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EXPLORING A NEW MODEL OF TIME, THE LABYRINTH

THESIS

The Honors Program

St. John's University / College of St. Benedict

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Distinction "All College Honors"
and the Degree Bachelor of Arts
in the Department of English**

BY

BEN LINDQUIST

MAY 1997

EXPLORING A NEW MODEL FOR TIME, THE LABYRINTH

HONORS THESIS

ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE OF ST. BENEDICT

BY

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MAY 1997

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I. An Exploration of a New Model for Time

The Watch

After four hours of constantly blinking, zoning, and nodding through classes, you slouch into your room, throw down your backpack, and collapse onto the couch at 4:30 in the afternoon. You spend all of your energy opening the fridge, grabbing a beer, and tapping it. Lifting the bottle to your lips, you greedily drink down the cold foaming liquid in huge swallows which overflow your mouth and froth down your chin. Tossing the empty bottle at the garbage can, you lean back and close your eyes for a nap.

You lie there for a few minutes waiting for the haze of unconsciousness to creep over you. However, unused muscles send shivers of energy up your legs. You attempt to shake them into silence, but they only twitch and cry for exercise, ruining any chance that you could sink into a slumber. You decide to go for a walk in the forest near your dorm. After the long winter, spring rains are dampening the earth, and green is starting to burst into life. You have been meaning to get out into the forest, but you just haven't made time to go. The solitude of the woods calls, but you have been overwhelmed by so many responsibilities that you have not been able to escape for months.

You sluggishly put on your sweats and running shoes. After digging out your watch from under papers on your cluttered desk, you put it on so that you will remember to catch the 5:45 bus to go see your girlfriend. After this preparation, you saunter outside and begin to walk towards the nearest path. Within a few strides, the chill of the wet air and the smell of nature exorcize the sluggishness from your body.

Feeling renewed, you take off in a loping jog down a path towards Lake Watab. Stored up energy courses through your veins, and you crash through crowding branches and jump fallen trunks. A smile lights up your face as you smell fallen leaves layered on the path and see them giving way to grass sprouting everywhere. Drizzle wets your face, and you feel alive.

However, with a pounding that resonates in your head, your heart protests, and you roll to a halt, breathing heavily. Sweat gathers on your neck and begins running down your back. Pulling off your sweatshirt, you tie it around your waist, and you remove your watch from your clammy wrist so the leather band will not be damaged. You glance down at the watch. It is 4:50, and you have plenty of time before you have to catch the bus. The watch flashes at you with its bright silver face. You think of your girlfriend who gave it to you for Christmas. It is a classy collector's watch, and you really like it because it matches your image, maybe a little too perfectly. After a few moments, you carelessly stuff the watch in your pocket so it will stay dry, and you won't glance at it every five minutes.

Your muscles, now coursing with fresh blood, are ready for an earnest workout, and you take off again running. Energized, you stay on the trails around the lake for a while, and then you break off onto the natural, twisting paths of the woods. You run heavily at first, but then you notice your clumsy stride and begin to step carefully, running in long, graceful strides. Feeling like a deer bounding through the forest, you continue deeper and deeper. Suddenly, you emerge on a new trail, and you pull up. You wonder what the time is, so you reach into your pocket to pull out your watch. The watch is gone. You search everywhere on your body, and carefully scan the ground around you. Sure now that you have lost the watch, you retrace your steps as best you can. Following faint footprints and slight markings evident now and again, you return

all the way to the beginning of the trail without finding the watch. Feeling the deer leave your body to bound elsewhere, you fight an anger which seeks to blame the loss of the watch on anything that resounds in your mind.

Maybe you can blame it on the watch company. If you write and tell them the watch broke somehow and fell off your wrist, they might replace it. No, it's not their fault, it's your girlfriend's fault...she gave you the damn watch anyway. Deep down, you know it's your fault for being so careless with it.

Spare time is gone, and you have to catch the 5:45 bus or your girlfriend will be disappointed. The whole time, you sense that the watch is destroying the freedom you once felt in the forest, but you keep this idea out of your thoughts as much as possible. Once more tracing your steps, you return all the way to where you stopped on the new trail. You still haven't found your watch, though, and you are angry that you have spent your whole walk bound to time. However, the bus and your girlfriend call, and you can't be late. You take off for your dorm at a quick pace, and you barely make the bus for St. Ben's in time. As you catch your breath and settle down for the bus trip, you wonder, was losing the watch an accident?

.....

I wrote this short piece for my Advanced Writing course with Pat McDarby last academic year. As is evident in the story, I was struggling with the constraints of Time in my life. Resistance to Time continued to nag me all of last year, and I began to feel deeply that, although some of my difficulties arise from my desire to procrastinate and my poor time-management skills, our current understanding of Time is an inadequate system.

In the spring of last year, I found out that I shared this common struggle for a new

relationship to Time with several contemporary authors. In my encounter with these authors, such as Gabriel Marquez, Salmon Rushdie, Feodor Dostoevsky, Knut Hamsun, and Jorge Luis Borges, I was immediately intrigued by the way they seemed to struggle with Time in their works. As my struggle continued, I focused my struggle with Time around the works of Borges.

Jorge Luis Borges was born in 1899 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He spent much of his life there, though he traveled extensively outside of its borders, and though the people who inspire his writings are truly an international assortment. Many critics speculate that Borges is most strongly influenced by many figures and writings of the Western tradition, and Borges himself frequently refers to figures, mainstream or obscure, in his various stories. For most of his life, Borges also seemed to maintain a distinct separation from other Argentinean or South American writers, and, until he became popular worldwide, he seems to have been largely unrecognized by his own people.

After only a shallow exploration of Borges, it is evident that he is exceedingly well-read, and his work seems to suggest layers of insight into human existence on a diverse range of topics. If there was any common trademark in his work, it was that Borges wrote to point out the inconsistencies and chaos in human understanding of existence. He did this through extremely complex pieces which artfully dance on the edge between fact and extreme fiction, playing each off the other until the reader cannot tell them apart. Through these tightly woven, brief stories, Borges develops, among others, two themes which I will be exploring in this thesis.

First, Borges picks apart our understanding of Time and suggests an alternative way of relating to it. This resistance to Time present in many of Borges' stories has fueled the fire for

my own pursuit of a new relationship to Time. For this reason, the work of Borges are the foundation for this thesis, and I will explore several of his works in various forms during this study. However, though Borges is the source for this endeavor, his works are fragmented and limited in that they suggest pieces and questions which often seem to be directed at creating chaos, rather than offering any clarity. I am attempting to construct these fragments and themes present in the stories of Borges and my own thoughts into a meaningful whole. This whole will depend on constructing a new model of Time.

The second idea present in the works of Borges again and again is a fascination with the Labyrinth. Borges wrote a children's book on mythical monsters describing the Minotaur in one of his earliest works. In addition, the Labyrinth is a metaphor present in the poetry and short stories Borges wrote throughout his career. In a recent collection of Borges' work, Labyrinths, many of the short stories abound with fantastic explorations of Time and the Labyrinth. These explorations loosely link Time to the Labyrinth, but the relationship is curious, playful, and very unclear. I am hoping to pull together the fragments in several of Borges' stories, and add them to a careful, historical understanding of the Labyrinth which embraces the myth of the Labyrinth as well as the Minoan civilization at the roots of the myth. This exploration can become part of a cohesive whole, so that I can present Time in the new model of the Labyrinth alongside Time in the ingrained, linear model.

I want to be explicit in separating this study from the works of Borges because, though they are integrally related, Borges did not, in any of my research, indicate a connection between Time and the Labyrinth. Borges plays with the Labyrinth as a metaphor for existence, but he does not attempt to make the Labyrinth a concrete model for Time. My understanding of the

Labyrinth as a concrete model has powerful implications for human life.

This thesis is a concerted effort to realize the influence of Time in our lives and to stop being bound so closely to its passage. Instead, I want to look at Time as a complex system which is understood through different models. By identifying and exploring Time in different forms, I can begin to use it to free my life for a fuller existence. The central argument which drives this paper is: *If we recognize the understood model for Time as a linear continuum, we can give Time a new shape, the Labyrinth, which will transform it into a system which helps us re-focus our lives around the center of our existence -- God.*

To make this thesis palatable, I will clarify several terms within it. First, when I speak for “we,” I am speaking for all people who live by the linear continuum of Time. I believe that “we,” particularly in cultures with Western roots (American, European, etc.), are completely immersed in the linear model for Time as an unquestioned force in our lives. Other cultures may not live in the linear model so completely, and so I do not include them in “we.” However, the Western lifestyle is being exported at a tremendous rate, and other cultures that may have lived by other models for Time are quickly being assimilated into the linear.

Also, for the purposes of this study, I will define “God” initially as the divine presence felt in Nature. By this definition, I mean that “God” is a title which is inclusive of Nature, of which humans are but one part. I will often link the term Nature with the term “environment,” meaning the external world of Nature around us, including plants, animals, and the nonliving universe. This definition excludes human-made structures or devices. I define God in this way because I want to distance myself from a common belief which tends to limit God to one being among beings. I firmly believe that God is not limited to a being in the way that we humans

would call one another beings. Our attempts to define God in this way reduce the divine mystery of God to a human level which is quite restrictive.

In the search to focus my life around God and to reshape human understandings of Time, I am seeking to know Time and God as forces that transcend religions (specifically Christianity) and culture, though their meaning is deeply rooted in both. I want to redefine God in relationship with the new model for Time, and then set the word back into its immense context of religions and cultures. This will create a friction between God as an inclusive model that transcends any one identify as person, and God as a being with thousands of years of history, a person (God in the Trinity as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) with human thoughts and emotions.

I have an intense respect for even the use of the term 'God,' and I want to progress and prepare for the term. For this reason, I will not use the word 'God' immediately, except in this explanation. Through respecting God in this way, I am hoping to keep the word and its meaning sacred. I don't believe that calling the divine presence felt in the environment God is somehow de-sanctifying the word, but I also want to avoid the danger that this definition could isolate God from beings in a way that is harmful.

This task of separating God from all of religious history is a stretch, because I myself choose the title for personal, religious, and cultural reasons. A struggling Christian, I have sought out a way of relating to God throughout my life thus far, and this thesis represents a breakthrough in this search. The very use of the word God, instead of Gods, begins to define God in my own narrow sense. Nevertheless, through my exploration, I hope to accomplish this task of building a new relationship to Time and to God that will break through the barriers of my

own previous notions of God.

II. "A New Refutation of Time"

"I deny the existence of one single time, in which all things are linked as in a chain...each moment we live exists, but not their imaginary combination," ("A New Refutation of Time" 222-223) writes Jorge Luis Borges. In his essay, "A New Refutation of Time," Borges denies that Time exists by tracing a conversation between various historical figures which he illustrates with elegant examples. Borges' aim in the argument is to refute Time entirely. However, I believe that Borges does not refute Time, though he does point out some fundamental flaws in the linear continuum of Time as a model. Borges' dismissal of the linear model does leave a great deal of upheaval in our understanding of Time, and I believe that upheaval is an opportunity for a more meaningful, new model of Time. I will begin by examining the basic logic of Borges' argument in the essay, complete with one of his examples. In this way, I can identify and critique the linear continuum as a model before turning to a different model, the Labyrinth.

Borges begins the essay by identifying and immersing his argument in a complex conversation between notable philosophers, scientists, and other assorted thinkers who are arguing about the nature of existence. The argument is over whether or not anything, be it matter or spirit, exists apart from the human perception of it. Borges quotes Berkeley, who writes,

all the choirs of heaven and furniture of the earth, in a word all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any substance without a mind, that their being is to be perceived or known; that consequently so long as they are not actually perceived by me, or do not exist in any mind or that or any other

created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, or else subsist in the mind of some eternal spirit. (219)

Borges follows this dialogue through the specific subjects of matter and spirit, and he extends the conversation to Time.

After locating the existence of matter and spirit in the mind, Borges, by stretching the conversation to Time, establishes Time within the mind as well. Borges reasons, “Both [Berkeley and Hume] affirm the existence of time: for Berkeley, it is ‘the succession of ideas in my mind, which flows uniformly, and is participated in by all beings;...for Hume, ‘a succession of indivisible moments’ (221). If indeed Time is the succession of indivisible ideas or moments in the mind, as Hume and Berkeley both argue, then it does exist in the mind.

After locating Time within the mind’s perceptions, Borges explores the chaos of the mind. He states,

I have accumulated transcriptions...I have abounded in their canonical passages, I have been reiterative and explicit...so that my reader may begin to penetrate into this unstable world of the mind. A world of evanescent impressions, a world without matter or spirit, neither objective nor subjective, a world without the ideal architecture of space; a world made of time, of the absolute uniform time of the *Principia*; a tireless labyrinth, a chaos, a dream. (“A New Refutation of Time” 221)

In this passage, Borges focuses on the “unstable world” of the mind, after locating the central dialogue about the existence of Time within the perceptions of the mind.

