

“THE BEAUTY OF HUMAN LIFE AGAINST WHICH INJUSTICE IS
A BLASPHEMY”:

AN EXPLORATION OF REPRESENTATIONS OF RELIGIOUS
EXPRESSION AND THEIR CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH
MODERNITY IN ELIZABETH KNOX'S *THE DREAMHUNTER DUET*

By
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Abstract

“The beauty of human life against which injustice is blasphemy”: An Exploration of Representations of Religious Expression and Their Critical Engagement with Modernity in Elizabeth Knox’s *The Dreamhunter Duet*

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Elizabeth Knox’s *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* show a variety of ways in which expressions of religion both critique modernity and suggest alternatives to it. I approach these texts through a religious rather than a literary lens, using the work of theorists such as Kierkegaard, Levinas, and Ricoeur in order to demonstrate how, in spite of its subjectivity and unobservable source, religious expression may be necessary in and to a deeply rational modernity. My argument looks at the relationship between church, culture, and state, examining how the criticism levelled by both institutional and secular expressions of religion can be seen to challenge the dehumanising objectivity of the will to power, profit, and progress. This notion of a religious challenge is then developed through the figure of the prophet, using a variety of tropes from the Jewish and Christian traditions to tease out the texts’ enactment of redemptive social critique.

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To Pinkie Pie – I couldn't have done this
without you, you crazy pink pony you.

But also to Scott, Dee, Sam, Lydia, Mike, Rachael,
and Rachel - 'cause you guys were pretty helpful too.

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1.0 Introduction

What is the place and purpose of religion in modernity? Marginalised by discourses of reason and objectivity, religion, in modernity, appears to manifest as either a problem – the voice of a deluded, irrational, and generally conservative minority – or as “a cognition free special area of social activity,”¹ like art, literature, or music. In spite of its marginalisation and its apparent irrelevancy, it is my belief that religion still has something valuable to contribute to our understanding of ourselves and our world. In this thesis, I turn to literature in order to explore one example of religion’s expression, examining how various aspects of this “cognition free special area” have been communicated in Elizabeth Knox’s *Dreamhunter*,² and its sequel, *Dreamquake*.³ Rather than approaching these texts from a literary perspective, I will be speaking from my background in Religious Studies, using the work of theorists such as Kierkegaard, Levinas, and Ricoeur to analyse how these texts express the need for ethical responsibility in and against modernity. I begin by discussing the theorisation of the conflict between religion and modernity, establishing exactly how and why these two epistemologies are in conflict with one another, as well as what effect this conflict has in terms of religion’s potential cultural role. This is followed by an analysis of how, on an institutional level, this conflict is explored in *The Dreamhunter Duet*. Through the pairings of Church and State, Church and Culture, and Culture and State, I explore how these institutions both collaborate with and critique one another. Special attention is paid to the ways in which the Church - as a manifestation of institutional religion - and Culture – as the location of secular expressions of religious concerns – serve to articulate concerns about, and solutions to, social injustice. I show how *The Dreamhunter Duet*, through its institutional interactions, succeeds in depicting a model of the nation state in which religious expression can – by re-introducing elements of transcendence, community, and ethical responsibility to the objectifying discourses privileged in modernity – be interpreted as not only valid, but necessary. Then, I move on to develop the idea that religious expression is both critical *and* ameliorative by exploring the prophetic potential of religion in

1 Adorno, T.W., & Horkheimer, M. (1972). *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York, New York, U.S.A: Herder and Herder, pp25-26

2 Knox, E., (2005). *Dreamhunter*. New York, New York, U.S.A: Square Fish

3 Knox, E., (2007). *Dreamquake*. Sydney, Australia: Harper Collins

modernity. By transforming traditional images and understandings of both prophecy and the prophet, these novels demonstrate the ongoing relevance of this mode of critique, the utility of this transcendent and future-oriented viewpoint in constructing a society where ethical responsibility is privileged. My analysis of this text shows how *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* use expressions of religion to critically engage with modernity, seeking to reform it. Rather than enacting the typical anti-modern retreat into pre-modern religious thought, these texts develop a complex image of religious expression in modernity, depicting it instead as a vital dialogic partner for modernity, an opposing voice whose communications of conflict help to maintain ideological balance.

2.0 Knox

Few New Zealand authors have enjoyed the sustained success and widespread critical acclaim that Elizabeth Knox has achieved in the last twenty-five years. Born in Wellington in 1959 Knox grew up in and around the wider Wellington region. She attended Tawa College before going on to work at the Porirua branch of the Inland Revenue Department. Here she saved to pursue her longstanding dream of becoming a writer; Knox took an eight-month, self-funded sabbatical, during which she wrote her first, never to be published novel, *One Too Many Lives*. Knox went back to work, finding employment in various clerical positions, and saved towards a second attempt. At twenty-two years old, Knox took a year off, wrote, and subsequently discarded, a second novel, this one called *Salamander*. In 1983 Knox began study at Victoria University of Wellington, aged twenty-four. During her studies, Knox participated in Bill Manhire's Original Composition class, where he told her that "he'd rather see her finish her novel than her degree".⁴ 1987 saw Knox achieve both, as she graduated with a B.A. in English Literature, received the ICI Writer's (now the Louis Johnson) Bursary, and published her first finished novel, *After Z-Hour*.

That was a quarter-century ago, and Knox has since published nine more novels⁵, three semi-autobiographical novellae⁶, and a collection of essays. She has been published primarily by Victoria University Press in New Zealand, but also internationally under the imprints of Macmillan, Harper Collins, and Random House. On the whole, Knox's novels have been very well received and Knox has won numerous honours for her writing. She has received awards that range from the Deutz Medal for Fiction (*The Vintner's Luck*, 1999) to the Commonwealth Writer's prize (*Daylight*, 2003), from the Esther Glen Award (*Dreamhunter*, 2006) to the internationally prestigious ALA's Michael L. Printz Award (*Dreamquake*, 2007). In addition to such awards, Knox has also received the Victoria University Writing Fellowship (1997), the Katherine Mansfield Memorial Fellowship (1999), The Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureate Award (2000), before going on to

⁴ <http://www.elizabethknox.com/> , accessed 16/05/2012, at 4:45 p.m.

⁵ *Treasure* (1992), *Glamour and the Sea* (1996), *The Vintner's Luck* (1998), *Black Oxen* (2001), *Billie's Kiss* (2002), *Daylight* (2003), *Dreamhunter* (2005), *Dreamquake* (2007), and *The Angel's Cut* (2009)

⁶ *Paremata* (1989), *Pomare* (1994), *Tawa* (1998)

become an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit, making the 2002 Queen's Birthday Honours list for her service to literature.

Of course, not everyone has responded warmly to Knox's writing. Patrick Evans, in *Baby Factory*⁷, accuses both her and her audience of something of a betrayal of New Zealand fiction, participating in what he interprets as an "attempt to break away from the past by integrating New Zealand writing into the global market"⁸ typical of graduates from Bill Manhire's Creative Writing school. For Evans, this betrayal manifests in the "decision to write novels [*The Vintner's Luck*] that would reach an international audience"⁹ and is reflected in the public's belief that Knox's overseas publication and cinematic re-working are markers of her success. C.K. Stead expresses a somewhat different sense of betrayal in his reaction to her use of fantasy. Reading it as a break with New Zealand's ostensibly "realist" canon, Stead's criticism goes further than Evan's, not only de-limiting what amounts to acceptable New Zealand fiction, but what amounts to acceptable fiction at all; Stead refused to read *The Vintner's Luck* because

it was a book which required one to accept the 'reality' of an angel... This was an obstacle I decided to consider insuperable, believing it beyond my powers to like such a book or to feel other than irritated by such a use of an indisputable talent.¹⁰

I hope to refute Stead's view by exploring the ways in which Knox's incorporates religious expression into her writing, the depth and texture that these elements bring to her fiction.

In this thesis I will be focussing on two of Knox's most commercially successful works; *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* (known collectively as *The Dreamhunter Duet*). Exemplary of Knox's style – a style that she describes as "fantastic naturalism"¹¹ - *The Dreamhunter Duet* combines the mythical, the metaphorical, and the mundane to create a complex, captivating, palimpsest of a novel. The Duet is set in 1905, in Southland, a

7 Evans, P., (2003). *Baby factory*. *The Listener*, August 16:3301. Retrieved from <http://www.listener.co.nz/uncategorized/baby-factory/>

8 Ibid

9 Ibid

10 Stead, C.K., (2003). *Kin of Place*. Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, pp364

11 Rothwell, K., (2007). Opportunity Knox. *The Dominion Post*, January 27 (WM8). Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com>

fictional world that looks very much like Aotearoa's South Island, but with one key difference; some of Southland's inhabitants are able to pass into and out of a mysterious, barren landscape (known as the Place) where dreams can be caught, brought back to the cities, and then performed as both medicine and entertainment. As beautiful as these dreams might initially seem, their sinister potential soon begins to manifest, building into a dystopic nightmare from which only faith, family, and memory can save us. In *Dreamhunter and Dreamquake* Knox works with a variety of religious imagery and images of religion; though she invokes no "offensive" angels here, she does depict characters who sing hymns, utter prophecies, and summon Golems, alluding to Jewish and Christian myth, all in order to challenge the validity of the modern, capitalist state. And these books have received rave reviews; The duet has been described as an "ingeniously constructed tale that transplants old-world myths into new-world soil to stunning effect,"¹² constituted by "sure, literary prose [and] nuanced characters,"¹³ and able "to make us think both poetically and analytically about human nature."¹⁴

In addition to such enthusiastic reviews, *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* have received the lion's share of what little academic attention has been paid to Knox's writing¹⁵. Much of the discussion around the duet has come from Victoria University of Wellington's School of English, with four of the five contributing authors lecturing in the school's departments. One of the earliest pieces of academic criticism to emerge is Lydia Wevers' paper *Fold in the Map: Figuring Modernity in Gail Jones's Dreams of Speaking and Elizabeth Knox's Dreamhunter*¹⁶. Wevers - using Bauman's theory of liquid and solid modernities¹⁷ to frame her discussion - contrasts the "nightmarish trains and industrial sites"¹⁸ of a burgeoning heavy modernity with the insidious fluidity of a more post-modern consumer culture. The

12 Gracewood, J., (2007). Book of revelations. *The Listener*, February 10:3483. Retrieved from <http://www.listener.co.nz/uncategorized/book-of-revelations>

13 <http://www.elizabethknox.com/dreamhunter/>, accessed 20/05/2012, at 8:39 p.m.

14 <http://www.elizabethknox.com/dreamquake/>, accessed 20/05/2012, at 8:40 p.m.

15 *The Vintner's Luck* has been the subject of papers by Laura Joseph and Tim McKenzie as well as Jane Stafford's "Antipodean Theologies", a chapter of *Floating Worlds* (2009). An analysis of the generic potential of *Daylight* as fantasy is currently being undertaken by Erin Mercer for her upcoming *Rereading the Real*.

16 Wevers, L. (2007). Fold in the map: figuring modernity in Gail Jones's *Dreams of Speaking* and Elizabeth Knox's *Dreamhunter*, *Journal for the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, 23:2(187-198). Retrieved from <http://www.nla.gov.au>

17 Bauman, Z., (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press

18 Wevers, pp191

paper shows how modernity is “continually breached and invaded, overlaid or overlying, running into or out of, its multiple dimensions,”¹⁹ in *Dreamhunter*, how modernity is threatened by a reality that will not be - at least not easily - contained or categorized. But more than this, Wever’s paper shows how bureaucratization and commodification can turn that which evades and challenges modernity (in this case, both dreams and the physics-defying landscape in which they can be caught), into the means of its perpetuation. She explores the way that dreams, in these novels, are used as “a form of social control,”²⁰ how they represent “the ‘modern’ dominance of a visual culture, but also,” by virtue of state involvement in the artistic, “a kind of policed subconscious.”²¹

In the same year, VUW’s Anna Jackson published a paper²² in which she discusses how *The Dreamhunter Duet* both adheres to and departs from the genre of portal fantasy. While Jackson touches on matters of fate and free-will, innocence, knowledge, hierarchy, and the presence of poetic truth in works of fantasy, the value of this paper to my research is very much located in the thought that it points to rather than that which it develops. However, another work from VUW - *A Made-up Place*²³ - has been of great use in the development of my argument. A series of essays that discuss the specificities of young adult fiction in New Zealand, it contains two chapters that deal with *The Dreamhunter Duet*; *Utopia* by Geoffrey Miles and *Religion* by Tatjana Schaefer. Miles reflects on the relationship between New Zealand’s history and the idea of utopia. He recalls the romantic hopes of “developing a new society, uncontaminated by the corruptions and compromises of old Britain and Europe”²⁴ that informed the colony’s establishment and the damage that was done in trying to achieve said hopes. The chapter’s discussion of *The Dreamhunter Duet* is, for the most part, fairly predictable; he shows how the novel’s nightmares, as representations of a returning repressed, undermine the “golden nostalgic light of the pre-WW1 Edwardian summer...the familiar image of colonial New Zealand as Arcadia.”²⁵ The chapter then goes

19 Ibid, pp189

20 Ibid, pp195

21 Ibid, pp195

22 Jackson A, (2007). Elizabeth Knox’s *Dreamhunter*: the portal fantasy turned upside down, *The Journal of Children’s Literature Studies*, 4:2 (18-36)

23 Jackson, A., Miles, G., Ricketts, H., Schaefer, T., Walls, K., (2011). *A Made-Up Place: New Zealand in Young Adult Fiction*. Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press

24 Ibid, pp88

25 Ibid, pp88

on to discuss the lack of an indigenous population in this precariously utopic, parallel New Zealand. Miles claims that that

in writing the indigenous people and their culture and traditions out of her fictional alternative New Zealand, Knox has replaced them with the Place...a living and conscious entity... who is the human embodiment of what is oppressed and repressed in the country.²⁶

While this explanation seems, to me, too readily forgiving of such an important act of neglect, the fact that Miles has not only queried, but engaged with the monocultural nature of *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake*, sets him apart amongst Knox's critics. The larger part of Tatjana Schaefer's chapter, *Religion*, is concerned with the way that religion in young adult novels is usually used to provide an "antagonistic oppressive regime [that] gives the young protagonists something to revolt against."²⁷ She notes that *The Dreamhunter Duet* is unusual in this regard, depicting instead a church that inhabits a space between moral conservatism, paternalistic pastoralism, and borderline social irrelevancy. Instead of being antagonistic, Schaefer states that the church is shown to provide a counterpoint, to serve as a friend and ally in the protagonist's battle against the machinations of the state²⁸. The chapter also discusses the value of "religious imagery and biblical allusions...used in part for their familiarity and to paint subtle but positive pictures of the central characters."²⁹

In addition to the analysis provided by the staff of Victoria University Wellington, Laura Joseph (a recent PhD graduate from the University of New South Wales) has, in two papers,³⁰ and her doctoral thesis,³¹ discussed the ways in which regional specificity, physical matter, memory, and multiplicity act as de-centring agents in terms of identity in the modern, nation state. According to Joseph, *The Dreamhunter Duet* materially mobilises a specific place against the all-encompassing nation. More specifically, it mobilises "the Place,

26 Ibid, pp108

27 Ibid, pp141

28 Ibid, pp157

29 Ibid, pp158

30 Joseph, L. (2008). Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*. *Journal for the Association for the Study of Australian Literature*, Special Issue 2008: The Colonial Present (1-10). Retrieved from <http://www.nla.gov.au> AND Joseph, L. (2009). Opening the Gates of Hell: Regional Emergences in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*. *Southerly*, 69:2 (66-80). Retrieved from <http://search.informit.com.au/>

31 Joseph, L., (2010). *Brimstone Flowers: Towards an Antipodean Poetics of Space*. Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of New South Wales, Sydney

as the dead underside of the colonial nation of Southland”³² using the dreams found there to engender a physical, “[a] visceral experience,”³³ to reveal “the violence, horror and waste buried beneath national modernity.”³⁴ In addition to materiality, Joseph also employs the metaphor of verticality, the idea of ascension, of rising up out of the “hells of industrial modernity.”³⁵ She uses this metaphor to express the privileging of region over nation, but also to explore the importance of resurrection and disinterment in the duet, using the movement from death to life, from underworld to overworld to communicate the rebellion of the suppressed specific.

Therefore, in spite of being one of New Zealand's most celebrated contemporary authors, scholarly analysis of Knox's work is limited. Her reviewers praise her and the industry lauds her with multitudinous honours, but the potential relevance and value of her work has yet to be fully explored. The authors discussed above have covered a lot of ground, mapping out, if not actively traversing the worlds of her novels. But paths have been pointed out to those who would take them, and it is my hope that, by both making good use of the exploration already done, and by blazing my own trails, I will be able to contribute, in some small way, to this ongoing analytical expedition.

32 Joseph, *Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation* in *Carpentaria* and *Dreamhunter*, pp7

33 Ibid, pp7

34 Ibid, pp7

35 Joseph, *Opening the Gates of Hell: Regional Emergences in Carpentaria and Dreamhunter*, pp66

3.0 Plot Summary

The Dreamhunter Duet (comprised of *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake*) is, as I mentioned in my previous chapter, set in 1905, in a nation known as Southland. Southland is a fictional world that “both is and is not Golden Bay.”³⁶ It looks and feels very much like New Zealand's South Island; the maps that Knox provides depict a coastline almost identical to that of the Nelson-Marlborough region, and even incorporate a cheekily named 'So Long Spit'. She frames her maps with images of Tuatara and Kiwi, names one of her towns Westport, and, as Geoffrey Miles noted,³⁷ she even mentions a Parson Bird (the colonial name for Aotearoa's native Tui). Southland, though clearly paralleled with New Zealand's South Island, is still another world entirely. Unlike Aotearoa, Southland has a layered geography, the everyday landscape concealing a “fold in the map”³⁸ into which only a select few, the dreamhunters, can pass. This mysterious, concomitant region is known simply as the Place. The Place is a wasteland, where there is no water and nothing burns, a landscape that seems somehow “to continue right at the point of death, year after year, as if time [has] simply stopped.”³⁹ Yet for all the vibrancy that the environment lacks, the Place is alive with vivid and fascinating dreams. Dreams with the power to heal and to entertain, that provide their audiences with the opportunity to not only experience, but to *be*, another self. These dreams can be caught, brought back to the cities, and performed, sold to the public.

The Dreamhunter Duet tells the story of the dreamhunter Tziga Hame and his daughter Laura. *Dreamhunter* begins in the summer leading up to the “try”, the moment in which Laura, along with her cousin Rose Tiebold, will find out if they are able to enter the Place. Shortly before the date of their try, Tziga ventures into the place, returning with a dream that necessitates not only his immediate departure, but an express train and a private escort. His performance will require him to be away for at least a week, meaning that he will miss his daughter's try. Laura is, at first, disappointed and furious, but soon becomes confused and frightened as well; her father is bandaged, bloodied, and seemingly crazed,

36 Wevers, pp188

37 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp107

38 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp 89

39 Ibid, pp199

insisting that she recite an old folk song, “The Measures”, to him as he departs. Tziga is then escorted to a prison in Westport, where he is to perform the dream he has just caught. He dreads this performance as the dream is an utterly horrific nightmare known as “Buried Alive”, caught for the purpose of punishing difficult prisoners. Unable to stomach another session of torture, Tziga throws himself to his death.

The girls' try passes in Tziga's absence, but only Laura makes it through. Rose is sent back to school, and Laura and the other novice dreamhunters make their first excursion into the place. They are escorted by Laura's aunt, Grace Tiebold, to the site of an adventure dream known as “Wild River”. They are expected to catch and perform this dream, enabling the Dream Regulatory Body (DRB) to measure their relative skill as dreamhunters. Laura fails to catch “Wild River”, catching a nightmare instead. In her nightmare, the dreamer is an escaped convict, fleeing guards and dogs until they run him down and kill him. It is not the first time that Laura has dreamt of convicts, and their presence in her dreams, as it always has, disturbs her.

While she and her aunt Grace are away, Laura's uncle Chorley Tiebold approaches the DRB for information; Tziga has still not come home and his family wish to know his whereabouts. The DRB present Chorley with forged documents suggesting that Tziga attempted a crossing of the as yet uncharted Place. Chorley suspects foul play, but assists in organizing a search party, realising that if the DRB have taken him, then it will be safer for Tziga if it looks as though his family believe what they have been told. Chorley's suspicions are half correct. The DRB *have* attempted to cover up Tziga's disappearance, as they do not want the Hame-Tiebolds to know how, or why, Tziga disappeared. However, Cas Doran, Secretary of the Interior and head of the Dream Regulatory Body, is similarly unaware of Tziga's current location. While he knows of Tziga's suicide attempt in Westport and of the guilt and horror that pushed Tziga over the edge, Doran is just as keen as the Hame-Tiebold's to locate him; Tziga's knowledge of the DRB's inhumane use of nightmares poses a serious threat.

Laura takes it upon herself to investigate her father's disappearance. Alone, she ventures into the Place and there discovers that her father has made her a servant out of

sand. Laura, reading the letters inscribed on its body, names her sand-man Nown; an acronym containing Name, Own, Will, and Name. She recognizes the pattern of words from “The Measures”, and realises that the folk song he so urgently insisted she recite was Tziga’s means of summoning her sand-man. Nown confirms that Tziga is still alive, and when Laura destroys him, hiding him from Rose and Chorley, he crumbles into dust, revealing the letter he carried at his heart; a letter from her father. The letter doesn’t explain Tziga’s disappearance. Instead it tells Laura to find and catch the nightmare that he was carrying, and to use it to over-dream her aunt Grace at her St. Lazarus’ Eve performance. In the letter, Tziga also mentions another dreamhunter, Maze Plasir. Rose and Laura go to Plasir’s offices, where he explains to them that the dreams taken to prisons are used not only to educate and reward, but to discipline and punish. He informs Rose and Laura that, like him, Tziga was under contract to the DRB to provide the prison with nightmares. Laura now understands the connection between the convicts in her dreams and the tortured convicts of Southland’s prisons. She believes the Place is protesting the mistreatment of Southland’s prisoners, demanding that she expose the atrocities being committed. Laura devises a plan; she will learn to sing the *The Measures* well enough to re-make Nown, then do exactly as her father has asked.

As Laura prepares, Chorley continues his own investigations. Tziga’s sister Marta denies Chorley the right to stage a memorial service. She sends Chorley to see the Grand Patriarch, head of the Temple of St. Lazarus. The Temple publicly oppose dream-hunting and Chorley is dubious. His dubiety turns to intrigue however, when the Grand Patriarch instructs him to catch a boat from Westport to the lighthouse on So Long Spit. Here Chorley finds Tziga, who had been rescued and hidden by the Temple. Tziga is now scarred and prone to fits, but otherwise alive and well.

While her uncle is secretly visiting with Tziga, Laura succeeds in building Nown anew. With Nown’s help, she travels more than sixty hours into the Place, where she finds Tziga’s last dream and catches it. In the dream she is trapped in a cramped, dark space; a coffin. She claws at silk, and then wood, until her fingers are raw, bleeding stumps She tears at herself and she suffocates on the stifling air before she wakes up, screaming and terrified. Laura then takes the train back to Founderston, Southland’s capitol, with her dream.

Frightened but resolute, Laura attends the Rainbow Opera (a dream palace) with her aunt and cousin. Her aunt mounts the dreamer's platform, ready for her annual St. Lazarus Eve performance, and Rose and Laura retire to their separate rooms. Laura, concerned for Rose's well-being, has spiked her candies with Wakeful, a narcotic used by dreamhunters to keep themselves awake. One by one, the Rainbow Opera's patrons fall asleep and the theatre is soon quiet, but before long, the air explodes with screams of horror. Guests burst from their imaginary graves and run from their rooms, their hands bleeding and their lips bitten through. Rose, having remained awake, is confused and horrified. Her horror and confusion only deepen when she hears Laura screaming, yelling the word "noun", until she is carried off by what appears to be a statue.

Picking up where *Dreamhunter* left off, *Dreamquake* details the aftermath of the St. Lazarus Eve nightmare. The dreamhunters present at the performance are rounded up and questioned. Doran, who recognizes the nightmare as one of Tziga's, questions Grace, accusing her of hiding him. As Chorley has not yet come home, Grace is oblivious to Tziga's re-appearance and can confirm that he is not to blame for the nightmare. Doran then goes on to inform Grace that Rose is safe, visiting with his wife, and his daughter Mamie. Rose's visit is not as innocent as it may seem however, as Rose, aware of her parent's suspicions, has cultivated a close friendship with Doran's daughter, working to get as close to the Doran family as she can.

Laura and Nown have fled. Still carrying her nightmare, Laura seeks refuge with her aunt Marta. Not knowing how to contain the horrors in Laura's mind, Marta sends Laura to the Grand Patriarch. She arrives at the Temple in a private car, and is kept away from the public until her nightmare has worn off. The Patriarch then sends her to meet her uncle, and to Laura's surprise, her father. While visiting So Long Spit, Laura sends a cryptic letter to her friend and fellow dreamhunter Sandy (Alexander) Mason. She asks him to deliver a note (containing instructions for Nown). Sandy, who is in love with Laura, opens and reads the Laura's message but is made jealous by the note's familiar tone, and so, destroys it. Although Nown never receives the note from Laura, he finds his own way to So Long Spit and they are re-united.

Chorley tells his wife and daughter that Tziga is still alive and will be back with them by Christmas. The Grand Patriarch then asks Chorley to research the nature of the Place. He begins by sifting through telegrams that had been interrupted by the corrupt line that once ran through the Place. He uncovers, in the garbled messages, a repeated command to “Rise up! Rise up!... [and] Crush them!,”⁴⁰ as well as a line of wistfully longing poetry, from Tennyson's *Maud*. Shortly afterwards, Sandy Mason catches a dream in which a young boy flees to the safety of his mother's arms during an earthquake. Grace and Chorley, who attend a performance of the dream, recognize the mother as a grown-up Laura and realise that the dreams are not entertaining diversions but visions of the future.

