

time line, and different target audiences). The book also introduces the topic of creative writing courses and pragmatic aspects of publishing.

The only part of the book related to a different linguistic territory (French-speaking countries) describes French children’s literature and discusses autism with reference to carefully chosen, supportive and stimulating literature.

As mentioned, all the essays presented in the book are highly informative for a person who possesses an interest in literature beyond reading for pleasure and might have an ambition to become an insider in the book business.

The presented topics and issues are applicable to the global market; however, there are also specific features that are rooted in the English-speaking world. Thanks to the English language, this market benefits from a strong ability to penetrate numerous countries and regions, and it benefits from the fact that English is used as a lingua franca in the world of business; the benefit of the English language is literally the ability to speak to the masses. In that light, translating a book into a local language requires several steps (different time lines, different planning/scheduling, taking into consideration the quality of a translation) within the publishing process. Also, in that context, there is a cultural (even political) question concerning which authors should represent a national literature outside its territory, and should be a part of the national canon with the ambition of being presented outside of their own country of origin. This question might be relevant for smaller linguistic groups; however, it is not so salient in the case of texts in the English language.

The book brings to the table highly informative, current topics, especially in the light of changing dynamics of publishing, and it reflects on the need to go to meet the readers and address their changing reading/literary needs and wants.

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**Ema Jelínková and Rachael Sanders, eds. [*The Literary Art of Ali Smith: “All we are is Eyes.” The Transatlantic Studies in British and North American Culture, vol. 31.*] Frankfurt am Mein: Peter Lang, 2019.**

This volume comprises papers from an international team of researchers exploring the multifaceted work of the contemporary Scottish writer, playwright, academic and journalist Ali Smith – who has become known especially for her short stories and novels addressing complex political and cultural issues, including feminism, philosophy or national identities.

The popularity and critical awareness of Smith’s fiction are documented by multiple essays and one collective monograph edited by Monica Germanà and Emily Horton: *Ali Smith: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (Bloomsbury 2013), which predominantly explores the aspects of space, the uncanny, and queer identities. Since the publication of this 2013 monograph, Smith has authored several acclaimed works, including the novel *How to be Both* (2014), the novel quartet *Autumn* (2016),

*Winter* (2017), *Spring* (2019) and *Summer* (2020), and the short-story collection *Public Library and Other Stories* (2015). While this prize-winning author has received growing attention from both critics and readers, Jelínková and Sanders prove that there is more to Ali Smith than gender identities and/or nationality concerns, and that her works address complex current social and political topics. While aspects such as Scottishness, gender or sexual preference are naturally considered in the volume, as they form an inseparable part of Smith's writing, the contributors focus predominantly on philosophical and mythological aspects, and above all on the “deeply human” (9) and universal impact of Smith's storytelling, as Ema Jelínková points out in her Introduction.

In her contribution “Time, Knowledge and Metafiction in Ali Smith's *Autumn*” Attila Dósa examines temporality and Smith's departure from mimetic narrative within the context of philosophies of time. Dósa simultaneously employs various critical approaches, focusing his detailed analysis on two episodes from the novel. This paper, though offering a fresh perspective on the connection of time and knowledge, assumes a rather expert audience, not only acquainted with narrative traditions, mythologies and philosophies of time, but also, and most importantly, with the novel *Autumn* itself – which remains unintroduced.

Héloïse Lecomte discusses the modern mythical dimension of Smith's series of lectures *Artful*, focusing on Orphic myths from a feminist perspective. At the same time, however, she foregrounds the universalist concept of mourning, alienation, and the modern desire for stories

that matter. The influence of Greek philosophy is also a major concern of Milena Kalkanin's paper “Pythagorean Tradition and Its Modern Echoes in Ali Smith's ‘Common’,” which discusses the importance of commonality, liberation from postmodern fragmentation, and dissociation in the context of Pythagorean philosophy. This philosophical approach receives significant space; the first six pages provide a purely theoretical background of Pythagorism and its variations, while only the second half of the paper applies the philosophical concepts to Smith's short story.

In contrast to the philosophical and mythological analyses, Ema Jelínková, besides providing an Introduction to the volume, centres her paper “‘Small Lives, Easily Lost in Foreign Droughts’: A. L. Kennedy's and Ali Smith's Short Stories of Human Interest” on the position of Ali Smith in the context of Scottish literature, especially in comparison with another Scottish writer, academic and stand-up comedian, Allison Louise Kennedy (who prefers to go by her initials so that her gender is not known before her work is). Drawing on her previous research of Scottish literature written by women, Jelínková foregrounds the universal human aspect of female Scottish voices, their emphasis on the common, everyday stories that are often silenced or unheard due to their seeming simplicity and domesticity. Starting with a brief historical context and an outline of the issues and forms of Scottish (women's) writing, Jelínková depicts the struggle of Scottish women writers to free themselves from various labels, mainly “woman writer”, “national writer”, or even “lesbian writer”; their plight is thus very close to that of American or British authors, as is

documented in the essays of and interviews with Elizabeth Bishop or Jeanette Winterson. While acknowledging Smith's and Kennedy's narrative experiments, what Jelínková foregrounds is their constant concern with commonality and “relevance to the world as we, readers, know it” (38).