After he has raised doubt as to whether or not the mind is capable of grounding any

objective structure, Borges gives an example which convinces his reader that linear Time does not exist in the mind. This example is grounded in a personal experience. Borges remembers, "Above the turbid and chaotic earth, a rose-colored wall seemed not to house the moonlight, but rather to effuse an intimate light of its own" ("A New Refutation of Time" 226). As he observed this scene, Borges realized that he had been in that very spot where he stood many years before. That realization struck him, because the scene fit his memory exactly. He recounts,

I kept looking at this simplicity. I thought, surely out loud: This is the same as thirty years ago...I conjectured the date...The easy thought "I am in the eighteen nineties" ceased to be a few approximate words and was deepened into reality. I felt dead, I felt an abstract spectator of the world; I do not think that I had returned upstream on the supposed waters of Time; rather I suspected that I was the possessor of a reticent or absent sense of the inconceivable word *eternity*. Only later was I able to define that imagination. ("A New Refutation of Time" 226)

In that moment, Borges realized that the exact connection between the scene he was observing and his memory was not merely an illusion. The present observation did match his memory, and so Borges was living in both past abstraction and present reality through his mind's connection of them.

Borges, in that realization, broke down the continuum of indivisible moments in the mind. He realized that the distinction between past and present does not exist in the mind with any absolute certainty. All of our present memories are abstractions of the past. Thus, Borges is able to conclude that the past is only part of the present within the mind. From this viewpoint, linear Time no longer exists as a continuous chain of events, because the past doesn't exist except

through the perceptions of each human mind. Borges asserts,

The pure representation of homogenous objects-- the night in serenity, a limpid little wall...the elemental earth-- is not merely identical to the one present on that corner many years ago; it is, without resemblances or repetitions, the very same. Time, if we can intuitively grasp such an identity, is a delusion; the difference and inseparability of one moment belonging to its apparent past from another belonging to its apparent present is sufficient to disintegrate it" ("The New Refutation of Time" 227).

This passage is the core of Borges' argument, and I believe it is successful in revealing that Time as a linear continuum is flawed. Our minds discriminate between past and present in various ways, and that discrimination, Borges asserts, is an arbitrary distinction. This means, to Borges, that Time is not a tangible thing; Time is merely a product of the mind. Time is a structure that does not exist outside the mind's awareness of it.

If we let go of the linear continuum as the only model for Time, Borges leaves us with an unsure concept of Time that is abstract and fragmented. Borges intentionally leaves this chaos. He claims,

Each moment is autonomous. Neither vengeance nor pardon nor prisons nor even oblivion can modify the invulnerable past. To me, hope and fear seem no less vain, for they always refer to future events: that is, to events that will not happen to us, who are the minutely detailed present. I am told that the present, the specious present of the psychologists, lasts from a few seconds to a minute fraction of a second; that can be the duration of the history of the universe. In

other words, there is not such history...each moment we live exists, but not their imaginary combination. (“A New Refutation of Time” 223)

The human mind is a jumble of perceptions which are not ordered in a linear strand with any certainty. Instead, Borges points out, our minds are a complex upheaval of various combinations of memories of the past, experiences of the present, and hopes for the future. These memories and hopes do not exist in the past and future; they only exist in our present minds.

.....

Borges, in the work I have just retold, seeks to discount Time through a clear argument. First, he identifies Time as a continuous, linear stream of moments. Second, he locates the existence of Time in the consciousness of the mind. Third, he calls into question the clarity and order of the mind. Fourth, he pulls apart the mind’s continuum of Time, as illustrated in a personal example. Finally, he generalizes that, because the linear model for Time does not exist in the mind, he has disproved it.

This argument is elegantly constructed, but I disagree with Borges’ conclusion. I do not think that he has disproved Time, but I do think that he has proven that the linear model is inadequate in crucial respects. However, without the linear continuum, Borges leaves no model to replace our understanding of Time. By proving that the linear continuum of Time is faulty, Borges creates upheaval in a system we do not generally question.

III. The Linear Continuum of Time

The dominant understanding of Time in Western societies is the linear continuum. The linear continuum, if unclear, is the model for Time which places everything on a single strand

extending from past to present to future. All that we claim to know about the history of the universe since the Big Bang or before until the present moment is part of this linear continuum. This linear understanding of Time, in our daily lives, is simple and easily grasped. Clocks and calendars measure its passage in constant, even increments. International time zones relate the continuum of time to all locations on the earth's surface. Most of us, in our everyday lives, wake up, spend our day, and go to bed based on the passage of linear Time. These constant reminders of a linear continuum direct our lives, and they make linear Time appear to be a force which operates outside of our minds. However, the linear model is not the only way of knowing Time, and, after assessing its strengths and weaknesses, I will present another possibility.

The linear model for Time which I have identified has several notable strengths. First, the linear continuum is extremely simple, in that it sets everything we experience in existence on one strand of continuous moments. This system is orderly and easy to grasp. However, the linear system does not take into account any of the uncertainties or chaos which Borges explores in "A New Refutation of Time."

A second and related strength of the linear model is that it seems to be absolute and consistent in its progression. We can track the linear model on our watches and calendars. We can use it as a concrete system for measuring the passing of Time in our lives. The linear system does not, in our conditioned understanding of it, have any deviations or inconsistencies.

A third strength of the linear model is that it serves as the firm foundation for many of our needs. For instance, the linear model allows each of us to organize our day by the hour, and even the minute. It gives us a very simple approach to many needs, such as setting and keeping appointments. Also, the linear system is necessary for such systems as international travel. By

using the linear model as the basis for time zones around the world, we have made commercial air or water travel much more accountable and efficient. Here in Minnesota, we can even change linear time in spring and fall with daylight savings, which allows us to maximize the natural light of the sun in our most active periods of the day.

Beyond its strengths, the linear continuum also several, crucial limitations. Exploring the linear model as a *model* and not as the only system makes it possible to see these limitations.

One of the strengths of the linear model is, as I said earlier, its simplicity. However, this simplicity is also a weakness because a single strand of Time is a terribly rigid and simple approach to an existence that is extremely complex. In the linear strand, everything that has happened before my life is now in the past, and that restriction to the past removes it from my present experience. I could deny this separation of the past imposed by the linear model, but I am only denying the limits of the model.

Examples of this limitation within the linear model lie all around us. For instance, several of my family members, including my mother and grandfather, have died. Instead of believing that I can still relate to them, the linear model relegates these valuable people who have been so influential in my life to the past, and I have to overcome this separation to the past in order to consider myself in relationship to these people. Somehow, my mother and grandfather are no longer a part of my present, and so I am forced to separate them from my life. I believe firmly that my mother and grandfather are alive in my life now, and they should not be distanced from my current experiences in such an absolute way. They are with me, and sometimes their influence on me is every bit as real as my present experience.

In addition to this relegation to the past, the linear model also separates people from my life

who are alive with me in the present. For instance, my father lives seventy miles away. Because he is an hour and a half away from me, the linear model would also relegate him to my past or my future experiences with him. My father, once again, is alive in me all the Time. In fact, sometimes I firmly believe he is more influential in my life when we are separated by distance than when we are talking together. The linear model does not account for this way that I can encounter my dad though we are separated by space, and this is another limitation.

In addition to fundamentally altering our relationship to other people, another limitation of the linear model for Time is that it has increasingly become removed from our experience with Nature. We structure our lives by human-made instruments such as watches, and so Time has become separated from its origins in Nature and in the human experience with Nature. Many scientists even suggest that time originated before life, with the Big Bang. Time has become a force which marches on whether or not life is aware of it. I disagree with this separation between Time, life, and the environment. Time originates in the world around us, and our awareness of the changes in Nature. For instance, we are aware of Time daily because we observe the sun rising and setting. As I will explore, we need to keep our understanding of Time rooted firmly in this core experience with Nature if we are to lead fulfilling lives.

A third weakness of the linear model is that it doesn't recognize that each of us is limited to our own perception of Time. Borges points out, in "A New Refutation of Time," that humans have a distinct consciousness within the mind which, to our knowledge, is not shared by any other forms of life. All life has some form of consciousness. Humans, animals, and plants all have an awareness of the environment. However, to our knowledge, only the human mind has a heightened consciousness which gives way to complex thought, including distinct memories and

hopes. This heightened awareness limits us to our own individual perceptions of Time and reality, though we are able to glimpse an existence beyond our own perceptions through shared experiences with one another and Nature. I cannot, in this existence, leave my perception. But, I do believe that, when we let go of our heightened consciousness for brief moments, we are able to experience a communion that transcends our individual perceptions.

A final limitation of the linear model is that it doesn't allow for any human experience with the Divine. The linear model flattens and simplifies Time so much that it is no longer a system which helps us to see the communal, the sacred, or the infinite in our experience. To see this divine aspect of our existence, we must transcend the confines of our temporal reality, and the linear model doesn't allow for this transcendence. Instead, the linear model is so oversimplified that

Time binds us to only the temporal, and so our lives have become more and more removed from a divine experience which transcends our own individual and temporal perceptions.

These limitations of the linear model are fundamentally problematic, and Borges was able to discount the linear system of Time based on these problems. By demonstrating the complexities of Time in the mind, Borges confounded the simplicity of the system, and allowed for difficulties and uncertainties which need to be addressed. To find a different notion of Time that offers solutions to these problems, we will have to seek out other models for Time.

Before I continue, I want to make it clear that I am not entirely dismissing the linear model. Nearing the conclusion of a century where the dismantling of systems has become vogue, I don't want to add Time to this fall into chaos. Instead, I believe that Time can be a powerful tool for reconstructing new possibilities for living in productive ways. However, these new

understandings of Time are just possibilities; I am not establishing *the* model. Instead, I wish to suggest that we can know Time as a force of many dimensions and possible models. Time is not limited to a rigid continuum; it is a complex system which can allow for the intricacy of human existence. To explore Time in another model, we must move beyond the linear continuum.

In fact, I couldn't even trash the linear model if I wanted to, because it undeniably influences my writing in this thesis. In "A New Refutation of Time," Borges writes,

I am not unaware that it [the title of the story] is an example of the monster termed by the logicians *contradiction in adjecto*, because stating that a refutation of time is new (or old) attributes to it a predicate of temporal nature which establishes the very notion the subject would destroy. I leave it as is, however, so that its slight mockery may prove that I do not exaggerate the importance of the verbal games. Besides, our language is so saturated and animated by time that it is quite possible there is not one statement in these pages which in some way does not demand or invoke the idea of time. (218)

Therefore, my words must continue to employ a linear concept of time even though I am exploring another model. This constant involvement of Time as a linear notion is important, because it indicates that the linear continuum can, in my view, exist within the new model for Time, the Labyrinth.

The linear continuum is a very necessary model, and this paper will be very much immersed in it, because my exploration will depend, in part, on the history of the Labyrinth from past to present. By layering that history of meaning of the Labyrinth from roots to Greek myth to contemporary understandings, I believe we can find richer meaning in the new model for Time.

By revealing all these layers of the new model, I am connecting my thoughts and the writings of Borges with countless people and many civilizations, particularly the Minoans and the Greeks.

In “A New Refutation of Time,” Borges dismissed Time as a system. In this dismissal, I disagree with Borges. Time does exist, and we have a keen sense of it through experiences with the environment, an awareness of self, and interactions with others. However, I do believe Time is not as simple, external, or concrete as we believe it to be.

For you the reader, I believe that this notion of moving beyond linear Time as we are comfortable with it may be a difficult leap to make, just as that leap is difficult for me. We all live by a notion of Time that seems very concrete and unquestionable. However, if we can just make the leap and see beyond the linear model of Time for the remainder of this thesis, the freedoms beyond are powerful and eye-opening.

For this thesis, then, I am asking a leap of faith from the reader. You must leave behind the linear continuum of Time to explore another model. This will allow for us to seek new and enlightening ways to live. I do not, in this effort, expect the reader to give up linear Time indefinitely. In fact, as I pointed out earlier, I believe that this model for Time is still very valuable. However, to fully appreciate Time, we must relinquish its control over us. Please take this leap with me.

