

FROM THE SUBLIME TO DUENDE: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY ON THE  
AESTHETICS OF ARTISTIC TRANSCENDENCE

A Thesis by

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The following faculty have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in English.

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Mary Waters, Committee Chair

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## DEDICATION

To my family, who now knows more about duende than they ever cared to know.

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## ABSTRACT

For centuries, artists have used their works as a means of communication. Such communication can, at times, connect artist and audience in a unique experience which defies barriers of both language and culture. Although artists have written about this experience--referred to here as “artistic transcendence” or “artistic transport”--since classical times, no word seemed able to encompass its meaning until Longinus used the word “sublime” to describe it. The concept has since undergone several reinterpretations, beginning with the additions by Joseph Addison in the eighteenth century, and continuing to the present day in which the word remains subjective and its uses diverse. Consequently, the notion of artistic transport now requires a new definition--one which embraces both the classical and eighteenth-century notions, yet also incorporates a contemporary understanding of the concept. This thesis submits that the Spanish word duende not only fulfills, but exceeds these requirements. Both the sublime and duende contain elements of a struggle between artist and art, an ability to elevate both artist and audience to a higher realm, and shared roots in the classical notion of artistic transport.

Using primary texts from Gorgias’ “Encomium of Helen” to Lorca’s “Play and Theory of the Duende,” this thesis establishes a connection between the classical notion of artistic transport, the eighteenth-century understanding of the sublime, and the twentieth-century concept of duende. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates how duende, which contains both historical and contemporary connotations, represents the modern sublime both in works of art as well as in the artistic process itself.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

“Art is the feeling materialized, incarnated, sculpted, written with skill and technique. . . . When the human spirit undergoes a sublime and free period, accompanied by a superior technique, then we will refer to this period as a Golden Art Age, like art in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”<sup>1</sup>

When one reads a poem which elicits a profound level of understanding, stands before any scene which causes simultaneous reactions of excitement and fear, or hears a song--or portion of a song--which sends chills up and down the spine, one experiences the sublime. One likewise experiences duende. In his essay “Play and Theory of the Duende,” Federico García Lorca describes a power (duende) which “[every] . . . artist” experiences as he “climbs each step in the tower of his perfection” (50). Similarly, Osbert Burdett, in “Blake and the Sublime,” states that “[William] Blake was . . . ever aspiring to an unobtainable height,” and that “[the] search for this height is the character of . . . the sublime” (192). Duende, a twentieth-century concept, and “the sublime,” a notion first introduced by Longinus in the first century C.E. and later revived in the eighteenth century, have many similarities. Both contain elements of a struggle between artist and art, an ability to raise both artist and audience to a higher realm, and roots in the classical notion of artistic transport. The connections between the sublime and duende tie both concepts back to their classical roots and project the ideas they have come to define forward into future translations. Furthermore, with historical and contemporary connotations that connect it to the idea of transport in both art and the artistic process, duende offers itself as a twentieth-century version of the sublime.

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<sup>1</sup> Jose Manuel Merello. [www.merello.com/21st\\_century\\_art\\_painting.html](http://www.merello.com/21st_century_art_painting.html)

## CHAPTER TWO

### BEAUTY AND THE NOTION OF ARTISTIC TRANSPORT

Since long before the rise of the Greek Sophists during the classical period of rhetoric, mankind has used speech as a tool—a means of persuasion. While initially rhetoricians used their ability to persuade for legal arguments, eventually they raised persuasion to an art form, with Gorgias of Leontini and other Sophists traveling from town to town teaching others the art of influence. Master rhetoricians could not only convince audiences through argument, they could also keep them entertained. Indeed, in “Encomium of Helen,” Gorgias calls speech “a powerful master,” and claims that “it can stop fear, relieve pain, create joy, and increase pity.” He claims that “to tell those who know something they know carries conviction, but does not bring pleasure” (31). In The Art of Rhetoric, Aristotle shares Gorgias’ ideas on rhetoric: “Rhetoric,” he claims, “may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever” (15). Aristotle further maintains that “an orator persuades” when he “[rouses his audience] to emotion by his speech” (17). Speech, then, became more about the art of performance than about one’s ability to argue a point well. A good orator could stir the audience’s emotions, exciting fervor in order to persuade.

The manipulation of listeners’ passions, and the ensuing transport effect, carried over into literature as well. Gorgias calls poetry “speech . . . with meter,” and claims it can cause “fearful shuddering, a tearful pity, and a grieving desire.” He furthermore states that through poetry, “the soul feels its own feelings for good and bad fortune in the affairs and lives of others” (31, 32). In fact, the Sophists used poetry and its impact to instruct their pupils on the art of persuasion (Classical Literary Criticism xxii). Literature, then, with its inherent power to influence, could, like speech, elevate an audience to new heights.

Plato, although opposed to the use of most poetry, agreed it had irresistible powers. In the introduction of Classical Literary Criticism, Penelope Murray states that Plato “[was] deeply imbued with poetry, and deeply attracted to it, yet determined to resist its spell” (xxiii). Indeed, in Book II of The Republic Plato contends that the young and uneducated “lack discrimination” and might therefore give in to the powerful emotions roused by poetry (50). Consequently, Plato believed that poets should write only that which leads to moral improvement; they should aspire to the greatness of God (55). Poetry—and literature in general—had a powerful influence that even its critics acknowledged. Hence Plato’s aversion to words written for reasons other than pure instruction.

Plato’s opposition to literature of the imagination led directly to the concept of taste in writing and art. Murray states that “Plato was the first thinker to formulate major questions about the function and role of art in society, and his writings on poetry, music, and the visual arts are fundamental texts in the history of Western aesthetics” (xxiv). For Plato, “good use of language, harmony, grace, and rhythm all depend on goodness of character.” A beautiful mental character, along with physical beauty, is consistent with beauty of the mind (61). In Book III of The Republic Glaucon asks, ““And the more beautiful a thing is, the more lovable it is?”” and Socrates replies, ““Naturally”” (63). Glaucon and Socrates’ discussion exemplifies Plato’s theories on beauty and taste.

Plato further develops the ideas of love and beauty in The Symposium. While he focuses primarily on the subject of love, he also introduces beauty as the object of love. Diotima, a character in The Symposium, offers Socrates her ideas on how to love beauty: ““The true follower,”” she contends, ““must begin, as a young man, with the pursuit of physical beauty. . . . [He] should be attracted, physically, to one individual.”” After this step, one must understand that

one body shares physical beauty with other bodies. Diotima then introduces the next stage, claiming that one must “put a higher value on mental than on physical beauty.” This allows the pupil to transcend the physical realm and continue on to the intellectual stage where he learns to appreciate “the beauty of customs and institutions.” After then learning the beauty of knowledge, one eventually experiences beauty itself, “a beauty of a breathtaking nature,” which “exists for all time, by itself and with itself, unique” (210-211). Plato believed humans could not access this ideal beauty on their own; they could only aspire to it. In his mind, all earthly endeavors merely mimicked the perfect beauty in Heaven, and poets could only represent this ideal.

