“Vision and Desire: Jim Morrison’s Mythography Beyond the Death of God.”

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ABSTRACT

The poetry of Jim Morrison, as opposed to his lyric verse, has been the subject of little critical examination. The aim of this paper is to open up an understanding and interpretation of a mythographic landscape developed by Morrison in his response to existence in a demythologised western culture.

Through the use of the Greek myth of Oedipus in its entirety, as opposed to the two most universally known events of the adult Oedipus' life, discussion here will attempt to demonstrate that Morrison developed a cohesive, holistic vision of the human condition of existence in the world, and presented a path of possibility for transcending its conflict. Indeed, it is proposed here that Morrison draws a clear path to and framework for living beyond the death of God.

For structure, discussion will be framed around not only the Oedipal myth, but also the "Three Metamorphoses" found in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* a transformational trinity which is easily aligned to the story of Oedipus. Critical theory will be drawn from mythology, principally through the work of Joseph Campbell, existentialism, from the work of Soren Kierkegaard and Jean-Paul Sartre, psychoanalysis, drawing mainly from Sigmund Freud, Julia Kristeva and Jacques Lacan and philosophy, based largely though not exclusively, in Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Will to Power*.

It is recognised that a great volume of biography and related commentary regarding Morrison has focus upon aspects and interpretations of his work that are not here under examination, and cite a significant volume of literature which has influenced him. Due to limitations of space within the parameters of this project, it has been impossible to address all works and persons that can be attributed as having influence, and notable omissions include, but are not limited to, the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud, the works of William Blake not noted in this paper, *The Birth of Tragedy* by Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac, and *The Doors of Perception* by Aldous Huxley, which is noted only briefly. Further to this Morrison drew on a vast knowledge of Greek myth, and most often cited is the myth of Dionysus, though

it should be kept in mind that many other Greek mythic figure are apparent in his writing.

Footnoting has been utilised throughout the paper for a twofold purpose. The first is to provide further relevant background information on a point under discussion in the main body of text. Footnotes are also used as a reference point for the reader for ease of access back to passages or ideas previously noted during discussion, which have reoccurred for further development. While this second use of footnotes is by no means exhaustive, it is used in a manner which attempts to strike a balance between excess and scarcity.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

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INTRODUCTION.

> Give us a creed
> To believe
> A night of Lust
> Give us trust in
> The Night
> ("An American Prayer", Courson, Courson, Lisciandro, & Lisciandro, 1990, p. 6).[1]

From an eclectic field of inspiration Morrison created a violent yet beautiful mythography which attempts to illuminate a path of transcendence from the world of conflict and opposition. The underpinning frame which can be used to discuss the great diversity found within Morrison's writing is that of mythic archetype. By using the mythic purpose and marrying this with the basic principles of existential and psychoanalytic thought, what has so often been labelled deep and inaccessible opens up to reveal a largely cohesive and intelligent creed. What the reader then has before them is a rich mythography which, drawing on some of the most ancient archetypes within myth, propels these symbols and meanings forward into the world of the Twentieth Century and beyond.

Though credited with being existential in his approach, there appears to be little detail offered by biographers and critics alike in support of this claim beyond generalised statements regarding the imminence of death and the imperative to live in a fully conscious state. When the reader then seeks an explanation and expansion of these, and indeed many other ideas, there is a general silence in reply, as if the existential tag alone is explanation enough. However, the simple act of removing the rock star from the script, as this project intends, will open the gateway through which interpretation and illumination may be found. With both critics and biographers of Morrison:

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[1] A good deal of material published posthumously from Morrison's notebooks are poems which did not have working titles. The editors of the two volumes used in this paper, *Wilderness: The Lost Writings of Jim Morrison* and *The American Night: The Writings of Jim Morrison*, have arranged indexes in these volumes according to the first line of any given poem. Where material is quoted from work which is not elsewhere published, referenced or known to have a title, the reference in this paper remains silent. For material quoted from either *The Lords* or *The New Creatures*, no further titles within the works were published by Morrison in relation to individual poems or sections, except where indicated with Roman numerals for some parts of *The New Creatures*.

> their glaring omission typifies the vast body of criticism written about the Doors in the past two decades [and they] fail to analyse Morrison's contribution as a poet; the larger-than-life details of his meteoric career appear to overwhelm any attempt at reading his language as art. And this is particularly unfortunate in Morrison's case, as the need to separate commercial myth from poetic legacy is most acute (Magistrale, 1992, p. 133).

What Morrison presents is a recognition of the need for something new while simultaneously supporting mythic archetypes and functions that have existed within western, and indeed world culture, for millennia. He presents a steadfast vision of something primeval, fundamental to the core of being human, and wraps it in the language and landscape of modern history and contemporary imagery. "An American Prayer"[2] (Courson et al., 1990, pp. 3-18) was Morrison's direct address to his country, and indeed to the western world, that in the midst of mediocrity and blind obedience to State and Church it was time to wake up, take responsibility for one's self and remember the path of the past. In the midst of rules shrouded in a particular morality to regulate behaviour, the dominance of words as symbols of language, and indeed the Word of God, in short, the symbolic order of things, there is a reconnection to be had. There is, Morrison asserts, a necessity for taking responsibility once more and making a connection back to something that precedes the word, something that appears to have been lost:

> Do you know the warm progress
> under the stars?
> Do you know we exist?
> Have you forgotten the keys
> to the kingdom?
> Have you been born yet
> & are you alive?
>
> Let's reinvent the gods, all the myths
> of the ages
> Celebrate symbols from deep elder forests
> [Have you forgotten the lessons
> of the ancient war]
>
> We need great golden copulations

[2] This poem was first published in 1969 in *Rolling Stone* at the end of an interview with Jerry Hopkins, and it marked "the first time that any rock star had published a work of poetry in a national publication." In January 1970 Morrison then privately published 100 copies of the finalised version (Davis, 2005, pp. 334, 359).

> ("An American Prayer", Courson et al., 1990, p. 3).

This is reflective of Morrison's "incessant call for self-transcendence," and his comprehension of living in a de-mythologised culture (Magistrale, 1992, pp. 135-6). Joseph Campbell spoke extensively on the issue of the necessity of myth within a culture, and the consequences of the loss of mythic tradition which underpins a culture's sense of itself. What he also recognised was the need for a culture's myth to evolve with that culture:

> Myth has to deal with the cosmology of the day and it is no good when it is based on a cosmology that is out of date….A mythological image that has to be explained to the brain is not working….There is one mythology in the world and it has inflected in the various cultures in terms of their historical and social circumstances and deeds and particular local ethic system, but it's one mythology.
> ("The Hero's Journey," 1987).

For Campbell, myth has a very specific function, and for Morrison the use of archetypes and myth in a landscape relevant to the world in which he lived is arguably one of the drives behind the manner in which he presented his own creed. What Campbell noticed in modern western culture is that over time the stories that were once known by the general population, and taught as a foundation within the education system, sourced from the Greek, Latin and Biblical traditions, were falling away. With this disappearance has emerged a progressive loss of the knowledge, which historically, has fed an individual's understanding of life and its function:

> These bits of information from ancient times, which have to do with the themes that have supported human life, built civilisations, and informed religion over the millennia, have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner thresholds of passage
> (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 4).

At the time of the above statement from Campbell in the 1980s, he had not seen the advent of a new, culturally embraced set of myths to fill the void. It could be argued this void remains. What is proposed here is that, when writing in the 1960s, Morrison did indeed attempt to make relevant the mythic tradition he had inherited within the culture in which he lived. While Morrison's mythography is perhaps not embraced by the whole of western culture, it functions well in its contemporaneous

setting and has continued to do so. Writing in 1835, Kierkegaard expressed the need for finding that which injects purpose into existence:

> What I really need is to be clear about *what I am to do*, not what I must know, except in the way knowledge must precede all action. It is a question of understanding my destiny, of seeing what the Deity really wants *me* to do; the thing is to find a truth which is truth *for me*, to find *the idea for which I am willing to live and die*
> (Kierkegaard, 1996, p. 32).

Myth functions as a means by which to understand the world and the individual's place within it. Campbell's assertion is that rather than looking for the meaning of life, the individual looks for the experience of life (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 5).

It has, Campbell asserts, become increasingly difficult for the individual to correlate what happens to them in life with an information base, that is, a mythic tradition. In *This Business of the Gods*, Campbell relays the vital question asked by Carl Jung after writing his text *Symbols of Transformation*:

> When he finished that, he thought, "Now I know the difference between a life that is moved by a myth and a life that is not." And he said, "I asked myself by what myth I was living and I found I didn't know. So I proposed to myself that the goal of goals of my life would be to find by what myth I was living" (Campbell, 1989, p. 108).

What Morrison presents within his search for this experience is a strong voice of understanding that life and death are dual functions of the experience of being human, and his mythography is one which tightly binds the concerns of life to those of sex and death, entering a dialogue couched in existential and psychoanalytic terms. In the experience of being alive, in a world of duality and separation, there can be no experience of life without the ever-present contingency of death.

The general notion of "living constantly in the face of death, in the awareness that the here and now may be the last moment" (Grene, 1976, p. 11) was central to the thought of existential forerunner Soren Kierkegaard, and is also found within Morrison's mythographic creed. For Kierkegaard, and indeed for existential thought in general, because death is ever present and the individual's experience of being

alive can at any moment be terminated, death therefore becomes an event through which human life is interpreted (Grene, 1976, p. 27).

Expanding on the parameters by which the individual[3] is bound, existentialism's view of the individual's relationship with God[4] is also useful in understanding Morrison. Because of the drive for survival which manifests in the individual's pursuit of maintaining a subjective position in relation to the world, thereby avoiding being no more than an object to some other being, that individual can only be a true statement of himself as such when facing God, because it is only in this circumstance that he will be utterly alone. However, it is here that the individual turns from being subject, as God now occupies this position, to simply being object and therefore, nothing:

> Religious experience for Kierkegaard, in other words, lies wholly in the self's awareness of its infinite distance from the God whom alone it loves. And the quality of that awareness, the way it feels to be self, is pure and unmixed suffering." (Grene, 1976, p. 38).

For Morrison, it is an entry into dialogue:

> Let me tell you about
> heartache & the loss
> of God
> Wandering, wandering
> in hopeless night
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 127).

The burden of suffering is added to by the natural progression of this further toward, indeed, the death of God. This is not a physical death of course, but rather an absence and it is the contingency of God, or lack thereof, which takes Him from the equation, not any requirement to disprove Him. Disbelief alone kills Him. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche wrote "that 'God is dead', that the belief in the Christian God has ceased to be believable" ([343], Kaufmann, 1954, p. 447).

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[3] When referring to the individual, this paper may at times, for convenience, use the terms 'he', 'his', 'him' etc. The usage of these terms is generic, that is, taken to be inclusive of the male and female rather than as an interpretive expression of phallocentric language and the positing of the 'other'. Where this secondary interpretation is intended, the text will be clear on the matter.

[4] The term "God", while in western culture is implicitly interpreted as meaning the Christian God, does within the context of this paper at times embrace a wider spectrum of interpretation. Not always by necessity capitalised, the usage of this term does not always refer specifically to the Judeo-Christian God, but rather may also be referent to god or the *divine other* in general, that is, the transcendent, and is inclusive of the term goddess also.

For Sartre, the idea of a typical human nature is not possible. Such an idea is considered to be "a byproduct of the traditional idea of God the maker" (Grene, 1976, p. 41) and when the god dies, or at the least the belief in him, the individual is left with nothing beyond their own history and the circumstance of their isolation (Grene, 1976, p. 42). "Human-reality remains alone because the Other's existence has the nature of a contingent and irreducible fact. We *encounter* the Other; we do not constitute him" (Sartre, 1956, p. 336).

The responsibilities and consequences of this position for the self, dealing with and establishing a moral code, and indeed demonstrating how that self then lives subjectively, are located as the central concern of Morrison's mythos: in short, how to live beyond the death of God.

God as a contingency can be removed, but death as a contingency remains. For existentialism the issue of death appears to be intrinsic to and inseparable from the position of the self as subject within the world. Death is the event that freedom works toward:

> Death in its utter negation of meaning limits, and so in the deepest sense determines, whatever resolve I make to turn the ineradicable past into a significant future. Yet it is only in such a resolve as limited by death – in the realization of my existence as essentially and necessarily *being to death* – that I can rise out of the distracting and deceiving cares of my day by day existence to become authentically myself
> (Grene, 1976, p. 53).

For Morrison, this is a vital realisation, a first step to transcendence. His mythos consistently supports such a view of death and its relation to not only freedom, but more importantly to validation of the self as something beyond any object or contrivance of the world, and this begins with understanding that death *is* inevitable:

> you must confront
> your life
> which is sneaking up
> on you
> like a rapt coiled
> serpent
>
> snail-slime

> you must confront
> the inevitable
> eventually
> Bloody Bones has got you!
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 25).

In the heart of Morrison's mythos is to be found a linking between the existential view of relationship and the psychoanalytic, which biographers and critics alike have universally reduced to a glib, almost insulting evaluation of the Oedipus Complex after the very public, and persistent, dissemination of a mere four lines from amongst Morrison's vast dialogue regarding the matter. The Oedipal material is a significant thread within Morrison's writings and to reduce its discussion to the pop psychology of pseudo-Freudian misrepresentation and cliché, is to negate an opportunity to discover the deeper ideas that flow from this aspect of the mythography.

At the root of the Oedipal story, and indeed psychoanalytic theory, is the recognition of what constitutes the parameters of the world into which the individual is born, that is, the world of the pairs of opposites. What is generated by the experience of living in the world is conflict, and what results is a desire to be free of the conflict, a desire which compels the individual to seek the transcendent. "That nostalgia for unity, that appetite for the absolute illustrates the essential impulse of the human drama" (Camus, 1955, p. 21). But what is it the individual seeks?

> "[T]ranscendent" properly means that which is beyond all concepts. Kant tells us that all of our experiences are bounded by time and space. They take place within space, and they take place in the course of time.
> Time and space form the sensibilities that bound our experiences. Our senses are enclosed in the field of time and space, and our minds are enclosed in a frame of the categories of thought. But the ultimate thing (which is no thing) that we are trying to get in touch with is not so enclosed. We enclose it as we try to think of it.
> The transcendent transcends all of these categories of thinking. Being and nonbeing – those are categories. The word "God" properly refers to what transcends all thinking, but the word "God" itself is something thought about
> (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 62).

When consciousness enters the field of time and space it also enters, by definition, the field of conflict. Rather than connection there is separation, rather than unity

there is duality, rather than an eternal yes, there is an eternal argument. There is a cleavage between the structure and the construct, between the foundation and the building. Consciousness is cut off by its very existence in this plane of language and opposites; it is cut off from its source, from participation and inherent comprehension of *what it is*, all of which exist outside the boundary of expression. In short, consciousness is cut off from god, and the inexpressible hungers for a way to express. "Consciousness is consciousness *of* something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is born *supported* by a being which is not itself. That is what we call the ontological proof" (Sartre, 1956, p. 23).

For progression of this discussion the Greek story of Oedipus[5] will be used, and in the format presented by Edith Hamilton in *Mythology* (1969, pp. 268-273)[6]. The main elements of this myth are embedded within Morrison's work and it is significant that the structure of the whole myth will be here employed, rather than simply the two pivotal acts committed by the adult Oedipus, being the killing of his father and marriage to his mother. I will use as a frame the "Three Metamorphoses" of the spirit in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Kaufmann, 1954, pp. 137-140) to provide a structure for reading Morrison and the Oedipal myth, the metamorphoses used as markers for sections of this thesis.[7]

Theoretical and critical sources will be principally drawn from the works of Joseph Campbell, Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva. Of significance also, though under less scrutiny due to limitations of space within this project are *The Myth of Sisyphus* by

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[5] Sophocles was born 496B.C. and the probable dates for writing the three plays which are concerned with the royal House of Thebes are: *Antigone* 442-441B.C., *King Oedipus* 429-420B.C. and *Oedipus at Colonus* 401B.C. (which was not performed until after Sophocles' death). The oral tradition of the Oedipal story however is most probably much older, though how much cannot be conclusively stated. Of approximately one hundred works Sophocles is said to have produced, only seven have survived and many scholars regard *King Oedipus* to be the best of the works. Aristotle considered *King Oedipus* "as the perfect type of tragic composition" (Watling, 1947, pp. 7-14).

[6] Morrison is known to have not only possessed a copy of Hamilton's book, but to have carried it with him (Davis, 2005, p. 73).

[7] Historically Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, is believed to have lived in the 6th century B.C., thereby pre-dating written account of Oedipus. Zoroaster is said to have had a "visionary revelation at the age of thirty … converted his mentor, a central Asian king named Vishtaspa, to his new faith" and "was the inventor of magic" having studied "the doctrine of the Magi, who, like their counterparts, the Brahmans of India, venerated fire as the sacred symbol of godhead" (Collins, 1997, pp. 97-8).

Albert Camus, and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* by William Blake.

METAMORPHOSIS ONE:

> There is much that is difficult for the spirit, the strong reverent spirit that would bear much: but the difficult and the most difficult are what its strength demands.
> What is difficult? asks the spirit that would bear much, and kneel down like a camel wanting to be well loaded. What is most difficult, O heroes, asks the spirit that would bear much, that I may take it upon myself and exult in my strength? Is it not humbling oneself to wound one's haughtiness? Letting one's folly shine to mock one's wisdom?
> Or is it this: parting from our cause when it triumphs? Climbing high mountains to tempt the tempter?
> Or is it this: feeding on the acorns and grass of knowledge and, for the sake of truth, suffering hunger in one's soul?
> Or is it this: being sick and sending home the comforters and making friends with the deaf, who never hear what you want?
> Or is it this: stepping into filthy waters when they are waters of truth, and not repulsing cold frogs and hot toads?
> Or is it this: loving those who despise us and offering a hand to the ghost that would frighten us?
> All these most difficult things the spirit that would bear much takes upon itself: like the camel that, burdened, speeds into the desert, thus the spirit speeds into its desert.
> ("On the Three Metamorphoses", Kaufmann, 1954, pp. 137-8).

In the Oedipal story, the journey begins with the birth of a son to King Laius and the queen, Jocasta. In fear for his own life, and in attempt to negate his fate as decreed by the Delphic oracle[8], Laius has the infant Oedipus bound by his feet and left on the summit of a mountain where he is intended to die (Hamilton, 1969, p. 268). From the beginning, the symbolic order of god asserts authority over the body through the word of the oracle, its consequence being the removal of the infant from the arms of his mother which have been his comfort and protection.

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[8] The *Collins English Dictionary* defines the terms of oracle and shaman in differing ways, and both of these contain points of interest in relation to this paper. "**oracle** *n*. **1.** a prophesy, often obscure or allegorical, revealed through the medium of a priest or priestess at the shrine of a god. **3.** an agency through which a prophesy is transmitted. **5.** a statement believed to be infallible and authoritative. **6.** *Bible*. **a.** a message from God" (Hanks, 1986, p. 1081). "**shaman** *n*. **1.** a priest of shamanism, [from Russian *shaman*, from Tungusian *saman*, from Pali *samana* Buddhist monk, ultimately from Sanskrit *srama* religious exercise] **shamanism** *n*. **1.** the religion of certain peoples of northern Asia, based on the belief that the world is pervaded by good and evil spirits who can be influenced or controlled only by the shamans" (Hanks, 1986, p. 1402). While the two terms can be considered relatively interchangeable, there are some particularities of each which can also be used to separate them. As Morrison has used both "oracle" and "shaman" across his work it is perhaps not an unreasonable supposition to make that he does so for the specifics of where they differ. For the purpose of this paper however, the two terms have been used and considered as generalised equivalents that point to both a path of vision which is different to the physical vision of the eyes, and a connection with the natural world and its "unseen" elements, e.g. spirits, ghosts.

The most notorious statement made by Morrison is a direct parallel with the events that occur later in life for Oedipus, and are presented in "The End" (Courson et al.1990, pp. 111-113). The response of outrage first attached to this lyric verse and the quasi-mystic elevation which evolved from it, is of such magnitude that the glib definition of it as an expression of Oedipal angst shrouds the revelation a more penetrating examination can uncover (Magistrale, 1992, p. 137). Beyond the modern cliché lies a pivotal aspect of Morrison's mythos and two sentences often voiced by Morrison form his mantra[9], "'Fuck the mother, kill the father'" (Densmore, 1990, p. 88) thereby capturing a great deal of his creed.

While the title of the verse is "The End", historically Oedipus has participated within western culture from the beginning. He is one of the ancestors, an archetypal hero whose shadow has been ever present. With the advent of psychoanalytic theory early in the twentieth century[10], Oedipus exploded onto the scientific and creative stages, and the subsequent exploration and enlargement of that body of work has made him relevant once more as a potent symbol of the human condition from which to learn. To bring a figure from the beginning of cultural history and inject him into "The End" thematically and metaphorically, is reflective of Morrison's continual effort to turn the given on its head, negate the norm and demonstrate the antithetical possibilities at the heart of what is culturally accepted.

It is a shock to face Oedipus, and as much as parts of the myth have held a momentum of popularity, the bare facts remain confronting to say the least, even in this more liberated culture of the twenty-first century. It could be argued that the attention "The End" has been given is disproportionate in relation to how small a volume of Morrison's total material it comprises. The attention it draws may be considered unwarranted because it is an idea and an image which is confined to one

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[9] "**creed. 2.** *Hinduism, Buddhism*. any sacred word or syllable used as an object of concentration and embodying some aspect of spiritual power. [C19: from Sanskrit, literally: speech, instrument of thought, from *man* to think]" (Hanks, 1986, p. 938).

[10] The publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1900 by Sigmund Freud questioned the idea that the totality of the human mind is open and accessible to consciousness. From this, he developed his psychoanalytic theory and practice which, among other important features, recognised the significance of what has become widely known as the Oedipal Complex (Rivkin & Ryan, 2004, p. 389).

song alone. However, to take such a view would be to negate a cornerstone of the creed embedded within his work. Oedipus and "The End" present a threshold – they are an alpha and omega. That is, it is only in the death of the father that Oedipus can then live authentically, and it is only in the loss of sexual innocence with the mother that Oedipus can *see* beyond the mask of the world.

It could also credibly be argued that one particular section of "The End" was written by Morrison as a deliberate move to publicly insult his parents. While there appears to be no direct confirmation of this, there is enough quoted material regarding his reluctance to recognise his parents in any way to perhaps support such a claim (Hopkins, 1992, pp. 80-1). This is not, it will be demonstrated, a useful or accurate reading of the passage when taken within the context of the verse as a whole, cohesive piece of writing.

While there is no dispute of the words first used publicly at the Whiskey-a-Go-Go[11] in Los Angeles, 1966 (Hopkins, 1992, p. 70), and recorded on The Doors' debut album (Densmore, 1990, p. 198), the verse as printed in a posthumously published anthology represents the climactic two words by implication:

> "Father?"
> "Yes son?"
> "I want to kill you.
> Mother, I want to …"
> ("The End", Courson et al., 1990, p. 112).

Courson et al. (1990, p. 205) cite in their "Notes" that they chose to remain faithful to Morrison's work by not making editorial changes, and so the final two words, "fuck you", do not appear on the printed page. What the reason behind this written omission was for Morrison is not known, but it is known that at every performance and recording of the piece made after that first public statement at the Whiskey-a-Go-Go, these words were used and so are accepted here as a part of a text originally written for performance. When later questioned about that performance Morrison said " '[s]omething just clicked … Just then at that moment, I realized what the whole song was about – what it has all been leading to'" (Davis, 2005, pp. 133-4),

[11] Ironically, Phil Tanzini, who fired The Doors after this gig, is reported as saying " 'You *filthy* motherfuckers!... Morrison – you can't say that shit about your mother!" (Davis, 2005, p. 135).

and Morrison told for the first time of the killer who put on his boots and walked down the hall. Morrison speaks of this as an incident which has come from an unplanned, subconscious level of understanding, something which is posited outside the rationalisation of the conscious mind. Of significance in this matter is that a written silence, by virtue of the words omitted, translates into an inability of the phallocentric language in use to properly express what the return to a semiotic participation is really about.

These words place focus immediately upon Morrison's primary concerns of sex and death, Oedipal conflict, and the desire for reconnection, all of which have application across the wider body of his work. The primary function of this passage, I believe, is not as an expression of murder and incest, but rather something else which is present throughout the mythography, underpinning its drive.

Morrison's mantra of "fuck the mother, kill the father", Nietzsche's "Three Metamorphoses" and the Greek's Oedipus all speak of and to the journey of the individual through the experience of life and living, inexorably moving toward death. They are all concerned with unravelling in order to comprehend not only the *position* but also the *point* of the individual within the world. In doing so, they all express a desire for something which to the conscious mind held in discourse with the symbolic ordering of that world, appears to be unnameable and perhaps even unobtainable, but most certainly worth striving for. It is the subconscious mind which suggests the existence of this thing by means of the operation and conscious recognition of the *other*, or double, as identified by Freud. In *Ecrits*, Lacan also states that:

> Following Freud I teach that the Other is the locus of that memory that he discovered and called the unconscious, a memory that he regards as the object of a question that has remained open in that it conditions the indestructibility of certain desires
> ("On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis", 1977, p. 215).

It is this other which holds discourse with what lies beneath in the semiotic foundation, and it is the conflict between these two aspects of identity that Morrison asserts the individual strives to transcend:

hope is just a word
when you think in
Table Cloths
Laughter will not end
her funny feeling
or assuage our
strange desire
Children will be born
(Courson et al., 1990, p. 26).

When existentialism speaks of self, it is in reference to the individual self. It is the responsibility of each individual to make of themself what they would, and this is a task rooted in circumstance and limitations that are, for the large part, without meaning (Grene, 1976, pp. 41-2). The notion of the absurdity of life stems from these ideas and certainly there is a point at which it becomes evident Morrison works well with the notion of making meaning from absurdity, folly and emptiness, demonstrating an understanding that indeed, life is absurd:

Hee Heee
Cut your throat
Life is a joke

Your wife's in a moat
The same boat
here comes the goat

Blood Blood Blood Blood
They're making a joke
of our universe
("An American Prayer", Courson et al., 1990, p. 15).

Or this, with its echoes of Nietzsche's *Will to Power* ("585 (rev. Spring-Fall 1888), 783 (1885)", 1968, pp. 318, 410-1):

Accomplishments:

To make works in the face
of the void
To gain form, identity
To rise from the herd-crowd

Public favour
public fervor

even the bitter Poet-Madman is
a clown
Treading the boards

(Courson, Courson, Lisciandro, & Lisciandro, 1988, p. 124).

And for Morrison, at the end of cataclysm when absurdity points to the futility of the grandiose pursuits of humanity in his cities and the fleeting passage of his power, there comes:

> The new man, time-soldier
> picked his way narrowly
> thru the crowded ruins
> of once grave city, gone
> comic now w/ rats
> & the insects of refuge
> ("I", Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 29)[12].

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus writes of this same understanding, the recognition by the individual of the absurdity of life and the "pause" in which he assesses his future. "For the absurd man it is not a matter of explaining and solving, but of experiencing and describing. Everything begins with lucid indifference" (Camus, 1955, p. 78). For Morrison's mythography the focus is on the experience of the individual, his absurd man, who rises to the challenge of the heroic pursuit.

There is, Sartre claims, no singular essence of humanity, for there is no god from which this essence comes. It is up to each individual to make themselves from existence. As Morrison states, there is "[e]ternal consciousness/ in the Void" ("The Fear", Courson et al., 1988, p. 40). That is, as pointed out in the Introduction of this paper, existence comes before essence:

> What we should note at present is that freedom, which manifests itself through anguish, is characterised by a constantly renewed obligation to remake the *Self* which designates the free being. As a matter of fact when we showed earlier that my possibilities were filled with anguish because it depended on *me* alone to sustain them in their existence, that did not mean that they derived from a *Me* which, to itself at least, would first be given and would then pass in the temporal flux from one consciousness to another consciousness…. This *self* with its *a priori* and historical content is the *essence* of man (Sartre, 1956, p. 72).

[12] The collection of poems that comprise *The New Creatures* was finished and dated by Morrison on 24th July, 1968. This collection was first privately published by Morrison in 1969, at 100 copies, after the encouragement of Michael McClure who saw the manuscript and was "moved" by what he read. McClure then gave copies of both *The Lords* and *The New Creatures* to his agent "who sent them to an editor at Simon and Schuster in New York, who immediately acquired rights to the books and arranged to publish them in 1970 (Davis, 2005, pp. 268-9, 286-7, 331).

Though each individual in the world is and can act as a free being, and thereby strive for transcendence, each is also potentially nothing other than an object in the world. “The object does not *possess* being, and its existence is not a participation in being, nor any other kind of relation” (Sartre, 1956, p. 8). Each individual subject becomes aware that there are others who, though they may constitute objects in the first instance, are themselves subjects in their own world and thereby threaten the first subject’s existence. The conflict felt by the individual between aspirations for the subjective self and the stark reality of being nothing beyond the objective this or that is an isolating one:

> The Lonely HWY
> Cold hiker
>
> Afraid of Wolves
> & his own
> Shadow
> ("The Fear", Courson et al., 1988, p. 41).

The lonely isolation of the road is significant, for a highway is most readily indicative of an image of the busy road that supports the flow of life. This image, however, invokes the hiker as alone on a road which in its scope has been built for the passage of many. It is not said they are absent, but rather it is implied that he is isolated from them, and that is an important difference. His fear is the very real fear of which Sartre speaks, of being no more than object to some other subject, in this case the wolves, who, as will later be demonstrated, can indeed also be “his own shadow.”

So, there is the issue of being with others, and in this aspect of existential theory Morrison’s illumination of interpersonal relationships is insightful, particularly in how he deals with the notions of sex and body and the relationship of these with what can be identified as one of his primary concerns, vision.

There is a recognition that no matter how isolated the individual is, he operates in a world populated with other such individuals: each their own subject, each of them creating and being in their own world, and each of them attendant to the same, or at the least similar, everyday concerns and by their very nature invading the subject’s

own world and sense of self. As noted by Sartre, “I need the Other in order to realise fully all the structures of my being” (1956, p. 303), however, the apparent angst of the existential view is that within a world of subjects told by so many of their systems they should be united, at peace and at one, they cannot escape the sheer fact of the matter that to become and remain authentic as individuals, they will remain isolated from all others:

> Ghost children
> down there
> in the frightening world
>
> You are alone
> & have no need of other
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 24).

The individual therefore:

> creates a world and a history out of the very fact of their inevitable cessation – and that world or that history, as there is room for only one catastrophe, so there is room for only one soliloquizing actor. Others are stage properties, placed perhaps by chance, playing without author or audience, as his own sense of tragic fitness may direct
> (Grene, 1976, p. 72).

As Grene (1976, pp. 78-81) goes on to state, it is not the individual’s recognition that there are other subjects in the world which generates conflict, for they merely exist to him as any other object does. Conflict rises where the path of vision from each subject intersects, when the vision of one intrudes upon the vision of the other, when eyes meet across a crowded room. Which individual will maintain his freedom and position as subject in this now shared landscape and which will lose it, die as it were and become an object? This is the source of conflict. Rather than remaining as the transcendent being he is within his own landscape, the subject in this shared landscape, by being looked at is becoming some*thing*, and that something, that body which is being viewed, is becoming no more than an object.

For any subject, their body is the manifestation which affirms that they exist. The body is one of a series of contingencies that set the parameters within which the subject can then establish their individual and authentic nature. But the very body the subject protects, and which is a statement that they do indeed exist, becomes to

the other, simply an object. It is the intrusion of another into a subject's landscape that can not only disturb, but potentially destroy that world, and the most natural reaction to this on the subject's part is to be afraid.

