

1. Synoptic paradigm of substance

In the light of this metanarrative research, Bowles may be seen as a beacon of orientation into the **paradigm of substance**. He managed to construct a **Western literary oeuvre based on non-Western grounds**. His Trojan horse of captivating stories contains the living soul of colonized lands and people. This paradigm may be new to modern Western consciousness, but it seems to be as old as the human world, and constantly contemporaneous with all organic phenomena. With certain scars from old colonial duals, but with a more certain new natural-human-cosmic integration, a luminous body of cultural consciousness emerges, one of synopsis, configuration, identification. Historical consciousness may end, but life, time, language, stories continue to be regenerated. The difference between the divided and the undivided world view is their “sense of an ending”¹: the former ends horizontally, the latter vertically. As shadow and substance are revealed as being one on the metanarrative level, so the **vision of narrative itself changes**. Once we see our own personal and collective stories in a greater context of revelativity, our vision, attitude, mentality, ethics, and language changes.

The paradigm of substance closes the I, and opens the eye. The radical revision of Hamlet is necessitated, for truth and revenge do not go together. The spirit of division is pathological, an eye for an eye cannot be the solution. The ghost that speaks the truth but provokes blood-shed cannot come from substance, but from the darkest shadows, for self-vindication comes from the I. Only reconciliation can “**restore amends,**” (*Midsummer*, V.ii.) where shadows return to their source: to light.² **Seeing and knowing** that we are “playing a part in a huge drama,”³ our deepest reflections change. Bowles says: “The Moroccans claim that full participation in life demands the regular contemplation of death. I agree without reserve.”⁴ The ritual enactment of death not only concerns the ego and narrativity, but more importantly the end of all roles, and the return to common substance, natural, human, and cosmic⁵. Metanarrative literature is therapy, taking the reader through the valley of death, through identification, to reintegration into the organic, cultic mode of existence. Narrative is death, in a way. Real life, as also the life of books, stems from metanarrativity, from the direct source of substance. The fact that narrative is indirectly metanarrative, and that linear causality is indirectly cyclical has been proven. What can be the aim of cult, then, if not the narrowing of the gap in-between, to achieve directness and immediacy of vision: seeing the simultaneous presence of metanarrative and narrative, and in them seeing the single source of substance and shadow: light itself. Substance, as consciousness, is a “question of degree,”⁶ therefore ultimately and primarily all is substance. The whole shadow-play is defined and driven by the self-transforming matter of light.

¹ Title of Frank Kermode’s book in: Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 1:67.

² See *Etymological notes* for Hungarian virág-világ (flower-world-light) identity.

³ WS, 127.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 367.

⁵ Cf. Victor Turner’s observation that the purpose of rites is to “destroy *all* roles and prepare for the emergence of *communitas*.” (Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 188.)

⁶ WS, 268.

The synopsis of expressing and reading (coding and decoding) consists in the method of seeing things at once from different dimensions: at once from outside and inside, at once as subject and object, foreign and familiar, temporal and timeless. This method, I believe, is the original human way of expression and interpretation, aiming at perfection, a mysterious unity of inner and outer form to restore total matter. This method is necessitated not merely by the fact that in isolation neither the esoteric nor the exoteric approach proves sufficient in handling organic phenomena i.e. the world, but supported also by the fact that the Absolute as a measure beyond the human exists in some form in every mentality. This removed absolute factor, whether black or white, is what provides perspective: in a sense, the hidden aspect of the Absolute is what provides our sense of time. Once the Absolute is spread out plain to see, like in the desert, the sense of time disappears. In order to see history, stories, personal episodes synoptically, from a perspective both inside and outside, this existential singing desert should be traversed: in solitude, personality starts singing its individual-cosmic song.

2. The body and pulse of substance

2.1 The cultic code

The total revision of history and linguistics is necessitated from this new-found archaic perspective of holistic thinking. The revision of all material sciences is also facilitated, as the vision of the whole does not take away but add to the specialised vision of partial disciplines, e.g. the dual nature of the spirit (as constant and changing), and the triadic function of the human being (as spirit, mind, and body), and his/her organic, analogical relation to the universe (man as cosmos) only adds to fields such as psychology and medicine. More importantly, however, the common understanding of man and world are potentially galvanized by metaphysical vision: the individual becomes centred, and the world becomes rounded.

