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Editorial 4/2015

Jyrki Korpua, Hanna-Riikka Roine & Päivi Väättänen

Hear the sledges with the bells -
 Silver bells!
 What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
 How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
 In the icy air of night!
 While the stars that oversprinkle
 All the heavens, seem to twinkle
 With a crystalline delight;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
 From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells -
 From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

(Edgar Allan Poe, “The Bells”, from *The Works of the late Edgar Allan Poe*, vol II)

The fourth and last issue of *Fafnir*'s second year is now in our midst. We are proud to present such a full and extensive selection of science fiction and fantasy research for our expert audience. There are a total of four peer-reviewed research articles, an essay edited from a *lectio praecursoria* of a doctoral defense, and three book-reviews which discuss topical works of science fiction and fantasy research.

The issue at hand demonstrates some of the major influences and angles of speculative fiction, such as classic Science Fiction, J. R. R. Tolkien, and the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic. At the same time, the issue is clearly multidisciplinary.

In her article “Hobbits, Ents, and Dæmons: Ecocritical Thought Embodied in the Fantastic”, Gry Ulstein discusses the occurrence of ecocritical thought in two canonical fantasy epics, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and *His Dark Materials* by Philip Pullman. Ulstein argues that fantasy fiction has an intrinsic exploratory potential for ecocritical ideas because the strong immersive aspect of the genre entices the reader to open up for a less anthropocentric view of the world.

Laura-Marie von Czarnowsky's article “‘Power and all its secrets’: Engendering Magic in Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*” focuses on fantasy, (female) magic, and feminist potential in Gaiman's most recent adult novel. Gaiman is often seen as a writer of feminist sensitivities, but in *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* he goes even further by presenting the power

of magic as an exclusively female concept. Von Czarnowsky argues, however, that it the text subverts its own feminist potential in its advocacy of motherhood as paradigmatic femininity.

In his article, “Why Do The Heavens Beckon Us? Revisiting Constructions of Home and Identity in Ray Bradbury’s *The Martian Chronicles*,” Christian Ylagan discusses colonial thematics of Bradbury’s classical work. Specifically, he problematizes the notions of home and identity from both ontological and ethical perspectives that subvert canonical ways of reading science fiction narratives, especially those from the genre’s Golden Age.

In our only non-English article, “Myyttisestä fantasiaksi: Etsivät matkalla Pohjolaan” (“From Mythical into Fantastic: Detectives on a Journey into Northland”) Merja Leppälahti discusses a journey into Pohjola (or *Northland*) in the *Kalevala*, and how this mythical journey is represented as a narrative technique in two contemporary Finnish detective novels, *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* by Harri V. Hietikko and *Väinämöisen vyö* by Mikko Karppi. In particular, she focuses on the way the mythical elements of folktales are transformed into the elements of fantasy.

We are also proud to present our editor Jyrki Korpua’s *lectio praecursoria* “Constructive Mythopoetics in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *Legendarium*.” It is based on Korpua’s doctoral dissertation, which he defended on November 13, 2015 at the University of Oulu. Korpua discusses the logic and elements on which Tolkien’s texts and his fantasy world are constructed. In this essay, Korpua concentrates on the select examples of constructive mythopoetics.

In addition to the four articles and *lectio praecursoria*, this issue includes three literary reviews and a seminar report. James Hamby discusses Brett M. Rogers and Benjamin Eldon Stevens (eds.), *Classical Traditions in Science Fiction*, a comprehensive treatment of the tradition of science fiction. Essi Vatiolo reviews Aino-Kaisa Koistinen’s dissertation *The Human Question in Science Fiction Television: (Re)Imagining Humanity in Battlestar Galactica, Bionic Woman and V*, which deals with the so called human question in science fiction television. In Finnish, Kaisa Kortekallio reviews Juha Raipola’s dissertation *Ihmisen rajoilla: Epävarma tulevaisuus ja ei-inhimilliset toimijuudet Leena Krohnin Pereat munduksessa*, which focuses on representations of the future and future-oriented thinking in Finnish writer Leena Krohn’s work. Last but not least, Jari Ylönen reports from the seminar “Reconfiguring Human and Non-Human: Texts, Images and Beyond,” which was held in Jyväskylä in October.

As the editors of the journal, we would like to thank you for the year 2015! This is also the last issue edited by Päivi Väättänen, as she steps aside as editor-in-chief in the end of this year. Hanna and Jyrki would like to thank Päivi on behalf of Fafnir.

We hope that you have enjoyed this year as much as we have - and that you enjoy this extensive issue at hand. Happy holidays!



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Hobbits, Ents, and Dæmons: Ecocritical Thought Embodied in the Fantastic

Gry Ulstein

Abstract: This paper investigates the occurrence of ecocritical thought in two canonical fantasy epics, The Lord of The Rings (1954–1955) by J. R. R. Tolkien and His Dark Materials (1995–2000) by Philip Pullman. Using current ecocritical theory as well as writers and critics of speculative fiction to study the primary works from a marginalized angle, this paper argues that fantasy fiction, more than other literary genres, has an intrinsic exploratory potential for ecocritical ideas because the strong immersive aspect of the genre entices the reader to open up for a less anthropocentric view of the world. If this is investigated further, the narrow space for fantasy literature in literary criticism and academia may be broadened to include a more politically engaged discussion of fantasy than typically assumed.

Keywords: ecocriticism, ecocentrism, anthropocentrism, fantastic literature

Biography and Contact info: Gry Ulstein is a second-year research master student of Comparative Literature at Utrecht University, and plans to write her MA thesis on the topic of ecocriticism and fantasy. She is a freelance editor and translator, and is a member of the editorial board of Frame – Journal of Literary Studies.

“Correct and sober taste may refuse to admit that there can be an interest for us – the proud we that includes all intelligent people – in ogres and dragons; we then perceive its puzzlement in face of the odd fact that it has derived great pleasure from a poem that is actually about these unfashionable creatures” (Tolkien, “The Monsters and The Critics” 112).

“Strip mining and single-crop farming are not the causes of the [ecological] crisis; they are logical end results of the central attitudes western humanity has developed and propagated about the relationship between itself and its environment” (Elgin 256).

Ursula K. Le Guin argues in “The Critics, the Monsters, and the Fantasists” (2007) that the most defining characteristic of the fantastic is that it fundamentally concerns the non-anthropocentric: “What fantasy often does that the realistic novel generally cannot do is include the nonhuman as essential” (87). Le Guin therefore proposes that “realistic fiction is drawn towards anthropocentrism, fantasy away from it” (87). Such a statement might seem obvious or simplistic, but in light of the rise of ecocriticism in literary studies, it could take a position of high relevance and calls for further investigation. Don D. Elgin, likewise, and twenty years before Le Guin, ties literature and particularly the fantasy genre to ecocentrism in “Literary Fantasy and Ecological Comedy” (1985). Here he concludes that “literature, particularly the fantasy novel, offers humanity

a way to reintegrate itself into the natural world and, in so doing, invites a new relationship between itself, its fellow creatures, and the science and literature that create and mirror that world” (Elgin 269). Le Guin, more vehement than Elgin, perhaps due to her artistic relationship with fantasy, moreover claims that we have “forgotten how to read the fiction that fully exploits fictionality” (Le Guin 84). Le Guin’s agenda – as a writer of fantasy and as a literary critic – is to grant fantasy the critical acclaim she believes it deserves, suggesting ecocriticism as the fantasy genre’s natural space in the literary critical landscape.

This image of fantasy literature as an arena for the unfolding of ecocritical notions is in other words not new, but it has not received due attention in literary criticism. I will in this paper explore whether Le Guin and Elgin’s statements are convincing, using contemporary ecocritical work for support – as it is, such criticism overwhelmingly limits itself to science fiction, but leaves fantasy literature out. How can ecocritical thought be used to analyse canonical works of fantastic literature such as Tolkien’s *The Lord of The Rings* and Philip Pullman’s *His Dark Materials* series, and in what ways are ecocriticism and the genre of fantasy thus related? Could one claim, as Elgin and Le Guin do, that reading fantasy may heighten our perception of ecology, the environment, and move the reader’s view on homo sapiens’ place in the world towards something beyond “anthropocentric”?

The Ecocritical Potential

In *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), Cheryl Glotfelty defines ecocriticism simply as “the study of the relationship between literature and its physical environment”, furthermore: “ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies” (Glotfelty xviii). This earth-centeredness is commonly called *ecocentrism*, which is the opposite of *anthropocentrism* (human-centeredness). Ursula K. Heise outlines the history of ecocriticism in “The Hitchhiker’s Guide to Ecocriticism” (2006) from when it emerged in literary and cultural studies in the 1990s, and she sums up the essence of ecocriticism as inherently critical towards the commodifying, anthropocentric values associated with modernity and consumer society:

Environmentalism and ecocriticism aim their critique of modernity at its presumption to know the natural world scientifically, to manipulate it technologically and exploit it economically, and thereby ultimately to create a human sphere apart from it in a historical process that is usually labelled ‘progress’. This domination strips nature of any value other than as a material resource and commodity and leads to a gradual destruction that may in the end deprive humanity of its basis for subsistence (507).

Whereas Glotfelty’s definition is broader and focuses on ecocriticism as a merging point for literature and ecocentric thoughts about nature, Heise’s definition is more politically oriented and focuses on the *critique* offered by ecocriticism.

Likewise, in his introduction to *Green Planets* (2014), Gary Canavan couples science fiction with ecocritical-political potential, arguing that “SF is our culture’s vast, shared, polyvocal archive of the possible” (18). Science fiction, Canavan claims, “can help us collectively ‘think’ [an imaginative] leap into futurity” (18), and further: “perhaps even ecological critique as such can productively be thought of *as a kind of science fiction*, as it uses the same tools of cognition and extrapolation to project the conditions of a possible future ... in hopes of transforming politics in the present” [*italics added*] (19). For Heise and Canavan, transformation of political (and social) values thus appears to be a key term when engaging in ecocriticism. Moreover, Canavan’s suggestion to “productively” think of “ecological critique” *as* science fiction is intriguing, and convincing testimony besides of SF’s potentially powerful political commentary. I would argue, however, that Canavan’s focus might be too narrow. While the relation between SF and ecocentrism

is rich, the other, big subgenre of speculative fiction deserves more attention in ecocritical studies such as Canavan's.

Although his focus is also on science fiction, Brian Stableforth is more generic than Canavan in his article "Ecology and Dystopia", where he claims that "most futuristic fantasies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ... accepted the notion that the most fundamental social evil ... was the abstraction of human beings from a supposedly harmonious relationship with the natural environment and its inherent rhythms" (Stableforth 266). Chris Brawley's *Nature and The Numinous in Mythopoetic Fantasy Literature* (2014) is one of the few critical works that considers the practical applicability of (mythopoetic)¹ fantasy and links it to environmentalism: "By making trees walk or animals talk, mythopoeic fantasy is perhaps the most subversive art form there is. In a similar manner, environmental critics have noted that this subversion is necessary for regaining right relations with nature" (Brawley 23). Echoing Le Guin, Brawley further argues that fantasy "blurs the distinction between [human and non-human], allowing for the contemplation and challenge of our usual way of perceiving" (23). Heise thus declares an opposition between ecocriticism and modernity's inherent (and anthropocentric) materialism; Canavan announces science fiction as the genre that embraces ecocentrism as an *alternative* to anthropocentrism; Stableforth points out antagonistic attitudes towards modern and postmodern society in "futuristic fantasies" where the "modern human" and its increased distancing from the natural world is often associated with *evil*; and Brawley, finally, situates the exploration ground for a more ecocentric way of perceiving the world, in fantastic literature.

Ecocriticism is thus generally accepted as a natural critical approach to the science fiction genre – possibly because much critically acclaimed SF explicitly assumes (for instance) an apocalyptic, feminist, or posthumanist rhetoric, and thus coerces the reader to take a critical position (typical examples are Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) or Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003)). When it comes to fantasy, however, the existing literary criticism is often more concerned with mythical, religious, or psychological analogies than with eco-political agendas. This may have to do with the fact that the intimacy between the narrator in fantastic literature and the reader of fantasy typically is increased in order to support the reader's immersion with the story and with the secondary world presented. In "Fantasy Fiction and Related Genres" (1986), Dieter Petzold talks about the special condition that a fantasy text imposes on the reader, and argues that fantasy fiction,

... far from astonishing the reader, often betrays a tacit agreement between author and reader concerning the relation between the secondary world of the narrative ... and the primary world. This makes it possible for the author to construct seemingly autonomous fairy-talelike worlds in which the marvellous is represented as normal (Petzold 16).

What Petzold describes above has a clear connection with Brawley's argument about the subversive nature of fantasy. When reading fantasy, the reader allows herself to be immersed in the story without questioning its fantastic premise.² This necessarily implies that the contrasts between the secondary world and the primary world are weakened, as the reader is willing, nearly over-willing, to see the "other" as normal. In other words, the (more or less) explicit political agenda often found in science fiction is in fantasy literature more likely to be hidden (if it is there at all) in the fabric of the immersive-subversive fantastic. The reader-narrator closeness created through the "agreement" Petzold describes above could therefore lead to an easy dismissal of the fantasy text's potential for

¹ Brawley defines mythopoetic fantasy as pertaining to "those authors who are employing fantasy as a subversive mode of literature to revise our perceptions of the natural world; and, the distinguishing feature of these authors is going to be an inculcation of a certain religious or mystical "feeling" of the numinous in the reader" (9).

² Already in 1817, in *Biographia Literaria*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge coined the famous term for this: the "willing suspension of disbelief" (chapter xiv), although this is a phenomenon applicable to all fiction and not just the fantastic. I would argue however, that fantasy fiction demands from the reader a greater willingness to suspend her disbelief.

political or social critique and thereby decrease the reader's readiness to consider and reflect on this potential. And if the average reader of fantasy is unable to locate a political agenda, it is less likely that the average critic will be bothered to engage with the genre at all.

Lance Olsen, conversely, ties the marvellous in fantasy to deconstructivist thought and politics when he argues that "[t]he fantastic confronts civilization with the very forces it must repress in order for it to remain whole, functioning, and successful" (290). In "Nameless Things and Thingless Names" Olsen classifies fantasy as a "deconstructive mode of narrative" because it is "designed to surprise, to question, to put into doubt, to create anxiety ..., to disgust, to repel, to rebel ..., to make ambiguous ..." (289; 291). Petzold and Olsen's views are not necessarily mutually exclusive; fantasy literature may in fact create anxiety or elicit surprise in the reader precisely because of the depth of the text's subversion and the reader's immersion.

Olsen's view of fantasy as inherently deconstructive and political is nevertheless a marginal one, and due to the low amount of criticism dedicated to the political aspects of fantasy, it is challenging to find a critical angle from which fantastic literature may be analysed without falling back into the analogy vortex of religion, myth, and psychology. And of course there is nothing wrong with using religion or myth to approach fantasy critically. It may, however, have become the only "safe" critical space for literary researchers who wish to take fantasy serious on an academic level, thus ignoring other aspects of the "fiction that fully exploits fictionality"; the "most subversive art form there is" – as Le Guin and Brawley argue above. As we shall see, ecocriticism as defined by Heise and Glotfelty could be *one* critical approach through which the fantastic may unfold its political potential. Elgin goes back to the old modes of theatre in order to show how fantasy fiction and ecology are related.

Drawing on Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival – Studies in Literary Ecology* (1974), Elgin argues that beyond the more generic romantic fiction (as is Meeker's focus), fantasy literature specifically, as a genre within the comic literary tradition, has the potential to reassess ecological values and critique the environmental crisis. Understanding tragedy as the literary mode that has shaped "Western humanity's attitudes toward nature" (259), Elgin connects tragic philosophy to the ecological crisis, because the tragic mode glorifies the superiority (often by religious decree) of humanity over nature and "clearly asserts that the world revolves around humanity" (259). Comedy, on the other hand, Elgin describes as the mode in which humanity reaffirms rather than denies its relationship with the physical world, as the comic mode is "essentially connective" (255). Elgin argues that while comedy often portrays humans as "foolish, bungling, lecherous, smelly, and pretentious", it also "*sees* them as compassionate, not in obedience to a dogma or creed, but in response to the accumulation of experience" [sic] (Elgin 262). Therefore, according to Elgin, fantasy literature has "adopted a comic conception of humanity, placing its emphasis upon humanity as part of a total environment or system and acknowledging the absolute dependence of humanity upon that system" (Elgin 264).

Elgin thus links "Western" mimetic literature (or realism) to tragedy and anthropocentrism, and fantasy literature to comedy and ecocentrism, arguing that tragedy encompasses the belief "that nature is made for humankind; that human morality transcends natural limits; and that the individual human personality is supremely important" (260). Elgin then points out how this belief or assumption ties directly in with "'causes' of the ecological crisis", and argues that the tendency in "Western" culture to favour the tragedy over the comedy, is one of the ways in which ecocritical thought is repressed and ignored in critical discourse (260). Fantastic literature has an intrinsic accessibility to ecological (comic) modes of thinking. Although Elgin, to the contemporary reader, might seem to draw rather narrow conclusions based on a widely encompassing field, the dichotomy between tragedy, realism, and anthropocentrism on the one hand, and comedy, fantasy, and ecology on the other, could be useful for an ecocritical approach to fantasy.

Elgin's placement of ecocentrism within comedy and anthropocentrism within tragedy is based on the stereotypical romantic-heroic quest with a happy ending and the equally stereotypical

downfall and “catharsis” found in realist fiction (and, according to Elgin, in the “Western” *reality*). These two patterns are of course not always adhered to— but they remain stereotypes for a reason – and by grouping fantasy with the one and realism with the other, Elgin suggests that a more ecocentric mind-set may be naturally explored in fantastic literature. Elgin’s dichotomy, though it may be criticized for over-simplicity, nevertheless suggests the origins from which Le Guin’s, Brawley’s, and Elgin’s own experience of the ecocentric in fantasy fiction emerged. Having accepted that the ecocritical-fantastic premise of Le Guin and Elgin holds merit, then, it is time to turn to two critically acclaimed works of fantastic literature for further exploration – beginning, quite naturally, in Middle-Earth.

Tolkien’s Primal Desire of Faerie

J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of The Rings* has become one of the world’s most influential books after its publication between 1954 and 55. Not only loved passionately by a massive mainstream readership, its critical acclaim surmounts that of most (if not all) fantasy books, as well as much non-fantasy fiction. Analyses of Tolkien’s epic are numerous, and their topics vary from religion (or anti-religion), to quest narrative/ bildungsroman, to First and Second World War analogy, to postcolonialism. Ecocentrism, on the other hand, has received less consideration in relation to Tolkien; however, there are exceptions.³ In *Ents, Elves, and Eriador* (2006), Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans focus entirely on Tolkien’s environmental vision, arguing that Tolkien, throughout his authorship, “provides a deep and complex ecological vision incorporating many elements and spanning a broad spectrum of approaches, including positions compatible with both conservation and preservation in modern environmentalism” (xvi). And indeed, when we look at characters such as Treebeard, Tom Bombadil, or even the Hobbits or Elves, as non-human people, the obviousness with which they see themselves as *part* of nature and wilderness rather than rulers over it, clearly suggests at the very least a comparison to *homo sapiens*’ relationship with Earth and our biological-hierarchical place on it.

In a paper published in *Tolkien Studies* (2009), Cynthia M. Cohen examines the many examples of extraordinary trees – and people’s relationship with trees – in Middle-Earth. “By making trees ... significant in the narrative, Tolkien enables a sense of recovery, allowing his readers to see trees – which, for many of us, have become all too familiar – in a vivid, new light” (Cohen 119). The significance of trees and forests is introduced early in *The Fellowship of The Ring*, when Frodo, Sam, Merry and Pippin enter the Old Forest just outside the border of The Shire. “I thought all the trees were whispering to each other”, Merry tells the others. “They do say the trees do actually move, and can surround strangers and hem them in” (Tolkien 121). Right after this, the naughty-spirited Old Man Willow proves Merry right by catching Merry and Pippin in his trunk, and the ancient Tom Bombadil has to sing them out (128-130). The power of trees is further presented through the alien beauty of the *mallorn* trees in Lothlórien, which provide homes for the elves in a nearly symbiotic way. The Hobbits – being creatures close to nature themselves – acutely feel this awe-inspiring connection: “Frodo ... laid his hand upon the tree beside the ladder: never before had he been so suddenly and so keenly aware of the feel and texture of a tree’s skin and of the life within” (*Fellowship* 366).

Once connected to the Old Forest, the Fangorn forest on the other side of the Misty Mountains is one of the oldest forests in Middle-Earth, and is home to the *Ents*, or tree herders. Dickerson and Evans offer interesting insight concerning the Ents and their lost female counterpart, the *Entwives*, whose views on how to “herd” nature differs from that of the Ents. While the Ents love nature for its wildness, wanting to communicate with the trees, the Entwives loved nature for

³ Other (explicitly) ecocritically-oriented titles on Tolkien’s work: Susan Jeffers’ *Arda Inhabited – Environmental Relationships in The Lord of the Rings* (2014) and J. R. R. Tolkien: *the Forest and the City* (2013), ed. Helen Conrad-O’Brien and Gerard Hynes.

its gifts, wanting to cultivate it. The Entwines disappeared from Middle Earth after their gardens were destroyed in the first Great War against Sauron. “As a result of this estrangement”, Dickerson and Evans write,

the Ents as a race are doomed for the lack of offspring. Toward the end of the trilogy, we read, “Treebeard’s face became sad. ‘Forests may grow,’ he said. ‘Woods may spread. But not Ents. There are no Entings’” (VI/vi). The message? Environmental positions should be held with conviction, but divergent views should not be adhered to so fiercely as to threaten one’s very survival (252).

As Dickerson and Evans point out, this story “serves a powerful warning” (252) – whether Tolkien was conscious of the strong environmental allegory embedded in it or not.

In the case of Fangorn and the Ents, the ecocritical potential of Tolkien’s universe thus becomes more explicit – also regarding mindless industry and destruction of nature for the sake of war and self-gain. The closest neighbour to Fangorn is the corrupt wizard Saruman, who believes he can overthrow Sauron and take The One Ring for himself. Using the forest as a resource to support his breeding of *Urûk-hai* (a powerful mix-breed of orc and man or orc and elf) for his army, Saruman cuts away a large chunk of Fangorn’s forest edge. Saruman disturbs an ancient harmony, and the normally slow-paced, sleepy Ents rise up and go to war. As Treebeard says to Merry and Pippin, “We Ents do not like being roused; and we are never roused unless it is clear to us that our trees and our lives are in great danger” (*Two Towers* 89). Thanks to the Ents, the *Huorns* (semi-sentient, malevolent trees), and the two Hobbits, Isengard is cleansed of orcs and *Urûk-hai*, and Saruman is trapped in his tower.

Saruman is the face of industry, modernity, and destruction of nature in *The Lord of The Rings* – perhaps more so than Sauron, who remains a more abstract, albeit ever-present, force of evil. “Portraying trees as something worth fighting for and asserting the connections that exist between humans and trees”, Cohen concludes her article, “Tolkien compels his readers to become responsible for preserving and protecting the trees in their own lives.” (119). Even though Cohen’s conclusion is in danger of pushing an agenda onto Tolkien’s books, and in retrospect turning Tolkien into some sort of nostalgic, environmental activist, her statement nonetheless illustrates the power which *can* be attributed to nature as portrayed in Middle-Earth. Furthermore, Dickerson and Evans share Cohen’s “applied” reading of *The Lord of The Rings*. Although careful to state that they do not intend to over-allegorize Tolkien’s epic, Dickerson and Evans nonetheless admit that their book is an attempt at “providing what may be called an allegorical application of the legendarium’s ideas to the particular topic of twenty-first-century environmentalism, suggesting that the principles embedded in [Tolkien’s] work should be brought to bear on environmental problems in the modern world” (220). It appears that Tolkien’s embedded environmental principles are too strong to avoid the temptation of ecocritical-allegorical readings. These principles again become evident in one of the last events of the trilogy.

Saruman’s corruption and vindictive nature go so deep that after Gandalf has taken his wizard powers, exiled him from the Council of Wizards, but spared his life, he goes to the Shire with his servant Gríma Wormtongue to perform one last act of mischief. In the second to last chapter, “The Scouring of the Shire”, the Hobbits have against all odds survived the horrors of war against evil, and come home to the Shire expecting their familiar, blessedly naïve, undisturbed home. But Saruman has been efficient, and what greets the home-comers are suspicious fellow Hobbits, cowed by fear, and a Hobbiton on the verge of desolation and industrialization:

Many of the houses they had known were missing. Some seemed to have been burned down. The pleasant row of old hobbit-holes in the bank of the north-side of the Pool were deserted Worse, there was a whole line of the ugly new houses all along Pool Side An avenue of trees had stood there. They were all gone. And looking with dismay up the road towards Bag End they saw a tall chimney of brick in the distance. It was pouring out black smoke into the evening air (*Return of The King* 283).

Plot-wise the scene is striking, as the Hobbits realise that not even their beloved Shire is safe from corruption; moreover, the criticism of modernity is nowhere in the trilogy as blatant as here. In his much-quoted paper “On Fairy-stories”, Tolkien writes that “one of the primal ‘desires’ that lie near the heart of Faerie [is] the desire of men to hold communion with other living things” (6). In *The Lord of The Rings*, Tolkien strengthens the reader’s response to this desire by threatening the very communion that has been glorified and fought for throughout the books. Herein clearly lies the groundwork for suggesting a more ecocentric way of thinking, although it had no name in Tolkien’s time.

