

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

***CAUGHT IN THE DANCE: DREAM POEMS,
EXPERIENTIAL NARRATIVE, AND
THE CONTINUITY HYPOTHESIS***

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Abstract

This thesis explores the efficacy of the dream poem as a narrative device and is the outcome of practice-led research. The creative component, a novella, includes significant dreams of the main characters in the form of lyric poetry. The author's own dream reports are used as source material for the poetry, and are contextualised within a prose fiction framework. *Caught in the Dance* is an experiment in combining prose with dream poetry and in investigating the experiential power of dreams on the formation of character identity.

The exegesis discusses dreaming as an experience and the place of that experience in the context of identity narratives. Central to this discussion is the continuity hypothesis regarding the symbiosis of waking and sleeping life. Fludernik's theory of experiential narrative is applied to dreaming and to the composition of poetry. This theory moves the emphasis of narrativity from events and the action of telling to 'grounding narrativity in the representation of experientiality' (Fludernik 1996:20).

Ricoeur's theories on identity and narrative are also applied to the reading of dreams, and experiences in general. He calls the system through which we 'read' life the 'semantics of action' (Ricoeur 1991b:28). Fludernik's and Ricoeur's approaches build on each other and they are brought together in the context of theories of the self, consciousness, and the processing of experience.

Lyric poetry, as a creative product of that same consciousness, is discussed as experienced narrative moment. Furthermore, those moments are identified as defining elements in the identity narratives of characters. By combining the experience of dreaming with the experience imparted through lyric poetry, this thesis argues that the continuity hypothesis serves effectively as a demonstration of the wider narratological importance of experiential narrative.

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Part One

Introduction

Even the man who wants ‘a nice story’ might be willing to follow the writer in the adventures of the dream because he cannot deny that dreaming belongs to a reality shared by both of them. It could in fact be the only reality they have in common. (Almansi & Beguin 1987:3)

The seventeenth century philosopher Blaise Pascal questioned the separation of waking and dreaming experience. He left behind a collection of thoughts on dreaming and waking life which was published posthumously in 1669:

No one is sure, apart from faith, whether he is awake or asleep, seeing that during sleep we believe that we are awake as firmly as we do when we *are* awake. We believe we see spaces, figures, movements; we experience the passage of time, we measure it; and in fact we behave just as when we are awake. [...] Who knows, therefore, whether the other half of life, in which we believe ourselves awake, is not another dream, slightly different from the first, from which we awake when we suppose ourselves asleep? [...]

Finally, as we often dream that we are dreaming, and thus add one dream to another, life itself is only a dream upon which other dreams are grafted and from which we awake at death. (Pascal 1987 [1669]:150)

The twentieth century saw a renewed fascination with dreams, partly induced by the controversial theories of dream psychology postulated by Freud and then Jung, and partly due to discoveries in the areas of neuropsychology and psychophysiology. In 1972 psychologists Calvin Hall and Vernon Nordby published their book *The Individual and his Dreams*. This book outlines what they termed ‘the continuity hypothesis’ (Hall & Nordby 1972:104). Although philosophers and poets of the past had alluded to this hypothesis, Hall and Nordby’s conclusion was the result of studying and analysing the contents of many series of dream sequences.

This hypothesis states that dreams are continuous with waking life; the world of dreaming and the world of waking are one. The dream world is neither discontinuous nor inverse in its relationship to the conscious world. We remain the same person, the same personality with the same characteristics, and the same basic beliefs and convictions whether awake or asleep. The wishes and fears that determine our actions and thoughts in everyday life also determine what we will dream about. (1972:104).

Where some psychologists have since criticised the continuity hypothesis, citing discontinuity in dream content such as physical flight, psychologist Michael Schredl (2012:3) has recently listed possible answers to the questions that the critics pose. These include the fact that the same content can be found in daydreaming; they are continuous in terms of emotions, on the level of metaphors; they might be replays of memories from as far back as before birth, access to what Jung termed ‘the collective unconscious’; and they

are a result of processing the information performed and absorbed by watching others in the waking state (for example, film and video games).¹

Chapter One of this thesis begins with a discussion of the intellectual background to dream narratives, beginning with an overview of popular theories from the Middle Ages to Jung, and then focusing on the post-Jungian approach, which can be followed through the work first developed by Hall and Nordby, and then by those who came after, especially Foulkes and Revonsuo. Since Hall and Nordby published their account, further research has been carried out, particularly in the areas of dream content analysis, dreaming patterns, the development of dream recall in children, and the impact of dreaming on waking life. This thesis features a discussion of societal understandings of the dream experience; the development of perceptions regarding dreams; definitions of dream; modern and contemporary understandings of dreams as a neuropsychological and psychophysiological process. Two key issues that have emerged from the research to date are that dreams can be culturally specific, and that the dream as experience is at the heart of dream studies. Literary scholar Anthony Spearing discusses the possibility that the types of dreams humans experience change over time. He refers to the anthropologist J.S. Lincoln (1936), who wrote that there are ‘dreams whose shape and content are determined by local-culture patterns, and which cease to occur when those culture-patterns are broken down’ (Lincoln 1936:23). Therefore the dreams experienced within any time and place might have an even greater importance to the identity narratives of the dreamers than previously conjectured. Psychologist David Foulkes has been at the forefront of dream psychology research. At times supporting and at times questioning the continuity hypothesis, he ultimately asserts that a dream is an experience, and that this must be the starting point of all dream enquiries (Foulkes 1990:46).

The continuity hypothesis of waking and dreaming has direct impact on theories of identity narratives or self-narratives, and therefore Chapter Two of this thesis addresses the work of two key narrative theorists: literary scholar Monika Fludernik and philosopher Paul Ricoeur. The continuity hypothesis posits that no narrative of life is complete unless we take into account both waking and sleeping (and dreaming) experience; and that this relies on both cognitive and organic parameters. Fludernik adopted the term ‘natural narratology’

¹ Most recently, psychologists Ming-Ni Lee and Don Kuiken (2015) conducted a study exploring the continuity of waking mindfulness and dream mindfulness, and the effects of dream mindfulness on subsequent waking thoughts and feelings. They conclude that their results confirm the hypothesis of cross-state continuity (2015:157).

in an effort to bring the study of narrative back into this realm (1996:xi), and she grounds this new narratology in human experience and consciousness of that experience (1996:12-13). For Fludernik, ‘experience’ is comprised of both incidents and the evaluation they inspire (1996:103). Furthermore, ‘the emotional involvement with the experience and its evaluation provide cognitive anchor points for the constitution of narrativity’ (Fludernik 1996:9-10). Hence narrativisation arises through the reader’s experiential engagement with the text (1996:313). Fludernik’s arguments are supported by the work of cognitive narratologists such as David Herman (2002; 2005; 2009; 2010) and Marie Laure-Ryan (1991; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2010). Although Fludernik does not specifically discuss ‘natural narratology’ in the context of dreams, her theories and arguments are applied to dreaming and the dream experience throughout this thesis. This application is complemented by the theories of Ricoeur, who is referenced by Fludernik, and who wrote extensively on human experience as the foundation for narrative. Ricoeur states that ‘narrative understanding in living experience consists in the very structure of human acting and suffering’ (1991b:28). He calls the system through which we ‘read’ life the ‘semantics of action’. These ‘semantics’ can be seen as the signs of ‘experience’, often linked to specific emotions, through which narrativisation occurs. Both Ricoeur and Fludernik discuss issues of consciousness and cognition in relation to identifying and experiencing narrative. Throughout this thesis, except where otherwise stated, references to narrative are made in terms of experientiality.

Central to the discussion of narrative and dreaming as experience is the reality of consciousness. Neuroscientists Rudolph R. Llinas and Denis Paré propose that consciousness during wakefulness is essentially and functionally the same as consciousness during sleep (1991:530). Foulkes, psychologist Alfio Maggiolini (2010), psychophysicologist Stephen LaBerge (1990), cognitive neuroscientist Antti Revonsuo (1995)², and others have all carried out research on mental and physical perceptions during dreaming, and they have all come to similar conclusions: the dream experience is just as real as a waking experience. This leads to a discussion of the ‘person’, or ‘self’, who ‘experiences’. Chapter Three of this thesis addresses the concept of ‘the self’ and ‘character’, as well as memory and autobiography, in the context of the narrativisation of the spectrum of human experience.

² The works of these three theorists are discussed in detail in Chapter One.

While there has been some discussion of identity narratives in terms of our waking life, especially in the wake of experiential narrative (Löschnigg 2010:169), there has not been much commentary on identity narratives in terms of our ‘sleeping’ or dreaming life. Literary scholar Richard Walsh identifies three relationships between dreams and narratives: dreams in literature, dream reports, and dream experiences as narratives (2012). Ultimately, all three of these relationships are relevant to the creative outcome of this thesis; to the composition of dream poetry, as dream report and as representation of dream experiences, and to dream poems as a form, within the canon of Western literature from the Middle Ages onwards.

The Dream Poem³

Chapter Three of this thesis ends with a discussion of the dream poem in the context of cognitive processes, which poet Sarah Arvio (2013) defines very broadly. Arvio’s use of the term ‘dream poem’ promotes a far-reaching definition – if we choose to follow her example we are free to include any poem that touches on the dream experience. The key to her definition, however, seems to be a conscious decision to draw on the dream experience in an artistic capacity. Broadly speaking, one can divide the dream poem into a number of sub-categories. One example is the poem that is composed when a dream prompts certain memories, emotions, or philosophies within the poet. This type of dream poem makes little or no direct reference to the dream experience.

Spearing (1976:1), in a discussion of medieval poetry, defines the dream poem as ‘poems whose main substance is a dream or vision, dreamt invariably by the ‘I’ of the poem’. In my efforts to compose dream poems by drawing on dreams in an artistic and writerly capacity I have found it useful to define dreams and dreaming from a common and psychological perspective. Therefore, I propose a slightly modified definition based on contemporary knowledge of mental activity during sleep: the dream poem is a poem whose main to sole substance is a dream experience, dreamt by the ‘I’ of the poem. In other words, a dream poem must directly represent large elements of the actual dream experience but may also include minimal commentary.

³ Parts of this thesis have been previously published in a paper ‘Dreaming: Narrative or Poetry?’ in the conference proceedings *Minding the gap: Writing across thresholds and fault lines – The Refereed Proceedings Of The 19th Conference Of The Australasian Association Of Writing Programs, 2014, Wellington NZ.*

Methodology and the Creative Product

The dream experience as narrative tends to be somewhat controversial since some dream researchers believe that it is only the memory of the dream and its consequential report that displays narrational qualities (Walsh 2010; Kilroe 2000). Similarly, while there has been some enquiry into the narrativity of lyric poetry, scholarly research concludes that poetry is not a legitimate form of narrative representation (McHale 2001; McHale 2009). This thesis presents a discussion of these issues and makes them directly relevant to the practice of poetry as an art. As a creative practitioner, I have attempted to explore these issues through the practice of poetry and with a conscious effort to accurately portray the dream experience in my compositions. The principles of my methodological approach are expounded by Haseman and Mafe in their article ‘Acquiring Know-How: Research Training for Practice-led Researchers’ (Smith & Dean 2009:211-228). The authors explain that it has become necessary for artist researchers to develop a research strategy that has its foundation in the practices of the creative disciplines. This approach is known by a variety of terms but they have chosen the term ‘practice-led research’.

Practice-led research is always multidisciplinary and is often built on a combination of creative practice and academic research (Haseman and Mafe 2009:218). Essentially, three research techniques have been used here: observation as auto-ethnography (in the form of a dream journal)⁴, discourse analysis (presented in the exegesis), and creative practice (a case study). The discourse analysis covers an array of writings on narratology, cognitive sciences and dream theory. It also includes the study of dream poetry written by various poets and other types of literature overtly based on dream experiences.

For the creative practice, or case study, I have engaged in exploring the efficacy of the dream poem as a fictional narrative device by writing a novella which consists of the ‘autobiographical’ accounts of three related fictional characters. While their waking life experiences and episodes are written in prose, half of the novella consists of lyric poems representing the characters’ dream experiences. Chapter Four of this thesis discusses poetry, and particularly lyric poetry, as a form and its relationship with narrative. The

⁴ The auto-ethnographic aspects of this research have become largely peripheral to the central argument outlined in this thesis and therefore they will not be expanded on. For a more reflective discussion on the composition process please see a previously published paper, N. Fanaian, ‘Dreaming: Narrative or Poetry?’ in the conference proceedings *Minding the gap: Writing across thresholds and fault lines – The Refereed Proceedings Of The 19th Conference Of The Australasian Association Of Writing Programs, 2014, Wellington NZ.*

chapter ends with a discussion of experimental narrative. In this thesis all literary works that do not strictly fulfil the expectations of prose narrative or lyric poetry are designated by the umbrella term 'experimental narrative'. This term also includes verse novels, prose poems, narrative poems, and other hybrid forms. The dream poems composed for this thesis appear alone, or in a series if they have occurred in the same night. The dreams are all my own, initially recorded in my dream journal as dream reports. Author and dream theorist Richard Russo states that a poem must be able to stand-alone and that, as a result, aspects of the original dream might be sacrificed for the poem (2003:22-23). While some of the poems in the novella are able to stand alone, one of the points of this particular project is to show that dreams, and therefore lyric poems, are not experienced without context.

Psychologist Ann Faraday (1974, 39-45) advocates clear and simple methods for recording dreams: have your paper and pen close at hand throughout the night; date your paper in advance; encourage your dreams by means of suggestion or invocation (for example, affirming out loud that you will remember your dreams and record them on awakening); record the dream/thoughts as soon as you are aware of it (dream memory fades quickly, however there is evidence that sharp body movements can cause the dream to fade faster so it might be useful to lie calmly for a moment and mull over the dream before you sit up to record it); never dismiss a dream as too trivial (record *anything* that is in your mind at the moment of waking); record the dream as fully as possible; transcribe the dream as soon as possible. I have been able to remember dreams through waking up at various stages through a sleep cycle and I have remembered multiple dreams from the same sleep cycle.

I have also found it necessary, much like Russo, to distinguish between interpretative and non-interpretative dream work. Russo explores the ways in which writers utilise or draw on dreams and explains how this form of dream work differs from dream interpretation. I incorporate his conclusion that the key difference between dream work as therapy and dream writing (or any other form of dream art) lies in the intent of the work (2003:25). To carry out non-interpretive dream work one must strive to achieve the goals of one's art, record dream reports as faithfully as possible, and strive to not apply any techniques devised for 'decoding' the dream (2003:16).

A characteristic of the creative component of this thesis is that it contains elements that could place it within the genre of speculative dystopic fiction. This categorisation is largely incidental and is related to the nature of the dream experiences that were utilised in the course of this project. For example, many of the dream poems incorporated into the novella make reference to specific planets, the moon, the sun, the stars, flight, natural disasters, and other dream elements that have connections to the speculative and/or dystopic genres. The issues surrounding speculative fiction are not directly relevant to the areas being explored in this thesis. However, this genre, like science fiction in particular, has certain attributes that are worth noting in relation to dreams in literature. Literary theorist Mark Rose (1976:1) suggests that science fiction is a genre that harks back to the most ancient literary form, fantasy, and that it is heavily influenced by the gothic (1976:4). In fact, he argues that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which might be considered the epitome of the gothic genre, is arguably the first science fiction novel (1976:2). This link to, and influence of, fantasy and gothic is also an aspect of dream poetry and dreams in literature, which is illustrated in Chapter Five of this thesis. Another historical aspect, outlined in Chapters Two and Five of this thesis, is the pull of both religion and science. It is interesting to note that fabulation⁵, like dreams, is claimed by both religion and science as a medium of exploration (Scholes 1975:29). Literary critic and theorist Robert Scholes points out:

Traditionally, it has been a favourite vehicle for religious thinkers, precisely because religions have insisted that there is more to the world than meets the eye... Science, of course, has been telling us much the same thing for several hundred years. The world we see and hear and feel—"reality" itself—is a fiction of our senses, and dependent on their focal ability, as the simplest microscope will easily demonstrate. Thus it is not surprising that what we call "science" fiction should employ the same narrative vehicle as the religious fictions of our past. In a sense, they are fellow travellers. (1975:29-30)

As a final aside, it is worth considering the following quote from Wordsworth, from his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), presaging the influence of scientific advancement on literature;

If the labours of men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will

⁵ Scholes does not generally use the term 'science fiction' but chooses a new term 'fabulation', which he defines as 'fiction that offers us a world clearly and radically discontinuous from the one we know, yet returns to confront that known world in some cognitive way.' (1975:29). He further states that 'speculative fabulation', born of humanism and beginning with Thomas More, has developed into 'structural fabulation'. He explains, 'It is a fictional exploration of human situations made perceptible by the implications of recent science. Its favourite themes involve the impact of developments or revelations derived from the human or the physical sciences upon the people who must live with those revelations or developments.' (41-42).

sleep then no more than at present, but he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the Science itself. The remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the Poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective Sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. (2003 [1802]:35-36)

The advances of science and technology have greatly changed and influenced the environment in which human society exists. These advancements include innovations and discoveries often featured in the popular discourses of astrophysics, environmental sciences, and neuroscience. The former two fields have found their way into the creative work of this thesis by what Wordsworth called 'indirect effects'. The third field has become part of the focus of this thesis, or part of 'the proper object of the poet's art'.

A Further Prelude

In 2003, a special issue of the journal *Dreaming* (a publication of the American Psychological Association) entitled 'Dreaming and the Arts' was published. In the introduction, Russo (2003:2) discusses the under-representation of research in the intersection of dream studies and creative arts. Russo calls for an interdisciplinary approach to this area, which has inspired and aided my own research at the nexus of dream studies and creative writing. The poems, drawn from my own dreams, were recorded in dream journals over a five-year period, and were composed both before and during the process of writing the novella. As a result, the form of this study is somewhat circular: it begins with an exploration of the world of dreams and dreaming; moves on to an introduction to relevant concepts of narrative; addresses theories of self, consciousness and storyworlds; looks at poetry and the poetic aspects of dreaming and being, returns to look at dreams in literature and particularly dream poems; and finally, engages in a discussion of dreaming, consciousness, and poetry in the context of a narratological framework that focuses on experientiality.

An objective of this thesis is to encourage an exploration of the relationship between the dream experience and lyric poetry. Throughout this thesis, I refer to ideas concerning the relationship and continuity of sleeping, or dreaming life, with waking life. I also draw parallels between dreams and narrative moments and poetry and narrative moments. These

parallels are examined in the context of experientiality and the experience of life as a progressive identity narrative. Dreams, narrative, and lyric poetry are discussed as products and constructs of the conscious mind. As is indicated by the ‘I’ of the dream poem, theories of the self and consciousness are central to the questions discussed here. The other elements are all presented as overlapping with these theories. Narrative, as an experience of consciousness, is central to a discussion of identity narrative, of both the ‘person’ and the ‘character’. Another objective of this thesis is to discover the possibilities for identifying dreams as signifiers of important narrational elements in identity narratives. Dreams, as experiences, and what we understand these experiences to be, acquire a prominent position in identity narrative, which forms the foundation of the continuity hypothesis. This thesis poses questions in relation to the application of the continuity hypothesis: dreams in literature, particularly dream poems, are looked at as extensions not only of the dream experience but also of the continuity hypothesis. In other words, this thesis attempts to locate the place of dream experiences in the identity narrative of a person or character by proposing that the elements of experiential narrative are the same elements that qualify a memory or dream as ‘meaningful’. Furthermore, poems – both as extension and expression of consciousness – are presented as the most natural form for expressing and sharing the dream experience.

Psychologist Harry Hunt (1991) summarises the work of anthropologist Barbara Tedlock (1987), when he reminds us that historically and cross-culturally dreams have been seen as the gateway to mythology, and as the major source of songs and poems. Furthermore, Hunt suggests that ‘dreaming is at the least a proto-literature’ (1991:236). Arvio evokes the idea of a proto-literature by linking poems and dreams to the ‘unconscious’:

Many poems behave like dreams, chasing associative patterns through the mind, using riffs and non sequiturs. They draw on the unconscious mind in their development of thought patterns. A poem can be like a dream, dancing around an idea and avoiding it. (Arvio 2013:notes)

Psychology researcher Wilse Webb identifies both poems and dreams as artistic creations of the mind: the former is the creation of the conscious mind; the latter of the unconscious mind (1992:126). Freud found a great similarity between poetry and dreams and particularly mentioned allegory, humour, and irony (1911:35)⁶.

⁶ Literary scholar Frederick Clarke Prescott’s book *Poetry and Dreams*, first published in 1912 and referring to Freud’s work, asserts that the poet and the dreamer are practically the same being (Prescott 1912:48-49).

It could be generalised that poems and dreams have something more in common: they both require interpretation. I would like to add a note here on the issue of interpretation. In keeping with the concept of a ‘natural’ narratology, all references to interpretation will be made on the macro-level of narrativisation. I will be following the precedent set by Fludernik (1996:373):

In the framework of this study I have concentrated on the *narrative* [her italics] side of interpretation, which is only part of a range of more general interpretative strategies. Narrativisation reads texts *as narrative* [her italics] and therefore reduces their potential metaphorical or philosophical or argumentative meanings to the projection of a fictional world, to embodied experientiality within it and to the specifics of individuality [...] So, although Natural Narratology relegates metaphoricity and other semantic areas of interpretation to the margins or the superstructure of narrativisation, it nevertheless opens the field at least a little further than do traditional narratologies.

Although there is a plethora of texts that provide commentary of the symbolic interpretation of dream imagery they are not discussed in this thesis.

The discourses discussed in this exegesis (narratology, cognitive sciences and dream theory) each offer valuable knowledge in regards to the dream experience, poetry, identity, and issues of continuity. However, they have not been previously discussed or presented in combination, and in the context of creative writing. Ultimately, this thesis aims to provide a map of the literature and thinking that overlap across these fields. By contemplating the experience of dreaming, and by expressing that contemplation through the artistic medium that most closely resembles the ‘remembered’ experience of dreaming, it is possible to draw closer to understanding ‘the continuity hypothesis’, its implications for the development of a ‘self’ or ‘identity narrative’, and the applicability of experiential narrative to all of the above.

Chapter One – Dreams and Dreaming

In The Beginning

That dreams can pack a “rhetorical wallop” in culture and in everyday life is evident in the range of expressions through which we make reference to these recalled happenings. From “having a dream” to “impossible dreams” to “stuff that dreams are made of” to “dream on!,” [sic] we use the metaphor of the dream to refer to our goals and fantasies, that which we wish but might be beyond our grasp, and even that which we fear. (Fine & Leighton 1993:95)

Dreams have featured in literature since ancient times. The oldest known representation of dreams in literature is the presence of several sequences of dreams recorded in the narrative of Gilgamesh. The clay tablets on which this narrative was engraved in cuneiform date back almost to the third millennium BCE (Van de Castle 2012:1)⁷. Dreams are a significant feature of both the Elder Edda and the Sagas of Old Norse literature (Kelchner 1935:3). The Sagas are prose stories; a mixture of myth, legend, and history. The Elder Edda is a collection of poems by mostly Norwegian and Icelandic authors. What is particularly interesting about these dreams is that, according to tradition, they are actual dream experiences, ‘and their value is considerably enhanced through their being supposed to be true’ (1935:3).

The various religious, physiological, and popular approaches to dreaming – including portrayals through various mediums such as literature, film, and fine art – all interact with and influence each other. Dreams are attributed to a variety of sources and causes. Some dreams are considered messages from an external source, often spiritual in nature, and sometimes prophetic (Kruger 1992:2-4). Scholar of English literature and medieval studies Steven Kruger (1992), in his discussion of dreaming in the Middle Ages, points out that both Freud (1991:783) and Jung (1967:326-327) could not deny the transcendent nature of some dreams. Today LaBerge, with colleague Lynne Levitan, also assert that lucid dreaming can be a source of transcendent experience (LaBerge and Levitan 2015).

⁷ When a citation refers to a Kindle E-Book the number at the end of the citation refers to the paragraph in the article/chapter; for example, (Russo 2012:3) means article/chapter by Russo, published 2012, paragraph 3.

Dreams have been, and are, often used as a literary device for a variety of reasons (Weidhorn 1970:9). Spearing (1999:1) states that dreams are used as frames for events or as events themselves in fictional narratives because the dream experience is charged with significance. Since the dream poem as a form in English literature is found most commonly in the Middle Ages it is important to note the attitudes towards dreams that were prevalent at the time. These were largely inherited from the philosophies of late antiquity and featured the writings of two Neoplatonic Romans, Macrobius and Calcidius (Kruger 1992:19-21). The following table illustrates a summary and combination of the classification systems created for dreams by the two philosophers;


Higher/ transcendent  Lower/ mundane	<i>Oraculum</i> (oracular dream)/waking visions	true (revelation by an authoritative, otherworldly figure)/from the divine
	<i>Visio</i> (prophetic dream)/revelatory dreams	true (revelation through a vision of mundane events)/from the divine
	<i>Somnium</i> (enigmatic dream)/rational dreams	true, but couched in fiction (needs interpretation)/from internal processes
	<i>Visium</i> (apparition)/passional dreams	false (spectral)/from internal processes
	<i>Insomnium</i> (nightmare)/passional dreams	false (mundane)/from internal processes

Table 1: Classification of dreams according to Macrobius and Calcidius.

Macrobius, a fifth century Roman philosopher, devoted a section of his *Commentary on Scipio's Dream* to outlining the five main types of dreams (Macrobius 1952:87-88): the nightmare, the apparition, the enigmatic dream, the prophetic dream, and the oracular dream. The nightmare and the apparition are discounted as insignificant and unworthy of interpretation. The nightmare is considered to be caused by stress and anxiety:

Nightmares may be caused by mental or physical distress, or anxiety about the future: the patient experiences in dreams vexations similar to those that disturb him during the day. As examples of the mental variety, we might mention the lover who dreams of possessing his sweetheart or of losing her, or the man who fears the plots or might of an enemy and is confronted with him in his dream or seems to be fleeing him. (1952:88)

‘The physical variety’ of nightmares includes over-eating while awake and then dreaming of choking, or being hungry and then dreaming of food (1952:88). Of nightmares, Macrobius explains that:

Since these dreams and others like them arise from some condition or circumstance that irritates a man during the day and consequently disturbs him when he falls asleep, they flee when he awakes and vanish into thin air. Thus the name *insomnium* was given, not because such dreams occur “in sleep” – in this respect nightmares are like other types – but because they are noteworthy only during their course and afterwards have no importance or meaning. (1952:89)

Macrobius describes a type of dream (the apparition) that occurs during the process of falling asleep, between waking and sleeping (1952:89), and the description is identical to what is later categorised as a ‘hypnagogic’ dream experienced at the onset of sleep (Foulkes & Vogel 1965).

The enigmatic dream offers valuable information but requires interpretation. The prophetic dream shows something that will actually come true. The oracular dream is one in which an authority figure, like a parent or priest or prophet, will appear and give advice. Macrobius’ categorisation of real dreams indicates the importance that was assigned to the generality of dreaming in antiquity. The role of advice, warnings, and philosophical truths was also reflected in the medieval literary dream.

It was expected that something could be learned from real dreams, and hence from literary dreams: advice or warnings about the future, or philosophical truths which it would be important to know in waking life. This is a role which real dreams have played in many cultures, and it was a common role for medieval literary dreams. (Spearing 1976:18)

The biggest drawback with these systems for classifying dreams is that we cannot know which category the dream belongs to until some time has passed, particularly in the case of prophetic dreams (Spearing 1976:74).

Kruger (1992:34) summarises the reasons for categorising dreams in this way:

The Neoplatonists assigned to them an important position. Potentially both divine and mundane, dreams mirror a world that is itself double. Neither wholly of this earth nor of the heavens, dreams, like soul, are able to navigate that middle realm where connections between the corporeal and incorporeal are forged, where the relationship between the ideal and the physical is defined. Dreams can thus explore a wide range of human and universal experience, from the most exalted to the most debased. The purely mundane dream is locked into the realm of earth, while the dream of divine revelation soars to the heavens; and a dream like Macrobius’ *somnium* is capable of examining that middle area where body and idea meet to work out their mutual roles.

It is interesting to note that Neoplatonic philosophers and early Christian writers, such as Gregory and Augustine, came to similar, almost identical, conclusions in terms of classifying and categorising types of dreams (Kruger 1992:47). Gregory, cited by Kruger (1992:45), gives the following reasons for dreams: they are generated either by a full stomach, or by an empty one, or by illusions, or by our thoughts combined with illusions, or by revelations, or by our thoughts combined with revelations. Augustine separated the dream into ‘corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual vision’ (Kruger 1992:61). Educated people of the late-Middle Ages would have been familiar with the theories mentioned here (61).

Not unlike contemporary views on dreaming, the aforementioned writings depict dreams as ‘complex experiences’ resulting from a variety of possible reasons and covering a range of topics in their content (Kruger 1992:65). Both Neoplatonic and Christian thought were influenced by classical mythology (67). Another unifying aspect of these theories is the concept of ‘betweenness’⁸ (65). Since the dream experience takes place somewhere between the mundane and the transcendent, and since it is almost impossible to determine what type each dream is as it happens, the dreamer could be said to be caught somewhere in between. Kathryn Lynch, scholar of medieval English literature, suggests that on a more basic level the concept of ‘middleness’ can come out of the fundamental tripartite aspect of the dreamer’s experience: ‘his existence before the vision, the vision itself, and his life afterward’ (Lynch 1988:47). This idea of liminality is mentioned again in contemporary thoughts on dreaming but it was elaborated on by twelfth century writers. Alain de Lille separates dreams into three general categories: higher, middle, and lower moral agents; beings; and ways of knowing (80). The middle dream is meant to be the most *human* dream, the dream that is experienced as a result of the combined influences of a human being’s dual nature, and captures the liminal station accorded to ‘humanness’. Kruger describes this belief in his commentary on the writings of Gilbert of Poitiers:

The human being – for the twelfth century, as for Late Antiquity – was the microcosm of a universe that stretched from a perfect God to fragmented matter. Like that universe, humanity was torn between its upper and lower nature, but simultaneously joined those two natures in a single, middle being. (Kruger 1992:81)

⁸ In this thesis all references to ‘betweenness’, ‘middleness’, and the ‘liminal’ will be made in terms of the definition outlined by Victor Turner within the context of anthropology. According to Turner (1977:37) ‘a *limen* is a threshold’ that is symbolised by a corridor or tunnel, which may act as a space of transition or become a state in itself. The term ‘liminality’ refers to ‘the state and process of mid-transition’. An aspect of liminality is that it signifies being ‘neither-this-nor-that, here-nor-there, one-thing-not-the-other’ as well as, at times, signifying ‘being *both* this *and* that’. Turner developed his definition from the work of Van Gennep, who observed rites of passage in a variety of cultures and determined that the processes involved ‘three phases: separation; margin (or *limen*); and re-aggregation’ (in Turner 1977:37).

The literary dream in the early middle ages reflected the dreaming mind as it was understood at the time; where the imagination becomes more engaged and receptive and reason switches off, 'thus creating a sort of psychic vacuum' (Lynch 1999:101).

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, a large amount of Aristotle's work had been re-translated again into Latin (Kruger 1992:84). Aristotle suggested that most dreams were caused by trivialities, largely impacted by waking thoughts, and had no outcome or purpose (Weidhorn 1970:29). However, the idea of a 'middle ground' persisted. A medieval writer, Albertus Magnus, refused to comment on the 'higher' dreams and discussed only 'natural' dreams (Kruger 1992:119). Despite the self-imposed limitations on his discussions, Albertus managed to express that:

Dreaming often arises from a source of knowledge, but in its encounters with imperfect humanity, that knowledge becomes more or less distorted. Most often, it ends up on that middle ground of the imagination where, affected by both body and intellect, truths are expressed sometimes clearly and sometimes obscurely. (Kruger 1992:122)

The dream here is described as representative of the various aspects of human nature. Spearing (1976:5) and fellow scholar of medieval literature Peter Brown (1999) both point out that the literary genre of dream poetry proved, in anticipation of Jung, that the dream 'allows for a confrontation with the self and its preoccupations such that a process of self-realisation may be achieved' (Brown 1999:34). This self-confrontation accelerates and intensifies the thought processes that began before the dream (37). Citing Macrobius, Spearing (1976:10) highlights the fact that a feature of 'middleness', or the boundary between waking and dreaming (Brown 1999:36), is that it gives access to a higher level of perception.

According to literary scholar Manfred Weidhorn, Aristotle's writings on dreams had a substantial impact on the increasing tendency to attribute dreams to physical and psychological origins (Weidhorn 1970:29). It was common, in the twelfth century, to attribute dreams to medical causes. For example, the *insomnium* was attributed by one theorist to constitutional disturbances arising from issues with the liver (Kruger 1992:71). medieval doctors classified dreams according to three causes: *somnium natural* caused by physical ailment; *somnium animale* caused by mental stress and anxiety; and *somnium celeste/divina*, which is prophecy caused by spiritual visitations when the mind is at rest (Weidhorn 1970:32). For obvious reasons medieval doctors were primarily concerned with the first type of dream, which they used for diagnosing medical problems.

All these traditions and theories of dreaming, starting from antiquity and gaining popularity right through the Middle Ages, survived well into the seventeenth century and beyond (Weidhorn 1970:43). Carroll Camden (1936:107), scholar of Renaissance literature, found that ‘Elizabethan writers on the psychology of sleep’ often defined ‘sleep as a kind of separation of the soul from the body’, and that they considered sleep a time when the physical senses are blocked and the imagination is set free (107-108). During the Renaissance, most dreams were classified as natural dreams and were incorporated by doctors in their diagnoses of illnesses (Holland 1999:128):

Natural dreams are those which are due to the predominant complexion or humor of the individual. The choleric man dreams of wars, fire, or debates; the phlegmatic man dreams of waters, drownings, and storms; the sanguine man dreams of love and happy things; the melancholic man dreams of death, dangers, and fears. It is very necessary for the physician to be familiar with these facts so that he may be able to know the complexion and constitution of his sick patient, for no man can minister to physical ills unless he knows the dominant humor [sic] of his patient. (Camden 1936:123-124)

Camden adds that melancholy made a person prone to insomnia since such a person would be distracted by constant worries and anxieties (1936:116). Once sleep was achieved, often through various tonics and ointments, it was possible that the same person might suffer a nightmare in the early stages of sleep (116-118). One explanation for a nightmare was that there was an evil spirit sitting on your chest (118); another was that nightmares were the result of physical ailment caused by stomach and digestive problems (119). Camden cites a number of Elizabethan writers and doctors who relegated dreams to meaningless drivel of the imagination. The most colourful of these statements is that made by Thomas Nashe: ‘A dreame is nothing els but a bubling scum or froath of the fancie, which the day hath left undigested; or an after feast made of the fragments of the idle imagination’ (as cited in Camden 1936:121). Philosopher Thomas Hobbes (2014 [1651]) recognised that since the physical senses were repressed during sleep, the dream experience was more clear than waking sensations, accounting for the confusion and disorientation that can occur upon waking. It is possible that Hobbes was intuitively deducing what was later found through neuropsychological research (LaBerge 1990:121). As psychoanalyst Ella Sharpe (1937:13) concludes:

Dreaming is [...] a psychical activity inseparable from life itself, for the only dreamless state is death. Dreams may not be remembered in waking consciousness, but subterranean psychical activity is, while life lasts, as unceasing as physiological processes of which also we are not aware in deep sleep. The dream, then, can be considered typical of the human mind.

In 1900 Freud published his controversial work, *The Interpretation of Dreams*. He claimed that dreams are a valid psychological phenomena; that they are ‘the fulfilment of wishes’ and ‘they can be inserted into the chain of intelligible waking mental acts’ (Freud 1991 [1900]:200). Freud asserted that dream content could be instigated by both recent experience and the memory of an older experience (266-267). Most importantly, he asserted time and again that dreams are never trivial (270). However, Freud also believed that a dream’s value lies in its latent content; that the dream has to be interpreted through ‘dream-work’ in order to arrive at its true meaning (381-382). As Jung said of Freud’s work:

By evaluating dreams as the most important source of information concerning the unconscious processes, he gave back to mankind a tool that had seemed irretrievably lost. He demonstrated empirically the presence of an unconscious psyche which had hitherto existed only as a philosophical postulate. (Jung 1967:193)

After questioning the validity of dreams throughout the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance, it seemed the issue was finally being put to rest.

Jung ends his praise of Freud at this point. Writing of Freud’s approach to dream interpretation, Jung (1967:185) noted that he ‘was never able to agree with Freud that the dream is a “façade” behind which its meaning lies hidden – a meaning already known but maliciously, so to speak, withheld from consciousness’. Jung believed that a dream is a natural phenomenon of the unconscious (Jung 1936-1940/2010:2). He expressed a different version of the continuity hypothesis: instead of being dependent on the content of our waking experience, dreams are a part of the endless monologue of the unconscious. ‘We are quite probably dreaming all the time, but consciousness makes so much noise that we no longer hear the dream when awake’ (Jung 2010:3). This is an important distinction because it implies that within our waking life we can find strands of our dreaming life, or the unconscious, as well as the other way around. In fact, Jung points out that the ‘strange’ occurrences one might usually attribute to dreams also happen in waking life. For example, ‘someone enters the room [...] and suddenly there is a chill everywhere. Something emanated from this person, one does not know what’ (15).

In terms of dream interpretation, Jung introduced the concept of ‘conditionalism’ (2010:3-4; Jacobi 1951:78). Where dreams are concerned:

No *unequivocal* causal connections can be maintained. Here the term *conditional* is much more appropriate [...] It is an attempt to replace strict causality with an interwoven action

of conditions, to extend the unequivocal connection between cause and effect with a connection open to many interpretations. Thus causality as such is not abolished, but only adapted to the multilayered material of life. (Jung 2010:4)

Later, in the same lecture series, Jung discusses both the general and the individualised nature of dreams (26-28). Psychologist Jolande Jacobi summarises by stating that the ideas of ‘standard symbols’ like those in dictionaries stand in ‘contradiction to Jung’s conception of the nature and structure of the psyche’ (1951:73).

Post-Jungian Developments

Considering the advancements in science and technology, the information available on dreams and dreaming has not changed as much as one might expect over the past few hundred years. A French encyclopaedia published in the eighteenth century contains the following in its entry for *Dreams*:

Dreams occupy us during sleep, and when a dream comes to us, we emerge from the kind of lethargy into which deep sleep had plunged us, and perceive a sequence of images which are more or less well-defined, depending on the intensity of the dream; this is the popular conception of dreaming. We can only be said to be dreaming when we become conscious of these images, when these images imprint themselves on our memories and we are able to say that we have had such and such a dream, or at least that we have been dreaming. But, in the strictest sense, we are dreaming all the time, that is to say that as soon as sleep has taken possession of our mental operations, the mind is subject to an uninterrupted series of representations and perceptions; but sometimes they are so confused or so dimly registered, that they do not leave the slightest trace, and this is in fact what we call ‘deep sleep’; but we would be wrong to regard it as a total absence of any sort of perception, as complete mental inertia. (Diderot and D’Alembert 1987 [1751-1772]:42)

According to psychologist and dream researcher Robert Van de Castle, psychologists accept that ‘there is no period during sleep in which our mind is “blank”; some kind of mental activity is always occurring. This mental activity varies along broad continua of reality, vividness, and descriptive detail’ (Van de Castle 1994:267). It is while our bodies are sleeping that our minds are busy dreaming. Psychologist Ann Faraday specifically defines a dream as a visual, vivid, and active sleep experience (1973:20-21). Our sleeping mind produces various kinds of ‘dreams, dreamlets, extensive thought patterns, and many hybrid combinations of these mental experiences’. (Van de Castle 1994:267)

Writer and dream theorist Bert States (2003:10) testifies to the ‘evanescence of mental representations and the incredible creative freedom of mind afforded by the dream state’. As he argues:

It is perhaps this freedom to expand associational possibilities across sensory limits that makes the dream state an extremity in the spectrum of thought – not unique in its function, perhaps, but capable of sorting out resemblances and probabilities at a sub-narrative level. (2003:10)

This statement addresses a number of ideas, including the functioning of the brain and consciousness, dream content and outcomes, and the narrativial properties of dream experiences or lack thereof.

