POETIC DISCOURSE IN A TIME OF CRISIS: THE CONCEPT OF LYRICISM

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Summary. The study of poetic discourse received great impetus from the beginning of the twentieth century onward with the rise of general linguistics (Linguistic Poetics), and sociology (Sociological Poetics). As for Linguistic Poetics, presented in the framework of Roman Jakobson, it had exhausted its potential for theoretical inquiry. Sociological Poetics, on the contrary, has not yet received the attention it deserves. This paper provides a brief account of two projects of Sociological Poetics devised by Voloshinov/Bakhtin, and T. Adorno. It offers schematic conceptualization of the notion of lyricism; contains some observations on the aesthetic evaluation of the realization of the concept lyricism through the prism of rhetorical sublime.

Keywords: lyricism, poetic discourse, linguistic poetics

Introduction

On May 25, 2020, as part of the American University in Paris' Conference on the Psychology of Global Crisis, a panel discussion was elaborated with the title, The Poetics of Crisis in which the participants explored how crisis gives voice and purpose to poetry and how poetry gives voice and purpose to crisis.

The participants of the conference entered into dialogue again, exploring poetry’s role in protest, acceptance, and resolution in the special issue of Human Arenas associated with the Psychology of Global Crisis 2020.

Here is the way Dialogue begins:

Q/JkR: Crisis exists at the interface of dissolution and emergence. Stephane Mallarme, a nineteenth century French poet, wrote that “poetry is the language of a state of crisis” (Mallarme et al. 2006). In your own experience how this is true, and how is this truth reflected in your own poetry?

A/TH: On a very personal level, I can say that much of my own poetry has arisen out of crisis, whether it be personal or global. Poetry is beauty, of course, but I think some pain is required, too. Most of the work of the poet isn’t writing; it’s loving the world enough, feeling its depth and subjectivity, inevitably involves experiencing pain.

We see that in the answer to the question the notion “crisis” has been elaborated into personal and global. Or to use Christopher Caudwell's terminology -- ‘a social subjectiveness or social ego’, and a social objectiveness or social world* ( 247). In addition, ‘beauty’ and ‘pain’ appear as constituents of the concept ‘lyricism’.

As regards crisis, Caudwell alludes to it in his Illusion and Reality: ‘Every phase of Art, every stage of culture, had its moving principle which is the source of its
tragedy, its beauty, its satisfaction and its creative power" (328). In ‘moving principle’ we see, then the inner form of ‘crisis’ – ‘evolution’ and ‘creativity’ being its constituents. Apart from positive connotation, ‘crisis’ has strong negative connotation when it stands for ‘trauma’.

Thomsen M.R. states (cited by Patnaik,77) that the literature of trauma or "denial of life" brings forth the issue of the "unrepresentable masses". Responding to the Kantian and Burkian category of the romantic and mathematical sublime, Thomsen offers his version of poetic witnessing as "the attempt to represent an overwhelming mass of people that cannot be represented as a whole, even though it can be thought of as such. Thomsen provides instances of the "social sublime" in Boccaccio's Decameron, Defoe's Journal of the Plague Year, and Voltaire's account of the plague and Lisbon earthquake in Candide.

Patnaik A. takes over the topic of sublime: "It is worth asking how the sublime -- a subjective experience of awe or horror -- may be extended to the collective experience of a community, nation, or the world" [2022:78]. Patnaik finds Kai Ericson's concept of the "social dimension" of collective trauma useful: "sometimes the tissues of community can be damaged in much the same way as the tissues of mind and body. ... traumatic wounds inflicted on individuals can combine to create a mood, an ethos --8-39).

Crisis, according to Ch. Caudwell, appears as the result of contradiction in society. The contradiction between instinct and cultural environment is absolutely primary to society. In language this contradiction is represented by the opposition between the rational content or objective existence expressed by words and the emotional content or subjective attitude expressed by the same words [Caudwell 1977:140].

Poetic discourse is influenced by specific historical and social circumstances. The critical moments in its evolution find their reflection in the language. The theory of social evolution, according to Voloshinov/Bakhtin, applies to every utterance as a historical speech performance. Since the utterance is detached from both the real object and from action, its material presence in the here and now becomes the organizing principle of the whole construction. But this construction cannot be completely understood at a remove from the conditions of its social realization. For the actual development of the work cannot be understood outside of the interrelationship between author and reader. Such is the role of social evaluation in the poetic construction [Voloshinov/Bakhtin,2004].