Other philosophers, while assenting to Plato’s theory of divine beauty, moved beyond the notion of art in relation to the divine, and focused instead on writing for one’s audience. Aristotle, for example, maintained that “it is not the poet’s province to relate such things as have actually happened, but such as might have happened--such as are possible, according either to probable or necessary consequence” (Poetics 20). A poet, he believed, should relate life as he sees it, as long as he creates a plausible story. Horace likewise veered away from the notion of art in relation to the divine, and called instead for art that instructs and delights its audience. In regards to poetry, for example, Horace claimed that “it is not enough for poetry to be beautiful; it must also be pleasing and lead the hearer’s mind wherever it will” (Ars Poetica 126). Art becomes beautiful, he avowed, when it guides its audience on an inward journey. While Plato called upon artists to lead audiences towards the divine, Aristotle and Horace searched for a transport inward--towards one’s soul. If an idea of beauty can exist in one’s mind, as Plato maintained, certainly the metaphysical effects of literature and other arts could transport one to a

realm of beauty much like Plato's ideal realm. The attainment of this realm through artistic transcendence became the goal of future artists.

The Neo-Platonists, led by Plotinus, likewise asserted that art could, in fact, function as the link between the physical and spiritual worlds. Influenced by the early Christians, Plotinus, in his Eighth Tractate On the Intellectual Beauty, stated that artists who could "attain to the vision of the Intellectual Beauty and [grasp] the beauty of the Authentic Intellect will be able also to come to understand the Father" (174). Neo-Platonists, then, endeavored to discover "how the Beauty of the divine Intellect and of the Intellectual Cosmos may be revealed to contemplation" (Plotinus 174). Creating a direct line from the arts to Plato's ideal realm, the Neo-Platonists revealed how art, by creating the inner transport effect which Aristotle and Horace spoke of, could actually lead one to true beauty. This combination created the aesthetic value that later became known as the sublime.

In the Middle Ages, the concept of translation of the divine through literature led to attempts at using biblical texts to explain the divine. St. Thomas Aquinas, who sought to reconcile the use of figurative language with his belief that language could lead to divine truth, introduced the idea of varied levels of interpretation. In Summa Theologica, Aquinas asserts that the Bible contains "figures taken from corporeal things, in order that thereby even the simple who are unable by themselves to grasp intellectual things may be able to understand it" (244). A "simple" reader may understand the Bible literally, while others may have the ability to discover meanings on allegorical, moral, or anagogical levels. Dante Alighieri, in Book II of Il Convivio, calls the anagogical meaning "beyond the senses," and states that "this occurs when a scripture is expounded in a spiritual sense which . . . signifies by means of the things signified a part of the supernal things of eternal glory" (250). Those who reach the anagogical level of interpretation

come closest to translating the divine. While previous philosophers had connected art to the ability to channel the divine, Aquinas and Dante asserted that humans could possess the ability to translate the divine, a concept which made Plato's ideal realm accessible by some, and posited the notion that those with access could become translators for those without the necessary interpretive skills.

For Giovanni Boccaccio, poets seemed the most capable of such translation. In Book 14 of Genealogy of the Gentile Gods, Boccaccio calls poetry "a sort of fervid and exquisite invention" and asserts that "[it] proceeds from the bosom of God," and that "poets have always been the rarest of men" (258). Furthermore, in defending poetry despite its hidden meanings, Boccaccio contends that "[such] majesty and dignity are not intended to hinder those who wish to understand, but rather propose a delightful task, and are designed to enhance the reader's pleasure." One must "read . . . persevere . . . sit up nights . . . inquire, and exert the utmost power of [one's] mind" in order to "find that clear which at first looked dark" (262). Even those with the ability to transcend the literal meaning of a work must still make a concerted effort to fully engage the anagogical interpretation. Boccaccio applies the same notion of divine revelation to non-biblical works, moving the concept of artistic transport back into the secular realm.

Sir Philip Sidney likewise saw poetry as a means to the divine. In An Apology for Poetry (1580-81), Sidney points out that "[among] the Romans a poet was called *vates* [a prophet or "diviner"] . . . so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge" (329). Poets, then, could not only understand the anagogical, but, by touching readers through their words, they could interpret it for others as well. Thus poets became the translators of the divine, able both to access this realm, and to transport others there.

In the classical era, the idea of artistic transport seemed tied to traditional concepts of beauty. Speakers or artists could elevate audiences by tapping into commonly-held beliefs of what constituted beauty. In Plato's Symposium, for example, Agathon calls Eros "the most beautiful" god, describing him as "delicate . . . very supple . . . [and] well-proportioned" (196). With concepts of beauty attached to gods such as Eros, Plato's theory of a beauty which exists in an ideal realm seems reasonable. If beauty means a level of perfection that only gods could attain, then ideal beauty, towards which humans could only aspire, makes sense. As Plato's ideas gave way to concepts of a beauty of the mind, however, the aesthetic began to change. Beauty came to represent a state, not of perfection, but of satisfaction—a satisfaction connected more to the world of nature than to a celestial world. Hence, Plato's beauty of perfection yielded to another form of the aesthetic known as the sublime.

Longinus first introduced the theory of the sublime aesthetic in On Sublimity. "Real sublimity," he maintains, "is difficult or rather impossible to resist, and makes a strong and ineffaceable impression on the memory" (139). Longinus seems, at first, to concur with the traditional notion of artistic transport. His thoughts on sublimity, however, suggest a more powerful force, one tied more to the world of nature, and thus more accessible to man. He asserts that, "as by some physical law, we admire, not surely the little streams . . . but Nile, or Tiber, or Rhine, and far more than all, Ocean; nor are we awed by this little flame of our kindling . . . more than by those heavenly bodies . . . nor think it more marvellous than the craters of Etna, whose eruptions bear up stones and entire masses" (Longinus on the Sublime 65-66). The philosophers of the Middle Ages, while they do not use the word sublime, seem to adhere more to Longinus' theory of transport than to those of his colleagues. While previously authors referred to the

sublime in context with the aesthetic of beauty, eventually the two words came to represent vastly different concepts.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE SUBLIME: FROM TRANSPORT TO TRANSLATION

In On Sublimity, Longinus states that “sublimity raises us towards the spiritual greatness of god. Freedom from error does indeed save us from blame, but it is only greatness that wins admiration” (152). Longinus’ inclusion of admiration, anticipating the separation of the sublime from the classical notion of beauty which Joseph Addison eventually realizes in the eighteenth century, advances the development of the sublime.