It is in isolation that the space may be found where freedom exists and "[d]read is the possibility of freedom" (Kierkegaard, 1844/1957, p. 139). So, the condition into which the individual is born is thus: only in isolation will freedom be attained, but the underlying contradiction is everywhere implicit that only in connection will transcendence be truly realised by that same individual. This is the anguish to which Morrison addresses his creed and attempts an answer.

When alone, the subject engages in actions of their own free choice, they are participating in both their own free will and a transcendent world. But when such action is observed by another, the position of the subject shifts from being a transcendent self to being a body, an object, and in this objectification by the observer the individual, the actor, becomes aware of the awkward stance which they are taking. Their actions are no longer their own project, but absurd posturing, and the subject's reaction to such a discovery is one of shame. Shame is not however posited in the subject for what they do, but rather in the subject-turned-object at the realisation that they are being looked upon (Sartre, 1956, pp. 301-3):

> This, like fate to the pagan, is the only thing he fears, but his fear is not the fear of being thought guilty, as in the foregoing case it was a maximum, but fear of being guilty. In the degree that he discovers freedom, in that same degree does the dread of guilt in the condition of possibility impend over him. Guilt only does he fear, for that is the one and only thing that can deprive him of his freedom
> (Kierkegaard, 1844/1957, p. 97).

To negate the shame or fear felt at being looked at, the only position which can be taken by the subject is to look back at the onlooker. And of course the conflict is here seated, for the individual subject will either become that watcher's object or will make the watcher an object, and because to be objectified announces the loss of the transcendent self, this is in effect a conflict which can result in death. This is an endless circle of conflict, with neither victim nor victor, and yet both:

> Everything which may be said of me in my relations with the Other applies to him as well. While I attempt to free myself

> from the hold of the Other, the Other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me. We are by no means dealing with unilateral relations with an object-in-itself, but with reciprocal and moving relations…. Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others (Sartre, 1956, pp. 474-5).

Morrison's concern with vision is underpinned by the existential view of conflict between individual subjects and ideas of the self as both individual and in relation to others. It is the exploration of the conflict between separation and connection, between world and body, between the symbolic and semiotic, in short, between vision and desire. His search is for the transcendence which appears to have been lost upon the individual's entry into the world.

Vision is a cornerstone within Morrison's writing. His mythic proposition is one of reawakening, making the lens clean that it might reveal what *is*, in order to return the audience to participation and transcendence. One of the more frequently quoted pieces of information regarding The Doors is the origin of the band's name (Davis, 2005, pp. 75-6; Riordan and Prochnicky, 1991, p. 74). Morrison referred to the famous statement, also quoted by Aldous Huxley in *The Doors of Perception* (Huxley, 1954/1994), given by William Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. "If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite" (Bloom & Trilling, 1973, p. 40). It is succinct and correct, I believe, to state that this is the key to Morrison's mythography.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell is referred to as a prophetic work which provides a guide or "manifesto" for the individual to forge a path to freedom from the constraints of the world "through the progression of contraries" (Bloom & Trilling, 1973, pp. 33-4). The creative output of the Doors, much of which was written by Morrison, is described as "a marriage of polarities: metaphysical and physical, historical and universal, secular and profane" (Magistrale, 1992, p. 144). What Morrison explores within his writing is the disconnective function of vision, and that through the act of birth and growth, a natural state for humanity, the individual becomes increasingly disassociated from the unity out of which he was first created. However, in apparent contradiction, Morrison then posits vision as not only the

source of disconnection but an important part of the path back to reconnection, a sentiment also expressed by Blake:

> All Bibles or sacred codes. have been the cause of the following Errors.
> 1. That Man has two real existing principles Viz: a body & a Soul.
> 2. That Energy. calld Evil. is alone from the Body. & that Reason. calld Good is alone from the Soul.
> 3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies. But the following Contraries to these are True
> 1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that calld Body is a portion of Soul discernd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age
> 2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.
> 3. Energy is Eternal Delight
> ("PLATE 4, *The Voice of the Devil*", Bloom & Trilling, 1973, pp. 35-6).

In truth there can be no separation. Blake's Body and Soul, Morrison's vision and desire, indeed any apparent pair of contraries are opposite sides of the same coin. Further to this, what will become apparent is that like Blake, Morrison points out that it is the aspect of the individual which is considered by *God's Law* to be the most punishable as sinful that is, in fact, the very aspect in which the key to reconnection is held.

As individual subjects, the first human experience in terms of sensation and vision is that of the womb, a place of darkness, water and limited vision[13]. "In the womb we are blind cave fish" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 6)[14]. After birth, what visual ability the

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[13] "Myelinization of the visual fibres is not completed, however, until about four months after birth; and improvement in the ability to fixate accurately and to see details (even though present to some degree as early as one week after birth) continues until about age six…. perfect 20/20 vision is not achieved until the child is about seven years of age." The author also quotes Carmichael in a 1970 study as saying: "There has been general agreement that the absence of radiation of the sort that typically activates the retina makes true sight all but impossible in prenatal life." (Annis, 1978, pp. 57-8).
Berk notes that "[t]he visual apparatus is less well developed at birth than *any other* [italics added] sensory system" (1989, p. 153).

[14] The manuscript for *The Lords* was first commenced during Morrison's student days at UCLA and developed over time until the final version was dated by him on 24th July 1968, after which he privately published the collection, 100 copies [refer to fn 12] (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, pp. 45, 312).

infant does possess is consumed by and limited to the mother's breast, coupled with participation in feeding and its resulting nourishment, security and warmth:

> A creature is nursing
> its child
> soft arms around
> the head & the neck
> a mouth to connect
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 17).

This passage introduces the creature who is elsewhere referred to by Morrison as the "Lizard woman" ("VII", Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 6), female and reptile in unity. The significance of this image will become evident as discussion progresses. Her arms are "soft", the infant's first encounter of touch in the external world identifiable with that of the internal, the link between the two being the mother, and a reference – "soft" – reappears across the mythography with subtle and significant repetition to culminate in "The Soft Parade" (Courson et al., 1990, pp. 49-52). The mouth connects to the body of the mother, the mouth is the place from which voice and words come, and this mouth suckles nourishment from the body.

"At the instant of birth dread culminates for a second time in woman, and at this instant the new individual comes into the world" (Kierkegaard, 1844/1957, p. 64). Born in dread, the infant's first experience of and participation with another individual beyond the womb, is with the mother. When separation from this close association occurs, that child then experiences its first wider scope of vision. It is at this point the child becomes increasingly aware of being a separate entity, increasingly detached from participation with the source of the flow of life, and severed from the divine. The focus of vision for the newborn is the "[b]reast, which we all of us came to know at the very beginning, in our mother's arms. Breast, which, later, we all lost, and have always dreamed of finding again" (Olivier, 1989, p. 16). This is a harsh transition and the mother's vision gazing back at the infant is equally harsh now the distinction between bodies is made. "Imagery is born of loss. Loss of the 'friendly expanses.' The breast is removed and the face imposes its cold, curious, forceful, and inscrutable presence" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 15).

The realm of vision is attained by the loss of something, is realised through sacrifice, and it is, Morrison asserts, the pursuit of that which is lost which motivates the

individual. Morrison expresses a desire to reconnect with the body of the mother, to transcend the conflict of a system operating in terms of dialectically opposed sets of signs. Furthermore, he also argues that the natural impulse of desire should flow without impediments of government by conditions of Symbolic Law, the Law of God, demonstrating effectively that when Symbolic Law does govern, the consequences are an exacerbation of the separation and conflict felt by the individual. Taking this further, he then transfers the dis-ease of the individual to the culture as a whole. His mythography is a dialogue of returning to balance, and this begins with understanding the desire for the mother.

But, what is the mother? She is the opposite of the father, as the two sides of the coin are opposite. She is the body from which life comes forth, and mythologically she is closely linked to the moon, the guiding light of the night sky:

> The moon is the lord and measure of the life-creating rhythm of
> the womb, and therewith of time, through which beings come
> and go: lord of the mystery of birth and equally of death – which
> two, in sum, are aspects of the one state of being
> (Campbell, 1964, p. 9).

With the moon she is also connected to water and, as will be demonstrated, the serpent. The connection of the mother with the moon and its link to the tides and waters of the earth is utilised by Morrison across the mythos as an expression of the semiotic landscape. "In the womb we are blind cave fish"[15] and as the individual is birthed from this watery cave, so too does he, or she, return to the water in death:

> Take her home.
> Carry our sister's body, back
> to the boat
> (Morrison, 1970/1985).

And this:

> I'm taking her home
> Back to the rain
> (Morrison, 1970/1985).

Morrison also locates within his waters an array of creatures which become significant for both their mythological meaning and as forerunners of the serpent. He

[15] refer to p. 20 of this paper.

speaks particularly of fish, eels, and worms, using them to signify the peristaltic flow of life. From "still pools" people "pull ancient trout from *the deep home* [italics added]" (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 26), and in their connection to caves and water they are creatures aligned with the still womb-world of the mother and the first great peristaltic experience of the individual, that of being born. The individual moves from the wet, dark cave of the body of the mother to the bright, dry world of "[t]he destruction of ideals, the new desert; new arts by means of which we can endure it, we amphibians" (617, Nietzsche, 1968, p. 331):

> Thank you, O Lord
> For the white blind light
> A city rises from the sea
> I had a splitting headache
> from which the future's made
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 191).

The mother's offering of the individual into the world through the process of birth is a threshold which, when crossed, separates that individual from the transcendent, injecting them into the field of time and consciousness where pairs of opposites exist. Before the biblical fall in the Garden of Eden, man and woman did not see themselves as different to one another, nor as different to God who walked beside them in the Garden (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 48). With entry into the world, as with entry into the knowledge of pairs of opposites at the Biblical Fall, comes the recognition that the mother must be left behind. The psychology of not knowing what you have got until you no longer have it begins in this space of existence *in* the world, where value is only found after loss:

> As we know, a complex can be really overcome only if it is
> lived out to the full. In other words, if we are to develop further
> we have to draw to us and drink down to the very dregs what,
> because of our complexes, we have held at a distance"
> (Jung, 1986, pp. 32-3).

Morrison's proposition is that society would have it that the child desires to enter the world, and by doing so, sustain the phallocentric system of difference. But vision, via the devices it employs, demonstrates that the natural world, which remains in accord with the impulse for life, that is, the semiotic, would seek to remain in the still, dark place of connection with its source:

> The theory is that birth is prompted
> by the child's desire to leave to womb.

> But in the photograph an unborn horse's
> neck strains inward w / legs scooped out
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 10).

This passage is also about that which is in accord with the semiotic resisting what the human individual will enter and thereby engage with, which is the arena. Is it humanity's nature to enter or not? Carefully, Morrison has left the answer to this question ambiguous. The text can easily be read that the individual is not like nature and therefore wishes to enter, by means of differentiating between the unborn infant and unborn foal. Alternatively, he raises the image of unity by comparison, the photograph showing what cannot be seen with the eyes - that as a living creature connected with the impulse for life the child may indeed, like the foal, strive to remain in the womb:

> Urge to come to terms with the "Outside," by absorbing,
> interiorizing it. I won't come out, you must come in to me. Into
> my womb-garden where I peer out. Where I can construct a
> universe within the skull, to rival the real
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 14).

Morrison's "womb-garden" is the cave, the safe place. It is the world dominated by touch and feeling, where vision is little required, it is the world of experience which preceded birth into a world dominated by vision. In the womb, the unborn is the result of sexual union, it is the *one* which results from the joining of *two* in the sexual act where connection has been made at its most basic level. The reluctance to participate in the external world as expressed in the passage above is a reluctance which later becomes an active choice, expressed by Oedipus when he blinds himself.

The process of life after birth is defined by the contingency of death and the first threshold to be crossed by the individual is the disassociation from the mother in that he will "[s]wallow milk at the breast/until there's no milk" (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 10). When the mouth can no longer feed from the body of the mother and the "friendly expanses"[16] are gone, the individual is thrown into the very world the mother first feared, the sexual act itself which conceived the offspring an act filled with dread on the part of the mother that the offspring of her womb will be devoured

[16] refer to p. 21 of this paper.

by the world, eaten, consumed like a sacrament or sacrifice, and taken away from her:

> … his pride
> until w/ pale mouth legs
>
> she sucks the root, dreading
> world to devour child
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 10).

This is birth into the world of vision and the assertion of its dominance over touch. This is birth into the world of the Word of the symbolic where nourishment is no longer gained by the mouth that suckles at the breast of the mother, but rather the mouth of the genitals which suckles for nourishment upon the phallus itself. The individual's first recognition of this world comes in what is termed the mirror stage (Lacan, 1949, p. 442). By this, Lacan refers to an identification the infant makes of the image before him as indeed an image of himself. Significantly this is one which comes before an understanding of himself as an object in relation to the other, which at this point he has not identified, even though the first other of his world is the mother. It is only in being separated from her that he can *look into the mirror*. "[T]he mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world" and Lacan later continues by stating he is "led, therefore, to regard the function of the mirror stage as a particular case of the function of the *imago*, which is to establish a relation between the organism and its reality" (1949, p. 443).

Morrison was aware of the importance of the mirror, not only for the initial positing of the individual's image of himself, but also in the wider scope of its use in relation to ideas of the subconscious and the practice of alchemy[17], which will be later addressed. He was also aware of the mirror's distinction from windows, linking the mirror to the fluid world. The mirror, in its one-way mode of operation, reflects what is already there. The mirror in showing the subject, turns that subject into their own object. Mirrors reflect a backward glance is as much as they show only what is behind and can be reflected, not what is forward from the subject observing self:

> (windows work two ways,
> mirrors one way.)

[17] Alchemy has been noted by critics and biographers as a topic of interest to Morrison, with Morrison himself demonstrating in interview that he understood its basic principles (Magistrale, 1992, pp. 136-7). For expansion on this, refer to p. 34 of this paper.

> You never walk through mirrors
> or swim through windows
> (Morrison, 1969/1985p. 12).

In reference to Oedipus, this is the time when his father, in fear of his own death as proclaimed by the oracle of Apollo, removed the infant from his mother, and binding his feet had him put upon a mountain to die (Hamilton, 1969, p. 268). This is also for Nietzsche's "Three Metamorphoses" the time when the spirit of the semiotic landscape becomes the camel and takes up the burdens of the symbolic landscape. The isolation of both the mountain and the desert wilderness resonate through Morrison's mythography as places of spirit and transformation, as part of the other landscape which exists outside the arena.

These stories also present another fundamental aspect of mythology in general and Morrison's mythography in particular, in the illumination of trinities. The ever present contingency of death can be found in all of Morrison's trinities, beginning with his trinity of participants:

> Those who Race toward Death
> Those who wait
> Those who worry
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 194).

The "Three Metamorphoses" relate as a trinity of transformation, and indeed for Oedipus his trinity of exile is a vehicle of transformation also. Added to this, the Oedipal trinity is not only one motivated by fear, hence dread, but reflective of the universal trinity of mother, father and offspring. The first takes Oedipus from the arena of the mother, the second sees Oedipus remove himself from the arena of the father, and the third sees Oedipus removed by his subjects from the arena of the king in which he was, as that king, bound to protect his subjects as a father would his children. Each of these exiles removes Oedipus from the arena and locates him in the wilderness where transformation shapes him in preparation for the next arena to come.

Long before Christianity preached the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, both Plutarch and Pythagoras had outlined the significance of trinities, and indeed the number three,

tracing the roots of this back to what is often called the cult of Isis (Seligmann, 1948/1997, pp. 72-6). Plutarch speaks of a "holy trinity of Osiris, Isis, and the son Horus. They corporealize, he says, Intelligence, Matter and Cosmos, and they are called the *most perfect triangle*", added to which the vertical aspect of the triangle "equal to *three*, is Osiris, the male creative principle" which stands on the base of the triangle and that "is Isis, the female conceiving element" (Seligmann, 1948/1997, p. 74).

Through separation from the transcendent by the process of birth, the individual begins to experience the symbolic rules of operation in the world to which they are cast and from this, conflict will arise. Morrison's expressed reluctance of the individual to enter the world suggests a pre-cognitive knowledge of this conflict, reinforcing the idea that the individual is, as Kierkegaard noted, first conceived and second birthed in a condition or circumstance of dread (1844/1957, pp. 64-5). The sacrifice is not only the mother's in giving up her child to the world, but it is also the child's:

> -Well 1st I screamed
> & I was a child again alive
> Then nothing til the age
> of 5
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 49).

Referring back to what is understood of the physiological development of vision, the impetus to be a fully functioning organism in terms of the visual symbolic world is somewhat delayed. Kristeva succinctly points out that any subject is possessed of both semiotic and symbolic qualities and it is not therefore possible for language or systems of signification to be constructed exclusively within one or the other (1974, p. 93). It is in this early space when the child remains close to the mother that the child's relationship with her, and other social factors such as his first experience with family and the training of the body itself to a particular system of behaviour, shape the way that child will respond to and engage with the symbolic order into which he is emerging:

> This modality is the one Freudian psychoanalysis points to in posturing not only the *facilitation* and the structuring *disposition* of drives, but also the so-called *primary processes* which displace and condense both energies and their inscription. Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the

> subject who is not yet constituted as such and, in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed on this body – always already involved in a semiotic process – by family and social structures. In this way the drives which are 'energy' charges as well as 'psychical' marks, articulate what we call a chora: a non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated
> (Kristeva, 1974, p. 93).

When suckling from the 'friendly expanses' is stopped and nourishment comes from other sources, the face of the mother becomes more apparent, marking this early stage of the development of visual faculty as the platform for entry to the mirror stage. The mirror of the mother is replaced by the mirror of *self*-reflection, and the stage is set for the dreadful conflict to come as the desire to return to the mother is reflected in the sexual pursuits of the future:

> The sheets were hot dead prisons.
> And she was beside me, old.
> She's, no: young.
> Her dark red hair.
> The white soft skin.
> Now, run to the mirror in the bathroom,
> Look!
> She's coming in here
> ("Celebration of the Lizard", Courson et al., 1990, p. 41)[18].

Compare this with:

> Ever since the mirror stage, when we came out of symbiosis with the mother and discovered what it is to be alone, each of us has been waiting for that other moment which by putting an end to the duality first discovered then, would restore the primary unity. Love is an attempt to go back through the mirror, to put an end to differentness, to give up the merely individual; all for the sake of symbiosis
> (Olivier, 1989, p. 91).

The threshold of separation places the individual in the external world and its attendant system of symbol, in which all things are distinguished as objects, as this

[18] "Celebration of the Lizard" first appeared, in part, on an early demo recording The Doors made in 1966 (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 214) and this piece evolved over time during Doors concerts. It was the working title for The Doors third album and one side of the album was to be taken up by a full length performance of the piece, which in the end, did not eventuate (Davis, 2005, pp. 241-3). As a poem and a performance piece however it did evolve over time to be considered one of the best pieces written by Morrison and was successfully captured on the live album recorded by The Doors, Absolutely Live (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 387).

and not that, entities separate from the subject. Lacan's argument is that the imposition of this set of rules for similarity and difference, as given by the Law of the Father, is a necessary requirement if that child is to enter society:

> The imaginary couple of the mirror stage, through that counter-nature that it manifests, if it must be related to a specific prematuration of birth in man, is appropriated to provide the imaginary triangle with the base to which the symbolic relation may in a sense correspond[19] (see schema R).
> In effect, it is by means of the gap opened up by this prematuration in the imaginary, and in which the effects of the mirror stage proliferate, that the human animal is *capable* of imagining himself as mortal, which does not mean that he would be able to do so without his symbiosis with the symbolic, but rather that without this gap that alienates him from his own image, this symbiosis with the symbolic, in which he constitutes himself as subject to death, could not have occurred….
> The whole problem … consists in conceiving how the child, in his relation to the mother, a relation constituted in analysis not by his vital dependence on her, but by his dependence on her love, that is to say, by the desire for her desire, identifies himself with the imaginary object of this desire in so far as the mother herself symbolizes it in the phallus
> ("On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis", Lacan, 1977, pp. 196-8).

Entering society means separation, for "[o]nly by accepting the necessity of sexual difference (either/or) and regulated desire can a child become socialized." (Selden, Widdowson, & Brooker, 1997, p. 140). The first landscape is well and truly left by the individual and they enter the arena. The mother is the door through which this occurs, *the door which later is to be cleansed*.

As Olivier suggests, there is a desire to go "back through the mirror", but this is not possible. As the mirror reflects only what faces it, and the individual is changed by their experience with the mother, this changed individual is then unable to return to their "Oedipal or pre-Oedipal history with the mother" (Olivier, 1989, p. 92). Unlike the mirror, the window, however, is a doorway, a threshold. The window, rather than requiring the watery subconscious state which can dreamily pass through the mirror, demands for the subject to pass through its threshold awake, the subject must actively choose to "walk through". The window is, however, still a barrier which in

[19] The image evoked here is enhanced when read in conjunction with Plutarch's description of the trinity and the "most perfect triangle" as referenced on pp. 26-7 of this paper.

the realm of the natural where connection has been maintained, does not exist and is not required. Participation, as expressed by the dance of the wasps, requires no threshold, for there is no disconnection, and these creatures will not cross into the symbolic arena, but rather will dance on its edges as reminders of the lost connection:

> The bird or insect that stumbles into a room and cannot find the window. Because they know no "windows,"
>
> Wasps, poised in the window,
> Excellent dancers,
> detached, are not inclined
> into our chamber
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 12).

In reference back to Morrison's earlier assertion with the unborn foal, that the natural realm strives to remain connected to the mother, it is significant that he has chosen the wasp to reinforce his statement of resistance to crossing the threshold into the symbolic order and disassociating from the source. The wasp as an insect which swarms, is also linked with Egypt, Isis and the dead king. "The wasp was a sacred symbol of the Pharaohs and sometimes used as an alternative translation for the word bee in Egyptian hieroglyphics, the bee being the emblem of the Kings of Lower Egypt" (Kritsky & Cherry, 2000, pp. 20-1). The wasps "poised in the window" are as kings, located at the edge of vision, the window providing a panoramic threshold either external or internal, depending upon the observer's position. Windows are doorways, and like any threshold from one position to another, they are to be made clean, the question is, how can this be done:

> Between childhood, boyhood
> adolescence
> & manhood (maturity) there
> should be sharp lines drawn w/
> Tests, deaths feats, rites
> stories, songs, & judgements
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 22).

Life now is to be viewed from a distance, the connections begin to break down. The child, who will grow to the adult, may look but may not touch:

> You may enjoy life from afar. You may look at things but not taste them. You may caress the mother only with the eyes.
>
> You cannot touch these phantoms

(Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 15).

The world opens as one to be watched and never touched. Only vision is granted this right, all other senses denied, and even this is precariously located amidst the laws of the symbolic order. The primal source of what once sustained, is now forbidden, necessitating the pursuits of the voyeur, and creating desire unfulfilled in conflict with a violent need to express it. Blake wrote in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* that “[he] who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence” ("Proverbs of Hell", Bloom & Trilling, 1973, p. 37) and Morrison demonstrates this through the landscape of his mythography. There are a number of ways the conflict between desire unfulfilled and the drive to express it can be achieved, and all of them, Morrison effectively demonstrates, are linked to sex and death.

The Lords opens with an invitation to “Look where we worship” (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3), to engage vision. The second line makes a clear statement that “We all live in the city” (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3). The Oedipal city of Thebes transfers to Morrison’s Los Angeles, both in life and symbolically in the text. With observation established and all who engage their vision located as participants within the field of concern, the text then catalogues the reality of what this sacred space of worship contains. To worship is “to show profound religious devotion and respect to; adore or venerate (God or any other person or thing considered divine)” (Hanks, 1986, p. 1750) and Morrison clearly defines that which is worshiped in terms of sex and death.

As the place of worship the city becomes not only a location of geography and community, but the arena within which there can reasonably be the expectation of something reaching beyond the secular. Morrison tells us “The city forms – often physically, but inevitably psychically – a circle. A Game. A ring of death with sex at its centre” (1969/1985, p. 3). Furthermore, this echoes the second of Blake’s Contraries[20] in as much as the energy “from the Body” can be aligned with the sexual centre, and Reason, which “is the bound or outward circumference of Energy” (Bloom & Trilling, 1973), with the perimeter of death.

[20] refer p. 20 of this paper.

The sacred is grounded in sex, in the biological impulse for life. But in framing an expectation of the sacred experience in terms of sex and death, the reader, indeed the participant, is confronted by the socially less palatable aspects of these things as they exist in the city, potentially generating ethical conflict. The temple of worship is immediately revealed for the dark underbelly it possesses and all subjects are located as participants within this arena of "[d]iseased specimens in dollar hotels, low boarding houses, bars, pawn shops, burlesques and brothels, in dying arcades which never die, in streets and streets of all-night cinemas" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3).

In its opening *The Lords* summarises many of the primary concerns for focus in Morrison's mythography, concerns which are presented, explored and expanded in, but by no means confined to this one text alone. Admission of these concerns is immediate and frank: the Game, the arena, sex and death, disease, the night, and vision. As the text expands it becomes clear that a morality grounded in the biological impulse asserts itself in the absence of a Christianized morality. Certainly the sacred is contained within the border of death, but the suggestion is already posed that a landscape exists beyond the arena *and* in connection to it, much in the same way Hegel expressed in his *Science of Logic*:

> a *circle* returning upon itself, the end being wound back into the beginning, the simple ground, by the mediation; this circle is moreover a *circle of circles*, for each individual member as ensouled by the method is reflected into itself, so that in returning into the beginning it is at the same time the beginning of a new member. Links of the chain are the individual sciences [of logic, nature and spirit], each of which has an *antecedent* and a *successor* – or, expressed more accurately, *has* only the *antecedent* and *indicates* its *successor* in its conclusion (Hegel, 1816/1969, p. 842).

It is the pursuit of breaking through that boundary to the *other* landscape for which Morrison demonstrates particular attention. There are rules to and consequences of this pursuit, for which responsibility need be taken, but sacrifice is a necessary part of the journey of reconnection.

This is the Oedipal landscape with its sexual centre of the queen, the mother, bordered and defined by murder of the father and surrounded by a wilderness of exile. The hub is a focal centre, it is the *axis mundi*, "the pivotal point around which

all things turn," (Campbell, 1964, p. 12). Campbell often cites the inclusion of serpents with the *axis mundi*, most commonly in the form of the caduceus, and also notes a correlation of imagery between the serpent and humanity in that the "single serpent … has become in the caduceus two – as Adam became Adam and Eve" (1964, p. 265). The hub is not, however, independent of the rim, nor is the rim independent of its hub. Without one, the function of the other is either meaningless or pointless, or perhaps even impossible. Sex and death are co-dependent for the fullness of their individual function.

The Eastern view of the wheel of life is particularly useful here. By locating sex at the *axis mundi*, Morrison makes it the point around which all life turns, while death is the edge that travels the road. It has no beginning or end, but is in continuous motion around the still point of the sacred centre:

> The wheel in Buddhist iconography is known as the "Wheel of the Law" (*dharma-cakra*). It is symbolic of the reign of the World Monarch, the so called "Turner of the Wheel" (*cakra-vartin*), but also of the teaching of the Buddha, the World Saviour, who in his first sermon, in the Deer Park of Benares, set the Wheel of the Law in motion. The World Monarch is to reign in the spirit of that law. And the wheel is to be known as of two sides: in its commonly manifest aspect, as the wheel of sorrow of this everlasting round of births and rebirths, disease, old age, and death (all life is sorrowful); but also in the deeper, darker, yet more luminous revelation of the Mahayana doctrine of the "great Delight" (*Ma-hasukha*): the realisation of this world, just as it is, as the Golden Lotus World; of *samsara*, the painful wheel of rebirth, and *nirvana*, the still state at the centre of the wheel, as the same – for those with the courage and strength of will to endure the terrible cutting edge (Campbell, 1968, pp. 415-6).

For Morrison "[w]e live, we die/ & death not ends it" ("An American Prayer", Courson et al., 1990, p. 4) in the world "just as it is":

> how can we hate or love or judge
> in the sea-swarm world of atoms
> All one, one All
> How can we play or not play
> How can we put one foot before us
> or revolutionize or write
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 101).

At the still point in the centre, at nirvana which looks out in reflection upon samsara, Morrison's locates his caged beast and sex. This is the mother-centre, and it is the garden. Samsara and nirvana are the light and dark of the yin and yang in balance, each containing some part of the other. Parallels with this can be drawn from many sources, the wheel of fortune, the Hindu *Panchatantra* and the Myth of Sisyphus, both the Base Greek myth and the work of the same title by Albert Camus (Campbell, 1968, pp. 413-23). Further to these the *Ars Magna* of Ramon Lull is significant. Referred to by Morrison in *The Lords* (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 28) the *Ars Magna* is and also related to alchemy[21], a philosophy and science which is well documented as a part of Morrison's wide spectrum of reading interest in the inclusion of alchemical and mystical texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Hopkins, 1992, pp. 40-1). Morrison clearly demonstrated both in his writing and in interview an understanding of alchemical process (Fowlie, 1994, pp. 19-20).

Within the arena the Game is controlled, scripted, and directed, and all are players in the Game, actors on the stage.

It is important to differentiate between play and game, and it is of interest that Morrison uses the term *players* for his trinity of participants (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 9), in as much as the term works beyond the immediate image of actors on a stage. Play is the activity of the child, generated in a condition of pre-Fall innocence and participation where the flow of engagement in that play stems from a satisfaction of the semiotic foundation where there are no symbolic rules or coding to be adhered to. As Campbell says, "The Garden of Eden is a metaphor for that innocence that is innocent of time, innocent of opposites, and that is the prime center out of which consciousness then becomes aware of the changes" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 50).

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[21] Ars Magna – the "Great Art" or "Great Work". The Spanish theologian Ramon Lull (Raimon Lull, Raimundus Lullus), circa 1235-1316, devised his Ars Magna, a series of rotating discs on a central axis. Each disc contained keywords or statements and as the wheels were turned, "truths" could be derived. This method was used in later centuries by a number of alchemists and Lull was posited alongside Hermes in a number of later alchemical and related documents (Faivre, 1995, pp. 137). Lull is also documented as recognising the wisdom of the Muslim philosophers (Campbell, 1968, p. 129) and is attributed with introducing their methods and reasoning into his own.

Added to this, an alchemical interpretation of play adds further depth and it is in the alchemical manuscript *Splendor Solis*, attributed to Salomon Trismosin, there can be found the game as played by children. This is an expression of ludus puerorum, "the process of inversion in the opus, the solve et coagula (dissolve and coagulate)" (Abraham, 1998, p. 118). The principle of this process is evident throughout Morrison's mythography, and the text within the *Splendor Solis* reads:

> 'Wherefore is the Art compared to the play of children, who, when they play, turn undermost that which before was uppermost'. The solve et coagula is a paradoxical process whereby that which is hard is made soft (body dissolved into spirit) and that which is soft is made hard (spirit is congealed into form). In this way these opposites may become mingled into one eternity – spirit and body are united (Abraham, 1998, p. 118).

"When play dies it becomes the Game"(Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3), and the child moves away from participation within the semiotic world to enter the visual processing of the symbolic order. With the commencement of the Game, as played in the arena, the individual enters the world of separation, conflict and *rules of engagement* as ordered by the Law of the Father, centred on sex and defined by death. When Oedipus entered the birth arena of Thebes, the Game began. The first move came from the god Apollo and as a consequence of *his word*, King Laius made the next move, *his word* leading to the infant Oedipus being bound and abandoned to die.