The aim of the article is to develop Adorno’s idea of the social nature of the lyric by turning it against the sphere of the aesthetic category of sublime.

**Theoretical Framework**

**The social theory of lyric**

The advancement of sociology and its major contributions ("social phenomena", August Comte, 1839; "community, politics", "the sociological study of aesthetics and art", Herbert Spencer, 1877; "the individual", "social action", Max Weber, 1905) resulted in the theory of sociological poetics [Swingewood, 1987].

The first practical step towards formulating the sociological poetics is Voloshinov/Bakhtin's essay 'Discourse in Life and Discourse in Art' (1926), in which V/B argues that "two approaches are taken to the intrinsic aesthetic quality of art:
the formal method which perceives the verbal object as an artefact, as an abstract linguistic construction, or the subjective which inputs everything in the work to the individual psyche of the creator or the contemplator.

Artistic communication stems from the basis common to it and other social forms, but at the same time, it retains, as do all other forms, its own uniqueness; it is a special type of communication, possessing a form of its own peculiar to itself. To understand this special form of social communication realized and fixed in the material of a work of art -- that precisely is the task of sociological poetics. It takes into account social evaluations as a strategic consideration.

The thing is that every distinct act of consciousness is a social act, the act of interaction. The choice of what we become conscious of determines the judgements/values -- "the emotional tone" of consciousness.

It is social evaluation which inseparably weaves the artistic work into the general canvas of the social life of a given historical epoch and a given social group. Social evaluation organizes how we see and conceptualize what interests or affects us in one way or another. Social evaluation also organizes the forms by which the event is communicated: the arrangement of the material into digressions, returns, repetitions, etc., is permeated with the single logic of social evaluation.

A work of art, viewed outside this communication and independently of it, is simply a physical artifact or an exercise in linguistics. It becomes art only in the process of the interaction between creator and contemplator, as the essential factor in this interaction" [Voloshinov & Bakhtin 2004: 160-161].

In [V/B] a particular attention is given to the social nature of intonation. "In intonation, discourse comes directly into contact with life. And it is in intonation above all that the speaker comes into contact with the listener -- intonation is social par excellence. It is especially sensitive to all the vibrations in the social atmosphere surrounding the speaker. Intonation's set toward possible sympathy, does not exhaust its social nature. The third participant is the referent, the object of the utterance.

When a person intones and gesticulates, he assumes an active social position with respect to certain specific values, and this position is conditioned by the very bases of his social being. It is precisely this objective and sociological, and not subjective and psychological, aspect of intonation that should interest theorists of various relevant art.

Thus we have a right to claim, any locution actually said aloud or written down for intelligible communication is the expression and product of the social interaction of three participants: the speaker (author), the listener (reader), and the topic (the who or what of speech" [Voloshinov & Bakhtin 2004:165-168].

These are the major thesis of Voloshinov/Bakhtin's poetics:

-- Artistic communication is a special form of social communication, and to understand the way it is realized in a work of art is the task of sociological poetics.

-- An act of consciousness is a social act and the choice of the type of consciousness bears "the emotional tone".

-- Social evaluation of the "emotional tone" is connected with a given historical epoch, and organizes our conceptualization.

-- Outside the artistic communication, a work of art is regarded as a physical artefact.
Theodor W. Adorno contributed much to the development of sociological poetics by bringing the notion 'lyric poetry' in the sphere of socialization in his work "On Lyric Poetry and Society" (Adorno, 1991: 37-46):

"My thesis is that the lyric work is always the subjective expression of a social antagonism. Language establishes the relationship to the universal and to the society. The lyric is most deeply grounded in society. It is not only that the individual inherently socially mediated, not only that its contents are always social as well. Conversely, society is formed and continues to live only by virtue of the individuals whose quintessence it is. A collective undercurrent provides the foundation for all individual lyric poetry. ... participation in this undercurrent is an essential part of the substantality of the individual lyric as well: it is undercurrent that makes language the medium in which the subject becomes more than a mere subject.

I'd like to emphasize that we are concerned not with the poet as a private person, not with his psychology or his so-called social perspective, but with the poem as a philosophical sundial telling the time of history" (p. 40)

To illustrate the main thesis of sociological poetics -- "the subjective expression of a social antagonism" -- consider Shakesperean Sonnet 91:

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill.
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force,
Some in their garments though new-fangled ill.
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse.

Thematic elements: birth, skill, wealth, body's force, garments, hawks, hounds, horse 'capture the historical moment.'