The word sublime, which comes to modern English via Middle English, the Middle French sublimier, Medieval Latin sublimare, meaning “to refine,” and finally from the Latin sublimus, “to elevate,” contains meanings as a transitive verb, an intransitive verb, and an adjective. As a transitive verb (from sublimier and sublimare), it can mean “to elevate or exalt especially in dignity or honor; to render finer (as in purity or excellence); [or] to convert (something inferior) into something of higher worth.” As an adjective, coming from the Latin sublimus, meaning “literally, high [or] elevated,” the word takes on the definition of “lofty, grand, or exalted in thought, expression, or manner.” Additionally, sublime can mean “tending to inspire awe usually because of elevated quality (as of beauty, nobility, or grandeur) or transcendent excellence” (“Sublime,” Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary). These elements of refinement and awe, of transcendent excellence, grandeur and elevation, hark back to the classical notion of transport. In this sense the word is often used as a noun--the form in which it will most often appear throughout this thesis. The sublime, then, represents the best of both unrefined greatness and that which pleases sensually.

Longinus expounds upon this definition: Using Horace and Aristotle’s theories of self-transport, he combines nature and literature, and intensifies the notion of danger attached to the

sublime. “Grandeur,” he asserts, “is particularly dangerous when left on its own, unaccompanied by knowledge.” He further states that “the very fact that some things in literature depend on nature alone can itself be learned only from art,” and maintains that while “grandeur produces ecstasy . . . in the hearer . . . [sublimity] . . . produced at the right moment, tears everything up like a whirlwind” (139,138). Longinus’ theory demonstrates that neither perfect beauty (whether in nature or in art), nor random force alone can transport one to an inward journey. Moreover, his ideas firmly establish the sublime as an aesthetic principle.

The Longinian theory, which had remained virtually unchanged for centuries, became more widely accessible when translated by Nicolas Boileau in 1674. The resurgence of the sublime created renewed interest, and in the early eighteenth century Joseph Addison, writing on the sublime for The Spectator in June of 1712, assigned the characteristics of awe and vastness to the concept. “Greatness,” he asserts, consists of more than just an object’s size. Rather, “the largeness of a whole view, considered as one entire piece” defines greatness, which includes “an open champian country, a vast uncultivated desert . . . huge heaps of mountains, high rocks and precipices, or a wide expanse of waters.” The sublime exists, contends Addison, “where we are not struck with the novelty or beauty of the sight, but with that rude link of magnificence” (423-24). Completely separating the sublime from the concept of beauty, Addison classifies beauty as a more refined aesthetic, and defines as sublime only those sights which strike the viewer with awe. Divorced from beauty, the sublime now relied almost entirely on the idea of transport. While Neoclassical<sup>2</sup> writers, fettered with set rules of language and style, clung to the classical notion of the sublime as intricately connected with beauty, Addison envisioned a sublime

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<sup>2</sup> “Neoclassicism: A revival of classical aesthetics and forms, esp. in art, architecture, or music.” (The American Heritage Dictionary 569)

separate from such tranquility. Future developments soon turned the tide in Addison's favor, allowing for an even further separation of beauty and the sublime.

Scientific advancements that had taken place in the seventeenth century helped create the aspects of vastness and awe now ascribed to the sublime. The first high-powered telescope, for example, allowed the world to look beyond itself for the first time, and new discoveries within the expanding universe awakened competing emotions of both wonder and fear. Mankind now encountered sights which eluded words, and the mixture of terror and excitement these spectacles aroused required a new mode of expression. Longinus' Peri Hupsous, as translated by Boileau, "provided a name for [the expression]" (Albrecht The Sublime Pleasures of Tragedy 3). The new sublime came to mean a splendor which also included a sense of mystery, fear, or uncertainty, emotions common in Europe in the 1700's--a period marked by numerous innovations in the areas of agriculture, science and philosophy. Radical changes in political thought spawned the Enlightenment, an eighteenth-century movement which cultivated "enlightened" thinkers such as Voltaire, Diderot, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who challenged traditional teachings by appealing to human reason. Ideological shifts away from institutions like the Church, the state, and the monarchy, created a new brand of philosophy in which the human being took center stage. Consequently, the meaning of the sublime experienced yet another transformation.

This alteration, however, took place within the context of mankind's search for meaning in an ever-changing world. In The Age of Enlightenment, Isaiah Berlin states, "Philosophical problems arise when men ask questions of themselves or of others" (11). In another book by the same title, Lester Crocker suggests that theorists of the eighteenth century pondered such questions as, "What is the quality of human nature? What kind of life is man destined to live?"

[and] What is his place in the ‘creation’?” (The Age of Enlightenment 31). With advances in medicine, industry, and agriculture, and the growing prosperity which these advances created, such questions became commonplace.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his Discourse on Inequality, sought answers through an examination of how progress had affected mankind. Regarding the difference between man and animal, he contends that “the faculty of making progress” separates man from beast. “[The] same cause which prevents savages from using their reason,” he maintains, “also prevents them from making abusive use of their faculties.” “The social man,” on the other hand, “has not a moment of relaxation,” for “after having devoured much treasure and ruined many men, [he] will end up by cutting everyone’s throat until he is the sole master of the universe.” “What could have depraved him to such a degree,” Rousseau asks, “except the . . . progress he has made, and the knowledge he has acquired?” (38, 39, 41, 43, 44). Progress, he contends--and the bounty that comes with it--has caused a host of problems for mankind. The animals and uncivilized man have fewer problems because they have not progressed enough to know that they lack anything. Their lives, free from the constant need to acquire more--wealth, power, prestige--contain less stress, more free time, and consequently, less evil. Nevertheless, Rousseau claims that man can, in fact, repair the problems that progress has caused by “[respecting] the sacred links of the societies to which [he belongs,] [loving his] fellow men and [serving] them with all [his] power [, and] scrupulously [obeying] the laws” (44-45). Mankind can cure many of its ailments simply by practicing common courtesy and obeying laws, while at the same time avoiding blind obedience.