While the roles are varied, Morrison identifies a trinity of participation to which he returns from varying angles throughout the mythos. In the arena where so much is determined for the participant, where so much is an illusion, there remains a sense of something which reaches beyond the mundane. The child and the gambler possessing a quality not apparent in the actor and, as such, an influence in their role and subsequent position:

> 'Players' – the child, the actor, and the gambler. The idea of chance is absent from the world of the child and the primitive. The gambler also feels in service of an alien power. Chance is a survival of religion in the modern city, as is theatre, more often cinema, the religion of possession.
>
> What sacrifice, at what price can the city be born? (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 9).

Morrison's trinity is not dissimilar to Camus' where "[t]the lover, the actor, or the adventurer plays the absurd" and these characters for Camus, as it could also be said of Morrison's, "do not propose moral codes and involve no judgements: they are sketches. They merely represent a style of life" (1955, p. 75). Both the child and the primitive as Morrison presents them are pre-Oedipal figures, operating in the pre-symbolic world where the Law of the Father has not been erected, the former as a result of his age and the latter as a result of his connection with the natural world he inhabits. While the gambler may take his chance, by the very nature of what he is, he is indeed still a *player* within the Game, and still at the mercy of some other, unseen force. The child is about to enter the Game and the actor, which is the child grown to maturity, is well and truly in its midst.

Furthermore the gambler's vision, as the "[s]olitary stroker of cards" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 16), processes the world as a game to be played and his position within it one of isolation. Though he takes his chances with each turn of the card and each new object captured, he negates a certain degree of dread, for his gaze is cast to a world that is composed of separate, inanimate images of the past rather than living and tangible flesh, where he risks no objectification of himself through any of his objects turning subject. While the gambler plays the Game, he does not participate, but is distanced and passive:

> He dealt himself a hand. Turn stills of the past in unending permutations, shuffle and begin. Sort the images again. And sort them again. This game reveals germs of truth, and death.
>
> The world becomes an apparently infinite, yet possibly finite, card game. Image combinations, permutations, comprise the world game.
>
> A mild possession, devoid of risk, at bottom sterile. With an image there is no attendant danger
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 16).

Compare this above, with Sartre:

> The phenomenal being manifests itself; it manifests its essence as well as its existence, and it is nothing but the well connected series of its manifestation.
> Does this mean that by reducing the existent to its manifestations we have succeeded in overcoming *all* dualisms?

> It seems rather that we have converted them all into a new dualism: that of finite and infinite
> (Sartre, 1956, p. 5).

But as much as the gambler is a player and, in that, akin to the actor, unlike the actor who moves entirely by script, the gambler will take a chance, he will deviate from the script before him, albeit within a world devoid of the impulse of life, to secure his victory. By the very nature of this unpredictable chance he makes a choice knowing he could lose everything in the process. This is existential responsibility and free will in operation:

> In this sense the responsibility of the for-itself is overwhelming since he is the one by whom it happens that *there is* a world; since he is also the one who makes himself be, then whatever may be the situation in which he finds himself, the for-itself must wholly assume this situation with its peculiar coefficient of adversity, even though it be insupportable. He must assume the situation with the proud consciousness of being the author of it, for the very worst disadvantages or the worst threats which can endanger my person have meaning only in and through my project; and it is on the ground of the engagement which I am that they appear
> (Sartre, 1956, pp. 707-8).

With each turn of a card the world changes and for the gambler each turn signifies location and circumstance to which he is bound and within which he may then choose how to respond. It is this continual cycle of both the world and self in creation and motion which allows for that self to be determined, scripted as it were, and yet free. With the script and stage props about him, the individual has situation, events and landscape which he may use or discard according to his own choice and it is his transcendence of them in choosing one and not the other which makes the world as it stands about him. This does not negate the apparently paradoxical circumstance of freedom and necessity, but rather:

> it implies not only hope of what I shall do, but literal and inescapable responsibility for what I have done. It implies not only that I may become what I may do, but that I am what I have done: not what out of well meaning incapacity, I meant but failed to do, but what, within the close yet flexible bounds of my personal situation, I *have* contrived to accomplish. Of such accomplishment and failure to accomplish I and I alone must bear the credit, the shame, the triumph, and the regret
> (Grene, 1976, p. 50).

As a consequence of the arena being subject to the rules of the Game, the notion of whether each player operates by their own free will or some other determined script emerges. Behind this are Morrison's Lords, and "[e]vents take place beyond our knowledge or control. Our lives are lived for us. We can only try to enslave others" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 32). There is a script by which players in the Game are governed, but this does not define the limits of the arena that operates about them and hence does not define as finite the limits of the choices to be made. There is a warning however which must be understood and the individual is cautioned to "[f]ear The Lords who are/ secret among us" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 84), positing dread at the threshold of knowledge and the transcendent possibility. Each individual has to decide how they engage with the direction of the unseen power and in doing so, seek to remain subject while turning others, who stumble within the subject's private sphere, to object.

The arena in which the Game is played, the city, is located within a greater landscape and its hub of sex is the point of impact between the stone that is cast and the water into which it falls. The ripples that move across the surface, the radiating effect of that first contact at the centre, are like the beating of a butterflies' wings[22], inferred by Morrison when he "want[s] to hear/ the scream of the butterfly" ("When the Music's Over", Courson et al., 1990, p. 106). Though by no means the only occurrence in the mythography, the butterfly effect is most effectively presented by Morrison in *The Lords* where he notes that "[f]ilm is nothing when not an

[22] Chaos, when capitalised, is a term used to signify "the disordered formless matter supposed to have existed before the ordered universe" (Hanks, 1986, p. 265). What is interesting in this is the clear way in which the realm of Chaos correlates with the Semiotic foundation and the Universe, which appears to operate in terms of the *Laws* of Physics, is easily identifiable with the Symbolic. "The noun *chaos* and the adjective *chaotic* are used to describe the time behaviour of a system when that behaviour is aperiodic (it never exactly repeats) and is *apparently* random or 'noisy'. The key word here is *apparently*. Underlying this apparent chaotic randomness is an order determined in some sense by the equations describing the system" (Hilborn, 1994, p. 7).
The butterfly effect is a term which "first appeared in the title of a talk given by E.N. Lorenz at the December 1972 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington, D.C.: 'Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil Set off a Tornado in Texas.' ….Lorenz's point was that if the atmosphere displays chaotic behaviour with divergence of nearby trajectories or sensitive dependence on initial conditions, then even a small effect, such as the flapping of a butterfly's (or other avian creature's) wings would render our long-term predictions of the atmosphere (that is, the weather) completely useless" (Hilborn, 1994, p. 40). In effect, what this proposes is the idea that a small and apparently insignificant event can, over the play of time and space have a cumulative effect which is quite significant at some other location.

illumination of this chain of being which makes a needle poised in flesh call up explosions in a foreign capital" (1969/1985, p. 30).

Like Morrison's arena, so too was Oedipus' Thebes located within the wider arena of Greece, and the Coliseum within the greater landscape of Rome, an arena itself which spread across borders and nations to erect new boundaries of its own. It is with the introduction of Rome that Morrison grounds what develops as an historical narrative that looks both forward and back like Hegel's circle, underpinning the work, and drawing from the past so that the transfer of location to modern Los Angeles may be readily accessed. Without a history, a culture and its attendant mythology dwell in chaos, and if that culture no longer embraces a mythology, this crisis intensifies (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 8).

The arena and its perimeter are the bounds of perception and knowledge, and this landscape should be understood before any entry beyond its reach is attempted. In Western history perhaps the most significant and well known arena is the Coliseum of ancient Rome. The law and order of the symbolic owes a great debt to the legacies of Rome and Greece. Injected into this landscape is the emperor, the father-god of Rome who resided within the city and ruled over all inhabitants(Goodman, 1997, pp. 123-34). And of course, the emperor also attended the Coliseum to preside over its games, holding by his word the power of life and death over all players on the field.

As a venue for games and a field of death, the Coliseum is parallel with Morrison's arena, the city. "All games contain the idea of death" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 4) and the Game does not exist without death, but rather, is defined by it. In Morrison's arena death is inextricably linked to sex, for in the eye of the storm is sex, and sex is inextricably linked to life. This is the endless cycle. There is no beginning or end, only the moment within the eternal now. This is life swallowing life, the universal serpent, to which discussion will return.

The city is an artificial construct of buildings, walls and roads rising from a natural, circular design. The individuals that populate it, by the nature of their collective

behaviour and location, replicate the pattern of the natural world found in the collective of the herd, or for Morrison the hive, where there are no individuals:

> The *herd instinct*, then – a power that has now become sovereign – is something totally different from the instinct of an *aristocratic society*: and the value of the *units* determines the significance of the sum. – Our entire sociology simply does not know any other instinct than that of the herd, i.e., that of the *sum of zeros* – where every zero has "equal rights," where it is virtuous to be zero
> ("53 (March-June 1888)", Nietzsche, 1968, p. 33).

There is a sense of entanglement and entrapment, and the projection of individual members of the city's society tied together in the filial bonds of their heritage. Further to this, Joseph Campbell speaks of the walled city as the focus of the "organized community" and its inhabitants who:

> were coordinated around a spiritual centre that represented the point that they were all serving – although they were differently trained , they all served the same centre. And the city itself become what we're calling today a mandala, a sacred circle with a centre to which everyone was related
> (Campbell, 1989, p. 114).

Just as Campbell frames the city as a mandala, a sacred centre served by all that dwell within, so too does Morrison link the sacred and the mandala. Further to this, Morrison then separates God and the sacred space of the arena (also done physically in the writing by means of a line break) through the question of *seeing*, through the symbolic device of vision. What those whose serve in the arena are then separated from, by virtue of their collective behaviour, is the realm of the other senses, the senses of individual experience, of engagement and touch:

> "Have you ever seen God?"
> - a mandala. A symmetrical angel.
>
> Felt? Yes. Fucking. The Sun.
> Heard? Music. Voices
> Touched? An animal. Your hand
> Tasted? Rare meat, corn, water,
> & wine
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 32).

Such connection between individuals and the function of the herd mind are important aspects of operation within the arena, and Morrison's use of insectoid language and

imagery is readily accessible in these terms. The royal parent is not only the focus toward which the activity of the hive is directed, she is the queen of Thebes, located at the sacred, sexual centre of the arena:

> *The City*. Hive. Web, or severed
> insect mound. All citizens heirs
> of the same royal parent.
>
> The caged beast, the holy center,
> a garden in the midst of the city
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 11).

Furthermore, at the *axis mundi*, not only is woman seated, but she is located amidst the natural process, the garden, surrounded by the vast multitude of objects which make up the rest of the city. Within mythologies of Levantine[23] origin, the first garden was that of Eden and unsurprisingly this was the place of the first separation from the transcendent, an awakening of consciousness to define itself in terms of what it is not, resulting in its isolation into the realm of symbolic law, and a view of sex which is shameful and separated from the divine. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, they were cast into the realm of death and sin, and what followed was a law which bound every aspect of life within rules. The events of Eden were the first transition from play to the Game. Of interest, too, is that:

> The word 'Eden' is in fact Akkadian – the proto-Hebrew , or Semitic, language introduced into Mesopotamia by the people of Agade, or Akkad, a race that seized control of the ancient kingdom of Sumer, in what today is Iraq, during the second half of the third millennium BC. In their language the word 'Eden', or *edin*, meant a 'steppe' or 'terrace', as in a raised agricultural terrace.
>
> Turning to the word 'paradise', I found that this simply inferred a 'walled enclosure', after the Persian root *pairi*, 'around', and *daeza*, 'wall'
> (Collins, 1997, pp. 151-2).

Etymologically, Eden is not only a garden, but also the original Christian arena. It is also said that Christians were thrown into the Roman arena to be consumed by the lions, and Nero had Christians "torn to pieces by dogs, or crucified, or made into torches to be ignited after dark as substitutes for daylight. Nero provided his

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[23] Levantine/Levant are used as terms in this thesis to encompass the three mythologies of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic Traditions, all of which are underpinned mythically and historically by the older traditions of ancient Sumer (Campbell, 1964).

Gardens [italics added] for the spectacle" (Goodman, 1997, p. 327). And what does Morrison place at the centre, in the garden? It is the "caged beast". Subtly he signifies the death of god, indeed the death of the law of the symbolic when it is located at the sexual centre, which is the gateway to the transcendent.

The caged beast can be found in the mythography associated with:

> Night-time women.
> Wondrous sacraments of doubt
> Sprang sullen in bursts
> of fear & guilt
> in the womb's pit hole
> below
> The belt of the beast
> ("The Anatomy of Rock", Courson et al., 1988, p. 29).

And Morrison posits the question of choosing between a carefree stance in defiance of the fate of what is before the individual, or:

> Whether to be a
> great cagey perfumed
> beast
> dying under the
> sweet patronage
> of Kings
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 127).

Of course this imprisoned creature operates in another way too, and within the unindividualised colony of the city, the individual creature is captured, designated as something foreign or different, and bound in chains. "Celebration of the Lizard" opens with her as:

> A beast caged in the heart of a city
>
> The body of his mother
> Rotting in the summer ground.
> He fled the town
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 39).

This creature is neither insectoid nor reptilian, *beast* being a word generally associated with a mammalian creature. It can be inferred as representative of both the youth who is yet to break free of the arena into which he is born, and the mother who is seated at the centre. This creature is significant and the multiplicity of interpretation which can be ascribed to it is its strength, a strength that Morrison has

allowed it by virtue of his somewhat ambivalent presentation. This device serves the mythography well in much the same way as Blake also pointed out that "[w]ithout Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence" *(The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Bloom & Trilling, 1973, p. 35). What is known is that the caged beast is significant, recurring across the mythography and confined to no one piece alone. As the mythos develops, so too does this creature accumulate meaning by virtue of *what* it is and *where* it sits.

Once the arena has been established, its contents and boundaries identified, Morrison expands the image. In the following reference to Naples he uses a clichéd and universally recognised phrase to affirm the position of both the arena and the emperor:

> "See Naples & die."
> Jump ship. Rats, sailors
> & death.
>
> So many wild pigeons.
> Animals ripe w/ new diseases.
> "There is only one disease
> and I am its catalyst,"
> cried doomed pride of the carrier
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 11).

The Italian proverb quoted by Morrison is generally taken to mean that once this city has been seen, there is nothing more beautiful to be held in vision, and so death would not be an inappropriate next event. Certainly this promotes Morrison's point here of the focus of the city, the importance in life of the arena and its events, but the use of Naples also indicates other significant symbols within the wider mythos.

In 1806 Joseph Bonaparte took an army into Naples, and once in possession, was proclaimed king by his younger brother, self proclaimed emperor, Napoleon (Ergang, 1967, p. 726). By 1808 Napoleon moved Joseph to preside over Spain as king and installed his brother in law, Murat, as the King of Naples (Ergang, 1967, p. 732), the *word* of the emperor leading to lawful occupation in both cases. Prior to this, the city of Naples had been subject to various urban developments replicating Roman, Greek and Spanish influences and was one of the first cities in Europe to make the

architectural advance of taller, larger buildings. Originally a Greco-Roman city, founded by the Greeks in approximately 500BC and located near Pompeii, Naples is also a seaport (Mountjoy, 1987, pp. 454, 456). What Naples represents for Morrison, is the one point where he can gather the significant factors of the Arena, the Law of the Symbolic, the emperor-god and the Oedipal connection through Greece all to one location within the Old World. From the Old World the Spanish set out in their ships in self-imposed exile, into an unknown wilderness. To "see Naples and die", has a very real significance to the mythographic landscape Morrison presents:

> a ha
> Come on, now
> luring the Traveller
> Mighty Voyager
> Curious, into its dark womb
> The graves grinning
> Indians of night
> The eyes of night
> Westward luring
> into the brothel, into the bloodbath
> into the Dream
> The dark Dream of conquest
> & Voyage
> into night, Westward into Night
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 43).

The rest, he then demonstrates, is history, and it is a history that repeats itself with indomitable ferocity.

That rats, sailors and death should be bound together is realistic, given what is known about sea travel during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but symbolically they also form a trinity of connection. As scavengers of opportunity from the refuse of human activity and carriers of the plague, rats have a close association with humanity, and so too has death with them both.

Morrison then adds into this relationship the pigeons, carriers themselves perhaps of diseases not present in the new frontier on the verge of discovery, and vehicles of communication. In Naples, these birds are wild, no longer used as messengers, carriers of the word. With their service to the symbolic order no longer regulated or required, but still caught as they are within the arena, they are capable of spreading their disease. The modern city thrives, as do its pursuits, and its border of death is all

that stands to contain the potential calamity of disease that would spread, should it be taken outside the arena and into the wilderness. When humanity boarded ships, they took the rats and the pigeons with them. When humanity entered the New World, located outside the arena and across the wilderness, beyond the reach of the established symbolic order, so too was disease injected like a needle into a vein:

> We were aware
> knee-deep in the fluttering air
> as the ships move on
> trains in their wake.
> trench mouth
> again in the camps.
> Gonorrhea
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 22).

Returning to the passage quoted from *The New Creatures* which introduces Naples[24], it finishes with:

> Fighting, dancing, gambling,
> bars, cinemas thrive
> in the avid summer
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 11).

These activities read as both what the modern city holds and as copies of activities brought from the Old World, the first arena, as symbolically represented in Naples. Within the city walls the activities of the body, the cinema and vision thrive in the abundance and warmth of the sun. But in such heat the city is "gone mad w/ fever" (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 12). The balance is lost and even within the confines of the city, its malady and the madness of sexual disease, which are historically associated with sexual licence and behaviour located outside the bounds of the sexual moral code of western civilisation, has taken hold. What Morrison effectively demonstrates is that when men left the city, when they left for journey into the wilderness, what went along for the ride was the imbalance and disconnection of the Old World and this took hold in the New to begin the process again.

What is it that lies beyond the arena into which the individual is born? It is the wilderness, that place of exile where transformation can begin. For Oedipus, the first exile from his birth arena was passive in as much that he did not choose it but rather

[24] refer to p. 43 of this paper.

it was put upon him by his father in an attempt to avoid fate. The fear of death motivated the father to exile the child, a fear that sprang from the word of the god Apollo as spoken by the oracle, and fear of the word itself.

Though he was expected to die in the wilderness, Oedipus was rescued and taken to Corinth where he was raised by King Polybus as if he were his own son (Hamilton, 1969, p. 272). It was in that second arena that Oedipus grew from childhood to maturity, indeed it was in that arena within the wilderness beyond his birth arena that transformation began, and it is to that arena we now turn: the arena of vision.

The Lords is subtitled *Notes on Vision* (Morrison, 1969/1985). Written while he attended UCLA, Morrison "described the work as 'a thesis on film esthetics'" (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 57). But this text is far more than that and specifically provides his manifesto for vision whilst exploring a number of the crucial concerns of his mythography.

Opening with an invitation to "look,"[25] for the duration of this text, vision is the driving force. The invitation is personalised to a collective "we", capturing the reader with the speaker in anticipation of and participation with what is to come. It is an invitation to see what, by subtle implication throughout the text, should already be apparent, an invitation to see what it is that binds the individual to another in the search for transcendence (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3).

Vision is located within an array of sources, the most immediate and organic being the eyes through which every individual, human and animal, views the world. Of the five physical senses, four tend to take a secondary role to that of vision[26]. There is so much to see that the body, and its response in mental processing of visual information, can easily pass into sensory overload. Vision works to separate this from that, to categorise and segregate, and it overrides the primary sense of touch experienced by the pre and post-natal infant.

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[25] refer to p. 31 of this paper.
[26] "More than any other sense, humans depend on vision for active exploration of the environment" (Berk, 1989, p. 153).

Beyond biological eyes the other significant lens is that of the camera, whether it is used for stills or motion picture. As optical devices, the biological eye and the camera lens function in a similar way, but are formed from opposing bases. The eye is biological, created by the natural impulse of life, the camera is mechanical, created by the realm of law and words: in short, one inhabits the realm of the semiotic and one the symbolic. What the camera and the eye do share, what binds them together, is that they have been birthed from a saturation of sex, that is, the biological coupling of male and female or the cinematic evolution of the peep show. Morrison immediately grounds vision, regardless of its device, in sex.

The camera approximates the same type of vision capability as that of a god, and that cinematic deity becomes voyeur to the panorama of the world. Hence, by implication, god is voyeuristic. Humanity is caught by the psychology of the voyeur, and this begins to link the pursuits and concerns of the divine with those of humanity. Their activities are equated as the same and the world becomes objectified:

> Camera, as all-seeing god, satisfies our longing for omniscience.
> To spy on others from this height and angle: pedestrians pass in
> and out of our lens like rare aquatic insects
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 5).

The “rare aquatic insects” that are scrutinized by scientists in drops of water and are “all-swarming dish-like/ elegance” (Courson et al., 1990, p. 24), introduce further concerns of Morrison’s, hinting at the connection of life and participation with fluid, and the objectification of individual subjects to the swarming mass. People and lives under the scrutiny of vision become insignificantly small.

Both humanity and god, by implication, possess an investigative, voyeuristic intelligence, perpetuating the peep show:

> More or less, we’re all afflicted with the psychology of the
> voyeur. Not in a strictly clinical or criminal sense, but in our
> whole physical and
> emotional
> stance before the world. Whenever we seek to break this spell
> of passivity, our actions are cruel and awkward and generally
> obscene, like an invalid who has forgotten how to walk
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 13).

This is our whole stance before the world. We are separated from participation:

> Let us imagine that moved by jealousy, curiosity, or vice I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole. I am alone and on the level of a non-thetic self-consciousness. This means first of all that there is no self to inhabit my consciousness, nothing therefore to which I can refer my acts in order to qualify them. They are in no way known; I am my acts and hence they carry in themselves their whole justification…. This means that behind that door a spectacle is presented as "to be seen," a conversation as "to be heard." The door, the keyhole are at once both instruments and obstacles
> (Sartre, 1956, pp. 347-8).

Compare this with Morrison when he speaks of the evolutionary paths of cinema where "[o]ne is spectacle…. The other is peep show, which claims for its realm both the erotic and the untampered observance of real life, and imitates the keyhole or voyeur's window without need of color, noise, grandeur" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 22).

Humanity's focus within the modern arena, Morrison claims, is so well worn to vision that active participation is disconnected and forgotten. In this, when the individual tries to reconnect, he is "obscene" in the attempt, shame pervading a sense of self in relation to the other (Sartre, 1956, pp. 360-1, 374). This is the stance of the individual in the world before others, and to exacerbate the isolation for the individual, when god is dead, what is left but this existence, this history, this isolation:

> [T]he being-who-looks-at and who can never be looked-at; that is, it is one with the idea of God. But if God is characterized as a radical absence, the effort to realize humanity as *ours* is forever renewed and forever results in failure
> (Sartre, 1956, p. 547).

In his isolation, if that individual is to maintain his subjective stance within the world, he must also remain in isolation from god, whom by ceasing to exist is thereby dead. God, according to Nietzsche, "is far too extreme a hypothesis" ("114 (June 10, 1887)", 1968, p.70):

> The flowering
> of God-like people
> ….
> is all we have left

> to guide us
> Now that He is gone
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 66).

Vision is the path of conflict, for by vision is the individual validated in the symbolic world and yet in doing so risks death, but it is only by death that the sought for transcendence may be found through desire, through touch, that is, through sex.

It can be argued that in the absence of connection to the mother, coupled with the dominance of the visual ordering of the world which asserts when the individual disengages from his mother, the voyeur naturally pursues activities related to sex and other socially secretive peristaltic activities. This begins, Freud proposes in *Totem and Taboo*, early in life when the child responds to his desire to touch his own body and the "external prohibition", usually from a parent, which results. The conflict that develops in the child contributes in relocating rather than extinguishing the desire to touch. This desire, rather than remaining in the upper, conscious mind, is influenced by the laws into which the individual is being invested by the symbolic world about him, moving it to the subconscious, which, of course, is the realm of the semiotic, desire and touch (1913/1960, p. 29). Evermore for the individual the immediate response when *seen*, is one of shame, which then acts as a further isolating force (Sartre, 1956, p. 350).

The secrecy of the voyeur is necessitated by their underhand activity, the pursuit of capturing in the field of vision things which should remain hidden. But anyone can be drawn into being his partner, his object, thereby validating the voyeur's existence by their death:

> The voyeur, the peeper, the Peeping Tom, is a dark comedian. He is repulsive in his dark anonymity, in his secret invasion. He is pitifully alone. But, strangely, he is able through this same silence and concealment to make unknowing partner of anyone within his eye's range. This is his threat and power (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 13).

Authentic life is to be found only in the secret, hidden places:

> Some activities are impossible in the open. And these secret events are the voyeur's game. He seeks them out with his myriad army of eyes – like the child's notion of a Deity who

> sees all. "Everything?" asks the child. "Yes, every-thing," they answer, and the child is left to cope with this divine intrusion.
>
> The voyeur is masturbator, the mirror his badge, the window his prey
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 14).

The "army of eyes", cinematic lenses, tell of histories and in doing so objectify the secret, subjective activity of individuals who in this telling become no more than objects under the lens as swarming "aquatic insects"[27].

The voyeur is in touch with, quite literally Morrison asserts, his impulse for life. Sex is the base drive and the work of the voyeur is concerned, in some way, with sex. Even when the voyeur is not engaged in the view of a sexual act, sex still lies at the heart of his pursuit. "Early film-makers, who – like the alchemists – delighted in a wilful obscurity about their craft, in order to withhold their skills from profane onlookers" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 28), are among many of the voyeurs Morrison deals with, his mythography supporting the notion that ultimately every individual is voyeur to the world in which he exists. The alchemists then, Morrison continues:

> detect in the sexual activity of man a correspondence with the world's creation, with the growth of plants, and with mineral formations. When they see the union of rain and earth, they see it in an erotic sense, as copulation. And this extends to all natural realms of matter. For they can picture love affairs of chemicals and stars, a romance of stones, or the fertility of fire (1969/1985, p. 29).

As a further expansion of this, Morrison also posits death alongside sex, using an alchemical view of sex as omnipresent in his description of an explosion, specifically a nuclear explosion, the elements of which are a replication of the natural process of the sun also:

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[27] A well expressed expansion of this idea and the position of god is contained within the dialogue between the characters Gene Klein and Alexander Leek in the film *The Mothman Prophesies*.
Leek: It's perception. They appear differently to everyone. A voice, a light, a man, a monster. If your friend thinks its God, he's off by more than a few degrees.
Klein: How do you explain that it knows everything?
Leek: Look at that. [points to top of high rise] If there was a car crash blocks away, that window washer could see it. Now, that doesn't mean he's God or even smarter than we are. But from where he's sitting, he can see a little farther down the road.
Klein: I think we can assume these entities are more advanced than us. Why don't they just come right out and tell us what's on their minds?
Leek: You're more advanced than a cockroach. Do you explain yourself to them? (Pellington, 2002).

The mushroom
The unfolding

instant of creation (fertilisation)
not an instant separate from breakfast
It all flows down & out, flowing

but that instant:
not fire & fusion (fission) but a moment
of jellied ice, crystal, vegetative mating
merging in cool slime splendour
a crushing of steel & glass & ice

(instant in a bar; glasses, clash, clink, collide)

far-out splendour

heat & fire are outward signs of a
Small dry mating
(Courson et al., 1988).

Both passages quoted above from Morrison reflect the alchemical process, even the sound and image of the glass in the bar is resonant of the glass or vessel in which "the alchemical couple, philosophical sulphur (male, hot, active) and argent vive (female, cold, receptive) must be united at the chemical wedding to produce the philosopher's stone[28]" (Abraham, 1998, p. 85). It is this process, Morrison asserts, that is within the province of film making and indeed, the activities of the voyeur.

The voyeur is historically located by Morrison as far back as ancient Rome (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 13) and the voyeur is foremost a peeper, a watcher of sex. Vision is not the device of the voyeur alone, however, but also that of the killer, and both possess a tremendous amount of power. Between the voyeur with a traditional predilection for viewing sex and the killer whose predilection is for death, vision brings with immediacy the other significant theme within the mythography, that of sex and death.

[28] The philosopher's stone is the most well known of alchemical terms and ideas, it is the goal of alchemy. "The Stone is the arcanum of all arcana, possessing the power to perfect imperfection in all things…. It is the figure of light veiled in dark matter, that divine love essence which combines divine wisdom and creative power…. During the transformation in man, the aspect of the psyche which is unconscious (the shadow) is illumined by consciousness. The two previously separated aspects of the psyche become integrated, creating harmonious unity. The Stone in known as the universal medicine because it can dispel all corruption, heal all disease and suffering, and bestow youth, longevity and wisdom" (Abraham, 1998, p. 145).

"The sniper's rifle is an extension of his eye. He kills with injurious vision" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 5), the sights magnifying what he sees. With this focus the target is not only easier to see, but also more objectified. The scientist objectifies in the microscope, the sniper through the sights of his rifle. To further distance the assassin from those he seeks out with his vision, he is presented as insectoid. Once his task is done and his existence maintained, by the death of the subject-turned-object through his vision, instinct leads him to the dark cave of the theatre, a place where he will be safe. "The assassin (?), in flight, gravitated with unconscious, instinctual ease, moth-like, toward a zone of safety, haven from the swarming streets. Quickly he was devoured in the warm, dark silent maw of the physical theatre" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 5).

He is at risk of becoming one of the swarming masses that populate the streets, his only hope of remaining subjective once his task is done is for isolation from the swarm, from the many objects about him that would threaten his existence. The greater the crowd, the greater the risk of becoming object to any one of them, the greater the risk of death. Yet in dealing out death the sniper, indeed any killer, can bring release and for some, relief. Put simply, he does god's work.

Morrison differentiates between the still and moving world, the killer's vision and his flight, the card game and the voyeur's pursuits, the photo and the film, and then demonstrates their connection. Within *The Lords* there is a significant catalogue of names, men who figure in the early development of film and cinema[29]. Eadweard

[29] Each of the particular people named is chosen for a reason relating to vision and/or the development of cinema. There are relationships between this development with publishing (artistic pursuit), photography, animals, movement (participation) and movement made still, internal and external stances for viewing (vision), fire and death. Muybridge was the chief photographer for the U.S. Government throughout much of the 1870s, and in the 1880s carried out a detailed "investigation of animal locomotion" using animal and human subjects. Other notable mentions are given by Morrison to Henry Mayhew, the co-founder of *Punch* who had his extensive work *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851) photographed by Richard Beard using Daguerrotypes. Carl Gropius, who ran a diorama in Berlin, is also mentioned, but of interest is the implication by name also of Walter Gropius. Walter Gropius, who was the founder of the avant-garde school of design, *Bauhaus*, saw the introduction of a course to *Bauhaus* which involved photographic exploration through the employ of x-ray photography and the forms of objects as revealed under the microscope. Robert Baker, an Eighteenth Century painter who first used the term panorama for a discovery made whilst in prison is also noted, and Daguerre, an early pioneer of photography, from which the Daguerrotype comes, who was also linked with the theatre as a "theatrical designer" (Gersheim & Gersheim, 1971).

Muybridge, some of whose work utilises naked women, is presented as the link between the still image that holds no life, and the voyeur's subject which does (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 16).

Through Morrison's catalogue of names are important points about the progression of vision, what it is and how it operates. This is a retelling of history from the perspective of the rise of technology and the decline in participation with the impulse of life, despite the fact that throughout this progression the audience *participates*, albeit with an artificial life. This is Morrison's dialogue regarding the process of desensitising the mind, particularly with the advent of erotic and nude cinema, widening the gap between vision and desire. The forbidden and secret, indeed the sacred, become common as celluloid takes the secret matters of sex to a wider audience. This marks the evolution of voyeur to audience. Sex, in being no longer a secret act of participation, becomes a visual set of objects and postures.

