Eudaimonics and the Mythical Method: A Pilot Study

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Dedication

To my parents,

Theuns and Karin Engelbrecht.

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ABSTRACT

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Criticising art only from a position of suspicion is an unstable epistemological and hermeneutic approach to adopt. In 2015, it resulted in the public destruction of dozens of works of "problematic" art on a South African university campus (Furlong, 2016; Pertsovsky, 2017). The incident was led by student protesters who felt that the art represented repressive ideology (Furlong, 2016; Pertsovsky, 2017). And, while this call for change in the cultural milieu of South Africa is, in a certain light, important, it is also necessary to discuss how this change is enacted, and, on a deeper level perhaps, how we could more constructively approach art as a nation in the future. Eudaimonics, a critical theory centred on wellbeing, growth, and balance offers a platform for such discourse. It suggests that the postmodern focus on "what is wrong" with art employs a hermeneutics of suspicion which may lead to unbalanced or condemning criticisms (Pawelski & Moores, 2013:27). In approaching T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* from this position, the poem and the "mythical method" (Eliot, 1923:167) by which it was written can be seen as a rich commentary on the phenomenological necessity, process, and constituent elements of sustainable change illustrated through the poetic superimposition of myth and modernity. Subsequently, this dissertation explores the possibility that *The Waste Land* and the mythical method demonstrate a position towards art that accounts for the simultaneous necessity of both change and stability. This aspect of Eliot's work, it is found, offers a relevant and viable approach to the necessity of sustainable cultural change in South Africa, stressing a eudaimonic consolidation between traditional and new art towards the constructive revitalisation of the contemporary cultural landscape. For a methodology this dissertation employs hermeneutic phenomenology informed by a eudaimonic perspective on literary interpretation. That is, a defined interpretative structure allows for the analysis of various texts (notes, lectures, interviews, essays, articles, and primary texts), which in turn supports the argument for Eliot's poem and the mythical method.

Keywords: Eudaimonics; hermeneutic phenomenology; art censorship and criticism; Modernism; T.S. Eliot; *The Waste Land*; the mythical method; mythology; sustainable change; Jordan B. Peterson; the psychology of belief.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **II**

ABSTRACT ..... **III**

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **VII**

INTRODUCTION —T.S. ELIOT'S MYTHICAL METHOD AS A RESPONSE TO A NEED FOR CHANGE: THE VALUE OF A EUDAIMONIC PERSPECTIVE **1**

CHAPTER ONE — HERMENEUTICS, ORDER, AND CHAOS: UNPACKING THE EUDAIMONIC PERSPECTIVE ON T.S. ELIOT'S MYTHICAL METHOD **12**

Theoretical framework 12

Conclusion 31

CHAPTER TWO — CONCEPTUALISING THE MYTHICAL METHOD **33**

I. The mythical method in its historical context **33**

Introduction 33

Ulysses as an expression of the modern age 34

A return to origins and myth 37

Psychology, the poet, and the mind of Europe 39

The mind of Europe divided 41

Conclusion 45

II. The mythical method and the role of myth in society **46**

Introduction 46

Archetypes, rituals, and patterns of being 47

Conclusion—Order and chaos: when myth fails 65

CHAPTER THREE— THE MYTHICAL METHOD IN *THE WASTE LAND*: AN ANALYSIS **71**

Introduction 73

1

The levels of discourse in *The Waste Land*..... 73

Creative application of the mythical method: “Frisch Weht der Wind”..... 102

Conclusion..... 106

CONCLUSION: THE VIABILITY AND RELEVANCE OF THE MYTHICAL METHOD AS A COMMENTARY ON SUSTAINABLE CHANGE..... 108

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 114

ANNEXURES..... 120

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 27

Figure 2 48

Figure 3 52

Figure 4 55

Figure 5 61

Figure 6 64

Figure 7 102

INTRODUCTION —T.S. ELIOT'S MYTHICAL METHOD AS A RESPONSE TO A NEED FOR CHANGE: THE VALUE OF A EUDAIMONIC PERSPECTIVE

In the context of 2015/16, we need to ask what we mean by politics that truly effects change which is both radical and sustained.

—Justice Dennis Davis (2016)

In 2017, a staff member at the University of Cape Town, William Daniels, submitted a request to the university to release to the public a list of art works that had been destroyed by protesters in 2016. He also requested a list of works "deemed to be problematic by student representatives on the [university's] Artworks Task Team (ATT) in 2015", which had been removed from public display (Pertsovsky, 2017). Following the publication of such a list by independent news agency *GroundUp,* UCT initially claimed that the publication was "not entirely correct" (previous vice-chancellor Max Price would later claim that *GroundUp*'s list was "substantially correct") (Pertsovsky, 2017; Bozzoli & Price, 2017). However, the institution also refused to publish its own fully correct list (Pertsovsky, 2017; Bozzoli & Price, 2017).

In response to this, Member of Parliament Professor Belinda Bozzoli wrote a public letter to Dr. Price. In her letter, Bozzoli condemns the university's response to the extreme criticism of art on its campus as an attack on freedom of speech, writing that

> [i]t is extremely difficult to comprehend how one of our country's leading universities, known for its commitment to openness and free speech and obviously dedicated to the support and curation of the creations of many of South Africa's best artists, could have indulged in this kind of censorship. This current incursion on freedom of speech is akin to the censorship and banning of literature, film, theatre and art by the apartheid government.
>
> I urge you to provide the public with full information on this matter; and to reverse the decisions of the Orwellian "Artworks Task Team" and restore these artworks to their rightful place in the University's buildings (2017).

Dr. Price responded:

> Most of the works that have been removed for safe keeping were identified by the Council's Works of Art Committee based on their assessment of the risk to these artworks following some months of debates on campus and particularly the calls from activists associated with the #RhodesMustFall to remove works of art that they considered problematic. It is easy to see how removing these works would come across as censorship – but it was always made clear that they were removed temporarily for safe keeping.
>
> Before the burnings and removals, the University Council had already set up a task team to develop a response to the debates about the University's art collection and to review the University's policies on acquisitions and curation. (2017)

Dr. Price's defence of UCT's actions argues that the decision was made to remove art works that were "considered problematic" for the protection of the art, not its censorship. The art is not banned but being kept safe, he holds. Price's attempted shift towards moral integrity, however, leaves unanswered the fact that protesters on his campus posed a significant enough threat to freedom of expression that art was removed as a response (pre-emptive or not).

The incident stands out as a troubling example of the results of suspicion-based criticism against art. In part, it is a violent physical reaction to art, one that masquerades as an intellectual response to problematic ideology (Furlong, 2016), and the incident was met with a wave of responses in the form of news articles, published letters, scathing opinion pieces, and dossiers of evidence compiled in online art journals.

But this dissertation is not another reaction to UCT's handling of events. Rather, it is a response at length to the hermeneutic imperative behind the kind of art criticism exemplified by the UCT issue; an incident of suspicion-based hermeneutics broken down, I shall argue. This dissertation is therefore a response to a model of criticism which, at its extreme, has allowed for the destruction and censorship of art, with neither broad public debate nor consideration of the works as significant historical and aesthetic artefacts which form an important part of South

Africa's cultural heritage. In responding, this dissertation argues for an alternative hermeneutic approach; one that accepts the necessity of sustainable cultural change, but which sees art as being part of a cultural tradition that must be accounted for by the new artist and art critic if they wish to effect sustainable change in this sphere.

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), perhaps surprisingly, speaks directly to this situation. It offers at its core an important voice to the conversation surrounding the necessity of sustainable change on various layers of self and society, but in special relation to art and the artist. Specifically, Eliot uses the "mythical method" to express through the poem a reaction to a perceived collapse of cultural wholeness in Europe that is translatable to the South African context, and which is perhaps more conceptually rigorous than the reactions we have seen thus far.

The need for the above-mentioned conversation, furthermore, is urgent. In issue 45 of *Amandla!* magazine (2016:10-11), for example, formerly-expelled UCT student Alex Hotz,[1] a "leading fallist organizer" (Ndelu, 2016) with the #RhodesMustFall movement (*RMF*), says the following regarding the new South Africa:

> Firstly, we are not a rainbow nation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission did nothing for this country except put a bandage on a deep gaping wound. The rainbow nation mythology of the new 'democratic' South Africa is a long way from the work that is actually required to deal with a history of racial discrimination, segregation and exploitation...Young people throughout 2015 have voiced clearly that 'vokol' [sic] has changed since 1994.

Hotz expresses a frustration with the post-apartheid system that is becoming increasingly widespread. This is demonstrated by the very existence of magazines like *Amandla!*, costly protests on university campuses across the nation (Kahn, 2018), and the rise of radical politics on South African university campuses (Mabasa, 2018). However, the activist's reference to the

[1]It must be said here that although there is photo evidence of Hotz's presence at the art burning incident, she has expressed clearly that she "did not take part in any burning of the art," and that she "was in the vicinity along with many other students having a conversation about the wisdom of burning the art" (Anon., 2016).

Rainbow Nation ideal as a “mythology” here and as a “story” and “narrative” later in the article is highly relevant to this dissertation.

In the context of Hotz’s article, “mythology” is used in a way that denotes a negative connotation, as if to indicate an accepted lie or scam. The intention behind the term here is vastly different than it is for T.S. Eliot, who refers to myth in more positive terms. Eliot scholar Denis Donoghue defines myth as “a story told for the benefit of the community to which it is addressed: it tells the members of that community how to live, what to do, which forces they should dread” (1997:208), and Eliot agrees, as will be shown. Both Donoghue and Eliot, therefore, conceptualise myth as being the articulation of points of aspiration and avoidance that are meant to benefit society. In this dissertation, I use “myth” and associated forms such as “mythology”, or the descriptive “mythological” to refer to ancient texts or traditions, the stories and symbols contained therein, and the configurations of the phenomenological domains of existence that fundamentally underlie these (Peterson, 2007:96). I accept, also, the perspective of myth’s societal role as presented by Donoghue above.

Despite the apparent differences of definition, however, Hotz’s description of the Rainbow Nation ideal (and its failures) becomes particularly interesting in light of Donoghue’s description of myth. Donoghue holds that myth acts as a compass that points towards what an individual and society should pursue and what they should fear (1997:208). This considered, the tone of frustration in Hotz’s words is understandable: myth and story are perhaps at some level taken to be true. When the opposite proves to be the case, anger and frustration are normal enough responses. For many—such as Hotz and *RMF* more broadly, in my opinion—it seems that the Rainbow Nation narrative has proven to be a myth that carries untenable instructions, a story that was perhaps naïve, or simply ignorant of complex truths. The pattern of life suggested by the old narrative, Hotz appears to argue, has collapsed. Her apparent frustration starts to look more like a sense of betrayal.

Regardless, the sense that there is a need for the critique of existing structures (be they academic, cultural, or economic) is acute and, I believe, important at universities especially. And it is not a need limited to social activists: Archbishop Desmond Tutu—one of the most socially prominent advocates of the old social narrative of a united South Africa—has even gone so far as to publicly voice his own disdain at the current state of the country, saying that the very "fabric of the nation is splitting at the seams" (Cohen, 2015).

Movements like *RMF* and #FeesMustFall (*FMF*) in 2015 attempt, in my opinion, to criticise existent structures and hierarchies on multiple levels, seeking to usher in a new "myth" for society with reformed value structures to replace the old, untenable ones. The UCT incident (among others) demonstrates this well. However, *RMF* and *FMF* failed by their actions and associations to uphold the sense of moral integrity that had given them impetus and credibility, and so achieved no sustainable moral, ideological goal. Besides the removal of several "problematic" symbols of colonialism, *RMF* and *FMF* were largely destructive, offering little by way of viable options for sustainable reconstruction, specifically in the artistic domain.

In a 2016 interview for *Agenda,* some time after the protests, Hotz declared that

> little to nothing has been gained and we have focused so much on protests within the campus that protesting towards the State in various ways and frustrating the State has been negated. But more importantly, where to from here in a movement that's become completely fragmented? When we cannot hold true to the politics in our movements? When the violence within our movements with regard to patriarchy, misogyny, sexism, trans antagonism, queer antagonism is so deep that so many people have decided that they're no longer going to be part of the movement? How do we build/rebuild?
>
> Some of the other things that I've been thinking about with regard to the movement is where I fit in, coming back onto the campus after expulsion, having all these reservations around the consistency of our politics and not wanting to legitimise bad politics/violent politics with regard to people within our movement (Ndelu, 2017).

But the movements' failure to uphold a collective political ideology was not the only indication of its demise. Tamar Kahn writes in *Business Day* that

> higher education and training minister Naledi Pandor spelt out the destruction wrought to universities over a three-year period, cataloguing how laboratories, libraries and buildings were set alight and vandalised on campuses across the country. Fees Must Fall was a student movement that began in 2015, and centred on a campaign for free higher education.
>
> The direct damage reported by the universities stood at R492.4m in 2015/2016, R237.7m in 2016/2017 and R56.5m in 2017/2018. The hardest-hit institutions were North West University, which sustained R198m in damage after its Mafikeng campus was set alight; the University of Johannesburg, which saw fire and vandalism cause damage worth R144m and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which estimated the damage done to its torched law library and vandalised buildings at more than R100m (2018).

The story carried by the UCT protesters and activists from *RMF* and *FMF,* like the Rainbow Nation narrative that preceded it, has also proved to be unreliable on several fronts, certainly in its current configuration. From the perspective of literary criticism, my sense is that the degeneration of the movements into chaos is somewhat predictable given the flaws in the hermeneutic structure they depend on; flaws made clear by the aftermath of both the UCT incident and the *FMF* protests. From this perspective, there exists a conflict of narratives and values at a national level, and it's particularly focused at South Africa's universities.

Given the expressed need to establish new narratives (Nyamnjoh, 2017:257)—and the demonstrably problematic underpinnings of attempts thus far—this dissertation hopes to add a voice to the conversation based on the eudaimonic study of T.S. Eliot's mythical method. It aims to philosophically explore alternative hermeneutics through Eliot's work that are more conducive to meaningful, sustainable change than expedient change. It asks: what light can literary studies shed on the need to readjust cultural structures without degenerating into destructive chaos?

It is a broad question, and one that is best answered at the level of detail. My initial research in pursuit of an answer to this question showed that besides its more obvious benefits such as improved literacy, developed empathy (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013), enriched vocabulary and exposure to worlds and thoughts outside of one's own, literary fiction offers something deeper, too; something implicit and therefore less quantifiable: eudaimonia, or a state of being wherein the individual thrives emotionally, socially, and intellectually (Pawelski & Moores, 2013).

Because it is concerned with wellbeing, and because that is my broad concern, too, eudaimonics provides an excellent theoretical canopy for this dissertation. And, while it is certainly not a new topic of interest (Pawelski & Moores, 2013:2), the recent upsurge of eudaimonic approaches across disciplines reveals a turn in academic focus towards "innovative approaches, interdisciplinary collaborations, and empirical investigations" surrounding wellbeing. James O. Pawelski and D.J. Moores call this the "eudaimonic turn" (2013:30).

Moores argues that eudaimonics as a route to exploring literature today is a viable alternative to critical theories based on the "suspicion model" of literary analysis and interpretation (he cites "feminism, Marxism, postcolonial studies, race theory, queer theory") (2013:27). The eudaimonic turn is dissatisfied with the focus of some critical theories on "what is wrong" as opposed to "what is right and preferable, in a text or character" (Pawelski & Moores, 2013:27). The focus, for the literary eudaimonist, is on "joy, love, tranquillity, wisdom, creativity, optimism, inspiration, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, life satisfaction, and play" (Pawelski & Moores, 2013:7), and how these manifest themselves in literature, or are evoked in readers by literature (2013:27, 37). This includes how the above are developed by so-called "difficult" texts, or texts which deal with "dark" narratives, as well as the ways in which readers experience "psychological growth" by reading and engaging with them (2013:41).

Eudaimonics brings into focus the broad question in this dissertation about the potential of literary studies, narrowing its scope to the links between wellbeing and literature. My interest in T.S. Eliot's mythical method and *The Waste Land* (1922), however, narrows the scope of the

question even further, as the poem deals specifically with how to respond to chaos and destruction in the face of necessary change. Eliot's work argues for a link between a deep knowledge of myth and the ability to deal with chaos, but is it viable? And in what way does it offer a more sustainable hermeneutic structure, a better "ordering" principle than the suspicion model?

Eliot's conviction is that an exposure to myth through literature leads the reader to a "mature knowledge of life" (Donoghue, 1997:208), a way of looking at existence that necessarily includes tenable patterns of being to pursue and a sustainable interpretative structure by which to view the world (Eliot, 1923:166). In his conceptualisation, this provides purpose, order; and order allows one to navigate the chaos of the present, restructuring as well as retaining spiritual and cultural structures (the Western literary or religious traditions, for example).

The response to anarchic society by writers such as T.S. Eliot, amongst other Modernists, was the belief in a necessary re-evaluation of how literature was being written at the time. He senses the need to change existent societal and artistic hierarchies for the healthy, continued existence of both. Society, Eliot feels, had lost cognisance of its continuity with its cultural past, and so relevant art—which, he feels, must necessarily build upon this continuity—was not possible for the world (Eliot, 1923:167). He perceives a breakdown in the social narrative of his time; that it had "lost all form" (a sentiment, in my opinion, that is translatable to the South African context described above) (Eliot, 1923:167). For Eliot, viewing modern life and its problems through the lens of myth is critical to regaining a sense of meaning and purpose in the face of futility—a clearly eudaimonic vision (Donoghue, 1997:208; Pawelski & Moores, 2013:7).

It is no surprise that myth features prominently in some of Modernism's most iconic works—*The Waste Land* (1922) and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), in particular. And while it plays a vital structural role in these works (Brooker, 1984:541), the presence of myth also functions importantly as a proposed route to responding to social dislocation, the breakdown of a social

narrative, the rejection of it as an untenable mythology (to borrow Hotz's metaphorical language).

Eliot names his and Joyce's particular form of the Modernist return to myth in "*Ulysses,* Order, and Myth" (1923) the "mythical method" (Eliot, 1923:167). He famously describes it as a way of "controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Eliot, 1923:166). For Eliot, the mythical method puts the present into vital perspective by allowing one to look at it through culturally significant historical and mythological fragments. Here, the fragments imply a whole, and the whole implies a eudaimonic security in a time when the narrative of "contemporary history" is uncertain and responses are chaotic. It is this focus on myth's ability to reaffirm the present that links Eliot to eudaimonics as well as to the work of Jordan B. Peterson, a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto with a special research interest in the psychology of belief and its relation to world mythologies.

On a more specific level, therefore, this dissertation asks what a return to myth and the mythical method can offer philosophically towards developing a model for the creation and criticism of art (and, perhaps, by extension, society) in South Africa, that leads to sustainable positive development. The state of unrest in the nation, the floundering attempts to bring forth a new social narrative, and the glaring disjunction between these attempts and their goals parallel the Modernist plight as seen by Eliot. It is the impetus behind my intention to explore the notion that Eliot's response to the need for sustainable change (the mythical method) could plausibly be applied as a parallel response today.[2]

I am interested in this not only because of the shared nature of the perceived social problems at hand, but because of the nature of Eliot's answer to them. As already remarked on, and as this dissertation intends to show, Eliot's mythical method bears close links with arguments put

[2]I realise, here, that Eliot's being European might, from a certain view, raise the problem of my applying a Eurocentric perspective to an African issue. My defence is simply that Marxism, which is Eurocentric too, enjoys considerable (measurable) popularity on university campuses in South Africa (Mabasa, 2018), and thereby offers solutions to, or at least means of broaching, numerous African issues, regardless of Marx's Eurocentricity.

forward in two recent and growing developments in literary and social criticism: the eudaimonic turn, and the work of Jordan Peterson.[3] As such, the mythical method can be shown to be inherently concerned with eudaimonic notions of wholeness and sustainable change.

Given that this dissertation responds directly to an incident of the hermeneutics of suspicion gone awry, I hope to show more broadly that the mythical method perhaps adds a necessary voice to the current conversation on cultural change in South Africa. It offers, I will argue, a more sustainable model for responses to art and the need for change than models employing suspicion-based postmodern hermeneutics.

In light of the above, I need to determine if there is an acceptable basis for T. S. Eliot's belief that looking at contemporary life through the parts of a mythological whole is a necessary and helpful activity to undertake in pursuit of sustainable individual and social change. And furthermore, does the mythical method, if its basis can be shown to be argumentatively sound from multiple perspectives, offer a theoretically sustainable and constructive alternative model—given the recent failures of the postmodern suspicion model—for a response to the need for social change in South Africa?

This dissertation argues that there are plausible grounds for using the mythical method as a model for responding to the need for sustainable cultural change, specifically in the realm of art and art criticism. Furthermore, it adds a necessary and viable constructive perspective to the critical discourse surrounding this need in South Africa.

My first aim is to discover through a detailed analysis of several important views on the role of myth in society whether Eliot's claim—that a connection to myth turns individuals towards a eudaimonic interpretation of the world—can be supported across a range of perspectives, purposes, and moments in history.

[3]Jordan Peterson carries some political notoriety. As with Eliot, I am not interested in Peterson's politics, but in what he has to say about myth. Nor am I interested in the politics of *RMF* or *FMF,* but in the hermeneutic structures by which they exact social and artistic critique.

My second aim is to consider what precisely Eliot's response to social uncertainty (the mythical method) could add to the necessary conversation around establishing an alternative model for responding to the need for cultural change in South Africa.

A word on my methodology: the research conducted in this dissertation is qualitative. It utilises one methodological strategy: hermeneutic phenomenology. That is, I shall use a defined interpretative structure to explore a variety of materials (essays, notes, lectures, articles, interviews, and primary texts) that will strengthen my argument in support of the mythical method. However, while it at times necessarily employs a healthy hermeneutics of scepticism, it also utilizes a eudaimonic hermeneutic to argue for the value of Eliot's mythical method.

I intend to substantiate my argument by analysing Eliot's mythical method in minute detail, establishing what his view of myth is and how he supposes that it can bring order to the chaos of modern existence. In the first chapter, I define the theoretical framework that will guide my reading and interpretations. The second chapter explores the socio-historical context of the mythical method to see what influenced Eliot to arrive at what may seem like a rather complicated—or otherwise seemingly absurd—conviction. To determine the conceptual validity of Eliot's model, the same chapter critically addresses other scholarly notions of myth in relation to Eliot's. In the third chapter, I discuss whether the mythical method is the same in Eliot's description of it as it is in his practice: I shall read *The Waste Land* to unravel the mechanics of the method, and address what this analysis reveals about Eliot's view of myth. I will also discuss my own practical application of Eliot's method, in demonstration of its accessibility and viability as a creative construct.

CHAPTER ONE — HERMENEUTICS, ORDER, AND CHAOS: UNPACKING THE EUDAIMONIC PERSPECTIVE ON T.S. ELIOT'S MYTHICAL METHOD

> It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.
>
> —T.S. Eliot (1923:166)

Theoretical framework

Hermeneutic phenomenology requires an interpretative framework—a set of principles by which to approach texts—that is definable and consistent. With such in place, each element of the resulting argument will have been arrived at within the same parameters of interpretation. It is this framework, and the hermeneutic structure that allows it to function, that I describe in detail and with critical consideration in this chapter.

At the broadest level, my theoretical framework is informed by eudaimonics. I link Jordan Peterson's work on myth to eudaimonics by way of their mutual focus on meaning and balance as routes to wellbeing—a trait they both share with Eliot's mythical method.

In this pair of "theoretical spectacles", eudaimonics forms the frame, and Peterson provides the lenses. One without the other would be a less-than-optimal configuration: without Peterson's hypotheses on the psychology of myth and the constituent elements of the human experience, the framework is unfocused, broad; without eudaimonics, the framework is too narrow, calling into question the sense that Eliot's perspective on the necessity of sustainable change is relevant and pressing.

For a practical definition of eudaimonics as critical theory, I rely on *The Eudaimonic Turn: Well-being in Literary Studies* (2013). With Peterson, I draw largely on his reviewed research, *Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief* (1999), and *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* (2018). Two of Peterson's lecture series, "The Psychological Significance of the Biblical Stories"

(2017), and “Maps of Meaning: the Architecture of Belief” (2017), also inform my theoretical paradigm.