Synchronous with the variety of our mental experiences is the variety of scientifically measurable brain activity that occurs throughout the night (or any other period of sleep). Foulkes (1962:14; Foulkes and Vogel 1965:231) has described Dement and Kleitman's discovery of four stages of brain activity:

- Stage 1 is the lightest stage of sleep and exhibits low-voltage activity with the occasional burst of patterns called alpha waves and theta waves, also known as the hypnagogic period;
- Stage 2 is also a light stage of sleep but is characterised by constant spikes of activity called 'sleep spindles';
- Stage 3 is a deep stage of sleep when spindles still occur but there are also the beginnings of low-frequency high-amplitude activity called 'slow waves' or 'delta waves'⁹;
- Stage 4 is the deepest stage of sleep which is dominated by 'delta waves';
- 'ascending' or 'emergent' Stage 1 or REM¹⁰ sleep is a very light stage of sleep characterised by the rapid movement of the eyes and the otherwise general paralysis of the body;¹¹

All stages other than REM are typically referred to as non-REM or NREM. The four stages of sleep, including REM, repeat themselves in cycles approximately four to five times throughout a sleep period.

When laboratory awakenings have been conducted, where the participant's personality and life story were known in great depth, the dreams reported were found to be concerned with the same issue or a limited number of issues. Dreams taking place early in the night generally relate to current events, often the previous day. As the night progresses, our

⁹ See Bonnet 2012.

¹⁰ REM refers to the bursts of rapid eye movement that are characteristic of this stage of sleep (Foulkes 1962:14).

¹¹ See McNamara 2012.

dreams regress chronologically so that, for example, the fourth REM stage dream would involve a much younger self. It is as though our mind identifies a problem and attempts to solve it by tracking down earlier events, situations and environments related to that problem. The last REM stage dream before awakening brings us back to current times, 'as if the dreamer were preparing to exit from the dreaming state to confront the present realities out-side [sic] the bedroom' (Van de Castle 1994:270-271).

REM sleep produces the most vivid and elaborate dreams (Foulkes 1962; Foulkes 1999:6). However, as psychologist and sociologist William Domhoff points out, contemporary psychologists believe that considerable dreaming occurs during NREM sleep, particularly during Stage 2 (the light stage of NREM), after the first four REM cycles (Domhoff 2002:10). Dreaming in both REM and NREM tend to be longer and more 'dreamlike' towards the end of a sleep period, so that a late NREM dream may start to resemble a REM dream from early in the night (Faraday 1973:32).

Foulkes' study of NREM reports (1962) showed that NREM dreams resemble deep thinking or a daytime reverie. They involve less emotion and imagery than REM dreams and seem to be more connected with recent events or daytime concerns. In a later study, Foulkes and psychoanalyst Gerald Vogel (1965) explored the mental occurrences of the first stages of sleep. They found that at the point at which people are falling asleep some experience imagery during a short time span, with mild emotions, 'more like a succession of snapshots than a movie' (Foulkes & Vogel 1965:241). They called this experience a 'dreamlet'. Others experienced very real-world dreams, more like a movie. The individual differences in mental experiences during Stage 1 sleep were much more varied than those found in REM sleep. Faraday developed some general rules in relation to NREM dreaming: she argues that they tend to be shorter, less vivid, less visual, less dramatic, less elaborated, less emotional, less active, more plausible, more concerned with current problems, more conversational, and more thought-like than REM dreams (Faraday 1973:23-24)¹².

More recently, Maggiolini et al. (2010:63) conducted a study where participants were asked to report their most recent dreams and a recent waking episode. Generally, they

¹² Social psychologists Gary Fine and Laura Leighton (1993:97) discuss an example of dreams that reflect real-world problems: in the 1980s a review was carried out of the nightmares of nineteen Salvadoran refugees who had lived through war and it was found that most had a recurring dream of being pursued by men trying to kill them.

found that there is no difference between waking life and dream narratives in regards to characters and social interactions (2010:73). In both situations, there was very little cognitive activity involved with the actual episode. In addition to the similarities found between dream content and waking life experiences, there was also some physical similarity between dreamtime and waking thought. Sleep research suggests that large body movements in sleep are responsible for disrupting an ongoing dream and starting a new one within the same REM phase, in the same way that disturbances in waking life will break a person's reverie and send them into another or bring them back to reality. Some participants of dream labs reported up to six separate dream episodes for a single REM period, particularly the last REM period just before waking (Faraday 1973:27).

Taking into account a great quantity of dream content analysis, many psychologists have concluded that dream images are in fact driven by emotional thoughts (Maggiolini et al. 2010). They call the source of these thoughts 'affective consciousness' (2012:61). Dreams are rife with affective symbolisation. These symbolic images convey strong emotions, much as the use of a storm in a film works to convey heightened affect. Psychologists Jean Grenier et al. (2005) also concluded that emotions play an important role in dream formation. They point out that memories of adolescence and early childhood are often 'affect laden' and therefore the emotions experienced in dreams have the potential to be associated with, and frequently to prompt the retrieval of, those memories, particularly in older dreamers (2005:287). In reference to emotions, Foulkes (1990:46) explains that attempts to integrate 'affective phenomena' with cognitive science conceptions have led to an awareness of the fundamental nature of human feeling as neither behavioural nor physiological, but rather, experiential. He goes on to link this observation with dreams: 'There are no externally observable inputs and outputs through which we only infer what dreaming might be; rather, we experience it, and this datum is the starting point of our inquiry' (46). Foulkes makes it clear that no matter what the driving force behind a dream is, it is first and foremost an experience.

Foulkes (1990) outlines how most data from research in the second half of the twentieth century shows that dreams tend to be mundane and ordinary, realistic and plausible, as opposed to fantastic. Interestingly, despite efforts in reductionist approaches, neurophysiological explanations of dreaming often address dream stereotypes far more than what dream sampling has shown to be prevalent (Foulkes 1990:40). This is possibly

due to the fact that although the majority of dreams seem to be ‘reality’ related there is still a prevalence of ‘strange’ occurrences and combinations in the way in which a dream conveys those experiences, as Revonsuo notes:

For example, a person in a dream may be identified only as “somebody”: a person with unsure or no identity at all; a person may be the combination of two known persons; a person from one waking context may appear in a completely inappropriate context in a dream; a person may suddenly change into an animal. [...] All of these forms of bizarreness require that the brain is spontaneously co-activating contents which never become activated when waking life constraints are on. In other words, the dreamworld is often bound together by violating some of the principles which guide the binding of waking perceptions. (Revonsuo 1995:53)

This may also explain why, outside of the sleep laboratory, many people claim only to remember strange and exotic dreams – it may be the strangeness that makes an impression and later prompts the remembering or recall.

Parallel to Jung’s concept of the universal dream¹³, States (2003:8-9) advocates the inevitability of ‘universal dreams’, just as ‘allergies, diseases, and disasters caused by inattention, nature, predators, etc.’ are inevitable. He refers to Patricia Garfield’s list of typical dreams where the dreamer is in a dangerous situation in which nature or culture is the foe:

[...] being chased or attacked, falling or drowning, being lost or trapped, being naked, being injured, ill or dying, being in natural or man-made disasters, performing poorly on tests, having car or vehicle trouble, missing your boat or plane, property lost or damaged, machine or telephone malfunction, and being menaced by a spirit. (States 2003:9)

States goes on to say that in his own experience he usually finds these scenarios do not present as the full dream but rather that many of them will be experienced as various aspects of a single dream.

There are two features of dreaming which are extremely common: dream reports show that almost all dreams have an experientially 3D-spatial setting and involve a self-character “I” (Revonsuo 1995:45). In regards to children’s dreams, Foulkes (1999:56) found that the self-character – to use Revonsuo’s terminology, the ‘dream-I’ on the ‘dream-stage’ – is a rare dream format for very young children. This can clearly be linked to the development of a concept of ‘self’ and situating that ‘self’ in the world. Similarly, Llinas and Pare (1991) assert that even though the mechanisms for generating consciousness are present at

¹³ States (2003:8) argues that he is setting aside Jung’s ‘collective unconscious’ as the source of dream archetypes but it appears that he is simply redefining ‘the collective unconscious’.

birth, 'the emergence of consciousness arises out of interactions between the brain and its environment' (525). Consciousness itself is a non-continuous event that is nurtured through sensory input during wakefulness and through memories during sleep (531), which may be another reason why children take time to begin recalling dreams and to develop complex dreamscapes. Experimental psychologist and cognitive neuroscientist Endel Tulving points out that generally episodic memory (the memory of personal experiences) begins to develop in children from the age of four onwards (2002:7).

In an effort to understand the link between dreaming and waking consciousness, and in order to see whether our dream-life can shed light on our waking cognitive functioning, Foulkes (1990) compared the development of dreaming and dream recall in children with their development of general cognitive functioning and remembering. The results of a longitudinal sleep-laboratory study showed that children very rarely remember dreams (Foulkes 1990:42), and that there is the possibility that little to no dreaming is experienced by children before the age of three (44). The study also found that children's dreams did not seem to be related to emotional competency but rather to their cognitive skills (43). This is particularly interesting since it is in opposition to Maggiolini et al.'s finding that adult dreams are driven by emotions. In parallel with the issues surrounding childhood dreaming, Grenier et al. (2005), in a study on temporal references, were able to confirm the 'phenomenon of childhood amnesia'. None of the young adult participants of the study were able to identify memories or dream temporal references dating to the age of five or earlier (286). Between the ages of seven and nine there is a significant increase in dream reporting (Maggiolini et al. 2010:42), that parallels the development of cognitive functioning, or 'mindful intelligence', and proves that dream data is 'relevant to the analysis of waking consciousness' (47).

Writer and dream researcher Patricia Kilroe (2001), in her analysis of verbal aspects of dreaming, gives us a more specific example of the link between dream content and cognitive functioning. The examples she examines suggest that verbal thinking, or the use of a linguistic system, plays a significant role in dream content and generation (112). Another example of dream-life shedding light on mental processes during wakefulness is the way dreams tend to operate in metaphors and puns: 'the dream's shift inward and away from topic may show us something of the normally hidden *processes* of metaphor generation precisely as the clarity of outer reference in lost' (Hunt 1991:238).

In the context of his research, Foulkes (1990:46) identifies three parallels between dreaming and waking consciousness. Both consciousness and dreaming involve content: you are conscious of something and you dream of something. Both conditions involve organising the content despite the diversity of sources involved, providing ‘a serially coherent model of self and world compatible with currently active, recently active, and frequently recurring patterns of information’ (Foulkes 1990:46). Finally, both are constructive: they are ‘not an unselective, passive, or automatic registration of the information available [...] From the information available, dream consciousness portrays wholly novel but unified and coherent simulations of life’ (1990:48). Foulkes states that:

Dreaming also involves consciousness of whole spatial layouts with the integration of information from different sensory modalities and of information seen with information unseen. [...] Both dreaming and waking consciousness show this kind of high-level informational integration. Both make *selective* sense of currently active information in a way that does justice both to that information and to temporal coherence in consciousness itself. (Foulkes 1990:48-49)

As has already been mentioned, there is a ‘functional continuity’ of dream-life with waking consciousness; the only difference seems to lie in the fact that ‘dream integration is involuntary’ (49). In other words, whereas we exercise control over the selection and processing of information during wakefulness, our experience during sleep is one of passive reflection.

Viewed developmentally, the problem is not how knowledge gains unconscious status but, rather, how it (sometimes) comes to be the object of self-reflection. Reflective awareness of this sort may be, as many have suggested, distinctively human. If so, as fewer have bothered to analyse in any detail, reflective awareness also must have cognitive prerequisites that imply its absence or imperfection in very early human life. (Foulkes 1990:50)

Foulkes points out that American cognitive developmentalists generally consider ‘reflection’ a function that develops relatively late (50). In the same article, Foulkes proposes that the processes for remembering and dreaming are the same and that both display an ability to generate ‘simulations of what one’s experience has been or might be’ (1990:52). This further suggests that ‘any pattern by which temporal references would be included in dreams would parallel that of autobiographical memory’ (Grenier et al. 2005:280). We generate dream-worlds based on the waking conscious construction of a model world within which is situated a purposeful self: dreaming is ‘an indication that we are capable [...] of consciously modelling our existence in the world’ (Foulkes 1990:53).

Experiments with lucid dreamers indicate that dreams, as experiences, last around the same time as the same experience would in wakefulness, or the ‘real’ world, not ruling out the obvious time distortion effects that occur in particular dreams (LaBerge 1990). Although dreaming is primarily a cognitive experience, and I am largely adhering to this definition, there is evidence that the body is affected and in fact participates in a physical way (1990:120). In REM sleep, for example, a spinal paralysis comes into effect, inhibiting muscles from carrying out actions ordered by the brain (123). Ironically, studies done in the 1980s by LaBerge and Dement suggest that the presence of alpha brain waves – necessary for creativity and peak performance – is tied to a decrease in cortical brain activity, the same activity responsible for sensory perceptions and motor skills (LaBerge 1990:120). In other words, in order to access creativity and problem solving, and in order to project alternate possibilities, it is necessary to be ‘asleep’ to the ‘world’.

LaBerge is very particular in the language that he uses to explain the co-mingling of wakefulness and sleep. Discussing the findings of Fenwick et al., he points out that there is no clear line between sleeping and waking, no concrete features that can distinguish between the two. The example given is the response of a lucid dreamer to environmental stimuli without waking up (LaBerge 1990:121). Rather, LaBerge describes a gradient or scale of consciousness: he suggests that ‘there must be degrees of being awake just as there are degrees of being asleep’.

Llinas and Pare (1991) found that regardless of how irrational they may seem dreams do reflect the same cognitive abilities that are present in waking life (525) and therefore our mental abilities are the same whether we are awake or asleep. They conclude that ‘*wakefulness is nothing other than a dreamlike state modulated by the constraints produced by specific sensory inputs*’ [italics in original]. Revonsuo (1995:44) argues: ‘dreams preserve the essentials of full-blown consciousness’. This conclusion has far-reaching implications for the ability to generate representations of the environment or, in other words, to evoke story-worlds.

Summarising Hobson’s findings regarding brain activity, Revonsuo says that:

The sleeping and dreaming brain is effectively isolated from input and output contacts with the world outside, and at the same time, the brain is generating states closely resembling those caused by external stimulation during waking. (Revonsuo 1995:39)

He affirms LaBerge's argument that 'to the functional systems of neuronal activity that construct our experiential world (model), dreaming of perceiving or doing something is equivalent to actually perceiving or doing it' (LaBerge 1990:124). Citing cognitive neuropsychological studies, and in conformity with the findings of Llinas and Pare, Revonsuo (1995:43) concludes that there is no connection between sensory input (and external stimuli) and the realisation of consciousness. Dreams, therefore, 'are conscious experiences occurring independently of sensory input and motor output', and they can be seen 'as a natural experiment which separates the consciousness system from its "surroundings"' (44). He further explains the difference:

The structure of waking consciousness is, consequently, directly reality-constrained, whereas the structure of the dream consciousness is not. This is the only sense in which we may say that dreams are not real; "real" means here "directly constrained by distal causes in the reality outside the brain". Otherwise, both dreaming and waking experiences are as real as you can get and, ontologically, both are instantiations of the same natural phenomenon or level of organisation in nature: consciousness. (Revonsuo 1995:47)

Llinas and Pare (1991:530) also proposed that wakefulness and REM sleep particularly are essentially the same functional states and that the key difference between the two is the type of input each relies upon. An example of internally generated consciousness is 'selective attentiveness'. Humans are capable of paying attention to certain events while completely ignoring others. Sometimes we are completely unresponsive, as in the case of someone daydreaming; in these moments internally generated mental activity – similar to what occurs during REM sleep – is extensive and not necessarily affected by external sources. In fact, electrophysiological studies have indicated that responsiveness during REM is very similar to responsiveness during non-attentive wakeful moments. Llinas and Pare suggest that it is therefore possible that 'dreaming is basically a hyperattentive state in many ways similar to full wakefulness' (1991:531).

In pursuit of a natural experiment, Revonsuo (1995) discusses the workings of new Virtual Reality (VR) technology and draws a parallel between the integration and processing of VR experiences and 'real' experiences. He concludes:

The phenomenological worlds we enjoy – whether those of dreams, computer-generated models or waking "reality" – is basically the same: the realities experienced are always "virtual". The neural mechanisms capable of bringing about any sort of sentience at all are buried inside our skulls and, thus, cannot reach out from there – the non-virtual world outside the skull is, in itself, black and imperceptible. [...] For the brain, sensory and motor systems are nothing but a "brain-mounted 3D display" connected with a whole-body "data suit" and a telepresence system which allows virtual movement to be translated into

real effects in the world through voluntary muscles. [...] Through all these millennia, the natural, ultimate VR was humming inside our brains, producing dreams and waking experiences. (1995:50-51)

‘The natural, ultimate VR [...] inside our brains’ brings to mind Scholes’ ‘fiction of the senses’ and the human being’s ability to fabulate beyond her immediate physical environment. In respect to the ‘reality’ of the dream experience LaBerge asserts that ‘when we experience feelings, say, anxiety or ecstasy, in dreams, we really feel anxious or ecstatic at the time. When we think in dreams, we really do think’ (1990:123). And finally, Revonsuo takes Foulkes’ argument one step further:

not only are dreams experiences but, in a way, all experiences are dreams. When asleep, the brain dreams for us a world of experience which reflects solely the nocturnal brainstorm in our memory systems or the processes in charge of binding features of experiences into wholes. When awake, the brain dreams for us a much more coherent world, because the causal chains constraining those dreams originate in the largely coherent reality out there. (1995:55)

Again, the differentiation between conscious and unconscious is removed and dreaming and waking are relegated to what LaBerge calls the scale of consciousness or, to incorporate Revonsuo’s terms, the scale or gradient of dreaming.¹⁴

The Function/s of Sleeping Dreams

The fact that most dreams are not remembered, Russo suggests, might imply that conscious memory and processing of dreams is not necessary for dreams to fulfil their function, whatever that may be (2012:5). There have been many theories developed to explain the purpose and function of dreaming. In the early 1900s, Freud asserted that he had discovered the function of dreaming: its purpose was to fulfil our wishes while we slept, thereby releasing us of the desires in our waking moments (1920:ch.7:para.9). Freud touched on many relevant aspects of dreaming but later psychologists have shown that there is much more to it than unspoken desires. Not long after Freud, Jung posed a new hypothesis: dreams and waking are two halves of a whole where the dreams provide a platform for the individual to grow psychologically and arrive at new attitudes in relation to waking life (1971:279). Jung’s theory may be closer to the current understandings of dreaming and its functions.

¹⁴ Recently, philosopher and dream researcher Ludwig Crespin (2015) readdressed the question of whether or not dreams are conscious experiences. He concluded, and reaffirmed, that dreams are conscious experiences that occur under constraint of delayed report, and that this assertion is important to current theories of consciousness (2015:134-135).

Since ancient times, dreams have been utilised for healing (both physical and psychological), for creative problem solving, and for inspiration (Reed 2012). These three things are still practiced widely today. Schredl and Erlacher (2007) studied the effects of dreams on waking-life creativity. They classified the resultant dream samples into four categories: ‘(a) dreams with direct impulses for artwork, (b) dreams that present solutions to problems, (c) dreams that stimulate behaviours in waking life, and (d) dreams containing emotional insights’ (2007:42). They found that ‘the effects of dreams on waking life together with the effects of waking life on subsequent dreams’ suggests that ‘there is a stream of consciousness that is always active, both as waking thoughts and feelings and as dreams during sleep’ (43).

It is believed that the associative qualities that dreams have with waking life indicates that memory is being reorganised and consolidated while we sleep (Hobson 2012:8). Psychologist Tore Nielsen (2012:3), in his study on the effects of dream-lag, has found that sleep and dreaming do contribute to memory consolidation and to the consolidation of cognitive functioning in general. Stage 2 sleep, characterised by spikes of fast spindles, has been found to be particularly important for memory and brain functioning (Kussé & Maquet 2012:3).

Since the discovery of REM and non-REM sleep in the 1950s research into the link between specific stages of sleep and the process of memory development and consolidation has fed a number of theories related to dreaming and consciousness (Walker & Stickgold 2006:140). Psychologists Matthew Walker and Robert Stickgold (2006:141) summarise Tulving’s (1985) findings on memory types by arguing that memory is made up of two distinct systems and a number of subcategories. These systems are known as declarative memory and nondeclarative memory. Declarative memory is responsible for memories of personal experiences, also known as episodic memory, which can be consolidated into autobiographical memory, and for the memory of facts and figures, also known as semantic memory. Declarative memory is specifically linked to consciousness. Nondeclarative memory is responsible for procedural memory including skills, actions, and habits. It is considered a nonconscious system. It is important to note that these systems usually function in combination with each other. Memory consolidation seems to be enhanced largely during sleep. A recent investigation into the effects of sleep deprivation on declarative memory (focusing on episodic memory) showed that

emotionally positive memory retention suffers greatly as a result (Walker & Stickgold 2006:144). It is interesting to note, in the context of dream recall, that memory recall is believed to destabilise the memory, and that a cycle of reconsolidation is required in order to stabilise the memory again (Nader 2003 in Walker & Stickgold 2006:142). In the context of the continuity hypothesis, it is possible to state that the role of sleep in memory organisation and consolidation reflects on and is related to the content of the dreams that are experienced during sleep.

Cognitive psychologists Josie Malinowski and Caroline Horton (2014) discuss a number of studies examining the memory sources of dreams and the role of dreaming in memory consolidation. They carried out their own study of episodic memory content in REM dreams and found them to be rare compared to the high occurrence of episodic ‘features’ from waking life. They point out that if episodic memories (EMs) rarely appear in their entirety in dreams, and yet sleep improves EM consolidation, then the process of consolidation must occur in a way that does not require the full replaying of EMs (Malinowski & Horton 2014:441). At this point, it is worth briefly diverging in order to deepen our understanding of episodic memory.

Tulving (2002) suggests three concepts lie at the heart of episodic memory. The first is the ‘self’, which he also refers to as the mental time traveller. The second is auto-noetic awareness, which allows us to be aware of the subjective time in which events happened, and is required for remembering. The third is subjectively sensed time, a ‘time’ outside of physical reality:

When one thinks today about what one did yesterday, time’s arrow is bent into a loop. The rememberer has mentally travelled back into her past and thus violated the law of the irreversibility of the flow of time. She has not accomplished the feat in physical reality, of course, but rather in the reality of the mind, which, as everyone knows, is at least as important for human beings as is the physical reality. (Tulving 2002:2)

The human ‘self’ exists in subjective time, but it is only episodic memory that allows people to consciously re-experience their past experiences. Malinowski & Horton (2014) summarise the current understanding of EMs suggesting that EMs are ‘detailed summary accounts of short-period experiences’ (Malinowski & Horton 2014:442), which are likely to be forgotten within twenty-four hours unless they are consolidated through sleep and linked to, or transformed into, autobiographical memory.

Keeping this in mind, Malinowski and Horton cite other researchers (2014:445) who have suggested that the mind is selective with dream content according to what has already been consolidated and constructed. Of EMs, there are only fragments that are relevant to long-term memory categories like autobiographical memory:

The emphasis, then, is on the novelty and/or the salience of the waking-life memories. Further, waking-life experiences may be consolidated selectively, depending on their levels of emotionality. (Malinowski & Horton 2014:445)

Again, as with Maggiolini et al. (2010), there is an emphasis on the importance of emotional thoughts and images.

According to cognitive scientist Eugen Tarnow (2003), memories with ‘meaning’ are remembered more easily. But what is it that provides or ‘encodes’ a particular memory with meaning? I suggest that it comes back to how an experience fits into a preconceived narrative. Inevitably, the ‘meaning’ of certain memories or dreams comes down to the process of reading, interpreting, and narrativisation. This brings us to autobiographical memory. Autobiographical memory is constructed or created from a combination of episodic memory and semantic memory (Malinowski & Horton 2014). The original memories ‘may have been incorporated fragmentarily, according to usefulness’ (2014:446). The strangeness of dream content might be reflective of the brain’s tendency to incorporate one’s waking life and emotional concerns in metaphors (446; Faraday 1974:53-57).

Malinowski and Horton point out that it is entirely possible that EMs play out more fully in NREM dreams but note that it would require further investigation. For now, they suggest that the memories of personal experiences that appear in dreams might be considered as autobiographical in nature. ‘Rather than replaying experiences intact, dreams constitute autobiographical memory constructions’ (Malinowski & Horton 2014:446). And the content of these constructions seem to be charged with emotional thoughts and images, with emotional experiences.

Sleeping Dreams as Signifiers

Sleeping dreams are primarily mental experiences that are impacted by and have impact on waking experiences. These dream experiences are directly linked to human cognitive development in that the development of dreamscapes and dream recall are linked to the

development of memory. Furthermore, the ages of seven to nine signal a significant transition period in terms of dreaming, memory, and the concept of the self. Sleep, and thereby dreaming, directly impacts memory consolidation, specifically waking declarative memory and therefore autobiographical memory. This relationship with memory affects the narrativisation of waking life, which in turn affects sleeping dreaming life, thereby constructing a cyclical reality.

The construction of content and content organisation that is carried out by the mind undergoes the same process at all levels of consciousness. LaBerge has shown that Scholes' theory of fabulation has a neurophysiological equivalent, and he has thereby reinforced a theory of the gradient of consciousness or dreaming, as opposed to distinct states of waking and sleeping or conscious and unconscious. It is emotionally charged experiences that seem to have the greatest impact on memory and hence dreaming. If dreams consolidate the most emotional and therefore meaningful memories, then it can be concluded that these particular dreams can be identified as signifiers of important narrational elements in identity narrative. Emotionally charged experiences may be crucial to an increased understanding of the continuity hypothesis, in that emotions are a commonality across the scale of consciousness, and to the narrativisation of a cyclical reality.

Chapter Two – The Narratological Framework

What is Narrative?

Narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself.
(Barthes 1966:251)

Narrative studies deal with storytelling and vehicles of storytelling. These vehicles have changed and evolved over the course of history to the establishment of narratology, ‘the ensemble of theories of narrative, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artefacts that “tell a story”’. Such a theory helps to understand, analyse, and evaluate narratives’ (Bal 2009:3). The study of narrative can be traced back to Aristotle’s discussion of plot and character in the context of drama as a vehicle for story-telling (Belfiore 2000:64). Since Aristotle there have been intermittent moves in the scholarly community to build an understanding of how narrative functions. The emergence of structuralism in the twentieth century signalled many discussions of various aspects of narrative by such scholars as Saussure and Levi-Strauss, then Barthes, Propp, and others (Herman 2002). Building on the work of the aforementioned scholars, and against a now structuralist backdrop, the study of narrative gained momentum when in 1969 Tzvetan Todorov called for a new ‘science of narrative’ and coined the term *narratology* (Herman 2005:ix). From its classical roots, narratology has developed into a humanities discipline that encompasses both a theoretical and a practical approach to the study of narrative representation (Meister 2011).

In 1966, Claude Bremond (1980:390-391) wrote that all narrative is made up of sequences of events and that all sequences can be defined as either amelioration or degradation. These sequences of amelioration and degradation alternate to form a narrative circle which can be repeated indefinitely. Much like Todorov’s theory, an improvement sequence begins with disequilibrium and moves on to establish equilibrium. Todorov’s (1969) analysis of a narrative led him to conclude that all narratives, in their telling, are made up of two main entities: agents (or characters) and predicates (or a verb denoting action). Actions are of two kinds; positive or negative (Todorov 1969:74). There are two possible conclusions/outcomes for each story or action: ‘avoided punishment’, a scenario where imbalance is created through action and further action is avoided, thereby creating a new

equilibrium, and ‘conversion’, a scenario where the imbalance prompts a reaction which then creates a new equilibrium.

The minimal complete plot can be seen as the shift from one equilibrium to another. This term “equilibrium,” which I am borrowing from genetic psychology, means the existence of a stable but not static relation between the members of a society; it is a social law, a rule of the game, a particular system of exchange. The two moments of equilibrium, similar and different, are separated by a period of imbalance, which is composed of a process of degeneration and a process of improvement. (Todorov 1969:75)

If a narrative is made up of a single plot point then ‘narrative’ can be seen as ‘the shift from one equilibrium to another’. In terms of a dream experience, plot points may be associated with the experiences that are remembered as events through dream recall. It is possible that a dreamer may experience only a single event within a dream, and it is also possible that multiple events are recalled. The identification of plot points, therefore, relies on the remembering of the dream experience. In this case, ‘equilibrium’ becomes that state that is disrupted, not only between events within a dream but also in the shift from one dream to another, from one stage of sleep to another, from waking to dreaming, and from dreaming to waking. Another way of expressing this phenomenon, to use Bremond’s terminology, would be to describe it as the transition between events, within a sequence, and over time.

Ricoeur (1983), in a discussion and juxtaposition of Augustine’s *Confessions* and Aristotle’s *Poetics*, explores the interplay of time, action, and plot. He explores the ‘configurational dimension’, or ‘configurational act’, through which events are transformed into story (Ricoeur 1983:66). He refers back to Augustine’s dilemma with ‘time’ when he concludes that emplotment ‘draws from this manifold of events the unity of one *temporal whole*’ (66). Psychologist Donald E. Polkinghorne (1991:141) summarises the argument: ‘Narrative configuration takes place through the process of emplotment. Emplotment is a procedure that configures temporal elements into a whole by ‘grasping them together’ and directing them toward a conclusion or ending’. The key here is that Ricoeur does not insist on emplotment being a tool for complete resolution; rather, he asserts that it is the force forever driving the whole in the direction of an ending. Ricoeur (1991b:21) defines emplotment as ‘a synthesis between the events or incidents which are multiple and the story which is unified and complete’, and he further elaborates that ‘the plot serves to make *one* story out of the multiple incidents or, if you prefer, transforms the many incidents *into one* story’. Since dream experiences are often recalled as fragments,

the process of emplotment becomes key to the process of reporting a dream or, in terms of this thesis, dream writing. When composing dream poems the ‘configurational act’ is a more subtle process. Since it is unnecessary to achieve complete resolution, and Ricoeur emphasises that the ‘act’ functions as a driving force moving the whole *towards* an end, the composition of a dream poem relies more on a sense of significance.

Ricoeur asserts that ‘the sense or significance of a narrative stems from the *intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader*’ (1991b:26). In a discussion on the differences between written history and lived life, Ricoeur points out that life involves ‘circularity’ that ‘expresses our true situation’ (1991a:181). We are born into a world full of narratives – ‘literature, in the largest sense of the word, including history as well as fiction, tends to reinforce a process of symbolisation already at work’ (182). He goes on to explain that through the repetition of this circle ‘there is [...] an extension of meaning, progressive meaning, from the inchoate to the fully determined’ (182). Essentially Ricoeur locates a narrative across two dimensions. In regards to the first he says, ‘a text is not something closed in upon itself, it is the projection of a new universe distinct from that in which we live’. He goes on to explain that a reader simultaneously straddles the world of ‘experience in imagination’ and that of her/his own ‘real action’. These two worlds are in a constant state of confrontation and fusion.

In reference to the world of the text, literary theorist Lubomír Doležel argues that:

Fictional semantics does not deny that the story is the defining feature of narrative but moves to the foreground the macrostructural conditions of story generation: stories happen, are enacted in certain kinds of possible worlds. The basic concept of narratology is not “story,” but “narrative world,” defined within a typology of possible worlds. (1998:31)

In other words, a story automatically implies a ‘world’ which has been projected by an author and is then projected by the reader in the process of reading. Philosopher Peter Strawson (1990:128), in a discussion on elements necessary for establishing the identity of individuals or the ‘concept of a man’, defines ‘possible worlds’: ‘Here “world” means spatio-temporal world, and “possible” means capable of being described exhaustively without self-contradiction’. Herman (2002) gives a summary of various writings on fictional ‘worlds’. He uses the term ‘storyworld’ ‘to suggest something of the world-creating power of narrative, its ability to transport interpreters’ (2002:14). He refers to cognitive narratologist Marie-Laure Ryan (1991) who points out that interpreters, or readers, of fiction relocate themselves to an ‘alternate possible world’:

Meanwhile, interpreting nonfictional (retrospective) narratives entails relocating not to an alternate possible world but to a possible world that is an earlier – and perhaps competing – version of the world deemed actual. (Ryan 1991:15)

Herman goes on to give the example of differing stories about the same historical event, like the discovery of antibiotics. By referencing differing accounts of the same historical events, Herman reminds the reader of the various factors that influence the interpretation of those events. Much like the experience of a dream, the experience of what may later be identified as an historical event is subject to the interpretation of the individuals experiencing that event. These individuals have unique vantage points, backgrounds, situations, and environments. Despite the uniqueness of the various perspectives on a single event there is also the probability of intersection and influence.

Herman also discusses the relationship of storyworlds with overlapping elements like common characters. For example, *Wide Sargasso Sea* does not falsify *Jane Eyre* but rather, extends and supplements it in that it creates a ‘successor world’ (Herman 2002:16). Nonfictional narratives, on the other hand, do not always behave this way, and they tend to compete directly with one another. The world/s experienced through dreaming present both scenarios: to a large extent they contain elements that overlap with waking life, and at the same time they contain elements, or anomalies, that contend and compete with waking life. Herman concludes the section by asserting that:

[...] *storyworld* applies both to fictional and nonfictional narratives. All narratives have world-creating power [...] More than reconstructed timelines and inventories of existents, storyworlds are mentally and emotionally projected environments in which interpreters are called upon to live out complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response, encompassing sympathy, the drawing of causal inferences, identification, evaluation, suspense, and so on. (Herman 2002:16-17)

Whether the world experienced during dreaming is a fictional construct or a non-fictional extension of waking life, or both, it is possible that the projection and experience of this world/s are a result of the individual interpreting, and creating cognitive and imaginative responses to, the narrative of life.

Later, in the same volume, and referring back to Doležel, Herman emphasises the incomplete nature of storyworlds (Herman 2002:67). No fictional world can be built having had every facet and element of it specified. This is where the ‘gappiness’ (Herman 2002) of both worlds and narratives become apparent. Every created world relies on the readers, listeners, or viewers ‘to draw a vast number of inferences about the world’ that is

always under construction (67-68). With this in mind it can be inferred that a dream world, which does not necessarily abide by the laws of the 'real' world, might also be viewed as a type of story-world: emotional, incorporating suspense, requiring evaluation, incomplete and full of gaps. The human mind is capable of projecting worlds, irrespective of 'time', in the same way that it can imagine possible futures and alternate pasts.

This ability to project and imagine possible worlds and times is directly linked to the functioning of episodic memory. Tulving (2002), discussing a subject who, as a result of an accident, has a dysfunctional episodic memory and no auto-noetic consciousness, explains that:

The impairment does not encompass only the past; it also extends to the future. Thus, when asked, he cannot tell the questioner what he is going to do later on that day, or the day after, or at any time in the rest of his life. He cannot imagine his future any more than he can remember his past. This aspect of the syndrome he presents suggests that the sense of time with which auto-noetic consciousness works covers not only the past but also the future. (Tulving 1985, cited in Tulving 2002:14)

The conclusion we must draw is that auto-noetic consciousness is crucial for projecting both lived and alternate pasts as well as possible futures. Dreams that take place in times other than the waking present are not uncommon. 'Time travel' within a single dream experience or across consecutive dream experiences is also possible. A single dream experience may take place entirely within one space and time or it may entail multiple spaces and times. It is auto-noetic consciousness that allows for dream experiences to be unbound by the present, or any restriction of time, and enables ease of 'time travel' during dreaming.

Just as Tulving provides the scientific rationale for the ability of the mind to project both past and future, Ricoeur (1985) raises the issue of limiting these projections. He urges the reader to:

[...] struggle against the tendency to consider the past only from the angle of what is done, unchangeable, and past. We have to re-open the past, to revivify its unaccomplished, cut-off – even slaughtered – possibilities. In short, when confronted with the adage that the future is open and contingent [...] but that the past is unequivocally closed and necessary, we have to make our expectations more determinate and our experience less so. For these are two faces of one and the same task, for only determinate expectations can have the retroactive effect on the past of revealing it as a living tradition. (1985:216)

Dream experiences enable the individual or character to live a different past, influenced by the ever-changing present and future. I propose that the dreams recalled may reflect the

dominant tendency of the individual or character, whether that is to consider the past as set, and with regret, or whether it is to consider past, present and future as a living tradition, full of possibilities. It is this living tradition that an author and/or storyteller accesses, both in creating and relaying text.

Returning to Ricoeur's idea of the dual dimension of narrative, and by appropriating the terms 'world of the text' and 'world of the reader', it is possible to begin an exploration of the author's place in both. I would like to propose a two-tiered reading of this idea: the first involves labelling the author as the instigator of the world of the text, the second sees the author take on the role of the dreamer. In the first reading, the author conceives of and instigates the world of the text. In other words, the author as dreamer creates and projects the world, or storyworld, in which the dream is experienced. This first reading occupies the world of the text, just as an author occupies the projected storyworld, and it anticipates the world of the reader. In the second reading the dream is defined as text, just as hieroglyphs are a series of images to be read, while the dreamer is still defined as the author of the text. This second tier of reading straddles both the world of the text and the world of the reader since the dreamer simultaneously projects and experiences the dream world. The author, or dreamer, becomes the reader of the text, in that dream content consists of images, sensations and symbols that are 'read' by the dreamer upon waking, in the same way that a reading of a text is 'to unfold the world horizon implicit in it which includes the actions, the characters and the events of the story' (Ricoeur 1991b:26).

Ricoeur concludes that 'reading is itself already a way of living in the fictive universe of the work; in this sense, we can already say that stories are recounted but they are also *lived in the mode of the imaginary*' (1991b:27). This statement can be applied to both readings of the core idea: the author as instigator of the fictive universe experiences within her imaginary all the things that she elaborates upon; and the dreamer as reader of the alternate universe experiences the dream before recounting it.

There might be objection to the idea of 'reading' a dream experience, especially in regards to the extra-imagery components of a dream. There is, however, precedence for the application of this idea within the aforementioned article by Ricoeur. Bremond (1980: 406) points out that 'the elementary narrative types correspond to the most general forms of human behaviour' and therefore 'although it is a technique of literary analysis, the

semiology of narrative draws its very existence and its wealth from its roots in anthropology'. Through an examination of cultural anthropological practice, Ricoeur concludes that 'narrative understanding in living experience consists in the very structure of human acting and suffering' (1991b:28). He calls the system through which we 'read' life the 'semantics of action' and goes on to explain:

[...] our familiarity with the conceptual network of human acting is of the same order as the familiarity we have with the plots of stories that are known to us; it is the same phronetic understanding which presides over the understanding of action (and of passion) and over that of narrative. [...] If indeed action can be recounted, this is because it is already articulated in signs, rules and norms; it is always symbolically mediated. (Ricoeur 1991b:28)

That system, or striving for mediation, must be understood as narrative.

There have been many attempts to provide a definition for narrative. Literary theorist Gerard Genette (1980:25) stated that 'a first meaning [...] has *narrative* refer to the narrative statement, the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events'. Similarly, literary scholar James Phelan (2007:22) regards narrative as 'the act of somebody telling somebody else *on a particular occasion for some purpose* that something happened'. This aspect of narrative is also known as 'tellability' (Herman 2002). Phelan (2007:7) also discusses narrative as a dual-process phenomenon which involves the telling of the story and the hearing/reading and responding to the story. In other words, there is the progress of events or plot points and there is the progress of reading and reader response. Both the textual and the 'readerly' aspects of the work have to be invested with a strong commitment in order to invoke a strong narrativity (2007:215). On the other hand, narrative theorist H. Porter Abbott (2008:237) defines narrative simply as 'the representation of a story' and explains that the two components that make up narrative are story and narrative discourse (2008:238). Furthermore, he states that narrative is 'always and forever full of gaps' that we are continually striving to fill in an effort to create coherence (2008:212). Filling in the gaps is what often occurs with dream recall and dream reporting. Additionally, dream reporting can be considered as fulfilling the dual-process phenomenon described by Phelan: the reporting of the dream functions as 'telling' and that 'telling' is a functional response to the dream experience or reading/hearing of the dream. Tellability, then, is an important quality of the dream experience and it is often the driving force behind dream recall, the writing of dream reports, and the conversational sharing of dream experiences.