"All energy and sensation is sucked up into the skull, a cerebral erection, skull bloated with blood" and the individual's experience is transformed by the "artificial insemination" of cinema (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 17). The experience of life becomes one of mind, where the symbolic law is located, and is no longer built on participation, further distinguishing the semiotic body as a part of the *other*. Referring back to the "womb-garden"[30], the safety of this is strengthened by the knowledge that the mind "within the skull" can make a reality which for all intents and purposes can serve as reality. This then marks the facilitation of vision in the disconnection of the body, where sex is rightly seated, from the mind where rather than participate and engage with the impulse of life the individual now watches in safety. Morrison then continues, "Caligula wished a single neck for all his subjects that he could behead a kingdom with one blow. Cinema is this transforming agent" (1969/1985, p. 17).

For Rome, for sacrifice, for blood, Caligula wished that his nation were gathered under one head, one neck to be severed (Goodman, 1997, p. 57). With that one blow he could behead the lot, the eyes of vision within the skull and the marriage between

[30] refer to p. 24 of this paper.

vision and mind, permanently separated from their relationship to the body, permanently separated from the possibility of reconnection. The Emperor, the father-god could ensure his permanent rule while the dangerous lure of the life impulse would be perpetually disregarded. The cinema, Morrison argues, has done what Caligula could not do.

To further the disconnective function ascribed to cinema, Morrison also recognises the illusion of film, that it is in some part a lie or at the least not a reflection of what is real, that there is something more which cannot be seen. As much as the images appear to be real, even the motion of celluloid is a mask. Like Muybridge's images of stills that turn in rapid succession to produce motion, "Films are collections of dead picture which are given artificial insemination" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 17). Film is not fluid and moving, at its roots are scripts and actors, a sense of already determined actions and outcomes, film becomes a game within the Game. These are ripples in the pond like those of the arena, the ripples of the game within an arena which is itself but a ripple within the sphere of arenas. Though film suggests free will Morrison looks to what lies behind, to the script, the acting, the divide between freedom and necessity:

> There are no longer "dancers," the possessed. The cleavage of men into actors and spectators is the central fact of our time….We are content with the "given" in sensation's quest. We have been metamorphosed from a mad body dancing on hillsides to a pair of eyes staring in the dark (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 9).

The voyeur, who participates in the landscape, becomes the spectator occupied in their profession, and increasingly so, as the reach of cinema expands. The artificial has replaced the natural. The participant increasingly is able to observe, becoming the spectator, and this is the stance of humanity before the whole of the world. As participation has been cast off, the passivity of observation has rooted and removed the participant from the world.

The cinema has replaced participation within the world. This may in time become a complete transformation, the individual so isolated and disconnected that this driving mechanism of vision will be the point through which sensation will be recalled. "There may be a time when we'll attend Weather Theatres to recall the sensation of

rain" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 22). There will be an utter end of participation, as only vision is left. "The body exists for the sake of the eyes; it becomes a dry stalk to support these two soft, insatiable jewels" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 17).

Film signifies death, in the objectification of its subjects, and in its mass production of the spectator. This dead thing which is brought to life by "artificial insemination", that is, an unnatural sexual act, gives a false sense of life. "Film spectators are quiet vampires" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 17) feeding on an unsustaining illusion and each becomes "a dying animal" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 23).

When the individual subject has been reduced to such a state, their existence ensured by the objectification of all that surrounds them, to then be nothing, is inevitable. "It is wrong to assume that art needs the spectator in order to be. The film runs on without any eyes. The spectator cannot exist without it. It insures his existence" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 25). The thing that remains transcendent is not the spectator, but rather the film. In capturing its subjects for objects in the vision of the lens, cinema has no need of the spectator. But the spectator uses the vision of cinema like the assassin uses the sights of his rifle or the scientist uses the microscope. Participation is removed and the subject sits in the dark in perfect isolation, surrounded by an absolutely objectified world and no longer in conflict with those objects, for they do not have need to attempt to turn their vision upon that spectator-as-subject to then turn him to their object.

The voyeur, however, remains in participation within the landscape. Like the prostitutes of Rome, the whores and other women who deal in sex that populate Morrison's mythography, the voyeur observes the hidden, is masturbator, and participates within the conflict which asserts his existence, at all times knowing that death may come at any moment. Located in the arena of sex, this is the root of the voyeur's power, this is the voyeur's freedom.

In the West, cinema replaces the peep show – it's all about sex – while in the East, cinema replaces the shadow play – and that's all about death. The Shadow play is linked in the text to the peep show, by implication as an exclusive pursuit of men (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 19). In both peep show and shadow play the voyeur's

secret realm is popularised by the advent of cinema, but remains a pursuit actively sought in the dark, that is, in the cave.

Death, like sex, is a threshold experience, and there are, according to Morrison, numerous kinds of death to be had. The shadow plays of East Asia are concerned with rituals of the dead, and the shadow play as employed by Morrison has implication and meaning for both men and women. Through this avenue comes an introduction of the East, a location revisited by Morrison, and for *The Lords* it is posited as a forerunner to the celluloid of the West. With this in mind, the way Morrison uses cinema is enriched by the addition of an Eastern interpretation:

> The modern East creates the greatest body of films. Cinema is a new form of an ancient tradition – the shadow play. Even their theatre is an imitation of it. Born in India or China, the shadow show was aligned with religious ritual, linked with celebrations which centred around cremation of the dead.
>
> It is wrong to assume, as some have done, that cinema belongs to women. Cinema is created by men for the consolation of men.
>
> The shadow plays originally were restricted to male audiences. Men could view these dream shows from either side of the screen. When women later began to be admitted, they were allowed to attend only to shadows
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, pp. 18-9).

As a forum created by and for men, according to Morrison, the cinema remains within the dialogue of the symbolic, while women could only attend to the shadow realm of the *other*. It would appear there is an attempt within the cinematic realm of vision for men to connect back to what, by their very nature, women are already connected to. But the means by which they seek in the dark and in secrecy speaks of a sense of shame and the negation of touch, the natural step from desire, in order to not risk the death of the self. Indeed, it would appear to some degree that Caligula has indeed had the victory in wishing a single neck for Rome.

Linked to the cinematic segregation of the sexes, and following the noted exclusion of women from participation with the shadow play, is Morrison's mention of:

> Kynaston's Bride
> [who] may not appear

> but the odor of her flesh
> is never very far
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 20).

This woman marks the beginning of the historic catalogue in *The Lords* of the birth of cinema which is characterised by fire, burning, light, and death. During the sixteenth century, women were not permitted to perform on the stage, and consequently men played female roles. Edward Kynaston was one of the better known of his time, but fell abruptly into obscurity when women were allowed to take to the stage and perform (Loftis, Southern, Jones, & Schouten, 1976, pp. 120-22). While his bride may not be visible, as women were traditionally not visible in the shadow play or in early theatre, her presence is noted by a sense other than vision. Her odour may be suggestive of her sex scent, or perhaps her rotting flesh, an echo of the mother's body "rotting in the summer ground,"[31] of the arena, or even the scent of death itself, as her advent was his death in the vision and esteem of the audience.

For a man, taking a bride presents a threshold of death to him. In the sphere of the audience's vision, Kynaston was deceased upon his bride's arrival. The climax of sexual coupling, which traditionally consummates a marriage, is death in that the unity experienced through coupling dies at the point of climax when the experience takes each back into their own individual body as opposed to being held within the experience of the other. The product of the union, the child, heralds the death of the woman at birth when he becomes an entity separate from her and to which she need now turn her focus away from herself and towards this child. This then, forms a trinity of death, with "sex at its centre" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3), the newborn life emerging as does the phoenix from the fire of transformation.

The child that emerges, however, is barely in the world before fear is motivating his creator to find a way to put him back out of it. It is the father's fear of death and the desire to delay his own return to the body of the earth that motivates his willingness to sacrifice his son, Oedipus:

> It has been said that
> on birth we are trying
> to find a proper womb

[31] refer to p. 42 of this paper.

> for the growth of our
> Buddha nature, & that
> on dying we find a
> womb in the tomb of the
> earth. This is my
> father's greatest
> fear. It shouldn't be
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 188).

The fear of Laius is in response to the word of god, that is, Apollo, spoken through the mouth of the oracle who, by Apollonian tradition, was a woman. What is interesting here is the desire to remain in the symbolic order, the desire to remain disconnected:

> It looks as if the famous 'trap' so often alluded to by men must
> be the trap of symbiosis with the mother that is seen as
> 'imprisoning'. Symbiosis, psychosis? At all events a 'prison'
> that sets off panic in the man at the thought of any symbiosis
> with any other woman
> (Olivier, 1989, pp. 40-1).

When the woman as oracle, proclaims god's word however, the king, indeed the father, cannot avoid the power of that symbolic word when underwritten from a position of utterance from the semiotic body. As Kristeva notes, "[t]he mother's body is therefore what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic chora, which is on the path of destruction, aggressivity and death" (Kristeva, 1974, p. 95). Woman is located *outside* the symbolic order, she is the *other* who, by the very nature of the semiotic language her body imparts, and from which the individual first learns, "threatens to disrupt the conscious (rational) order of speech" (Selden et al., 1997, p. 142). The woman who stands outside this discourse is the oracle, the fortune teller, the prostitute, the virgin - the woman who signifies reconnection, as all women do. Morrison recognised this function of women, particularly the culturally censored, and though his writings are read with a male voice in mind and within the context of a phallocentric language, he honours woman in all her forms and for what she is.

Something has gone wrong in the modern arena with the oracular path, and the theatres of modern LA have facilitated a transformation which is not, in cleansing vision, what was sought and hoped for.

Morrison's use of LA for his modern arena is a choice of greater significance than the fact that he lived there for most of his adult life. As well as signifying Los Angeles as a microcosm of the modern United States (Hopkins, 1992, p. 271), LA, or more specifically *la*, also signifies a musical sound or "an exclamation of surprise or emphasis (Hanks, 1986, p. 855). Further to this, and perhaps of greater import is that *la* is the chemical symbol for lanthanum, a metal used in the manufacture of optical glass, particularly that used for lenses and lighting in film and photography (Hanks, 1986, p. 863). In view of this then, the recurring motif of LA throughout the mythography is important and consistent, and not only does Morrison employ it for reference to the city of Los Angeles, but also to what he calls Lamerica (Courson et al., 1988, pp. 7-8,26, 45, 87; 1990, p. 140), reinforcing both the image of the arena of LA within the greater arena of America and in support of his propositions regarding film and cinema in relation to issues of death, the voyeur and the symbolic realm and, ultimately, the disconnection of the modern culture from the transcendent possibility.

Theatre and cinema are stated by Morrison to be the "religion of possession" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 9). The cave of the theatre is dark, womb-like, it is the realm of the storyteller and the shaman. It is a place of thresholds and transformation. The purpose of the shaman is to heal and direct the tribe, to guide them through thresholds[32].

The rise in cinema, Morrison demonstrates, resulted not in the increase of participation, but rather, separation. The arena of the cinema has replaced participation in the real and when the "body exists for the sake of the eyes," the body becomes redundant to the world and law of symbolic interpretation of objects. Film does not need the spectator, but the spectator, to find definition of himself, needs the film. Located within the cave, the location that was once the province of the shaman where he "signalled his 'trip' to an audience which shared the journey" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 23), is an audience now separate and objectified.

[32] The first three volumes of Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God* provide detailed information on shamanic purpose and practice from diverse cultures (1962, 1964, 1969).

"Film spectators are quiet vampires," (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 17) their life sustained by draining life. There is a shift in the modern audience from participation in the act which then validates the ritual, to an acceptance of what is put before them. They no longer dance, but rather passively suck the life from the vision.

The cinematic line of descent is traced from the theatre, and before that, as noted, the shaman. The living arena as a stage is most famously quoted from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

> All the world's a stage.
> And all the men and women merely players:
> They have their exits and their entrances,
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
> …. Last scene of all,
> That ends this strange eventful history,
> Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,
> (Staunton, 1989, Act II, scene vii, pp 144-5 of vol. 2).

That the arena is presented as a stage also signifies, by implication, there is a backstage complete with a cast waiting in the wings, a technical crew, producer and director, props, costumes and masks. What is seen by the audience within the arena is only a small and well controlled part of the mechanism. What happens in the arena and how, is a direct effect of the actions and choices of all that remains *unseen*, it is the end result of rehearsal and practice. Indeed, it is to some large degree, an illusion.

Further to this, like Blake's assertion of a move out of Experience into an informed Innocence, so too does Shakespeare recognise a return to the things of innocence at the end of life, a point not lost on Morrison and which will be later discussed.

The patina of freedom is smeared across existence to cover up the control. This control, Morrison advocated, was something to be resisted, revolted against. With the arena set and the field of the Game and its participants identified and located, Morrison injects the modern cinema and its visionary functions into this landscape. Using vision he then carries the reader through a dialogue concerning the loss of connection to the transcendent, and demonstrates how it can be relocated:

> But gradually, special perceptions are being developed. The idea of the "Lords" is beginning to form in some minds. We should enlist them into bands of perceivers to tour the labyrinth during their mysterious nocturnal appearances. The Lords have secret entrances, and they know disguises. But they give themselves away in minor ways. Too much glint of light in the eye. A wrong gesture. Too long and curious a glance (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 32).

Those who begin to see beyond the boundary of the stage alone, beyond the rim of the arena, begin to sense there are driving forces behind it. Their vision captures the attention of the previously unseen controlling force[33]. These are the individuals who can make the shamanic journey into wilderness and bring back the unifying vision, these are the ones to "tour the labyrinth".

The responsibility for doing this was once the province of the shaman, but it will be demonstrated that Morrison asserts it is the responsibility of each individual to wake up and cross the threshold, seeing not the illusion of symbolic ordering but rather feeling the integration of all objects as part of the universal one. His invitation is the question: "Can you picture what will be,/ so limitless and free" ("The End", Courson et al., 1990, p. 111), and the song then continues with the mantra of how to do this. This is achieved not by vision alone, but by participation, for "[t]he subject says 'I see first lots of things which dance … then everything becomes gradually connected' " (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 27).

What this connection leads back to, as Shakespeare implies in *As You Like It* and Morrison most certainly states throughout his mythography, is the source from which life comes. "In this womb or tomb, we're free of the/ swarming streets" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 9). It is the fundamental notion of return, of coming full circle back to transcendent connection with that source. The player, regardless of what kind he is and despite the drama he has played out in the arena, returns to the state in which he

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[33] This idea is also expressed in *The Mothman Prophesies* just prior to statements transcribed in *fn 27*, during the same conversation:
Leek: you're asking for an explanation for something that can't be explained rationally. Their motivations aren't human.
Klein: All right, then what do they want?
Leek: I have no idea. What you really want to know is why you?
Klein: Yes.
Leek: You noticed them, and they noticed that you noticed them. Most people aren't sensitive enough to see them without some kind of trauma. What happened to you, Mr Klein? (Pellington, 2002).

began and in doing so, returns to nothingness. For Morrison, as for Shakespeare and Blake, the drama is punctuated by stages, differing acts or scenes, each marked by the crossing of a threshold.

Cleansing and purging is the painful sacrifice laid at every threshold as an offering for advancement full circle back to the beginning. The desire for return to the body of the mother is the recognition of the experiential order of existence and consciousness which has been lost in the overriding realm of vision and the distinctions that realm makes to separate one thing from another. The psychosomatic drives which are the first learnt responses of the unborn and the infant remain as a landscape which underpins existence as foundations to the symbolic order and all in that order which rails against those very foundations (Kristeva, 1974, p. 95). What Morrison demonstrates is the understanding that because the semiotic landscape of the body and its impulse for life is the foundation, the symbolic ordering of it would not in fact function without it. Further to this, when the semiotic is consciously admitted or, more precisely, allowed, the symbolic order is at risk of failure. This is the reconnection to the real that he seeks within the mythos. This is the transcendence.

METAMORPHOSIS TWO:

> In the loneliest desert, however, the second metamorphosis occurs: here the spirit becomes a lion who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert. Here he seeks out his last master: he wants to fight him and his last god; for ultimate victory he wants to fight with the great dragon (Kaufmann, 1954, p. 138).

Morrison's extensive use of the natural realm begins in Africa, and the mythology he draws from has its foundation in the development of a planting culture across the north of the continent, reaching into the near east by approximately 7500 B.C. (Campbell, 1969, pp. 384-7). What Campbell also points out is that the goddess is known to have been well established prior to this time and the myth of the serpent and the maiden[34] is perhaps a variant of some earlier tradition. As it stands, the serpent is one of the most ancient archetypes in myth, and for Morrison, a cornerstone.

The serpent, and in its differing forms of the snake and lizard, crosses the thresholds of life: sex, birth, death and resurrection. In this sense, the snake is almost universally considered a positive symbol, with the stark exception of the patriarchal mythologies of Levant origin. From an archaeological viewpoint, it appears that older systems (which venerated the goddess and the serpent) were supplanted in many cases by emerging patriarchal cultures. By the time the serpent is in the Garden of Eden something remarkable has occurred, and it has become a figure of evil:

> The first point that emerges from this contrast, …, is that in the context of the patriarchy of the Iron Age Hebrews of the first millennium B.C., the mythology adopted from the earlier Neolithic and Bronze Age civilizations of the lands they occupied and for a time ruled became inverted, to render an argument just the opposite to that of its origin (Campbell, 1964, pp. 16-7).

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[34] "The basic elements" of this myth "are: (1) the young woman ready for marriage (the nymph), associated with the mysteries of birth and menstruation, these mysteries (and the womb itself, therefore) being identified with the lunar force; (2) the fructifying masculine semen, identified with the waters of the earth and sky and imaged in the phallic, waterlike, lighteninglike serpent by which the maiden is to be transformed; and (3) an experience of life as change, transformation, death and new birth" (Campbell, 1969, p. 390).

At its most basic level the serpent "is the symbol of life throwing off the past and continuing to live" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 45). It is recognised by some deep part of the psyche that responds to it with both fear and fascination:

> The power of life causes the snake to shed its skin, just as the moon sheds its shadow. The serpent sheds its skin to be born again, as the moon its shadow to be born again. They are equivalent symbols. Sometimes the serpent is represented as a circle eating its own tail. That's an image of life. Life sheds one generation after another, to be born again. The serpent represents immortal energy and consciousness engaged in the field of time, constantly throwing off death and being born again. There is something tremendously terrifying about life when you look at it that way. And so the serpent carries in itself the sense of both the fascination and the terror of life (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 47).

In its biological sense, the serpent is a creature which has refined its form to the most efficient employ of the peristaltic motion, the basic flow of the impulse for life. It is this swallowing, this devouring of life, which signifies entering the cave of shamanic transformation, and the threshold crossed by the subject in doing this is one of death. From the early pages of *The Lords*, Morrison evokes the life giving principle of the serpent, signifying that through death can be made the reunion of the consciousness with the body of the mother, indeed the womb of the earth:

> Everything is vague and dizzy. The skin swells and there is no more distinction between parts of the body. An encroaching sound of threatening, mocking, monotonous voices. This is fear and attraction of being swallowed.
>
> Inside the dream, button sleep around your body like a glove. Free now of space and time. Free to dissolve in the streaming summer
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 6).

What Morrison also posits in this passage is recognition for the Oedipal dichotomy which follows entrance to the sphere of life, a sphere that will again be forsaken at the point of death. When the field of time and consciousness is entered by the individual he becomes subject to both the division of the symbolic world into pairs of opposites, and the underlying fear of not only separation from the transcendent, but also the fear of death by which reunion with the transcendent will be facilitated.

So what, indeed, has the snake been to which Morrison returns in his use of this archetype? In a 1970 interview with Salli Stevenson, when questioned about what he believed in, Morrison offered an answer which illuminates his view of an ancient symbol:

> We evolved from snakes and I used to see the universe as a mammoth peristaltic snake. I used to see all the people and objects and landscapes as little pictures on the facets of their skins. I think the peristaltic motion is the basic life movement and even your basic unicellular structures have this same motion. It's swallowing, digestion, the rhythms of sexual intercourse
> (Stevenson, 1970, p. 242).

From a general precept for the snake as the underlying principle of the universe, Morrison develops a mythography that embraces symbols and metaphors predating the rise of Christianity. Rather than accept the serpent as evil and woman as its willing subject and therefore also corrupt, Morrison rejects this stance in order to "reinvent the gods."[35] The woman and the serpent remain inseparable. With such a foundation then, Morrison moves forward in a mythographic landscape which opens up the opportunity to explore and interpret the modern world.

All too often, it seems, the individual appears at odds with his place in the world. He is burdened with guilt because of the conflict that arises from the pull of opposites and contradictions when regulated rules of behaviour work against the instincts of biology, a guilt which must then be borne in isolation for fear of death at becoming nothing more than an object within the *other's* sphere of existence (Sartre, 1956, p. 350). What Morrison offers is a way through to the other side of this suffering by resurrecting the goddess and rightfully restoring the serpent to its original symbology.

What is particularly interesting in Morrison's revision is his blending of woman and serpent, not always as two distinct personalities as most such archetypes represent, but in some cases as one unified symbol, who we meet as his lizard woman[36]. By marrying the two he brings together an enormous amount of symbology to rest in

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[35] refer to p. 2 of this paper.
[36] refer to p. 21 of this paper.

unity, and what this does is quite precisely point out that rather than woman being the vehicle through which man is corrupted, thereby losing connection with the transcendent, it is in fact the symbolic law that corrupts, or at the least draws the individual away from transcendent connection.

When Morrison speaks of being:

> Lost in a Roman wilderness of pain,
> and all the children are insane,
> all the children are insane
> waiting for the summer rain
> ("The End", Courson et al., 1990, p. 111),

he really is speaking of life as experienced by the individual aware of himself as such. Rome, for Morrison, represents the founding of civilisation in terms of law and societal rules and is used by him as a model of the arena. The “Roman wilderness” then is the arena of life as it operates in the field of time and consciousness, as opposed to life swallowed in the belly of the snake, the womb of the earth, the border beyond death where the individual is “[f]ree to dissolve in the streaming summer” just as it is that the children, caught in isolation, dread and guilt, wait for “summer rain”.

A return to the womb of the mother, the cave of the earth, is a return to the belly of the snake, and in this same location water is also found. Traditionally woman is symbolically represented by the moon and when adding to her the form of the lizard or serpent, which is mythologically linked to the moon, the circle is strengthened, becoming even more precise in that:

> The moon is the lord of tides and of the dew that falls at night to refresh the verdure on which cattle graze. But the serpent, too, is a lord of waters. Dwelling in the earth, among the roots of trees, frequenting springs, marshes, and water courses, it glides with a motion of waves
> (Campbell, 1964, pp. 9-10).

Before the return can be made, however, the journey must be taken through the arena of the symbolic landscape, and the child that has been disengaged from the mother, is raised by the word of the father, just as Oedipus was raised in Corinth by its king, its emperor, Polybus.

As the source of the seed of life, provider, protector, lawgiver, role model and hero to the son, the father becomes a potent figure in the mythic vocabulary of the child. As that child moves out of an infancy which was, as Morrison has already proposed, reluctantly entered, and into life independent of the mother he finds a:

> Strange world that waits & watches.
> Ancient dread of non-existence.
>
> If it's no problem, why mention it.
> Everything spoken means that,
> its opposite, & everything else.
> I'm alive. I'm dying.
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 80)[37].

The father is a vision of what is to be one day attained. As the child begins to grasp the symbolic order and feel the conflict generated by the dialectic nature of that discourse, the father increasingly becomes an ideal which is unobtainable, a reference point for defining god, and as these understandings emerge so too does an increasing sense of separation and conflict (Freud, 1921, p. 438). It is also in the application of symbolic law as an authority over the semiotic response to life, that the conflict experienced by the individual in the face of the dialectic begins to translate into an imbalance, the symptom of which is dis-ease.

There is an underlying notion that whatever is new will decay and die, that sex and death are inextricably linked. The specific locations of sex and death within the arena also speak of the idea that the further out from the centre the individual moves, that is, the further away from sexual connection, the closer they come to death. Sex, however, will only achieve its ultimate high when the realm of death is entered, for "[w]hen sex dies it becomes Climax" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3).

Turning to landscape, Rome is an arena in itself[38] and a location within a greater arena. Rome is Empire with its law and ruling Emperor. It is the birthplace of

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[37] The last four lines also appear in *The American Night: The Writings of Jim Morrison* as a stand-alone section. What is not indicated however, is whether they therefore exist within his notebooks separately as a statement or as part of the working toward a longer poem, from which the quote above was taken (Courson et al., 1990, p. 178).

formalised Christianity and the location from which spread the subsequent death of the older, nature based religions, it could be argued, like an infection. Though rich in a history of cults venerating goddesses, gods and nature, Rome did, in time, depart from its multiplicity of deities, replacing the Emperor with a patriarchal God and His words of Law[39]. With connection to nature lost, the impulse of life is no longer honoured but compartmentalised to something surrounded by taboo, thereby making it difficult to access. Suppressed and controlled the impulse might be, but eradicated it cannot be, and the symbolic order which strives to contain it is all the time threatened by the existence of Rome's women.

Morrison draws direct sexual parallels between ancient Rome and modern Los Angeles and, in doing so, also carries through to the modern landscape the intimate connection between sex and disease, blood and infection. In *The Lords*, sex makes its historical debut in Rome where:

> prostitutes were exhibited on roofs above the public highways for the dubious hygiene of loose tides of men whose potential lust endangered the fragile order of power. It is even reported that patrician ladies, masked and naked, sometimes offered themselves up to these deprived eyes for private excitements of their own
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 13).

Above the city streets and swarms of people, at the highest point in the constructed arena, sex is to be found. This higher ground[40], symbolically linked with the higher

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[38] Rome "was founded – traditionally by Romulus, the mythical son of Mars, the Roman god of war – in 753BC and was built on *seven hills* [italics added] and surrounded by the Aurelian Wall" (Mountjoy, 1987, p. 551).

[39] During the early centuries of the Christian Church, history was quite literally rewritten so that by the twentieth century, for all intent and purpose, it would appear that the success of Christianity was universal from the beginning (Goodman, 1997, p. 316). This is the history and culture Morrison inherited and drew his symbology from, for the images he used can be, in western culture, universally understood. "Many of the elements of theology and cult from which Christianity was constructed were inherited and adopted from contemporary Judaism and paganism; from the perspective of the ancient world it can be seen as a peculiarly successful oriental cult, in many ways similar to Mithraism and (most obviously) Judaism." But by AD 180 "most inhabitants of the empire would still not by that date have had much, if any, contact with Christians…. In its first generation, Christianity was a Jewish movement, and the prime cause of persecution was the painful process of separation" (Goodman, 1997, pp. 315-25).

[40] The high ground is significant to a landscape. "You can tell what's informing a society by what the tallest building is. When you approach a medieval town, the cathedral is the tallest thing in the place. When you approach an eighteenth-century town, it is the political palace that's the tallest thing in the place. And when you approach a modern city, the tallest places are the office buildings, these centres of economic life" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 95-6). Before cities and arenas, the high ground was simply that, the tall trees and more significantly, the mountains, both of which are the informative

ground of the spiritual plane, places these women atop buildings which themselves are phallic signifiers within the landscape. To further add to this, Lacan notes the symbolic representations of such a landscape in dreams, dramatically enhancing what Morrison presents in his mythographic foundation. In his essay on the mirror stage Lacan states:

> Correlatively, the formation of the I is symbolized in dreams by a fortress, or a stadium – its inner arena and enclosure, surrounded by marshes and rubbish-tips, dividing it into two opposed fields of contest where the subject flounders in quest of the lofty, remote inner castle whose form (sometimes juxtaposed in the same scenario) symbolizes the id in a quite startling way. Similarly, on the mental plane, we find realized the structures of fortified works, the metaphor of which arises spontaneously, as if issuing from the symptoms themselves, to designate the mechanisms of obsessional neurosis, inversion, isolation, splitting, negation and displacement
> (1949, p. 444).

It is interesting to note that the phallic id is located by Lacan at the centre where Morrison locates the "caged beast" and sex, where the mother is to be found.

Added to this, prostitution takes sex from being an impulse of nature, and turns it to an economic pursuit, something that currency can buy and something that is in itself currency. And this, according to Morrison, is not only the location of the prostitute, but the nobility as well. Morrison's linking of prostitutes with patrician ladies is interesting and reflects his understanding of an important aspect of Roman law and how Rome's citizens gave the appearance of abiding by it so as to negate shame. While it has been remarked by some scholars that Augustan law relating to adulterous behaviour on the part of women was not applied, due to that fact "that women in the upper reaches of Roman society openly practised adultery", it is actually correct that the law had a very real and devastating effect on such women and as a consequence it was not uncommon for:

> adulterous women [to have] themselves registered as prostitutes in order to avoid condemnation. Tacitus and Suetonius used the

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locations from out of nature. In *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, the author also speaks of mountains, and that upon climbing in altitude the atmospheric changes have a tendency to promote a feeling that "it's a good day to be alive…. You always feel like this when you start getting into higher altitudes" (Pirsig, 1974, p. 105). He talks about the "high country of the mind" (Pirsig, 1974, p. 130) and is aware of the daunting journey ahead when standing at the foot of the mountain, recognising the possibilities for not only life, but also death (Pirsig, 1974, p. 127).

> adjectives *infamis* and f*amosa* to describe other women; these terms had a precise legal meaning, indicating that such women had lost their status as matrons, and cannot be translated simply as 'depraved'" (Burguiere, Klapisch-Zuber, Segalen, & Zonabend, 1986/1996, p. 293).

Vision in this location, and its negation, is active. The masks worn both obscure identity and blind these women to the world about them. They can remain safely their own subject, for while they become another's object, they cannot see that they are thus, and so the other who potentially threatens their very existence does not themselves exist. What is problematic here is the imbalance this isolation fosters, and while these women participate within the sexual arena, they remain disconnected from a more significant participation with the transcendent. What keeps them separated is dread, firstly in that they negate the symbolic law, secondly for the fear of capture and objectification within the field of another's vision. What Morrison presents here is a case in support of the requirement for something reaching beyond vision as a necessary factor in attaining transcendence. Furthermore, this image echoes the modern *do it in the dark* mentality which serves the symbolic order's denial of transcendental possibilities made available through engagement with the natural impulse, and it clearly demonstrates some part at least of the existential stance on love and relationship.

According to Sartre, the relationship of love is based in the wish "to be loved". As such, the desire of the lover is to be the body, indeed the object, in which the beloved sees the foundation of all their values and desires. It is the lover's hope that they become the beloved's focus of what makes life worth living, thereby defining the existence of the beloved and consequently becoming the source of the beloved's freedom (Sartre, 1956, pp. 478-80). When the men of Rome climb the buildings to seek out the transcendent experience, the women have posited themselves thus in the hope of being the source of such an experience. For the lover, it is a very real desire to know that as the focus of all that defines another's freedom, that other would indeed lie for them, steal for them, kill for them (Sartre, 1956, p. 481):

> Come here
> I love you.
> Peace on earth
> Will you die for me
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 123).

But at the moment the lover as object captures the freedom of the beloved as subject, he objectifies the beloved and the latter's freedom is destroyed. The success of the lover is that the beloved in turn loves them, and this cycle of exchange potentially continues in a relationship moving back and forth from one to the other without end in the same reflection as Hegel's "*circle of circles*," [41] and the serpent of the uroboros.