*****

It is perhaps best to arrive at a description of eudaimonics via a brief discussion of it as an emerging critical theory, referred to by Pawelski and Moores as the “eudaimonic turn”. As the name suggests, the eudaimonic turn is characterized by a concern with eudaimonia. James O. Pawelski (2013:7) writes that

> eudaimonia refers to well-being or human flourishing, with its root, *daimon* connecting it to divinity and giving it a connotation of blessedness. Eudaimonia refers to the things that make life most worth living and thus enable human beings to thrive. Most centrally, then, what we mean by the eudaimonic turn is an increased interest in well-being, human flourishing, and thriving. This includes such things as joy, love, tranquillity, wisdom, creativity, optimism, inspiration, personal growth, positive relationships, purpose in life, life satisfaction, and play.

“Eudaimonics”, therefore, is centrally a form of academic inquiry focused on “human flourishing” (Pawelski & Moores, 2013:3). D.J. Moores aligns it with Paul Ricoeur’s “hermeneutics of affirmation”, as opposed to the “hermeneutics of suspicion” characteristic of the postmodern schools of critique (Pawelski & Moores, 2013:27). However, while the eudaimonic turn is primarily concerned with the hermeneutics of affirmation, it does not totally discount the value of the scepticism model (Pawelski & Moores, 2013:27). Rather, Pawelski argues that

> this shift in the conversation about well-being is a turn and not a revolution. Although it is true that scholars involved in the eudaimonic turn argue for an increased emphasis on what humans directly value, they are aiming, in good Greek fashion, for greater balance. Not seeking a revolution, which would simply cause an imbalance in the opposite direction, they do not advocate discarding everything outside of the eudaimonic turn (2013:17-18).

This cognisance of the need for “greater balance” speaks directly to the intellectual imperative that drives eudaimonics, Peterson’s work, and the mythical method. None of these call for the

mere rejection and replacement of what has come before. As Eliot says in “The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism” (1933) (cited by Noel-Tod, 2013:484-485):

> From time to time, every hundred years or so, it is desirable that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poets and the poems in a new order. The task is not one of revolution but of readjustment.

Both Eliot and eudaimonics, as demonstrated above, seek to avoid “revolution” while still effecting change. For Eliot, this means a “readjustment” of tradition. In eudaimonics, it manifests as a recognition and appreciation for the bodies of knowledge generated by models of inquiry that differ from it. From an argumentative standpoint, being open to recognising the value of the scepticism model greatly strengthens the case for the affirmation model. Any counter-argument based on the grounds that there is value in scepticism is already accepted and incorporated. The advantage of this is that the eudaimonic scholar is free to cast a wide qualitative net, collecting perspectives from a variety of informative sources (another characteristic of the eudaimonic turn shared with Peterson’s approach) to build an argumentative framework that is supported from various angles. Eudaimonics, therefore, encourages a consilience approach to research and argumentation—as strived for in this dissertation. Moores (2013:29) asserts:

> Only a reactionary would decry the many insights that have resulted from the critique of ideology and diseased psychodynamics in literary studies. Where would the discipline be without the depth of the psychological tradition, which has enabled scholars to question the manifest, to subvert the primacy of the ego, and to explore the mysterious depths of the unconscious? Where would the discipline be without the critique of power and ideology, which have been shown to circulate in all discourses, indeed all language?

So, eudaimonics does not simply seek to condemn postmodernism, but to point to the shortcomings of its dominant hermeneutic position in an attempt to balance academic discussion more evenly across a wide range of disciplines. As a literary theory, eudaimonics claims that the suspicion model is too often guilty of neglecting vital aspects of both the human

experience and the artistic process to be justifiably used as the sole model for interpretation. Moores argues that academia should rather recognize that

> suspicious reading is one possibility among others, not the absolute ground of critical being, a point Eve Sedgwick argued in a challenge to "paranoid" reading strategies that call for the use of suspicion and demystification to read latent realities beneath the surface of manifest superficialities and illusions. The image of paranoid reading is in many ways appropriate, because paranoia causes us to suspect wrongly, to be wary and even fearful of an object that wills us no harm…To be sure, authors are often complicit in the ideologies that circulate in the historical moments in which they write, and they are often tortured souls whose psychological maladies in some ways inform their imaginative work. By no means, however, is authorial genius *reducible* to disease or bad politics. This is a common critical practice, nevertheless, in literary discourse over the last forty years. The suspicion model is useful when it enables scholars to read ideology or psychodynamics beneath the surface of a text, but such an interpretive framework often leaves unexplored other important textual dimensions (2013:29).

Where suspicion falls short, where it marginalizes affirmation, eudaimonics aims to step in and restore balance to the conversation. For example, it calls into question the assumption that a work of art ought to be condemned because of the "disease or bad politics" of the artist. The eudaimonic critic is aware that such treatment of creative work fails to make a sustainable argument about art because it fails to account for the nuances inherent to the artistic process.

In this light, "paranoid reading" is conceivably a fitting label for the UCT incident. Did a suspicion-based model of hermeneutic interpretation cause the protesters and administrators, perhaps, to "suspect wrongly" that the works were mere symbols of "problematic" ideologies (Furlong, 2016; Pertsovsky, 2017)?

Tammy Petersen reports for *News24* that, during one demonstration—reportedly referred to by protesters as a "decolonisation project" (Furlong, 2016)—activists burned the paintings of anti-apartheid artist Richard Keresemose Baholo (2016). Because the work was interpreted as a symbol of problematic ideology, it was deemed worthy of destruction. It is perhaps this action in

particular that most clearly illustrates the possible failures of the interpretative framework utilised by activists during the incident. It is also sadly ironic that a photo taken by a *GroundUp* reporter alleges that one of the burned paintings was Baholo's "Extinguished Torch of Academic Freedom" (Anon, 2016).

This approach to the criticism of art is, at times, alarmingly counter-productive. It utilizes a hermeneutics of suspicion to pin ideologies on art not because of the content of the art, but because of the artist—which, in Baholo's case, is shown to be a perilous interpretative tactic. And while this may lead to a necessary criticism of ideology if done with nuance, the UCT incident problematically pins the wrong artists to the wrong ideologies. The troublesome absence of nuance that underscores the incident is well demonstrated by the treatment of Baholo's work. It also demonstrates how far postmodernism's dominant hermeneutic can degenerate into counter-productive chaos, and why the conversation about sustainable change—as opposed to expedient change—is necessary.

Eudaimonics offers a relevant and necessary strategy to correct the excesses of the suspicion model, without discounting everything that postmodernism and its associated theories have contributed to the critical discourse. Considering the very real nature of the destruction that may be caused by some suspicion-based iterations of postmodern critique, eudaimonics is reserved in its approach and aims.

Since my interest is in responding to the necessity of sustainable change, this dissertation primarily refers to the aspects of eudaimonics that focus on hermeneutic interpretation and notions of rejuvenation through balance and wholeness. Importantly, Eliot's response to this need (as will be expounded in the following chapters) is also focused on notions of balance and wholeness. Eudaimonics can therefore be seen as fundamentally aligned with Eliot's intention regarding the mythical method, and undeniably relevant and important to the given context as a result.

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Peterson is best introduced, here, with the appropriate pretext: I would emphasize that evaluations of Peterson's ideas should not be based on the perspectives and focuses of popular media, nor on Peterson's popular work (or popularity) alone. Instead, they should be based on the value of his peer-reviewed publications (of which there are more than a hundred, cited in more than seven thousand recorded instances) (Research Gate, 2019), his academic lectures, and his most ambitious publication: *Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief* (1999). This is especially vital within the context of this dissertation, as I have tried to limit my use of Peterson to the latter categories.

Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief (1999), "shares [Peterson's] profound insights into universal themes of world mythology, and explains how all cultures have created stories to help us grapple with, and ultimately manage, the chaos into which we are thrown at birth…" (2018:xiii). This premise—that myth carries guidelines for living a meaningful life—is what links Peterson simultaneously to Eliot (via using myth and dealing with the necessity of sustainable change in the face of chaos) and to eudaimonics (via the focus on improving the human experience by pursuing meaning, balance, and wholeness).

Importantly, this premise regarding myth and the psychology of belief, formed in *Maps of Meaning,* directly informs the eponymous rules in *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos* (2018:xiii-xiv). Therefore, in referring to the latter book in this dissertation, I adopt the perspective that it is, firstly, a work based on significant, peer-reviewed research on the psychology of belief, and, secondly, that it is a cultural phenomenon the popularity of which interests me particularly because Peterson, like Eliot, makes an explicit argument for the ordering potential of myth.

While Peterson's and Eliot's views on myth—and their subsequent advice on how to use it—are strikingly similar, Peterson's articulation of why and how myth is helpful is clearer and, perhaps, aimed towards more attainable goals than Eliot's. Where Eliot's conceptualization is at times

slippery and vague (his “mind of Europe” image, for example), Peterson’s is more accessible, aiming at a concrete materialistic description of myth and its purpose in as clear and direct language as possible.

The congruence of Peterson’s current popularity[4] with his focus on myth and the psychology of belief allows, perhaps, for a relevant contemporary perspective on Eliot to be developed. Given that both Peterson’s and Eliot’s thoughts on myth are very much in line with the turn in literary criticism driven by eudaimonics, this dissertation offers an argument informed by important emerging theoretical paradigms. And while the phenomenon of Peterson’s popularity is not an indication of his academic acuity, it is an indication of how widely his ideas are being received. They deserve critical attention because of this, and so this dissertation is, in a small way, also an experimental application of Peterson’s ideas on myth to see if they are useful tools for eudaimonic critique.

12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos has as its central argument the notion that the individual adoption of responsibility is key to leading a meaningful life (2018:xxxiii). Importantly, this argument is deeply related to Peterson’s earlier work on mythology, with *Maps of Meaning* directly informing it (2018:xiv). In *12 Rules*, Peterson implicitly argues that much of world mythology touches on the idea that

> [we] must each adopt as much responsibility as possible for individual life, society, and the world. We must each tell the truth and repair what is in disrepair and break down and recreate what is old and outdated. It is in this manner that we can and must reduce the suffering that poisons the world. It’s asking a lot. It’s asking for everything. But the alternative—the horror of authoritarian belief, the chaos of the collapsed state, the tragic catastrophe of the unbridled natural world, the existential angst and weakness of the purposeless individual—is clearly worse (2018:xxxiii).

[4]In January of 2018, Tristin Hopper reported for the *National Post* that *12 Rules for Life* made Peterson the most widely-read Canadian author at the time of the article’s publication. The book went on to top *Reuters’* US bestseller list (Anon, 2018), as well as topping the nonfiction bestseller list of the *Washington Post* (Anon, 2018), and the best-selling books list of the *Wall Street Journal* (Anon, 2018). It was also the number one most-sold book on Amazon on the 31st of January, 2018 (Kocsis, 2018).

His advice for a meaningful life in the face of chaos is clear: adopt responsibility and live with purpose. For Peterson, each individual should take on that which is difficult and strive for greatness—Nietzsche's grand admonition, also a principle shared with eudaimonics (Pawelski, 2013:18). It is perhaps embodied most clearly by the seventh "rule" in Peterson's new book: pursue what is meaningful in life, not what is expedient (2018:161).

However, I am particularly interested in the way that Peterson uses myth to arrive at or otherwise substantiate principles, like the one above, in *12 Rules for Life*. By what parameters, for example, does Peterson define what constitutes "meaning", or meaningful pursuits?

To begin answering this question, therefore, it is necessary to determine the foundations of Peterson's thoughts; to trace back, as it were, the line from meaning to myth. Fundamentally, Peterson argues in *12 Rules* that the individual must have a value system, a hierarchy of action, if you will, to guide our being towards meaning and purpose (2018:198-197). And so we arrive at the first link to myth: value.

The structure implicit in the meaning/expedience "rule" above elevates meaning and responsibility to a position of value, worth aspiring to. This guides us away, according to Peterson, from "the horror of authoritarian belief, the chaos of the collapsed state, the tragic catastrophe of the unbridled natural world, the existential angst and weakness of the purposeless individual" (Peterson, 2018:xxxiii). This broad assumption—that hierarchies are best understood as value systems for action, and that myth illustrates these—may be taken as the core abstraction that Peterson derives from his research and psychological interpretation of mythology in *Maps of Meaning*.

Let us consider, then, his use of myth to substantiate his claims for individual well-being more carefully. Peterson, for example, also parallels the orientating points of aspiration and avoidance described above, with the symbolic mythological dichotomy of heaven and hell:

> You could help direct the world, on its careening trajectory, a bit more towards Heaven and a bit more away from Hell. Once having understood Hell, researched it, so to speak—particularly your own individual Hell— you could decide against going there or creating that. You could aim elsewhere. You could, in fact, devote your life to this. (2018:63)

The passage is perhaps a little heavy-handed, out of context, but gives insight into the way that Peterson uses myth in *12 Rules.* As in this example (which, it is worth noting, is a concluding paragraph), he weaves together the bits of myth (heaven and hell, here) into his language as a way of providing an illustrative background against which to consider the "rules" at hand. Much of Peterson's bombast falls away, for me, upon accepting this. Furthermore, in its context, passages like the one above are supported by isolated treatments of myth and psychology. When the reader arrives at the synthesis of the two, this is accepted within the given precedents. Peterson's is a method of integration that aims to make apparent to a broad readership the important parallels that exist between myth and modernity. In this way, his work is also returning the discussion of various symbols and myths to the broader cultural milieu.

Peterson's and Eliot's suggestions are, also, strikingly specific in their similarity: pay attention to what myth offers by way of ordering chaos. But Peterson goes deeper, to the practicum of balancing order and chaos, in the way various myths and Eliot instruct. In this dissertation, *Maps of Meaning* and *12 Rules for Life* lend relevant substance to Eliot's mythical method. It is necessary, therefore, to lay out and evaluate in detail the central elements of Peterson's argument for the importance of myth, since it not only informs my interpretative framework, but also supports my central argument.

Peterson believes that order and chaos are fundamental components of reality and that their interplay forms the "broad context" within which myth is "interpreted properly" (Peterson, 2007:97). For him, myth is the articulation of fundamental truths manifest in abstracted forms (Peterson, 2007:96; Peterson, 2018:xxvii). He holds that humanity observes itself participating in life (a notion he supports by referencing Piaget's observations of children at play) and abstracts information pertaining to the reality of existence from this over time (Peterson, 2017;

Peterson, 2018:163). Importantly, Peterson holds that myth is one result of such abstraction (2018:xxvii, 163).

At this level, Peterson's more popular work does not offer the incisive articulation present in his academic work which is necessary if the validity of his ideas is to be accepted within the academic context. Published in the *Archive for the Psychology of Religion,* "Religion, sovereignty, natural rights, and the constituent elements of experience" (2006:135-180), lays out, perhaps most convincingly, the foundation for Peterson's vital order/chaos claim. Citing *Maps of Meaning,* Peterson (2006:137-138) asserts:

> The world as experienced therefore manifests itself naturally to understanding, action and conception in three categories: nature, culture, individual; unknown, known, knower. Each of these categories appears to consciousness as a paradoxical and ambivalent unity, positive and negative (Peterson, 1999). It is the continual apprehension of this complex paradox that accounts for the central existential problems that universally characterize human existence…Every individual is faced with the vagaries of the natural world, and everything that remains mysterious, within that world. Every individual is faced, equally, with the vagaries of the social world, and its often arbitrary and unreasonable demands. Finally, each individual is faced with the fact of his capacity for transcendence, restricted terribly by the limits of moral vulnerability. Regardless of where the individual is situated in time or in space—regardless of nature or culture—these are his problems. His path of life is therefore necessarily characterized by comedy or tragedy, as he confronts the constituent elements of experience, as he solves or fails to solve the essential problems of life. It is for such reasons that the nature of human experience manifests itself to conscious apprehension as a story.

Since Peterson argues that myth illustrates value systems that are built around fundamental realities of existence over time, it is worth interrogating the conceptual foundation of that idea. In the excerpt above, this foundation is a world made up "not of objects, but of phenomenological constants (although it still contains objects)" (Peterson, 2006:136). In this light, being is not merely an "experience of the material world" (which is just a "subset of the raw fact of being")

(Peterson, 2006:136). In an environment of “phenomenological constants”, rather, “being” is also one’s experience with the things “common to all domains of the human experience”. Peterson argues that these domains—in which “[phenomenologically] considered, all humans have their existence”—are “nature, culture, individual; unknown, known, knower” (2006:136). For him, these are abstracted into myth as, essentially: order, chaos, the individual (balancing the dialectic), and the balanced, vital unity of this group as an entity itself (Peterson, 2006:138; Peterson, 2017; Peterson, 2018:167). It is humankind’s failed or successful confrontations of these “constituent elements of experience”—the individual life as a sequence of defeats by or victories over “the essential problems of life”—that are abstracted by humanity into “story” (2006:136).

To illustrate the function of this conceptualisation, it is helpful to explore Peterson’s application of it to three domains: biology, religion, and narrative. First, he argues, reality as a phenomenological experience with unknown, known, and knower is

> naturally apprehensible to a biological mind, an evolutionarily-constructed mind, the mind of a highly social creature, with a constant family structure: the primary or base-level category of mother, part of our ancestral mammalian heritage, broadened with the help of our more powerful cortex to encapsulate the natural world itself; the primary category of father, broadened in the same manner to include the entire patriarchal social structure characteristic of our species; and the primary category of self, broadened to include the individual, as such, struggling endlessly with the primordial forces of nature and culture (2006:138).

And so, Peterson argues, the biology of the individual mind, “evolutionarily-constructed” around the “constituent elements of experience” and “highly social”, naturally consolidates its phenomenological experience of reality with its material experiences of reality (Peterson, 2006:138; Peterson, 2007:96). It incorporates, for example, the material categories of mother, father, and self with the phenomenological categories of nature, culture, and individual.

Importantly, Peterson argues that “the world that makes up religious reality” consists of the same phenomenological categories. This is made clear when religious concepts are explored with this “*a priori*” phenomenological structure in place (Peterson, 2007:96). For Peterson, the religious world is made up of

> phenomenological description, eternal content, dramatic form: representation of *nature*, creative and destructive, the matrix from which all things emerge and to which all things eventually return; *culture*, tyrannical and protective, capable both of engendering a tremendous expansion of individual consciousness and power and of simultaneously subjecting everything natural and individual to a catastrophically procrustean limitation; *and the individual*, ennobled by the possession of private being and crushed by its terrible weight, torn by gratitude and resentment into motivation for ultimate good and unspeakable evil. This is by no means the same realm over which science spreads its unshakeable dominion.
>
> Something is still missing, however, from this description, necessarily complete though it may appear. Three elements make a group—and the group is, in this case, the fourth element. The Totality of the constituent elements of experience—Nature, Culture, Individual; Mother, Father, Son—comprises a fourth element, the indescribable Absolute, out of which the separate elements emerge. This Totality is YHWH, the Old Testament Hebrew God, whose name cannot be uttered, who must not be represented, and for whom no representation is sufficient. This Totality is the Uncarved Block of the Taoists, the Mother of the ten thousand things, or the paradoxical initial union of Tiamat and Apsu, the primordial parents of the Mesopotamian elder Gods (2006:138).

So, unknown, known, and knower or nature, culture, and individual come to be represented in religion via the base-categories provided by the material world, according to Peterson. The three elements, furthermore, form a necessarily balanced whole in much of world mythology. For Peterson, it is the balancing of the unknown and known, chaos and order enacted by the individual that constitutes a victorious, meaningful confrontation with the “constituent elements of experience” (Peterson, 2007:97). As a result, his notion of “meaning” should be seen as

> the ultimate balance between, on the one hand, the chaos of transformation and possibility and on the other, the discipline of pristine order, whose purpose is to produce out of the attendant chaos a new order that will be even more immaculate, and capable of bringing forth a still more balanced and productive chaos and order. Meaning is the Way, the path of life more abundant, the place you live when you are guided by Love and speaking Truth and when nothing you want or could possibly want takes any precedence over precisely that (2018:201).

As a central point of reference, Peterson relates this phenomenological understanding of experience and meaning not only to the domains of biology and religion, but also to mythological narratives, since "the nature of human experience manifests itself to conscious apprehension as a story" (2006:138). This story, "[regardless] of where the individual is situated in time or in space—regardless of nature or culture" is necessarily one of a struggle with the constituent elements of experience (Peterson, 2006:137). Here, Peterson refers to a narrative pattern that is of particular relevance to Eliot and *The Waste Land:* the pattern of being illustrated in the "mythology of the hero" (Peterson, 2006:140).

As Jewel Spears Brooker states in "'The Second Coming' and 'The Waste Land': Capstones of the Western Civilisation Course" (1986), it is the pattern underlying hero narratives that forms the "major symbol" of the *The Waste Land* (Brooker, 1986:248). The mythical method is involved by extension,[5] and so Peterson's view on the particular significance of this narrative and its pattern (in terms of humanity's phenomenological understanding of reality) deserves special attention:

> If this is the world, then, how is it that people should act in it? How should the proper relationship between the individual and all the constituent elements of experience be conceptualized? What is the proper response of the individual, given that he is threatened by the natural world and the unknown on the left hand, and by social order and its tyranny on the right—but is also dependent on the natural world and chaos for all good things and all new

[5]Not only by extension, but, the following chapter argues, by virtue of the method itself operating within a phenomenological structure of unknown, known, and knower; as evidenced by its relation to Eliot's perspective on new art, tradition, and the artist in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919).

> information, and on the social order for a successful mode of being? How can such a route be properly negotiated? Is there anything constant and general that might be said in answer to such a question?
>
> It is precisely the mythology of the hero, in its multiplicity of forms, which addresses this problem. Carl Jung, who provided what has perhaps been the most complete analysis of such mythology, believed that what the hero encountered was the unconscious itself (Jung, 1911/1967). Jung's "encounter with the unconscious", however, seems a specific and limited manifestation of a more general class of conceptions and behaviors (just as Freud's Oedipal drama was a specific and limited manifestation). What the hero actually encounters, at the most inclusive level of analysis, are the constituent elements of experience: unknown, known and knower; nature, culture and individual. What is unconscious is a subset of what is unknown, but the unknown exists independently of the merely unconscious (Peterson, 1999) (even though it may be met, first, by the unconscious). It is confrontation with the unknown, as such, that is most simply and evidently heroic. Equally, however, although somewhat more subtly, the hero also restructures what is known, widening the purview of culture or challenging and reconceptualizing its most fundamental axioms. Finally, no hero remains unchanged, as a consequence of such activity. He necessarily meets himself as an individual, defined in contrast to what he confronts and restructures, broadened and extended as a consequence of the information so garnered and conceptualized. (2006:140-141)

The hero myth demonstrates, for Peterson, a pattern of being that is built—whether as symbols, rites, or narratives—around the constituent elements of unknown/known/knower; chaos/order/balancing individual. Here, as in Eliot, the myth is seen as centred on a need to restore wholeness and meaning to a land bereft of connection and vitality (Brooker, 1986:248; Peterson, 2006:141). In this sense, the pattern (including its implicit values and the resultant hierarchy) is a commentary on the notion of sustainable change.

This is the foundation of Peterson’s argument for the significance of the order/chaos dialectic and its presence in myth. In *Maps of Meaning,* he draws on “evolution, the neuroscience of emotion, some of the best of Jung, some of Freud, much of the great works of Nietzsche,

Dostoyevsky, Solzhenitsyn, Eliade, Neumann, Piaget, Frye and Frankl" to inform this foundation further, and to substantiate his argument from various perspectives (Peterson, 2018:xiii). This allows him, for example, to give an account of sacrifice in myth and ritual that is at once materialistic and, perhaps, oddly profound. In discussing sacrifice, Peterson unpacks the notion of delayed gratification and how it is embedded in myth:

> The pleasure of expediency may be fleeting, but it's pleasure nonetheless, and that's something to stack up against the terror and pain of existence. Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost, as the old proverb has it. Why not simply take everything you can get, whenever the opportunity arises? Why not determine to live in that manner? Or is there an alternative, more powerful and more compelling?
>
> Our ancestors worked out very sophisticated answers to such questions, but we still don't understand them very well. This is because they are in large part still implicit—manifest primarily in ritual and myth and as of yet, incompletely articulated. We act them out and represent them in stories, but we're not yet wise enough to formulate them explicitly. We're still chimps in a troupe, or wolves in a pack. We know how to behave. We know who's who, and why. We've learned that through experience. Our knowledge has been shaped by our interaction with others. We've established predictable routines and patterns of behavior—but we don't really understand them, or know where they originated. They've evolved over great expanses of time. No one was formulating them explicitly (at least not in the dimmest reaches of the past), even though we've been telling each other how to act forever. One day, however, not so long ago, we woke up. We were already doing, but we started *noticing* what we were doing. We started using our bodies as devices to represent their own actions. We started imitating and dramatizing. We invented ritual. We started acting out our own experiences. Then we started to tell stories. We coded our observations of our own drama in these stories. In this manner, the information that was at first only embedded in our behavior became represented in our stories. But we didn't and still don't understand what it all means. (2018:162-163)

The excerpt above lays out in detail the psychologist's view of myth's development over time. He also demonstrates how he believes a truth of existence can be abstracted by humanity and stored effectively in story. Here, he gives an account for the plausible emergence of such a truth. It is the same model that he uses when conducting analyses of other abstractions embedded in myth: humanity observes itself acting, abstracts information from this, distils the information, and represents it in myth.