As we have seen, the figure of the centred, spheric common living universe can be observed in cultic literature, as **binary nature** (stasis and dynamism), **trinary operation** (pointal, cyclical, and spheric), **and centrally defined structure** (concentric). The same seal is even more unquestionable in the codified law of cultic core languages. The linguistic test I have proposed concludes the following, in the case of the unbroken core language, Magyar or Hungarian: the inner core is **TWO IN ONE**, the outer core is **THREE IN ONE**, and the total form is **ALL IN ONE**. This, I believe, is the key to individual and collective human reintegration into the natural-cosmic order.

The same organic model underlies the entire physical and human world, from the atom to the globe. The cultic model is considerably more clearly instructive of organic life than these objective scientific models, so the reinstatement of cultic thinking is suggested. The analogous **human ritual, linguistic, and temporal code** is for more differentiated than any **physical code**: the human heart, as a cosmic centre, generates all the winding verbal and narrative paths, and this meta-linguistic, intimate heart, concealed only to be revealed, finds its source and end in its transfigurative, boundlessly overflowing core nature.

2.2 Map

The once hidden, now revealed ritual ground of the cultic organism may be used as a map to the literary island, leading to the subtle body of substance. Its function is to help the participant gain sight of beauty, to hear the truth, to experience pure, free life, and to find integration and resolution, both inside and outside. In the literary world, and indeed in any world overwhelmed by shadows, it is not easy to find these pieces of gold. Bowles is a cultic

master of conspiracy, taking his audience on a perilous journey. No other harm can befall us, but to fall prey to our own dark, untransformed, dislocated nature. The participant who listens carefully and follows the right signs, those of ascent and convergence, is sure to emerge not only alive, but laden with treasures of poetry, wisdom, and experience. With my research, I attempted to draw a proper, useful map for such cultic books heavy with dread, exoticism, sentiment, futility, bewilderment, loss, but full of hidden caves and coves of light and life.

The novels of Bowles may be considered as dreams. Traditional cultic guides such as Chukchi **dream maps** provide a “sense of direction and choice.”

Dreams mediate between levels of reality, and the process of transition may be indicated, positively or negatively, by images of ascent into light or descent into darkness. A total reconstruction of the Self is made possible through the acceptance of psychic terror and symbolic death in the dream state... The Chukchi explicitly recognize the two-way traffic through the levels of middle earth, the infernal regions and the heavens. Maps show the way and minimize the risk of becoming lost. Paths to the worlds of dawn, of evening and of darkness pass through the pole star, the axis of the world, while sun, moon, planets and stars shine simultaneously.⁷

At the crossroads, there is a choice to be made. “I have set before you life and death; therefore **chose life**.” (Deut 30:19) Paraphrased, literature sets before us substance and shadow; therefore we must **choose substance**. It seems an easy choice from the outside – but not from within. Hamlet chooses the shadow, Port chooses the black star, Dyar the track of money, Stenham the pretty girl, Soto his nightmare. When they choose, they are not aware of going the wrong way, because they are within their predicament. But the reader sees that the choice is really between integration and disintegration, between the isolated, divided ego and the “natural man” at once individual and universal. The narrative choice must indeed be made, and this is what Bowles wants us to see in his **cultic content**. Of course, there is a price to pay, but what life of shadow, what symbolic death can be too dear for resurrection in the warm light of substance and “the sacramental vision of reality”?

Yet the decision to be made concerns “only” the narrative projection of reality. The **cultic form** carries a deeper message, which is merited only by those who have undergone the baptism of the narrative labyrinth, lost themselves, chosen and walked the path of substance, have not left unsettled accounts, and have no burden of guilt. For debt and guilt automatically destroy their owners, sooner or later, according to the universal law. But for the initiated audience purified by water and fire, by burial and by weightlessness, the message of the subtle body is that narrative is the illusion of the mind which cuts up the body of time. For the body of time, by its very nature, is indivisible. The **source and end of all things, as even of stories**, is substance: **evolution into timelessness, or rather into the fullness of time**. An epiphany, one might say, of light, flight, convergence, and configuration, insight and synopsis. This substance, which I call metanarrative, has been shown to contain and generate the shadows of narrative, as the metaphysical **contains and generates** the physical, by giving life to it and liberating it at the same time.

⁷ David Coxhead, Susan Hiller (eds.), *Dreams: Visions of the Night*, Plate 19.