In Elgin’s eyes, this embodiment of the ecocentric in the fantastic is natural, and he maintains that canonical fantasy writers such as Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and Frank Herbert “have offered an alternative to the tragic conception which has brought humanity and environment to the point of imminent destruction” (Elgin 265). Brawler supports this statement, underlining that Tolkien’s unmistakable “appreciation for nature is a view of nature as part of a community, not as a commodity. This involves an appreciation of nature as it is, not for how it can be used” (109-110). Le Guin writes further in *Cheek By Jowl* (2009) that animal stories and fairy tales in which non-human creatures play a major part, evokes a longing in the reader. “Fearful and suspicious as it is, the human mind yet yearns for a greater belonging, a vaster identification. Wilderness scares us because it is unknown, indifferent, dangerous, yet it is an absolute need to us; it is that animal otherness, that strangeness ... that we must join, or rejoin, if we want to stay sane and stay alive” (Le Guin 1112). This longing echoes Tolkien’s “primal desire”, though Le Guin ties it explicitly to ecocentrism and the need to “rejoin” nature in order to remain on Earth. Such yearning for wilderness and animal otherness is also present in Philip Pullman’s fantasy trilogy, where ecocritical thought takes on ever more complex fantastical shapes.

Dust and Universal Connectivity

In Pullman’s *His Dark Materials*, the world of Lyra Belacqua is parallel to our primary world and very similar (she lives at an esteemed Oxford college, for instance), but there are several striking, supernatural differences. For instance, every human in Lyra’s universe has a part of their spirit on the outside of their body, in the shape of an animal: a *dæmon*. The animal part of the soul takes a settled shape when a person reaches puberty, usually of the opposite gender of its human; before that, it can shapeshift. The dæmons have the ability to speak and think rationally (often to a greater extent than their human), but the human and the dæmon cannot read each other’s minds, and in this sense they are two separate beings. Lyra’s own Pantalaimon is often the one who calms her down or stops her from making rash decisions; for example, the first book begins with a scene where Lyra accuses Pan of being a coward, to which he replies, “Certainly I am. May I ask what you intend to do?” (Pullman 9).

The idea that everyone has an animal spirit is loaded with mythical allusion, and one instantly thinks of native or heathen religions as well as fables. Pullman’s evolution, so to speak, of humans in Lyra’s world immediately suggests a relationship with non-human creatures and nature that far surpasses that which the reader is used to. It is less evident than in *The Lord of The Rings*, however, as the dæmons in essence (if not in shape) are more human than non-human. Pullman’s trilogy is more concerned with the all-encompassing connectivity between every creature in the world, and between parallel worlds and universes, inventing Dark Matter particles (also called *Dust*

or *Shadows*) as the universal source connecting everything. Dr Mary Malone, a physicist from “our” world (at least the world is similar enough to the primary world to call it so) who has spent her entire life investigating the elusive, sentient Dark Matter, is introduced in the second book, *The Amber Spyglass*. She is finally able to communicate with the conscious particles when Lyra visits through a portal from her world to Malone’s.

The Dust particles (as people in Lyra’s world call them) are everywhere and they are drawn to living matter – though concentrate around humans only after they reach puberty. Lyra is in the possession of an *alethiometer*, a golden, compass-looking instrument through which she can converse with the particles and learn truths about the past, present, and future if she asks the right questions. After Lyra shows Dr Malone how she must phrase her questions, Malone is finally able to communicate with the Dark Matter through her computer, learning that the particles are in fact angels. Dr Malone knows from her research that “something happened thirty or forty thousand years ago”, something that “involved evolution” and made humans conscious (Pullman 238). The angels confirm that they did in fact “interfere with human evolution” in order to avenge themselves on the Authority, or God (Pullman 249).

Religious commentary aside, angels, or Dust, are thus the reason for the existence of the human consciousness and spirit – but not only *human* consciousness. Dust is what makes *all* life forms conscious, and the biggest quest of *His Dark Materials* is to stop Dust from leaking out of the universe. The existence of Dust thus vastly downplays the importance of humanity in the world, and this is perhaps Pullman’s point. His fantasy exposes, trivializes, and ridicules anthropocentrism through spiritual, conscious Dark Matter that was there long before humankind. Naomi Woods writes in her article “(Em)bracing Icy Mothers” (2004) that Pullman’s Dust “suggests that if we do not acknowledge our materiality and love the world that gives us birth, we are doomed to destroy it” (213). There are several creatures in Pullman’s world(s) that embrace the Dust particles and thereby contribute to the ecocentric exploration of the trilogy.

In addition to angels and dæmons, *His Dark Materials* introduces sentient Icelandic warrior bears called *panserbjørns*; there are powerful witches, zombie-like, soul(Dust)-eating spectres, and the creatures called the *mulefa*. More than anything else in Pullman’s fiction, the mulefa display an ecocentric alternative worldview. Presented to the reader by Dr Malone when she escapes from the police in “our” world through a portal in the second book (*The Amber Spyglass*), the creatures are grey, antelope-sized, “with horned heads and short trunks like elephants”, and a “diamond-shaped structure” to their legs: one in front and one back; two in the middle (Pullman 88). In other words, the mulefa are utterly “other”. The mulefa live in splendid symbiosis with the massive trees of their world, as they use the hard, disk-shaped seedpods of the trees as wheels on which the otherwise clumsy creatures move around with great speed and elegance.

Dr Malone first compares the mulefa to a similarly built animal she has seen grazing on the plains when entering the new world, but realises upon closer inspection of their intelligent eyes and acute awareness, that they are “as different from the grazing animals nearby as a human was from a cow” (Pullman 89). Malone quickly begins to see them as *people* rather than *creatures*: “These beings weren’t humans, but they were people, she told herself, it’s not *them*, they’re *us*” (123). The experienced otherness of the mulefa is replaced with astonished recognition. Such an explicit encounter with a species as self-aware as humans baffles the reader through Dr Malone, and because she is delighted and amazed, the reader is more likely to feel the same way – having, of course, already accepted and incorporated many other fantastic *others* in the course of the trilogy.

This manipulation, if you will, of the reader’s empathy is made possible by what Petzold refers to as the “tacit agreement” between the writer and the reader, and shows that Pullman’s trilogy fulfils what Brawler calls the subversive nature of fantasy. Such manipulation, as discussed above, facilitates the move towards a less anthropocentric way of viewing the primary world *through* the secondary world presented in *His Dark Materials*. The mulefa’s symbiotic relationship with the seedpods reinforces Pullman’s fantastic alternative to human supremacy on Earth. Without

the seedpods, the mulefa would not have evolved, and without the mulefa, the seedpod trees would die as nothing would be able to crack open the pods; “Each species depended on the other” (Pullman 129). Dr Malone moreover learns, by observing and sharing in the community of the mulefa, that Dust needs

... some feedback system to reinforce it and make it safe, as the mulefa had their wheels and the oil from the trees. Without something like that, it would all vanish. Thought, imagination, feeling, would all wither and blow away, leaving nothing but a brutish automatism (Pullman 453).

It does not require high levels of abstraction to see the analogy to our own primary world. What feedback system would keep Earth safe from impending eco-crisis and “brutish automatism” of future modernity? Through the description of the mulefa, and the universal essence of Dust, Pullman thus performs what Brawley terms fantasy’s blurring of the boundaries between human and non-human; what Le Guin understands as the reader’s “longing” and fantasy’s move towards non-anthropocentrism; what Tolkien would call humans’ “primal desire”; and Elgin would refer to as acknowledgement of humanity’s interdependence on nature. It is the juxtaposition of modernity’s, as Heise describes it above, “presumption” of human domination over nature with an alternative; an alternative world view that moves away from the anthropocentric and towards an environmentally conscious approach. This alternative may be easier to access in the fullest from within the immersive space of fantasy.

Fantastic Ecocritique or Cheerleading?

Judging from the examples given and the critics discussed, the hypothesis attempted to be worked out in this paper regarding the intrinsic embodiment of ecocritical thought in fantastic literature at the very least appears to be worth investigating further. However, there is also reason (as always) to be critical. Michael D. C. Drout reminds us that due to the stigma surrounding fantasy in literary criticism, it is easy to become apologetic or naïve, or as Drout puts it: to “run the risk of being cheerleaders rather than scholars” (18). Drout’s paper, “Beowulf: The Monsters and The Critics Seventy-five Years Later”, is a response to Tolkien’s famous lecture. Although he does not deny the importance of Tolkien’s contribution, Drout nonetheless points out that Tolkien defending monsters and heroes “because no one else was” ultimately led to a category mistake of over-allegory: “all of a sudden we’re not talking about monsters, we’re talking about us” (20).

Drout thus calls for caution and nuanced, critical approach from the fantasy apologist, and this is good to have in mind also when exploring ecocentrism in fantasy. One could argue that anthropocentrism is just as easily found in Tolkien as ecocentrism, looking for instance at the elves in Middle-Earth, who are manipulating nature just as much as humans or orcs (who said the mallorn trees benefit from growing into elven castles?). Le Guin actually points out the anthropocentrism inherent in Pullman’s dæmons: “They are fragments or images of the human psyche given animal shape, wholly contingent, having no independent being and therefore incapable of relationship. Lyra’s much-emphasized love for her daemon is self-love” (1083). In other words, even though non-human, sentient creatures often feature in fantastic literature, they are not immediately signs that the text is (exclusively) ecocentric. Rather, as this paper has shown, the fantasy genre’s subversive-immersive nature gives the fantasy text a higher potential for engaging with ecocritical ideas. This does not mean that other literary genres *cannot* fulfil such a potential; rather that fantasy has an inherent capacity for exploring it. The author manipulates the fantastic space to her wish, and if the reader agrees to be manipulated –to be immersed –fantasy holds the power to take her, as David Sandner writes it in *Fantastic Literature – A Critical Reader* (2004), “to the edge of meaning itself” (3). Perhaps it is at the edge of meaning itself that humans may glean a manner of thinking that encompasses more than the anthropocentric.

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“Power and all its secrets”: Engendering Magic in Neil Gaiman’s *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*

Laura-Marie von Czarnowsky

Abstract: Neil Gaiman’s recent adult novel, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013), presents the power of magic as an exclusively female concept. At the same time, however, it can be argued that the text subverts its own feminist potential in its advocacy of motherhood as paradigmatic femininity. Gaiman’s ecofeminist vision connects the nurturing qualities of the motherly Hempstocks with the prospering magical landscape they inhabit. Evoking the image of the triple goddess of Neopaganism and connecting it to the Greek Moirai, Gaiman presents them as direct counterparts to the text’s other magical creature, the villainess Ursula Monkton, who appears as embodiment of Freud’s unruly id.

Both variations of female magic empowerment can be read productively as gendered performances of the *femme fatale* and the *godmother*, used in order to effectively manipulate their human surroundings. Contrasting evil hypersexual femininity, which eventually has to be banished from the scene, with a benevolent nurturing femininity, the text clearly values one over the other. While the domesticity of the Hempstocks’ thus seems to communicate a surprisingly old-fashioned set of gender politics, continuously pointing to the constructedness of gender roles actually makes the text a postmodern meta-commentary on the performance of gender roles.

Keywords: Gaiman, feminism, ecofeminism, performance, fantasy

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That Neil Gaiman is a writer with strong feminist sensibilities has been frequently pointed out by scholars interested in his work (cf. Prescott and Drucker “Preface” 2, Cook 18, Dalmaso 37). In 2012, editors Tara Prescott and Aaron Drucker even published an entire and insightful collection *Feminism in the Worlds of Neil Gaiman: Essays on the Comics, Poetry and Prose* to this effect. This article continues Drucker’s and Prescott’s approach and examines the feminist potential of Gaiman’s latest novel, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*. Published in 2013, the novel promptly topped bestseller lists and became a critical darling. Gaiman’s latest offering is very specific in what

kind of feminism it promotes and takes up the often discarded notion of ecofeminism and renders it literal within the confines of the novel's fantasy setting. By connecting ecofeminism and magical maternities, Gaiman seems to advocate a benign and powerful maternalism as ideal femininity. However, due to the complex and overt constructedness of gender roles within the novel, the text simultaneously functions as a meta-commentary on the performance of gender.

Genesis

In numerous interviews, Gaiman has explained that *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* was written to tell his wife Amanda Palmer, to whom it is dedicated, about the author's childhood (see Campbell 244). Gaiman muses that

[i]t is such a weird book ... in that the narrative character is absolutely playing fast and loose with my memories and my identity, and [the narrator is] kind of me except when he's not. ... I really tried very hard to kind of make him as me as I possibly, possibly could. (qtd. in Campbell 245)

Gaiman thus uses autobiographical elements to ground the novel's magical plot. In its frame narrative, *Ocean* trails an unnamed first-person narrator's return to his childhood home for a funeral. Almost unconsciously, he begins to trace his childhood, revisiting the house he lived in as a boy and seeking out a family he used to know, the Hempstocks. Upon meeting them at their eponymous farm at the end of the lane, he begins to remember the childhood he had forgotten, full of trauma, death, miracles, and magic. "I remembered everything," (8) the narrator suddenly exclaims, and the novel dips into an embedded narrative, where the readers encounter the narrator as a child.

The child-narrator befriends the youngest Hempstock, Lettie, and together they embark on an adventure to banish a disruptive ancient creature. Unfortunately, the mission fails, the monstrous creature is released, and returns to the narrator's home in the shape of a pretty, new nanny called Ursula Monkton. In the novel's climax, the three Hempstocks, who are supernatural protectors and gatekeepers, eventually succeed in banishing Monkton, but only at a price.

Mothers, Magic, and Deities

While most, if not all, of Gaiman's works strives to present strong and complex female characters, Gaiman's newest novel goes even further in that *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* presents the power of magic as an exclusively female concept. There is not a single male magical character in the whole text: all magic is female, and all males are mere observers (and occasionally victims) of it. Gaiman's goddaughter-daughter-grandmother trio lives on their farm at the end of lane without any sons, fathers, or grandfathers present. When the boy-narrator wonders about this, Old Mrs. Hempstock exclaims "I dunno what blessed good a man would be! Nothing a man could do around this farm that I can't do twice as fast and five times as well" (94). Old Mrs. Hempstock thus represents the second wave of feminism in its most radical form; in her world, men are obsolete, and women can do it better anyway. The fact that this is supported by her actions in the novel's climax attests to *Ocean*'s radical feminist potential. Lettie takes a more moderate view: "We've had men here, sometimes. They come and they go. Right now, it's just us" (95). Her mother, perhaps in an attempt to make the boy narrator feel more at ease, provides the longest explanation.

They went off to seek their fate and fortune, mostly, the male Hempstocks. There's never any keeping them when the call comes. They get a distant look in their eyes and then we've lost them, good and proper. Next chance they gets they're off to towns and even cities, and nothing but an occasional postcard to even show they were here at all. (ibid)

The different positions the three women take to explain the absence of men on their farm also points to the fact that feminism as such is hardly a unified movement, and that different strands take up different issues and negotiate them in a multitude of ways. But however radical (Old Mrs. Hempstock) or however moderate the approach (Lettie), it is made clear that the absence of men does by no means connote a lack. The farm is complete, functional, and happy without them. While the adventurous nature of the male Hempstocks must appeal to a boy who loves to read adventures tales, it is the combination of safety, powerful autonomy, and nurturing warmth the female Hempstocks exude that really draws him in.

The novel, rather than stopping only at one mode of femininity (i.e. maternal), further differentiates between two models of female-gendered magic: the aforementioned protective, nurturing magic of the homely Hempstocks, and the dark and dangerous allure of Monkton's powers. The Hempstocks are a set of characters that Gaiman has worked with a number of times. He called them "the oldest characters in his head" (Campbell 245), and some of their relatives have already appeared in *The Graveyard Book*, where Liza Hempstock is a mischievous but kind-hearted witch who protects and aids another boy protagonist, and in Gaiman's Victorian fairy tale *Stardust* (1999), where Daisy Hempstock takes in the son of a fairy princess and raises him as her own.¹

All of Gaiman's Hempstocks characters are benign, in equal terms supportive and protective, offering a kind of tough love approach to the young male heroes whom they take under their wings, but the Hempstocks of *Ocean* are the only ones who are placed in the context of a deity. Alluding to a common belief "in an originary matriarchy, located in the prehistorical ancient world," the Hempstocks play into the idea of "a deity called the Great Goddess or the Great Mother" (Purkiss 33), and are further connected to the concept of the Triple Goddess. The triple goddess can be interpreted in two ways: for one, as "a triad of related goddesses with similar aspects" or as "a single goddess that appears in three forms" (Keen 125). The Hempstocks falls into the first category and play with the trope of what Robert Graves in his seminal *The White Goddess* (1948) has called the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. Young Lettie is the Maiden, Ginnie Hempstock serves as the Mother, and Old Mrs. Hempstock is the Crone. Courtney Landis points out that Gaiman partially subverts the trope by not casting the maiden either as a baby or as a "young woman maturing sexually" (165), but as prepubescent (166), and thus as more aligned with the role of a child. Likewise, the mother too is devoid of any markers of overt sexuality as Mrs. Hempstock usually appears in loose fitting farm clothes. In fact, this rendition of Gaiman's triple goddess is "utterly desexualized" (Landis 175).

The triple goddess is a motif that finds frequent application in both Gaiman's novels and comics, but the desexualized portrayal used in *Ocean* markedly stands out. Tony Keen has traced the recurring motif of the triple goddess in Gaiman's earlier works, finding that it is used to effect particularly in *The Sandman* and in *American Gods*. Whereas *American Gods* features a sudden nocturnal seduction scene between the novel's protagonist Shadow and the maiden, *Ocean*, by virtue of its young protagonist, plays it safe in order to later elevate Monkton's monstrous sexuality. Where the bed at midnight, and in the company of the maiden, is a charged location in *American Gods*, *Ocean* simply puts it protagonist to bed, and in a long, flowing nightgown at that. Gaiman here reinforces the maternal nature of the triple goddess, and saves her sexualisation for his works featuring adult heroes.

Keen finds that – desexualisation or not – "Gaiman's One who is Three are supernatural primal forces" (133), and, like the Fates of Greco-Roman mythology, do not have to take orders from anyone. Instead, they inhabit a position of supreme power and isolation, both of a spatial and temporal nature. This is evidenced by the Hempstocks unchanging nature; since they do not age,

¹ Gaiman commented on the connection between the different Hempstock characters spread across his novels as early as 2011, two years before *Ocean*'s publication: "Also, I'm writing a story about Lettie Hempstock. Who may be distantly related to Daisy Hempstock in *Stardust* and Liza Hempstock in *The Graveyard Book*" (Gaiman "Hobart" n.p.).

they forever inhabit the same role in the maiden-mother-crone triad. As a boy, this barely baffles the narrator. He asks Lettie for her age, to which she replies: “Eleven.” Shrewdly, he prods: “How long have you been eleven for?” Lettie’s answer is a smile (30). As an adult, he has forgotten much of his magical summer with the Hempstocks and mistakes Old Mrs. Hempstock for her daughter, Ginnie, simply assuming that she must have aged. The Hempstocks’ unchanging age is not the first power they demonstrate, but it is a telling one: they are magical beings that offer stability (cf. Miller 115; Long 126; Kim 159; Landis 170).² They provide the narrator, both as a boy and as an adult, with a stable home to return to, a place untainted by the changing world around him, sexually unproblematic in their stagnant roles of childhood friend, mother, and grandmother. While precisely this kind of stability is rendered threatening in *Coraline* (2002), where an “old-school, maternal stereotype is depicted ... as evil and must be decommissioned” (Parsons 376), the maternal stereotype in *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is not only maintained, but idealised and frozen in time. Change in the Hempstocks is shown as undesirable and their permanent attribution to grandmother and mother roles speaks to the narrator’s desire to prolong childhood and ward off destabilising influences (such as a burgeoning sexuality and the realisation that parents are not necessarily perfect) that come with growing up.

The “old-school, maternal stereotype” is realised in a variety of ways, be it tucking the narrator in at night, or making sure that the boy is well fed. This goes so far that every time the boy narrator sets foot in Hempstocks’ house, he is given food (cf. Landis 169). Be it warm milk fresh from the cow and porridge with homemade blueberry jam on his first visit, pancakes during his second, soup after he fled his own home after Monkton’s intrusion of it, or the cheese and tomato sandwiches Old Mrs. Hempstock prepares for him when he returns as an adult, the Hempstocks are constantly associated with food and loving care. Monica Miller finds that “the material sustenance reinforces the sense of emotional security” (115) the narrator finds on the farm. This emotional security is perhaps best expressed in the narrator’s blissful description of the first glass of milk – a beverage inherently connected to motherhood – he drinks on the farm: it tasted “rich and warm and perfectly happy” (20) and this emotional connection is maintained throughout the novel. The Hempstocks feed him, take him in for a night, mend his clothes, and keep him from harm in a way his own (non-magical) parents fail to do.³

Ecofeminism Revisited

Gaiman’s ecofeminist vision connects the nurturing qualities of the motherly Hempstocks with the prospering magical landscape they inhabit. Whereas the idea of an “all-powerful maternal” was still used as a means to generate fear in *Coraline* (Parsons 371), here it is used in conjunction with ecofeminism to create the opposite effect. Ecofeminism denotes an interdisciplinary approach of philosophy, activist work, cultural anthropology that has its roots in Françoise d’Eaubonne’s 1974 book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (cf. Gates 7). It argues that

women interact with the environment in a spiritual, nurturing and intuitive manner. As a result of women’s close association with the environment, their domination and oppression has occurred in conjunction with the domination and degradation of the environment. Ecofeminist strategies to address women’s oppression and environmental degradation are centred on reclaiming and reviving nature and women as powerful forces. (James 8)

² So far, scholarship on *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is centred in one recent anthology, *Neil Gaiman in the 21st century*.

³ In that way, they evoke the “other mother” from Gaiman’s novella *Coraline* (2002), who too seemed to offer more care and attention than Coraline’s real mother, who, like the protagonist’s mother in *Ocean*, is busy working. But unlike the other mother in *Coraline*, there is nothing evil about the Hempstocks.

Since its inception in the 70s, ecofeminism has been frequently criticised “for its dangerous essentialisms” (Evans 223). Argued to use middle-class, white, Western women as their prime subject and as a stand-in for all women, the approach has largely fallen out of favour (cf. Kunze 31). Peter Kunze argues that in “early ecofeminist thought ... one woman metonymically stands for all women” (34); in *Ocean*, this idea is both doubled down on *and* subverted. The idea is reinforced once more because the Hempstocks, as has been shown, evoke the image of the triple goddess, the one who is three. Where Lettie therefore automatically stands in for her mother and grandmother, one woman stands in for all in their connection to the land. The subversion however is brought on by the differences between the three Hempstocks. These differences are manifested in their different ages, but most importantly in their different powers. Lettie is not as capable as her mother, let alone her grandmother, and her connection to the land and the power she can draw from it is thus a different one.

Ecofeminism further draws the connection between women’s reproductive abilities and the land’s production of food: both thus participate in humanity’s continued existence, thus once more offering stability. As the men leave Hempstock farm and only the (never-aging) maiden-mother-crone trio remains behind, it is them who are deeply connected to the land and Old Mrs. Hempstock’s strong assertion that they do not need men to take care of the world becomes a reality. Ursula Monkton, who leaves her home to haunt and hunt in the ‘real’ world, is shown as disconnected from her true nature; it is disconnect that will later allow the Hempstocks to banish her. Just like the land gives power to the Hempstocks, Monkton loses hers because she has abandoned her home.

The connection between the land and creatures living on it is enforced when the narrator goes exploring with Lettie. He soon learns that the farm is a magical, timeless place, one where yellow and white daisies bloom in every corner, and kittens grow in the ground like mandrakes. The narrator is caught in wonder:

The furry tendril by my feet was perfectly black. I bent, grasped it at the base, firmly, with my left hand, and I pulled. ... I brushed the earth from it and apologized ... It jumped from my hand to my shirt, I stroked it: a kitten, black and sleek, with a pointed, inquisitive face, a white spot over one ear, and eyes of a peculiarly vivid blue-green. (44-45)

The protagonist of Gaiman’s Neo-Victorian fairy tale *Stardust*, Tristran Thorn, son of Daisy Hempstock, is also given a magical kitten during a difficult time of his life (echoing the events of the fairy tale musical *Into the Woods*, he is not allowed to go the market while everyone else does). Not plucked from the ground but born to the farm cat, the kitten nevertheless offers a trace of the Hempstock magic that stands at the heart of *Ocean*. It is “a tiny kitten with a dusty blue sheen to her coat, and eyes that changed color depending on her mood” (*Stardust* 46), but like the cat *Ocean*’s narrator encounters, it is not for him to keep. After a while, it disappears to be back “[w]ith her own kind” (47), as Tristran’s father explains. The Hempstock cats in both novels therefore function as magical means of providing support and affection, but like many magical creatures, cannot be owned indefinitely. They are extensions of the ecofeminist magical set-up of Gaiman’s fictional world, but it is a world that at least in *Ocean*, must be travelled through and cannot be inhabited by anyone but the Hempstocks themselves.