His conceptualization of myth is thus expressed by the following mandala:

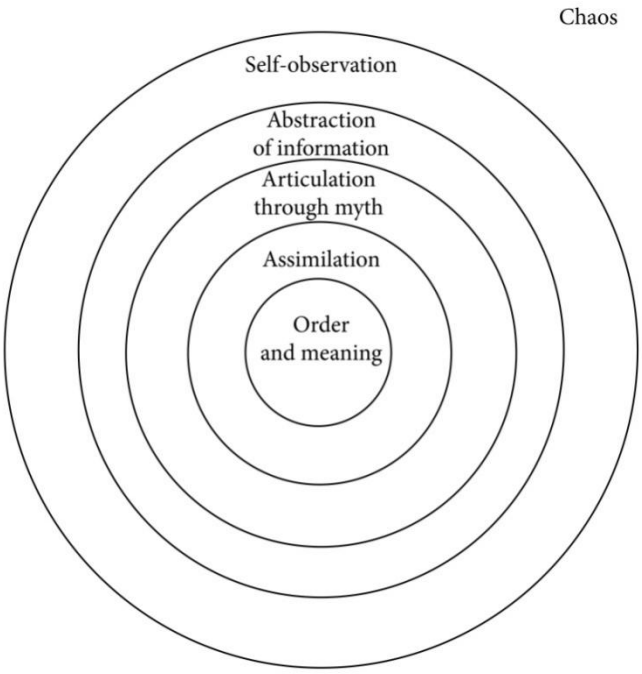

Figure 1

Importantly, this model also attempts to account for the cohesive nature of world myth. If myth is based on a phenomenological understanding of human experiences, it suggests, it is predictable that these should be represented (although the method and form of representation varies) in myth across culture and time, too (Peterson, 2006:137).

Putting this conceptualisation into the terms of the constituent elements of humanity's experience of reality as "phenomenological constants", we find that chaos, again, is the unknown; the articulation of reality through myth becomes the known, ordering force; and the assimilation of story and action move the individual towards order, and meaningful balance is

restored as a result. Using this model to dissect the symbolism of sacrifice in myth, Peterson writes:

> It's as if something like the following happened as humanity developed. First were the endless tens or hundreds of thousands of years prior to the emergence of written history and drama. During this time, the twin practices of delay and exchange begin to emerge, slowly and painfully. Then they become represented, in metaphorical abstraction, as rituals and tales of sacrifice, told in a manner such as this: "It's *as if* there is a powerful Figure in the Sky, who sees all, and is judging you. Giving up something you value seems to make Him happy—and you want to make Him happy, because all Hell breaks loose if you don't. So, practice sacrificing, and sharing, until you become expert at it, and things will go well for you." No one said any of this, at least not so plainly and directly. But it was implicit in the practice and then the stories. (2018:169)

Peterson works backwards from myth, seeking out the principle being articulated by interpreting it according to his understanding of phenomenological reality. Assuming that myth is the illustration of patterns of actions to avoid or aspire to, Peterson posits that "*Implicit, unrecognized value came first* (as the actions that preceded thought embodied value, but did not make that value explicit" (2018:169, emphasis in original). So, over time, "thought" (self-observation) eventually caused humanity to identify the actions that "embodied value", articulating these as hierarchies of action (or being) that found their illustration in myth (2018:169).

In *12 Rules*, Peterson implicitly asks: what is the information that humanity has abstracted into story? The above excerpt, for example, shows how he believes the notion of delayed gratification—this is the "more powerful and more compelling" alternative to expedience that he refers to earlier—is embedded in ancient rituals and stories (2018:163). Through an analysis of the symbolism of sacrifice in ritual and myth, Peterson attempts to demonstrate how complex ideas have been with us for a considerable time.

He does not argue that there is a mystical force that responds positively to sacrifice, but instead that there is a complex material case to be made for the symbolism of the practice. Assuming that it is the "explicit" embodiment of actions deemed valuable by society over time, myth creates a deep cultural backdrop to Peterson's rules. Furthermore, he holds that myth's hierarchies are not only encoded with helpful values (here, placing meaning over expedience), but are highly effective in their encoding:

> We appear to have made the presumption that stories such as these—myths—were equivalent in function and intent (but were inferior methodologically) to empirical or post-experimental description. It is this fundamentally absurd insistence that, above all, has destabilized the effect of religious tradition upon the organization of modern human moral reasoning and behaviour. (Peterson, 1999:20)

His work on myth argues that humanity discovered over time by which structures to organize itself to ensure sustainability, and that this is often present in myth. He relies on the universality of human experience to account for the often universal themes and figures of world myth. Peterson does not, however, argue that these structures are infallible, or that rituals such as sacrifice should be practised today. Rather, *12 Rules for Life* attempts to demonstrate how the underlying codes of behaviour embedded in myth often have meanings that remain relevant over time.

Peterson is important to the focus of this dissertation because he argues that the existence of material truths in myth could be used to help navigate moments of existential chaos. By balancing chaos with the ordering perspective offered by myth, Peterson seems to suggest, the individual can perhaps arrive at an interpretation of reality that encompasses a broader, stronger conceptualisation of reality: one that is formed around the constituent elements of unknown, known, and knower. It is this act of using myth to provide ordering perspective that Eliot claims society had failed to do in his time and, for him, modern existence had "lost all form" as a result (1923:165).

Considering the aim of his work and the role it is playing in responding to postmodernism, Peterson fits very neatly into the paradigms of eudaimonics. Furthermore, he demonstrates a central premise of the mythical method, but with a bolstered description. He shows that myth often bears a perspective on reality that is centralised, at its base-levels, on bringing sustainable order to the chaos of the individual life, and to society by extension.

It may be coincidental that Peterson subtitles his newest book as an "antidote to chaos" and that Eliot's "*Ulysses,* Order, and Myth" (1923) also lays the struggle against chaos at the feet of myth. It may also be coincidental that Eliot famously describes the mythical method as "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Eliot, 1923:166), and that Peterson employs a similar, deeply eudaimonic view of myth in his work. However, even among other conceptualisations of myth (which will be explored in the chapters to follow), it is important to note that the vocabulary around myth and its role in society consistently returns to where Peterson and Eliot begin: order and chaos.

So, Eliot's claim for the mythical method, as laid out in "*Ulysses,* Order, and Myth", is tempered by the materialistic claim for myth that Peterson demonstrates in his work. However, Peterson does not dispel the sense of mystery inherent in Eliot's work (a sense that Eliot would be loath to lose), but rather helps to alleviate some of the pressure that mystery exerts upon myth, and which may have served to discredit myth—and Eliot's mythical method by association—in the past. As Peterson points out in his analysis of the link between sacrifice and delayed gratification, the truths embedded in myth can improve life, "whether there is—or is not—*actually* such a powerful figure 'in the sky'" as often described by myth (2018:169).

Peterson strengthens the claim that Eliot's vision for the mythical method is a viable and eudaimonic one. Given the fact that his work is gaining such rapid popularity, and that it supports Eliot so precisely and elegantly, Peterson offers a vital, current toolkit to my analysis of the mythical method and how it might theoretically work as a model for responding to the

necessity of change. It also allows this dissertation to incorporate what is arguably the most culturally-prominent eudaimonic use of myth in contemporary philosophical discourse.

With a eudaimonic perspective on the mythical method that is informed by Peterson's work on belief psychology, the constituent elements of experience, and myth, Eliot's work is seen to offer an alternative response to the sense of futility inherent in many aspects of postmodernism and its associated schools of critique. It is a quiet, thoughtful response which holds that society may stand to benefit from a return to the notion that there are truths that help make life a little more bearable for everyone. And perhaps those truths are at some level illustrated in myth. As Peterson points out, "*Back* is the way forward—as T.S. Eliot so rightly insisted—but back as awake beings, exercising the proper choice of awake beings, instead of back to sleep" (2018:57).

The centrality of the notion of sustainable change to the "major symbol" of *The Waste Land*—the pattern underlying the mythic hero narrative—legitimises *The Waste Land,* itself, as a commentary on the notion of sustainable change. Furthermore, it is Peterson's understanding of the constituent elements of experience that facilitates the relation of the poem and its mythic imperative to the South African context, since it is phenomenological and therefore not relegated to time and space (Peterson, 2006:137).

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Conclusion

Eliot's vision for myth is supported not only by eudaimonics as a response to postmodernism, but also by Jordan Peterson's work on myth. Eudaimonics, therefore, allows me to locate my argument in a broader critical context, and Eliot's vision for the mythical method sets necessary parameters upon it. Peterson, in turn, provides the tools to articulate how the mythical method might theoretically achieve the eudaimonic intentions apparent in Eliot's reading of myth.

The first section of following chapter attempts to describe some of the influences that led Eliot to develop the mythical method. The second section compares Eliot's conceptualisation of myth's role in society to other perspectives on the subject. It aims to determine whether Eliot's conceptualisation can be defended from various perspectives and historical moments.

CHAPTER TWO — CONCEPTUALISING THE MYTHICAL METHOD

The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new.

—T.S. Eliot (1920:44)

I. The mythical method in its historical context

Introduction

At the start of the twentieth century, T.S. Eliot perceives a need to restore spiritual and cultural wholeness to Europe, specifically to what he calls the “mind of Europe” (Brooker, 1994:62). Eliot feels that literature—and poetry in particular—is well suited for the task, but that conventional literary forms and methods need to be re-examined and redeveloped if they are to be sustained (Eliot, 1923:166; Noel-Tod, 2013:484). In considering both the need for wholeness and the need for appropriate literature to help restore this wholeness to Europe, Eliot arrives at the mythical method.

This chapter aims, centrally, to argue that the mythical method, as the product of multiple converging influences and convictions upon Eliot’s thought, is fundamentally a method both of critique and artistic creation that reflects the elements of experience as defined by Peterson. Furthermore, the reason for this phenomenological structure of “unknown, known, and knower” being so clearly evidenced in both the critical and creative iterations of the mythical method is likely the result of its relation to Eliot’s notion of the “modern poet as cultural hero”; his vision of the creative mind as “prophet, the great poet-critic” (Noel-Tod, 2013:484), who shall “review the past of our literature, and set the poets and the poems in a new order” (Eliot, 1933) (cited by Noel-Tod, 2013:484-485). It is this same pattern, as shown in the following chapter, that forms

the “major symbol” of *The Waste Land* (Brooker, 1986:248), the creative product of the mythical method.

To support this argument the present chapter will: unpack what the mythical method is; reveal what the mind of Europe is, for Eliot; explore the nature of the breakdown he perceived in the mind of Europe; and consider why the mythical method is his response to this breakdown. As a route to a better understanding of the mythical method, this chapter will also explore how Eliot arrives at the conclusion that the mythical method is “a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (1923:167).

Ulysses as an expression of the modern age

In his review of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), T.S. Eliot provides a succinct description of the mythical method, as well as the first use of the term as such. The review, “*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth” (1923), speaks to a broad Modernist conviction that theirs was an age in need of new literature created in relevant ways.

For Eliot, *Ulysses* is an impressive, important example of this necessary new literature. More than that, however, he writes that *Ulysses* will be looked back on as "the most important expression which the present age has found", that it is "a book to which we are all indebted, and from which none of us can escape" (1923:165). This is a dramatic statement, but it provides clear insight into Eliot's focus and concern: Joyce’s ability to capture the essence of modern life in *Ulysses*, and, by extension, the method that enables this ability. For Eliot, Joyce encapsulates in *Ulysses* the notion that the “modern mind” is in a state of continuity with the “primitive mind”.

Although Eliot uses the term "method" without much contextual meaning early in the review, the reader comes to realise that he is referring specifically to the way that Joyce sets his novel in "parallel to the Odyssey", and how he attributes "appropriate styles and symbols to each

division" (Eliot, 1923:165). For Eliot, this is where the value of *Ulysses*—artistically and socially (the two are intertwined)—is located:

> It is here that Mr. Joyce's parallel use of the *Odyssey* has a great importance. It has the importance of a scientific discovery. No one else has built a novel upon such a foundation before: it has never before been necessary. I am not begging the question in calling *Ulysses* a "novel"; and if you call it an epic it will not matter. If it is not a novel, that is simply because the novel is a form which will no longer serve; it is because the novel, instead of being a form, was simply the expression of an age which had not sufficiently lost all form to feel the need of something stricter. (1923:166)

Order and chaos is clearly a prominent dialectic at play here: "form" is set against the "need for something stricter". Eliot subsequently argues that Joyce's use of myth in *Ulysses* is not only innovative, but "necessary". He sees Joyce's method as having led to a piece of art that meaningfully adds to the literary tradition by drawing from myth, thereby expressing an important continuity with the past. *Ulysses* is thus an example, for Eliot, of how the artist should add to the order of tradition by simultaneously building upon it and altering it.

Eliot argues that there exists a need for literary fiction to undergo such a conscious redevelopment in order to be culturally sustainable again. He sees *Ulysses,* in contrast to the traditional novel, as an accurate representation of the Modern age. This justifies for Eliot the weighty cultural importance that he attributes to the novel and to the method by which Joyce wrote it. It is clear that he sees the mythical method as a necessary response to chaos, and as part of an important broader response, too:

> It is a method already adumbrated by Mr. Yeats, and of the need for which I believe Mr. Yeats to have been the first contemporary to be conscious. It is a method for which the horoscope is auspicious…Instead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe, a step toward making the modern world possible for art (Eliot, 1923:167).

For Eliot, the mythical method is not a response employed only by Joyce, but first by Yeats (in an earlier form), and certainly by himself. Nor is it a method that was thought up simply to be subversively modern. Rather, it was propagated by contemporary need. And while he does not make any divine claims for the poet (*per se*), Eliot does claim (at least implicitly) perceptive insight into the needs of society: that change was necessary to restore cultural wholeness and well-being, and that the "modern poet as cultural hero" (Noel-Tod, 2013:484) was the individual tasked with effecting this change. To return to the epigraph to this chapter:

> The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new (Eliot, 1920:44).

In contrasting *Ulysses* with the traditional novel, therefore, Eliot makes a vital argument for the mythical method. He does not say that the traditional novel is the expression of an age that had form, but rather that it was "the expression of an age that had not sufficiently lost all form to feel the need of something stricter" (1923:166). The loss of form (wholeness, connection) and structure he perceives in European life was gradual (an important motif), but this gradual loss had peaked. His age had "sufficiently lost all form", Eliot suggests, requiring a return to order that would lead back to balance and vitality. Eliot argues that the "immense panorama of futility and anarchy" (1923:167) that was the Modern age could be shown in the light of mythic form—and thereby be imbibed with significance and order—by the mythical method, by works such as *Ulysses*.

At the moment when vitality and wholeness are lost, Eliot asks if society will benefit from literature and art that continue to portray existence as being adherent to order (both in form and content) while contemporary European society, suffering from a split mind (the mind of Europe) had "lost all form" (Eliot, 1923:166) and fallen into chaos. It is important to take note, here, of the

similarity between Eliot's and Peterson's use of the order and chaos dialectic: both assume that imbalance is problematic, and that myth illustrates patterns of action to restore balance that are worth considering (Peterson, 2007:87).

Eliot concludes, however, that because the "narrative method" was made irrelevant by the total loss of a sustainable ordering force (myth) at a societal level, artists should turn to myth to help restore form and order on an individual level (1923:166). This they must express in their art, answering a social need, and helping society stave off chaos, making the world "possible for art" (1923:167). The historical, social moment (a moment of need) and the artistic response to it must be in harmony.

In his review of *Ulysses*, however, Eliot perhaps lays the foundation of the mythical method as a method of critique, too. The review sees Eliot reversing the mythical method, using it as a tool to unpack the novel and its significance in the realm of art. Myth is not merely a source of references or allusions, then. And the mythical method is more than a creative act: it is the "pattern of being" (to borrow Peterson's phrase) of the hero-poet-critic.

A return to origins and myth

The development of the mythical method in literature also runs in parallel with important developments in other fields of the humanities, each concerned in its own way with the notion of origins. J.S. Brooker writes in "Transcendence and Return: T.S. Eliot and the Dialectic of Modernism" (1994) that "[the] very idea of the modern, then, includes the idea of a return" (1994:62). This "idea of a return", she writes, helps to pave the way for a "migration of Hegelian idealism and Darwinian science into the human sciences" in the early twentieth century (1994:62). Brooker continues, saying that

> [t]he fruitfulness of this migration is particularly evident in the field of psychology. Insights from philosophy and biology proved to be useful in analysing the human mind. In fact, they led to major breakthroughs, and these psychological advances were immediately absorbed back into philosophy and science. These developments gave the modernists, particularly Eliot and Valéry,

> one of their essential metaphors—the "mind of Europe". This metaphor turned out to be a dynamic one with a structure that echoes the modernist dialectic (1994:62).

Importantly, Eliot shows an acute awareness of this influence upon his thinking and writing. In the *"*Notes on *The Waste Land"* that accompany later publications of the poem, he credits his influences for creating the mental climate that allowed him to conceive of *The Waste Land*, writing that, "Psychology (such as it is, and whether our reaction to it be comic or serious), ethnology, and *The Golden Bough* have concurred to make possible what was impossible even a few years ago" (1923:167).

The implication, for him, is that the mythical method is part of—as well as being informed by—a broader response (often concerned with origins) to a pressing social problem (the loss of wholeness in society). He sees these developments as both affirmation of the need for the mythical method, and as the building blocks that make it possible at all: illustrative, perhaps, of what Brooker calls his "insistence on a 'both/and' rather than an 'either/or' logic" (1994:55). It is here, in examining the three elements that make possible the full fruition of the mythical method (psychology, ethnology, and Frazer's *The Golden Bough*), that one perhaps arrives at the source of Eliot's zeal.

To begin with, ethnology—the "scientific description of different races and cultures" (Oxford advanced learner's dictionary, 2010)—covers an astoundingly broad area of interest. One of its foci, however, is on origins, another example of the Darwinian influence on sciences and humanities of which Brooker speaks.

Writing in the *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*, Ernest Dieffenbach describes ethnology as a science concerned with "the origin and education of man, the causes of the varieties of the physical and mental development of nations, the origin and difference of languages and religious ideas", and which is "able to collect the colours of the prism, each of them rich and beautiful, into the pure ray of light, and confirm by inductive science the cherished unity of mankind" (1848:17). Dieffenbach paints a hopeful, confirmative picture of the discipline,

and clarifies the link between it and the mythical method. Ethnology—like Eliot's mind of Europe—postulates an underlying, unifying foundation of beliefs and traditions in cultures.

Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) also stands as an example of the Darwinian influence on the human sciences at the time. The book attempts to arrive at an original European myth, constructed from a plethora of fragments. Eliot (2002:58) says he is "indebted in general" to Frazer's work for the insights it gave him on European myth and religion. And in his "Notes on *The Waste Land*" Eliot specifically credits the book for his knowledge of the role of vegetation rites and sympathetic magic in early primitive European cultures, which form a central motif in *The Waste Land* from the outset.

The importance of both ethnology and *The Golden Bough* to the mythical method is relatively clear, then: they inform Eliot on European myth and religion, employing a Darwinian structure to interpret myth and culture. Eliot's reason for including "psychology" as a catalyst to the mythical method seems somewhat out of place by comparison. Its role, however, is most vital in understanding the urgency that Eliot feels about the mythical method. It provides the link to a concrete description of two central elements of the mythical method: the mind of Europe and the notion of a social "loss of form".

Psychology, the poet, and the mind of Europe

Eliot employs the mind of Europe metaphor in much of his critical and artistic work (Brooker, 1994:62). This is reason enough to explore the notion in detail, but its centrality within the mythical method makes its elucidation imperative for this study.

The metaphor envisions the tradition of European history, society, art, and culture as a "primitive mind" (here already the influence of psychology shows) that survives within the inhabitants of Europe. It is complemented by an individual "modern mind", so that the individual is at once his present self and, in a sense, a generic, past self. It is a complicated metaphor with complex implications, but Eliot sheds light on it and its vital relation to the mythical method in "Tradition

and the Individual Talent" (1920). In the essay, he contrasts "the mind of the individual poet to the mind of Europe" (Brooker, 1994:62). Writing about the poet's connection to tradition, Eliot asserts that

> the mind of Europe—the mind of his own country—a mind which he learns in time to be much more important than his own private mind—is a mind which changes, and that this change is a development which abandons nothing *en route*, which does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen. That this development, refinement perhaps, complication certainly, is not, from the point of view of the artist, any improvement (1920:64).

Eliot describes this "primitive mind", this "mind of Europe" as one that retains everything of cultural, historical, artistic, and social significance on one level of importance, and it resonates beneath the individual mind. Its relation to Peterson's category of the phenomenologically "known" is direct: culture is a subset of that which is known; the need for change within tradition is the unknown. The poet, as already mentioned, is the heroic individual that takes on the restorative pattern of being.

Vitally, the primitive mind is one that "changes" and develops, but without losing anything it has previously retained. It is not static, nor is it a finite space. And its similarity to Carl Jung's "collective unconscious", as well as the general primacy of the notion of a powerful subconscious-like structure, is further indication of the influence that psychology had on Eliot.

It is imperative, for him, that the poet has a strong, conscious connection with this mind, with the "mind of his own country" (Brooker, 1994:64). The implication for artists, as Eliot begins to hint in the excerpt, is that they will be unable to produce any work that is truly new without a connection to this primitive cultural mind. Without returning to tradition they cannot hope to master individual talent. They will be incapable of making a meaningful contribution to the tradition of European art. And since new, relevant art is a vital Modernist focus, a return to the "primitive mind" is an important artistic responsibility for Eliot. The mythical method, in its

capacity to return both artist and audience to the “primitive mind” therefore carries the important double function of leading to new art, and healing the mind of society. Brooker clarifies this, writing that, for Eliot

> the primitive mind survives behind and beneath the modern, and that health for a poet involves a return, a conscious encounter with the living past. The “really new” is the fruit of this encounter. The profound continuity between the primitive and the modern minds makes it imperative for artists to cultivate the "historical sense", to become conscious of the simultaneity of past and present and of the layers of mind supporting the modem soul. The survival of the primitive in the modern is, in some way, physical; the earlier spiritual and cultural experience survives in the bones of succeeding generations. Poets should cultivate this historical sense, this consciousness that they write with "the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of [their] whole country” in their bones (1994:65).

Eliot’s motivation for developing the mythical method, and his reasons for believing that it was vital to the writing of new literature becomes clearer: without returning to the past, there can be no forward progression for art. Without a return to and deep understanding of the ancient, there can be no escape, no transcendence of the “vast panorama of anarchy and futility that is contemporary history” (Eliot, 1923:167). Society would remain trapped in this sense of meaningless disorder, and the artist would keep creating art that doesn’t make this fact clear. For Eliot, the mythical method is at its core a model for a response to the need for change caused by chaos—and the reason he praises *Ulysses*.

The mind of Europe divided

But Eliot’s thought on the mind of Europe has a second facet, too. And it is here that we discover why he perceives such an urgent need for the mythical method. For Eliot, the mind of Europe, once unified, now lies torn in two, and the consciousness of its continuity with the past, vital to maintaining order in society, is lost. The gradual loss of form and wholeness in society, Eliot feels, is the result of an earlier split in the European mind between reason and feeling (Brooker, 1994:65). He writes, in “Imperfect Critics: Swinburne as Critic” (1920:18):

> We are aware, after the *Contemporaries of Shakespeare* and the *Age of Shakespeare* and the books on Shakespeare and Jonson, that there is something unsatisfactory in the way in which Swinburne was interested in these people; we suspect that his interest was never articulately formulated in his mind or consciously directed to any purpose. He makes his way, or loses it, between two paths of definite direction. He might as a poet have concentrated his attention upon the technical problems solved or tackled by these men; he might have traced for us the development of blank verse from Sackville to the mature Shakespeare, and its degeneration from Shakespeare to Milton. Or he might have studied through the literature to the mind of that century; he might, by dissection and analysis, have helped us to some insight into the feeling and thought which we seem to have left so far away. In either case, you would have had at least the excitement of following the movements of an important mind groping towards important conclusions.