That summer, Rose goes to stay at the Doran's summer house. One night she sees men carrying piles of sleepers off the Doran's property and into the Place. She also discovers a map on Cas Doran's desk on which a series of overlapping circles, each containing the name of a dreamhunter, have been drawn to cover Founderston. Rose tells Laura of her discovery, and Laura and Nown venture into the Place to investigate. Entering at the border of the Doran's property, Laura finds an un-marked grave. Disquieted, she moves quickly on. Nown carries her through a mountain range, setting her down on its far side and she continues on alone. She is soon captured and taken, by hand-pumped rail-car, to The Depot; a prison camp filled with smiling, pyjama-clad prisoners. The wardens have no need of force, for not only is The Depot too far in to be escaped without mechanical assistance, but it is built on the sight of a powerfully pacifying dream; *Contentment*. Mortified by the happily placid inmates, Laura attempts an escape, walking until she collapses. She is saved by Nown who carries her out of the Place.

Nown leaves her at a train station where she is found by Sandy Mason. He takes her home and she tells her family what she has seen. Combining their new knowledge of The Depot with Rose's earlier findings, the family realise that Doran plans to use dreamhunters carrying *Contentment*, to tranquilize Founderston's population. Plotting their next move, the family prepare for the presentation ball in which Rose will officially enter society. Laura

40 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp196

sends Nown to acquire camera footage of The Depot, and passes the time by catching and performing dreams with Sandy. They grow closer to one another, Sandy now assuming that her earlier letter was meant for her convalescent father, and they eventually consummate their relationship. They sleep together at a site known as Foreigner's West. The site is marked by an O (for *ouest*) dug into the earth. Sandy informs her that there is a Foreigner's North as well, marked by an N (presumably for *Nord*) and Laura realises that the Place is a Nown.

The night of the presentation ball, tragedy strikes. There is a fire in the town hall. Rose is trapped and Laura sends Nown in after her. Rose manages to escape on her own, but Nown fails to make it back out. The next day, Laura receives news that Sandy had not been found after the fire. However, all is not lost; while Laura is waiting for a delayed stage coach, Nown re-appears, no longer made of sand and grit but fire-tempered glass. Laura is overjoyed, until he informs her that she is pregnant with Sandy's child. They return to the house to find Rose, Tziga, and Chorley useless with *Contentment*. Maze Plasir and two of Doran's men arrive, planning to destroy both the Hame-Tiebolds and any evidence that they may have collected. Nown disarms the men and disappears. This incident forces the family's hand. They, along with Marta and The Grand Patriarch, make copies and decoy evidence and prepare to move against Doran.

Rose goes to stay with Mamie Doran, to comfort her in the impending chaos. Laura and Nown sneak onto Rose's train, travelling with her to the Doran property. They take their leave and make their way back to the unmarked grave.. They dig it up and, in doing so, undo the Place. The Place then disappears, and Nown along with it. The man in the grave wakes up and informs Laura that he is Lazarus Hame, an escaped convict, explaining how, filled with rage and half-known folk songs, he had run until he could run no more, and buried himself in a grave that he dug with his own hands, scratching the letters N, O, and W into the side of his grave. As he tells her his story, Laura realises that it was Lazarus who summoned the Nown that became the Place, and that the dreams are moments from his past, and her future. She realises too that she is, and will be, his mother, and she is overwhelmed with sorrow, knowing that the child in her womb is doomed to a life of loneliness, hard-labour, and punishment.

But her fate is not as fixed as she thinks. In undoing the Place, Laura undoes Doran's plans. The prisoners of the Depot, along with any dreamhunters who had made a trip in, stumble out of what is now just bush, and among them is Sandy Mason, who had, as it works out, been kidnapped before the fire took hold. He and Laura are re-united, and the adult Lazarus is welcomed into the Hame-Tiebold family. Cas Doran is brought to justice and Southland's prisons and convict labour laws undergo considerable reforms. The future is open to change. Although the adult Lazarus had suffered, he had used his pain to call the Place into being and the Place had spoken to Laura. She had once told her Nown not to hurt her, and so Nown's future incarnation, remembering his instructions, had reached out across time to save her, and her unborn son, from their future.

4.0 Theoretical Position

Before I analyse how *The Dreamhunter Duet* uses expressions of religion to critically engage with modernity, I will explore the relationship between religion and modernity, in particular the highly productive tension between these two epistemologies. My discussion is divided into three sub-chapters. The first is an attempt to define, or, at the very least, to characterize modernity. The next addresses the ways in which religion has been problematised by, and constructed in opposition to, modernity. My final section focuses on one manifestation of religious anti-modern thought, examining the use of religious imagery, especially of myth and symbol, in literature. This discussion looks at how these forms of religious expression can be used to productively explore the tension between religion and modernity, using the religious, as that which modernity has excluded, to expose modernity's shortcomings and to provide solutions and/or alternatives to it.

4.1 What is modernity?

Modernity, although notoriously hard to define, is relatively easy to characterise. Like its philosophical progenitor, the enlightenment, modernity is preoccupied with the individual, with reason, and with progress. Modernity, however, takes these concepts and develops them further. Through its disavowal of history and its valorisation of the present, modernity moves away from enlightenment thought and its focus on the individual's use of reason in his progress towards self-knowledge. Instead, modernity pursues reason as the individual's means to power and control. As a result, modernity nurtures a culture of objectivity and mechanization, a culture that seeks to enable a society of individuals to endlessly progress beyond not only its past, but its own fleeting present.

In essence, reason is the ability of the individual to observe, and to make conclusions based on those observations. It is the foundation of science, and as such, of all thinking most valued in modernity. The enlightenment, as indicated by its name, envisaged man moving out of an epoch of confused superstitious obscurity and into a new era of intellectual clarity and light. By advocating the use of one's own mental faculties to form conclusions and discover scientific truths about the world, it was hoped that reason would free man from the blindness of faith, of belief based on what one had been told but could not necessarily see: "The program of the enlightenment was the dissolution of myths and the substitution of knowledge for fancy."⁴¹ This desire to move away from myth, from blind faith and belief, was inspired by a desire for justice, for the "social and moral improvement"⁴² that a way of knowing open to all individuals could potentially provide. In order to achieve this egalitarianism, enlightenment thinking favoured objectivity; becoming concerned not with the inner world of the individual, with her own experiences, interpretations, and endeavours towards personal meaning, but with the world of objects, with the material reality that all individuals hold in common. Such a form of knowledge is ostensibly free from the exclusivity of claims to revealed truths and the claims to

41 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp3

42 d'Entreves, M.P., Benhabib, S. (Eds.)(1997). *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity: Critical Essays on The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A: MIT Press, pp39

individual and collective privilege that they enabled.

But, “on the road to science, men renounce any claim to meaning.”⁴³ In order to achieve egalitarian objectivity, the individual's meaning making endeavour must come second to the construction of knowledge as a shared body of facts (as opposed to opinions, feelings, and experiences). The subject must have certain rules with which he is to structure his use of reason, in order to make it fair, objective, and thus legitimate. This mediation of mental processes abstracts the individual, placing him at one remove from himself and his experiences, inhibiting his ability to make meaning out of what she observes. Furthermore, as he applies these rules to the world around him - conquering it by reducing it to the finitude of its observable parts - he discovers that these rules can be applied to him too. To the individual observer, other individuals are, necessarily, objects; external materialities like trees or stars that can be observed, and it follows that he is understood by other individuals to be an object. This further abstracts the individual from himself, casting him completely away from his subjectivity and into the object position, making him not a self with a need for meaning, not a subject, but another object which reason can observe and explain; “Abstraction...treats its objects as did fate...it liquidates them.”⁴⁴ As objective reason necessitates rules and structures that render the subject-position redundant, it also abstracts itself. No longer the process of individual cognition, reason becomes a concept, a set of axioms that supersede those who exercise them:

The technical process, into which the subject has objectified itself after being removed from the consciousness, is free of the ambiguity of mythic thought as of all meaning altogether, because reason itself has become [a] mere instrument.⁴⁵

This exclusion of “subjectivity and inwardness”⁴⁶ marks the shift from individual to objective reason and is a primary characteristic of modernity. But modernity entails more than just the objectification of the world and of the individual. For this objective reason to become *modern*, it

43 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp5

44 Ibid, pp13

45 Ibid, pp30

46 Westphal, M., (1987). *Kierkegaard's Critique of Reason and Society*. Macon, Georgia, U.S.A: Mercer University Press, pp117

must also be combined with the devaluation of the past and the attendant idea of progress.

Reason is used, in modernity, to aid an interminable advancement of knowledge and of its material progeny; technology. It is not enough, in modernity, to move further and further away from the ostensibly ignorant mytho-centrism and exclusive truth claims of the past. Rather, an ever more comprehensive body of objective knowledge must be put to use. Progress must be made evident by enabling objective reason to be exercised more quickly, thoroughly, accurately, and efficiently - that is to say, better - than ever before. The abstraction of reason, in tandem with the idea of progress, drives it towards mechanization. As an emphasis on reason moves away from the flexibility of the individual's cognitive response to experience, it generates a formulaic rigidity of thought. The rules and structures that set reason free from the biases of subjectivity, objectify thought so that it can become "an automatic, self-activating process; an impersonation of the machine that it produces itself so that ultimately the machine can replace it."⁴⁷ Objective reason is a way of knowing that not only enables the production of machines and technology that further our observational capacities, but one that enables those machines and technology, finally, to assume reason's task. By observing that things inevitably fall towards the earth, or that chunks of glass bend light, or that heat, when exposed to certain gases, can cause explosions, we have developed technology, we have produced machines. And these machines represent progress as they make use of our observations. More than this, however, they allow us to observe more closely, accurately, and quickly than before. Technology has enabled the individual to move from observing a leaf, to observing the cells of that leaf, to observing the features of that cell, to observing the chemical compounds that constitute that feature, to going out for coffee while her laboratory computer scans for variations in the samples that it has selected. Every such development provides proof of progress even as it increases the volume of our objective knowledge. However, since the types of observations and conclusions that objectivity demands are axiomatic, mathematical, finite, and structured, they can be programmed into and carried out by the machine itself. The machine is devoid of thought and feeling and as such, it exercises objective reason much better than the human individual can.

⁴⁷ Adorno & Horkheimer, pp25

The machine also embodies modernity perfectly; it allows not only for knowledge to be gathered more efficiently than in the past, but it enables the gathering of more knowledge, and constitutes an object of knowledge itself. The individual, as the subject who once exercised reason over the object, is rendered further obsolete by technology, diminished by the mechanization of her intellectual imperative.

Technology also allows for the more rapid dissemination of available knowledge. The machine is not only a tool for the more efficient acquisition of data, but, from the printing press to the Smartphone, it is a harbinger of what Guenon⁴⁸ calls hypermodernity, the speeding up of time through the ubiquity and instantaneity of access to information. As a result of technological progress, information is increasingly uniform; at first, the same book was printed en masse, and now the e-text is potentially accessible in the same form from every computer, e-reader, and cell phone worldwide. In modernity, individuals and institutions have access to an unprecedented body of information, all thanks to the machine. The machine has enabled objective reason to become universal in content, form, and availability. This is both a wonder and a cause for concern, in as much as those who control the machines control the content to which the individual has access, as well as controlling the manner in which it is presented. The ever increasing availability of knowledge means that not only is the individual no longer necessary as the subject who exercises reason, but that she needn't use reason for herself at all. Rather than observing and coming to conclusions, in modernity, the individual relies on the objective reason of others and while the individual's access to information is unprecedented, the information to which she has access is increasingly abstracted from her own experiences, uniform, selected, controlled, and presented to her by individuals and collectives which are in no way involved in the processes of her own reason. The individual finds herself becoming ever more unnecessary, trapped in the contradiction at the heart of modernity: the modern concept of realising one's own potential...clash[ing] with the power of "second nature", the technical apparatus designed to overcome natural limitations.⁴⁹

48 Versluis, A. (2006). Antimodernism. *TELOS*, 137 (Winter), 96-130, pp99

49 Rohkramer, T., (1999). Antimodernism, Reactionary Modernism and National Socialism: Technocratic Tendencies in Germany 1890-1945. *Contemporary European History*, 8 (1), 29-50, pp38

In spite of her diminishment by objectivity and mechanization, the individual remains at the centre of modernity's ideology. Bauman states that "needing to become what one is is the feature of modern living"⁵⁰ and he is right. Modernity clings - albeit futilely - to the enlightenment ideology of social and moral improvement through reason, which itself was a rejection of achieving the same aims through faith in revelation. However, reason in modernity is obsessed with objectivity and mechanization and – rather than freeing the individual from the tyranny of conflicting and biased claims to truth, as well as from the task of exercising reason – it has burdened the individual with the laborious effort of constructing and presenting a self. No longer the subject who exercises reason, but an all too replaceable object of it, the individual's identity is transformed "from a "given" into a "task."⁵¹ The individual, in modernity, must define herself against, or at least amidst, the myriad other objects amongst which she moves. The option is available, of course, to simply be defined by the conclusions of objective reason, an option that denies the last vestiges of the self even as it releases the individual from responsibility. For subjectivity, once delegitimated, becomes an individual's responsibility. As the individual "disappears before the apparatus which he serves"⁵² she is alienated from her devalued subjectivity, from her experientially based sense of self; her subjectivity becomes a somewhat arbitrary position, that must be chosen, that can be defined and inhabited only by a choice or a series of choices that must be made, affirmed, and represented constantly,⁵³ rather than a vital and intrinsic part of herself. These constantly self-declaring individuals are required to first find and then maintain their chosen self-hood. But as free as they may be to make these choices, the scope of their choices is limited by what the reasonable society has made available. In modernity, the business of bureaucracy, social administration, and the state, is no longer that of the objective definition, discussion, and resolution of a collective's problems. Rather its business is that of the market, of protecting the means of producing, advertising, and making available

50 Bauman, pp32

51 Ibid, pp17-18

52 Adorno & Horkheimer, ppxiv

53 Kort, W.A., (1990). "Religion and Literature" in Postmodernist Contexts. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 58:4 (575-588). Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org> , pp588

the means of an individual's subject-position/self definition and expression⁵⁴. The state as economic administrator offers choice and variety, but it controls and limits the available choices; the freedom to choose, to “become what one is” is limited to “the use of mass produced and merchandised commodities.”⁵⁵

54 Bauman, pp38-41

55 Ibid, pp84

4.2 Modernity and Religion

Modernity, in its obsession with objective reason, exercises a form of categorical violence; “that which it does not reduce to numbers...becomes illusion; modern positivism writes it off.”⁵⁶ By designating only the objectively observable and repeatable as truth, modernity delegitimizes religion – including its expressions as myth, symbol, morality, and community - declaring it to be unforgivably unreasonable, a worthless remnant of an uninformed past and its unenlightened traditions. Drawing on an argument put forward by, amongst others, Horkheimer and Adorno – that “the proscription of superstition has always signified not only the process of domination but its compromise”⁵⁷ - I posit that it is the repression of religion in modernity (where religion is understood as an alternative epistemology) that facilitates modernity’s critique.

Before exploring this argument further, I feel it would be prudent to clarify quite what I am referring to when I use the term “religion”. I do not mean “a religion” in the sense of an organized system of beliefs and practices geared towards a posited sacred. This conception of religion - problematised by the likes of Cantwell-Smith⁵⁸ and Masuzawa⁵⁹ - has led to the establishment and widespread acceptance of terms such as Christianity, Islam, Shinto, and Hinduism; terms that take varied and often conflicting or contradictory beliefs and practices and combine them into convenient - if somewhat forced and erroneous - categories. Such an understanding of religion also excludes individual and unsystematic forms of spiritual engagement, those experienced by the uninitiated individual or in ways that these categorically legitimised religions fail to recognise. Though such an understanding does, of course, inform my own interpretation of what constitutes religion, such categories play only a small part. I would argue that religion has a far broader meaning than this, one that, in the interests of my argument, begins with the irrationality that modernity seeks to exclude. Drawing heavily on

56 Ibid, pp7

57 Ibid, pp39

58 Cantwell-Smith, W., (1962), *The Meaning and End of Religion*. New York, New York., U.S.A: Macmillan

59 Masuzawa, T., (2005), *The Invention of World Religions, Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A: Chicago University Press

Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*,⁶⁰ my understanding of religion encompasses all aspects of existence affected by the felt presence of the numinous. The numinous – a term that I prefer for its comparative unfamiliarity, and its distance from the connotations of “sacred” and “divine” – denotes a “non-rational, non-sensory experience or feeling whose primary and immediate object is outside the self.”⁶¹ According to Otto, this immediate object inspires a combination of terror and fascination in the individual and elicits “a unique feeling-response, which can be in itself ethically neutral and claims consideration in its own right,”⁶² but that makes the individual aware of “its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures.”⁶³ This object that Otto designates the numinous echoes Kierkegaard's “idea”, and is echoed in Levinas' “ethics”; the numinous refers to an utterly irreducible other, an absolute that demands a response. The presence of the numinous is a feeling or experience that elicits a *sui generis* response; a response unique to this unique experience. But that response needn't take the form of ritual, or of morality, of institution, song, image, community, symbol, myth, or even utterance, but can inspire any or all of these. The felt presence of the numinous can occur in any area of life, be it prayers and pilgrimages, or aspects of environmental movements and sports events.

Objective reason is understood by its proponents as a way of knowing that can, and eventually will, explain everything, in a way that is valid to everyone. However, religion - as the individually, subjectively felt presence of the numinous, and the various responses elicited by it - renders reason's claims to totality false:

the infinite that is other to us continually disturbs, disrupts, and, if you like, deconstructs each totality we seek to construct, every logos into which we try to make everything fit⁶⁴

as do the beliefs and practices that this infinite inspires. The idea of the numinous, of infinity,

60 Otto, R., (1952). *The Idea of the Holy*. London, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press

61 Ibid, pp6

62 Ibid, pp10

63 Ibid, pp10

64 Matusik, M.J., Westphal, M., (Eds.) (1995), *Kierkegaard in Post/Modernity*. Indiana, U.S.A: Indiana University Press, pp266

aims at understanding and representing of something, but the something that it aims at outstrips the borders and constructs of representational, objectifying thought⁶⁵; the individual cannot reasonably observe the numinous, he cannot come to objective conclusions about it, he cannot show the numinous to others, presenting it to them logically, and so, if he is to be considered reasonable, he must deny the numinous' existence. The starting point of the numinous as experiential- and furthermore, experienced by an individual - places it at odds with objective reason. A reasonable individual can, however, observe the responses elicited by the numinous, but as these responses are grounded in something that he cannot reasonably observe, these responses too are denied validity or are discussed as phenomena/phenomenological, classified and ordered by what can be observed, that is by what they cause people to do. In modernity religion is permitted only as a "cognition free, special area of social activity."⁶⁶ Of course, objective reason has been used, on numerous occasions, to try and assimilate religion, to explain it away; Nietzsche,⁶⁷ Freud,⁶⁸ and, much later, Peter Berger,⁶⁹ have suggested that the gods and their attendant religions are simply socially constructed coping strategies; Marx⁷⁰ dismissed religion as social control through distraction and habit; and William James⁷¹ and Aldous Huxley⁷² tried to reduce the numinous to neurochemistry. Such explanations, though they may provide the dominant order with the illusion of explanatory success, do little to affect the self-understanding and cultural significance of individuals, communities, events, objects, and acts involved in engagement with the numinous. Religion remains undeniably present, infuriatingly unscientific, and wilfully subjective in spite of its oft-declared irrelevance. It is modernity's irresolvable other; encompassing types of experience and ways of knowing that modernity not only refuses to, but is fundamentally incapable of acknowledging as valid.

65 Perpich, D. (2008). *The Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas*. Stanford, California, U.S.A: Stanford University Press, pp58-59

66 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp25-26

67 Nietzsche, F. W., (1974). *The Gay Science*, (Walter Kaufmann, trans.). New York, New York, U.S.A: Random House

68 Freud, S., (1939). *Moses and Monotheism*. New York, New York, U.S.A: Random House

69 Berger, P.L., (1967). *The Sacred Canopy: elements of a sociological theory of religion*. Garden City, New York, U.S.A: Doubleday

70 O'Malley, J., (Ed.), (1970). *Marx's Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University press

71 James, W., (1902). *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York, New York, U.S.A: Longman, Green, & Co.

72 Huxley, A. (1956) *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell*. New York, new York, U.S.A: Harer & Brothers

Why does it matter that religion stakes a claim to a way of knowing that reason cannot subsume? The exclusion of religion from modernity enables the establishment of productive critical dialogue. As modernity pushes religion away, religion gains critical distance from it; religion is not involved in the rationalising projects of modernity and so is able to see modernity's limitations, just as modernity, disassociated from experiences of the numinous and the demands that such experiences make, is often able to expose the weaknesses of religious thought. Where objective reason is the dominant epistemology, the persistence of religion, in all its forms, provides protection against modernity's ideological monopoly, just as enlightenment thought helped to undermine the intellectual control exercised by the Church. By excluding expressions of religion, rendering it a present but invalid form of thought, modernity inadvertently saves itself from the logocentric totalitarianism towards which it is inherently geared.

In addition to acting as a partner in critical dialogue, religion is capable of instigating change, of providing solutions to modernity's ostensible mistakes, and supplementing its perceived lack. Versluis, in his essay *Antimodernism*⁷³, describes religion - in the inherent anti-modernism produced by its exclusion - as having a prophetic voice. The prophet does not only speak out against the dominant order, but also issues instructions for change; to use Kierkegaard's unashamedly Christian terminology "Prophetic preaching of the law is followed by the prophetic gospel."⁷⁴ Religion is a creative area of both individual and collective life. Those people and groups whose lives are in some way directed towards the numinous actively construct new codes of conduct, philosophies, ethical systems, theories, and values that are - sometimes radically, and sometimes only moderately - different to those favoured by modernity. As such, religion is able to do more than simply attack modernity's shortcomings, it can also provides alternatives and additions to it; religion acts as the necessary problem both for and of modernity.

73 Versluis, pp129

74 Westphal, pp 17

What then are the ostensible mistakes and perceived lacks that religion is able to criticise and ameliorate? In shunning the religious, reasonable society has “witnessed a loss of mystery, a loss of awe, a loss of the sacred myth that infused life with transcendent possibilities,”⁷⁵ as well as “a rising tide in all advanced societies of clinical depression...distrust...[and] alienation.”⁷⁶ It is perhaps unfair to infer that these two occurrences are linked. However, if we look at what religion - as a source of mystery, awe, and sacred myth - provides within both individual and collective life, then the correspondence makes a significant degree of sense. As I discussed in section 4.1, the process of objectification fragments the individual, places him at a distance from both himself and from the other individuals around him, that is to say, it alienates him from himself and from others. Religious anti-modernism often points to this sense of alienation as one of the most ubiquitous and pernicious consequences of modernity. As both the subject that uses reason, and an object of it, the individual develops an understanding of himself as one object among many; he “allows himself to be treated as an object, and delivers himself over to knowledge,”⁷⁷ “reduced to the nodal point of the conventional responses and modes of operation expected of him.”⁷⁸ In effect, he becomes both the subject and the object of instrumental reason and can find himself living, as a result, a very instrumental life. His self-hood is only valid in as much as it provides a location from which to exercise objective thought, and so, the singularity and unity of the individual's self-hood is denied; his self-awareness is fragmented and reduced to an axiom, an abstraction, a subject-position whose purpose is simply to facilitate the deployment of objective observation, a subjectivity as available to others as it is to him. The individual thus experiences a feeling of nothingness. This nothingness is not that which Otto describes, a sense of contextualising awe inspired by the absolute, but is rather, a sense of insignificance, irrelevance, and expendability. The systematization of reason in modernity, rather than liberating the individual, annihilates him:

the individuals of the contemporary generation are fearful of existence...

75 Ostwalt, C., (2003). *Secular Steeples - Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.A: Trinity Press International, pp 25

76 Lane, R.E., (2000). *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies*. New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A: Yale University Press, pp 3

77 Perpich, pp75

78 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp28

only in great masses do they dare to live, and they cluster together en masse in order to feel that they amount to something.⁷⁹

By annihilating the individual, objective reason places him in a position of non-morality; if the individual cannot relate to himself as a self, if he is alienated from his own unique subjectivity, then he is certainly incapable of relating to other objectified individuals as *sui generis* selves. Modern individuals form collectivities but not communities, interacting in the superficial, transactional manner predicated by the subject-object relationship. This is the major criticism that Levinas levels against modernity in his discussions of ethics as he argues for a relationship to the other person that is not mediated by knowledge or understanding and hence does not approach the other through the abstraction or generality of a horizon.⁸⁰

The objectification of the individual reduces him to a use, a concept, a sign, a representation, but the numinous, in Levinas' writings, makes us aware of radical alterity and functions "as a trope to express the inadequacy of every representation to the singularity of the other who faces me."⁸¹ The numinous is an Other that makes the other credible; if we cannot reduce the numinous, then irreducibility is possible and the singularity of an individual becomes plausible. Kierkegaard, one of religious anti-modernism's earlier proponents, attributes a similar function to the numinous:

the self cannot be a self until, in addition to relating itself to itself, it also relates itself to another... one can become oneself only through relating the synthesis of opposing aspects of oneself to a third party – God as irreducible other.⁸²

The mystery, awe, and transcendent possibility embodied by the numinous demonstrate to the alienated individual a completeness and integrity through which he is able to unite his fragmented self-awareness. It enables him to relate to other individuals as singular beings and to understand himself as one. This relational act arouses in the individual a fundamental empathy

79 Westphal, pp39

80 Perpich, pp39-40

81 Ibid, pp49

82 Matusik & Westphal, pp100

and in doing so, calls him to moral responsibility and facilitates community.⁸³

The exclusion of religion from modernity has negative consequences on a wider socio-political level as well. As modern reason objectifies the individual, alienating him from himself, from other selves, and from the numinous, so it alienates society from that which gives its structures and imperatives meaning. Objective reason, while

it can tell us how to be effective (how to achieve our ends) and how to be efficient (how to achieve them at the least cost to ourselves)...has nothing to say about what ends we should pursue or what means we may not employ in their pursuit.⁸⁴

As a society's administrative structures move away from their traditionally religious past, that society's administration suffers a crisis of legitimation. Modernity, in the interest of objectivity, demands secularization, demands the separation of religion – understood to be unreasonable and problematically subjective - from politics and economics. The removal of religion, however, creates a vacuum of meaning, a lack of ideals to guide the development of political and economic policies. This leaves the pre-ethical will to both power and profit free to act as society's guiding ideals.⁸⁵ The modern secular society legitimises its exclusion of religion as a form of egalitarianism; it has been repeatedly demonstrated that the involvement of religion in politics - particularly of institutional religion - has contributed to the privileging of the few and the oppression of the many. However modern secular society, with its de-humanising objectivity and its “constant amoral relativity,”⁸⁶ can be just as oppressive; the working classes are exploited by capitalism and political hegemony represses diversity and secular societies often construct governments that are more concerned with money and might than they are with man. What religious anti-modernists like Kierkegaard make clear, is that the exclusion of religion from modernity has resulted in the exclusion of ethical guidance from social administration, and that what is needed is not a return to pre-enlightenment systems of social administration, but a constant responsibility to an ethical ideal that transcends the political and the economic.