This rational approach, commonly referred to as the use of “reason” in the eighteenth century, pervaded many of the philosophers’ writings. In A Treatise of Human Nature, for

example, David Hume explores the effect (or lack thereof) that reason had upon the passions: “Nothing can oppose or retard the impulse of passion but a contrary impulse. . . . Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them” (125). Reason, Hume asserts, cannot control human passions, nor should it. Furthermore, he maintains that the two can coexist peacefully: “[Nothing] can be contrary to truth or reason, except what has a reference to it, and as the judgments of our understanding only have this reference, it must follow that passions can be contrary to reason only so far as they are accompanied with some judgment or opinion” (125). Introducing the subject of judgment in relation to passion and reason, Hume likewise introduces the criterion of taste to the world of enlightenment.

The concepts of reason and taste which Rousseau and Hume refer to belong to a period known as the Age of Reason. Beginning around 1650, and lasting until the start of the nineteenth century, the Age of Reason made significant contributions to the Enlightenment. In his book The Age of Reason, Louis Snyder calls this era “a great intellectual revolution that gave the modern mind its temper and spirit.” Mankind, “rejecting medieval theology as the final authority, now sought to interpret the universe, the world, and himself in terms of reason or logical analysis” (7). No longer restricted in their thinking by Church principles or firm tenets governing the measurement of taste, philosophers began to examine how modern man reasoned, sensed, and interacted with the world around him. Such unfettered reflection, and the questions it produced, broadened intellectual horizons. Consequently, the rules of literature began to ease, and the Neoclassical era gave way to the burgeoning freedoms of the Age of Enlightenment.

In A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, Edmund Burke posits ideas which exemplify the changing boundaries of the period. Maintaining

that mankind shares a common basis for judging taste, he asserts, “There is in all men a sufficient remembrance of the original natural causes of pleasure. . . . Thus the pleasure of all the senses . . . is the same in all” (542-43). With the notion that every person has the ability to rank new experiences according to a system built upon previous experiences, Burke expounds upon Hume’s idea of taste and attributes it to mankind as a whole. Furthermore, Burke’s contentions imply that, along with individual taste, human imagination may also play a large part in the formation of the sublime. “Besides the ideas . . . which are presented by the sense,” Burke explains, “the mind of man possesses a sort of creative power of its own. . . . This power is called Imagination” (543). Since the “creative power” of the imagination would almost certainly affect what the sublime means to each individual, the sublime, when viewed through the lens of imagination, becomes a more abstract concept, open to each individual’s perception.

In his Critique of Judgment, Immanuel Kant, following Burke’s lead, speaks of the limitlessness of Nature in reference to the sublime: “[It] is rather in its chaos,” Kant asserts, “that nature most arouses our ideas of the sublime.” Furthermore, he contends that to experience beauty, “we must seek a basis outside ourselves,” while a sublime experience requires “a basis merely within ourselves and in [our] way of thinking” (521). What constitutes the sublime does not rely on form, function, or even specific objects. Just as Addison had before him, Kant clearly separates the sublime from the more refined concept of beauty, and places it within the realm of chaos and confusion. This new definition complicates the issue, however. If the sublime lies in chaos and confusion, how does one grasp its meaning or come to recognize it in nature or elsewhere? Kant proposes that such disorder helps create the sublime: “We call *sublime* what is *absolutely . . . large . . . [what] is large beyond all comparison*” (emphasis in original; 521-22). Size, one of several possible ways in which the sublime conveys its greatness, can overwhelm

and awe the viewer. Imposing mountains, vast bodies of water, and the constantly expanding universe, all qualify as sublime, due in part to their magnitude. By acknowledging this aspect of the sublime, Kant not only begins to tackle the problem of defining it, but, because size remains relative to each individual, he also turns the discussion back to the human imagination and the prospect of controlling the sublime.

Kant describes this struggle for control as “our imagination [striving] to progress toward infinity, while our reason demands absolute totality as a real idea.” Consequently, our inability to comprehend “the magnitude of things in the world of sense” creates an “inadequacy” which “[arouses] . . . the feeling that we have within us a supersensible power.” The sublime, Kant contends, “*is what even to be able to think proves that the mind has a power surpassing any standard of sense*” (emphasis in original; 522). Simply grasping the concept of something so immense--a mountain, an ocean, the heavens--creates conflicting feelings of awe and power. This sensation, rather than any object or work of art, constitutes Kant’s sublime. With this notion, he delves even deeper into Horace’s theory of inner transport and situates the sublime squarely within the psyche of each human being. The philosophies of both Burke and Kant reflect the movement of the enlightenment age away from adherence to a strict religious dogma and towards a more internalized mode of thinking. Even while man considered the dizzying array of concepts and possibilities that advancements in science and the arts provided--from a more leisurely lifestyle to an infinite universe--he contemplated them in relation to himself. Samuel Monk states that “[theories] and tastes which during the Augustan age, were well controlled . . . began in the fifth decade of the century to find positive and well-organized expression” (The Sublime in XVIII Century England 101). Attempting to find meaning outside

of organized religion, people began to explore a deeper connection between themselves and the world around them. Theories such as those concerning the sublime followed suit.

In a world constantly changing, without the structure that religion had previously afforded, people began to search for new meaning. The Romantic sublime filled one aspect of that need. In The Romantic Sublime Thomas Weiskel avers, “The Romantic sublime was an attempt to revise the meaning of transcendence” at the exact moment that the classical definitions began to fail. Weiskel calls this endeavor “the most spectacular response of the literary mind to the dualisms which cut across post-Renaissance thinking” (4). With religious boundaries fading and physical boundaries expanding, humans endeavored to find a new sense of significance. The Romantic sublime, by reconnecting the sublime situated within the imagination to the arts, helped readers find meaning in this quest.

Incorporating the sublime’s natural affinity towards transport into literature, writers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge created new theories concerning the concept. Whereas before, writers usually attributed the elevating effect inherent in the sublime to nature, they now attached that same effect to the arts. The search for meaning had found at least a temporary home in the Romantic Movement. Additionally, the concept of the sublime darkened significantly around this time, perhaps influenced by the uncertainty surrounding the era. William Marshall’s A Review of The Landscape, written in 1795, exemplifies this more ominous tone: “The sublime seems to require that the higher degrees of astonishment should be roused, to demonstrate its presence: a degree of terror, if not of horror, is required to produce the more forcible emotions of the mind, which sublimity is capable of exciting” (276). Although the sublime had previously contained at least some degree of fear, the Romantic era infused new life into this concept, adding a degree of horror to the idea.