Eliot argues, here, that Swinburne had had the opportunity to critically address the "feeling and thought" of Shakespeare, Jonson, or Milton. For Eliot, the connection demonstrated by these poets between emotion and intellect is an important feature of Elizabethan poetry (Brooker, 1994:65; Eliot, 1920:18). He also demonstrates this in his essay, "Dante" (1920:152, emphasis in original):

> But Dante's is the most comprehensive, and the most *ordered* presentation of emotions that has ever been made. Dante's method of dealing with any emotion may be contrasted, not so appositely with that of other "epic" poets as with that of Shakespeare. Shakespeare takes a character apparently controlled by a simple emotion, and analyses the character and the emotion itself. The emotion is split up into constituents—and perhaps destroyed in the process. The mind of Shakespeare was one of the most *critical* that has ever existed. Dante, on the other hand, does not analyse the emotion so much as he exhibits its relation to other emotions.

Restoring a connection between intellect and emotion is clearly a central concern, for Eliot, and his admonition that balance is needed becomes explicit. Brooker sheds light on this, saying that for Eliot

> [i]n the time of Shakespeare and Dante…the mind of Europe had been unified, but beginning in the seventeenth century that mind split into intellect, on the one side, and emotion, on the other. In the centuries following the seventeenth, the mind of Europe was dominated first by reason, in the Enlightenment, and then by feeling, in the romantic age. In Eliot's analysis, this cultural schizophrenia led in the twentieth century to a full-blown crack-up in the mind of Europe (1994:65).

Eliot traces the beginning of this schism in the mind of Europe to the seventeenth century, when he feels it was divided into two separate halves: intellect and emotion (Brooker, 1994:65). The culmination of the "cultural schizophrenia" that came about after the split between intellect and emotion was the total loss of form and wholeness in society. Sincere connection between aspects of individual and societal identity (spiritual, historical, sexual, familial, etc.) is lost as a result.

This loss includes the vital poetic connection between the "the primitive and the modern minds", and is what makes the Modern world impossible for art of the vital "really new" sort to emerge (Brooker, 1994:65). Unless, Eliot says, the artist returns to the past. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1920:44), he asserts:

> Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.

Brooker (1994:65) expounds:

> In “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” Eliot had suggested as therapy a programmatic revisiting of the past, not because it was the past, but because it was part of the present of which the ordinary person was unaware. Eliot’s conviction that some sort of return was essential for the psychological healing of Europe partly explains his close attention to ancient and modern texts.

Eliot expresses two concepts in the essay, according to Brooker, that are central to understanding the urgency of a return to myth: the “simultaneity of past and present,” and the notion that there are “layers of mind supporting the modern soul” (“the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country”) (Brooker, 1994:65). In these terms, the layers of supporting mind and the presence of the past act as a “critical light” (Donoghue, 1997:208) under which the heroic artist should view modern existence, thereby preparing the way for a revitalisation of tradition (Noel-Tod, 2013:484).

In a phenomenological sense, furthermore, there is a clear correlation between the domains of the unknown and the known and Eliot’s notion of “the temporal” and “the timeless”, respectively (1920:44). The restorative unity of the two domains (“the timeless [and] temporal together”), as in the broader mythological/religious abstraction (Peterson, 2006:138), is achieved for Eliot by the individual: here, the hero-poet (Noel-Tod, 2013:484).

The mind of Europe, reverberating beneath the mind of the European poet and vital to the creation of new art, is the landscape which is in need of restoration. Eliot argues that vitality (connection, wholeness, and order) could be attained through “a return to origins and a retrieval of past experience” (Brooker, 1994: 65).

His prescribed cure for the split mind of Europe is perhaps comparable to what analytical psychology suggests: that individuals must return to past experiences (the primitive mind of their cultural past, for Eliot) not only to transcend modern limitations, but to experience healing through the restoration of wholeness and balance. The links between the notion of the mind of

Europe, the mythical method, and psychology are concretised: the act of returning becomes the cure, and it is an act that is facilitated by the mythical method.

Conclusion

The mythical method achieves two goals which Eliot holds in the utmost importance. First, it allows poets to reconnect with the “mind of their country” (Brooker, 1994:64) and recognise the tradition into which they are entering (without which process the poet would be incapable of creating truly new poetry). Second, the act of return begins a process of healing needed to close the divide between intellect and emotion, modern and primitive, order and chaos.

The mythical method, centred on the idea of a "profound continuity between the primitive and the modern minds" (Brooker, 1994:65) is fundamentally hopeful. This continuity, restored and cultivated by the use of the mythical method, allows both poet and audience to access the mature knowledge of life that is embedded in myth. Experiencing the continuity ultimately eases the sense that modern existence is only futile and chaotic. That is the heart of the mythical method, and it is deeply eudaimonic.

Furthermore, mythical patterns are apparent in the mythical method as restorative critical/creative act, insofar as it is intended to be a pattern of being for the revitalising hero-poet. In its use of the categories of “unknown, known, and knower” in the form of chaos, order, and heroic individual, the mythical method reveals that it is arrived at within paradigms that are concerned not with “matter”, as Peterson puts it, but with “what matters” (2007:87). Therefore, the mythical method (as both creative and critical approach) is clearly based on a phenomenological understanding of the human experience of reality. It is this, and not simply the act of bringing together myth and modernity, that makes Eliot’s method mythical (Brooker, 1984:543).

II. The mythical method and the role of myth in society

Introduction

In engaging with the intellectual and historical climate of his time, Eliot, it becomes clear, is ambitious in his thinking. But his method, while conceptually complex, is aimed at a problem that requires significant insight to identify and articulate. Eliot not only does this, but provides a solution: to turn to myth as an ordering, healing force.

However, to take this postulation seriously—as Eliot says one should in "*Ulysses,* Order, and Myth" (1923)—it is necessary to evaluate all its embedded assumptions along rational intellectual lines. First, one is forced to ask: is the separation from myth a problem for a society? If one can argue with certainty that it is problematic, it seems logical that reconnection would solve, or at least ease the problem, and that Eliot is plausibly right about this aspect. But how does one effect reconnection in such a way that it improves life? There are certainly examples of societies being deeply connected to myth but suffering tremendously for it, as will be expounded in the following. What do we do when myth is innately corrupt?

The broad aim of this section is to arrive at a better understanding of Eliot's conceptualization of myth's role in society. It tests the conceptual fortitude of the mythical method by relating it to other hypotheses about the role of myth in society. I shall arrive at an answer for the questions raised above by comparing Eliot's conceptualisation of myth with those of others. These other perspectives on myth are taken from various disciplines and moments in history.

What surfaces continually, I hope to demonstrate, is a fairly consistent set of arguments across perspectives. For example, the notion of myth as the articulation of a store of old knowledge often surfaces from the arguments around what myth *is*, and if it is indeed vital to society. Similarly, when discussing what myth *is for*, many argue that myth helps society and the individual operate with a sense of purpose and meaning. It is also seen to provide illustrative examples of good and bad hierarchies of action on many levels (individual, familial, societal,

etc.) and illustrates how to navigate them in sustainable ways. Much of this is made apparent by the perspectives on myth's handling of imbalances between order and chaos.

Archetypes, rituals, and patterns of being

The mythical method hinges on the idea that there is a vast, ancient store of important socio-cultural knowledge (the "primitive mind" aspect of the mind of Europe), and that myth is part of this old knowledge. Eliot, recognizing a disconnection between the "primitive mind" and the "modern mind" (an extension of his reason and emotion/order and chaos dialectic) concludes that the disconnection may be the source of many of Europe's problems during the early twentieth century. It is this conclusion that lays the foundation of the mythical method.

For Eliot, the mythical method allows us to see the "profound continuity between the primitive and the modern minds" (Brooker, 1994:65). This is achieved by overlaying myth and modernity. Eliot posits that the individual can let the resultant illustration inform the present, using it as an "ordering force" that reassures and instructs. The realisation of this continuity, what Brooker calls a "conscious encounter with the living past" (1994:65), restores health and vitality to the poet and his craft. By allowing the mythical method to provide answers to the questions of what myth is, and what myth does for society, a mandala can be constructed that visually lays out Eliot's conceptualization of myth:

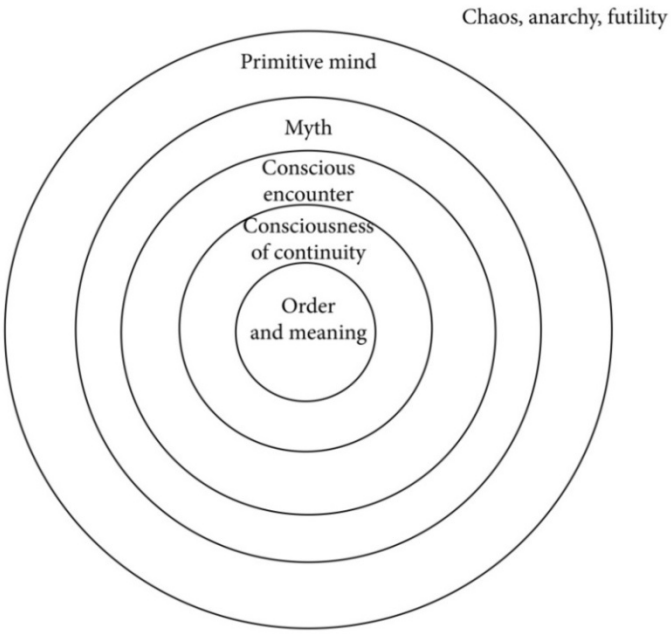

Figure 2

Within a reality of chaos, anarchy, and futility the primitive mind—reverberating in all modern minds to form the whole that is the mind of one's "own country" (Brooker, 1994:64)—has been operating since pre-history. In that time it has learned much about life and how to survive the storms of chaos. This knowledge is illustrated and preserved by myth (in stories, rites, symbols, characters, religion, etc.). In holding myth up to modernity (or *vice versa*), one reveals the continuity of the "primitive" and "modern" minds. In this way, the schism between the primitive and modern minds is bridged. Being conscious of this continuity and allowing it to colour one's perception of modernity leads to a sense of order and meaning. Living life unaware of the continuity leaves the individual and society susceptible to futility and anarchy.

The mandala reveals an important aspect of Eliot's conceptualisation: chaos is a force that acts upon the individual, and order and meaning lie at the centre, forming an important dichotomy. When there is a disruption in the consciousness of the continuity between the "primitive mind" and the "modern mind", the route to order becomes impossible, and chaos reigns unchecked. Without myth, the continuity cannot be seen, and so the mind is not really whole, missing out on important perspectives. The balance between known and unknown is destabilised, and the

world subsequently loses its sense of wholeness. Carl Jung (1968: par. 28) shares this sentiment about myth:

> I am convinced that the growing impoverishment of symbols has a meaning. It is a development that has an inner consistency. Everything that we have not thought about, and that has therefore been deprived of a meaningful connection with our developing consciousness, has got lost.

The notion of an orientating "connection to the past" is clearly a shared pillar in both Eliot and Jung's thoughts about myth. And as has been noted, Eliot's "mind of Europe" image bears striking similarity to Jung's notion of a "collective unconscious". That is not to say, however, that Eliot is merely Jungian in his thinking, but the knowledge that Eliot's thought was influenced by his intellectual contemporaries—and by the emerging field of psychology in particular—makes Jung's hypothesis a vital point of discussion in this section.

Plausibly, the source of the similarities between the two frameworks is that both consider myth to be in direct relation to the individual mind, as opposed to other notions which consider myth first in relation to nature or language, and only then in relation to the individual. For example, Jung sees a foundational congruence between what he believes to be the structure of myth, and the structure of the psyche:

> Jung's account of mythmaking and myths—the process and its product—is inseparable from his theory of the archetypal configuration of the psyche. In effect, he is telling us that we need to study myth because it shows the workings of the psyche as hypothesized by him. (Jones, 2003:621-622)

So, Jung's conceptualization of myth is not that myth is the result of trying to explain occurrences in the material world, but rather that myth should be seen as an attempted expression of the fundamental "workings of the psyche". This "configuration", furthermore, is archetypal in nature. But what precisely does this mean? Eugene Williamson sheds light on the question, writing about the similarities and differences between the Platonic *eidos* and the

Jungian notion of the archetype. In “Plato’s ‘Eidos’ and the Archetypes of Jung and Frye” (1985:96), Williamson states:

> [T]he nearest Jungian parallel to the Platonic *eidos* is the archetype-as-such (*an sich*), hypothesized by Jung to explain why certain human symbolic and other behavioral patterns recur despite manifold cultural differences among individuals. Jung describes the archetype-as-such as an inherited “mode of psychic functioning” or “pattern of instinctual behavior” belonging to the supra-personal or “collective” unconscious dimension of the human psyche. As he frequently points out, the archetype-as-such is purely formal, “irrepresentable,” and only “a possibility of representation which is given *a priori*.” As such, it is available to the conscious mind only when “filled out with the material of conscious experience.” Thus Jung argues that man’s infinitely variable images of woman are all shaped to some degree by the anima, or female archetype, “incarnated anew in every male child,” though the anima itself is not directly known to the conscious mind. Like the *eidos*, the archetype-as-such transcends empirical experience and is nonperceptible.

This passage unpacks the Jungian idea of the archetype-as-such. It shows, first, that the Jungian “archetype-as-such” is closer in concept to the Platonic *eidos* than to the Platonic *archetype*—which is seen as a way of paraphrasing the notion of the *eidos*. That is, the Jungian “archetype-as-such” is an unconscious, unarticulated structure that guides one’s understanding of and subsequent behaviour towards reality.

It resides in the collective unconscious, and reveals itself to the conscious mind only when animated by “conscious experience”. For Jung—as for Eliot and Peterson—myth is one such animation. Jung’s explanation of myth’s relationship to reality is comparable to Eliot’s notion that myth (stored in the primitive, “unconscious” mind) brings meaning to the modern, “conscious” mind by way of facilitating a “conscious encounter with the living past” (Brooker, 1994:65). Furthermore, Neil Yetwin writes, in “Thoreau, Jung, and the Collective Unconscious” (2009:6), that

> Jung also believed that the collective unconscious provides fertile ground for the archetypes forming the basis of our religious and philosophical beliefs as well as our dreams, fantasies, and fairytales, all of which are represented by universally recognizable characters and symbols.

Accordingly, Jung's configuration implies that we can work backwards from an analysis and understanding of myth to arrive at an understanding of archetypes, then the collective unconscious, and then the rest of the psyche. For Jung, achieving this perfectly would result in "individuation", or self-realisation (Yetwin, 2009:6). The collective unconscious, like Eliot's "primitive mind" is the part of the psyche that stores the knowledge gained by the collective human experience. Myth is important for Jung, therefore, in that it reveals archetypes which unlock the knowledge stored in the collective unconscious. This helps the individual navigate the present, a similar notion to that which Eliot argues. In "Jung's very twentieth-century view of myth" (2003:606), writes Robert Segal,

> unlike Freudians, Jungians have taken myth positively from the outset. For them, the unconscious expressed in myth is not a repository of repressed, antisocial drives but a storehouse of innately unconscious archetypes that have simply never had an opportunity at realization. Myth is one means of encountering this unconscious. The function of myth is less that of release, as for classical Freudians, than that of growth, as for contemporary ones. But where even contemporary Freudians see myth as a means of adjustment to the demands of the outer world, Jungians see myth as a means of the cultivation of the inner world. The payoff is not adjustment but self-realization.

But how precisely does "self-realisation" help the individual, and how does it compare to the aims of Eliot's mythical method? Yetwin clarifies this important aspect of Jung's argument for myth. He writes that Jung

> emphasized that the collective unconscious exercises a crucial function beyond its role as the birthplace of archetypes. He admitted that it was virtually impossible for individuals fully to bridge the gap between their conscious and unconscious lives. Yet this very struggle, he thought, encouraged the realization of what he called "individuation"—the attainment of a

> personal sense of balance, wholeness, and self-knowledge while remaining true to oneself. This undertaking, Jung hoped, might foster awareness of our "invisible system of relations to the unconscious" (2009:6).

It becomes apparent that Jung's view shares important structural similarities with Eliot's view of myth, as well as a eudaimonic vision of its purpose. As a "means of encountering [the] unconscious" for Jung (Segal, 2003:606), and facilitating a "conscious encounter with the living past" for Eliot (Brooker, 1994:65), myth and engagement with it form a direct route to a state of existence characterized by "wholeness, and self-knowledge" (Yetwin, 2009:6).

Jung's view of myth comes together in the following illustrative mandala:

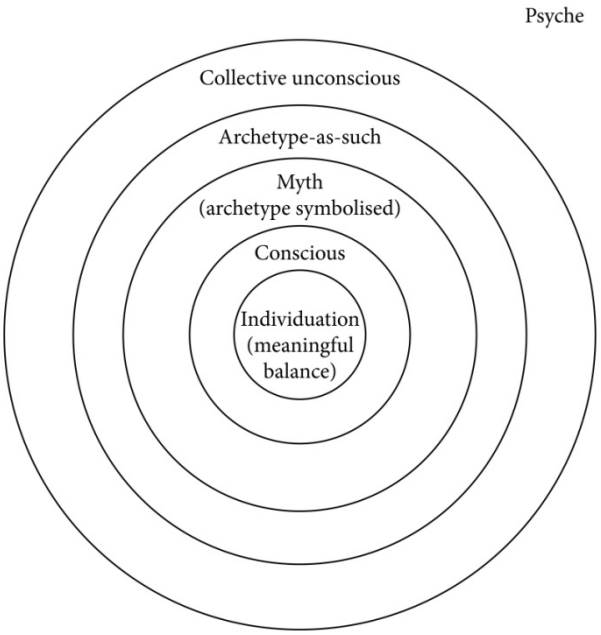

Figure 3

The mandala reveals that Jung answers the question of what myth is by saying that it is an illustrative bridge between the conscious mind and the helpful knowledge stored in the collective unconscious. In accounting for the purpose of myth, he argues that it allows for individuation, and that individuation ("balance, wholeness, and self-knowledge") helps us navigate the present efficiently.

Myth arises as the expression of archetypes, for Jung. And archetypes, furthermore, articulate our collective unconscious, sharing its structure and revealing basic psychological building blocks common to all humanity. For Jung, knowledge of myth is important on two levels: first, it helps us arrive at an understanding of the psyche; second, it fosters the process of individuation, which is comparable to Eliot's vision of the whole mind restored.

To expound Jung's perspective, we may consider the issue in light of his own words in an interview: "It is just as if you are born without eyes and ears when you are growing up with no connection to the past" (2015). Individuation helps by bringing closer to consciousness the knowledge stored by the collective unconscious about the human experience across time and cultures. So myth, vitally, is a bridge between conscious and unconscious. As Yetwin writes,

> Jung spent decades struggling to demonstrate that we carry "the whole living part in the lower storeys of the skyscraper of rational consciousness...The true history of the mind is not preserved in learned volumes," he insisted, "but in the living psychic organism of every individual," and asked, "Aren't we the carriers of the entire history of mankind?" (2009:3).

It is an elegant-sounding, compelling argument: that the history of human experience, the "whole living part" of being can be understood by observing the congruences between our oldest stories, our failures and triumphs. So meaning, balance, and integration lie at the core of both Jung's conceptualisation and Eliot's: both see myth as the articulation of the unconscious and therefore value it as a route to wholeness. For both, this is achieved by integrating the conscious and unconscious, modern and primitive: they conceptualise myth in direct relation to the mind.

This, however, differs notably from several other important views on myth (Segal, 2003:593), such as that of anthropologist J.G. Frazer. Interestingly, as previously noted, it is Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890) that Eliot credits as being vital to both the mythical method and to *The Waste Land*. It is important, therefore, to explore how Eliot consolidates such a foundational incongruence with the mythical method.

Curtis Churchill writes in the foreword to *The Golden Bough* (1981 edition) that

> Frazer's original purpose was modest—to explain an ancient Italian folk custom. A runaway slave, if successful in pulling down a bough from a special golden tree, won the right to fight to the death the king of a sacred forest grove at Nemi and perhaps to become the next king of the woods...Frazer opened up the whole world of myth and ritual, from the far reaches of the legendary past to the practices of primitive peoples of his day. It was an astounding revelation to Frazer's culture-bound world that the customs and superstitions of civilised society were in many ways comparable to the beliefs and practices of primitive peoples (1981:vi).

Frazer's aim leads him to explore a vast collection of primitive rites and myths. In unfolding these, he abstracts an argument about myth and what it is for. This argument, like his methodology, is Darwinian in principle. Broadly, his view of myth posits that it is humanity's primitive need for survival that leads to the development of abstract thought. In order to survive optimally and in an increasingly civilised manner, humanity attempts to master nature (Segal, 2015:758). One of the ways it attempts to do this is through ritual. Frazer writes that

> a myth is never so graphic or precise in its details as when it is a simple transcript of a ceremony which the author of the myth witnessed with his eyes. At all events, if it can be made probable that rites like those described in the Balder myth have been practised by Norsemen and by other European peoples, we shall be justified in inferring that the ritual gave birth to the myth, not the myth to the ritual. For while many cases can be shown in which a myth has been invented to explain a rite, it would be hard to point to a single case in which a myth has given rise to a rite. Ritual may be the parent of myth, but can never be its child (1981:246, IV).

In wrestling with the origin of myth, Frazer arrives at the conclusion that myth arose out of a primitive need for security and survival. According to Frazer, rituals and rites should be seen as an attempt by man to master nature, to arrive at order, and myth should logically be considered as man's attempt to explain rituals and rites. However, Frazer holds that myth has acted beyond its original purpose:

> Side by side with the view of the world as pervaded by spiritual forces, primitive man has another conception in which we may detect a germ of the modern notion of natural law or the view of nature as a series of events occurring in an invariable order without the intervention of personal agency. The germ of which I speak is involved in that sympathetic magic, as it may be called, which plays a large part in most systems of superstition (1981:9, I).

Frazer argues that if we consider some of the guiding principles of myth and ritual in the past, we are forced to accept that the conceptual foundation for scientific principles, such as the law of natural selection, can be traced back to rituals and rites. For Frazer, both ritual and science are evidence of humanity's pursuit of a sense of predictable outcomes as a means to ease the pressures of chaos on existence. His view of myth as expressed in *The Golden Bough* can thus be laid out in the following manner:

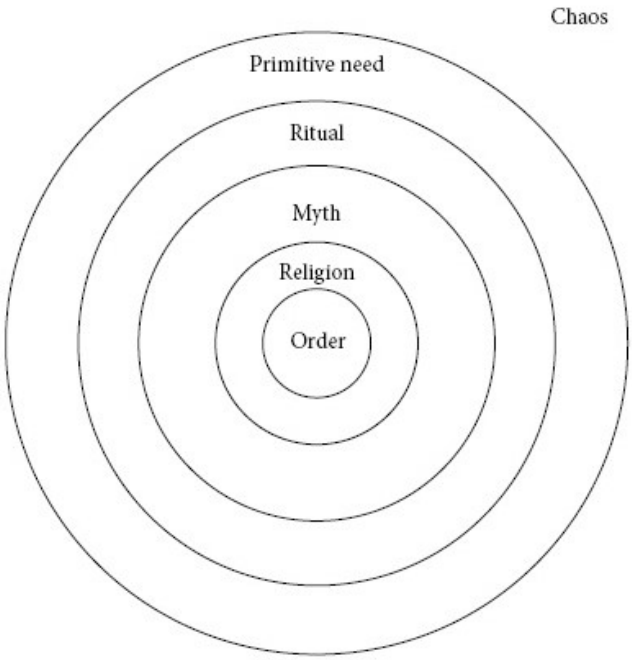

Figure 4

The underlying Darwinian structure of Frazer's conceptualisation is easily seen: the chaos of existence forces the need for survival upon primitive humanity (Segal, 2015:758). This need drives man to try to master nature, which plants the seeds for ritual practises such as those associated with sympathetic magic. In order to explain the rituals and why they may work or fail,

man invents myth. Myth develops into religion through man's "recognition of his own helplessness" (1981:30, I): practises that at first tapped into man's self-presumed parity with the metaphysical (like sympathetic magic) prove to be unreliable. At this stage, myth is brought in to account for ritual:

> If he then feels himself to be so frail and slight, how vast and powerful must he deem the beings who control the gigantic machinery of nature! Thus as his old sense of equality with the gods slowly vanishes, he resigns at the same time the hope of directing the course of nature by his own unaided resources, that is, by magic, and looks more and more to the gods as the sole repositories of those supernatural powers which he once claimed to share with them. (1981:31, I)

In describing ritual's metamorphosis into myth, however, Frazer's hypothesis assumes that abstract metaphysical thought (the notion of sympathetic magic, for example) somehow exists before and outside of the presence of myth in thought. The comparative strength of other conceptualizations (Eliot's, Jung's, Campbell's and Peterson's, specifically) is that they do not place myth and ritual into a rigid structure of linear evolution, they instead position both elements on the same conceptual plane. Frazer also fails to account for why myth—if it was merely the expression of humanity's need to master nature—continues to exist alongside science. If it was a simple case of each level of the response to primitive need replacing the previous one, why hasn't science been able to replace myth and religion?

