DANIELA FELTRACCO (Farra di Soligo, TV Italy 1968) graduated in 1992 at the IULM (Feltre), with a dissertation on Australian literature focussing on the novelist Elizabeth Jolley. From 1993 to 1999 she taught English language and literature in primary and secondary schools. From 2000 to 2004 she was granted a PhD course in Comparative literatures at the University of Udine. Under the supervision of Stefano Calabrese, professor of Semiotics and Literary theory at the Faculty of Foreign languages in the University of Udine, she completed her PhD with a dissertation on Northrop Frye's Criticism (*Northrop Frye: anatomia di un metodo critico*, Forum Editrice, 2005). She also translated and published some fragments from Frye's *Notebooks* (*Frammenti critici*, a cura di Stefano Calabrese e Daniela Feltracco, MUP Editore, 2005). She also contributed to a volume on the motifs of fairy tales with particular reference to Little Red Riding Hood oral and written versions (*Cappuccetto Rosso: una fiaba vera*, a cura di Stefano Calabrese e Daniela Feltracco, Meltemi, 2008). From 2005 to 2010 she taught Italian language at the Faculty of Scienze della Comunicazione e dell'Economia at the University of Modena e Reggio Emilia. She is currently teaching English language and literature at secondary school and doing some studies on the neural theory of metaphor as she is preparing a chapter to be included in a forthcoming volume on *Neurorhetorics*.

8. FICOVÁ, SYLVA

Northrop Frye, William Blake and the Art of Translation

Motto: *I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Mans*. As far as we know Northrop Frye did not study the theory of translation, nor did he practice it. It even seems he believed that the “translation” of ideas and concepts is quite impossible—that “an intellectual and cultural synthesis that gets everything in and reconciles everyone with everyone else is an attempt to build a Tower of Babel, and will lead to confusion of utterance.” Yet the interest in the history of literature and oriental culture inspired Northrop Frye and helped him understand and cultivate the art of interpretation and recreation of ideas, particularly in his study *Fearful Symmetry*. That is why I would like to discuss the importance of Frye's work for the translation profession and how it influenced my translation of his *Anatomy of Criticism* and William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

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SYLVA FICOVÁ is a freelance translator and editor. She studied English and Czech at the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, and took part in exchange studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Leeds, the UK. She has translated more than 10 books, including two theoretical books by Northrop Frye, fiction, poetry, and a comic book. As a freelance translator she also specializes in localization and subtitling. She worked as an English teacher for several years and has written a number of book reviews and articles. She lives with her daughter in Brno, Czech Republic. Last autumn she read a paper on “Northrop Frye in Czech Lands” at the conference *Canada in Eight Tongues* organized by the Central European Association for Canadian Studies and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

9. FÜLÖP, JÓZSEF

Northrop Frye és Rudolf Kassner

Tanulmányomban Northrop Frye és az osztrák esszéíró, Rudolf Kassner (1873–1959) szellemi rokonságára mutatok rá: mindketten alkatilag voltak képtelenek a szűkkeblű dogmatikusságra és kiskatekizmusra; számtalan kötetet felölelő életművükben roppant erudícióról és széles szellemi horizontról tettek tanúbizonyságot; a biografikus és habitusbeli közös jegyeken túl tematikus azonosságok is felfedezhetők, annak ellenére, hogy Kassner, néhány (jelentős) irodalomkritikai szövegét leszámítva, nem tekinthető irodalomtudósnak.

Az egybevetés közvetlen alapjául Frye-nak a Pált ismétlő, a metaforáról szóló gondolkörét és Kassnernek a látvány, a fiziognómia és a képzelőerőről vallott nézeteit választottam. Amiképpen Frye az elméletíró eszköztárával közelít az irodalmi (és a bibliai) szöveg poliszemikus természetéhez, Kassner műfajok (hasonlatok, példabeszédek, esszék, transzfigurációk, elbeszélések, fiktív levelek stb.) változatos során át példázza a költői szövegek többszólamúságát a maga kifejlesztette fiziognómiai módszer jegyében, közvetlenül emlékeztetve az olvasás összetett mechanizmusára, belső, imaginatív erejére és dinamizmusára.

A filológiai párhuzamokon, tehát az „össze-” vagy „egybeolvasáson” felül Frye és Kassner Biblia-értéséről is számot kell adnunk. Röviden, hívószókkal: János 3,8; az Ige kihirdetése; Ézsaiás prófétaasága.

Northrop Frye and Rudolf Kassner

The paper examines intellectual relationship between Northrop Frye and Rudolf Kassner (1873–1959): both had an inborn inaptitude for dogmatic small-mindedness or catechism thinking; their extensive oeuvre witnessed to their huge erudi-

tion and wide intellectual horizons; apart from similarities in life and habit, they shared several common themes in spite of the fact that Kassner, excluding his few (yet significant) literary critical works, cannot be regarded as a literary scholar.

The basis of comparison is Frye's discussion of metaphor recalling Paul and Kassner's thinking on spectacle, physiognomy and imagination. As Frye approaches the polysemic nature of the literary (and Biblical) text by way of the means of a theorist, so does Kassner exemplify the polyphony of poetic texts in the name of his physiognomic method through a variety of genres (similes, parables, essays, transfigurations, narratives, fictive letters, etc), and thus calls attention to the complex mechanism of reading, its internal imaginative force and dynamism.

Apart from philological parallels, reading them together must account for Frye's and Kassner's understanding of the Bible, the Proclamation of the Word (John 3,8) and the prophethood of Isaiah in particular.

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FÜLÖP JÓZSEF 1979-ben született Szombathelyen. Az Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetemen esztétikát, a Károli Gáspár Református Egyetemen germanisztikát végzett. Doktori címét az ELTE Filozófiatudományi Doktori Iskolájában szerezte. Adjunktus a KRE Német Tanszékén (ahol egyben a Hüperion Fordítói Műhely vezetője), ugyanott óraadó a Szabaddölcészet Tanszéken, valamint a Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetemen. Szerkesztőként és fordítóként is tevékeny.

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JÓZSEF FÜLÖP was born in Szombathely 1978. He studied aesthetics at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and German at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Budapest. He earned his PhD at the Doctoral School of Philosophy of ELTE. He is a lecturer at the German Department of KGRE, where he leads the Hyperion Translators' Workshop, and he also teaches liberal arts KGRE and at the Liszt Ferenc Music University.