While the masked women cannot themselves see the voyeurs (that is, the men who ascend the buildings, who would objectify them) what they do offer is that by being object to the voyeur's vision they are in some way bridging the gap, offering a path toward transcendence, and their lack of vision reduces the risk of them then turning subject in the conflict for the possession of another's freedom. But this dangerous ground remains a threshold uncrossed and it can be readily argued that it is not vision which brings connection and transcendence, vision merely shows the door. Rather, there is something more which is grounded in the sexual act itself that enable the individual to transcend, cleanse and see the infinite truth:

> Sex for you
> was thread
> which binds
> us even now
> on this pale
> planet
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 86).

When the laws of Rome locate the prostitutes up and away from the concerns of everyday life, a base awareness of sex and, indeed, of the impulse itself is removed from the field of vision, allowing for other concerns to take hold. While the relegation of prostitutes out of sight is indicative of the order of the symbolic separating them as *other*, what threatens to topple this fragile order is the very conscious choice made by the aristocratic ladies who join them. Although these ladies in being masked remain in isolation, they *choose* location within the covert sexual centre. They are compelled, however, to carry out their connective activity in secrecy to avoid identification and shame, or as Nietzsche states a "bad conscience" ("738 (Spring-Fall 1887)", 1968, p. 391), for they cannot remain on the roof tops but

[41] refer to p. 32 of this paper.

will be required to descend to the streets below and rejoin the order of symbolic law. That they choose to enter the realm of sex, climb up from the world of the Law-of-the-Father and participate in the impulse of life, places within their grasp a significant power in as much as they engage in "*admitted* immorality", for as Nietzsche also says, "[i]f anything can reconcile us to our age, it is the great amount of immorality it permits itself without thinking any the worse of itself. On the contrary!" ("747 (Spring-Fall 1887; rev. Spring-Fall 1888", 1968, p. 395).

It is a task to get to these women, a conscious choice to move upward out of the collective, to seek and move closer to the transcendent threshold. As "loose tides" the men who climb to these women are implicitly so numerous, that to carry out their pursuits on the floor of the arena would topple the hold of the symbolic through sheer weight of numbers. An institution of laws and collective behaviour will only survive while the illusion of its success and adherence to it by its subjects can be maintained ("720 (1886-1887)", Nietzsche, 1968, pp. 383-4). The underlying dialogue for this scenario, Morrison seems to imply, is one of revolt or revolution.

In their desire for reconnection and transcendence, however, the arrival of men to this high place implies the advent also of dis-ease, their own natural drive so strong that it is not the few, but successive waves of many that seek. Disease, and sexual disease in particular, is an important issue, often signifying a negation of some kind. Sex and Nature are closely linked, the natural impulse of sex and sexual activity when healthy, demonstrate that there is a natural order to things. Dis-ease can rise when this order or balance is disturbed and, as much as the women are venerated by their elevated location, this is perhaps not the only place where the natural impulse of life should be found. Rather, it should have location back down in the streets and on the highway.

To follow a linear historical progression, the separation that begins in Rome with the concealment of sex and sexual women continues in the rise of the peep show and the birth of cinema. The forbidden becomes the common as celluloid takes the secret, and sacred, matters of sex, the voyeur's realm, to a wider audience. Through vision, men no longer participate by climbing to the tops of buildings to prostitutes and aristocratic ladies, but rather the objects of vision are brought *down*, into the city

streets, where the passive masses can observe them. The sacred turns to "[d]iseased specimens in dollar hotels, low boarding houses, bars, pawn shops, burlesques and brothels, in dying arcades which never die, in streets and streets of all-night cinemas" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 3).

Morrison locates disease close to the centre, close to sex, and potentially present from the advent of the arena. This also echoes the landscape noted by Lacan with its "marshes and rubbish-tips." Sexual imbalance arises through disconnection from participation in the sexual act itself, as expressed in the activities of the voyeur and the theatre of the peep show, and sexual disease is used as the metaphor for the root of imbalance within the human community and interaction between individuals. Disease, or rather dis-ease is something to be overcome, to be cured, and its presence is a warning that points toward disconnection from the transcendent.

The necessity for the presence and exchange of fluid between bodies is pertinent to sexual activity. Sweat, saliva, lubrication, semen, and later, amniotic fluid, all have their function; all are part of the waters of life. Sexual disease also bears and is borne by fluid, and it is in the injection of disease into the healthy waters of sex, such as lubricating secretions, when imbalance occurs. Each sexual act is a gamble with the possibility of the healthy being mingled with the diseased:

> Swimmers
> entertain embryo
> sweet dangerous thrust flow
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 31).

That this occurs within fluid is important in connection with the serpent, the moon and tides, the sea, and ultimately the reconnection that is sought.

The "swimmers", implicitly sperm and in plural, like the tides of men on rooftops, bring focus to the image of the many returning to the one, millions of sperm searching for the one egg and connection to create the new embryonic life. These swimmers, these men, participate in the vast sea of life, bridging the shores of sex and connection with the subconscious, pre-symbolic realm archetypically represented by the sea. And the act of sex itself is both "sweet" and "dangerous", involving the

risk of disease, and more importantly here, capture of an individual's subjective self by that of another and, ultimately, death.

It is at this juncture, that Morrison's use of sex, coupled with vision and the realm of the voyeur, can be explored through further application of existential thought, opening the door upon examination of the wider concerns of relationship presented in the Oedipal myth. It is the link of vision and separation with desire and participation, as typically expressed in sexual activity and its close connection with death, which Morrison expands across the body of his mythographic landscape.

With sex as the base drive then, the work of the voyeur is concerned with participation in some way with sex. This is pursued however through vision and the separation such covert activity requires, rather than through touch and, it will be demonstrated, usually in co-operation with death.

Morrison presents the body in varying conditions, often referring to it in terms of imbalance, that is, dis-ease:

> Room of withering mesh
> read love's vocabulary
> in the green lamp
> of tumescent flesh
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 12).

With flesh swollen, most probably but not necessarily exclusively the phallus, love speaks through a body out of balance. As a light emitting device, allowing for vision in darkness, the flesh as lamp is a beacon to light the way. But this vision is generated from the diseased position, the use of green aligning with references Morrison makes elsewhere to sexual disease, such as that found in "Columbus' groin" where "(I touched her thigh/ & death smiled)" (Courson et al., 1990, pp. 4-5)[42].

From an alchemical position, however, green is more positive and "is the colour of fertility, of spring-time growth, of new life, and is associated with the alchemical

[42] These lines occur again in "Lament for the Death of my Cock" where Morrison states "I pressed her thigh/ and death smiled" (Courson et al., 1990, p. 60).

generation which occurs after the chemical wedding of the two seeds of metals, male sulphur (Sol) with female argent vive (Luna)" (Abraham, 1998, p. 91). What is interesting in this point is the layering of the positive interpretation of new life with the possibility of disease, somehow removing the sting of death so it becomes "death, old friend" ("Lament for the Death of my Cock", Courson et al., 1990, p. 60). What is or has been out of balance, in the act of sexual coupling, is allowed the possibility of transformation to something whole and full of life once more.

As vision asserts itself throughout the text, Morrison makes the connection between vision and movement in the form of the journey. His vision is captured by the hero's journey, by the histories that rise and fall in a seemingly endless pattern of repetition. Though many journeys are explored by Morrison, a significant one, already touched on, is the discovery of the New World: the Americas. This journey is linked to many themes and primarily it is a vision soaked in violence, sex and death:

> Fall down.
> Strange gods arrive in fast enemy poses.
> Their shirts are soft marrying
> cloth and hair together.
> All along their arms ornaments
> conceal veins bluer than blood
> pretending welcome
> Soft lizard eyes connect.
> Their soft insect cries erect
> new fear, where fears reign.
> The rustling of sex against their skin.
> The wind withdraws all sound
> Stamp your witness on the punished ground.
>
> Wounds, stags, & arrows
> Hooded flashing legs plunge
> near the tranquil women.
> Startling obedience from the pool people.
> Astonishing caves to plunder.
> Loose, nerveless ballets of looting.
> Boys are running.
> Girls are screaming, falling.
> The air is thick w/ smoke.
> Dead crackling wires dance pools
> of sea blood
> ("V" & "VI", Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 5).

Clearly the lengthy passage above speaks of the discovery of the New World and clearly it demonstrates the assertion of an arrival imbued in sex and death. But there are other words and phrases which add to the image and speak to wider concerns, Morrison's positing of them at the beginning of settlement marking them as constituents of the foundation from which his modern arena will eventually arise. The men who arrived in ships are "gods", having crossed the body of water that is the sea. Their masks of cloth and ornament conceal the truth of what they are and the response to them is one of "fear". A number of words chosen convey a sense of violence, and the dance of participation in which these "gods" are engaged is "loose, nerveless" and shows a lack of respect or understanding for an arena in balance with the natural realm in as much as they are "looting".

One of the more prominent words to repeat in this passage is "soft", a word which is used by Morrison across his mythos and which holds a particular significance.[43] In the immediate instance, "soft" can be taken to refer to the spirit, and further to this it appears in the passage to allude to the idea of the invasion of the spirit, indeed the semiotic, by the body of the symbolic. In further generalised terms reaching beyond this passage alone, the solve et coagula can be taken to correspond to the yin and yang in which each contain some part of the other and the continuous cycles of existence as symbolised by the uroboros, indeed the peristaltic snake. That the lizard is also mentioned in the passage serves to strengthen this connection. In this use of history Morrison traces his path from the Mediterranean, and its localities of Thebes and Naples, to the New World of the Americas.

Returning to the vision of the voyeur then, to only look is not enough, and he will not reach the transcendent by vision alone. The choice to step over the threshold into participation must be taken, and taken at the risk of death. Just as love and, indeed, the voyeur's game is borne by the hope of securing another's freedom, capturing them by means of the symbolic ordering and their vision each of the other, so too perhaps a transformation could be made by the movement of desire between the lover and the beloved, between the watcher and the watched.

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[43] refer to p. 35 of this paper for definition of the ludus puerorum and the solve et coagula in alchemy and their relationship to what is soft.

As love is linked to vision, so, desire is linked to touch. Desire is not just about the individual separating another subject from their freedom, and thereby maintaining his own, but it is about a transcendence of body and object to real and tangible flesh in as much as "[t]he being which desires is consciousness *making itself body*" (Sartre, 1956, p. 505). In this, it is not necessarily sex itself which transforms the body, but touch, of which the sexual act is a part but not the sum of the intimate relationship between two individuals in conflict. Through touch, the face that is touched is no longer an object seen, but skin touched, making of the beloved something more than or different to an object of observation robbed of freedom (Sartre, 1956, p. 507). In acting upon desire then, it may be said, the isolation of the individual can be transcended and the loneliness of the burden of existence is, albeit momentarily, overcome:

> At this moment the communion of desire is realized; each consciousness by incarnating itself has realized the incarnation of the other; each one's disturbance has caused disturbance to be born in the Other and is thereby so much enriched. By each caress I experience my own flesh and the Other's flesh through my flesh, and I am conscious that this flesh which I feel and appropriate through my flesh is flesh-realized-by-the-Other. It is not by chance that desire while aiming at the body as a whole attains it especially through masses of flesh which are very little differentiated, grossly nerveless, hardly capable of spontaneous movement, through breasts, buttocks, thighs, stomach: these form a sort of image of pure facticity
> (Sartre, 1956, p. 514).

When desire is not sought by the lover, however, the touch becomes something else. Without desire, and without the will for touch to transform an object to flesh, the object remains as object, and the touch becomes sadistic. The fear of being caught in the vision of the other will impede the flow of desire and the subject will remain subject rather than relinquish power to become object in stance to that other (Sartre, 1956, pp. 517-8). So, for the patrician ladies of Rome and the men who pursue them, connection to the transcendent cannot be fulfilled. The desire is a one way communication, or lack thereof, for the subject, the voyeur, *may* touch and yet not allow themselves to be touched and made flesh:

> Sadism like desire seeks to strip the Other of the acts which hide him. It seeks to reveal the flesh beneath the action. But whereas the For-itself in desire loses itself in its own flesh in order to reveal to the Other that he too is flesh, the sadist refuses his own

> flesh at the same time that he uses instruments to reveal by force the Other's flesh to him. The object of sadism is immediate appropriation. But sadism is a blind alley, for it not only enjoys the possession of the Other's flesh, it enjoys its own non-incarnation. It *wants* the non-reciprocity of sexual relations, it enjoys being a free appropriating power confronting a freedom captured by flesh
> (Sartre, 1956, p. 518).

Found in hand with sex is death, forming a symbiotic relationship, and life after birth is a journey of events leading back to death. The first death is the infant's disassociation from the mother as he enters the symbolic order in which youth is spent and instruction received. It is only when that individual becomes aware of itself as a sexual entity that they encounter the threshold which leads back to a conscious seeking out of transcendent connection:

> Walks in D.C. in
> Negro streets. The library
> & book stores. Orange
> brick in warm sun.
> The books & poets magic
>
> Then sex gives greater stimulation
> Than you've ever known &
> all peace & books lose their
> charm & you are thrown
> back on the eye of vision
> ("As I Look Back", Courson et al., 1988, p. 203).

Sex is death, is new life already dying. When the infant leaves the womb, albeit reluctantly, Morrison claims that:

> From this everything follows:
>
> Swallow milk at the breast
> until there's no milk.
>
> Squeeze wealth at the rim
> until tile pools claim it.
>
> He swallows seed, his pride
> until w/ pale mouth legs
>
> she sucks the root, dreading
> world to devour child.
>
> Doesn't the ground swallow me

> when I die, or the sea
> if I die at sea?
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 10).

The image of the uroboros is invoked here, the eternal cycle of life swallowing life, the ring of the arena. The infant, sustained by milk from the mother's body, is sustained later in life by the pursuit of wealth in the arena, consuming his own seed, an image implicit of adolescent sexual curiosity and exploration through masturbation, of this new drive within the body. His pride, his power to create new life, he consumes back into his body, remaining isolated and safe. The transition from boy to man occurs with sexual coupling and in this freedom the recognition of the dreadful inevitability of death is also located.

Sexual coupling is the opening up of the women to swallow, to consume from the root. Her sexual appetite and process sucks at the base of the phallus, at the root of the Name-of-the-Father (much in the same way the infant's mouth suckled at the breast), and in doing so receives the symbolic back into her body from which it first came, while simultaneously understanding this connection may result in the birth of another. She must deliver that other out from her body into the symbolic order, the arena, in which its existence and freedom will be framed within the parameters of the ultimate contingency of death. This is her dread, the knowledge that the symbolic realm of separation will consume her offspring. Death is a swallowing, a devouring, into the ground to be consumed by worms or into the sea to be immersed in water and consumed by its creatures. Until that time, the economics of life in the arena, the chemical, artificial environment, has claim on the individual. For Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the cycle was the same:

> Thus one portion of being, is the Prolific. the other, the Devouring: to the devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains, but it is not so, he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole.
>
> But the Prolific would cease to be the Prolific unless the Devourer as a sea received the excess of his delights
> ("PLATE 16", Bloom & Trilling, 1973, p. 41).

The arena which is entered is that of the Game; blood sport and death part of the play. Sex and death are salvation and though death defines, it is the centrality of sex which makes participation in the arena a temptation:

> The mating-pit
> "Salvation"
> Tempted to leap in circle
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 13).

Once in the arena, it is conflict and violence that are consumed by life, indeed which are life. It is violence which affirms the connection, through sex, back to the base impulse:

> Camel caravans bear
> witness guns to Caesar.
> Hordes crawl & seep inside
> the walls. The streets
> flow stone. Life goes
> on absorbing war. Violence
> kills the temple of no sex
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 16).

From the beginning, the symbolic order of Rome and its father, Caesar, allowed the life which dwelt in the wilderness an entry into the field. The arena entertains the welcome and unwelcome and the city walls, the border of death itself, are no barrier. The streets are paved rivers on which life moves and flows below the rooftops. Conflict is absorbed by life, indeed is life, and connection, via the means of sex, is resurrected by conflict.

In *This Business of the Gods* …, Campbell states:

> The life in the walled city came right up through the fourteenth century in Europe, little cities like Rotenberg. In those days, the city was your life. It was your defender. You were born into it. It nourished you. It held you together and the people in that city constituted a dynamic living unit. It was very different from a metropolis of today, where you have people of totally different origins who come in to exploit the metropolis, and if they don't get what they want, then they get nasty and become vandals. They are dangerous in the city. You didn't get that in the old walled city. In a walled city everybody realized that the city was their life, and they were defending themselves and their life against enemy influences without
> (1989, p. 121).

While the walled city as expressed by Campbell can be readily applied to the Oedipal Thebes, and historically may very well have also applied to Rome at its inception, Morrison does in this and other instances reveal his ancient cities to function in a

manner similar to the modern metropolis, to which he also pays homage. Added to this, the influx of *others* from outside the city walls also alludes to at least some part of the dis-ease which later settles on Thebes (Hamilton, 1969, pp. 269-70), the imbalance stemming from a populous which having not been born into it therefore have no connection and cannot be “nourished” by it.

For Morrison, the premise that conflict is a natural part of life is vital to his mythography. Violence, rioting, indeed movement, are all aspects of the way by which the individual subject might find connection with not only other subjects, but ultimately with what it is from which he has been cut off. Within the arena as Morrison presents it, sex and death are linked together by sacrifice, through a practice which is characteristically thought of as Roman, that of crucifixion. A common penalty in Rome, the murder tree, the crucifix, holds significance across the mythos:

> Lament for my cock
> Sore & crucified
> I seek to know you
> acquiring soulful wisdom
> you can open walls of
> mystery
> strip-show….
> The death of my cock
> gives life
> ("Lament for the Death of My Cock", Courson et al., 1990, p. 59).

The connection of the body with sacrifice and death through the crucified image appears throughout Morrison’s creed, signifying the symbiosis between not only sex and death but the necessity of these for renewal and resurrection. Norman Lindsay’s drawing titled “The Crucified Venus” (1912) adds an interesting dimension to the symbology of the crucified when considered in parallel with Morrison’s presentation, and The Doors themselves contemporised this image into the modern arena with the release of the album *LA Woman*. “The back of the inner sleeve was a startling illustration of a woman crucified on a utility pole” (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 444). Elsewhere Morrison writes that:

> The 1st electric wilderness came
> over the people
> on sweet Friday.

> ….
> A girl stripped naked on the
> base of the flagpole
> ("The Anatomy of Rock", Courson et al., 1988, p. 27).

Here, it is not only the image of the crucified, but specifically the body of woman sacrificed, or at the least exposed and tied, to the rule of the symbolic and its obvious connection to the Law of the Father through the phallic position. In *The New Creatures* the "new man"[44] laments in the modern arena much as King Richard did for a horse ("*King Richard the Third*, Act V, Scene iv", Staunton, 1989, vol. 2, p. 274):

> to ride thru the waste
> a dog at his side
> to sniff meat-maids
> chained on the public poles
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 29).

This is the imagery of sacrifice and bliss, of the crucified hero[45]. In reference to a passage that speaks of the Last Supper in the "apocryphal Christian Acts" Campbell states:

> "A door am I to thee that knocketh at me…. A way am I to thee, a wayfarer." And when the dance is ended, he walks out into the garden to be taken and crucified.
> When you go to your death that way, as a god, in the knowledge of the myth, you are going to your eternal life. So what is there to be sad about? Let us make it magnificent – as it is. Let us celebrate it.
> MOYERS: The god of death is the lord of the dance.
> CAMPBELL: The god of death is at the same time the lord of sex (1988, p. 109).

Crucifixion signifies the death of god, the death of the phallic signifier, it is the death of the symbolic which occurs in the sexual act and the reassertion – or at the least the open way for as much – of participation with the semiotic. And for Morrison's women it is, quite literally, sacrifice on the altar of the symbolic. As the Son of God,

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[44] refer to p. 15 of this paper.

[45] "There's a form of the crucifix known as 'Christ Triumphant', where he is not with head bowed and blood pouring from him, but with head erect and eyes open, as though having come voluntarily to the crucifixion. St. Augustine has written somewhere that Jesus went to the cross as a bridegroom to his bride" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 138-9).
Though hardly triumphant, the crucified hero also appears when Morrison himself portrays this image in the movie clip made for the song "The Unknown Soldier" (Manzarek, 1985).

Jesus was the Word of God made flesh, the word made as body, and it was only then in the sacrifice of these two combined, that atonement (*at-one-ment*) could be made. Campbell continues by stating that:

> It is in compassion with Christ that we turn to Christ, and the injured one becomes our savior.
> This is reflected in the medieval idea of the injured king, the Grail King, suffering from his incurable wound. The injured one again becomes the savior
> (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 112).

The above assertions regarding the injured hero turned saviour and the sacrifice required for reconnection with the semiotic through connection with the *silent other*, or woman, compares well with Morrison:

> I can forgive
> my injuries
> in the name of wisdom
>
> luxury
>
> romance
>
> Sentence upon sentence
> Words are healing.
>
> Words got me the wound
> & will get me well
>
> If you believe it
>
> All join now in lament
> for the death of my cock….
>
> I sacrifice my cock
> on the altar
> of silence
> ("Lament for the Death of My Cock", Courson et al., 1990, p. 61).

The body as it is physically held on the cross is mirrored by the prostrate body of "[o]ur injured leader prone on the sweating tile. Chlorine on his breath and in his long hair" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 4). The prostrate body and water of the pool is mirrored in "[t]he rosy body cross" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 31) the colour of which suggests blood and in both these cases reinforcing the presence of the fluid environment.

Further to the connection of not only the hero but that between sex, death and sacrifice so new life may be found, is the positing within the body itself of the iconic Christian trinity of sacrifice upon the hill, representing the symbolic word that must be cast off. Added to this, the association of vision with the genitals of the sexually active male operating in the symbolic, resonates with the vision Morrison posits in a woman's nipples[46], where prior to separation from her body, nourishment is received by the infant:

> Male genitals are small faces
> forming trinities of thieves
> and Christs
> Fathers, sons, and ghosts
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 20).

God is placed at the location of the phallus, and the Oedipal threshold to come echoes through the histories past, present and future as if they exist outside the confines of time and space, that is, in eternity, in the transcendent. Returning to the arena the sacrifice wished for by the Emperor, as already expressed, is a desire to keep the individual severed from the transcendent connection and thereby keep the Emperor's supreme position of rule intact.

As Morrison states, "[t]he body exists for the sake of the eyes; it becomes a dry stalk to support these two soft insatiable jewels."[47] In the symbolic order it is vision which keeps the subject separate from participation, the eyes hunger for more, soft and wet, having sucked all nourishment and life up from the body which is dry and withered. But the sexual connection made here is a connection of mind, in that it is a cerebral experience and not one of body, where sex is a physical and participatory experience, thus keeping each individual subject locked within their symbolic separation. The only desire is that of vision for more, an unquenchable hunger, echoing the existential viewpoint of sadism[48].

Surrounding these issues, a mythic interpretation of the significance of blood is successful in application to Morrison's mythography. Already clearly demonstrated

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[46] refer to p 110 of this paper.
[47] refer to p. 55 of this paper.
[48] refer to pp. 77-8 of this paper.

as present in the sacrificial aspect of crossing thresholds by means of crucifixion inconography, and as a functional aspect of phallic erection, blood also deepens understanding when aligned also with Morrison's presentation of the vampire. The ancient idea that *the blood is the life*[49] cannot be too carefully emphasised. Vampires represent the drive for life and "[f]ilm spectators are quiet vampires"[50]. The spectator as a "dying animal"[51] reinforces the life sucking nature of cinema in its disengagement of the participatory body and all life, all fluid, is consumed by the "insatiable jewels" of vision.

In reference back to a passage earlier discussed, when Morrison writes "she sucks the root"[52], the word "suck" implies a similar vampiric behaviour in the sexual engagement of the phallus by the female body.

The transformation of life through threshold experiences, sex, death and sacrifice, in connection with blood are scattered throughout Morrison's mythographic landscape. Perhaps the most well know is "Peace Frog", which was drawn from a poem titled "Abortion Stories" (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 364). In this piece what becomes apparent when the original title is known, coupled with matters under discussion, is the connection between sex and death, a death which is necessary for new life, and blood. Of interest here too is that Morrison presents the arena as synonymous with the body of woman and its sacred centre can be paralleled with the vagina, that is, the centre from which new life comes. The flowing paved streets of Rome are the legs of the city, that same city from which a nation and its collective individual histories will be born:

Blood in the streets

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[49] The Bible states: "But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat." Deuteronomy 12:23 (Barker, 1985, p. 261). "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" Leviticus 17:11. The notes for this passage state: "The blood shed in the sacrifices was sacred. It epitomized the life of the sacrificial victim. Since life was sacred, blood (a symbol of life) had to be treated with respect…. Practically every sacrifice included the sprinkling or smearing of blood on the altar or within the tabernacle, thus teaching that atonement involves the substitution of life for life" (Barker, 1985, pp. 168-9). Of interest in connection to this is the protection of the firstborn in Exodus 12:1-30 during Passover whereby the *doorway* of the house that was painted in the blood of the sacrificed animal would be passed over by death, the blood of sacrifice ensuring that life would continue (Barker, 1985, pp. 101-3).
[50] refer to p. 55 of this paper.
[51] refer to p. 55 of this paper.
[52] refer to p. 78 of this paper.

runs a river of sadness
Blood in the streets
& its up to my thigh
The river runs red
down the legs of the city
The women are crying
red rivers of weeping
….
Blood will be born
in the birth of a Nation
Blood is the rose of mysterious
union
(Courson et al., 1990, pp. 109-10)[53].

Elsewhere Morrison writes of abortion with:

a young woman, bound silently, on
a hospital table, obviously pregnant,
is gutted and rifled of her empire

objects of oblivion
(Courson et al., 1988, p. 100).

Here again the body of the woman is likened to the arena with what it contains as the empire, much as the city contains the subjects of the emperor, the father-god, and as such they are to him a collective of objects.

In the following passage a depth of interpretation comes immediately to the fore, almost as if a summary of the intricate connections between the opposing realms of the symbolic and semiotic, the crucified hero, the blood, resurrection and abortion:

The dark girl begins to bleed.
It's Catholic heaven. I have an
ancient Indian crucifix around
my neck. My chest is hard
& brown. Lying on stained &
wretched sheets w/ a bleeding Virgin.
We could plan a murder, or
Start a religion
(Courson et al., 1990, p. 124).

With all this in mind, then, we come to the questing hero Oedipus in his second and self-imposed exile where he has left the arena in which he learnt the rules of the

[53] The printed edition of the poem which has been referenced has uses the first line as the title for the piece, "There's Blood in the Streets", which appeared on The Doors fourth album as the song "Peace Frog" ("Morrison Hotel," 1970).

game, for fear of killing the father he loves. It is interesting to note that Oedipus was raised by a man who was not in fact his father, but to whose law he was still bound. This is mirrored much in the same way that the god espoused by Christianity is not in fact the god to whom the civilisations which have become the modern western world first responded (Campbell, 1969; Collins, 1997). Oedipus undertakes this exile in attempt to negate his fate, it is an active choice in which once again he crosses a threshold and does so because the word of god is proclaimed through the body of the woman, Apollo's oracle. It is fear of the authority of the word that motivates the exile.

Relating to the historical journey Morrison presents, this second Oedipal exile parallels the Spanish leaving the Old World and the discovery of the New. It is the hero's quest, the leaving of decline and disease, in search of or hope for, regaining what has been lost. This is where the fluid environment again becomes important and is the positing of the Sargasso Sea within Morrison's mythography, thereby identifying the stopping of the journey and the necessity of sacrifice in order to move forward. During an interview, Morrison said that "Horse Latitudes" was:

> about the Doldrums where sailing ships from Spain would get stuck. In order to lighten the vessel, they had to throw things overboard. Their major cargo was working horses for the New World. And this song is about the moment when the horse is in the air. I imagine it must have been hard to get them over the side. When they got to the edge they probably started chucking and kicking. And it must have been hell for the men to watch too. Because, horses can swim for a little while, but then they lose their strength and just go down … slowly sink away (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 41).

The horses rise to their most significant in this material, both for their Spanish connection and usage, and for their baptism of death in the waters of life. The new land and people discovered are closely related to the natural realm and there is accord between them. The first echoes of the lizard woman are found here and it is suggested that she does indeed predate Morrison's Lizard King. But in search for the new, what is brought to this arena is the same disease that was left behind.

Morrison maps throughout his mythographic landscape a journey that starts in Africa and makes a general geographic course of north, before turning to face west and

follow the path of the sun. The final resting place for this journey is the west coast of North America, Los Angeles, at the edge of the ocean, in view of the setting sun and coming night.

The journey is expressed in terms of the desire for a place to begin again for the "[m]en who go out on ships/ To escape sin & the mire of cities" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 25), and these are his "Vikings & explorers/ Discoverers" ("Lamerica", Courson et al., 1988, p. 26). But rather than begin anew, what appears to have been taken along for the ride are the very things that humanity, according to Morrison, was attempting to escape. This New World is the place of Oedipus repeating, it is the inexorable turn of life, birthed in blood and disease, sex and death.

Surrounded by water and weed on the Sargasso Sea,[54] the Doldrums as it is also known, the horses are sacrificed:

> When the still sea conspires an armour
> and her sullen and aborted
> Currents breed tiny monster,
> True sailing is dead.
>
> Awkward instant
> and the first animal is jettisoned,
> Legs furiously pumping
> Their stiff green gallop,
> And heads bob up
> Poise
> Delicate

---

[54] There are many accounts relating to this area and its conditions. Also referred to as the *Horse Latitudes*, the name of which Morrison uses for his poem, Columbus was the first European mariner in recorded history to encounter the becalming conditions and the seaweed from which the Sargasso Sea gets its name. "The Sargasso weed *(Sargassum bacciferum)* is of the brown algae family and is never dense enough to impede the progress of any vessel, however small. Supported on small berry-like bladders, it is to be found between 32° and 70° West and from the Gulf Stream down to roughly 20° North…. The following day they ran out of the trade winds. They were now in the area of what are termed 'the variables', roughly between longitudes 40' to 47' West. The weed was all around.
The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.
It had been well enough while the 'breeze' did indeed blow, but now in the variables the crew began to murmur amongst themselves. They had – and who can blame them? – the feeling that they would never get back to Spain. Up to date all the winds had boosted them relentlessly away from the shores of the known world, and now even these had deserted them, and they were sailing perforce on a westerly course into this interminable ocean" (Bradford, 1973, pp. 104, 109).

> Pause
> Consent
> In mute nostril agony
> Carefully refined
> And sealed over
> ("Horse Latitudes", Courson et al., 1990, p. 156).

While Morrison's assertion was that the horses were thrown overboard to lighten the load in an attempt to get the ships moving again, on a practical level the horses may well have been sacrificed as a means of conserving fresh water until the winds picked up again. Either way, this threshold of death signifies the severing of the alliance between man and nature, the separating of something that once had connection. The sacrifice is a necessary cost for life to move forward, and it occurs in the ocean, the waters of the body of mother-earth from which all life comes forth. This sacrifice, this birth, parallels the birth of the infant and his separation from the mother to face the *new world* of the symbolic.

Elsewhere in his notebooks Morrison had written at least one other poem with the same title of "Horse Latitudes." While its opening setting differs to the more well known poem above, it still encapsulates the sacrifice, and this threshold is of significance enough to Morrison for it to be repeated so that it not only emerges as one of his mythographic archetypes, but also as a device of repetition which strengthens the subtle underlying message of Oedipus repeating and the turning wheel of life and death:

> Some people have a hard time
> describing sailors to the
> undernourished.
>
> The decks are starving
> Time to throw the cargo over
>
> Now down & the high-sailing
> fluttering of smiles on the air
> w/ its cool night time disturbance
>
> Tropic corridor
> Tropic Treasure
>
> What got us this far to this
> mild equator
>
> Now we need something

& someone new
(Courson et al., 1988, pp. 94-5).