It might be that Frazer simply labels the articulation of myth as "myth" in his own conceptualisation of it, confusing the presence of myth in thought with the articulation of that presence through story or song, for example. Perhaps it is this, in part, which leads him to state that "[now] that the theory, which necessarily presented itself to me at first in outline, has been worked out in detail, I cannot but feel that in some places I may have pushed it too far" (1981:ix).

It becomes clear from the mandala, however, that Eliot and Frazer share the notion that ritual and myth enable humanity to cope with the chaos of existence that is always present.

Furthermore, they share the sense that a pursuit of order lies at the core of humanity's desire for abstract mythic thought. And that is no trivial coincidence.

It is a sentiment shared by anthropologist and mythology scholar Joseph Campbell, who suggests an alternative to Frazer's naturalistic view of myth-making (what Campbell calls a "traditional" mythology). Where Frazer is focussed heavily on the origin of myth, Campbell chooses instead to focus on why myth is more sustainable in certain cases than in others. He explores this question in *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology* (1968). In this volume of the series, Campbell argues that "since the middle of the twelfth century" the West has experienced an "accelerating disintegration" of orthodoxy, which paved the way for a release of the "creative powers of a great company of towering individuals" (1968:3). His argument defends the works of writers like Joyce and Eliot, placing them on the level of "living myth" (1968:4). Campbell asserts that

> [i]n the context of a traditional mythology, the symbols are presented in socially maintained rites, through which the individual is required to experience, or will pretend to have experienced, certain insights, sentiments, and commitments. In what I am calling "creative" mythology, on the other hand, this order is reversed: the individual has had an experience of his own—of order, horror, beauty, or even mere exhilaration—which he seeks to communicate through signs; and if his realization has been of a certain depth and import his communication will have the value and force of living myth—for those, that is to say, who receive and respond to it of themselves, with recognition, uncoerced (1968:4).

Here, Campbell intends to show that the structure of a creative mythology (that is, a mythology which is the result of voluntary, "uncoerced" individual experience) is made up of the same elements of traditional mythology, but with some structural adjustments. Importantly, it is a profound experience—with "order, horror, beauty"—that informs the "creative mythology", and it is the sincerity and profundity of the experience, communicated symbolically, that allows it to have the "value and force of living myth". This resonates with Peterson's view that the myths that survive are the abstraction and communication of streamlined information gained through

experience over time. Both Peterson and Campbell, therefore, have arguments for myth that attempt to account for its adaptation and subsequent survival. These are, centrally, ideas addressing the nature of sustainability.

In describing the differences between “traditional mythology” and “creative mythology”, Campbell lays out what he considers to be the four functions of myth. He begins by saying that myth aims first to

> reconcile waking consciousness to the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* of this universe *as it is*: the second [aim is] to render an interpretive total image of the same, as known to contemporary consciousness. Shakespeare’s definition of the function of his art, “to hold, as ‘twere, the mirror up to nature,” is thus equally a definition of mythology (1968:4).

For Campbell myth restores and sustains the relationship between waking consciousness—the sense of being here, now—with the tremendous and fascinating mystery of the universe as such. But how does he suppose myth achieves this? He argues that myth, being a mirror, acts as a device which allows us to see ourselves in a greater context. In this way, myth gives us an “interpretative total image”, an image by which to make sense of the chaotic, at times frightening mystery of the universe: a narrative or symbolic structure to use as a map.

Unsurprisingly, the third function of myth is the “enforcement of a moral order” (1968:4). From myth, humanity arrives at rules for behaviour. Some of them ensure mutual and individual survival, others turn into dangerous “socially ordered brands and croppings” (1968:5). Campbell brings an important issue to light here: the corruptibility of myth. He addresses the predicament of “a dissociation of professed from actual existence” (1968:5) much in the way that Eliot describes the schism between the “primitive” and “modern” minds. This dissociation, Campbell says, is shown by history to result in a “spiritual disaster” that will eventually lead a civilisation past a metaphysical “point of no return” (1968:5-6):

> The rise and fall of civilisations in the long, broad course of history can be seen to have been largely a function of the integrity and cogency of their supporting cannons of myth; for not

> authority but aspiration is the motivator, builder, and transformer of civilisation. A mythological cannon is an organization of symbols, ineffable in import, by which the energies of aspiration are evoked and gathered toward a focus. The message leaps from heart to heart by way of the brain, and where the brain is unpersuaded the message cannot pass. (1968:5)

Myth, for Campbell, gives humanity something to aspire to: a pattern of being, a life lived within parameters established over time by trial and error. It is a "total interpretative image" of individual consciousness in balance with universal mystery (Campbell, 1968:4). Myth also draws out the "energies of aspiration", and aspiration "is the motivator, builder, and transformer of civilisation" (Campbell, 1964:5). However, if a pattern of being suggested by myth is adopted under coercion or proves unsustainable over time, Campbell says that the individual "can only harden to some figure of living death; and if any considerable number of the members of a civilisation are in this predicament, a point of no return will have been reached" (1968:5-6).

Where myth is corrupt, therefore, there is no aspiration, or there is unsustainable aspiration (tyranny or anarchy, for example). Accordingly, when a myth and its accompanying aspiration prove to be somehow unpersuasive over time it needs to undergo transformation in order to survive. As a result, myth's fourth function (Campbell, 1968:6) is to

> foster the centering and unfolding of the individual in integrity, in accord with *d*) himself (the microcosm), *c)* his culture (the mesocosm), *b)* the universe (the macrocosm), and *a*) that awesome ultimate mystery which is both beyond and within himself and all things:
>
> > Wherefrom words turn back,
> > Together with the mind, not having attained
> > [The bliss of Brahma…]

This function, informed by the Taittiriya Upanishad (Hume, 1921:40, 289), brings into focus the sustainability factor of myth. To survive, Campbell argues, mythology must provide a structure, a process that will engender a state of constant implementation ("centering") and recalibration ("unfolding") regarding honest and truthful aspiration ("integrity") on a range of levels spanning

the individual and metaphysical. He demonstrates, here, the centrality of the phenomenological domains of “nature, culture, individual” (Peterson, 2006:137) to the uncoerced survival of myth.

For Campbell, the “traditional” mythology is more open to the loss of integrity (corruption, essentially) because it is not based on actual experience: the symbols and rites precede the knowledge of the actual mythic force, as in Frazer’s ritualistic model, and so are devoid of integrity. Campbell’s model of the “creative” mythology, by contrast, posits that when symbols and rites grow from the articulation of humanity’s sincere experience with *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, the mythology is connected to a balanced integrity, and is therefore sustainable:

> Creative mythology, in Shakespeare’s sense, of the mirror “to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure,” springs not, like theology, from the dicta of authority, but from insights, sentiments, thought, and vision of an adequate individual, loyal to his own experience of value. (1968:6-7)

It is the “experience of value” that, in agreement with Peterson and Eliot, gives the individual something to aspire towards. As Peterson convincingly argues, society is incrementally improved as a result (2018:63-64). In articulating these four functions, and in his conceptual rebuttal of the sustainability of “traditional” mythology, Campbell’s conceptualisation of a sustainable myth might be seen as reflected in the following mandala:

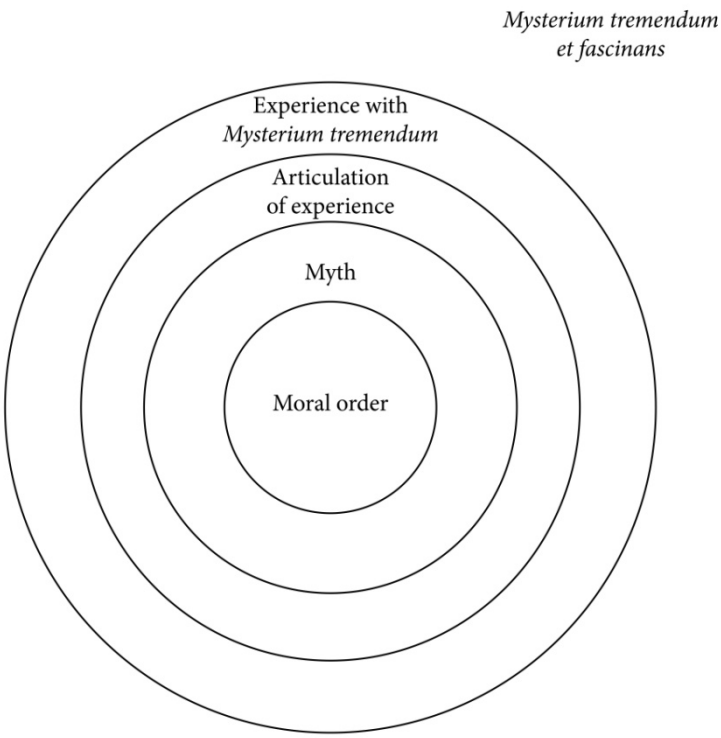

Figure 5

At the broadest level, there is the tremendous and fascinating mystery of the universe which man recognizes as being "both beyond and within himself and all things" (1968:5). The individual encounters this great mystery in an experience of "order, horror, beauty, or even mere exhilaration" (1968:40). In the creative mythology, the individual articulates this experience. If it has led him to a realisation of "certain depth and import", the experience and its articulation will become socially relevant, given that society is convinced by it, and it is not forced upon society.

In this way, society and the individual arrive at a sustainable goal for existence: a state of being in "accord with the social order, and of harmony with the universe" (1968:5), similar to Jung's "individuation" and the healing that Eliot envisions for the mind of Europe. If the moral order is corrupted, if hierarchies harden into tyranny, for example, creative mythology rejuvenates it, being built on a structure of centring and unfolding. It offers a new perspective, fosters the process of knowing and exploring. Creative mythology

> corrects the authority holding to the shells of forms produced and left behind by the lives once lived. Renewing the act of experience itself, it restores to existence the quality of adventure, at once shattering and reintegrating the fixed, already known, in the sacrificial creative fire of the

> becoming thing that is no thing at all but life, not as it *will be* or *should be,* as it *was* or as it *never will be*, but as it *is,* in depth, in process, *here and now,* inside and out (1968:7).

It is fruitful to return, again, to the process that Eliot expresses in his essay on the importance of tradition for the artist. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" he argues that the "existing monuments" of an artistic tradition

> form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new (1920:44).

In this very important sense, Eliot's vision of the poet's relationship to tradition is closely in line with Campbell's vision of the creative mythology and the symbolic representation of the need for it

> which, in the imagery of the Grail legend, is symbolized in the Waste Land theme: a landscape of spiritual death, a world waiting, waiting...for the Desired Knight, who would restore its integrity to life and let stream again from infinite depths the lost, forgotten, living waters of the inexhaustible source (1968:5).

Both Campbell's and Eliot's conceptualisations of myth, therefore, are concerned with the process of "shattering and rejoining" existing structures, while also placing value on "conformity between the old and the new" (a vital aspect of the defence for the mythical method). Sustainable change, for both, is a necessary and important process, and it is a given part of their conceptualisations of myth. For Eliot, it is perhaps this experience that "makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity", and which results in works of art that are, by his definition, truly new (1920:44). Similarly, for Campbell it leads to a consolidation of consciousness of one's place here, now, and an understanding of one's place in the mystery of the universe (1968:4).

French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss shares Campbell's conclusion that myth may be a way to arrive at a "general understanding of the universe" (1978:17), but takes a rather different route to get there. In *Myth and Meaning* (1978), Levi-Strauss argues that the complexity of the phenomenon of myth across cultures demands to be investigated:

> I escaped [to anthropology], and was confronted immediately by one problem—there were lots of rules of marriage all over the world which looked absolutely meaningless, and it was all the more irritating because, if they were meaningless, then there should be different rules for each people, though nevertheless the number of rules would be more or less finite. So, if the same absurdity was found to reappear over and over again, and another kind of absurdity also to reappear, then this was something which was not absolutely absurd; otherwise it would not reappear. (1978:11)

If myth, Levi-Strauss argues, is merely meaningless "absurdity", it seems unlikely that the same absurdities can be found across time and culture. Myth, therefore, must have meaning. And according to Levi-Strauss, if myth is meaningful it must have order (1978:12), for he sees myth as linguistic, and language as fundamentally ordered:

> It is, I think, absolutely impossible to conceive of meaning without order…It seems to me that the only answer we can give is that 'to mean' means the ability of any kind of data to be translated in a different language. I do not mean a different language like French or German, but different words on a different level. After all, this translation is what a dictionary is expected to give you—the meaning of the word in different words, which on a slightly different level are isomorphic to the word or expression you are trying to understand. (1978:12)

From this perspective, myth is a "language": a set of symbols that, in specific combination, convey specific meaning. Levi-Strauss argues that if it is presumed to be meaningful, it can also be presumed that there is an underlying structure, for the order inherent to language is fundamental to its ability to convey meaning. This structure, furthermore, allows for translation, analysis, and interpretation. Like a numeric or linguistic code, if the symbols of myth can be understood, the message can be decoded. Understanding the structure of myth is therefore vital

to understanding its meaning. The notion that myth seeks to convey information is clearly a central part of Levi-Strauss' thought here.

He also continually returns to the notion of order, chaos, and meaning in *Myth and Meaning* (1978), and repeatedly argues for the meaning/order congruence, like Eliot, Jung, Campbell, and Peterson. His motivation, plausibly, is to substantiate his view that the structural analysis of myth as a phenomenon is the surest way of determining the meaning of any particular myth. However, in defending this proposition he makes the following statement:

> To speak of rules and to speak of meaning is to speak of the same thing; and if we look at all the intellectual undertakings of mankind, as far as they have been recorded all over the world, the common denominator is always to introduce some kind of order. If this represents a basic need for order in the human mind and since, after all, the human mind is only part of the universe, the need probably exists because there is some order in the universe and the universe is not chaos. (1978:13)

Levi-Strauss' conceptualization of myth's role in society can thus be represented in the following manner:

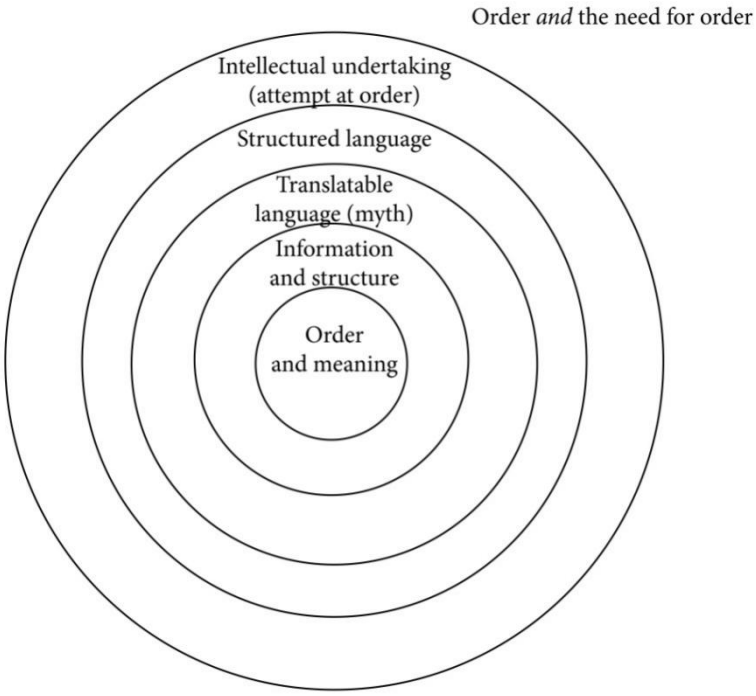

Figure 6

The implications for myth are twofold: first, that it is an intellectual undertaking; and second, that it can be assumed, by virtue of the former fact, to be an attempt by humanity to try and "introduce some kind of order" into existence (Levi-Strauss, 1978:13). Interestingly, Levi-Strauss does not conceive of myth as a reaction to the disorder of the universe as others do. Instead, he sees myth as the manifestation of an order inherent to the universe, as well as an expression of the need for that order.

Consider that for Levi-Strauss "the need [for order] probably exists because there is some order in the universe and the universe is not chaos" (1978:13). He posits that the desire for order arises from both the existence of "some order" as well as the knowledge that "the universe is not chaos". And so, if there is meaning to be made, there is an implicit need for order. He arrives at the same conclusion as the other mythologists discussed here: myth is ultimately an attempt at restoring a necessary balance between chaos and order.

Conclusion—Order and chaos: when myth fails

Until now, this chapter has been concerned largely with testing and stretching the rationale behind the mythical method. In attempting to compare it to other—admittedly Western—conceptualisations of myth, it becomes apparent that Eliot was never conceptually isolated, and that his view of myth is aligned with a deep and influential range of hypotheses. Moreover, Eliot offers as succinct and elegant an answer as the others to the question of what myth is, and why it is important to humanity.

This alignment is perhaps an indication that the mythical method carries at least some conceptual credibility, and may hold its own in challenging postmodern notions around sustainable change, and certainly (in Eliot's case) around sustainable art and critique. It is important, therefore, to address some of these challenges, as well as some of the flaws inherent in the implicit social argument of the mythical method.

A first major weakness in the mythical method—and indeed in all the hypotheses of the previous section—is the assumption that the order provided by myth is helpful and good. Campbell brings this issue into consideration in *The Masks of God: Creative Mythology*:

> Circumcisions, subincisions, scarifications, tattoos, and so forth, are socially ordered brands and croppings, to join merely the body in membership to a larger, more enduring cultural body, of which it is required to become an organ—the mind and feelings being imprinted simultaneously with a correlative mythology. And not nature, but society, is the alpha and omega of this lesson. Moreover, it is in the moral, sociological sphere that authority and coercion come into play, as they did mightily in India in the maintenance of caste and the rites and mythologies of suttee. (1968:5)

While I think Campbell may be a bit dismissive of the significance of the myth-related practices he names above (perhaps understandably, from a humanitarian point of view), he raises an important point about myth which forces us to consider the dangers of implementing the mythical method, or the danger of too easily trusting voices like Peterson and Jung. Campbell speaks directly to the sense that myth can be easily corrupted, and that the order created by myth can be made to serve the purposes of evil ideology, as history shows us is very often the case. In this sense, postmodernism's apparent suspicion of myth and the hierarchies it inevitably creates expresses a rational concern.

However, we must consider that the hierarchies embedded in myth not only have the potential to be corrupted by greed, prejudice, or the pursuit of power, but also that they can be innately corrupt—like the caste system, for Campbell. Apartheid, perpetuated by a strong religious justification, offers perhaps a more local example of this serious problem. Since myth is not only corruptible, but at times innately corrupt, the obvious way to proceed seems to be to use a non-mythical lens—by necessity of avoiding a perpetual cycle of possible corruptions—through which to critically assess the validity as well as corruptibility of the hierarchies, old knowledge, or archetypes we find in myth and may wish to apply to real life.

Campbell's statement that "not nature, but society, is the alpha and omega of this lesson", is a useful starting point for identifying corrupt hierarchies—whether innately corrupt or corrupted over time. He suggests that when mythical practices are for the appeasement of culture, power or social norms—in contrast to a sincere attempt at individuation, balance, or centring and unfolding—these corrupt the ordering potential of myth, and thus uphold problematic points of aspiration for society.

The sense that myth is a reliable route towards order and meaning is brought into question. Myth's "ambition to speak truly about life, so far as that truth is known—not of life freed of constraint, but of the forms of life that persist in a community through diverse conditions" (Donoghue, 1997:209), suffers as a result.

The weakness of both the obvious, broad solution (using a non-mythic lens by which to evaluate myth) and Campbell's more specific solution (using dominance of culture as an indication of corrupt myth) is a problem of definition. Who will define "non-mythic lens" or "violation of nature" (with "nature" being especially difficult to define)?

If myth can be innately corrupt, it is possible that corruption will simply perpetuate corruption. Unless there is a universally-accepted rationale by which to evaluate social practices rooted in myth, the cycle of corrupted knowledge could, theoretically, continue forever. But establishing (not to mention enforcing) a universally-accepted rationale is not a viable, practical course of action, and returns the conversation to the danger of corrupt ideology taking root. It is a serious problem that the defence of myth has to contend with.

However, the previously discussed views of myth's role in society provide a possible third alternative to simply abandoning myth or otherwise risking its calcification into tyranny. That is, to strive for the balance between order and chaos, known and unknown, trusting and testing, which is necessary for sustainable change. It requires the acceptance of existence as more than a place of "matter": it requires us to adopt the sense that the world is also made up of

“what matters” (Peterson, 2007:87); a place “not of objects, but of phenomenological constants” (Peterson 2006:136).

The various analyses (including Eliot’s) of the phenomenon of myth consistently point towards the necessity of balance between chaos and order, unknown and known by way of the individual, the knower. And balance is not an act of stasis: it implies constant recalibration and re-evaluation, with adjustments necessarily made to maintain stability. It is a concept that is often expressed in myth, demonstrated well by Peterson’s work (2006:138-144). But how is this not simply a case of myth again possibly perpetuating corrupt myth? Peterson helps to counter this objection by writing that

> [we] eternally inhabit order, surrounded by chaos. We eternally occupy known territory, surrounded by the unknown. We experience meaningful engagement when we mediate appropriately between them. We are adapted, in the deepest Darwinian sense, not to the world of objects, but to the meta-realities of order and chaos, yang and yin. Chaos and order make up the eternal, transcendent environment of living.
>
> To straddle that fundamental duality is to be balanced: to have one foot firmly planted in order and security, and the other in chaos, possibility, growth and adventure...The subjective meaning that we encounter there is the reaction of our deepest being, our neurologically and evolutionarily grounded instinctive self, indicating that we are ensuring the stability but also the expansion of habitable, productive territory, of space that is personal, social, and neutral. It’s the right place to be, in every sense...Chaos and order are fundamental elements because every lived situation (even every conceivable lived situation) is made up of both (2018:43-44).

Peterson argues, as we know, that the order and chaos dialectic is the abstraction through myth of the constituent elements of experience “phenomenologically considered” (Peterson, 2006:136; Peterson, 2007:87). The mythical, and perhaps “psycho-ontological” (Peterson, 2007) corollary is that meaning and sustainability reside in the balance between order and chaos (Peterson, 1999:227). That this is expressed in myth through symbol does not mean, however, that it is a purely metaphysical principle: myth is the abstracted articulation of humanity’s

experience of reality. And because this root “nature, culture, individual; unknown, known, knower” (Peterson, 2006:167) structure is a “phenomenological constant” for Peterson, it follows that “[regardless] of where the individual is situated in time or in space—regardless of nature or culture—these are his problems” (Peterson, 2006:136).

If we accept Peterson’s argument, the necessity for balance between order and chaos is differentiated from other mythic structures by the fact that it is the expression of an unavoidable dialectical reality. So fundamental, perhaps, that it is not unique to any single culture, religion, race, gender, or dogma (Peterson, 2007:137).

From an argumentative perspective, then, balance between chaos and order—as a structure—may offer a plausible alternative to suspicion-based views on notions of sustainable change (incidents of extreme “suspicious reading” and criticism reinforce this notion, for me). Simultaneously, aiming towards balance implies that a healthy amount of scepticism (not suspicion) about ideas and the way they are expressed is also necessary to avoid calcification in structures. And the eudaimonic turn as well as the reception of Peterson’s work clearly demonstrates that there is not only disenchantment with postmodernism, but a desire for a deeper, more wholesome approach to hermeneutic analysis and criticism.

The perspectives on myth unpacked in this chapter conclude from various intellectual positions and times that myth illustrates and facilitates a balance between centring and unfolding, conscious and unconscious, modern and primitive, known and unknown, order and chaos. Accordingly, I believe the mythical method offers a model for hermeneutic interpretation that is centred on a eudaimonic notion of sustainable change informed by the constituent phenomenological elements of experience. For Eliot, as the following chapter makes clear, it is the way to restore vitality to the cultural, spiritual, and psychological wasteland of modernity: bury the dead symbols, and then wait attentively for what might sprout from them.