10. GILL, GLEN ROBERT

The Dialectical Vision: Myth and Criticism as Cultural Theory in the Work of Northrop Frye

The twenty-first century has thus far seen an increasing marginalization of myth as an existential factor to populist, insular, and radical communities, which thrive but largely outside the mainstream of liberal intellectual culture. Over

the course of his prolific fifty-year career, Northrop Frye consistently worked to recover myth from the rationalist and materialist perspectives that sponsor such dismissals, even as he theorized the function of such skeptical habits of mind in liberal society. A conventional overemphasis of one of these aspects of Frye's work over the other, however, has led to a misapprehension of his intellectual project and legacy as Janus-faced, as dual if not bifurcated, establishing an identity for him as a theorist of myth on the one hand, and as a social and cultural critic on the other. A long-overdue coordinating of these two dimensions of Frye's thought, as this paper shall endeavour, will demonstrate that they are interrelated and interdependent as dialectical phases or elements in a single, over-arching vision or theory of myth-as-cultural process. In this paper, I will argue that the chief contribution and essential legacy of Northrop Frye is his mythic theory of culture; his conception of society as proceeding dialectically from an essential, originary basis of mythic thought, which itself creates a necessary, countervailing phase of rational resistance, but ultimately enables, through the catalytic element of criticism, a mature consciousness of culture as consisting of variations and complexes of myth accommodated to yet fulfilled in the existential realities of human life.

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GLEN ROBERT GILL is an Associate Professor in the Department of Classics and Humanities at Montclair State University, New Jersey. He is the author of *Northrop Frye and the Phenomenology of Myth* (University of Toronto Press, 2007), the editor of *Northrop Frye on Twentieth-Century Literature* for *The Collected Works of Northrop Frye* (University of Toronto Press, 2010), and has published essays on Frye, C. G. Jung, T. S. Eliot, Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop, and J. R. R. Tolkien.

11. GRAHAM, BRIAN RUSSELL

Primary Identity in Literature: Frye-Inspired Reflections on Characters in Literature

Sherry Ortner famously argued that the *nature-as-woman* metaphor is the cause of the historical subjugation of women, and her critique informs today's eco-criticism. In this article, I discuss Frye's view of the tradition in literature of symbolizing nature as a female figure. As I shall explain, we should not view Frye's attitude to this area of imagery as illustrative of his dubious sexual politics, however tempted we may be. In contrast to Ortner, Frye argues that the metaphor is part of an image of a particular relationship between mankind and

nature, as well as image of possible relations between men and women. Frye's view is neither, sexist, nor essentialist, nor misanthropic, I argue.

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 BRIAN RUSSELL GRAHAM is assistant professor of literature, media and culture at Aalborg University in Denmark. His first monograph, *The Necessary Unity of Opposites*, is a study of Northrop Frye, particularly Frye's dialectical thinking. He continues to work with literary and cultural theory, but has also begun original research on English poet William Blake. He also writes about popular culture—his latest research in this area deals with "Fictions of the Apocalypse." Graham has also been venturing into fiction, 2011 seeing the publication of his first work of fiction.

12. HÓDOSY, ANNAMÁRIA

Frye vs. Freud on Nationalism: Oedipus, Hamlet, Bánk bán and the "Mother-centred Myth"

There is a strange complicity between nineteenth-century Hungarian patriotic poetry and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: the plot of the play reminded contemporary Hungarian readers—and sometimes seemed to them to be an allegory—of the political situation of their country suffering under Habsburg rule. The paper demonstrates that the connection between *Hamlet* and the Hungarian literature of the period is based on a tacit understanding of the political implications of Shakespeare's play. These Hungarian patriotic poems and plays manifest several elements which invite the psychoanalytical interpretations of the situation of the Prince of Denmark. However, Frye's notion of the "mythic grounding of literature" can offer an alternative explanation for the familial master narrative of Hungarian patriotic poetry. The "archetypal criticism" that Frye introduces to explore the most basic levels of art (and perhaps any kind of discourse) may question the validity of the Freudian notion of the Oedipal conflict in this national context. Instead of being seen as a psychological phenomenon, the family tropology of the conflict should be interpreted as the consequence of the rise of romantic "mother-centred" myths, which contributed to the increasing popularity and prevalence of the metaphor of the *motherland* in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the family romance of *Hamlet* is already political in Shakespeare's play, and although it is more than 200 years older than the Hungarian literature in question, it is among the first manifestations of the reappearance of the mother-centred myth that Frye calls Romantic.

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ANNAMÁRIA Hódosy teaches as senior assistant professor at the Visual Culture and Literary Theory Department of the University of Szeged. She wrote her PhD thesis on the metafiction in Shakespeare's Sonnets. Her main fields of interest are feminist and queer literary and film theory.

13. HORVÁTH, CSABA

Kettős tükrök—tükörszerkezetek és biblikus olvasatok a kortárs magyar irodalomban (Esterházy: *Harmonia Caelestis*, Bodor Ádám: *Sinistra körzet*, *Verhovina madarai*)

Az előadás a kortárs magyar irodalom két reprezentáns művéből, Esterházy Péter *Harmonia Caelestis*éből és Bodor Ádám pár művéből, a *Sinistra-körzet*ből illetve a *Verhovina madaraiból* kiindulva a kettős tükör és a Nagy Kód értelmezési lehetőségeit vizsgálja. Mindkét mű a tükörszerkezet és a biblikus hagyomány metszéspontján értelmezhető, s rájuk épülve jól bemutatható a Frye gondolatai és a posztmodern nagy narráció végére vonatkozó elméletek közötti dinamikus feszültség.

Double Mirrors—Mirror Structures and Biblical Readings in Contemporary Hungarian Literature: Péter Esterházy: *Harmonia Caelestis*; Ádám Bodor: *Sinistra körzet* (Sinistra Circuit) and *Verhovina madarai* (The Birds of Verhovina) The paper examines the interpretative possibilities of the double mirror and the Great Code starting out from representative contemporary Hungarian works, Péter Esterházy's *Harmonia Caelestis*; Ádám Bodor's *Sinistra körzet* (Sinistra Circuit) and *Verhovina madarai* (The Birds of Verhovina). All three works can be interpreted at the intersection of the mirror structure and the Biblical tradition, and, on their basis, the dynamic tension between Frye's ideas and the theories concerning the end of the grand narrative can be clearly demonstrated.