For the Spanish the horses were working creatures, they were vehicles, and in times of conflict they were part of the armoury of battle. Once domesticated, the horse changed the way peoples both moved across the land and how they conquered. From its earliest times in history as an animal to be ridden or harnessed, the horse has signified the divide between "the peasant afoot and the nobleman ahorse" (Campbell, 1962, p. 173). From that time, until the modern age of the machine, Campbell points out that this use of the horse injected into the shaping of the human landscape both an arrogance on the part of the horse masters and the violence of accompanying conquest, "so that the world that formerly had been dividing was now gradually being brought together – but with a radical split horizontally between those who cry 'Victory!' and those who weep" (1962, p. 174). This split, echoes in *The Will to Power* with the assertion of "the right of the individual to defend himself; in the same sense one might also speak of his right to attack" and these are stated as "necessities for every living thing" ("728 (March-June 1888)", Nietzsche, 1968, p. 386). Nietzsche then follows this with such an assertion for the "military state" and the maintenance of the "strong" ("729 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)", 1968, p. 386) which support his assertion that the state will indeed do and achieve what the herd does not have the "courage" for ("717, 718 (Nov. 1887-March 1888)", 1968, pp. 382-3)[55].

So then, when the horses are pushed out of the ships to their deaths, the means by which the symbolic order has conquered and achieved goes with them, and the birth, or perhaps more precisely resurrection, of the men in ships into a new world can indeed be achieved. The vision of the old is sacrificed to find a new vision. These horses also haunt the image of the unborn foal that strains to remain in the womb, apparently fighting against the inevitable re-entry into the symbolic. It hardly needs saying at this point that the uroboric circle of birth, death and resurrection is here encapsulated.

[55] Related to these passages, the earlier passage "121 (1888)" is also of interest in as much as it discusses the split between culture and civilisation and the way these advance, particularly in stating that "[t]he great moments of culture were always, morally speaking, times of corruption" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 75).

“Horse Latitudes” first appeared on The Doors debut album ("The Doors," 1967), and horses recur elsewhere in the mythography as echoes of this threshold and, significantly, also in reference to whipping. In *The New Creatures* the horses are linked with imbalance and the dis-ease of the New World in:

> Bitter grazing in sick pastures
> Animal sadness & the daybed
> Whipping
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 4).

The image is further deepened in “The Soft Parade”, where cure or redemption is sought, for:

> When all else fails
> We can whip the horse’s
> eyes & make them sleep
> & cry
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 52).[56]

What is interesting in relation to the horses is their parallel imagery with the crucified god of Christianity, his scourging beforehand, and the hope of redemption for the men who bear witness to the sacrifice. Compounding this image is the notion of the blinded horses and the negation of vision in terms of relation to the symbolic order and also in as much as that in the absence of vision can be felt the full sensation of the *experience* of what in the case of the horses amounts to pain and death.

Once the sacrifice has been made, the threshold between worlds, between arenas, is crossed and new land found. The waters are left, the Spanish mariners with Columbus at the helm rise as representatives of the journey of man to a natural arena and a people who do not understand the Law of God as it is brought to virgin lands by white men, by gods[57]. The connection of Columbus, as representative of the Queen, who is herself representative of God, brings the Law in direct collision with

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[56] Of interest here is that these lines are published at the end of “Horse Latitudes” (Courson et al., 1988, p. 95), the second poem of the same title referred to in this paper, except there Morrison has the words “cry” and “sleep” reversed. This therefore begs the question whether these lines were first written for “Horse Latitudes” and later used at the end of performance of “The Soft Parade”, which is very possible as Morrison is well documented as inserting pieces of his poetry into performance, and hence points towards the fluidity and connectivity of his mythographic landscape .

[57] refer to p. 75 of this paper.

the world of nature. There is a function here of vision and touch, the meeting of the symbolic order and semiotic participation, reptilian vision, connection, and fear.

For Oedipus, as it was for Columbus, the journey is most certainly that of the hero, and it is also the mythic father quest. Whether the hero is thrust by some external force into this journey or chooses it, the point is that "[t]he boy first has to disengage himself from his mother, get his energy into himself, and then start forth. That's what the myth of 'Young man, go find your father' is all about" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 138). To further strengthen this, Campbell (1988, p. 153) also notes the parallel dialogue to the quest found in "the three transformations of the spirit" identified in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which is used here to frame discussion. For the Oedipal hero, the course the journey takes is very much shaped by the desire for reconnection to the source of life, and it is in this that the murder of the father becomes a necessity for making the way clear.

Upon leaving the arena in which he has been raised and instructed, Oedipus is a stranger in the new arena of the wilderness, uninitiated into its rules. There is a striking comparison in this point with the characters Valentine Michael Smith in *Stranger in a Strange Land* (Heinlein, 1961) and Paul Atreides in *Dune* (Herbert, 1965), and it is the response of the hero through the journey of the strange land, on quest back to *something*, which characterises both these stories and Morrison's mythography. Added to this, the father quest of the hero and the murder which occurs has its parallel in Nietzsche's "three transformations" with the slaying of the dragon[58], curiously a creature often given reptilian appearance and traits:

> Who is the great dragon whom the spirit will no longer call lord and god? "Thou shalt" is the name of the great dragon. But the spirit of the lion says, "I will". "Thou shalt" lies in his way, sparkling like gold, an animal covered with scales; and on every scale shines a golden "thou shalt."
> Values, thousands of years old, shine on these scales; and thus speaks the mightiest of all dragons: "All value of all things shines on me. All value has long been created, and I am all created value. Verily, there shall be no more 'I will.'" Thus speaks the dragon. My brothers why is there a need in the spirit for the lion? Why is not the beast of burden, which renounces and is reverent, enough?

[58] As Campbell notes, in myth and fairytales, "[a]ll of these dragon killings and threshold crossings have to do with getting past being stuck" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 138). And so it also is with the sacrifice of the horses.

> To create new values – that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred "No" even to duty – for that, my brothers, the lion is needed. To assume the right to new values – that is the most terrifying assumption for a reverent spirit that would bear much. Verily, to him it is preying, and a matter for a beast of prey. He once loved "thou shalt" as most sacred: now he must find illusion and caprice even in the most sacred, the freedom from his love may become his prey: the lion is needed for such prey
> (Kaufmann, 1954, pp. 138-9).

The desire to kill the father is an active statement of recognising the necessity to move from being the dependent child to becoming the independent man, a rite of passage to emerge into fullness of power, which is most readily demonstrated in the sexual arena and the opportunity to once more access the mother. To kill the father is to kill the symbol, to kill the god, and open up the possibility to make one's self in full knowledge of and responsibility for that making, and this is the hero's sacrifice (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 127). The location for these events in the Oedipal story is at the crossing point of three roads, beyond the walls of Thebes, bringing together the trinity and the arena (Hamilton, 1969, p. 271).

Ironically of course, it is within his self-imposed exile that Oedipus does indeed fulfil the destiny he was given, though at the time remains ignorant of this fact. Morrison's act of patricide however, from the start, is a deliberate and calculated one of fulfilling the call of the word, the divine proclamation which comes forth from the Law of the Father. The father quest for Morrison "is the adventure of finding what your career is, what your nature is, what your source is. You undertake that *intentionally* [italics added]" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 129). This pointed difference between making deliberate choice and falling into the path of fate has, largely, been lost to critics of this aspect of Morrison's creed. It is of fundamental importance to understand his heroic quest is one of conscious choice for he "believed in the powers of transformation, that change – personal as well as social – was always within our grasp if only we would awaken sufficiently to recognise and pursue it" (Magistrale, 1992, p. 142). Later, this becomes the crucial factor for opening up the possibility of achieving transcendent reconnection.

In the last dark hour of night, in a conscious choice of action, the killer makes no apology for what he is, choosing to participate in and take responsibility for what he does. This is a moving forward, and outward. A significant threshold through which he passes:

> The killer awoke before dawn,
> He put his boots on.
> He took a face from the ancient gallery,
> And he walked on down the hall
> ("The End", Courson et al., 1990, p. 112).

The landscape for both stories lies within the father's realms and both are killed within these boundaries: King Laius on the roads outside the city of Thebes, and the father of Morrison's mythography in his own house. The murder committed by Oedipus was an event which occurred in exile. So, too, is the setting for "The End" "a Roman wilderness of Pain," where "There's danger on the edge of town," (Courson et al., 1990, p. 111), suggestive of a suburban home. It was on the road to Delphi that Oedipus killed his father, and it was on the King's Highway at the borders of the city of Thebes that he also encountered the Sphinx. In "The End" Morrison tells us:

> There's danger on the edge of town,
> Ride the King's highway.
> Weird scenes inside the gold mine;
> Ride the highway west, baby.
>
> Ride the snake (Courson et al., 1990, p. 111).

The danger of death and the sphinx are echoed here, as well as the already mentioned notion of the death of the father in the modern suburban home, on the edge of town. Further to this the highway of "The End" echoes the universal snake and the west reminds the reader of Los Angeles, Morrison's contemporary arena. In *The New Creatures* Morrison speaks of a "[s]erpentine road/ To the Chinese caves" (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 19), strengthening the image of travel across the wilderness of California, the gold rush and Chinese immigrants, outsiders at the city gates, the winding path of the snake.

Depth is added to these images when put together as Morrison has done, the mineral serpentine plays a subtle but significant role toward further illumination. In

appearance it is patterned in shades of green and black, resembling the skin of a snake, further enhanced by its smooth almost waxy feel to the touch (Mountjoy, 1987, p. 578), and is found extensively throughout both China and the northern part of California. What Morrison has in this, it could be said, is a pre-existent set of symbols to support in the modern landscape the foundations of a very ancient myth. The image of the serpentine road then, coupled with riding the highway of the universal snake firmly constructs the landscape in which the arena is located. This environment also sets up the differences between the natural road and the constructed one, the inclined or intuitive path as opposed to the contrived or directed, in short, the individual's journey of both symbolic moulding and semiotic return.

The Oedipal killing of the father is not by any means Morrison's only usage of murder. Reference is made at a number of points within *The Lords* to murder, specifically referring very early to "large murder". This suggests a critical mass and foreshadows early in the text the wishes of Caligula. The arena builds its landscape around the rule of the Law, sex, death, murder and blood – it is all a part of the Game:

> All games contain the idea of death.
>
> Baths, bars, the indoor pool. Our injured leader prone on the sweating tile. Chlorine on his breath and in his long hair. Lithe, although crippled, body of a middle-weight contender[59]. Near him the trusted journalist, confidant. He liked men near him with a large sense of life. But most of the press were vultures

[59] This passage from *The Lords* bears striking similarity with "Ode to LA While Thinking of Brian Jones, Deceased" (Courson et al., 1988, pp. 129-32). This poem was first published by Morrison himself and on July 3, 1969, at the Aquarius Theatre, Morrison distributed copies to the audience who came to The Doors concert that night. "The irony of the poem is undeniable especially when you consider that Jim Morrison would also be found dead in water two years to the day later" (Riordan & Prochnicky, 1991, p. 332)While "Ode to LA…" is by its title somewhat explicable, the content deals with wider aspects of Morrison's mythos through the employ of reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and imagery of life and living as the work of actors on a stage. As in *The Lords*, here the reader also finds the prone form of the hero, surrounded by water:

> Chlorine
> dream
> mad stifled
> Witness

The diving board, the plunge
> The pool

You were a fighter
(Courson et al., 1988, p. 130).

> descending on the scene for curious America aplomb. Cameras
> inside the coffin interviewing worms.
>
> It takes large murder to turn rocks in the shade and expose
> strange worms beneath. The lives of our discontented madmen
> are revealed
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 4).

With their camera lenses, the press represent not only an aspect of vision, but by their behaviour may be linked to the vampirous imagery Morrison later evokes within the cinematic realm. As vultures, the modern press are scavengers of the dead "interviewing worms", but while such birds are harbingers of death, in the natural world they are also responsible for cleaning up the mess left behind by death, and thereby preventing transmission of disease. Often aligned to images of death and decay, worms are here indicative not only of these but new life too, the peristaltic process of death and decay necessary for the enrichment of the earth from which new life springs, and fundamental to the mythographic landscape Morrison presents.

Surrounding the scene, water is encountered as an element of the natural world transformed by artificial chemicalisation and contained within the constructed arena. It is in this context the leader is found, the hero, and it is at the point of death that he is of value to the audience of the wider arena. He is a swimmer and one of the multitude, just as sperm are swimmers striving towards their death,[60] and he has been engaged in the concern of the symbolic Game by "[s]queez[ing] wealth at the rim/ until tile pools claim it."[61]

This particular image of the hero is later echoed in the text with:

> Dull lions prone on a watery beach.
> The universe kneels at the swamp
> To curiously eye its own raw
> Posture of decay
> In the mirror of human consciousness
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 33).

The lion is a significant creature in this mythographic landscape and it is found in echoed references to the lion of Nietzsche's "Three Transformations", "the Lion of

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[60] refer to p. 73 of this paper.
[61] refer to p. 78 of this paper.

the tribe of Judah" ("Revelation 5:5", Barker, 1985, p. 1932), William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, the sphinx of the Oedipal myth and chimera of the Pegasus myth (Hamilton, 1969, p. 142).

Evoking an image of stagnating water, the swamp is offered as a place of decay, that is, disease, and it is of interest to view this alongside Lacan's statement relating to the "marshes and rubbish-tips" of the dream landscape[62]. The universe is here, watching itself, engaged in passive vision rather than active participation while the lions, Nietzsche's heroic figures, are prone, are crucified. The parallel between this and the cinema, where the way vision is employed to disengage the body from participation, is clear, and it seems this very disengagement is what the hero risks if indeed he does not move into the journey before him.

The killer, though voyeur also, is more than this title alone. There are many kinds of killers to which Morrison pays attention, and the sniper is one with and interesting requirement of vision. As stated already, he brings death about by vision, he effectively does god's work[63]. The killer is a threshold guardian.[64]

The sniper engages vision through the lens of the sights, which serves to both separate him from and magnify the object in his line of vision. From a mythic position, killing is viewed as a natural impulse, this is to say, as a part of the function of the natural process. In primitive mythologies which have been sustained it can be clearly seen that death is very much a part of the function of the world and murder is a fundamental aspect of the carriage of death:

> The world lives in death: that is the insight rendered dramatically in this image. Moreover as we learn from other myths and mythological fragments in this culture sphere, the sexual organs are supposed to have appeared at the time of this coming of death. Reproduction without death would be a calamity, as would death without reproduction (Campbell, 1969, pp. 176-7).

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[62] refer to p. 69 of this paper.
[63] refer to p. 52 of this paper.
[64] A threshold guardian is the one who stands "at the threshold of the passage from time to eternity, which is in fact the plane of reference of the metaphors of myth, the unmitigated yogic way (according to Ramakrishna) is to lose oneself, together with the world, in transcendence". In being posited at this site they operate in " the two worlds at once: temporal in the human appeal of their pictured denotations, while by connotation opening to eternity" (Campbell, 1986, p. 69).

The killer, as Morrison presents in his assassin, is a part of the natural realm, part of the swarm. Like the swimmer, he is a part of the anonymous multitude, only of interest when located close to death. Because he is connected to the natural, rather that separated from it, his actions stem from his "instinctual" insect "ease"[65] and he returns to the anonymity of a landscape of unindividualised objects, that instinct guiding him from death to the movie house, to the peep show, to sex.

The killer rises throughout Morrison's mythography as a significant figure. Most visible in "The End" as an Oedipal character, the killer draws together in one subject the roots of sex and death. He is an assassin, a soldier, a murderer, a protector. He is one that recognises the root of living and dying and is generally unapologetic for what he is and does. There is no moral attached to the actions of the killer. Rather, the killer stands as a recognition, indeed a celebration, of what life *is*. Campbell calls this a "deeply moving, emotionally disturbing glimpse of death as the life of the living" (1969, p. 177) and Sartre presents it as "a violent urge to *destroy*" and then follows by saying:

> To destroy is to reabsorb into myself; it is to enter along with the being-in-itself of the destroyed object into a relation as profound as that of creation…. Destruction realizes appropriation perhaps more keenly than creation does, for the object destroyed is no longer there to show itself impenetrable
> (1956, pp. 756-7).

And Morrison says "[w]e are eating each other" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 74).

The sexual connection to the killer is not only posited in the mythic foundation behind him, but is physically present in his rifle as symbolic phallus. Taking this further, if the phallus is also symbolic of the Name of the Father, then death, via the rifle, comes effectively by that Law. It is the operation of the symbolic order which can kill, and death, without sex, does not complete the path of transformation, nor does it continue the eternally repeating cycle. Vision is linked to the symbolic and the sniper kills via his vision, reinforcing the idea that the symbolic is in itself an order of death.

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[65] Refer to p. 52 of this paper.

Later, in *The New Creatures*, Morrison expands the assassin's work, in an image which echoes both Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the Oedipal journey:

> The assassin's bullet
> Marries the King
> Dissembling miles of air
> To kiss the crown.
> The Prince rambles in blood.
> Ode to the neck
> That was groomed
> For rape's gown
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 18).

The rifle, the bullet, the crown – the phallus, the sperm, the father. The assassin's purpose here is to uncrown a king and unseat his power, in short, to remove the rule of the symbolic. It is the prince, the son, heir of the king and usurper of his place, who is to rise to the seat of power and this is only achieved by violence and death. Significantly, the bullet's point of impact not only strikes at the seat of power, by killing the king, but at the symbol itself, the crown which is worn on the head, and it is the head where the mind and vision reside. Added to this the image subtly refers back to the crucified god, Jesus and the crown of thorns, the father a crucified hero in his own quest while also the dragon of "thou shalt" which must be destroyed in the quest of the Oedipal hero. These are all what falls when the father is killed. The bullet, metaphorically the sperm, also invokes the image that it is not only the vision, but the sexual activity of the assassin, the prince, the son, which will deliver the death blow.

The psycho-sexual linking of the bullet to the king is increased by the terms "marriage" and "kiss", speaking, at least by implication, of a queen, and most specifically of an Oedipal queen. This then turns the killer's bullet to not only being aligned with his sperm, but an alignment with the queen herself, the deception under which she takes a new king giving rise to a relationship which can, and has in some instances, been interpreted as one of rape. The sexual liaison between the queen and her son reinforce killing off the father, by virtue of replacing him with a new source of life embodied by the new husband's sperm. Only in death can life emerge.

Posited with death, on the Oedipal road where the father is killed, the sphinx is also found outside the arena. It is significant that these events take place on the back, as it

were, of the universal snake, the "King's highway" which Morrison invites the individual to "ride,"[66] an invitation which can itself be read as sexually suggestive. The Sphinx, while not directly named as such by Morrison, most certainly makes her presence felt in his mythography and like so much in this landscape she arrives from more than one direction:

> The sphinx in the Oedipus story is not the Egyptian Sphinx, but a female form with the wings of a bird, the body of an animal, and the breast, neck and face of a woman. What she represents is the destiny of all life. She has sent a plague over the land, and to lift the plague, the hero has to answer the riddle that she presents: "What is it that walks on four legs, then on two legs, and then on three?" The answer is "Man." The child creeps about on four legs, the adult walks on two, and the aged walks with a cane.
>
> The riddle of the Sphinx is the image of life itself through time – childhood, maturity, age, and death. When without fear you have faced and accepted the riddle of the Sphinx, death has no further hold on you, and the curse of the Sphinx disappears. The conquest of the fear of death is the recovery of life's joy. One can experience an unconditional affirmation of life only when one has accepted death, not as contrary to life but as an aspect of life. Life in its becoming is always shedding death, and on the point of death. The conquest of fear yields the courage of life. That is the cardinal initiation of every heroic adventure – fearlessness and achievement
> (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 151-2).

It is hardly surprising to find the Sphinx echoes similar archetypal representation as the serpent and the two are closely related. By metaphorically placing her then as riding the snake, for she is on the road to the city, Morrison guards the re-entry to the arena with the test of death much as the cherubim guarded the gates of Eden[67].

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[66] Refer to p. 94 of this paper.

[67] "When Yahweh threw man out of the Garden, he put two cherubim at the gate, with a flaming sword between. Now, when you approach a Buddhist shrine, with the Buddha seated under the tree of immortal life, you will find at the gate two guardians – those are the cherubim, and you're going between them to the tree of immortal life. In the Christian tradition, Jesus on the cross is on a tree, the tree of immortal life, and he is the fruit of the tree. Jesus on the cross, the Buddha under the tree – these are the same figures. And the cherubim at the gate – who are they? At the Buddhist shrines you'll see one has its mouth open, the other has its mouth closed – fear and desire, a pair of opposites. If you're approaching a garden like that, and those two figures there are real to you and threaten you, if you have fear for your life, you are still outside the garden…. We're kept out of the Garden by our own fear and desire in relation to what we think to be the goods of our life" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 107).

A close parallel to the lizard woman, and a threshold guardian, the sphinx is also oracle and holds the power of life and death. It is only by her and through her that, without fear, the individual who has walked the Roman wilderness of symbolic law can re-enter the arena, in which a garden is to be found, and once more participate. When re-entry to the arena is gained, the god, the father, the symbolic order, encapsulated in the triumphant hero, can reclaim control. An interesting point, here Oedipus has become the thing he killed, but there is a difference, and it is similar to the new order of Innocence that follows Experience proposed by Blake. The reconnection that has occurred is one which aligns the universal peristaltic snake with the body as the underwriting of the ordering of the world of pairs of opposites:

> This type of relation makes it possible to specify the *semiotic* as a psychosomatic modality of the signifying process; in other words, not a symbolic modality but one articulating (in the largest sense of the word) a continuum: the connections between the (glottal and anal) sphincters in (rhythmic and intonational) vocal modulations, or those between the sphincters and family protagonists, for example
> (Kristeva, 1974, p. 96).

It can be said that Oedipus succeeded where other men before him had failed and died *because* he killed the father and thereby set himself free from the rule of symbolic law:

> any disturbance of the 'social censorship' – that of the signifier/signified break – attests, perhaps first and foremost, to an influx of the death drive, which no signifier, no mirror, no other And no mother could ever contain. In 'artistic' practices the semiotic – the precondition of the symbolic – is revealed as that which also destroys the symbolic
> (Kristeva, 1974, p. 103).

Without fear, Oedipus faced the sphinx and in her death also signified the death of something not entirely male or female. While the sphinx is spoken of as female, she is different to the goddess/mother in as much as she is a "winged lion, but with the breast and face of a woman" (Hamilton, 1969, p. 269), the lion often and elsewhere a reference to the hero and inferred as male, as opposed to the lioness. Further to this, Nietzsche's "great dragon"[68] can only be defeated by the spirit that is of the lion, an interesting paradox of the sphinx. As a "winged lion" the image invokes that of a

[68] Refer to pp. 92-3 of this paper.

bird, particularly a bird of prey. While Morrison's vultures and their connection to the sacrificial hero[69] are shadowed in this image, this coupling of the bird of prey with the image of death on the highway is also invoked elsewhere by Morrison with startling clarity:

> Bird of prey, Bird of prey
> flying high, flying high
> Am I going to die
>
> Bird of prey, Bird of prey
> flying high, flying high,
> Take me on your flight
>
> Indians scattered on dawn's
> Hiway bleeding,
> Ghosts crowd the young child's
> fragile egg-shell mind
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 139)[70].

The sphinx as oracle, woman as oracle and the indirect referent to the shaman by means of the Indian, sacrifice and the child about to cross the threshold to become an independent man: this location outside the gates of the arena is a potent one. This is where Morrison asks "[w]hat sacrifice, at what price can the city be born?" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 9), and the answer is – at the cost of death. By death is new life resurrected and the tyranny of disease broken. And this is the endless cycle of Oedipus repeating: Thebes – Rome – Spain – Los Angeles.

Across this landscape, as it draws from mythic archetypes, Morrison continually reinforces this quest of the individual to become his own independent self, free to return to "a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred 'Yes'" (Kaufmann, 1954, p. 139). This is the eternal, peristaltic snake which

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[69] Refer to pp. 95-6 of this paper.

[70] The words relating to the Indians were recorded by Morrison on December 7, 1970, during extensive poetry reading in a session which resulted in what is often referred to as "The Village Tapes", and transcribed in *Wilderness* (Courson et al., 1988, p. 180). One of the earlier, and most famous, childhood experience of Morrison's was to witness the aftermath of a motor vehicle accident involving a car and a truck carrying Indian workers (Davis, 2005, p. 8). He used this incident as a focus in a number of variations on the scene in his poetry, song performance and interview, claiming it was possible one or more of the dead possessed him that day, and in this assertion building a particular aspect of his public persona. The media, critics and biographers alike have continued to speculate on this incident from a multitude of angles and Oliver Stone in his film *The Doors* (1991) used it as the linchpin of his dialogue regarding Morrison. Irrespective of the debate over where fact ends and fiction begins, the event was crucial to the way Morrison presented some part at least of his mythographic landscape.

Morrison supports, this is Oedipus returning to the city, this is the return to participation in the arena and the sacred centre, the alpha and the omega of the uroboros:

> "I am the Lizard King
>
> I can do anything
> I can make the earth stop in its tracks
> I made the blue cars go away.
>
> For seven years I dwelt in the loose palace of exile,
> Playing strange games
> w/ the girls of the island.
>
> Now I have come again
> To the land of the fair, & the strong, & the wise.
>
> Brothers & sisters of the pale forest
> O children of Night
> Who among you will run w/ the hunt?
>
> Now Night arrives with her purple legion.
> Retire now to your tents & to your dreams.
> Tomorrow we enter the town of my birth.
> I want to be ready"
> ("Celebration of the Lizard", Courson et al., 1990, p. 45).

Oedipus triumphant returns to the city. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake writes of "the return of Adam into Paradise; see Isaiah XXXIV & XXXV Chap" (Bloom & Trilling, 1973). Turning to Isaiah, particularly Chapter 35:8-10, this potent scene is found, thereby reverberating in Morrison's landscape with force not only through the pagan Greek inheritance of western culture, but also its Levantine word of God:

> And a highway will be there;
> it will be called the Way of
> Holiness.
> The unclean will not journey on it;
> it will be for those who walk in that
> Way;
> wicked fools will not go about on it.
> No lion will be there,
> nor will any ferocious beast get up
> on it;
> they will not be found there.
> But only the redeemed will walk
> there,
> and the ransomed of the Lord will

> return.
> They will enter Zion with singing,
> everlasting joy will crown their
> heads.
> Gladness and joy will overtake them,
> and sorrow and sighing will flee
> away
> (Barker, 1985, p. 1065).

What is of interest here is that Thebes has been a city under siege, the sphinx so devastating in her hunger that the seven gates were closed, the people starved, and the flow of life in and out of the arena was stopped. This is a landscape poised on the edge of decline, its dis-ease exacerbated by its stagnant state, an echo of the "swamp" at which "the universe kneels," and populated by the "loose tides of men" who visit the rooftops in search of a lost connection. When Oedipus returns, moving closer to the mother, the result in the arena is abundance and prosperity, the curse of famine and disease is gone (Hamilton, 1969, p. 269).

The Lizard King can make time stop, he can make "the blue cars go away". Just as the horse was a significant and principle mode of transport in the arena prior to the twentieth century, so too has the car become the horse of the modern arena. Morrison claims that "[m]odern life is a journey by car. The Passengers change terribly in their reeking seats, or roam from car to car, subject to unceasing transformation. Inevitable progress is made toward the beginning" (Morrison, 1969/1985p. 11). The "new man, [the] time soldier,"[71] who dwells in the modern arena "lives in cars" (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 29) and is carried from the high country down into the swarming streets where:

> The soft parade has now begun
> on Sunset.
> Cars come thundering down
> the canyon.
> Now is the time and place.
> The cars come rumbling.
> "You got a cool machine."
> These engine beasts
> muttering their soft
> talk. A delight
> at night
> to hear their quiet voices

[71] refer to p. 15 of this paper.

> again
> after 2 years.
>
> Now the soft parade
> has soon begun.
> Cool pools
> from a tired land
> sink now
> in the peace of evening.
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 21).

But the car is a mechanical construct which operates according to certain laws, further divorcing humanity from a symbiotic relationship with the natural and a time when the horse was essential. That the cars are blue[72] is also significant, and this colour reverberates throughout Morrison's work. Blue is the colour of the sky, of the heavens, it is the colour of water when the sun is bright and in Christianity blue is the colour of the virgin. Blue is both life and death:

> The Greek word for 'blue', *kuaneos* (whence the stem 'cyan-' in chemical terms), meant 'dark'… It was the colour of mourning…. Another Latin word, *lividus*, meant 'leaden' or 'black and blue'. It is also the colour of death…. 'Azure' has always had nearly the opposite connotation: it is the noble, pure, ideal blue… (The word has the same Persian source as 'lazuli,' as in 'lapis lazuli'
> (Ferber, 1999, pp. 31-3).

The exile of the Lizard King has been one of seven years and his return heralds the opening, indeed cleansing, of the seven city gates, thresholds between the arena and the wilderness. In Pythagorean thought, seven[73] corresponds with Pallas Athene (Seligmann, 1948/1997, p. 80), and she is notable for not only being born of no other woman, but of being birthed *from her father's head* where vision resides. "She was pre-eminently the Goddess of the City, the protector of civilized life, of handicrafts

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[72] Blue evokes not only the sky, but also the waters of the Sargasso and the Nile. The indoor pool referred to by Morrison and its tiles, though artificial, are blue by implication. Morrison makes reference across his mythography to blue, often, but not exclusively, in relation to moving vehicles.

[73] Seven is also notable in as much as it figures significantly throughout the Books of Genesis and Revelation in the Bible, the beginning and the end, and often in relation to creation, life and prophetic vision. From the earliest recorded history, seven has been aligned with the heavenly realm and there were considered to be seven steps between earth and heaven, as expressed in the Chaldean ziggurat, the model on which the biblical tower of Babel was constructed (Seligmann, 1948/1997, p. 33). Of interest here too is that in preventing the construction of this tower, the "Lord" took from humanity the one universal language (the word) and replaced it with a multiplicity of languages to lead to confusion and prevent the goal of a unified people reaching heaven, that is, the transcendent ("Genesis 11:1-9", Barker, 1985, pp. 22-3).

and agriculture; the inventor of the bridle, who first tamed horses for men to use" (Hamilton, 1969, pp. 29-30).

The return to the mother is possible only after crossing the threshold of murder and gaining its consequent independence. Murder is a deliberate act made in full consciousness and responsibility, signifying the rise of a new creature from the death of the old. The trinity of this journey is to "Separate, purify, reunite." and this process is "The formula of Ars Magna, and its heir, the cinema" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 28)[74]. Campbell expresses this as "a typical hero act – departure, fulfilment, return" (1988, p. 135). This is also the opus circulatorium of alchemy in which the "cycle of solve et coagula or separation and union has to be reiterated many times throughout the opus" and is often expressed in terms of a turning wheel (Abraham, 1998, pp. 137-8)[75].

Morrison's Oedipal journey is based on alchemy, clarity of vision and deliberate choice. Unlike the Oedipus of Greek myth who railed against the determinations put upon him by the symbolic order through the words of Apollo, and his fruitless attempt to avoid them, Morrison accepts that this is the path. There is a shift occurring here within the heroic approach to circumstance which is greatly lacking in the modern, demythologised culture, the consequence of which is the development of a fully conscious awareness and acceptance of what is going to be done; it is the ownership of existential responsibility.