Gerald Prince (2008:25), linguist and narrative theorist, adds that ‘context is inexhaustible and, however much a text contextualises what it represents, it never does so completely’. He states that ‘an object is a narrative if it is taken to be the logically consistent representation of at least two asynchronous events that do not presuppose or imply each other’ (19). He further elaborates that his definition of narrative relies on a narrative object being able to satisfy a number of conditions: ‘the presence (or absence) of events, their number, and their temporal, causal, or implicational links’ (21).

More recently, Herman has stated that:

[...] rather than focusing on general, abstract situations or trends, stories are accounts of what happened to particular people – and of what it was like for them to experience what happened – in particular circumstances and with specific consequences. Narrative, in other words, is a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change. (2009:2)

Following the thread of narrative as story, writer Ursula Le Guin gives the example of a very short story (Le Guin 1980:193). The story is a carving in runes and reads ‘Tolfink carved these runes in this stone’. Le Guin states that Tolfink was reliable as a narrator and that, at least, Tolfink bore witness to his own existence and through this act says that he is a human being unwilling to dissolve into his surroundings (1980:193). This concept of ‘bearing witness’ is like a plot-point; it infers a more detailed narrative. Considering that ‘narrative is always and forever full of gaps that we must fill’ (Abbott 2008:212), Tolfink’s story can also be considered as a narrative in itself. It also fulfils Herman’s definition of narrative as being focused on a personal account.

Both Herman and Le Guin give definitions and examples that are less traditional, less reliant on language structure, and specifically mention human experience as a basis for narrative. The idea that human experience is something that is shared and rarely isolated can be taken for granted. Even beyond sharing, an individual’s experiences are influenced by and influence others’ experiences, often surviving transmission either in part or in whole. In 1983 literary scholar and narrative theorist Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan wrote ‘*story* is that thing which survives paraphrase or translation’ (8). This marked a liminal phase in the study of narrative, after the study of narrative as text and before the greater expedition into the world of narrative as experience, where the notion of ‘story’ was bound to that which is identifiable and transferable from medium to medium.

Fludernik and ‘Natural’ Narratology

In a further development, Fludernik and Olson argue that narratology’s traditional reliance on language has created a prison-like stifling of the discipline (2011:22-23). They note that narrative theorist Ruth Page (2010) advocates a narratology which is not submissive to language. They envision that narratology will move from transgeneric and transmedial to include more transmodal forms of analysis and narrative theory (Fludernik and Olson 2011). Fludernik, in her book *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology*’ (1996), made a bold move in this direction. She focuses on experientiality, which she calls ‘a quasi-mimetic evocation of “real-life experience”’. Cognitive narratologist Marco Caracciolo (2014:31) expands on the concept of ‘experience’ by stating that it is ‘a field of embodied, practical, evaluative interactions and not simply a “thing” that can be referred to.’¹⁵ Fludernik proposes that while experientiality can be associated with preconceived character roles and functions, ‘it also correlates with the evocation of consciousness or with the representation of a speaker role. Experientiality, as everything else in narrative, reflects a cognitive schema of embodiedness that relates to human existence and human concerns’ (1996:12-13). It is worth noting at this point that Fludernik adds, ‘Naturally, my suggestions will fail to exhaust the subject. After all, this new paradigm is aptly entitled *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology*, leaving ample space for extension and improvement, or even falsification, by those responding to it’ [bold in original] (52). This statement allows us to further explore the concept, application, and implications of ‘natural’ narratology.

The difference between the natural narratology and previous theories of narrative, which also recognise human experience to be the foundation of any narrative, is the assertion that there **can** be narrative **without** plot but narrative cannot exist without a ‘human (anthropomorphic) experiencer of some sort at some narrative level’ [bold in original] (Fludernik 1996:13). Fludernik then clarifies that ‘natural’ refers specifically to

¹⁵ While Caracciolo has expanded on and adopted Fludernik’s concept of ‘experientiality’ in his analysis and discussion of narrative, he does not equate experientiality with narrativity. Rather, he incorporates it into a different multi-dimensional approach to narrative (32, footnote). The focus of Caracciolo’s work seems to be an attempt to take experiential narrative beyond mental cognition, or ‘below mental representations’, in order to reach a more ‘bodily’ understanding of narrative experience (2014:8&11). Fundamentally, Caracciolo is discussing an aspect of the continuity hypothesis when he points out that ‘cognition is embodied and situated – in other words, inseparable from the subject’s body and from the context in which it is situated’ (2014:19). This is a fascinating area of enquiry and it would be interesting to see Caracciolo’s framework applied to dream studies in the future. This thesis, however, while acknowledging that embodiment forms an element of cognitive continuity, is primarily concerned with the consciousness element of continuity and its ability to function divorced from other sensory input (as in the dream consciousness) in an attempt to discuss the continual gradient of consciousness as central to identity narrativisation. Therefore, Caracciolo’s work will not be discussed in this thesis.

‘spontaneous (re)production’ that is universal and transcultural (15). Her methodology focuses on the examples and lessons that can be garnered from the analysis of spontaneous conversational storytelling. This methodology, whether intentional or not, harks back to Henry James’ argument that:

All life therefore comes back to the question of our speech, the medium through which we communicate with each other, for all life comes back to the question of our relations with one another. (James 1905:10)

Fludernik (1996:15) also states, however, that ‘both oral and written forms of discourse are coequal, structurally determined symbolic media which operate within specific generic, cultural and contextual frames’. It is important to note that she makes no differentiation between fiction and non-fiction (16; 38-43). This refers back to Ricoeur’s idea of ‘reading’ as a ‘way of living’, or in other words, ‘experiencing’.

Towards a Natural Narratology moves the emphasis of narrativity on events and the action of telling to ‘grounding narrativity in the representation of experientiality’ (Fludernik 1996:20). ‘Both acting and telling are facets of a real-world model most forcefully present in natural narrative but nevertheless disposable on a theoretical level’ (1996:27):

Experiencing, just like telling, viewing or thinking, are holistic schemata known from real life and therefore can be used as building stones for the mimetic evocation of a fictional world. People experience the world as agents, tellers and auditors and also as observers, viewers and experiencers. (1996:28)

These various modes of experiencing include a sense of time, and especially a sense of being in time; however the temporal aspect of experience is overwhelmed by other more ‘dynamic’ factors (29). Temporality and specificity remain as important markers of narrativity: ‘temporality is a constitutive aspect of embodiment and evaluation, but it is secondary to the experience itself, which includes temporality as one of its parameters but – in my view – cannot be subsumed under the umbrella of temporality.’ (1996:322)

Fludernik expands on this by linking experience to consciousness of that experience including reflection as a cognitive process. She goes on to state that ‘narrative modes are therefore all “resolved” or mediated on the basis of cognitive categories which can be identified as categories of human consciousness’ (1996:50). In opposition to previous definitions of narrativity, which conclude that the concept is a function centred on semiotics, Fludernik argues that narrativity centres on ‘experientiality of an

anthropomorphic nature' (26). She also denies the necessity of a narrator or teller and likewise denies that the presence of a narrator implies the presence of narrative (26). While sequentiality and logical connectedness are not central in this new definition of narrative, they are still acknowledged as playing a role in most narrative texts (26). Finally, actants or characters are not defined by the role they play in a plot but rather acknowledged through their fictive existence; movement, speech, and thought are all implied by consciousness, perception, and emotionality (26).

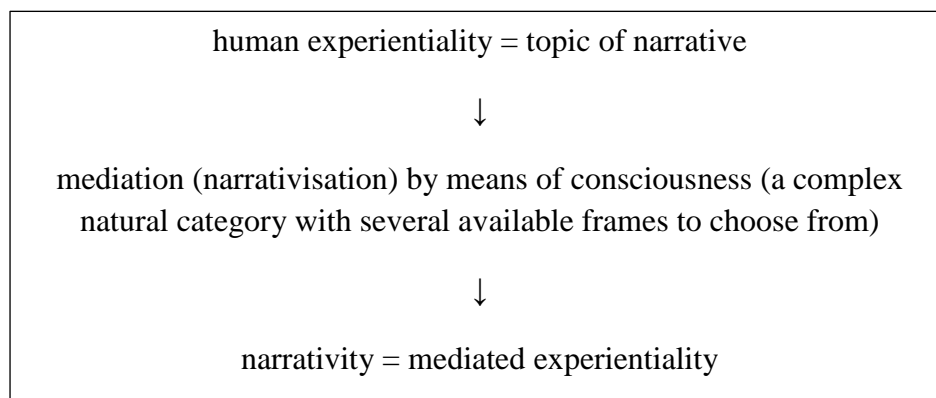


Diagram representing paradigm of 'natural' narratology (Fludernik 1996:50).

Ricoeur's 'system for reading life' is once again implied: Fludernik (1996:313) applies this concept to text based narratives, and thereby elaborates on this phenomenon, by stating that readers engage with text in terms of experientiality, and they align the text with their own 'experiential cognitive parameters'; hence, narrativisation. Fludernik (1996:327) constitutes narrativity in the reading process and places the onus of realising a narrative on the reader. She outlines four levels of natural narrative:

- 1- real life,
- 2- natural frames including ACTION, VIEWING, EXPERIENCING, TELLING, REFLECTING
- 3- concepts inferred from level three
- 4- the process of mediating the first three levels through consciousness;

hence narrativisation (372). She adds that consciousness is located on three levels, or in three realms: the fictional world (as a protagonist), in narration (as the narrator), and in the receiver (as the reader).

Cognitive Narratology

Parallel to the rise of *experientiality* has been the development of cognitive narratology. Herman (2009:140) defines cognitive narratology as ‘the mind-relevant aspects of storytelling practices’. He suggests that narrative is a tool of the human consciousness through which we experience events (145). Herman (2002:115) does not discuss ‘character’ as such, but rather he chooses to use the term ‘participant’. He argues that ‘storyworlds acquire part of their structure by way of analogous roles assigned to their participants’ (116). In the context of this thesis, ‘participant’ can be interpreted as meaning both person and character. More recently, Herman states that narrative is a unique mode of representation since it can capture the ‘what-it’s-like dimension of conscious awareness itself’ (2010:157). He goes on to endorse the study of ‘how specific modes and media of storytelling can be used to emulate the structure of conscious experience’ (157). One of the goals of this thesis, as mentioned in the introduction, is to explore the effectiveness of the dream poem in regards to capturing, emulating, and relaying the dream experience. To incorporate the words of Herman, it is an attempt to study how the specific mode of lyric poetry combined with prose can be used to emulate the structure of conscious experience across the spectrum or scale of consciousness. In this case the ‘participants’ of the narrative are the author, the dreamer, any other characters or persons that are present and/or interact within the dream experience, and the reader.

Ryan gives the following description of the relationship between stories, narratives and the functions of the mind:

Stories are mental constructs that we form as a response to certain texts, artworks, discourse acts and, more generally, as a response to life itself, and narratives are the semiotic realization of stories: their inscription as texts, images, and sounds. The most fundamental mental operations that we perform to extract a story out of a text are the same ones that we execute to interpret the behaviour of our fellow humans and to make decisions in our own lives. (2006:647)

Ryan (2010:476) identifies three areas of study within cognitive narratology: the minds of the characters, the mental activity of the reader, and narrative as a way of thinking. She explains that cognitive narratology can be problematic as a discipline since it is ‘a project uncomfortably sandwiched between the speculative and interpretive disciplines of the humanities and the experimental disciplines of the hard sciences’ (2010:474). Generally there has been an emphasis on borrowing and applying terminology and methodology

from the sciences in a top-down fashion, such as using MRIs to scan and interpret reader response to various texts (2010:475). However, Ryan explains that in the end she advocates an approach of ‘trusting the ability of our own minds to figure out how the mind creates, decodes and uses stories.’ (2010:489).

Ultimately, the process of creating and decoding stories is a process of reading, interpreting, and meaning making. It is the process that our minds are engaged in both on a micro level and on a macro level, in relation to moments and in relation to large blocks of timing, experience/s. It is this process that is central to a discussion of narrative in the context of self and identity, and which is elaborated on in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Narrative and Dreams

I tried to clutch at my companions, but already we were all crushed, buried, drowned, swept away by that pitch-black, icy, thundering wave! Darkness ... darkness everlasting!

Scarcely breathing, I awoke.

March 1878 – Turgenev, ‘The End of the World: A Dream’

Literary scholars Guido Almansi and Claude Béguin suggest that the main difference between dreams and waking narrative is structural:

Let us suppose that the fragments of a dream were connected, not by a linear development or circular pattern, as usually happens with narrations in waking life, but in a kind of Moebius ring (what Lacan calls a *huit intérieur*, an internal eight, though in a different context); or perhaps in a spiral progress from one point to the next. [...] the Moebius ring or the spiral progression could explain the distorting effect we perceive in many dream situations, which could be due to the continuous curving of the narration in a dream. Once awake the dreamer, penetrated by the memory of his dream experience, does not possess a corresponding unfolding model in his mind. If he tries to reconstruct his dream afterwards, he must ‘translate’ it, changing the Moebius ring into a circle, the spiral movement into a linear one. (1987:7)

Lyric poetry has the ability to communicate in spirals, which from a certain vantage point appears as layers of circles. However, it is most common to relate and record dreams in waking life as narratives. Spearing (1999:2), in a discussion of Sartre’s writings on the link between experience and recounting that experience, adds that his ‘impression is that dreaming too, however fleeting and strange, has some qualities of an experience told along with those of an experience lived’. This would place dreams in the category of narrative based solely on their ‘tellability’.

Kilroe (2000) asserts that a dream report constitutes a narrative. The content and experience of dreams, however, seem to be problematic where narrative theory is involved. Dreams tend to be fragmented, vague and usually involve only one event/action/episode, and even when they seem to be more detailed they seldom have a clear beginning or end. Kilroe argues that dreams can only be analysed in the form of a dream report and that in this form they fit into Todorov's definition of narrative as a 'shift from one equilibrium to another' (2000:129). Following this assertion, Jenkins argue that in a dream, and specifically in a nightmare, the new equilibrium is never realised (Jenkins, 2012). Clinical psychologist David Jenkins (2012) identifies this issue, as well as that of fragmentation, and the lack of beginning-middle-end as central to the debate surrounding the relevance of narrative to dreams. Psychiatrist and dream researcher Ernest Hartmann (1970:267) describes nightmares as 'horses of at least two very different colours: a heavy, shapeless black beast crushing the sleeper's chest as he awakens in terror, and a more ordinary reddish mare galloping off with the sleeper on a frightening and yet familiar journey'. He explains that the first usually occurs early in a sleep cycle, as the sleeper transitions from slow wave sleep, and the second usually happens later in the cycle during a REM stage. Jenkins also makes the point that a series of dreams, or even an individual dream, can often seem story-like. 'For instance, a dream in which a young woman has to work while her sisters go to a dance could be seen as a part of a Cinderella plot; in another dream she might find herself married to a prince or a movie star' (Jenkins 2012:114).

Kilroe concludes, 'the dream text is made up of strands of disparate thoughts weaving their way through our mind as we sleep' (2000:135). This thesis additionally argues that there is narrative inherent in the movement and flow of the dream 'strands', much like in the lines of a poem. Finally, Kilroe asserts that dream texts range in their degree of narrativity (135) and that dreams are in fact basic and unrefined stories that display a shift from one equilibrium to another (136). It is also possible that the realisation of the new equilibrium happens in the waking life that follows the dream, either mentally in a frame of thought or actually through the dreamer's actions. Hunt (1991) supports this position: 'It is the way we handle dreams when we wake up that in a now quite interesting way might be taken as *finishing* the dream' (239).

Hunt (1991) also points out Ricoeur's theory on narrative endings. Ricoeur (1984) discusses the idea of a conclusion as opposed to an ending:

To say that we are oriented in a certain direction is to recognise a teleological function in the “conclusion” [...] we need to add that a narrative “conclusion” is not something that can be deduced or predicted. [...] Rather than being predictable, a narrative’s conclusion has to be *acceptable*. Looking back from the conclusion toward the intermediary episodes, we must be able to say that this end demanded those events and that chain of actions. (Ricoeur 1984:150)

The key in the above passage is the assertion that, regardless of the ending, the events and actions must link in a continuous flow. At this point it is important to refer back to Domhoff’s statement that dream content ‘is generally continuous with waking conceptions’ (2001:14). It can be suggested therefore that our self-narrative, or ‘identity’ story, is incomplete without our sleeping/dreaming experiences. This possibility is readdressed and explored further, in relation to philosophies of the self and identity theory, in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Clinical psychologists Roger Knudson and Samuel Minier (1999) discuss the case of a woman who is still influenced by a dream she had at the age of seven. They entitled the dream ‘The Bodiless Head’, and concluded that while there was a specific life experience that led to the dream occurring when it did, the significance of the dream lies in the central ‘image’ of the dream that continues to resonate and serves ‘as a source of or framework for perception’ (1999:242).

Up until this point I have, a number of times, referred to a view of the dream as text, and I would like to briefly address an alternative view explored and reiterated by Knudson and Minier in the aforementioned paper. They refer to Hunt as the instigator of this alternative view. In his 1989 paper, Hunt discusses the multiplicity of symbols and references that occur in any one dream and draws a parallel with poetry, drama, and visual arts:

As Hunt says, here meaning resides directly in the experiencing of the formal properties of the expressive medium itself – its felt qualities and rhythms, its texture and flow. He adds, importantly, that such meaning resists any full or complete narrative formulation. (Knudson & Minier 1999:243)

First of all, multiplicity of meaning itself is not contradictory with text (for example, see McNamara (2010) who discusses the multi-dimensionality of text). Just as with an image, text also offers layers of meaning influenced by pre-knowledge, context, etc. Secondly, one of the examples of expressive medium given, poetry, is traditionally represented as text. Furthermore, as has been pointed out, and will be further discussed later, experiences

centred on rhythm, texture and flow, while resistant to certain definitions of narrative, are capable of fitting into an *experiential* narrative.

According to Knudson and Minier (1999:243), Hunt's main arguments are that dream images are not 'verbally mediated' but rather they are symbols arising from multi-modal sensory combinations, and that 'neither language nor image may be reduced to the other', which suggests:

That at least for some dreams "text" may be a misleading metaphor. Some big dreams, we could say, could better be approached not linguistically but imagistically, not as (or not only as) "texts" but as "paintings". (Knudson & Minier 1999:243)

Another comparison that might be useful here is the analogy of a dream as theatre. Writer and politician Joseph Addison (1891 [1712]), points out that when a body is asleep: 'She converses with numberless Beings of her own Creation, and is transported into ten thousand Scenes of her own raising. She is herself the Theatre, the Actors, and the Beholder' (Addison 1891:487). This statement brings together many threads of thought. A theatre is a space that can be entered and exited, and it often implies expectations of narrative. It is also predicated on a text, the written play. Therefore both the 'actor' and the 'beholder' of the theatre is experiencing on one level image and on another level text. Emotions are also an important aspect of a theatrical experience; acting is a very physical, whole body experience, and the best acting is emotionally involved, and watching theatre involves being present and emotionally affected.

It has been mentioned previously that various studies have found dreams to be driven by emotional thoughts and images (see Maggiolini et al.). As demonstrated by the analogy of dream as theatre, it is not contradictory to think of dreams as both image and text. Knudson and Minier follow a line of argument set out by Hillman (1978) and Hunt (1995) in asserting that the dream should be viewed as image (or painting), as opposed to text. They emphasise that:

Hillman's understanding of dream, running throughout his discussion of image (e.g. Hillman 1977, 1978, 1979a), as scene, as context, as mood – something which in the experience of dreaming we enter and in turn are embraced, gripped by. (Knudson & Minier 1999:243)

Image and text are not necessarily opposites; viewing a dream as image does not retract from other approaches. The viewer, or dreamer, is pulled into various depths of imagery.

This implies a ‘reading’ of layers. At the very least it implies an experience of many cognitive modes which can be felt as an *experiential* narrative.

Referring back to the image of ‘the bodiless head’, Knudson and Minier (1999:244) conclude that ‘this image, its life never pinned down, never literalised into a fixed concept or “meaning” (Hillman & McLean 1997), remains an animating, enlivening presence in the psychic life of the dreamer’. If reformulated around the idea of ‘image as text’, this could be restated to say that the dream is a living text that is constantly re-read, re-interpreted, and re-applied to new times, situations, and contexts;

The more deeply she pursued the image, the more she began to discover its connections, its parallels, its multiple faces in media depictions of the female body, in scholarly accounts of eating disorders, and in the painful struggles of individual women in this culture to live comfortably in their own bodies. (Knudson & Minier 1999:244)

Philosopher Jeremy Barris (2010:1) argues that the contradictions and seemingly illogical occurrences in dreams are in fact valid and logical in respect to the issues that dreams are exploring and/or expressing. He explains that these issues are related to the dimensions in which we deal, not with aspects of self, life or world, but with the *whole* (3). Barris goes on to cite a number of theorists who propound the need to view the world or life as a *whole*. He later states that his purpose is to propose a possible way of ‘making sense of dreams and a possible role they play in our lives’ (2010:5). Barris’ suggested view brings to mind two possibilities. The first is that by viewing human existence and life experience as a single whole you are able to blur the lines between waking and sleeping. Secondly, if we replace the words existence and life with ‘narrative’, we create the premise for experiences, whether waking or dreaming, to stand for ‘narrative moments’.

In this vein Knudson et al. (2006) conducted a case study exploring how a significant dream might act as a catalyst for redefining the self-narrative of the dreamer. They discuss identity as a narrative and a central feature of this self-narrative as being the ‘self-defining memory’ (2006:216). It is these memories that are thought to be the driving force behind some dreams. They found that some dreams are manifestations of ‘telling’ narratives where, in reaction to a certain self-defining memory/memories, we tell/show ourselves an alternative and thereby act in waking life in order to reposition ourselves, vis-à-vis our previous selves (217)¹⁶. This position is usually in reference to one or more cultural

¹⁶ Psychologist Michael Bamberg (2013), discusses Alexandra Georgakopoulou’s and Bamberg’s approaches to narrative research, which focuses on ‘narratives-in-interaction’ or ‘small stories’. Just as a single dream experience like the one

‘master narratives’. There were many examples given but the most striking was that of a middle-aged woman who had lived in what she felt to be a very suffocating marriage for over thirty years. She dreamt one night that she was confronted by a larger, more powerful version of herself. Before that night she had always had dreams where she was a victim but from then on she had dreams where she was strong and would rescue people. Shortly afterwards she became independent and returned to university which she had left as an eighteen-year-old (219-220).

Narrative and Life

The past fifty years has seen a move away from structural narratology to a consideration of many narrative theories. Ricoeur’s world of the text and world of the reader broadly reflect the experience of the imagination and the experience of ‘real’ or ‘waking’ action. A dream can be viewed as belonging to both worlds. This labelling effectively forms another cycle which mirrors the cyclical nature of the continuity hypothesis. The power of projecting or evoking storyworlds is considered crucial to the ‘semantics of life’, or reading life, or the narrativisation of life. According to Fludernik this narrativisation of an anthropomorphic experience is moderated by a natural and spontaneous ‘tellability’. Central to this process is the existence and functioning of consciousness, perception, and emotionality, which are also central to a further understanding of the continuity hypothesis, and qualify a memory or dream as meaningful.

At times a meaningful experience will qualify as a narrative moment which fits into a larger narrative structure and is in itself tellable. Dreams are tellable within their own spiral structure. At the same time narrative is inherent in the movement and flow of the dream strands. The resolution of or shift in equilibrium in waking life adds to the ability to narrativise the dream experience and reinforces the continuity hypothesis. It can be inferred that the actions of waking life which follow a dream experience are part of the cognitive processes that resolve that experience into narrative, linking these actions, such as reporting a dream, to tellability and feeding back into the continuous cycle of life.

mentioned above, can be related in a short story-telling situation, these ‘small stories’ allow us to place an emphasis on the actor/s, what is represented, and what is reflected upon. ‘The aim is to analyse how people use small stories in their interactive engagements to *construct* a sense of who they are’ (Bamberg 2013) as opposed to the emphasis of big story research, which focuses on the story as representation.

Chapter Three – The Self, Character, and Narrative

Investigation into the concepts self and identity is directly relevant to dreams in two ways. Firstly, both dreams and identity narratives are products and constructions of the mind, or consciousness. Second, they are relevant in regards to the ever-present question surrounding the ‘continuity hypothesis’, or the place of dream experiences in the self-narrative or identity narrative of a person and/or character. This chapter features a discussion of identity, beginning with an exploration of the concept of self as it pertains to individual persons. This discussion highlights the theories of Ricoeur, Polkinghorne, and Löschnigg. It is useful to note that Ricoeur considered the identity of a person’s self practically interchangeable with the identity of an author’s invented character (Ricoeur 1991b), which is arguably a manifestation of an aspect of the author. Fludernik suggests that:

All narrative (even on its minimal level of sequential report) is a fictive construct, a representation, and cannot reproduce ‘reality’ in any mimetic fashion. Stories, lives, the products of conversation are all concepts of the human mind, the result of cognitive parameters which we bring to bear upon the flux of unknowable and indivisible being, upon our exposure to the world. (1996:40-41)

However, Fludernik differentiates between fictive elements and fictionality, which she defines as ‘the subjective experience of imaginary human beings in an imaginary human space’ (1996:39). There are varying views on this issue, which are addressed later in this thesis. The topic of ‘person’ versus ‘character’, however, is particularly relevant since the novella that makes up Part Two of this thesis consists of interplay between personal dreams and dreamwork and invented characters. Therefore the topics of autobiography and ‘fiction’ versus ‘narrative’ are also addressed. Finally, this chapter considers the possibilities inherent in combining what is known of dreams and dreaming with perceptions of self and narrative identity.

The Self and Character

The twentieth century witnessed a preoccupation with questions of the mind, self, and identity. While Freud’s experimental psychology and Jung’s analytical psychology were attempts at making scientific inroads to addressing these questions, and while the latter half of the century saw the rise of narratology and a return to philosophical undertakings in this area with the addition of incorporating the results of scientific inquiry, ‘philosophers

seem to have largely forgotten dreams as conscious mental phenomena' (Revonsuo 1995:36). However, the discussion surrounding the phenomena of the 'self' and consciousness continues in many spheres of enquiry and it is through this discussion that it is possible to find a path back to the realm of dreams.

In *Oneself as Another* (1992) Ricoeur begins by discussing the history of philosophical debate surrounding the concept of the cogito and 'I'. This leads into a discussion of the identification of the individual in terms of linguistics and semantics. He then follows with a semantic and ontological study of actions versus events. Simultaneously, Ricoeur takes the reader on a journey through a history of relevant writings on the topic of self, memory, and identity. When Locke wrote *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1690, he inadvertently established a hierarchy of identities which placed 'mental' identity, as opposed to corporeal identity, on top (Ricoeur 1992:126). Locke wrote:

Nothing but consciousness can unite remote existences into the same person: the identity of substance will not do it; for whatever substance there is, however framed, without consciousness there is no person: and a carcass may be a person, as well as any sort of substance be so, without consciousness. (Locke 2014 [1690]:325)

Following Locke, potential problems were proposed surrounding the idea of identity as separated into two parts – mental and corporeal (126-127 footnotes). Not long afterwards philosopher and theologian Joseph Butler (1736)¹⁷ addressed the question of the continuity of an individual's consciousness. Ricoeur encapsulates Butler's argument with the question, 'rather than saying that a person exists inasmuch as that person remembers, is it not plausible [...] to assign the continuity of memory to the continuous existence of a soul-substance?' (Ricoeur 1992:126). As a result of these ongoing debates two theories of identity arose: the first could be considered reductionist in nature and is restricted to the dimensions of body and mind working together; the second could be considered as non-reductionist in nature and finds its zenith in Parfit's essay, who incorporates the notion of spiritual substance in addition to the physical and/or mental existence, and calls it 'the *Further Fact View*' (Ricoeur 1992:131).

The first issue arises with the separation of mental and corporeal. Since we exist both in our minds and bodies and experience both at once, it is difficult to separate the two in

¹⁷ Joseph Butler published his major work *The Analogy of Religion* in London, 1736, to which he added, as an appendix, an essay entitled *Of Personal Identity*. This essay, to an extent built on the work of Locke. It was also written in response to theories that propounded the transience of personality.

terms of identity¹⁸. Even in dreams, as it has been mentioned in Chapter Two of this thesis, mental experiences have a direct impact on the physical body, sometimes so far as to override the paralysis that comes into effect during REM sleep. The second issue arises with the introduction of a third, and unknowable, aspect: soul-substance. That this substance, assuming it exists, must be intrinsically linked to ‘mind’, and providing that ‘mind’ is intrinsically linked to ‘body’ or physical aspect, the dividing of the concept of identity into three aspects becomes redundant.

Ricoeur (1992) takes the discussion of identity from the concern with aspects to a concern with relationships. He identifies two manifestations of identity: *idem* which is constant, unchanging, and permanent in time, and *ipse* which is a sense of the ‘self’ in relation to the ‘other’, characterised by relativity and context. He states that ‘personal identity [...] can be articulated only in the temporal dimension of human existence’ (1992:114). Ricoeur argues that humans constantly change and grow, and that therefore it is impossible to indicate a human identity without acknowledging this aspect of human existence, which can only be done through narrative. Narrative facilitates the ‘*uninterrupted continuity* between the first and the last stage in the development of what we consider to be the same individual’ (117).

Ricoeur also explains his understanding of the term ‘character’ in reference to individuals. He says that character ‘designates the set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognised’ (1992:121), and that ‘habits’, those being formed and those already acquired, are aspects of character that have temporal significance. Habits provide a history of character and thereby brings us back to the narrativisation of identity (121).

Understood in narrative terms, identity can be called, by linguistic convention, the identity of the *character*. This identity will later be placed back into the sphere of the dialectic of the same and the self. (Ricoeur 1992:141)

In other words, Ricoeur treats the identity of the ‘self’ and the identity of a ‘character’ as the same thing, allowing us to analyse and comment on them interchangeably. There have been efforts to reduce fictional characters to words, however the arguments have not been convincing (Jannidis 2012). Literary scholar John Frow (2014:vii) takes a different approach, by reversing the viewpoint, and advocates viewing persons ‘not as ontological

¹⁸ The mind/body debate can be traced back to Plato, who advocated a dualist approach, and Aristotle, who was a monist: in Plato’s terms the body and the soul, synonymous with mind in some ancient philosophies, are separate, and therefore they manifest themselves separately from each other (Jowett 1871). According to Aristotle all aspects of a substance, or individual, belong to the *whole* of that substance and so the substance is *one* (Aristotle *Metaphysics*: Bk. X).

givens but as constructs' since they are 'in part made out of the same material as fictional characters'.

Ricoeur considers 'events' as central to the study of the constructed self (Ricoeur 1992:142). He argues that the narrative event, which takes place within a plot, is a source of 'discordance' since it occurs as something different within the continuous norm. At the same time it is a source of 'concordance' since it provides impetus for the story to move forward. Based on the earlier chapter of this thesis exploring dreams and dreaming, the above can be restated as follows: the dream as event, which takes place within a life-story, is considered a source of 'discordance' since it occurs as something different within the continuous norm. At the same time it is seen as a source of 'concordance' since it provides impetus for the story to move forward.

The process of emplotment incorporates events into a story in such a way that the events are seen as necessary and/or probable occurrences with no room for contingency (Ricoeur 1992:142). This is similar to the way that dreams are incorporated into waking life:

[...] as a mere occurrence, the latter [event] is confined to thwarting the expectations created by the prior course of events; it is quite simply the unexpected, the surprising. It only becomes an integral part of the story when understood after the fact, once it is transfigured by the so-to-speak retrograde necessity which proceeds from the temporal totality carried to its term. (Ricoeur 1992:142)

Ricoeur proposes that the identity of a character can be understood through the process of emplotment: through the transfer of action, or event, to character (1992:143). The story and the character develop simultaneously and reciprocally. Even so, Ricoeur adopts Frank Kermode's proposition that character development requires another level of explication, that 'developing a character is recounting more' (144).

If action (and reaction) are correlated with character, in that the emplotment of those actions drive narrative and thereby narrative identity (Ricoeur 1992:147), then it is possible that dreams are reflections and discussions on those actions and therefore provide an expansion on the identity of the character. Fine and Leighton further develop this line of thought by pointing out that:

not only does the content of dreams include interaction, but dreams draw on previously experienced interaction and are often presented in social situations [...] Humans bring cognition, affect, and even dreams, to the forefront of action. Dreams are performed for

others in the flow of interaction. Action is ultimately grounded in self, just as self is grounded in action. (Fine & Leighton 1993:96)

In other words, ‘it is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character’ (Ricoeur 1992:148).

Polkinghorne (1991:140) defines an ‘action’ as unfolding in time, and as part of a whole phase made up of interdependent movements. He suggests that ‘actions’ are also a branch of ‘perceptual experiences’. This term connotes a large umbrella covering many experiences, perhaps even dreams. These definitions of ‘event’ and ‘action’ could be synonymous with Ricoeur’s terminology. Polkinghorne goes on to say ‘our conscious life consists of temporally configured episodes or lived experiences’ (1991:141), and that ‘it is only by use of narrative conceptualization that we can produce out of our separate life events the meaningful whole that we are’ (137).

Sociologist Douglas Ezzy (1998) provides a useful analysis and comparison of philosopher George Herbert Mead’s theories of self¹⁹ and Ricoeur’s conceptions of events and identity.

Ezzy suggests that:

Mead’s (1934) analysis of taking the role of the other can be seen as exploring the internalisation of the intersubjective process of the creation of self-narratives. The internalised soliloquy (Athens 1994) anticipates and reinterprets through narrative. The self dialogues with phantom imagined others who inhabit our thoughts and whose perspective we use as we narrate our past, present, and anticipated experiences. It is common to develop new self-understandings as issues are “thought through.” Although nobody else may be physically present, new episodes in our life narrative are recast in the presence of imagined others. (Ezzy 1998:246)

He goes on to say that:

Temporality is integral to Mead’s theory of the self, consciousness, and role taking. The past and future are continually reconstituted, according to Mead, in the light of the “emergent” in the present. This reconstitutive process involves an interweaving of the objective events of the past, the past’s effects on the present, and the symbolic reconstruction of the past in the present. (1998:250)

In terms of the above, it is possible to identify some dreams as an aspect, or manifestation, of the internalised soliloquy insofar as dreams often reflect mental struggles, fears, and desires, often contain memories of past events, and can provide an impetus for specific actions and/or new directions in the following wakefulness (see Chapter One of this

¹⁹ In the late nineteenth century Mead developed theories that tied the self to language and social interaction (Aboulafia 2012). A great quantity of his lecture notes and papers were published posthumously in four volumes, one of them entitled *Mind, Self, and Society*, edited by Charles W. Morris.

thesis). In terms of the dream poem, the ‘I’ of the dreamer poet is a key indication that dreamer, poet, and reader are entering that internalised soliloquy that takes place in and from consciousness.

Fludernik (1996:50) suggests that there are three forms of consciousness, or selves, in relation to a narrative:

a	protagonist’s consciousness	EXPERIENCING	reflector-mode narrative
b	teller’s consciousness	TELLING	teller-mode narrative
		REFLECTING	much experimental self-reflective fiction
c	viewer’s consciousness	VIEWING	neutral narrative; Banfield’s empty centre; reflectorisation

Table 2: Forms of consciousness and modes of narrative (Fludernik 1996:50).

As an example of how these levels of consciousness can merge, Fludernik creates the term *figuralisation*. This term describes a ‘reflector-mode narrative that has no ruling figural consciousness attached to it’ (Fludernik 1996:197). Often indicated in text by the use of the pronoun ‘you’, figuralisation ‘evokes a perceiving consciousness, whether of a mere observer or of a complete “voice” on the story level’ (1996:217). There is also a notable absence of a narrator persona (217). This merging of modes can be applied to the dream experience as text. If we are creating a dream and experiencing it at the same time then we are simultaneously REFLECTING and VIEWING. Fludernik adds that ‘texts such as these cohere on the basis of a blank which is filled in by the reader in the process of interpretation’ (374). This serves as an accurate description for the process of reading, and interpreting, dreams.

Ezzy comments that, in regards to interpretation, ‘Ricoeur’s hermeneutics emphasises the reality of lived experience, of acting in the world, as foundational to any attempt to understand the interpretive process’ (Ezzy 1998:244). Ezzy concludes that according to Ricoeur, ‘narrative identity is coherent but fluid and changeable, historically grounded but “fictively” reinterpreted by an individual but constructed in interaction and dialogue with other people’ (1998:246). In other words, engaging with the semantics of life involves both an independent self who is capable of projecting storyworlds and narrativising her experiences, as well as interacting with other individuals and/or the environment in order to share those experiences. In regards to the dream experience, the interpretative process, or engagement with the semantics of life, can take the form of dream reporting or dream art. Beyond the products of waking life, this engagement can also be manifested within the dream experience itself where the dreamer projects, observes, and interacts with characters or persons other than herself.

In 2006 the American Psychological Association published a volume of papers entitled *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative*. The introduction begins:

We are all storytellers, and we are the stories we tell. Had William James (1892/1963) been a narrative psychologist when he wrote his much-quoted chapter on the self more than 100 years ago, he might have conceptualised his famous distinction between the “I” and the “me” as that between the self-as-teller and the self-as-the-tale told. James imagined the I as a stream of consciousness, but what is consciousness if not an inner narration of experience? (McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich 2006:3)

If consciousness is an inner narration, and dreams are a product of a fully active and conscious mind, then it can be argued that dreams are the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, even when more than one character or person is a participant within the experience. The dream experience is, therefore, a crucial part of any constructed identity.

Autobiography, Memory, and Fictionality

I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. – Oscar Wilde²⁰

There are two acknowledged functions of autobiographical memory: the personal function, which involves reflecting on the past in order to better understand the self, and the social function, which serves to develop relationships through sharing the past (McLean

²⁰ in Faraday 1974:37

2005:684). Psychologist Kate C. McLean conducted a study where she adopted the view that, in regards to ‘the social telling of personal self-defining memories’, the two functions of autobiographical memory are inseparable. She argues that the process of storing and communicating memories is a social occurrence. McLean suggests that this ‘social process of memory telling’ is at ‘the centre of narrative identity development’ (2005:684). Dreams, in that they often contain content related to waking life memories (Van de Castle 1994:270-271), can be seen as a personal function of autobiographical memory. I suggest that it is in the development and sharing of the dream report, either verbally or in writing, that the social function is achieved.

Since the creative outcome of this thesis is a novella presenting autobiographical accounts of three fictional characters, it is worth looking at this branch of narrative theory separately. Autobiography is generally acknowledged as a ‘narrative’ genre (Löschnigg 2010:260). Literary scholar Martin Löschnigg (2010:262), referring to a number of narrative theorists, asserts that the organisation of an individual’s personal experiences and memories in the form of narrative leads to the creation of an identity. Professor of comparative literature Peter Brooks (1984:33) calls the ‘effort to tell a whole life’ a ‘powerful narrative machine’. He draws attention to the constant reorganising and reproducing, the constant morphing of identity that occurs based on the passage of time. He argues that ‘any time one goes over a moment of the past the machine can be relied on to produce more narrative – not only differing stories of the past, but future scenarios and narratives of writing itself’ (1984:33). Fludernik (1996:29) suggests that human experience can be broken down into a three part schema of ‘situation-event or incidence-reaction to event’:

In narrating such experience, however, after-the-fact evaluations become important as a means of making narrative experience relevant to oneself and to others. All experience is therefore stored as emotionally charged remembrance, and it is reproduced in narrative form because it was memorable, funny, scary, or exciting. (29)

Polkinghorne states that ‘we achieve our personal identities and self-concept through the use of the narrative configuration, and make our existence into a whole by understanding it as an expression of a single unfolding and developing story’ (1988:150). He is asking us to see life as a *whole*, to regard events, experiences, and memories, not in isolation but as building blocks of a greater narrative.