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HORVÁTH CSABA Az ELTE-n folytatott tanulmányai után a párizsi Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales-on posztgraduális képzést (DEA), majd a az ELTE esztétika doktori iskoláján PhD fokozatot szerzett. Kutatási területe a kortárs irodalom és irodalomelmélet, azon belül is a regény műfajának filozófiai aspektusai.

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 CSABA HORVÁTH, after his graduate studies at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, he earned a post-graduate degree (DEA) at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris. He wrote his PhD thesis in aesthetics at ELTE. His field of research is contemporary literature and literary theory, the philosophical aspects of the novel as a genre in particular.

14. KELEMEN, ZOLTÁN

Mítosz és irodalom—Northrop Frye mítoszkonstruációjának kritikai megközelítése

Northrop Frye szerint a *történelmi*, legalábbis bizonyos történettudományi értelemben, a mitikus ellentéte. Habár egy ponton túl Frye szerint minden történelmi munka a mitikushoz, sőt a költőihez közelít érthetőségében, megfogalmazásában. Így Frye megkülönbözteti a romantikus mítoszokat, amelyek „Isten országának vagy egy osztály nélküli társadalomnak” a megtalálásáról vagy a hozzá vezető zarándokltról szólnak; a komikus mítoszokat, melyek a haladást tételezik lassú fejlődésként vagy forradalmak mechanikus sorozataként; a tragikus mítoszokat, melyek a hanyatlásnak és a bukásnak állítanak emléket; végül az ironikus mítoszokat, melyek a visszatérésről és a véletlen katasztrófáról szólnak. Northrop Frye *A kritika anatómiája* című munkájában kifejti, hogy a különböző irodalmi történetek, mítoszok, népi mesék, motívumok szívesen csoportosulnak enciklopédikus formákba. Másrészt Frye az orákulumokból vezeti le számos olyan történettípus kifejlődését, melyek előszeretettel tömörülnek enciklopédikus gyűjteménybe. Frye szerint az ironikus ábrázolásmód eleve köthető az áldozati rítusokhoz és a haldokló istenséggel kapcsolatos tiszteletadás formáihoz, a gyász munkához. Enciklopédia és mítosz összefonódását, pontosabban a mítoszok enciklopédikussá válásának igényét Northrop Frye egyetemes érvényűnek tételezi, bár az enciklopédikus hajlamot nem minden esetben tartja esztétikailag pozitívan értékelhetőnek.

Jelen dolgozat figyelmének homlokterében mégsem *A kritika anatómiája* áll, hanem *The Great Code*-nak a mítoszt illető meghatározása. Milyen összefüggés van *A kritika anatómiájában* megfogalmazott esztétikai állásfoglalás és a mítoszt társadalmi nyilvánosság elé táró olyan típusú retorikák között, melyek például a zsidókeresztény, illetve az antik görög-római kultúrát jellemezték? A kutatás G. S. Kirk, Jan Assmann, Kerényi Károly és Mircea Eliade mítoszmeghatározásainak segítségével próbálja áttekinteni ezt a problematikát *The Great Code* szövegterében.

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KELEMEN ZOLTÁN 1969. december 29-én, Dombóvárott született. 1989-től napjainkig folyamatosan publikál. 1995-től dolgozik a Szegedi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Karának Összehasonlító Irodalomtudományi Tanszékén. Kutatási területe: közép-európai és angolszász irodalmak, határainkon túli és emigráns magyar irodalom, kulturális ikonológia. Legutóbbi könyve a 2012-es könyvhétre jelent meg *A ködlovagok tegnapijai* címmel és a dualizmus-kori magyar ködlovag szerzőkről tartalmaz tanulmányokat.

Myth and Literature—A Critical Approach to Northrop Frye’s Construction of Myth

According to Northrop Frye, the *historical*, at least in the sense of historiography, is the opposite of the mythical. Though, beyond a certain point, according to him, all histories approach the mythical, even the poetic in their wording and their understanding. He thus distinguishes romantic myths, which are about finding, or the pilgrimage to, the Kingdom of God or a classless society; comic myths, which presuppose progress as slow development or a mechanical series of revolutions; tragic myths, which commemorate fall and decline, and ironic myths, which are about return and accidental catastrophe. In the *Anatomy of Criticism*, he expounds that the various literary stories, myths, folk tales, and motifs tend to group into encyclopaedic forms. On the other hand, it is to oracles that he traces back the development of stories that have a predilection to forming encyclopaedic collections. In his view, ironic representation can in principle be linked to sacrificial rites and forms of reverence to dying gods, mourning. The interweaving of myth and encyclopaedia, more precisely the need for myths to become encyclopaedic, was deemed to be universal by Frye, yet he does not always have a positive assessment of this encyclopaedic tendency.

The paper nevertheless focuses not on the *Anatomy* but *The Great Code* and its definition of myth. What is the relationship between the aesthetic position formulated in the *Anatomy* and the rhetoric that publicizes myth in e.g. the Judeo-Christian and the Greco-Roman cultures? The paper seeks to review this problem in the textual layers of *The Great Code* with the help of the myth definitions proposed by G. S. Kirk, Jan Assmann, Károly Kerényi, and Mircea Eliade.

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ZOLTÁN KELEMEN was born in Dombóvár in 1969. He has been regularly publishing since 1989. He teaches at the Department of Comparative Literature of the University

of Szeged. His field of research spans Central-European and British-American literature, cross-border and emigrant Hungarian literature, and cultural iconology. His last book, *The Yesterdays of Daydreamers*, discussing Hungarian “daydreamer” writers of the late nineteenth century, came out for the 2012 Book Week.