IV. The Labyrinth - An Intriguing Model

Sarah loved the imaginary world ruled by the goblin king in her books, and she was captivated by the creatures of that realm: giants, hobgoblins, and talking door knockers. The stories provided her an escape from the cruel, ‘real’ world where her parents forced her to stay

home and baby-sit her little brother who was a constant annoyance. One night, in a fit of anger at her brother, Sarah prayed to the goblin king to take him away. Taking his opportunity, the king of the goblins, Jareth, leaped from the imaginary world of Sarah's dreams into her reality and stole her brother away into the goblin realm. After he was taken, Sarah realized how much she cared for her little brother, and she entered the imaginary realm to rescue him. Jareth, ruler of his realm, put her in a labyrinth which seemed endless. The labyrinth was full of strange lands with odd creatures, and Sarah wandered through, battling despair and finding strength in herself as she went. In the end, the only battle that Sarah fought to escape the labyrinth and break the power of the goblin king was to remember a spell which ended with, "You have no power over me." Once she recited the spell and rejected Jareth, she took control of her dreams and won her baby brother back to 'reality.'

This is the plot of the movie "Labyrinth." When I saw that movie as a teen, besides being annoyed by trite aspects of the plot, I was captivated by the imaginative world of the labyrinth. After seeing the movie, I used to doodle in classes for hours, drawing pages and pages of my own mazes. What about the notion of the labyrinth is so captivating?

Humans have been drawn to the notion of labyrinths for many centuries. The first recorded story which makes use of a labyrinth is the myth of Theseus and King Minos in Greek mythology. This tale probably dates back to the existence of the Minoan civilization, between one and four millennia before the birth of Christ. From its foundation in the prosperous Minoan civilization, the story evolved in oral tradition and was eventually written down. The first accounts of the myth in English were translated from Greek collections which were written by Apollodorus and Plutarch, two authors who lived anywhere between the middle of the first

century B.C. and the first century A.D.

Based on the accounts of Plutarch and Apollodorus, various authors have written stories about the Labyrinth of Minos over the centuries. Some authors, such as Nikos Kazantzakis in At The Palace of Knossos and Mary Renault in The King Must Die, have written the story of the Labyrinth as if they were retelling the original tale. To recapture the fascination and meaning of the story, they place it at the site of the Palace of Knossos on the island of Crete in the Mediterranean, and they reinvent the details as they might have happened. Jorge Luis Borges takes the notion of the Labyrinth and, recognizing its power, explores it in his stories. All of these authors recognize the myth and its history of meaning, but only Borges, after seeking out the roots and direction of the Labyrinth, continues the evolution of the myth of the Labyrinth and suggests a connection to Time.

To understand the importance of the myth of the Labyrinth, we must begin with the origins of the myth. These origins are in the Minoan civilization, which could date as far back as 4500 B.C. In the palaces of the Minoans, we see the first structures which would become the inspirations for the notion of the Labyrinth.

V. The Palace at Knossos

Discovery and Excavations

“One morning in 1878 a Cretan merchant whose name was Minos Kalokairinos was digging in his olive grove spread across the top of a large mound overlooked by Mount Juktas. Suddenly his spade struck something hard and rocklike. It proved to be part of a wall, built of enormous blocks of stone” (33), writes Agnes Vaughan, Professor Emeritus of Classical Languages and

Literatures at Smith College and author of several works on Greek mythology. Without realizing the value of his discovery, Minos dug deeper, and widening his trenches, he discovered the remains of building foundations and huge ceramic jars used for storage. Minos was amazed by his findings, and continued to dig, uncovering various rooms and passages. This work soon attracted attention throughout Europe, and various archaeologists went to visit the site in Crete. However, none were able to attain ownership of the land or capitalize on the beginnings of Minos's find, and the site was left barely begun as the owners continued to farm the olive grove (Vaughan 33-34).

"In the spring of 1894 Arthur Evans set foot in Crete for the first time," (111) states Leonard Cottrell, author of several books on ancient civilizations at Greece, Crete, Egypt, and the Near East. When Evans arrived in Crete, he was forty-three and anxious to earn a place among the great archeologists of all time. Immediately, he set out looking for further evidence of the ancient Mycenaean civilization which had already been found on the island by the renowned archeologist Heinrich Schliemann. In his travels over the island, Evans met the people of Crete and learned about their culture and land. Eventually, he came to the curious rectangular mound of Kephala crowned by the grove of olive trees. Kephala was located about three miles from the city of Herakleion on the Mediterranean Sea. After learning of many Greek legends surrounding various sites on the island, Evans was not surprised to find the remains of an ancient civilization at the merchant Minos's first digs (Cottrell 111-112).

According to Cottrell, "Even before the first spade was thrust in the soil of Knossos, Evans was already convinced that in Crete, whose landscape, traditions and people had won his heart, he would find the clue to that earlier, pre-Hellenic world to which Schliemann's finds at

Mycenae had pointed the way” (112). Evans was fascinated by the site immediately, and Vaughan reports that “he succeeded in buying from the Turkish owner a quarter of the land he coveted” (36). As quickly as he could, Evans gathered the resources to begin excavating the mound. In the next nine months, Evans made incredible discoveries which lead to thirty years of further excavations (Vaughan 36). Evans found the remains of the huge and elaborate Palace (or Palaces) of Knossos. Vaughan explains, “Great buildings came to light, a drainage system constructed on scientific lines, gaily decorated stone bathtubs, beautiful frescoes, and exquisite jewelry, all proofs of an advanced civilization surpassing anything ever found before in the Aegean world” (38).

Today, Knossos is a well-traveled tourist spot that has been excavated extensively, and it stands as an awesome landmark to the ancient Minoan civilization. Arthur Cottrell, whose career includes extensive study of Cretan antiquity resulting in several books, writes, “It gradually became clear that the mound at Kephala concealed a great Palace, some six acres in extent -- or rather the remains of several Palaces, not neatly stratified one beneath another but to some extent jumbled together, as later builders had utilized some of the buildings of their forefathers, while completely gutting and rebuilding others. But everything testified to a long and comparatively uninterrupted habitation. Human beings had lived continuously on the spot, and on the surrounding hillsides, for more than a score of centuries” (124). The excavations done by Evans account for much of the site’s tourist interest, and his reconstruction of several parts of the Palace are testaments to the impressive beauty and complexity of what was Knossos.

Archeologists generally agree on a history of the building and habitation of Knossos which fits into three ages. Vaughan explains, “For the Early Minoan Age he [Evans] set as rough

chronological limits 3000-2200 B.C.; for the Middle Minoan 2200-1580 B.C.; and for the Late Minoan 1580-1400 B.C. He [Evans] was enabled to set up this system for Crete by correlating the stratigraphic evidence of his test pits with the dates already set for Egyptian civilization. Scholars have not always agreed with his classification... but on the whole his system has proved acceptable” (42). Evan’s classification was roughly confirmed by Platon, another excavator who determined the Minoan ages by the evolution of pottery. His scheme is as follows:

Dating systems

BC	Evans' scheme	Platon's scheme
6000 2600	Neolithic	Neolithic
2600 2200	Early Minoan I Early Minoan II Early Minoan III	Pre-palatial (2600-2000)
2100 ?	Middle Minoan Ia Middle Minoan Ib Middle Minoan IIa Middle Minoan IIb Middle Minoan IIIa Middle Minoan IIIb	First-palatial (2000-1700)
1600 ?	Late Minoan Ia Late Minoan Ib Late Minoan II Late Minoan IIIa Late Minoan IIIb	Second-palatial (1700-1400)
1150 ?		Post-palatial (1400-1100)

The alternative chronological frameworks proposed by Evans and Platon

Diagram Taken From Arthur Cotterell, The Minoan World. p. 85

each of these three ages, the Palace at Knossos was rebuilt and went through major construction resulting in sizable additions. Always, however, the Palace remained on the same ground, and

new additions were built inside of old ones or expanded outward from them. Many times, old remains were filled in with broken pottery or fallen walls before new structures were cut out and carefully built.

This description of the findings at Knossos and the ages of the Palace give us an understanding of an awesome civilization that rose and fell thousands of years before Christ. This civilization left a powerful symbol of its existence in the physical remains of Knossos. By understanding the Palace, we can explore the traditions and values which were instilled in the myth of the Labyrinth of Minos. These values of the Minoan civilization are an important part of the foundation for the new model for Time. If we can see the layers of meaning and values present in the Labyrinth, it becomes a potent model both in its conceptualizing and in its inherent values. There are two major values held by the Minoans, relationship to Nature and close community, that need to be carefully added in to our understanding of the Labyrinth.

The site at Knossos is surrounded by barren, rocky landscape with few streams, poor soil, and scraggly, dry vegetation. Also, the island of Crete has an arid climate which no longer supports rich forests and farming. Looking over the site of Knossos today, it is hard to imagine why such a site would have been the chosen place for a civilization which would rise to the highest levels of wealth and greatness in the Mediterranean area.

Several millennia ago, Crete was an island rich in abundant natural resources such as lush forests, fresh water rivers and lakes, and good soil. The Minoans farmed, lumbered, and carefully cultivated this land. Because of their agrarian base, a respect and reverence for Nature was an underlying value in the Minoans' lives.

Pillars

Nature was an integral part of the Minoan culture and the way that the Palace at Knossos, the original Labyrinth, was built. One major element of the Palace's architecture is the Palace pillars. The Palace at Knossos was filled with pillars. Pillars outlined the huge central courtyard and marked holy places on all levels of the House of the Double Axe. Many of these pillars had carved into them a symbol of a double axe. The Minoan pillars were thick and richly painted, generally in a deep, ox-blood red, and tapered upward. In this way, they were thicker at the top, reminding the observer of a tree either widening out as it spreads up to its canopy or thickening as it nears its roots. Arthur Cotterell, author of The Minoan World, believes that, "there are obvious connections between the cult of the sacred pillar and that of the sacred tree. The Minoans surrounded the latter with walls and placed boughs on domestic altars. Although later scholars have questioned 'Evans' interpretation of the double axe as the an iconic image of the Minoan deity and argued that it was often used merely as a mason's mark, it would seem that he is correct in identifying pillar crypts and finding tree and pillar worship inseparable" (21).

The pillars at Knossos also bring to mind huge stalactites and stalagmites much like those found in the mountain caves near Knossos obviously used as places of worship. Cotterell explains, "Yet the subterranean world, the world of caves recreated in the pillar crypts, is extended and transformed elsewhere in the palace as the architecture of columns. At Knossos, the column seems a potent symbol of life rising from the earth, the inviolable source of fertility and the shrouded abode of the dead" (16). Pillars were certainly a symbol of the natural world brought into the palace to honor the close connection the Minoan people had with their land.

The Significance of Water in Knossos

A second architectural element of Knossos which indicates a close relationship to Nature is

the presence of several large sunken crypts, probably used as baths, located around the palace, often near sacred rooms. Vaughan describes one of these: "The west wing contained the royal treasury, the king's throne room, and nearby a deep, sunken bath, or lustral area. A stone stairway with a balustrade led down into the bath" (47). These baths are believed to be places of sacrifice or places of ritual cleansing. Vaughan states, "Several of these baths were found in each palace. They were generally located near an important entrance and seem to have been designed for some kind of purification ceremony. This interpretation was confirmed by the later discovery beneath the ground floor of two small crypts in which sacrifices were performed. In each crypt stood a square stone pillar, incised with the sacred emblem of Knossos, the double axe" (47). Cotterell also mentions these "lustral chambers" in connection with the duties of the rulers of Knossos. He asserts,

Whatever the truth, the so-called Throne Room was the scene of ritual observances. The chamber is low-ceilinged and dark...while opposite the throne, a short flight of steps away, stands a lustral chamber used for ceremonial washing. As a priest-king, the ruler of Knossos might have been expected to perform here rites of purification connected with the adjacent Pillar Crypts. An alternative view is that the throne belonged to a high priestess who, seated amid her companions, impersonated the Minoan mother-goddess, the Lady of the Labyrinth. In this case the king might have approached her as a divine consort. (21)

Many archeologists agree that some of these sunken areas must have been used for sacrifice or cleansing, but others may have simply been used for sanitary purposes. I think it possible that the Minoans mingled sanitary washing with ceremonial cleansing, but they certainly appreciated the

need for water in their lives and in the cycle of life. The baths indicate this constant awareness of the life-giving elements of land, including clean, fresh water.

In addition to their baths, the Minoans were connected to water in other ways. Throughout the Palace at Knossos, detailed frescoes, colorful pottery, precious statues, and other signs indicate that the Minoans loved art in abundance. “There was a suavity of style, an assurance, even a hint of decadence in Cretan art. Above all, there was an impression of tremendous age, and of long-continued, uninterrupted development,” (123) writes Leonard Cottrell. Evans was able to recover an incredible wealth of these artifacts, but, for brevity’s sake, I will only speak about those which directly relate to the Myth of the Labyrinth. The Minoans were surrounded by a powerful sea on all sides, and the sea was a potent symbol in their art. Commonly depicted in the frescoes and other artifacts found at Knossos are sea creatures of many kinds, such as dolphins and octopuses. These sea creatures are symbolically depicted in their natural habitat, the ocean.