At this point it might be useful to address the issue of fictionality in regards to autobiography. Löschnigg (2010) provides a discussion of the topic where he acknowledges that there is an ongoing controversy around whether any autobiography can be considered non-fiction. He refers to literary theorist James Olney (1972) as employing the term ‘metaphor’ to describe any and every world view that humans use to give structure to the reality of their existence (Löschnigg 2012:269)²¹. These metaphors usually come in the form of narratives. Löschnigg also refers to Fludernik’s experientially-based model of narratology, in which she plays down any distinction between fictionality and narrativity (2010:269; Fludernik 1996:28). Löschnigg concludes by proposing that memory-based narratives are created from two processes: the first is a process of segmentation through which various events, encounters, emotions, etc. are identified and reflected upon; the second is a process of creating coherence (2010:270-271). Likewise, Tulving (1985:1) states that ‘to remember an event means to be consciously aware now of something that happened on an earlier occasion’. The emphasis here has to be on the concept of *awareness*, since awareness can come about in a variety of occurrences, influences, and encounters (Foulkes 1990:46). *Awareness* might be the direct link between identity narrative, autobiography, and consciousness.

Narrative Identity and Continuity

We use the term *narrative identity* to refer to the stories people construct and tell about themselves to define who they are for themselves and for others (McAdams et al 2006:4).

The concept of ‘constructing’ the story, or narrativising, is the key to narrative identity. Personality psychologist Gary S Gregg (1998:146) concludes that individuals embrace multiple discourses in the process of narrativising their identity, and that these discourses, and the resulting possible identities, are often contradictory to each other. Others uphold that ‘a certain kind of unity of selfhood can still be discerned’, or read, and that ‘narrative identity can sometimes be seen as expressing multiplicity in unity, and unity in multiplicity’ (McAdams et al. 2006:6). In other words, people strive to interpret a common thread that links their meaningful experiences.

²¹ Olney (1972), in *Metaphors of Self: the meaning of autobiography*, states that ‘metaphor is essentially a way of knowing’ (1972:31). While his discussion of metaphor and autobiography alludes to narrativisation, it is more concerned with symbolism and the symbolic as opposed to experience.

By considering *Life In Quest of Narrative* (1991b) we return to Ricoeur's thoughts on the readability of experience. The previous chapter of this thesis reflected on his example of how experience can be read. He continues by stating that 'symbolism gives an initial *readability* to action. It makes action a quasi-text for which symbols provide the rules of signification in terms of which a given conduct can be interpreted' (1991b:29). Since actions and experience are on-going throughout a life, he identifies 'life' as 'a story in its nascent state' and as an 'activity and a passion in search of a narrative' (29). Ricoeur reminds us of the ever-present need to construct and interpret, to experience and to read, which is possibly the intrinsic function of consciousness: 'it is not by chance or by mistake that we commonly speak of stories that happen to us or of stories in which we are caught up, or simply of the story of a life' (1991b:29). He (1991b:30) considers the general fragments of lived experience as the potential building blocks of one's identity narrative. There is a pre-history of a story told, and that pre-history is made up of a greater whole and consists of the background. The background is made up of all lived stories. 'The stories that are told must then be made to emerge out of this background. And as they emerge, the implied subject also emerges' (Ricoeur 1991b:30). From this reasoning, we can assume that any aspect of life is a potential point in a life story, including one or more dreams. Ricoeur suggests that:

[...] it follows that fiction, in particular narrative fiction, is an irreducible dimension of *self-understanding*. If it is true that fiction is only completed in life and that life can be understood only through the stories that we tell about it, then an *examined* life [...] is a life *recounted*. (1991b:30-31)

This statement nicely echoes that of Kilroe in the previous chapter of this thesis where she is cited as concluding that dreams are only resolved through life. We can likewise mirror the above statement by saying that a dream *examined* is a dream *recounted*. Recounting a dream, therefore, may be considered as part of the process of examining a life.

Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1963:412) concluded that the gradual process of acquiring a 'self-identity' is a way of providing unity and purpose to people's lives. McAdams et al. (2006) summarise his argument and go on to give an example of the opposing view of 'narrative identity'. They point out psychologist Hubert Hermans' (1996:33) suggestion that 'narrative identity itself is akin to a polyphonic, multivoiced novel [...] To the extent there is integration, it lies in the shifting and dynamic dialogue among the voices, an ongoing conversation among autonomous selves' (McAdams et al. 2006:5). They present Peter Raggatt as an example of a theorist taking a more postmodern view. Raggatt claims

that ‘contemporary social life is too complex and inconsistent’ to fit into a single identity consolidation: instead, people construct a number of narrative identities to fit various forms and scenarios (2006:5). Modern narratives are more closely reflecting modern life in that instead of featuring a single protagonist they follow a ‘constellation of characters’, like the constellation of persons connected to each other in life (Tröhler 2007²² cited in Jannidis 2012). The idea of multiple conversations and multiple characters interacting to inform an identity is not unlike the variety of experiences that can happen across the spectrum of consciousness. Ultimately, regardless of whether narrative brings unity to a life, the process of story construction still seems to be the foundation for the identity of a ‘self’.

Polkinghorne concludes that ‘self’, or the construction of a ‘self’, is a temporal process as opposed to a thing: it is ‘becoming’ as opposed to ‘is’ (Polkinghorne 1991:144). This conclusion is similar to Tulving’s discussion of mental time travel where Tulving states that ‘the traveller in this case is what is referred to as ‘self’’ (Tulving 2002:2). At this point the discussion is not necessarily focused on a narrator but rather a ‘self’ experiencing narrative. In line with Ricoeur’s theory of ‘self and other’, Polkinghorne states that life stories, in order to avoid being narcissistic, need to expand to include others: ‘the place in which I stand at any moment is enlarged to embrace that in which my community stands’ (Polkinghorne 1991:147). The people closest to you often feature in your identity narrative and, it is noted in Chapter Two of this thesis, they often feature in your dreams.

Psychologists seem to regard identities as unfixed and fluid. McAdams et al. (2006:7) state that ‘identity is expected to change with age and with changing circumstances’. They further suggest that:

At the same time, if identity were to change from one moment to the next, if it were to show no stability whatsoever, then many psychologists would not find it to be a very useful concept. When it comes to narrative identity, furthermore, one would expect that some degree of stability would be found. A person’s life story or stories should show some stability from one day to the next, and (relatedly) those same stories should express some themes of stability and continuity in a given life. (McAdams et al. 2006:7-8)

²² The original reference has yet to be translated into English: Tröhler, Margrit (2007). *Offene Welten ohne Helden. Plurale Figurenkonstellationen im Film*. Marburg: Schüren.

Given that a person, or character, will change over time it can be assumed that their life stories would also change and develop with the passage of experiences, much like our projections of the past in general are open to review.

There is a literary awareness and tradition of stories and characters that are handed down through generations, which results in a prevalence of specific plots and narratives in society and culture. Ricoeur suggests that humans have the ‘power of applying to ourselves the plots that we have received from our culture and of trying on the different roles assumed by the favourite characters of the stories most dear to us’ (Ricoeur 1991b:33). This ensures that, whether we are striving to understand a written work or a lived experience, there is only one pool of influence. It is in this space that ‘character’ and ‘person’ can be considered interchangeable, and it is within this space that we can safely examine the use of a ‘person’s’ dream poem as a fictional narrative device.

The Dreamer, the Poet, and the Narrator

A person or character is identified by their existence as a whole, which includes both their mental and corporeal reality. The construction of this identity takes place through an interdependent cycle of social and environmental interaction and the internal generation of consciousness (see Llinas and Pare 1991; Chapter Two of this thesis). Further to this cycle, or continuity, is a process of bringing together perceived events and actions over time. The forms of self, or mind, that are involved in this process and the experience of these events are labelled by Fludernik as protagonist, teller, and viewer. In the context of this thesis these labels can be considered synonymous with the dreamer, the poet, and the narrator. Ultimately, the separate experiences, and views of those experiences, must be consolidated with a vision of a life as a whole. Dreams, and waking memories, play a vital role in the reading and narrativisation of these experiences. For example, dreams of memories (previous life experiences) reinforce identity narratives and character roles that are assumed within those narratives. And the act of reporting a dream further emphasises the process of identity narrativisation within the cycle. Similarly, the composition of a dream poem involves the same cognitive process that ‘resolves’ an experience into narrative, and therefore links reporting and composing back to the traditional function of a narrative, which is tellability.

Jung (1928) discusses the creative process of artists, particularly writers when he suggests that:

In this activity the poet is simply identical with the creative process, whether he has willingly surrendered himself as the head of the creative movement, or whether this has so entirely seized upon him as a tool or instrument that all consciousness of the fact has escaped him. He is the creative process itself, standing completely in it and undifferentiated from it with all his aims and all his powers. (Jung 1928:228)

He points out the ‘presence of certain threads, woven by the personal and intimate life of the poet – whether with or without conscious intention – into the fabric of his work’ (1928:228). It is possible to discern ‘the way in which the artistic creation is interwoven in the personal life of the artist, and also in a sense arises from it’ (229). An example of these persistent threads that weave their way throughout the spectrum of consciousness, and are incorporated into the narrativisation of the ‘self’, is the presence of alpha brain waves. Alpha waves flow in bursts during certain stages of sleep and also during waking creativity, while engaged in poetic composition, and during peak performance, while problem solving (LaBerge 1990:120). By this reasoning, and by incorporating the poet as the character of his or her poem, we can propose another ‘continuity hypothesis’, not in relation to dreaming and waking but in relation to creating and interacting.

Chapter Four – Poetry and Narrative

In *the Fantastic*, Todorov (1973 [1970]:60-62) briefly discusses the relationship between poetry and ‘the fantastic’ (which necessarily must be fiction), wherein he cites dreams from the text *Aurélia* (1999 [1855]) as examples of what is expected of fictional text versus poetic text. It is clear from the outset that he does not consider poetry as fiction since, it is implied, poems do not have the capacity to evoke a story-world. Todorov states that ‘the poetic image is a combination of words, not of things, and it is pointless, even harmful, to translate this combination into sensory terms’ (1973:60). In light of this reasoning, and by applying it to a reading, or processing, of dreams, then it can be argued: the dreamer automatically perceives that the dream, while containing elements of the fantastic, should be read as literal, and since it is reflective of the dreamer’s life and ongoing mental processes then it is not fiction but rather it is poetic. The idea that a dream is poetic in experience is not new. However, it is precisely because both are experiential, sensory, and capable of evoking story-worlds that a dream is poetic and poems are dream-like. States (2003:11) draws an apt parallel that captures the relationship of both poetry and dreaming to cognitive ability:

Just as poets are constantly displacing our accepted uses of the words in our vocabulary into new arrangements [...] so dreams are devoted – in fact, have no other choice in the matter – to pressing possibilities as far as they will go. (2003:11)

What is a Poem?

[...] art is a kind of cognitive “looking glass,” to invoke an old renaissance metaphor: it concentrates and enlarges our perceptual and response systems, creating an intensity of feeling and involvement that doesn’t normally occur in more distributed experience. (States 2003:5)

Since the vehicle of enquiry for this thesis is poetic composition, the following includes a presentation of some theories on poetry and what constitutes a lyric poem. Immanuel Kant stated that:

[Poetry] expands the mind by setting the imagination at liberty and by offering, within the limits of a given concept [...] that which unites the presentment of this concept with a wealth of thought to which no verbal expression is completely adequate, and so rising aesthetically to ideas. (1951 [1790]:171)

Kant's description of poetry, and poetry's capacity to express the inexpressible, speak to Almansi and Beguin's dilemma regarding the untranslatable dimension of dreams. It is possible that poetry, or the processes of poetic composition and reading, is the experience that can solve the dilemma and draw these points on the spectrum of consciousness closer together.

Ezra Pound, in *ABC of Reading* (1987 [1934]), outlines three elements that make up a poem: melopoeia (musical qualities), logopoeia (the combine effect of ideas, rhythm and syntax), and phanopoeia (imagistic qualities) (63). Pound describes phanopoeia as 'the throwing of an image on the mind's retina' (1987:52)²³. This description of poetry as possessing the ability to throw an image onto the mind's eye is reminiscent of Revonsuo's description of the mind as a self-generating virtual reality (VR) machine: poetry seems to be a facilitator of the mind's VR.

Literary theorist Derek Attridge (1995) defines poetry as a text that enacts 'an experience, a happening in time, that is physical and emotional and mental all at once' (1995:2). Poems are made up of 'the movement of meaningful sound through time' (10) and are distinguished by heightened rhythm and musicality. Rhythm is understood as 'a series of alternations of build-up and release, movement and counter-movement' which must be felt just as it is heard or seen (3-4). Attridge's emphasis on the experiential rhythm of poetry and his illustration of rhythm can also be explored in terms of segments and segmentation (see below).

Literary scholar Susan Friedman (1989:164), in a discussion of 'lyric' in Virginia Woolf's narratives, states that the lyric mode is disruptive to narrative order. She elaborates:

To highlight the contrast between them, lyric and narrative can be defined as opposing modes of discourse that are found in a variety of genres. Narrative is [...] a mode that foregrounds a *sequence* of events that move dynamically in space and time. Lyric is [...] a mode that foregrounds a *simultaneity*, a cluster of feelings or ideas that project a gestalt in stasis. Where narrative centres on *story*, lyric focuses on *state of mind*, although clearly each mode contains elements of the other. (Friedman 1989:164)

This notion of simultaneity combined with 'a gestalt in stasis' brings to mind the concept of the Moebius ring, the endless spiral circling in on itself. 'Feelings', or emotions, and

²³ The three elements of poetry described by Pound should not be interpreted as attributes that belong to, or are found, solely in poetry. It is, however, argued that these attributes are dominant in poetry as opposed to within any other form of literature.

‘state of mind’ allude to experience ruled by consciousness. Based on these arguments, it is possible to conclude that lyric, central to poetry, is the mode closest to human experience, to human identity, and ironically, to human narrative²⁴.

Segmentivity

Brian McHale, writing from the perspective of narrative theory, discusses and draws together two definitions of poetry. Although in his article he features DuPlessis’ approach first and follows with Shoptaw’s approach I will be looking first at Shoptaw’s definition in order to facilitate the discussion that follows. Poet and creative writing academic John Shoptaw defines the units that make up a poem as ‘its smallest unit of resistance to meaning’ (Shoptaw 1995:212). This is another way of locating the moments in a poem where meaning is interrupted, as it is with gaps and enjambment. These ‘units’ can also be seen as ‘segments’, or beats, which create a rhythm that infers a narrative.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis, poet and interdisciplinary scholar, in her article ‘Manifests’ (1996:36), defines poetry as a form of discourse that is dependent on segmentation or spacing in achieving meaning. She calls this dominant characteristic ‘segmentivity’. This definition can be applied to all modes of poetry including its oral manifestation. It also highlights the common thread that runs through poetry, music and, in a broader sense, narrative. To say that poetry is segmented might seem an obvious statement and in order to demonstrate this fact we need only to think of the physicality of poetry as shown through line breaks, stanza breaks, page space, recurrent patterns and oral pauses and breaks or silence. Similarly, segmentivity is a key aspect of music since music can be divided into individual notes, beats, bars, rests or silence, phrases and themes.

Le Guin, using J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* as an example, discusses the rhythmic structure of narrative:

The rhythmic structure of narrative is both journeylike and architectural. [...] the psychological and moral universe of *The Lord of the Rings*, is built up by repetition, semirepetition, suggestion, foreshadowing, recollection, echo, and reversal. Through it the story goes forward at its steady, human gait. (Le Guin 2004:106)

²⁴ While lyrical qualities are dominant within poetry it is important to note that they are also present in prose (see section below on ‘Natural’ Narrative and Poetry for a further discussion on ‘lyric’).

The elements she mentions can be viewed as the segments that are carefully arranged in order to construct Tolkien's narrative. The 'segmentivity' of prose narrative is not intensely concentrated as it is in poetry but it is definitely an attribute of prose narrative and narrative in general (McHale 2009:17). In other words, in prose the segments or units of meaning are larger and fewer in number and therefore there is less occasion to pause when reading.

McHale (2009) elaborates on the segmented nature of narrative. He discusses the various levels and scales of segmentivity in narrative such as sub-plots, episodes, shifting voices, time and space. DuPlessis (1996) identifies the interaction of narrative segments with the inherent segmentation of poetry and draws a parallel between poetry and music by describing this interaction as 'the intricate interplay among the "scales"' or 'chords' (DuPlessis 1996:51). McHale cites other scholars – Kinney, Levy and Hühn – who have previously noted and examined the counterpoint of narrative segments and poetic segmentation. None of these aforementioned scholars have committed to the idea that segmentivity and its interplay within poetry or poetic narrative is crucial to its structure. McHale does so with great effect.

In the article 'Narrativity and Segmentivity, or, Poetry in the Gutter' (2010) McHale draws a parallel between the segmentivity of poetry and the segments inherent in comics and graphic novels. He discusses Scott McCloud's illustration of comic panels (or frames) and the gutters in between them, particularly in reference to Rowson's comic *Waste Land*, which is based on T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. He concludes that, even though the comic narrativizes Eliot's poem it also opens new gaps. It is possible to draw a parallel between Eliot's poem and a dream experience, and Rowson's comic and a dream poem: both versions operate as hybrids of narrativity and segmentivity, they both consist of segments or frames of meaning, and they both 'elicit meaning in the place where meaning stalls out — in between, in the gutter' (McHale 2010:46).

Narrative and Poems

Literary theorist Heilna DuPlooy (2010:4) asks, if there is inherent narrative to be found in lyric poetry, where do we look for it? In its content? In the understanding/reconstruction of the poem? In its allusions or in the reader's mind? She refers to Dylan Thomas who said

that 'poetry is the rhythmic, inevitably narrative, movement from an overclothed blindness to a naked vision' (as cited in Sinclair, 1975:219). DuPlooy (2010:4) states that Thomas finds 'movement' in poetry attractive; that movement in poetry can come in the form of narrative; and that narrative can be seen as the opposite of stasis.

One of the 'aims and preliminary findings' of a project initiated by DuPlooy through North-West University (South Africa) titled 'Verse and narrative: narrative structures and techniques in lyric poetry' is:

to contribute to the debate about whether the more prominent use of narrative in contemporary poetry has anything to do with the need or the purpose to write more accessible poetry, poetry which is more humane and natural in opposition to modernist poetry which was esoteric and intellectual. (DuPlooy, 2010:7)

DuPlooy (2010:10) reiterates that an adaptation of a new theoretical approach is important where different modes of writing and different genres are amalgamated in poetry. This separation of modes, and the development of 'genres', is largely a phenomenon of the twentieth century.

There is a dynamic in poetry – a 'poetic tension' – which is the result of the interaction between narrative coherence and lyric/poetic tools such as metre and metaphor (DuPlooy, 2010:9). DuPlooy (2010:9) applies Barthes' 'theory of cardinal functions and indices'²⁵ to simplify the function of narrative traits as creating forward momentum in a poem, and the poetic elements as creating the aesthetics and functions of the text. The tension between narrative segments and poetic segmentivity is the conceptual extension of the physical tension between syntax and typography (DuPlooy, 2010:9). This tension can also be seen between the experience of a dream, as it happens, and the memory of that experience upon waking. Furthermore, it may also exist in the continuous oscillation between waking life experiences and sleeping life experiences: the segments of meaningful waking experience that are made manifest in our dreams, and the fragmentary residue of meaningful dream experience that tugs on the corners of our awareness in wakefulness. The tension between the 'functions' and 'indices' of poetry and of life serves to push and pull the cycle of continuity around itself into the moebius ring, allowing for endless possibilities of narrativisation.

²⁵ In 1966 Roland Barthes published an essay titled 'An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative' in which he outlines the basic elements of plot and plot structures (Culler 1983:81). In his discussion, Barthes (1975:246-247) asserts that narratives are made up of units: functional units and integrative units or indicators, or cardinal functions and indices. He elaborates that the 'functions' can be considered as metonymic and 'indices' as metaphoric. In other words, cardinal functions provide movement and indices provide atmosphere – both of which inform the experience of narrative.

A Scale of Narrativity

Prince (1991) proposed a scalar approach to narrativity, analysing text as to its degree of narrativity and as to the strength of narrational elements in that text (Prince 1991:58). Prince states that ‘some objects are narratives; some are quasi-narratives; and some are not narratives. Some narratives are more narrative than others; some non-narratives are more narrative than others; and some are even more narrative than narratives’ (Prince 2008:22). Prince’s approach does not necessarily negate the principle of narrative as experience. His description of the strength and weakness of narrative elements correlates, to an extent, with points or stages along the spectrum of consciousness. The idea that these elements are extant to varying degrees across the spectrum also alludes to the alternation between the attributes of ‘waking’ and ‘sleeping’. An example of the presence, to varying degrees, of Prince’s narrative elements – events, their number, and their temporal, causal, or implicational links – can be seen in the diversity of dream reports and dream poems²⁶. Even though dream reports are generally labelled as narratives, in some reports it can be difficult to identify one ‘event’ while others may contain several ‘events’.

Ryan (2005) distinguishes between ‘being a narrative’ and ‘possessing narrativity’ and states that narrative is a ‘semiotic object’ whereas narrativity is ‘being able to inspire a narrative response’ (Ryan 2005:347). As such, DuPlooy identifies poems as having a low narrativity (2010:10). Congruently, some dream experiences may also be identified as possessing low narrativity in that a dream experience might contain narrational elements or attributes to the extent that it inspires a dream report (either oral or written). Herman (2002:100) talks about a distinct difference between tellability and narrativity, and says that narratologists differentiate between the two. Although both can be afforded a scalar approach, ‘tellability attaches to configurations of facts and narrativity to sequences representing configurations of facts’ (Herman 2002:100). In the case of a dream experience, tellability and narrativity become synonymous: dreams are experiences in themselves and at the same time they are representations in that the mind creates and projects those experiences. A dream poem, as a new version of a dream experience (much like Rowson’s comic of *The Waste Land*), which comprises new and different levels of ‘movement and counter-movement’ (see Attridge 1995), or narrativity, is also both experienced and representative of experience.

²⁶ See appendix for samples of dream reports.

McHale (2001) questions Prince's 'scalar' approach to narrativity. He approaches 'degrees' of narrativity from another angle by stipulating that 'degree [...] entails a difference in kind' (2001:165): a weak narrative becomes a type of narrative. He identifies this trait as 'weak narrativity' and proposes this as an additional 'mode' of narrativity, to be added to Ryan's modes of narrativity. McHale, in the process of tracing the development of poetry, or the lyric, in relation to narrative over time identifies the point at which narrative poetry falls into the category of 'weak narrative'. He argues that:

Modernism marks a crisis in the long poem: it interdicts narrative modes of organisation and submits the long-poem genre to a general "lyricisation". The result is a form of long poem lacking any continuous narrative, but instead made up of lyric fragments strung together in sequence. Narrative, while not utterly banished, shifts to another level, becoming the invisible "master-narrative" that, present nowhere in the text, nevertheless ensures the text's ideological (if not formal) coherence. (McHale 2001:162)

He accuses postmodernist poets of resorting to a variety of strategies in order to tell stories without having to commit to the master-narratives in which those stories are located. One strategy 'seems to evoke narrative forms of coherence without fully submitting to them' (163). In an examination of *Oxota*, by Lyn Hejinian, McHale states that:

[...] at the same time that our sense of narrative is being solicited, it is also being frustrated – by the dispersal of narrative fragments, by the interpolation of alien materials, by indeterminacies of anaphoric reference, no doubt by other indeterminacies as well. (McHale 2001:164)

Lyric poetry as an experience evokes a sense of narrative to varying degrees, and it is at times the fragmentary nature, the anaphoric references, and the appearance of alien materials in a poem that provide movement, evoke an emotional response, and inspire evaluation. Similarly, it may be the solicitation of a sense of narrative that, in some cases, induces a dreamer to report the dream experience. In this case, a 'sense of narrative' can be seen as the evocation of 'meaningful experience'. Furthermore, poems vary in the strength and weakness of their inherent experientiality. McHale's argument can be reinterpreted, therefore, as 'weak experientiality'.

'Natural' Narrative and Poetry

Fludernik (1996:311) redefines narrativity in terms of experientiality. This redefinition allows for the marginalisation of plot but not of fictionality. She states that:

There does need to be a fictional situation that consists in the presence of at least one *persona* and her consciousness. Neither existence *per se* nor plot *per se* constitute narrativity, but the crucial factor is that of human immundation, of situational embodiment.

In experimental texts embodiment can be reduced to consciousness or perception with the setting dwindling to rudimentary implied contiguities. But consciousness there needs to be, because this is the locus of experientiality. (Fludernik 1996:311)

This becomes somewhat problematic in relation to poetry since poetry is often weak in fictionality but strong in the presence of *persona*. However, when poetry is attributed to a *persona* and a fictional situation, it should then fulfil the requirement of narrativity in terms of ‘natural’ narrative. Fludernik suggests that:

[...] some poems describe a poetic persona’s perceptions [...] rendering the text equivalent to [...] first-person narrative or putting an observer on the scene whose perceptions can be cognised in terms of the VIEWING frame. Poems can also depict a situation involving specific characters at a specific point in time, and they may additionally employ a great deal of descriptive realism. (1996:354)

The VIEWING frame can probably be applied to a large proportion of dream poetry (which is discussed in the next chapter of this thesis). Since our dreaming selves, or other personae that appear within our dreams, are often as foreign to us as characters from a novel, this would satisfy the condition of fictionality. The dream poem of the Middle Ages, otherwise recognisable as romances, epics, narrative poems, and long poems, are a good example of the development of these conditions.

A poem may contain only a single narrative moment but that moment is, according to literary scholar Peter Hühn (2002), a pivotal event in the progression of a narrative. An outcome of the ‘verse and narrative’ project, Hühn’s article ‘Plotting the lyric: forms of narration in poetry’ (2010) discusses two types of narrative events: physical and mental. Hühn asserts that lyric poetry largely consists of sequences of mental or psychological incidents or phenomena in so far as they constitute the basic components of story, discourse and narrative act, which is essential to narrative (Hühn, 2010:149). These incidents can be the same cognitive incidence that inspire evaluation and thereby qualify as ‘experientiality’ (Fludernik 1996:103).

Cultural theorist and literary scholar Patrick Hogan (2003), establishes his ‘narrative hypothesis’ while exploring lyric poems as ‘implicit plots’ (2003:152-171). The ‘narrative hypothesis’ hinges on the definition of lyric poems as ‘elaborations of junctural moments in narratives’ (Hogan 2003:153). Hogan goes on to qualify this definition by noting that narrative in poems is implicit and often vague. Lyric poems also involve focusing on a particular emotion paired with a particular event. Hogan elaborates: ‘prototypical lyric

poems are tacitly located at junctural moments of heroic or romantic tragi-comedies and imply the emotion prototypes for those genres' (153). Hogan's 'emotion prototypes' brings to mind the importance of emotional thoughts and images in dream content, in identifying 'meaningful' experiences, and of the importance of emotions in 'experientiality' (Fludernik 1996:9-10).

McHale, reflecting on a Western history of narrative literature and the poems of Homer, points out that lyric and narrative were not originally separate but were, in fact, treated as two essential elements of a poem (2009:11). John Gouws (2010) also argues this point. McHale criticises contemporary narrative theory for treating Homer as a novelist. If one takes into account the vast domain of oral literature, the majority of poems composed before the nineteenth century and much of poetry composed since then, one could conclude that a great quantity of the world's narrative literature is poetic narrative (McHale, 2009:12). An analysis of a wide-ranging survey on popular narratives could reveal some valuable insights into commonly attractive elements of poetic narrative.

In the same article McHale (2009:12) refers to Phelan's definition of lyricity, which can be summarised as 'bearing witness' or simply voicing a thought. This definition might be unhelpful since it creates a distinction between lyricity and poeticity. It does, however, fall within Fludernik's modes of mediation, or narrativisation, particularly the VIEWING mode. McHale draws a connection between Phelan's and Hühn's treatments of this topic. Putting aside the advocated separation of lyricity and poeticity, Hühn's proposition that what he calls lyric poetry consists of mental or psychological events, or plot points, can be used as the foundation for the argument that all poetry contains narrativity and infers narrative. McHale (2009:13) argues that, as Phelan says, lyric can be presented in prose form. If we adopt Hühn's analysis of what consists of 'lyric' poetry then, by taking a further step we can conclude that 'lyric' includes those elements of poetry that are explored within cognitive science, and is aligned with *emotionality*.²⁷ If prose contains some lyric elements then it is simply prose containing lyricity, much like prose that contains poeticity.

Literary theorist Eva Müller-Zettelmann (2011) applies narrative analysis to poetry by examining Christina Rossetti's poem 'An End' from a narratological perspective. She

²⁷ See Hogan 2008 for a discussion of emotion in narrative.

points out that the poem represents a story in progress but that the story is very much focused on the here and now of the narrator. She states that:

Lyric poetry is the genre which places us, or rather the speaker, in the thick of things. In witnessing the speaker, we witness the fundamental human endeavour to use language and storytelling to make meaning. (Müller-Zetzelmann 2011:244)

Zetzelmann concludes that poetry is ‘highly experiential’ and that it projects a high level of ‘cognitive and emotional involvement’ (2011:248). She also notes that poetry readily lends itself to the application of narratological concepts. In this case, one could add that poetry lends itself to the application of Fludernik’s concept of natural narrative, which revolves around experience, emotion and meaning.

In 2007 psychoanalyst Eugene Mahon published the article ‘A Poem and a Dream’ in which he analysed a writer’s report of a dream and a poem stimulated by that dream. Although the majority of the article is an exercise in psychoanalysis, and therefore irrelevant to this particular project, Mahon does make some interesting and useful observations in terms of language and the *experience* of the artistic artefact. He discusses the ‘*psychological* [...] being put to the *physiological* test’ (2007:253) in terms of word choice where the reading of bodily, sensory, and elemental words make a more powerful impact on the body of the audience. Hence, in lyric poetry, when these words appear either on their own on a line or surrounded by few others, the translation of experience and *experiential* narrative, or narrativisation, becomes more immediate.

In ‘In the Waiting Room’ literary and cultural theorist Stefan Kjerkegaard (2014) attempts a biographical, and experiential, reading of a lyric poem. He stresses that adapting real events (autobiography) into lyric poetry alters those events and presents them in a new light, or from a new angle. As a result, the narrativity of the poem becomes weaker and lyricality is emphasised, there is a new emphasis on the question of *voice*, and there is a blurring of narrativity and experientiality (2014:185-186). Kjerkegaard points out that:

[...] readers often narrativise situations. Our readerly expectations are one thing, what the literary text in fact contains, another; and often readers feel more consolation in the idea that the text transmits a narrative, and not just a thought, emotion, meditation, etc. (Kjerkegaard 2014:189)

He further concludes that Fludernik’s experientiality, as a marker for the presence or evocation of narrative, does not take place in the poem but rather in the reader (2014:192). It must therefore be mediated by way of the ‘viewer’s’ consciousness.

In regards to Lawrence Ferlinghetti's poem 'Autobiography', Kjerkegaard continues, 'poetic devices impede the narrative' and urge the focus of the text in different directions, both narrational and metaphorical (2014:195). The assumption is that in an autobiographical poem the possibility of veiling or unveiling is in relation to a more particular and/or personal expression. Ferlinghetti's poem suggests that the stories that are told in many autobiographies reveal the identity of the teller, and possibly reveal a relationship between self and narrative in the autobiography (198). 'Autobiography' never really establishes a storyworld, mainly due to the repeated restarting of the story: the cyclical nature of the verse that keeps bringing us back to the beginning and thereby disrupts the development of that world²⁸.

Fludernik (1996:355) reminds us of these very issues when it comes to identifying poems as narratives. She states that although poems are rife with 'the reflections and enthusings' of the speaker/poet, the speaker is never a character in an alternative fictional world. She argues that:

Unless the reflections are clearly part of a person's specific experience at a specific (fictional) moment in time, one cannot describe this setup in terms of experientiality. Fictional situations therefore need to be situated at a particular (even if indefinite) moment in time, and the story-world, too, needs to be locatable as a non-hypothetical realm. (1996:355)

Considering Fludernik's previous discussions on fictiveness and fictionality, her comment here can be interpreted to mean that a projected story-world must be recognised as believable, as opposed to conjectural. In terms of the dream poem this requirement can be seen as problematic. For example, one might argue that dream experiences themselves take us on temporal loops thereby making it difficult to fix the experience in time. However, this particular loop folds in on itself – the moebius ring – simultaneously connecting the dreamer to multiple moments in time, itself remaining somewhat indefinite. The dream also occurs in the context of waking life time, which can be pinpointed with fair accuracy. The dream also often captures key moments in a person's waking life, which are in themselves often mysterious and therefore poetic in nature. The dream poem has the ability to reflect all of these attributes. Furthermore, a dream poem as device can be situated within yet another story, and can be attributed to another character.

²⁸ A result of this static experience, suggested by literary critic and analytic philosopher Galen Strawson (2004), is the evocation of an 'episodic identity' as opposed to a 'narrative identity'.

Experimental Narrative

The form of literature, which incorporates both poetry and narrative, and is closest to the structure that I am exploring, is the verse novel. Teacher and lecturer in education Joy Alexander (2005:269) points out that the verse novel is a relatively new phenomenon in children's literature, and that it is especially aimed at the teenage market. There are still ongoing questions regarding the difference between a novel in verse and a series of narratively linked poems. The current format of a verse novel, however, generally abides by the following parameters: the story is relayed in non-rhyming free verse; each section is between half a page to a few pages at the most; each section has a title that orientates the reader, (the section titles sometimes specify the speaker or place or time or theme); and each section is often built around a single character or incident (Alexander 2005:270). The section titles are crucial for situating the reader within the verse novel and, in some cases, the verse does not make sense without the title (275). Literary scholar Patrick Murphy (1989:64) designates the verse novel to the category of the modern long poem. He suggests that this form is produced for the individual and private reader, much like the novel. These conditions, therefore, have an impact on the use of rhythms and sounds, the density of language, the traditional requisite of repetition, the visual representation of words and sounds, and the visual representation of the poem on the page. Perhaps more importantly, Murphy suggests that these conditions of private and silent reading have an impact on 'internal continuity'. It can be inferred from this statement that, under these conditions, the world of the text is more likely to be realised within a verse novel than within other forms of literature.

Catherine Addison (2009), professor of English literature, states that 'English-language verse novels are becoming signature texts of the turn-of-the-millennium period' (2009:539). Works identifying themselves as verse novels are unrestricted as to subject, theme or prosody, ranging from science fiction to family histories, and ranging from a variety of free verse forms to traditional metres. Addison (2009:540) challenges the existence of the verse novel as a specific genre, asserting that all such texts fit comfortably within one of the oldest genres in the world, the genre of narrative poetry. Teacher and literary critic Patty Campbell (2004) explains that part of the issue with including verse novels as poetry is that some authors of verse novels vehemently deny the poetry of their writing. For example, Campbell cites Virginia Euwer Wolff who,

[...] in the face of Roger Sutton's insistence that the compression of her language made it poetry, denied it staunchly. "Writing my prose in funny-shaped lines does not render it poetry," she said. Other authors have agreed with her about their own work. (Campbell 2004)

Despite this, Campbell insists that a 'good' verse novel still abides by the strictest definition of poetry, 'especially in their use of condensed language, natural cadences, and metaphor' as well as portraying 'a vivid and imaginative sense of experience'.

Alexander (2005:270-271) outlines the advantages of writing poetry in free verse. She suggests that free verse highlights the oral aspects of poetry in that the rhythm and line-breaks can be manipulated to add or reduce emphasis, the pace can be shifted throughout a single line, and 'poetic devices such as repetition, caesura and enjambment' can be exploited. As a result 'readers are more likely to experience the words as sound as they read'. According to Viki Van Sickle (2006), scholar of children's literature, the role of poetry in the verse novel is to 'transcend the literal and leave an *emotional impression* upon the reader'. The verse novel does this by drawing on the 'technical aspects' of poetry such as rhythm, metaphor, and imagery. As examples, she cites poems from a verse novel by Karen Hesse, and explains that while the poems are verbally spare they manage to be emotionally dense. Alexander (2005:279) also discusses a verse novel by Hesse called *Aleutian Sparrow* and highlights the way Hesse achieves both figurative and lyrical effects. She suggests that it is in the use and manipulation of language and lines, and in the use of the silencing 'white page' that backdrop the short verses, which gives the book the form of a 'moving lament'. Alexander (2005:274) refers to Wolff, in the context of her verse novel *Make Lemonade* as an example of an author who specifically attempts to capture the feeling of prose within the verse novel: 'Wolff works with the longer lines and sections to highlight the rhythm of the prose line.'

Murphy (1989:66) identifies 'plot' as the factor that distinguishes the verse novel from other 'novelised poetic genres' which include the lyric poem, the dramatic poem, and the prose poem. However, Alexander (2005:281) suggests that the plot in a verse novel is not always realised. She further suggests that the fact that the narration in a verse novel is 'voiced' may lend the form to 'the confessional', 'which raises the spectre of banality and melodrama'. It is possible that the issue of confession and melodrama arise as a result of constant versification. Moving away from a form that is completely versified, and back along the scale towards the novel, in order to include prose, may solve this problem. Van

Sickle (2006) also identifies the matter of form as a problem for the verse novel. She states that ‘the hybridisation of verse and novel’ ‘causes the most strife among critics because often the verse is not technical enough to be considered a strong example of verse or poetry’. Despite this issue Van Sickle reiterates that the verse novel is a form of literature that is ‘accessible’ and that has ‘considerable emotional impact’.

Addison points out that although the verse novel can be dated back to Anna Seward’s *Louisa: A Poetical Novel*, published in 1784, very little has been written about this phenomenon at any stage of its history (Addison 2009:540). The growing divide between the verse novel and other poetry seems to lie more in changes to poetry in general. In Addison’s opinion, the contemporary verse novel reads more like a popular novel, embracing broad social themes, whereas the contemporary poem tends to be esoteric or personal and confessional. It is possible to view the verse novel as a sub-genre of narrative poetry. There is a resistance to placing it within the genre of the novel, mainly due to the insistence by some theorists that the novel must be written in prose (Addison 2009:546). Addison, however, proposes that this may change in the future and that ‘it may soon become the norm to compose novels wholly or partially in verse.’ (2009:555). Van Sickle (2006) encourages a broader view of the verse novel and asks the reader to seek subcategories within that term. Mike Cadden (2011), professor of English language and literature, sees lyric poetry and the novel as two extreme forms on the continuum of literary genre – much like points on the scale of consciousness. Cadden proposes that ‘the use of various short forms of narrative poetry, followed by the epic, and then the free-verse novel provide three points of transition along a continuum from lyric poetry to the novel’ (Cadden 2011:26). Campbell (2004) outlines the difference between a conventional novel and a verse novel as being one of structure:

The structure of the verse novel, then, can be quite different from the novel, which is built with rising conflict toward a climax, followed by a denouement. The verse novel is often more like a wheel, with the hub a compelling emotional event, and the narration referring to this even like the spokes. (Campbell 2004)

This analogy of a verse novel as a wheel brings to mind the moebius ring, or the cycle of experience.

Certain attributes of poetry, and forms of experimental narrative such as the verse novel, make them particularly suitable for an investigation into experiential, or ‘natural’ narrative. As Campbell (2004) points out,

[...] they are all intensely internal, focused on the characters' feelings, because emotion is what the verse novel—and poetry—is all about. Characteristically, the action centres on an emotional event, and the rest of the novel deals with the characters' feelings before and after. (Campbell 2004)

This 'emotional event' that Campbell references can be captured by a dream and/or be the dream experience itself. Going back to the analogy of the wheel, it is possible to interpret the hub, or the emotional centre, as poetry in general and the spokes, or narration, as prose narrative. By combining the aforementioned metaphors another metaphor can be visualised: the dream is the emotional centre of the wheel of life, or consciousness, and the spokes are the narrative surrounding that centre. One cannot be divorced from the other. A new form of experimental narrative now takes shape – literature written as a mixture of poetry and prose should reflect the literary equivalent of a person's, or character's, identity development. It should also provide some insight into the author's interpretation of what qualifies as poetic, both in lived experience and in a literary sense.