15. KENYERES, JÁNOS

Northrop Frye as Creative Writer

The Critic as Writer, the Writer as Critic: The Creative Imagination in Northrop Frye’s Work

When examining Northrop Frye’s vast output, one finds that the concept of the creative imagination is relevant to him in several areas. This paper wishes to map out some of the fields where this holds true, including his views of literature, the Bible and his cultural and social thought. However, Frye was not only a literary critic, social theorist and cultural thinker; he tried his pen as a writer as well. Most of his eight pieces of short fiction were published between 1936 and 1941 in *Acta Victoriana* and *The Canadian Forum*. In addition, Frye is also the author of an unfinished novel. While suggesting that the creative imagination is an overarching principle in Frye’s oeuvre, the paper examines Frye as writer and traces some connections between his fiction and scholarship.

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 JÁNOS KENYERES is Director of Research and Associate Professor in the School of English and American Studies at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, where he teaches English and Canadian literature, Canadian cinema, and literary theory. He has several publications in these fields, including the book *Revolving around the Bible: A Study of Northrop Frye* (2003). From 2005 to 2008 he was Visiting Professor of Hungarian at the University of Toronto. He is currently vice-president of the Central European Association for Canadian Studies, head of the Canadian Studies Centre in the School of English and American Studies at Eötvös Loránd University, and co-editor of *The AnaChronisT*.

16. KLAPCSIK, SÁNDOR

Mythical Journeys in Agatha Christie’s *Crooked House* and *Ordeal by Innocence*

The essay interprets Agatha Christie’s detective fiction in the mirror of anthropological and mythical theories. Based on Northrop Frye’s *Anatomy of Criticism* and his essay “The Journey as Metaphor,” I argue that Christie’s *Crooked House*

(1949) and *Ordeal by Innocence* (1958) demonstrate various aspects of the rites of passage and liminality, phenomena that are closely related to Frye's views on the mythical hero's circular or spiral journey. I also intend to demonstrate that the investigation process in the two novels closely follows mythic rituals, such as the ancient ritual of the scapegoat or pharmakos. In the classical detective story, usually a powerful man, the head of the family, is murdered and so an established world order and seemingly rightful power structure is ended. The new order, however, cannot commence before the guilty party is found. The culprit does not have to be the actual murderer, merely a suitable scapegoat for the family. Analogously, Frye emphasizes that the basic formula of detective fiction presents "how a man-hunter locates a pharmakos and gets rid of him." Frye associates detective fiction with comedy, which is centered around the (re)birth or "the integration of the society," the characters' return to a rightful state of affairs. The investigation process in Christie's *Crooked House* and *Ordeal by Innocence* manifests Turner's rite of passage and Frye's circular or spiral journeys in that the initial status quo in the family and British society is temporarily questioned and disrupted; eventually, however, after the characters endure the ordeal, the ritual of liminality and that of the pharmakos, they can regain a stable identity and power structure: in a way similar to comedies, a new social order is created and a stabilized social life can commence.

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SÁNDOR KLAPCSIK is an assistant professor at the Technical University of Liberec in the Czech Republic, where he conducts research on multiculturalism and adaptations in popular culture. He was a part-time senior lecturer at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Budapest, Hungary between 2011 and 2012. He earned his PhD at the Cultural Studies Department of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in 2010. He was a Fulbright-Zoltai Fellow at the University of Minnesota and did a long-term research at the science fiction archives of the University of Liverpool. His essays were published in *Extrapolation*, *Foundation*, and *Journal of the Fantastic in Arts*, and he received the Jamie Bishop Memorial Award from IAFA for an essay in Hungarian on Philip K. Dick as well as the Mary Kay Bray Award from SFRA for his review on *Rewired: The Post-Cyberpunk Anthology*. His book *Liminality in Fantastic Fiction: A Poststructuralist Approach* was published by McFarland in 2012.

17. KOCIĆ-ZÁMBÓ, LARISA

Frye and the Musical Poet

It is a well-known fact that Frye was a lover of music to the point that he considered it an “alternative career.” Yet, the role of music has been left largely unexplored in the conceptual framework of his literary theory (Bogdan). Perhaps for the same reason, his preoccupation with Milton had never enjoyed such eminence as his writings on Blake, for it is in terms of music and of the musical poet that the importance of Milton to Frye stands out (Fletcher). Hence, my aim is to explore how Frye’s knowledge of music, and his theoretical use of musical form—particularly in his exposition on *epos*—sheds new light on Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and can, therefore, contribute to the recently rekindled debate among Milton scholars about the oral/aural significance of Milton’s poem.

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 Larisa Kocić-Zámbó, Assistant Professor at the University of Szeged, Institute of English & American Studies. Reader in Early Modern Literature and Culture, particular interests in Donne, Milton and the women writers of the era. Other research interests include fandom studies (secondary orality), comics studies (image-text dynamics, comparative study of postmodern and protomodern emblematics), and critical inquiries into Digital Humanities. Web designer of the TNT (Gender Research Group) and the technical editor of the TNTeF, the Interdisciplinary eJournal of Gender Studies. Contact: larisa@ieas-szeged.hu

18. KOVÁCS, ÁRPÁD

Metafora és identitás—Northrop Frye időszerűsége

Az írás elhelyezi Northrop Frye trópusfelfogását a retorikai gondolkodás rendszerében, valamint bemutatja a metaforikus megnyilatkozás jelentőségét az elbeszélő történetmondás és a mimézis között fennálló korreláció megteremtésében. Értelmezi a prózanyelvi és versnyelvi tagolásnak kitett metaforikus megnyilatkozás jelentésújító szerepét, továbbá ennek hatását a mű világának megértésében. Harmadik témaként felveti a szemantikai innováción átesett szavak és a szövegegész összefüggését a műalkotáson kívüli valósággal, a személyes tapasztalat feldolgozásával és értelmezhetőségével.

Metaphor and Identity—The Timeliness of Northrop Frye

The paper places Northrop Frye's concept of trope in the system of rhetorical thought, and demonstrates the significance of metaphoric utterance in the creation of the correlation between narrative story-telling and mimesis. It interprets the meaning-renewing role of metaphoric utterances exposed to prose-and-verse-language articulation. As a third theme, it proposes a relationship of semantically renewed words and the textual whole with the reality outside the artwork, the elaboration and interpretability of personal experience.