In addition to their arts, the Minoans constructed an amazing network of pipes to carry the fresh water of the local rivers and streams into their homes. This network of piping was one of the most elaborate and carefully constructed of any civilization in the ancient world. Water was a crucial element in the Minoans’ lives, whether by necessity or by appreciation, and it became an integral part of their spirituality. Water fed their crops, and enabled their civilization to flourish. Water gave life, and its integral role in Minoan life affirms their deep connection with Nature.

Beyond these elements of Nature present at Knossos, the Palace is filled with splendid feats of architecture, from narrow, three story courtyards used for light to the grand staircase hewn of

stone which descends to the throne room. These open courtyards could also have been used for elaborate gardens. Such splendid accomplishments mark a people very aware and in tune with their surrounding environment. Cotterell indicates this atmosphere of the Palace: "There is a sense of naturalness and spontaneity about what were once complex, labyrinthine constructions. The palaces do not seem to dominate or impress; they leave room for the human spirit to breathe freely" (94). This naturalness and human scale of the Palace spaces reflects on the culture and advancement of the Minoan civilization.

The Central Courtyard and the Meaning of the Bull

At the center of the Palace at Knossos and at the heart of the Minoans is relationship with the environment around them. This central relationship to Nature is captured in the huge central courtyard at the Palace, used for religious ceremonies and cultural events. Many of these ceremonies involved bulls. There are numerous artifacts from Knossos which depict a bull dance where a young acrobat is somersaulting over the back of a bull. Some believe that the athletes, youth who practiced for the games or ceremonies, grasped the horns of the bull and flipped over its back. Many archeologists believe that this dancing was part of common celebration and ritual in the Minoan civilization.

Significant evidence suggests that the bull was a divine symbol to the Minoans. For example, outside of Knossos, the ruins of a house were found. The house had been destroyed by some kind of natural catastrophe, and its remains contained a room where a sacred ceremony is thought to have been performed. Vaughan explains,

The other [house], which had apparently been deliberately filled with earth after the catastrophe, proved when it was cleared to contain a sealed room, also filled

with earth. Lying on the floor were several tripod altars and a bull's head with its horns intact. The excavators had learned enough to feel sure that this had been a propitiatory sacrifice to the underworld, that the bull had been killed outside the house, its head brought in and placed upon the floor, and the room then filled with earth and sealed. (42-43).

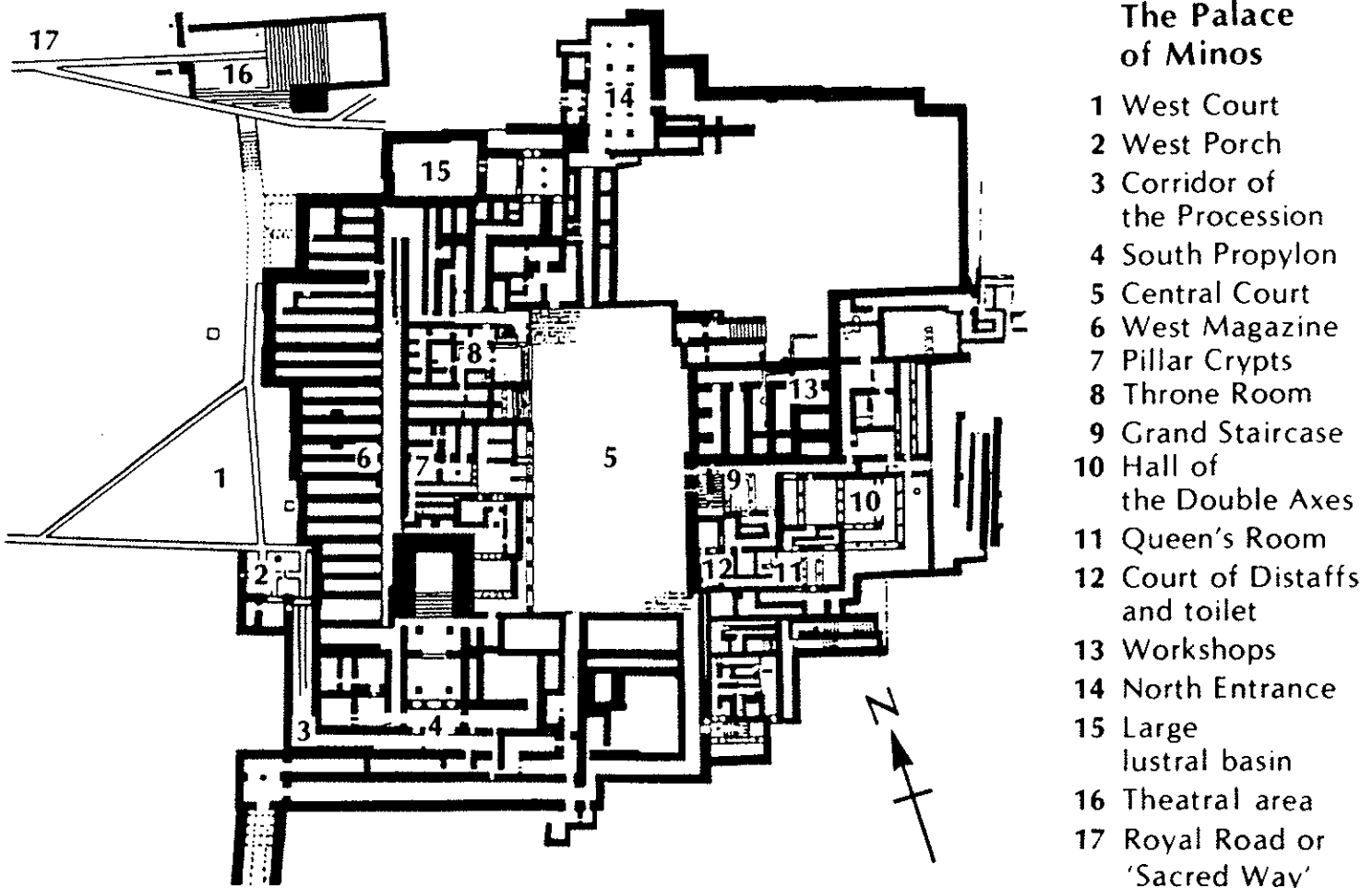
This discovery of a sacred bull ritual, along with massive pairs of stone horns mounted on the outside walls at the Palace which still stand today, indicate that the bull was a sacred symbol to the Minoans. This importance of the bull indicates a vital link between Nature and human ceremony, once again affirming the importance of Nature to the Minoans.

Close-Knit Community

In addition to valuing an basic relationship with Nature, the Minoans also valued close community as an integral part of their daily life. As the palace at Knossos reveals, the Minoans built their temples, palace, storage rooms, and homes together in one massive structure. Agnes Vaughan writes, "Palace of Minos...covered some six and a half acres, a confusion of endless corridors, hall, and rooms" (Vaughan 24). To an outsider who did not know the Palace, this immense structure must have seemed infinite and confusing. However, to the Minoans, the Palace was a structure that kept them living and working in close community with one another. Within Knossos, rooms are mingled without much distinction; palace areas were not clearly separated from other homes or from work areas. This structure of the Palace surrounds the central courtyard, and the Palace supported thousands of people living together.

Because of the way that the Minoan civilization grew over many centuries, the palace was built without any particular order. Rulers who lived at Knossos added on sections and wings to

the Palace. In these additions, their only common intent seemed to be to center the palace around the courtyard in the middle. This courtyard was the center of their ceremonies and celebrations, where the people congregated in large numbers for events. The Minoans obviously interacted with one another often every day, and they valued close community in their lives. Because of this organization, people at all levels of the community, from the royalty to many of the workers, must have encountered one another in the halls of the Palace. I have included a detailed floor map of Knossos which reveals the layout and organization of the Palace:



Palace Map Taken From Arthur Cotterell, The Minoan World. p. 12

As the floor map indicates, the Palace was a mass of rooms and passages without a clear, master

plan. The map, though it is complex, does not reveal the vast size of the Palace fully, because the Palace was two and even three stories in most sections.

Even more confounding, the Palace at Knossos had a way of leading people inwards from the outskirts of the palace to the inner courtyard. Arthur Cotterell explains, "In this indirect way of bringing an outsider into the inner parts of the palace, we encounter a favorite conceit of Minoan architects: a circuitousness that must have fostered the notion of the labyrinth" (14). The Palace at Knossos, then, is an entangled confusion of passages that leads visitors and dwellers towards the central courtyard. This courtyard, where celebrations and rituals commonly occurred, is the hub of activity around which the Palace was built and organized.

VI. The Place of Knossos in Myth

The Palace at Knossos is, unmistakably, the central palace of the Minoan civilization, named after the legendary ruler Minos, a key figure in Greek Mythology. Since the creation of the Greek myths, many well-known stories have been written that recognize the importance of Minos and the Minoan civilization. For example, in Dante's vision of Hell, Minos presides at the entrance of one of the levels of hell, judging souls who are doomed to spend eternity in misery. Along with the tales about Minos, legends about the Palace at Knossos and the island of Crete have been fundamental to our understanding of the role of Minoan civilization in the Mediterranean since earliest discovery.

Cotterell describes the site: "On the north of the island rose snow-capped Mount Ida, where, it was said, one could still find the sacred cave in which he [Zeus] was born. And immediately behind the port of Heraklion, on the north, lay Mount Jukta, legendary tomb of the god" (112).

These legends are indicative of the importance of Crete in the history of the Mediterranean.

Vaughan comments on these legends surrounding Knossos:

The tale [of Zeus] helps to emphasize the importance of Crete in the early history of the Mediterranean. Fantastic though it is, to see in it a symbol of the high and significant place which Crete was destined to achieve is not at all fantastic. For as she flung her empire farther out to sea, building ships with sides so steep not even Scylla would have ventured to climb them, she was achieving Olympian heights in the empire building of the period. (32)

The Minoan civilization had a key role in the development of the Mediterranean cultures, and, as a result, Crete became a land of great religious importance.

Present in most of the legends surrounding Crete is the myth of the labyrinth and its master, Minos. Vaughan writes of this mythology:

Folklorists and anthropologists know that the number and variety of traditions clustering about a place often help in judging both its importance and its antiquity. This is particularly true of Cretan legend, for although Homer speaks of numerous cities on the island, virtually all the legends that occur in both epic and classical literature are woven about Knossos, for centuries the most powerful city on any island. (28)

Because of this flourishing of Minoan civilization and the splendor indicated by the physical remains of the palace at Knossos, it is easy to understand why such a palace, whose sheer grandeur is unmatched by any other palace of Mediterranean civilization, would become the foundation of legends which spread throughout the region. Along with the physical presence of

the Palace itself, the values of the Minoans so evident in the Palace would also become part of the foundation of the mythology that would develop.

A few historians argue that Knossos is not the labyrinth spoken of in the Greek myth. They would argue the point, because Knossos was not a place built for war, as the myth of the Labyrinth would seem to indicate, but a place of wealth, splendor, and peace. Arthur Cotterell explains in The Minoan World:

Knossos is a replica of the Minoan cosmos: the complex structure and several stories of the great palace- twice the size of the palaces at Phaestos and Mallia- reveals an unequalled delight in the joy of life. The builders of the first elaborate pile in Europe chose simple companionship of low surrounding hills. Theirs was an unsullied world, open to earth, sea, and sky. So unlike the cities that followed this first European civilization was Knossos that its extensive ruins were misinterpreted by the Greeks as the labyrinth, the abode of the awful Minotaur in the Theseus legend. How strange that later inhabitants of the island overlooked the basic tenor of the Minoan world. Peace. (11)

Though Cotterell understands the splendor and peace of the Minoan world, I believe he misses the point. The Minoan civilization may have been essentially a peaceful one, but as it expanded and became influential throughout the Mediterranean, it would naturally have been perceived as threatening to other peoples.

To other civilizations around the Mediterranean, Crete was a distant island inhabited by a rich and powerful civilization which, for a time, probably had the largest naval force in the known world. These ships were used by the Minoans as trading vessels. However, as the Minoans'

power grew, their navy may have been capable of defeating nations by transporting armies across the sea. The development of such a powerful navy could easily have led to conflicts with other flourishing civilizations, though Knossos was built in a peaceful time.

I disagree with Cotterell's point that, because of its peaceful flourishing, the Minoan civilization could not have given rise to the myth of the Labyrinth. Clearly, the threat that the Minoan civilization posed with its formidable navy could easily have given rise to the myth of the Labyrinth. A visitor from a foreign land would have seen Knossos and been struck by its size and labyrinthine structure. In addition, the bull dancing ceremony and other rituals could easily have left outsiders awestruck. In light of all this evidence, I believe that Knossos and the Minoans are the source of the myth of the Labyrinth.