This shows that the ecofeminist set-up is exclusive rather than inclusive; the narrator, a boy, must leave the farm at some point since he is not part of the gendered connection between land, magic, and identity. This, of course, is linked to the fact that except for Peter Pan, all children must grow up, and the boy will become a man sooner or later. At the very end of the novel, it is revealed that like a stray cat, the grown-up narrator has returned and will return to the farm many times, but every time, he is made to leave again. This raises an interesting point with regard to the motherliness of the Hempstocks. They evoke the idea of motherliness, but they do not integrate

strangers into their families. The story is not one of adoption, it is one of a temporary refuge. The idea of returning to one's own kind is made central, and the pity in the narrative comes from the fact that *Ocean's* narrator seems to feel at home at the farm, but as neither a Hempstock nor as a woman is not allowed to fully partake in the ecofeminist vision he so admires.

Protection, Power, and Age

Even though the Hempstocks do not care to integrate the boy into their lives fully, they nevertheless take care of him and protect him. This is linked to their other occupation: rather than just being farmers, they are also protectors of both the humans around them and the magical creatures living in the magical land that their farm is a gateway to. When the narrator worries about the interference of Ursula Monkton and the danger she constitutes for him and his family, Lettie assures him that "I'll make sure you're safe. I promise. *I'm not scared*" (31).⁴

While Lettie indeed is not scared, she is however also not as capable as she thought she was. The boy is hurt when they go exploring, and in this instance, Lettie's age suddenly becomes a factor again. As the maiden, her magical prowess ranks lower than that of her elders, and Gaiman's choice to render her prebuscent instead of a young woman is backed up by narrative implications. Rather than an all-powerful and omniscient deity, Lettie suddenly becomes a girl who makes a mistake and it falls to her elders to fix it.

Ultimately and perhaps conventionally, it has to be the crone, attributed with the authority of age and the wisdom that comes with it, that returns the world to how it should be. Gaiman thus pits a motherly or even grandmotherly authority against the wiles of sexualised young femininity as represented by the evil nanny (cf. Landis 176), but he also plays into well-established genre tropes. The idea of the wise, old helper (to use a Proppian term) has been extensively used in the fantasy genre, and *The Harry Potter* series, where Albus Dumbledore aids the child-protagonist, and *The Lord of the Rings*, where the wizard Gandalf offers counsel and protection to the childlike Frodo, come to mind as obvious examples. Terry Pratchett's *Tiffany Aching* series also plays with the trope, when testy witch Granny Weatherwax aids the titular heroine. One notable difference though is that Gaiman offers a combination of protagonist and helper that draws on different genders. In the ecofeminist setting, this pairing then has further implications that render the relationship an impermanent one. Of permanence, the novel seems to argue, is only the connection between the Hempstocks and their land.

It is therefore also the crone who once more points out the connection between the land and the Hempstock women who live on it. Lettie, critically wounded in the final battle, is given to her pond, which she calls her ocean. "One day, in its own time," Old Mrs. Hempstock explains, "the ocean will give her back" (164), restored to perfect health, once more the ageless maiden the narrator befriended on the lane. As long as the land is there, the girl will not die. A Hempstock, the crone assures the boy, would never do anything so common (162). Lettie's submersion in the pond is thus the ultimate ecofeminist fusion between women and land, and further plays into the well-established "symbolism of water regarding rejuvenation, (re)birth, and life" (Kunze 35). The ecofeminist vision proposed in the text is thus of a circular nature, and despite the traumatic events that lead the narrator to grow up into a confused and aimless man, there is a fairy tale promise at work. "The Hempstocks' world is story-shaped" (Kim 160), insinuating that an 'and they lived happily ever after' is not ruled out. The Hempstocks, Gaiman communicates, are here to stay, but they will do so within the exclusive confines of the ecofeminist, triple goddess family.

⁴ In that way, they evoke the "other mother" from Gaiman's novella *Coraline* (2002), who too seemed to offer more care and attention than Coraline's real mother, who, like the protagonist's mother in *Ocean*, is busy working. But unlike the other mother in *Coraline*, there is nothing evil about the Hempstocks.

Performing Magic

Old Mrs. Hempstock, as the leader and matriarch of this family, is nearly omnipotent. Able to threaten disruptive magical beings with removing them from the list of all created things (159), her powers far transcend the time she lives and the novel takes place in. The Hempstocks have the ability to manipulate time as they see fit. Earlier in the novel, this is once again connected to the Hempstocks as homemakers: Old Mrs. Hempstock mends the narrator's torn bathrobe, and with each snip and stitch, she also changes the course of events and alters the memory of the boy's parents. She is quite literally working on 'the fabric of time' in what Miller calls "[s]ome of the most striking magic" (118) in the novel. Magic and housework are thus metaphorically and literally linked, making a case for homeliness as a powerful ideal.

That this homeliness is an act, at least visually, is revealed in the novel's climax. During an epic battle between the Hempstocks and the creatures Lettie has summoned to rid the world of the intruder Ursula Monkton, Old Mrs. Hempstock's old spinster looks are shown to be a disguise she only wears when dealing in the mortal world. In the 'ancient' land, deities assume a different physical shape.⁵

It was Old Mrs. Hempstock, I suppose. But it wasn't. It was Lettie's gran in the same way that... I mean... She shone silver. Her hair was still long, but now she stood as tall and as straight as a teenager. My eyes had become too used to the darkness, and I could not look at her face to see if it was the face I was familiar with: it was too bright. Magnesium-flare bright. Fireworks Night bright. Midday-sun-reflecting-off-a-silver-coin bright. I looked at her as long as I could bear to look, and then I turned my head, screwing my eye tightly shut, unable to see anything but a pulsating after image. (159)

The form of mother-maiden-crone is thus a choice, a costume selected to put the 'real' world at ease. The Hempstocks thus exemplify the point Judith Butler makes about bodies in connection with drag in *Gender Trouble*, namely that "drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (137). The Hempstocks have deliberately gendered their appearance into the three generation model of femininity, acting and performing their gender to full effect. Their power is hidden underneath the unassuming shapes of an eleven year old girl, her hands-on mum, and the frail old grandmother. They are too kind to mock, but their costumes point to the constructed nature of gender, and more importantly, the expectations tied to it. Magic is made unthreatening, ordinary, commonplace. It becomes a friend rather than a danger. However, it does not become domesticated, which is evidenced by the boy's inability to fully take in Old Mrs Hempstock's real appearance; he has to look away. Likewise, he will also never permanently remember the events of that night. It can be argued that the magic is too overwhelming, too traumatic, for perfect recall, while the performed genders as weaker images can remain in his mind.

Sex and Seduction

In very much the same way, villainess Ursula Monkton too has chosen a form to appear in. Where she looks like a "kind of tent, as high as a country church, made of gray and pink canvas that flapped in the gusts of storm wind, ... aged by weather and ripped by time" (41) in the ancient lands, she appears as a "very pretty" (53) woman when she becomes the narrator's nanny. It is this dual appearance that has an uncanny effect on the boy,⁶ who recognises the monstrous creature in the beautiful nanny. Monkton's chosen form however also problematizes the feminist potential of Gaiman's novel. As Landis points out, "Ursula adopts a sexualized performance of femininity,

⁵ Gaiman also used this concept in *American Gods* and *Anansi Boys*, where he called it "backstage."

⁶ For an elaborate discussion of uncanniness in *Ocean*, please see Yaeri Kim's "Not at Home: Examining the Uncanny."

utilizing a pretty appearance and seductive behaviour to gain a position of power within the narrator's home" (164). Monkton easily and deliberately plays into the trope of the femme fatale: always perfectly made up, she is an image of seduction. She soon makes a move on the narrator's father, successfully so. The moment echoes Freud's primal scene (cf. Miller 114).

I was not sure what I was looking at. My father had Ursula Monkton pressed up against the side of the big fireplace in the far wall. He had his back to me. She did too, her hands pressed against the huge, high mantelpiece. He was hugging her from behind. Her midi skirt was hiked around her waist. ... I was scared by what it meant that my father was kissing the neck of Ursula Monkton ... my parents were a unit, inviolate. The future had suddenly become unknowable: anything could happen. (79-80)

The destruction of the boy's nuclear family renders her far more monstrous than her shape, be it the abstract one of the tent fluttering in the breeze, or that of the pretty woman. But it is key here that the second shape facilitates her disruptive influence, leading Kim to argue that her "greatest danger comes from her attractive adult body and the power it has over the narrator's father" (158).

It is thus logical that the shape this creature has chosen is that of an appealing and sexualised "honey-blond" (*Ocean* 53) woman, who fully uses (and thus subverts) Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze to her advantage. Writing about film and drawing on Freud's writing on scopophilia, Mulvey identifies "[w]oman as image, [and] man as bearer of the look" and argues that

[i]n a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Women displayed as sexual object is the leitmotif of erotic spectacle. (837)

By providing an image that the male characters will wish to consume, Monkton's true terror is cleverly hidden to all except the boy narrator. He is too young to fall prey to the sexually charged image, but too old to not realise that there is something wrong about the new nanny and her interactions with his father.

Even though Monkton appears harmless during her first appearance in the boy's home, he is terrified because he has already learned from the Hempstocks that just because power is not flaunted, does not mean it is not there. Afraid of Monkton and unable to understand why she is causing him harm, it falls to the Hempstocks to explain Monkton's motives to the child. Ginnie Hempstock, the mother, explains that "I don't hate her. She does what she does, according to her nature. She was asleep, she woke up, she's trying to give everyone what they want" (*Ocean* 110). Antagonism is thus unwarranted, but control must be exerted. Monkton however operates as an uncontrolled Freudian id, and the non-negotiation of its manifold desires stands in stark contrast to the rule-governed existence of family life. Untampered by a super-ego, Monkton just delivers desire, irrespective of the consequences. Sexual desire is released and acted upon, threatening the father's marriage and thus the stable family unit so important to the narrator.

Where the Hempstocks are connected precisely with a stable family life (perhaps, given their unaging nature, even a too stable one) and with warmth and nurture, Monkton occupies the other end of the spectrum. As the nanny, she is supposed to take care of the narrator, but deliberately does not do so. For the narrator, her presence is connected to hunger and loneliness (cf. Landis 171), which – physical shapes aside – aids in constructing Monkton as a monster. Monkton's presence in the narrator's home leads to restricted access to food as well as restricted freedom of movement, for Monkton declares everything outside the actual house and garden as out of bounds. Most importantly, she severely restricts parental attention. Monkton's presence allows the narrator's mother to take on a job in a nearby town, and demands the narrator's father's full attention by

flirting with him and turning him against his son. While Monkton thus gives, to echo Ginnie Hempstock, everyone what they want, there is one notable exception and that is the narrator, whose needs and wishes are denied entirely. Where the Hempstocks carefully explain their magic to him (as far as magic can be explained), Monkton thrives on mystery, and mystery, in her case, means danger. The Hempstocks provide answers, Monkton provides questions. She is thus directly juxtaposed with the benign and nurturing trio, and by doing so, affirmative and powerful motherliness in women is presented as an ideal (cf. Landis 167).

Conclusion

As mentioned in the beginning, Gaiman's feminist literary potential is well attested. He creates strong female characters from all age groups, races, sexualities, and ethnicities. When asked to explain how to write strong female characters, he replied that

Well I write people. ... And also, it's worth pointing out that people, unfortunately, misunderstand the phrase "strong women." The glory of *Buffy* is it was filled with strong women. Only one of those strong women had supernatural strength and an awful lot of sharpened stakes. And people sort of go "Well yes, of course Buffy was a strong woman. She could kick her way through a door." And you go "No, well that's not actually what makes her a strong woman! You're missing the point." (Gaiman, BBC)

Gaiman's latest novel, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, is filled to the brim with these strong women, and not in the sense of door-kicking, but in that mysterious other quality that Gaiman alluded to. Strength in *Ocean* has little to do with physical prowess, and everything to do with determination and magic.

Both the Hempstocks and Ursula Monkton are beings of magic and determination. While the Hempstocks seek to unobtrusively do good, Monkton gives people what they want (essentially money and sex), thus appealing to baser desires. Both are strong characters, complex and well-rounded, but the element of shape shifting and more particularly the forms that the magical beings shift into (maiden-mother-crone on the one hand, femme fatale on the other) partly subverts *Ocean*'s feminist potential in its advocacy of motherhood as paradigmatic femininity (a reading for instance proposed by Landis). The only adult female character not presented as belonging to a family, not assuming a motherly role, but instead perverting it, is the novel's antagonist. Her weapon is the sexuality that both the Hempstocks and the narrator's mother are denied. While the humanised shapes the Hempstocks assume are the ones that offer stability, especially in connection with their un-aging nature and the ecofeminist connection to their land, Monkton's shape shifting confronts the boy narrator with the instability that desire produces: he is faced with a sexuality he cannot understand yet.

Diane Purkiss argued in a discussion of myths of female deities, originary ones in particular, that "such figures [as the Great Goddess] were the dark, repressed underside of civilisation" (34) and that civilisation then needed to be ordered by men, leading to new and more patriarchal mythologies. *Ocean* subverts this; the men (even the boy narrator) are expelled, as is the dark female – only the true one in three is allowed to remain, safely connected to the land they inhabit. Power remains a maternal and matrilineal concept, but it is shown as an exclusive one that is bound to a strict, desexualised presentation. Contrasting evil hypersexual femininity, which eventually has to be banished from the scene, with a non-threatening benign nurturing femininity, the text clearly values one over the other. However, I argue that what is valued here is good over evil, and not sexuality over motherliness. While the domesticity of the Hempstocks' thus seems to communicate a surprisingly old-fashioned set of gender politics, continuously pointing to the complex

constructedness of gender roles actually makes the text a postmodern meta-commentary on the performance of gender roles.

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Why Do The Heavens Beckon Us? Revisiting Constructions of Home and Identity in Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*

Christian Ylagan

Abstract: Scholarship on Ray Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles, and science fiction in general, have hitherto been focused on binary accounts of human colonization and imperialism. This article seeks to complement existing research by instead providing an intervention that focuses on the hybridizing dynamic of space travel and encounters with alien races. Specifically, this article problematizes notions of home and identity from both ontological and ethical perspectives that subvert canonical ways of reading science fiction narratives, especially those from the genre's Golden Age. Emblematic of these canonical readings is the insistence on the grand narrative of man as galactic colonizer whose culture and identity is considered stable and imposable on alien populations. This article seeks to invert such a narrative by reading Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles using a postcolonial framework, specifically by viewing the dynamic of human space travel in terms of the ontological and ethical ambiguities that parallel the historical movement of diaspora and decolonization. Drawing primarily on Emmanuel Levinas' notion of encountering the Other-as-Subject and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the habitus as both abstract and material space where these encounters can happen, this article argues that while the ontological problem of the self-construction of identity is indeed largely influenced by the space that one inhabits, the violent imperialistic ethos of refashioning home as introduced in traditional readings of The Martian Chronicles must give way to an ethical ability to imagine the possibility of a non-violent confrontation with the Other, especially when such contact takes place in fluid, unstable, and imbricated spaces.

Keywords: Ray Bradbury, home, identity, self-construction, psycho-geography, colonialism

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Originally published in 1950, Ray Bradbury's short story collection *The Martian Chronicles* has long been conceived as a seminal work of science fiction insofar as it presents a vision of the future that is rooted in its creative reimagining of notions of space-as-home. While some critics have

negatively received Bradbury's notion of a "new Earth" as being sentimental and anti-technology in its insistence on nostalgia and nature, others have lauded him for presenting a very human take on the futuristic problems of space travel: fundamental to Bradbury's work is his treatment of the twin predicaments of physical and sociocultural alienation as man struggles to find his place in the universe.

This article reconsiders Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* by reframing the questions of home and identity as both ontological and ethical problems, especially when set against the backdrop of modern-day issues of diaspora, decolonization, and globalization. Whereas the world of Bradbury's time was still largely preoccupied with a static idea of home, as manifested for example in the strong political desire to maintain and defend borders, such borders have become more fluid and porous in today's world. Current perceptions of notions of identity and selfhood, usually collocated and developed within the habitus of space, are thus more ambiguous. By recontextualizing Bradbury's work along these axes, this article argues that while the ontological problem of the self-construction of identity is indeed largely influenced by the space that one inhabits, the violent imperialistic ethos of refashioning home as introduced in traditional readings of *The Martian Chronicles* must give way to an ethical ability to imagine the possibility of a non-violent confrontation with the Other, especially when such contact takes place in fluid, unstable, and imbricated spaces.

Since its earliest days, science fiction has always been a vehicle where notions of home and homecoming were portrayed and problematized. From classical Greek texts by Aristophanes that depict air travel to fantastic worlds, to modern-day television series such as BBC's *Doctor Who* or films such as Ridley Scott's *The Martian*, these themes of homelessness, homecomings, threats to and invasions of home, and journeys to and from it have been foundational to the genre. The concept of home is also a key narrative element in establishing the spatial and temporal locus of the audience member or reader, whose identification with such enables the very possibilities of an alien encounter or a glimpse into future or alternate worlds.

The term "home," broadly conceived, denotes a variety of localized and domesticated spaces: houses, villages, towns, homelands, home planets, to name a few. Such spaces serve an important ontological function, in that the situatedness of home – with all of its sociocultural or, in the case of science fiction, temporal-geographic trappings – serves as an important existential fulcrum that helps people organize their identities. For example, 19th century Victorian conceptions of home that were hinged on stable notions of domesticity have given way to the 21st century preoccupation with uprootedness and displacement, phenomena brought about by massive advances in technology, globalization, and diaspora that have steadily rendered the home ideal ambivalent. This shift coincides with the postmodern ideas of self-construction and the philosophical contingencies of home-making in general, as manifested in contemporary literature across genres. For example, while not a work of science fiction, Salman Rushdie's 1999 novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* clearly illustrates this turn in current understanding of the notion of home. Rushdie plays on multiple iterations of the word "ground": be it "ground" from an ontological point of view, as in the terrain by which home, solidity, and even geology are set upon; or "ground" from an epistemological perspective, wherein notions of belonging and memory are predicated. Rushdie tries to encapsulate the provisionality and contingency of the human experience in these lines: "There. Now I've removed my mask, and you can see what I really am. In this quaking unreliable time, I have built my house – morally speaking – upon shifting sands. *Terra infirma*" (244). Madelena Gonzalez notes how "organized around a syntax of disorientation, impermanence, evanescence and inmixing ..., [the] universe is a world where ... homelessness [is] the norm" (qtd. in Frank 260), and where visualizing a perpetual reconstruction of home is necessary and perhaps even inevitable. This postmodern turn in the understanding of home, thematized by Rushdie but already predated as a recurring motif in Ray Bradbury's science fiction narratives, reveals how its

contingent and precarious constructions are “nevertheless presented as ‘real’ and something generally achievable to strive for and treasure” (Stierstorfer ix).

Many science fiction texts operate within this same trajectory of constantly re-conceptualizing and reconstructing home, and architecture plays a significant role in science fiction by facilitating the establishment of this plausibility of homeness through familiarity and technological imagery, while also evoking unknown frontiers and otherness through an attitude of deliberate estrangement. Central to this function is the notion of home as “zero world,” a concept introduced by noted science fiction theorist Darko Suvin. Suvin defines the “zero world” as the world of the audience of the science fiction text, which has “empirically verifiable properties around the author” (11) and whose familiarity forms the counterpoint to the “fictional *novum* (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic” (63). Science fiction helps us maneuver the dynamic between the concept of the “zero world” as *Gemütlichkeit*, which connotes coziness and a sense of protection, and what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls *Fremdheit*, the condition of being alienated or no longer at home in the world. Science fiction achieves this through a mechanism of projection, whereby the cathected *Fremdheit* is relocated to “another time and space distinct from one’s home through a myriad of [possible] futures ... and estranged environments. [The result is that] one’s sense of place, origin, or home is reinforced as that which is not estranged” (Fortin 22). By seeking to familiarize the unfamiliar through a sustained practice of deliberate estrangement, science fiction thus functions akin to retracing nostalgia, reconstructing memory, and regenerating identity in its pursuit and practice of world building.

As social geographers and sociologists have pointed out, space and geography are significant elements in the construction of social groups and their identity, and places are seen “not just as passive backdrops to social process but [as] actively involved in the constitution and construction of ... identities” (qtd. in Deane and Schuch 83). Ray Bradbury’s short story collection *The Martian Chronicles* attempts to reconcile the *Gemütlichkeit* with the *Fremdheit* by presenting the value of space, whether natural landscapes or built architectural zones, in establishing and reinforcing human identity. Within its twenty six largely standalone short stories, *The Martian Chronicles* demonstrates not just the technology-mania that has slowly but steadily gripped humanity, but also the contemporary impetus – brought about in an increasingly mobile, industrial, and multicultural world that has given rise to countless interpretations of home – to make sense of the steady erosion of the ideals of stable home-ness and belonging. By projecting nostalgic elements into the refashioning of an unfamiliar landscape, *The Martian Chronicles* (re)frames the practice of place-making – and consequently, home-building – in science fiction as both ontological and ethical pursuits within an unstable postmodern context.

Constructions of Self in *The Martian Chronicles*

Early scholarship about *The Martian Chronicles* focuses much on a nostalgic yearning for bygone days of innocence and for an idyllic return to an almost Eden-like agrarian settlement era, or otherwise the allegorization of Mars as Bradbury’s Midwestern hometown (for more recent studies, see Darling; Rabkin; Cryer). This nostalgia is played out as an organic result of the tension between two seemingly opposing paradigms that are competing for primacy: the Earthling’s colonial agenda vis-à-vis Martian indigeneity. Bradbury’s stories are rife with characters that represent polar aspects of the spectrum, from people like Sam Parkhill (“And the Moon Be Still as Bright”) who clearly identify the colonization of Mars as an inevitable part of Earth’s celestial travels, to others like Jeff Spender (“And the Moon Be Still as Bright”) who actively condemn these colonial impulses, and Tomas Gomez (“Night Meeting”) who opens himself to the experience of Martian alterity. The possibility of maintaining identity in an alien land, therefore, seems possible only “through the firm grasp of the land, yet it is precisely the failure to grasp that Bradbury seeks to underscore”

(Lawrence 73). In his article “Being Martian: Spatiotemporal Self in Ray Bradbury’s *The Martian Chronicles*,” Walter Mucher observes that the text “reflects...the incursion into a psychological and phenomenological humanism in which, in their search for a new self, the protagonists re-create a world of multiple readings which re-trace their exploits, moving forward while continuously looking back over their own experiential shoulders” (171). Throughout much of Bradbury’s text, the characters reflect this paradoxical desire to establish home while in exile. Upon landing in Mars, for example, the astronaut Biggs takes six empty wine bottles to the rim of a Martian canal and drops them in the canal waters while chanting, “I christen thee, I christen thee, I christen thee ... I christen thee Biggs, Biggs, Biggs Canal ...,” an act that earns the ire of resident archeologist Spender, who laments: “We’ll call the canal Rockefeller Canal and the mountain King George Mountain, and the sea the Dupont Sea, and there’ll be Roosevelt and Lincoln and Coolidge cities ...” (“And the Moon” 72). Even on a subconscious level, however, Bradbury depicts the men who come to Mars as longing to establish home. In “The Third Expedition,” Martians are able to turn human memories and desires, through telepathy, against the ship’s crew. The Mars that the Third Expedition finds is a nostalgic, pretechnological, small town that has shades of the American Midwest and Bradbury’s hometown of “Green Town” (Waukegan), Illinois. Among other familiar things, the Third Expedition rocket lands close to a

Victorian house, quiet in the sunlight, all covered with scrolls and rococo, its windows made of blue and pink and yellow and green colored glass. Upon the porch were hairy geraniums and an old swing which was hooked into the porch ceiling and which now swung back and forth, back and forth, in a little breeze. At the summit of the house was a cupola with diamond leaded-glass windows and a dunce-cap roof! ... Around the rocket in four directions spread the little town, green and motionless in the Martian spring. There were white houses and red brick ones, and tall elm trees blowing in the wind, and tall maples and horse chestnuts. And church steeples with golden bells silent in them. (“The Third Expedition” 49-50)

The projection of the human desire for the familiar, embodied in the architectural landscape of Mars, disarms the crew members of the Third Expedition long enough for the Martians, who were distrustful of Earthlings based on their experiences with the previous expeditions, to murder them. Edward Gallagher observes that “in a time of exciting yet threatening and disruptive progress and change, [humans] are attracted to the security of an idealized, timeless, and static past; and they make the fatal mistake of trying to re-create Earth rather than accepting the fact that Mars is different” (62), as evidenced by the pompous hubris displayed by humans who demanded that they be welcomed upon their arrival (“The Earth Men”). And so the Third Expedition, unable to see the alterity of Mars and its inhabitants, fails as it falls victim to emotion and longing for the past. Bradbury’s narrativization of mankind in “The Third Expedition” belies an uncritical indulgence in many science fiction texts, that is, that there are ultimately no true aliens: only a rehashing of our own history caused either by a simple lack of imagination or an unconscious need always to return, narcissistically, to oneself.

