

# The Sublime and the Uncanny

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## *Preface*

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This volume includes papers presented at the international forum “The Sublime and the Uncanny” on March 3 and 4, 2015 at Sofia University, Bulgaria. The forum was co-organized by the Sofia Literary Theory Seminar (SLS), Cultural Center of Sofia University, and University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy (UTCP). It focused on notions of the “sublime” and the “uncanny,” which play a crucial role not only in the 20th century but also in contemporary critical discourses. The forum posed the question of heuristic potential of these notions in the time of redefinition of understanding of the human intellect and status of the (in) human, respectively.

First, let us go back to the basis of our forum. It was about three years ago that Profs. Yasuo Kobayashi (University of Tokyo), Boyan Manchev (New Bulgarian University), and Darin Tenev (Sofia University) organized the previous forum “Metamorphosis and Catastrophe” in Sofia (November 1 and 2, 2013). Around ten scholars from Paris, Sofia, and Tokyo presented their papers at this forum, and some of their papers can be perused in *UTCP Booklet 26: Métamorphose et catastrophe* (UTCP, 2014) and *Literary Newspaper* (“Metamorphosis and Catastrophe I,” N9/2014 and “Catastrophe and Metamorphosis II,” N37/2014). It would be acceptable to say that it was an epochal event for this long-term collaboration between Sofia and Tokyo at an institutional as well as individual level. Undeniably, the opportunity led to a partnership, and subsequently, the next meeting between the University of Tokyo and Sofia University could be conceived. Eventually, the editors of this volume, Futoshi Hoshino (University of Tokyo) and Kamelia Spassova (Sofia University), decided to focus on the two notions in the forum: the “sublime” and the “uncanny.”

The essays in this booklet explore the questions concerning the “sublime” and the “uncanny.”

1. The sublime: The essay or “gloss” by Boyan Manchev presents a stimulating interpretation on “The Analytic of the Sublime” in Kant’s

*Critique of Judgment*, while Futoshi Hoshino attempts to show a hidden motif, namely, “critique of capitalism” in Lyotard’s “sublime,” strongly influenced by Kant’s “The Analytic of the Sublime.”

2. The uncanny: The essay by Kamelia Spassova and Maria Kalinova explores various implications of *das Unheimliche* (the uncanny) and negation in and along with Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*; Darin Tenev and Enyo Stoyanov articulate the “literary uncanny” while carefully examining *das Unheimliche* as defined by Freud and Jentsch; Bozhana Filipova tries to elaborate on “the uncanny effect” by reading Joyce’s “Circe,” the 15th episode of *Ulysses*.

3. Related topics: Hisato Kuriwaki, by tracing Kristeva’s reading on Sartre, gives us an insight into the “philosophical gimmicks” — “abjection” and “whirligig”; Yuji Nishiyama carefully interprets the mysterious lines by Paul Celan “The world is gone. I must carry you,” and shows its importance for Jacques Derrida’s thinking about “end of the world”; Takafumi Shimada attempts to construe the notion of “history” as a “difference of force” while examining Derrida’s views on Nietzsche and Heidegger.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the participants for their generous contribution to the intellectual community. During the two-day forum, we held workshops and presentations on the “sublime” and the “uncanny.” All participants actively participated in the discussion related to these themes, beginning from classical texts such as Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (1790) and Freud’s *The Uncanny* (1919). Based on these classics, we could communicate the actuality of these notions along with their successors in the 20th century such as Heidegger, Adorno, Derrida, Kofman, Lyotard, Todorov, and Kristeva.

We hope that this volume would contribute to further dialogues on the “sublime” and the “uncanny,” or other important themes in philosophy and literature.

Futoshi Hoshino and Kamelia Spassova