As the kingdom of Minos became a power, legends of the civilization would have been spread throughout the lands surrounding the Mediterranean. Communities would have incorporated them into their oral tradition. The cultures of the Mediterranean, through their complex and evolving oral tradition, put together fragments of different individual and communal beliefs and truths into the story of the Labyrinth. That story was powerful because it helped the Greeks grasp a notion of the world outside their homeland. The known world surrounding the Mediterranean, which today seems like a small place on the face of the planet, was a world full of fantastic lands still being explored. Greek and other cultural notions of religion further added a powerful element of the supernatural to that unsure conception of the world. Gods and Goddesses were constantly mixing with humans, shattering their world or changing it with their slightest whim. This was the world depicted in such works as the Iliad and the Odyssey.

In all of that unknown, the story of the Labyrinth was a concrete way of conceptualizing the legendary land of Crete. Stories spoke of the island, ruled by a legendary patriarch named Minos, as a place abundant in resources and incredibly advanced in the arts. Traders from lands all around the Sea who had traveled to Crete brought back tales of the riches and beauty of that place. Those same traders may have returned, too, with stories of magnificent and elaborate palaces, like the one at Knossos, unmatched by any other Mediterranean cultures. In order to conceive of such a place, fragments of intricate tales and shreds of concrete experiences were put together into story. That story portrayed the Minoans as a great and terrifying people. In a world full of unknown powers where various civilizations felt threatened, a legendary people from a foreign land would easily have taken on a superhuman nature.

From this understanding of the roots of the Labyrinth in the Minoan civilization, let us turn to the myth of the Labyrinth of Minos.

VII. The Greek Myth of the Labyrinth

Apollodorus and Plutarch are two Greek authors who give us the first preserved versions of the myth of the Labyrinth, and so I will begin with their accounts. However, there is plenty of evidence from art and fragments of poetry which affirms that the myth of the Labyrinth was well developed and known as early as the 6th Century B.C. This evidence makes a strong case for an oral tradition which was alive early in the creation of Greek myths, and this tradition may have played a fundamental role in shaping the Greek mythology we have today. Before I recount the narratives of Apollodorus and Plutarch, it is important that some background be given on each writer.

Sir J. G. Frazier, the translator of Apollodorus's Library and author of The Golden Bough, speculates rather carefully on the life of Apollodorus. "Nothing is positively known, and little can be conjectured with any degree of probability, concerning the author of the *Library*," (ix) asserts Frazier. However, he does go on to point out that Apollodorus was most likely a common man of a middle class family (Frazier xvi). Little is known about Apollodorus probably because written records of a middle class, rather obscure writer would not have been preserved with any care. Frazier continues: "To me it seems that we cannot safely say more than that the *Library* was probably written at some time in either the first or the second century of our era" (xvi).

Frazier's acknowledgment of the unknown identity of Apollodorus leaves him little but the text itself. On this text, Frazier reflects,

we may describe the *Library* as a plain unvarnished summary of Greek myths and heroic legends, as these were recorded in literature; for the writer makes no claim to draw on oral tradition, nor is there the least evidence or probability that he did so: it may be taken as certain that he derived all his information from books alone. But he used excellent authorities and followed them faithfully, reporting, but seldom or never attempting to explain or reconcile, their discrepancies and contradictions. Hence this book possesses documentary value as an accurate record of what the Greeks in general believed about the origin and early history of the world and of their race. (xvii)

Frazier here shows great confidence in the faithfulness of Apollodorus to his sources. In addition, Frazier argues that the Greeks believed that such an account as Apollodorus's Library was the history of their race. This suggests that Greek mythology was an intermingling of history

and fiction.

The life of Plutarch, in contrast to Apollodorus, is well known and documented. “Plutarch was born at Chaeroneia, a small town on the northern confines of Boeotia, about the middle of the first century of our era...He belonged to a family of ample means and generous culture, and was liberally educated. He studied at Athens,” reports Bernadotte Perrin, the translator of Plutarch’s Lives. Plutarch, unlike Apollodorus, was from an affluent background and fairly well educated. Plutarch himself claims that his purpose in writing the Lives is to learn about great figures in Greek history who can serve as role models by which he and others can direct their own lives.

Using history as a mirror I try by whatever means I can to improve my own life and to model it by the standard of all that is best is those whose lives I write. As a result I feel as though I were conversing and indeed living with them; by means of history I receive each one of them in turn...consider their stature and qualities and select from their actions the most authoritative and the best with a view to getting to know them, (Barrow 54)

explains Plutarch, as translated by R. H Barrow in his book Plutarch and His Times. Plutarch’s intent is clearly to take the history of his Greek heritage, explore it, write about it, and draw from it honorable morals which he can uphold in his own life. He, like the Greeks who were Apollodorus’s audience, believed mythology to be full of accurate accounts of lives with great moral value.

To truly embrace the accounts of Plutarch and Apollodorus, I will recount stories of the Labyrinth as they wrote them. I will give roughly the first half of the myth as it is translated from

Apollodorus, and I will take the second half from Plutarch's account.

In ancient Greek culture, mythology and history constantly overlapped. Myths were like historical accounts in that they preserved stories and names of past deeds and people, though this preservation was not restricted from embellishment. In respect for the importance of myths in Greek history, I wanted to include the myth of the Labyrinth in raw form, as we have been given it by Apollodorus and Plutarch. If I could, I would include the original Greek version, but since I cannot read Greek, that would be worthless to me and probably many of my readers. I want the story to have all the detail, animation, and complexity which the original translations had, because we are forced to recognize that historical reality and mythical realities overlap. The relationship between the linear model for Time and history and the creative expressions of human stories is not clear cut. I would lose this overlap if I were to put the myth in my own words, and I would not be preserving the original Greek records of their history / mythology.

Because of the melding of history and mythology, I believe that the accounts are a product of years and years of written history, and before that, oral tradition. It is by chance that these accounts survived instead of others, because each individual could have learned and remembered one of several variations. This development of the story orally makes the account one which layers the ideas of many authors on the Labyrinth of Minos. As a result, the accounts are truly an expression of the Mediterranean civilization, and not simply a story of the individuals Plutarch and Apollodorus, though their own voices are present too.

Another motivation for giving the full account of the Myth of the Labyrinth is that it sets the foundation for the model we will use for time. If this myth and its elements are present, we can use it as a detailed and concrete model for time. The full understanding of the myth will be

important as we connect it to the history of the Labyrinth in the Minoan civilization and, finally, link these two foundations of the Labyrinth to time.

In this way, we can continue the exploration of the myth of the Labyrinth with a firm foothold in the history of the Labyrinth at the Palace at Knossos, and now in close written translations. The story varies from author to author slightly with their style, but the basic account is very similar. The footnotes will reveal specific sites where the authors differ in details. For example, Plutarch has a more rambling style and cites various people as sources of information for his account, so his narration of the action is longer.

I begin with Apollodorus. The writing is intriguing in the way that Apollodorus mixes history which seems concrete, complete with names of people and places, and the narration of the myth, which I believe is a fictional story. People and places are mentioned because their identities and deeds are preserved as part of Greek history. In Mediterranean cultures, retelling detailed stories in this way of blurring history and fiction was a way of respecting and even immortalizing notable people of the past. Further, in a world where the afterlife was unsure (beliefs that existed were very negative) and the world was a threatening place manipulated by the forces of the Gods, myths gave people a firm meaning to grasp, and a pattern by which to live life in noble ways. Out of respect for this tradition, I will give the accounts of Apollodorus and Plutarch in their own words, seeking to keep alive the names, places, and form of the story which they wrote down so carefully.

Apollodorus writes,

When the war lingered on and he could not take Athens, he [Minos] prayed to Zeus that he might be avenged on the Athenians. And the city being visited with a

famine and a pestilence, the Athenians... inquired of the oracle how they could be delivered; and the god answered them that they should give Minos whatever satisfaction he might choose. So they sent to Minos and left it to him to claim satisfaction. And Minos ordered them to send seven youths and the same number of damsels without weapons to be fodder for the Minotaur. Now the Minotaur was confined in a labyrinth¹, in which he who entered could not find his way out; for many a winding turn shut off the secret outward way. The Labyrinth was constructed by Daedalus, for he was an excellent architect and the first inventor of images... Pasiphae having fallen in love with the bull of Poseidon, Daedalus acted as her accomplice by contriving a wooden cow, and he constructed the labyrinth, to which the Athenians every year sent seven youths and as many damsels to be fodder for the Minotaur...

XVI. Aethra bore to Aegeus a son Theseus, and when he was grown up, he pushed away the rock and took up the sandals and the sword, and hastened on foot to Athens...

And he [Theseus] was numbered among those who were to be sent as the third tribute to the Minotaur; or, as some affirm, he offered himself voluntarily.

¹ Plutarch says, "And the most dramatic version of the story declares that these young men and women, on being brought to Crete, were destroyed by the Minotaur in the Labyrinth, or else wandered about at their own will and, being unable to find an exit, perished there; and that the Minotaur, as Euripides says, was 'A mingled form and hybrid birth of monstrous shape,' and that "Two different natures, man and bull, were joined in him." Plutarch also explains another possibility for the Labyrinth. Philochorus told him that the Labyrinth was in fact a dungeon, and the youth imprisoned were given as prizes to victors in the games which Minos conducted.

(Apollodorus 119-135)

At this point, I will end Apollodorus's account and turn to Plutarch, who will tell the second part of the myth. Plutarch has a very different style from Apollodorus because he refers to his different sources for the story of the Labyrinth. For example, Plutarch mentions that Hellanicus told him one version and Simonides gave him another account. This sharing of accounts would have been impossible, because both Hellanicus and Simonides were dead in Plutarch's time. However, this is important to note because, though Hellanicus and Simonides were not contemporaries of Plutarch, the mention of their names may indicate the way individual tales were pieced together into written and oral tradition. Certainly, when Plutarch was writing his account, he must have been putting together the written fragments he mentions. This complexity of Greek mythology points to layered meanings and different lines of thought. Stories were not exact, and the underlying themes at work were carefully kept and preserved just as the numerous details. Throughout the Mediterranean, there must have been an enormous diversity of stories and beliefs all being mixed and layered into common stories as they were shared, written, and passed on.

Plutarch writes,

Accordingly, when the time came for the third tribute, and it was necessary for the fathers who had youthful sons to present them for the lot, fresh accusations against Aegeus arose among the people, who were full of sorrow and vexation that he who was the cause of all their trouble alone had no share in the punishment, but devolved the kingdom upon a bastard and foreign son [Theseus], and suffered them to be left destitute and bereft of legitimate children. These

things troubled Theseus, who, thinking it right not to disregard but to share in the fortune of his fellow-citizens, came forward and offered himself independently of the lot.

The citizens admired his spirit, and Aegeus, when he saw that his son was not to be won over or turned from his purpose by prayers and entreaties, cast the lots for the rest of the youths.

Hellanicus, however, says that the city did not send its young men and maidens by lot, but that Minos himself used to come and pick them out, and that he now pitched upon Theseus first of all, following the terms agreed upon. And he says the agreement was that the Athenians should furnish the ship, and that the youths should embark and sail with him carrying no warlike weapons, and that if the Minotaur was killed the penalty should cease.

On the former occasion, then, no hope of safety was entertained, and therefore they sent the ship with a black sail, convinced that their youth were going to certain destruction; but now Theseus encouraged his father and loudly boasted that he would master the Minotaur, so that he gave the pilot another sail, a white one, ordering him, if he returned with Theseus safe, to hoist the white sail, but otherwise to sail with the black one, and so indicate the affliction...

When he reached Crete on his voyage, most historians and poets tell us that he got from Ariadne, who had fallen in love with him, the famous thread², and that having been instructed by her how to make his way through the intricacies of the

² Plutarch calls the spool of thread a 'clue.'

Labyrinth³, he slew the Minotaur⁴ and sailed off with Ariadne and the youth. And Pherecydes says that Theseus also staved in the bottoms of the Cretan ships, thus depriving them of the power to pursue. And Demon says also that Taurus, the general of Minos, was killed in a naval battle in the harbour as Theseus was sailing out. But as Philochorus tells the story, Minos was holding the funeral games, and Taurus was expected to conquer all his competitors in them, as he had done before, and was grudged his success. For his disposition made his power hateful, and he was accused of too great intimacy with Pasiphae.

Therefore when Theseus asked the privilege of entering the lists, it was granted him by Minos. And since it was the custom in Crete for women to view the games, Ariadne was present, and was smitten with the appearance of Theseus, as well as filled with admiration for his athletic prowess, when he conquered all his opponents. Minos also was delighted with him, especially because he conquered Taurus in wrestling and disgraced him, and therefore gave back the youths to Theseus, besides remitting its [Athen's] tribute to the city.