83 Ibid, pp50

84 Westphal, pp118-119

85 Ibid, pp119

86 Ibid, pp51

Levinas and Kierkegaard – Jewish and Christian respectively - both level quite religiously specific criticisms against modernity. Modernity does objectify the reasoning individual and fragments and alienates her in the process. Modernity, also, through its emphasis on reason, does advocate non-moral systems of social administration that are potentially harmful to the societies that they administer. Not everyone will see these aspects of modernity as problematic, and of course, not everyone, not even every religious anti-modernist, will engage with the numinous, as it is described above, nor have faith in it as the best response to modernity's ostensible failures. However, what the theories discussed above do show is that religion – as the numinous and the response elicited by it – provides an epistemological position outside of objective reason, a position that both enables modernity's critique and that offers possible solutions to the problems that it perceives.

4.3 Religion and Literature

Where the theories of Levinas and Kierkegaard discussed above focus on the importance – especially the individual and ethical importance - of the numinous, the theories I address in this sub-chapter look more towards the importance of expressing it. Over the next few pages I examine the importance of myth and symbol – as expressions of religion - as a means of both connecting with and communicating experiences of the numinous. At the beginning of my last sub-chapter I accused modernity of categorical violence, of excluding the numinous and the responses it elicits. How does this violence, manifesting as the delegitimation of religious imagery, inhibit imagination? How does the use of myth and symbol enable individuals and collectives to imagine and create alternatives to modernity, to connect with the numinous and to productively explore that connection?

There is a linguistic theory, widely referred to as the “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis”, which posits that the scope of our thought is constrained by our language⁸⁷. Though neither religion nor modernity can, strictly speaking, be called languages, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis raises an important point with regards to modernity's exclusionary practices; Whorf claims that

thinking itself is in a language...And every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others, in which is culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but analyses nature, notices or neglects types of relationship and phenomena, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of the consciousness.⁸⁸

In modernity only certain ideas and concepts – such as individualism and progress - are considered to be valuable, and so, these concepts dominate a society's acts of expression. These acts of expression – linguistic, artistic, legal, and commercial alike – constitute the modern individual's semantic world, and it is through these expressions, and the limited range of concepts that they communicate, that she learns to understand and interpret the world around

87 Carroll, J.B. (ed.). (1956). *Language, thought, and reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

88 Ibid, pp173

her. Thus, the individual's thought is limited by these concepts, restricted to what these concepts - at worst - immediately express, or, - at best - what synthesis they enable. Her cultural milieu inhibits her access to alternative epistemologies, and, in doing so, inhibits her ability to think outside the axiomatic square:

The dutiful child of modern civilization is possessed by a fear of departing from the facts which, in the very act of perception, the dominant conventions of science, commerce, and politics – cliché like – have already moulded.⁸⁹

As discussed, religion is not a valued conceptual source in modernity and, as such, its expression is often trivialised or discounted. However, “without its expression thought thinks nothing,”⁹⁰ that is to say, without the communication of religious ideas, without access to the language (broadly speaking) that expresses the numinous, the individual has difficulty thinking about it, difficulty accessing the ideas and concepts, and the experiences behind the expressions. The exclusion of religious imagery means that when the individual finds herself “needing mystery, needing to think in some other way than empirically, needing to visualize in some other way than literally”⁹¹ - if she is even able to conceive of the possibility - then she is at loss.

What the encounter with religious imagery provides for the individual in modernity is access to “creative mythos” as an alternative to modernity’s “critical logos,”⁹² to a broader semantic world with which to formulate responses to modernity’s many challenges. Paul Ricoeur, one of the theorists from whom I draw substantial inspiration, expresses a hope that

in the borderlands beyond calculative reason there might be a world of transcendent possibilities (mediated through the text) that can re-figure and remake the world of the reader.⁹³

That is to say, a world of possibilities that is expressed in the text through myth and symbol. In

89 Adorno & Horkheimer, ppxiv

90 Levinas, E., (1972). *Humanism of the Other* (Nidra Poller, trans.). Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A: University of Illinois Press, pp17

91 Ostwalt, pp26

92 Kearney, R., (1995). *Poetics of Modernity: Toward a Hermeneutic Imagination*. Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, U.S.A: Humanities Press International, pp91

93 Ricoeur, P., Wallace, M.I., (Ed), (1995). *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*. Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A : Fortress Press, pp2

Ricoeur's work the symbol functions similarly to the sign, but where

the sign possesses a relatively obvious and conventional set of denotations, the symbol's meanings are polysemic, difficult to discern, and virtually inexhaustible in depth.⁹⁴

Unlike the sign, the religious symbol (and its contextualising, narrative form, myth) sidesteps the “referential function of ordinary discourse,”⁹⁵ and ignores the call to literally describe, to point out and represent a material reality, to communicate objectively and efficiently. Instead it seeks to represent something beyond material reality; it evokes the numinous and the “non-literal world of unimagined possibilities”⁹⁶ that it constitutes. By referring to something that exists above, beyond, and behind the given world, to something that cannot be directly or logically represented, the symbol engages the individual in active, imaginative interpretation, in what Eliade refers to as a “creative hermeneutics.”⁹⁷ Creative hermeneutics is an effort to understand the religious symbol “on its own plane of reference,”⁹⁸ to see beyond the immediate sign and to decipher the “fundamental existential situations”⁹⁹ that it seeks to express. He claims that

a considerable enrichment of consciousness results from the hermeneutical effort of deciphering the meaning of myths, symbols, and other traditional religious forms.¹⁰⁰

The individual finds “redemption through imagination,” because “in imagining his possibilities man can act as prophet of his own existence,”¹⁰¹ and furthermore, he “attain[s] a deeper knowledge of man”¹⁰² and his connection to the numinous. As symbol and myth engage the individual in imaginative interpretation they rouse him from his unquestioning conversation with the mundane semantic world and direct his attention towards the numinous and the

94 Ibid, pp5

95 Ibid, pp42

96 Ibid, pp8

97 Eliade, M., (1969). *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*. Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A:

Chicago University Press

98 Ibid, pp4

99 Ibid, ppiii

100 Ibid, ppiii

101 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp7

102 Eliade, pp3

infinite, transcendent possibilities that it provides.

I have constructed religion's exclusion from modernity in a primarily negative manner; however, it must be acknowledged that this exclusion can also be interpreted as beneficial. Religion's epistemological delegitimation has, in a way, given myth and symbol more freedom. It means that when myth and symbol appear in secular society they do so in a way that is often at odds with the continuing forms of institutionalised religion, and they can act as much as a critique against such forms as the enlightenment once did and modernity still does. Myth once "intended report, naming, the narration of the Beginning: but also presentation, confirmation, [and] explanation."¹⁰³ It was considered to be true, if not necessarily the Truth, and was thus burdened with the job that science and history now carry. But religious myth and symbol, in being declared "a cognition free special area of social activity,"¹⁰⁴ along with art and fiction, have been freed from the burden of explanation; "having eliminated the abuse of myth as explanation of how things are, we are free to appreciate its role as exploration of how things might be."¹⁰⁵ Such an understanding of myth – and symbol, as that which myth narrates - is by no means a universal one; many individuals and communities of faith would balk at the suggestion that the stories and images through which they represent their connection to the numinous are anything but literally True. However, for the individual, who has assimilated objective reason as an epistemology, and is as a result incapable of living "the great symbolisms of the sacred in accordance with the original belief in them,"¹⁰⁶ the tension between her critical scepticism and the transcendent world of the religious image can be a productive one. Struggling with alienation from herself and those around her, the individual is drawn towards the transcendent possibilities offered by religion. At the same time, she is wary of emotional and pre-logical responses. Educated in suspicion and criticism, she responds to myth and symbol in an exploratory and somewhat deconstructive manner, contextualising the religious image and interpreting it metaphorically rather than literally. Religion thus departs from polemics and returns to poetics. This dialogic process - in which the religious challenges the assumptions of

103 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp8

104 Ibid, pp25-26

105 Kearney, pp91

106 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp5-6

reason, and objective reason challenges the claims of religious expressions' accuracy and relevancy - enables the content of the myth or symbol to be taken seriously without demanding the dissolution of the reasoning subject. Not only do myth and symbol extend the individual's thought towards the possibilities that the religious may present, but the religious image itself acquires new significance in the process. Rather than remaining a vestige of an uninformed past, the individual's hermeneutic endeavour imbues the myth or symbol with contemporary understandings, new contexts and connections, with nuances of meaning that revitalise it and renew its semantic relevance.

Religion's exclusion has also allowed it a greater degree of cultural permeation. Having lost its hegemonic significance, especially in European and European-derived societies, religion has been forced to compete with other cultural forms:

When religious institutions no longer dominate culture, they lose their grip on what might otherwise be their prerogative – the religious sensibility and the striving of humanity toward the sacred. With this loss of prerogative, religious concerns find expression in other cultural forms so that cultural products perceived to be secular can carry authentic and meaningful religious content.¹⁰⁷

Though the religious institution once provided religious imagery with a greater amount of perceptible power, it also somewhat limited the forms that it could officially take. In modernity, religion has been aligned with art, music, and literature, but “art comes into play where knowledge forsakes mankind.”¹⁰⁸ Religion's consignment to the irrational world of artistic expression appears to be a demotion, and in many ways it is. Institutional forms of religion have been forced to sell themselves and compete for attention. They have had to make themselves more entertaining in order to try and engage the individual in communication. But such forms of religion carry the weight of history, the perceived responsibility for oppressive political regimes, wars, and - most offensive to modernity - non-progressive ideologies. For non-institutional forms of religion, the shift from a distinct, somewhat political sphere of culture to a shared and ostensibly secular realm of cultural expression has been a positive move. Religious

107 Ostwalt, pp7

108 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp19

imagery now manifests in pop-songs, comic books, high art pieces, and poetry, meaning that “secular and popular culture might contain more authentic belief than official religious theologies.”¹⁰⁹ As well as allowing for the more widespread availability of myth and symbol, religion's disassociation from institutional forms also allows it to be explored in unorthodox ways. Myth and symbol can now be interpreted by the individual in ways that are not only informed by the critical demands of objective reason, but by personal aesthetic preferences. What once might have been called blasphemous or perverse is now permissible; the hegemonic mediation of symbolic interpretation has been dissolved.

In the following discussion I will be exploring how Elizabeth Knox's *Dreamhunter Duet* expresses the relationship between religion and modernity within the world of the text. The novels themselves are representative of how religion manifests in modernity; they are young adult fantasy novels, written by an atheist with an aesthetic interest in religion and marketed as entertainment through secular, commercial channels. They manifest the way in which “popular cultural forms, including literature, film, and music are becoming increasingly more visible vehicles of religious images, symbols, and categories”¹¹⁰ and simultaneously embody and describe religion's association with art and entertainment, its exclusion from legitimate thought. The *Duet* also explores the relationship between religion and modernity on a narrative level. More than simply including religious elements in a secular cultural form, these novels express the conflict between an industrial, bureaucratic, secular modernity and an ethically demanding alterity that disrupts and de-constructs it. *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* depict – in the form of the Place - a literal “borderland beyond calculative reason” reference? from which both criticism and redemption come. *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* thus create images that embody and enact the critical process in which the novels themselves participate: as the Place brings the numinous and its epistemological challenge to the citizens of Southland, so these novels bring religious imagery to the post-enlightenment reader.

109 Ostwalt, pp7

110 Ibid, pp29

5.0 Conflict and Co-operation

I begin my analysis of *The Dreamhunter Duet* at its broadest point, examining the social institutions depicted in these novels and exploring how their relationships with each other can be seen to express religion's critical engagement with modernity. Dividing Southland's social organization into three parts - state, church, and culture - I discuss the dialectical relationship between these areas in terms of both co-operation and conflict. In my argument, the state - embodied in *The Duet* by the Dream Regulatory Body (DRB)- will be read as a strong representation of modernity; of the will to power, profit, and progress through the deployment of objective modes of organization and control. The Temple of St. Lazarus is an established and once influential religious institution that must now compete with the state for political and economic power, and as such fills the role of the church in a modern secular society. Culture, in this instance, refers to what could be called "art and entertainment", as opposed to "a culture", the sum of any given civilisation's governmental, religious, artistic, educational, or military parts. For my analysis I will refer to Dreaming as the primary manifestation of culture in Southland. More than just entertainment, however, I argue that, as a form of art, Dreaming presents Southland's inhabitants with a secular point of access to the numinous. As entertainment, Dreaming can be understood as furthering the ends of the DRB, yet it can also be seen as a path to transcendence and alterity, a way to call the state to ethical responsibility and to challenge the Temple's ongoing religious relevancy. Both Dreaming and the Temple exist in uneasy tension with the DRB, which manipulates one while mocking and devaluing the other. On the other hand, the DRB can also be understood as protecting the Dreaming industry from the negative and dogmatically biased judgement of the Temple, which warns against it as unholy and dangerous. The Temple recognises the potential for both propaganda and pacification inherent in Dreaming, and as such, its members work to oppose the unethical activities of the state. By discussing this network of complementary and antagonistic relationships I show not only how Dreaming and the Temple - as images of the religious - can be seen to critically engage with modernity as embodied by the state, but how, by critically engaging, they show the potential to develop a network of ethically sound and mutually

responsive social institutions.

5.1 The Isle of the Temple

Through Founderston - Southland's capital – runs the Sva river. In the middle of this river is an island, a district of Founderston known as The Isle of the Temple. As its name suggests, it is home to the Temple of St. Lazarus, and its head; the Grand Patriarch Erasmus Tiebold (a distant relative of Chorley's). The Temple constitutes the most obvious image of religion in *The Dreamhunter Duet*. The Temple itself is an imposing, domed, marble building, covered in ornate, gilded, masonry. It has an attached palace, in which the Grand Patriarch resides. It has guards in embroidered capes, its own choirs, and fronts onto Founderston's main square; there is much about the wealth and ceremony of the Temple that evokes the Vatican. However, the Temple was founded early in Southland's history, when Founderston was little more than a settler town and a river port, and the story of its founding reveals quite a different parallel to organized religion as we know and understand it. A group of immigrants led by John Hame - the ancestor of Tziga, Marta, and Laura - fled from an island called Elprus to the other side of the world, to Southland. The Elpra had been forced from their homeland by a catastrophic volcanic eruption in which all those not fishing or sailing at the time had been killed. Those that survived and fled Elprus brought with them the bones of St. Lazarus, excavated from their ruined Temple. In their new home, the Elpra re-established the Temple of St. Lazarus. The images that the novels provide of the Temple of St. Lazarus - referred to at one point as the Southern Orthodox Church - draw far more strongly on Greek Orthodox tradition than on Catholic or any form of Protestant sect. In the Greek Orthodox Church, St. Lazarus is believed to have fled Pharisaic persecution to the somewhat homophonic island of Cyprus. There he lived for thirty years before being appointed the Bishop of Kition by St. Mark and St. Barnabas. When he died (again), Lazarus' remains were enshrined within the church at Larnaca¹¹¹. Furthermore, Erasmus Tiebold, as Grand Patriarch, bears a title strikingly similar to that of the head of the Orthodox churches: the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Hames and the other Elpra are described as being small, olive skinned, and as having dark, curly hair, much like the native inhabitants of Cyprus, and Tziga, Laura, and Marta use demotic Greek in their

111 <http://www.kypros.org/Cyprus/larnaca.html>, accessed 23/07/2012, at 3.07 p.m.

family's folk songs. As such, the Temple represents a strong and affluent institutional presence, but one that is imported and has always existed separately from Southland's government, its power based in popularity and participation rather than in political involvement.

The Elpran population were especially valued for the revenue that the Temple generated as a site of pilgrimage; the hotels, guest-houses, and even convents on the Isle benefited financially from the presence of devotees. But:

by the time Laura's father fell from the Sisters Beach coach [and into the Place], business wasn't what it had been. Faith wasn't what it had been, and there were fewer pilgrims than in former times. The hotels had needed custom, and welcomed dreamhunters as guests.¹¹²

And so, as faith waned and dreaming boomed, the Isle's hotels and guest houses were transformed into the parlours and salons in which dreams were performed until "the Isle was as full of the business of dreamhunting as it was of the business of the Orthodox church."¹¹³ As the commercial importance of Dreaming grew, the Isle became home to not only the Temple, but to the Dream Regulatory Body as well. At the opposite end of the Isle to the Temple, on reclaimed swamp-land, stands a tower in a walled park; the offices of the DRB. "The Dream Regulatory Body was set up under a piece of legislation known as the Intangible Resources Act,"¹¹⁴ an act formulated to govern the supply and performance of dreams, Southland's primary entertainment commodity. Presided over by the Secretary of the Interior, Cas Doran, it is the Body's responsibility to monitor traffic into and out of the Place, to license dreamhunters, rangers, dream parlours, and palaces, to classify and, essentially, copyright dreams, and to issue and manage contracts for dreams deemed to be for the "public good". The DRB aims, ostensibly, to protect the safety and the financial interests of both the dreamhunters and those that do business with them. By classifying dreams, the public are protected from potentially harmful or distressing content; by licensing parlours, the proprietor's profits are protected and their patrons are assured of quality and comfort; by monitoring traffic, the DRB is better

112 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp271

113 Ibid, pp271

114 Ibid, pp44

equipped to ensure that no-one goes missing, wanders in and gets lost in the Place; copyrighting protects an individual dreamhunter's claim to any dream she might discover, and so protects her potential income; and by setting an age at which dreamhunters can Try and be licensed, the DRB protects children from the financial ambitions of their parents. However, as Doran declared the Place “a valuable resource belonging to our nation” that “cannot be an ungoverned frontier,”¹¹⁵ the DRB seized administrative control over the Place and its “intangible resources.” That is to say, they seized control over the “pre-production of the [dream as] cultural artefact.”¹¹⁶ And this control is limiting; the DRB use categorization and supervision to restrict the activities of dreamhunters, shaping their involvement in the production and performance of culture, determining the conditions under which the cultural artefact can be made and the ways in which it can be used. Furthermore, this control is somewhat abused; Doran, unbeknownst to the public or to most dreamhunters, uses his authority over this thriving area of Southland's culture to further his own economic and political ends. He manipulates dreamhunters into inflicting nightmares on criminals, broadcasting propaganda, spying on and kidnapping persons of interest, and, most insidiously, into infecting Founderston's residents with a dream known as “Contentment”, an hideously pacificatory dream that will ensure their compliance until his political aims have been achieved.

With the DRB inhabiting one end, and St. Lazarus' the other, the Isle of the Temple creates a spatial metaphor for the relationship between these two institutions; they are as opposed ideologically as they are physically. The DRB, its employees, as well as a great deal of the public, view the Temple as a puritanical, obsolete institution. The Temple views the DRB as corrupt, unethical, and more concerned with profit and progress than with the people that it governs. Their relationship is typical of that between the church and state in modernity, where religion is viewed as “a precarious or as a less-than-legitimate way of understanding reality,”¹¹⁷ and the state not as an agora, or a group of individuals dedicated to solving the problems of a social collective, but as an administrative machine, an embodiment of objective, systematic,

115 Ibid, pp44

116 Wevers, pp190

117 Ostwalt, pp3

rationality organised, governance¹¹⁸. But in the middle of the Isle of the Temple stands the Rainbow Opera, Southland's largest Dreaming venue, and if we continue to read the Isle as a spatial metaphor for the relationships between the institutions that occupy it, then it is Dreaming that stands between the Temple and the DRB.

118 Bauman, pp38-41

5.2 Dreaming

Dreaming plays the role of art and entertainment in the society of Founderston, as well as that of art *as* entertainment. It is fairly simple to read Dreaming as entertainment; dreamhunters venture into the Place, collecting dreams as though they were rolls of film, before returning to the mundane world, where they perform, sharing the dreams that they have collected with paying audiences in specially built hotel-cum-theatres. Reading Dreaming as art, however, is somewhat more complicated. Dreaming's artistic nature resides more in *what* the dreams do in society than in *how* they do it. Dreams are not, strictly speaking, acts of creative expression; dreamhunters, in most instances, have little to no control over what they present to their viewing public. The dreamhunter retrieves, from the Place, segments of immersive audio visual narrative, populated by pre-existing characters in fixed settings. The characters and settings in the dreams are not fantastic, the laws of physics are obeyed, and the weather, flora, fauna, architecture, language, and dress are all reasonable to their Southland audience, no creative license is taken in this regard. Some dreamhunters, known in their industry as "gifters" are capable of exercising a small amount control over the content of the dreams that they retrieve, grafting the faces of known people onto the characters in their dreams. "Novelists" too are able to alter the dreams that they perform, providing their audience with multiple perspectives within one dream, and some dreamhunters - Tziga Hame for example - are able to cut a dream short, waking up before undesirable content is presented. These minor adjustments, however, constitute the extent to which dreamhunters are able to modify their performances. Furthermore, most dreamhunters are able to catch most dreams. Some dreamhunters have speciality areas – a propensity for catching healing dreams or romantic dreams – but all are able to catch and perform dreams outside of these genres. Dreaming can thus be understood to inhabit a space in between the screening of a film and the performance of a play, embodying more the reproduction and commodification of existing works of art, more art as entertainment, than art as creativity, as the expression of an artist's own experiences, emotions, and relationship to his society.

How then can Dreaming be read as some - for lack of a better word - *purier* form of art, rather than simply as the reproduction of the aesthetically pleasing for entertainment? As mentioned above, the artistic nature of dreams resides more in *what the dreams do* in society than in *how they do it*; that is to say, it resides in *the content* that dreamhunters are presenting to their audiences and in the *effects* that these performances can (potentially) have for the dreamhunters themselves, for their audiences, and for Southland's social institutions. Although it is not fully understood until late in *The Dreamhunter Duet*, the Place from whence the dreams are retrieved is an at least partially-conscious entity, filling the heads of dreamhunters with images of Southland's possible future. Even if the dreamhunters themselves - as the closest thing to dreamhunting "artists" - are bypassed, the Place expresses from and into the nation's distinct cultural milieu, its experiences of and relationship to itself. The stories that it tells, through the segments of narrative that are caught, are bound up with the tormented memories of Lazarus, one of Southland's future inhabitants. He lays himself to rest in the heart of a giant Golem, his own head full of wishes for revenge, memories of loss and of his exploitation at the hands of a corrupt system. The Golem's head is full of promises and longing, of memories of his once-creator and of Lazarus' mother, Laura. Their wishes, promises, and memories manifest as dreams, transmitted back through time by the Golem as he seeks to protect Lazarus. The dreams - though performed in the time of the novel as entertainment - show not only "the future in the past: what modernity can and has looked like,"¹¹⁹ but also what modernity *must not* look like, what it must not be allowed to become. Dreaming is thus more than just entertainment; it is a source of social critique, fulfilling the critical, as well as the aesthetic potential of art in society. For if in "imagining his possibilities, man can act as a prophet of his own existence,"¹²⁰ then by exploring the possible aftermath of Southland's current socio-political trajectory, by imagining and depicting its consequences and outcomes for one of Southland's inhabitants, Dreaming facilitates the reconsideration and reform of both the nation's present and its possible future.

The temporal dislocation of the Place, its alignment with potentiality and futurity, also affords it a degree of transcendence. The dreams are set in a time that has not been, is not, and,

119 Wevers, pp196

120 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp7

as the outcome proves, may possibly never be. The dreams are therefore outside of time. They are also outside of normative space. Knox, in her collection of personal essays, describes the Place as being bigger than the geographical area it encompasses, the several hundred miles of its border containing a space so vast as to be immeasurable, “infinite and mysterious, like the inside of our heads.”¹²¹ The Place exists in relation to, but outside of, immanent space and time, transcending these and disrupting any sense of their continuity. As such, what is presented by dreamhunters to their audiences, is not only the potential effects of their current actions on their possible futures, but the tangible presence of something that surpasses, that exists beyond - but is involved - in the everyday world, something that resembles and evokes the numinous. Dreaming can also be understood to engender a more personal, individual sense of transcendence; by sharing a dream, the individual enters into a literally ecstatic state, standing outside of herself and, in terms of her subjective experience, becoming an entirely other person. It is common knowledge amongst Southland’s inhabitants that “The dream supplies another self.”¹²² It immerses the dreamer and their audience in a complete mental and emotional world, and - given the experiential nature of Dreaming - a tangible sense of (re)embodiment. These “other selves” enable Southland’s population to live out “the self-transcending powers of the imagination”¹²³ as a part of fairly routine cultural activity, and, as a result, they are empowered to move a little bit beyond “the always limiting character of perspectival, fragmented experience.”¹²⁴

Although the selves that the dreams provide are, for the most part, completely immersive, Tziga and Grace both exhibit an abstracted awareness of their other-self experiences. For example, Grace is aware that she is not trapped inside a coffin whilst dreaming “Buried Alive”, knowing instead that she is trapped in a hideous nightmare from which she must wake up. Tziga, in spite of being clearly affected by the stupefying powers of “Contentment”, maintains some cognizance of the fact that his mood is the result of a dream:

Tziga walked, slow and shaky, leaning on both of them. As they went along

121 Knox, E., (2008). *The Love School*. Wellington, New Zealand: Victoria University Press, pp350

122 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp138

123 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp3-4

124 Ibid, pp3-4

he said to Laura, ‘The thing about this dream, darling, is that even though the man is blissfully pleased with himself it’s the wasps eating the apricots that are most present... It’s as though the dream uses the man’s eyes like a camera to show us something more real than the story he’s telling himself about what a fine person he is.’

‘Da!’ Laura was floored by surprise and admiration. ‘You’re yourself.’