The desire by man to refashion Mars extends to reworking the very landscape and geography of the planet itself to suit one’s physical and emotional needs. In “The Taxpayer” (47), Pritchard, the eponymous taxpayer, demands that he be allowed to ride the next rocket out to Mars as he thinks that it is going to be a utopian land compared to Earth, which is on the brink of a nuclear apocalypse. Pervaded by a strong sense of alienation brought about by the estrangement of what was once familiar – in essence, by the perceived unfitness of Earth to fulfill basic human needs for survival – the promise of Mars is to bring people together in a shared experience of community through a return to the familiar. Yet the topography of Mars itself is unfamiliar, and it must be reworked to make this communalization to happen. Thus, in “The Green Morning” (96), Benjamin Driscoll sets out to domesticate the harsh Martian land by planting trees in hopes of

changing the barren topography and improving the thin, oxygen-deprived air in the atmosphere. Driscoll compares himself to a “Johnny Appleseed [figure] walking across America planting apple trees ... [he will be] planting oaks, elms, and maples, every kind of tree, aspens and deodars and chestnuts. Instead of making just fruit for the stomach, [he will be] making air for the lungs” (“The Green Morning 97). While the story is written in quite an optimistic and even heroic tone, the mythic resonance and the underlying sinister colonial overtones are undeniable:

And he turned his head to look across the Martian fields and hills. He brought them to focus, and the first thing he noticed was that there were no trees, no trees at all, as far as you could look in any direction. The land was down upon itself, a land of black loam, but nothing on it, not even grass ... Of course! He felt the answer came not from his mind, but his lungs and throat ... He would plant trees and grass. That would be his job, fighting against the very thing that might prevent his staying here. *He would have a private horticultural war with Mars ...* (98, italics mine)

In desiring to transform the harsh Martian landscape into a fruitful garden and a possible source of hidden wealth under the earth, Driscoll desires to re-colonize Mars in the same way that humans have colonized Earth. He plants thousands of seeds for thirty days straight, and after a night of miraculous Martian rain, Driscoll wakes up to a green morning, where

as far as he could see, the trees were standing up against the sky. Not one, not two, not a dozen, but the thousands he had planted in seed and sprout. And not little trees, no, not saplings, not little tender shoots, but great trees, huge trees, trees as tall as ten men, green and green and huge and round and full, trees shimmering their metallic leaves, trees whispering, trees in a line over hills, lemon trees, lime trees, redwoods and mimosas and oaks and elms and aspens, cheery, maple, ash, apple, orange, eucalyptus, stung by tumultuous rain, nourished by alien and magical soil, and even as he watched, throwing out new branches, popping open new buds. (100)

Driscoll represents not just the Johnny Appleseed figure that helps make the unfamiliar land familiar, but he is also “Jack, of ‘Jack and the Beanstalk,’ forging a link to the land of hostile giants, [and] although he builds trees instead of domes, the result is the same: the technological onslaught [and colonization by Earthlings that follow]” (Gallagher 66). Thus, while heroic in scope and intent, Driscoll’s act is still a way of terraforming Mars to fit his planetary ideal. Now that the Martian atmosphere has been refashioned to be habitable for humans, Driscoll’s pseudo-benevolent act of creation paves the way for an even greater degree of domestication; in the following story, “The Locusts,” we are told about how

the rockets came like locusts, swarming and settling in blooms of rosy smoke. And from the rockets ran men with hammers in their hands to beat the strange world into a shape that was familiar to the eye, to bludgeon away all the strangeness, their mouths fringed with nails so they resembled steel-toothed carnivores, spitting them into their swift hands as they hammered up frame cottages and scuttled over roofs with shingles to blot out eerie stars, and for green shades to pull against the night. And when the carpenters had hurried on, the women came in with flowerpots and chintz and pans and set up a kitchen clamor to cover the silence that Mars made waiting outside the door and the shaded window. (101)

Finally, the widespread refashioning of Mars in the aforementioned stories is juxtaposed with the perceived Earthly habitus itself. This habitus, which Pierre Bourdieu describes as the “durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations” that informs a “particular but constant way of entering into a relationship with the world” (*Outline of a Theory of Practice* 78; *Pascalian Meditations* 142), are values and dispositions gained from our cultural history that are immediately present and are generally durable and transposable, and which in turn allow us to engage non-native sociocultural rules and contexts. Habitus refers at once to how individuals develop their attitudes

and dispositions, as well as the ways in which such individuals engage in practices and relate with other entities (or “agents”). It is important to note, however, the dialectical nature of the *habitus* as it relates to the individual: as agents move through and across various fields of interactions, they tend to incorporate into their *habitus* the values and imperatives of those fields while imprinting some of their own dispositions onto those same fields. The *habitus* thus has an important relationship with the *habitat*, if we take the *habitat* as both the abstract and material space where these various horizons of values, dispositions, histories, and cultures all converge and intersect. *The Martian Chronicles* problematizes this dynamic by presenting humankind as seemingly intractable and uncompromising in their colonizing intent, disavowing any kind of cultural symbiosis with the external ecosystem and choosing instead to impose their *habitus* to transform and assimilate it.

In “There Will Come Soft Rains,” Bradbury provides us with a vision of a technologically advanced house that exists in post-apocalyptic Earth after it had been ravaged by nuclear war. By taking human characters out of the equation, Bradbury invites us to reflect on our relationship with our environment, and how the dynamics of such a relationship define who we are as a people. The house itself is described in human terms, what with its electric eyes, memory tapes, vocal capabilities, and attic brain. It is a domestic utopia, fulfilling every familiar human function: it wakes you up, prepares your meals, reminds you of appointments, and even reads you poetry. The house is an “altar with ten thousand attendants... [where] the gods had gone away, and [where] the ritual of religion continued senselessly, uselessly” (“There Will Come Soft Rains” 207). It is nothing more than a “mechanical wilderness, a symbol of a civilization which destroys itself in its own sophistication” (Gallagher 79).

The story begins with the house fulfilling its day-to-day functions and tasks with the expectation of life, but because the family that owns it had been obliterated by nuclear fallout (as evidenced by scorch marks and outlines of human figures on the house’s outside walls), the humanness of the house serves as an ominous backdrop for death and destruction. At ten in the evening, a fiery branch crashes through one of the windows, which none of the house’s defense mechanisms could extinguish. The house burns down throughout the night, and as dawn breaks, a disembodied voice rises through the ashes and repeats the date endlessly over the rubble and the ruins. The destruction of the house reflects the human impetus to destroy, and to be destroyed in carrying out such destruction. The full mechanization of the house appears as a travesty of humanity, and since technology is meant to serve, without humans it has no function. By employing advanced technology in automating the house, the text reveals the human need not just to make life easier, but to make it as close an approximation of the banalities of human existence as possible. Thus, what is foreign, strange, and advanced is reduced to something handy, like mechanical rats that clean the house or humanoid voices that resemble family: all in an effort to avoid making the experience *unheimlich*, literally “un-homely,” which refers to the eerie discomfort when faced with the uncanny.

By framing the open plausibility of projecting the familiar into the unfamiliar through a systematic scientific speculation, usually through a sustained practice of world-building, narratives such as *The Martian Chronicles* impel us to reflect on the constantly moving framework of knowledge, both of the world around us and of our inner selves. The *novum* or novelty in science fiction, usually contextualized within notions of domesticating the uncanny, goes beyond the transgression of cultural norms in naturalistic or realistic texts; instead, “the *novum* of science fiction is ... more than merely cultural, it is ontological, brought about by an ontic change in a character’s reality either because of displacement in space and/or time or because the reality around him is [unfamiliar]” (Touponce 57). *The Martian Chronicles*, and perhaps science fiction texts in general, allows us to confront the imaginary through an

existential encounter with primal realities ... [through the interplay of what] Gaston Bachelard calls resonance (*résonance*), the plane of our existence in the world, our personal associations to the portrayed world (memories, affects, etc.), and reverberation (*retentissement*), an ontological plane of discovery in which we become aware of certain possibilities of our being as the foundation of [our] responses ... This brings about a *virement d'être*, a swerve in being, which reveals possibilities that pervade humane existence, offering transcendence, [and thus satisfying] our recessive desires to know and linger in a fantastic world and at the same time provides the possibility for a critique of the real. (Touponce 13)

Science fiction narratives, and *The Martian Chronicles* in particular, essentially highlight the postmodern impetus of creating simulacrum-literature wherein foundation and collapse, Earth and Mars, territorialization and deterritorialization are engaged in a constant dynamic. Such narratives are both “form and vitalism, it is vitalistic form, in constant movement and without any stable centre or central perspective” (Frank 255). *The Martian Chronicles* may be viewed as a critique of the centrist, hegemonic, and essentially colonial view of imposing one’s paradigm upon a Subjective Other, a dynamic that Emmanuel Levinas would call an act of violence. Thus, in presenting us ways with which to problematize the ontology, science fiction also surfaces possibilities in investigating the way that we construct and employ ethical norms.

Constructions of Ethical Norms in *The Martian Chronicles*

As previously discussed in this article, the practice of building a familiar or homey space is an integral corollary to identity construction because such spaces is where everyday life takes place. Home spaces, typically including expanded spaces from cities to planets, enable or disable what Philip Sheldrake calls “place identity,” citing how place involves human narrative and memory embedded within spatial contexts (50-51). According to the French Marxist thinker Henry Lefebvre, these spatial contexts are always historically conditioned, not just in a physical sense (i.e., as in topography or architecture) but also socially, culturally, and politically. In a postmodern context where power is designated by the ability to define or construct, the “meta-narratives of the people who hold power take over the public places they control ... [and] the notion that place relates to issues of empowerment and disempowerment forces us to think of multilocalities (locations are different “places” simultaneously) and multivocalities (different voices are heard in each place)” (Sheldrake 51). Given this, there is a dialectical relationship between environment and identity, for physical spaces provide venues where identity can be contested and (re)formed, while concurrently our understanding of who we are affects the way that we sculpt the physical spaces that we inhabit.

This tension between “inner” and “outer” spaces figures prominently in Michel de Certeau’s analysis of the modern city, where he focuses on a critique of modernist urban planning and design as embodied, for example, by figures such as Le Corbusier who espouse the totalization and depersonalization of living spaces. Le Corbusier’s key design tenets are especially problematic because they are founded on a tendency to create or support architectural designs that seek to erase the past by subordinating the realities of the occupant population’s lives to abstract concepts of space that dichotomize public and private lives along the axes of public and private spaces. His is a design philosophy rooted in a kind of matter-spirit dualism that privileges the inner realm as the horizon of self-actualization while simultaneously demonizes the outer realm as *negative* space – one where such things as knowledge, meaning, or identity cannot be adequately formed or cultivated. Such a design philosophy – one that seeks to subvert the lived experience – translates to austere architecture that debars human interaction, and thus minimizes any aspect of public participation that reinforces public life as a determining factor in establishing social identity. De Certeau asserts that contrary to the modernist paradigm that dissociates people from (especially

public) spaces, it is the very particularities of everyday life in such spaces that give them their definition, and consequently, their power. De Certeau's counter-argument is to emphasize the individual narratives of the very people who inhabit such spaces, a point that runs against the Corbusian view that it is the city itself, rather than its inhabitants, that functions as Temple. The value of telling a narrative is thus an essential element in building communitarian interests that enable a space to transcend mere physicality; De Certeau's understanding of narrative "embraced the history of 'place' because without respecting the past, a city would become dysfunctional and dangerous" (Sheldrake 61). In short, any attempt at building a habitus, from the level of a private home to the planetary scale and beyond, must negotiate a shared vision of a common good that respects diversity, contextualizes historicity, and espouses solidarity. Bradbury presents a commentary on the ethical impact of technology on the lived experience within such spaces; because technology connotes an application of science to aspects of everyday life, *The Martian Chronicles* shows how technology enables one to see how such frontiers can be maneuvered, challenged, or even transgressed. Because such spaces always function as fields of contestation among human and/or alien beings, narrativizing in Bradbury's text, and perhaps science fiction in general, becomes an inherently ethical practice characterized by relationships among agents, and the relationship of such agents with their environment.

Consider for example the strong colonial undertones thematized in science fiction, especially those written during its Golden Age (1940s-1950s). Authors such as Isaac Asimov (the *Foundation* trilogy), Robert Heinlein (*Tomorrow, the Stars*), Philip K. Dick (*The Cosmic Puppets*), and Bradbury himself all dealt with the theme of colonization as the inevitable next part in the expansion of contemporary society. In a number of science fiction texts written during this period, mankind is portrayed as a race that has mastered interplanetary travel and/or colonized distant worlds. In *The Martian Chronicles*, Bradbury very clearly presents the dual opposition between landscape and settlers, and between natives and settlers. Gary Wolfe invokes Frederick Jackson Turner, whose studies of the American frontier experience closely parallel Bradbury's own project. Wolfe notes how the emergence of a frontier society is portrayed in a series of distinct stages:

first, there is the initial exploratory stage in which the inhabitants of the frontier environment are encountered and subdued. In the second stage the environment masters the colonist, transforming him into a kind of native with new values. Third is the successive waves of subsequent settlers who begin to develop towns and commerce. Finally there are those who see in the frontier an opportunity to correct the mistakes of the past and escape the oppression of the urbanized environment they have left behind. (43)

While Turner assumes that frontier encounters are between civilized humans and barbaric aliens, Bradbury interestingly does not begin *The Martian Chronicles* with such stereotypical conquest narratives; instead, we are offered a view of Martians as being very similar to humans: with similar domestic sensibilities, desires, and even fears and insecurities. In "Ylla," we are presented with a strange Martian caricature of a middle class human couple:

They had a house of crystal pillars on the planet Mars by the edge of an empty sea, and every morning you could see Mrs. K eating the golden fruits that grew from the crystal walls, or cleaning the house with handfuls of magnetic dust which, taking all the dirt with it, blew away on the hot wind. Afternoons, when the fossil sea was warm and motionless ... you could see Mr. K himself in his room, reading from a metal book with raised hieroglyphs over which he brushed his hand, as one might play a harp ... Mr. and Mrs. K had lived by the dead sea for twenty years, and their ancestors had lived in the same house, which turned and followed the sun, flower-like, for ten centuries. ("Ylla" 14)

Through some form of Martian telepathy, Mrs. K is able to pick up the thoughts of the Earthmen in the First Expedition to Mars, incurring the jealousy and wrath of Mr. K, who takes it upon himself

to kill the men as soon as they land on the planet. Similarly, in “The Earth Men,” we find the members of the Second Expedition incarcerated in an asylum for their persistent incursion into the lives of many Martian families in hopes of being acknowledged and celebrated for their astounding feat of interplanetary travel. In both these instances we find that ethical norms that govern movement and interaction within social spaces are breached and undermined; indeed, these are “not stories of adventure in unknown realms, much as we might expect in a story of the exploration of Mars, but rather are stories of outside interlopers disturbing the placidity of a stable, conservative society” (Wolfe 43). This also parallels an earlier point in this article: that Martians are compelled to fight back – engaging in psychic warfare against the Earthmen in “Third Expedition” for example – due to the perceived external threats to their native space, and so it is this persistence to impose their own agenda into the alien landscape that leads to the downfall of the explorers.

The second stage is when the environment begins to transform the settler into a kind of native, and this is illustrated well in the character of Spender from the “And the Moon Be Still as Bright.” Spender is an archeologist who, upon discovering the relics of the Martian civilization (the Martians were all but gone at this point, having been wiped out by chickenpox brought about unwittingly by the previous expeditions), begins to appropriate the alien culture to the point that he even considers himself the “last Martian.” Spender compares the impending migration of Earthlings to Mars to the Mexican invasion led by Cortez, an invasion that destroyed the native civilization. Spender believes that the Americans who will migrate to Mars, as will the rest of the Earthlings that will follow, will carry out the same pattern, because “anything that’s strange is no good to the average American. If it doesn’t have Chicago plumbing, it’s nonsense ... If things work out they hope to establish three atomic research and atom bomb depots on Mars. That means Mars is finished; all this wonderful stuff gone” (“And the Moon” 84). Spender sees the inherent, and perhaps to our eyes somewhat pagan, ability of Martians not just to acknowledge the alterity in what is Other, but to be able to co-exist alongside such Otherness. This is in stark contrast to the human impetus to domesticate (violently, as Levinas would say) the Other to fit into categories or forms of convenience. Spender, realizing that the Martian way is better, is in awe of how

[t]hey knew how to live with nature and get along with nature. They didn’t try too hard to be all men and no animal. That’s the mistake we made when Darwin showed up. We embraced him and Huxley and Freud, all smiles. And then we discovered that Darwin and our religions don’t mix ... so, like idiots, we tried knocking down religion. We lost our faith and went around wondering what life was for ... The Martians discovered the secret of life among animals ... Its very reason for living is life; it enjoys and relishes life. You see – the statuary, the animal symbols, again and again ... They never let science crush the aesthetic and the beautiful. (“And the Moon” 86-87)

However, Spender is unsuccessful in convincing the rest of the crew to see his point about Mars, and instead they hunt him down across the Martian wilderness and take him down. This paves the way for the crew to submit a positive report back home to Earth, which then impels people to move to Mars, occupying it and re-establishing a second Earth, as it were, across its alien landscape. As Spender is rendered transformed by the overpowering beauty and the fantasy environment of Mars and the freedom that such an environment represents, the crew also transforms to co-inhabit the mindset of interplanetary conquistadors who are continually moving beyond into still more distant frontiers.

Finally, while *The Martian Chronicles* presents us with the traditional colonial dynamic of subjugation and abuse, it also positions within its text some possible counterpoints to such an imperialist discourse. Bradbury’s text can also be read from a decidedly postcolonial point of view, that is, to go beyond the determinism of colonial discourse and move towards “the process by which a decolonizing society negotiates its identity apart from that of its colonizer, and apart from its

identity as a colonized place or people, within the context of both colonial history and decolonized future” (Langer 8). While colonial discourses are predominantly seen as unidirectional (characterized by an imposition of one culture over another), postcolonial discourse foregrounds the contestatory and dialectical relationship between colonizer and colonized. Indeed, by historicizing the struggle for identity within fields of contestation (as opposed to social or cultural genocide), a postcolonial critique of science fiction reveals that in the encounter between Earthlings and aliens, there is a mutual re-formation of roles and identities.

A postcolonial reading of *The Martian Chronicles* might posit, for example, that instead of being mere interplanetary colonizers, Earthlings are victims of diaspora that is clearly physical, geographical, and even emotional, hence their need to refashion the Martian landscape to assuage the negative affect of their displacement. Indian thinker Vijay Mishra notes how “diaspora is some sense of loss, a constant dissonance, a permanent wound or scar that disfigures in some the experience of a diasporic people..., an ‘impossible mourning’ [that inspires] a longing for a pure, unhyphenated identity, a desire for concord between where one is from and where one is” (Langer 57). Hence, diasporic communities have an inherent need to self-define along cultural poles, and this is manifested in the creation of landmarks, symbols of public history and memory, the vernacular. The need to domesticate the landscape, typically achieved through architecture, is a way to reconcile the nostalgia for home with an alien topography. Of course, this entails that diasporic communities define themselves always in dynamic interrelation with the nation/native state in which they live against the grain, creating “turbulations in the fabric of the nation that are both of the nation and not of it, simultaneously foreign and native in both directions” (Langer 57).

Tied closely to this dynamic of self-definition, the concept of alterity is often depicted corporeally as a physical difference between two species that reverts back to an essence difference, whereby while “this concept of alienness does not always signify a colonial relationship, it often dovetails with the colonial discourse of the Other” (Langer 82). It is precisely our response to this alterity that Bradbury invites us to examine; instead of focusing on what Ursula LeGuin criticizes as “the White Man’s Burden all over again” (Langer 83), *The Martian Chronicles* presents a view of encounters with the Other as encounters among beings-in-the-world whose historical and mortal existence converge and become the very ground of Being itself. Because ethics precedes metaphysics, as Levinas notes, an ethical reading *The Martian Chronicles* means that “when we encounter alterity, the ‘otherwise than being’ through the appearance of the face of another, we experience a precognitive call, an appeal whose response is none other than a responsibility toward, if not sacrifice for, the vulnerability of the other as Other (Caicco 14). Such encounters with the Other can only happen within a horizon or a space, and in the dynamics of this discourse both humans and Martians form their subjectivities and are actualized. This is because the notion of the individual, self-contained body is also a product of the habitus and the encounters that happen within such fields of contact: as Bourdieu notes, the body of the Subject, while “indisputably function[ing] as the principle of individuation ... [is also] open to the world, and therefore exposed to the world, and so capable of being conditioned by the world, shaped by the material and cultural conditions of existence in which it is placed from the beginning” (*Pascalian Meditations* 133-134).

A nuanced reading of *The Martian Chronicles* requires a certain ability to imagine the possibility of a non-violent confrontation with the Other, one that refuses to reduce or objectify alterity into convenient centripetal categories of perception. Instead, it necessitates an imaginative conceptualization of the Other as another Subject, whose unique subjectivity demands a face-to-face encounter. When confronted by the Other, Levinas says we are impelled by a metaphysical desire that “tends towards something else entirely, toward the absolutely other: this is a desire that does not attempt to absorb the other but, in turning towards it, turns away from the self, from the enjoyment of totality” (Levinas 33). This view is embodied in the tension between seeking to familiarize the unfamiliar and waiting patiently and openly for the possibility of contact.

In the story “Night Meeting,” Bradbury presents us with a narrative that illustrates the very tension that Levinas introduces. The story is about the encounter between a young “colonist” from Earth named Tomas and a Martian named Muhe Ca. Each of them can see the Mars that they know in their respective times: Muhe Ca sees a sprawling Martian city where Tomas sees ruins, and Muhe Ca sees the ominous Martian ocean where Tomas points to a manmade settlement. Each appears to the other as a translucent phantom, and each argue his own presence, reality, and substance. Bradbury constructs a poignant scene where two strangers try to engage each other, but cannot actually physically connect, and therefore struggle in their trans-action. In this scene, it can be observed that like Levinas, Bradbury is emphasizing that “one’s selfhood is only confirmed by an Other’s presence, and that confirmation does not establish, legitimize, or prioritize the self but on the contrary, puts its authority into question” (Lawrence 79). Tomas and Muhe Ca engage in a thoughtful debate that leads to a mutual disillusionment about each person’s primacy, and Muhe Ca’s words underscore the adequacy of a “mere” encounter between two Subjects:

“Let us agree to disagree,” said the Martian. “What does it matter who is Past or Future, if we are both alive, for what follows will follow, tomorrow or in ten thousand years. How do you know that those temples are not the temples of your own civilization one hundred centuries from now, tumbled and broken? You do not know. Then don’t ask. But the night is very short. There go the festival fires in the sky, and the birds.” (“Night Meeting” 110)

When they “agree to disagree,” the remark is not a surrender or acknowledgment of inferiority, but a concession of the irreconcilable schism between them; paradoxically, while the encounter with the Other is estranging, it is this very experience that binds them as two Subjects in a common encounter. Walter Mucher notes that “it is not the Martian who is the Other, as Earth would have us believe. Rather, it is the intruding Earthness, which shows its otherness previously concealed by imperialistic superiority” (Mucher 182).

The book’s final story, “The Million-Year Picnic,” rounds out this shift from radical imperialism towards a more tempered view of the human experience in Mars. The story is about a family that salvages a rocket ship and escapes to Mars on a “fishing trip.” Earth at this point has been totally razed by nuclear war, and all human settlers to Mars returned to Earth for their families, eventually perishing in a nuclear holocaust. It is implied that the family, alongside one other family that is still on its way to Mars, are the only survivors of the human race. The family picks a city to live in, and while they pass numerous cities that used to be human settlements in Mars, the family picks a decidedly Martian city where “fifty or sixty huge structures [were] still standing, streets were dusty but paved, and [one] could see one or two centrifugal fountains still pulsing wetly in the plazas. That was the only life – water leaping in the late sunlight” (“The Million-Year Picnic” 218). In an almost ritualistic scene, the Father begins to burn documents from Earth that symbolized their previous lives, culminating in the burning of a world map. Later, he introduces his sons to the Martians: their own reflections in canal water. This scene stands to bookend the other burial scene that happens earlier in the book in “Third Expedition,” where the Martians hold a funeral for the crewmembers of the expedition that they presumably kill after emulating the human forms of their loved ones, revealed to them through a telepathic process, and becoming their surrogates. The Martian’s burial of the men may be seen symbolically as a ritual of Oedipal significance: the child, given form by the parent, seeks to subvert and supplant them in order to individuate himself, only to discover that the alterity coexists and is inevitably linked with their progenitors. Through such violent means, one is introduced into the realm of symbolic order, where one is able to discover oneself and one’s capacity to interact with others – and thus engage with one’s habitus.

In this story, what was once considered frontier land transforms into a new Eden, an imperfect yet real space that can give birth to a new human civilization out of the ashes of two great ones. The story appears to end on a hopeful note as it underscores the human colonists’ realization

of the essential hybridity of their identities, manifested in their abandonment of the “fetishistic or imperialist intention to overcome the landscape, consume it, and to take pleasure from its exotic qualities” (Lawrence 85). This intention, which hitherto had been represented as a desire to impose Earthness upon Mars, has been replaced by the understanding that identity is defined and redefined around the interplay of alterity and subjectivity. The ethical imperative that we find therefore at the end of the story (and the book) is based around the dynamics of hospitality and immersion: to welcome and be welcomed, to embrace and be embraced.

