THE AESTHETIC EFFECTS OF LITERARY READING AND IMPACTFUL DREAMS:

SUBLIME DISQUIETUDE AND SUBLIME ENTHRALLMENT

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METAPHORICITY DURING REM DREAMING

- Dreams are “a series of incomplete metaphors connected by a story-line” (Jones, 1987, p. 88)
  - Metaphors are one of the “principal tropes” (with metonymy [synecdoche] and irony (Hall, 1953, p. 173; States, 1988)
  - Dreaming may be the “product of metaphors, metonymies, ironies, and conceptual blends” (Domhoff, 2003, p. 33; Lakoff, 1993)
- “I was sleeping in the bathtub” (Foulkes, 1970)
  - The equivalent of a metaphoric noun-noun compound (a “bathtub bed”) or an implicit metaphoric assertion (“My bed is a bathtub”)
OPEN ATTENTION DURING REM DREAMING

• The standard “deficit” interpretation:
  • REM dreaming reflects activation of the default mode network (DMN), including deactivation of the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) and the consequent absence of reality-testing “executive” functions

• An alternative “capacity” interpretation:
  • Deactivation of the DLPFC and activation of the medial prefrontal cortex (MPFC) indicates (1) reduced supervisory attention with (2) increased salience monitoring (Menon & Uddin, 2010)
  • This attentional pattern during the REM sensory blockade also occurs during “absorbed” literary reading (Kuiken & Douglas, in press)
RECURSIVE EXPLICATION DURING REM DREAMING

- Image “discontinuities” are the most common form of REM dream anomaly (Revonsuo & Tarkko, 2002)
  - Such discontinuities accompany phasic events (e.g., E-PIPs, MEMAs) (e.g., Ogilvie, Hunt, Sawicki, & Samahalskyi, 1982) and indicate tonic activation of the orienting response during REM (Morrison, 1989)
  - Adjustments to working memory as though, in response to an [implicit] question “What is this?”, the [implicit] answer is, “Oh, not [the expected] X [“aphids on the leaves of my tomatoes”], but rather [the unexpected] Y [“spiders on my hands”]
- Mukarovský’s (1976) analysis of literary foregrounding also identified such non-figurative transitions across “resonant” sound patterns
LEVEL II: THE POETICS OF IMPACTFUL DREAMS
RECURSIVE EXPLICATION ACROSS EPISODES OF IMPACTFUL DREAMS

• Impactful dreams are those that affect the dreamer’s thoughts and feelings after awakening (“carry-over” effects)

• Impactful dreams with a recursive narrative structure are more likely than dreams without that structure to conclude with self-reported “inexpressible realizations” (Kuiken, 2012)
CONTRASTING TYPES OF IMPACTFUL DREAMS

• The empirical articulation of three types of impactful dreams: transcendent dreams, existential dreams, and nightmares (Kuiken & Sikora, 1993; Busink & Kuiken, 1995)
NIGHTMARES: FEATURE PROFILE

- Emotions and feelings: fear
- Motives, concerns: harm avoidance
- Movement style: vigorous activity
- Success/failure: lack of goal achievement
- Sensory phenomena: auditory anomalies
- Dream transitions: physical metamorphoses
- Dream endings: intense affect
TRANSCENDENT DREAMS: FEATURE PROFILE

• Emotions and feelings: ecstasy
• Motives, concerns: magical success
• Movement style: vigorous activity
• Success/failure: goal achievement
• Sensory phenomena: extraordinary light
• Dream transitions: shifts in perspective
• Dream endings: intense affect
EXISTENTIAL DREAMS:
FEATURE PROFILE

• Emotions and feelings: sadness
• Motives, concerns: separation
• Movement style: ineffectuality(fatigue)
• Success/failure: lack of goal achievement
• Sensory phenomena: light/dark contrast
• Dream transitions: affective shifts
• Dream endings: intense affect
CONTRASTING EFFECTS OF IMPACTFUL DREAMS

• One of these types (existential dreams) is followed by an altered sense of the dreamer’s “existential” concerns; another of these types (transcendent dreams) is followed by an altered sense of the dreamer’s “spiritual” concerns (Kuiken et al., 2006)
  • Both loosely entail “aesthetic” complexity (Kuiken et al., 2006)
AFTEREFFECTS OF IMPACTFUL DREAMS: SUBLIME FEELING