Poets such as John Keats integrated this new idea of horror into their works. In an undated fragment, Keats writes of an “infant playing with a skull,” and later in the poem he exclaims, “Oh, the sweetness of the pain!” (The Complete Poetical Works and Letters of John Keats 43). Integrating the commingling of pleasure and pain, of innocence and horror, into his works, Keats illustrates the new sublime. Furthermore, some of his personal correspondence reveals his own theories on the sublime. In a letter to his brothers, George and Thomas, dated December 22, 1817, he writes that “the excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth.” The letter also discloses that he had discovered “what quality [forms] a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature.” He calls this quality “Negative Capability,” and describes it as the ability of a man to “[be] in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason” (277). To have negative capability one must embrace the unknown--the mysterious--in life. Keats’ philosophies encapsulate the fear and uncertainty felt during the eighteenth century, as well as the movement away from strict rules of writing. Moreover, they illustrate how artists, realizing they had the ability to create the sublime effect within their audiences, began using it within their works. The notion that humans could create such transcendental experiences simply through the arts led to a new form of literature: the eighteenth-century novel of sensibility.

As new scientific discoveries expanded the universe, colonization changed the map of the world, and enlightened philosophers broadened the mind, eighteenth-century Europeans strived to adapt to their changing environment. World growth meant national growth, and European trade expansion brought increased revenue and new ways in which to spend it. As G.J. Barker-Benfield points out in The Culture of Sensibility, “writers recognized the large changes

commercial capitalism was bringing about in Britain and tended increasingly to advocate them as signs of the progress of civilization” (104). British consumers had more money, and, thanks to overseas products never before available, a variety of goods from which to choose. Writers who wished to compete with captivating novelties from other countries needed to find innovative ways to attract the consumer’s attention. The capitalization upon the wide range of emotions which the contemporaneous climate generated quickly became their necessary innovative vehicle. Artists and writers alike, using the new sublime as their compass, began to create works infused with both passion and horror. Joseph Dennis’ essay, entitled The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry, states, “Passion . . . is the characteristical mark of poetry. . . . [In] tragedy, and in epic poetry, a man may instruct without harmony, but never without passion: for the one instructs by admiration, and the other by compassion and terror” (32). Not only must poetry instruct, but it now must also evoke a passionate response. Artists of the eighteenth century heeded Dennis’ advice, creating a form of art that not only cultivated the sublime, but that incorporated it into the art itself. Attempting to combine the emotions of the sublime with the culture of the eighteenth century, writers created what Barker-Benfield refers to as a “culture of sensibility.” “Sensibility,” he contends, “signified revolution, promised freedom . . . [and] denoted the receptivity of the senses” (xvii). This combination gave rise to a society which thrived on cultivating the senses, ultimately leading to literature that fed this indulgence. Such literature forwarded the notion of transport that had now become the sublime. Barker-Benfield further maintains that “transcendence of long-standing forms of the suffering brought about by natural and human causes preceded the widespread expression of the refined kind of suffering that preoccupied cultivators of sensibility” (xx). Authors used the eighteenth-century novel of sensibility as a way of both explaining and arousing the emotions caused by the sublime, while at

the same time keeping in the forefront the problems first identified by the Enlightenment. Stories often included “wretched creatures” such as the poor and women oppressed by a male-dominated society. The sublime now became an integral part of the culture of sensibility.

The assimilation of the sublime into the culture of sensibility also altered where one might search for the sublime. Previously, philosophers had limited the meaning of the word to objects in nature, to works of art, or to the explanation of the feelings that such objects or works aroused. Now, however, authors increasingly attributed the concept of the sublime to humans with certain characteristics or tendencies. Alexander Gerard, for example, in An Essay on Taste, describes a sublime human being as one with “such eminence in strength, or power, or genius, as is uncommon,” who “overcomes difficulties, which are insurmountable by lower degrees of ability [, has] vigour of mind, [and despises] honours, riches, power, pain, [and] death.” Gerard contends that these sublime qualities in a person “excite wonder and astonishment,” replicating the emotions one experiences when encountering sublime objects in nature (170). Gerard assigns attributes such as wonder, astonishment, and vastness--which previous authors on the sublime had used to describe scenes that included mountains and oceans--to people he views as sublime. Following the same search for inner meaning that led the sublime away from strict doctrine, Gerard further embeds the ideal within the soul of each human being.

With the notion that humans had the capacity for the sublime within themselves came the cultivation of sublime qualities as a key component of the culture of sensibility. To this end, John Wilmot, the Second Earl of Rochester, introduced his “Maxims of Morality”: “Do nothing to the hurt of any other, or that might prejudice [one’s] own health.” Additionally, Rochester’s desire to “[live] the complete life of pleasure” came from Hobbes’ disconnection of the pleasure of sense from the religious idea of sensuality (as quoted by Barker-Benfield in The Culture of

Sensibility 38). Rochester felt that one should indulge in all pleasures that did not break either maxim, and that this indulgence simply gratifies one's natural appetites. He desired to teach both men and women to learn to enjoy their new-found materialism, yet he also wanted them to learn how to deal with the reality of life's disappointments. Rochester's theory of seeking pleasure for pleasure's sake, however, did not quite give the citizens of eighteenth-century Europe the firm sense of control they sought. Bishop Gilbert Burnet's ideas came closer to hitting the mark. The government of one's passions through the use of reason, according to Burnet, "[ministers] to a higher and more lasting Pleasure to a Man" (as quoted by Barker-Benfield in The Culture of Sensibility 42). In an effort to refine the manners of lawless men, Burnet and others called for men to take control of their overwhelming emotions and become reformed citizens. This self-control included the reigning in of passions excited by sublime thoughts, sights, and sounds, and indicates a move towards the inner struggle that came to exemplify the period of sensibility.

As philosophers considered the idea that the sublime now lay within the control of the human imagination and taste, they began to search for answers as to how the sublime could create such a range of emotions. Longinus' definitions no longer sufficed. In Reflections on the Nature and Property of Language, Thomas Stackhouse reiterates Longinus' description of the sublime and then states, "[All] these expressions give us a full conception of the wonderful effects of it, but they leave us still to seek what is the cause of these effects" (49). Likewise, in A Miscellany of Ingenious Thoughts and Reflections, Tamworth Reresby seeks answers beyond what Longinus could provide: "Longinus," he says, "is the most ancient author that is to be found upon this subject . . . but we remain still ignorant as to the nature of the marvellous, or sublime" (43). Seeking more than mere description, authors such as Stackhouse and Reresby began to explore all the ways in which the sublime could affect one's emotions.