The feeling of love transcends material manifestation of society that finds its expression in the use of comparative degree of adjectives: better, richer, prouder:

But these particulars are not my measure,
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' costs,
Of more delight than hawks and horses be:
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast.

"The concept of the lyric is not simply that of the expression of a subjectivity to which language grants objectivity. Not only does the lyric subject embody the whole ... the more it expresses itself; but only a few human beings are allowed to grasp the universal through immersion in the self. <...> The others have the same right, or a greater right, to grope for the sounds in which sufferings and dreams are welded.

The manifestation in earlier periods of the specifically lyric spirit familiar to us are only isolated flashes ... they do not establish it as a form. The great poets of the distant past -- whom literary history classifies as lyric poets are uncommonly far from our conception of the lyric. They lack the quality of immediacy, of immateriality, which we are accustomed to consider the criterion of the lyric" (p. 40-45).

An apt illustration of "the quality of immediacy" as "the criterion of the lyric" is the poem "Manhattan":

City of orgies, walks and joys,
City whom I that have lived and sung in your midst will one
day make you illustrious,
Not the pageants of you, not your shifting tableaux, your
spectacles, repay me,
Not the interminable rows of your houses, nor the ships at the
wharves,
Nor the processions in the street, nor the bright windows with
goods in them,
Nor to converse with learn’d persons, or bear my share in the
soiree or feast;
Not those, but as I pass, O Manhattan, your frequent and swift
flash of eyes offering me love,
Offering response to my own -- these repay me,
Lovers, continual lovers, only repay me.

Walt Whitman (1819-1891)

What follows next might be taken as Adorno’s sociological interpretation of the
poem adduced above:

"The "I" whose voice is heard in the lyric is an "I" that defines and expressed
itself as something opposed to the collective, to objectivity; it is not immediately at
one with the nature to which its expression refers. It has lost it, as it were, and
attempts to restore it through animation, through immersion in the "I" itself. ... the
greatest lyric works ... owe their quality to the force with which the "I" creates
the illusion of nature emerging from alienation. A second immediacy is promised:
what is human, language itself, seems to become creation again, while everything
external dies away in the echo of the soul" (p.41).

It is interesting to note that both, Adorno’s conceptualization of the lyric, and
the poet’s discourse, proceed by contraries (not, Not, but; Not ... but) that results
in ‘semiotic fitting’ (K.Kull’s term) of two different types of discourses: the philosopher,
as it were, translates the poet’s discourse in terms of his poetics, and, conversely,
Whitman illustrates Adorno’s theory using the same logic.

"It is commonly said that a perfect lyric poem must possess totality or
universality, must provide the whole within the bounds of the poem and the infinite
within the poem’s finitude. It indicates that in every lyric poem the historical
relationship of the subject to objectivity, of the individual to society, must have found
its precipitate in the medium of a subjective spirit thrown back upon itself. The less
the work thematizes the relationship of "I" and society, the more spontaneously it
crystallizes of its own accord in the poem. ... what is not social in the lyric poem that
is now to become its social aspect”(p.42).

To illustrate Adorno’s thesis let us take a fragment from W.Wordsworth’s poem
Lines Written a few Miles above Tintern Abbey:

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, 
And the round ocean, and the living air, 
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man, 
A motion and a spirit, that impels 
All thinking things, all objects of all thought ... 

What Adorno says next fits well the spontaneous in-take of nature by Wordsworth’s lyrical hero: “I am not trying to deduce lyric poetry from society; its social substance is precisely what is spontaneous in it. ... the artistic forces, which operate in and through the individual and his spontaneity, are objective forces that impel a constricted and constricting social condition to transcend itself and become worthy of human beings”(p.43).

“The lyric spirit’s idiosyncratic opposition to the superior power of material things is a form of reaction to the reification of the world ... to assimilate even alien objects to pure subjective expression, to dissolve them, to give them metaphysicl credit for their alienness (p.40).

The paradox specific to the lyric work, a subjectivity that turns into objectivity, is tied to the priority of linguistic form in the lyric; it is that priority from which the primacy of language in literature in general, is derived. <...> For language is itself something double. Through its configurations it assimilates itself completely into subjective impulses. But at the same time language remains ... that which establishes an inescapable relationship to the universal and the society. Hence the highest lyric works are those in which the subject ... sounds forth in language until language itself acquires a voice. The unself-consciousness of the subject submitting itself to language as to something objective, and the immediacy and spontaneity of that subject’s expression are one and the same: thus language mediates lyric poetry and society in their innermost core. This is why the lyric reveals itself to be most deeply grounded in society” (p.40-43).