• Not sublime feeling as a particular kind of emotion (e.g., melancholy, elevation)

• Not sublime feeling as response to particular stimulus properties (e.g., natural spectacle)

• But rather, sublime feeling as the poignant combination of
  • An inexpressible recognition/realization
  • A “no-longer-having,” within sublime disquietude; a “not-yet-having” within sublime enthrallment (both are forms of “unpleasure”)
  • A “shift” toward self-perceptual depth (an epistemic “pleasure”)


EMPIRICAL INDICES OF SUBLIME FEELING

• The Experiencing Questionnaire (EQ; Kuiken, Campbell, & Sopčák, 2012)
  • Sublime Disquietude: The interactive combination of Inexpressible Realizations, Self-perceptual Depth, Discord/Disquiet
  • Sublime Enthrallment: The interactive combination of Inexpressible Realizations, Self-perceptual Depth, Wonder/Reverence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aesthetic Outcomes</th>
<th>Sample Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sublime Disquietude</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-perceptual Depth</td>
<td>I felt sensitive to aspects of my life that I usually ignore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexpressible Realizations</td>
<td>What seemed clear to me also seemed beyond words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Discord/Disquiet</td>
<td>Something in my experience seemed irreversibly ruined/I felt profoundly ill-at-ease</td>
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<td>Wonder/Reverence</td>
<td>I felt deeply astonished/I seemed to touch something sacred</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BACKGROUND TO THESE INDICES

• Two previous studies of literary reading (Kuiken, Campbell, & Sopčák, 2012) found that:
  • Sublime Disquietude was greater following reading of Celan’s *Death Fugue*, Owen’s *Exposure*, Blanchot’s *The Instant of My Death*, and Levi’s *The Black Stars*
  • Sublime Enthrallment was greater following reading of Shelley’s *Mont Blanc*, Coleridge’s *Frost at Midnight*, Rilke’s First *Duino Elegy*, and Eliot’s *Little Gidding*

• Are the carry-over effects of some dreams comparable to reading *Death Fugue*, etc.?

• Are the carry-over effects of some dreams comparable to reading *Mont Blanc*, etc.?
STUDY 1: RESEARCH DESIGN (LEE & KUIKEN, 2015)

- 158 participants who remembered at least one dream/month (including at least one impactful dream)
- Participants recorded a dream that was as impactful as their most impactful dream within the preceding month
  - By completing the 26-item Impactful Dreams Questionnaire (IDQ; Kuiken, 2009), which enabled classification of nightmares (n=38), existential dreams (n=47), transcendent dreams (n=35), and mundane dreams (n=38)
  - And by completing a dream-specific version of the Experiencing Questionnaire (EQ)
# DREAM TYPE DIFFERENCES: EFFECTS ON SUBLIME FEELING (STUDY 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mundane dreams (n = 38)</th>
<th>Transcend dreams (n = 35)</th>
<th>Nightmares (n = 38)</th>
<th>Existential dreams (n = 47)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sublime Enthrallment</td>
<td>1.37&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.23&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.53&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.77&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sublime Disquietude</td>
<td>1.46&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.38&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.02&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.46&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>abc</sup> Means with different superscripts (within rows) differ significantly from each other (p < .05; LSD)
STUDY 2: RESEARCH DESIGN (KUIKEN & HARTMANN, IN PREP)

- 215 participants who remembered at least one dream/month (including at least one impactful dream)
- Participants recorded a dream that was as impactful as their most impactful dream within the preceding month
  - By completing the 26-item Impactful Dreams Questionnaire (IDQ; Kuiken, 2009), which enabled classification of nightmares (n=38), existential dreams (n=47), transcendent dreams (n=35), and mundane dreams (n=38)
  - And by completing a dream-specific version of the Experiencing Questionnaire (EQ)
### DREAM TYPE DIFFERENCES: EFFECTS ON SUBLIME FEELING (STUDY 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mundane dreams (n = 63)</th>
<th>Transcend dreams (n = 31)</th>
<th>Nightmares (n = 50)</th>
<th>Existential dreams (n = 64)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sublime Enthrallment</strong></td>
<td>1.23&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.39&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.23&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.31&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sublime Disquietude</strong></td>
<td>1.25&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.34&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.39&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.53&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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</tbody>
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THE CURRENT STATE OF THIS DREAMY ART