It is said, moreover, that as they drew nigh the coast of Attica, Theseus himself forgot, and his pilot forgot, such was their joy and exultation, to hoist the sail which was to have been the token of their safety to Aegeus, who therefore, in

³ Apollodorus reports that Ariadne pleaded with Daedalus to learn the way of the labyrinth.

⁴ Plutarch reports elsewhere that Theseus killed the Minotaur by "smiting his with his fists."

despair, threw himself down from the rock and was dashed to pieces⁵. (Plutarch
Theseus 33-45)

This myth which I have just written in fairly full form (except for excluding superfluous portions) as it appears in Apollodorus's Library, and Plutarch's Life of Theseus, is the story of the Labyrinth of Minos in the oldest written works available. The accounts are full of the detailed history and colorful stories always present in Greek works.

VIII. Exploring the Labyrinth as a Model for Time

We have now come a long ways through many layers of the history and myth surrounding the Labyrinth. These layers could obscure the point of this thesis, but instead of confusing the issue, I want them to add depth and meaning to our new model for time. I cannot, now, discuss the Labyrinth and fully separate it from its history and mythology, just as I cannot discuss Time separate from the linear model. In both Time and the Labyrinth, numerous, almost infinite numbers of people and many civilizations have added their own voices to the mix so that we are continuing a vast conversation.

Before I began this long history of the myth and civilization of the Labyrinth, I was seeking a new model for Time. I chose the Labyrinth because it brings crucial themes and many new voices to the search for a new model. To link the Labyrinth to Time in a discernable manner, I will return to Borges' stories, which bring valuable and digestible insights. Each of Borges' stories explores one element of the Labyrinth of Time, and so they merit careful attention. Borges stories and my own ideas will become part of this movement towards understanding

⁵ Both authors write that Theseus assumed the position which his father held in Attica.

Time in a new model, the Labyrinth.

The Center

“The Library of Babel” is fundamental to Borges’ work with the Labyrinth. In the short story, Borges thrusts the reader into a world of one labyrinthine library. Within that library, humans wander and seek to make sense of its seemingly infinite galleries of books. Borges states:

The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries, with vast air shafts between, surrounded by very low railings. From any of the hexagons one can see, interminably, the upper and lower floors. The distribution of the galleries is invariable. Twenty shelves, five long shelves per side, cover all the sides except two; their height, which is the distance from floor to ceiling, scarcely exceeds that of a normal bookcase. One of the free sides leads to a narrow hallway which opens into another gallery, identical to the first and to all the rest. To the left and right of the hallway there are two very small closets. In the first, one may sleep standing up; in the other, satisfy one’s fecal necessities. Also through here passes a spiral stairway, which sinks abysmally and soars upwards to remote distances. (“The Library of Babel” 51)

This library is the world of all humans. However, in this parallel world, Nature does not exist. Humans are left alone, alienated from our environment. In such a place, the natural inclination of humankind is to make sense of the reality they live in; they seek to understand the library. This effort to comprehend the meaning of existence naturally leads humans to search

through the books. Borges describes the content of the books:

The orthographical symbols are twenty-five in number [twenty-two letters of the alphabet, the comma, the period, and the space]. This finding made it possible, three hundred years ago, to formulate a general theory of the Library and solve satisfactorily the problem which no conjecture had deciphered: the formless and chaotic nature of almost all the books. One which my father saw in a hexagon on circuit fifteen ninety-four was made up of the letter MCV, perversely repeated from the first line to the last. Another (very much consulted in this area) is a mere labyrinth of letters, but the next-to-last page says *Oh time thy pyramids*. This much is already known: for every sensible line or straightforward statement, there are leagues of senseless cacophonies, verbal jumbles and incoherences. (“The Library of Babel” 53)

Within this maddening library of countless books which make no apparent sense, humans wander and seek meaning. Some despair in their search and hurl themselves over the edge of the railings to fall forever down the shafts, while others establish beliefs and pass on ideas about the meaning of the labyrinthine library. The narrator, a person within the library, outlines several of these theories, and tells pieces of the history of how humans sought to find books which would explain their existence and the creator of the library. The narrator believes that the library contains every possible combination of the 25 letters; everything is said somewhere in the library. Therefore, the library is, for all practical purposes, infinite in size, though the narrator sets forth a different theory of the library. He declares,

I have just written the word “infinite.” I have not interpolated this adjective out of

rhetorical habit; I say that it is not illogical to think that the world is infinite.

Those who judge it to be limited postulate that in remote places the corridors and stairways and hexagons can conceivably come to an end-- which is absurd. Those who imagine it to be without limit forget that the possible number of books does have such a limit. I venture to suggest this solution to the ancient problem: *The library is unlimited and cyclical*. If an eternal traveler were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which, thus repeated, would be an order: the Order). My solitude is gladdened by this elegant hope. ("The Library of Babel" 58)

In this world of the Library of Babel, Borges constructs an existence which parallels our own. This world is a maddening library which contains all possible written creations of humankind. In this labyrinth, we are all doomed to wander and seek our fate though we have no means for finding joy or sorrow beyond what we find in community with each other and in the books. The idea of such an existence is intriguing and yet threatening, because such a notion voids all meaning and makes each of us an isolated wanderer in a place where all creative works are already written down.

In "The Library of Babel," Borges takes the idea of a two dimensional labyrinth on a plane and transforms it into a world which defies Time and any other boundaries we would place upon it. This labyrinth exists on an infinite number of planes, and its only order is its cycling. The image is fantastic, and it is hopeless. Inserted in a foreign place where our experience with the environment no longer matters, we are reduced to bumbling wanderers, forced to recognize any meaning as illusory. "The Library of Babel" is a maddening library because it removes humans

entirely from our environment, and places us in a world where all meaning has already been discovered. If we are alienated from Nature and put in an artificial place, we are lost without any sense of Time. We cannot find meaning when isolated from the world around us. We must center ourselves in Nature to know time and to have purpose in life.

As Borges illustrates in "The Library of Babel," we must have a relationship with Nature to know a meaningful existence. Alienated from the natural environment, the people of the library are left in a world defined by the limits of human thought, and that world is meaningless when isolated from all else. In "The Library of Babel," these patterns of possible symbols and thoughts are written down in shelves of books, and they define a uniform, tiresome existence. There is no experience with Nature. Furthermore, because they are alienated from Nature, the dwellers in the library do not know any passage of time, except that they are born, age, and die...searching for some meaning beyond the prison of human writing.

Our experience with the passage of Time originates in the world of nature around us. Sunrise and sunset mark the day. The passage of seasons marks the yearly cycle, as does the movement of the stars in the night sky. The cycle of life to death to new life is integral to this passage of time in nature, and we see it all around us in the environment. We can live in recognition and experience with this origin, or we can seek to alienate or remove ourselves from nature.

In the study of the Palace at Knossos and the Minoan civilization, it was clear that Nature was a central part of the Minoan experience. Such architectural elements and artifacts as the pillars, the lustral areas, the complex system of water piping, the frescoes of sea creatures, and the courtyards clearly revealed the integral place of Nature in Minoan life. The bull, as evident in the bull dancing ceremonies in the central courtyard, the religious rituals, and the huge horns

mounted on the Palace walls, was a potent symbol of Nature for the Minoans. This relationship with Nature symbolized by the bull was the core of the Minoan experience with their land, and it defined all aspects of their lives. The Minoans, very clearly, had a fundamental value for their environment.

In the Myth of the Labyrinth of Minos, I firmly believe that the Minotaur embodies the relationship between Nature and Human so evident in Minoan culture. In the myth, the Minotaur resides in the center of the Labyrinth. The Minotaur is a potent symbol of nature embodied in one form, half-human, half-bull. During his life, the Minotaur was the union of human with non-human. The Minotaur is also a creature born from the womb of a woman, an important symbol of fertility.

The myth of the Labyrinth indicated that Poseidon gave Minos a bull for sacrifice. Because Minos refused to sacrifice the bull, Pasiphae was given the unnatural lust which resulted in the birth of the Minotaur. The connection between Poseidon, god of the sea, and the bull indicates a divine link between Gods and humans. The Minotaur which Theseus battled, then, is an awesome symbol which may have its roots in the bull ceremonies in the central courtyard of the Palace at Knossos. These ceremonies, so important to Minoan celebration and ritual, could have given rise, in the mind of an imaginative storyteller, to the creation of the Minotaur.

Thus, when Theseus slays this potent symbol, the Minotaur, he is destroying a beast which embodies the absolute unity between human and animal in one form. The slaying of the Minotaur is a break in this union between Nature and humans, and between Gods and humans.

The place for this important role of Nature in the Labyrinth of Time is clearly in the center. The center is where the Minotaur lived; the central courtyard of the Palace at Knossos is where

the bull ritual was performed; the center is where the passages of the Labyrinth lead. The center of the Labyrinth includes all of Nature, from living to nonliving, with the sole exception of humans. We are not included in Nature because we possess a heightened consciousness limited to our individual perceptions. This consciousness within our minds defines our boundaries as unique, isolated forms, and this heightened awareness separates us from the environment around us.

The Paths of the Labyrinth

Now that we have found a center for the Labyrinth of Time, we can explore the passages of the Labyrinth. To clearly understand these passages, we must look at "The House of Asterion." In this short work, Borges retells the myth of Minos from the perspective of the beast, Asterion. Asterion, the Minotaur, is doomed to the fate of being spurned by all living creatures. He is not fully human, and so he is ostracized by civilization, yet he is thoughtful and articulate (as he narrates the short story), and so separated from animals. The Minotaur is alone, except that he has his environment, the Labyrinth. Without a community of other living beings, Asterion is left to know time through his experience with his environment.

As Borges' story unfolds, Asterion tells the reader of his life in the Labyrinth. He describes his life in the enormous palace of infinite rooms, passages, and stairways with great pride, for he is a prince. Asterion declares, "Not for nothing was my mother a queen; I cannot be confused with the populace, though my modesty might so desire" ("The House of Asterion" 139). Within the Labyrinth, Asterion spends endless hours playing games and trying to distract himself from loneliness. The Minotaur says, "Of course, I am not without distractions. Like the ram about to charge, I run through the stone galleries, until I fall dizzy to the floor" ("The House of Asterion"

139).

However, with all of his efforts, Asterion cannot hide his solitary fate from himself. Even in his isolation, the Minotaur has the world around him. He has the great house, and he has the presence of some elements of nature. Asterion explains, "Everything is repeated many times...but two things in the world seem to be only once: above, the intricate sun; below, Asterion. Perhaps I have created the stars and the sun and this enormous house, but I no longer remember" ("The House of Asterion" 140). The Minotaur, in the complete isolation of the Labyrinth from other living beings, does not feel constrained by time. His only relation to Time is the sun, the stars, and his environment, and he loses track of the days that pass. Everything melds into one present. Asterion is isolated from other beings and yet interacts with the world around him through observations, imagination, and amusements. His only notion of time is confined to faint memories of the past and one burning hope for the future.

Asterion hopes for a liberator. He wants someone to come and free him from his isolation. He remembers,

I know that one of them prophesied, at the moment of his death, that some day my redeemer would come. Since then my loneliness does not pain me, because I know my redeemer lives and he will finally rise above the dust. If my ear could capture all the sounds of the world, I should hear his steps. I hope he will take me to a place with fewer galleries and fewer doors. ("The House of Asterion" 140)

The Minotaur can only live in hope of another who will come and give him an escape from his solitary life. He knows no time of any importance except that moment in the future when he will

be liberated.

So, when finally Theseus arrives to slay the Minotaur, Asterion puts up no resistance. Borges writes,

The morning sun reverberated from the bronze sword. There was no longer even a vestige of blood.

“Would you believe it, Ariadne?” said Theseus. “The Minotaur scarcely defended himself.” (“The House of Asterion” 140)

“The House of Asterion” gives a powerful message about the living beings, the environment, and time. The Minotaur, isolated from other beings, sustains himself in relationship with his environment: “above the sun, below Asterion.” The world around Asterion becomes a close part of a relationship he needs to survive. His only sense of Time is in the rising and setting of the sun. That sense of Time transcends the linear continuum, because it all melds into one present. The Minotaur cannot distinguish his memories or his history from his present. Everything is now. He lives with some cyclical sense of time, but not by the linear model for time.

The story of Asterion also reveals a powerful message about the human need for relationship with other humans. We are creatures of relationship, and we need interaction to sustain us. In the end, the Minotaur’s only hope is that his liberator will free him from his loneliness, his isolation from other people. Without that hope, he would despair, trapped in the isolation of the Labyrinth and his identity..