“A collective undercurrent provides the foundation for all individual lyric poetry. When that poetry actually bears the whole in mind and is not simply an expression of the privileged, refinement, and gentility of those who can afford to be gentle, participation in this undercurrent is an essential part of the substantiality of the individual lyric as well: it is this undercurrent that makes language the medium in which the subject becomes more than a mere subject. ... the poetic subject, which always stands for a far more general collective subject, to the social reality that is its antithesis” (p.45).

From what has been expounded above, if follows that the space of Adorno’s social poetics is organized by the following fundamental concepts: 1) social antagonism, 2) a collective undercurrent, 3) immersion in the self/ in the ”I” itself, 4) manifestation of the lyric spirit in isolated flashes, 5) the quality of immediacy and spontaneity, which acquire categorial status in the analysis of poems.

The notion sublime

A brief outline of a background for the Romantic sublime is given in [Weiskel, 1976: 4, 23 - 25 ]. Thomas Weiskel begins with the hypothesis that the encounter with literary greatness -- the so-called rhetorical sublime -- is structurally cognate with the transcendence, gentle or terrible, excited in the encounter with landscape, the ”natural” sublime. <...>
The sublime moment seems to consist of three phases.

In the first phase, the mind is in a determinable relation to the object, and this relation is habitual, more or less unconscious, and harmonious. This is the state of normal perception or comprehension, the syntagmatic linearity of reading ... linear rhythm of sensation and reflection.

In the second phase, the habitual relation of mind and object suddenly breaks down. Surprise or astonishment is the affective correlative, and there is an immediate intuition of a disconcerting disproportion between inner and outer. Either mind or object is suddenly in excess. We are reading along and suddenly occurs a text which exceeds comprehension, which seems to contain a residue of signifier which finds no reflected signified in our minds.

In the third, or reactive, phase of the sublime moment, the mind recovers the balance of outer and inner by constituting a fresh relation between itself and the object such that the very indeterminacy which erupted in phase two is taken as symbolizing the mind's relation to a transcendent order. In fact, the intuition of depth which occurs in the third phase seems to be curiously proportionate to the reluctance of the mind to invoke transcendent categories. Height and depth are of course merely two perspectives within the same dimension of verticality; what is "lofty" for the idealist will be profound for the naturalizing mind. ... The sublime moment establishes depth because the presentation of unattainability is phenomenologically a negation, a falling away from what might be seized, perceived, known. As an image, it is the abyss. When the intervention of the transcendent becomes specific, however, the image is converted into a symbol, and height takes over as the valorizing perspective. In the third phase an ideological component necessarily enters the sublime moment."

The concept lyricism

It follows from what has been expounded above that the notion "lyric, which is associated with 'compactness', 'interiority', 'musical density', refers to the material aspect of poetry. It would be reasonable enough to treat "lyric" as a social concept, making use of 'the qualities of immateriality'. To begin with, a more abstract notion 'lyric' should be restricted to its concrete realization, namely lyricism.

During the long eighteenth century lyric evolved into a discrete category -- lyricism -- an artist's expression of emotion in an imaginative and beautiful way; the quality of being lyrical -- a quality that expresses deep feelings or emotions in an inspired work of art [Chan, 2020].

In the essay "The Lyrical Impulse" Charles Altieri states: "The essay asks not what lyric is, but what poets are doing and why, e.g. when Yeats and Auden write lullabies, they are not content with individual instances of lullaby but want to capture the essence of lullaby as one aspect of levels of feeling inseparable from ideas of genre, not just uses of the genre" [Altieri, 2017:12]

Lyricism appears to be closely connected with the way we read. According to George Steiner, where we read truly, where the experience is to be that of meaning, we do so as if the text incarnates ... a real presence of significant being. Not many of us feel compelled to, have the expressive means to, register the mastering quality of this experience -- as does Proust when he crystallizes the sense of the world and of the word in Vermeer's View of Delft ... . The experience itself is one we are
thoroughly *at home* with -- an informing idiom -- each and every time we live a text, a sonata, a painting [Steiner, 1996: 35].

According to Joshua T. Seth [2009:231-235], "in one of the more influential aesthetic theories of the last century, Clive Bell offered to distinguished between "regular" emotions and the aesthetic emotion, a particular kind that true artworks elicit from perceivers. A single common element that could account for the provocation of the aesthetic emotion Bell called *significant form*. Bell thought that only works possessive significant form have merit. As Seth suggests, significant form is a valuational object, not a perceptual object, yet for Bell it is grasped by simple perception. Significant form then is form behind which we glimpse ultimate reality."