‘Not really. But I am a dreamhunter.’¹²⁵

This level of awareness, this recognition of dually experienced selves, seems to be limited to veteran dreamhunters. The individual becomes another being, and, as a result, is made aware – subconsciously for novices and consciously for dreamhunters like Tziga and Grace – of the sovereignty, the individuality, the *sui generis* being-ness of another as well as of the circumstantiality, fluidity, and impermanence of their own selves. They are drawn into a realm that exists beyond them, where they are not and others are. For Levinas “recognizing the infinity of the neighbour is an essential prior condition to recognizing the infinity of God.”¹²⁶ For Kierkegaard it is the other way around; the awareness of a transcendent that encompasses and goes beyond every individual is a necessary precondition for ethical action¹²⁷. Whether beginning with the Place, with potentiality outside of space and time, or with the experience of another *sui generis* self, the instances of transcendence engendered by Dreaming serve to draw the individual towards the numinous. This both renders dreaming an image of the numinous – if not an actual instance of it - and further links Dreaming to art, in as much as art, in its romantically ideal form, intends “something beyond itself,”¹²⁸ serving to present or re-present transcendence to its audience, so that he may live “not only in a historical and natural world but also in an existential, private world and in an imaginary Universe.”¹²⁹ Dreaming, like art, is capable of evoking responses beyond its immediate value as a commodity and the pleasure it provides, awakening an awareness of and engagement with transcendence, a world of meaning beyond the finite experience of the individual in her concrete position in time and space.

125 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp428

126 Matusik & Westphal, pp273

127 Ibid, pp273

128 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp5

129 Eliade, ppiv

Straddling, as it does, the world of entertainment and of art, Dreaming creates further tension between the DRB and the Temple. The DRB recognizes the lucrative opportunities that such a commodity provides, as well as its pacificatory and escapist potential. Pretty and pleasurable dreams can be used to distract Southland's inhabitants, keeping them entertained, diverting their attention from the state's more controversial and exploitative activities. Furthermore, their legislative involvement with this "intangible resource", this source and manifestation of Southland's culture - its relationship to and expression of itself - enables them to exercise a degree of ideological control. It is in the state's best interests to monitor this activity, to ensure that Dreaming is interpreted as frivolous entertainment and not as a source of ethical truth and of both socio-cultural and individual context. By separating dreams out into their uses and by controlling their acquisition and performance, the DRB directs a vital expression of transcendence to its own purposes, neutralizing the threat it potentially poses. The Temple is aware of the DRB's unethical use of Dreaming, and, by virtue of its involvement in the ethical demands of the numinous, sees the danger that this transcendent, religiously important area of art-as-culture poses when guided by the will to power and profit alone. This pits the Temple against the DRB on a level more bound to ethics than to the competition for authority in a secular nation. That said, the Temple itself is threatened by the transcendent potential of dreaming. Its monopoly over the religious is jeopardized by Dreaming as a secularly controlled means of access to the numinous. Dreaming itself calls into question the relevancy of traditional institutional control over the numinous, whilst also challenging the wisdom of its being administered by a non-moral state.

5.3 Church and State

In *Dreamhunter*, the Temple is almost invisible as a source of cultural, economic, or political power. Its physical presence is mentioned a handful of times and primarily as a landmark, descriptions of its imposing architecture contributing more to the creation of Founderston's turn-of-the-century (post-) Christian urban atmosphere than to any sense of a power-struggle or conflict of interests. That said, occasional mention *is* made of the Temple's puritanical preaching, with several characters dismissively mentioning both the Grand Patriarch's warnings against sharing dreams and the reports of swelling ranks of pledge-takers (members of the Temple's congregation who have sworn off Dreaming). The minimal visibility of the Temple of St. Lazarus in *Dreamhunter* reflects its minimisation in the day-to-day life of Southland's society. One of the most frequently projected effects of a society's modernisation is its secularization¹³⁰. Secularisation is meant here not only in the administrative sense of the separation of church and state, but in the sense of an expectation that religion's relevance to society will diminish in direct proportion to the increase in objective reason and its attendant cultural and institutional forms. In Southland the Temple and the state appear never to have been joined; secularity in the purely administrative sense is a *fait accompli*. However, the story of the Temple's founding, development, and eventual decline in the face of a burgeoning commodity-capitalist modernity mirrors the expected trajectory of *cultural* secularization. Once a force to be reckoned with, a source of wealth for the local tourism industry and of prestige for a developing colony, the Temple, in *Dreamhunter*, can be seen as representing religion in decline, a bastion of tradition and irrational belief, an image of that which modernity seeks to leave behind.

This reading is re-enforced by the attitudes of the novel's main characters. Cas Doran - the Secretary of the Interior and head of the DRB - is the primary representative of the State in the *Duet*. In spite of the fact that the Temple is vocal in its disapproval of Dreaming, Doran pays it little mind, dismissing the Grand Patriarch's concerns and failing - at least initially - to take

130 Ostwalt, pp2

the Temple's opposition to his dominion as any serious threat. Doran is convinced of his government's and his own superiority; not only does he have more influence than the Grand Patriarch, and his government more institutional power than the Temple, but he and the state also have the means of maintaining this power and influence, having nurtured a society which is "immune to the challenge from non-economic action,"¹³¹ where

Most political or moral levers capable of shifting or reforming the new order have been broken or rendered too short, weak or otherwise inadequate for the task.¹³²

More than simply being secure in his own power, Doran is secure in the correctness of his own and his government's actions. He considers himself to be a patriot, and so, to be acting in the best interests of Southland and its population. He truly believes he knows what is necessary for their ongoing success (where success is understood in terms of the nation's collective power and profit). He does not consider the use of dreams to manipulate and control the people of Southland to be immoral, or, rather, he considers the financial wellbeing and political expansion of Southland to be an end which is so beneficial to the population as a whole as to justify such dubious means. His motives are - if political power and economic growth are privileged - unassailably pure. Doran's society is, like ours, a capitalist democracy. A society where the individual's right to seek better for himself is paramount¹³³, and where the better off the nation is - financially and in terms of international politics - the better the individual is able to do this¹³⁴. Of course,

the problem is that people often choose of their own accord paths that do not lead to their well-being...[and] this view is heresy in a society whose economic and political institutions depend on individual choices and in which self-reliance and the belief that the individual *should* control his or her own destiny are canonical.¹³⁵

As such, the Temple's moral admonishments look puritanical, too restrictive for a society in the thrall of objective, non-moral reason (and its ideological offspring, capitalist democracy) and

131 Bauman, pp4

132 Ibid, pp4

133 Lane, pp3

134 Ibid, pp9

135 Ibid, pp9

Cas Doran is smugly aware of this. As his accomplice Maze Plasir so smugly and succinctly says:

The public knows what goes on. They may not want to be bothered with the details, but they know. The general public isn't fond of details. They know that this is a civilised nation, where no one is tortured, or lives in squalor [and] That's all they want to know.¹³⁶

Not only is the opposing voice weak, but, busy chasing better, more pleasurable, comfortable circumstances for themselves and their families, the inhabitants of Southland have no desire to listen to what it may be saying.

It is not only Doran, as embodiment of the state, whose attitude is dismissive of the Temple and its attitude towards Dreaming. Tziga's doctor reads to him from the paper, quoting the Patriarch's lament's against dreamhunters. The Grand Patriarch, in the article, has used the word for a dreamhunter's range of projection - "penumbra" - to evoke images of a dark and obscuring shadow over the human mind. The doctor, as a man of science, thinks the Patriarch a superstitious scaremonger and mocks his words, sarcastically suggesting that "Perhaps he would rather you called it a blast zone. Or, if we're describing circles, perhaps a bubo, like the boils of plague."¹³⁷ Chorley Tiebold is, in *Dreamhunter*, one of the Temple's biggest and most overt critics. He is an avowed atheist, a practical man, and, in contrast to his family's more aesthetically focussed dreamhunting activities, a documentary film-maker; focussed more on the real than the evocative. His family recognise him as a deeply reasonable being, with Laura invoking his opinions when discussing Hame history with her father. Laura says of an apocryphal family folk-tale that "it can't be proven, right? It's what Uncle Chorley would call unscientific,"¹³⁸ to which her father ruefully replies that "The gospels are a good source of things Chorley would call unscientific."¹³⁹ Chorley also excludes Laura's Aunt Marta - a deeply religious member of the Temple's congregation and personal friend of the Patriarch - from family affairs, as he is irritated and offended by their ideological differences. Chorley, like Doran, is secure in the superiority of his ideological position, and as such, easily dismisses the claims made from the

136 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp279

137 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp99

138 Ibid, pp23

139 Ibid, pp23

non-reasonable position of faith that the Temple inhabits.

Unsurprisingly, dreamhunters themselves resent the Temple's attitude; the puritanical tone of the Grand Patriarch's pronouncements come across as judgemental, and the implications of sinfulness and immorality loaded into his descriptions – in which dreamhunters and their audiences are “strangers sleeping together”¹⁴⁰ in “houses of unholy worship”¹⁴¹ – are offensive and demeaning, grounded in exclusivist faith, non-reasonable beliefs, and value claims. Not only does the antagonism of the Temple stand to inhibit individual freedoms, to interfere with the pursuit of power and profit, but the manner in which it is presented is unpleasant, it has the potential to make people feel bad about the things that they enjoy, thus reducing the Temple's popularity further; no-one likes being told off. Even Laura, a descendent of the original Hame, and the daughter of a man with deeply spiritual tendencies, struggles to respect the Grand Patriarch and the Temple on the grounds of their negative attitude towards the vastly popular cultural practice. But as Kierkegaard points out, what we call reason is never objective, it is a rationality that is always

both historically specific and socially functional...[that] secretly serves special interests by providing legitimation for the particular society whose acceptance of it enables it to wear the honorific title, Reason...By its overtones of universal and timeless necessity, it masks the particular and contingent interests that govern the thinking of those who use reason.¹⁴²

The dismissal of the Temple - by both the DRB and by Southland society in general - on the grounds of its non-reasonable claims is a problematic one, as their modernity, the commodity-capitalist democracy that they deem reasonable, is itself the product of “particular and contingent interests”. These interests are not only at odds with those of the Temple, but are, in practice, at odds with the wellbeing and freedom of Southland and with what they profess, on some levels, to be seeking.

And so, in *Dreamquake*, the church and state dynamic shifts, the tables turn, and the

140 Ibid, pp270

141 Ibid, pp270

142 Westphal, pp115

Temple becomes, not an attractive landmark, an historical relic and a voice of outdated values, but a significant threat to the unquestioned ideological dominance of the state, a refuge, and a reminder of equally important, if radically different, values. One of the greatest achievements of these novels is their depiction of the internal inconsistencies of modernity, the way in which they make plain the motives and the manipulations that enslave populations whilst pretending to enable their self-realization¹⁴³. Having already reached a point where the Truth of *religion* has been thrown into doubt, and its motivations and loyalties questioned and problematised, *The Dreamhunter Duet* depicts and speaks into a society in which the validity of *reason* needs now to be questioned. The Temple features far more heavily in the second half of the *Duet*. Before *Dreamhunter* ends, Chorley meets with the Grand Patriarch only to discover that he, aided by his social influence and his wealth, has knowledge of not only Tziga's whereabouts, but of the circumstances, the practices and plans that lead to his disappearance. With this knowledge comes the realisation, on Chorley's part, of both the Temple's potential power and the validity of their seemingly puritanical concerns. Though he may still disagree with their supernatural beliefs and take issue with the cultural form of institutional religion, Chorley is forced to concede their relevancy, and with his move towards co-operation we watch the conflict between reason and religion begin to diminish in terms of the relationships within the novels, even as the battle between church and state rages on.

After Laura's shocking performance of "Buried Alive", she retreats to her Aunt Marta's house. Her Aunt, as a dedicated member of the Temple's congregation and a personal friend of the Grand Patriarch, is ill equipped to deal with her nightmare-laden niece and arranges for her transportation to the Temple. There, Laura is sequestered in the Temple's dome to wait out the nightmare. High above the city, the residents of Founderston are safe from her repeat performances, and she is safe from Cas Doran's investigations. This turn of events necessitates a re-appraisal of the Temple's role in Southland, and in the novels themselves. Despite public perception of the Temple as antagonistically puritanical, the Grand Patriarch and his followers can be seen as protective, caring, fully engaged in their pastoral role. The Temple can be read as

143 Adorno & Horkheimer, ppxv

taking care of Southland's civilian population, and of Laura, in her role as vigilante dreamhunter, a lost sheep in terms of her occupation, but ethically sympathetic, similarly concerned with Southland's wellbeing in her own anarchic way. Tatjana Schaeffer points out, in her discussion of religion in New Zealand Young Adult fiction, that this depiction of institutional religion is rather unique¹⁴⁴. Although it is represented in a mainly negative light throughout *Dreamhunter*, the Temple is not – as the church usually is – portrayed as the

oppressive regime [that] gives the young protagonists [of Young Adult fiction] something to revolt against on their path to autonomy.¹⁴⁵

The antagonistic role is fulfilled instead by the DRB which, though it seems sympathetic to dreamhunting, produces an oppressive and limiting state, abusing the population's trust through manipulation, deceit, and heedless pursuit of power. As the Grand Patriarch steps in to thwart these activities and to counter their effects, the religious institution over which he presides moves out of the shadows of Southland's history and into a position of potentially constructive critique and positive influence. As such, it escapes the usual unfavourable portrayal, quite in spite of its opposition to dreamhunting and by extension, its opposition to the protagonists (as those who practice it). The Temple is depicted instead as a moral check and a “counterbalance to the state,”¹⁴⁶ a social institution competing with the state-as-oppressive-regime for ideological – though not political – control.

But I am perhaps getting a little ahead of myself. Although the Temple is protecting her, its puritanical proselytising leaves Laura doubtful about the Temple's ability to contribute anything beyond a refuge from the DRB's investigations:

the Grand Patriarch was always speaking out against dreamhunters and dream palaces. According to him, the Rainbow Opera was a place where people indulged in ‘a second-hand education of the senses’ and ‘acts without consequences’. What kind of advice could the Grand Patriarch offer a law-breaking dreamhunter? All he believed in was abstinence. Besides, Laura hadn't wanted advice, she'd only wanted to get the job done.¹⁴⁷

144 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp150

145 Ibid, pp141

146 Ibid, pp150

147 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp34

However, these doubts are soon allayed as Laura discovers that not only is her father still alive, having been rescued and relocated by the Temple and its allies, but that the Grand Patriarch is already aware of both the covert activities that she sought to expose, and of more besides. As with Chorley, Laura's first real engagement with the Grand Patriarch and the institution over which he presides initiates a drastic change in her understanding of their importance and their role. As well as making his knowledge and influence plain, however, the Patriarch also calls Laura to task on the hypocrisy of her own behaviour:

'Laura, I want to talk to you about what you've done.' The girl sighed and shrugged. 'My letter explains it.' 'Well then, according to your letter, you wanted to gain support for people who were being terrorised?' Laura nodded. 'And in order to do that you chose to terrorise people?' She stared at him, sullen. 'What other way was there to show them? How else could I prove it? I didn't have any evidence. I couldn't take photographs of what was happening.' The Grand Patriarch paced back and forth for a moment, thinking. He ran his hand along the table through rooftops and courtyards, streets, flights of steps, waterways, hurrying people. 'In my grandparents' day no one was taking photographs. Do you think that the people back then believed that testimony — to any crime — needed photographic evidence to support it? Are people now any less inclined to listen to testimony? To listen in good faith?' 'You would say "faith",' the girl said, insolent, but without any great energy. 'Faith doesn't just mean faith in God, Laura. It means faith in people, in the truth, in truth-telling. Faith in your own ability to make yourself heard. Faith that people will understand what you take the time to explain to them. Faith that people don't need to be tricked, or sold the truth.'¹⁴⁸

This conversation between the Grand Patriarch and Laura is tectonic in terms of the *Duet's* depiction of the religious institution. While it is already plain that the Temple opposes dreamhunting - as immoral and dangerous, placing the soul and the self into peril - and that the Temple has an unexpected degree of knowledge and influence, it is in this conversation that the Temple begins to be revealed as a voice of, not reason, but common sense, of care, concern and community, that is to say, a voice of ethical responsibility. The Grand Patriarch seeks to make Laura aware of the fact that, in using terror to raise awareness of the state's terrorism, she is

148 Ibid, pp60-61

placing herself in a position of comparable guilt. Though he is sympathetic to her cause, and opposed to the state's abuses of power, he clearly privileges the wellbeing and safety of Southland's population far more than he values the power that the DRB's downfall might afford his institution. The Temple opposes the state, not out of a resentful desire for power lost – as I said, the Temple has never had political power in Southland – but out of pastoral duty, a “passionate commitment to the Idea [that] subjects both personal and social life to its critical scrutiny.”¹⁴⁹ It is through moments like this that we can see the Temple as an image of religion where religion is a supplement to and a dialogic partner for modernity, one that engages it in conversation about people, and challenges the validity of its objectivity and abstraction, thus reminding it of what it has devalued and left behind.

One of the most important aspects to bear in mind when considering the attitude of the Temple towards the DRB is the fact that, *at no point*, does the Temple make a bid for political power. This sets it apart from real-world discussions of the relationship between church and state, where the church is often seeking a return to power, or, at the very least, some authority over the state's decisions¹⁵⁰. The conflict between these two social institutions, as it manifests in *The Dreamhunter Duet* is grounded in ideological differences; in the comparative value ascribed to individual life, and in their differing strategies for ensuring social success (and for imagining what constitutes such success). Were the Temple to make a bid for administrative control - as the Church so often does in, say, America - the opportunity for productive dialogue between church and state would be markedly reduced, replaced instead with the cagily defensive circling of sparring partners. But the Temple serves not as a competitor in these novels - not as something similar, with commensurate needs and desires - but as an other, with appropriately other concerns. Church and State are constructed as strange, but potentially complementary bedfellows. Unfortunately, the DRB is committed more to increasing Southland's power and prosperity than to its people as individual beings and, as such, is disinclined to listen to or cooperate with the Temple, perceiving it as hostile even if its criticisms are borne out of the shared (though strategically divergent) commitment to Southland's betterment.

149 Westphal, pp59

150 Ostwalt, pp13

Although the DRB initially fails to register that the Temple may be a genuine threat to its ongoing success, it is at least aware that the Temple would like to see an end to dreamhunting, and in following, to see the dissolution of Cas Doran's governmental department. As *Dreamquake* picks up, however, it becomes impossible for Cas Doran, and those in his employ, to ignore the danger to the DRB that the Temple poses. Laura's performance of "Buried Alive" and the explanatory letters sent by Laura to the DRB, the Temple, and to the offices of the Founderston Herald - signed off as "Lazarus" - serve to alert Doran to the fact that his religious-minded opponents are willing to take drastic action against him. His concern is deepened when Laura is captured by rangers and taken to the Depot, a special prison facility that has been built on the site of the dream "Contentment". Her arrival at this hushed-up and inaccessible location signals to Doran that the Grand Patriarch and his allies know far more than he thought. When the presumed-dead Tziga and the escaped Laura re-appear in society not long after the Depot incident, he finally realises that the anti-dreamhunting minority, led by the Grand Patriarch, is a force to be reckoned with. Though he claims that "Courage isn't cleverness...They can't outwit me,"¹⁵¹ it is at this point that Doran panics and steps up his plans to pacify the people of Southland with his dream of "Contentment", that "most insidious and...dangerous aspect of nation."¹⁵² By dismissing and ignoring their opposition for so long, Doran allowed the Temple the freedom to inquire, to network, and to strategise undetected; the Temple's perceived lack of power thus becomes a source of it.

It requires a significant change in attitude for Doran - as the embodiment of the capitalist nation state in these novels - to accept that the Temple does, in fact, pose a genuine threat, that it is a location of significant knowledge and power. But this significant change is insufficient. The Temple has importance beyond its ability to undermine the activities of a corrupt government, a fact that Doran realises only as he is being brought to justice. The Patriarch's moral criticisms, though perceived as puritanical and unreasonable, are both

151 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp310

152 Joseph, *Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in Carpentaria and Dreamhunte*, pp7

important and valid. Blinded by his own greed and by the arrogant belief that he is acting in Southland's long-term best interests, Doran is unable to see, or simply doesn't care, how selfish and damaging his actions may be. By focussing exclusively on the "big picture", on the nation in its conceptual entirety as beneficiary, he is able to ignore the comparatively few individuals and families that he destroys along the way. Why should it matter that criminals are being used as slave labour, abused and tormented by their wardens, if it means that the law-abiding majority live in a more prosperous nation and have access to a greater range of comforts and commodities? How is it wrong to manipulate the people's vote if the candidate they are coerced into selecting will serve them well? What looks like a course of action taken for "the greater good" of Southland is, in reality, a reflection of the elevation of the idea of Southland, and the consequent objectification of the people that constitute it, the demotion of individuals and beings to the position of resources, equalized by their potential to serve the state's ends:

The crucial test of this suggestion that the egalitarian sentiments of the modern age are instruments of self interest (will to power), rather than commitments to the ideal of justice or compassion for the needy neighbour, would be to examine what happens to those sentiments when they lead in directions costly to the bearer...How does a bureaucracy respond to an individual who dares to blow the whistle on corruption or incompetence?¹⁵³

As the Hames and Tiebolds find out, a bureaucracy, as embodied by the DRB, responds by trying to eliminate the rogue element, using force and coercion to re-establish the totalitarian unity and cohesion of the nation.

The Temple, as a religious - especially a Christian - institution, seeks to remedy this objectification of Southland's population through the exercise of pastoral power. Foucault defines pastoral power against state power on the grounds that the former is control over a flock and the latter over a land¹⁵⁴. With pastoral power

Everything the shepherd does is geared to the good of his flock. That's his constant concern. When they sleep he keeps watch. The theme of keeping

153 Westphal, pp57

154 Carrette, J.R. (Ed.) (1999). *Religion and Culture: Michel Foucault*, (pp135-152). New York, New York, U.S.A: Routledge, pp137

watch is important. It brings out two aspects of the shepherd's devotedness. First, he acts, he works, he puts himself out, for those he nourishes and who are asleep. Second, he watches over them. He pays attention to them all and scans each one of them...The shepherd's power implies individual attention paid to each member of the flock.¹⁵⁵

In this individual attention, this devotedness, is the seed of the Temple's importance. It is unacceptable, when seeking the salvation of each being, to allow the abuse of the few for the benefit of the many; each individual being is beloved and important. Where the state objectifies and dehumanises the individual, the pastoral focuses on her in her individuality. In terms of the Temple's relationship with the DRB, the Patriarch's concern can be read as a reminder of the lived reality of Southland's population. A reminder that, more than a flag, an anthem and a series of statistics and calculations, Southland is a collective of individual beings. The Patriarch reaches out to those that have been hurt by the DRB – Tziga, Laura, Chorley – and helps them to confront it. In doing so, Doran is confronted by the all-too-human effects of his abstracted administrative decisions, by the fact that - as the Grand Patriarch puts it - "This society cannot continue in its callous willingness to base its wealth on suffering."¹⁵⁶ Through this reminder, the Temple makes clear the state's lack of morality, the Temple's seeming puritanism justified by the reality of the damage Dreaming has enabled, if not caused. By privileging abstract concepts – such as power and profit - over individual beings, by allowing the individual citizen of Southland to "become the mere instrument of the all-inclusive economic apparatus,"¹⁵⁷ Doran is readily able to ignore the suffering that manifests in face to face engagement and, unfortunately for him and his plans, awareness of this suffering makes the complacency of contentment impossible.

Dreamquake ends with Doran's arrest. He puzzles over the fact that he has failed as, through the seemingly predictive dream "Contentment", he had experienced his future self as a satisfied and successful family man whose actions were, in the end, "all worth it":

Understanding didn't come to him. 'What I tried to do had to work,' he said

155 Ibid, pp137

156 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp491

157 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp30

to Hame, very quietly, and with desperate puzzlement, 'because there I was, twenty-six years later, congratulating myself on my successes. The dreams were the future.'¹⁵⁸

The Temple (an image of religion) disrupts the plans of the DRB (an image of modernity), diverting its ethically irresponsible trajectory, even as the Patriarch diverts Doran from his projected future.

158 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp492

5.4 Church and Culture

When compared to the state, the Temple (as church) is shown in a primarily positive light. However, *The Dreamhunter Duet's* portrayal of the Southland's most prominent religious institution is by no means wholly favourable. As I mentioned in my discussion of church and state, the Temple takes a position that opposes Dreaming, and this opposition *is* general, rather than simply aimed at the state's misuse of it. When we read Dreaming as culture, the Temple's general opposition to Dreaming can be read as expressing the potential tension between church and culture. As Schaeffer points out, the novels "run the risk of the church being a site of antagonism as it usually is"¹⁵⁹ and, although it is the state that constitutes the *Duet's* main antagonist, the risk of the church's antagonism isn't altogether unrealised. In spite of the fact that Laura, Chorley, Tziga et. al. eventually band together with the Grand Patriarch in a mutual attack against the state, both the popularity and tangibility of Dreaming and the Temple's attitude towards it serve to highlight the limits of the Temple's positive role in Southland's society. Both of these novels - in spite of their generally anti-modern tone and their alignment with romantic artistic ideals - can be seen to side with modernity when it comes to their portrayal of *institutional* religion. Their depiction of the relationship between church and culture problematises institutional religion in its relationship with history, with tradition, and with revealed truth. Through Dreaming, both *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* also echo the enlightenment's privileging of reason in their privileging of individual subjective engagement with the numinous. Furthermore, they challenge the Temple's authority over religious matters, casting doubt on its access to the numinous, to religious truth, whilst simultaneously providing an alternative means of engagement, a means that goes beyond the dogmatic claims of history and tradition that flourish in any institutionalised religion. On the other hand, the Temple can also be seen in these novels to act as an "anchor of meaning,"¹⁶⁰ a set of traditions, a framework grounded in centuries of experience and practice that is able to structure and guide these secular interactions with the numinous.