By this act, the old structure (calcified tradition, the wasteland) is not merely destroyed or disposed. Instead, it is used as a foundation (whether to show what to avoid, or what to pursue)

for what must follow. It becomes something new while still retaining what it was, and interaction between two levels of discourse is initiated. The urgency of the restorative act, furthermore, is perhaps the reason that the narrative voice in *"*Burial of the Dead*"* interrogates Stetson (and the reader), asking: "'That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?'"

CHAPTER THREE — THE MYTHICAL METHOD IN *THE WASTE LAND*: AN ANALYSIS

Tradition limits the hero, by putting restraints on his domain of action…The application of such strictures kills creativity, of course, and allows the gap between social preconceptions and the real world to continually expand. The hero is the necessary antidote to such sterility and anachronism. His eyes are open, and he retains voluntary contact with the unknown. However, he is also the enemy of tradition. He demonstrates its limits and, therefore, undermines its structure. Despite this, without tradition, he is homeless and lost. Some form of entente must therefore be established.

—Jordan Peterson (2006:149)

Introduction

The mythical method is clearly eudaimonic in its intention: its aims are influenced by notions focused on wholeness, connection, and sustainable revitalization. It has also been demonstrated—from a considerable range of perspectives—that the general importance of being consciously and sincerely connected with myth is often thought to stem from the need to restore balance to an order/chaos dialectic on an individual or societal level. Importantly, Eliot shares this conviction not only with the various views of myth discussed in the previous chapter, but also with the eudaimonic turn and Jordan Peterson's phenomenological understanding of the constituent elements of existence (and their abstractions into myth) in particular (Peterson, 1999:263). Both are influences in the current response to postmodernism and the hermeneutics of suspicion that dominated it. Eliot and the mythical method, furthermore, fit neatly into the heart of the discussion around sustainable change.

Until this point, however, this dissertation has focused on the mythical method primarily as described by Eliot in "*Ulysses,* Order, and Myth" (1923). This description and some of Eliot's other critical writings have formed the basis of my attempt to demonstrate that the conceptual and philosophical foundations of the mythical method are relevant and important to the South African context. But what does the mythical method look like in artistic practice? Does the argument for the mythical method—that it is a relevant eudaimonic commentary on the notion of

sustainable change—hold if it is understood according to its role in Eliot's actual poetry, as opposed to his description of it in a review?

In "Yeats, Eliot, and the mythical method" (1997), Denis Donoghue examines Eliot's claim that the mythical method—as Eliot defines it in "*Ulysses*, order, and myth" (1923)—was "adumbrated" by Yeats. In considering Eliot's postulation, Donoghue proposes that the mythical method aims to restore cultural balance by what is essentially a three-step process of integrating myth and modernity (1997:207-212).

First, Donoghue says, the mythical method presents two "radically different levels of discourse"—a mature level (mythological) and a modern level ("everyday" occurrences that illustrate modern existence)—on the same plane of existence. Second, it uses the mature level of discourse to give shape and order to the new level of discourse, or modern existence, within the poem. Third, the mythical method allows for this "giving shape" to enlarge the immediate experience of everyday life, adding meaning and purpose to it, thereby displacing the sense that modern life is futile (1997:207-212).

In this chapter, I read sections of *The Waste Land* (1922) to explore how Eliot applies the mythical method in artistic practice. I will use the mythical method's three aspirations—as expounded by Donoghue above—as a tool to stratify the poem into three functional layers: modernity, myth, and their necessary reunification. I will assume that the context within which *The Waste Land* should be interpreted is a phenomenological one, concerned at its core not with "matter" but with "what matters" and that "[from] such a perspective, the phenomenon of meaning is the primary reality" (Peterson, 2007:87).

This assumption is based, firstly, on the connection between the poem's creative model and the phenomenological domains of "nature, culture, individual; unknown, known, knower" (Peterson, 2006:137): the need for new art, tradition, and the hero-poet, respectively. Secondly, the poem's vital connections to myth, in itself, place it within the phenomenological sphere of understanding,

since these domains are “fundamental to instinctual religious thought” (Peterson, 2007:96). In the final section, I will describe my attempt to utilise the mythical method in creative practice.

The extent to which the mythical level of discourse reflects the pattern of balance between the aforementioned constituent elements of experience is expounded by the following analysis. This will clarify the eudaimonic intention behind the mythical method as creative model, and shed light on the intricate composition of the poem.

This analytical section aims, therefore, to demonstrate that the argument for the mythical method is upheld by Eliot’s poetry. I hope to show that the mythical method offers a perspective on the notion of sustainable change that is both critically and artistically eudaimonic.

The levels of discourse in *The Waste Land*

The first aspiration of the mythical method is to present two levels of discourse on the same plane of existence. For Eliot, the mature level of discourse is mythological, sourced from the “primitive mind” that is innate (though not innately accessible), to all humanity and of which the poet must be particularly aware (Brooker, 1994:65; Noel-Tod, 2013:477). The second level of discourse is modern, including all the ennui, futility, and sterility that Eliot associates with modern being (Donoghue, 1997:208). The poem itself (and, perhaps, the act of reading it) forms the plane of existence upon which the levels are brought together.

For Eliot, the cultivation of deep knowledge and appreciation of the continuity between the levels of discourse is highly important to sustainable change. Artists, as we know, would not be able to fully realise their place in the realm of tradition without it, and so would be operating in something of a conceptual vacuum.

The mythical method facilitates exactly this restorative process, for Eliot. But in what forms does he bring the levels of discourse into the poem? How do they interact? And how does this interaction lead to order and significance for the second level of discourse?

To answer this, the poem must be accepted as an expression of an aspect of reality as Eliot sees it. That is, he is illustrating in the poem the vital continuity between the “primitive” and “modern” minds (phenomenologically, the unknown and known), he believes exists in reality, as well as the waste land that develops when consciousness of the continuity is lost and balance must be restored. Eliot does so by weaving together myth and modernity in *The Waste Land*. Given that it primarily substantiates my view of the mythical method as eudaimonic commentary on sustainable change, my focus is on the use of mythical references in the poem to allude to the deeper mythological structure of chaos/order/balance in various forms.

In terms of form, Eliot presents the mythical level in the poem through two modes of reference: textual and symbolic. Interestingly, there is a plausible alignment of Eliot’s notions of “layers of supporting mind” and the “simultaneity of past and present” (Brooker, 1994:65) with his textual and symbolic references, respectively.

References to source texts—for example, references to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* or Gottfried von Straßburg’s *Tristan*—are, therefore, no less important than the quest, notions of reconnection, or the phenomenological structure to which they may allude. Instead, Eliot’s notion of the “layers of supporting mind” suggests that the echoes of a foundational mythic pattern throughout the “primitive mind” of culture are part of his vision of a healthy, forward-moving artistic tradition.

References to mythical symbols also inform the mythological level of discourse. These are made through the inclusion of mythical figures, geographies, and actual symbols that have been removed, in a sense, from their source texts, to reside, like the painting of Philomela, within the world of the poem. The symbolic presence of myth, it will be demonstrated, works well as an illustration of Eliot’s idea of the “simultaneity of past and present” in the poem.

The poem’s epigraph is another good example of Eliot’s use of an ancient text to correlate the mythical level and the modern:

'Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis
Vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent:
Σίβνλλα τί Θέλεις; respondebat illa: άπο Θανεΐν Θέλω.'

The mythological level of discourse is introduced at the outset of the poem through the use of this direct quotation from an ancient literary text. The result, here, is a strong indication not only of the thematic importance of ancient European culture to the poem, but also of the central notion of disconnection and the need for reconnection towards revitalisation. For example, its inaccessibility (being in Latin and Greek) highlights the sense of modern disconnection from myth and tradition. By translating the epigraph into English, however, the modern reader is perhaps better able to grasp the weight of the content of the quotation. In “The Sybil in the bottle”, Helen Bacon (1958:262) offers the following translation:

For I myself once saw the Sibyl with my own eyes at Cumae,
Hanging in a bottle, and when the children said to her:
“Sibyl, what do you want?” she replied, “I want to die.”

An excerpt from Trimalchio's boast in the *Satyricon* (Ackerley, 2007:24; Bacon, 1958:262), this quotation unlocks the poem, providing a vital interpretative lens applicable to the entirety of the text: the disconnection between primitive and modern, known and unknown, order and chaos. Moreover, the excerpt illustrates the suffering resultant of this separation and imbalance—a recurring motif.

Considered within the paradigms of the “fundamental axioms of instinctual religious thought” (Peterson, 2007:96), the separation between nature (death, the unknown) and culture (the oracle, the known) is deeply problematic. The Sibyl, relegated to longevity without eternal youth (Ackerley, 2007:24; Bacon, 1958:262), offers a picture of a vital connection to myth that is wasting away, but which cannot die. She is left only to consider the wasteland of her existence. Death, unnaturally, escapes her. And so, restoration of the mythic connection, in a symbolic sense, becomes unattainable.

Upon our considering the impact of the mythical reference, however, the quotation gives shape to the modern level of discourse: every line of the poem to follow now resonates with the theme introduced by the epigraph. The moment we understand the implications of the quotation, the modern level of discourse within the poem adopts, for us, important new nuances.

However, the mythical method also acts on the modern level of discourse outside of the poem. The act of translation for better understanding, for example, is prompted by Eliot's method, and not only illustrates why it is necessary (by virtue of the necessity for translation), but also actively brings society (curious readers of the poem, here) closer to myth. This carries out the aim of the mythical method in a literal sense. The mythical thus acts doubly on the modern level of discourse: "giving shape" within the poem (in providing a reference to a central theme), and in reality (by encouraging the individual reader to engage consciously with a myth-informed text).

Consider, also, the final line of the poem: "Shantih shantih shantih". Although K.N. Chandran states that Eliot demonstrates a "more than ordinary understanding of the *Śāntih mantra*", he uses this position to argue that Eliot consciously severs the final line of the poem from its traditionally precedent *Ōm* (the "Hindu logos", for Chandran) (1989:682). The closing of the poem, therefore, may not be the restorative moment (Mills, 1988:59) that one might expect at the end of a poem informed by hero myths and fertility rites. For Chandran, there is "nothing more devastatingly ironic in the whole poem than its last line" (1989:681). He writes:

> *Śāntih* in fact becomes benediction only when *Ōm* precedes it, as *Ōm śāntih śāntih śāntih,* for the Upanishads describe *Ōm* as the supreme symbol of Brahman, indeed of the whole world…As a poet whose ear was ever so finely tuned to the resonances of the Word, Eliot would hardly have missed the mystical nuances of the Hindu Word. (1989:682)

For Chandran, the omission of *Ōm* needs to be addressed directly. It is, fundamentally, the omission of the state wherein "earth and water, person and speech, the chant and the syllable inhere homogeneously" (Chandran, 1989:683). Without it, *śāntih* "assumes an ominously literal

meaning" (1989:683) when understood as "[t]he Peace which passeth understanding" (Eliot, 2002:64).

I agree with Chandran that the accidental omission of the word seems unlikely. However, I believe that irony is not the only possible reason for the missing *Ōm*. First, the poem's reliance on the restorative pattern inherent to hero narratives is a widely accepted critical position (Ackerley, 2007:24; Brooker, 1984:551; Brooker, 1986:248; Donker, 1974:164; Mills, 1988:59; Noel-Tod, 2013:475; Rogers, 1983:280). Therefore, the phenomenological domains of experience, "fundamental to instinctual thought" (Peterson, 2007:96), are a given in the poem throughout.

Furthermore, Brooker argues in "The Case of the Missing Abstraction" (1984:551) that, for Eliot, a "reference point myth" should be incorporated into the new creative work. However, this should be done in such a way that he "does not bring the myth in its entirety; rather he brings the information needed to construct the myth" (Brooker, 1984:551).

The pattern of being expressed by the hero's journey hinges, for Peterson, on a voluntary descent into chaos with the intention of confronting it so that it can be converted into order (Peterson, 1999:106,150; Peterson, 2006:141,149; Peterson, 2007:97). In "A psycho-ontological analysis of Genesis 2-6" (2007:97), Peterson states that

> [t]he fact of its voluntarism (which has a very archaic neurological substrate) means that Logos can return order to chaos or produce order from chaos *creatively,* pre-emptively…The archetype of the hero, the positive aspect of the individual, is the embodiment in drama of the active quality of Logos…these [Biblical] stories cannot be properly interpreted without noting the broader context in which they occur (that of the already established fundamental interplay of chaos, order, and Logos).

In relating the "constituent elements of experience" to "classical Greek and Christian thought", the domains of "nature, culture, individual; unknown, known, knower" (Peterson, 2006:137) are abstracted into chaos, order, Logos (Peterson, 2007:97). These same domains—as mentioned

above—necessarily inform the narrative and symbolic structure that provide the poem with what Brooker calls its “major symbol” (1986:248). Not coincidentally, Jessie Weston’s exploration of the Grail legend and the Fisher King myth, so vital to *The Waste Land,* details precisely this pattern of action. C.J. Ackerley (2007:24) writes that

> [the Grail] myth gives *The Waste Land* structural continuity when narrative form is conspicuously absent. The protagonist sees himself variously as Wounded King and Quester, and the poem moves from despair and sterility (both physical and spiritual), to seek the values needed to redeem the arid land (a metaphor of a state of mind). Specific details from the myth figure forth at key moments: the description of the Waste Land; the failure in the Hyacinth garden to ask the overwhelming question; images of the Fisher King; the archetypal journey of the questing knight towards the Chapel Perilous; the implied “task of the hero” as being the “freeing of the waters” when the Thunder speaks; and the hope of relief implicit in asking the question, “Shall I at least set my lands in order?” This is not to reduce the elements of the poem to their archetypal significance alone (there is no allegory as such), yet the panorama of futility and anarchy that is *The Waste Land* becomes more shapely and significant with this understanding of its underlying mythic order and control.

If we accept, in light of Ackerley’s ideas, that “[the] archetype of the hero, the positive aspect of the individual, is the embodiment in drama of the active quality of Logos” (Peterson, 2007:97), and the notion that Eliot gives the reader “the information needed to construct the [reference point] myth” in *The Waste Land* (Brooker, 1984:551), then the “Hindu *logos*” (Chandran, 1989:682) has perhaps been replaced by a collection of symbolic and textual references (the poem that precedes it). These may represent, in their unity, the same fundamental notion as *Ōm*: the fulfilled necessity for balance and wholeness between domains of experience. “Shantih, shantih, shantih” is therefore set in relation to the poem as a whole, instead of being set in relation to a missing *Ōm* for the purpose of irony. Furthermore, the “synthesis of Eastern and Western teaching” to communicate the same symbolic imperative also occurs elsewhere in the poem (Ackerley, 2007:95).

A deeper phenomenological exploration of the final lines also leads to a disagreement with Chandran's interpretation. Thunder's set of three commands, directly preceding the final repetitions of *"*shantih*",* returns the reader to a eudaimonic chaos and order dialectic and the necessity for balance. If "control" is semantically comparable to order and the known ("*Damyata*: The boat responded / Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar"), then "give" would be the logical counterpart of chaos and the unknown, insofar as it denotes "surrender" and uncertainty of outcome ("The awful daring of a moment's surrender"). "Sympathize" implies a connection between the known (personal experience) and unknown (the experiences of others), and acts, perhaps, as the unifying point of meaning: the balance between giving and controlling.

If "Shantih shantih shantih" is therefore understood in direct correlation to giving, sympathising, and controlling as well as the *Ōm*-like structure fundamentally suggested by the *The Waste Land*'s "major symbol" (Brooker, 1986:248), the apparent irony becomes a confirmation of the possibility, at least, of restoration (Ackerley, 2007:95). In contrast to the epigraph, this closing quotation is not one of doomed disconnection, but of eudaimonic affirmation: the wasteland can be redeemed by returning balance to the constituent elements of phenomenological experience. The contrast between these two sets of direct quotations (in position, language, and tone) is obvious, but the point of their inclusion remains the same: to illustrate the importance of consolidating the primitive mind with the modern mind of the individual.

Eliot begins the poem with a need, and resolves it with a solution (Ackerley, 2007:24). And although the poem cannot be strictly read as a hero narrative (Brooker, 1984:541), the symbolic interaction between known, unknown, and knower that informs these final lines is comparable to their consolidation as expressed in the hero's quest. Brooker asserts that "the new mythical method is announced not as a means of holding on to narrative, but as a means of avoiding it" (1984:541). The reader thus moves through the wasteland away from sterility, futility, and anarchy towards, in its very last moments, the potential for meaning, peace, and wholeness (Ackerley, 2007:24), not by means of narrative progression but by a deeper symbolic imperative.

Here, the imperative is communicated through Eliot's fragmented use of direct quotations from a religious text.

However, he also uses indirect textual quotations to establish the presence of myth in the poem. The opening lines of "A Game of Chess" (ll. 77-96), for example, offer an allusion to lines in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (Ackerley, 2007:44; Eliot, 2002:59), to parallel the woman in Eliot's poem with the Cleopatra of Western historiography and mythology. Compare Eliot's lines (ll. 77-81):

> The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
> Glowed on the marble, where the glass
> Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
> From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
> (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)

With Shakespeare's (II. ii. 201-216):

> *Enobarbus*: I will tell you.
> The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
> Burned on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
> Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
> The winds were lovesick with them; the oars were silver,
> Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
> The water which they beat to follow faster,
> As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
> It beggar'd all description: she did lie
> In her pavilion, cloth-of-gold of tissue,
> O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
> The fancy outwork nature: on each side her
> Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
> With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem

> To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
> And what they undid did

Eliot subtly places the lens of tradition over the reader's eyes, and demonstrates an important point about his argument: the continuity between the primitive and modern minds is not only present and helpful in the moments of epic human crises and victories, but also in the everyday moments of life. A struggle with the constituent elements of experience can occur within the normality of life, too. The modern woman's inability to grasp this, however, is what reduces her to "a parody of Cleopatra" (Cowan, 1984:159). For Eliot, being conscious of the continuity enlarges one's perception of experiences that would otherwise be penurious, and thus futility may be kept at bay. As Donoghue (1997:208) says, Eliot

> believed that the futility and anarchy of contemporary history could be redeemed for a work of literature only by showing contemporary events in the critical light of a myth, a coordinate story already significantly shaped. Such a myth would redeem the penury of mere events.

"Futility and anarchy", importantly, do not exclude moments of sumptuous ennui like the opening scene of "A Game of Chess". Instead, Eliot shows that it is one of myth's great qualities that it imbues even the mundane—the very existence of which is the result of the loss of conscious continuity with myth— with a sense of greater significance. And that is what he achieves here. Donoghue (1997:209) expounds that for Eliot the aim of myth is

> to embody in a story a mature knowledge of life, not merely the local quality of living it and suffering its accidents. Leopold Bloom's adventures and peregrinations on June 16, 1904, are not the same as Odysseus's in Homer's poem; but they resemble those in form and outline: they embody a going forth, a sequence of exacerbations and felicities, and in the end a return. However different they are in detail and in tone, they share a pattern of life and have their value in sharing it.

Just as the description of the modern woman in "A Game of Chess" is not the same in detail as that of Shakespeare's Cleopatra, so Bloom's story is not the same as that of Homer's Odysseus.

However, Donoghue says, it is the shared “pattern of life”, incorporated by Eliot and Joyce in “form and outline”, that reflects the value of the first level of discourse onto the second level. Plausibly, then, consciousness of this shared pattern of being may have lent the characters (Bloom and the woman in “A Game of Chess”) some vital perspective or insight into their modern troubles.

Eliot’s references to mythical texts form an important part of the mythological level of discourse. The poem incorporates references through direct quotation (the epigraph and closing of the poem, for example) on the one hand, and allusive indirect quotation (the Cleopatra and modern woman scene, for example) on the other.

The purpose of the quotations remains unaffected, however, by the discrepancy. Their use, as mentioned, aligns well with Eliot’s notion of the “layers of supporting mind” of which the artist must be aware in order to create a “really new” work of art (1920). To demonstrate this further, consider the first *Tristan und Isolde* reference (ll. 31-34):

> *Firsh weht der Wind*
> *Der Heimat zu*
> *Mein Irisch Kind,*
> *Wo weilest du?*

The lines are quoted from Wagner's operatic rendering (Sloane, 2001:30) of the lines in Gottfried von Straßburg’s German *Tristan* (thirteenth century) (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1998). Philip Waldron points out, however, that the punctuation and capitalisation have been altered slightly in Eliot’s rendering (1993:424), blurring the lines between quotation and allusion. As with the Cleopatra passage, this passage refers the reader first to the Western artistic tradition, and then to Western myth more broadly. In this instance, the textual quotations again touch on several domains of cultural reference at once, illustrating Eliot’s notion that there are “multiple layers of mind supporting the modern soul” (Brooker, 1994:65). This allows Eliot to show the duality of

being artistically part of tradition (the known) and of the transcendence of tradition (the unknown, or the potential for change).

The translation—again, an act of closing the distance between modernity and myth facilitated by Eliot's use of the mythical method—clarifies the significance of the quotation:

> The wind blows fresh
> To the homeland
> My Irish girl,
> Where are you lingering?

Unsurprisingly, the lines lament disconnection—between lovers, and between the individual and her homeland (the "historic sense" that we know carries great significance, for Eliot). By its inclusion in the poem here, myth calls out (as it does in the Sibyl quotation) through layers of cultural tradition for integration and wholeness. However, it is equally important to account for the broader cultural significance of the quotation.

As Philip Waldron states in "Wagner and *The Waste Land*" (1993:423),

> [t]here are direct and clear allusions in *The Waste Land* to *Tristan un Isolde*, *Parsifal,* and *Götterdämmerung,* and each of these allusions illustrates Eliot's interest in those works as operas, not merely as mythic structures carrying an interest independent of the music which enacts them…These allusions are usually interpreted as ironically contrasting a romantic, epic, fictionalised love with the impotence of the inhabitants of the Waste Land. Yet both external and internal evidence encourage one to respond to the quotations more fully than this.

His insight is particularly accurate in terms of Eliot's concern: the operas do inform the poem in ways that aren't merely reducible to their mythic or narrative associations. And Waldron takes care in his article to consider the musical context of the quotations in order to demonstrate this. Again, the argument is presented that the fragmentation of references in the poem does not merely imply irony. Considering them within their context (their relation to Wagner's music, in Waldron's article) is important to understanding their role in relation to each other.

In content, therefore, the *Tristan und Isolde* reference speaks to the importance of individual connection and re-connection; as a cultural touchstone, as Waldron suggests, it demonstrates Eliot's concern with the "layers of mind" that support culture's traversal into modernity. Phenomenologically considered, the lines are a call for wholeness, for reconnection between a wild Irish maid and her distant lover; between homeland and wanderer; between the domains of nature, culture, and individual. And in the waste land, connection is central to the restoration of vitality.

By merely reading and translating the lines, the reader may conclude that Eliot is trying to speak only of love and a sense of national belonging. But in accounting for its content, context, and phenomenology, we begin to see that the passage illustrates the important interconnection of these aspects of existence for Eliot.

But *The Waste Land* does not exist simply as a conglomeration of quotations, and the non-quotation forms of textual reference in the poem are more difficult to unpack and quantify, overlapping in nature and effect. In these cases, the reader must make connections not only between the poem and canonical texts, but also between the poem and Eliot more broadly: his "Notes on *Waste Land";* his critical writings; the facts of his personal life and philosophies. Consider, for example, the first stanza of the poem (ll. 1-4):

> April is the cruellest month, breeding
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
> Memory and desire, stirring
> Dull roots with spring rain.

Read as a textual allusion (Ackerley, 2007:26), the lines mirror the opening lines of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer, 1996:3):

> Whan that April with his showres soote
> The drought of March hath perced to the roote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich licour,

Of which vertu engendred is the flowr…

However, Eliot's lines also speak to the necessity of death in order that the renewal of life might occur. Fertility rites, like those described by Frazer, are clearly an influential symbolic imperative here (Coote, 1988:94-95). Given that April is also the month during which the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are traditionally celebrated, a reader with a moderate knowledge of Eliot's connection to the Church of England may easily and correctly detect a religious undertone in this excerpt (Ackerley, 2007:26). The name given to the burial rite practised by the Anglican church—"The Order for Burial of the Dead" (Coote, 1988:32)—confirms, here, the association with Christianity and its rituals.