Jess Orr offers a fresh perspective on visual media and spectators in “New Ways of Seeing and the Role of the Critical Spectator in Ali Smith's *The Accidental*,” while Maria del Pino Montesdeoca Cubas discusses cyclical time, ethics and intertextuality in her paper “‘Look into My Eyes’: (In)Visibility in Ali Smith's *Autumn*, *Winter*, and *Spring*.” Cubas focuses on the ethical role of a writer and the genre that Smith understands as a reflection of contemporary events. As these seasonal novels were written during Brexit, immigration, the mass media and political manipulation play a major role in the narratives, as well as the role of the writer and his/her moral responsibility and active engagement in current affairs. The role of the author and narrative perspectives are addressed in Milada Franková's essay “Omniscient Narrative Revisited by Ali Smith and Kate Atkinson.” Outlining the development of omniscient narrative and its decline in the 20th century, Franková argues that this concept has begun to reappear, at least to a certain degree, undermining the “need for strict distinctions between omniscience or a lack of it” (88). Such a “partially omniscient voice” is then examined in Ali Smith's *Winter* and Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life*.

Multiple points of view and their effect on the narrative, especially in connection with performance and artistic techniques, are further discussed in Ro-

chelle Simmons's paper “‘I Want to Go to Collage’: On Ali Smith and John Berger.” Simmons focuses on Smith's employment of Berger's transformative visions, representing current social issues and the use of non-verbal means of communication, and social feminist criticism, examining the influence of visual arts (specifically painting) on Smith's narrative style. Rachael Sumner analyses the narrative effect of collage or “bricolage” in “The Art of Memory in *Autumn* by Ali Smith.” Yet unlike Simmons, Sumner focuses chiefly on the creation of identities and the function of memory in the novel *Autumn*, analysing memory in connection with “continual creation of self and world through narrative” (131). Olga Roebuck adopts a female-oriented approach, discussing the representation of contemporary women in her essay “Authenticating Women: Ali Smith and Denise Mina.” Focusing on the complex negotiations between feminism, nationalism, and resistance to labelling, Roebuck, similarly to Jelínková, foregrounds the authors' concern with authenticity.

This volume offers original insights into the short stories and novels of Ali Smith, focusing predominantly on her *Seasonal Quartet*. The papers contained in it adopt various approaches, ranging from philosophical to genre- and form-oriented, feminist, political, or mythological; while some papers are more text-oriented, others foreground theoretical discussions. Overall, the presented papers reflect the complexity of Ali Smith's writing and – despite their disparate perspectives – explore topical concerns, be it narrative structures, the moral responsibility of artists, the rise of nationalisms, cultural and literary labelling, or post-Brexit society.

As the volume perhaps addresses rather those readers who are already acquainted with Smith's work (as most of the essays do not introduce the plot and/or focus specifically on the details or parts of the stories or novels that are crucial for their theoretical perspective), the analysed texts often seem to be rather backgrounded. Nevertheless, the editors have selected representative examples of diverse approaches to Ali Smith's literary output and highlighted the topicality and complexity of her work.

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**Kamila Vránková**  
***[Metamorphoses of***  
***the Sublime: From***  
***Ballads and Gothic***  
***Novels to Contemporary***  
***Anglo-American***  
***Children's Literature]* České**  
**Budějovice: Pedagogická**  
**fakulta Jihočeské univerzity,**  
**2019**

This monograph is concerned with the sublime and with shifts in the understanding of the sublime over time as reflected in literature. It is a response to an increase of interest in the topic in the Anglo-American environment. The author's aim is to contribute to the discussion surrounding the sublime, and to show the possibilities for incorporating the sublime into literary analysis, as demonstrated across several chapters.

The monograph is based on research by a range of contemporary Czech scholars. It consists of ten chapters, but it could be thematically divided into three parts. The first part, and also the first chapter, provides a theoretical background for the topic. This chapter outlines the history of the concept from Longinus to the present day, touching on modern theories of the sublime, but it also concerns itself with possible definitions of the term as well as with the features of the sublime.

The second part deals with the literary analysis itself. It begins with a closer look at various metamorphoses of the revenant/demon lover/Lenore motif as present in European ballads, and explores the threshold between life and death as a place of experience and the possible rebirth of the self.

The next chapters analyse features of the sublime as manifested in *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, several works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* compared with Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

While the last part of the book remains focused on literary interpretation, the last four chapters shift their attention entirely to children's literature. The seventh chapter is concerned with changing attitudes towards the presence of the sublime and the fantastic in literature for young readers over the course of time. The following two chapters provide a closer introduction to (respectively) the motifs of time travel and other worlds existing alongside our own. Finally, the last chapter analyses the works of three contemporary authors – J. K. Rowling, Chris Priestley and Lemony Snicket, and explores the ways in