159 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp150

160 Ostwalt, pp20

The tension between the Temple and Dreaming stems in no small part from a sense of competition between the two. Earlier in this chapter I quoted a passage from *Dreamhunter* that discussed the transition undergone by the Isle of the Temple, from a religiously focussed district to a neighbourhood fully engaged in the entertainment industry:

by the time Laura's father fell from the Sisters Beach coach, business wasn't what it had been. Faith wasn't what it had been, and there were fewer pilgrims than in former times. The hotels had needed custom, and welcomed dreamhunters as guests...Over the years the streets, and alleys, and winding staircases of the Isle had filled with dream parlours and their customers.¹⁶¹

As Southland's society changed, Dreaming overtook the Temple as Southland's central cultural focus. One of the main things provided by the religious institution for the society in which it participates is a means of interpreting the place and purpose of that society. Religion provides people with meaning, with a context, with identity, with narratives and histories that explain where they have come from, where they should be going, and why. However, when ways of thinking arise that challenge the validity of the meaning that religion provides – ways of thinking such as objective reason – religion can often be seen to go into decline. Dreaming reflects and is a by-product of a society in which such religion-challenging systems of thought have taken hold. Dreaming's increasing popularity, its commercial usurpation of the Isle of the Temple, stems in no small part from the fact that the stories that Dreaming tells are more relevant to Southland's present. This relevancy manifests in both the ideological content of dreams, the styles, situations, and relationships that they depict, as well as in their facilitation of capitalist endeavour, a vital aspect of the industrialising modernity that the novels depict. Dreaming is understood, by the people of Southland as, first and foremost, an entertainment commodity. Knox claims to have written these novels with commodity culture in mind, attributing a significant part of the narrative's impetus to the following line of inquiry:

What if Tziga could go back to this Place and catch other dreams?... What if other people could go there and find different sorts of dreams? Adventurous, romantic, erotic, educational dreams? Wouldn't this eventually become an

161Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp271

industry?¹⁶²

Dreaming represents culture as a saleable and readily reproducible commodity, embodying the commercialisation of the aesthetic object, and so testifies to Southland's participation in modernity through its enacting of that ostensibly rational and egalitarian economic system known as capitalism. Dreaming speaks - through its multitudinous performances, its glittering theatres, and its night-time fashions - to the individual's need to consume in modernity. Dreaming also takes the human mind - still a location of some scientific mystery even by today's standards - and technologises it, renders it a means of reproducing the art-object, evoking the critical works of theorists such as Walter Benjamin, Jean Baudrillard, and Andy Warhol. Furthermore, and quite in spite of the prisons-and-railways heaviness of the novels' representation of physical modernity, Dreaming performs what Bauman calls a "new technique of power"¹⁶³ that is exclusive to high or liquid modernity; it represents the use of "disengagement and the art of escape"¹⁶⁴ as significant tools in the perpetuation of capitalist modernity. Appearing as "harmless entertainment, a commercial commodity and a route to wealth and success,"¹⁶⁵ Dreaming is also a form of "delusive shadow,"¹⁶⁶ "the simulated extension of the spirit...The flood of detailed information and candy-floss entertainment that simultaneously instructs and stultifies mankind,"¹⁶⁷ all the while obscuring the violent and coercive forces used to maintain the fiction of a coherent modern state.

Dreaming also speaks from, and into, Southland's distinct cultural milieu. More than simply appealing to the population's vanity, its socio-cultural specificity also increases Dreaming's ability to function as a secular means of making meaning for the inhabitants of this isolated, island nation. The Temple, though woven into Southland's history, is an imported institution, expressing the ideals of a society that is distant in both time and space. How could an institution, founded millennia ago in the Mediterranean, possibly serve to inform the

162 Knox, *The Love School*, pp350

163 Bauman, pp14

164 Ibid, pp14

165 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp105

166 Ibid, pp105

167 Adorno & Horkheimer, ppxiv

purpose and progress of a scientifically minded and wealthy colonial nation? As Southland industrializes, focussing increasingly on both production and consumption (markers of early/low/heavy and late/high/liquid modernity respectively), the Temple becomes less and less relevant. The Temple's historicity, lack of contextual immediacy, and preference for a non-rational way of knowing make it appear worthless, unnecessary to the modernizing capitalist nation state. Dreaming, on the other hand, is unique to Southland's here and now. It belongs to the nation as a physical place, and it communicates in images that reflect, if not exactly replicate, the experiential reality of its inhabitants:

There was the whittled elegance of the woman's skirts — skirts with higher hemlines than women ever wore. There was the lack of jitters in the sleek motor cars. The town seemed real and not real at the same time. (Though, of course, all the dreams were factual — none had monsters, or unassisted flight, or any of the things true human dreams had.)¹⁶⁸

What differences there are, are to be accounted for by the fact that the dreams are set in Southland's potential future, or, at least, in the memories of one of Southland's potential future inhabitants. This portrayal of a possible future — as it makes the images slightly unfamiliar — serves to both highlight the feeling of fantasy and escape for the audience, and also serves to heighten Dreaming's relevancy to the nation, especially in the omniscient eyes of the reader.

Simply being more culturally relevant, however, is not enough to justify a reading of Dreaming as being in competition with the Temple. In order for that to be true, both must be concerned with the numinous, both geared towards achieving the same ends. I have already explained how — by virtue of both the ecstatic experiences it engenders and the fact that it exists outside of space and time — the Place and its vivid, marvellous visions can be understood as a representation of engagement with the numinous in these novels, as expressing a transcendent reality, incursively, into Southland's society. As such, Dreaming is more than just an apt and relevant expression of Southland's zeitgeist and particularity; it is also a contemporary expression of that which inspires religion. Ostwalt posits, in his discussion of religion in popular culture, that as a society secularizes there is

168 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp104

a shift in the locus of authority to express religious ideals. Authority might shift from traditional religions to new religions or from institutional religion to some other cultural form...the entertainment industry, the media, the publishing industry.¹⁶⁹

Dreaming embodies this shift. In a society where the church has been stripped of its ideological power - through its perceived puritanism, its ties to history and tradition, and its incompatibility with reasonable modes of thought - popular culture, represented here by Dreaming, is able to assume a level of religious significance. Dreaming becomes the means of communicating the “religious concerns” of Southland; concerns about social context, ethics, and individual purpose, for example. For the Temple, this presents a significant problem. Not only has the numinous, its traditional area of cultural jurisdiction, been devalued and marginalised by the ideals of modernity, but perhaps it is no longer the Temple’s area of cultural jurisdiction:

When religious institutions no longer dominate culture, they lose their grip on what might otherwise be their prerogative - the religious sensibility and the striving of humanity toward the sacred. With this loss of prerogative, religious concerns find expression in other cultural forms so that cultural products perceived to be secular can carry authentic and meaningful religious content and deal with sacred concerns.¹⁷⁰

As such, it is placed into a position of competition, not only for Southland’s attention, but for the ability to authentically express Southland’s engagement with a transcendent reality. As an image of an emerging form of secular culture, that - in spite of its secularity- engages with the numinous and expresses transcendence, Dreaming creates a space where the conflict between historically grounded expressions of revealed truth and the importance of a vital and ongoing engagement with the numinous can be explored. The strongest criticism against the Temple’s irrelevancy in these novels comes not from its failure to reflect the ideals of modernity or to express the spirit of a technologising capitalist nation-state, but from its lack of immersion in and involvement with Southland’s experiences of transcendence. The Temple is an image of a religion that is fixed, grounded in the dogmatism of the institution. It is an image of religious engagement that demands adherence to a contract between the individual and, not so much the

169 Ostwalt, pp5

170 Ibid, pp7

numinous, as orthodoxy, adherence and submission to rules that, though steeped in history and subjective interpretation, are *posited* as transcending it. Dreaming is depicted as being in opposition to this. Though they could be co-operative, aligned in as much as they are both involved with the numinous - with that which exceeds society and places moral and ethical demands on it - Dreaming and the Temple instead make competing claims of access to the numinous. They are placed in opposition by their divergent methodologies, and the different ways they take towards their mutual end. It is through the Temple's negative attitude towards Dreaming (which supplies the livelihood of the novels' protagonists and expresses Southland's cultural milieu) that means the Temple must lose this competition, that the religious institution appears as the "wrong" way, the irrelevant and unreasonable way, to go about accessing the numinous and expressing its transcendence. Instead *The Dreamhunter Duet* depicts Dreaming - as the secular expression of religious concerns, of moral and ethical necessity, of transcendence and immanence - as being more efficacious, more relevant, more tangibly present, and (perhaps most importantly) more attractive to the population of Southland. Dreaming is popular and it is enjoyable, it heals people and it elevates them, it passes comment on their current society, and it allows them the freedom to explore both their world and themselves. Dreaming is a means of accessing the numinous and expressing transcendence that is depicted as being compatible with modernity, enabling capitalism, and privileging individual engagement with and experience of the numinous, over and above its mediation through traditional institutions with their focus on a past moment of religious truth; "Truth and justice are scarcely ever the property of religion!...And if a pack of mangy convicts needs our help, let's help them because it's the right thing to do, not because God loves them!"¹⁷¹ Dreaming is a recognition that in our postmodern context, with shifting authority structures, popular cultural expression of religiosity is more important, more available and more powerful than traditional expressions of religious truth.¹⁷²

As an image of secular engagement with the numinous, Dreaming also demonstrates the

171 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp78

172 Ostwalt, pp14

transcendence of institutional roles that the numinous embodies, and in doing so, explores the critical potential of transcendence. By being widely interpreted as entertainment, medicine, or education, and simultaneously enacting the expression of “religious concerns”, Dreaming is depicted as being involved in both culture and church, whilst still being more than either of those things. Furthermore, it participates in the structures of state, representing, on many levels, the forms and effects that such structures may respectively take or have. Dreaming is, in short, ubiquitous, a part of but greater than all aspects of Southland’s cultural milieu. In order to explore this extra-institutional aspect of Dreaming’s transcendence, I turn to Kierkegaard, who, in his discussion of the stages of existence, draws a distinction between two forms of religion, religiousness A and religiousness B. Expressed in these novels by the Temple, religiousness A can be understood as the fourth Kantian culture sphere, the much neglected sibling of science, art, and morality. Religiousness A is the “beliefs and practices that are given a cultural expression in their institutionalization and their effect upon a wider public... a component within the cultural life of humankind.”¹⁷³ It is characterized by guilt and by the individual’s search for God. Religiousness B on the other hand is “a God-relationship which is initiated by God breaking into the region of immanence from the outside.”¹⁷⁴ Such an incursive exteriority – so neatly expressed by the Place, by the “reaching out” of Laura’s future-son Lazarus and his reincarnated Golem into the immanent present – exists outside of time and place, and importantly, outside of social institutions, and as such renders the Place, like religiousness B, as “the vertical dimension of transcendence that stands in judgement of the horizontal succession of immanent culture-spheres.”¹⁷⁵ This idea of verticality metaphoricises the way in which Dreaming passes through and participates in all of the horizontal – or the contextually co-existent - institutions of Southland’s culture, and shows how Dreaming, through its pervasion of the cultural life of Southland, is able to unify these spheres of culture and also to serve as a critical principle, “protesting the self-elevation of any one of the culture spheres to a status of ultimacy.”¹⁷⁶ This protest is exercised most obviously against the state, as I will discuss in the following sub-chapter, but it is also used, as Kierkegaard envisioned, against the Temple, against the religious

173 Matusik & Westphal, pp9 -15

174 Ibid, pp9

175 Ibid, pp13

176 Ibid, pp13

institution/religion/religiousness A itself. When we understand Dreaming as the incursion of transcendence into immanence, as the paradoxical arrival of something outside of or beyond experiential time *into* the realm of lived history, then we see the level on which Dreaming is able to call the Temple to account. Too invested in its own rules and history, in its role in society, in power struggles, rationalization, the accrual of wealth, and the lives and success of its leaders, the Temple represents the church as an institution in which “the holy is gradually replaced by the authority of an achieved consensus,”¹⁷⁷ that exists in a state of what Victor Turner might call “Normative” or “Ideological” *communitas*, where the initial experience of transcendence is transformed into systems of moral precepts and rules, where a structure is implemented to try and maintain the effects of transcendence in its experience’s absence¹⁷⁸.

All this talk of transcendence necessitates my discussing a rather challenging aspect of Dreaming’s depiction; that fact that, not until the second half of *Dreamquake* do any of the characters realise that the dreams being performed are scenes from Southland’s future. In terms of my theorisation of Dreaming as art (or as art-as-culture), as the secular engagement with and expression of transcendence, I find that – as an all-seeing reader - I am challenged by the fact that no-one, for the longest time, realises that Dreaming is an expression of anything beyond itself, is anything more than aesthetically uplifting entertainment. No-one, except perhaps the Grand Patriarch. There are several implications of Dreaming’s being overlooked as an expression of transcendence. First and foremost, its lack of recognition as an area of religious activity (in the Kierkegaardian sense) enables it to escape the reason-centric limits of modernity. Perceived by the state and by popular opinion to be entertainment, Dreaming not only escapes “as art - as a cognition free special area of social activity,”¹⁷⁹ slipping past the borders that delimit modernity’s epistemological narrow-mindedness, but is freed from the Temple’s hermeneutical mandates. The demands made by the Place - through its depiction of suffering prisoners and the cost of unethical governance - are not filtered through the theological discourses of established religion, but are individual revelations, sites of engagement and dialogue between the dreamer and the

177 Ibid, pp14

178 Brown, S.L., (Ed.), *Intentional Community: An Anthropological Perspective*, (pp. 41-65). New York: State University of New York Press, pp43

179 Adorno & Horkheimer, , pp25-26

Place, between the individual and the numinous. Dreaming represents a situation in which secular and popular culture might contain more authentic belief than official religious theologies, because it is in the popular culture that one can encounter belief and values apart from and freed from paternalistic religious doctrine and dogma.¹⁸⁰

Dreaming is also freed, by virtue of its perceived role as art-as-culture, from the criticisms levelled against the historical and un-reasonable nature of the Temple. This means that in Southland, a society largely unable to subscribe to a traditional and unobservable God, the population finds itself able to access Dreaming with the combination of openness to experience and critical thought that Ricoeur describes as being necessary to productive engagement with religious imagery and images of religion¹⁸¹. By failing to understand Dreaming as a means of accessing the numinous, the people of Southland fail also to shy away from or shun it. In a secularised culture like Southland's, art becomes religion for atheists.

On the other hand, the general understanding of Dreaming as entertainment also means that the Place's messages remain uninterpreted until it is almost too late. The Grand Patriarch, whose calling and livelihood are intricately involved in the mediation of transcendence, recognises the serious risk that Dreaming may pose to Southland, should its uses go unchecked. His opposition is multi-faceted, manifesting publically in terms of an exclusivist and puritanical discourse, but privately in terms of pastoral concern about the origin and purpose of these mysterious visions. Erasmus Tiebold's opposition renders Dreaming and the Temple as mutually exclusive means of access to the numinous; he calls the pledge takers his "Ark", and as Rose puts it, thinks that "sharing dreams is sinful and we'll all be punished one day for doing it — struck down by a righteous God."¹⁸² The Grand Patriarch unequivocally privileges the Temple's rituals and traditions but his concerns run deeper than competitive jealousy. By describing dream places as "houses of unholy worship,"¹⁸³ and Dreaming itself as a "second-hand education of the

180 Ostwalt, pp7

181 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp5-6

182 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp77-78

183 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp270

senses,”¹⁸⁴ Erasmus Tiebold not only expresses a sort of anti-sensual abhorrence, familiar from puritanical Christian discourse, but also implies his fear of the fundamental physical, mental, and emotional levels on which Dreaming may affect those who participate in it. It is more than entertainment, it is profoundly perception altering, speaking directly into the dreamer’s experiential reality. His fear is an acknowledgement of Dreaming’s power, albeit a disparaging one. While such sentiments *can* be read as a warning against losing oneself, not in the numinous, but in something of a Baudrillardian hyperreality¹⁸⁵, against the loss of the *sui generis* individual to a distracting world of imagined reality, the can also be seen to highlight the intensity and effectiveness of such a reality.

The Grand Patriarch recognises that the Place constitutes more than a source of dazzling and distracting fictions. While such recognition is only implicit in his public discourse, partially negated by his attempts to discredit Dreaming’s possible religious authenticity, we see in his interactions with Chorley, Laura, and Tziga an awareness of Dreaming’s real power. In *Dreamquake*, the Grand Patriarch asks Chorley to investigate the place for him. This investigation is to be conducted not in terms of facts and figures, exploration, description, and cartography. Rather, Chorley’s deeply religious cousin asks him to think instead about what the place “really is,”¹⁸⁶ suggesting that he suspects that the Place is more than the sum of its geographical parts and its by-products. The Grand Patriarch’s awareness of and openness to transcendence is cast in a positive light. It is his assistance and subtle direction that ultimately enables Cas Doran’s downfall and the dissolution of the DRB. Interestingly, at this point in the text, the Grand Patriarch concedes his own inadequacy and the need for ideological co-operation in the face of this burgeoning phenomenon, entreating Chorley’s aid on the grounds of his scientific mindset:

You have a reputation as something of a scientific mind, and independent thinker. So please, Mr Tiebold, look into it for me.¹⁸⁷

The Grand Patriarch’s desire to combine different forms of knowledge and approach the

184 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp34

185 Ostwalt, pp25

186 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp109

187 *Ibid*, pp109

problem from an epistemologically inclusive standpoint perfectly expresses the co-operative possibilities of these apparently exclusive ways of knowing. He approaches Chorley and in doing so he actively and symbolically bridges the gap between Dreaming as secularly expressed transcendence, an atheistic, scientific, objectively rational paradigm, and the world of institutional religion.

Erasmus Tiebold can also be seen to guide the protagonists through their encounters with an ethically demanding numinous. His knowledge and ecclesiastical experiences of the systematization and ritualisation of “religious” experiences enables him to moderate the revolutionary responses of Laura’s unstructured and uninformed encounter with the numinous. Having been exposed to the horror and torment suffered by Southland’s convicts, Laura becomes furious, and is violent in her approach to Southland’s social ills, hurting the society she seeks to heal by using terror as a means of protesting terror. The Grand Patriarch helps Laura to both make more sense of what she has seen, and to process it, to use it in a way that is healthy for her and that enacts a sense of responsibility to her family and her society. Throughout *Dreamhunter*, Laura believes that the torturing of prisoners is the injustice that has been revealed to her and against which she must fight. However, during her stay at the Temple, the Grand Patriarch makes Laura aware that the problem is both more complicated than she currently realises and requires a more delicate and thoughtful response. He alerts Laura to the fact that while the mistreatment of convicts is a serious issue, Dreaming itself is an emotionally and psychologically penetrative force that is being used in the service of power and profit, to manipulate and control all of Southland’s population, not just its convicts. The Grand Patriarch recognises the power of the ethical demands that manifest in Dreaming, and he is used to negotiating such power, making sense of it and its effects. As such, he is dismayed by the carelessness with which the DRB treats the Place:

‘You may have “done enough”, Laura, but you don’t know enough.’ The Grand Patriarch shook his head. ‘The Regulatory Body sends you off into the Place with signal whistles, but without a full education!’¹⁸⁸

188 Ibid, pp63

He is a mentor of sorts, whose wisdom is initially spurned by those around him, until - moving out of their epistemological naivety - they realise that the traditions of the Temple and his experience in religious matters may just be of some worth.

The dialogue between church and culture, between institutionalised expressions of transcendence and their secular manifestations, is explored hopefully in *The Dreamhunter Duet*. The Temple calls Dreaming to account. Dreaming, on the other hand, challenges the Temple's relevancy, its ability to represent and engage with the numinous in a way that makes contemporary sense. There is both a competitive and a complementary relationship.

5.5 Culture and State

Dreaming can similarly be seen to criticise the State, challenging its methods and its lack of ethical responsibility. Dreaming can be understood, on one level, as a representation of the critical potential of transcendence and of art-as-culture in modernity. It is a manifestation of the experiences and concerns of Southland's society, and of alternative ways of being. However, Dreaming is also constructed, in *The Dreamhunter Duet*, as an active participant in the modern nation state, contributing towards the perpetuation of Southland's state systems even as it seeks to subvert them. For all of the anti-modern influence that Dreaming does eventually exert - making plain the plight of Southland's exploited convicts and the corruption of the state - Dreaming is also used to support the modern capitalist nation. One of the functions of culture in modernity that the *Duet* best illuminates is that of pacification and/or distraction. In its relationship with the DRB, Dreaming can be seen to demonstrate how the commodified art-object is used to divert the individual's attention from the state's controversial activities and to keep him in a state of placid and unquestioning contentment. This pacificatory role makes Dreaming valuable to the state, ensuring its protection. However, Dreaming's involvement with the state also limits it, its integration into the machinery of the modern nation restricting the practices around it.

We are first alerted to the potentially problematic nature of Dreaming in the books prologue. Tziga cuts his dream short, awakening himself before the appearance of convicts in a dream known as "Convalescent One". Tziga's response to these convicts - his uncertainty as to whether they want him to "Tell their story? Or break their chains?"¹⁸⁹ - is a recognition that their appearance might not be a mistake, but rather some kind of message. If anyone is in a position to decipher such a message too, it is Tziga. A little way further into the story we find out that, as a part of his contractual involvement with the DRB, Tziga is required to take "educational" dreams - nightmares used to punish difficult inmates - to Southland's primary prison facility. Here - evoking Anthony Burgess' "A Clockwork Orange" (1962) - the prisoners

189 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp5

are coerced by being either tortured with horrific visions, or made to experience their crimes from the victims' perspective. Tziga is thus aware of the suffering that Southland's convicts are forced to endure and the measures taken to ensure their co-operation in state labour schemes and in day-to-day prison life. This torturous use of dreams is the reader's first insight into the darker possibilities of Dreaming. Tziga's contract work, when contrasted with the luxury and ceremony of the Rainbow Opera - the silk-covered dreamer's dais, the private suites of rooms, the subservient wait-staff, the gilded fittings, and rich furnishings - makes plain the possibility that this charming form of apparently profitable and harmless entertainment may, in fact, be something altogether more sinister. The reader (though not the main characters) is also made aware of the dissemination of subliminal propaganda through dreaming. This use of Dreaming, as a means of control, represents both the ambivalence of entertainment technology and what Geoffrey Miles describes as "*corruptio optima pessima*"¹⁹⁰; the production of the worst through the corruption of the best. Dreaming has been transformed from being a healing and transcendent experience (as it was for Tziga when he first fell into the Place), into a profit-driven entertainment commodity, a tool for manipulation and control. Powerfully beautiful, Dreaming becomes powerfully brutal when utilised without ethical reflection.

The abuse of Dreaming as a medium also manifests in more subtle ways. In *Dreamquake*, when the torture of Southland's prisoners is exposed by Laura and subsequently glossed over by the news media, the reader is confronted with Cas Doran's plans for "Contentment". At the Depot - a prison built on the site of "Contentment" - he loads arrested, kidnapped, and presumed-missing dreamhunters with the mollifying reverie. He intends to place them about Founderston, using Dreaming as a drug, as a way to keep the capital's residents happy and quiet while he implements a variety of controversial economic and political measures. This manipulative plan makes plain, through exaggeration, the effects of popular culture on modern society, that is to say, it makes explicit the insidious processes of distraction that have been implicit in Dreaming - as a representation of art-as-entertainment - all along. Zygmunt Bauman describes society in modernity as suffering from

190 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp89

a collective brain-damage caused by a 'culture industry' planting a thirst for entertainment where - as Matthew Arnold would say - should be occupied by 'the passion for sweetness and light and the passion for making them prevail'¹⁹¹

Dreaming provides Southland's residents with an attractive and immersive world in which the struggles and injustices of the less fortunate are – unless you are Tziga or Laura – both invisible and irrelevant. Through Dreaming, the DRB uses “disengagement and the art of escape as its major tools”¹⁹² in its efforts to control society. Readily available and deeply enjoyable, this entertainment commodity blinds Southland's residents to their interpersonal, ethical responsibilities in two ways. Firstly, Dreaming, like some Huxleyian hallucinogenic trip, keeps the eyes and minds of Southland's residents - especially Southland's more well-off residents - in a world beyond the immanent. Focussed on the beauty and intensity of Dreaming's apparently imaginary world, they find it easier to ignore or to turn away from aspects of the real world that may be disquieting or confrontational. Secondly, the state administration of Dreaming adheres to one of the simplest formula of successful marketing in commodity capitalist societies¹⁹³; it uses Dreaming, a desirable commodity, to propitiate Southland's population. As a result of their associating this pleasurable distraction with state administration, the population are more likely to view and respond to the state positively. Furthermore, entertained and content, the people of Southland needn't concern themselves with the social evils to which they are kept oblivious. This approach is typical of Bauman's liquid modernity in which “the favourite strategic principles of the powers-that-be are nowadays escape, avoidance and disengagement, and their ideal condition is invisibility.”¹⁹⁴ Doran's deployment of the dream “Contentment” only makes this invisible process obvious:

Dreamhunter insists that contentment is the most insidious and the most dangerous aspect of nation; in the duet it is discontent and disobedience to authorities...that change the future.¹⁹⁵

191 Bauman, pp19

192 Ibid, pp14

193 Lane, pp177-178

194 Bauman, pp40

195 Joseph, *Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in Carpentaria and Dreamhunter*, pp7

The struggle against contentment or, more specifically, against the complacency that it engenders, is, as Laura Joseph emphasises above, one of the core themes of *The Dreamhunter Duet*. The distracted and placated population of Southland is problematised, depicted as ignorant of the state's exploitative actions. Furthermore, when this ignorance is remedied, they are shown to be unwilling to take ethical action. Grace is – amongst the main characters - the most representative of this position. As her family become more and more involved in uncovering and exposing the corrupt and manipulative practices of the DRB, Grace is increasingly resistant to their efforts, dismayed by the loss of fame and fortune that Dreaming's disestablishment will bring about. Dreaming has made her successful and has brought both her fans and herself a great amount of enjoyment. As such, she bitterly resents her family's efforts against this cultural phenomenon:

‘You all act as though you’ve been appointed to save the world,’ Grace said, still sobbing. ‘The world doesn’t need saving.’¹⁹⁶

As far as Grace is concerned, there is a problem and there is injustice, but Dreaming, the means through which these are perpetuated is not the problem. She realises that the exploitation of convicts is wrong, and that the State's shady dealings with and kidnappings of dreamhunters are in no way acceptable, however she fails to recognise the fundamental role that Dreaming itself plays in enabling this unethical behaviour. Grace enjoys Dreaming and is unwilling to let it go, unwilling to acknowledge that this state-sanctioned and controlled form of fun might be an accessory to injustice. She is content, and content, she has no desire to affect change. However, even as it aids in the state's distraction and pacification of Southland, Dreaming is also depicted as being the means of the DRB's undoing. Regardless of the state's abuses of Dreaming, it remains the location of a truth that transcends its manipulation.