Charles Harvey (1978:6) asserts that this passage "introduces, right at the beginning, a motif to which the poem returns several times: i.e. that there is an intimate and necessary correlation between physical and spiritual health and vigour". In its associations with burial rites, sympathetic magic, and Christianity the stanza alludes, broadly, to myth (Coote, 1988:32, 94-95). In its reference to Chaucer's monumental work of literary fiction—as well as demonstrating tenuous links to Beckett and Whitman (Ackerley, 2007:27)—the stanza alludes to the Western literary tradition (Harvey, 1978:6; Mills, 1988:60). Here, Eliot consolidates various fragments of cultural tradition, showing their overlap and simultaneously creating "really new" poetry (Eliot, 1920).

It is, also, the same pairing of subjects (myth and literary tradition) created by the allusive opening lines of "A Game of Chess" and the *Tristan and Isolde* quotes. Clearly, this use of textual references points towards the relationship between myth and the Western literary tradition, and the deep significance of both to the cultivation of European culture. For Eliot, both elements resonate in the primitive mind on the same level of importance since, as the poet must know, this developing mind "abandons nothing *en route*", and "does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer, or the rock drawing of the Magdalenian draughtsmen" (Brooker, 1994: 64). Clearly, it doesn't superannuate Wagner, Chaucer, or the Anglican Church either.

In combining these various cultural subjects in one stanza, Eliot returns the reader to the argument that he makes in "*Ulysses,* Order, and Myth" and "Tradition and the Individual Talent": knowledge of one's cultural past is an important way of reconnecting to the tradition that illustrates the "primitive mind" of one's culture. The supportive "layers of mind", resonating on one level of importance in the "primitive mind", form an order that orientates the individual (Eliot, 1920:44). Importantly, the order to which Eliot refers does not denote a hierarchy of value, but rather points to his notion that the elements of the primitive mind are built one upon the other over time. His use of references that demonstrate this, and his insistence that there is no superannuation that takes place in the "primitive mind" actively illustrate this sentiment. A "conscious encounter with the living past" (Brooker, 1994:65), therefore, is necessarily an experience with order and significance, purpose and meaning. The eudaimonic nature of the mythical method is thus clearly transferable to the creative output it informs.

However, Eliot also uses another technique to illustrate the mythical level of discourse in the poem: invocation by character or symbol. Here, mythological and historical figures or symbols are not evoked through direct or indirect quotations from associated texts. Instead, they are present as either themselves as such—the Fisher King, sitting "upon the shore" (l. 424) as London Bridge collapses, for example—or as representations of themselves as such— the image of Philomela above the mantelpiece in "A Game of Chess" (ll. 97-110)—existing in the presence of modernity:

> Above the antique mantel was displayed
> As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
> The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
> So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
> Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
> And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
> "Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
> And other withered stumps of time

> Were told upon the walls; staring forms
> Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
> Footsteps shuffled on the stair.
> Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
> Spread out in fiery points
> Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.

It becomes apparent that the symbolic form of invocation, like the textual form of mythical references/allusions, also illustrates a certain aspect of Eliot's thought around sustainable change in the artistic sphere. That is, they are set directly within the modern level of discourse, and thereby clearly illustrate his notion of the "simultaneity of past and present" (Brooker, 1994:65). The painting, to begin with, is described as a "window" through which the modern woman in the poem may plausibly look upon myth. However, it is equally important to consider that the modern woman can be viewed through the "window" of the Philomela scene. Open windows, after all, can be looked through from both sides.

S. A. Cowan (1984:159) illustrates this well, stating that

> [t]he importance of the Philomela myth is emphasized by the sensory vividness, exoticism, and nervous tension of the scene in which it is introduced. The woman whose "hair / Spread out in fiery points" (ll. 108-09), a parody of Cleopatra, is the antithesis of the spiritually inviolable Philomela.

Cowan suggests that myth, as expressed here in image, is in direct contrast with the modern level of discourse in which it is set. In later comparing Philomela to the poem's Marie Larisch, Cowan (1984:163) reveals precisely what it is that, for him, sets Philomela apart from the modern figures in the poem:

> Speculations on a parallel between Marie and Philomela would be too tenuous were it not for Marie's remark about going "south in the winter" (l. 18). The idea of seasonal migration to the south is so inextricably linked with the swallow that the association has become proverbial. This certain association of Marie with the Philomela myth is consistent with the "change" she must

> undergo if there is to be any hope for her, and for the other inhabitants of the Waste Land whom she represents. For whether we think of Philomela as nightingale or as swallow, she is restored to a harmonious relationship with nature after suffering the unnatural lust of Tereus. Fleeing her defiler, she is "changed", and flying south at the proper season expresses the restored harmony.

The vital critical light provided by Philomela, therefore, is specifically her defiance of voicelessness, her ability to relentlessly confront chaos with truth. After her transformation, the individual integration of known and unknown, a “harmonious relationship with nature” is restored. The parallels with the hero’s quest cannot easily be attributed to chance. When Philomela threatens to reveal the evil done to her, she loses her tongue (the first change “by the barbarous king / So rudely forced”). But that does not keep her silent. She persists, determined to convert an experience of extreme violation into “inviolable” voice. When this leads to further danger, Philomela is turned into a nightingale, and spreads her song of defiance thus.

It is this same challenge (to communicate and articulate experience through language) that the modern woman in the passage fails to solve, Cowan suggests (1984:159-160). Perhaps because she is unconscious of the continuity between myth and modernity, the woman’s perception of her situation is not affected by the eudaimonic perspective offered by Philomela as symbol. As a result, the nightingale’s song is no longer a lament of violence and an admonition of the defiance of tyranny, but a cheap pun (“‘Jug jug’ to dirty ears”). Ignorant of the potential significance of the “withered stumps of time” upon her walls, the woman is unable to recognise her own failure to use language to communicate the suffering of her existence, approaching articulation, but failing at the moment of crisis—“Glowed into words, then would be savagely still”. The contrast with Philomela’s actions—her voluntary confrontation and persistence through chaos to restore order, in more heroic terms—is notable. It is not extreme, therefore, to call the modern woman, representative of the modern level of discourse, the “antithesis of the spiritually inviolable Philomela” as Cowan does (1984:159).

Where the textual references and allusions illustrate the multifaceted and layered nature of the “primitive mind” and the system by which it retains information, the symbolic invocations and

allusions particularly highlight the dissociation between the mythical and modern levels of discourse and the importance of being conscious of the continuity between them. The opening passage of “A Game of Chess” illustrates the failure of the mythical level of discourse to bring “a shape and a significance” (Eliot, 1923:165) to the second level of discourse. Modern ignorance of the continuity, furthermore, causes this failure: Stephen Coote (1988:36) argues that the ignorance does not merely sever the modern woman from myth’s perspective, but her modernity leads her to misinterpret the myth altogether:

> But there is the paradox that the metamorphosis of Philomela into a nightingale gave the world the bird whose “inviolable voice” has always been the symbol of love and beauty—the core of lyric poetry. Now, in this time of sullied myths, her call is heard only as an invitation to physical sex...The “dirty ears” suggest the mentality of the people who respond. The nightingale thus joins the other “withered stumps of time”, the modern debasement of ancient myth and Renaissance celebration.

In the passage, then, the difference between the presence of Cleopatra and the presence of Philomela is not merely that they are referred to through different techniques, but that they make two separate (yet equally important) arguments.

Philomela’s ekphrastic presence suggests, at its core, that the primitive mind stores helpful knowledge in myth, but that this is often rendered impotent by the modern mind’s ignorance of its true continuity with the primitive mind. The nature of Cleopatra’s presence, because of its textual connotations, demonstrates a supportive tradition that can restore this connection, for Eliot. Both, however, illustrate his sense that the continuity between primitive and modern minds is indifferent to one’s knowledge of it; it continues without the need for recognition. But those who do recognise it stand to enlarge their experience of life by accessing a eudaimonic perspective on existence that may be worth considering.

Certainly, as Cowan demonstrates, that is not the only purpose of these references, and it would be reductive to suggest that it is. However, since my focus is on how Eliot utilises the mythical

method creatively, it is necessary to explore these structural functions. We see, broadly, that Eliot's symbolic references to myth act well as illustrations of the important "simultaneity of past and present", and that the textual references and allusions demonstrate Eliot's notion of "layers of mind supporting the modern soul" (Brooker, 1994:65).

The other modern misinterpretations of myth present in the poem also seem to reflect this pattern. Similar to the "withered stumps of time" in the previous passage, the symbolic references to myth in the Madame Sosostris passage (ll. 43-59) are established through a myriad of symbolic references. They speak to mythical practices such as prophecy, fertility rites, and sympathetic magic (Budzinska, 2009; Cowan, 1988:34-35). Here, the notion that new life springs from symbolic death features prominently. Myth appears on Madame Sosostris's table as it does above the woman's mantelpiece in "A Game of Chess": as a symbol of itself. But does it serve the same illustrative purpose?

> Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
> Had a bad cold, nevertheless
> Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
> With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
> Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,
> (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
> Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
> The lady of situations.
> Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
> And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
> Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
> Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
> The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.
> I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.
> Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,
> Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:

One must be so careful these days.

In this excerpt, several symbolic allusions to myth are made: Phlebas the Phoenician in line 47—to be met again in "Death by Water" as the embodiment of a “drowned god” whose drowned image should herald the necessary death of summer and fertility (Budzinska, 2009:8); Belladonna, the Greek fate in line 49; the man with three staves who is associated by Eliot with Jessie Weston's Fisher King in line 52; the Hanged God (Odin) from Frazer's *The Golden Bough* in the form of the Hanged Man in line 55 (Eliot, 2002:58-59).[6] Ariel's voice from Shakespeare's *Tempest* interjects in line 48 (Harvey, 1978:14) as a direct quotation acting, in my opinion, not as the voice of Madame Sosostris, but as the voice of the poem’s mythological level of discourse, or perhaps even of tradition itself.

Compared to the Cumaean Sibyl from the epigraph, Madame Sosostris is a rather poor prophetess. She demonstrates a bad connection to myth because she arrives (by uncertain agency) at an interpretation of the symbols on her table which contradicts the eudaimonic meanings of those symbols (Budzinska, 2009:6). The presence of myth—powerful and important as it may potentially be—is reduced to dangerous pastiche in her hands as a result (Southam, 1994:147). The best interpretation she can offer her client from the vast and interrelated set of symbols is, “Fear death by water”. And while it isn’t bad advice (*per se*), one may be forgiven for expecting more depth from a genuine practitioner of prophetic arts. One expects her, perhaps, to deliver something with the grandeur and impact of the final lines in “Death by Water”.

But, upon arriving at that section of *The Waste Land*, “fear” has fallen away, and so Madame Sosostris’s command is called into question. C.J.D. Harvey (1978:14) refers to the clairvoyante’s reading as “deeply ironical”, and demonstrates why her advice, in a symbolic phenomenological sense, threatens the eudaimonic restoration of the wasteland:

[6]It is not surprising to find Eliot again playing with the layers of supporting mind, putting them on one plane of existence to show that reality, symbol, and text interact and build upon each other to form an “ideal order among themselves” (Eliot, 1920:44).

> [I]n Madame Sosostris's glib patter that follows she unwittingly stumbles over and hints at profound truths. She informs the protagonist that the card she turns up as his is "the drowned Phoenician sailor" and that he must consequently "fear death by water". But in the poem generally, drowning (partly by means of allusions to *The Tempest* where it was only an imaginary event, no one actually being drowned) is made to symbolise "letting go", a dissolution of the old self leading, perhaps, to a transformation "into something rich and strange".

In "Death by Water", therefore, Eliot demonstrates an alternative interpretation of the symbols alluded to through the cards before the "famous clairvoyante"—certainly of "[the client's] card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor".[7] It shows, by contrast, that it is a restorative process of change that underscores the "the drowned Phoenician sailor":

> Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
> Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
> And the profit and loss.
> A current under sea
> Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
> He passed the stages of his age and youth
> Entering the whirlpool.
> Gentile or Jew
> O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
> Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

This section of *The Waste Land* resonates deeply with Frazer's descriptions of vegetation rites that utilise symbolic drowning as a means of embodying a process of regenerative burial and resurrection. As Agata Budzinska (2009:8), citing B.C. Southam, expounds:

> The figure on the card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor, is associated with the traditions of ancient fertility myths of Egypt, India, and Greece, in which "god must die to be reborn to bring fertility to the soil and potency to the people"….What we learn from [Weston and Frazer] is that

[7]The "Notes" make this explicitly clear: "The Phoenician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the 'crowds of people', and Death by Water is executed in part IV" (Eliot, 2002:59).

> the fertility ritual could take a form of drowning the image of a god, which was thrown into the sea each year to symbolize the death of summer (without which there could be no resurrection, the new year in spring).

As the embodiment of such a "fertility ritual", Phlebas is not a warning against death by water (Budzinska, 2009:8; Harvey, 1978:14). Rather, he illustrates an important pattern in fertility rites which resonates phenomenologically with a part of the hero narrative deeply explored in Weston's work: the need for death so that resurrection can restore sustainable vitality to a wasteland (Budzinska, 2009:8; Harvey, 1978:14). This myth, then, necessarily involves a voluntary confrontation with chaos (nature, death, as for the Sibyl) to convert it into order (Peterson, 1999:150). According to B.C. Southam (cited by Budzinska, 2009:9) it is also comparable to the symbolic imperative behind the Christian practice of baptism.

"Death by Water" demonstrates why the tarot reader is not merely unhelpful, here, but a contributing factor to the chaos of modern existence: she "warned the protagonist of the drowning, not realising that death by water may be an initiation, a way into life rather than the final end" (Budzinska, 2009:9).

Marjory Donker (1974:166) asserts that "[in] both [the *Aeneid* and *The Waste Land*] the death by drowning precedes a quester's descent into the Lower World and suggests the cost and sacrifice of the hero's journey". Again, it is important to note that Weston explicitly states her awareness of the focus placed on sustainable change by such mythological narratives in *From Ritual to Romance* (2005:23):

> To sum up the result of the analysis, I hold that we have solid grounds for the belief that the [Grail] story postulates a close connection between the vitality of a certain King, and the prosperity of his kingdom; the forces of the ruler being weakened or destroyed, by wound, sickness, old age, or death, the land becomes Waste, and the task of the hero is that of restoration.

“Death by Water” illustrates precisely this necessary process of “restoration” within the mythical phenomenology. It is a narrative version of the symbolic imperative behind fertility rites. This section of the poem is comparable in intent to the buried corpse passage at the end of “Burial of the Dead”. Both stress the importance of a pattern of being that encourages a regenerative balance between order and chaos, “age and youth”, known and unknown. In light of this, the danger of Madame Sosostris’s obliviousness to the depth of the symbols in front of her becomes clear.

To “[f]ear death by water” is equivalent to letting the “corpse you planted last year in your garden” (l. 71) succumb to frost and calcify into a truly dead symbol or structure (if I might amalgamate Eliot and Campbell). In Peterson’s terms, Madame Sosostris’s reading is problematic because it contradicts the imperative suggested by the “fundamental axioms of instinctual religious thought” (Peterson, 2007:96). The constituent elements of experience are prevented from attaining balance because, as with the Sibyl of Cumae, the symbolic individual is separated from the symbolic experience of restorative death, nature, the unknown. Restoring the connection between known and unknown is therefore impossible. The clairvoyante’s reading ultimately fails to recognize the necessity of having “one foot firmly planted in order and security, and the other in chaos, possibility, growth and adventure” (Peterson, 2018:44), stressed especially by the symbol of Phlebas as a drowned fertility god (Budzinska, 2009:8; Southam, 1994:126). The loss of a vital connection to myth, again, leads to a modern failure of interpretation and articulation.

Considering the balance of order and chaos, Peterson writes that, psychologically, the

> subjective meaning that we encounter there is the reaction of our deepest being, our neurologically and evolutionarily grounded instinctive self, indicating that we are ensuring the stability but also the expansion of habitable, productive territory, of space that is personal, social, and neutral (2018:44).

Death by water as symbolized by Phlebas works directly against the retention of patterns of being that have lost their meaning and vitality, thereby establishing both structure (the known, “stability”) and the acting of potential upon it (the unknown, the “expansion of habitable, productive territory”) (Peterson, 2018:44). Here, most directly, Eliot shows how the ignorance of myth’s real meaning actively encourages the perpetuation of a wasteland.

Broadly, “Death by Water” encourages an important reflection upon parallels with myth. The interpretation of Phlebas’ story that is presented in this section of *The Waste Land* is informed (unlike Madame Sosostris’s) by Eliot’s real knowledge, his convincing grasp of the tradition of the drowned Phoenician’s symbolic meaning, and its important connections with other symbols. The poem, furthermore, stresses that this meaning is important to all of humanity: both those already in parallel with Phlebas (“you who turn the wheel and look to windward”), and everybody else (“Gentile or Jew”). The poem encourages modernity to “[consider] Phlebas”, to think about the things that need to be drowned and revived to restore vitality to the wasteland, rather than to anxiously, suspiciously “[f]ear death by Water” or, worse, avoid it all together. It is, in this sense, a eudaimonic and necessary commentary on the notion of sustainable change.

With the tarot cards, like with the “withered stumps of time” in “A Game of Chess”, a disconnection exists between myth and modernity despite their proximity. Thus, the symbolic presence of myth seems to specifically stress the notion that modernity in the poem has lost its true connection to myth’s meaning. By his understanding and inclusion of these symbols, Eliot illustrates a dislocation between modern figures and mythical perspectives. This dislocation perpetuates the wasteland. As Joseph Campbell (1968:5) argues, when society experienced the loss of a real sense of connection with myth,

> the result was a dissociation of professed from actual existence and that consequent spiritual disaster which, in the imagery of the Grail legend, is symbolized in the Waste Land theme: a landscape of spiritual death, a world waiting, waiting...for the Desired Knight, who would restore its integrity to life and let stream again from infinite depths the lost, forgotten, living waters of the inexhaustible source.

The apparent “dissociation of professed from actual existence”—evidenced by Madame Sosostris’s reading, the client waiting for a significant connection to myth despite the faulty conduit at his service—renders the symbols weak, unable to bridge the gap between symbol and reality. The first level of discourse is therefore unable to give shape or meaning to the second in a eudaimonic way. However, Eliot does not leave the matter simply at the point of disconnection. He shows the reader precisely what death by water actually entails within the given phenomenological context, and encourages us, as in “Burial of the Dead”, to “consider” the symbolism. The focus of the symbolic form of reference in the poem, therefore, appears to stress modernity’s inability to effect meaningful connections between the primitive and modern minds, between known and unknown.

Tiresias or, more accurately, his presence in the typist passage (ll. 215-256) is perhaps the most dramatic illustration of myth failing, because of modern dissociation, to be used as an informative perspective in the poem (Rogers, 1983:280). Tiresias—to whom Eliot famously refers in the "Notes on The Waste Land" as a "mere spectator and not indeed a 'character'"—is an important element of the central scene in “The Fire Sermon” between the typist and the "young man carbuncular" (2002:49). Here, as on Madame Sosostris's table, the presence of a mythological figure in modern times highlights the loss of a sense of continuity between the primitive and modern minds that contributes to the wasteland (ll.423-246):

> (And I Tiresias have foresuffered all
> Enacted on this same divan or bed;
> I who have sat by Thebes below the wall
> And walked among the lowest of the dead.)

Herein lies the urgency of the parallel: Tiresias’ words make it explicit that the typist is suffering what he has already been through (Coote, 1988:108-109). That includes walking “among the lowest of the dead”. That is hell, the deepest expression of human suffering. In this scene it is, perhaps, the “horror of authoritarian belief, the chaos of the collapsed state, the tragic catastrophe of the unbridled natural world, the existential angst and weakness of the

purposeless individual" (Peterson, 2018:xxxiii). And, according to Eliot, in this specific moment of modernity, "[what] Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem" (2002:60). Given Eliot's eudaimonic focus, however, it is perhaps not futility itself but rather the need to restore connection in order to transcend futility that is best understood as the "substance of the poem". And his use of symbolic references to myth supports this, specifically because of the proximity of the two levels of discourse in such moments.

The tragedy of the scene, therefore, is not only the automatic, forced nature of the interaction between the two modern characters, or the tyranny of the young man's actions, but that, for Eliot, the modern characters are unable to access the helpful eudaimonic perspective on the modern hell provided by myth; one that has been "foresuffered" by Tiresias. Audrey Rogers (1983:280) argues that "the inhabitants of the Waste Land are unable to perceive what Tiresias knows to be true, and thus the debris in the Waste Land is a record of their failures. For them the quest is doomed".

According to the myth it is in Hades (hell) that Tiresias offers Odysseus the help he needs in order to continue his journey and return home (Harvey, 1978:31). With this in mind, Eliot seems to suggest that the typist is in the same metaphorical position as Odysseus. Considering that "the two sexes meet in Tiresias" (Eliot, 2002:60), the prophet/ess's presence is symbolically related to the phenomenological notion of a balanced unity between known and unknown, nature and culture— often illustrated as feminine and masculine, in their abstractions into mythical symbolic terms (Peterson, 1999:354; Peterson 2006:138).

However, because the typist is not consciously connected to this notion of a necessary unity, she remains in a "hell" that requires the confrontation of chaos with truth, so that it may be overcome (Peterson, 1999:150). Here, the restorative quest is indeed "doomed" as Rogers suggests (1983:280). Stephen Coote, similarly, asserts that, at this moment in the poem, "[there] can be no redemption for the Waste Land" (1988:109).

In the Philomela and Tiresias passages, the proximity of the modern and mythical figures highlights the need for consolidation between the modern and mythical levels of discourse in the poem. Allusions to myth through references to architecture, geographies, spaces, and occurrences that have deep cultural significance perform a similar function. I include here references to any meaningful physical structures, or places in the poem such as cities, countries, cathedrals, rivers, beaches, bridges, and battles. These structures, spaces, and events, I believe, provide Eliot with another set of powerful images and symbols for expressing the continuity between myth and modernity.

Where the textual references illustrate the layered nature of the continuity between the primitive and modern minds, and the symbolic references highlight the desolation that develops when that continuity remains in the unconscious, the significant spaces in the poem show that the continuity between myth and modernity, the "historical sense" is sometimes a concrete material reality. The specific tarot cards, or the painting of Philomela, or Tiresias "throbbing between two lives" (ll. 218) were never physically part of the real world as such. They exist metaphysically, in the worlds of the poem and myth, and while that doesn't detract from the significance of their roles in the poem (or from what the reader can learn from these roles), the spaces and structures that are present on the mythical level of the poem are more concretely part of the past and, vitally, of the present.

Eliot is clearly not ignorant of this. By this spatial mode of allusion he imbibes the poem with the historic quality of long-lasting structures (man-made or natural, religious or ordinary). His references to these structures suggest that he is acutely aware of the dual nature of the spaces in the poem, that they are both present and past at once.

That is perhaps why Eliot almost casually incorporates the ancient battle of Mylae in line 70 of the poem into a modern scene, and through a passage of modern dialogue. Doing so allows him to locate the battle—as well as the sympathetic magic implied by the buried corpse—in the

realm of modernity. Here, again, the first level of discourse gives a eudaimonic “shape and significance” to the modern (ll. 60-73):

> Unreal City,
> Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
> I had not thought death had undone so many.
> Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
> And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
> Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
> To where St. Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
> With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
> There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: ‘Stetson!
> ‘You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
> ‘That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
> ‘Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
> ‘Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

The poem here again illustrates Eliot’s eudaimonic notion of continuity with the past. This passage places the crowd of city workers flowing over London Bridge in parallel not only with the crowds of dead souls passing over the bridge in Dante’s *Inferno* (Baskett, 1988:79; Eliot, 2002:59; Rodgers, 1983:238), but with all that have passed over the bridge in this manner before. Through the dialogue in the passage above, Eliot draws the battle of Mylae into the present, and so myth shapes modernity. In the final lines, here, the content of the dialogue and the modernity of its tone project ancient sympathetic magic practices onto a modern figure by linguistic sleight of hand.