Stackhouse attempts to tackle the problem by first stating that “[what] we call the sublime [is] nothing else, but a lively and perfect imitation either of nature, or of what surpasses it,” and then by laying out five causes of the sublime: “[1.] an elevation of mind that makes us think happily of things; [2.] the pathetic . . . that enthusiasm and natural vehemence that moves and affects us; [3.] figures turned after a certain manner; [4.] nobleness of expression; [and 5.] the composition and order of words” (50-51). Unfortunately, Stackhouse, first merely mimicking Plato’s concept of imitation, and next listing the same ideals Longinus mentions in reference to the sublime, does nothing to bring his readers to a closer understanding of what exactly causes the “elevation of mind” and the “nobleness of expression” so inherent in the sublime. Jonathan Richardson’s An Essay on the Theory of Painting ventures somewhat closer to an explanation of the causes, rather than the effects. His assertion that “the dignity of a man consists chiefly in his capacity of thinking” recalls the notion that the potential for the sublime lies within each individual’s mind. Furthermore, his claim that “the great manner of thinking . . . is either pure invention, or what rises upon hints suggested from without” implies that the imagination plays a significant part in the creation of the sublime (45). The concept of “invention”--imagination--lends characteristics of both mystery and veracity to Richardson’s theory. Since imagination differs from person to person, each individual experiences the sublime in a unique way. Thus, Richardson’s contention, coupled with his idea that “*the . . . most noble thoughts [and] images*” represent “the perfect sublime,” goes one step further than Stackhouse’s essay, bringing the reader closer to an interpretation of the sublime (emphasis in original; 45).

With the inclusion of the imagination in its definition, what formed the sublime became more and more subjective. By the late eighteenth century, reaction--not substance--defined the sublime. In Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, written in 1787, Robert Lowth states,

“The sublime consists either in language or sentiment, or more frequently in an union of both, since they reciprocally assist each other, and since there is a necessary and indissoluble connection between them” (106). Lowth sums up what many authors had failed to recognize: when refined words connect with one’s emotions, the resulting reverberation causes the feeling known as the sublime. Language, then, becomes an important factor in the creation of the sublime. Additionally, in Reflections on the Nature and Property of Language Thomas Stackhouse posits the notion that the concept of sublimity does not exist in one language alone: “Sublimity,” he contends, “is one of the principal effects of the energy and number of a language.” Therefore, if “all languages have their number and energy . . . one would think . . . that they have all likewise their sublime” (49). Since all languages, then, contain the potential for the sublime, Stackhouse thus extends the reach of the sublime. If sublimity exists in all languages, the sublime then becomes available to readers from various cultures. Such accessibility widens the scope of interpretation, allowing for a more modern understanding of the word. Comprehension of the sublime, however, likely varies from culture to culture. Therefore, the study of these variances might expand one’s comprehension of the concept.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DUENDE: THE DEMONIC SUBLIME

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the German writer and philosopher who lived from 1749 to 1832, provides a connection between the eighteenth-century sublime and a more modern interpretation. Goethe refers to a force--the Dämonisch or “demonic”--that runs through humankind, creating a surge of energy or creativity which allows artists to speak to their audiences on a more personal level. Referring to the eighteenth-century poet Robert Burns, Goethe remarks that “the reason for his greatness is none other than that the old songs of his ancestors lived in the voice of the common people.” Goethe believes the ancient songs “formed a living foundation upon which [Burns] could build his writings.” Robert Burns’ poetry “immediately found receptive ears among the people” because he used common words and themes that resounded within his audience (as quoted by Eckermann 113-14). Goethe likewise connects with his readers in his own works. In the introduction of Conversations with Goethe, J.P. Eckermann states, “I read Goethe’s songs . . . and the happiness they gave me was more than words can express. . . . I had the feeling that from these songs my own inner life . . . shone back at me” (vi). Eckermann echoes Lowth’s sentiments from 1787: works that rouse the sublime within an audience connect the artist and audience on an intimate level.

Goethe maintains that such a connection involves the work of the “demonic.” “The Demonic,” he explains, “is that which cannot be resolved by either the logic or the intuition of reason.” Furthermore, Goethe believes that the Demonic “manifests itself in various ways in all of nature . . . in a very positive efficacy,” and claims that the Demonic “is the reason [Paganini] produces such great effects” (as quoted by Eckermann 206-07). While the eighteenth-century reformers had called for the use of logic and reason to control overwhelming passions, Goethe

introduces the nineteenth century to a power that defies rationality. This power, this force, not only becomes the means by which one can come to understand the sublime, but, when transmitted to an audience, it also creates a modern-day sublime. Acting as the vinculum between artist and audience, the Demonic carries the notion of aesthetic transport forward from Longinus to the present day.

What Goethe calls “Demonic,” Federico García Lorca,<sup>3</sup> writing in the twentieth century, calls duende. In a 1933 lecture entitled “Play and Theory of the Duende,” Lorca refers to duende as something an artist “must awaken . . . in the remotest mansions of the blood . . . [a] mysterious power which everyone senses and no philosopher explains,” and contends that “Goethe . . . defined the duende while speaking of Paganini” (In Search of Duende 51, 49). As Goethe and Lorca reveal, Thomas Stackhouse had theorized correctly: “all languages . . . have their sublime” (49). Goethe apparently influenced Lorca’s concept of duende. In “From Dämonisch to Duende,” Elizabeth Bohning states, “[Lorca] . . . uses one of Goethe’s definitions of dämonisch as a touchstone of his own theory of the highest artistic inspiration.” Bohning further contends, “Lorca developed his unique theory of *duende* through the close . . . perusal of Goethe’s *dämonisch*” (32).

In describing their respective concepts, Goethe and Lorca both attribute a certain destructive element to an artist’s ability to create. Lorca states that duende “is a struggle, not a thought,” that it “burns the blood like a poultice of broken glass,” that it “must know beforehand that [it] can serenade death’s house and rock those branches we all wear, branches that . . . will never have, any consolation.” “[The] duende wounds,” Lorca maintains, and “in the healing of that wound, which never closes, lie the strange, invented qualities of a man’s work” (49, 51, 58). The duende manifests as more than muse or inspiration. It breaks an artist down to his basest

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<sup>3</sup> From this point on, referred to simply as “Lorca,” rather than “García Lorca.”

level where he must begin to create with only raw emotion. Sharing Lorca's sentiment while referring to his own struggle in writing The Sorrows of Young Werther, Goethe states that he "nourished" the story "with the blood of [his] heart," and that it contains "so much that sprang from the depths of [his] own being, and enough of [his] feelings and thoughts to furnish the material for a novel in ten such little volumes." Goethe further admits that the experience of writing it so overwhelmed him that, by revisiting the book he fears he "might experience all over again the pathological state which produced it" (Eckermann 22). Identifying an even closer connection between an artist's work and its sublime effect, Goethe and Lorca alter the sublime aesthetic, adding an artist's struggle as an essential element.