Returning to Kierkegaard's "religiousness B" and his understanding of the "Idea" we can see how the Place and its nightmarish visions, its fleeing convicts and "blood-soaked revenants,"¹⁹⁷ can be read as a source of criticism against the state. Not only does Dreaming

196 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp195

197 Ibid, pp21

enact a symbolically powerful return of the repressed, an uprising of those elements of Southland's culture and society that have been exploited and hidden, pushed aside, or ignored in the pursuit of power and/or profit (as noted by Geoffrey Miles),¹⁹⁸ but it demonstrates the irrepressible nature of Dreaming as an expression of transcendence, of an engagement with the numinous and its ethical demands. Although it has been placed under state control, Dreaming still exists outside it. The characters resist and resent the state's control of the Place. Tziga and Grace, for example try, to take Laura and Rose beyond the border before the date of their appointed Try:

‘Come on, Grace,’ said Tziga. ‘Why should we make the girls go through all the ceremony of a Try? It’s only for the benefit of the Regulatory Body, so they can see their rules enforced. Why can’t we just find out now, in a minute, in private?’¹⁹⁹

And later, Tziga, Laura, and Grace all make unreported visits to the Place, seeking dreams and information outside their authorized roles as entertainers. Although they have been roped into the position of mass visual culture, and have been limited by this designation, the dreams express events and experiences that are not entertaining, not suitable for the Dreaming industry. Just as art in the real world is shepherded into contexts that are perceived as validating it as art – galleries, theatres, and concert halls – but still exists outside of these, Dreaming, its expressions and explorations, extend far beyond the purposes and locations assigned to it by the state. This understanding of Dreaming - as a phenomenon, as a source of truth and its expression that goes beyond its social role or category - is in line with my earlier interpretation of Dreaming as a depiction of religiousness B. More than a “religion” and more than just “culture” it is “the vertical dimension of transcendence that stands in judgement of the horizontal succession of immanent culture-spheres.”²⁰⁰

In its embodiment of religiousness B, an incursive expression of a numinous that transcends time, place, *and* the scintillating entertainment for which it is renowned, Dreaming

198 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp105

199 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp10

200 Matusik & Westphal, pp13

becomes the source of the “idea”, where the idea is “the individual's telos and duty.”²⁰¹

According to Kierkegaard

The idea wounds and makes life strenuous; its absence makes life easier. It does not merely demand that I abandon my criminal or immoral ways and conform to the prevailing mores of my society; it subjects social morality itself to the test of an infinite demand and deprives social conformity of an ultimate comfort.²⁰²

Although they are hidden from the public eye and excluded from the pageantry of the Rainbow Opera, the convicts that the Place reveals express the darker side of Southland's culture, the “underside of national modernity.”²⁰³ Dreaming speaks uncomfortable truths, truths which, when heard, demand a response. Neither Laura nor Tziga are able to ignore the call to ethical responsibility that the Place issues them and encounter the Kierkegaardian “Idea” first hand in their engagement with the Dreaming. They see and inhabit the other, they endure her suffering, and as a result, Tziga and Laura find themselves in a position of “unlimited obligation,”²⁰⁴ of responsibility that exceeds their happy existence and exceeds their posited social role.

The Place's less entertaining visions also perform a narrative-centred re-imagining of society. By demonstrating the possible outcomes of the DRB's exploitative and deceitful strategy, Dreaming invites Southland to imagine and pursue a better way of being. What appears as a fantastical fiction is, in fact, a foreboding potential reality. The dreams tell the fragmented stories that constitute one undesirable way of being Southland in the future. However, Dreaming's “power of reference is the power to set forth novel ontologies that disorient readers in order to reorient them by way of an ever-expanding vision of the whole.”²⁰⁵ When Tziga, Chorley, the Grand Patriarch, Doran, and others become aware that Dreaming shows a possible future, they respond with an attempt to either realise or avert what the Place has revealed. Ricoeur posits, in his discussion of narrative and self-hood that

201 Westphal, pp46-47

202 Ibid, pp46-47

203 Joseph, *Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in Carpentaria and Dreamhunter*, pp6

204 Perpich, pp84

205 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp8-9

The narrative self involves an ongoing process of self-constancy and self-rectification that requires imagination to synthesize the different horizons of past, present and future.²⁰⁶

Southland, as a collective self, a nation-as-being, experiences this synthetic process through Dreaming. Dreaming takes a potential future and imposes it on the present, illuminates the relationship between who and what Southland believes itself to be and what it is becoming. The “disruption of futurity and sequence,” this unravelling of cause and effect “as the future manifests itself in dreams of the Place,”²⁰⁷ speaks into the nation state’s self-understanding, demanding of it a self-interrogation and an imagination of both consequences and alternatives.

There is one last way in which Dreaming can be seen to support the state, and that is, of course, financially. By taking control of Dreaming - implementing the Intangible Resources Act and establishing its administrative body, the DRB – the state secures itself not only a powerful means of pacification and control, but a source of considerable income and prestige. Considerations of public safety and the desire for organization certainly figure in the rationale behind the state’s involvement in this area of cultural production, however, as Chorley puts it, “All the government seemed to care about was that they got control.”²⁰⁸ By imposing a variety of individual and corporate licensing controls and copyright-like legislation, the DRB took a flourishing industry and re-directed a portion of its profits into its own coffers. Such direct accrual aside, control over Dreaming also means involvement in and a degree of control over a unique and vital area of tourism, as well as a thriving area of the retail economy (outfitters specialising in the dry weather gear and hiking equipment for dreamhunters abound on the Isle of the Temple). Even the manipulative control of the population’s attention is – at least partially - geared towards financial ends. When chatting with his accomplice and confidant Plazir, Doran admits to wanting the current President to remain in power long enough for him to take over the copper mines on nearby Shackle Island, saying

206 Kearney, pp99

207 Joseph, *Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in Carpentaria and Dreamhunter*, pp2

208 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp45

‘Maze, we are a country that has always found reasons to congratulate itself. Material reasons — our production of wheat and beef, iron and coal. And moral reasons — our tradition of democracy. Now, I’m a patriot. Any patriot has sometimes to think like a farmer — a farmer who takes out his gun to kill a wolf, and who builds a fence around his water supply.’²⁰⁹

Doran is willing - as I mentioned in my “church and state” sub-chapter – to undermine the touted principles of the modern nation state (such as democracy) for the protection and improvement of Southland’s *material* interests. This use of Dreaming as a tool for pacification and distraction critiques this aspect of the state; its very role as mollifying entertainment is an indictment of commodity culture in and of itself. If the state were functioning optimally, creating a just society whose people were genuinely happy, there would be no need for Southland’s population to be pacified or distracted. The very fact that the state needs to deploy a strategy centred on escapism implies that there is an undesirable reality from which Southland’s people feel the need to escape.

The relationships between Southland’s social institutions are complex and dynamic. In spite of a variety of tensions and conflicting interests, the Temple, the DRB, and Dreaming can all be seen to contribute valuable feedback, critically engaging with and responding to each other. Through Dreaming, Knox creates a space in which the Place and its ethical demands can be interpreted as an expression of the numinous, a unifying principle and a transcendence that demands ultimate concern for the people of Southland, privileging the prevention of suffering above and beyond all institutional goals. The network of church, state, and culture depicted in *The Dreamhunter Duet* makes plain the vital contribution made by expressions of religion on the path towards institutional co-operation.

209 Ibid, pp169-170

6.0 The Modern Prophet

In this next chapter I continue to explore the critical role of Dreaming. Rather than focussing on institutional relationships, the chapter focuses on the idea of prophecy as an expression of an incursive numinous, and the prophet as the embodiment of religion's critical potential. I discuss how religious expression can be understood as prophetic in modernity and briefly recap several of the ideas outlined in "4.0 Theoretical Position", as well as integrating theory from both Max Weber and John Dewey into my approach. Given the (Post-) Christian social milieu of *The Dreamhunter Duet*, I work from a biblically influenced model of prophecy, rather than a more Classical, fate-centred understanding. Using this theoretical starting point I discuss how the Place and Dreaming can be understood as sources of prophecy. Then, through Tziga and Laura's attempts to communicate the controversial content of their dreams, I explore the *Duet's* depiction of the prophet in modernity, the connections with and departures from tradition. I go on to discuss Laura as a saviour figure, with allegorical connections to Christ, and I consider the nuances of prophecy that this connection illuminates. By discussing images of prophecy in *The Dreamhunter Duet* I show how this traditionally religious concept is altered, de- and re-constructed in these novels to represent a way of speaking into and against modernity.

6.1 Prophecy in Modernity

What is prophecy? Understood - in its everyday use - to mean simply “prediction” or “forecast”, prophecy is a term with far more complex and ideologically loaded implications. Although it stems from the Greek word “prophet” (*prophetes*; *pro-* meaning before, and *phetes* meaning speaker)²¹⁰ prophet means more than simply one with the ability to foretell, to literally *speak before* events have occurred. The term “prophet”, through its implication of prior knowledge, also implies that there is some source of prior knowledge, some access to information that *transcends* the time and place of he who utters it. The prophet can thus be understood as one “who utters divinely inspired revelations,”²¹¹ who “speaks with “fire and strength”,²¹² on behalf of someone or something transcendent. A prophecy – as it will be engaged with in this analysis – is therefore an utterance about things to come that has been inspired and informed by an experience of transcendence, an *engagement with the numinous*.

But “prophecy” intends more than this again. Prophetic speech, according to Kierkegaard, is always “personal, untimely, political and eschatological.”²¹³ It is never a message of congratulations or encouragement, but a warning, distasteful to those who must hear it, and difficult for the prophet herself to utter. The words of the prophet demand change. They are an ultimatum, a threat of the dire and brutal consequences that await those who complacently continue in their warned-against behaviours. Ricoeur takes a similar approach to Kierkegaard, describing prophets as mediators of “an imminent history that they “see” coming about...and that they interpret for their people as the carrying out of a judgement brought against them.”²¹⁴ Prophecy, for both Ricoeur and Kierkegaard, is a challenging act, and the prophet, a “figure of crisis.”²¹⁵ Furthermore, for these two theorists, the prophet and her prophecy are specific: she is

210 <http://mw1.m-w.com/dictionary/prophet>, accessed 11/10/2012, at 2:38 P.M.

211 Ibid

212 Glaude, E.S., (2011). On Prophecy and Critical Intelligence. *American Journal of Theology and Philosophy*, May 32:2 (105-121). Retrieved from <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals>, pp107

213 Westphal, pp12

214 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp263

215 Ibid, pp265

“addressing a specific audience in a particular situation,”²¹⁶ and “belongs to the people from whom he is withdrawn so as to be sent to them.”²¹⁷

Such an understanding of prophecy, and of the prophet, is deeply grounded in the Hebraic/Biblical tradition of prophecy; unsurprising given the backgrounds of both Kierkegaard and Ricoeur. I am privileging this understanding of prophecy over and above that of the Greeks and Romans, by virtue of the fact that prophecy in the Classical tradition is both morally and ethically arbitrary as well as being inescapable, an announcement of fatal predestination. Oedipus is a perfect example of this; in spite of his moral blamelessness, he still inadvertently murders his father, Laius, and marries Queen Jocasta, his mother, a tragedy that leads to Jocasta’s suicide, Oedipus’ own self-inflicted blindness, his exile, and, indirectly, the deaths of his daughter Antigone, and the prince Haemon. Such prophecies are tragic in their fatalism. The Jewish and Christian traditions, however, offer the possibility of redemption in exchange for repentance and behavioural change. As Kierkegaard says “Prophetic preaching of the law is followed by the prophetic gospel... the prophetic view of time not only denies the sufficiency of the past and the ultimacy of the present, but also affirms the priority of God’s future.”²¹⁸ Such prophecies engage a logic of cause and effect, a reason for the punishment prophesied, and a means of its evasion. For example, Jonah prophesies that Nineveh will be destroyed; their king hears him and orders fasting, prayer, and repentance. Accordingly Jonah’s god spares them. Jesus – though a saviour in term of Christian theology, and not, technically a prophet - prophesied against what he saw as the blindness, hypocrisy, and elitism of the Jewish institution, threatening hell for those who continued the Jewish tradition and offering a heavenly redemption to those who sought god through *his* teachings. I favour this more prescriptive understanding of prophecy because it is more hopeful, more in keeping with a constructive and critically engaged religious perspective, and because it speaks into the (Post-) Christian setting of *The Dreamhunter Duet*.

216 Westphal, pp12

217 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp266-7

218 Westphal, pp7

The transcendent inspiration of prophecy renders it problematic in modernity. In its emphasis on objective reason and on the conclusions that come from the repetition of observable proofs, modernity disavows the existence of the numinous and devalues any claims made by it, or by others in its name. As a result, it is ostensibly impossible - and at the very least paradoxical - for there to be valid and legitimate prophecy (as opposed to *prediction*) in modernity. Prophecy is, by its very nature, concerned with an individual's subjective experience of the numinous, with a religious or transcendent truth. It is a subjective truth, revealed to one individual, who then relays this revelation to others, declaring it not as experience, but Truth. The knowledge discharged by the prophet is thus excluded from modernity on two grounds. First, the source of prophecy cannot be empirically proven to exist. It is a transcendent reality that can only be accessed in the encounter between an individual and the numinous; it is never objective and it is irreducible, existing in the unique experience of personal nothingness, of the individual's awe and trembling in the face of the absolute. Available only to the individual, the existence of the numinous cannot be affirmed beyond faith and testimony, and therefore, where objective reason is privileged, the existence of the numinous must be denied. The very *source* of prophecy is thereby excluded from modernity. The subjective nature of the encounter with the numinous also grounds the second cause for prophecy's exclusion; this being its status as revealed truth. The prophet brings her message from what *she* understands to be an infinite and transcendent source and delivers that message to her people. She *tells* them that this message concerns not only herself, but all of them. In modernity, however, her people do not recognise the source of her message as real, let alone as transcendent and universally relevant. The prophet's people balk at the espousal of her subjective experience - understood to be, at best, the prophet's opinion, and at worst, her delusion. They resist seeing it as a public matter, a matter that concerns them all. The prophet can tell, but she cannot show, and in modernity this failing is unforgivable. However, as I made clear earlier, the exclusion of the religious from modernity enables it to act as modernity's repressed but recurrent other. As Horkheimer and Adorno put it, "The proscription of superstition has always signified not only the progress of domination but its compromise"²¹⁹; while pushed aside and ignored, the religious continues to

219 Adorno & Horkheimer, pp39

manifest in the gaps that modernity fails to fill, meeting needs that modernity has neglected to satisfy, providing access to alternative ways of perceiving and understanding both the world and the individual's place in it. Prophecy can be interpreted as one such expression of these alternatives, a noisy and particularly confrontational articulation of that which modernity seeks to silence. Religion's exclusion not only renders the numinous as a source of alternative ways of knowing, but it can also be seen to *strengthen* prophecy's potential as a critical - and indeed a political - voice. It commands attention in its ideologically transgressive nature. In a society receptive to divinely inspired messages the prophetic voice is challenging, but it is valid and unsurprising, like a parent's chastisement of a misbehaving child. In modernity, however, when the prophetic voice is heard it is not only unexpected, coming as it does from an ostensibly non-existent source, but absurd, a judgemental and demanding criticism of normative values and practices grounded in what appears to be opinion or delusion. As such, prophecy goes beyond the challenging, and is instead offensive, an imposition of epistemologically untenable demands, a disquieting and somewhat abject resurgence of the ideological corpses modernity sought to permanently inter.

If religious expression is thus disallowed in modernity, then how does it - as the critical voice inspired by the numinous - manifest? It is at this point that both Max Weber and John Dewey become important, for the theorisation of prophecy constructed by these two men acknowledges the importance of objectivity, and seeks a more compromising and dialogic approach. Max Weber was heavily influenced by both his own protestant Christianity and by the romantics, who "expressed the fear that a "rational-scientific" ontology negated the emotional character of life. For this group a purely rational existence negated life itself."²²⁰ Though he was committed to the epistemological project of modernity and to the ubiquitous implementation of objective reason, Weber's writings are underpinned by a fear of the moral and creative loss that the objectification of human subjects necessarily entails. What Weber

220 Koch, A.M., (1993). Rationality, Romanticism, and the Individual: Max Weber's "Modernism" and the confrontation with "Modernity". *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Mar 26:1(123-144). Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org>, pp123

advocates as a remedy to this loss, to this “anomie and dehumanization,”²²¹ is a “new prophecy”. In Weber’s writing “prophecy” is used to “describe a process by which an individual introduces a new conceptual ordering of the world.”²²² As such, and quite in spite of Weber’s own protestant Christianity, “prophecy” is not used by Weber to refer to a strictly religious concept - in the traditional, institutional sense – but refers instead to *any* introduction of a “new conceptual orientation to the world,”²²³ that has been inspired by some experience of transcendence. For Weber, rationalism once constituted a form of prophecy, however, as the concept of objectivity has become normative, and as its effects have become plain, a new form of prophecy – one that speaks to the creative and ethical individual - has become necessary. As Ricoeur did much later, Weber recognizes that we can “no longer live the great symbolisms of the sacred in accordance with the original belief in them,”²²⁴ acknowledging that “the reassertion of past religious doctrines” will result in the “corresponding disintegration of the scientific world view.”²²⁵ Weber’s recognition of modernity’s dehumanizing effects, and of the untenable nature of “past religious doctrines,”²²⁶ of their inability to speak to the modern individual and ameliorate her sense of alienation, manifests in a creatively and emotionally engaged orientation towards the environment (where the environment is read as the location of a wholeness in which we all participate). While the environment - as the suggested location of the numinous, the transcendent inspiration of Weber’s “new prophecy” - has little relevance to this discussion, his re-interpretation of prophecy (as the proclaiming of a radical conceptual re-orientation, inspired by transcendence) is incredibly valuable. This broadened understanding of prophecy - as a generically romantic, creative, and transformational act, rather than as a act associated with the religious institution - moves it towards being a rationally tenable concept that is capable of “breaking the old norms, values and orientation,”²²⁷ of a society, a “creative revolutionary force of history.”²²⁸

221 Ibid, pp129

222 Ibid, pp138

223 Ibid, pp139

224 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp5-6

225 Koch, pp139 **Emphasis mine**

226 Ibid, pp139

227 Ibid, pp140

228 Ibid, pp140

John Dewey, like Max Weber, re-conceptualises prophecy in a way that addresses the problematic relationship between religion and modernity. Glaude describes Dewey's approach as containing "a romantic impulse – a vision in which the moral *imagination* plays a crucial role in our efforts to become who we hope to be as we engage a perilous world."²²⁹ Weber's construction of prophecy differs from the conventional Hebraic and Biblical reading only in as much as it moves the prophet away from his engagement with anthropomorphic deity and the religious institution. He denies the necessity of divine judgement, but retains the need for both criticism and the transcendently inspired and charismatic individual, the prophet. For Weber, the prophet's warning stems from his own response to the numinous, his creative synthesis of inspiration and socio-cultural context, but is still "in the mould of the Hebrew prophet."²³⁰ For Dewey, on the other hand, prophecy constitutes an "important category of analysis";²³¹ he thus goes further than Weber in his attempts to render prophecy relevant in modernity. Dewey depicts prophecy not as a way of instigating social and cultural change, but as a vital part of modernity that needs to be recognised and incorporated into reasonable endeavours. Dewey's construction of "prophecy" is focussed on its predictive function, on the prophet's call to speak of events before they have occurred. What makes the act "prophecy" - rather than simply "prediction" - in his writings is that this predictive function is ethically concentrated, deployed not as a forecast of income or political conflict, but as an "exercise of the *moral* imagination."²³² For Dewey, modernity had created a society in which the needs, desires, and expressions of the creative individual - and of the community alike - had been eclipsed by the progression of the economic imperative. His philosophy disagrees with Kant's argument

that statements of morality cannot produce the same quality of statement produced in the study of the phenomenal world...ethical systems are not grounded in knowledge but in an assumption.²³³

The way in which Dewey understands and uses the term "prophecy" requires the individual to

229 Glaude, pp105

230 Ibid, pp109

231 Ibid, pp111

232 Ibid, pp109, **Emphasis mine**

233 Koch, pp129

conduct what is, basically, a more rigorous hypothesisation, an in-depth contemplation of the consequences of our actions from a “unified view of reality.”²³⁴ This approach demands a move towards transcendence, an attempt to envisage and - in our imaginations - live out, as many potential outcomes as possible. Dewey believed that this would “help us anticipate and clarify the path ahead in order that we may intelligently redirect, if necessary, those interactions that carry us one way or another.”²³⁵ For him, actions, thoughts, and behaviours should not be considered purely in the light of the momentary context, but must be considered critically and in terms of their wider implications and longer term effects. This is required so that,

in those moments, when unanticipated forces eclipse our habitual ways (e.g. old notions of individualism that were once liberating, now, under different material conditions, constrain individuality), that we find ourselves in need of prophetic action: conduct reflective of efforts to imagine beyond the opacity of current conditions in order to “grasp undisclosed opportunities and to generate new ideals and ends” that further human flourishing.²³⁶

Prophecy, for Dewey, is a move beyond immediacy into a world of imagined consequences, a call to act in a way that has been informed by futural possibility rather than just immanent materiality. And, just as Weber prefigures Ricoeur’s understanding that a return to a pre-modern, religious naïveté is impossible, Dewey somewhat pre-empts Ricoeur’s espousal of imaginative transformation. Where Ricoeur places the symbol as the gateway to transcendence, a vacillating palimpsest of meaning and potential, Dewey turns to a “unified world view,” an observation *and* imagination driven vision of the numinous (here represented by the totality, the unity of human experience and material existence). Regardless of the means, however, both attempt to show that imagination - the fictitious development and communication of alternative scenarios - is vital to the recognition of potential problems and to the improvement of both individual and collective quality of life.

In spite of its religious roots, prophecy is still recognised as a valid, even a necessary act, in modernity. As it has been re-constructed, by the likes of Dewey, Weber, and – obliquely -

234 Glaude, pp108

235 Ibid, pp109

236 Ibid, pp109

Ricoeur, prophecy seeks to move beyond religion, or at least, beyond its involvement with the religious institution, and into an ameliorative and exploratory realm of criticism, imagination, and unification. These theorists simultaneously acknowledge the ubiquity and power of objective reason as well as the need for something more. There is a moderated, synthetic approach that recognizes both modernity's power and its negative effects, both the critical potential of the prophet and the problem that she poses to an objectivity-centred epistemology. Where more traditional Hebraic and Biblical prophecy *demand*ed, with divine authority, that a society turn back or suffer the hideous, punitive consequences engendered by displeasing its god, prophecy in modernity *suggests* that a society seek alternative experiences, engaging with the numinous in new ways so that it might re-evaluate its behaviours for its own satisfaction and happiness' sake.

6.2 How is Dreaming Prophecy?

Dreaming is primarily depicted as entertainment, medicine, punishment, and control, *not* as prophecy. However, Dreaming is – in addition to its more popular functions - an image of what prophecy might look like in and against modernity, an imagining of possible causes and effects, and a representation of a potential future, enabling Laura and her family to “intelligently redirect”²³⁷ their society. At the same time as it fulfils this Deweyan function, Dreaming also introduces a “new conceptual orientation to the world,”²³⁸ in which people’s experiences of their social milieu are privileged above and beyond the state’s technological and economical progress. Over the next few pages I discuss how Dreaming enacts several aspects of prophecy (as religious prophecy) and examine how the novels’ depictions both align with and deconstruct more traditional understandings, asking “how is a representation of prophecy in modernity created that is as amenable to objective reason it as it is critical?”

The Place is “magical,” an embodiment of “discontinuous space and time.”²³⁹ It is mysterious, disruptive of Southland’s physical borders, and of Southland’s present, its future, and even disruptive of its own past. As such, the Place enables Dreaming to fulfil one of the primary criteria of prophecy; that of divine inspiration. In 5.2 I argued that Dreaming is a viable representation of art, and more specifically, a viable representation of romantically ideal art. As a part of this argument I linked Dreaming to the numinous by invoking its “alignment with potentiality and futurity”, as well as its function as “the secular expression of religious concerns, of moral and ethical necessity, of transcendence and immanence.” It makes some sense that the link between Dreaming and art be should reappear as the link between Dreaming and prophecy, as the Romantic ideal demands that art express transcendence, point to “something that lies beyond the object world of book or film.”²⁴⁰ That is to say that Dreaming can be read as being “divinely inspired” for the same reason that Dreaming can be read as art; it springs from the

237 Glaude, pp109

238 Koch, pp139

239 Joseph, *Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in Carpentaria and Dreamhunter*, pp6

240 Wevers, pp190

Place, a representation of the numinous, the “non-rational, non-sensory experience or feeling whose primary and immediate object is outside the self²⁴¹”, outside of experiential time, and outside of material space.

The Place - as a material representation of the numinous and as the source of Dreaming, and so, prophecy – requires some analysis in its own right, as the manner of its depiction fruitfully subverts one of the major tropes of Hebraic and Biblical prophecy, even as it develops its key metaphors. The Place develops the role of the desert in Jewish and Christian prophecy. As a location in which the revelation of truth occurs, in which the divine encounter is had, the desert plays a crucial role in narratives of prophecy. It is a space away from the day to day life of the society into and against which prophecy is made. It is a space away from the demands, priorities, conflicts, and difficulties of society. It is separate from the profane, making it ideal – in a paradigm where the two are dichotomised - for an encounter with the sacred. The opposite of civilization, it is a wilderness into which the prophet ventures to find the divine, and, interestingly enough, into which the modern romantic retreats to find herself. But the desert, as the specific wilderness of the Israelites is, importantly, an *empty* wilderness. The desert parallels the ideal state of the prophet; it is as empty of society and its norms as the vessel of god’s message must be (remembering here that the prophet is a figure who is and must remain withdrawn from her society “so as to be sent to them”²⁴²). The Place is described as a desert. It is completely dry. There are riverbeds, and there is rumoured coastline, but there is no water. It is also devoid of animal life, lacking any sign of habitation, and is full of parched grass and sapless trees; “vegetation that wasn’t dead, but wouldn’t revive.”²⁴³ The landscape is pale, bleached out, and sandy, with features that crumble to the touch. When Laura walks through the grass in the Place, it gives way beneath her feet, but never springs back, never closes behind her. Strangely, the Place is also perpetually light, in spite of there being no visible sun. The sky is described as being a “luminous white,”²⁴⁴ and quite in spite of The Place’s solar lack, dreamhunters are noted

241 Otto, pp6

242 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp266

243 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp199

244 Ibid, pp93

as returning “thin, tanned and dry-skinned²⁴⁵”, as though they have walked for miles in the desert. Though, of course, actual deserts teem with life, the descriptions of The Place provided in *The Dreamhunter Duet* evoke a symbolic desert, a desert that resonates with the images of a barren wilderness into which the Jewish and Christian prophets venture; a no-place, in no-time, filled with no-thing, that exists beyond the limits of the civilised and social world. Unlike the desert of such prophets however, The Place lacks a certain reality and tangibility. The desert of the prophets is an exteriority, a place into which anyone can venture, but into which only a few are called or dare go. The desert of Dreaming, on the other hand, is an interiority, folded into and intersecting with the carefully constructed society of Southland, a part of it, even as it is set-apart. What this re-imagining of the desert achieves – where the desert functions as a metaphor, symbol, or image of the space and place of prophecy - is a subtle and complex relocation of the numinous. The encounter with the numinous takes place, within these novels, in a place that is woven into, underlying, and overlapping the space of civilised society but that is still greater than it. It is a sacred that permeates and participates in the profane. This indicates perhaps, that the prophetic encounter with the divine - while it *does* require the prophet to move out of the everyday world – may necessitate an *inward* turn, a journey deeper *into* the inhabited world, or, at least, into a space of deep and quiet humanity, a shared level of human experience that is a part of, but greater than any individual. The Place is “infinite and mysterious, like the inside of our heads,”²⁴⁶ and it is into this infinite and mysterious interior that the dreamhunter-as-prophet must venture, finding truth and meaning in that most neural and intimate of visual experiences; the dream.