Conclusion

Six decades after it was first published, Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* continue to delight us and impel us to consider the possibilities of defining ourselves as we encounter Others in the spaces we inhabit. As we continue to grapple with the increasing complexities of existing within spaces that continue to shift, Bradbury invites us to position our own narratives and our own identities as pliable constructs determined by our openness to what is Not-Us. Science fiction, through its incursion into worlds of possibility, helps us see that hegemonic views of self, home, and culture are dangerous in their totalizing agenda – a truth that is even more relevant in today's globalized context. By showing us that refashioning unfamiliar spaces or subjugating alien natures in order to assert our own supposed superiority are non-viable means of human encounters because of their inherent violence, *The Martian Chronicles* compels us to re-examine the very reasons that motivated the human race to look out to the heavens and travel there in the first place.

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Myyttisestä fantasiaksi – Etsivät matkalla Pohjolaan

Merja Leppälahti

Abstrakti: Tässä artikkelissa tarkastelen kahden 2000-luvulla ilmestyneen romaanin intertekstuaalisia kytköksiä Kalevalaan ja kansanperinteeseen sekä kansantarinoiden myyttiaineksen muuttumista fantasiaksi. Kummassakin teoksessa tehdään matkaa kohti Pohjolaa, johon Kalevalassa liittyy paljon myyttistä ainesta. Harri V. Hietikon Roger Repo ja tuonen väki on julkaistu vuonna 2005 ja Mikko Karpin Väinämöisen vyö vuonna 2007; molempien teosten päähenkilö on etsivä ja kummankin juonenkulussa on keskeistä siirtyminen tavallisesta maailmasta kalevalaiseen maailmaan ja siellä tehtävä matka Pohjolaan. Kummassakin teoksessa Pohjolaan liittyy myös Tuonela.

Asiasanat: intertekstuaalisuus, Kalevala, myyttisyys, Pohjola, Tuonela

Biografia ja yhteystiedot: Merja Leppälahti on turkulainen filosofian lisensiaatti pääaineenaan folkloristiikka. Hän on freelance kriitikko ja tietokirjailija.

Ellösvainen, poikueni,
menkö Pohjolan pitoihin!
Monet on kummat matkallasi,
isot tielläsi imehet,
kolme surmoa kovinta,
kolme miehen kuolemata. (*Kalevala* 26: 100–105.)

Tässä artikkelissa tarkastelen kahden 2000-luvulla ilmestyneen romaanin intertekstuaalisia kytköksiä *Kalevalaan* ja kansanperinteeseen. Kiinnostava kysymys on nimenomaan kansantarinaston myyttiaineksen muuttuminen fantasiaksi.

Harri V. Hietikon *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* on julkaistu vuonna 2005 ja Mikko Karpin *Väinämöisen vyö* vuonna 2007. Molemmissa teoksissa päähenkilönä on etsivä (rikosetsivä ja yksityisetsivä), joka siirtyy toiseen, kalevalaiseen maailmaan. Kummassakin teoksessa keskeisen osan juonesta muodostaa sekundaarimaailmassa tapahtuva matka Pohjolaan, johon liittyy myös käynti Tuonelassa.

Tarkastelen erityisesti siirtymistä toiseen maailmaan ja siellä tehtävää matkaa. Matka-teema on ollut kertomusperinteessä yleinen, pohjoismaisessa kertomusperinteessä ovat erityisesti monenlaiset sankarien kosinta- ja ryöstöretket olleet hyvin suosittuja. (Siikala, *Suomalainen šamanismi* 250–271.) Fantasiakirjallisuudessa etsintäretki (quest) kuuluu genren keskeisiin juonikuvioihin. Fantasiassankarin matkan on nähty noudattavan Vladimir Proppin ihmesadun funktioiden tai Joseph Campbellin monomyytin kuvaamaa kaavaa, jossa sankari lähtee kotoaan, kokee vaaroja ja seikkailuja ja palaa lopulta takaisin menestyneenä.

Kalevala ja kaunokirjallisuus

Kalevala on Elias Lönnrotin luomus, vaikkakin kansanrunoista koottu. Sen lisäksi, että Lönnrot yhdisteli runoja ja säkeitä pitkiä kertoviksi kokonaisuuksiksi, hän muokkasi runot viittaamaan suomalaisiin kansakuntana ja häivytti niiden historiallisia ja kielellisiä siteitä konkreettisiin keruupaikkoihin. (Anttonen, ”Kalevala ja suomalaisuus” 310; Häkkinen 123–125.) Lönnrot ei ottanut itselleen kunniaa *Kalevalan* kirjoittajana, mutta ei myöskään yrittänyt peitellä oman luovan työnsä osuutta *Kalevalan* kokoamisessa. Lönnrot mm. totesi vuotta ennen uuden *Kalevalan* ilmestymistä, että samoista aineksista olisi voinut koota vaikka seitsemän erilaista Kalevalaa. (Anttonen, ”Suomalaisen eepoksen synty” 75; Siikala, ”Kalevala myyttisenä historiana” 318.)

Ensimmäinen *Kalevala* ilmestyi vuonna 1835, mutta Lönnrotilla oli jo sen ilmestyessä käytössään paljon lisäaineistoa. Sen lisäksi, että Lönnrot laajensi teosta, hän teki muutoksia juoneen muuttamalla tapahtumien järjestystä. Se teos, jota nykyään luetaan *Kalevalana*, julkaistiin vuonna 1849, aikaisempaa versiota nimitetään vanhaksi Kalevalaksi. Koska *Kalevalaan* on yhdistetty erilaisia runoja ja säkeitä eri runoista, kokonaisuus on paikoin monitulkintainen ja ristiriitainenkin.

Kalevala on inspiroinut kirjailijoita ilmestymisestään lähtien. *Kalevala*-aiheet ovat olleet erityisen vahvasti esillä melko pian *Kalevalan* ilmestymisen jälkeen ja myöhemmin karelianismin aikaan 1800- ja 1900-luvun vaihteessa. Seuraava *Kalevala*-kirjallisuudennousuvaihe sijoittui 1970–80-luvulle. Tällöin kansalliseepokseen tartuttiin aivan uudella otteella ja siitä tehtiin uusia tulkintoja, jotka tavallisesti kiinnittyivät varsin konkreettisesti reaali maailman arkeen. Tätä onkin nimitetty *Kalevalan* uudelleenarvioinnin kaudeksi. (Alhoniemi, ”Miten suomalaiset kirjailijat” 111.)

Uusin *Kalevalan* inspiroiman kirjallisuuden kausi on alkanut 1990-luvulla aallonharjanaan 2000-luku, mutta *Kalevala*-aalto näyttää edelleen jatkuvan. *Kalevala* on innoittanut monenlaisia kirjoittajia romaanikirjallisuudesta nuortenfantasiaan, jännitysromaaneista sarjakuviin. Nykyään *Kalevalan* aineksia käytetään entistä vapaampina menneisyyden arvokkuudesta ja *Kalevala* on muuttunut suomalaiskansallisesta juhlakirjasta kiinnostavien tarinoiden lähteeksi. Uusissa teoksissa voidaan nähdä monen tasoisia *Kalevala*-viitteitä. Kysymyksessä voi olla hyvin laaja yhteys *Kalevalaan*, mikä usein tarkoittaa *Kalevalan* uudelleenkirjoittamista, laajentamista tai jatkamista¹, mutta hyvin yleisiä ovat *Kalevala*-lainaukset ja monenlaiset yksittäisetkin *Kalevala*-alluusioiden. (Leppälahti, ”Le Kalevala dans la littérature” 63–83.)

Monet *Kalevalaan* viittaavat piirteet ovat perinneaineiksina kansanvälisesti tunnettuja ja lisäksi tuttuja fantasiasta. Yleisesti ottaen eri alueiden kansanperinneaineiksia on käytetty erittäin paljon spekulatiivisen fiktion lähteenä (esim. Sullivan; Wienker-Piepho; Leppälahti, *Vahvaa väkeä*).

Myyttistä *Kalevalaa* kaunokirjallisuudessa on tarkastellut erityisesti Johanna Pentikäinen, jonka vuonna 2002 tarkastettu väitöskirja käsitteli Paavo Haavikon teosten *Kalevala*-myyttejä ja myyttisyyttä. Fantastisten teosten viittaussuhteita *Kalevalaan* ovat käsitelleet Eliisa Pitkäsalo väitöskirjassaan *Sankareita ja tarinoita. Kalevalaiset henkilöahmot Johanna Sinisalon romaanissa Sankarit* (2009) ja Katja Kontturi väitöskirjassaan *Ankkalinn – portti kahden maailman välillä. Don Rosan Disney-sarjakuvat postmodernina fantasiana* (2014). *Kalevalan* henkilöahmojen käyttöä kaunokirjallisuudessa on käsitelty erityisesti Pirkko Alhoniemi useissa artikkeleissaan.

Intertekstuaalisuus ja myytit

Intertekstuaalisessa kirjallisuudentutkimuksessa kaunokirjallisen teoksen nähdään saavan merkityksensä nimenomaan suhteessa muihin teksteihin, kirjoittamisen konventioihin ja kulttuuriin laajemminkin (Lyytikäinen, 145; Makkonen, 19–20). Terminä intertekstuaalisuus on peräisin Julia Kristevalta (64–91), joka ensimmäisenä käytti sitä Bahtinia käsittelevässä esseessään vuonna 1969.

¹ Kysymyksessä on hypertekstuaalinen viittaussuhde, mikä tarkoittaa sitä, että koko teos ja sen olemassaolo liittyvät alkuperäiseen hypotekstiin (tässä siis *Kalevalaan*) eikä uutta tekstiä voisi olla edes olemassa ilman *Kalevalaa*. (Genette, *Palimpsests* 5.)

Ajatus tekstien sisältämistä viittauksista toisiin teksteihin ei kuitenkaan ollut uusi, sen tunsivat jo Homeros, Aristoteles, Rabelais ja Cervantes (Eco, 20). Ranskalainen kirjallisuudentutkija Gérard Genette (*Palimpsests*) puhuu kirjallisuuden teksteistä palimpsesteina. Sana on alun perin tarkoittanut pergamenttia, josta on raaputettu vanha kirjoitus pois, mutta se häämöttää kuitenkin uuden alta.

Esimerkiksi Umberto Eco (20) on sitä mieltä, että kaikki kerrotut kertomukset kertovat jonkun jo aiemmin kerrotun tarinan eikä tässä mielessä ”viatonta” tekstiä voi olla. Intertekstuaalisia viittauksia sisältävät tekstit toimivat edelleen mahdollisina lähteinä uusille teksteille ja niiden tekemille uusille tulkinnoille. Intertekstuaalisuus on siten jatkuvaa ja pysähtymätöntä. Monet intertekstuaaliset viittaukset ajankohtaisiin asioihin voivat kuitenkin vähitellen muuttua tunnistamattomiksi. Pysyviä ovat kuitenkin viitteet suuriin ja vanhoihin teksteihin, joiden juuret ovat syvällä kulttuurikoodeissa. (Malmio 1996, 30.) Tällaisia ovat esimerkiksi *Raamattu* ja *Kalevala*, joissa on myyttistä sisältöä.

Uskontotieteessä myytillä on tarkoitettu kaukaiseen alkuaikaan sijoittuvaa kertomusta perustavalaatuisista tapahtumista, jotka vaikuttavat edelleen maailmanjärjestykseen (Honko, *Uskontotieteen oppisanasto* 25–26). Rationaalisessa ajattelussa myytit ovat merkinneet tapaa ajatella toisin. Nykyään myytit nähdään kulttuurisina merkityksenantajina, jotka ovat kuitenkin jatkuvassa purkamisen ja rakentamisen prosessissa. (Saariluoma 47–52). Myytit ovat tärkeää kulttuurista pääomaa, jonka avulla ja kautta jäsennetään todellisuutta. (Siikala, ”Kertomukset” 47–81.)

Aineisto

Harri V. Hietikon *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* (jatkossa RR) on julkaistu vuonna 2005 ja Mikko Karpin *Väinämöisen vyö* (jatkossa VV) vuonna 2007. Molemmissa tarkasteltavissa teoksissa jo nimi viittaa *Kalevalan* ja kansanperinteen suuntaan. Gérard Genette (*Paratexts*) on nimittänyt parateksteiksi muita tekstejä, jotka eräänlaisina kynnyksinä ohjaavat tarkasteltavan teoksen tekstin ymmärtämistä tietyllä tavalla. Kirjan nimi kuuluu keskeisiin parateksteihin, kohtaahan lukija sen jo kirjan kannessa. Mikko Karpin teoksen nimi, *Väinämöisen vyö*, viittaa *Kalevalaan* sisältäessään Väinämöisen nimen.

Väinämöisen vyö on kansanomainen nimi tähtikuvio Orionin osalle. Kirjassakin Väinämöisen vyö eli Vanaamosen vyö on tähtikuvio, mutta se on erilainen kuin reaali maailmassa; fantasiamaailman tähtivyö kulkee koko taivaan poikki. Harri V. Hietikon *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* -teoksen nimessä mainittu tuonen väki viittaa tuonelaan ja kansanperinteeseen. Lisäksi teoksen alaotsikkona oleva *Kertomuksia yksityisetsivä Roger Revon omituisista toimeksiannoista* vihjaa perinteisestä dekkarista poikkeavaan sisältöön. Hietikon teoksessa on paikoin metafiktion piirteitä tekstin viitatessa todelliseen maailmaan tekstin ulkopuolelle. (Hallila 119–122.) *Väinämöisen vyön* päähenkilöiden pohdinnat *Kalevalan* totuusarvosta voi nekin tulkita metafiktioksi. Molemmissa tapauksissa teksti muistuttaa lukijalle olevansa fiktiota.

Molemmissa tarkasteltavana olevissa teoksissa esitellään päähenkilön elämää ja ympäröivää tavallista maailmaa jonkun verran ennen ylikuonnollisten piirteiden mukaantuloa. Ylikuonnollinen konkretisoituu vasta siirryttäessä fantasiamaailmaan, jossa keskeinen teema on matka kohti Pohjolaa. Kummassakin teoksessa matkaanlähtöön johtava impulssi näyttää liittyvän päähenkilön työhön. Yksityisetsivä Roger Repo saa toimeksiannon, rikospoliisi Juha Hannukainen jäljittää murhaajaa. Kumpikaan tapaus ei kuitenkaan ole lajissaan aivan tyypillinen.

Roger Repo ja Tuonen väki -kirjan kerrontatyyli on kovaksikeitetyn dekkarin piirteitä.² Yksityisetsivä Roger Repo viettää sateista iltaa kotonaan, joka on samalla hänen toimistonsa. Repo katselee kotiteatterissa pyörivää elokuvaa ja leikittelee samalla pistoolillaan, kun ovelta kuuluu koputus. Ovella on märkä nuori nainen, joka pyytää apua, koska hänen neljä tättiään ovat ajaneet hänet pois hänen omasta kodistaan Pohjolasta. Repo lupaa lähteä selvittämään asiaa. Hänellä ei oikeastaan ole parempaakaan tekemistä ja hänellä on uusi vene, jolla on tarkoitus lähteä matkaan. Lisäksi tyttö näyttää kovin nuorelta, seuraava auttajaksi pyydetty voisi olla kuka tahansa sekopää. Yksityisetsivä Repo käyttäytyy tässä tyypillisen kovaksikeitetyn dekkarin päähenkilön tapaan. John G. Caweltin mukaan perinteisen kovaksikeitetyn dekkarin päähenkilön kovuus ja kyynisyys peittävät sitä, että hän oikeastaan on kunniallinen ja suorastaan jalo. Ympäröivä maailma sitä vastoin on moraaliton ja korruptoitunut (152). Roger Repo muistuttaa monin tavoin Reijo Mäen Jussi Varesta. Molempiin sopivat kovaksikeitetyn etsivän tyypilliset piirteet, kuten perheettömyys, ulkonaisilta puitteiltaan vaatimaton tai nukkavieru olemus ja verbaalinen nokkeluus. (Lehtolainen 115–136.) Roger Repo ei siis saa selvitettyäkseen rikosta, mutta tarkoituksena on kuitenkin saada oikeus toteutumaan, onhan apua pyytävä Kerttu Pohjolan talon laillinen perijä.

Rikospoliisi Juha Hannukainen joutuu työssään tutkimaan rituaalimurhalta vaikuttavaa kaksoismurhaa. Juhan työtoveri Jaska Ojala näyttää tietävän asioista jotain, mutta kuolee oudoissa olosuhteissa. Jaskan kuoleman jälkeen tämän veli Seppo ottaa Juhaan yhteyttä. Hän saa Juhan vakuuttumaan siitä, että Kalevala ja Pohjola ovat oikeasti olemassa ja että murhaaja on paennut Pohjolaan. Juha, hänen työtoverinsa Saarinen sekä Seppo ja Jaskan tytär Katri Hakala lähtevät Kalevalaan tavoittamaan murhaajaa, mutta he joutuvat samalla mukaan torjumaan Pohjolan aiheuttamaa uhkaa.

Tekstinnimeäminen tiettyyn genreen kuuluvaksi sisältää usein vahvan oletuksen teoksen sisällöstä. Henkilöhahmot ja juonenkulku liittyvät tietynlaiseen paradigmaan; romanssiin, lännentarinaan tai rikosromaniin kuuluvat tietyt, toisistaan poikkeavat ja melko helposti tunnistettavat piirteet (ks. esim. Gelder, 64). Toisaalta esimerkiksi Alastair Fowler pitää genreen määrittelyssä joissain tapauksissa käyttökelpoisena Wittgensteinin perheyhtäläisyys-käsitettä: kaikilla perheeseen kuuluvilla ei tarvitse olla määrättyjä yhteisiä piirteitä, mutta niillä on kuitenkin useita yhdistäviä seikkoja, joista voi tunnistaa ne samaan perheeseen kuuluviksi. (Fowler, 41–42.) Tässä tarkasteltavat teokset ovat hybrideitä, selvästi kahden eri perheen jälkeläisiä. Päähenkilön ammatti (poliisi, yksityisetsivä) ja teoksen alkuosan kerronnan sisältö ja muoto viittaavat jännityskirjallisuuden, dekkarin suuntaan. Siirtyminen toiseen maailmaan, jossa reaali maailman lainalaisuudet eivät päde, sijoittaa kertomukset kuitenkin lopulta spekulatiivisen fiktion alueelle.

Kysymyksessä ovat teokset, jotka saavat inspiraationsa nimenomaan *Kalevalasta*, mikä näkyy *Kalevala*-viittausten runsautena. *Väinämöisen vyössä* ollaan Kalevalan maassa, jossa keskustellaan myös Lönnrotin kokoaman *Kalevalan* todenmukaisuudesta ja siihen tullevista asiavirheistä. Teoksessa viitataan myös *Kalevalan* sisältöön, esimerkiksi Ainon kohtaloon (VV 455), vaikka se ei varsinaisesti liity kirjan tapahtumiin. Ennen Kalevalaan siirtymistä tietoa etsitään myös kansanrunousarkistosta, jonne onkin talletettu tärkeä vihje (VV 317). Myös *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* antaa lukijalle vähän väliä muistutuksen teoksen *Kalevala*-yhteydestä. Tällaisia ovat esimerkiksi nuolia ampuva Joukahainen (RR 45–47), kuvaus raudan synnystä, (RR 49), MC Raudan kultaneidot (RR 48–59), Tuonelan joella haravoiva Lemminkäisen äiti (RR 93) sekä luonnottaret, Saaren neidot (RR 94). *Kalevala* siis muodostaa tärkeän kaikupohjan näiden teosten fantasialle.

Kalevalan intertekstuaalinen käyttö voidaan nähdä postmodernina ilmiönä (Kontturi 97–104; Pitkäsalo 9). Postmodernille kirjallisuudelle on tyypillistä rajojen rikkomisen ja

² Kovaksikeitetty dekkari on määritelmän mukaan ”Yhdysvalloissa 1920-luvulla alkunsa saanut realistisen rikoskertomuksen tai -romaanin muoto, jolle on ominaista lakoninen, karkeuksia ja hirtehishuumoria viljelevä dialogi, yhteiskunnallisten erojen kuvaaminen sekä pessimistinen maailmankuva”. (Tieteen termipankki.)

erityyppisten ainesten kierrättäminen ja sekoittuminen (genret, fakta ja fiktio, korkeakulttuuri ja populaari) (Hutcheon 2–28). Toisaalta fantasialle on yleensäkin tyypillistä olla avoin hyvin monenlaiselle ainekselle (esim. Leppälahti ”Eläviä vainajia”), mutta aivan erityisesti mytologialle ja kansanperinteelle, joista fantasia ammentaa aiheitaan (Attebery 108–109).

Runsaista *Kalevala*-viitteistä huolimatta kummankaan teoksen keskeisissä juonikuvioissa ei ole mukana varsinaisia *Kalevalan* henkilöitä, paitsi Louhi, joka hänkin on *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* -teoksessa juuri kuollut. *Väinämöisen vyössä* Pohjolan matkan tarkoituksena taas on nimenomaan Louhen tappaminen. Kysymyksessä eivät siis ole *Kalevalan* uudelleentulkinnat, vaan nimenomaan kalevalaisen aineksen hyödyntäminen fantasiana.

Siiirtyminen toiseen maailmaan

Tunnetussa esseessään ”Saduista” J. R. R. Tolkien on esittänyt jaon todellisen maailman ja fantasiamaailman välillä. Todellinen maailma, jossa kirjan lukija lukee fantasiakirjaa, on primaarimaailma (*primary world*) ja kirjan sisällä oleva fantasiamaailma, jonne lukija siirtyy mielikuvituksen avulla, on sekundaarimaailma (*secondary world*). Jos fantasiamaailman laatija, ”alempi luoja”, on onnistunut työssään, lukija lumoutuu ja siirtyy lukemisen ajaksi toiseen maailmaan. (Tolkien 55–56.) Maria Nikolajeva (36–37) on jättänyt mallista pois lukijan ja nimittää kertomuksen sisällä olevaa ”tavallista maailmaa” primaarimaailmaksi ja fantasiamaailmaa sekundaarimaailmaksi. Tämä mahdollistaa fantasian jakamisen kolmeen ryhmään sen mukaan, miten näitä sekundaarisia fantasiamaailmoja kerronnassa käytetään.

Tolkienille *secondary world* oli omalakinen fantasiamaailma, sellainen, jossa asuvat esimerkiksi Tolkienin oman fantasiahahmot kuten hobitit. Tällaista fantasiaa kutsutaan myös korkeaksi fantasiaksi (*high fantasy*) (Zahorski & Boyer 56–59). Maria Nikolajeva nimesi tällaisen maailman suljetuksi sekundaarimaailmaksi (*closed secondary world*). Avoimen sekundaarimaailman fantasiassa (*open secondary world*) päähenkilö on yleensä tavallisen maailman asukas, joka jostakin syystä siirtyy fantasiamaailmaan ja usein lopuksi palaa takaisin tavalliseen maailmaan. Kolmas kategoria on vihjattu sekundaarimaailma (*implied secondary world*), jossa fantasiamaailmaa ei esitellä, vaan tavallisessa maailmassa löytyy jokin fantasielementti. (Nikolajeva 36–40.)

Tässä käsiteltävät kirjat kuuluvat avoimen sekundaarimaailman luokkaan. Molemmissa kirjoissa eletään tavallisessa nykymaailmassa, josta siirrytään toiseen maailmaan, fantasiamaailmaan. Avoimen sekundaarimaailman fantasiassa maailmojen välillä on usein jonkinlainen erityinen tila, jonka kautta siirtyminen tapahtuu. Tätä voidaan nimittää portiksi tai kynnykseksi. (Ks. esim. Ihonen 37; Wienker-Piepho 34–36.) *Väinämöisen vyössä* maailmojen välillä matkustamiseen tarvitaan erityinen portti, joka ei ole sen enempää eikä vähempää kuin *Kalevalassa* kerrottu sampo.

Kalevalan kymmenennessä runossa Ilmarinen takoi Pohjolassa sammon, *Kalevalan* myyttisistä esineistä keskeisimmän. Väinämöinen oli luvannut lähettää Pohjolaan sammon tekijän ja huijannut vastahakoisien Ilmarisen paikalle, mutta Pohjolan emännän luvattua tyttärensä sammon takojalle palkaksi, Ilmarinen ryhtyi mielellään työhön ja onnistuukin valmistamaan sammon.

Kalevalan mukaan sampoon tuli yhteen laitaan jauhomylly, toiseen suolamylly ja kolmanteen rahamylly. Kansankertojien maininnoissa sampo ei aina ole ollut mylly, vaan se voinut olla laiva, lipas tai arkku tai kantelekin. Tutkijat puolestaan ovat nähneet sammossa toisaalta tärkeitä luonnonelementtejä, kuten auringon, kuun, pohjantähden, sateenkaaren tai pilven, toisaalta kulttuuritekoisen temppelin, jumalankuvan, valtaistuimen, lohikäärmeilaivan, ihmemyllyn, soittokoneen, kilven, noitarummun, lippaan tai taikakalun. Sampo on nähty myös kuvauksena taivasta kannattavasta maailmanpatsaasta. Joskus sampo on ajateltu todelliseksi tai tarunomaiseksi

eläimeksi. (Harva, *Sammon ryöstö* 16–17.) Joka tapauksessa sampo on tulkittu erityisen merkitykselliseksi ja jollakin tavoin ainutlaatuiseksi.