• Articulation of a basic form of open reflection during REM dreaming (and during a broad spectrum of engagements with literary and fantasy narratives)

• Articulation of a basic form of metaphoricity during REM dreaming (and during encounters with highly foregrounded literary and fantasy narratives)
THE CURRENT STATE OF THIS DREAMY ART

- Articulation of a form of cross-episodic metaphoricity during the enactive expressiveness of impactful dreams (and the “expressive enactment” that comprises one form of “absorbing” engagement with literary fiction)

- Articulation of two forms of sublime feeling that emerge from existential and transcendent dreams (and from one form of especially “absorbing” engagement with contrasting genres of literary fiction)
THANK YOU!

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THANK YOU!
AESTHETIC EFFECTS OF “ABSORBED” READING: SUBLIME FEELING
TWO TYPES OF DEEPLY ENGAGED READING

• Expressive Enactment involves:
  • Pre-enactive Empathy, Peripersonal Space, Self-implicating Givenness
  • A form of open, recursive, expression-centered explication (Kuiken, Miall, & Sikora, 2004; Sikora, Kuiken, & Miall, 2011)

• Integrative Comprehension involves:
  • Cognitive Perspective-taking, Extrapersonal Space, Narrative Realism
  • A form of open, elaborative, inference-centered interpretation (situation model; Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Zwaan, 2014)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent Variables (with Miniscales)</th>
<th>Sample Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressive Enactment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-implicating Givenness</td>
<td>Remembering experiences in my own life helped me to sense what the character was going through</td>
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<td>Peri-personal Space</td>
<td>I could almost feel what it would be like to move or change position in relation to the things (objects, characters) in the story world</td>
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<td>Pre-enactive Empathy</td>
<td>For a moment I felt like I “was” the character described there</td>
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<td><strong>Integrative Comprehension</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Realistic Conduct/Affective Realism</td>
<td>This character's actions seemed similar to what I observe people doing in “real” life/The character's feelings, attitudes, and concerns seemed life-like</td>
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<td>Cognitive Perspective-taking</td>
<td>I could understand events in the story from the perspective of each different character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra-personal Space</td>
<td>I could see (in my mind's eye) the same setting (or environment) that was “there” for a character to see</td>
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STUDY 1: RESEARCH DESIGN (KUIKEN & DOUGLAS, IN PRESS)

- 365 participants were asked to read an excerpt from the novella On Chesil Beach (McEwan, 2008).

- After reading, participants were asked to
  - Write recursively and expressively about their experience of a pivotal (preselected) passage
  - Describe their reflections using (1) a preliminary version of the Absorption-like States Questionnaire (ASQ; Kuiken & Douglas, in press) and (2) selected items from the EQ (Kuiken, Campbell, & Sopčák, 2012)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Expressive Enact Coefficient</th>
<th>Integrate Compreh Coefficient</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>RMS EA</th>
<th>RMSEA Low/Hi</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aesthetic Outcomes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sublime Disquietude</strong></td>
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<td>.90</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>192.8</td>
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<td>.941</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.076/.102</td>
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<td><strong>Being Moved</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>181.0</td>
<td>.925</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>.923</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.072/.098</td>
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<td><strong>Explanatory Outcomes</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Narrator Intelligibility</strong></td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>212.4</td>
<td>.906</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>.910</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.082/.108</td>
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<td><strong>Causal Explanation</strong></td>
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<td>.14</td>
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<td>.936</td>
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<td>.075/.101</td>
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<td><strong>Plot Coherence</strong></td>
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<td>.908</td>
<td>.931</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.081/.107</td>
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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

• Two studies replicating the preceding asymmetric pattern for absorption-like states (Douglas & Kuiken, in preparation; Kuijpers, Douglas, Kuiken, & Menninghaus, in preparation)

• Two studies indicating that expressive enactment facilitates metaphor comprehension following expressive enactment but not following integrative comprehension (Douglas & Kuiken, in preparation)

• An ongoing study involving the assessment of metaphor comprehension following existential dreams (as well as transcendent dreams and nightmares)