The Place also raises questions around the matter of divine will and agency. Traditionally, the Jewish or Christian prophet acts as a messenger. She is spoken to directly by god or his emissaries and then delivers god’s word to his people. Alternatively, the prophet is imbued with the knowledge necessary to interpret signs and omens, and, through this process, she communicates god’s will as an interpretor, rather than simply as a messenger. In *The Dreamhunter Duet* the process is somewhat more complex and open-ended. The dreams that

245 Ibid, pp10

246 Knox, *The Love School*, pp350

dreamhunters retrieve are memories and longings; the memories belonging to Lazarus Hame and the longings belonging to his Golem. Lazarus summons the Golem and buries himself at its heart, ordering it to "Rise up and crush them all."²⁴⁷ The Golem then extends his consciousness, his soul, back through time, reaching out in an attempt to prevent Lazarus' suffering from ever having happened. As such, the dreams retrieved from The Place can be understood as wilfully proclaimed warnings, criticisms, and demands for change, issued by a man who does not (yet) and may not exist and a supernatural being whose soul, consciousness, or essence is pulled into and out of time and existence throughout history. Laura receives these warnings, and delivers them to the people of Southland, alerting them to danger and thus securing their salvation. When interpreted in this manner, the dreams are a little unorthodox in their prophetic source – anthropocentric as it is - but can be seen to correspond loosely to the Hebraic and Biblical norm. However, a sense of – if not divine, then transcendent - will and agency is undermined by the relationship between Lazarus and his Golem and by the sporadic and indirect nature of Dreaming. The "Thus saith the lord"²⁴⁸ which is ostensibly necessary to legitimise prophecy is absent from Dreaming; there is no single voice issuing commands from on high. Instead, *The Dreamhunter Duet* presents its readers with (at minimum) a duo of voices, with different, though complementary tones. Lazarus' "voice" is vengeful, tormented, and filled with loss. The Golem's "voice", on the other hand, is sorrowful, longing, and determined. Lazarus seeks the destruction and punishment of his tormentors. The Golem seeks to protect and save Lazarus from his suffering. While both of these "voices" combine, seeking to achieve the downfall of Cas Doran and the dissolution of his corrupt government, their separateness allows for a model in which more than one soul, being, or self can be honoured. Matters are further complicated by the fact that dreams - while they stem from the memories of these two figures – are not necessarily presented from their perspectives. For example, "Contentment" is experienced as an aging Cas Doran, and "Sunken", from the perspective of an old man serving time alongside Lazarus. With Dreaming, there is no ultimate divine agent whose monologic judgement is final. Rather there is something altogether messier, a cry or plea borne of loss and longing, transmitted empathically, through and by Lazarus and the Golem's shared emotion and experience.

247 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp477

248 Westphal, pp11

Dreaming then invokes and perpetuates this sharing as its means of communication.

The coherent and monologic nature of most Jewish and Christian prophecy is further subverted by the often confused and disconnected nature of Dreaming. In spite of the fact that the dreams all arrive in Southland's present from its future, from the memories and longing of Lazarus and his Golem, they have no apparent narrative coherency; they do not tell a story. The dreams are fragments, depicting a wide variety of characters, locations, emotions, and events, from, as I have mentioned, a variety of perspectives. As such, the fact that the dreams are a warning is not immediately clear to anyone, not Tziga, nor even Laura (to whom the warning is directed). Unlike the usual univocal pronouncement – as represented by “Thus saith the lord” – *The Dreamhunter Duet* represents to the reader a multivocal and complex source of prophecy, where truth is not revealed through fire, stone commandments, and the awesome voice of the lord, but through dialogue, curiosity, and a sense of respect for and commitment to the other.

Dreaming's status as prophecy is further strengthened – though also complicated – by the fact that its message is delivered by an individual who is “chosen” by the Place. When Tziga fell from a stagecoach, out of mundane reality, and into the dust and glare of that strange desert, he “lost consciousness and had a dream,”²⁴⁹ returning with it to Southland and triggering the events that *The Dreamhunter Duet* describes. It is Tziga who first notices the presence of convicts in the dreams that he catches, and he who first suspects that their appearance may, in fact, signify something. It is not Tziga, however, that we should interpret as Dreaming's prophet, but Laura. Towards the end of *Dreamquake*, it is revealed that the Place reached out to Tziga in an attempt to make contact with Laura:

Laura's servant, the ninth Nown, had loved her, and so the giant, immobile, speechless tenth, the Place, remembered having loved her, and went looking for her to ask for help. To say, ‘Here is one you love who has asked me to stifle him. What should I do?’ It moved its territory of stopped time back in time. It went too far, went on until it found the first someone it felt it knew — Laura's father.²⁵⁰

249 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp87

250 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp 477-478

Both Laura and Tziga, are sought out by the Place to carry its message to the people of Southland. This seemingly “chosen” status is emphasised by the fact that not all dreamhunters are aware of, let alone receptive to the warning that the Place is attempting to communicate. While many others are able to enter the Place, catch dreams, and share them with others, while many others have access to the “unearthly geography”²⁵¹ of the place, and through it, to the numinous, only Tziga and Laura are able to receive, understand, and deliver the message being communicated. The fact that *only they* are able to see any deeper meaning in dreams clearly marks them as special. The word “chosen”, however, is problematic in light of not only the Place’s dual consciousness – its simultaneous expression of Lazarus, the Golem, and others besides - but also in terms of Tziga, Laura, and Lazarus’ genealogical ties. Lazarus was seeking someone to destroy his tormentors, and the Golem, someone to heal and/or prevent his ward’s future torment. There is no unified will, no agency capable of “choosing” Laura as such. But both Lazarus and the Golem *are* seeking her, reaching towards her in particular. Laura is not so much “chosen” as she is *bound* to be the Place’s prophet. The Golem reaches out to one of his creators, more specifically, to the creator who was not the first to make or summon him, but who *was* the first to give him free-will. The Golem, in his newly possible gratitude and affection, made a promise to Laura - “I promise in the future to do more, to do — I know not what — to save whomever you love,” – and so, the Golem’s choice of Laura is inevitable:

Laura’s servant...had loved her, and so the giant, immobile, speechless tenth, the Place, remembered having loved her, and went looking for her to ask for help. To say, ‘Here is one you love who has asked me to stifle him. What should I do?’²⁵²

Laura is the source of the Golem’s ability to choose *and* she is emotionally responsible for both him and Lazarus. The Golem could have sought someone with greater political or financial power, more physical strength, or more education. He could have sought someone with a greater capacity to undermine Cas Doran, to play his games against him. But the Golem and Laura were *bound* together by love, by her gift, and by his promise. The Place didn’t “choose” her; they were already linked. Furthermore, Lazarus is Laura’s (future) son; who better to care for and

251 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp133

252 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp477-478

protect him than his mother? The centrality of this maternal bond to my understanding of Laura’s involvement is underscored by descriptions of one of the Place’s most potent dreams, “The Gate”. In this dream – experienced from Lazarus’ perspective – the protagonist follows a woman through a beautiful garden in which there was “too much colour to take in.”²⁵³ He then arrives at a gate where the woman has been lingering, waiting for him to catch up. He can see

a little of the garden beyond her — its piled flower colours and flower lights... [and] The woman who might be his mother smiled at him... The sun had gone, and the birds had soothed themselves down, settled and roosted, shadows nestled into shadows. But suddenly they began again to make expectant noises, like dawn birdcalls. The sun was coming back... With every hour he would be cleaner and fresher and more full of the certainty that is health and youth... That was her promise, that was where she meant to take him — through the gate.²⁵⁴

Lazarus - although he is angry and broken when he lays himself to rest in his self-dug grave – yearns for his mother, for love, forgiveness, safety, and an opportunity to be saved, to start over, to be a child once again. It makes sense that - in his desire for a new life - he reaches for the one who gave him life in the first place. Laura is *not* “chosen” by Lazarus; as with the Golem, they are already linked, only in this case by something so symbolically and emotionally fundamental that it extends beyond temporal and material reality and into a world of potential and hope.

This depiction of a prophet, not chosen by, but bound to the source of prophecy, constitutes a lapse in the texts avoidance of hopeless pre-destination. It would hardly be an exaggeration to claim that Laura is *destined* to deliver the Place’s message to the people of Southland. However, the paradigm that Laura’s fatedness here creates *is* a hopeful one. She is an ideal prophet, the only one that can issue this judgement and negotiate salvation, not because she is morally perfect or utterly devout, but because she is woven into in a pattern of emotionally meaningful relationships, joined to a several other souls in a time-and-space transcending network of love. This justification of Laura’s suitability as prophet constitutes evidence of the *Duet’s* construction and deployment of a more Weberian prophetic model; by

253 Ibid, pp306

254 Ibid, pp306-307

emphasising love and interpersonal connection, *The Dreamhunter Duet* hints at a “new conceptual orientation to the world,”²⁵⁵ in which responsibility to, and care for other people is the principle needed to guide and determine Southland’s actions.

This characterisation of prophecy and of the prophet, by virtue of its focus on interpersonal relationships, assists in the development of an image of prophecy as vital to, and functional in, modernity. Dreaming critiques the society of Southland, warning it against the consequences of exploiting and alienating its citizens and, through this warning, encouraging positive social change. This critical function is the last aspect of Dreaming that marks it as prophecy. Although many of Dreaming’s images are positive - captivating expressions of intimacy, health, friendship, and adventure - the most important images, in terms of both plot development and in terms of the narrative’s own internal logic, are those that show the suffering and abuse of Southland’s less fortunate and less obedient. These images represent the dangerous consequences of amorality, of a purely political and economic standard of judgement, and constitute a “reaction against the mechanization and bureaucratization of life, against the destruction of the quality of human life.”²⁵⁶ They reveal the nightmare ending to which their society’s current choices may potentially lead. Not only do these images *represent* the potential suffering latent in Southland’s future, but they facilitate an experience of it. The audience of a dreamhunter is thrown into a state of empathetic engagement, experiencing – within the dream – an identification with the dream’s protagonist. The effect of this self-transcending empathy is two-fold; first, it strengthens the effect of Dreaming’s criticism, by rendering it more personally affective, more direct and emotionally confrontational in its expression; and secondly, it focuses Dreaming’s social critique. Not only does Dreaming *depict* the suffering that current choices and attitudes may engender, *representing* this suffering to the population of Southland, but it shares the experience of it, highlighting the importance of ethical responsibility, of responsibility to other individuals, by highlighting its lack, enacting its lack experientially.

But Dreaming, as prophecy, does more than just criticise Southland’s amorality, passing

255 Koch, pp139

256 Versluis, pp122

judgement against it. *The Dreamhunter Duet* depicts a prophecy that is – in some significant ways - in line with the Hebraic and Biblical model of redemptive prophecy. By revealing the potential consequences of Southland's objectifying modernity, Dreaming opens up the possibility of Southland changing its behaviour and striving to make better choices, or, at least, choices grounded in a different set of priorities. The dreams are a warning, and, as a warning, they *enable preventative action to be taken*. Traditionally, this preventative action manifests in the form of repentance, of prayer, apology, behavioural or ideological change, and the request for forgiveness and salvation. Such a model relies on the presence of a deity - a divine agent with divine will - and such an agent is not present here. *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* offer an alternative means of redemption. As I have mentioned, the most literal criterion of prophecy is the speaking (*-phetes*) of events before they happen (*pro-*). Dreaming satisfies this criterion, communicating images of Southland's potential future by transmitting them back into the society's present. In doing so, *The Dreamhunter Duet* enacts a “deliberate disruption of futurity and sequence”²⁵⁷ that stresses, explores, deconstructs, and emphasizes the relationship between cause and effect, between imagination and possibility. Lazarus both does and does not experience the events that Dreaming depicts. The Lazarus that Laura exhumes *has* experienced them, whereas the Lazarus in her womb never will. The resurrected Lazarus is an embodiment, in the text, of a potential future that, in the end, never comes to pass. Of a future that is - to everyone but him - imaginary. As such, he can be understood as a manifestation of Dewey's “moral imagination” – the projected possible consequences of current action made flesh. The characters of *The Dreamhunter Duet* encounter this “imagined” future through Dreaming. They are - through their horrific, empathetic experiences of being buried alive, chased by dogs, and mocked and tormented by prison guards – provoked into imagining a better future, a future in which the as-yet-unborn incarnation of Lazarus, and many of Southland's other citizens besides, will not have to endure such suffering. The disruption of linear time, embodied by Lazarus' multiple presence, and expressed in Laura's undoing of her possible future reality and her adult son's past, serves to explore how we are able to “perceive the meaning of what exists only as we

257 Joseph, *Dreaming Phantoms and Golems: Elements of the Place Beyond Nation in Carpentaria and Dreamhunter*, pp2

forecast the consequences it entails.”²⁵⁸ More than this, the predictive warning that simply allows for the re-direction of their course, Laura and Lazarus’s temporally muddled story perfectly expresses the tension of the narrativised self which

involves an ongoing process of self-constancy and self-rectification, that requires imagination to synthesize the different horizons of past, present and future.²⁵⁹

It is this imaginative synthesis then that constitutes the means of salvation in *The Dreamhunter Duet*, rather than the wilful intervention, the forgiveness, salvation, or redemption of god. *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* can thus be seen to use Dreaming to express a model of prophecy for modernity. The social critique depicted in *The Dreamhunter Duet* is expressed through the individual’s *imaginative* self-and-situation transcending engagement with the other, suggesting that we take “seriously...childhood dreams, works of art, and religious symbols as lived possibilities for a transformative future,”²⁶⁰ but that we locate redemption in the individual and collective capacity to *act* on these possibilities.

258 Glaude, pp107

259 Kearney, pp99

260 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp7

6.3 Laura and Tziga as Prophets

As a part of the above discussion, I nominated Laura and Tziga as Dreaming's prophets, individuals chosen by the Place and charged with delivering its warning to the people of Southland. What is that marks Tziga and Laura as prophets? What it is about their personalities, behaviours, and sympathies that renders them suitable representations of the prophet? For this chapter, I rely heavily on Kierkegaard's discussion of what constitutes a prophet, but also incorporate aspects of Weber, Levinas, and Ricoeur's thought. I then discuss imagery used to emphasise the connection between Laura, Tziga, and - to a lesser degree - Lazarus, and figures of the Christian narrative.

In 6.2 I went into some detail about why Laura is the only possible candidate for the role of Dreaming's prophet. Laura, although not especially virtuous, perceptive, or powerful, is the mother and/or creator of both Lazarus and the Golem, and, as such, she is essential to their emotional wellbeing. Through these emotional and familial bonds, Laura is capable of both enacting and representing a profound sense of ethical responsibility to others, accomplishing the task demanded by her prophecy even as she delivers its message. However, there are other factors, beyond emotional and familial tie, that contribute to a sense of Laura's suitability as prophet. Many of these factors apply also to Tziga, who, while not the primary vessel of prophecy, can be understood as a sort of proto-prophet, or perhaps, a prophet to the coming prophet; a John the Baptist to Laura's Christ (a connection I will pick up later). The mutual applicability of these distinguishing factors illuminates Tziga's importance, as well as further emphasizing the importance of familial and emotional connections to the Place's prophetic critique. Both Laura and Tziga are quiet, thoughtful, and otherwise introverted characters. These traits serve, from the outset of *The Dreamhunter Duet*, to set Tziga and Laura apart; although they are members of a family, a community, a social class, a school, and a profession, both Laura and Tziga are detached, participating in but never wholly a part of these groups. This sense of separation is useful in establishing them as prophets, for the prophet is - by necessity - set aside from her peers; she must be withdrawn from her society "so as to be sent to

them."²⁶¹ Laura is depicted throughout the *Duet* as a shy and somewhat sensitive girl, who, observant, careful, and thoughtful, functions as a counterpoint to her more charismatic and impulsive cousin, Rose. Elements of self-doubt *are* present in Laura's personality, for example, Laura doubts that she will enter the Place, and feels threatened, "slowly crushed"²⁶² by her cousin's comparative confidence. However, Laura's social reticence seems to stem more from personal preference than from fear of low self worth. Laura is simply inclined, as an individual, towards reflection and contemplation, towards a quiet sort of situational- and self-awareness that is enabled by the more outgoing Rose:

Laura was in the habit of following Rose, of letting Rose make arrangements...It was easy for Laura to follow Rose. Rose always made headway, whichever way the wind was blowing. And following Rose left Laura free to watch what was going on around her.²⁶³

Some might see this passivity, this quietude and lack of initiative as an obstacle to successful prophecy, for surely the prophet needs to be confident, charismatic, and capable of capturing her audience's attention²⁶⁴. Of course, such traits and abilities *are* useful, but the prophet must also "continue to listen in order to speak,"²⁶⁵ she must be able to hear the Place's message before she can deliver it. And listening is what Laura does best. In the Place Laura is without Rose, and, though she is initially at a loss, in the end Laura is neither disadvantaged by her solitude nor handicapped by her introverted nature. Rather, Laura's quiet and receptive personality allows her to listen to the Place, to feel, as she moves through it, "as if it's telling [her] something."²⁶⁶ Without Rose, Laura is free to observe, to watch and listen, without feeling the need to make any "forward movement". It is noted in the text that Laura's attitude to dreamhunting is strange, unconcerned as she is with making money or honing her skills:

All his carry-on seemed to imply that, since she wasn't trying to make money, she was only playing at being a dreamhunter, perhaps in an effort to make herself seem more substantial to herself. Perhaps he thought she was

261 Ricœur & Wallace, pp266-7

262 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp66

263 Ibid, pp57

264 Koch, pp22

265 Ricœur & Wallace, pp265

266 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp255

some kind of dabbler.²⁶⁷

But by dedicating her energies to observation rather than commerce or achievement, Laura shows herself to be ideal for the role of prophet. Rose may have the willpower, the charisma and the sense of purpose to effectively *deliver* a prophecy, but in her busy-ness and action, she would never have heard the call.

Not only is Laura shy and quiet, but she is also somewhat oblivious, set apart as much by her absent-minded failure to conform to social norms as she is by her failure to participate socially. For example, Laura is caught, by Rose and Mamie, caressing the buttocks of a statue in the National Museum; Laura is planning a sculpture, and so, her actions are justifiable, but she has forgotten to consider how they might appear to others. Like Rose, Chorley finds himself chastising Laura for her behaviour, telling her off for the “childish and intimate”²⁶⁸ way that she interacts with Sandy in public. Rose notes Laura’s inability to remember birthdays and other such occasions, describing them as the “sort of nicety that slipped Laura’s mind”²⁶⁹; she is an odd and distracted girl, more involved in her own inner, emotional world, than in the material world around her. Her transition to the life of a dreamhunter only exacerbates this situation. Dreamhunters are generally considered to live “a life apart,”²⁷⁰ as Dreaming is “a dangerous and socially ambiguous activity”²⁷¹ undertaken by rather mysterious - if useful and talented – outsiders. However, Laura goes well beyond the functional exclusion from society that her profession demands; the odd hours, long distances, and strange visions that constitute dreamhunting serve to take her deeper into her isolated and lonely world of reflection and interiority. As loved as she is, as powerful and successful as her family might be, and as well mannered as she may be capable of being, Laura is not like those around her. Less invested in the pressures and expectations of the everyday, she is better equipped to leave society behind; detached from reality and comfortable in her own psycho-emotional world, Laura’s personality

267 Ibid, pp248

268 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp 291

269 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp340

270 Ibid, pp28

271 Wevers, pp195

is geared towards something beyond the profane. Tziga, like his daughter, is considered to be a little odd. Chorley recalls Tziga's courtship of Verity, describing him as "this black-eyed, limping, spooky man who managed always to be there, watching my friends and me as though we were a pack of happy dogs."²⁷² As a younger man, he was on the edges of the social group, an unsettling and intense presence. Now that he is an adult, little has changed; he is still emotionally intense, having suffered through the illness and death of his wife, and endured the ongoing torment of providing "dreams for the public good", and, as with Laura, his inherent oddness is exacerbated by his line of work. Tziga, "though small and shabby," has "the aura belonging to all great dreamhunters...a residue of the dreams they'd carried."²⁷³ The strangeness of the Place sticks to him, and combines with both his melancholy attitude, and the loss that has permeated his life, to render him quiet, introverted, and haunted, a figure both tragic and awesome, whose pain and whose talent sets him apart from his society.

Tziga is also depicted as a spiritual man, another trait which in his social milieu, marks him as both an outsider and a prophetic figure. He was raised in the Southern Orthodox Church, and, although he no longer participates in institutional worship, he still openly discusses his (partial) subscription to Temple's beliefs as well as engaging in more folkish aspects of the religion; telling apocryphal tales, and singing "folk ballads and hymns and old prophecy songs."²⁷⁴ In short, Tziga is not closed to the possibility of the numinous, of something that goes beyond the world of objective reason. This openness marks him as an outsider, who, by engaging with an alternative epistemology, is capable of thinking and expressing himself in a language beyond the limits of the hegemonic discourse. Tziga teaches Laura the "old Hame songs and stories"²⁷⁵ and shares with her his opinions and musings on matters religious, thus granting her access to this alternative epistemology also. While Laura does not share her father's institutional background, she is, through his tutelage, made similarly aware of and open to numinous possibility, more receptive than most of her peers (if not as receptive as Tziga). The religious sympathies of Laura and Tziga serve to further emphasize their distance from the

²⁷² Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp173

²⁷³ *Ibid*, pp11

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp97

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, pp192

concerns and obsessions of modernity, and affirm their suitability as prophets, using expressions of religious concerns to critique the amoral and objective. Laura and Tziga are also positioned as outsiders to institutional religion. Not only are they open to numinous possibility, but they are open to manifestations that exceed the all-too-limiting dogma of the Temple. This locates them as enemies of both the “priest and King,”²⁷⁶ enabling them to enact the holistic prophecy that Kierkegaard posits as both ideal and necessary in modernity;

a prophecy in which “prophets protest against both the religious and social sins of the people...It [their prophecy] is a call to a religion that functions seven days a week and to a politics whose piety is more visible in policy than in church attendance.”²⁷⁷

Tziga and Laura’s suitability as Dreaming’s prophets is further cemented by their motivation. Kierkegaard states that the prophet’s critique is necessarily pious. He distinguishes between a pious and an impious social critique, where the pious critique is that which occurs when one loves a society and is committed to it being better, whereas the impious is self-serving²⁷⁸. Neither Tziga nor Laura seek to gain anything for themselves by criticizing their society. They are aiming, rather, to bring Southland closer to an ideal of moral justice and ethical responsibility. When Tziga writes his letter to Laura, imploring her to share “Buried Alive” with the people of Southland and to warn them against the consequences of their exploitative and heedless treatment of prisoners, he believes that he will be dead by the time that she reads it. He is – emotionally - dead already, and seeks nothing but an end to the torment that he has both seen and perpetuated. Likewise, Laura, when she sets out to share that hideous dream, has no self-serving interests. Having initially sought to save her father’s life, she finds herself seeking only to serve his will, to see his hopes realised in the fair treatment of Southland’s less fortunate. She has no idea that the chain of events triggered by her prophetic act will ultimately result in saving the lives of her future husband son, so securing her happiness and that of her family. The prophesying of Laura and Tziga is pious, legitimately prophetic in its

276 Westphal, pp15

277 Ibid, pp16

278 Ibid, pp21

commitment to the idea of ethical responsibility, to de-objectifying and re-humanising the individual, to promoting - as Knox herself so succinctly puts it - “the beauty of human life against which injustice is a blasphemy.”²⁷⁹

Their commitment to the idea of ethical responsibility satisfies another criterion of prophecy laid down by Kierkegaard. For Kierkegaard prophecy must express an idea, and not just any idea, but “*The idea...a truth that claims me for its own in life and in death and, in claiming me, gives meaning to both life and death.*”²⁸⁰ Kierkegaard’s “idea” is described as infinite, unconditional, and ultimate, like Religiousness A in as much as it “subjects social morality itself to the test of an infinite demand and deprives social conformity of an ultimate comfort.”²⁸¹ As such, upholding this idea, striving towards it, requires *commitment*, necessitates a willingness to go beyond what is easily achievable or attainable. The demand that Dreaming’s prophecy makes, that is, the demand for ethical responsibility, can be read as one manifestation of the idea, infinitely demanding in its reification of the absolute, *sui generis*, being-ness of the human individual. In order to establish this interpretation, I turn to Levinas’ theory of the face, in which “the inadequacy of thought to its object takes an overtly ethical significance.”²⁸² For Levinas, ethical responsibility is born out of our encounter with the human face, with the series of features and expressions that signifies another human being. This encounter with the human face directs us towards an awareness that this face, this collection of features and expressions, is like our own face, inadequate to express the being that it represents. Through this we ostensibly become aware of the absolute irreducibility of other human beings and of their equal and infinitely different capacity for emotion and suffering. In terms of Dreaming, it is not the literal face that triggers this awareness, but the substitution of the dreamer self for the dream’s protagonist, the fragmentary glimpse into a whole other life world. According to Levinas, such an awareness of human reality effects a radical de-objectification of the other, and one which cannot possibly be ignored; the awareness is present in every subsequent confrontation with the face, the inadequate representation of being-ness. Levinas’ theory constitutes an empathically

279 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp478

280 Westphal, pp46 **Emphasis mine**

281 *Ibid*, pp47

282 Perpich, pp61

focussed manifestation of the Kirkegaardian idea, a call to ethical responsibility that - as the idea must - “subjects social morality itself to the test of an infinite demand and deprives social conformity of an ultimate comfort.”²⁸³

In spite of their quiet, contemplative, and otherwise introverted personalities, both Tziga and Laura show commitment to this idea, overcoming their lack of ostensibly essential charisma and becoming passionate, driven beyond comfort, sanity, and self-preservation in their quest to expose the injustice shown to them by the Place. Tziga endures the torment of “Buried Alive”, suffering through the fifty hour hike, the clawing and biting induced by the dream, the guilt of inflicting its horror on others. He suffers through this in silence, refusing to burden his family with either the knowledge of his pain, or the pain of his knowledge. He summons a Golem, gathering his waning physical and emotional strength to fashion a servant for his daughter. However, Tziga - as much as he wants to see the suffering come to an end - gives up, attempting suicide before he has seen his prophecy made public. He does not seek his own death as a sacrifice, offering himself in order that his goal might be achieved, but rather, he attempts suicide because he lacks the necessary commitment to achieve this goal; in Tziga’s case the idea does not quite claim him “for its own in life and in death.” Laura, on the other hand, is taken beyond the possibility of giving up, committing her life to her cause rather than simply struggling to achieve it. Laura endures as much as her father, in terms of physical and emotional effort, but she goes further, risking - not only the disapproval of the authorities - but death and imprisonment. Her actions show a distinct lack of regard for her own – and at times others’ - life and limb. For example, Laura ventures into the Place repeatedly without registering her intentions, she openly confronts Maze Plasir about her father’s disappearance, she brings “Buried Alive” to the public in the presence of Doran and many of his cronies, and she takes on armed agents when they invade her family home . Unlike her father - who barely manages to speak out before he opts out - Laura takes action. She not only receives the Place’s message, but she delivers that message to the people of Southland, and she seeks to remedy the problems that it outlines. Her status as prophet is thus further confirmed by the absolute and self-effacing

283 Westphal, pp47

nature of her commitment.