Väinämöisen vyön sampo on portti kahden eri maailman välillä. Kummassakin maailmassa on ainakin kaksi sammon alttaria, pohjaa, johon sammon neljä palaa kootaan, kun se halutaan käynnistää. Sammon palasesta ”-- ei tiennyt, oliko kyseessä veistetty kivi, metalli vai jokin muu aine, mutta joka tapauksessa se hohti himmeää, epämiellyttävää valoa. Se oli yhdeltä reunaltaan täydellisen kaareva, ja toisaalta taas terävän kulmikas.” (VV 203.) Kun Pohjolan edustaja oli saanut haltuunsa palaset ja koonnut sammon, päähenkilöt lähtivät harkitusti tämän perään sammon läpi.

Roger Repo puolestaan siirtyy toiseen maailmaan ukonilman siivittämänä. Aluksi Repo ja hänen toimeksiantajansa matkaavat veneellä Näsijärveltä kohti pohjoista. Rajuilma pakottaa matkalaiset maihin sadetta pitämään. Salama iskee lähelle, tyttö lukee loitsua, jostain kuuluu rummutusta. Ukonilmaa on muinoin pidetty ylikuonnollisena tapahtumana ja salamat on tulkittu ukkosenjumalan aikaansaannoksiksi. Maasta löydettyjä kivikautisia kiviesineitä on pidetty jumalan heittäminä tai ampumina taikaesineinä ja niitä on nimitetty Suomessa ukonvaajoiksi. Vastaavat uskomukset ovat kansainvälisiä ja laajalle levinneitä. (Salo 99.) Tässäkin ukonilmaa voi pitää myyttisenä tapahtumana, osana toiseen maailmaan siirtymistä. Repo kaatuu tajuttomana maahan, hänen havahtuessaan tyttö on poissa. Kun Repo lähtee veneellään jatkamaan matkaa, tutun järvenselän sijalla on joki, jota pitkin pääsee vain yhteen suuntaan, kohti Pohjolaa. Radiopuhelimen ja kompassin toimimattomuus vahvistavat, että on siirrytty pois tavallisesta maailmasta.

Vaikka kummankin teoksen sekundaarimaailma on kalevalainen maailma ja sen kasvi- ja eläinkunta muistuttavat paljon primaarimaailman Suomea, maailmoissa on kuitenkin myös selviä, perustavanlaatuisia eroja. Kalevalaista maailmaa voi Maria Nikolajevan (49) termein pitää paralleelina fantasiamaailmana, joka vaikuttaa todellisen maailman kaltaiselta, mutta joka kuitenkin on ratkaisevasti toisenlainen. Taikuuden ja outojen olentojen lisäksi toisessa maailmassa on muitakin erilaista: taivaalla voi loistaa kolme aurinkoa (RR) tai öinen tähtitaivas voi olla erilainen (VV). Nämä erot todistavat, että kysymyksessä ei ole esimerkiksi siirtyminen ajassa, vaan nimenomaan aivan eri maailma.

Realistinen ja myyttinen matka

Pohjola on *Kalevalan* juonen kannalta varsin tärkeä paikka. *Kalevalassa* on neljä keskeistä kokonaisuutta, jotka käsittelevät Kalevalan ja Pohjolan suhteita. Näistä kahdessa ensimmäisessä tapahtuu ystävällismielisiä käyntejä Pohjolassa, kahdessa jälkimmäisessä suhteet ovat vihamielisiä. (Juha Pentikäinen 51.) Pohjola on kansanrunoudessa yhdistetty usein Tuonelaan, ja tämä näkyy paikoin *Kalevalassakin*. Esimerkiksi *Kalevalassa* kuvattu Lemminkäisen matka Pohjolaan on matkan ylikuonnollisten vaarojen vuoksi tulkittu matkaksi tuonpuoleiseen. (Siikala, *Suomalainen šamanismi* 263.)

Pohjola esiintyy *Kalevalassa* sekä konkreettisena että myyttisenä paikkana. Reaalisena paikkana kuvatussa Pohjolassa käydään mm. kosimassa tyttöä ja vietetään häät. Tosin kosiomatkojen kuvauksissakin on myyttisen matkan piirteitä. Myyttinen Pohjola on suljettu ja suojattu, sinne päästäkseen on kohdattava tulta ja petoja ja kuljettava rautaisen käärmeaidan läpi. Pohjola esitetään *Kalevalassa* vaarallisena, myyttisenä paikkana erityisesti silloin, kun kuvataan vihamielistä kohtaamista (Juha Pentikäinen 51). Kummassakin tarkasteltavassa teoksessa tiedetään odottaa vihamielistä vastaanottoa Pohjolassa.

Matkaa kohti Pohjolaa tehdään aivan konkreettisesti kävellen ja veneellä; matka kestää useita päiviä (RR) tai jopa useita kuukausia (VV). Matkalla tulee nälkä ja kylmä, välillä on syötävää ja myös nukuttava. Juha Hannukaisen ja Katri Hakalan matka kestää niin pitkään, että eväät loppuvat ja matkaajat joutuvat hankkimaan lisää ruokaa kalastamalla ja metsästämällä. Molemmissa teoksissa matkan aikana käydään saunassa, mikä sitoo tapahtumia vahvasti suomalaiseen

reaalimaailmaan. Sauna kuuluu vahvasti suomalaiseen identiteettiin ja juuri *Kalevalan* on sanottu vakiinnuttaneen saunan ja kylpemisen kuvaukset kotimaiseen kirjallisuuteen (Laaksonen 137–138). Roger Revolle kylvyn valmistavat Luonnottaret, Juha Hannukainen ja Katri Hakala valmistavat matkallaan itse itselleen eräänlaisen kenttäsaunan. Saunominen kuvataan nautinnolliseksi: ”Voi että, miten hienoa, Katri sanoi.” (VV 547.) ”Saunan lämpö tuntui uskomattoman hyvältä. Tartuin kiuluun ja viskasin vettä kiukaalle.” (RR 95.) Kummassakin tapauksessa saunomiseen liittyy myös seksi, jota päähenkilö ei ole ennakoanut eikä suunnitellut.

Matkan myyttisyyteen viittaa erityisesti Tuonelan olemassaolo, mutta matkalla kohdataan myös erikoisia eläimiä. Roger Repo tapaa puhuvan ketun, joka kertoo olevansa hänen voimaeläimensä. Kettu antaa ohjeita matkaa varten ja lupaa tulla avuksi loitsulla kutsuttaessa. Juha Hannukainen ryhmineen puolestaan kohtaa myyttisen kauriin. Eläin ei varsinaisesti keskustele ihmisten kanssa, mutta matkaajat kuulevat naisen äänellä lausutun runomuotoisen ennustuksen. *Väinämöisen vyössä* kauriin on kerrottu olevan kalevalaisille aivan erityinen myyttinen eläin ja palvonnan kohde. Ajatus yksittäisen henkilön omasta voimaeläimestä, daimonista, on tunnettu jo muinaisessa Kreikassa. Šamaanilla ja tietäjällä on joskus kerrottu olevan apueläimiä, toisinaan šamaani itse muuttuu eläimeksi (Siikala, *Suomalainen šamanismi* 195–205). Kokonaisen kansan tai heimon toteemieläin yhdistetään usein erityisesti Amerikan intiaaniheimoihin. Suomalais-karjalaisessa perinteessä karhulla on ollut erityisasema ja tässä on nähty viitteitä myös toteemieläin-ajatuksesta. (Juha Pentikäinen 207–210.) Erilaiset voima- ja sielueläimet ovat melko yleisiä myös fantasiassa.

Molemmissa teoksissa matkaan kohti Pohjolaa liittyy myös Tuonela, vainajien maailma. Kansanrunoudessa Pohjolaa on käytetty myös yhtenä Tuonelan rinnakkaisnimityksenä; Pohjolan ja Tuonelan yhteys on nähty myös *Kalevalassa* (Siikala, *Suomalainen šamanismi*, 263). Jotkut tutkijat ovatkin rinnastaneet Pohjolan ja Tuonelan yhdeksi ja samaksi paikaksi, joka sijaitsee tavallisen maailman ulkopuolella. Tällaista Pohjolaa voidaan kuvata esimerkiksi käsittämällä taivaanranta Pohjolan portiksi ja revontulet Pohjolan käärmeaidaksi (Aspelin 8–16). Kertomukset matkasta vainajien asuinsijoille kuuluvat laajalti tunnettuun kansainväliseen perinteeseen (Siikala, *Suomalainen šamanismi* 250–271.) Matkat kuolleiden maailmaan ovat fantasiakirjallisuudessaakin yleisiä, niitä tehdään paljon myös kotimaisessa fantasiakirjallisuudessa (esim. Leppälahti, ”Kotimaista tuonelamatkailua” 35–40).

Suomalaisten kansanuskomusten mukaan vainajien on ajateltu jatkavan tuonpuoleisessa maailmassa elämäänsä melko lailla samalla tavoin ja samanlaisin tarpein kuin oikeassa elämässään. Vainajien on toisaalta ajateltu asuvan haudoissaan³, toisaalta siirtyvän asumaan erityiseen vainajille varattuun paikkaan. (Harva, *Suomalainen muinaisusko* 488–511.) Vainajien asuinpaikkaa on tavallisimmin nimitetty Tuonelaksi tai Manalaksi. ”Tuonelan tuvalla” tai ”Manalan majalla” on kuitenkin toisinaan selvästi tarkoitettu yksittäistä hautaa, ja joskus Tuonela-nimitystä on käytetty myös hautausmaan merkityksessä. (Krohn 59–65; Tarkka, *Rajarahvaan laulut* 309–310.)

Kalevalassa Väinämöinen käy Tuonelassa etsimässä tietoa. Elävän matka vainajien maille on ikivanha uskomusmotiivi, joka kuuluu šamaanin erityistoimintoihin. Šamaani tekee matkoja tuonpuoleiseen tavallisesti saadakseen sieltä tietoja, joita tavallisessa maailmassa ei ole mahdollista saada. (Siikala, *Suomalainen šamanismi* 250–271.) Kummassakaan tarkasteltavassa teoksessa Tuonelaan ei kuitenkaan matkata etsimään tietoa, vaan se kuuluu välttämättömänä osana matkareittiin. Juha Hannukainen ystävineen yrittää vältellä paikkaa ja kiertää Tuonelan parhaansa mukaan, Roger Repo puolestaan joutuu nimenomaan tekemään matkansa Tuonelassa, johon Pohjolakin kuuluu. Häntä varoitetaan matkasta Pohjolaan samaan tapaan kuin *Kalevalassa* Tuonelaan menijää: ”Monen tiedän sinne aikojen saatossa lähteneen, mutten muista yhdenkään

³ Aikaisemmin arkku varustettiin ainakin jossain määrin kuolemanjälkeistä elämää varten. Arkku saattoi jopa olla talon mallinen ja varustettu ikkunalla. (Tarkka, *Rajarahvaan laulut* 306.) Nykyään arkku on nimenomaan vainajan viimeinen vuode, jossa hän nukkuu ikuista (Jetsu 208–209).

palanneen.” (RR 50.) *Kalevalassa* Tuonen tyttö lausuu Väinämöiselle: ”Parempi sinun olisi/palata omille maille:/äijä [=paljon] on tänne tullehia,/ei paljo palannehia.” (*Kalevala* 16: 269–272.)

Kuolleiden maailman on arveltu sijaitsevan pitkän ja vaivalloisen matkan takana, ”maailman äärellä”. Vainajan matkaa toiseen maailmaan kuvataan melko yksityiskohtaisesti muutamissa itkuvirsissä, joissa kerrotaan altaista veräjistä, Tuonelan porteista ja avaimista, tuonenkoirista, manalan joesta, lautturin tammisesta veneestä ja monista muista matkan vaihteista. (Harva, *Suomalainen muinaisusko*, 510; Honko, ”Itkuvirsirunous” 112–113.)

Kummassakin teoksessa Tuonelassa virtaa joki. Joet ovat ikiaikaisesti toimineet sekä luonnollisina rajoina että kulkureitteinä. Tuonelan virta löytyy *Kalevalastakin*: Väinämöinen ylittää Tuonelan joen Tuonen tytön veneellä, Lemminkäinen rientää Tuonelan joelle ampuakseen sieltä joutsenen. Tuonelan virta on laajasti tunnettu kansanvälinen motiivi (ks. esim. Juha Pentikäinen 262–263). Roger Repo matkaa omalla veneellään pitkin Tuonelan virtaa ja kohtaa maissa monia vainajia, jotka ”elävät” samaan tapaan kuin ennenkin. Kansanuskomuksissa vainajien on kuvattu olevan elävien ihmisten tavoin toisinaan hyvänsävyisiä, toisinaan pahankurisia, välillä loukkaantuvia mutta lepyttävissä (Krohn 41). Myös Revon tapaamista vainajista osa on yksilöllisiä ja persoonallisia. Repo saa kuitenkin kuulla, että vainajat unohtavat entisen elämänsä ja vähitellen hiipuvat pois.

Myös Juha Hannukainen ja Katri Hakala matkaavat kohti Pohjolaa. Koska Pohjolan soturit ovat valloittaneet alueen, joiden kautta heidän oli tarkoitus kulkea, he joutuvat valitsemaan toisen tien, joka kulkee osan matkaa Tuonelan reuna-alueilla. Tuonela itsessään on painostavan liikkumaton ja hämärä, matkaajat haluavat päästä sieltä pois niin pian kuin suinkin. Hannukainen ja Hakala näkevät joutsenveneet (vrt. Tuonelan joutsen), joilla sekä ihmis- että eläinvainajat siirtyvät Tuonelan virtaa pitkin jonnekin sisemmälle Tuonelan maailmaan. He eivät tapaa Tuonelan asukkaita eivätkä näe eläimiä; nähdessään eläviä lintuja he tietävät päässeensä pois Tuonelan alueilta.

Kuolleiden maailmaa on joskus kuvattu käänteiseksi tai vastakohtaiseksi elävien maailmaan verrattuna. Aurinkokin voi kulkea vainajien maailmassa toisin, nousta lännestä ja laskea itään. Kuolleiden maailman käänteisyyden on toisinaan jopa ajateltu menevän niin pitkälle, että aika kulkee siellä takaperin, jolloin vainaja aloittaa vanhuksena ja nuortuu. (Holmberg 24–27). Kansanperinteen tuonpuoleinen on usein ajaton, ikiaikainen (Tarkka, ”Mielikuvitus”). Tuonelan aika voi olla myös syklinen, ilman alkua ja loppua. Roger Repo kohtaa maailmojen erilaisuuden huomattaessaan, että päivällä kuolleet soturit heräävät illalla uuteen elämään kuin mitään ei olisi tapahtunut. Motiivi ajan erilaisesta kulusta tavallisen maailman ulkopuolella on kansainvälinen ja yleisesti tunnettu (Hartland 161–195).

Lopuksi

Molempien käsiteltyjen teosten juonenkulussa voidaan nähdä sekä kansantarinoissa että fantasiassa yleinen juonirakenne, jossa sankari lähtee kotoaan, kohtaa monenlaisia vaaroja ja vaikeuksia ja lopulta tehtävän suoritettuaan palaa kotiin sinne jäädäkseen. Kummankin kirjan lopussa kerronta palaa reaalimaailmaan, vaikka kaikki matkaan osallistujat eivät palaa. *Väinämöisen vyössä* aikaa on reaalimaailmassa kulunut saman verran kuin sekundaarimaailmassa, matkaajat ovat olleet poissa yli vuoden. Yksi ryhmän jäsenistä on menehtynyt matkan aikana, toinen on muuten jäänyt sekundaarimaailmaan. *Kalevalasta* palanneet henkilöhahmot uskovat jäämisen olleen vahinko, mutta lukija voi aavistaa, että kyseisen hahmon oli ehkä tarkoituskin jäädä pysyvästi Kalevalaan.

Sekundaarimaailman monista ennustuksista osa liittyi juuri tähän hahmoon ja hän oli keskeisessä roolissa Louhen voittamisessa. Roger Repo puolestaan tekee sekundaarimaailmassa matkaa useita päiviä, kunnes tekee sankaritekonsa ja saa prinsessansa sekä valtakuntansa. Hänkään ei palaa enää primaarimaailmaan. Kerronta vihjaa, että aikaa on saattanut kulua reaalimaailmassa

vähemmän kuin sekundaarimaailmassa, mutta se ei ole kovin merkityksellistä. Kansanperinteessä matka Tuonelaan on kuulunut šamaanin toimintaan ja *Kalevalassakin* tehdyt Tuonelanmatkat on nähty kaikuina muinaisista šamanistisista uskomuksista. Tarkastelluissa teksteissä matka Tuonelaan on muuttunut osaksi sekundaarimaailmassa tehtävää fantastista matkaa.

Fantasialle on tyypillistä monenlaisten aineiden sulattaminen yhteen ja erityisesti kansanperinteen käyttö. *Kalevala* itsessään ei ole kansanperinnettä, mutta se toimii suomalais-karjalaisten perinneainesten välittäjänä. Tarkastelluissa teksteissä intertekstuaalinen yhteys *Kalevalaan* on tärkeä osa juonirakennetta ja yhteyttä vielä korostetaan tekstin sisällä *Kalevala*-viittauksin.

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Summary in English

In this article I discuss how mythical themes and ideas of *Kalevala* are used as fantasy in two novels (Harri V. Hietikko's *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* (2005) and Mikko Karppi's *Väinämöisen vyö* (2007)). Both of these stories begin as detective stories, but turn into fantasy. In both of the books, the main character makes a journey from the realistic world to the lands of Kalevala and the dangerous Pohjola.

In fantasy, it is very common to put together various materials from different sources, and folklore is one of the most important sources of inspiration. Although *Kalevala* itself is not a collection of folklore as such, it contains folklore texts and ideas. In these novels, the connection with *Kalevala* is an important part of the plot and it is emphasised with several allusions.



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Lectio praecursoria: Constructive Mythopoetics In J. R. R. Tolkien's *Legendarium*

Jyrki Korpua

MA Jyrki Korpua defended his doctoral dissertation Constructive Mythopoetics in J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium on the 13th of November 2015. This essay is a translated and edited version of the lectio praecursoria given by Korpua before the defense. The dissertation is available as an electronic publication in the following address: <http://herkules oulu.fi/isbn9789526209289/isbn9789526209289.pdf>

Keywords: constructive mythopoetics, fantasy, legendarium, mythopoetics, speculative fiction, Tolkien

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John Ronald Reuel Tolkien is the father of modern fantasy. Tolkien was a writer and scholar, a professor at Oxford University and the co-founder of the literary association “The Inklings”. Today Tolkien is known as the writer of *The Lord of the Rings*, the most influential work on the genre. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (352) has called him “the greatest influence within the fantasy genre”. His position in the genre of fantasy literature is monolithic.

In my doctoral dissertation, I discuss constructive mythopoetics in Tolkien's *legendarium*, the logics and elements on which Tolkien's texts and his fantasy world (Arda, and Middle-earth inside it) is constructed. The central focus of the dissertation is on the logics of constructive mythopoetics. In this case, mythopoetics means creative myth-making.¹ The term itself has been connected with authors of fantasy who integrate mythological themes and archetypes into fiction. J. R. R. Tolkien's creative work could be seen as a central example of such practise.

Legendarium, another important term mentioned in the title, refers to Tolkien's writing concerning his fictional fantasy world. Tolkien used the word himself in a letter to Milton Waldman in 1951 (Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* xvii). For me, all Tolkien's texts that deal with Middle-earth, both the legends of Elves (e.g. *The Silmarillion* and *The History of Middle-earth* -series) and the fictional history of the Hobbits (*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*), form a complete and coherent *legendarium*. These texts also function as primary sources for my dissertation.

My research argues for a reading of Tolkien's fiction that shows that it is possible to discern a mythopoetic **code** in Tolkien's *legendarium*. My hypothesis is that Tolkien's mythopoetic fiction aims to be coherent on the levels of languages, myths, and inter- and intratextual background. This coherence can be found throughout the various texts and fragments of Tolkien's fiction. From the cosmogonical creation myth of *The Silmarillion*, to the fairy-story lightness of *The Hobbit* and the

¹ Mythopoetics could be seen as reimagining of myths and mythical situations, for example such constitutive myths as the creation myth or myths of the apocalypse. In my dissertation, I discuss various mythopoetic examples from Tolkien's *legendarium*, for example creation, mortality/immortality, and reimagining of the myth of Atlantis.

quest fantasy of *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien's fiction has its roots in the mythopoetic logics of his theory of creative writing (or *myth-making*). Tolkien is the *sub-creator*; he is creating myths and building his own world. For Tolkien, God is the primary creator, but the author is the (sub-)creator of his own creation.

In my dissertation, I trace the inner timeline of Tolkien's *legendarium*. Starting from the creation of the world, I move on to the long fall and struggle and to the end of the world. When discussing the theme of creation, I focus on the concept of creation on the intratextual level of Tolkien's *legendarium* as well as on Tolkien's aesthetics of creative work. In the end of the dissertation, I turn my attention also to the creative work of the reader.

The theoretical approach of the dissertation is influenced by both Northrop Frye's constructive theory of literature and Benjamin Harshav's theory of constructive poetics. I discuss the creative methods of speculative historical epic and the dichotomies of beginning and end, good and evil, mortality and immortality, spiritual and physical, and visibility and invisibility, as well as how these elements manifest themselves in Tolkien's mythopoetic vision. The structure of Tolkien's constructive mythopoetics is illuminated through the grand concepts of the Creation, the Existence, the Fall and the Struggle.

The great inner story, the mythopoetic code, of Tolkien's *legendarium* begins with music – the Music of the Ainur – played by the divine spirits, the Ainur, made from the creator's thoughts, and executing (at first, it seems) the creator's exact wishes. The timeline of Tolkien's *legendarium* reaches from the beginning of his "cosmos" to its destruction – from start to finish, although this is not exactly evident in his central fictional works. The main popular works, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, portray only a tiny temporal segment of Tolkien's *legendarium*.

The table 1 below demonstrates that the timeline of Tolkien's *legendarium* is linear and (in a way) Biblical. It begins with the creation of the world and ends with its destruction, and hints at an apocalyptic future where everything will be healed and unmarred again. The image reflects my research logic in the dissertation. I begin from the creation of the world and chronologically move on to the long fall and struggle.

Table 1. The Timeline of Tolkien's *Legendarium*

Era	Theme	Active Inhabitants	Source material in the <i>legendarium</i>
Creation	"Arda Unmarred" & The Song of Ainur	Eru Ilúvatar and Ainur (Valar/Maiar)	"Ainulindalë"
Building the World	The First great cosmological battles between Good and Evil	Ainur (Valar/Maiar)	"Valaquenta" and the beginning of "Quenta Silmarillion"
The Fall	"Arda Marred"	Ainur (Valar/Maiar) Elves	"Quenta Silmarillion"
The Struggle	"Arda Marred" and "The Long Defeat"	Elves Men (Hobbits)	"Akallabêth", <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> (<i>The Hobbit</i>)
The End	The Second Music & "Arda Healed"	All	<i>The History of Middle-earth</i> (e.g. <i>Morgoth's Ring</i>)

The table 1 above demonstrates my reading of Tolkien's *legendarium*. The constructive structure of the *legendarium* follows the given order: 1) Creation, 2) Building the World, 3) The Fall, 4) The Struggle, and 5) The End. Thus, it is a coherent cosmological account that starts with the creation of the world and ends with an apocalyptic vision of the end of the world. A quite similar structure can be seen in the Christian *Bible*, where in the Old Testament, God is active and Creation is described in detail. In the Christian New Testament, God's activity is seen through the incarnation of Christ and through the results of Christ's preaching. This is the construct that I discuss in the main chapters of the dissertation.

Chapter two discusses the themes of "The Creation" and "The Existence". The chapter focuses on both the *legendarium's* intratextual creation myth and the built-in cosmology of Tolkien's works, but also on Tolkien's creative methods and aesthetic theory. The creation myth of Tolkien's fantasy world is examined in comparison with Plato's *Timaeus*. The intertextual similarities are as follows: 1) The world is made by a good Creator, and in both cases, the Creator subsequently does not affect the created world directly, but through the actions of his own offspring. 2) Plato's model of two levels has similarities to the cosmology of Tolkien's fantasy world. Most importantly, this comes up concerning the dichotomies between visible and invisible, and physical and spiritual. 3) In Tolkien's cosmology, the world is created from the model of an original vision. So the natural world itself is a copy of the original idea of the world, as it is in Plato's *Timaeus*.

Also, there is a hierarchical structure of living beings, a so-called *scala naturae* or a chain of being, in Tolkien's *legendarium*. In this hierarchical chain of being, where some races and creatures are higher or lower in hierarchy than others, highest is Eru Ilúvatar, the creator god of Middle-earth. After Eru come the Ainur, The Holy Ones. After the spiritual creatures, come the races that Eru had created, which in *The Silmarillion* are called The Children of Ilúvatar. They are Elves and Men. Elves are considered to be higher in the hierarchy than Men because they are created first and resemble more the Ainur. After the Children of Ilúvatar come other intellectual and rational beings in Tolkien's chain of being, such as Hobbits and Dwarves.