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Árpád Kovács, Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, taught at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and is currently Professor at the Institute of Literary and Cultural Studies at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church, Budapest; he is the head of the editorial board of the academic journal *Filológiai Közlöny*, he edits the series entitled *Diszkurzívák* (Discursives); he has been counsel for over a dozen PhD students; he is a Master Teacher. He researches span literary scholarship, history of scholarship, linguistic philosophy, semiotics, hermeneutics, and poetics. His books published at home and abroad treat mostly novel and prose theory. His book on personal narrative was published in Germany. His latest books include *Diszkurzív poétika* (Discursive Poetics; 2004), *Prózanyelv és elbeszélés. Regénypoétikai írások* (Prose Language and Narrative; 2011), *Versbe írt szavak* (Words Written in Verse; 2012).

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KOVÁCS ÁRPÁD az MTA Doktora, korábban az ELTE, jelenleg a Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem Irodalom- és Kultúratudományi Intézetének professzora, a Nemzetközi Dosztojevskij Társaság regionális képviselője, a Filológiai Közlöny szerkesztőbizottságának elnöke, A *Diszkurzívák* című könyvsorozat szerkesztője; tizenhárom végzett doktorandusz témavezetője; Mestertanár. Kutatásai kiterjednek az irodalomtudomány és tudománytörténet, a nyelvbölcselet és a szemiotika, a hermeneutika és a poétika területére. Külföldön és itthon publikált könyvei, tanulmányai elsősorban a regény- és a prózaelmélet kérdéseivel foglalkoznak. A perszonális elbeszélésről írott könyve Németországban látott napvilágot. Három legutóbb megjelent könyve: *Diszkurzív poétika* (2004), *Prózanyelv és elbeszélés. Regénypoétikai írások* (2011), *Versbe írt szavak* (2012).

19. LE FUSTEC, CLAUDE

The Kerygmatic Mode in Fiction: Three Examples from the United States

The aim of this contribution is to use Frye’s notion of “the kerygmatic” as a critical tool in the study of literature. The project itself seems amply supported by Frye’s own vision of the responsibility of the critic. In O’Grady’s terms, Frye seems to have envisioned “a role for the critic in connection with kerygma”. In “The Responsibilities of the Critic”, he focused on the prophetic authority of literature and suggested that the critic’s task was to identify it. In this paper, I am examining three canonical novels: Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1988). Indeed, each of these novels seems to manifest what might arguably be considered as three aspects of kerygma.

As critics have pointed out, kerygma is a particularly elusive concept when it comes to its being applied to literature. Northrop Frye himself seems to have been hesitant about applying it to secular works, though he did come to recognize that “every work of art is a possible medium for kerygma”. Concerning US fiction, the considerable power that Puritan imagination has wielded over it makes it a particularly interesting field of study. When considered in a sequence, the afore-mentioned novels reveal an increasingly internalized relationship to kerygma. In the process of studying this evolution, I am discussing the romantic dramatization of kerygma in *The Scarlet Letter*, prophecy in *The Grapes of Wrath* and the principle of interpenetration in *Beloved* as three manifestations of the “kerygmatic mode” in US fiction. My hope is to shed light on the multifaceted literary manifestations of what remains the essential mystery of man’s relationship to transcendence.

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CLAUDE LE FUSTEC is Assistant Professor in American Literature at Rennes 2 University (France) and has conducted research oriented by her interest in literature and spirituality. After her PhD thesis on Toni Cade Bambara’s and Toni Morrison’s fiction, she published a monograph on Toni Cade Bambara (*Toni Cade Bambara: entre militantisme et fiction*. Paris: Belin, 2003) as well as several contributions bearing both on American and African American fiction. She has also edited a collection of essays on Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* (*Lectures de Steinbeck: Les raisins de la colère*. Rennes: PU de Rennes, 2007) as well as a volume dealing with gender in the literature and the arts of the English speaking world (Fustec, Claude Le, and Sophie Marret, eds. *La fabrique du genre, (dé) constructions du féminin et du masculin dans les arts et la littérature anglophones*. Rennes: PU de Rennes, 2009). Her book, *Northrop Frye and American Fiction*, which

deals with US fiction and its relationship to transcendence via Frye's studies of the Bible and literature, will be published by the University of Toronto Press in 2014.

20. NYILASY, BALÁZS

Northrop Frye és a romance

Előadásom a legeltökéltebb és leghatékonyabb romance-apológéta elképzeléseit ismerteti és azok fölött medítál, elsősorban az összefoglaló Frye-mű, az 1976-ban megjelent *The Secular Scripture* alapján.

Az előadás első részében röviden felvázolom Frye művészetantropológiai elképzeléseit. Számba veszem a tudós irodalmár legfontosabb fogalmait (imagination, displacement), s ezután keríték sort a displacement fogalom segítségével megalkotott fikcióelméleti okfejtések taglalására. A Frye-i fikció- és regényelmélet pillérét alkotó romance-fogalom bemutatásakor kitérek a kanadai tudós realizmusbírálatára, és felvázolom azokat az elbeszélés-poétikai, irodalomtörténeti szinteket, amelyekre e kritika indokoltan s meggyőzően kiterjed.

Előadásom második része a Frye-i gondolatok kritikai vizsgálatát adja. Mindenekelőtt kifejezem, kifejtem meggyőződésemet—a felvázolt elmélet hozadékát és problematikusságait latoló mérleg evidensen pozitív túlsúlyt mutat. Mindazonáltal a teória gyengeségeiről, problematikusságairól sem hallgatok. Kritikával illetem a displacement-fogalom túlértelmezéseit (az ekképpen megalkotott regényelmélet hiányosságait), nehezményezem a Northrop Frye-i szemlélet szkémaközpontúságát, univerzálialelvét, és nem hallgatok azokról az értékelési anomáliákról, történeti hiátusokról, kidolgozatlanságokról sem, amelyek a szkémaközpontú, struktúrákereső szemlélet túlhajtásából következnek.