Poetic discourse is aesthetically oriented. Kalevi Kull [2022:4] writes:

> The aesthetic relation is always a semiotic relation. Semiosis, as an act of interpretation, has (due to memory) a tendency to form habits, and has in addition also biases (due to choice) towards semiotic fitting by which we mean coexistence based on semiosis. Semiotic fitting itself has a stepwise tendency to establish multiple perfectly coordinated relationships. The latter tendency is an aesthetic process, and the resulting perfection -- by which we mean fitting in all aspects that are in use -- is an aesthetic quality. ...There are individual and social differences in aesthetic evaluation."

Taking into consideration what has been expounded above, we consider rhetorical sublime as the aesthetical evaluation of lyricism.

We proceed with the belief that the categorical status of 'crisis' is important for conceptualising the notion 'lyricism'. Mental experience of lyricism is constituted by social and personal perspectives of crisis. The interpretative perspective of crisis is rhetorical sublime. Rhetorical sublime is constituted by two sublimes -- positive, which is associated with such lexical items as *delight, joy, beauty*, and negative, which is represented by *terror, awe and pain*.

It is important to note that the concept *lyricism* is equated with the entire network.

According to [Montgomery 1915:293], "the rhetorical quality of sublimity springs from the marriage of lofty thought with lofty presentation. The sublime idea may be at hand, but he who conceives it may not possess the poetic power to give it worthy expression. ... Or there may exist artistic capacity, withal that no lofty theme offers itself to the poet's matrix ... No other quality so much demands the absolute infusion and inspiration of that which is great."

James Montgomery singles out the formal elements of sublimity: "the express image", 'the element of simplicity', 'the element of imagination', 'the mythological basis of the forms of ideas', 'rapid shifting scenes of thought', which give life to the subject.

Edmund Burke [Burke] argued that the sublime is the most powerful aesthetic experience. It is a mixture of fear and excitement, terror and awe. It's a feeling of transport and transcendence, as you forget about your surroundings and are caught up in the moment.

For Burke, the best word to describe the sublime is *astonishment*. This is "that state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror."

Evidently, Bell's "significant form" refers to a lyrical moment -- a lyricism that acts as a flash -- a lightning that is hidden in the structure of the poem and reveals
itself in the unfolding of the text before the reader. It is a significant moment in the twilight zone which in painting is known as chiroscuro -- the use of the areas of light and darkness to create a strong and dramatic mood. It is also treated as a literary device to display the juxtaposition of light and shade to create depth.

Taking into consideration what has been expounded above, the concept of lyricism may be represented by the following scheme.

**DISCUSSION**

To begin with, let us consider the first stanza of *Mutability* by P.B. Shelley:

*The flower that smiles to-day*
*To-morrow dies;*
*All that we wish to stay*
*Tempts and then flies.*
*What is this world's delight?*
*Lightning that mocks the night*
*Brief even as bright.*

The stanza under discussion opens the lofty theme of Man and Nature with the perspective of inherent social conflict. The psychological plane is negative due to the words with varying degree of negative inherent connotations, like 'dies', 'flies', 'night'. The manifestation of the lyric spirit finds its way in the use of 'lightning' -- which is the main feature of sublime in the poem, and one of the best use of chiaroscuro in the poem.

The poetry of Laurence Binyon (1869--1943) is a good example of rhetorical sublime:

*The Woods Entry*
*So old is the wood, so old,*
*Old and Fear,*
*Wrinkled roots; great stems; hushed leaves;*
*No sound near*
*Shadows retreat into shadow,*
Deepening, crossed.
Burning light singles a low leaf, a bough
Far within, lost.

The poem demonstrates the subliminal effect of chiaroscuro. The poet pays tribute to 'Fear' 'excited in the encounter with landscape', which is one of the powerful aesthetic experience. The primeval Fear is presented as 'wrinkled', 'great' and 'hushed'. Against the 'shadowy' background 'burning light' stands out as 'express image' of lyricism.

Here is another poem by L. Binyon:
**The Renewal**
No more of sorrow, the world's old distress,
Nor war of thronging spirits numberless,
Immortal arduors in brief days confined.
No more the languid fever of mankind.
To -- day I sing: 'tis no melodious pain
Cries in me: a full note, a rapturous strain
My voice adventures. Tremblest thou, my heart,
Because so eagerly the bliss would start
Up from thy fountains? O be near to me,
Thou that upliftest, thou that sett'st me free!