Then again, from the internal perspective, the central focus is on Tolkien's aesthetics and Tolkien's creative method: the sub-creation, most evident in his essay *On Fairy-Stories*. Tolkien's aesthetics are seen in the continuum of the tradition of such creative theorists as Sir Philip and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Also, I discuss the question of historical poetics in Tolkien's *legendarium*. Tolkien uses creative methods that can be compared to the methods of historical novels, since Tolkien's intratextual references – references between his own texts – create an illusion of (fictional) older eras. Tolkien uses these methods in a quite humorous way, since Tolkien's *legendarium's* seemingly factual sources are created by the author as historical documents written by for example Elves of Hobbits.

Chapter three focuses on the central themes of "The Fall and the Struggle". There, I discuss the functions of good and evil, and heroic, mythical heroes in the *legendarium*. One of the interesting mythical heroes discussed here is Túrin Turambar, whose character is seen as a re-imagining of Kullervo from Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala*.

My three chosen examples of constructive mythopoeia in Tolkien's *legendarium* are: 1) Númenor as a re-imagined myth of Atlantis, 2) The motif of The Ring, and, 3) familiarisation and defamiliarisation of Myth.

The first example here is Númenor the Fallen, from "the Akallabêth", the fourth part of *The Silmarillion*. Akallabêth is a story about Middle-earth's greatest Human kingdom, Númenor, whose inhabitants after thousands of years grow in power and become proud and forget the morality of their actions. The story tells how the kingdom was destroyed by a divine judgment. There, I consider this re-imagined myth of Atlantis in the light of the overall theme of Tolkien's *legendarium*, as a story of fall from greatness. This seemingly Catholic (and Platonic) view of "the

world of change” – that everything “fades” – could also be seen as the overarching theme of *The Silmarillion* and Tolkien’s *legendarium*.

Secondly, I discuss the myth of the One Ring in Tolkien’s *legendarium*. As a major intertextual field of reference, I discuss the Platonic ring myth, The Ring of Gyges, from the second book of the *Republic*. In Plato’s story, the shepherd Gyges finds a golden ring which makes its user invisible. After gaining the power of invisibility, Gyges loses the morality of his actions. Therefore, Plato’s myth has similarities to Tolkien’s motif of The Ring also on the level of morality. In Tolkien’s *legendarium*, The Ring corrupts everyone who uses it; even the Hobbits, although they prove to be most resilient against its powers.

Thirdly, I turn my attention to this resilient race, The Hobbits. My main point is that Hobbits are characters that the readers can identify with, but, at the same time work are “alien” to the surrounding milieu, the Middle-earth outside the Shire, the idyllic home of the Hobbits.

As a tool to integrate myths and legends for contemporary readers, Tolkien uses “modern” literary devices, such as English language and choosing contemporary protagonists in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In *The Silmarillion*, for example, where the protagonists are harder to find, this familiarising perspective disappears and the book becomes unreadable for the most parts of the reading audience.

The questions of familiarisations (*Heimlich*) and defamiliarisations (*uncanny*, *Das Unheimliche*) become relevant, and it could be researched how these activate the myths for contemporary readers.

That is also the case in Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, where the Hobbit protagonists move from idyllic and homely (*familiar*) milieu of the Shire to the surrounding, sinister world, where they sometimes feel themselves to be strangers.

The Hobbit protagonists could be seen as an answer to the question of familiarisation in Tolkien’s *legendarium*. In *The Hobbit*, the main character Bilbo Baggins resembles “homely”, early middle-aged Englishman living comfortably alone in his bachelor house. Bilbo is living in the idyllic, rural countryside of the Shire, which in close ways echoes English countryside of the 18th or 19th century before the industrial revolution. In the story, Bilbo is forced out from his comfortable livelihood in a dangerous and adventurous quest with wizard Gandalf and the dwarves to claim back the dwarves’ treasure which the evil dragon Smaug has stolen.

In the book, revealingly titled *There and Back Again*, Bilbo Baggins returns to his idyllic home as a changed and transformed character. The idyllic countryside of the Shire resembles England, but the other milieus in the book have older and more mythical appearances. Danger is lurking everywhere, and even if the book is written in a fairy-story mode it has a kind of a medieval tone in its story-telling.

The familiarisation of pre-modern, medieval and mythological myths, locations and milieus is even plainer in *The Lord of the Rings*. The book starts as a sequel to *The Hobbit*, but the tone of writing changes early on to more adult and more epic style. The main protagonist in *The Lord of the Rings* is once again a Hobbit, Frodo Baggins, who starts a dangerous and difficult quest with his fellow hobbits Sam Gamgee, Peregrin “Pippin” Took, and Meriadoc “Merry” Brandybuck. In the book, the four hobbits represent contemporary Englishmen, simplified and caricatured. This way, the reader relates to the unfamiliar surroundings from the view of the Hobbit characters.

As the unfamiliar surroundings and milieus, and Tolkien’s horror elements of beasts, monsters and mythological creatures evoke a defamiliarising effect in the reader, the characters of Hobbits acts as the familiarising elements, or “middlemen”.

I suggest that without the “middle-men” of Hobbits, without those familiarising characters for the contemporary reading audience, J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* would not have become the cornerstone of 20th century fantasy, or any fiction, and Tolkien would not have become the father of fantasy literature that he is today.

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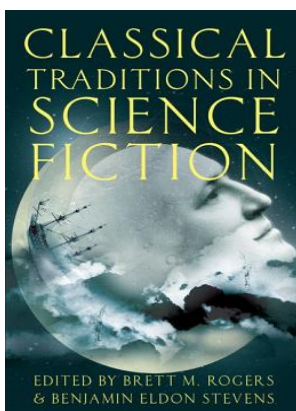
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A Book Review: Brett M. Rogers & Benjamin Eldon Stevens (eds.) –
Classical Traditions in Science Fiction

James Hamby



Brett M. Rogers and Benjamin Eldon Stevens (eds.).
Classical Traditions in Science Fiction. Oxford: Oxford
UP, 2015. ISBN 978-0190228330.

Classical Traditions in Science Fiction, edited by Brett M. Rogers and Benjamin Eldon Stevens, examines the many links that exist between Classical myth, history, and philosophy and science fiction. The scope of this volume is broad, not just in terms of time and genre, but also in epistemological considerations. The essays do not merely contain discussions of direct influences from classical sources intentionally borrowed by producers of science fiction, they also examine questions such as: what constitutes science fiction? Where does the history of science fiction begin? What impulses create science fiction? How do issues and ideas from the ancient past persist in contemporary science fiction and in the popular mind, even when audiences and producers do not know that they are there? In their introduction to the volume “The Past is an Undiscovered Country,” Rogers and Stevens assert that “the classics” are often “made into vivid signifiers *neither* of the ancient past, *nor* even of professional knowledge of antiquity, *but* or a present moment: an advanced post-modern moment marked by a recomposition of past cultural products that is omnivorous” (10). In this way, producers reconstitute material from the past that speaks to our conditions in the present, and in the future.

The first section, “SF’s Rosy-Fingered Dawn,” contains essays that examine the roots of contemporary science fiction in both classical and early modern sources. Moreover, as the editors assert, this section explores the pivotal moments in early modern literary history when medieval allegories became something more modern, and fictional narratives were used by Renaissance writers “to distinguish ‘science’ from ‘religion’” (20). In this way, early modern writers were able to tap into the traditions of the past and recycle archetypal characters, paradigms, settings, and epistemological questions from ancient literature into new material that could speculatively explore the new scientific discoveries of the era. With the advent of the Protestant Reformation, many of the

medieval powers that had censored fiction were now gone, and writers were more free to secularly contemplate the nature of the cosmos, from the moon to the center of the earth, without as much fear of repercussions from authorities. Additionally, many of these speculative fictions began to address moral dilemmas as well—some were intricately connected to issues of scientific inquiry, while others simply used speculative fiction as a veil to explore issues that were already of great importance in the contemporary world, but needed something to displace the criticisms levied at various aspects of society. With this section as a foundation for the rest of the volume, the editors trace the links between ancient literature and modern SF via the seminal speculative texts of the early modern era.

This volume begins, appropriately, with what many consider to be SF's starting point: Johannes Kepler's *Somnium*, a satirical work first published posthumously in 1634 that attacks the idea of a geocentric universe. In this work, Kepler imagines that were there inhabitants on the moon, they might hold the erroneous belief that the moon was the center of the universe, due to their point of view. Clearly, this work supports the findings of Copernicus and challenges the notions of geocentric conservatives, but what interests Dean Swinford most in his chapter, "The Lunar Setting of Johannes Kepler's *Somnium*, Science Fiction's Missing Link," is how Kepler based many of his pioneering SF elements on classical sources. Swinford points out that Kepler was a trailblazer in using "a fictional frame to make a point about the specifics of astronomy" (34) and in envisioning the worlds beyond earth, particularly the moon, as inhabited (35). Yet while these elements are of great consequence to the development of SF, Swinford points out that, in many ways, they were nothing new; rather, they were continuations of narrative traditions found in antiquity. Swinford writes: "While the *Somnium* may be said to inaugurate SF as a modern genre, it is clearly indebted to a classical tradition that employs many of the same tropes that Kepler bends to his scientific thesis, including fictional travel to the fantastic islands of the Western seas and that one 'island' floating above the sea, the moon" (35). In so doing, Kepler's *Somnium* uses narratives from antiquity in a way that anticipates the space-travel SF that is to come in the ensuing centuries.

Swinford cites two sources in particular, Plutarch's *The Face on the Moon* and Lucian's *True History*, as the work's primary classical influences. *True History* contains a story of a journey to outer space with inhabitants on the moon, but Plutarch's work is considered the more influential of the two (35). In *The Face on the Moon*, Plutarch imagines a dialogue amongst several characters representing different philosophical points of view about the moon, some mystical and some scientific. Ultimately, Swinford writes, "the dialogue has as its primary purpose the representation of the moon as something quite mundane" (39), and the text supports the notion that the moon, like the earth, is merely a geometric object, devoid of mystical properties (40). As proof of how important *The Face on the Moon* was to Kepler's thinking, Swinford points out that Kepler desired a full translation of the work printed as an appendix to the *Somnium* (29). However, as much as Kepler desired to promote a scientific view of the moon, Swinford observes that he was never quite able to shed his mystical beliefs about it, and the moon is both "a resting place for souls in transit, and ... a body with mass that obeys physical laws of motion (28). In this way, *Somnium* is a text that looks backwards as well as forwards: backwards to the classical past and forwards to a scientific future.

In the following chapter, "Lucretius, Lucan, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," Jesse Weiner posits that science fiction is "a genre concerned, not only with the speculative possibilities of science, but also with the ethical boundaries of human knowledge" (46) and that in *Frankenstein*, often considered the first SF novel, "works of Greek and Latin literature serve as sources of ethical orientation" (47). Though both Plutarch's *Lives* and the subtitle's allusion to Prometheus figure prominently in the novel, Weiner focuses on two works that have received less critical attention as influences on the novel: Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* and the Erichtho episode of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Weiner argues that Shelley took from *De Rerum Natura* Lucretius's notions of atomism.

Weiner notes that Lucretius defined monstrosity as “discordant assemblages of limbs” and that he furthermore argued “against the existence of mythological monsters on the grounds that such atomistic combinations are prohibited by the laws of nature” (52–53). Not only does Lucretius’s influence ground Frankenstein’s creation as a monster due to its unnatural assemblage of parts, but it also roots the novel in an intellectual tradition that is entirely secular. There are no gods, no spirits, no mystical forces, only a scientist and his unnatural creation struggling with the ethical dilemmas that define their mutual existence. From the Erichtho episode of *Bellum Civile*, Shelley adopts Lucan’s condemnation of necromancy, and Weiner argues that some of the scenes in *Frankenstein* that describe the monster’s ghastliness are borrowed from Lucan. Frankenstein’s monster is then doubly monstrous as defined by these classical authors, both as a combination of disparate parts and as a reanimated corpse.

Frankenstein, written near the nascence of the Industrial Age, presciently captures many of the ethical concerns that the SF of the following centuries will grapple with. Much as with Kepler’s *Somnium*, Weiner observes that “Mary Shelley’s intertextual strategies look backwards, acknowledging several millennia of literary tradition, while the novel she wrote has been credited with establishing a new and distinctly futuristic genre” (73). As such, Weiner concludes, *Frankenstein* fits in with a host of other SF works that peer into the future through the frame of the classical past, which explore both the tensions and the connections between the future and the past (73–74).

Just as *Somnium* and *Frankenstein* do much to replace mystical viewpoints with scientific ones, so too does Jules Verne, as Benjamin Eldon Stevens argues in “Virgin in Jules Verne’s *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.” In this essay, Stevens explores a number of ways in which Verne engages Virgil through direct quotations, allusions, and structural parallels to *The Aeneid* (75). Yet what interests Stevens most is the discrepancy between Aeneas’s journey to Hades and the explorers’ descent through the geologic strata of the earth. Stevens sees the scientific exploration of the center of the earth found in this novel as a metaphor for how the “mere tradition” of the classics were being replaced in the nineteenth century by the “knowledge” of a far more scientific age (75). While Virgil’s hero learned of the future of his people from the shades of people from his own personal past, the heroes in this novel learn of the past through scientific observation. Thus, Stevens argues, Verne envisions “offers an image of the ‘hero’ redefined as modern scientific man” (76). Stevens goes on to write that the “new, materialist definition of ‘knowledge’ excludes the classics entirely, classifying them as mere ‘tradition’” (101). Once again, this early work of SF defines the genre and comments on its contemporary world by eschewing the mystical in favor of the secular and scientific.

The final work of Part I, “Mr. Lucian in Suburbia: Links between the *True History* and *The First Men on the Moon*” by Antony Keen, returns to works that focus on the moon. As with Kepler’s work, Wells’s novel about a voyage to the moon owes a great debt to Lucian’s *True History*. Keen argues that, like Lucian, Wells uses the narrative structure of a fantastic journey to the moon as social criticism, particularly in terms of class criticism (much like Wells uses SF as a vehicle for social critique in *The Time Machine*) and in criticisms of the nature of the British Empire. Keen also produces a list of sequences that draw directly on the incidents Lucian’s text. In addition to Lucian, Keen also briefly discusses other sources in a tradition of literature about fantastic journeys that Wells drew upon for his novel, including authors such as Swift, Milton, Kepler, Cyrano de Bergerac, and others. As the editors note in their introduction to this volume, the essays are arranged in a roughly chronological order. Keen’s essay, then, is a fitting conclusion for the first section, as the essays have progressed from Swinford’s discussion of Kepler conflating mystical and scientific notions of the moon in his *Somnium* to Wells’s description of a journey to the moon that is solidly grounded in scientific speculation (wild speculation, perhaps, but definitely based on scientific musings rather than spiritual impulses). In the long gestational state of modern

SF, from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, Western thought shifted from a mystical/religious view of the cosmos based on tradition to a scientific view based on observation. With the dawn of the twentieth century, SF was now ready to move into a new era, and many works that we now consider to be classics of the genre were made.

Part II, entitled “SF ‘Classics,’” focuses on works created in the 1950s through the 1980s. By this time, the editors note, SF had come into its own as a recognizable genre, and “direct evocation of the classical past” was no longer a primary of many of the authors and directors producing SF (22). So instead of direct quotations and borrowings of plots and themes, many works of SF were influenced by “classical epistemologies,” such as “how Aristotle shapes our ideas about how to produce drama, how Hesiod and Ovid shape our thinking about time,” and other such “transcultural poetics” that frame many of these stories in a setting originally inspired by classical thought but familiar to modern SF audiences.

The first essay of this section, “A Complex Oedipus: The Tragedy of Edward Morbius,” by Gregory S. Bucher, argues that this film, long recognized as a retelling of *The Tempest*, is also, as Bucher puts it, “animated by a Sophoclean heart,” and owes much not only to *Oedipus Rex* but also to Aristotle’s discussion of the tragedy in his *Poetics* (124). Bucher downplays the possible incestuous theme and instead focuses on the hubris of the main character of the film, Morbius. Morbius and his daughter live on a planet where he has discovered a powerful alien machine, yet he does not quite know what it is for. As it turns out, it is a machine that can make thoughts and desires, even deeply suppressed ones, manifest in the physical world. Years earlier, the “id monster” created by Morbius killed all of the other settlers on the planet, sparing only himself and his daughter. In these events, Bucher sees several echoes of Oedipus. Morbius is a man completely confident in his own power to solve a Sphinx-like riddle, yet he is not insightful enough to know his own mind, or to see what is actually a fairly obvious answer to a mystery that has vexed him for years. Thus Morbius, blinded by his pride in his own abilities, brings about his own downfall. With this Oedipus-like focus on hubris, Bucher sees a distinctive Greek influence that blends together with the film’s otherwise Shakespearean bent.

The next essay, “Walter M. Miller, Jr.’s *A Canticle for Leibowitz*, the Great Year, and the Ages of Man” by Erik Grayson, examines Greco-Roman influences on Miller’s novel in terms of theories of time, Greek- and Roman-inspired names, and notions of cultural downfall inspired by a cultural memory of the collapse of the Roman Empire. Though many critics have pointed to the historical, monastic record of the Middle Ages as providing a cultural context for the sense of time in this novel, Grayson argues that “given its decidedly cyclical nature, [the novel’s vision of human history] is actually closer to visions conceived of by the Greek Pythagoreans and Roman Stoics” and articulated by ancient writers such as Hesiod, Plato, and Ovid (146). This time-frame creates a vision of growth and collapse that bears many similarities to Greco-Roman myth and philosophy. Additionally, Grayson posits that the many names which derive from Greek and Latin words, such as “Arkos,” “Fingo,” and “Dr. Cors” (159–60) serve “the dual function of adding nuance to the author’s characterization and ensuring that readers continue to contemplate the book’s relationship to the classical world throughout the text” (160). The presence of these names suggest the persistence of the past into the present, both in our actual human history as well as in this speculative timeline. Finally, the ideas of cultural collapse and resurgence that pervade the novel echo the cultural memory of the rise and fall of Rome, the cycle of Medieval society, and the rise of our own modern world. Through a combination of both overt allusions and subtle narrative framing, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* articulates a vision of human history that is heavily predicated upon the philosophies of the Greco-Roman world.

In a far more subtle way, classical literature also provides a foundation for Frank Herbert’s novel *Dune*. In “Time and Self-Referentiality in the *Iliad* and Frank Herbert’s *Dune*,” Joel P. Christensen asserts that Homer’s classic work serves as an archetypal forerunner for Herbert’s story.

Christensen argues that both the *Iliad* and *Dune* use storytelling to “facilitate the exploration of individual identity and psychology, the examination of social structures, and the search for humankind’s place in the universe” (162). Christensen sees these works as both coming from storytelling traditions that are highly aware of their own epistemological strategies, and which contain a high degree of self-referentiality within their narratives. This self-referentiality affects notions of time within the work, thus conflating past, present, and future, and causing each narrative to contemplate “its own repeatability and, in turn, the consequences of storytelling (especially heroic tales)” (171). Christensen’s essay creates a nice dialogue with Grayson’s, and in tandem these two chapters offer an interesting view of the closely connected natures of both ancient mythological epic and modern SF.

The final essay in this section, “Disability as Rhetorical Trope in Classical Myth and *Blade Runner*” by Rebecca Raphael also focuses more on the cultural literary milieu left to the contemporary world by classical myth rather than direct influence or allusion. In this essay, Raphael examines the relationships between stories in Greco-Roman myths of artificial beings and the Ridley Scott film about androids, *Blade Runner*. In so doing, Raphael analyzes “how artificial beings rhetorically define the human” and what this says about “two phases of Western civilization’s engagement with the idea of artificial life (177). Raphael discusses Donna Haraway’s work on the cyborg, citing her argument that “human-machine hybridity defies the possibility of a unitary origin” thus “destabilize[ing] boundaries between the binaries human/animal, organism/machine, and physical/non-physical. Thus, cyborgs evoke horror” (177).

Raphael contrasts this view, however, with the one found in classical myth, which contains no such horror. One myth Raphael looks at, that of the maidens of Hephaestus, is completely devoid of any dread or angst at their own existence. The maidens are happy servants of the blacksmith god. In much the same way, the bronze warrior Talos from the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes performs his function as a guardian without complaint. However, in both *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and its film version *Blade Runner*, the “Replicants” resent their differences from humans, particularly their status as servants, their short lifespans, and the manipulation of their emotions. Ultimately, Raphael argues the characters in the film “function as cautionary examples of what humans can be, but should not be” and that “[t]he monstrous, disabled, near perfect simulated beings of *Blade Runner* embody the postmodern fear that we have become too completely artificial” (196). In contrasting the different emotional responses to artificial beings in classical and modern literature, Raphael’s article calls to mind one of the chief epistemological concerns raised in *Frankenstein* and in many other SF works: has humanity progressed to a point where we are no longer sure of what precisely makes us human, and have we now created technology that we cannot control?

Part III, “Classics in Space,” has much in common with Part II, except (of course), the works analyzed take place in space. The editors also point out that “the chapters in Part III suggest that such topics as the breakdown of boundaries, utopias and dystopias in society, and hybridities in the human body and indeed in ‘humanity’ are not only ‘science fictional’ but are equally of interest in certain ancient classics” (23). It is only fitting that this volume have a section devoted exclusively to space since so much of SF takes place there, and since it is in many ways the ultimate symbol of endless possibility.

The section begins with “Moral and Mortal in *Star Trek: The Original Series*” by George Kovacs. *Star Trek* is of course one of the most recognizable franchises in all of contemporary SF, and its Utopian vision of the future serves as one of the foundations of its success. Kovacs’s essay insightfully examines how the show’s articulation of the human future was cobbled together by a motley crew of writers working to fulfill producer Gene Roddenberry’s vision. Often racing against the clock, these writers turned to the classical world for storylines for several episodes, including “Plato’s Stepchildren” and “Bread and Circuses.” Yet the episode that Kovacs sees as engaging the

most meaningfully with the classical world is “Who Mourns for Adonais?” In this episode, the crew of the *Enterprise* encounters the Greek gods. The gods, as it turns out, are interstellar beings who visited Earth thousands of years ago, whereupon the people of ancient Greece worshipped them as deities. Eager to be worshipped once again, Apollo attempts to force the crew to worship him as the Greeks once did. However, Kirk, Spock, and McCoy outsmart Apollo and destroy the source of his power. Kovacs sees in Apollo an apt representative of “a number of omnipotent characters in *TOS* who are depicted as emotionally and morally inferior to the mortal protagonists,” and he goes on to say that “[i]n the ethical logic of *TOS*, conditions of immortality and omnipotence, as well as situations of paradise, lead to stagnation (on the individual level, as with Apollo, or the societal, as with the Platonians ...) and therefore a negation of humanity’s natural development” (209). In many ways, this episode articulates Gene Roddenberry’s vision for humanity’s future—one free from superstition and slavery.

While *Star Trek* concerns humanity’s venturing into space, the film *Alien Resurrection* explores issues of homecoming. Brett M. Rogers explores the connection between this film and the *Odyssey* in his excellent essay, “Hybrids and Homecomings in the *Odyssey* and *Alien Resurrection*.” Rogers cleverly compares the journey home of Ellen Ripley to that of Odysseus. Like Odysseus, Ripley has been changed by her journeys, and her homecoming forces her to contemplate who, and even what, she is. As a clone produced from the DNA of the original Ellen Ripley and from the DNA of the Aliens, Ripley’s homecoming is not really a homecoming at all. It is, in fact, the first time she has ever set foot on earth. Rogers sees a parallel in the homecoming of Odysseus, who in his travels to lands inhabited by barbarous peoples and monsters, has undergone a significant amount of change himself. Rogers sees Ripley’s statement, “I’m a stranger here myself” (236) as a pivotal moment in the film. Ripley utters this sentence while staring into the ruins of Paris, and Rogers cites Raz Greenberg’s observation that, now that Ripley’s homecoming has been achieved, she must once again set off on a journey back into human society that brought about an apocalypse on itself (236), thus raising the question of what is the nature of humanity?

The section on space concludes with Vincent Tomasso’s “Classical Antiquity and Western Identity in *Battlestar Galactica*.” *BSG* is a series that contemplates the role of the past in the future. Just as this volume began with authors from the past, such as Kepler, occupying a strange moment in time where mysticism and scientific inquiry are coeval, this series looks forward to a future where ancient gods and even their idols persist into the future. Taking the opposite view espoused by Gene Roddenberry and *Star Trek*, *BSG* considers the beneficial aspects of religion. As Tomasso observes, “myths are indispensable for locating a place where life can continue” and that to break out of the cycle of cultural collapse and destruction, this series suggests that “humanity must embrace a mythic hermeneutic and hybridize its traditions as well as reject the technology that leads to arrogance and decadence” (258). Much like other SF works covered in this volume, *BSG* uses the cultural memory of the collapse of the Roman Empire as a potent reminder of what may be in store for all of humanity on an even grander scale.

The final section, “Ancient Classics for a Future Generation?” looks at more recent SF that consciously recreates the classical world for direct comparison with the present (or near future). The editors assert that these final chapters “round out the volume’s emphasis on links between those seemingly disparate worlds by suggesting that a theme of great importance in modern SF is the capacity of other worlds, whether future, past, or simply alternative, to serve as thought experiments about important or contentious aspects of this world” (23). These last chapters illustrate that SF creators still today look to the classical past for inspiration.