6.4 Connections to Christ

Laura’s willingness to sacrifice herself in order to bring Dreaming’s prophecy to the people of Southland, brings me neatly to the matter of her depiction as a Christ figure. Like Jesus Christ, Laura must endure the tormented state of those she seeks to save, experiencing the pain meant for them so that they might avoid it. Laura’s endurance of the Place’s nightmares prevents the events that shaped them from ever coming to pass. Through Dreaming, she experiences the consequences of Southland’s actions, repeatedly, and in diverse forms. Had she not suffered thus, had she (and, to be fair, Tziga) not endured the horrors, the fear, and violence of the Place’s visions, then Southland would not have been redirected towards a future in which such suffering need never be endured, inhabiting instead the projected future in which such suffering was everyone’s due. This substitutory suffering echoes that of Jesus, who - by enduring the punishment for mankind’s sin and offering them salvation through repentance, through the admittance and discontinuation of their sin - absolved them of the need to suffer. This connection between Jesus and Laura has already been noted by Tatjana Schaefer. Schaefer comments that “Laura, like Christ, must experience fully the suffering of those who are to be redeemed.”²⁸⁴ However, for Schaefer, it is Lazarus who is “to be redeemed”, his salvation secured through Laura’s mutual experience of being “Buried Alive”. In one sense, Schaeffer is right, for Lazarus *is* saved by Laura’s act of prophecy, and the dream *is* derived from his experience of being buried, however, the issue is somewhat more complicated. First of all, Lazarus is only one among many saved by Laura’s prophetic act. In delivering the Place’s message, Laura is delivering, not just Lazarus, but Southland. As such, Laura must experience the suffering of not just Lazarus, but Southland. The suffering that Laura experiences through Dreaming – while some of it stems from Lazarus’ memories – is not solely his. In addition to Lazarus’ hideous burial, there are echoes of the Golem’s longing, and beyond even that, there are, aspects of Doran’s exploitation-based pride and success, and of Lazarus’ co-convicts’ humiliation. Dreaming - while it *stems from* the experiences and memories of Lazarus and his Golem - is not *limited* by their experiences, reflecting instead a future of suffering in which everyone, *all of*

284 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp142

Southland, is involved. Laura - by Dreaming dreams that incorporate a wide spectrum of Southland's potential future – shares the suffering of, and so, redeems all of Southland. Like Jesus, Laura endures *everyone's* suffering in order that *everyone* might be redeemed. Of course, rather than undermining Schaefer's claim that Laura shares symbolic elements with Christ, this complication serves only to highlight its validity.

A significant part of Laura's suffering is the result of state persecution. She is a rebellious figure, who – as a result of her opposition to the prevailing social order, undergoes surveillance, and is both pursued and imprisoned at various points in the *Duet*. This social defiance also aligns her with Christ, as he too was opposed to the dominant ideals of his society. Though he claimed that he came to fulfil the law, rather than to abolish it, Jesus nonetheless took a negative view of how the law was interpreted and enacted. One vital aspect of Christ's rebellion, of his opposition to his society, is its direction against *both* the religious institution and the state. Neither the Pharisees and Sadducees, nor the Roman Empire, were safe from Jesus' criticism. I have already explored how Dreaming - the prophecy that Laura carries from the Place to Southland – expresses criticism of both the Temple's exclusivity and irrelevance, and the State's cruelty and injustice. What I have *not* explored is how Dreaming - while it criticises the alienation and dehumanisation of modernity - seeks to remind modernity of what objective reason first sought to achieve; that is to say, it comes not to “abolish the law...but to fulfil it.”²⁸⁵ According to Kierkegaard

Christ was executed as an infidel because he refused to recognize the established order as the criterion of virtue...He showed “what ‘the truth’ had to suffer in every generation and what it must always suffer” by not retreating from the collision between piety and the established order.²⁸⁶

Laura, although she is not executed as an infidel, is an excellent expression of the conflict between “piety and the established order”, between the ideal behind modernity and the rules, systems, and institutions through which it has been implemented and maintained. In 4.2 I discussed how objective reason was initially understood as egalitarian; in its reduction of truth to

285 Matthew 5:17, New International Version
286 Westphal, pp24

the observable and repeatable, it denied claims to exclusivity and revelation. Rather than reducing individuals to objects, this form of reason was ostensibly intended to place all individuals on an equal footing as regards truth and knowledge, their ability to make sense of the world and of themselves – as individuals – in it. Laura’s prophesying enacts the task that Horkheimer and Adorno posit as necessary in modernity; the contemplation and amendment of reason’s so-called “recidivist element.”²⁸⁷ Though Horkheimer and Adorno place great value on critical thought, they recognise the propensity for abstraction and objectification inherent in the exercise of reason. They claim that “blindly pragmatized thought loses its transcending quality and, its relation to truth,”²⁸⁸ that the emphasis on objective and objectifying forms of reason in modernity - on forms of reason that define, control, and manipulate reality via its reduction into axioms - has led humanity away from the use of its faculties, its apprehension of the world and experiences of it, away from both truth and its humanising qualities. When Laura delivers her message to the people of Southland, she is delivering a warning against the abstraction and objectification of capitalist modernity, the devaluing of individual beings that comes with the reduction of the world to columns of income and expenses, to equations on the page of a ledger. Her prophecy demands that Southland - as a society in the throes of modernity - reconsider its use of reason, that thought be directed towards an egalitarian respect for the other individual, not as object, but as co-subject. As such Laura seeks to restore what is, in many ways, the enlightenment ideal; a more anthropocentric and socially just form of reason, criticising not so much reason itself, but the form that it takes in modernity.

There are further links between the figures of Jesus Christ and Laura Hame. Not only must Laura experience her people’s suffering in order to redeem them, but, like Christ, Laura suffers in innocence: “For the Messiah also suffered for sins once for all, an innocent person for the guilty, so that he could bring you to God.”²⁸⁹ This suffering-in-innocence is another reason that Laura assumes the role of prophet, succeeding where her father fails. Tziga – although he is aware that Dreaming is used as a tool for torture - participates in and perpetuates this hideously

287 Adorno & Horkheimer, ppxxii

288 Ibid, ppxxii

289 1 Peter 3:18, New International Version

exploitative system. His complicity excludes him from the role of true prophet. Laura, unlike her father, is blameless, an innocent in every sense of the word. She has had a rather protected, albeit progressive upbringing:

His daughter and niece might congratulate themselves on having lived in a liberal, adventurous household, but really they'd led sheltered lives. Chorley had led a sheltered life too — and was very grateful for it. He wanted to see the girls grow up surrounded by pleasant, civilised people.²⁹⁰

Laura not only begins her adventures in a state of naïve innocence, unaware of much of the struggling and suffering endured by Southland's less fortunate citizens, but more importantly, she is functionally innocent; the young and privileged Laura has never compromised her ideals, has never needed to. This sweet, gentle, albeit privileged, child endures so much - loss, the revelation of hideous truths, physical trauma, fear, loneliness, *and* despair - in order to deliver her prophecy, and quite in spite of the fact that she is innocent of Dreaming's various misuses. Laura pays, in pain and strife, for the crimes that others have committed. As with the other connection between Christ and Laura, however, the matter is not that simple. As Laura ventures into the Place, gradually becoming aware of its dark secret, Laura loses her innocence, in so far as her naivety is concerned. Her functional innocence, while it remains largely intact, is somewhat compromised by her infliction of the torturous "Buried Alive" on the general public. Here Laura differs from the Christian model of innocence, reflecting a more Foucauldian model of pastoral care. Christ's functional innocence is actively, totally, and necessarily maintained; though he walks in flesh and suffers its desires, he resists; though he is tempted by Satan, offered "all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour,"²⁹¹ he resists; he is sinless and pure. Laura cannot claim this absolute blamelessness, she is not the Lamb of God, not an atoning sacrifice, and, as such, her suffering-in-innocence is by no means a complete or perfect parallel of Jesus'. Rather than *being* an innocent sacrifice, Laura, sacrifices her own innocence. Foucault posits that the shepherd, the embodiment of pastoral care, must be willing to put himself in the firing line, to endanger himself for his sheep. According to Foucault, the shepherd "by saving his

290 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp46

291 Matthew 4:8, New International Version

sheep...lays himself open to getting lost.”²⁹² Furthermore “if he wants to save himself, he must run the risk of losing himself for others,”²⁹³ for “the sheep’s sin is also imputable to the shepherd...by helping his flock to find salvation, the shepherd will also find his own.”²⁹⁴ The innocent Laura exposes herself to the wolves of the DRB, and in doing so she saves not only Lazarus, her father, Sandy, and *all* of future Southland, but - through their happiness and wellbeing - she saves herself. Laura, like Christ, suffers for crimes of which she is innocent, however in light of Foucault’s theories - perhaps we can understand Laura as a reflection of the Good Shepherd, rather than the Lamb of God. This connection illuminates the importance of knowledge over ignorance, the necessity of awareness and action. Laura’s innocence in terms of her refusal to participate in corrupt and corrupting behaviours is not posited –as it is with Christ - as the primary location of her purity and virtue. Rather, her virtue flows from her willingness to sacrifice her naivety, her blissfully ignorant and comfortable existence in order to create a more ethically responsive society.

Laura’s relationship with her father, Tziga, reveals further connections to Jesus Christ. The first of these connections manifests in her dutiful execution of his instructions, her pursuing his goals rather than her own. This connects her to Christ as although the Place delivers Laura’s prophecy to her - revealing its terrible message and engendering a motivational sense of empathy - it is on her father’s instructions that Laura first engages with her visions in any meaningful way. This connection is another that is noted by Tatjana Schaefer; she makes the point that Laura’s defensive cry of “This is what my father wanted me to do!”²⁹⁵ echoes Christ when he states that he “had to be about [his] father’s business.”²⁹⁶ Like Christ, Laura struggles to do her father’s bidding. She finds herself distanced not just from her society as a whole, but from her friends and family. Laura is painfully alone in her task. However, this is unsurprising for, as Kierkegaard says, prophecy is a “lonely speech from the viewpoint of the speaker, while

292 Carrette, pp142

293 Ibid, pp142

294 Ibid

295 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp324

296 Luke 2:49, New International Version

from the perspective of the hearer it is simply untimely and unwelcome.”²⁹⁷ In this scenario, Tziga is cast as God the father, aligned with the Place (which perhaps could, in this instance be interpreted as the Holy Spirit) as the source of prophecy. Laura is bringing the message that the Place expresses, at the behest of her invisible, intangible, absent father. This interpretation of Laura’s relationship with her father – as being similar to that between Christ and his father – is strengthened by Laura’s reaction to her task. Though she has no Gethsemane, no one moment of crippling self-doubt, of seeking a release from her task, the novels *are* littered with ruminations on her abandonment. There is one moment, before she and Nown catch the train to Founderston, for her founder’s day performance of “Buried Alive” that expresses this well:

As they went she thought about her father on the platform of Sisters Beach Station — his gnawed lips and bandaged hands. She wondered how her father had managed not to think of her as a child. As his child, whom he should protect at all costs...Laura was softhearted, but now would have to do what her father had asked. She would take the dream to those who profited from their willingness to terrify other people with it, and dreams like it... She was the same size as the dream now. It was packed into her, tamped down, compacted under tremendous pressure, like a huge, horrible charge.²⁹⁸

Christ’s cry of “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”²⁹⁹ resonates strongly with Laura’s thoughts of Tziga. The reading of Tziga as god the father is further nuanced by other character’s reactions to him; Sandy, for example, describes Tziga as “a god, basically,”³⁰⁰ a figure awesome in his ordinary status and spectacular powers. The public of Southland agree with Sandy; Tziga is widely regarded as the father of dreamhunting; not quite its creator, but the figure who somehow made this mysterious and vivid realm available.

Tziga’s creator aspect is further explored in his summoning of the Golem, which Laura refers to as Nown. Like God making Adam, Tziga sculpts a man from dust and clay. However, rather than *breathing* life into him, Tziga sings it, drawing together his creative energies in song. The way in which Tziga imbues the Golem with life, brings together the traditional motif of the

297 Westphal, pp14

298 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp319-320

299 Mark 15:34, New International Version

300 Knox, *Dreamhunter*, pp246

Word of God with the romantic ideal of creative expression – here represented by song – as the source or location of an ideal and fulfilling life. This ability to create new life is not unique to Tziga however, for Laura too is able to summon Nown. As such, Laura can be interpreted as being not only Christ like, but, at times, god-like, a powerful creator figure. Like Tziga, Laura has the ability to sculpt a man out of sand and sing him into being. However, as in most things, Laura surpasses her father. She not only creates the Golem, but gives him free will, removing the first N from the magical “NOWN” scratched into his skin, and so making him his “Own”. This not only renders her connection to the biblical idea of God the creator stronger than that of Tziga, but it displays in her a deeper respect for the other, expressing a wilful choice not to view the other – embodied here by the Golem - as an object or a tool. Furthermore, Laura is shown creating *human* life, an ability expressed through her pregnancy with Lazarus. This particular representation of Laura’s creative ability emphasises the importance of nurturing and caring for another, for *the* other, in its intrinsic connection to the maternal archetype. It also emphasises the interconnectedness of life, the way in which one being can be separate to, but a part of, another. Levinas posits that this parent-child relationship is ideal in terms of ethical development, as parenthood represents a “relationship with a stranger who, entirely while being other, is myself, the relationship of the ego with a self who is nonetheless a stranger to me.”³⁰¹

Tziga’s relationship to Laura – to Laura as a Christ figure rather than as a creator – also constructs him as a John the Baptist figure, a role he inhabits even as he plays out aspects of god the father. Where Tziga’s literal fatherhood, his foundational importance to dreamhunting, and his creative ability support a reading of him as both God the creator *and* God the father, his more heraldic function enable us to interpret him otherwise. The Place speaks to Tziga, because Tziga is Laura’s father:

It moved its territory of stopped time back in time. It went too far, went on until it found the first someone it felt it knew — Laura’s father...It waited, and it felt Laura as she came towards it, through time, being born, growing up, reaching the age of her Try.³⁰²

301 Perpich, pp36

302 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp478

It aims for Laura, but it reaches Tziga. As a result, the Place uses, or perhaps enables, Tziga to pave the way for his daughter, for the one who – as the mother of Lazarus and liberator of the Golem – is most able and best suited to prophesy against Southland’s unjust social practices, thus saving its people. Tziga is crucial in establishing dreamhunting. He the first to enter the Place and the power of his performances encourage the development of the dreamhunting industry, so that by the time of Laura’s Try, she is not communicating her prophecy in some oracular haze, some obscure and inscrutable language, but rather delivering her message through a popular medium to an established – if surprised and horrified – audience. If Laura is Christ, then Tziga is the “one calling in the wilderness”³⁰³ of whom Isaiah spoke, the one whose job it is to “prepare the way for the Lord [and] make straight paths for him.”³⁰⁴ Furthermore, Tziga, like John the Baptist, is aware of both “the coming wrath”³⁰⁵ of the future depicted by “Buried Alive”, and, eventually, of his own inadequacy; the fact that after him comes “one who is more powerful,”³⁰⁶ one strong enough to not only prophesy, but to effect society’s salvation. Tziga’s preparatory role confirms his prophetic importance, somewhat contextualising his failure to deliver the Place’s message himself, whilst simultaneously strengthening Laura’s representational connections to Jesus Christ.

Laura’s relationship with Lazarus also illuminates aspects of her character that connect her to Christ. The most obvious of these is indicated by the very name; Lazarus. Towards the end of *Dreamquake*, Laura disinters a body from the dry dust of the Place. Lazarus explains to Laura how he had fled prison, focussing his energy in rage, and singing – without quite knowing his intent - a Golem into existence. He explains how, exhausted, he stopped and dug a grave for himself, laid himself inside it, and how the earth, then imbued with the Golem’s soul, “had fallen in to cover him... had piled up over him to make what he’d imagined for himself: a low grave-mound.”³⁰⁷ There he falls out of consciousness, only to find himself – in what seems

303 Isaiah 40:3, New International Version

304 Matthew 3:3, New International Version

305 Matthew 3:7, New International Version

306 Matthew 3:11, New International Version

307 Knox, *Dreamquake*, pp477

to him no more than a moment – being exhumed, brought back to the world of the living by Laura. The story of Jesus and Lazarus sheds some interesting light on Laura’s resurrection of her own futural son. When Jesus hears of Lazarus’ seemingly fatal illness, he claims that “This sickness will not end in death.”³⁰⁸ Laura saves Lazarus from his own death, showing him to be heart-sick and world-weary, but not doomed. She also, through this resurrection, saves Southland from the death of “ethics’...as a category of life,”³⁰⁹ revealing its callous, power-and-profit focussed priorities to be symptomatic of a curable social ill. By unearthing Lazarus, returning him to life, and to a time that exists before his suffering has ever even occurred, Laura demonstrates how her society’s sickness, its ethical malaise, need not end in death.

On the way to Judea to visit Lazarus’ grieving family, Jesus also states that “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.”³¹⁰ The fact that Lazarus is described by Christ as being, not dead, but sleeping, is naturally of great interest in terms of *The Dreamhunter Duet*. Concerned as these books are with Dreaming, the *sleeping* Lazarus -waiting to be called either back to this life or on to the next - is a powerful image. For Schaefer, the awakening of Lazarus represents a “harrowing of hell”, wherein “memories and dreams, good and bad alike, exist in the Place...trapped there until released by a saviour figure.”³¹¹ However, I posit that the dreams and memories - as manifestations of Southland’s future potential – are dispersed, dissolved, or rendered otherwise un-real on Lazarus awakening. Lazarus’s death-sleep represents the imaginary potential of the multiple, simultaneously held, possibilities of the transitional state. Lazarus’s sleep is a state close to death, and, had Lazarus remained entombed, that is to say, had he actually *died*, this would have both guaranteed Southland’s nightmarish “future of satanic mills”³¹² as well as symbolically representing the death of Southland itself. However, Lazarus only sleeps, and is summoned from this sleep by Laura, as if – all obvious wordplay intended - from a bad dream. At Laura’s call, Lazarus wakes up from the nightmare of his own past, and in doing so, he relegates that past to a world half way between sub-conscious

308 John 11:4, new International Version

309 Westphal, M, pp119

310 John 11:11, New International Version

311 Jackson, Miles, Ricketts, Schaefer, & Walls, pp152

312 Wevers, pp197

fantasy and never-to-be-realised negative potential. Furthermore, his awakening represents Southland's awakening, its movement out of the uncritical and unethical state of an objective, axiomatic modernity and into a future of responsibility and concern. There is one last point regarding Lazarus that I must raise. Lazarus is resurrected, having spent a significant time suffering the torments of a sinful Southland, in such a way that they may never, in reality, have to suffer these torments themselves. This suffering, and self sacrifice, in addition to the motif of his resurrection, links Lazarus - as well as Laura - to the figure of Christ. Both echo this vital figure of prophecy, piety, and social critique. However, given Lazarus' minimal presence in the *Duet* and in light of the obvious link implied by his name, I posit that Lazarus and Laura's shared connection to Jesus serves more as an expression of the novels' internal reflexivity than as a point of allegory. Their connection is a repeated image, a device to strengthen the sense of co-being and mutual struggle in which the *Duet* consistently locates virtue.

In *The Dreamhunter Duet* prophecy is depicted as being somewhat separate from the traditions embedded in the religious institution, grounded more in the evocation of ethical responsibility and the redemptive possibilities of imagination. However, the incorporation of biblical character parallels – parallels to the Holy Trinity, Lazarus, and John the Baptist - creates an image of prophecy in which these traditional figures are still useful in the expression of vital truths. Rather than creating a completely de-institutionalised prophecy, a prophecy whose truths are – though transcendent –secular, the *Duet* makes use of these past representations of the prophet, and enables them to guide the reshaping of modernity's values, even as they themselves are reshaped. Where Jesus, for example, is traditionally understood to be a single human being, a well defined figure of myth and/or history, *The Dreamhunter Duet*, incorporates the figures as symbols or archetypes, using each as a “multiple-meaning expression...[whose] meanings are polysemic, difficult to discern and virtually inexhaustible in depth.”³¹³ Typically dismissed as fictions in modernity, with ongoing relevance to only a deludedly faithful few, figures like Lazarus and John the Baptist are granted contemporary relevance through the manner of their use in *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake*. The biblical figures evoked by Laura, Tziga, and Lazarus

313 Ricoeur & Wallace, pp5

function as symbols, as words, rather than as “real people”, staging – it must be said - a rather poetic return in terms of religious expression, if “in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.”³¹⁴ In modernity, Jesus, John the Baptist, and Lazarus – especially in terms of their full spectrum of religious significance – cannot be interpreted as “real people”, but they can, as in these novels, function as words, as symbols, as signifiers that point to a vast array of possible meanings and content. And like words, symbols can change and grow in terms of their ability to signify. Just as “awful” once meant “filled with awe,” but is now used to mean “extremely disagreeable or objectionable,”³¹⁵ the *Duet* uses Jesus in such a way that, though invoking him once meant invoking “the son of God”, he is now evoked to signify an innocent, self-sacrificing, redeemer, here in the form of a 15 year old girl. Removed from the limits of faith and history, Jesus-as-symbol is evoked in Laura and, as such, this religious figure is shown to be capable of expressing and communicating ethical responsibility in a way that not only still has meaning in modernity, but that is capable of making more. At all times, *The Dreamhunter Duet* expresses a complex network of relationships between past and present understandings, and future hopes, and the inclusion of these ostensibly problematic figures of faith is no exception.

314 John 1:1, New International Version

315 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/awful>, accessed 18/11/2012, at 9:18 a.m.

7.0 Concluding Remarks

As I claimed in my introduction, *Dreamhunter* and *Dreamquake* can be seen to develop a complex image of religious expression in modernity, depicting it as a vital dialogic partner, an opposing voice whose communications of conflict helps to maintain ideological balance. The *Duet* explores the positive potential of religious expression, demonstrating how, in spite of its exclusion from the discourses of modernity, in spite of its subjectivity and unobservable source, religious expression may be not only valuable, but necessary in and to modernity.

By emphasising images of transcendence over and above images of institutional religious expression, Knox creates a vision of the religious outside of religion, outside of the problematic ties to history, tradition, and dogma that the institution embodies. The institution – though it lingers as a source of guidance and protection – is largely left behind. Dreaming enacts and expresses an experience of transcendence, an engagement with the numinous that supplements modernity’s moral and ethical lack, enabling the characters to think in terms of both poetic *and* objective truth. More than simply moving religious expression into the realm of secular culture, however, Dreaming represents the transcendent possibilities inherent in imaginative and empathetic thinking. Such forms of thought are shown to take the individual beyond herself and her time, and, in doing so, to engender an understanding of the numinous that escapes the anthropomorphic boundaries of divine will and agency, to manifest instead in intra- and interpersonal engagement. This supplementary function of this transcendent experience is expressed through the motif of prophecy and the figure of the prophet. Embodying the critical function of transcendence, of the individual engagement with the numinous, and the recognition of the ethical demands that it makes, the familiar figure of prophet is re-interpreted and re-constructed, used to demonstrate the incursive and confrontational nature of religious expression in modernity, its utility in communicating suppressed values and priorities.

My analysis, in its emphasis on the critical potential of religious expression, reveals only

a few of *The Dreamhunter Duet's* critical implications. In departing from the literary analysis of these texts, I have gone some way towards exploring their ideological and epistemological implications. However, as far as this exploration may have gone, much has yet to be discovered. In my own analysis, I have hinted at a relationship between creativity and the numinous, and have discussed a limited few of the allegorical and mythical parallels contained in *The Dreamhunter Duet*. Others have made it clear that matters of indigeneity, and of the connection between people and the land also require further contemplation. All of these topics, and more besides, warrant further investigation as they too point to the ways in which *The Dreamhunter Duet*, acting as an example act of religious expression itself, may be of great value in our own lived modernity.

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