Duende, Lorca's version of Goethe's "demon," most likely derives from the Spanish phrase dueño de casa, meaning "owner of the house." In "Duende: Gypsy Soul and Something More," George Bria notes that duende "originally meant *dueño de una casa* 'lord, or master, of a house' and is a contraction of *duen de casa*." Bria further states that "as the Spanish word evolved, the *de* was suffixed to the *duen*, the *casa* was omitted altogether, and *el duende* thus became 'the lord of the house,' [with a] plural form [,] *duendes* [, which] also signified 'household gods'" (3). The connotations "lord of the house," and "household gods" give duende both a spiritual as well as a personal aspect: a force that not only dwells within one, but that rules within that dwelling as well.

In his essay "Spanish *Duende*, and *Duendo*, Portuguese-Galician-Asturian *Dondo*, Leonese *Dondio*, Central American *Dondio*" Yakov Malkiel echoes Bria's notion of duende as "lord of the house." Malkiel defines duende as an "imp," citing Covarrubias' definition in Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española:

*Duende* . . . es algún espíritu de los que cayeron con Lucifer, de los cuales unos baxáron al profundo, otros quedaron en la región del ayre, y algunos en la superficie de la tierra, según comúnmente se tiene. Estos suelen dentro de las casas, y en las montañas, y en las cuevas espantar con algunas apariencias, tomando cuerpos fantásticos, y por esta razón se dixeron trasgos<sup>4</sup>.

Another description, “furnished by E. de Terreros on the eve of the French Revolution,” gives a more detailed definition: “[Algunos] dicen que [duendes] son una especie de demonios o espíritus . . . que inquietan a los hombres, casas, etc. . . . otros dicen que son unos trasgos o fantasmas, cuyas acciones extraordinarias los hacen temibles y maravillosos.”<sup>5</sup> While this definition comes closer to Lorca’s duende, the one that most accurately describes the duende of Lorca’s world appears only as a footnote in Malkiel’s essay: “*El Diccionario de autoridades* provides a distinctly briefer definition: ‘espíritu que el vulgo cree que habita en algunas casas y que travesea, causando en ellas trastornos y estruendo.’”<sup>6</sup> Malkiel accurately describes Lorca’s duende, which “takes it upon himself to make us suffer” (Lorca 59). Here too one can see a connection to Goethe, who maintains that “the higher a man is, the more he lives under the influence of the demons, and he must be careful not to let his guiding will be led astray” (Eckermann 152). Goethe furthermore refers to demons “who like to tease people and to have fun at our expense” (Eckermann 166). Clearly Lorca’s duende and Goethe’s dämonisch manifest

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<sup>4</sup> *Treasury of the Castilian or Spanish Language*: “*Duende* . . . is any of the spirits that fell with Lucifer, some of which fell into the deep [below the earth], [while] others remained in mid-air, and [still] others [fell onto] the earth’s surface, according to common legend. The latter [those that fell to earth] commonly appear to dwellers of houses, mountains, and caves, changing their appearances and taking on incredible forms in order to frighten, and for this reason they were called imps” (unless otherwise noted, all translations mine; 370).

<sup>5</sup> “*Duende*: some say they are a type of demons or spirits, who haunt people, houses, etc. . . . others say they are imps or ghosts, whose extraordinary actions cause [both] fear and amazement” (Malkiel 370).

<sup>6</sup> “[the] spirit that commoners believe lives in their houses and plays pranks, causing [mental] disturbances and turmoil” (370).

as more than mere spiritual entities. Rather, these demons become an integral part of an artist's identity, capable of influencing the outcome of the creative process.

The notion of a demonic presence as key to artistic creation not only establishes duende as a modern-day Spanish version of the sublime, but it connects both duende and the sublime through the pre-Enlightenment period as well. Indeed, Malkiel states that the appearance of “*duende* . . . at a remarkably late date in Spanish literature . . . may, in small part, be explained by the sharply increased interest, toward the end of the sixteenth century, in things fantastic grotesquely fitted into a realistic setting” (371). Consequently, just as science stood poised to introduce the human imagination to endless possibilities, the human imagination itself proved favorable to the task, blending common folklore and literature to generate fresh concepts. Hence, the common definition of duende as an imp eventually developed into the personal duende that Lorca came to utilize in his own writings--a duende closely connected to seventeenth-century ideas of the sublime.

Furthermore, Lorca's twentieth-century ideas of artistic transcendence embodied in duende, while inventive, also have roots in the classical notion of transport. Horace's claim that poetry “must . . . be pleasing and lead the hearer's mind wherever it will” (Ars Poetica 126) sounds very similar to Lorca's duende, whose “arrival . . . brings to old planes unknown feelings of freshness, with the quality of something newly created . . . and . . . [which] produces an almost religious enthusiasm” (In Search of Duende 53). In fact, duende actually fulfills Horace's poetic requirement. Lorca's definition connects his aesthetic concepts to those of classical writers. His idea, for example, that when an artist's work has duende, “everyone feels its effects, both the initiate, who sees that style has conquered a poor material, and the unenlightened, who feel some sort of authentic emotion” (54) echoes Gorgias' claim that poetry “brings a fearful shuddering, a

tearful pity, and a grieving desire, while through its words the soul feels its own feelings for good and bad fortune in the affairs and lives of others” (32). Both writers stress a universal sentiment, as well as the power of art to effect a metaphysical change within an audience. Lorca, then, while writing centuries after both Gorgias and Horace, does not drastically change the idea of artistic transport; he merely renames it.

Likewise, Lorca’s ideas mesh well with the eighteenth-century notion of artistic transport, renamed as the sublime. Joseph Addison’s sublime, which includes “open champion [countries and] vast uncultivated [deserts]” (423), and Kant’s assertion that “it is . . . in its chaos that nature most arouses our ideas of the sublime” (521) both coincide with Lorca’s duende, which disregards “violin, meter, and compass,” and has “neither maps nor exercises to help us find it” (58, 51). All three concepts involve a sense of imperfection, of doing away with regulated styles and outdated notions of beauty and form. Addison and Kant’s idea of a chaotic sublime comes to fruition in Lorca’s duende. Additionally, one can find within duende the aspects of both terror and excitement that the eighteenth-century sublime encompasses. Lorca himself, referring directly to this period of scientific and political change, dares artists to “conquer [their] fear of the violet smile exhaled by eighteenth-century poetry, and of the great telescope in whose lens the muse, sickened by limits, is sleeping” (51). Lorca’s challenge encapsulates all that the eighteenth century entails: the longing for change mixed with the fear of the unknown; his concept of duende incorporates both emotions.