To seek further meaning from Borges’ story, “The House of Asterion,” we will once again return to the history of the Minoans and the myth of the Labyrinth. These sources will help us find a place for the lesson of Asterion in the Labyrinth of Time we are creating.

As I pointed out in the exploration of Knossos, the Palace reveals an underlying Minoan value in close-knit community. The Minoans, by building the Palace in its Labyrinthine form, affirmed the need for people to live in close community. As a result of the Palace's organization, Minoans from various levels of status and affluence interacted with one another in their daily lives. The bull dancing ceremonies also indicate that the Minoans enjoyed community celebration.

In the myth, Theseus, after unwinding the thread to the center of the maze and slaying the Minotaur, followed his string out from the center back to the entrance/exit.

In the Labyrinth of Time, like Theseus, each of us has a strand of reality. At birth, we originate from the center of the Labyrinth, and we unwind our strand outwards from that beginning. We all take our own individual path, though we constantly cross the paths of others before us. We twist outward in random, chaotic, interlacing paths as our individual strands of time continue. Always, we cycle back to the center for that core experience with Nature and the passage of time. Within this structure of the Labyrinth, each person comprehends or follows one unique strand of the infinite, dizzying net of different lives. This net forms a reality which we are all woven into, a reality that begins with our birth. When we die, we conclude the one strand we have followed.

In "The House of Asterion," the Minotaur was isolated from this web or net of different lives. Left alone, lost in the Labyrinth with only a structure of passages and no other beings, Asterion lost his notion of Time and his value for life. He could only think of the day when his redeemer would come; he could only hope to intersect another's path in the Labyrinth. We too must cross others paths to have meaning in our lives.

One of the greatest freedoms of the Labyrinth model for time is that all humans, past or present, are part of the paths surrounding the center. This means that we can always find communion with others, whether they are alive in this reality or not. Their paths are always present directing us, and they shaping the paths we create in our lifetime.

When I intersect the path of another person, dead or alive, I may glimpse a shared perception, if I am open to it. To this end, there are numerous ways in which we encounter the paths of others. For instance, if I dream about my deceased grandfather or mother, I am sharing in their path. Their life is still influencing my stream of consciousness, affecting the direction of my path. In these experiences, I am transcending linear Time. When I think of my father who lives an hour and a half away, I am crossing his path and sharing (or struggling) with his perception. In this encounter, I am crossing the limitations of Space. If I encounter the teachings of Ghandi, he may influence my path, and I share some part of his strand of perception. In this way, all people are forever part of the Labyrinth, because their path is present always.

Each individual unwinds one strand because that strand is our stream of consciousness. In our lives, we are limited to this stream of consciousness, because we are limited to our own perception of reality. Our individual path is our consciousness, because it is this heightened awareness of the world perceived through our mind that separates us from our origin in nature and from one another. Our minds direct our lives, and gives a constant stream to the chaos of our experiences. We cannot leave behind this strand of continuous thoughts and perceptions, just as we cannot leave our bodies. In "A New Refutation of Time," Borges was right to locate linear Time in the mind. Each of us has our own string of moments, and that string is our path, our strand of linear Time in the Labyrinth.

In the beginning of human history or the beginning of the Labyrinth of Time, we had no maze, only a center. That center is Nature. In the history of humanity, each human born created his/her own path, intersecting various paths already created by others. In this way, each person found his/her own place to add to the maze. As Time has gone on, more and more history has been compiled, so the labyrinth of temporal reality grows larger and larger. This creates a growing tangle of paths, and the Labyrinth is filled with the interlacing strands of individuals seeking to add their own paths either by filling in spaces or by seeking beyond the outer boundaries. Gradually, as more and more people are born into human existence, they add variations to the paths. All the paths converge on the center, our experience with Nature.

Instead of a structure which spreads across a single plane as at Knossos, the Labyrinth of Time is a structure which exists on infinite planes. The only thing that links the plains full of individual paths is one center, Nature. The Labyrinth, because it exists on infinite plains with one center, is a sphere which extends in all directions. This sphere is defined by the origin in nature, and all the paths originate from that point. No matter which way the paths extend, whether they exist on one plain or another, they all originate in Nature.

To keep the core experience with Nature we are so dependent upon, our paths constantly cycle from movement outward to movement back to the origin. Each of us, from day to day, experiences the changing of Nature which is the foundation of our sense of time. In the model of the Labyrinth then, our path is a constant cycle from the origin out to experiences with other humans and back to the origin. In this way, our paths become loops or cycles of movement outward to movement inward. These cycles transcend any one plane.

IX. The Power of Mythology

I have now explored the Spherical Labyrinth of Time. Before I make any conclusions about the implications of this model for Time, it is important that I set the Labyrinth back into its context of mythology. During the course of my research, I have learned a great deal about what I believe defines a myth. Myths, in my opinion, are pieced-together stories. Myths draw from many individuals who, through encounters with one another or with Nature, glimpse an experience with some presence in the world around them that cannot be accounted for. From these glimpses, people create stories. Through sharing their stories orally or in writing, these individuals put their own pieces together into one evolving story. Over time, this story becomes representative of a communal encounter, by pulling together many different individual glimpses of an unexplainable force present in our existence.

From individual fragments, myths distill common themes which transcend any one local perspective and represent the communion of many different perspectives. Myths transcend individual temporal realities to more authentically reveal our experiences with the unknown that lies outside of human influence. This unknown is the Divine, the infinite, or the eternal that exists beyond human perception, and it is best understood through myths. The myth of the Labyrinth is one, and in addition to preserving some of the names of people and places who were part of its shaping, it has distilled a greater experience with the unknown presence in the world which operates outside of human influence, the Divine that transcends linear Time.

By adding my voice to the myth of the Labyrinth, I hope to continue evolving the myth, and to make it meaningful for us in new ways. However, with my addition to the myth comes the responsibility of sharing my own perception. I must share my part with others orally or in

writing in order to add my own limited understanding to the myth. I cannot, on my own, add to the myth; I am dependent on communication with others through story to contribute my part.

Finally, I want to point out that myths are still limited to human understanding. Though they represent a communal encounter with the infinite, the Divine, the eternal, they are still bound to human limitations, such as language and the senses. This is a crucial acknowledgment, because myths are not the whole, but a way to glimpse the whole through a communal understanding of it. Myths are not a whole in themselves, rather they point us to the whole. So myths must constantly evolve and change to continue revealing communal visions of the whole. The understanding of the Divine or eternal which any one myth gives is still limited to human perceptions, even in communion.

I will now turn to the implications of the Labyrinth of Time. As I stretch out these implications, I and my reader should know that the understanding which the Labyrinth of Time reveals is powerful, but it is not *the* whole. I firmly believe that no one human myth can comprehend fully the whole or the infinite divine. However, the understanding which the Labyrinth of Time gives is meaningful and needed.

X. Connecting the Spherical Labyrinth of Time to God

“It may be that universal history is the history of a handful of metaphors,” writes Borges in the first line of his brief work, “The Fearful Sphere of Pascal.” The metaphor to which Borges refers links the sphere to Nature and God. Through tracing people in history back to centuries before Christ, Borges records a long line of notable thinkers who have linked Nature and God to the sphere. This history of people begins with a Greek thinker in the 6th Century B.C. Borges

writes, “Xenophanes of Colophon, weary of the Homeric verses he recited from city to city, lashed out at the poets who attributed anthropomorphic traits to the gods, and offered the Greeks a single God, a god who was an eternal sphere” (“The Fearful Sphere of Pascal” 189). From this root poet and thinker, Borges tracks the metaphor through history in the writings of thinkers from various cultures. Each of these people contributed to the conversation about the sphere as a metaphor for Nature or God, and Pascal added his part in the 17th Century. Borges writes of Pascal:

He felt the incessant weight of the physical world, he experienced vertigo, fright and solitude, and he put his feelings into these words: ‘Nature is an infinite sphere, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.’...Pascal started to write the word *effroyable*: ‘a fearful sphere, whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. (“The Fearful Sphere of Pascal” 192)

In “The Fearful Sphere of Pascal,” Borges reveals that Nature and God have been linked with the sphere many times throughout history. The reason for this close connection is that the sphere is such an ideal, inclusive shape in many ways. Parmenides, one of the people Borges refers to, explored the elegance of the sphere as a metaphor when he wrote, “The Divine Being is like the mass of a well-rounded sphere, whose force is constant from the center in any direction” (“The Fearful Sphere of Pascal” 189).

Borges, as the story ends, makes the sphere a metaphor which shapes our understanding of Space and Time. Borges writes, “In time, because if the future and the past are infinite, there can not really be a when; in space, because if every being is equidistant from the infinite and the

infinitesimal, neither can there be a where” (“The Fearful Sphere of Pascal” 191). Borges, in this leap, uses the metaphor of the sphere to transcend any specific moment or location in Space and Time.

In his closing leap, Borges concludes the story with a cosmic but rather nebulous notion of the sphere as symbolic of many things, including Nature, Time, Space, and God. These connections are all-encompassing and abstract, and I want to use the Labyrinth of Time to find specific meanings for these concepts in a comprehensible model. This is a difficult task, because the notions Borges is playing with are difficult to identify and compare. However, I will try to keep them clear as I address them.

To realize the full potential of the Spherical Labyrinth of Time, I want to link it, with the help of Borges in “The Fearful Sphere of Pascal,” to the sphere of God. Thus, the Labyrinth of Time is significant not only as a model for Time, but also as a metaphor for understanding God. Living in accord with the Spherical Labyrinth of Time is recognizing and seeking harmony with God. This harmony encompasses past, present, and future into one model conceptualized as a sphere. Within this sphere, we are all cycling between the origin and the limits of our path. We, as individual humans, catch glimpses of God in our journey, but we cannot further our understanding of God without Nature and without one another. So, though each one of us is an integral part of God’s sphere, God is not limited to any one being and transcends any of our perceptions. In addition, God is a presence which exists within us as well as outside of us in Nature. In this model, God cannot be fathomed as a person or as Nature alone. Rather, God is best understood as a sphere which encompasses the communion of all life and the nonliving environment.

The Spherical Labyrinth of Time is a metaphor for the sphere of God. By embracing the Labyrinth of Time and rooting out lives in its inherent values, we strive to understand our part in the whole that is God. To live by that Spherical Labyrinth, our existence is about various cycles, between human relationship and nature, between day and night, between fall and spring, between infinite and temporal. In all of these cycles, we can contribute to the paths which shape the sphere of God. In this way, God is dependent on each one of us a part of the whole, and yet God transcends any individual by encompassing the communion of all people who have lived and Nature.

To contribute to the sphere of God, we must embrace two prominent values embedded in the Labyrinth of Time, Nature and close community with others. By valuing these two elements of our Labyrinth of Time, we honor our relationship to the whole that is God, and we contribute a vital path to that whole. If we do not live by the Spherical Labyrinth of Time, we lose our sense of direction and meaning, and we isolate ourselves from knowing God.

The Labyrinth of Time is a fitting metaphor for the Sphere of God because it places great significance on our part of the whole sphere in this lifetime. By understanding that we have a vital part in creating and adding to the Labyrinth of God, we see the importance of our place in this existence. We also see that God is a sphere still in progress, and that Nature and humans are a needed part of that continually evolving communion.

The danger of the metaphor with God is that God is reduced to an easily conceived notion, the Spherical Labyrinth of Time. I do not believe this, but I do believe that the Labyrinth points to the Divine I call God. By embracing the Labyrinth, we add its understanding of God to others we have encountered along our paths.

XI. Return to the Minoan Culture

The ancient Minoans had it right, and I wish that their cultural values had survived in a living civilization. Their culture, and I believe their awareness of Time, was rooted in a basic relationship to Nature, and they built their close-knit communities around that fundamental experience with the natural world. As a result, the palaces of the Minoans were instilled with their core values, as is very evident at Knossos.

Derived from the Palace at Knossos, the Labyrinth of the Greek myth is a structure which continues to preserve the core values of the Minoans. The Greeks recognized the power and importance of the Labyrinth, and its values were picked up and held in the oral tradition and writings which lead to the myth of the Labyrinth told by Apollodorus and Plutarch.

To make the Labyrinth our model for Time, then, is a move to re-integrate the core values of ancient Minoan and Greek cultures into our current lives. These values are ingrained in the Labyrinth, which was structured around them. Because we have unquestioningly accepted the linear model as the only model for Time, we have increasingly removed ourselves from the values which are so fundamental to Time. Time originates in our experience with Nature as individuals and as communities in constant communion with one another. When we accept this new model for Time, the Spherical Labyrinth, we re-connect ourselves to these core values which drive our lives. This connection will help us to unify our everyday, moment-to-moment existence with our original struggle as humans.