Where Morrison makes reference to women, his notion of them is not confined to the mother, nor is his treatment one of convention. What he appears to do with many of the women within his writing is present a return to older mythic interpretations and usage, reinventing these to clothe his women, or indeed unclothe them as the case may be. Superficially many of the women he presents are sexual objects and used as

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[74] Refer to p. 34 of this paper.

[75] Further to this image, the Philosophical wheel of alchemy is at times portrayed with "a man symbolizing the matter to be converted being tortured on the wheel" (Abraham, 1998, p. 138). This image corresponds with a story in the Hindu *Panchatantra* of the man bloodied from the wheel turning on his head and the Buddhist Wheel of the Law (Campbell, 1968, pp. 413-6). Perhaps even more startling is the image of Ixion punished by Zeus by being bound to a wheel and sent through the air for the crimes "of violence (the murder of his father-in-law), and the second, of lust (an attempt to ravish the goddess Hera)" (Campbell, 1968, pp. 421-2).

such, and the question of ambivalence in his approach has in the past been raised (Magistrale, 1992, p.138). But the underlying dialogue he offers is one of returning them to the symbology of older traditions as the embodiment of the goddess in her many forms and as the point of connection with the transcendent.

As the mother of Oedipus, Jocasta's journey is one from wife and mother, to widow of a king and back to wife and mother, an interesting triune shadow itself of Blake's passage from Innocence, through Experience to a new Innocence. In ignorance of who her husband is, she shares a bed with her son and their union produces four children. There are numerous mythographic examples of such unions and Campbell notes that there are:

> a number of such deities who are at once the consorts and sons of the Great Goddesses of the Universe. Returning to her bosom in death (or, according to another image, in marriage), *the god is reborn* [italics added] – as the moon sloughing its shadow or the serpent sloughing its skin
> (Campbell, 1964, p. 15).

Morrison's Lizard King is the natural evolution of the questing offspring, transformed after killing the father so that he may return to the arena as peristaltic universal serpent connected to the semiotic by his nature and to the symbolic by his birthright as king.

Of interest here also is the point that historically it has not been uncommon practice for a man to take a dead brother's wife for his own, and certainly for a widowed queen to be taken for a wife by the new King, providing of course, usually, that he was not her son[76].

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[76] "If a woman is widowed, her affinal family must find her another husband; she is usually given in marriage to the dead husband's brother (levirate)…. If she continued to live in her husband's house and had no children, her father-in-law could give her to another of his sons, or even marry her himself…. In the most ancient texts, the first-born of a leviratical union is accounted the dead man's child…. In Pavia and Toledo, where the queen, by virtue simply of her marriage, had a legitimacy that she could, if widowed, pass on to a second husband, the notion of 'royal couple' seems even more evident" Further to this, a widowed queen could "give the throne as a gift to the man she chose as her second husband" (Burguiere et al., 1986/1996, pp. 40, 116, 179-80, 362-3).

Further to this, and bearing in mind the earlier definitions of Eden and paradise,[77] Morrison's presentation of the return to the mother can be viewed as an alternate interpretation of the Garden of Eden. In the second and third chapters of Genesis woman is made out of man, the serpent is an evil influence which brings about separation from God, that is, the transcendent, and woman's subsequent corruption of man leads to their expulsion from the Garden (Barker, 1985, pp. 8-11). Within Morrison's mythography however the woman and serpent are unified in the regenerative principle of the life-death uroboric circle, the Oedipal hero is made out of woman, and it is the killing of the father which enables re-entry into the arena, its garden, and reconnection with the transcendent.

While a son's physical return to his mother, through sexual coupling, is generally considered a disruption of the natural order, the mythic import is founded in the psychic return to the semiotic world of the mother. Further to this, the climax of the Oedipal journey is not the reunion with the mother, but rather what occurs after the truth of this union is revealed. Obtaining access back to the mother is not the end of the journey but another threshold to be crossed, and like the sphinx, she is a threshold guardian to be reckoned with and "[t]he very thing that he most feared finding on his road to manhood is right there in his bed" (Olivier, 1989, p. 97).

Although the image quite clearly speaks of sex, Morrison's assertion of fucking the mother is also not only concerned, as psychoanalysis would argue, "with the [boy's] wish to replace his father in regards to his mother as well." (Freud, 1921, p. 438). After a lengthy discussion with Morrison, Paul Rothchild stated in an interview with *Crawdaddy* that:

> [E]ssentially it boils down to this, kill all those things in yourself which are instilled in you and are not of yourself, they are alien concepts which are not yours, they must die. The psychedelic revolution. Fuck the mother is very basic, and it means get back to the essence, what is reality, what is, fuck the mother is very basically mother, mother-birth, real, you can touch it, it's nature, it can't lie to you. So what Jim says at the end of the Oedipus section, which is essentially the same thing that the classics say, kill the alien concepts, get back to reality, the end of the alien concepts, the beginning of personal concepts

[77] Refer to p. 41 of this paper.

(Densmore, 1990, p. 88).

Sexual contact with the mother is about crossing the threshold, returning to the dark place where there is connection with the transcendent, occurring because of, and culminating in, death. This connection marks symbolically and metaphorically the junction at which vision transfers to desire and participation. This is the point. Sex is the connector, the means through which can be achieved a return to participation, and participation includes rather than negates death:

> death, old friend
> death & my cock
> are the world
> ("Lament for the Death of my Cock", Courson et al., 1990, p. 60).

It is the search for the mother which lies at the heart of another rather striking set of images Morrison employs in which he posits vision within the body, specifically the sexual body. While Morrison effectively demonstrates that vision as a cerebral pursuit alone is ultimately detrimental, he also points out that when vision functions correctly in relation to sex and the sexual arena, it becomes a transformative agent residing within the body, as opposed to the mind alone, and is therefore located within the sphere of touch and participation:

> Male genitals are small faces
> forming trinities of thieves
> and Christs
> Fathers, sons, and ghosts[78].
>
> A nose hangs over a wall
> and two half eyes, sad eyes,
> mute and handless, multiply
> an endless round of victories.
>
> These dry and secret triumphs, fought
> in stalls and stamped in prisons,
> glorify our walls
> and scorch our vision.
>
> A horror of empty spaces
> propagates this seal on private places.
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 20).

[78] refer to p. 84 of this paper.

Vision is located here within the body as opposed to within the head, semiotic and symbolic respectively, and the functions of sex are seated within the same space as those of spirit. Through imagery, Morrison posits the inherited Levantine symbolic law at the male sexual centre, the guilty and innocent together. What this vision witnesses is an "endless round of victories", the sacrifice of the phallus in sexual climax resulting in death. The enduring repetition of this cycle immediately evokes the image of the uroboros, reinforcing the theme of peristalsis to which Morrison pays particular attention. But these triumphs are dry rather than wet, suggesting a lack of the fluids usually associated with sexual activity.

It is perhaps even possible that "dry and secret triumphs" are metaphor for masturbation, the sexual victory without substance as it has produced no new life, no connection with an *other*. What this links well with then, are the stalls where these victories have been fought for, raising an image of the stalls of the peep show or theatre, and strengthening the notion that vision alone, in isolation from that *other*, is not enough and only acts to reinforce the separation.

Furthermore, in the second presentation of "Horse Latitudes"[79], the horses are sacrificed under the dryness of fire and flame. The fleeting triumph of the Game on the "race-track is over" now that death has come, for "[t]he horse flesh is burning/ They're kicking the stalls," (Courson et al., 1988, p. 94) and fear of death propels the animal of the natural, connective realm, to rail against the constructed confinement of the symbolic.

It is not only in male genitals that issues of vision and participation are connected, but female genitals and breasts also, and these images further cement the relationship of body and participation as safeguards against the isolation of existence in a purely symbolic order. In "Celebration of the Lizard":

> (Each house repeats a mold,
> ….
> Of lawful couples wound
> in sheets & daughters,
> smug w/ semen, eyes
> in their nipples.)

[79] Refer to pp. 89-90 of this paper.

(Courson et al., 1990, p.42).

It is the sexually active daughters who wield significant power. As daughters they are young, fecund, and sexually satisfied, and it is this which invests their bodies with vision. But rather than this vision being located at the genitals, it is located at the breast and at the level of the heart[80]. The women's connection to the base impulse is so well achieved, that vision is expressed at the point in the body which offers not the seed of fertilisation for new life, but the means of sustenance for that new life. The vision offered by these women is seated at the place from which the infant suckles and maintains connection with the body of the mother: nourishment and vision in direct feed from the semiotic.

Already referred to, the nursing mother is met with in *The New Creatures*,[81] her arms soft and supportive, she comforts and protects the infant. Immediately the image of the Christian Madonna is evoked, and significantly this is an echo of an older image of the mother and child, perhaps most famously known from Egypt in the form of Isis and Horus. Located within the neolithic period, the mother and child image is a representation of the goddess who emerged at some point during the paleolithic (Campbell, 1964, p. 44).

By her "soft" arms the creature not only protects, but nurtures, softness used in many circumstances by Morrison. Eyes are "soft insatiable jewel" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 17) and "[s]oft lizard eyes connect", such images linking vision and touch with voice and hearing in "soft drained insect cries" (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 5). Indeed, the senses respond in Morrison's landscape to what is soft - in alchemical terms, what is of the spirit - and what is soft is first encountered at the site of the mother, the lizard woman. The mouth of the suckling infant connects to the body of the mother for nourishment which promotes growth, allowing the dependant infant to grow to an independent individual. The mouth is also the place from which comes forth the

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[80] Buddha "is said to have been born from his mother's side from the level of the heart chakra…. The chakra means 'circle' or 'sphere'" (Campbell & Moyers, 1988). Added to this, it is significant that "one of the soldiers pierced Jesus side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water" and the accompanying notes to the text state that blood and water were "[t]he result of the spear piercing the pericardium (the sac that surrounds the heart) and the heart itself" ("John 19:34", Barker, 1985, p. 1635), further reinforcing the connections between sex, death and sacrifice for new life or transformation.

[81] refer to p. 21 of this paper.

voice and by which the symbolic law is uttered. The mouth of the suckling infant also echoes the later sexual connection of the genital "pale mouth legs/ [where] she sucks the root,"[82] receiving the phallus during sexual coupling physically in peristaltic motion, and metaphorically as the Name of the Father by which symbolic law is imparted.

So, then, in passage "VII" of *The New Creatures*, we come to her:

> Lizard woman
> w/ your insect eyes
> w/ your wild surprise.
> Warm daughter of silence.
> Venom.
> Turn your back w/ a slither of moaning wisdom.
> The unblinking blind eyes
> behind walls new histories rise
> and wake growling and whining
> the weird dawn of dreams.
> Dogs lie sleeping.
> The wolf howls.
> A creature lives out the war.
> A forest.
> A rustle of cut words, choking
> river
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 6).

With her "insect eyes" the lizard woman is queen of the hive, the visual capabilities of her eyes perhaps that of many lenses, suggestive of a pervasive vision much like that of the god who sees everything[83]. The Queen of any insect colony is usually located at the centre of the hive where she is most protected from the dangerous wilderness outside and can produce her young. She is at the sexual centre of the city, the arena, a queen surrounded by the unindividualised masses.

Like the serpent this woman has venom, she is life and death. She is an oracle, a wise woman, the venom of the serpent not only a poison but possibly also a means by which shamanic visionary quest can be undertaken. What Morrison is restoring here is the goddess in all her forms - maiden and mother, virgin and whore, creator and destroyer (Campbell, 1989, pp. 51-9).

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[82] refer to pp. 25, 78 of this paper.
[83] refer to pp. 49-50 of this paper.

Blind eyes do not see the external world, they do not blink in the sun, they do not distinguish between objects. The creature with blind eyes relies on other senses. "The unblinking blind eyes" return the reader to Oedipus after he blinds himself when faced with the facts of his circumstance, and the "new histories" are his children, born within the city walls, offspring of the Queen:

> Also we have another mother image which occurs after the rise of cities. Here you see the goddesses with a crown on their heads which represents the walls of the city. The walled city is our mother, the mother of our civilisation, the mother of our life. So the culture is also our mother
> (Campbell, 1989, p. 63).

In *The New Creatures* the lizard woman can be read as the woman of the natural realm discovered by Columbus as the New World, she is also Jocasta, in short, she is woman across time and space. The return of the son is a return to interaction with the semiotic foundation, "a resumption of the functioning characteristic of the semiotic *chora* within the signifying device of language" (Kristeva, 1974, p. 103).

While the dogs[84] may be the new generation which arises from the queen, they bear striking comparison to the offspring of Oedipus and Jocasta. Located close to the "blind eyes" they rise from "behind walls" of the city "growling & whining" as they did when adults in warfare for the throne of Thebes (Hamilton, 1969, p. 274)[85]. The point of interest here is whether the natural order suffers because the son has returned to the mother, or, because in her absence the remaining offspring are denied the opportunity to do so and consequently remain stuck in conflict without apparent possibility for resolution.

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[84] It is interesting to note that the serpent, insects (particularly the bee and wasp which live in colonies surrounding and protecting a queen) and the dog (particularly as the jackal) are all creatures which can be associated with Egypt. Added to this of course, the lion is also a creature from out of Africa and is associated with the Egyptian Sphinx, the Oedipal sphinx and Biblical archetype related to both the Hebrew occupation and/or captivity within Egypt and certain aspects of the character and divinity of Jesus. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake also refers to a cast of significant creatures, each in a chamber or room within the printing house – arenas within the larger arena of production of words, and these creatures are the "Dragon-Man," "Viper," "Eagle," "Lions," and "unnam'd forms" (Bloom & Trilling, 1973, pp. 40-1).

[85] Refer back to "The Fear" on p. 16 of this paper. The hiker on the highway afraid of the wolves can be read as parallel to Oedipus' recognition of his own offspring.

The dog represents the new generation of youth and vigour, offspring of the mother and father. They are those who are living in and learning from the symbolic, and are yet to kill it off to facilitate their return to the semiotic: the offspring on the verge of desiring return to the mother. The dog is a warrior, a companion animal that survives adversity in the wilderness:

> Jackal, we sniff after the survivors of caravans.
> We reap bloody crops on war fields.
> No meat of any corpse deprives our lean bellies.
> hunger drives us on scented winds.
> Stranger, traveller,
> peer into our eyes & translate
> the horrible barking of ancient dogs
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 16).

Taking the spoils of violence and war, the human remains, the dog makes use of what is available. Resourceful, the dog is a lean, scavenger of the dead. The bloody crops echo both the sustaining of life by killing and eating, and the failing, blighted harvests of Thebes, the disease that comes from imbalance (Hamilton, 1969, pp. 269-270).

The stranger in the land who has walked the wilderness will look into their eyes, vision meeting. It is the Oedipal translation of the "horrible barking", the recognition from *one who knows* that will hear the conflict of kindred and understand what it signifies. Unlike their father who had unity with the mother, the offspring of Oedipus and Jocasta know no such union, their lack of connection back to the mother perhaps generating the bitter conflict between them, exacerbated by her absence in that by dying, she abandons them.

Within the Oedipal setting is a subtle dialogue regarding the caravans followed by the dogs. *The New Creatures* presents the dogs as the jackals encountered along the route of the caravan, and also the dogs at the city gates that would inspect survivors of journey as they enter. The caravans facilitate the flow of life into the city from places beyond its walls, bringing with them new objects from without, injecting the arena, the "legs of the city," with its hordes, its "swimmers":

> Camel caravans bear
> witness guns to Caesar.
> Hordes crawl & seep inside

> the walls. Life goes
> on absorbing war. Violence
> kills the temple of no sex
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 16).

The movement of the world into the city is matched by inhabitants leaving the arena, what flows in, flowing back out. This of course raises the potential of Oedipus repeating, it began with a:

> night of sin (The Fall)
> - 1st sex, a feeling of having
> done this same act in time before
> O No, not again
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 21).

Once more the pervasive uroboros is found, life continuing in the same inexorable pattern, the repetition of a process that appears at least superficially to be already determined and beyond the influence of the free will of the individual:

> Terrible shouts start
> the journey
> - if they had migrated sooner
>
> - a high wailing keening
> piercing animal lament
> from a woman
> high atop a Mt. tower
>
> - Thin wire fence
> in the mind
> dividing the heart
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 17).

Animistic in expression, the woman's cry is implicitly that of a dog or wolf and the location evokes the image of a wolf upon a hill, howling at the moon – the offspring in "lament" for its separation from the mother, between them, the expanse of heavens. The separation that is felt by *all* offspring. This is the moment of realising the division of the world of pairs of opposites, that there is a divide between the symbolic mind and the semiotic body, and the suffering this realisation evokes. At Madison Square Garden in 1969 Morrison expressed this principle:

> Pointing to the left half of the arena, Jim solemnly intoned,
> "You… are… *Life*." Pointing to the other half, he announced,
> "And you are… *Death*!" After a pregnant pause , Jim delivered
> the punch line. "I straddle the fence… and my balls hurt!"

(Davis, 2005, p. 310).

These words are shaded by the crucified god, the cock which is "sore and crucified"[86].

It is the grief of facing the truth, just as Jocasta had to face the truth in the identities of her husband and offspring, a truth she did not have the strength to live with. There is a strong evocation here of the second aphorism in Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* where he states that "[e]ven the most courageous among us only rarely has the courage for that which he really knows" (Kaufmann, 1954, p. 466), and later echoed in *The Will to Power* that "[i]t is only late that one musters the courage for what one really knows" (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 18). The woman's position in the mountains is also significant, it is the high place of the natural realm in correspondence with the rooftops of Rome.

In the face of what is known by the mother, she kills herself. The question has to be asked, however, did she kill herself because she had married and conceived new life with her own son, or because she had at last confessed the abandonment of that son, her flesh, into the realm of Symbolic Law? Morrison locates this death, at least in part, at the hands of her own offspring, as it were, a violent death echoing that "violence kills the temple of no sex" – that is, she did not consummate with these children sexually and so they killed her for the lack and thereby loss of connection:

> It is only in the human world that there can be lacks. A lack presupposes a trinity: that which is missing or 'the lacking,' that which misses what is lacking or 'the existing,' and a totality which has been broken by the lacking and which would be restored by the synthesis of 'the lacking' and 'the existing' (Sartre, 1956, p. 135).

The trinity is broken.

The final numbered passage at the opening of *The New Creature*, "VIII", brings to some conclusion the life of this woman:

> The snake, the lizard, the insect eye
> the huntsman's green obedience.

[86] refer to p. 81 of this paper.

Quick, in raw time, serving
stealth and slumber,
grinding warm forests into restless lumber.

Now for the valley.
Now for the syrup hair.
Stabbing the eyes, widening skies
behind the skull bone.
Swift end of hunting.
Hug round the swollen torn breast
& red-stained throat.
The hounds gloat.
Take her home.
Carry our sister's body, back
to the boat
(Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 7)[87].

The death of the lizard woman comes by the teeth of her own offspring, the hounds, teeth in the mouths that once suckled at the mother's breast, shadowing her once more with Jocasta. As it is in the nature for dogs of any kind, these have hunted and made their kill, targeting the throat through which the voice is uttered, and the breast by which they were first fed and from which they were then removed to turn and face the world of words and objects. In their victory, these hounds have released themselves from the source of their distress, the cause of their being deposited into the field of opposites and symbolic law. It is the law of the father replacing the semiotic of the mother and it is a necessary threshold to be crossed.

The "red-stained throat" and "torn breast" indicate a violent death, a sacrifice, pointing to the violent nature of life. Life kills and consumes life in order to continue, the new generation have triumphed in life over the older and the cycle sustains itself without end. The moment of birthing for any woman is a crossing of the threshold of death in as much as she will then live not for her own life, but for that of her offspring (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 110). For the lizard woman this is expressed not only in passive sacrifice of the self to the infant, but then in violent sacrifice in which the now independent offspring participate in releasing the mother from the sacrifice she made in birth and suckling. They are now free and so too is she. In death, the lizard woman can cross the water to return to her home.

[87] refer to p. 22 of this paper.

When Morrison writes "[t]he city sleeps" (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 19), he is not only presenting the city at night[88] but also an image of the mother in death. The children, beyond infancy where "[d]ependance on the mother is severed, and transformed into a symbolic relation to an other" (Kristeva, 1974, p. 102), and who have not yet left the arena for the external wilderness, learn from the dogs already there, the violent offspring who have been denied the opportunity to reconnect with the mother. The questions begs to be asked, with these as teachers, how can inner, guiding vision be found?

> the unhappy children
> roam w/ animal gangs.
> They seem to speak
> to their friends
> the dogs
> who teach them trails.
> Who can catch them?
> Who can make them come
> inside?
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 19).

What is interesting in the Oedipal myth is that with the mother now gone, the male offspring fight for the right to rule (Hamilton, 1969, pp. 274-5)[89]. Amongst those that remain in the arena, there is conflict in the absence of the mother and a connective relationship with her. People:

> are sniffing each other
> & backing away
> teeth grinning
> hair raised, growling,
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 23).

They no longer appear to recognise each other as part of the same pack and rather than seek reconnection, the quest of each individual becomes one of violence, dominion and power in the face of loss of the mother. This is what happens in the

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[88] The city at night and the life it contains is a recurrent image throughout Morrison's work, the most well known depiction of this image found in the lyric verse "LA Woman" (Courson et al., 1990, pp. 114-5), released on The Doors sixth album ("LA Woman," 1971).

[89] Further to this, the conflict between Polyneices and Etacles bears striking similarities to the dispute and violence, between Cain and Abel as accounted in Genesis 4:1-12 (Barker, 1985, pp. 11-2). The fight for the right to rule as king of Thebes between the Oedipal brothers is significant in as much as it reflects the desire of Cain, the firstborn, to be recognised by God in the same way his brother was. The younger of the brother, Etacles, in turn "expelled his brother from Thebes" (Hamilton, 1969, pp. 273-4), the exile of Polyneices a mirror for the exile of Cain.

modern arena, this is the warning Morrison provides, the consequence of the "loss of god"[90].

The king's murderer is outlawed by Oedipus and put beyond the bounds of the law of the word, exiled to exist in isolation. The king and the land are one and in killing his father, Oedipus has killed the land. The land falls into disease because with the father - who is synonymous with the king and indeed god – absent, the *body* of the earth resides purely in the semiotic, without the symbolic law to balance and guide it. As Kristeva notes, while the *chora* is "nourishing and maternal" it is "not yet unified in an ordered whole because deity is absent from it" (1974, p. 94).

> (When the true King's murderers
> are allowed to roam free
> a 1000 Magicians arise
> in the land)
>
> Where are the feasts
> we were promised
> Where is the wine
> The New Wine
> (dying on the vine)
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 5).

That the vine is withering before harvest strengthens the requirement for the land to be in balance, for the king and the land, indeed the male and female, to be in symbiosis. Alchemically the vine is synonymous with grapes, which are the fruit of the philosophical tree, and "the raw matter for the [Philosopher's] Stone. It is the juice, the *fluid* of the fruit which dissolves the old matter into the "prima materia, the original stuff of creation" (Abraham, 1998, p. 89). Furthermore, it is the blood of the sacrificed god which is symbolised in the wine of the Christian communion, further reinforced by its connection to the grail, that refers back to the mystery which is the symbiosis of the king and the land (Campbell, 1964, p. 508; 1968, pp. 391-2).

Balance is essential for the health of the vine and its ensuing harvest, which is itself a death, parallel to the death that occurs in sexual coupling and the production of offspring. Only through this process can the new creation, the new generation, rise

[90] Refers back to p.5 of this paper.

and the cycle continue. Without this balance, the prima materia cannot be distilled, and that is "the original, pure substance from which it was believed the universe was created and into which it might again be resolved" (Abraham, 1998).

When faced with the facts of events, the courage for what is known, while negated by Jocasta, is embraced by Oedipus, culminating in his third exile. This is the exile of blindness, the exile that comes because of sacrifice and the revelation of the truth. "The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword. are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Bloom & Trilling, 1973, p. 38). When external vision is stopped, internal vision increases, and when Oedipus blinds himself he facilitates a meeting of mind and vision[91].

When vision is taken away, the other senses come to the fore, more necessary now that the means through which the symbolic order is predominantly recognised and interpreted is gone. Things that have passed by unheard, unsmelt, untested, *unfelt* and lost in the swarming multitude of possibilities that have their voice, these things are now recognised. Without vision as the overriding operative, the symbolic order loses a great deal of its power, the vision of the individual is free to turn to other ways through which to see, and it is through touch that this is achieved.

Oedipus blinds himself for it was, "better to be there than to see with strange shamed eyes the old world that had been so bright" (Hamilton, 1969, p. 273). Oedipal Blindness is significant for Morrison and marks a further threshold within the journey, already noted with "[s]tabbing the eyes, widening skies/ behind the skull bone."[92]

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[91] The exchange of external vision for increased internal vision is also to be found in the Norse god Odin who exchanged one of his eyes for the opportunity to drink from the Fount of Wisdom. The loss was 'compensated for by his two ravens, … who perched on his shoulders and informed him of what they had seen and heard" (Melville, 2003, p. 26). These two ravens have their counterpart in the Oedipal myth with the daughters, Antigone and Ismene (Hamilton, 1969). This exchange of external vision for a greater internal one is also handled by Frank Herbert with the blinding of Paul Muad'dib in *Dune Messiah* (1969, pp. 160-5).

[92] refer to p. 117 of this paper.

The world of the independent, standing individual is that of the symbolic. From the moment the infant is turned away from the mother, he experiences the endless conflict between thesis and antithesis which rules the world of objects and threatens the dis-ease of imbalance:

> First man stood, shifting stance
> while germs of sight
> unfurl'd Flags in his skull
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 9).

Before this however, the world of the womb is warm and wet, and vision is not made through eyes which view a world entirely separate from the body, but through the body itself which *sees* its world through its connection to it:

> and quickening, hair, nails, skin
> turned slowly, whirl'd, in
> the warm aquarium, warm
> wheel turning
>
> Cave fish, eels, & gray salamanders
> turn in their night career of sleep.
>
> The idea of vision escapes
> the animal worm whose earth
> is an ocean, whose eye is its body
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 9).

When Morrison speaks of sex with the mother, it is to this he seeks return. When Oedipus blinds himself, it is for this which he sacrifices the symbolic world and the power he holds within it. It is a return to the impulse and essence of life and it is achieved not through the vision and division of the symbolic order, but by the vision of touch and reconnection.

Added to this, the first landscape is not of a harsh dry world, such as found in the desert and the wilderness of exile. The realm of the symbolic is harsh and dry, a discomfort to the very eyes which look upon it, eyes which must remain moist in order to maintain healthy function. Even though vision is invited to the external world, it is a world of suffering, difficult to endure:

> The eye looks vulgar
> Inside its ugly shell.
> Come out in the open
> In all of your Brilliance.

> Nothing. The air outside
> burns my eyes.
> I'll pull them out
> and get rid of the burning
> (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 7).

The conditions of the womb, linked with the aquatic creatures, announce connection between the human and the animal. While Morrison's assertion is not that the human individual is an animal, he demonstrates through his extensive use of animistic iconography, stereotypes of human behaviour and that, unlike the animal, humanity has lost its connection to the impulse of life. Further to this, the "animal worm" is a peristaltic creature, seeing the world by *moving through it in participation* and not observation. The worm is located within the ocean, the waters of the womb, the waters of the subconscious. This worm, this unborn child, echoes the coming of the universal snake, the peristaltic uroboros of sex and death.

The cessation of vision is often violent, linking it not only to sex and life, but also to death. But the blind eye is comfortable, not irritated by the dry air nor dazzled by the brightness of the sun. When these distractions are no longer present and vision is cast back into the internal landscape, the individual has the opportunity to make something new, to rediscover what had been lost in the external landscape. The transcendence which is sought, the animistic reconnection, begins to wake.

What happens when the eyes are closed, when the lens does not let in light? When vision fails, where is its cure? In the absence of vision Morrison erects the dark, the cave, the womb, the tomb, the night. "All hail the American Night" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 146). In these places can be found sleep and dreams, the landscape of the subconscious, the semiotic, sex and death.

METAMORPHOSIS THREE:

> But say, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world
> (Kaufmann, 1954, p. 139)[93].

Blind Oedipus enters his third exile, completing the trinity, and returns to the wilderness. He is accompanied by Antigone, one of his daughters, that she might see for him (Hamilton, 1969, p. 274). In effect he is returning to the vision which relies on the body and the semiotic as opposed to vision regulated by the symbolic order in which he has grown from infancy to manhood. Like the voice of god that issues forth from the oracle, the man who has crossed the threshold of disengaging from the rule of the father to reconnect with the body of the mother sees the world through the girl, the one-day mother, the body of the earth.

It is in this exile that Oedipus finds peace, and it is in this particular arena of the wilderness that Morrison posits the foundation of the oracle and shaman[94], as a vehicle for reconnection to the natural realm and ultimately, transcendent participation. In "Jamaica", Morrison brings Oedipus out of the arena and away from the fight that is to come:

> The hour of the wolf
> has now ended. Cocks
> crow. The world is built
> up again, struggling in
> darkness
>
> The child gives in to night-
> Mare, while the grown
> Man fears his fear.
>
> I must leave this island,
> Struggling to be born

---

[93] This passage compares well with section "293" of *The Will to Power*, which further supports Morrison's mythography. Nietzsche writes "If becoming is a great ring, then everything is equally valuable, eternal, necessary. – In all correlations of Yes and No, of preference and rejection, love and hate, all that is expressed is a perspective, an interest of certain types of life: in itself, everything that is says Yes" (1968, p. 165).

[94] refer to *fn 8* for definitions.

> from blackness
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 151).

Of interest also in the above passage is the child giving in to "night-Mare", the image of the unborn horse that strains against birth and the sacrifice of the horses in "Horse Latitudes" resonate, leaving no doubt that the struggle of life ahead for the child is to be hard fought, just as it has been for Oedipus, and as it is for every individual.

The significance of Oedipus choosing to leave the arena, the necessity for the clear water of the "pool people" who lived in the forests before the arrival of "strange gods,"[95] and the return to harmonious existence with the natural realm, is recognised by Morrison, and this lingers as an invitation when he writes:

> Meeting you at your parent's gate
> We will tell you what to do
> What you have to do
> to survive
>
> Leave the rotten towns
> of your father
> Leave the poisoned wells
> & bloodstained streets
> Enter now the sweet forest
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 64).

The blind eye is a clean eye, it is an eye no longer affected by distortion of vision from dryness, disease or illusion. The blind eye does not blink, it has no need for the renewal of moisture of the seeing eye, it does not require fluid to keep it in a state of balance. The clean eye and the camera both possess the same strength. Purged of imprint or illusory interpretation, what is captured by vision is what *exists*, and that object is indeed "free to dissolve"[96]:

> *Metamorphose.* An object is cut off from its name, habits, associations. Detached, it becomes only the thing, in and of itself. When this disintegration into pure existence is at last achieved, the object is free to become endlessly anything.
>
> The subject says "I see first lots of things which dance … then everything becomes gradually connected"

[95] refer to p. 75 of this paper.
[96] refer to p. 64 of this paper.

> Objects as they exist in time the clean eye and camera give us. Not falsified by "seeing".
>
> When there are as yet no objects (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 27-8).

Compare this with Sartre:

> Although an *object* may disclose itself only through a single *Abschattung*[97], the sole fact of there being a subject implies the possibility of multiplying the points of view on that *Abschattung*…. This new opposition, the "finite and the infinite," or better "the infinite in the finite," replaces the dualism of being and appearance
> (Sartre, 1956, pp. 5-6).

Unclouded, the clean eye is free of disease and stripped of filters which interpret. This is the blindness that takes away the overwhelming dominance of the symbolic order, as opposed to the illusion the symbolic order uses to hold the individual in its thrall and blind them to the truth. The camera works in the same way, provided it too is free of filters and effects which distort.