Chapter Five – Literary Dreams and Dream Poems

In their introduction to *Theatre of Sleep: An Anthology of Literary Dreams*, Almansi & Beguin (1987:9) assert that ‘almost every writer since the beginning of recorded history has invented or transcribed dreams’. This anthology of literary dreams (mainly from Western literature) includes prose, lyric poems, prose poems, extracts from epics, plays, sonnets, philosophy, and other commentary, from Aristotle to Dante to Dostoyevsky to Borges. They also manage to miss a few key writers and poets like Milton, Coleridge, and Lord Byron, although they apologise for any omissions and note that they suffered from an embarrassment of riches (10). Later in the same volume, Almansi & Beguin describe a separation between the world of dreaming and the world of waking that experiences heavy traffic along its borderland: ‘the analogies between the two worlds are striking and awesome, and traffic accidents are all too frequent’ (1987:121). They further counsel:

Whoever ignores this traffic out of positivist short-sightedness is almost by definition a fool. Whoever thinks he is able to monitor or explain it is, almost by necessity, another kind of fool. When writing about dreams, one must beware of those two types of foolishness. (Almansi & Beguin 1987:121)

It would be difficult to provide an exhaustive list, let alone commentary, of dreams in literature. It would also be impossible to present a full study of dreams and dreaming in any culture (Kruger 1992:4). Therefore, I have attempted to limit myself, as much as possible, to considering dreams in poetry, the dream poem as a form, and dreams in Western literature. The specific examples that are discussed in this chapter are taken from the Middle Ages onwards since that is the period in Western literature when the dream poem is first fully realised as a category of composition.

Kruger (1992:5) explains that ‘literary depictions of dreams, even when directly invoking theoretical material, also depend upon literary traditions and “real-life” experience.’ This chapter discusses a selection of dreams in fictional prose narratives where those literary dreams have a direct impact on the development of the continuity hypothesis and/or theories of dreaming as an experience. Primarily, however, this chapter considers the evolution of the dream poem as a form, and its uses in literature. While it is common to encounter accounts of dreams in works of history (Kruger 1992:4), historical writing lies beyond the scope of this inquiry and therefore these accounts are not considered here. It is also unnecessary to look at works of dream interpretation which provide culturally

specific, and sometimes gender specific, codes and keys for the explanation of dreams. Finally, the dream poem and chosen literary dreams are considered as experiences in the context of the broader life experience.

The Middle Ages and the Renaissance

There developed, in medieval times, a very popular and separate literary genre which Kruger (1992:4) calls the 'dream vision'. This genre included dreams that were set within longer narratives in what we would, today, classify as a narrative poem. These narrative poems, sometimes epic in nature, were the antecedent of the novel (McHale 2009). The development of the dream poem as a genre during the middle ages was perfectly natural considering the common view of poetry, which Kruger outlines: 'involved in the middleness of imagination, the poetic, like the oneiric, dwells in a region between body and intellect, wedding ideas to a sensible and pleasurable form' (1992:131). Spearing (1976:4) explains that dream poems of the fourteenth century onwards are distinguished by a number of factors. Firstly, they can stand alone as poems. They are also framed by the falling asleep and awakening of the narrator, thereby making the reader more aware of the beginning and end of the poem, that the poem has a narrator whose experience is the subject of the poem, and that the poem is not describing waking experience or tangible objects but rather it is a work of the imagination (4). Spearing also observes that the dream framework confirms the presence of the poet in his own poem, especially 'as the person who experiences the whole substance of the poem' (5). At the same time the poet disappears completely 'since he becomes part of his own fiction' (5). It is tempting to read some later dream poems as autobiographical, however, especially in the context of medieval dream poetry, it is largely problematic to do so (6).

Fludernik (1996:120) discusses the *experiential* evolution of Middle English verse narratives. She suggests that, while these narratives started out with a heavy emphasis on episodes and episodic patterns, they can be seen to have developed into larger, slower-paced narratives which allow for more 'characters' dialogue and psychological meditations'. She states that:

Romance and epic, moreover, document the crucial transference of the experiential core from action-oriented parameters to a presentation of the protagonists' consciousness which starts to take up more and more space. (Fludernik 1996:120)

While Fludernik never mentions the dream poem in her discussion, I believe that the realisation of the dream poem is strongly connected to this very development. Furthermore, I suggest that it was the influence of the move towards a modern understanding of poetry and the lyric that affected this change. The need then arises to identify the various aspects of these new types of poems, still categorised as romances and epics, as ‘devices’.

Brown (1999:24) adds to Spearing’s list of reasons for, and effects of, using the dream as literary device. The dream in literature appeals to the audience as a common experience; it allows the author to include disparate material; it inspires the use of powerful imagery; it allows the author to disavow the content at that point; it invokes the authority of ‘vision’; it is an avenue for covering topics such as ‘divine prophecy, erotic pleasure, political or philosophical speculation, apocalyptic vision’; and finally, it gives the author an opportunity to enter a ‘representational’ mode of communication (1999:25). Brown focuses his enquiry on the meaning of the dream experience as illustrated by ‘the boundary between waking and sleeping’ (25). This brings us back to Spearing’s emphasis on the dream as a frame, which is signalled by the falling asleep and awakening of the dreamer-poet. The details of waking circumstances preceding falling asleep, when specific, can invest the dream with authenticity and significance (25-26). Just as readers are often prepared for the onset of sleep and dream, they are also sometimes greeted with a discussion of the impact and meaning of the dream upon waking (42).

Fludernik (1996:343) addresses the two-fold manifestation of ‘framing’. She states that:

Holistic natural schemata, by contrast, have little difficulty with frame narratives or stories within stories since these are observable factors in real-world situations of storytelling. The specific function of a given tale and its relation to the discourse within which it is embedded can be extrapolated from the individual context: no absolutes of categorisation need apply. [...] If the tale is conceptualised as subsidiary to the primary story frame, a relationship of embedding obtains; if the primary story level serves as a mere introduction to the narrative proper, it will be perceived as a framing device.

Many dream poems have been arbitrarily categorised as ‘frames’. It is possible, however, to identify a ‘natural schemata’ in some of these dream poems, especially from the twentieth century onwards. But even in the older dream poems there is an element of real-world framing in the continuity of the first person narration, or experience, which is the element that makes the ‘frame’ work in the first place.

Brown (1999:27), after listing the common specificities one might encounter in the details preceding sleep, reaffirms Spearing's (1976:18) suggestion that poets felt bound by a set of conventions which they might 'invoke in order to prepare an audience for a dream'. Some of these, 'expressive of the dreamer's mental and emotional condition,' are solitude, insomnia, wandering, and a sense of death (Brown 1999:28-29). These conditions are all linked to the concept of middleness, or betweenness, discussed by Kruger. Brown points out that 'the boundary is not an absolute division but a party wall within the same house, a wall with a connecting door' (1999:33). With this statement he is essentially describing the continuity hypothesis and liminal space – transgressive and across boundaries. He goes on to say that dreaming, in this genre of literature, should not be thought of as different from waking but rather as a different version of it (33). Brown concludes that 'betweenness', or the experience of liminality, is what the dream poem allows the writer to express and explore (45).

Medieval dream poems were written under the powerful influence of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, which can account for the prevalence of, what Macrobius would classify as, prophetic dreams and oracular dreams (Spearing 1976:11). This tradition, in combination with the writings of the Neoplatonic philosophers, can be said to have had a great impact largely due to the survival and availability of texts (Kruger 1992:58). Medieval dream poems often discussed topics such as the nature of happiness and nobility, providence, predestination, and freewill (Spearing 1976:19). They also often featured personification, for example 'love' or 'chaos'. 'Personified abstractions could not engage in dialogue and homily in the objective world, but they could well do so in the world of the mind, to which dreams give access' (Spearing 1976:20). Brown (1999:44) suggests that:

[...] the dream enabled writers to explore the roots both of the self and of society. In some measure, the literary dream is the meeting-place of both, being at once intensely private and expansively public, providing a means whereby the outer world can be read through the inner. [...] A dream is [...] well suited to the representation and analysis of alienation, of a sense of lost authority, or of a search for connections that have become hidden, tenuous, or problematic.

The thirteenth century French narrative poem, *Roman de la Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris, set precedence for the English dream poem (Spearing 1976:24-25). It was partially translated by Chaucer into Middle English, which impacted on its popularity. The two main qualities it presents are that it opens with a verse that questions the validity of dreams, and it establishes the poet as the dreamer. The *Roman* also sets out a separation

between the 'I' of the dreamer and the 'I' of the poet: 'The Dreamer and the poet are both 'I', but 'I' as poet does not necessarily endorse his reactions as Dreamer to the dream-experience of five years back.' (1976:28). Throughout the poem the reader is made aware of this distinction by the poet's commentary on aspects of the dream experience that could only be noticed with hindsight and not while undergoing the experience. Spearing further states that:

I suspect that the dream-poem made an especially favourable matrix for the development of a *persona* separable from the author of a poem, simply because, in remembering and writing down a dream, one cannot help feeling that one's dreaming self has been separate at times from one's waking self. (1976:39)

The *Roman* asserts both the distinction and the 'ambiguity' of dreams by framing the poem and ending with 'Straightway it was day, and I awoke' (40).

Any discussion of dream poetry would be incomplete without a look at Chaucer's contribution to the sub-genre. Chaucer (c. 1343-1400) wrote four dream poems in the latter half of the fourteenth century, although he also included dreams and interpretations of those dreams, as well as discussions of the validity and significance of dreams, in many of his other poems (Spearing 1976:48-49). Chaucer manages to incorporate dream-like devices in his dream poems (63), for example 'thinking through sequences of concrete images' (173). In regards to the dream-like characteristics of Chaucer's dream poems Spearing points out that in terms of their content they are

[...] mysteriously disordered and often unintelligible, and in particular that they involve abrupt transitions from one sequence of events to another, with a lack of any connecting links. And yet on a deeper level [...] they can be shown to be intricately ordered and fully intelligible. (Spearing 1976:63)

One of the examples given by Spearing is the dream at the heart of *The Book of the Duchess*. As well as the abrupt transitions in this poem, there is also the reappearance of the character 'I' who begins as the narrator, falls asleep to become the dreamer, and awakens to become the narrator again (66-67):

Thoghte I, `this is so queynt a sweven,
That I wol, be processe of tyme,
Fonde to putte this sweven in ryme
As I can best, and that anoon.' --
This was my sweven; now hit is doon. (lines 1330-1334)

In the case of *The Parliament of Fowls* Chaucer uses the dream both as narrative device and as a frame for the narrative (Spearing 1976:88-89). The poem involves the reading of a dream which prompts the dream of the poem. Here we find very clear psychological links between waking and dreaming life: the dream that results from the reading of a book contains the character Scipio Africanus, the older version of Scipio in the book (91). The dream of the poem also includes the personification of pleasure, courtesy, beauty, etc. It is a frame to the extent that the narrator begins awake, falls asleep, and wakens again. The introduction includes a discussion of Scipio's dream:

This book of which I make of mencion,
Entitled was al thus, as I shal telle,
'Tullius of the Dreame of Scipioun.'
Chapitres seven it hadde, of hevene and helle,
And erthe, and soules that therinne dwelle,
Of whiche, as shortly as I can it trete,
Of his sentence I wol you seyn the grete. (lines 29-35)
But fynally my spirit, at the laste,
For-wery of my labour al the day,
Took rest, that made me to slepe faste,
And in my slepe I mette, as I lay,
How Affrican, right in the selfe array
That Scipioun him saw before that tyde,
Was comen and stood right at my bedes syde. (lines 92-98)

An unusual occurrence in this poem happens around line 305. The 'fowls', or birds, take over the poem and both the dreamer and the dreamer's guide, Africanus, almost disappear for the next nine verses. In other words, the dreamer becomes pure narrator while remaining in the dream, and for a while we forget that the narrative is happening within a dream world.

Around the same time as Chaucer, William Langland (c.1332-c.1386) was writing and revising a dream poem titled *Piers Plowman* (Spearing 1976:138). In this dream the poet-dreamer travels through his youth, meets with Hunger and Fever, and grows old (1976:152-153). Spearing notes that, as a result, the dream 'gives the *impression* of drawing a real life into the poem' (153). In the merging of different ages and times into the single space of the dream poem, Langland succeeds in 'making past and present, whether real or fictional, equally present, as they are to the consciousness itself, in reverie and in

dream' (153). Spearing points out that the dream, as frame and device, was and can be used by a writer to portray a scene which is basically impossible to realise in waking life (175). In fact, some of the 'Chaucerian' dream poems would be more appropriately categorised as 'day-dream' poems, and are framed with a description of a condition between waking and sleeping (176). In other words, these dreams would be classified, in Macrobian terms, as *phantasma*.

A final example from the medieval period is that of Skelton's *The Bowge of Court*, written around 1498 (Spearing 1976:197). This dream makes two major contributions to the portrayal of dreams in literature. Firstly, the place where the dreamer falls asleep and experiences the dream is clearly and specifically identified as a real place (197). Second, according to Spearing, Skelton achieves the effects of a nightmare more compellingly than had been done before:

Part of the horror of his dream-experience is that he is trapped in a state of fear so deep-rooted as to have become an identity, which makes him from the beginning as unattractive to the other figures in his dream as they are to him. (Spearing 1976:201)

Typical uses for dreams in Western literature have been in dramas, for heuristic purposes, to portray the erotic, to communicate a warning, prophecy, deliver practical guidance, and metaphor. In poetry, other than the narrative poem of medieval times, it has been common to see dreams incorporated in love poems and elegies (Weidhorn 1970:53). Weidhorn points out that dreams are sometimes described and discussed in seventeenth century lyric poetry (89):

The dream's function here is not, as in vision works, to convey esoteric lore or frame a narrative but to dramatize a relationship, express a state of mind, depict a person or place. (Weidhorn 1970:89)

The love-dream lyric of the seventeenth century typically involves a dream where the poet's love interest finally decides to return his affection but the poet awakens just as this is happening and then laments his awakening (93). These poems usually concentrate on contrasting the happiness felt during sleep with the sad 'reality' of waking life. An exception to this pattern is Donne's poem 'The Dream', where most of the poem is devoted to the events after waking (99). This poem is written as an elegy and reflects longingly on the beloved's presence in his dreams:

But dearest heart, and dearer image stay;
Alas, true joys at best are dream enough;
Though you stay here you pass too fast away:

For even at first life's taper is a snuff. (lines 21-24)

Shakespeare makes frequent use of 'dreams' in his drama, sometimes as an important narrative driver, but there are almost no dream poems to be found. As dreams occur in various plays there is a frequent questioning of their validity (Weidhorn 1970:107-118). Lynch (1999:99-100) points out that both Chaucer and Shakespeare reflect the general and popular attitude in regards to the ambiguity of dreaming versus reality. Both medieval and renaissance poets utilised the juxtaposition of perspectives to highlight the issue of relativity in regards to truth and reality (117). Perhaps the most famous contribution that Shakespeare made to the body of 'dream' literature is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The structure of the play reflects the Chaucerian dream vision and provides commentary on dreams, dreaming, and imagination (Lynch 1999:119). Puck's closing speech to the audience suggests that if they have trouble reconciling the events of the play they are welcome to discount the whole of it as a 'dream':

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream... (act V.1, lines 413-420)

At the centre of the play the character Bottom has a dream that illustrates the transformative power of the imagination: he is transformed, literally, into an ass. In other words, his physical reality reflects his thoughts and his dream is realised. His commentary following awakening captures the bizarreness and disorientation attributed to so many dream experiences:

I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what a dream it was. Man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was – and methought I had – but man is but a patched fool if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report what my dream was! (act IV.1, lines 203-211).

Bottom's lament at the untranslatable quality of his dream speaks across the centuries to the similar disclaimer made by Almansí and Beguin. The perceived impossibility of translation may also be a reason for the dismissive attitude towards dreams that has periodically been prevalent.

Camden (1936) found many passages in Shakespeare's plays on sleep and dreaming that reflect Elizabethan views on the topic. In *The Winter's Tale* the character Antigonus has a dream that reflects elements of the Chaucerian dream poem:

I have heard, but not believed, the spirits o' the dead
May walk again: if such thing be, thy mother
Appear'd to me last night, for ne'er was dream
So like a waking. To me comes a creature,
Sometimes her head on one side, some another;
I never saw a vessel of like sorrow,
So fill'd and so becoming: in pure white robes,
Like very sanctity, she did approach
My cabin where I lay; thrice bow'd before me,
And gasping to begin some speech, her eyes
Became two spouts: the fury spent, anon
Did this break from her: 'Good Antigonus,
Since fate, against thy better disposition,
Hath made thy person for the thrower-out
Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,
Places remote enough are in Bohemia,
There weep and leave it crying; and, for the babe
Is counted lost for ever, Perdita,
I prithee, call't. For this ungentle business,
Put on thee by my Lord, thou ne'er shalt see
Thy wife Paulina more.' And so, with shrieks,
She melted into air. Affrighted much,
I did in time collect myself and thought
This was so and no slumber. Dreams are toys:
Yet for this once, yea, superstitiously,
I will be squared by this. (act III, scene iii, lines 16-41)

This passage is framed by commentary regarding the truth and validity of dreams, particularly the type of dream that Macrobius would classify as *oraculum*: Antigonus is visited by a figure from the other world and is given both prophecy and instructions which he carries out. He ends his account by iterating that dreams are 'toys' but that, just this once, he is ready to put aside this belief and give credence to the dream experience. He mentions that the experience is 'so like waking' that he has no choice but to believe what

he has seen. This general discounting of the validity of dreams with certain exceptions was a common point of view in Elizabethan England.

The idea of dreams as ‘toys’ is further elaborated on in another play, *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo expresses reluctance in going to the Mask being held at the Capulet’s house and he gives a dream from the preceding night as his reason. Mercutio responds:

O, then, I see Queen Mab hath been with you.
She is the fairies’ midwife, and she comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men’s noses as they lie asleep; (act I, scene iv, lines 54-59)

And again:

I talk of dreams,
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,
Which is as thin of substance as the air (act I, scene IV, lines 96-99)

Mercutio’s opinion of dreams is that they are meaningless and not to be trusted. However, in the same passage he describes the various dreams that people will have depending on their daytime endeavours, thereby alluding to the continuity hypothesis:

Through lovers’ brains, and then they dream of love;
O’er courties’ knees, that dream on court’ sies straight,
O’er lawyers’ fingers, who straight dream on fees,
O’er ladies’ lips, who straight on kisses dream (lines 71-74)

It seems that Shakespeare was aware of the idea that dreams often take the form of one’s daytime preoccupations. In this passage one is confronted with the image of Queen Mab riding through people’s sleeping minds and weaving images of experiences that they would enjoy but that might not be possible in waking life. In other words Shakespeare is alluding to, what would later be called by Freud, wish-fulfilment.

Richard III features a beautifully written dream poem (McLuskie 1999:165). George, Duke of Clarence, has a dream in which he dies and he recounts it to the Lieutenant of the Tower:

Lord, Lord! methought, what pain it was to drown!
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears!

What ugly sights of death within mine eyes!
 Methought I saw a thousand fearful wrecks;
 Ten thousand men that fishes gnaw'd upon;
 Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
 Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
 All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea:
 Some lay in dead men's skulls; and, in those holes
 Where eyes did once inhabit, there were crept,
 As 'twere in scorn of eyes, reflecting gems,
 Which woo'd the slimy bottom of the deep,
 And mock'd the dead bones that lay scatter'd by. (act I, scene iv, lines 21-33)

This particular dream turns out to be a *visio* since it prophesies the Duke's imminent murder. The passage is much longer than the extract quoted here: it continues past death and includes an account of crossing the river Styx as well as encountering a dead character, murdered by the dreamer. The dream effectively links past, present, and future within a single experience. It also illustrates the ability of the mind to reassess the past, alter the present, and project the future. The dream poem encapsulates an exercise in narrativising a 'self'.

The collaboratively written play *Sir Thomas More* features two very illustrative dreams. Professor of Shakespeare studies, Kathleen McLuskie (1999) states that these dreams suggest a 'complex relationship between dream as literature, dream as a set of symbolic images, and dream as a route into the feelings, if not of the unconscious, of its characters' (McLuskie 1999:164). The following dream is recounted by Lady More to Master Roper, her son-in-law. Typically, it is preceded and followed by a questioning of the validity of dream experiences but I will not include the surrounding discussion here:

tonight I had the strangest dream
 That e'er my sleep was troubled with.
 Methought 'twas night,
 And that the king and queen went on the Thames
 In barges to hear music. My lord and I
 Were in a little boat, methought—Lord, Lord,
 What strange things live in slumbers!—and being near,
 We grappled to the barge that bare the king.
 But after many pleasing voices spent

In that still moving music-house, methought
 The violence of the stream did sever us
 Quite from the golden fleet, and hurried us
 Unto the bridge, which with unuséd horror
 We entered at full tide; thence some flight shoot
 Being carried by the waves, our boat stood still
 Just opposite the Tower, and there it turned
 And turned about, as when a whirlpool sucks
 The circled waters. Methought that we both cried
 Till that we sunk, where arm in arm we died. (act IV, scene ii, lines 8-26)

The account of this dream begins with ‘sleep’ and ends with the ending of the dream. The passage is charged with emotion and invokes three of the five senses; touch, sight, and sound. McLuskie (1999:166) points out that Elizabethan dramatists made use of ‘the compressed metaphors and symbolism of a character’s speech’ to highlight the ‘psychological density’ of the character’s dream experience. Lady More’s dream is an example of the powerful way in which the mind can evoke the senses and emotions that are usually associated with waking experience.

Soon after Shakespeare, Milton references dreams in some of his early poems (Weidhorn 1970:133). There are also four major dreams in ‘Paradise Lost’, the most complex of which is Eve’s dream. This dream is reported by Eve to Adam in book V and, if the relevant lines were isolated, the verse could constitute a dream poem according to the definition established early in this thesis. One of the unusual aspects of this dream poem, a quality shared with Donne’s poem, is that it begins with the dreamer’s awakening as opposed to their falling asleep:

Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
 On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake:
 “O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
 My glory, my perfection, glad I see
 Thy face, and morn returned, for I this night—
 Such night till this I never passed—have dreamed,
 If dreamed, not as I oft am wont, of thee,
 Works of day past, or morrow’s next design,
 But of offence and trouble, which my mind
 Knew never till this irksome night. Methought

Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk (book V, lines 26-36)

The preceding segment, the beginning of the dream poem, makes reference to daytime preoccupation becoming night-time preoccupations. Eve states that such is the norm, however this particular dream is different. The poem goes on to describe Eve's encounter with an angel at the tree of knowledge. The poem ends:

With him I flew, and underneath beheld
The Earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
And various. Wondering at my flight and change
To this high exaltation, suddenly
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
And fell asleep; but O how glad I waked
To find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her night

Related (lines 86-94)

This dream's complexity comes down to the fact that, in the context of the master narrative, it could be classified as both a *somnium* and a *visio*. It is prophetic but it also plays on the dreamer's innate curiosities. It also brings to mind a couple of the dreamer's memories, thereby uniting past, present, and future – the story of the character that was, the story of the character that is, and the story of the character that will be.

The Nineteenth Century Onwards

Dream poetry, as defined by Russo (2012) in terms of non-interpretive dream work, began to appear in earnest during the nineteenth century (Russo 2012:3). The romantic period of English Literature saw a number of authors and poets engage in dream work as a source of inspiration. Mary Shelley based her novel *Frankenstein* on a dream and Robert L. Stevenson dreamed part of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Coleridge wrote *Kubla Khan* entirely from a dream experience (Russo 2012:3). Percy Bysshe Shelley (1840) devoted a section of his essay on metaphysics to *The Catalogue of Phenomenon of Dreams, as Connecting Sleeping and Waking*. Christina Rossetti also wrote many poems based on her dream experiences (Barrett 2012).

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, otherwise known as Lewis Carroll, was first published in 1865 as a fantastical children's book. It and its sequel, *Through the Looking Glass and what Alice found there*, are set almost entirely in a dream world. However, like most other narratives of their time, the dreams are present

purely as narrative device. There are a number of poems in both volumes but none of them qualify as dream poetry since the speaker of the poems is never the dreamer. Despite this, the stories have had a couple of very relevant positive effects on dreams in literature: they remind us of the playful aspect of dreaming, and they strengthen the bond between dreams and lyric poetry. The end of the second volume further hints at a parallel between waking and dreaming:

In a Wonderland they lie,
Dreaming as the days go by,
Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream –
Lingering in the golden gleam –
Life, what is it but a dream? (Carrol 2002 [1865]:240)

Gerard de Nerval, a poet who lived in the first half of the nineteenth century, and became famous for his political verse, his travel writing, some short stories, and his very public mental collapse, also managed to leave behind an unfinished manuscript called *Aurélia or Dream and Life* (Sieburth 1999). Translator and literary scholar Richard Sieburth (1999:xxix) describes this piece as a romance ‘centred around the female figure of Death and modelled on the experimental dream narratives’. Nerval begins the first part of *Aurélia* with a deeply personal observation:

Dream is a second life. I have never been able to cross through those gates of ivory or horn which separate us from the invisible world without a sense of dread. The first few instants of sleep are the image of death; a drowsy numbness steals over our thoughts, and it becomes impossible to determine the precise point at which the *self*, in some other form, continues to carry on the work of existence. (Nerval 1999 [1855]:265)

Rather than coming across as a work of fantasy this introduction impresses upon the reader the very real immediacy of mortality. It also likens sleep to death, which might be considered a common analogy. Putting aside the permanence of the latter, it is interesting to consider that both states have been incorporated into literature as devices evoking fantasy.

Throughout the nineteenth century dreams were treated as a ‘convenient motivation for elements of the fantastic in plots’ (Wanner 1999:599), but with the rise of modernism dreams broke free from the frames of larger narratives and began to be treated as literary texts in their own right. This development is often linked to the French surrealists (Wanner

1999:599). However, as literary theorist and translator Adrian Wanner (1999) points out, towards the end of the nineteenth century the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev (1897)²⁹, anticipated the phenomenon to come by writing a collection of *Dream Tales and Prose Poems*. The dream tales are short stories which feature a character's dream, often a recurring dream. The prose poems include poems written from actual dream reports, the most obvious of which are entitled 'The End of the World: A Dream' and 'Nature'.

Turgenev's efforts were soon expanded on by another Russian writer, Aleksei Remizov, who began recording his dreams around twenty years before the surrealist revolution (Wanner 1999:599). Remizov incorporated fictional dreams in novels and short stories but he also published a collection of dreams, which he described as his own dream reports. He wrote a lengthy preface and afterword to his book of dreams, *Martyn Zadeka*, sections of which are quoted and translated by Wanner in his paper *Aleksei Remizov's Dreams*. Wanner points out that Remizov saw something inherently poetic in dreams. In fact, Remizov questioned whether 'it is possible to compose dreams as one composes verses' (cited in Wanner 1999:603). While Remizov believed in the musicality of dreams he balked at the metric forms still common in Russian poetry at the time, pointing out that 'the formlessness of dreams is unmeasurable' (603).

The prose poem, a form that eschews the constraints of metre or line breaks, might be seen as the ideal vehicle for evoking dreams. Turgenev had already established the beginnings of this practice and Remizov certainly found the form appealing (Wanner 1999:603). However, the prose poem poses its own limitations. As Wanner asserts, it often lacks lyricism and/or rhythm – the same qualities that Remizov ascribes to dreams – and 'there is no universally accepted definition of the prose poem' (604). Remizov's own dreams have been described as anti-poetic and Remizov's opinion of some of Turgenev's dreams was that they had nothing 'dream-like' about them (603-604). A possible conclusion to this discussion is that the dream poem, presented in lyric verse form, but resisting any formal metre, is the best-suited medium for evoking a dream experience.

Wanner (1999:608) points out that Remizov, unlike Turgenev and other writers of dreams, does not use a framing device to indicate a dream text. Traditionally certain phrases would be employed, before and after, such as 'I dreamt' and 'I awoke'. However, with no

²⁹ This is the date of publication for the English translation, translated by Constance Garnett.

indication other than the subtitle that one is reading a dream text, Wanner argues that it is difficult for the reader to remain engaged (608). *The Cat*, translated and quoted from *Martyn Zadeka*, is one such example:

They were chasing a cat. And caught it. They placed in on the table, as one places flowers. The cat stood for a while, ate the flowers, and went away. (cited in Wanner 1999:611)

It was this kind of text that linked Remizov to the surrealists. In the afterword to *Martyn Zadeka*, and in anticipation of the ‘continuity hypothesis’ Remizov states that:

Life is not limited to daytime occurrences of three-dimensional reality, but continues in the multidimensionality of dreams, which are equally existing and equally valid as the waking world. (cited in Wanner 1999:609)

Although there were strong connections between Remizov and the surrealist movement in Paris there remained some important differences in their approaches. The main difference was that the surrealist process involved allowing the mind free reign to think and express without conscious control, whereas Remizov believed in consciously selecting and shaping words in both writing and speech (Wanner 1999:610). Dream reports were a common form of expression and point of discussion during early surrealism, although the interest in them faded as the movement continued to develop (Wanner 1999:613-614). The largest volume of French surrealist dreams were written by André Breton, Michel Leiris, Antonin Artaud, and others. Wanner points out that the French dreams are generally longer and more ‘literary’ in style than Remizov’s (610). Leiris was one writer who continued recording his dreams long after the fervour had died down. *Nights as Day, Days as Night*, by Michel Leiris (1988 [1961]), is essentially a dream diary. The dreams are entered as short passages of prose poems with some waking reflections interspersed. It is unique for a number of reasons: firstly, it is identified as highly autobiographical at the same time as being lyrical in nature; second, it explores the idea of self-identity and the constant transformation of self-identity (Hand 2002:39). Here is an example from Leiris’ collection, published as *Nuits sans nuit et quelques jours sans jours*, and translated by J. Romney;

14-15 July 1958

‘Poulet Vuillambert (or Vuillambeau, Vuillambé)’, the name and surname of a prostitute or hostess who gave me her telephone number when I met her in a nightclub. Someone’s clumsy fingernail, perhaps my own, has torn the piece of paper or card on which I had written the number. How can I find it again, unless I go back to sleep, to plunge myself once more into dreams and propel myself towards this woman with whom I passed some hours chatting so agreeably?

I go back to sleep, but to no avail: this adventure, barely begun, is now a thing of the past. Perhaps by writing this story, I might find another roundabout way to retrieve at least some of it, and if chance will have it, once more breathe her perfume?

(Leiris 1986 [1961]:98)

Anne Nagel (2013), literary scholar, discusses the intensity of dreams in gothic literature and points out that these texts make extensive use of both the nightmare and the premonitory dream³⁰. Gothic narratives that are arguably dependent on dreams include *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen, *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, and *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. The last of these, first published in 1938, opens with a dream that incorporates many qualities attributed to the traditional dream poem, as well as integrating popular qualities associated with dreaming. Given the lyricism of the language, passages of the dream could fall into that illusive category called a prose poem;

Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again [...] the grey stone shining in the moonlight of my dream, the mullioned windows reflecting the green lawns and the terrace. Time could not wreck the perfect symmetry of those walls, nor the site itself, a jewel in the hollow of a hand [...] A cloud, hitherto unseen, came upon the moon, and hovered an instant like a dark hand before a face. The illusion went with it, and the lights in the windows were extinguished. I looked upon a desolate shell, soulless at last, unhaunted, with no whisper of the past about its staring walls. The house was a sepulchre, our fear and suffering lay buried in the ruins. There would be no resurrection. When I thought of Manderley in my waking hours I would not be bitter. I should think of it as it might have been, could I have lived there without fear [...] I would think of the blown lilac, and the Happy Valley. These were permanent, they could not be dissolved. They were the memories that cannot hurt. All this I resolved in my dream, while the clouds lay across the face of the moon, for like most sleepers I knew that I dreamed. In reality I lay many hundred miles away in an alien land, and would wake, before many seconds had passed [...] (1-3)

The modern gothic novel is not the only twentieth century narrative to leave us with descriptions of dreams that make a genuine effort to evoke a real dream experience. First published in 1931, *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf is a rare experiment in ‘stream of consciousness’. The novel follows the inner monologues of six main characters, interspersed with lyrical passages describing the sunrise, throughout the first half of the novel, and sunset, throughout the second half. Dreams are mentioned a number of times, mainly in the metaphorical sense. However, at the end of the first section, the character

³⁰ The place of dreams in Gothic literature is, as argued by Nagel, significant. However, since this chapter is intended as a brief outline of dreams in literature, and since the focus of the thesis is dream poetry (which is not an overt feature of these novels), Gothic literature will be given only a cursory glance here.

Rhoda, after going through the process of bathing and getting into bed, takes the reader into her dream:

I sail on alone under white cliffs. Oh, but I sink, I fall! That is the corner of the cupboard; that is the nursery looking-glass. But they stretch, they elongate. I sink down on the black plumes of sleep; its thick wings are pressed to my eyes. Travelling through darkness I see the stretched flowerbeds, and Mrs Constable runs from behind the corner of the pampas-grass to say my aunt has come to fetch me in a carriage. I mount; I escape; I rise on spring-heeled boots over the tree-tops. But I am now fallen into the carriage at the hall door, where she sits nodding yellow plumes with eyes hard like glazed marbles. Oh, to awake from dreaming! Look, there is the chest of drawers. Let me pull myself out of these waters. But they heap themselves on me; they sweep me between their great shoulders; I am turned; I am tumbled; I am stretched, among these long lights, these long waves, these endless paths, with people pursuing, pursuing. (23)

The passage contains a number of elements that are unique in terms of dreams in literature. Firstly, although Woolf published this as a prose novel, the language in this passage, and throughout much of *The Waves*, is exceptionally lyrical. Secondly, and again in keeping with the rest of the novel, the dream is related in first person as a stream of consciousness. Indeed, the dream flows on from waking in a seamless manner. There is also a very clear description of being thrust into wakefulness, either from the agitation of a nightmare or the end of a REM cycle, or both. The key is that the character almost immediately sinks back into the next cycle. The ‘turning’ and ‘tumbling’ can be connected with the NREM stage of sleep called sleep spindles, the ‘long waves’ with the NREM stage called deep sleep, and the ‘people pursuing’ with another REM stage. The transition from waking and dreaming, between stages of sleep, and between whole cycles is described with uncanny accuracy and the effect is very poetic.

Another novelistic example was published in 1949 when George Orwell (1989 [1949]) created an important dream experience for the character of Winston in his novel *1984*;

Winston had woken up with his eyes full of tears. Julia rolled sleepily against him, murmuring something that might have been ‘What’s the matter?’

‘I dreamt’ he began, and stopped short. It was too complex to be put into words. There was the dream itself, and there was a memory connected with it that had swum into his mind in the few seconds after waking.

He lay back with his eyes shut, still sodden in the atmosphere of the dream. It was a vast, luminous dream in which his whole life seemed to stretch out before him like a landscape on a summer evening after rain. It had all occurred inside the glass paperweight, but the surface of the glass was the dome of the sky, and inside the dome everything was flooded with clear soft light in which one could see into interminable distances. (167)

The most striking aspect of this passage is that Orwell very clearly distinguishes between the dream as an experience and the dream as a memory. Although this distinction has been made by philosophers and scientists it is rare to find it illustrated so fittingly in a work of fiction.

Some contemporary poets and authors whose work includes significant dream-related material are Lucille Clifton, Maxine Kumin, C.K. Williams, Naguib Mahfouz and Sarah Arvio. Most of these authors and poets have used dream work for specific poems or novels, or have gleaned inspiration from dreams, which has then informed and mixed with other ideas, to create poems or sequences of poems.

There is a plethora of novels and poetry that invoke dreams and dreaming as a side note and not as a true narrative device let alone in an effort to harness or portray a real/istic dream experience. Maxine Kumin's lyric poetry brings her dreams into the context of her waking narrative, or rather, her waking life into the context of her dreams. A number of her poems can be classified as dream poems (other than the ones that make use of the word 'dream' for poetic effect). Except for 'The Incest Dream', which appears in her collection *Our Ground Time here will be Brief* (1982:27), her dream poems are not indicated as such in title, and they are not framed in the traditional manner. Rather, the reader is plunged into her dream and at some point in the poem we are informed that dreaming is or has been taking place. For example, 'My Father's Neckties' (1978:10) begins:

Last night my color-blind chainsmoking father
who has been dead for fourteen years
stepped up out of a basement tie shop
downtown and did not recognize me.

Later, in the same poem:

Why do I wait years and years to dream this outcome?
My brothers, in whose dreams he must as surely
turn up wearing red ties or polka dots clumsily
knotted, do not speak of their encounters.

The reader is taken through three stanzas of dream narrative before arriving at a discussion of the dream state. The effect is somewhat disruptive to the reader but reflects the hazy combination of thought and reflection that often accompanies the process of waking up.

In her poem 'The Longing to be Saved' (1978:5-6) Kumin is more subtle in her manner of alerting the reader to the dream world. It begins: *When the barn catches fire/ I am wearing the wrong negligee*. Then, at the end of the third stanza and the beginning of the fourth we read, *Three nights of such disquiet/ in and out of dreams as thin as acetate/- until, last of all, it's you/ trapped in the blazing fortress*. This poem stays almost entirely within the dream experience. It incorporates a passage of 'figuralisation' in the use of 'you': we are made more aware of the dreamer as perceiver and experiencer, a consciousness on the story level (Fludernik 1996:197). There is the mention of waking as a disruption to the dream narrative but it is subtle and has the affect of a slight disruption, like a jostling wave in a gently lolling sea. It is obvious that this is a recurring dream in that we are told it takes place at least three times. There are also other indications that she experiences the dream more than once, especially in the fifth and last stanza;

and me in the same gunny sack
and the slamming sounds as the gutted building burns.
Now the family's out, there's no holding back.
I go in to get my turn.

It is difficult to come across a dream poem that keeps the reader within a dream experience for the duration of the poem. Lucille Clifton managed to achieve this task. Her collection, *Next* (2012 [1987]), contains seven poems that have titles beginning with 'my dream about'. Four of them mention dreaming and/or waking within the poem and three of them do not. Arguably the most dreamlike of the seven is 'my dream about time' (2012:281):

a woman unlike myself is running
down the long hall of a lifeless house
with too many windows which open on
a world she has no language for,
running and running until she reaches
at last the one and only door
which she pulls open to find each wall
is faced with clocks and as she watches
all of the clocks strike

NO

This poem captures the dream experience in a number of ways. The speaker of the poem is the dreamer 'I'. There is no punctuation except for a single comma about halfway through the poem which, in combination with the recurrence of 'running' and the line breaks, gives

a strong impression of anxiousness. The lack of capitalisation combined with the lack of punctuation gives the piece fluidity. The ending of the poem, with the capitalised 'NO', is jarring, surprising, and compels the reader to go over the poem again. In other words, the piece provides incident and prompts evaluation.

The Dreams, by Naguib Mahfouz, is a series of 212 dreams which the author developed into 206 stories, or 'nanonovellas', which were originally published chronologically, and as a series, in a Cairo magazine from 2000 to 2006 (Stock 2009)³¹. They were subsequently translated and published in two volumes (the second posthumously). These stories were recorded in prose much like dream reports. An example of these nanonovellas is Dream 3, a self-contained story which reads much like a parable:

At the center of the boat's deck was a mast. A man was bound to it by a rope that wrapped around him from his upper torso to his lower legs. He twisted his head violently both right and left, crying out from his wounded depths, "When will this torture end?"

Three of us looked toward him with sympathy, exchanging confused glances with each other. A voice asked him, "Who's doing this to you?"

The tormented man replied, as his head continued to thrash from side to side, "I'm the one doing it."

"Why?"