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NYILASY BALÁZS (Budapest, 1950) a debreceni egyetemen végzett magyar-országi szakon. 1980: egyetemi doktor, 1989: az irodalomtudomány kandidátusa, 1999: az ELTE habilitált doktora. Fő kutatási területei: tizenkilencedik és huszadik századi magyar irodalom, műfaj-történet, irodalomelmélet. Könyvei: *A fiatalember mindennapjai* (verseskötet, Kozmosz, Bp., 1977.), *Rés és kaland* (verseskötet, Magvető, Bp., 1985.), *A szó társadalmi lelke* (esszékötet, Cserépfalvi, Bp., 1996.), *Arany János* (kismonográfia, Korona, Bp., 1998.), *A konzervatív-modern költő. Arany János verses epikája* (műfaji monográfia, Eötvös József Könyvkiadó Bp., 2001.), *A románc és Jókai Mór* (műfaji monográfia, Eötvös József Könyvkiadó, Bp., 2005), *Arany János balladái* (műfaji kismonográfia, Savaria

University Press, 2011), *A 19. századi modern magyar románc* (műfaji monográfia, Argumentum, Bp., 2011.)

Frye and Romance

The paper reviews and meditates over the ideas of the most intent and efficient apologue of romance, primarily on the basis of the summing-up work, *The Secular Scripture* (1976).

It, first, gives a brief outline of Frye's art anthropological concepts. Then summarizes his most important terms (imagination, displacement), and so goes on to discuss his theory of fiction based on displacement. Expounding his concept of romance, the pillar of his theory of the novel and fiction, the paper touches upon his critique of realism, and outlines those levels of narrative poetics and literary history where this critique convincingly holds.

In its second part, the paper takes a critical stance towards Frye's ideas. It primarily points out that, the on the balance, the positive yield of the theory outlined convincingly prevails over its problems. It criticizes the over-wrought interpretations of the term displacement (and the resulting wants of the theory of the novel), it disapproves of the schematicism of Frye's approach, its universal principles, and it does not keep silent about those anomalies of evaluation, historical hiatuses, and crudenesses that are a result of a schematicism overdone.

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BALÁZS NYILASY (b. 1950, Budapest), graduated in Hungarian and Russian literature at the University. He received his PhD in 1980, his university doctorate in 1989, his habilitated doctorate in 1999. His research fields span nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hungarian literature, generic history, and literary theory. His books include: *A fiatalember mindennapjai* (The Young Man's Daily Life, verse; Budapest: Kozmosz, 1977); *Rés és kaland* (Gap and Adventure, verse; Budapest: Magvető, 1985); *A szó társadalmi lelke* (The Social Spirit of the Word, essays; Budapest: Cserépfalvi, 1996); *Arany János* (monograph; Budapest: Korona, 1998); *A konzervatív-modern költő. Arany János verses epikája* (The Conservative-modern Poet: The Verse Epic of János Arany; Budapest: Eötvös, 2001); *A románc és Jókai Mór* (Romance and Mór Jókai; Budapest: Eötvös, 2005); *Arany János balladái* (The Ballads of János Arany; Szombathely: Savaria UP, 2011); and *A 19. századi modern magyar románc* (Modern Hungarian Romance in the nineteenth century; Budapest: Argumentum, 2011).

21. ANA-MAGDALENA PETRARU

This paper aims to give an overview of the reception of the Canadian scholar's work in translations and critical studies in Romania. It will outline both communist and post-communist perspectives on Northrop Frye. Also, it will try to account for translations of Frye's works from the communist era to the present day and the possible criteria that might have operated in the selection of his works for translation. Moreover, the paper will sketch how far Frye influences today's Romanian university curricula.

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ANA-MAGDALENA PETRARU is an associate assistant of English at Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi since 2008 and she holds a PhD on a Canadian-related topic (The English Canadian Novel in Romania. Translations and Critical Studies) awarded in 2011 by "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi, Romania. During her doctoral studies she participated in a SSHRC-based project (The Contribution of Literary Translation to Intercultural Understanding: Developing a Model for Reciprocal Exchange) and disseminated the results of her research at national and international conferences on British and American Studies, in general and Canadian Studies in particular.

22. SINDING, MICHAEL

The Shaping Spirit and Rousseau: Literary Cosmology, Cognition and Culture

Frye's approach to culture integrates bodily, cognitive, semiotic, social, and historical factors. Yet productive dialogue with other approaches is challenging: sympathizers may get stuck "inside" his capacious thinking, while sceptics remain "outside"—today, typically emphasizing contextual factors shaping cultural texts (e.g., ideology). I explore an integrative approach via Frye's account of the inversion of the *axis mundi*.

Frye's principle that thought and meaning are structured by metaphor and narrative is central to cognitive science today (Lakoff and Johnson, Turner, Hogan). Studies of cultural and cognitive change and stability (e.g. Greenblatt, Zunshine) can therefore profit from his vision of intertwined imaginative-cultural processes.

Frye sees early cultures as rooted in mythologies (canonical narratives addressing "primary concerns"), which mentally crystallize into cosmologies. These world-pictures are organized by spatial metaphors based on the orienta-

tion of the human body (e.g. the axis mundi). Cosmologies become frameworks for later literary and theoretical structures.

Changes in cosmology, then, affect all of human experience. The most profound change in Western cultural history was the eighteenth-century inversion of the axis mundi: the locus of value and power shifted from God (above and outside) to humanity (below and within). To develop this account, I examine how cosmological structures inform Rousseau's revolutionary early *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (Words 239-43), and therein mediate historical change. I identify key spatial metaphors and myths, and assess how they embody and manipulate "image-schemas" such as the vertical scale (up/down) and container (in/out). Analysis indicates that the language of Rousseau's argument reorganizing the traditional cosmology focuses on the inner/ outer contrast more than on an axial above/ below contrast. Causal relations among souls depend primarily on the attachment or detachment of inner substance to outer surfaces: attached soul-substances get pulled apart, weaken, decline, and dissolve; while the detached soul, contained in and oriented to itself, remains solid (integrity) and (if ordinary) attends to words within, or (if extraordinary) rises up strongly and attaches to great things above and beyond.

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MICHAEL SINDING is a Marie Curie Fellow in the Department of Language and Communication at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. His current project "Framing the World: Genre as Worldview" is a study of how metaphor and narrative interact in structuring moral and political worldviews, particularly during the formation of modern liberalism and conservatism in the eighteenth century debate over the French Revolution. He also studies cognitive approaches to literary and cultural forms, including genre, narrative, metaphor, and allegory, especially genre mixture as conceptual blending. He received his PhD from McMaster University and has held postdoctoral fellowships in Canada, Germany and the Netherlands. He is the author of *Body of Vision: Northrop Frye and the Poetics of Mind* (Frye Studies, University of Toronto Press, 2014). He has published articles and reviews in the *Wallace Stevens Journal*, *Genre*, *New Literary History*, *SubStance*, *Style*, *Poetics Today*, *Postmodern Culture*, *Cognitive Linguistics*, and the *Journal of Literary Theory*, and in edited collections *Northrop Frye: New Directions from Old*, *Beyond Cognitive Metaphor Theory*, *The Cognition of Literature*, and *Blending and Narrative*.