So, then, what cleans the eye, what removes the blindness of symbolic illusion? In short, Morrison tells us the answer is sex. The individual can "[c]ure blindness with a whore's spittle" (1969/1985, p. 12). Offering sex as a cure, this woman is more than a whore, she is oracle and she restores vision. The spittle, as fluid, returns the eye to its moist state of health and echoes the fluids of the sexual act and the waters of the womb. Further to this, woman as whore, or more specifically woman in her sexual power, is one of the aspects of the triple goddess[98]. The crone, who was often associated with oracular power as the *wise woman*, is the other side of the sexual woman, her eldership earning, through experience, the wisdom with which she is endowed. This trinity, (before being whore this woman was virgin), is strengthened by another trinity in the connections between sex, disease and blood, all of which support and affect each other.

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[97] "Used by Sartre in the phenomenological sense to refer to the successive appearance of the object 'in profile'," ("Key to Special Terminology", Sartre, 1956, p.799).

[98] In popular terms these are the three aspects of the maiden, mother and crone. Campbell aligns these archetypes with the three principle deities of Aphrodite, Hera and Athena in the Classical tradition, all of which have their counterparts in other mythic foundations (Campbell, 1964, 1989).

Beyond the biological, the necessity for fluidity in connection with the eyes demonstrates the connection between the subconscious and vision and that a state of dis-ease is avoided when the balance is maintained. The connection relates to subconscious vision, that which can see beyond the physical realm, and can be likened to the intuitive vision often ascribed to women:

> Savage destiny
> Naked girl, seen from behind,
>
> on a natural road
> (Morrison, 1985, p. 12).

Rather than being a construction of the symbolic order the road is natural, it is made of the earth, and she walks upon the intuitive path. Naked, this girl is seen for *what she is*, and from behind suggests that what she sees ahead of her is also in the scope of vision of the subject who looks upon her. Unlike looking at her face, as if in a mirror, to see her from this perspective enhances an image of the forward projection of oracular vision. Added to this, she is unaware of being some other's object and viewed from behind as she leads the way there is no risk of her becoming object within the world as she sees it (Sartre, 1956, pp. 347-9, 353). Indeed this is her "savage destiny" as the girl who will one day be woman, one day to lead and to sacrifice that some other might find reconnection with what she will never be separated from. From this point the next threshold to cross is the cave and the trials of the labyrinth. When this reaches the modern arena, the young girl is captured on film for the vision of the audience in the cave of the theatre:

> Friends
> explore the labyrinth
>
> - Movie
> young woman left on the desert
>
> A city gone mad with fever
> (Morrison, 1985, p. 12).

While Morrison frames the image in the modern arena, the young woman, the oracle, is still precisely located walking the natural, intuitive path and associated with the cave. Significantly she is in the desert, the wilderness which apparently lacks water, but water is to be found in any desert if the individual knows where to look. The city is of course the Oedipal arena presented earlier in this paper, and the audience is

gathered in the cinema just as the tribe gathered in the cave with the shaman or in the temple with the oracle to seek and receive the healing vision.

When the camera is clean, just as it is when the eye is clean, the opportunity for reconnection is available. Ideally, cinema returns the audience to movement, to participation. As a mechanism which is struck within the external symbolic order of the father, cinema has the unique ability to explore and communicate the internal mechanism of the semiotic, pre-symbolic landscape. "Cinema returns us to anima, religion of matter, which gives each thing its special divinity and sees gods in all things and beings" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 30). This compares well with Jung who wrote that "[w]ith the archetype of the anima we enter the realm of the gods, or rather, the realm that metaphysics has reserved for itself" (1959/1968, p. 28). Further to this Jung locates the anima "beyond all categories" thereby positing it in the transcendent, and claims that it " therefore can dispense with blame as well as with praise" (1959/1968, p. 29). Just as Morrison compares the work of the film-maker with that of the alchemist (1969/1985, pp. 28-30), so too does Jung further note that "the anima complex is one of the oldest features of Latin alchemy" (1959/1968, p. 286).

What is interesting in Morrison's mythography is the collection of poems under the title "Dry Water"[99]. This title raises the idea that the antithesis of a natural *wet* state of vision is also operative, that there is a significance attached to the lack of fluid as a medium for assisting or enhancing vision. These words echoes the desert, the wilderness, and the blindness that heralds the rise of internal vision, as Oedipus has in his exile with "unblinking blind eyes,"[100] but they also retain in the landscape the operative sphere of fluid as implied by the water. As a metaphor for the subconscious and as an image of the mirror, water need not be present in the form of fluid to facilitate what it does. Just as the physical blinded Oedipal eyes are dry but engage and unify vision, so too is water still felt when it acts upon a dry landscape:

the graveyard, the tombstone,

[99] The poems were written in 1969 and some reworked by Morrison in 1970 for publication in *Circus* magazine (Davis, 2005, pp. 308, 359). "Dry Water" is "a single book-length work consisting of a series of shorter poems…. A selection of the poems was published in the Los Angeles *Image* in October 1969. And in January 1971 *Circus* magazine published three other poems from the work" ("Notes", Courson et al., 1990, pp. 207-8).
[100] Refer to pp. 112 of this paper.

> the gloomstone & runestone
> The sand & the moon, mating
> deep in the Western night
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 157).

The vision of "Dry Water" is an oracular one, the body of the earth and the goddess surrounded by and centred on sex and death. The sand and moon of the "Western night" speak generally of the western world in as much as it is capitalised, and specifically of the modern arena of LA and its location in the west at the edge of the sea. "Dry Water" is the vision of the arena and the individual in it after the thresholds of killing the dragon of the symbolic and reconnecting with the semiotic. It addresses the modern LA of Morrison's mythography where reconnection with the internal, oracular vision brings back to the foundation a vision and understanding of the journey, indeed the history, taken during exile in the wilderness of disconnection and conflict:

> She lives in the city
> under the sea
> Prisoner of pirates
> prisoner of dreams
> I want to be w/ her
> want her to see
> The things I've created
> sea-shells that bleed
> Sensitive seeds
> of impossible warships
> (Courson et al., 1990).

To strengthen the sense of meaning ascribed to the idea of dry water, in the absence of the cure of sex, in the absence of fluid, the eyes that have not yet been blinded by the courage for what is known, burn in the open air.[101] Burning is both purification and destruction. A threshold, a sacrifice, it is the image of the phoenix, it is the burning of the horses in "Horse Latitudes."[102] Quoting Wolfram von Eschenbach's twelfth century epic *Parzival*, Campbell notes that he writes " 'the phoenix burns and becomes ashes, but the ashes restore it speedily to life' " and this occurs in the presence of the alchemical philosopher's stone (1968, pp. 429-30). Either way, whether blinded or burning, vision by necessity must be cleansed.

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[101] refer to p. 122 of this paper.
[102] refer to p. 110 of this paper.

When the fluid world is left, that is, the subconscious world of the semiotic foundation, the body is immersed in conflict with the waking world and its array of objects and opposites. "Sleep is an under-ocean dipped into each night. At morning, awake dripping, gasping, eyes stinging" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 7), but of course it is this fluid world of dreams and the subconscious, that makes sufferance of the dry, waking world endurable. In *Ecrits*, Lacan points out that "(the unconscious is the discourse of the Other), whose syntax Freud first sought to define for those bits that come to us in certain priviledged moments, in dreams" ("On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis", 1977, p. 193). Morrison's statement in *The Lords* referring to sleep also serves to enhance an understanding of "the city/ under the sea" where "she lives", emphasising the point that the transformation that is sought is not necessarily one that involves an actual physical sexual act with an actual physical mother, for the transcendence that is sought exists beyond the physical world which is framed by the parameters of time and space:

> [M]ale and female are two aspects of one principle…. You're born in only one aspect of your actual metaphysical duality, you might say. This is represented in the mystery religions, where an individual goes through a series of initiations opening him out inside into a deeper and deeper depth of himself, and there comes a moment when he realises that he is both mortal and immortal, both male and female
> (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 49-50).

"Under the sea" in "dreams", this woman, with whom the individual seeks to be, is in the subconscious of that individual; she is deep within him already:

> [W]ho is the author of our lives? Who is the builder of this interlocking dream? When Schopenhauer comes to this image he says, "It is *as if*." He doesn't say "It is." And that's very important! The great mythological point of view is, "It is *as if*." He says, "It is as if the whole world were a dream of a single dreamer in which all the dream characters dream too, as if everything interlocks with everything else like the instruments in a symphony
> (Campbell, 1989, pp. 127-8).

Re-entry to the womb, that is, the cave, is entering the internal landscape, and this also returns attention in the mythography to the creatures that inhabit such environments. This is the environment where the umbilical is not severed, where there is connection between the human and the animal. Of particular demonstrated

significance to Morrison in the active world of the symbolic arena are lions, dogs and horses, all of these representative of the individual in the process of transformation, and different to the serpent which, by its very nature, shares peristaltic connection within the body of the earth. Entry to the cave represents the same peristaltic movement, and it is the transformation of the independent, severed umbilical creature to the peristaltic creature which Morrison presents as the threshold to be crossed toward the opportunity for reaching transcendence. This is quite simply the transformation of the exiled to the Lizard King[103].

Synonymous with the cave of the shaman and the temple of the oracle is the labyrinth:

> In archaic art, the labyrinth – home of the child-consuming Minotaur – was represented in the figure of a spiral[104]…. [A] constellation of images denoting the plunge and dissolution of consciousness in the darkness of non-being must have been employed, intentionally, from an early date, to represent the analogy of threshold rites to the mystery of the entry of the child into the womb for birth. And this suggestion is reinforced by the further fact that the paleolithic caves of southern France and northern Spain, which are now dated by authorities circa 30,000 – 10,000 B.C., were certainly sanctuaries not only of hunting but also of male puberty rites. A terrific sense of claustrophobia, and simultaneously of release from every context of the world above, assails the mind impounded in those more than absolutely dark abysses, where darkness no longer is an absence of light but an experienced force
> (Campbell, 1969, pp. 65-6).

Morrison writes, "I am a guide to the Labyrinth" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 12), and speaks of "children of the caves" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 108). He claims that people need:

> Ceremonies, theatre, dances
> To reassert Tribal needs & memories
> a call to worship, uniting
> above all, a reversion,
> a longing for family & the
> safety magic of childhood
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 14).

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[103] refer to p. 103 of this paper.
[104] This image of course has resonance with the uncoiling of the snake and with the caduceus, strengthening the connection of peristalsis and phallic symbology with the cave, indeed, the womb of the mother.

From an archaeological viewpoint, the first landscape in Morrison's mythographic history is Africa and the Nile in the kingdom of Egypt, which corresponds not only to the desert but also as a place of exile and oracular vision for the hero who might then lead the tribe out to the Promised Land[105]. From this first location the same pattern of exile and deliverance is repeated, from the kingdom of Spain to the New World and from the American east coast to the new frontier in the west and the modern arena of LA. The "strange gods", the "swarming multitude" who arrived in the New World remained, the twentieth century man of LA a "marrying"[106] of the old and the new - the eternal cycle:

> Snakeskin jacket
> Indian eyes
> Brilliant hair
>
> He moves in disturbed
> Nile insect
> Air
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 3).

What is striking about this man is that he is one of the "strange gods", not only the pale white man first encountered by the Indian, but the god, the man who *is* in the transcendent beyond the field of opposites. "Man makes himself man in order to be God" (Sartre, 1956, p. 796). As Blake noted, the "system was formed" which in time divorced man from his cognition of what he is:

> And at length they pronounced that the Gods had ordered such things.
> Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast
> (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Bloom & Trilling, 1973, p. 39).

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[105] In Genesis, Chapter 41, an account is given of Joseph, (who was at the time in exile and sold as a slave), interpreting the dreams of the Pharaoh. As a consequence he is given the responsibility of ensuring provision is made for the people of Egypt in the prophesised time of famine, that they might survive and their Pharaoh, their king-god, continue to be loved by them. The Book of Exodus, gives account of Moses who not only communed with God, but then spoke the prophesy of God that if the Jewish people were not allowed to leave the Egyptian arena and return to the arena of their birth, plague and death would cross the land. This indeed occurred before Moses was allowed to take his people from Egypt, where they then wandered around the desert for some time, enduring tests and trials, before God once more spoke His word by giving the Ten Commandments. Exodus also gives an account of the tabernacle and Ark of the Covenant, cornerstones of the new Jewish arena established after deliverance from the wilderness (Barker, 1985, pp. 67-9, 88-144).

[106] refer to p. 75 of this paper.

This modern man, this creature, this god, sheds his clothes like skin in renewal and growth, as a purging of the old and a transformation to the new, just as the snake sheds its skin. His "Indian eyes" refer not only to vision, but to shamanic vision and the Nile calls up not only Africa and its insects, which are elsewhere present as swarms, but also water. The air is the domain of insects and birds and as the opposite of water, strikes the balance between the symbolic and the semiotic. Indeed, the air is the realm of the gods, and "[f]rom the air we trapped gods, with the gods' omniscient gaze, but without their power to be inside minds and cities as they fly above" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 11).

Elsewhere the visionary, the re-connected individual, appears again:

> I am a guide to the labyrinth
> ….
> I will show you the girl of the ghetto
> I will show you the burning well
> I will show you strange people
> haunted, beast-like, on the
> verge of evolution
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 84).

Where the oracle is met with in the arena, the balance in which she is centred is presented in the co-existing opposite conditions of her material poverty and her spiritual wealth. Though young, and thereby implicitly fecund, this woman is also oracle, she is the "sacred beast", the lizard woman, her "hut" is the cave, and the man who seeks her out is one of the young offspring, the generation seeking reconnection:

> The wild dog
> The sacred beast
>
> Find her!
>
> He goes to see the girl
> of the ghetto.
> Dark savage streets.
> A hut, lighted by candle.
> She is magician
> Female prophet
> Sorceress
> Dressed in the past
> All arrayed.
>
> The stars
> The moon

> She reads the future
> in your hand
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, pp. 12-3).

The way to get to her is dark, violent, and lit by fire. Her mantle is an awareness of the past, her power the reading of the future, and that future is held within the hands. The hands are the seat of vision of a different order to the eyes. When the blind utilise Braille to read, the word is read by the hands. The law of the symbolic comes to the blind not by vision, but by touch, the hands linking the symbolic and semiotic, indeed, vision and desire.

As the means by which the individual may touch another body, hands mark the path back to the mother. The words of the oracle come forth from the feminine province of the stars and the moon to show this man his future. His hands, through touch, are literally his future. When vision seizes the object, it remains object. But when touch is engaged under the condition and “cause” of desire, as differentiated from the condition of “need”, then subject and object are transcended through participation ("The signification of the phallus", Lacan, 1977, p. 287):

> [T]he caress reveals the flesh by stripping the body of its action, by cutting it off from the possibilities which surround it; the caress is designed to uncover the web of inertia beneath the action – i.e., the pure “being-there” – which sustains it (Sartre, 1956, p. 507).

Compare this with Morrison:

> - What is connection?
>
> - When 2 motions, thought
> to be infinite & mutually
> exclusive, meet in a
> moment.
>
> - Of Time?
>
> - Yes.
>
> - Time does not exist.
> there is no time
>
> ("The Connectors", Courson et al., 1988, p. 120).

Returning to Morrison's "girl of the ghetto" who "reads the future/ in your hand," this passage from *The New Creatures* is located between two other sections of text that make reference to hands. But Morrison has posited her between damaged hands as if she were the sacrificed god in a trinity of the crucified:

> Mangled hands
> Tales of the Old Days
> Discovery of the Sacred Pool
> changes
> mute-handed stillness baby cry
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 12).

Damaged hands, cannot touch, they cannot connect. The "Sacred Pool" is the fluid world of connection, it is the harmonious realm of the goddess where man is in accord with nature. It is the world damaged in the "Old Days" when the Spanish arrived "near the tranquil women./ Startling obedience from the pool people."[107]

Damaged hands are the symptom of disconnection, they are the means by which the symbolic law will keep its control and prevent the sought after re-entry to the garden, to the "town of my birth"[108]. If the hands can be damaged in the infant, that infant will be altogether stopped from finding the reconnection that will later be actively sought when the overriding rule of the symbolic alone is understood to be *not enough*. Blake warns "[s]ooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires" (Bloom & Trilling, 1973) and Morrison demonstrates with his wolves that roam both the arena and the wilderness what happens when desire for connection with the mother is denied.

These hands are in a very real sense mute, the voice they had through touch, the communication they made between bodies, no more now than an echo in the mind that cannot be heard - absolute disconnection:

> Blood! screams her brain
> as they chop off her fingers
> ("Peace Frog", Courson et al., 1990, p. 110).

Just as the blood is the life and the severed fingers bleed, so too does the mother when she births her child and so too does the crucified god:

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[107] refer to p. 75 of this paper.
[108] refer to p. 103 of this paper.

> I don't dig what they did
> to that girl
> Mercy pack
> Wild song they sing
> As they chop her hands
> Nailed to a ghost
> Tree
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 15).

Already posited as the offspring of the symbolic that are cut off from, or at the least have not yet found their way back to, the mother, the howling dogs here hunt and sacrifice the very means by which they might have been saved when they crucify the girl, that is the woman, the future mother. Is it that the fear of a future to come, fear of the touch *from* and their reciprocal caress *of* the mother, what motivates the pack to rally together? As Nietzsche states, "the strongest and most fortunate are weak when opposed by organized herd instincts, by the timidity of the weak, by the vast majority" ("685 (March-June 1888)", 1968, p. 364), that is, the organised pack.

Surrounded by these damaged hands dwells the oracle, her visionary power, her location in the cave and her mother's body the means by which the individual can be delivered from the terrible fate of isolation as nothing in the symbolic order of the conflict of opposites in a sea of objects.

Further to this, the body itself translates into the hand. The import of touch and connection, the need for flesh to be realised is expressed, and the sexual act itself a revelation of this, is security found in familiarity of location in the body of woman:

> Her cunt gripped him
> like a warm friendly
> hand
> ("An American Prayer", Courson et al., 1990, p. 12).

As Lacan says, and Morrison affirms, "[t]he phallus is the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the logos is joined with the advent of desire" ("The signification of the phallus", 1977, p. 287).

When the body of woman is at a distance, Morrison also recognises its isolation as it waits on the threshold for connection in order to be rescued and transcend. The candle's flame, a pilot light of the phoenix to come:

> She looked so sad in sleep
> Like a friendly hand
> just out of reach
> A candle stranded on
> a beach
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 62).

With the reconnection posited in touch, the peristaltic sexual connection is equivalent to the work of the alchemist:

> The alchemists detect in the sexual activity of man a correspondence with the world's creation, with the growth of plants, and with mineral formations. When they see the union of rain and earth, they see it in an erotic sense, as copulation. And this extends to all natural realms of matter. For they can picture love affairs of chemicals and stars, a romance of stones, of the fertility of fire (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 29).

The mineral formations occur within the body of the earth, within caves, and the link can be drawn back to Morrison's "serpentine caves" and the universal snake. As Morrison affirms elsewhere, "[l]et's recreate the world./ The palace of conception is burning" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 11). Sexual activity is a microcosm of universal creation and growth, connection to the natural world and the natural impulse of and for life. Two blend to make a new thing and this transformation is the creation of the philosopher's stone (Abraham, 1998, p. 146). Sexual activity is a catalyst, a threshold, a dance of bodies which brings the participant closer to the natural order from which his symbolic vision had cut him off.

> Sisters of the unicorn, dance
> Sisters & brothers of Pyramid
> Dance
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 12).

The unicorn is a variant of the horse and this passage calls the offspring to dance, to engage in participation. The brothers and sisters are linked to Africa and to South America by the pyramid and even though Morrison is drawing on implicit stereotyping, this locates the dance back to the beginnings of civilisation and cities, the first arenas, the first gardens. The Aztec is in the New World, a builder of cities whose king, like Oedipus, has also wandered the wilderness and faced thresholds of death and sex:

> Call out of the Wilderness
> Call out of fever, receiving

> the wet dreams of an Aztec King
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 4).

In linking the Oedipal participation with life to the Aztec, Morrison draws the cycle up through history and across continents, spans generations of living and dying to bring it into the modern arena where:

> I received an Aztec wall
> of vision
> & dissolved my room in
> Sweet derision
> Closed my eyes, prepared to go
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 77).

Returning to "Jamaica", where blind Oedipus is located as leaving the arena, Morrison presents a startling statement. Underlined, capitalised, and framed, "-Walking on the Water-" (Courson et al., 1988, p. 154) is something to take notice of. Water is ever present across the mythography, its roles and variants numerous and its fundamental importance irrefutable. Tucked away in this one statement is the key to crossing the threshold.

If water, and by implication fluid, translates to the subconscious, then walking upon it is walking on the semiotic foundation, as a man, as one whose symbolic law is informed by this foundation. In the realm of the law alone, logic would dictate that to walk on water is impossible, that it would take a miracle to do so, the individual who would attempt such a thing would sink, would drown and die and it is the fear of death which stops the attempt. The mind and vision are already geared to the apparently immutable belief that water can not be walked on. But it is the water of the sea,[109] of the subconscious, of the womb of the mother, the body of the earth, in short – the waters of life that sustain.

[109] Further to this image, the Sargassum weed, as noted on p. 88 of this paper, floats (walks) on the surface of the Sargasso Sea and supports a community of its own. "It is not as Columbus thought, and indeed as was believed for many centuries, torn from the seabed but is a self-perpetuating plant, a permanent native of the ocean. Small crabs and other simple forms of animal life live in it" (Bradford, 1973, p. 104).

In the biblical story of Jesus walking on water, it is the account written in the Book of Matthew which adds an interesting dimension.[110] When Jesus is seen walking on the water towards the boat that carries his disciples, Peter gets out of the boat and fixing his vision on Jesus, walks on the water also. But when Peter hesitates, when he looks down and that same vision tells him this is an act which should not be, in his fear he begins to sink, until *reaching out his hand*, Jesus guides him back to the boat (14: 22-33, Barker, 1985, pp. 1463-4). When vision is focused on something other than the limited notion, the possibility is infinite. And of course this image also connects the necessity for touch with the crucified god. Morrison tells us that "[w]e are obsessed with heroes who live for us and whom we punish" (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 9), we look to others to save us.

The point he is making is that the individual must take responsibility for himself. The mythography draws itself to the position that each should be self-responsible and not look to crucifying and making martyr of another. Referring back to Blake, "when the doors of perception are cleansed", when symbolic vision is transformed by suffering and through sex and death, the semiotic vision can be restored. Rather than conflict between these two apparent opposites there is symbiosis. In this, each individual is his own hero and his own crucified god, the alchemical journey becomes one of personal and active participation rather than something that is viewed from the safety of distance and disconnection. "Our objective essence implies the existence of the Other, and conversely it is the Other's freedom which founds our essence. If we could manage to interiorize the whole system, we should be our own foundation" (Sartre, 1956, p. 484):

> I can make the earth stop in
> its tracks. I made the
> blue cars go away.
>
> I can make myself invisible or small.
> I can become gigantic & reach the
> farthest thing. I can change
> the course of nature.
> I can place myself anywhere in
> space or time.
> I can summon the dead.

[110] Three of the four gospels give an account of Jesus walking on water, but only Matthew also speaks of Peter also walking on water. The accounts are given in Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:16-21 (Barker, 1985, pp. 1463-4, 1506, 1606).

> I can perceive events on other worlds,
> in my deepest inner mind,
> & in the minds of others.
>
> I can
>
> I am
> ("Power", Courson et al., 1988, p. 13).

To cling to the oracle for guiding vision, to pin all responsibility for the future on some other, is equivalent to the crime of Nietzsche's pale criminal in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* who had the courage of the knife, but not the blood (Kaufmann, 1954, pp. 150-1). In the end, "I am a railing by the torrent: let those who can, grasp me! Your crutch, however, I am not" (Kaufmann, 1954, p. 152). It is the individual taking responsibility for himself that he may find a way back to what was lost, and this is the return to Eden, the triumphant re-entry into the original arena, in short, the source.

At the death of Oedipus in the wilderness, the oracle speaks the words of the god Apollo once more. In death, there will be abundance and renewal:

> The oracle which once had spoken terrible words to him
> comforted him when he was dying. Apollo promised that he,
> the disgraced, the homeless wanderer, would bring to the place
> where his grave should be a mysterious blessing from the gods.
> Theseus, the King of Athens, received him with all honor, and
> the old man died rejoicing that he was no longer hateful to men,
> but welcomed as a benefactor to the land that harboured him
> (Hamilton, 1969, p. 274).

This is a vindication of Oedipus, this is where, without fear, the path is forged and freedom is found. This is a cleansing of the doors and a passing through, and significantly his daughters, the next generation of mothers, are with him when he crosses this threshold. The *eternal-unending*, that which transcends the field of time and space, the uroboros. Oedipus enters the arena of Athens.

In the arena the father as king is the one who rules by his word. He is the one who protects. The mother is seated at the centre of the arena, at the centre of the garden, the *axis mundi* of the turning wheel of life. The father as king and the mother as the

body of the arena of the earth are captured within this landscape and truly the king and the land are one:

> We're kept out of the Garden by our own fear and desire in relation to what we think to be the goods of our life…. You go past fear and desire, past the pairs of opposites.
> MOYERS: Into harmony?
> CAMPBELL: Into Transcendence. This is an essential experience of any mystical realization. You die to your flesh and are born into your spirit. You identify yourself with the consciousness and life of which your body is but the vehicle. You die to the vehicle and become identified in your consciousness with that of which the vehicle is the carrier. That is the God….
> MOYERS: That death is life, and life is death, and that the two are in accord?
> CAMPBELL: That you have to balance between death and life – they are two aspects of the same thing, which is being, becoming
> (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, pp. 107-8).

Significantly, the journey has followed the path of the sun, from east to west. Across the sea, across the land to come to rest in LA, Morrison brings his vision to stand at the water's edge where children play on the beach (Morrison, 1969/1985, p. 11), where "a child's sand boat [is] facing the sun"(Courson et al., 1988, p. 14):

> A vast radiant beach & a cool
> jewelled moon. Couples naked
> race down by its quiet side &
> we laugh like soft mad children
> (Courson et al., 1988, p. 136).

The west is the threshold between day and night and their corresponding rulers of sun and moon, male and female, symbolic and semiotic. This is where people gather on the beach, some hesitate, some play it safe, some race towards the sea.[111] This is where the children play, where laughter is heard, the joy of the experience of life.

Adding to this further, it is also useful to consider commentary made regarding Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. While at its root the term innocence means "harmlessness," by further extraction and implication it also means a lack of guilt or tie to what is sinful. Blake took the view that Innocence could be either "organised" or "unorganised," that "'[i]nnocence dwells with Wisdom, but

[111] refer to p. 26 of this paper.

never with Ignorance.' Since Innocence and Experience are states of the soul through which we pass, neither is a finality, both are necessary, and neither is wholly preferable to the other" (Bloom & Trilling, 1973, pp. 17-8). It is Blake's Post-Experience Innocence that Morrison posits here with clarity, the return not to exactly where the individual had come from, but rather to an acceptance of the world "just as it [infinitely] is."[112] Like Shakespeare's actors on a stage[113] the return is met with, and:

> The form is an angel of soul
> from horse to man to boy
> & back again
> (Courson et al., 1990, p. 34).

The doors are cleansed. The threshold can be crossed. The return to Innocence is possible:

> This we know
> that all are free
> in the school-made
> text of the unforgiven
>
> deceit smiles
> incredible hardships are suffered
> by those barely able
> to endure
>
> but all will pass
> lie down in green grass
> & smile, & muse, & gaze
> upon her smooth
> resemblance
> to the mating-Queen
> who it seems
> is in love
> w/ the horseman
>
> now isn't that fragrant
> Sir, isn't that knowing
> w/ a wayward careless
> backward glance
> (Morrison, 1970/1985, p. 30).

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[112] refer to p. 33 of this paper.
[113] refer to p. 60 of this paper.

CONCLUSION:

Morrison's use of the Oedipal myth is one of transformation in which by rewriting it in his own voice, he invests it with a pagan interpretation of unity with the goddess and the earth, as they are embodied in the image of the mother and indeed woman. For Morrison, death is no thing to be feared, but rather a threshold of growth, and the quest for that, as is the quest for any threshold, is indeed also the quest of self and to *know* that self. In short, his mythography is a positive affirmation of life, and supports the Oedipal quest in this way, rather than the traditional Christianised reading of the myth as one of evil, murder and incest, as a guilt-ridden tale of shame and the negation of life. Using the Oedipal foundation opens up interpretation by Morrison of the given as reversed, and the apparently antithetical nature of human life is explored and expressed by him in a way that engages the necessity of death and sex as core functions of the human experience.

He attempts and successfully manages to make relevant inherited mythic traditions within his culture for seeking, and having, as Campbell asserts, the *experience* of life. Further to this he demonstrates not only relevance to the modern landscape, but a panorama of traditions that, rather than conflict, blend to complement one another in a holistic world view.

Archetype and myth, some thousands of years old, are transported into modern language and settings, to retain, or perhaps more specifically resurrect their relevance, demonstrating a set of principles which appear to be eternal in as much as they have been the concern of successive waves of cultures and generations for recorded history. Morrison's mythography remains accessible in the modern landscape, and perhaps increasingly so as human consciousness appears to now be searching beyond its cities and civilisations for meaning and reason. Consciousness is walking back out into the wilderness. The question need be asked if it has ever stopped doing this, and it would appear that on the whole Morrison's mythography supports the answer as "no".

He explores the antithetical nature of human life, indeed of existence, in the world. The creed addresses, and seeks an answer to, the anguish that *only in isolation is*

freedom found, but only in connection can transcendence be realised. Through vision and desire, as it is expressed in touch, Morrison seeks to define the world of the individual. His heroic quest is the quest to reunite the symbolic order of law with the semiotic foundation of the source in order that transcendence of the field of time and space might be attained.

From this mythos, there opens a space which can be filled with a divinity that bears the relevance once possessed by the vacating deity, and the *how to live beyond the death of god* is offered as a real possibility. Indeed, Blake's assertion regarding the "doors of perception" holds true, and is the key to much in Morrison's mythography which has at times appeared, at its best, dark and negative, and at its worst, obscure. He clearly demonstrates the proposition that when the symbolic and the semiotic are in accord, the male and female, the light and dark, living and dying, then transcendence *is*. This is a statement of bliss, this is Sat Chit Ananda:

> Now I came to this idea of bliss because in Sanskrit, which is the great spiritual language of the world, there are three terms that represent the brink, the jumping-off place to the ocean of transcendence: *Sat, Chit, Ananda*. The word *"Sat"* means being. *"Chit"* means consciousness. *"Ananda"* means bliss or rapture
> (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 120).

Morrison firmly asserts that the injured one becomes savior, and then, each individual is responsible for their own freedom and their own heroic quest, framed by the experience *of* and participation *in* life. It is the responsibility of the individual to not only *see* the world in which he is cast, but also in active participation *touch* the divine, he can regain the connection that was lost. Ultimately, this will be sought under the shadow of the ever-present contingency of death, but Morrison posits a strong argument for the possibility of transcendence *now*, in this divine moment, as in the next and the next, in continuum without beginning or end.

Indeed the transformation of the injured to the Lizard King[114] is this transcendence, he lives beyond the death of God, he lives in affirmation of the divinity within and acceptance for making the world *as it is*:

> I'll never look into your eye again.

[114] refer to p. 103 of this paper.

> Can you picture what will be,
> so limitless and free
> ….
> This is the end
> ("The End," Courson et al., 1990, pp. 111-3).

And so, it begins again.

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