"This is the punishment I deserve."

"For what offence?"

"Ignorance," he said, sighing with anger.

"We knew you as one who had a dream, as well as experience," I answered him. "We did not know that rage lies latent in every person."

"You were also ignorant of the facts," he batted back, his voice rising, "that no human being can be stripped of all nobility, no matter how wretched their condition!"

At this we were conquered by sadness and silence.

The dream reports are presented chronologically and represent a type of autobiography, although they do not include any explanatory notes, analysis or reflections on the part of the author.

In *Night Thoughts: 70 dream poems and notes from an analysis*, Sarah Arvio presents a book of dream poems spanning a specific time-period in her life. Arvio's poems can be distinctly identified as lyric poems, as opposed to Leiris' prose poems and Mahfouz's prose. Together with the accompanying notes they form an autobiographical narrative. Arvio's work is unique for two reasons. Firstly, the poems and notes were formed and refined through professional psychoanalysis sessions over the course of many years. Arvio

³¹ in Mahfouz 2009; Translator's Afterward

became engaged in therapy and psychoanalysis after suffering from a semi-psychotic experience (Arvio 2013:notes). As a result her accounts are deeply personal and disturbing. Her poem, 'altar' gives us the following lines:

there's a finger left from the sacrifice
one baby finger lying on the stone
it isn't my finger it is someone's
whose name is young beautiful or else young war

In the poem the incident is provided through the word 'sacrifice'. Later, in the accompanying notes, she relates an episode from her childhood in which she cut her own finger. She also provides a detailed account of post-dream reflection and analysis, which were arrived at through psychoanalysis, linking the images, metaphors, language and movement directly to the event and subsequent emotions of her life. The second reason her book is distinctive is the fact that although the book refers to 70 'dream poems', several of the poems are memories, fantasies, combinations of dreams and combinations of waking and dreaming. Many of the poems, other than 'alter', also discuss the waking background to the dreams, which were arrived at through psychoanalysis (Arvio 2013:notes). Although Arvio creates an autobiography, or self-narrative, through a collection of mostly dream poems she has not specifically written a verse-novel. Nevertheless, Arvio's achievement is unique: the book leans towards a realisation of the continuity hypothesis through the emotionally incident driven dream poems, composed so that the musicality and rhythm of the verses heighten narrativisation.

Dreams and Literature

The dream poem has evolved from existing as a framing device for narrative poems to being the focus of a lyric poem. The dream experience, as portrayed in prose novels, lends itself more to the lyrical and poetic. In all its manifestations the dream as portrayed in these examples of literature captures emotionally driven experiences. The lyric poem in free verse, however, seems able to capture more of the attributes of that authentic experience of dreaming than any other form. It does so by relaying the strangeness of the experience, the discrepancies that arise between dreaming and waking life, the disorientation of falling asleep and waking from a dream, the feeling of existing in an in-between space, and the sense of timelessness. The extremely personal nature of a dream, in that it takes place inside the dreamer's mind free from external sensory input, and in

conformity with the private process of composition, places the reader inside the human consciousness. Prose, in comparison to poetry, can sometimes feel busy, much like the effect of sensory overload during a moment of waking life. When presented together they are able to reflect more accurately the process of identity narrative: the balance of waking moments and dreaming moments, life in prose and life in poetry.

Conclusion

The nineteenth century writer Joseph Popper Lynkaeus provided a fitting analogy of the relationship between prose narrative and poetry, waking and dreaming, when he wrote, ‘I live in prose and poetry. Waking and dreaming often convey the same message to me, but they use different forms or colours or whatever you care to name it’ (Lynkaeus 1987 [1899]:186). I noted earlier that both dream experiences and lyric poems feature fragmentation or segmentivity. Dreams are mainly experienced as images or imagery, as observed in Pound’s statement that a main feature of poetry is phanopoeia (imagism). Dreams can also include symbolism and metaphor, which are common elements of lyric poetry but which also dilute narrativity (Fludernik 1996:354-355).

Neither dreams nor lyric poems contain in full force the traditional elements of a narrative – beginning, middle, end. In the context of Todorov’s definition of narrative, while some dreams and poems can be said to shift between states of equilibrium within the experience, many never achieve a new equilibrium in themselves. In the case of many dream experiences and poetic expressions the new equilibrium is only realised in waking life or in the reader’s/composer’s mind. There are developments within narratology that focus on non-traditional forms of narrative. One of these developments has been the explication of a scalar approach to narrative where, instead of labelling something as narrative (or not), forms and structures of communication are labelled as possessing various degrees of narrativity. However, the scalar approach still relies on the presence, absence, and resolution of plot. But plot is not essential if we focus on *experience* as the defining factor of narrative: if all experiences take place in the mind, and the mind functions in temporal loops, then temporal succession has no place in a narrative experience. Rather, the *process* of emplotment, or narrativisation, functions as a driving force towards an ending as opposed to requiring complete resolution.

I mentioned previously that Fludernik created momentum for non-traditional ideas of narrative when she published her book *Towards a ‘Natural’ Narratology* (1996). It made clear that the reinvention of the concept of narrative is closely linked to the depiction and role of *consciousness* in the literature of the past century (Fludernik 1996:27). Fludernik affirms Revonsuo’s findings in regards to the mind’s power to generate experience. While discussing readers’ tendency to construct narrative, and impose narrative on any given text

even where there is no experiential premise, Fludernik (1996:313) states that ‘the ‘real world’, in turn, is of course a primary-level construct’. She defines the ‘consciousness factor’ as the mediating function on which narrative is built (1996:49). She suggests that:

This consciousness can surface on several levels and in different shapes. Consciousness comprises both lived experientiality and intellectual attempts to deal with experience, and it includes the comprehension of actancy just as it necessarily embraces an understanding of mental processes. (Fludernik 1996:49-50)

She further elaborates on the consciousness factor, which she interprets ‘as a rediscovery of the deep-structural potentialities of the art of oral storytelling within the written medium’ (313) by linking experience to consciousness of that experience, and including reflection as a cognitive process. She goes on to state that ‘narrative modes are therefore all ‘resolved’ or mediated on the basis of cognitive categories which can be identified as categories of human consciousness’ (1996:50). The act of reporting a dream, and/or composing a dream poem, can be described as a cognitive process that ‘resolves’ or narrativises the dream experience. To an extent, this description also links back to the concept of tellability. It has been established that the individual anthropomorphic consciousness is the vehicle for resolving narrative, however, there is also an inescapable societal factor. This factor can be broken down into a few aspects: the human/historical bank of pre-existing narratives; the inevitable fact that most human experience arises from interaction with other humans and thereby inducing emotional response and residue; and the need to share these experiences with other humans, either verbally or through writing (and of course any other medium of communication that may or may not have been invented yet).

An interesting link between the work of Fludernik, Ricoeur, and Fine and Leighton is the emphasis on the social element of narrative formation or experience. Fludernik states that ‘my recourse to natural narrative therefore resembles Alfred Schutz’s sociological recourse to everyday experience as a prototype of human relations’ (Fludernik 1996:17). A more detailed outline of the everyday experience is provided by Fine and Leighton: ‘Dreams are emergent ‘experiences’ that reflect, in unsolicited and uncontrollable fashion, the interaction of self, culture, and structure, as people test and rehearse strategies for change and reinforce strategies for stability’ (Fine and Leighton 1993:96). Considering Ricoeur’s theory regarding narrative and emplotment, these strategies for stability may be synonymous with the process of narrativisation.

Both dreams and lyric poems happen, and are experienced, in the context of narratives. A dream is experienced during a pause in a person's identity narrative, during sleep, when the mind (self) steps back from the narrational journey and examines a moment/theme/issue/character/etc. Even though the experience often involves fundamental elements of narrative, such as a crisis, and is often tellable, I would argue that it is the telling of the experience and/or the cognitive/action based resolution of that crisis in wakefulness that gives the dream the status of narrative. It is the meaningfulness of the experience that prompts evaluation and hence action. Indeed, dreams are known for prompting change and/or movement in wakefulness. And dreams of memories (previous life experiences) reinforce identity narratives and character roles that are assumed within those narratives.

Likewise, lyric poems are experienced as a pause in our meta-narrative, during reflective times, when the mind of the reader/composer steps back from the narrational journey and examines or illustrates a moment/theme/issue/character/etc. Even though a lyric poem often involves rhythm and movement, which are aspects of narrative, it is the writing by the composer and the reading of the poem, often following an incident that has prompted evaluation within their own narratives that suggests the lyric poem is part of our meta-narrative.

Dreams and poems, which are both creative products of the mind, exhibit narrativity. Kilroe (2000) states that dreams in the form of dream reports constitute a narrative text. But the dream experience itself, the process by which the dream is communicated by our mind to ourselves and remembered upon waking, can be seen to have more in common with a lyric poem than with a prose narrative text. Similarly, there has been some commentary on the presence of attenuated narrational structures in lyric poems (McHale 2009). Hogan (2003) and Hühn (2010) have suggested that the narrative of a poem often arises from its broader context and constitutes a narrative 'moment', and McHale (2009) suggests that it arises from the movement of language and idea that is found in the poem itself. A dream experience also lies within the context of the dreamer's life events, society and culture, and often constitutes what may later be termed as a 'narrative moment'. There is evidence that many remembered dreams act as a trigger, catalyst or inspiration for the dreamer in their waking life (Knudson et al., 2006). Like poems, many dreams also provide commentary, observation and description of the dreamer's world. The work of

many poets, including Chaucer, Milton, Leiris, Kumin, and Clifton, by representing dream as poem has managed to capture the lyric elements of the dream experience. We are also able to explore the narrativity of poems in the context of dream narratives and in the context of dreams as narrative moments in the self-narrative of the dreamer.

The capacity for both dreams and poetry to evoke story-worlds also contributes to the dream poem's efficacy as narrative device. Regardless of the involuntary nature of dreams, the possible world generated by the experience is even more powerful than that generated by a lyric poem. Incorporating the idea of a dream as an unconscious work of art, it is pertinent to consider States' discussion of Nelson Goodman:

who feels that all virtual worlds created by our species are, so to speak, created equal in that they contribute to our understanding of the so-called "actual" world: "the arts must be taken no less seriously than the sciences as modes of discovery, creation, and enlargement of knowledge in the broad sense of advancement of the understanding" (States 2003:7)

Dreams and dream poems can be perceived to have strong experiential narrativity based on the following attributes: they are emotionally charged and therefore the action in both is emotionally driven and goal oriented; they create a unity of temporality in that they provide links to the past, present, and future, hence increasing their interpretability as narrative; they both constitute direct access to anthropomorphic consciousness; and the 'I' of the dreamer/poet is locatable in the story-world evoked by the dream. Fludernik states that 'where experientiality resolves into words and their music, narrativity also finds its ultimate horizon' (1996:310). Therefore both dreams and lyric poems, while they possess low narrativity and are not constitutive of traditional narrative on their own, are experienced in the process of traditional narrative, function as pivotal narrative moments, embody experiential narrativity and, when combined as dream poems, can serve as a powerful narrative device.

In order to create a platform from which one can experience and explore an intersection of dreaming, poetry and narrative, I have written a novella – experimental narrative – in which the characters' waking moments are expressed in prose and their dreaming/sleeping moments are presented as sequences of poems. This novella, a creative outcome of this enquiry, draws on the long history of the dream narrative and, more specifically, the dream poem within Western literature. The creative outcome of this project explores and demonstrates the interconnectedness of poetry and narrative, dreaming and waking, the

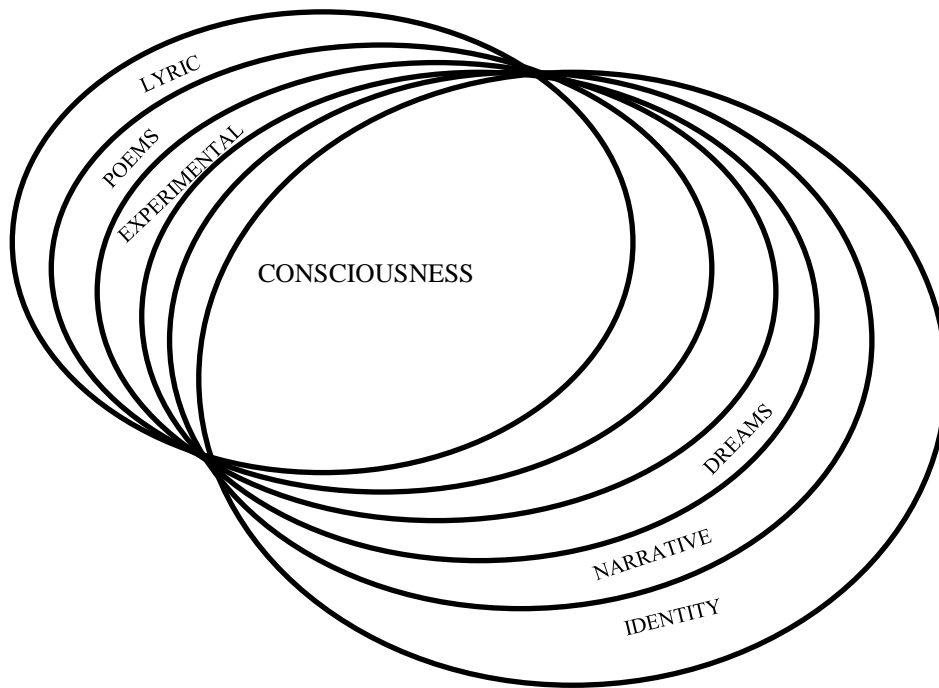
moment and the journey. At its heart it incorporates the issue of continuity and thereby creates a platform from which these ideas can be tested.

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the novella may be categorised as speculative dystopic fiction. The setting of the novella is largely a result of the influence of my own dream experiences, which are often imbued with a sense of the future and/or timelessness and include cosmological imagery. The format and contents have also been affected by the discourses that have been discussed in this exegesis. Through the process of composing dream poems and constructing a larger narrative around those dream poems I have found that my experiences of dreaming ‘feel’ narratival; however, they inspire a more lyrical response, and the ensuing lyrics inspire more narrativisation. The process of writing in this way therefore captures the dreamer (me) in a cyclical dance. There is more scope for research here, and the possibilities regarding the use of dream poems as creative device, narratival or otherwise, have certainly not been exhausted.

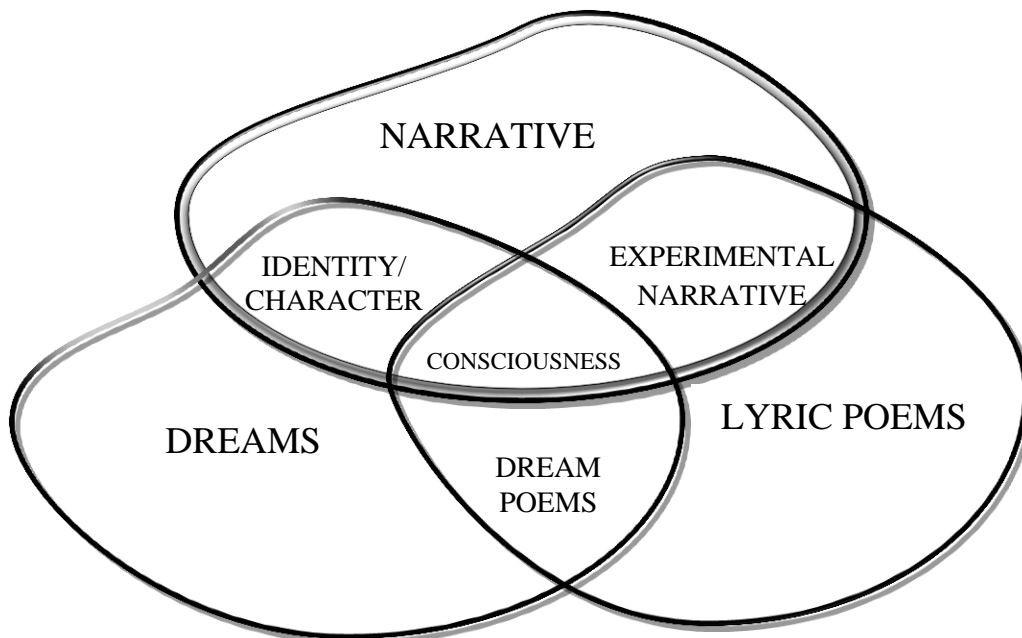
It is possible that, by consciously reflecting on the role of dreams and dreaming, and by expressing that reflection through a literary and artistic process, we might draw closer to the thin veil still floating between sleeping and waking, poetry and narrative, being and doing. And it is through this process that we might reveal these states as points along the gradient, or scale, of ‘dreaming’ or ‘consciousness’, remembering that in order to be creative in waking life it is necessary to be ‘asleep to the world’. Foulkes summarises the scientific parallel of this cultural irony:

And so, the ultimate paradoxes of dream psychology may be these: dreaming reveals not the unconscious but consciousness; spontaneous imagination reveals the growth of the underpinnings of deliberate thought; and dreaming, that inauthentically experienced simulation, reveals the evolving possibility of authentic experience. (1990:53)

In light of Foulke's summary we can replace the grading of narrative with a **never-ending spiral of continuity**:



which can also be seen as a **deconstructed moebius ring of consciousness**:



Almansi and Beguin state that a ‘corresponding unfolding model’ is required in order to translate the spiralling progression of dreams (1987:7). I would like to suggest that the true human experience, whether during waking or dreaming, is closer to the spiral than the straight line – the spiral with no beginning or end, the ring that loops back onto itself. Lyric poetry contains an element of the spiral, and infuses this element (of our reality) into fiction. ‘Natural’ narratology, or *experiential* narrative, is an attempt to bring us closer to our reality. The lyric dream poem accesses the dream experience which consists of pre-existing narratives and newly invented narratives: a process of artistic invention and cognition which occurs during the activity of dreaming consciousness. The lyric poem, as a form that is largely achieved during waking consciousness, serves to portray that process as faithfully as possible. Therefore, the continuity hypothesis, as manifested through the juxtaposition of dream poetry and waking prose, demonstrates our cyclical reality and highlights the far-reaching importance and implications of *experiential* narrative.

Part Two

Caught in the Dance

To our tired and distracted musing, what is visible in the carpet (the design of which never repeats itself) is probably the pattern for earthly existence; the reverse of the weft, the other side of the world (suppression of time and space or the insulting or glorious magnification of both); and the weft, the dreams.

(Moisés Neman, maker and seller of carpets)

Prologue

Maryam was born in an orchard. Her mother gave birth under a plum tree at three o'clock on a summer afternoon. Her father and the orchard-hand who helped with the birthing both attested to her glorious smile, her sparkling eyes and her swift but elegant entrance into the world. She was a quiet and happy infant and grew to be a troublesome toddler. Her mother frequently said that Maryam got in the way because she was always trying to help. She had a kind and affectionate nature and so was quickly forgiven for all her offences.

She had a penchant for eating plums. The chickens often suffered her attempts at cleaning and reorganising the hen house. Her father was always busy in the orchard and her mother was always busy in the kitchen. Her parents began to call her Miri, just to save time.

When Miri was four she had an encounter with the chickens. Some chooks were hatching and she really wanted to see what was going on. She got very close to the mother hen and disturbed her. The hen attacked – Miri's father grabbed her as she was running past trying to avoid the hen. 'The chicken got angry.'

Her father held her still and crouched next to her. 'What happened?'

'I just wanted to see the baby chooks when they hatch.'

'Mothers are very protective of their babies. And the chooks belong to her first. You need to be patient. Once the babies have seen their mother and feel safe and happy and their mother is sure that her babies are well then you will be able to visit with them. You have to wait your turn. There is a time for everything. Don't ever be scared that you will miss out.'

Miri looked down at her feet as she shuffled them in the grass. She was upset that she had done the wrong thing. 'Yes papa.'

Her father gave her a hug and then went to check on the hen and her eggs from a safe distance. When he came back they went inside the house and had lemonade while mother had tea. Miri stayed away from the chickens for the rest of the day.

The next afternoon her father found her by the pond, polishing some stones in the water. 'Miri, I want to show you something. Come with me.' Miri got up and followed her father. She faltered when they got near the chickens but when her father gestured to her to keep

coming she did. The mother hen was sitting in the middle of a patch of hay, looking relaxed and content, every now and then gently pecking her chooks to stop them from straying too far. The baby chooks were tiny cream feathered creatures. They nestled into their mother's wings and feathers. One of them kept trying to waddle off but the mother pecked him back into place.

Miri's father indicated to her to sit down on the ground about half a metre from the chickens. She sat there, content, and watched patiently as the chooks and their mother interacted. Her father left her there and when he came back an hour later she was holding one of the chooks. There didn't seem to be any upset chickens or signs of commotion. 'Papa, the mother let her baby come to me. When the baby got to my leg I opened my hand and he hopped in.' She looked up at him with a beaming smile.

'Very good Miri. Very good.'

When Miri was five she loved getting up early to see the sun rise. And she loved watching her mother put together the pot of tea. The sky changed colour through the kitchen window as her mother measured teaspoons of tea into the little porcelain pot. And as she poured the just boiled water onto the tea the steam rose in spirals against the deep orange sky. Once the pot was three quarters full her mother put the lid on it and set it on top of a miniature grill with a tea light lit underneath it.

Miri returned her attention to the sun emerging from behind earth and tree. She slipped out onto the veranda and stood with her little bare feet and nightie, eyes closed and hands stretched out in front of her, to catch the warmth of the new sunlight. It gathered there, heating up the lines on her palms, the tips of her fingers, the joints and the sinews.

After a while her mother called her inside: 'Miri, the tea is ready.' Miri hurried back to the kitchen, leaned on the bench and raised herself to her tiptoes, expectantly. Mother lifted the lid from the teapot and swiped some of the steam in Miri's direction. Miri inhaled deeply, and as she did she could see the bushes outside with their delicate yellow petal flowers, the narrow needle-like green leaves, and the thin reddish branches.

'Doesn't it smell lovely?' Mother and Miri looked at each other and said 'Mmmm.'

Then they laughed happily as Mother grabbed three tea cups from the shelf and began to pour.

Sometimes her Uncle Mark and Aunt Diana would come to visit. They always arrived unannounced. Mark was Mother's cousin and they had grown up together. Mark and Diana were very affectionate and very talkative. They would sit and chat with Maryam's parents for hours into the night. She crouched by her bedroom door and tried to listen to their conversations but rarely understood what they were talking about – they used mysterious words like 'traffic', 'politics', 'el nino', 'space station'. In the end, she would fall asleep by the door, listening to the sound of their voices.

When Miri was six, and Mark and Diana were visiting, all five of them went on a special trip. There was a small mountain near the orchard and Father said it was a good mountain for hiking. Miri had never been away from the orchard before so she was very excited. Mother was not sure that Miri should come but Father said it would be fine and that there were four adults to look out for her. They set out early one morning, before the sun had risen properly, when the sky was still pink. The adults carried backpacks and Miri carried a small sack with her own portion of water and food.

Mother had gotten her to dress in trousers and shirt and to wear a jacket and a hat. She had said it might be a hot day, not that anyone could ever accurately predict the weather anymore. It took about an hour to get to the foothills of the mountain. At that point Mother anxiously checked on Miri but Miri was doing well. She did however need to rest. Father said that from then on, if it got too steep or just too tiring, he would carry Miri piggy-back style.

They began hiking around the base of the mountain, slowly working their way upwards in a zigzag. There were plants that Miri hadn't seen before. There were also little animals and birds. But the higher up they travelled the more everything seemed dry and lifeless. At one point Mark slid on a loose rock and saved himself by spreading his legs wide and grabbing the brush with both hands. Miri was struggling at this point so Father passed his pack to Mother and swung her onto his back. She wrapped her little arms around his neck and rested her head on his shoulder, watching the orchard recede as they climbed higher and further around the mountain.

Just when the orchard had completely disappeared around the side of the mountain they stopped. Father put Miri down and she looked ahead of her in shock. Before them, in the distance and on the far side of the mountain, was a vast dry plain. Beyond the plain was a

place without dirt, grass, or trees. This ‘beyond’ place was obscured by lots of low grey clouds – it was like the air changed colour after the plain.

‘That’s the city where we live, Miri, your aunt Diana and I,’ Mark said. Miri held Mark’s hand, staring into the distance and trying to comprehend.

‘But it’s so dark. And so far away,’ she said. ‘Does it take you ages to get there?’

‘No,’ Diana said, ‘not very long; a little over an hour. The car goes very fast once we are away from the orchard.’ She said this as she looked at Mother and winked indicating that this was as much as she would say for now. Mother smiled. They sat down beside the track and had some lunch. Miri wandered around, looking out toward the city and skipping over dry tufts of grass.

Eventually she found some purple lupins growing in a shallow ditch. She leaned over and picked a few and then followed her nose back to the grown-ups. They had already unwrapped the fried eggs and potatoes her mother had cooked that morning. Miri could smell the summer savoury in the omelette and unceremoniously dropped the flowers as she sat down to eat. Diana carefully picked up the lupins and cradled them, her eyes wide. ‘Well, you don’t see these every day.’

‘I do,’ Miri said.

The grown-ups smiled. Diana nodded. ‘Yes Miri, I meant that they are not as common as they used to be.’

‘Oh...Why?’

‘It’s the soil,’ Mark said. ‘The soil used to have more food for the different plants.’

‘Can we add food to the soil?’

Mark was looking over Miri’s head, out towards the dark horizon. ‘Maybe.’

‘You should keep these flowers and frame them,’ Diana said, putting them down next to Miri’s pack.

‘Frame flowers?’

‘Your mother and I will show you, this evening.’

After they had eaten and chatted and rested they headed back to the orchard. Father carried Miri down the slopes, the lupins waving in her hand.

That evening Mother, Diana, and Miri went outside, around the back of the chicken coop, through a trap door and down the stairs to Mother's workshop. The walls were lined with shelving, some were open and some were covered. There were a couple of doors in one of the walls. Diana turned all the lights on and headed to a basin at the far end of the room. Underneath the basin was a cupboard that held flat weights of various sizes. Mother cleared a bench and got a stool for Miri to stand on. They matched the weights to the two different sized sprigs of lupin and put them aside to press.

When Miri was eight she spent a lot of time in her mother's workshop. She pressed flowers, she dried seeds and tea leaves and fruit, and she sat quietly and watched the grown-ups move boxes of odd assortments into the adjoining rooms. One day, after Mark and Diana had left and Father was back in the house and Mother was still in the anteroom, Miri walked in to see her mother surrounded by colour.

The anteroom was lit by a single kerosene lamp, and it was filled with books, paintings, metal bowls and plates engraved with pictures, ceramics, crystal vases, embroidered drapes, rugs and carpets, and items Miri could not identify. Mother turned at the sound of Miri's gasp. She was sitting on the floor, cleaning a ceramic bowl. She gestured for Miri to join her.

'Diana found this last week,' she said. 'It was in a kitchen pantry in an abandoned apartment block.' Miri crouched down and touched the glossy white bowl, the blue patterns that looked like clouds and birds and mountains. She stood and started to look around and realised that everything had been organised into sections. After a while she found a small rug rolled up by the door, amongst the books, and carried it over to the middle, unrolling it next to her mother.

'Found something interesting?'

'It wasn't with the others.'

'No. That one is ours.' Mother leaned over and tenderly straightened the tassels. Miri studied the pattern of pink and green flowers, flowering trees, and grazing deer that bordered the rug. In the bottom left hand corner a hunter was astride a horse, beneath a tree, his bow aimed at a reindeer standing in the centre, at the foot of a mountain that stretched into the top right hand corner. Some of the colours were soft and shiny and others were dull and fluffy.

‘Where did it come from?’ Miri asked.

‘It belonged to my grandmother. She was born in a different land, far away, and she brought this with her when she moved.’ Mother paused then pulled the rug closer. ‘The shiny threads are silk, the dull threads are wool. The tree is called a poplar.’

‘Why did she move?’

‘Sometimes it is not possible to continue living in the same place. Something happens to the land... or the people. When that time comes we have to find a new land, a new place, to live.’

‘But we don’t have to find a new place.’ Miri saw her mother frowning. ‘Mother?’

Mother rolled up the rug and put it back by the books. ‘Come Miri. Let’s go find your father.’

Maryam’s ninth birthday

‘Maryam... it’s time to go.’ There was a note of finality in Diana’s voice as she stood in the driveway, waiting by the open car door. Her face, usually as bright as burnished bronze, was drawn with exhaustion but she smiled encouragingly at her niece.

Miri stared straight ahead as if she hadn’t heard. She could smell the sweet tartness of hot plum jam brewing in her mother’s kitchen. She could hear her father singing in the orchard. She could see the peach-coloured horizon of summer nights when the Evening Star dangled amidst the changing colours of the sky. She could not understand exactly how or why it had happened – the storm had been sudden and harsh and fatal, accompanied by some very unnatural phenomena. Diana had stayed with her in the bunker under the fields while strange men with shiny gadgets had scoured the property looking for survivors.

She had tried to explain. ‘The earth is very sick. Your Uncle Mark works with a group of scientists who set up the orchard as an experiment, to see how much the land can be repaired.’

‘But we live here...’ Miri’s voice was soft and she stayed huddled on the mattress.

‘Yes. You lived here because your Father was a very good horticulturalist, one of the best.’ She put another blanket on Miri’s shivering form and sighed.

She continued, almost murmuring to herself now, ‘The influence of the Energy Committee is becoming weaker by the day, but right now they still have enough power to destroy us. We have to stay beneath their notice.’

Miri hadn’t slept much in the following weeks. A few days ago Uncle Mark had arrived and announced that it was safe to leave but Miri didn’t feel safe. If they would just let her go back into the house she might find her parents. From where she stood now, the frame of the house was barely standing.

Miri reluctantly got into the car and closed her eyes. She awoke to a loud humming, looked out through the car windows and froze. Diana heard her stirring and turned to see the child’s face pale with shock, eyes large and stunned. Maryam could not process the new world she had been thrown into. She struggled to spot a single tree amidst the bricks and concrete and metal. The air had a strange grey quality to it. The sun was pale and its light was even paler. There were cars in front and cars behind. They were driving past a large red brick building, tiles from its roof broken and scattered around the foundations, the windows cracked in several places. A long blue tube suddenly flew past between the car and the building. Maryam gasped and jumped in her seat.

‘It’s ok honey. It’s just the train,’ Diana said softly. She stretched out her hand, palm up, waiting. Maryam turned and looked into her eyes, full of love. She put her small hand in her aunt’s and felt that love envelop her like a warm blanket till her heart was calm and quiet. Mark started humming the song about blackbirds and Diana joined in. Another train whooshed past.

Maryam leaned to the side to see if she could follow the train with her eyes but it was long gone. Instead she saw a green butterfly floating slowly through the gray new world.

Maryam

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
Whisper of running streams, and winter lightning.
The wild thyme unseen and the wild strawberry,
The laughter in the garden, echoed ecstasy
Not lost, but requiring, pointing to the agony
Of death and birth.

T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 1944 'East Coker' – III

Father takes hammer to chisel,
marks the stone once more
Light is fading fast when he

leaves. I creep up to the stone,
run my fingers over rough grey,
trace the freshly engraved

crescent. In a moment
I might throw myself against the wall,
arms outspread, cheek and chest

pressed against the cold, vision
and memory. The moon is high
when I curl up moon-shadow,

I hear Father's warm laughter
above. I fall into dreamful sleep

The skies roll past at great speed
the years number nine and ten
Winding on the side of the hill

I stop beneath the crescent
I think of strong hands, a warm laugh
I wind my way up the rise,

hammer to chisel once more,
complete the pattern, cast
my shadow onto the stone

Maryam's fifteenth birthday

'Sarah, come on! We're going to miss it!' I waved frantically at my friend from the eighteenth floor landing. Sarah was struggling more than usual with tonight's climb. Sam was already at the top and was yelling out random descriptions of the fire-show: they had already started.

'There're a lot of purple fish-shaped ones this year! Over the concrete ship sails!'

'Wait for me Miri...' Sarah's voice floated up ahead of her. I grabbed her hand as she reached the landing and pulled her up the last flight of stairs to the roof of our apartment building. Sarah bent over, gasping to catch her breath, while I whipped out my phidget to take snaps of the display in the sky. Sarah had been cheerfully delicate for as long as I had known her. I first saw her six years ago, standing in her doorway across the hall, wispy blonde hair floating near her eyes. Her smile had stayed with me, even though I was still caught up in another time and place.

'Don't forget the sunflowers around the moon,' Sam murmured as he stared, enamoured, at the pale and fuzzy orb almost obscured by flashes of yellow fireworks. Sarah, who was fully recovered from her efforts, rolled her eyes at him. I laughed and happily proceeded to take a few snaps of the favoured scene. Sam's father, Arthur, used to work with Mark's group as a science illustrator and Sam had a knack for locating the oddest images. Mark said Arthur died in an accident – a sink hole appeared while he was out in the field a couple of years ago. Sam now lived with some of his older cousins downstairs.

After another five minutes had passed, and the light show had fizzled into smoke, we sat down on the concrete to review the snaps. The show was reminiscent of how I had woken up that morning. Lots of flashing lights, sounds, and shapes, but it was all scattered. There was no beginning, and no end. My head felt heavy and my eyes couldn't focus. I reached my hand out but there was nothing to touch. I felt as though I had missed something important – it had happened but I just couldn't remember what it was.

I was clearly swiping through the pictures too fast for Sam – he reached over and swiped back to the first one. Sarah groaned and started nudging my elbow to take charge again. We all paused and looked up when we heard slow heavy footsteps, getting closer and

closer. The rooftop door opened. A pair of bushy eyebrows wiggled at us and we scowled, trying not to laugh.

‘You should all be in your respective apartments and bedrooms right now,’ Mark admonished, not so seriously. Sarah pulled a sour face and jumped up. ‘I should get going. Don’t forget the phidget tomorrow. Goodnight all.’ Mark held the door open for her as she hurried away. Sam was staring up again with a faraway look.

Mark shook his head. ‘Come on Sam, you too.’

Sam got up and strolled distractedly towards the door. Suddenly he stopped and looked straight at me.

‘What did the sky look like when you lived at the orchard?’

I stared back at him. Maybe if I held my breath they would forget the question and move on. Mark closed his eyes and sighed. He was a kind man and he and Diana loved me as if I were their daughter. But they were not my parents. And sometimes Mother’s face and Father’s voice invaded my thoughts, as though they were right there with me, as though I was still little and we were out in the field, star-gazing.

Just when I thought they were going to leave it came to me: ‘Like a black ocean with diamonds floating on it.’

Sam’s eyes grew wide and he turned his head up towards the sky. His hand reached up as if to touch a star. ‘I’m going up there one day,’ he said. Mark smiled and tousled his hair. ‘Wouldn’t we all love that.’ He steered the young man through the door and down the stairs, lecturing him about the benefits of sleep as he went. I followed slowly, feeling a little cold, trying not to let them see me cry.

She lies,
in deep sleep, oblivious to the world,
her mind caught in a fine web
of other-worldly colours.
Her body is a weight
in the centre of her feathery bed,
and all around her, overlapping,
are smallish green snakes.
They slide and squirm to get on top,
sharp fangs sink
into her flesh,
and they repeat the invasion
again and again,
frustrated,
since she refuses to bleed.
A large Hand reaches
into the picture
and picks a snake off her sleeping frame,
carries
and drops it on a pile of snakes.
The Hand
removes them one by one
while she sleeps
and lucidity claims my mind.

Two months before Maryam's eighteenth birthday

Mark pushed against the iron gate and swore in frustration.

'It's ok Uncle Mark; we can try again next year,' Sam said, picking up his backpack and making ready to go. I didn't make a move. I was sure Mark wasn't going to give up so easily. Mark's brow's furrowed. 'This was meant to be your birthday present.'

'Besides,' Sarah said, 'who knows where we'll all be next year?'

Sam turned back. 'We'll try again for Miri's birthday.'

Mark grabbed his walking cane and took a wild swing at the gate – the cane cracked down the middle and Mark fell back onto the boulder. I climbed up and crouched next to him, 'Dammit Uncle Mark! Is this really worth it?'

'It should still be there, behind the gate, I'm sure of it. People have just forgotten it exists, like they forgot about the orchard.'

I paused. 'The orchard isn't there anymore.'

'This is different. This has been behind walls. People always forget about stuff they put away behind walls.' He shook his head. 'Besides, the bunker is still there, under the field.' He said this in a hushed tone.

I looked down at Sam. He ran his fingers through his hair and after a moment he nodded.

'Right,' he said, 'those hinges look like they're pretty much glued together so we might need an alternative plan.'

'Climbing?' Sarah asked softly. Mark smiled at her. 'I can't climb but I'd be satisfied if the three of you got in.'

I stood up. 'It's almost sunrise. Let's start scouting the periphery. Sam, you head east. Sarah and I will go west.'

We helped Mark down and he settled himself in between the boulder and a shrub of chamomiles.

Sarah and I started walking, following the wall. There were bits that looked weaker, weathered and cracked, but overall the concrete was pretty solid. Almost nothing was growing near the concrete and the rocks were too small. The sun was rising higher and I could see Sarah struggling to keep up.

'Do you want to rest?' I asked her.

'No.'

I turned to look at her face. It was stony and impassive. She hated being coddled and she was stubborn about it.

‘What I wouldn’t give for one of Diana’s ice-creams right now.’

‘It’s too hot.’

‘Too many flies.’

‘Too much dust.’ Sarah’s face cracked into a grin as she recited Diana’s favourite excuse for not eating outside on the roof.

I felt the cool breeze before I noticed the tree. We quickened our pace till we stood in its shade. The trunk was wide and wrinkled, its roots stuck out of the ground and disappeared beneath the wall. The far side of the tree almost caressed the concrete as it stretched up and beyond, its branches thick and heavy, hanging low on either side. The smell of the leaves had been released in the heat and mingled with the dust.

Sarah gave me a leg up to the lowest fork in the tree trunk. I climbed up the branches that were leaning against the wall, using the wall as a support, till I reached the edge of the concrete. The foliage was surprisingly thick. ‘I can’t see much,’ I called down.

‘Will it get us over?’

‘Yes, I think so.’

I climbed back down and we made good time back to Mark. When we got there Sam was waiting for us.

‘Don’t you look scruffy,’ he said, pulling a twig out of my collar. ‘There was no sign of you at the half-way mark so I came back.’ He looked apologetic.

Sarah was still panting and fumbling for her puffer and Sam helped her sit down.

‘I think you need more time,’ I said carefully. ‘We can come back tomorrow.’

Sarah put her hand up in protest. ‘No. I’ll be fine in a minute.’

I shrugged. ‘Suit yourself.’ I turned to Sam and Mark. ‘We found the perfect spot – a great big gnarled eucalypt that leans right over the wall, as though someone meant to leave it there.’

I climbed up to the wall but I couldn’t see much and it was getting late so...’

Sam was already walking. ‘I think we should make a move now if we want to be back in the city before dark.’

Sam was searching for a foothold by the time Sarah and I arrived back at the tree. The sun was right over our heads and we could hear the buzz of the city across the miniature

wasteland. Leaves and twigs fell sporadically as Sam made his way further up. I started the climb, pausing to give Sarah a hand.

The three of us sat on the concrete ledge and held some of the thinner branches aside. I inhaled sharply, turned and saw Sam grinning at me. ‘After you,’ he said. I wrapped myself around a larger branch and started climbing down. Sarah coughed nervously. ‘Try not to land on the back of that giraffe over there.’ I laughed. It felt like we were at school again. I could hear Sam quizzing Sarah: ‘How do you know it’s a giraffe?’

‘You know, Mark and Diana have those books in the workshop.’

‘Is that what you tell your students during question and answer time?’

‘My students are five years old, they don’t ask stupid questions.’

I was at the end of the branch now and there was a two to three metre drop to the ground. I looked around for a soft spot and, eyeing a patch of grass, gently swayed towards it and let go.

‘What was this place?’ Sarah asked, once we were all on the ground.

‘I’m guessing a zoo?’ I suggested.

‘A zoo. Where are the fences then?’

‘Do you honestly think there would be fences left after all these years?’