23. SINKA, JUDIT ERZSÉBET

A „balladisztikus novella” mint archaikus tapasztalatok megjelenítője a modernségben – a „balladisztikus novella” a frye-i tengelyen

A 19. századi magyar irodalomtörténet-írás sokszor visszatér a novella műfajában tapasztalható poétikai interferenciák kérdésére. A balladisztikus novella megnevezéssel illetett interferencia a 19. század második felének irodalmában jelent meg. Több irodalomkritikus megfigyelte a ballada hatását a novellairodalomra ebben a korban, s foglalkoztak novella és ballada ötvöződéssel. A „klasszikus műfajtipológia” által azonban eddig még nem sikerült magyarázatot találni a „balladisztikus novella” létezésére, hiszen az elsősorban az Arisztotelésznek tulajdonított „műnemi hármasság” felől közelíti meg ballada és novella összefüggéseit. A ballada azonban nem arisztotelészi műfaj, a benne található „lírai”, „drámai jegyek” elkülöníthetetlen részei, összetevői e formának. Northrop Frye irodalomelméleti megközelítése által azonban felfejthető a ballada és novella kapcsolata, s feltárható e formák ötvöződése – előadásomban konkrétan Petelei István elbeszélései által. Frye elsődleges célja nem a műfajok osztályozása, hanem a műfajok kapcsolatainak megvilágítása. Alapvetően megkülönböztet epikát és fikciót, ezzel megteszi a szóbeli, orális költészet és a nyomtatáson alapuló írott irodalom elkülönítését. Az *epika* szót alkalmazza minden olyan műre, amelynek előadásformája szóbeli, s a *fikció* szót használja a nyomtatott betűn alapuló műfaj jelölésére. A *fikciót* azonban meg kell különböztetni a többi olyan műfajtól, melynek létezése pusztán gyakorlati okokból „könyvhöz kötött”. Frye ezt egy történeti példával illusztrálja: „A beszélő költő és az őt hallgató közönség közötti kapcsolat még valóságosan fennállhatott Homérosz vagy Chaucer esetében, de hamarosan mindinkább elméletivé vált, s ezzel párhuzamosan az epika észrevétlenül átment fikcióba.” S ez a felvetés az, amely által megfogható a balladisztikus novella léte: a ballada *epikus*, azaz *szóbeli* jellegének átváltása a novella *fikciójába* adhat alapot az elnevezésre, a műfaji változat megjelölésére. Ennek tükrében nem is a két műfaj keveredésének, hanem egy meglévő tapasztalat (a ballada) új felhasználásának, új formába öntésének lehetünk tanúi: a szóbeli formák (csodás) elemei *displacement* módon *áthelyeződnek* a reális világ keretei közé. A szóbeli struktúrák beépülése az írott irodalomba pedig olyan poétikai változatokat hoz létre, mint például a balladisztikus novella a 19. század második felében.

The „Balladic Short Story” as Representing Archaic Experience— A Frygian Grounding

Literary histories of the nineteenth century recurrently discuss the issue poetical interferences in the short story genre. The interference called “balladic short story” appeared in the literature of the second half of the nineteenth century. Several critics noted the effect of the ballad on short story writing at the time, as there were many attempts at blending ballad and short story. On the basis of classical generic typology however, no explanation has been given to the existence of “balladic short story”, because that approaches the relationship between ballad and short story on the basis of the “generic trinity” attributed to Aristotle. The ballad is not an Aristotelian genre, its “lyrical” and “dramatic” features are inseparable and constitutive parts of this form. On the basis of Northrop Frye’s approach to literary history, the relationship between ballad and short story can be accounted for, and the blending of these forms can be explained—particularly in the short stories of István Petelei the paper discusses. Frye’s primary aim was not to classify genres, but to shed light on the relationship between them. Fundamentally, he distinguishes *epos* and *fiction*, whereby he separates verbal and oral poetry from printed literature. He applies *epos* to all works performed orally, and *fiction* to the genres based on print. Fiction however has to be differentiated from all the genres that are “bound to a book” for mere practicality. Frye illustrates this on a historical example: “The connection between speaking poet and listening audience which may be actual in Homer or Chaucer soon becomes increasingly theoretical, and as it does so *epos* passes insensibly into fiction” (AC 248). It is this suggestion the helps to account for the existence of the balladic short story. The naming, the generic variant, can be grounded on the passing of the *epic*, i.e. oral, quality of the ballad into the *fiction* of the short story. In this light, it is not the blending of two genres that we are witnesses to but the fact the an existing experience (ballad) is used again and given a new shape: the (marvellous) elements of the verbal forms are *displaced* into the framework of a realistic world. The integration of verbal structures into written literature brings into being a poetic variant like the balladic short story in the second half of the nineteenth century.

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SINKA JUDIT ERZSÉBET (Debrecen 1981) első diplomáját a Kölcsey Ferenc Református Tanítóképző Főiskolán szerezte tanító-kommunikáció szakon, újságírás szakiránnyal. A Debreceni Egyetemen magyar szakos bölcsészként végzett, majd 2010-ben a Debreceni Egyetem Irodalomtudományok Doktori Iskolájába nyert felvételt, jelenleg másodéves PhD-hallgató. Témavezetője Dr. S. Varga Pál, kutatási területe a 19. századi magyar novel-

lairodalom, ezen belül is a novellában fellépő poétikai interferenciák vizsgálata. Szintén 2010-től a Debreceni Egyetem Kutatóegyetemi program *Magyar Emlékezhelyek* kutatócsoportjának tagja.

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JUDIT ERZSÉBET SINKA (b. 1981 Debrecen), she graduated in communication, journalism and pedagogy at Kölcsey Ferenc Teacher Training College of the Reformed Church, Debrecen, then in Hungarian literature at the University of Debrecen, and started her PhD programme there in 2010, with Pál S. Varga as her consultant. Since 2010, she has also been on the staff of the research project Locations of Hungarian Memory.