This section begins with Gaël Grobé’s “Revised Iliadic Epiphanies in Dan Simmons’s *Ilium*,” in which Grobé considers scenes from the novel *Ilium* and analyzes, as he says, “its struggle to replace Homeric values and beliefs with new preoccupations valued by modern society,” particularly the “opposition [to] religion and the relationship between men and gods” (264). In this

work, a twenty-first century literary scholar and expert on Homer, Thomas Hockenberry, is cloned thousands of years in the future by technologically-altered superhumans who wish to live the lives of the gods of the *Iliad*. They have cloned him and compel him to observe their recreated mythic universe to ensure its accuracy. Grobé sees the moment of epiphany as the focus point for the epistemological concerns in this novel. In the *Iliad*, gods appear in mysterious epiphanies that were once ambiguous. As an *Iliad* scholar, Hockenberry had always wondered if the epiphanies in that epic were metaphors for characters' own sudden moments of intellectual clarity. With the superhuman "gods," however, the moment of epiphany becomes, as Grobé says, "demystified via technology, ... the tool of a masquerade" (278). With this disillusionment, Hockenberry rebels against the gods, and asserts the concerns of individuality and free will valued by our contemporary age.

In "Refiguring the Roman Empire in *The Hunger Games* Trilogy," Marian Makins explores the ties between the Roman Empire and the world of *The Hunger Games*, as well as our own entertainment culture with its appetite for reality television. Makins points out several elements clearly borrowed from Roman history: the empire, the imperial living lives of opulence at the expense of the provincials whom they ruled, gladiatorial contests, and the concept of "bread and circuses." In an overt allusion to ancient Rome, one of the characters who imparts some of the suppressed knowledge to the main character, Katniss Everdeen, is named Plutarch Heavensbee. He tells Katniss the meaning of the phrase "*panem et circenses*" and gives her an understanding of the socio-economic realities of the empire (304–05). Once again, Rome emerges in a work of SF as a cautionary archetype. Instead of the chaos of collapse, though, we see in *The Hunger Games* the decadence and dehumanization that leads to just such a collapse.

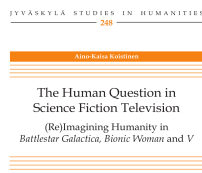
The volume concludes with C. W. Marshall's essay "Jonathan Hickman's *Pax Romana* and the End of Antiquity." In this essay, Marshall considers the different ways in which different audiences react to this time-travel graphic novel. In the work, the Catholic Church in 2053 has been rendered nearly obsolete due to the expansion of Islam. The Church, having discovered time travel, decides to send soldiers with modern weaponry, including nuclear weapons, back in time to help the emperor Constantine to ensure that the Roman Empire never falls, and that the Catholic Church is kept forever in a position of authority. Marshall argues that the recreation of the Roman Catholic world explores the nature of human existence, and leads readers to arrive at different conclusions, depending on what each reader brings with them (320). Ultimately, as Marshall notes, human experiences such as "[f]actionalism, strife, envy, ambition, pride, mercy, doubt, lust and faith all still exist and are shown to shape events at the level of the individual" (325). Hickman's alternative world suggests that no matter how many times civilization fails and rebuilds itself, it will always fall into the same follies.

Interestingly enough, though the genre of science fiction has evolved greatly since the time of Kepler, and though the genre is very often focused on the future, the persistence of classical traditions on science fiction seems to offer no signs of waning. This volume offers valuable insights on a genre that is ever-evolving, and that simultaneously has its roots deeply situated in classical literature.



A Book Review: Aino-Kaisa Koistinen – *The Human Question in Science Fiction Television: (Re)Imagining Humanity in Battlestar Galactica, Bionic Woman and V*

Essi Vatiilo



Koistinen Aino-Kaisa. *The Human Question in Science Fiction Television: (Re)Imagining Humanity in Battlestar Galactica, Bionic Woman and V*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 2015. ISBN 978-951-39-6147-3.

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Science fiction has long been in the business of exploring and reimagining the boundaries of humanity. An abundance of aliens, robots and other non-humans have been pitted against and juxtaposed with humans for various purposes. Often they are simply the necessary monster for the human heroes defeat, but other times the non-human is there to reveal something about humanity. This is also true for the three television series that Aino-Kaisa Koistinen focuses on in her doctoral dissertation *The Human Question in Science Fiction Television: (Re)Imagining Humanity in Battlestar Galactica, Bionic Woman and V*. These television series negotiate the boundaries of humanity in conflicts between humans and non-humans as well as in the blending of human and non-human.

Koistinen focuses on what she calls the human question, by which she means “the changing understandings and meanings of being human” (11). Koistinen approaches this question by looking closely at how humans and non-humans are represented and where the boundaries between the two lie. She explores the way these boundaries are constructed, how they shift and change and how the representations contribute to cultural-historical, political and ethical understandings of humanity. Since she focuses on both the original and re-imagined versions of the series, she is also able to trace developments in the representations across time.

Koistinen’s theoretical framework is threefold. Firstly, she connects performativity to include not just gender but humanity. In order for the non-humans to pass for human, they need to behave in a recognisable and intelligible manner in addition to having the right kind of appearance. Secondly, she uses the concept of grievable, ungrievable and livable lives to analyse how the series question the separation into ‘us’ and ‘them’, into those who will be grieved and those who will not.

As viewers are invited to sympathise and to identify with both sides, the distinction between grievable and ungrievable begins to break down. This also destabilizes the frames of war if the opposing sides cannot be separated, which in turn affects whether the war is perceived as justified. Thirdly, Koistinen complements both these approaches with posthumanism. The fact that non-humans stretch the boundaries of human, also means that they are redefining the future of humanity. This is especially evident in the blending of human and machine into a cyborg, which challenges what it is to be human.

The dissertation is divided in five parts followed by three of the four original articles. After laying out the foundation for her study in the first section, Koistinen goes on to talk about science fiction television in section 2. She situates the three series in historical perspective and shows how the human question has been explored in science fiction television. In section 3 she outlines her theoretical and methodological framework and offers summaries of the four original articles in section 4. In the final section Koistinen draws her conclusions as well as outlines some of the limitations of her study.

In the first article, the only one written in Finnish, Koistinen examines the representation, reproduction and performance of gender in *Battlestar Galactica*. She questions straightforward interpretations and begins to connect gender performance with performing human. The second article focuses on passing for human in *Battlestar Galactica* and *V*. It explores how humanity is constructed, what kind of power structures involved in the process and how humanness can slide between humans and non-humans. The third article (not included) explores the cyborg body in *Bionic Woman* and the way that gender is inextricably linked to being human. The fourth and last article concentrates on the frames of war in *V*, how these frames define grievable and livable lives and how the series both construct and break these frames.

Through careful analysis of the series Koistinen demonstrates how gender and humanity are constructed through performance and how the problems in these representations reveal the norms and conditions of humanity and the contradictions within. She maintains that the series demonstrate and expose the shifting and sliding status of humanity. The very concept of humanity becomes unstable as non-humans succeed in measuring up to humanist ideals while humans fail and as the two cannot always be distinguished from one another. The fact that Koistinen includes both the original and reimagined versions in her analysis, unlike most studies on the series, allows her to analyse how the boundaries of humanity have changed over time and what humanity is defined against in different historical contexts. She is also conscious of the real world implications of her work. When the binaries between human and non-human are questioned, this calls for a re-evaluation of which lives should be counted as grievable and livable. Through her choice of method Koistinen also avoids simply evaluating the series' success or failure in representing gender or humanity, instead examining how these are constructed and then analysing the problematic nature of the stereotypes. Though there is some overlap in the articles, Koistinen provides interesting insights into the *Battlestar Galactica*, *Bionic Woman*, and *V* and into the human question. As Koistinen notes herself, understanding the division between 'us' and 'them' and how the separation is upheld and undermined is very topical in the recent surge of xenophobia and immigration, and this can be only more so today.



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Kirja-arvio: Juha Raipola – *Ihmisen rajoilla. Epävarma tulevaisuus ja ei-inhimilliset toimijuudet* Leena Krohnin Pereat munduksessa

Kaisa Kortekallio



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TAMPEREEN YLIOPISTO

”*Pereat mundus* on loppuista kertova teos, joka ei lopulta paljasta lukijalleen yhtään kerronnallista loppua.” (203.)

Leena Krohnin *Pereat mundus. Romaani eräänlainen* (1998) on monitahoinen teos, eräänlainen tesserakti. Se väreilee tuntemattomien tuhojen laidoilla, tiloissa joissa uusien teknologioiden tuottamat ei-aivan-inhimilliset oliot kauhistuvat omasta ajattelustaan. Se on allegoriaa täynnä, ja samalla se välittää nykyhetken materiaalista todellisuutta tavalla, johon realistinen kirjallisuus harvoin pystyy.

Juha Raipolan väitöskirjatutkimus *Ihmisen rajoilla. Epävarma tulevaisuus ja ei-inhimilliset toimijuudet* Leena Krohnin Pereat munduksessa (2015) käsittelee *Pereat munduksen* rakenteellisia ja temaattisia piirteitä laajan teoriapatterin avulla. Kohdetekstin luonne oikeuttaa lähestymistavan laajuuden: Krohnin teksti ammentaa monista länsimaisten ajattelun suuntauksista ja ottaa aiheikseen niin identiteetin vaihtuvuuden kuin tietoteknologiankin.

Posthumanistinen teoriakudelman

Raipola nimeää keskeisimmäksi lähestymistavakseen deskriptiivisen poetiikan, johon kuuluu tutkittavan teoksen kunnioittaminen teoriaa täydentävänä ja muokkaavana vaikutteena. (22; McHale 64–65.) Krohnin teoksen tutkiminen saakin Raipolan kutsumaan esiin poeettisen periaatteen, jonka hän nimeää vaihtuvan todellisuuden poetiikaksi. Raipolan mukaan vaihtuvan todellisuuden poetiikka pitää sisällään kaksi keskeistä filosofista perusoletusta: ”Ensimmäisen mukaan kokevan yksilön näkökulma todellisuuteen on jatkuvasti avoin muutokselle, ja toisen mukaan koko havainnoitu materiaallinen todellisuus on jatkuvassa muutoksessa” (22–23). Vaihtuvan todellisuuden

poetiikka tuottaa rajoituksistaan tietoista ihmisyyttä, joka toimii jatkuvasti muuttuvassa maailmassa. Raipolan lähestymistapa perustuu myös aiempaan Pirjo Lyytikäisen tekemään Krohn-tutkimukseen, jossa Krohnin tuotanto hahmotetaan hermeneuttiseksi merkitysten etsinnäksi pikemminkin kuin juonelliseksi fiktioksi (24; Lyytikäinen).

Raipola hyödyntää tutkimuksessaan Serenella Iovinin ja Serpil Oppermannin kehrittelemää materiaalsen ekokritiikin viitekehystä, joka sijoittuu osaksi posthumanistista tutkimussuuntausta ja yhteiskunta- ja kulttuuritieteiden materiaalista käännettä. Materiaalinen ekokritiikki siirtää tutkimuksellisen fokuksen luonnosta materiaan. Tämän siirtymän ansiosta ekokriittistä näkökulmaa voidaan soveltaa myös teoksiin, joissa ihmistodellisuudesta erillistä ”luontoa” ei kuvailla lainkaan. (27; Iovino 56.) Materiaalinen ekokritiikki asettuu Raipolan tutkimuksessa pikemminkin orientoivaksi aatteeksi kuin aktiivisesti uutta tulkintaa tuottavaksi työkaluksi. Se perustelee temaattisen fokuksen: ”keskeisimmät tutkimuskysymykset kohdistuvat ihmisen ja ihmisruumiin väistämättömään yhteenkietymiseen muiden toimijuuksien kanssa” (30). Orientaatio nostaa teoksesta esiin ihmisen erillisyyttä ja varmuutta kyseenalaistavia ilmiöitä: synteettisen biologian ja tietotekniikan kehityksestä nousevat ei-inhimilliset älyt, ekologista tasapainoa horjuttavan ympäristökriisin, maailmanlopunpelon ja tulevaisuuden visioinnin moninaiset tavat.

Raipola on kuitenkin myös kriittinen joitakin viitekehyksensä piirteitä kohtaan. Hän kyseenalaistaa Iovinin ja Oppermannin tavan esittää materia lähtökohtaisesti ”kertomuksellisenä”. Materiaan kertomuksellistamisen kritiikki osoittautuu läpi tutkimuksen kantavaksi argumentiksi, joka sitoo yhteen kohdeteoksen temaattiset ja rakenteelliset piirteet. Raipolan tulkinnan mukaan *Pereat mundus* haastaa kohtaamaan ”enemmän kuin inhimillisen todellisuuden” kertomuksellisuutta vastustavat prosessit. ”Inhimillinen tarve ymmärrettäville kertomuksille saa teoksessa vastineensa kompleksisesta luonnontodellisuudesta, joka ei asetu kertomusmuodon edellyttämiin puitteisiin: ihmisruumista ympäröivästä tai ruumiin sisäisestä todellisuudesta ei löydy selkeitä kerronnallisia alkuja tai loppuja tai selkeitä toimijoita, jotka voitaisiin eri tapauksissa nimetä tapahtumien aiheuttajiksi.” (203.) Tällainen tulkinta tekee Raipolan väitöskirjasta todella posthumanistista kertomuksentutkimusta: samalla kun se aktiivisesti tuottaa lisää merkityksiä se myös osoittaa inhimillisen merkityksenannon rajallisuuden.

Näitä suuria linjauksia tukee valikoima kirjallisuudentutkimuksen perinteestä kumpuavia käsitteellisiä työkaluja. *Pereat munduksen* rakenteellista avoimuutta ja jännitteisyyttä Raipola lähestyy novellisikermän käsitteen avulla, ja kiinnittää samalla huomiota kerronnallisten sulkeumien puutteeseen teoksessa. Myös teoksen allegoriset keinot ja mytologiset alluusiot saavat vuorollaan huomion.

Krohnin teoksen suhdetta tieteisfiktioon perinteeseen Raipola lähestyy lähinnä Gary K. Wolfen esittämän ”lajien sekoittumisen” idean avulla. Tieteisfiktioon keskeiset elementit ovat nykyään kutoutuneet myös osaksi muita kirjallisuudenlajeja. (120; Wolfe 27.) Raipola näkee *Pereat munduksen* osana tendenssiä, jossa tieteisfiktiiviset elementit ja ikonit ovat yleistyneet osaksi kulttuurista kenttää ja aikalaiskeskustelua. *Pereat mundus* ei hänen mukaansa asetu osaksi Damien Broderickin määrittelemää tieteisfiktioon megatekstiä, jossa genreteoksen ymmärtäminen vaatii lukijaltaan tiettyjä genretekstien kokonaisuudesta kumpuavia ennakkotietoja ja -taitoja (119; Broderick xiii), eikä se myöskään ”perustu tieteisfiktioon tyypillisille juonirakenteille” (7). Teoksen keskeisinä interteksteinä Raipola mainitsee tieteisfiktioon sijaan tiedekirjoittamisen ja populaarin tulevaisuudentutkimuksen (120–121). Tästä huolimatta Raipola käyttää tieteisfiktioon tutkimuksessa kehitettyjä jäsennyksiä ja käsitteitä aktiivisesti hyväkseen tarkastellessaan teoksen tieteisfiktiovisiä piirteitä.

Sulkeumallisista kertomuksista emergenttiin moninaisuuteen

Raipolan tulkinnassa Krohnin teos asettuu vastahankaan suhteessa transhumanistisen ajattelun teleologisiin visioihin, eppisiin evoluutiokertomuksiin ja apokalyptisiin lopunvisioihin, joissa kaikissa historia ja tulevaisuus järjestyvät ennaltamäärätyn lopun mukaan. Keith Ansell-Pearsonin näkemyksiin tukeutuen Raipola esittää, että transhumanistiset visiot perustuvat luonnonprosessien ja etenkin evoluution antropomorfisointiin. Transhumanistisessa ”suuressa kertomuksessa” evoluutio on paitsi kaikkia luonnonjärjestelmiä koskevaa, myös tavoitteellista: ihmisen kaltaisena toimijana käsitetty evoluutio pyrkii järjestämään ja kontrolloimaan materiaalisen todellisuuden moninaisuutta. Ihmisen rooli on edistää tätä kosmista edistyskertomusta, jonka lopullisena tuloksena ja sankarina on yleensä teknologisesti tuotettu postinhimillinen äly. (73–74; Ansell-Pearson 220–223.)

Pereat munduksessa tekoälyn läsnäolo ei vähennä inhimillisen elämän epävarmuutta tai evolutiivisten prosessien yllättävyyttä, ja transhumanistinen teknotranssendenssi näyttäytyy vain yhtenä keinona vähentää epävarmuuden ja tulevaisuuden uhkakuvien herättämää ahdistusta. Krohnin lähestymistapa muistuttaakin Raipolan mukaan eniten David Rodenin spekulatiivista posthumanismia, joka tunnustaa teknologisesti tuotetut ei-inhimilliset olennot materiaalisena mahdollisuutena, mutta ei ota kantaa siihen, pitäisikö niitä tarkoituksellisesti luoda. (78, alaviite; Roden.)

Sulkeumien ja kertomuksellistamisen vaihtoehtona on Raipolan tulkinnassa emergenssin periaate, johon monet *Pereat munduksen* käsitteellisistä jäsenyksistä palautuvat. Niin ihmisen kuin tekoälynkin tietoisuus saa selityksensä materian emergentistä itseorganisoiuvuudesta, ja niin historia kuin evoluutiokin kehittyvät kohti ennalta tuntemattomia, mahdollisesti tuhoisia tulevaisuuksia. (83–88.) Tutkimuksensa päätöskappaleessa Raipola korostaa, että *Pereat mundus* alleviivaa ”jatkuvaa näkökulmanmuutosten tarpeellisuutta, todellisuuden paradoksaalisuutta ja kertomuksiin sisältyviä aukkoja” (203).

Enemmän kuin inhimillinen teksti?

Teoreettisten vaikutteiden moninaisuudesta huolimatta Raipolan tutkimuksen tyyli on varma, täsmällinen ja harkitseva. Hän perustelee kärsivällisesti jokaisen käyttämänsä käsitteen tarpeellisuuden. Tämä harkitsevaisuus on tervetullut osoitus siitä, että posthumanistinen tutkimus voi kyseenalaistaa humanistisen tutkimuksen perinnettä sysäämättä syrjään sen arvokkaita puolia. Raipolan tutkimusotteessa korostuukin jatkuvuus katkoksen sijaan. Tämä näkyy myös suhteessa kohdetekstiin: Raipola jäljittää uskollisesti Krohnin merkitsemiä polkuja, selvittäen miten ne on poljettu ja missä ne leikkaavat toisiaan.

Tutkijapersoonana Raipola asettuu tekstinsä taustalle. Hän häivyttää kirjoittavan ja lukevan ruumiinsa kuin Krohn monien Håkan-henkilöhahmojensa yksilöllisyyden. Tämä ratkaisu on toki omiaan korostamaan krohnilaista näkökulmaa, jossa ”yksityishenkilöiden afäärit” eivät ole kiinnostavia ei-inhimillisen todellisuuden ymmärtämisen kannalta, ja jossa persoonallinen elämä on parhaimmillaankin sattumien suosta nousevaa kuhinaa. Raipolan valinta on perusteltu, ja akateemisessa ekosysteemissä selviytymisen kannalta se on varmasti myös viisas. Kuitenkin Raipolan valinta – yhdessä tutkimuksen temaattisen fokuksen kanssa – vahvistaa oletusta tekstuaalisen merkityksen ja materiaalisen todellisuuden välisestä kuilusta. Materiaalinen käänne kutsuu tekemään radikaalimpaa posthumanistista tutkimusta, jossa ei-inhimilliset toimijuudet vaikuttavat myös tutkijassa ja tutkimuksen tekstissä.

Yksi posthumanistisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen kiinnostavimmista mahdollisuuksista on tekstin ja kertomusten uudelleenjäsenitys osaksi enemmän kuin inhimillistä todellisuutta. Voidaan kysyä, Karoliina Lummaan (esim. 2010, 2013) tapaan, mitä ei-ihmiset tekevät tekstile.

Osallistuvatko linnut, koneelliset älyt, luonnonvalinnan prosessit ja gammasäteily tekstin merkitysten syntyyn? Millaisia jälkiä ne painavat lukeviin ja kirjoittaviin ihmiskehoihin? Onko materiaalisessa ekokritiikissä tilaa merkityksiä tuottaville ei-inhimillisille toimijuuksille – ja jos on, millä tavalla niiden kanssa kirjoitetaan?

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“Reconfiguring Human and Non-Human: Texts, Images and Beyond” – A Seminar in Jyväskylä Demonstrates the Growing Interest in Anthropocene

Jani Ylönen

The relevance of the seminar *Reconfiguring Human and Non-Human: Texts, Images and Beyond*, which was held in Jyväskylä from October 29th to 30th, was demonstrated by the influx of participants. As the chairs of the organizing committee, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen and Essi Varis, stated in their opening words, the organizers expected around 20 to 30 participants, but the number of guests quickly rose to 70. During the two-day seminar these guests presented a total of 39 papers ranging from literary studies to games and bioarts. As the chairs summarized, the seminar was to discuss many of the complex issues related to our era, which is called the Anthropocene, such as what is humanity, what is not, and how does dehumanization operate; all topical questions for our times.

Topicality was present from the first paper by one of the keynote speakers, Dr Robert McKay, who gave a thorough reading of Michael Faber’s *Under the Skin*. McKay discussed, among other things, the allegory of the meat industry and its effects presented in the novel and examined the gothic animal politics in it. As the paper’s commentator Kaisa Kortekallio noted, the topic was especially relevant in Finland, as just three days earlier the Finnish investigative television program MOT had shown a video depicting how the meat industry not only dehumanized the animals, but also had a similar effect on the people working in it.

After the key note and a coffee break those guests not presenting a papers themselves had to choose from two parallel sessions, as was to be for the remaining part of the seminar. One of the first sessions discussed the borders of human life with two fairly different topics. The first by Tatiana Novikova discussed the thoughts and discourses connected to when life begins with the focus on foetus, while the second by Marjut Puhakka discussed the definitions of those that have died yet live, the undead, or zombies to be more precise.

After a lunch break the parallel session (Re)Writing Gender and Colonialism hosted presenters from what might be categorized as Anglican tradition with presenters from England, India, Australia, and South-Africa. Once again the session had a topical note as especially Lara Buxbaum’s discussion of xenophobia in South African fiction had parallels with the discourse coursing through Europe, and indeed Finland, due to the current refugee situation.

The next and final parallel session for the day revolved around the possibilities of posthuman literature with analyses and a look into what makes literature posthuman – for example, what kind of new foci and literary subjects it can contain. The session included a rare analysis of Finnish literature in the otherwise internationally inclined seminar as Laura Piippo discussed Jaakko Yli-Juonikas’ confounding *Neuromaani*. After the third session the guests were quite ready for some more informal entertainment in the form of cocktails and dinner.

The second and final day began with the second keynote speech given by Erich Berger, director of The Finnish Bioart Society. Berger introduced the audience both to the interest the

society shares with many of the topics discussed the day before and the similar questions raised by their art, such as how do we perceive nature and what do we recognize as life or as unnatural. The commentator Annika Waenerberg added a historical perspective into how art has approached nature and the unnatural providing, together with Berger, a look into how the relationship has evolved with cultural development. Interesting, if not unique, comparisons included how nature has been placed on a pedestal for political reasons similarly as patriarchy has done to women.

Day two's parallel sessions discussed similar questions as the previous day's, but in a different context, whether more popular or even in application. The first parallel session discussed fantasy races throughout history, from medieval literature to contemporary mass-roleplaying games. The races discussed ranged from fairies, hobbits and dragons to orcs, but all discussed from the viewpoint of the cultural constructions behind the evolution of the races. Mika Lopenen, for example, examined how orcs to this day carry tropes from colonialist literature and, therefore, 19th century race theory.

In the overall fifth session a new Finnish school was born, at least according to chair Essi Varis, when three scholars joined to discuss the limits of narrative agency. The session began with the most theoretical paper by Juha Raipola who discussed narrative agency and matter through the example of an ambulocetus named Alfred, followed by two presentations analysing literature from similar theoretical approaches.

The final session took a step away from literature, art, and theory to analyse the application of posthuman technology. Markus Spöhler discussed cochlear implants which can be used to simulate hearing to the deaf, while Hana Porketová discussed guide dogs and Raune Frankjaer presented an art project concerned with communicating with bamboo sticks reacting to physical stimulus. These finishing touches to the seminar provided interesting insights into how technology is both changing and redefining how we approach human communication and also offers possibilities to communicate beyond the sphere of what is traditionally considered human.

After the final sessions guests were invited to celebrate the dvd release of the documentary *Finno-Ugric Guardian Spirits and Animal Mothers: Pohjola Mythology and Ecological Knowledge* by Kirre Koivunen. However, a part of the participants decided to leave straight after the enlightening seminar. Overall, the event gathered an international crowd comprised of both young scholars looking for their own path amidst the topical questions on definitions of human and non-human, and also seasoned ones who had reconfigured their views throughout their longer careers, but had found themselves drawn to similar topics. The seminar, which was praised for its organization and attention to detail throughout, offered opportunities for these groups to mingle in the hospitable if cold and dark late-November Finland.

Rumours tell that some of the more ambitious organizers are already thinking about a follow-up seminar.