Sam got out his phidget and started scanning the scenery. ‘If we were on a different continent I would think we had wandered across a safari park.’

‘How do you think they survived all this time?’

‘There must be another way in and out. We must’ve missed something. Besides, they don’t seem to be doing so well. Look at the ribs on that gazelle.’

The gazelle in question lifted his head from the tough brown weeds he was attempting to chew and eyed us nervously. His soft hairless belly drooped, his antlers were dull and the spirals were chipped at the edges. He seemed paralysed as I drew closer. His eyes were like glass and I thought I could see myself in the black irises.

I could hear my name coming from far away, something of a whisper, and I tried to turn towards the voice but the gazelle would not let me go. Someone grabbed my hand and suddenly Sam was standing in front of me. His mouth formed the words, ‘Turn around.’

The world rushed back in through my eyes and ears and I turned quickly. I found myself incredibly close to the leg of a giraffe.

The giraffe was facing away from us, her tail swishing back and forth. Her long neck shook slightly. I could feel the heat of her body in front of me. Sam was still holding my hand. I looked around to find Sarah close behind us. The air had gone very still. The giraffe's legs had old scars, lots of little gashes around the calves, where the fur had never grown back. The hooves were badly cracked and infected.

There was a scuttling sound as the gazelle finally moved. The giraffe, as if disturbed by the sound, took a step back towards us, forcing us off the grass and onto the dirt. And I saw the lion.

Sam moved closer and bent his head till our ears were almost touching.

'We should run,' I whispered.

'We can't go back up the wall. We have to find somewhere to hide.'

The lion shook his thin mane and glanced in our direction for a moment before locking eyes with the gazelle.

I leaned into Sam. 'Stick close to the edges?'

'Yes.'

'We need to grab Sarah.'

Sam turned his head slightly and found Sarah standing stock still. 'I can see her,' he said.

'On the count of three. One. Two. Three...'

We ran. We headed away from the battle and stayed by the wall as much as we could. I could hear the giraffe bleating in the growing distance, almost like an alarm. I looked back briefly to see dust being kicked up by its hooves as it galloped in the opposite direction. The gazelle was already down.

Three pilots, three planes –
we fly in formation over plains below.
Silk white scarves flutter
behind our heads, cheeks rosy
in the cold wind.

The woman with short curls
smiles and waves, to my left.
The man with short curls
just smiles, to my right.

Three pilots, three planes –
we fly over jungle, vast, dark and dense,
eagerly guarding its secrets.
My hands begin to sweat and slide
in brown leather gloves.

Singing over a deep crater –
an explosion beneath us –
air retracts, earth flies,
stains the silk scarves.

Three pilots –
we crouch in a cave on the crater rim.
We watch trenches and ravines
eat rocks and pebbles
and trees. She stands

and murmurs the words –
'Remember the heart'
we quietly chant as Earth
swallows itself.

I sat up too fast. My head was spinning and pounding. I felt something nudge my leg and swatted at it, scaring away a small furry creature. ‘Sam. Sarah. Sam,’ I croaked.

‘I’m here.’ Sam’s arm came around my shoulders and held me still while my head cleared.

‘Where’s Sarah?’

‘She’s at the mouth of the cave, keeping watch. You hit your head pretty hard, we were worried.’ He moved so he was kneeling in front of me. His face came into focus and I saw his dark eyes examining my face.

We had been running for what felt like hours. We had dodged any number of animals. Sam had spotted the dip on the side of the hill, behind the thinning line of trees. Just as we had reached the cave mouth I had seen the elephant. A lone senile giant, his skin rolling in large wrinkles, he stood quietly amongst the trees. As if he could smell the three humans he turned his head towards us and his large grey ears started loudly flapping back and forth, snapping dust into the air around him. Sarah had called out and I had turned and tripped right into the cave wall.

‘How long have we been here?’

‘Not long. It’s not dark yet.’ Sam glanced towards the entrance. ‘She feels terrible.’

‘It’s not her fault.’

‘Still, she feels terrible.’ He stood and I took a moment to look around.

The cave was about the size of a small flat. The roof was just high enough so that Sam could stand without crouching but low enough that he ducked slightly as he walked around. The cave walls were slightly damp and there seemed to be another opening, possibly to a tunnel, and possibly to a water source.

Sam saw where I was looking and shook his head. ‘I tried to go down there. It’s too dark and too narrow. And we don’t know where it will come out.’

‘I’m surprised there are no animals in here.’

‘Well, except for these furry little things.’ Sam pointed to a couple of small catlike animals watching us intently from near the tunnel entrance.

‘So, back the way we came?’

‘I think so.’

‘How are you feeling?’ Sarah asked softly as she walked in.

I smiled up at her. ‘I’m fine.’

‘I’m sorry, I panicked.’

‘It’s fine,’ I said more firmly. I held out my hand and Sarah grabbed it and helped me up.

‘What’s the plan?’ Sarah asked, as we stood in line with the trees.

‘We head back to the tree, stick close to the wall,’ Sam said. ‘There’s no need to run, there’s plenty of light left.’

We trekked slowly, pausing every twenty odd metres. Sometimes we could hear elephants in the distance, and sometimes we could hear scuttling in the brush but we didn’t see any more animals.

Sam indicated for us to slow down as we approached the clearing by the tree. I knew what he was worried about. We hadn’t seen what happened between the lion and the giraffe – there might be a body on the scene and the lion might be close by, waking up for his evening hunt.

But when we arrived there was no sign of the two animals except for the severely disturbed ground on which they had battled. On the edge of the scene, on the other side of the hanging tree branches, was a small fresh zebra carcass. I kept my eyes focused on Sarah struggling above me, as Sam gave me a leg up and I grabbed hold of a branch.

Mark was waiting for us where we had left him. He waved when he saw us coming and was shaking by the time we arrived.

‘What happened?’ he asked, his brows furrowed.

‘We’ll tell you once we’re home,’ I said, helping him up.

Four months after Maryam’s eighteenth birthday

Sarah was still not herself. We had talked about the zoo late at night when the rest of the world was asleep. We had pored over Mark’s old *Nat Geo* books and done sketches of anything we could remember. But Sarah didn’t joke around anymore and was more easily startled.

The weather was chilly and Sarah and I had taken to sitting on the landing inside a little tent and surrounded by thermal blankets. Sam showed up on the rooftop in a black parka, looking like he was ready to go out.

‘What have you done now?’ I asked, pointing my flashlight at his face.

‘I left my phidget at the observatory and my assignment notes are on it.’

‘Isn’t that, like, your entrance exam for flight training?’

‘Yes. And the network is down.’

‘When isn’t it?’

‘So we have to go up there and get it tonight.’

‘We?’

He grinned and pointed his own flashlight at us. Sarah flinched and pulled her blanket tighter around her shoulders. ‘You guys go. I’ll see you tomorrow.’ She got up to leave but Sam and I both stopped her.

‘Sarah,’ I hugged her, ‘please come. We won’t take long.’

‘And if the South dome is open we can have a look through the telescope,’ Sam added quickly. Sarah’s face brightened and after a moment she agreed to come.

By the time we reached the top of the hill we were all a lot warmer and out of breath. The red-brown bricks were covered in moss around the bottom of the buildings and from about halfway up transitioned into a dry sandy texture. The wild weather changes had wreaked havoc on the old buildings but their position on the hill had somehow protected them from human interference and they had remained relatively functional. Now the site had been filled with new equipment and housed student labs, a few obs, and offices of the Department for Protection.

Sam swiped a button-sized key over a panel above the doorknob and we filed inside where Sarah and I ran into his stationary back.

‘There’s a lamp on in the South Dome,’ Sam said. We peered over his shoulder.

‘Is that a problem?’ I asked.

‘It depends on who it is.’

All of a sudden the foyer lights came on. We blinked as we faced a thin grouchy looking guy in a light blue lab coat. He had big curly red hair and was squinting at us through thick-rimmed yellow lenses.

‘Ed! You scared the devil out of me. I thought you were the professor.’ Sam laughed and patted him on the back as he passed him and headed into the ob. I went to follow but noticed that Ed hadn’t moved – he was standing awkwardly and watching Sarah.

‘Sarah, this is Ed, Sam’s astronomy tutor. Ed, this is Sarah.’ I waited for either of them to say something or move at all. Eventually Sarah smiled shyly and said, ‘The yellow glasses clash with your hair.’

Sam’s laughter floated out into the foyer and I rolled my eyes. This was not going to be a quick visit after all.

Birds warble in
shifting branches

Foot-stain,
frost melts over crushed rosemary

Yellow beaks curious

White roses shed
into the valley below

Petals
linger by the wild sage

A silver head leans over the kissing stream,
ripples

The stream rises,
the sun sets

Nine days before Maryam's twenty-first birthday

Hover above Pluto
(it's not a planet, just a rock)
Hot energy crackles in waves
leaving a light pink trace,
fizzling outwards from a star

Caught in the dance
as the Sun spins,
twirling her splaying skirt
The static is warm, blinding –
barely see the stars beyond

But then, they are also caught up
in the tulle layers,
one by one

Sam and I sat on the stone steps, the dark water splashing softly against the wall in waves. The sun was just rising and sharp arrows of light shot out across the harbour. A long grey fish leapt out in front of us, twisting mid-air before diving back into the deep. I had run out of tears but had not yet found the words, so I remained silent.

Sarah had been walking home from the school, following the train line. Several people had seen her stumble as the train flew past. The same people saw her fall off the bridge. Her body was never found – no one could find anything in that water – they had searched for three days. Her parents waited three more days before deciding to hold a life celebration. They had been so distraught that an aunt had asked me to organise it for them.

Everyone from the school had come. They gathered at the docks at dusk. Sam had projected pictures of Sarah onto the side of an old dance theatre. The children from her class had brought paper flowers and thrown them in the water, where they floated for a few minutes each until they were soaked through and disappeared. Her parents had not stayed long. A few days later the aunt called me to say that they were moving to a new city in the south. That evening I found a box at my door with a note stuck to it. It was Sarah's treasure box.

'Miri.' Sam reached out and gently tucked a long black ringlet behind my ear. I turned slightly, my hand searching for his. He held me tight as the clouds came together overhead.

'We should open the box,' he said a few moments later. I stirred in his arms.

'When?'

'Today. Her phidget might be in there. And there might be information about the project. She was working with Ed out at the observatory the past few months.'

'Ok. After dinner tonight. I'll meet you on the rooftop.'

In a hall of pink and red, gilded frames,
chandeliers suspended
above multitudes,
men and women sit round tables
dressed in suits over white silk shirts.

The sound of giggles draws camera
towards centre of the hall
where two women
leaning to one side –
conspirators on holiday.

long elegant hands, fingers curling
slightly, draw twisting patterns;
arms float out and in,
jiggle
in time with the alternating lights.

Others watch the women,
the music, wondering if they too
should try the secret.

The scene fades out –
Chinese restaurant.

the frenetic swaying of branches,
and the elusive fragrance of eucalypt
mingles with the miniscule drops of mist suspended
in the early morning air. There is a storm
receding, its tail rising, following its head
north into the hinterland of overwhelmed tempests and exhausted
philosophies that write and rewrite themselves –
palimpsests of time
wither as the summer sun reaches that obscure spot on the star map –
a zenith that sheds light on everything, unless you're hiding
under the branches of the eucalypt.

The world was trembling – I opened my eyes to see Diana shaking my shoulder and frowning at me. ‘Are you feeling ok, dear?’

‘Yes. I’m just tired.’ I stretched my arms over my head then quickly lowered them around Diana, catching her in a hug. Diana closed her eyes and laughed.

‘What time is it?’

‘After eight. Sam is at the door.’ I scrambled off the bed and started to get changed.

‘Is this about Sarah?’

‘And the project. We have to open her box tonight, we can’t leave it any longer.’

‘It’s a crazy idea. These scientists will think of anything to get money out of the government.’

I stopped and stared at her. ‘You and Uncle Mark founded the orchard and installed my family there. How can you say such a thing?’

‘It’s been thirty years since the orchard was created. And years since it was destroyed.’

She shook her head, ‘The planet is still here, we still have plenty of resources, and we could go on like this for another three hundred years.’

‘We have resources *here!* On *this* continent!’ I knelt in front of her and took a deep breath.

‘I know you’re exhausted – you’ve been looking for options for years. But the problem doesn’t go away just because you ran out of ideas. The earth is still dying, possibly faster than we think.’ I put my hands on her shoulders, gently brushing her frizzy silver tresses away from her neck. I could feel her trembling slightly.

After a moment Diana looked at me. ‘What do you think is in the box?’

‘I’m not sure. But last year, after the zoo, Sarah couldn’t stop thinking about the animals and what the planet should look like. We had all seen pictures, but seeing them breathing and moving in the wild was different. She started hanging out with Sam’s friend Ed, at the observatory, after school. We’re pretty sure they were looking for a substitute earth.’

Diana’s eyes widened. ‘We need a new home.’

I nodded. ‘But Sarah wasn’t a scientist and Ed is only one man, and he disappeared after Sarah fell, so we need to know how far they got. We were meant to meet up next Saturday, and maybe Ed will show up by then.’

‘Sam hasn’t been working on this?’

‘He’s been in flight training the past four months, not at the observatory. He has two more months before he can return to the labs full time.’

‘And you’ve been helping me with Mark...’

‘Don’t even go there. You know I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.’

Diana stood up. ‘Well now you have to be somewhere else.’ She picked up Sarah’s box from my desk and handed it to me. ‘Sam is waiting for you.’

It was not yet dark when we opened the door to the rooftop. The long summer days made me feel as though we had more time. We walked to the ledge and sat down, facing the bridge. I placed the box in front of us and for a moment we studied it together. It was about the size of an old computer screen, made of a light but sturdy plastic, painted blue. The latches on the sides had little plastic butterflies stuck to them from years ago. I undid the latches and lifted the lid.

The box was filled with pencils and papers. There were hand-written notes, recipes, stories, and poems. There were many sketches, mostly of me and Sam over the years, but also some of Sarah’s parents and students. Sarah’s phidget was there, at the bottom with the blank sheets of recycled paper. A short note from her parents was stuck to the back. *Sarah would want you to have this.*

Sam picked it up and turned it on. The screensaver was a photo of Ed hunched over a telescope, his glasses sitting halfway down his nose. Sam sighed. ‘Where have you gone man?’

He opened the storage folder and I gasped. There must have been at least a hundred files with the title ‘star_search’ followed by a combination of letters.

‘How and when are we going to check all of these? There’s no telescope strong enough at the school and I can’t get into the observatory without you or Ed.’

‘Miri,’ Sam slowly put the phidget down and turned to face me. ‘I’ve been talking to the captain.’

‘About?’

‘About Ed and Sarah’s project.’ He grabbed my arms. ‘Listen. The captain is a scientist first, an astronaut second. And she’s high up enough that she can make this whole thing official. They will open a special department, put money into it, start targeted missions, not like the ones they’ve been randomly sending out for the past one hundred odd years.’

‘You will have to give her everything – the phidget.’

‘Yes. I’ll back-up the information first.’

‘Of course.’ I looked over his shoulder at the dark sky, the stars barely visible through the haze. ‘You’re going out there.’

Sam tightened his hold on my arms. ‘Not for a while yet.’

She pauses as they fly,
the ancient contraption, bouncing over pot-holes,
and she bumps her head
like every time before –

‘There might be
complications,’ he tells her. She reaches out –
the carriage stops.

She remembers the scarlet thread
he held in the story.

He nods as she talks.
Scarlet velvet drapes across the window
and swishes as they
stop and stay, move forward again,
untangling years of coming and going.

Maryam's twenty-fourth birthday

Dull teeth

gnawing incessantly
on the end of your nerves –
She feels it, crouching
in the dark on the snow.

A sharp pain then
a dull cramp spreads
through her body,
memories of other times press
against the part of her that you can't touch.

The gnawing becomes
a gnashing tugging
on her internal organs –
she feels it, cold seeping
through the skin of her palms.

Eyes stare at the stars,
willing them to spell
the answer in starlight –
Blessing or curse?
Her memories become

prismatic threads
winding through the stars and
dancing beyond her reach.
Another sharp pain – pale hand bats
at the offending memory –

takes over,
anticipation and pain both pause,
a slow inhale before the chaos –
She feels it –
The answer comes

Six months after Maryam's twenty-fourth birthday

Earth spews fire from behind a glass wall;
fire and mud slide against the glass
and the fire in my blood moves faster as I stare
at the dying land.

It invades the ears – high pitched screaming;
human and non-human, surrounded by glass,
and the smell of ash and smoke comes after
the burning has crawled through the orifices.

Feet, heavy with the pain of panic, run
down glass corridors, encased by the violence
encased by the world outside, leaking in
through holes the size of earth particles.

How do you describe that particular kind
of fear, when you might miss the last flight out?
That feeling fills me and then overflows
as sweat and hot air from the pores of my skin.

The web of corridors seem never-ending,
the glass walls reveal more corridors beyond –
tunnels suffused in varying colours of light,
and different ages, and different countries, and

a flute of air touches my lips like
water caressing fire, the fire recedes with
the sound of tearing tickets.

This pregnancy was going to hold. I was sure this time. The smell of the acrylics in the art room was making my stomach flip. And no matter how slowly I walked home from the school I was still exhausted by the time I got there. Sam had just left and wouldn't be back within range for at least six months.

'Miri,' Mark called as I closed the door, 'I finished another sketch today.' I smiled and went to him. Mark spent most of his days writing and sketching since he couldn't walk anymore and we couldn't afford an electronic glider. His 'sketch' was a detailed drawing of Sam in his astronaut uniform, standing in the entrance to the building, his fair hair cropped short, his hand raised in farewell.

'Uncle Mark.'

'I thought you might like it,' he said. I kissed him on the forehead and went to the kitchen to start cooking dinner.

I missed Sam but I was glad that he was in space, doing what he loved. It had taken the better part of a year to convince the captain, even with all the data from Sarah's phidget. But once she was convinced the project picked up pace. Then Ed had reappeared. Sam and I could tell he'd been through a lot so we didn't push him for explanations. He was automatically appointed to the special unit that had been opened as a sub-section of the Department for Protection, the Beyond Earth project, or BE. The team had spent almost two years preparing for the first targeted mission. In the end the captain had decided to go with Sam and Ed – it turned out she was just as much of a space junkie as they were.

Soon after Sarah had passed away Sam had moved in. Sam and I worked on unpacking the documents together at first but once it became official government business, and the summer holidays had ended, I had gone back to teaching full time. Some nights I would go out to the observatory and take notes while Sam and Ed looked through the telescopes and called out coordinates. Then Sam and I would walk home together.

Diana had strolled into the kitchen while I was humming and peeling root vegetables. She cleared her throat and I looked up, startled.

'Is there something you would finally like to tell me?'

Fingers rest
woollen fibres
and silken threads,
cream wool, pistachio
silk,
salmon tufts upwards,
purple sideways,
cobalt trembles when the air moves,

topaz in the sun –

light and oxygen in tandem;
they dance through the window,
past the curtains and around the room,
teasing lotus and nightingales,
the archer poised and leaping stag,
leaning poplars and the blossoming orange,
and I, cross-legged, above them all,
while the others
are held captive by wool and silk,
and in that moment.

Four months before Maryam's twenty-fifth birthday

Something was tapping at the window. I rolled over and opened my eyes, I was suddenly assaulted by glaring light. At that moment it was as though I was eight years old again, in my room at the orchard. The sun used to blast through the window early in the morning. The tree leaves glowed as if lit from within, the sky looked like a painted dome, and my room was filled with light particles dancing in circles.

I rubbed my eyes and looked again. The building caretaker had decided it was a good night to turn on the window moppers. The squidgy end of the machine was rubbing across the window while soapy water was squirted from above the LCD light. The metal arm had a glitch in it and the elbow kept bending too far and tapping against the glass.

I placed my hand on my belly and took a deep breath. I wished my children could be born in a different world, a cleaner world. There was still no news from Sam, and the group had been gone for months. I wondered if they had found anything, if they were coming back to take me to our new home. Ed had said that they were unlikely to come across a viable option the first time. In fact, the first few missions were meant to be purely exploratory. I got up, turned on the light, and went to Mark's bookshelf. I stood there scanning the spines, then reached out and took the big yellow glossy book. It was extremely frayed and many of the pages had fallen out. I sat down on the wicker chair and carefully opened it.

A photograph of red craggy cliffs and bright blue ocean lay on my lap. There were dolphins leaping out of the water, the high sun created sparkles around them, and the waves crashed in white foam against the rocks. In a text box, in the top right corner of the page, was written, 'Nature is the best medicine. The universe is life. Know serenity'. I could hear Sam's voice reading the words to me, over and over, like a mantra.

I focused on the picture and tried to imagine the ocean full of life. When I had just moved to the city with Diana and Mark, I sometimes wandered the corridors in sleeplessness. Then I had become friends with an elderly lady who also found solace in the corridors, a lady called Emma.

'Dolphins were all the rage when I was a child,' Emma had said as the two of us sat on the steps with the book in our lap. That was how I had learned what they were.

‘They would come close to shore, near the town I grew up in. The water was just the right temperature and we would go out in boats. And when they came by we would jump into the water and swim with them.’ She had paused and ran her long wrinkly fingers over the not-so-glossy page, as though she were touching the side of the dolphin.

‘Where are they now?’ I had asked.

‘Many of them were hunted for food. Many died from poisoning. But there are a few still out there. These days they’re skittish so you won’t see many near the land...’

‘The water looks so light and warm, like the sky back home.’

‘Ah, yes... I remember that sky also.’

Emma had passed away soon after. I didn’t know her well but I remembered her hands and the sad, husky tone of her voice.

darkness, warm and safe, a shelter
 i prefer not to leave
coward or pragmatist
 a sweep of Father's hair
peppery and full, a shadow falling
 deeper into the valley
between two brows, eyelids lifting
 edges of the iris
fluctuate in and out, nothing but black
 lots of stars bursting
from afar, time travels back
 through oceanic rifts
pinching my nerves, seeking attention
 draw lines around
different people, a corporeal extension
 filled with everything
of earth and sky, lines are dark
 trails of spices lead
back to hot coal, the flavours are sharp
 they clear my head
glance sideways, images burn to make way
 for more
the darker the soil, the longer the day

I stood at the bench, mixing the colours for the afternoon class. I tipped the container – the yellow spilled smoothly into the centre of the red, creating a pool that seeped slowly throughout the bowl. Rivulets of paint spread through paint, edges blending ever so slightly to create wrinkles of orange. For a moment I remained still, watching the force of gravity and momentum mix the colours for me. There was something missing. I closed my eyes and concentrated. Then I added the blue. This time I didn't wait – I took a brush and stirred the paints with the handle.

Splotches of colour flew out of the bowl and landed against the apron stretched over my belly, on the bench, on the floor. At one point I thought I heard footsteps and paused but there was no one there. It still wasn't right so more blue went in, then a little more red. The afternoon sun dropped in the window and I had to blink, just like the last summer Mum and I had sat outside stirring the pots of plum jam so they wouldn't stick. The pots sat on outdoor gas barbecues, bubbling and spitting, and as the day wore on the sun dipped below the tree line and you couldn't see inside the pots. Mum would declare that the jam was done, although sometimes it would end up a little watery, and Mum and Dad would take the pots off the heat and quickly fill the waiting jars while everything was still hot.

I put the brush down and carried the bowl to a bench on the other side of the room. Looking down, all I could see was black – a dark, murky black with a hint of warmth to it. I picked up a piece of parchment, uneven from repeated recycling, and dipped it into the paint then held it up to drip and dry. This was it – the soil in the cave. Sarah often talked about the warm darkness of that soil long after the zoo. It was as if all the organic matter from the surrounding area had been sucked into the space of the cave. It probably helped that many animals had died in the vicinity. Sarah and Sam had argued about whether it was worth risking another trip to test the soil but Sarah had soon become distracted by working with Ed at the observatory and had given up the idea. Instead she spent her time looking for a planet half-covered in black soil.

'Can we come in now, Miri?' Jim asked from the doorway. The three o'clock group were milling in the corridor chatting amongst themselves. I smiled. 'Of course, Jim.'

'How are you feeling these days?'

'Just fine. Trying to stay occupied and calm all at the same time. I heard you're finishing up soon.'

‘Yeah, I’ve been accepted into the medical academy. I start at the end of summer.’ He watched me carefully as he continued. ‘I heard the government is closing down the workshop. Donna said we’re running out of colours.’

I didn’t know what to say. The news hadn’t been announced yet. I frowned and shook my head. The room was filling up fast and Jim moved away to talk to a friend, saving me from having to answer. I quickly wiped down the two benches I had used while the students set up bowls, pallets, brushes, and easels. I turned on the camera for the home students who were waving and smiling on screen, ready to start.

‘Ok guys. The theme for today is *Warm and Dark*. Try to get a colour that is warm while being as dark as possible. Then apply it to the parchment in a way that demonstrates the qualities of the colour, whether through shape, form, or the use of specific brush strokes.’

They moved slowly at first, selecting paints and parchment, consulting with each other. One of the home students had run out of red and decided to skip the class. Once they started painting the session went by quickly. Jim was the last one to pack up. He looked up as I walked over to his bench.

‘Jim, try not to tell people about the workshops. There are a lot of loose ends to tie up. And it’s going to take time.’

‘So we are running out of colour?’

‘We’re running out of everything.’ I threw my arms wide in frustration. Jim put a hand on my shoulder. ‘What are you going to do?’

‘I don’t know yet but I’ll be ok. Besides, there’s probably still a year to go.’

‘Any news from Sam?’

‘Not yet...’

‘Don’t worry. They’ll be back in no time.’

Jim picked up his backpack and started to leave. ‘Have a good week. Catch you next time.’ I realised I hadn’t congratulated him and called out, ‘I’m really happy for you.’ He turned back. ‘Thanks!’

The walk home was unusually noisy for a Friday. There must have been another accident near the old city centre. As I approached the apartments I noticed it had become very quiet all of a sudden. The entrance was stuck open and there was no one in the corridors. I

climbed the stairs slowly. The doctor had told me to keep my blood pressure down, as though I could actually instruct my heart to pump slower.

The landing door was open and there was a cold draught filling the stairwell. The corridor was filled with people. Someone was sobbing in the distance and there were lots of instructions being thrown around. A man in a fluorescent yellow vest cleared people away and I slipped into the apartment. Diana was sitting on a chair in the centre of the room. A medic was crouched by her side holding her hand. Another held an oxygen mask to her face. There were cords attached to her body under her shirt.

I rushed over to her and took her other hand. ‘Diana.’ She opened her eyes and looked up. They were red and her face was pale.

‘What happened?’ I asked the medic.

‘Are you related?’ he asked, attaching one of the cords to a monitoring tablet.

‘Yes.’

‘She’s been having trouble breathing.’

One of the neighbours had brought a chair over and I sat down with a ‘Thank you.’ Diana was squeezing my hand and I focused on her again. ‘It’s ok dearest. It’s going to be ok.’ She shook her head, frowning and mumbling through the mask.

I looked around. Many of the people had retreated but it was still too quiet.

‘Where’s Mark?’

‘I’m sorry,’ the medic said. ‘We couldn’t save him.’

My head rolls to the left

Elgar sings
they hum along with his tune

Pages shuffle the air
Chickens cluck and crow

Ice-water spills onto the music

Ten days before Maryam's twenty-fifth birthday

Small and dark, ignored by all,
lurking in shadows, at their feet –
at first she is a distraction but I am
scared by the fact that no one can
see her.

Fear (immobilises eyes, tongue,
ears, nose,
and everything else from the neck down)
of prisons,
and indifference.
Mothers know,
when a child is suffering
but they too are immobilised.

She grows and moves out
of the dark,
making her way up the tower of flesh.
Her eyes lock on mine and I hear
laughter like a shrill siren,
increasing my fear.
But I shouldn't be scared –
she is beautiful. I notice

at the last minute, after she launches her bulk
of pure muscle,
scales of burnished onyx, emeralds
framing her face, mouth open wide showing
lustrous fangs,
large eyes like whirlpools –
she swallows me whole.

Diana sat in the wicker chair staring at the books. She wiped her cheeks as I turned on the light.

‘Miri, you should be sleeping.’ Her voice was raspy.

‘So should you. It’s three in the morning.’

‘You need to rest. The babies could come any day now.’

‘They’ll come when they’re ready.’ We’d had a version of this conversation every day for about two weeks now. I pulled over a chair and sat next to her. The eerie quiet reminded me of the day we had lost Mark. She was examining the bookshelf again. ‘Dearest, are you looking for something?’

‘The sketch book,’ she mumbled. I took a deep breath. The sketchbook was lying flat on top of the books in the middle shelf, right in front of us. Her eyes had been deteriorating but grief had accelerated the process. I didn’t say anything; I just reached over, pulled out the book and laid it in her lap. I understood why she wanted it – wanted to hold it, smell the pages, and look through the sketches. Mark had drawn bits and pieces of everyone and everything that had been important to them. He had filled up the book – except for the last two pages.

She opened it to the first page where a younger version of herself looked back at her. Her pointed chin, not as pointy back then, was lifted a little as she gave a cheeky smile, her hair tumbling down around her shoulders. Hunched over the book and squinting, Diana traced the lines over the lumpy paper, reverent and attentive to the details, as though engaged in a holy ritual that would transport her back to the time that had inspired the drawing.

‘Miri,’ she looked up, her voice suddenly smooth and strong, ‘you have to promise me something.’

‘Ok.’

‘No matter what happens, even if Sam doesn’t come back, you will keep looking for the planet.’

‘Sam is coming back.’

‘Promise me.’

I stared at her, trying to stay calm. She was in one of those moods.

‘Ok. I promise.’ She squinted at me, her chin trembling. I took her two hands in mine and held them to my face, the way she had cradled my cheeks when I was little. ‘Of course I promise.’

She nodded and sighed. ‘The sooner we leave the better.’ I could hear the tapping of the window moppers outside.

‘Donna said there are going to be some impressive fireworks this year.’

She laughed. ‘I suppose that will be nice.’

‘We’ll go up to the roof, just like old times, and some of the folks from the school and the observatory will come and play music and dance...’

‘We could try to track down some potatoes to fry.’

‘Definitely.’

We were both smiling now. Diana leaned back and cuddled the sketch book. I went to get a blanket from her bed and when I returned she was asleep.

White

titanium white

snow

bridal white

ghost white

white rose

jasmine

stone

ribbon

milk of Isis

white unicorn

salt earth

a child

the footsteps of pilgrims

new stars in the Milky Way

remnants of a supernova

a white dwarf dwindles

patterns of a nebula

a thousand colours

a thousand worlds

watch, run, crackle, break

down into the elements, burning, create

life in the universe

heat of the spirit

white

Maryam's twenty-fifth birthday

For the first time in years there were more than a few people gathered on the rooftop. It was hot and humid and I was wishing the babies had come days ago. Diana was on a rug with some of the children who used to be in Sarah's prep class. Jim and his brother had showed up early and practically carried Diana up to the roof. One of them had stayed by her side the entire time since. One of the children was wielding an old contraption called an iPhone, her parent had dug it up that morning and given it to her as a First Day present. We were all surprised that it still worked; it wasn't even a later model.

'Where is this great fire-show you've been going on about?' Donna asked her partner. Everyone paused and looked at them. Donna's partner had been working at the Office of Public Protection for a long time and that was how Donna got most of her information. But sometimes the information proved faulty and that always made her unpleasant to be around, as though it was everyone else's fault that she had cast herself as the queen of gossip.

Donna's partner laughed as if she had shared a good joke, and said, 'Any time now. It's almost dark enough.'

A few moments later there were flashes in the sky and the sound of chatter faded. Flowers and fish and faces of old famous people took shape in the showers of light erupting over the water.

'That one's always my favourite,' Jim murmured next to me as a lady with blonde hair, red lips, and a pert expression appeared above the old bridge. There was usually a song that went with that face but I couldn't remember it. I was distracted by the sunflowers near the ship sails. Sam always looked for the sunflowers. Sam was out there, with Ed and the captain, and with ten other scientists and crew.

'What's that?' Donna jumped back from the ledge, her face pale. I pulled myself up from the chair and followed Jim to the ledge. There was something strange happening on the horizon in the ocean. I got out the phidget from my dress pocket and turned on the telescope function, pointing the view finder east. Wave after wave of dark water was

moving closer to the land. I heard a gasp behind me where people were looking over my shoulder. Each successive wave was getting taller and more wild. None of us could move.

One of the children pointed down to the streets – there was a film of water covering the ground. The fireworks had stopped and we could hear people screaming far away. I pointed the phidget back towards the ocean. It now appeared as though one long, unbreakable wall of water was rolling straight into the city.

The sirens started. And my water broke.

Jim was the first to make a move. ‘Right. We all need to get down to the evac point.’
‘Wait,’ his brother said. ‘If the water level is rising wouldn’t it be better for us to stay on the roof?’

The blood was pounding in my ears. Pain was shooting through my body. There was something wrong. I could barely feel my feet or legs. I glanced down and I saw blood.

Someone was hovering over me, trying to keep me upright.

‘We need a medic.’

‘No, we have to get her to the hospital.’

‘In this chaos? It’ll be impossible.’

‘We have to try.’ That was Jim’s voice, he was in front of me now. There were many hands on me.

Then I fell.

Two days after Maryam's twenty-fifth birthday

the soft blush
of a late light still seeping
through the gap between curtains.
Inside the eyelids, pink flesh darkens red
into black – the black of night –
and somewhere in the world pink
brightens the dark petals of a rose
in the garden of mind – where life is –
petals released, their wings expand.

Flowers unhinged from the earth of the body
in circles of time and colour
merging with the aurora – clashing with others –
into foreign gardens.
A splash as the petals dive,
wings tucked in for landing – expressions serious –
soil fills with light as the synapses flash
a streak of white cuts across the carpet.

They lay in a cushioned trolley next to me. I couldn't take my eyes off them. Every now and then the sirens sounded and the babies would stir – Arthur and Sarah. I knew Sam would be happy with the names.

We were installed on the eleventh floor of the hospital with eight other women and their babies. They had switched to solar power as soon as the tidal wave had been sighted, and most of the patients seemed to have gone through the transition without a hitch, except that there were emergencies arriving constantly.

Arthur started crying. I reached over and picked him up. He turned his head in against my chest and I drew the blanket up over him, leaning back into the cushions. He already reminded me of Sam. But then, so did Sarah.

After I woke from the anaesthesia, the nurse had told me that Diana was being looked after by neighbours back at the building. Jim and his brother had gone after their parents. People were being told to stay put. I asked her about the tidal waves but she just shook her head and ran off.

The sirens went off again. A baby across the room started crying and her mother got up, dancing with her and hushing. I tightened my arm around Arthur, shielding his head with my hand and keeping my eyes on Sarah.

The door swung open and a tall man in boots and a plastic poncho walked in. He pushed back his hood, running pale fingers through light brown curls. His dark eyes scanned the beds of mothers till he faced me.

'Sam.'

Two walls of water, swirling of
the ocean,

move rapidly towards me,
grow higher and higher

A glimpse of emerald
crashes down

against the ocean floor
I see

Myself, drowned and floating,
far from the shore

Arthur

The dove descending breaks the air
With flame of incandescent terror
Of which the tongues declare
The one discharge from sin and error.
The only hope, or else despair
 Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre –
 To be redeemed from fire by fire.
Who then devised the torment? Love.
Love is the unfamiliar Name
Behind the hands that wove
The intolerable shirt of flame
Which human power cannot remove.
 We only live, only suspire
 Consumed by either fire or fire.

T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 1944 'Little Gidding'
– IV

Sarah

With the drawing of this Love and the voice of
this Calling

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always –
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 1944 'Little Gidding'
– V

Arthur's thirteenth birthday

It wasn't true. Dad wasn't dead. The other juniors at the academy kept looking at us like we were orphans and I hated it. At least I had gotten into the accelerated program and I would be out of there in a couple of years. In the meantime, Sarah's attitude didn't help. She didn't talk as much as she used to and she didn't laugh at my pranks. And she didn't like Tomas, the only friendly guy around. I wanted to talk to Mum about it but she wasn't quite the same since the government raided the bunker and took her away. She was more emotional. She spent most of her time reading aloud to Aunt Diana. I hadn't seen her paint or sketch in months.

I finished my last assignment for the year and put the black screen aside. There was dinner clatter coming from the kitchen and for a moment I was tempted to join them. I grabbed my raincoat and went up to the roof. Even on a clear night you could barely see anything without a telescope. When Dad came home from a mission he spent days telling us funny stories about the crew, especially Uncle Ed. Then, on the second night, he always described where they had been and what they had seen. Sometimes Mum drew as he spoke. A couple of nights, while we were staying at the bunker, we went outside to the field and Sarah and I tried to locate as many stars and constellations as we could name. At least out there you could see some fuzzy spots in the sky.

There was a flash on the horizon and I heard a boom. It was Dad's re-entry, I was sure of it!

'Arthur, what are you doing up here?' I turned to see Mum standing behind me, her hands in her coat pockets. She looked pale.

'Mum, did you see the flash? I think it was re-entry.' She looked past me towards the horizon and shook her head.

'I'm going out to HQ to see if there's any news.'

'Arthur, they wouldn't tell you if there was.'

'I'm his son. Of course they'd tell me.'

'Maybe...'

'In a few years I'll be a cadet. I'll be out there myself.'

She smiled. 'Yes, you will.'

I walked past her and into the building. The door slammed behind me and the sound echoed through the stairwell. I paused on the third step. Maybe I should have asked her to come with me. I walked back up but I never opened the door. I just stood behind it and listened to her singing a song about blackbirds.

Emerald green and vast –
I move over this field, pulled
towards a dark mass at the centre.
Women and men dressed
in dark greys and blacks converged in silence;
they look inwards at the backs
of the people looking at the backs
of people looking
at the centre.

I drift through, drawn
down to a place in the sunlight.
Mother sits in the corner like a pendant
securing the dark stole, her face luminous.
She closes her eyes
to the play of light and shade
her voice rises ethereal and angelic
as she chants
my funeral prayer.

Here begins to smell stale –
feeling that you have been here
too long,
heaviness bearing down
on the top of your head,
burden of inertia,

like tree trunks tied
to your ankles
and food too long on the table
and you can't
even turn your head.

I gather my strength –
untie the knots.

One month after Arthur's twenty-second birthday

'General Su will see you now.' A cadet in a grey uniform held the door open for me. The General was standing at a table, poring over a large black screen. He turned as the door shut behind me and waved me over.

'Your sister is ready to command her own mission.'

I stopped. 'If you say so, sir.'

He frowned. 'You don't agree. Why?'

I pulled myself up and studied the document on the screen, hoping he would change the subject. He continued to watch me.

Sarah was a good pilot but she navigated science the same way she flew a shuttle: with her instincts. I had learnt the hard way that your instincts don't count when real life is involved. It's all about the numbers. Numbers are what got me through the academy ahead of my twin. Numbers got me through three successful missions to locate and establish storage outposts. Numbers were going to get Mum a nice place in the new highlands. And they didn't appreciate it.

'General,' I said, turning to him, 'I believe that Sarah is dominated by her emotions in times of stress and that would endanger a mission if she were to command it.'

'I see.' He walked towards a chair by the wall. 'The fact is,' he said, as he sat down, 'we need you here. You will technically command the mission from the space station and Sarah will be shuttle commander. I need you as a team.'

'How exactly do you propose I do that? We can't communicate with a mission once they've moved beyond the light barrier.'

'The same way CubeSats have been sending us data. These are the documents I was looking at before you arrived. We've found a way of using the CubeSats as a kind of middle-man transition device. Of course there will be delays in communication but I think it can be done.'

He indicated I should study the screen. What he was saying was incredible. It also meant that I couldn't back out.

I took the seat opposite. ‘What is the mission?’

‘One of the CubeSats has been sending back some promising data from Delphinus.’

‘I thought the early missions had ruled out that entire region.’

‘I’m willing to risk it one more time. I have a new cryoshuttle being prepped for flight. It should be ready in a few weeks.’

‘We won’t have an entire crew ready in time.’

He raised his eyebrows. ‘You better get started.’