24. TÓTH, SÁRA

A Frygian Perspective on European Irony: The Green Butchers

In my paper I will apply Frye's perspective on one decisive feature of European élite culture, namely, the presence of extreme irony, or rather, the tendency of interpretation to overlook textual data pointing away from irony. Influential thinkers of the twentieth century such as Paul de Man or Jacques Lacan tend to essentialize irony by turning it into the ultimate condition of human existence. In contrast, Northrop Frye is known to be a critic with a preference for comedy and romance as opposed to tragedy and irony. In his vision of the whole of literature, Frye relativizes the *mythos* of irony and satire by turning it into one of the four pregeneric narratives and by opposing its demonic imagery to the paradisaical or apocalyptic group of images. In his strongest statement on the relativity of irony Frye, associating it with hell, states that "it is the paradisaical pole that gives us a perspective on the hell world [...] provides the norm that makes irony ironic" (WP 88). This means that a narrative of the most extreme tragical or ironical descent can conjure up its opposite, the comic ascent, thus echoing the entire U shaped story of loss and recovery, of alienation and redemption. In a brief discussion of Anders Thomas Jensen's film, my aim is to apply Frye's archetypal perspective and show that while the majority of online reviews essentialize the murderously dark satire of the two cannibal butchers who sacrifice others to feed themselves, they overlook strong visual and narrative hints of the opposite, paradisaical pole, an Eucharistic vision of love nurtured by sacrifice.

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SÁRA TÓTH (1967) teaches courses in English literature, religion studies, and translation studies at Károli Gáspár University. Her main interest is the interplay between Christian-

ity and the arts, particularly literature and Christian belief, literature and the Bible. She completed her doctorate in 2003 with a dissertation on the religious aspects of the work of Northrop Frye. She has published papers on Northrop Frye in English (in the volume *New Directions from Old* published by University of Ottawa Press, and in the journal *English Studies in Canada*) as well as in Hungarian (*Pannonhalmi Szemle, Holmi* among others). Her first book, so far the only book-length study of Northrop Frye in the Hungarian was published in September 2012.

25. ZWANZIG, REBEKAH

Anagnorisis in Northrop Frye and the Qur’ān

In the Introduction to *Words with Power* Frye states that a large portion of his critical thinking has revolved around the double meaning of the Aristotelian term *anagnorisis*. The paper will explore the Quranic imagery of mountains, specifically Mt. .Arafat, and the etymological connection to the Arabic verb ‘*arafa* (to recognize, to know) as the framework for understanding a larger Quranic narrative of recognition. This narrative begins on the Day of the Covenant (Q7:172), continues with the Quranic imperative to recognize the signs of God, and culminates on the Day of Judgment. The play between the double meaning of ‘recognition’ and ‘discovery’ can be found throughout Frye’s work, and is perhaps most apparent in his articulation of the interplay between identity and metaphor starting in *The Great Code* and carrying through to *The Double Vision*. Frye’s concept of the existential metaphor hinges on the reader’s discovery of and subsequent recognition of a “that’s for me” element in the text. The paper will explore this framework in Frye’s reading of the Qur’ān by analyzing some of the annotations in two Qur’āns from his personal collection. It will look at the annotations related to mountain imagery and the concepts associated with recognition in his Qur’āns and how they can be understood in the context of Frye’s broader inquiry into *anagnorisis*.

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REBEKAH ZWANZIG is a Research Assistant at the University of Toronto. Her current research interests focus on studying the Qur’ān as literature and the creative and transformative effects reading has on the individual. She holds a M.A. in Religion from the University of Toronto and a M.A. in Philosophy from Brock University. Her previous research focused on the French philosopher and Islamic Studies scholar Henry Corbin’s concept of philosophy, and the role of the Perfect Human (*al-isan al-kamil*) in Ibn ‘Arabi’s thought.

KRSTIĆ, MILORAD

Cover Design

Das Anatomische Theater

*The simultaneist poem teaches a sense of the merry-go-round
of all things; while Herr Schulze reads his paper, the Balkan Express
crosses the bridge at Nish; a pig squeals in Butcher Nuttke's cellar.*

Richard Huelsenbeck
"First German Dada Manifesto", Berlin 1918

The Theatre is anatomical by nature because within it the twentieth century is placed on a dissection table; the people, the events and the phenomena therefore do not wear costumes or masks; on the contrary, even the skin is torn off, tissue is cut, bone and muscle are revealed, and the nervous, blood and lymph systems are observed. The walls of the Theatre remind us of the walls of a biological lab surrounded by glass showcases filled with neatly arranged bottles in which, floating in a 40% formaldehyde solution, the body parts of world's history await their curious observer.

Eroticism, which often appears in the scenes of *Das Anatomische Theater* many times bordering on obscenity, and which is deeply rooted in the depths of the age-old traditions of Eros and Thanatos, is evoked to counterbalance the tragic events and the totalitarian systems that brought doom to the twentieth century. The civilized nations have long forgotten that, in more primitive stages of their existence, they too used erotic art to expel the evil spirits. With the help of its irony and eroticism, *Das Anatomische Theater* banishes the evil powers of the twentieth century.

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MILORAD KRSTIĆ is a Central-European artist born in the former Yugoslavia, Slovenia, in 1952. He took a degree in law. Since 1989 he has been living and working in Budapest, Hungary, as a painter and multimedia artist. He has tried his hand at different genres of visual art, painting, drawing, sculpture, animation, documentary film, stage design, set design, photography, interactive CD-ROM, and picture books for children, comics, and animation films. His animated film *My Baby Left Me* was awarded the Silver Bear Prize at the Berlin Film Festival in 1995. He put up a major one-man show, *Das Anatomische Theater*, at the Műcsarnok (Kunsthalle), Budapest, in December 2011 and January 2012.

Publications by Milorad Krstić

Budapest. Budapest: Magyar Könyvklub, 2003. (Photo album)

Das Anatomische Theater. Ljubljana: Strip CoreForum and Budapest: Roczkov Studio, 2007. (Album of paintings, drawings and prints)

Websites: www.milorad.eu; www.dasanatomischetheater.com