However, while duende may indeed exemplify the modern-day sublime, it functions on another level as well. When Burke and Kant introduced the notion that the sublime lay within the human imagination, hence the potential for the sublime lay within each individual, they prefigured the question that Stackhouse, Richardson, and Lowth attempted to answer regarding

how the sublime functions. We may recall that Lowth came closest to answering this question when he posited the idea that the sublime “consists . . . [of both] . . . language [and] sentiment” (106). His answer, however, does not definitively satisfy all that the question of function entails, for if the sublime lies in a synergy of language and sentiment, what instrument provides that synergy? Lorca’s duende becomes the missing link. Recalling Plotinus’ definition of intellectual beauty as “[grasping] the beauty of the Authentic Intellect [a ‘Divine Being’]” (174-175), and the classical notion that beauty exists in an ideal realm, as well as Longinus’ introduction of the word *sublime* as the expression of that notion, one might wonder how intellectual beauty comes to fruition in a sublime creation if intellectual beauty resides in the non-sensual realm, and man initially experiences the sublime through at least one of the five senses. Lorca’s duende, dwelling within an artist, provides the necessary connection: “Every man and every artist, whether he is Nietzsche or Cézanne, climbs each step in the tower of his perfection by fighting his duende” (Lorca 50). An artist’s struggle with his duende creates the means necessary to connect both artist and audience to Plotinus’ ideal realm where all can experience intellectual beauty. When an artist learns to control his duende he creates the sublime. Duende, then, becomes both the sublime effect as well as its mode of function.

Additionally, an artist’s struggle with his duende exemplifies the purification process which must take place for one to create a sublime piece of work. Plotinus asserts that “there can be no representation of [Intellectual Beauty], except in the sense that we represent gold by some portion of gold--purified, either actually or mentally” (176-77). Knowledge that belongs in the spiritual realm cannot possibly reach humans without this process. Human comprehension, then, requires some type of refinement. The method of controlling one’s duende represents this cathartic rite in an artist: “[Duende] burns the blood like a poultice of broken glass,” and through

this wounding, artists become purified (Lorca 51). Once purified--free from doubts, insecurities, and distractions--artists create sublime works of art.

Once again, however, Lorca's innovative concept may not have originated with Lorca himself. John Keats' idea of negative capability, the ability of a man to "[be] in uncertainties, mysteries, [and] doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason," clearly contains elements similar to the transport effect of duende within an artist. Not only does it capture the mood of the eighteenth century, it likewise describes perfectly an artist's ability to let duende break him down--to ignore the urge to craft within confined limits, to withstand the onslaught of negative emotions that comes with creating art--and ultimately to control that duende, at just the right moment, in order to create the sublime. Hence, Lorca's twentieth-century ideas of artistic transport embodied in duende, while inventive, also have roots in both the classical and the eighteenth-century connotations of the sublime. Therefore, while duende can operate as both the definition of sublime effects, as well as the cause for the effects themselves, one can ultimately tie both functions back to authors of previous ages. Lorca's concepts, then, reach back to classical times while simultaneously projecting forward to future interpretations of artistic transport.

The concept of a sublime for all nations further cements the connection between Lorca and his predecessors. "Cante jondo," or "deep song," a form of music from Lorca's native Andalusia, and related to flamenco song and dance, influenced how Lorca saw not just music, but art in general. Furthermore, cante jondo added yet another element to Lorca's understanding of duende. In the preface to In Search of Duende, Christopher Maurer states that Lorca "saw cante jondo as . . . an intimate and anonymous cry of pain and longing." Maurer further contends that, for Lorca, "[duende's] sober, haunting melody and style were collective, and in that sense

*impersonal*, creations. ‘The four- or five-line lyrics, belong to no one,’ Lorca wrote. ‘They float in the wind like golden thistledown’” (vii). Goethe’s theories likewise promote works of art as impersonal creations. He asserts that, for a poet, “the country of his poetic powers and of his poetic impact is . . . bound to no particular province and to no particular nation” (Eckermann 227-28). For both Goethe and Lorca, the sublime effect evident in dämonisch and duende belongs to all.

Eventually, however, Lorca became disillusioned with the primitive concept of deep song. Not all singers of cante jondo, it seems, sing equally. Lorca’s view most likely changed after he visited New York. Indeed, Maurer writes that after “listening to jazz, blues, and negro spirituals . . . Lorca grew dissatisfied” with his earlier notion of cante jondo and, revising a previous lecture, Lorca claimed that “the difference between a good and a bad cantaor [singer] is that the first has duende, and the second never, ever achieves it” (vii, viii). For Lorca, cante jondo no longer defined the artistic expression he not only felt within himself, but that he experienced in other artists and works as well. Although the emotion present in cante jondo still touched him, he needed a new expression to illustrate works which result from an artist’s true inner struggle between form and creative expression. The duende that Malkiel speaks of--the duende of the late sixteenth century which Goethe refers to as demonic--provides the additional emphasis Lorca sought. The “wavering emission” of cante jondo, coupled with the “struggle,” the “spontaneous creation” of the duende finally allowed Lorca to name an experience that many had felt, yet none could put into words. Duende “climbs up inside you, from the soles of the feet” and “brings to old planes unknown feelings of freshness” (Lorca 49, 53). Consequently, the “number and energy,” the “nobleness of thought” that Thomas Stackhouse believed present “in all languages,” becomes recreated in the form of duende. As the sublime effect shared between

artist and audience, the cause of that sublime effect through the artistic process, and the bond of past, present and future in all cultures and languages, duende clearly supplants the sublime as today's adaptation of artistic transport.

While the notion of duende answers many questions regarding the transport effect in both artists and audiences, the subject matter nonetheless remains far from exhausted. In "A Terrible Beauty," for example, John Mullan offers a scientific approach, stating, "'the sublime' catches an experience that we still recognise in a post-modern world, glimpsed in the dizzying reaches of interplanetary space or the vertiginous spirals of the human genome" (as quoted by Joanna Zylińska in On Spiders, Cyborgs and Being Scared 1). Lisa Rado, on the other hand, applies the concept to the area of sexual politics in The Modern Androgyne Imagination: "Simply put, the transport of the sublime corresponds to the empowerment gained by the male (artist) who has successfully negotiated the oedipal struggle" (21). Patricia Yaeger seems to reverse the notion, referring to a "failed sublime" as "dazzling, unexpected empowerment followed by a moment in which this power is snatched away" (as quoted by Christophe Den Tandt in The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism). These contemporary examples illustrate that the notion of artistic transport and the definition of the sublime remain in flux. The subjectivity of the word and the inherent instability of language anticipate future translations of both the expression and the concept. The definition of the sublime in the twenty-first century and beyond, therefore, awaits the theorists of tomorrow.

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