She lay in white sheets
steel frames everywhere, metal
basins, metal floors

The cries reverberated
bouncing off the ceiling and back
to slide along the polished surface

They argued 'how to stop
the noise,' arms rose and fell
slapped against grey leather uniforms

A doctor strode, heels
against the ground, he grabbed
the crying package and held it under water

the noise stopped –
the noise stopped

One month after Arthur's twenty-third birthday

Commander, turn back. This is an order. I typed and moved away. They had been gone for seven months. The CubeSat following them had been sending back images of asteroid fields for days. I had informed the General and I had sent that command at least ten times now but there was still no response.

Tomas cleared his throat and offered me a drink. I wished he was less of a coward and had gone with the others. He was useless to me here. At least if he was on the mission he could report back. I took the drink and he hurried away, pushing his glasses further into his face.

The screen flashed green and I grabbed the bench and pulled myself forward. 'On our way,' the message read. Oddly enough, I didn't find this piece of overdue communication comforting. Why had it taken them this long to respond? And what were they doing in the meantime? If they were going into cryoseal now then we would expect them back in a few weeks. I sent a message to the General informing him that I was ready to come back down.

Green –

emerald, jade,

mint, sage,

in a vase on the windowsill

green through light

green through shadow

above

below

eyes at night

static, moving, staring, stirring

leaves and feathers

fall in gravity

my world

my home

my goal

Two months after Arthur's twenty-third birthday

I pounded my fist onto my right thigh. The drumming helped me to focus. Scraps of images and sounds floated through my head and I couldn't grasp any of them. I knew I had a big dream last night, or maybe lots of big dreams. But I had woken up with a heavy head and flashes of nothings, teasing my brain and constantly shouting for attention, and giving me nothing. And it all mingled with the impossible dive my career was taking.

Delphinus Disaster was all over the news. And my name was the first one listed in every report. I could taste bile as I sat waiting for the meeting to start. If I didn't get rid of her now she would ruin my life, my career, and any chance of another mission. The room was already packed with astronauts and lab technicians sitting in chairs lining the walls and others standing in the doorway. General Su came in and sat down at the head of the table. Sarah was sitting opposite me, Matt at her side. He was looking particularly haggard. Most people had very little if any physical reactions to cryoseal, but Matt was obviously not one of them. My respect for the blonde giant went up a notch.

'Report.' The General hoarsely barked out. I took that as my cue and stood up.

'We have all seen the footage and heard the recordings from the *Delphinus* shuttle.' I paused to make sure I had everyone's attention.

'The shuttle commander took over from the pilot and, against my specific orders, attempted to manoeuvre the shuttle through a shifting asteroid field. The shuttle was damaged and the crew's life was put at risk. We were lucky the cryoseal still worked.' I saw Sarah shrink in her seat.

'The shuttle was unable to dock with the space station when it returned and the crew attempted to fly it straight back to Earth. Upon re-entry the shuttle was further damaged, beyond repair.' By the door, the flight engineer shifted. I lowered my voice. I needed only one person to hear what I going to say next.

'The shuttle commander was reckless and endangered not only the mission but its entire crew as well. It is my recommendation that she be removed from the BE program.'

Sarah's face lost all colour. I sat down and stared at the wall behind her head. The bile taste in my mouth had turned more metallic.

The General leaned forward on the table. ‘Commander,’ he said briskly, ‘you may speak now.’ She didn’t stand like I had. She drew herself up where she sat and looked around the room, making eye contact with everyone, and indicating that she was going to speak from where she was.

‘Arthur is right.’ Her voice was soft but it carried. ‘I took a risk and I was lucky to get out alive. I have recently learned that the CubeSat exploring ahead of us was defective. The images it sent were from the wrong angle, which is also why the asteroid field didn’t look like it was shifting.’ She turned towards the General. ‘I’m sorry, sir.’

The General nodded to Matt. ‘Captain, would you like to add anything?’

He shook his head. ‘No, sir.’ My level of respect for him went back down that one notch.

‘Ok.’ General Su leaned on one elbow and rubbed his chin. Then he stood. ‘Arthur, Sarah, I would like to see you in my office.’ I didn’t see Sarah move but a few minutes later she was standing next to me in his office.

‘Sarah, there is nothing wrong with taking risks at the right time. Unfortunately, you chose the worst time. Panic has doubled since the cryoshuttle crashed into our ocean. The other two are away on mission and I don’t know how long it will take to build a new one, let alone get the funding for it.’ He sat down behind his desk. ‘I won’t kick you out of the program, you’re too valuable for that. I’m assigning you to Star Watch, indefinitely.’

I felt her shift towards me. The General waved his hand. ‘You should leave now. Arthur, stay for a moment, I want to run some strategies by you.’

She called my name in a whisper, as though she had run out of breath. I studied the General’s desk. I needed her gone. I needed to gain my dignity back.

I heard the door close behind me with a soft click.

At high altitude, green pomegranates dangle,
their flowering, blood-orange lips brushing
against each other, lazy in the heat.

Through the mesh of foliage a soft moon.
The murmur of friends.
Trees bend, and dissipate.

It seemed so close,
I started walking, my footsteps firm,
the way became slower and darker,
the air constricted; the smell of dirt
closed in around me.

The ground grumbled,
from far ahead.
It came to a halt, its nose beside me,
another materialised from behind,
on my other side; two beasts missed
the mark.

The retreat was swift.
They were gathered, looking at
a big neon sign, and speculating. Relief
and shaky legs spurred me on; I started
on the long way around.

Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

The rain would not stop
even after the window was dry.
I saw drops of water falling,
sliding against the walls,
obscuring the world from my mind.

All it took was a shake
of the head, a question mark,
and the torrent was released.

‘Turn it off! The ship is sinking,
we won’t survive!’

‘I can’t find the tap...’

Now I crouch in a corner of the cabin, constantly
being yelled at. My fists are scrunched,
nails biting

angry red lines

into my palm.

The blood beneath my skin begins
to hum. My lungs grow warm and constricted.

He leans in,
just a fraction.

A clap of thunder,
and everyone hears it this time. The first tear –

he stays. The second tear
hovers – he stands up.
People rush around me,
organising life boats, taking inventory.
There are a few who tread softly.
One of them taps my shoulder,
'Just try to turn it off dearie. Just try.'
There's a pause;
I can hear the world inhale.
The ship pitches;
the deluge resumes. People
leave. The man with the dark eyes
is the first to go.

They think I'm in control –
they think I'm doing this on purpose.
But the rain will not stop.

The ship will sink.

And I will go back to the ocean.

I let the door slam on my way out. Four weeks had passed and I still couldn't relocate the star. Arthur would be gloating; he never believed me in the first place. I could hear the rush hour traffic from the top of the hill, and I felt my forehead wrinkle at the thought of driving in it.

When we were children Mum often brought us to the observatory after school. It took us thirty minutes to walk up the hill and there was only one road that went through the area. Then the sea level rose and the government noticed the few patches of land they had missed in the global warming frenzy. Seven roads were cut across the hill and three of them led directly to the BE headquarters.

Last year, after the disaster of the Delphinus mission, I was allocated to Star Watch, given a vehicle, and was asked to remain within reach at all times. To make matters worse the General placed me under Arthur's command. Arthur, Mum, and I had been shifted to the new buildings behind the hill, away from the ocean. Many of our old friends were still living in the low lands, and none of them had transport.

I stared down the hill at the mass of vehicles trying to move forward, or in any direction at all. It was like navigating through a shifting asteroid field all over again. At least all the crew of the Delphinus mission got home alive.

'Well done, Commander,' I whispered to myself.

I reached my antiquated car and opened the back door. I just needed a rest before going back to the telescope.

A stray thread –
it stays where you tuck it in,
sometimes
it hangs, loose and cumbersome,
until it comes away,
unravelling till there is no carpet to stand on.

If I sit in the middle and stay
very still
they might not notice
the fraying and the gaps, the dark holes and
gashes leaking confusion, the resting tassels
stained with anguish and stains that threaten to swallow me whole.

Falcon hovers above traffic
glides back and forth
waiting for the gap

A scuttling prey
a gap appears
one fell swoop

Bicycle moves
 off
 into the grey

Butterflies

fly through the ceiling

dive through the floor

fluttering

She climbs the side of the crater
setting sun slowly burns the back of her neck
The grasses are long and they hide
the clear path
Their dark flowers clash in her shadow

She camps on the rim
Her red skin burns, her burning heart
worthless
their words, not hers

She looks out over the great crater
Palm tree bends
Falcon swoops
Cool air on burnt skin

She sees the moon above
a hole in the earth, a hole in her mind
full of questions. White veins run
through the grey marble high above

She begins to slip away

Arthur's twenty-fifth birthday

She was speculating again. Every time there was an anomaly she would get ahead of herself, instead of identifying it as just that – an anomaly. And Mum was always defending her. I didn't understand why the General had placed her in my unit. I had enough to worry about without having to field requests and suggestions from my own sister. It helped that Tomas was watching her. He could tell me what she was up to before she sent me a message requesting extended hours access.

And now she was chasing some phantom in Coma Berenices. The new cryoshuttle was almost finished and I hoped I would get to take it on mission to the Orion Nebula so I had asked all staff assigned to my unit to focus on that quadrant. Of course, it was almost pointless to ask Sarah to do any particular task since she inevitably did her own thing.

I leaned back and closed my eyes. I had turned off the phidget and locked the office door to give myself some space. News had arrived last night that the shuttle to Eridanus was officially missing in action. None of the ground staff had been informed, as yet. I heard a bang and looked out the window to see Sarah storming off into the car-park. Would she be so passionately reckless if she really understood the risks?

Today was our birthday and I wished that Dad would walk through the door like Mum said he had done the day we were born. Once, when Sarah was struggling to get through pilot training, Mum had sat with her and talked all night. I sat just outside her room, listening. 'Sam is always with us,' Mum had said, 'and he gives us strength when we think we've run out.' I cringed in the corridor. She was talking about him as though he was dead, the way she talked about her own parents. And Sarah bought it. In fact, the thought obviously gave her comfort.

It had gotten dark all of a sudden. I noticed most of the cars were gone from the car-park. It was time to get back to the telescope.

The sweet smell –
wet grass and flowers mingle
with wood smoke, a mixture
that travels through synapses
and settles on nerve-endings

The day it rained
it started and wouldn't stop
I tried to ignore
the great drops of water
that fell on my head
and soaked through my clothes
that crashed on my roof
that wrenched me awake

The rain stopped
but it had not stopped
in my mind the water still poured
washing away the sweetness

Two days after Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

Mum was still awake when I got home. She sat by the window, listening to the news. The smell of baked vegetables hovered in the house. My mother gave me a half-smile as I sat down next to her.

'Did you see your brother today?'

I replied, 'Arthur is a very busy man now.'

I stared at my hands, gripping the cushion in my lap. Mum leaned forward. 'The earthquakes are getting worse. People are panicking.'

'People.' I said, 'People have been panicking for decades.'

The newsman's voice stopped and music surrounded us. Mum hugged me. 'You're tired. You need your rest.'

I nodded and stood up.

A coloured-in sketch of Dad smiled at me from across my room as I flopped onto the bed. I smiled back and saluted, the way he had taught us to. Mum had the sketch framed not long after his last mission and gave it to me when I graduated from the astronaut program. Arthur had graduated six months ahead, and when I unwrapped the simple wooden frame his face had darkened.

'Where did that come from?' he asked 'I thought it had been lost in the raid.' Mum shook her head.

'No. I always kept it with Uncle Mark's books.' She reached out and traced some of the curls on Dad's head over the glass. Then the siren rang and we had rushed back into the building.

Years ago, when Arthur smiled, he constantly reminded me of our father. But these days he either scowled or looked nonchalant and I struggled to find Dad in him.

I turned off the lights and closed my eyes.

Lanterns, pillars,
endless cavern

Medusa's speechless head

A coin drops

Fish swim, lazy in dark streams

Children hide
behind cats

We've been here before,
driving over hill after hill,
always ten years old,
the sound of joy floats towards us from the front.

My brother pokes me,
points at the sky where
stars hide between and
storm clouds are racing each other above.

My hair grows,
the road bends,
the wind moans,
the rain becomes a wall of glass

Two months after Arthur's twenty-fifth birthday

I was called in to see the General again. He was pacing behind his desk and he didn't look happy to see me. He didn't say anything til I sat down.

'Arthur, you've been diverting the research to serve your own agenda. I thought I made it clear that BE doesn't have the luxury to afford anyone, and I mean anyone, hijacking our resources.'

'Sir?'

'You have ordered your entire unit to focus on a single quadrant, an extremely dangerous move, especially considering that we recently lost a whole unit.'

'Sir, I have good reason to believe that NQ1 is the most promising quadrant. We have received images from two CubeSats over the past ten years that indicate the possibility of life-sustaining conditions.' I tried to relax my shoulders. The man was just having his yearly outburst.

'Isn't NQ1 also the quadrant in which your father disappeared?' The General's words echoed in a distorted voice on repeat, cancelling any other noise as though I was suddenly two metres deep under water.

'Excuse me, sir?'

'I don't mean to be harsh, Arthur. But the fact is you're just as much of a risk as Sarah. The difference between the two of you is that you want to find your father, and she wants to find us all a home. You're both brilliant,' he continued, 'but I just can't afford to send either of you out there.'

'Sir, if you'll just have a look at the evidence...'

'Damn it, Arthur! I'm not saying you're out. I need you both working on the ground. I need you to continue running the research unit. But from now on I'm going to check who you're allocating to what.' The metallic taste in my mouth again. And the distorted voice wouldn't go away. The mission to Orion was fast fading from possibility. And I couldn't think straight.

I went to the black screen and started typing to locate the relevant documents. Someone was grumbling behind me about *classified access* and then there was a hand on my arm. I jerked to loosen the hand and shoved it away. There was a loud crash.

I turned to see the General sprawled, a couple of chairs overturned. He glared at me as he slowly got up and brushed himself down.

‘Arthur.’ His voice was low. ‘It’s time for you go.’

My head was ringing and for a moment I just stood there.

Then I turned and walked out.

The water flows, it seems
right through her,
the blue and white light surrounding
her limbs, lifting
the body up towards the open air.

The city below stretches
her jaws wide in a yawn
her hair of silver and glass sprawling
over the land, strands
standing with static here and there.

A woman in a city of light;
 a city,
 in a woman's light

I told you not to speak
but you chose to intrude
while I was busy creating
my dream

Through a haze of colours
I heard your voice
and followed it back
to waking

I can still smell the sea,
feel the spray, hear
the nightingales sing
me to sleep

Three months after Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

Arthur decided I could go on the expedition. I didn't know why he was being kind and I didn't care. The others of the party were friendly but not really my friends – I didn't care about that either. I stared at the giant building, its rounded walls more cream than white. E-ELT was getting old but it was still the best telescope on earth.

A familiar voice called my name as I stood admiring the telescope. I turned to see an old friend rugged up in fluorescent gear. 'Matt. It's been a while.' We shook hands and I could see him smiling within his hood.

'After Delphinus I was given a new assignment every three months. I guess they wanted to make sure I'm still quick off the mark.' He said this with a chuckle.

'I'm sorry...'

'I was the pilot, I flew the damn contraption.' He paused. 'We all agreed to it, Sarah. No point rehashing old adventures.' I shifted, trying to think of what to say. He was right. Delphinus was the last thing I should be thinking about.

'You'll be here long?' I finally asked.

'For another few months at least. Although I'm hankering to get back in the right-hand seat.' He raised his hand and started back towards the offices.

'Matt.'

He stopped.

'It's good to see you again.'

His face crinkled. 'Same here.'

The others had decided to camp outside in the snow instead of staying in the dorms. I helped set up then rushed into the building. Most of the rooms had four beds but I finally found one with just two and dumped my bag on one of them. The other was occupied by a cheerful girl called Lisa. I could tell she wanted to chat but I studiously avoided eye contact and got into bed. Seeing Matt had been emotionally draining, and the long flight and bus ride had been tiring. The commotion outside took me back to the flight across the Pacific. The plane had to fly low because of the weather conditions and for a while we were buffeted by heavy storms. The noise reminded me of the raid.

When Dad's shuttle had disappeared Mum decided to leave the city. The orchard where she had lived as a child had been destroyed years earlier but she insisted on driving out in that direction. That was when she told us about the bunker. Technically it lies underneath the ruins of the house but the entrance is actually in the middle of the fields, impossible to find unless you already know where it is. Mum drew the grass away and pulled the door open to lead us into a spacious underground apartment. A couple of the rooms were filled with books and papers, and there was a box filled with phidgets. We lived there for two months until the government came looking for us, thinking that Mum had information about Dad she wasn't sharing.

They had emptied the apartment in the raid and then taken us to stay with Aunt Diana. Mum was kept in a facility for a few days until they were convinced she knew nothing. Arthur and I sat in front of Mum, each of us holding one of her hands. I declared that I was never going to go to the academy or work in the Department for Protection.

'We have to,' Arthur had said.

'No.'

'It's the only way we'll find Dad.'

Mum and I both looked at him, astonished.

'No,' Mum had sighed. 'You will not find him. But you will join the academy. And you will both go out there, because you have to finish what we started.'

The wind outside mingled with remembered voices. I pulled the doona over my head.

We number nine and ten and we are hungry

I become a gazelle
from the mountain

My head swirls with fragrance
in delight

Staring at the hunter's eyes
past the hunger
willing her

edges of frustration seeping
empathy

Green iris streaks into grey
flecks of gold then
the pupils
a black mirror

flicker
of a smile

The hunter turns
runs away...

Four grey walls, floor of carpet
shadows, light and dark but
no window to be seen

A man and a woman stand
facing each other
a question hangs in the air
between

Four months after Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

I smiled at the vision. It was as though I was seeing it from the observatory on the space station. The stars appeared so close to us and so far away from each other. I wished I was out there again, but that would involve another battle. Someone in the room turned up the music. Someone else banged the door and I quickly changed the coordinates on the tracker. Footsteps echoed in the room and masked the humming as the telescope adjusted to find the Western sky. Rigel was flashing, it seemed, in tandem with the cello concerto.

'Are you still checking in the direction of Orion?' Tomas was standing right behind me now. I turned too quickly and for a moment I saw spots. Tomas stood there, a big black folder tucked under one arm and a phone in his hand.

'Of course I am,' I replied. The others were ignoring us, except for Lisa. She had turned away from the digital tracker and looked worried. I knew Tomas was spying for Arthur. He always was. Even when we were students he was eager to run errands for him. But back then Arthur and I still saw eye to eye, we were a team, and we didn't have much time for other friends.

Tomas scowled at the screen, his right eye twitching nervously. 'Make sure you scan that area again, the picture is a bit fuzzy.' He opened his folder and scribbled a note. Then he turned and left, the door banging again behind him. Lisa shook her head. 'That man needs to find some balls.'

I changed the coordinates back to relocate Coma Berenices. Tomas was right. The picture was a bit fuzzy. It was bad enough I was stuck in the southern hemisphere but the equipment was starting to fail as well. If I could get myself out there then maybe I could hijack a CubeSat and send it in the right direction.

'Are you having thoughts of insubordination?' Lisa's voice made me jump. She was frowning as she continued. 'Be careful. You mumble to yourself sometimes and there are more ears around here than you realise.'

She waited for me to nod then she turned with a flip of her hair and strode towards the door. 'I'm going to get some snacks,' she said loudly. 'Anyone care to join me?' She looked at Matt and Jake as she said this. One of them got up to follow her and the others started yelling out requests. I was grateful for the diversion.

It felt like I was making progress but in micro-steps. Sometimes I thought I was seeing true white spots or streaks of yellow and then they turned out to be too bright or too orange. Lisa reappeared with chocolates which she placed on the stool. 'Have a snack. The galaxies won't move much in the next twenty minutes.'

of the day

of the night

blue blood beneath

skin, so soft, so tight

silent, rolling, soothing, sighing

waving, falling, cooling, flying

outer space

inner mind

peacefulness

the need to find

blue

Mother is dancing, moving freely

Caught in her spin, I am flung far away

to form my own 'pillars', begin my own spin

I throw an apple.
I'm in zero gravity
I just lost an apple

Blue,
it glows slightly, spins
in my hand, white clouds
travel beneath the skin

The metal mass groans
beneath me, eager to sail
away
Scales begin to fall

The engine explodes

Four months and five days after Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

'Did you hear what I said?' Lisa was hovering again. I sat up and tried to focus on her. She was dressed in a suit and trying to tame her mass of blonde curls. She stopped and turned away from the mirror.

'Arthur phoned earlier. They're sending a couple of hot-shots over from BE today to select three of us for another assignment.' She smiled as she said this. I smiled as well. I had to get back out there. Then I realised I'd have to sit through another interview and I felt my face sink. I wondered if Arthur would also show up.

I searched under my pillow for my phidget while Lisa went through my things, trying to find me something to wear. Mum hadn't called me in days, not since the last earthquake. The morning I had left to come to E-ELT Arthur had decided to stay home and say goodbye. He seemed pleasant enough at first. Mum made him some coffee and we sat around the table. Mum told him about the volunteering she did in the lowlands and Arthur told us about the new equipment that was being installed at BE headquarters.

'What about the earthquakes?' Mum had asked.

'What about them?' Arthur narrowed his eyes.

'Is the old observatory strong enough to handle this new equipment, with all the earthquakes happening? Can the government afford it?'

'If we don't update the resources we'll never get everyone off this planet.'

'And when will that be? Your sister has ideas...' I shook my head. Too late.

Arthur had stood, his face red, his fists clenched. 'I'm in charge because Sarah is always stuffing up. But you don't see that, do you?'

'You should be working together.'

'I don't need her.'

'Sarah,' Mum had implored. 'You try.' Arthur had turned his eyes towards me and I had flinched, stepping back. For a moment a shadow passed over his face. Then he stormed out of the house. When I finally looked at Mum she was crying. I will never forget the pain etched into her face, the stoop of her shoulders, the fall of her tears. 'I'm sorry.' I had whispered. It was not enough.

Lisa waved a hand in front of me. 'I couldn't find a nice enough shirt so you'll have to wear mine.' She pointed at the outfit she had laid out on her bed. It consisted of her black silk shirt and my black suit. Perfect for the mood I was in. Once I was dressed we made our way to the lab where others had arrived earlier and were sitting on a bench in the corridor. Lisa sat down next to Matt and I remained standing.

'I heard they're running out of ideas,' Matt said to Lisa.

'Yes,' a cadet standing nearby, 'and apparently whoever gets to head this mission will basically be able to do whatever they want with the money.'

I looked at Lisa and she nodded. She knew what I had been working on and so far she thought I was on the right track. Tomas came out with a clipboard and called the cadet's name – it seemed they were interviewing in order of experience. An hour later there were only three of us left. I walked in to find the General, his secretary and Tomas in the room. No Arthur.

I stand on a small eyot,
water rushes past on both sides
Suspended in the trees above me spheres of gold and white

A moment has not passed since I thought those spheres were blossoms
Small and yellow, bell-like,
infusing the air with colour

Like Father's textbook
So many moons near stars
I lie beneath multitudes

The water is cold
Bright fish brush past me
with wings, make me roll in
streaks of sunlight,
sand scrapes across my scales

The water rising
between colours, I try to catch
warmer streams, I
move to leap but something snags
my hair, tugs me back

Coral, new and pink
A large kick of my tail, I speed
up and out of
the ocean, through the open air

Heat tingles
my outstretched arms, warms the glowing scales
The sun is white and young and
strange. I splash
back into the deep.

I see one, lying under the baobab tree
I look up and she is hovering,
burnished scales of light

Her claws rattle
the tops of the tree. A door appears
in the trunk of the baobab

I step through

Four months and fifteen days after Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

We cleared the atmosphere so quickly. I had forgotten what a short trip it was to the station. I looked over at Lisa and we both laughed. She had turned out to be a good friend and I was glad she had been selected as well. Matt was our pilot. We both trusted him and he was still as confident as ever. Tomas turned and frowned at us. I was sure Arthur had made him come along. Tomas didn't enjoy being off-planet; I felt sorry for him. But I didn't dwell on it too long. I was going home.

A few hours before docking, I opened my handy-sack and pulled out a small rolled-up carpet. I had warned Lisa of this ritual the night before so she floated over and helped me unroll it. We watched the carpet float for a moment, then I grabbed some tassels and pulled them to make it fly. 'Look at those colours,' Lisa said as she followed the carpet around the tiny shuttle. I always tugged on the bottom tassels so that it looked like the stag was moving towards the hunter.

During the time we spent living in Mum's old bunker she had reopened a lot of boxes and hidden some of the items so well that they had remained hidden throughout the raid. Years later, when I was leaving for my first mission, she pulled out her great-grandmother's carpet. 'The stag is higher than the hunter and stands on a mountain because he is the king of his world. But the hunter is noble because he aims high,' Mum had said softly, in her story-telling voice. 'Do you think you could take the rug with you?'

I had smiled. 'Like the story of the magic carpet?'

'Yes, exactly.' She was grinning. She had rolled the carpet up tight and squeezed it into the side of my handy-sack. 'Don't forget to take a snap with your phidget once it's flying.'

I was worried about the carpet at first but Mum reassured me that it was practically indestructible. And now it was flying again. I had managed to talk to her after the interview. She was with friends, she was fine, and she had not seen Arthur. She didn't ask me if I'd seen him. She had wished me luck and blew kisses over the phidget. Now, here I was, about to dock for the first time in almost two years. Tomas informed us tersely that

there was twenty minutes left so I rolled it up and we strapped ourselves back in. Aunt Diana had taught me a blessing for journeys and I sang it now, another ritual.

Soon afterwards there was a thud and then BE headquarters requested confirmation of our status. Matt turned to me. 'We're now docked with the space station, Commander.'

The air is heavier, I push against
a wall of wind, damp from the fog
suddenly surrounding me
Cold, thick, grey

My fingers brush against soft
airy fibre, almost but not strands,
long and wide and plenty, warm
I'm sitting on something that breathes
the fog clears a little, I inhale the clear air

The back of a long slender neck
revealed, her wings are spread out
on either side, greys, blues, browns
in the white light

I lean forward, my head whirls
I sense two long slender legs folded
beneath her downy bulk, the clouds
are moved by a wave of her wings, I grip
her feathers tight as the world recedes

Plant pots
made of glass
oscillate beneath the light
casting rainbows and shadows below
All the while the plants are stretching
their leaves,
their roots extend
till they touch
the glass

Chasing the dawn

I've tried it before
once, when I was little
But when you're on the planet
it happens too fast
The dawn catches up with you

I watch a thin line
separating dark and light

sweeping across and around;
night chases day, day chases night

Cold air on my face
I loll as the vehicle
murmurs in time with the other passengers

The humming of fibre
rubbing against the air
grows louder as we move farther away

I reach for the belt
and my fingers twitch
as they brush an expanse of silk and wool

The vehicle curves
cream coloured tassels
float up ahead then twist back down again

Five months and fifteen days after Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

I found the trace of an explosion. It was in Messier 64. And it was recent! Lisa was excited but didn't think we should tell Tomas. I didn't like the idea. It felt too much like Delphinus all over again, but eventually I agreed. We would wait till we could confirm the source. The CubeSat had been sending back useless information, telling us that there were no practical options in the Milky Way. It was wasting our time. On the other hand, the red CubeSat, which we had commandeered thanks to Matt's help and Tomas' stupidity, was doing a great job out in Coma Berenices.

The General had promised that as soon as we had a viable option he would send the new cryoshuttle. The old one had been damaged in the asteroid field and again during re-entry. At least we had come back. I wondered how many would crew the new shuttle, how many would they trust me with. The situation back on Earth was worsening; maybe they were desperate.

'Sarah.' Lisa held a headset towards me. 'Call for you.'

I put the headset on and moved away from the tracking feed, leaving Matt to take notes. 'General.'

'No, it's Arthur.' His voice sounded strange and I felt a chill crawl up my spine.

'Arthur. Good morning.'

'It's evening here, Commander, or have you lost your bearings already?'

I took a deep breath. 'What is it, Arthur?'

'There was a 9.0 this morning.'

'Where's Mum?'

'She's fine. She's safe.' He said this gently and for a moment I remembered that we were family. 'I know what you're up to Sarah,' he continued. 'No one in their right mind would head into the Black Eye galaxy.'

'You mean Dad wouldn't have gone there.'

He didn't respond.

'Dad went in the opposite direction and he never came back.'

More silence.

I took a gamble. 'If you're so worried, then come and help me.'

‘The old entrance to BE headquarters collapsed in the quake. There was a lot of damage and we might have to relocate soon.’

‘What about the cryoshuttle?’

‘It was moved to the desert three days ago.’ He paused. ‘We know you’ve sent out an extra CubeSat.’

‘We?’

‘Bring it back in Sarah, and I won’t tell the General.’ He terminated the call.

My right hand was shaking. I splayed it slowly against a window and tried to calm down. I located Diadem through the glass and focused on it, thinking of the trace I had found hours earlier. We just needed a few more days.

A muted blue light falls
through thin white curtains
onto a girl sleeping
on a beige sofa,
her hands curl.

He bumps the lamp-shade,
she opens her eyes.
She sees him touch the gold,
he doesn't notice.
She opens her mouth –

no sound comes out.
He cradles the arm-band,
she grips the blanket.
His moustache curls into cobalt,
her eyes widen into onyx.

She knows he will take
Everything. He doesn't know
she is watching him.

I fell into a foggy evening –
and there were many bonfires lit.
Wood smoke whirled through my hair,
stuck to clothes, stung the eyes.

Only three around this bonfire –
soul siblings staring at stars.
Piles of paper sprawled at our sides –
piles that spread when we were fast asleep.

One soul sibling lifted some paper,
the other began tearing the paper to shreds –
I threw a handful of paper into the fire,
and the fog lifted from the stage.

We three sat smiling –
not gleeful but happy, at peace.
The paper burned to louder murmurs from the fire
and the smoke smelled sweeter as the fog dispersed.

I am driving down the Road –
the traffic is wild, bicycles
weaving through, people making
a run for it.

My feet feel wet. I look
down – my car is flooding.
The water is rising
There is nothing I can do
There is nowhere to stop
My doors will not open
My windows
will not wind down

Six months after Arthur's twenty-fifth birthday

I am walking on an old tarmac road
sun glaring through the trees above
burning the skin on the ridge of my nose
and on my head

a song echoes between my ears
just the verse, not the chorus
frustrated I swing my arms in front
grasping at the notes and lyrics

mother's eyes appear before me
her gentle gaze as she sings the song
the song becomes loud in my ears
my head is burning,
the ground is gone

my cheek is pressed against the rough
my hands stick to the hot uneven surface
full of jagged edges and bits come loose
my feet suspended in air, uncertain

I open my eyes, I breathe in the dust
my body dares not move, I stare
at the world inverted, I cling to the earth
as the sky falls
away beneath me

The earthquakes were stronger and more frequent. The side of Mum's house collapsed and we couldn't get anyone to put up a tarpaulin cover for days afterwards. Mum asked me to call Sarah and let her know what was happening, so I did. Then I had to get back to work.

HQ had suffered and we couldn't get any workers to help with repairs. Scientists and lab technicians were running around with hammers and screws as though we'd gone backwards a whole century. I didn't even have Tomas to order around. No research could be done and we had to pass off all the space station support to the staff at E-ELT.

The aftershocks were another matter. By the time the third one was over the lowlands had all but disappeared. Mum was stoic as ever. She organised for the neighbourhood to take in as many survivors as possible.

A number of the HQ staff put in requests to be transferred, either to the space station or to Armazones. I didn't bother. I knew the General was never going to look at a request with my name on it. I had burned that bridge and now I could only bide my time.

About a week after the big one Mum showed up at my office, or what was left of it. She knocked on the lab door. I was the only one in there so I looked up and there she was, a determined woman in an old navy rain-coat. She walked slowly, taking in her surroundings like she had never been there before.

'I brought sandwiches.' She placed a paper package on one of the lab benches. I put away the phidget and sat on a stool at the bench with her. When I was a child Mum had brought Sarah and me to 'the old Observatory' on clear nights. She used to pack sandwiches and, if Dad was away, we would spend our time locating constellations where he might have been and telling each other stories about what he might have found out there.

'Is Sarah heading out soon?'

Of course, that was what she wanted to talk about.

'Yes. The cryoshuttle is going up tomorrow. Amazingly, the launch system wasn't affected in the earthquake.'

'Could you give an envelope to someone to pass on to her?'

'Mum, why don't you just send the message to her phidget?'

'Could you get an envelope to her?'

I stared at Mum. I hoped she hadn't chosen this day to have an emotional breakdown.

She reached into her coat and took out two envelopes. 'One is for you,' she said as she shoved both of them across the bench.

'What...?'

'There are two pages in each one. The first is a sketch of you that I drew when you were little. The second is a poem your Dad wrote from a dream he had around the same time, while he was away.'

I didn't know what to say. I just sat there staring at the envelopes. Mum stayed with me for a while. Then she got up and quietly slipped away. I don't know how long she was gone before I noticed. I decided to deliver the package before anything else. I drove for five hours, around the mountains and out to the launch site.

Sarah's had her name on it so I handed it over to one of the science officers. By the time I made my way back to the surface it was dark and cold and windy. The lights in the above-ground office were flickering and the sky was completely overcast. I got in the car and put my head down on the steering wheel.

After a few deep breaths I leaned over and took out an envelope from the glove box. I unfolded the first sheet and saw a six year old version of myself smiling up at me. One hand was raised in a wave and my hair was scruffy as though it was windy in the world of the picture. This was how Mum saw me. I wanted to smile but it wouldn't come to my lips.

I opened the second sheet of paper and almost dropped it. Dad's sprawling handwriting sat precariously on the page, as though it were about to fly off. So I decided to read it before it had a chance to disappear –

*Cold morning on a cold mountain
cold in my heart – give it wings to fly*

*the space between –
it thrums with spinning waves of heat,
propels me deep into the galaxy*

*because I dare to dream in the dark
because I look through another lens
because my inner voice begins*

*all my journeys. I am near
where the new star should be
it rotates and travels just slightly*

*Now I see beside me a new home,
blue and green, different but the same –
an eclipse, like the 'hide and seek' game*

*Joy infuses my being, gives me wings,
I fold my wings and
fall*

Six months after Sarah's twenty-fifth birthday

'Commander, everyone is in place.' Matt stood beside the last vault. We walked back to the cockpit together to punch in the coordinates. Both of us had to enter our personal codes to activate the autopilot. The cryo-chambers would be sealed twenty minutes after the activation.

The red CubeSat had sent images of several viable looking planets just days after the trace. The General was quick to approve the flight, especially in light of the numerous natural disasters that were taking place back on Earth. The cryoshuttle had arrived a week later with a crew of four astronauts; two flight engineers and two science officers – a chemist and a biologist. After we separated from the space station the chemist had approached me with an envelope. 'The General said it's from your mother.'

On the back of the envelope Mum had written instructions, *Sarah dear, when you reach our new home, open this letter and think of us. Love, Mum.*

The system lights went down and I punched in the commander's code. The cabin lights became a dull blue and Matt and I moved quickly to the vaults. I tucked Mum's letter into my breast pocket as the chamber sealed itself.

The back of the music stand
is all I can see
a small light reveals the pages

and everything else fades into darkness.
A baton taps the metal ledge,
music flies at me from 360 degrees.

Now I can see the hand
wielding the baton, conducting
my colours round into a prism.

Soft brown,
red and gold grains interspersed,
floats through dim light
just beyond her reach.

An unnatural,
smell of resin mingles
with crushed leaves.

Long strands of molasses
fall, caught in small silver pegs.

Through gnarled twigs
metallic string reflects
fires of a sunrise ahead.

Brown earth resounds
with chase,

deep timbre fills the air.

Jagged edges of dirt and stone
rush past –

she is over the cliff.

I pray for dreams,
— ‘Come’

The emerald spreads
her wings

They whirl with thoughts
stay elusive

A slight sliver teases the eyelids
— ninety-five hours of confinement to come

I look down at the Lotus

I lean over
Hold her tight
Her head turns a fraction,
eye frozen in moonlight
A concave translucent, filled
with starry moss

A secret seeming message passes
from one to the other and back
Rigel winks
Trees bow low

Lavish fur
whispers on my skin
Whiskers swipe my face,
paw swings at the moon
The cosmos is closer, surrounds us
We exhale

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Appendix

Sample Dream Reports

The following dream reports are samples from my own dream journal. I have removed specific dates, names, and places. Otherwise, they are copied here as they appear in my journals.

September 2011

I dreamt I was standing in an airport, somewhere in the Americas. I stood in front of a floor to ceiling window looking out at a dry mountainous landscape, in particular one great big mountain, tall and craggy, very close to the airport. That mountain erupted. The volcano spewed fire and boulders, lava and black rocks, smoke and dust all mixed together.

The alarms in the airport started whining. People were running, panicked. There was a boarding call for my flight so I started to run as well. I ran down glass encased corridors with smooth white floors. The corridors were never-ending. I knew where my gate was but it seemed like I would never get there.

I did.

August 2012

I hover above Pluto. (Apparently it's not a planet anymore.) Hot energy rustles around me, in waves but cyclical, leaving a light pink trace or shadow as it moves, twirling from the Sun outwards. I am caught in the dance as the Sun spins, twirling her ever-expanding ballerina skirt. The static is warm but blinding, I can't see – I can barely see glimpses of the stars beyond. But then, they are also caught up in the tulle folds, one by one...

September 2012

The cat leapt up onto the ledge and stared into my eyes questioningly. She stretched out along the salmon concrete in a companionable way as I sipped my spicy tea. Her lush brown fur shimmered with red highlights as she turned her head to follow a squirrel scampering along the neighbour's fence. I see her eye in profile. A hemisphere, mostly clear but with a light metallic swirl, protrudes from a small and delicate and furry face. As she turns her head slightly there is a flash of moss green, gleaming in the depths of the glass orb.

The cat is her own planet, looking out into the universe, observing other bodies. The cat and I understand each other...

February 2013

We are running through the jungle, there are nineteen of us. We are hungry, starving, and there is no food left. There are no other people left either. The jungle is dense, almost suffocating. Our stomachs ache, our heads hurt, and we feel weak and ill.

We come to a clearing. There is a great mountain in the distance with snow on top. The whole scene is lush and verdant and full of life. I see a beautiful gazelle in the middle of the field. She does not notice us, her head is down and she is eating the green grass. All of a sudden it occurs to me that we could also eat the grass.

I get down on my knees and start to nibble. The grass is sweet and peppery at the same time. A breeze wafts through from the mountain and I can smell the herbs and flowers, the spring water in the distance. The breeze ruffles the soft fur on my back and along my belly. I become aware of my hooves and experimentally tap them in the grass.

I notice movement from the corner of my eye and turn my head quickly to see my partner aiming a rifle straight at me. I look him in the eyes, willing him to recognise me. I see hunger, anger, frustration, and then slowly, a question. I see my reflection in his irises. Then he turns and starts running into the skirt of the mountain, following the others, still looking for food, still wanting to survive.

October 2013

I dreamed that I sat cross-legged on a prayer rug in X's room (my old and new room). The curtains were pulled back so the room was filled with light and the window was open – a light breeze, refreshing, flowed through the room.

The rug was **new** – I had never seen it before – it was soft, a blend of wool and silk. It was woven of all my favourite colours; cream, pistachio green, salmon, purple, cobalt blue. It was warm and magical – the patterns were classical, intricate, and elegant. There were birds and lotus flowers woven into it.

Sitting on this rug I felt at peace...

July 2014

I had an amazing dream. It was not very sharp although it felt like it lasted for a very long time. I was living in and travelling through an incredible city filled with light. It was half under water and half above ground. There were tunnels that connected the different parts of the city. I saw myself walking above ground then swimming under water, both in tunnels and in open water. Everything glowed a soft blue and white. I felt both at home and in awe.

December 2014

I had a strange dream in the middle of the night. A baby was born. There was an argument over the baby because it wouldn't stop crying. The doctor came in and killed it by drowning it in a basin of water, in order to end the argument. The environment was very sterile; there was a lot of metal (ie. metal basins). I really don't understand it...