The poet begins by making a firm denial of social sublime: sorrow, the world's old distress, war of thronging spirits, immortal arduors, the languid fever of mankind, and switches to romantic sublime. The moment of great lyricism coincides with calling upon God in prayer: O be near to me, / Thou that upliftest, thou that sett'st me free! By immersion in the "I" itself the poet demonstrates the manifestation of the lyric spirit in the isolated flashes.

Here is one more poem by L. Binyon:
**A Glimpse of Time**

In the shadow of a broken house,
Down a deserted street,
Propt wall, cold hearths, and phantom stairs,
And the silence of dead feet --
Locked wildly in one another's arms
I saw two lovers meet.

And over that heartless house agast
Rose from mind's abyss
Lost stars and ruined, peering moons,
Worlds overshadowing this, --
Time's stony palace crumbled down
Before that instant kiss.

The peculiarity of romantic sublime in the poem adduced above is that it is germinal. It reveals itself in the title -- a glimpse stands for a momentary view of something.
The cumulative use of words and word combinations -- the shadow of a broken house, a deserted street, phantom stairs, the silence of dead feet, hearthless house create apocalyptic sublime that results in a spontaneous utterance that establishes depth and the moment of romantic sublime:

Time’s strong palace crumbled down/ Before that instant kiss, which is akin to the energy of lightning. Here we can observe a sudden transition from negative psychological plane of crisis to the positive one.

Here is a poem by Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) which has much in common with the one we have just considered:

**In Time of ‘Breaking of Nations’**

Only a man harrowing clods  
In a slow silent walk  
With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
Half asleep as they stalk.  
Only thin smoke without flame  
From the heaps of couch-grass;  
Yet this will go onward the same  
Though dynasties pass.  
Yonder a maid and her wight  
Come whispering by:  
War’s annals will cloud into night  
Ere their story die.

The atmosphere of obscurity created by the image of a rough man with an old horse, ‘silent walk’ and ‘thin smoke’ form the depressing background against which stands out ‘a maid and her wight’. With ‘their story’, the outer (the social) and inner (the romantic) balance is recovered, and the sublime moment is achieved.

Both, ‘that instant kiss’ and ‘their story’ are significant forms for the sublime moment, because they evoke the intuition of depth and as such, belong to the third phase of the sublime moment.

The backgrounds of the poems -- apocalyptical and obscure -- belong to the second phase of the sublime moment, and as such evoke astonishment and surprise, and give rise to disproportion between inner and outer.

Here is a poem by Andrew Motion that illustrates the way the poet establishes depth by the sublime moment.

**The Camp**

Near the dog’s leg turn of the lane down to the ponies’ field,  
skulking in summer among cow parsley and meadowsweet,  
in winter with their streaked black corrugated walls laid bare,  
were the half-dozen Nissen huts my father refused to mention.  
A prisoner of war camp for Italian soldiers my mother told me,  
but also part of the silence my father had brought back with him  
ten years before from Germany which now could not be ended  
although the reason for that was another thing he never gave up.  
Why spoil an early morning stroll bringing halters for the ponies  
so we could lead them home to the stable yard then saddle up?
What else could there possibly be on earth for us to talk about that was more interesting than a blackbird calling in the hedge, or the swarming hawthorn flowers that smelled faintly of drains, or the rain cloud that he always said was only a clearing shower?

The father in the poem is in deep silence because he was a prisoner of war camp for Italian soldiers, and another part of silence was brought by him from Germany. As we know from E. Burke, silence has a sublime effect. Thus the question arises -- how should we interpret the father's deep silence? Are there reasons to interpret the father's silence in aesthetic terms? It seems appropriate to consider the father's silence as the first phase of the sublime moment, as 'the state of normal perception', 'the smooth correspondence of inner and outer'.

**Conclusion**

In this article I have addressed the main principles of Sociological Poetics expounded in the works of Voloshinov/Bakhtin and T. Adorno. My aim was to further develop Adorno's idea of the social nature of the lyric by turning it against the sphere of the aesthetic category of sublime. In order to do so, a conceptual scheme of lyricism was put forward, taking into consideration three phases of rhetorical sublime.

The results obtained here may require some revision. However, the descriptive analysis carried out in this article shows clearly that conceptualising lyricism opens new vistas in interpretation of poetry.

**References:**