These spaces and occurrences—London Bridge, King William Street, St. Mary Woolnoth, Mylae—effectively illustrate the parallel existence of myth and modernity, of the primitive and

modern minds, of known and unknown throughout the poem. S.S. Baskett (1988:79-79) writes that

> [r]ealistically described London scenes serve as a modern urban background from which the quester feels largely alienated, but which, if he is to be a "modern" poet of the city he must enter—the alternative being the death in life that has "undone so many"…It is immediately apparent that the graphic scenes of London tend to blur into other places and other times. A crowd flows over London Bridge provoking a grasp of realistic recognition; but the allusions to and echoes of other eras, reinforced by Eliot's pointed Notes, make the reader aware that Eliot has transformed the City into Baudelaire's Paris, Dante's *Inferno,* the worlds of the Grail legend and *The Golden Bough*. Starkly solid in the 1920s, London Bridge is "falling down" along with other "Falling towers / Jerusalem Athens Alexandria / Vienna London / Unreal". The contemporary river that "sweats / Oil and tar" is also the Thames of Spencer's "Prothalamion" and the dalliance of Elizabeth and Leicester, as well as evocative of other celebrated writers.

As symbols of continuity, therefore, the structures and spaces in the poem form an important aspect of both the mythical and modern levels of discourse. But modernity, in contrast to myth, does not rely solely on external references for its existence in the poem.

The Waste Land references modern texts, songs, and figures, and while these references are at times individually and abstractly positioned, they, too, are fragments that form a whole. Together, they provide moments of modernity in the poem, scenes that include both fictional and real modern characters, dialogues, and spaces/occurrences. In this way, Eliot establishes the modern level of discourse throughout the poem.

Where the mythological level is initially established through direct quotation, the modern level of discourse is first established through scenes from the life of Countess Marie Larisch. Launched into the text by the summer that follows cruel April, the poem's Marie narrates two short scenes of upper-class European life in the late nineteenth century. Based upon Marie Larisch's memoir *My Past* (1913), the lines are indirect quotations, making the passage one of two moments in the

poem in which a historically-known contemporary of Eliot is alluded to.[8] In the other instances, the modern figures—Lil and the narrator of the bar scene in “A Game of Chess” (ll. 139-173), for example—are fictional creations.

Immediately preceding this bar scene, a disembodied dialogue is presented to the reader (ll. 111-134). Here, unlike in the dialogue at the bar, or Madame Sosostris’s prophecy, the dialogue is not grounded by any single personage or character, although, it plausibly belongs to the modern woman from the opening stanza of “A Game of Chess”. As a result, the reader is unable to ascribe characters to all the voices in this sequence, and so must infer meaning solely from the words themselves. It does, however, allow a sense of universality into the dialogue, as though it may be spoken between any two modern people. What grounds this dialogue in modernity, besides the linguistic style, is the fleeting inclusion of a modern lyric (“OOOO that Shakespearean Rag—”) which demonstrates that Eliot also uses direct quotation to inform the modern level of discourse.

The typist passage (ll. 215-255), again, is a good example of how modern elements interact to create a scene that establishes the modern level of discourse in detail. The scene is narrated by Tiresias in the present tense (already the past rises into the present), giving the sense that he is there, in the modern age itself; the characters are ambiguous, but nonetheless contemporary (“typist” gives certainty about this); the linguistic style of the dialogue (“Well now that’s done: and I’m glad it’s over”) certainly rings as modern; and the elements of the setting (returning in the evening from work, the motorised taxi, the gramophone and apartment) locate the scene firmly in the twentieth century. It is a rich illustration of Eliot’s establishment of the modern level of discourse.

In short, Eliot employs a finite set of techniques to establish the mythical and modern levels of discourse in the poem. The mythological level is created by references to mythology through text (direct quotation as well as allusion); the presences of mythological symbols and figures; and

[8] The other is the reference to “Stetson” in the final stanza of “Burial of the Dead,” which is thought to refer to Ezra Pound (Ackerley, 2007:41).

spaces or occurrences of mythical and cultural significance. The modern level of discourse is created similarly, being established through instances of modern figures, dialogues, and spaces or occurrences used in combination to create modern scenes. Importantly, it is Eliot's use of spaces and occurrences that most concretely illustrates the vital continuity that he wishes to restore to the consciousness of Europe. In an attempt to illustrate the specific ways in which Eliot materialises the two levels of discourse in the poem, I have formulated the following diagram:

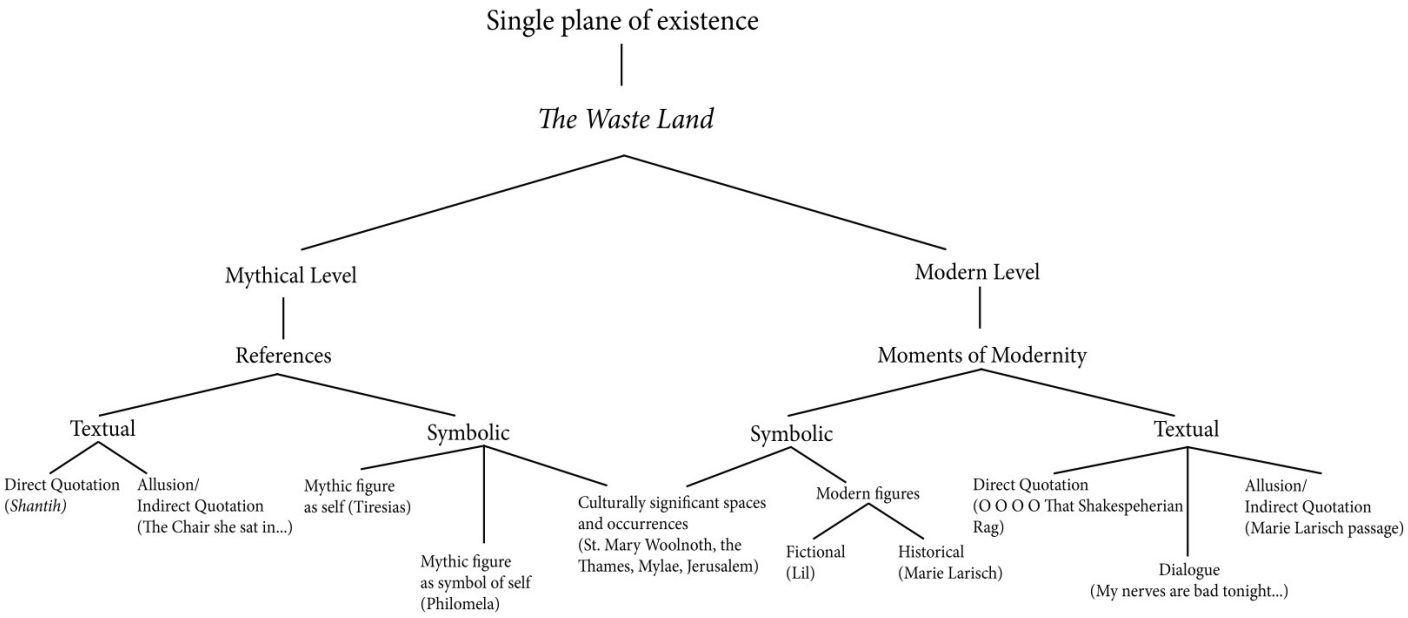

Figure 7

Creative application of the mythical method: "Frisch Weht der Wind"

"Frisch Weht der Wind" (see *Annexure A*) is an original piece for choir that utilises T.S. Eliot's mythical method to explore the tension between the unknown and known in a manner which demonstrates that both are necessary for a sense of wholeness and meaning (the act of balance). It is thus based on a symbolic imperative that is informed by a phenomenological understanding of existence abstracted into mythological narratives and symbols across time and cultures. This abstraction occurs, broadly, as "nature, culture, individual; unknown, known,

knower" (Peterson, 2007:137). In this sense, the piece is a creative exercise in symbolism that is aimed, centrally, at eudaimonic notions of balance, restoration, and sustainable change.

For a methodology, this exercise employs T.S. Eliot's mythical method. Accordingly, it aims to build on past tradition, and to facilitate an interaction between two levels of discourse: one mythological, the other modern (Donoghue, 1997:207-212). To this end, I have selected a text that has connections to both levels:

> Frisch weht der Wind
> der Heimat zu:
> Mein irisch Kind,
> wo weilest du?
> Sind's deiner Seufzer Wehen,
> die mir die Segel blähen?
> Wehe, wehe, du Wind!
> Weh, ach wehe, mein Kind!

Building on Eliot's use of it in *The Waste Land,* the choral piece relies on this text to establish a base connection to myth and culture that is "already significantly shaped" and therefore culturally significant from the perspective of the mythical method (Donoghue,1997:208). In Eliot's poem, the excerpt from Wagner's libretto acts, most broadly, as a moment illustrating the necessity of connection and wholeness, and the desolation that grows in its absence. The text, as mentioned in the previous section, expresses the need for vital reconnection between primordial representations of nature, culture, and individual: between the complementary opposite energies of known and unknown suggested by the lovers; and between the individual and culture (the travellers and their homeland).

These phenomenological constituent elements of experience—"nature, culture, individual; unknown, known, knower" (Peterson, 2007:137), order, chaos, balance—are the primary structural and thematic elements at play in "Frisch Weht der Wind". Order, the known, is

represented in its desolate, “tyrannical” form by strictness in the piece: in pitch (the lack of variation in soprano and tenor lines), use of text (the repetition of the initial phrase), and time (the static nature of the rhythmic structure).

The tyranny of the known, as in myth, is made most apparent when it is separated from the unknown. In the opening bars there is no juxtaposition and only order, but the severity of the soprano line is softened when it is combined with the alto line in bar 7. Throughout the piece, rigidity and desolation adopt a constructive nature when juxtaposed with animated movement and dissonant interactions. In this sense, chaos and the unknown (potential) act positively on tyrannical order. In the final bars, the resolution (and the process it symbolises) represent the individual: the “Logos” (Peterson, 2007:97) or “hero, in its multiplicity of forms” through whom, in mythical and religious thought, eudaimonic balance is restored to the constituent elements of experience (Peterson, 2006:140).

The interplay between these elements is dramatised through the progression of the choral piece, communicating a narrative through music. Like Eliot’s poem, the piece relies not only on the tension between order (rigidity, sparse chord structures, the known text from Eliot’s poem) and chaos (movement, full chord structures, and the unknown, new composition), but also on the prospect of their unity in order to move from desolation to restoration, as in myth (Peterson, 2007:97).

Contrast, for example, the syncopated movement of “die Mir die Segel blähen” and the accompanying soprano and bass lines in bars 20-21, with the static “Wehe” that follows the phrase in bar 22, the final bar in this excerpt:

The juxtaposition of the elements, here, dramatises the tension. Furthermore, note the difference between this “Wehe” (bar 22) and the sustaining, restorative final “Wehe” that is arrived at (in bar 30) through the consolidation of known and unknown, rigidity and movement in bars 26-29:

In bar 22, the moment is tense and desolate: the E-minor chord is rigid and unstable: at once possessed of a minor and a diminished third (the bass's G, and the alto's F#, respectively), with the effect being the need for consolidation between the two. Importantly, however, this tension is resolved when structure and movement begin to come together and form something new. The E-minor in bar 26, established by the bass's E and the tenor's B, now allows dissonance (the alto's F#) to act upon it, to shape its role in the piece. The chord yields to the pressure created by the alto line by adjusting its foundation, moving the tonic to D (bass, bars 26-27), and subsequently transforming the alto's F# and tenor's A into the third and fifth intervals of the new chord, respectively. It still retains, however, the tenor's B, creating a pleasing dissonance. This illustrates, musically, the constructive consolidation between the known and unknown, and it is the moment that allows the piece to move towards its resolution.

The text of the cadence in bars 29-30 ("Ach wehe, mein kind" translating to "Alas, my child") does not suggest futility, therefore, but a eudaimonic recognition of the disconnection that necessitated the restoration of wholeness. And since this restoration is a continuous process, the piece does not resolve to its tonic. Through the unification of these "phenomenological constants" (Peterson, 2007:136) and the interaction between music and text, the atmosphere of desolation initiating the piece is restored to wholeness and vitality at its cadence.

Being based on a phenomenological understanding of the constituent elements of experience (both in Eliot's critical and creative work), the mythical method is conducive to creative output that speaks to notions of sustainable change. Real artistic value, however, and not only symbolism, methodology, and structure must also be pursued. Eliot demonstrates an achievement of this in his poetry. My creative attempt, here, primarily aims to show that his method is eudaimonic, and that it is an accessible creative idea.

Conclusion

Eliot's use of myth in the poem also demonstrates that his vision for the mythical method is fundamentally eudaimonic: it is focused on reconnection, growth, and wholeness. Eliot's use of

Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* places the mythical level of discourse squarely in the realm of the need for sustainable change and the culturally significant narratives and symbols that are built, phenomenologically, around this notion. Furthermore, my analysis of the levels of discourse and their interaction confirms and clarifies Eliot's description of the mythical method in "*Ulysses,* Order, and Myth", and it also shows that the poem reflects the philosophical imperatives expressed in writings such as "Tradition and the Individual Talent". In addressing the need for balance between order and chaos, primitive and modern, the mythical method and *The Waste Land* provide a vital eudaimonic perspective on the modern need for sustainable change (specifically in the cultural sphere of art and art criticism).

In so doing, the poem offers a constructive creative perspective to the discourse around sustainable change in art for South Africa, and presents at least a different hermeneutic lens—the eudaimonic phenomenological unity of "nature, culture, individual; unknown, known, knower" (Peterson, 2006:137)—by which to critically consider the issues at hand. The mythical method does not merely shed light on the necessity of change, but also on what to do with the structures (art, narratives, and symbols, for example) that are perceived as representative of hierarchies or forms that, to paraphrase Eliot, no longer serve.

Practically, the mythical method has also proven to be an accessible creative construct. The previous section offers a brief description of a pilot attempt at contemporary creative use of the mythical method. Importantly, the central paradigms that inform this output (eudaimonics and the mythical method) both require the consolidation of past and present traditions, whether critical or creative. My attempt demonstrates, hopefully, that the method can lead to creative pursuits that are eudaimonic in intention, imbibed with symbolic depth and significance, and which build on a past carried into the present.

CONCLUSION: THE VIABILITY AND RELEVANCE OF THE MYTHICAL METHOD AS A COMMENTARY ON SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

"Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?

"Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,

"Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!

"You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!"

—T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land,* (1922)

In an opinion piece for *GroundUp*, Justice Dennis Davis, a member of faculty at UCT (2016) detailed his opinion of the academy's response—or lack thereof—to the destruction and violence carried out by protesters associated with *RMF* and *FMF* on university campuses. In "Academics and the Fallist Movement" (2016), Davis states:

> It is astounding how these so-called revolutionaries in academic life refuse to accept that there are a small group of disrupters who are bent on violence, whether it be carrying of rocks, sticks, burning of cars, art, etc. Read the Supreme Court of Appeal judgment in Hotz and others vs University of Cape Town where the violence and destruction of art took place when there were no police on campus. That violence had nothing to do with security. What other than naked populism or opportunism explains how we have medical doctors who sanction, at least by implication, violence?
>
> In the humanities we now are paying the price for the heavy overdose of postmodernism that passes for radical critique...It is also ironic that some of the academics who tolerate violence continue to teach absent any changes to their curricula, which is an even more frustrating example of a new politics of expediency.
>
> I too want no police or security when I teach but then we need to get back to the politics of the two key demands [of the protest movement] and an organised form of politics that focuses thereon. In the context of 2015/16, we need to ask what we mean by politics that truly effects change which is both radical and sustained.

Davis' words ring with particular poignancy in light of Peterson's seventh mythically-informed "rule": pursue meaning, not expedience (2018:161). Davis' call for "change which is both radical and sustained" is well worded: it admits simultaneously to the need for both change and sustainability, unknown and known. As this dissertation argues, and as Davis implicitly suggests, the "fallist movement" has led to change that seems largely expedient. Peterson's view on the kind of "expediency" that Davis identifies above offers a more clearly-articulated stance on the relationship between meaning and the mythical balance of phenomenological domains:

> Expedience—that's hiding all the skeletons in the closet. That's covering the blood you just spilled with a carpet. That's avoiding responsibility. It's cowardly, and shallow, and wrong...There is no faith and no courage and no sacrifice in doing what is expedient. There is no careful observation that actions and presuppositions matter, or that the world is made of what matters...Meaning is the ultimate balance between, on the one hand, the chaos of transformation and possibility and on the other, the discipline of pristine order whose purpose is to produce out of the attendant chaos a new order that will be even more immaculate and capable of bringing forth a still more balanced and productive chaos and order (2018:200-201).

In his admonition of "courage", and in seeing the world as a place made up of both matter and "what matters", Peterson suggests that accounting for the constituent elements of experience is vital to effecting meaningful change. This results, for him, in a "new order that will be even more immaculate and capable of bringing forth a still more balanced and productive chaos and order" (2018:200-201). From this perspective, it is plausible that a phenomenological understanding of the world could positively inform our notions surrounding necessary, sustainable change.

The Waste Land and the mythical method by which Eliot composed it, I have argued, reflect precisely such an understanding, offering a eudaimonic model for responding to the need for sustainable change. The model, as demonstrated, is aimed both critically and creatively at consolidating the phenomenological categories of unknown, known, and individual—tradition, new art, and artist-hero, respectively—towards sustained revitalisation. In this capacity, the mythical method offers a viable approach to sustainable change that is much needed in the

South African context, allowing us to refer to the unity of the constituent elements of experience in direct relation to the critique and creation of art.

Demonstrating the relevance of the mythical method to the South African context, however, is perhaps more straightforward than arguing for its viability. To substantiate my argument, this dissertation first explores the conceptual foundations of the mythical method. It considers, specifically, how Eliot arrived at the mythical method, and what we can determine about its conceptual validity by investigating its implicit presumptions on myth.

Here it is determined that, like its influences, the mythical method sees the restoration of wholeness as a vital part of cultural and spiritual healing. For Eliot, this is effected by re-establishing the connection and consolidating process between the primitive and contemporary minds, myth and modernity. In this sense, it is argued, the mythical method clearly echoes eudaimonic concerns.

Peterson's articulation of the constituent elements of phenomenological experience and their abstraction into myth also helps to demonstrate that the very foundation of the mythical method, as notably argued by J.S. Brooker, is built around the same symbolic imperative as *The Waste Land*'s central, informing myth. This confirms that the mythical method is not mythical simply because of its content, but because of the understanding of reality that it demonstrates.

My analysis of various other perspectives on myth confirms, furthermore, that the mythical method's foundational assumptions on myth are not iconoclastic or fringe. Instead, clear parallels can be drawn between Eliot's conceptualisation of myth and those of others. Interestingly, these parallels seem to exist most strongly along the lines of a chaos/order/balance structure, adding yet more credibility to Eliot's method, and to Peterson's claims for the fundamental concerns of mythic thought. Peterson's admonition regarding the value of interpreting myth and associated texts within the parameters set by the constituent elements of experience is also bolstered as a result.

Since this dissertation seeks to construct an argument for the viability of the mythical method as a relevant commentary on sustainable change in art, it carefully considers the creative application of the method by Eliot in *The Waste Land*. The eudaimonic analysis of the poem, consequently, demonstrates that its mythical level of discourse is centralised around the notion of a necessary restorative balance between the constituent elements of experience. The failure to effect such balance, throughout the poem, largely characterises the modern level of discourse. Furthermore, the analysis both confirms Eliot's description of the mythical method and demonstrates the possible parallels between the poem and other philosophical convictions expressed by Eliot in his broader critical work.

As a result, the mythical method not only highlights the need for sustainable change in art, but also inherently offers a constructive eudaimonic response to this need. Informed by a phenomenological understanding of experience, the method provides a hermeneutic structure by which to interpret and create art not from a position of suspicion, but from a position that accepts the necessity of both sustainability and change. Therefore, the mythical method presents a viable and relevant perspective on the needs of our nation's cultural milieu.

This dissertation also explores the accessibility of the mythical method as a creative construct. Here, it demonstrates that the method can be adopted in contemporary artistic pursuit, and that the method's assertions and aims are not only applicable to Eliot's work. This again strengthens the case for the application of the mythical method in South Africa, showing that it results in creative output that is built around the notion of balance between the phenomenological categories of unknown, known, and knower. In this way, perhaps, the method can effect meaningful change both critically and creatively. Further research is required, however, to test and explore this notion practically.

Justice Davis identifies an expediency in the current responses to the need for sustainable change which has caused irreversible and permanent damage to the tradition of South African art. The absence of a phenomenological balance between known and unknown in popular

protest movements has led, perhaps, to a failure to “produce out of the attendant chaos a new order” (Peterson, 2018:200-201), resulting, simply, in new chaos. The mythical method, however, opens a doorway to a conversation about balance and sustainability that returns us not to ideological failure, but to the experience of reality as a place of both meaning and objects.

Davis’ words also resonate deeply with the epigraph to this conclusion, the final lines of “Burial of the Dead” (ll. 71-76):

> “That corpse you planted last year in your garden
> “Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
> “Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
> “Oh keep the Dog far hence, that’s friend to men,
> “Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again!
> “You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!”

This planted corpse, as in the symbolism of fertility rites described in Frazer’s work, is expected to revive vitality. Here, the mythic process of “bringing forth a still more balanced and productive chaos and order”, of which Peterson speaks (2018:201), is illustrated poetically.

In this light, the “sudden frost”, may warn against imbalance in favour of order. This specific imbalance may cause the foundation of the structure or tradition (the “bed” of a pattern of being) to calcify, preventing the corpse from sprouting into something new and relevant. For Eliot more broadly, it is the failure of the artist to “alter” the “existing order” of tradition with something “truly new”(1920:44); it is the persistence of forms which, like the “traditional novel”, “no longer serve” (1923:166). It is what Campbell calls the cultural retention of the “shells of forms produced and left behind by lives once lived”, and which results in a “world waiting...for the Desired Knight, who would restore its integrity to life...” (1968:5). For Peterson, it is the hardening of culture and the known into “tyranny and stultification...when the demand for certainty and uniformity and purity becomes too one-sided” (2018:36). In South Africa, it was Apartheid, and the vestiges of it that still have to be dismantled properly today.

Predictably, Eliot's lines also go on to warn us against an imbalance in favour of chaos: the process of "shattering and regenerating the fixed" (Campbell, 1968:7)—allowing the buried dead structure to germinate and "sprout"—is interrupted by the "Dog", agent of chaos, "friend to men". In this state, there is only "shattering" and no regeneration. It is the failure to turn potential into meaning because the "interplay between the possibilities of the world and the value structure operating within that world" has been disrupted (Peterson, 2018:199). For Eliot, it is the "immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (1923:165). In South Africa, it is the destruction of art for the sake of expedient results now, rather than meaningful growth later. For Davis, it is the "naked populism or opportunism" that characterised the actions of students at UCT (2016). It is the "price", for him, that we are paying for the "heavy overdose of postmodernism that passes for radical critique" (Davis, 2016).

The last line of the "The Burial of the Dead" makes it clear upon whom these responsibilities of observation, analysis, and re-balance fall, for Eliot. They fall to the "Desired Knight" of the Grail legend, as Campbell says; to the Fisher King, and Philomela, and the warriors of the Battle of Mylae, both ancient and modern. They fall to the heroic poet-critic, and to the reader who is journeying from the Sybil's futility to the peace of the poem's closing *shantih*: the individual willingly undertaking the hero's journey in order to confront chaos and enact sustainable, eudaimonic change in the wasteland: "You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!"

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ANNEXURES

Annexure A: “Frisch weht der Wind” (2019)

10
S.
I-risch Kind wo weil-est du? Frisch weht der wind
A.
I-risch Kind wo weil-est du? Frisch weht der wind
T.
Frisch weht der wind
B.
Frisch weht der wind
14
S.
der Hei - mat zu. Mein I-risch Kind wo weil-est du?
A.
der Hei - mat zu. Mein risch Kind wo weil-est du?
T.
der Hei - mat zu. Mein I-risch Kind wo weil-est du?
B.
der Hei - mat zu. Mein I-risch Kind wo weil-est du?
19
S.
Ah Ooh Wehe
A.
Sind's dein - er Seuf - zer We - hen die Mir die Se - gel blä-hen Wehe.
T.
Ah die Mir die Se - gel blä-hen Wehe.
B.
Sind's dein - er Seuf - zer We - hen Mmm Wehe.

23
S.
wehe du Wind
ach wehe mein Kind
A.
wehe du wind
ach wehe mein Kind
we-he
T.
wehe du wind
ach wehe mein Kind
we -
B.
wehe du wind
ach wehe mein Kind
we - he
27
S.
we - he
du Wind!
Wind. Ach
wehe
mein Kind.
A.
we-he
du Wind!
Wind. Ach
wehe
mein Kind.
T.
- he
du Wind!
Wind. Ach
wehe
mein Kind.
B.
we-he
du Wind!
Wind. Ach
wehe
mein Kind.