By uncovering the Labyrinth and using it as a model for Time, we also find the roots of a new relationship with Time in our own heritage, the Western tradition. Often, I think that we seek outside of our own roots for more fulfilling ways of living. In America, this search often takes us

to Native American traditions, or others. Though we should continue to embrace these experiences with other cultures, it is important that we uncover more fulfilling ways of living in our own roots. The Minoan civilization suggests a different way of living that was established in a founding civilization of Western culture thousands of years ago.

XII. Final Reflection on the Minotaur

In all of the history and mythology surrounding the Labyrinth, the Minotaur is the figure of greatest importance. Asterion is a potent symbol, because his creation, life in the Labyrinth, and fate strike at the core of the meaning of the Labyrinth. By grappling with the meaning of the Minotaur, I believe there is much to be learned about the Spherical Labyrinth of Time as a significant model.

The Minotaur, through his birth, embodied all of the crucial elements of the Labyrinth of Time. First, the Minotaur was seeded from the Queen Pasiphae's lust for the bull. In his birth, the union of human and animal was made incarnate. Thus, the Minotaur is, in physical form, the center of the Labyrinth, where humans encounter Nature, and where temporal self-awareness and eternal consciousness are culminated in one form.

Second, the Minotaur was created because Poseidon, God of the sea, caused his life. When Minos denied Poseidon the bull, the angry God cursed Pasiphae with the unnatural lust which lead to the Minotaur. As a result, the Minotaur is a product of Divine intervention in human affairs. The Minotaur couldn't have been created without the involvement of a supernatural force. Poseidon's intervention also affirms the Minotaur's core importance and central location, because Asterion is a product of the human experience with the Divine.

In the absolute center of any sphere which is turning, movement encounters stillness. The center, then, is the meeting place of temporal and eternal, mortal and immortal. All of this is embodied in the Minotaur.

Finally, the slaying of the Minotaur would seem to mark a basic break in the union between humans and Nature, self-awareness and natural consciousness. Through the Labyrinth and Theseus' journey into it, we see the human struggle with our origin and separation from Nature. On the one hand, we search to be reunited with Nature. On the other hand, we want to separate ourselves from Nature and rise above it...even destroy it. This fundamental effort to come to peace with Nature is a driving force in our lives, and we need each other to help in the effort.

The slaying of the Minotaur also symbolizes, as I indicated before, a tradition in Western culture. When the Minotaur was slain, humans were forever separated from Nature and from the Divine. As Western culture had developed, we have lived in this denial of our connection to Nature. A core example of this denial is our current linear model for Time. The linear model is an attempt to separate our notion of Time from its origin in Nature. By living with the linear model, we try to extend the human notion of Time located in our minds into the world around us, denying that Time also has a present outside of human influence in Nature. By understanding the Minotaur's death, we can see the division between humans and Nature, and we can try to reconnect human with Nature once again.

XIII. Connecting with Nature

To reconnect our lives with Nature, we must embrace the Spherical Labyrinth of Time in our daily lives. I have several suggestions for changing our everyday lives which all rise from

relationship with the center, Nature.

In our own path, we are limited to a linear perception of Time which exists in our minds. This linear perception is a fairly continuous stream of moments from past to present to future. However, if we return to the center where Time exists in Nature, we begin to see glimpses of a Time beyond our own linear path. This Time, which I believe is present in Nature, is conceived of in the notion of the Eternal Now and of cycles.

In Nature, Time is not bound to the linear notion of Time; the present always encompasses the past and future. Now is the only Time that exists, and Now includes all that is before the present, and all that will happen after the present. This means that Now is eternal.

Time in Nature is also about cycling. There are the cycles of the day, the seasons, the years. In these cycles we find a different rhythm of passing Time which is not so simple or rigid as the linear continuum of Time.

How do we live in the Eternal Now and the cycling of Nature? Let me give one example.

Most summers I am able to set aside the worries of a life in linear Time and go to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area with my brother and friends. When we go to the BWCA, we leave behind the strict bounds that linear Time imposes. We are careful to leave all watches, alarm clocks, and calendars at home. After canoeing for several days, our sense of living with Time changes. We start getting up when the day gets light, and we get tired shortly after dark. We eat large meals in the morning, around the peak of the sun, and at night, when we are naturally hungry. We also stop for snacks during the day.

As the trip continues, the days start to meld together. Every moment of the day is appreciated in itself. I lose any track of the passage of Time in the rhythm and labor of paddling, and in

sensing the world around me. Days seem to go by quickly, and the trip is over without anxious planning. We all return from the BWCA, healthy, refreshed, and renewed.

In this example, our BWCA party is living in Nature's Time. By giving up a tight hold on the linear model, we become present in the Eternal Now. This kind of living is peaceful, and it also has its own sense of a passing Time which is felt in the cycling of Nature.

My suggestion for changes in our lives is to balance the cycling and the Eternal Now of Nature with the cares of the linear model. On a daily basis, spend Time without a watch on, walking in the forest, gardening, canoeing, being present in Nature. Let the cares of linear Time go for a while, and the anxieties of the linear model become less binding. This absence of linear Time allows for an experience with Now and a sense of passing Time in cycles.

XIV. The Paradox of the Center: Nature in One Another

Before birth, we are nothing but the physical substance which will become our body. We are only a part of the environment before we are born. After birth, we develop our separate consciousness, and we are removed from our origin in Nature. Thus, our birth is a movement from Nature to human consciousness.

The center of the Labyrinth is the starting point. The center joins human with divine, temporal with eternal. Joseph Campbell, through understanding the bounds of a linear continuum of Time, gives us clues to the nature of the center in "The Power of Myth" series. In the third volume of the series, Campbell tells Moyers, "The central point of the world is the point where stillness and movement are together, movement is time, stillness is eternity, realizing the relationship of the temporal to the eternal is the sense of life. The experience of the eternal

aspect of what you're doing in the temporal experience is the mythological experience."

In the Labyrinth of Time, we all begin our single strand at birth, and originate in the center of the Labyrinth. However, this paradox of the center of the sphere of existence without Time is that it is not one point, but infinite centers. Campbell told Bill Moyers, "God is an intelligible sphere, a sphere known to the mind, not to the senses, whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere. The center, Bill, is right where you're sitting and the other one is right where I am sitting. Each of us is a manifestation of that mystery." This center Campbell speaks of represents the birthing force from which we come. Before birth, we are not human in any way that we know, and, after the moment of conception, we are human because we are embodied. Therefore, the center is a powerful place of Nature's birth (fertility) and divine connection, a place we do not understand, a place of darkness, an encounter with the unknown. Also, the center is the point where time begins for each one of us, because we begin our own strand of linear time. All of this meaning is embodied in the Minotaur.

The center of the sphere, then, lies everywhere within the Labyrinth of Time. This fits our conceptualization because, as more and more humans create and shape their paths, we fill in the sphere with our paths crossing over and over, and the center comes to encompass the whole sphere. God is this sphere, the meeting place between eternal and temporal, divine and mortal.

Another reason why the center is everywhere within the spherical Labyrinth of Time is that we are constantly encountering Nature in the center *and in one another*. Each human originates in Nature, and struggles to grasp that origin. As a result, our paths all begin at that common point. When we share an experience with each other, then, we are sharing perceptions which all have a common origin in Nature. By the very act of sharing perceptions and momentarily

escaping the bounds of self-awareness, we join a web of interlacing paths which all originate in the center. In this act of sharing experiences with each other, we join the network which is Nature.

I will give two examples of this communion with other humans in my life. In each of these examples, I believe that, through relationship with other people, I found communion with Nature. A couple of years ago, I took part in a smoke-out, a Native American smoking ceremony. In this ritual, four of us walked down to a spot by the lake at night. We laid down a blanket, and sat, one on each of the four corners.

After some initial silence and internal reflection, I remember feeling an intense clarity of thought. My worries subsided, and all my fragmented thoughts seemed to focus and deepen into one strong, steady stream of consciousness. I felt the thrill of the night without even recognizing it: the chill of the air, the movement of animal life, the rustling of plants, the sound of water. After some silence, we began praying individually as we smoked the pipe and passed it on. While others prayed, I listened with full attention, and truly devoted my energy to affirming their prayers. While I prayed, I felt a strong sense of the others' listening and affirming my prayers. At times in the ceremony, I lost my clarity for moments while fragmented thoughts slipped into my consciousness. But, at other times, I was lost in the ceremony, and I felt as though I was part of a whole, and the whole was part of me. Looking back on it, that smoke-out was truly a ritual which brought me into communion with other people, and brought all of us into common wholeness with Nature.

My second example of a communal experience may be more difficult to understand. When I play basketball, every so often, I am able to let go of my worries and the constant stream of

internal thoughts and cares. In these moments, which may last a whole game if I am lucky, I lose track of any self-awareness, and I am able to play in complete absorption with the game. Then I am part of a team, and we are silently, freely interacting with one another in our play. At these times, I tend to perform the best, because there is none of the tension of constant self-awareness.

In such moments on the court, I believe that we, as a team, truly experienced a natural consciousness in our interaction. All of us were able to let go of our individual perceptions, and we played together with a chemistry that was rhythmic and graceful. This rhythm is the encounter with Nature that is found in relationship with others.

Recently, I have lost that sense of communal experience in basketball. I no longer am able to give up my self-awareness for the game. As a result, basketball is no longer as enjoyable, and I play less and less. This loss of the communal experience in basketball is regrettable, and I seek out other ways of finding communion with others to fill such spaces.

I believe it is in lapses of self-awareness that we know the divine presence of God/ Nature within ourselves. A strength of the Spherical Labyrinth of Time is that it encourages us to transcend our own individual perception. When I intersect the path of another or experience Nature, I share my perception with another being or a communion of beings. This intersection enables me, for a moment, to share the perception of the whole sphere. Before taking up my own way, I share the whole with another or with Nature. In this moment, I lose consciousness of my own self, of my separation of body, and I am lost in the whole.

XV. The Future of the Spherical Labyrinth of Time

I have put a great deal of effort into incorporating the past into the Spherical Labyrinth of

Time. However, I have spent little time on the future. The Labyrinth of Time leaves a great deal of unknown territory in its conception of the future. For instance, I have not dealt with the boundaries of the Spherical Labyrinth, because I don't understand the future of the Labyrinth. Does the Labyrinth have sharp boundaries or a definable circumference? Eventually, as more and more paths are added, are we ever bound to repeat human paths in our own journey without adding anything of our own? I don't know the answers to these questions. I tend to agree with Campbell that the sphere is without circumference. It gives a conception of the present, because we cannot know the future, and so seeking to predict it is pointless. The Spherical Labyrinth of Time seems to take into account the futility of seeking to know the future, and so there is no clear plan for it in the model. Instead, the Labyrinth would encourage living in the Eternal Now and in the cycling of Nature, without so much concern for the end in the future. If we truly live in the present, there is no end ahead, because we cannot end in the present.

XVI. Other Myths

Beyond the myth of the Labyrinth, I believe that we can find myths in traditional and unexpected places. For instance, the Creation stories from many cultures are authentically mythological. I even believe that the Eucharist in the Catholic Church is a valuable myth.

As one example, the Judeo-Christian Creation Story is about a break between humans and Nature too. Before the Fall, Adam and Eve lived in harmony with Nature in the garden. After they took of the forbidden fruit, they become *aware* of their separation from the world around them. They were suddenly bound within their own perceptions, and aware of their own nakedness. This fall from grace reveals that we, as humans, are separated from the world around

us by our awareness of it. Adam and Eve, in eating of the Tree of Knowledge, symbolically separated themselves from Nature much like when the Minotaur was slain by Theseus. Both the Judeo-Christian Creation Story and the Greek myth of the Labyrinth tell of the human separation from Nature, from the eternal, and from the Divine.

XVII. Conclusion: "The Garden of Forking Paths"

Among the stories I have read, I have found an authentic sense of life with the Spherical Labyrinth of Time in only one place. Borges captures a sense of the communion with Nature and with other people in the conclusion of his short piece, "The Garden of Forking Paths." One slice of this short story describes the journey of a young man walking to the home of a relative who has written a great book. This book is a written maze which encompasses all possibilities within its pages. Meditating over this notion of an infinite book, the young man suddenly sees the possibility in the world around him. Borges imagines,

Beneath English trees I meditated on that lost maze: I imagined it erased by rice fields or beneath the water; I imagined it infinite, no longer composed of octagonal kiosks and returning paths, but of rivers and provinces and kingdoms...I thought of a labyrinth of labyrinths, of one sinuous spreading labyrinth that would encompass the past and the future and in some way involve the stars. Absorbed in these illusory images, I forgot my destiny of one pursued. I felt myself to be, for an unknown period of time, an abstract perceiver of the world. The vague, living countryside, the moon, the remains of the day worked on me, as well as the slope of the road which eliminated any possibility of weariness. The afternoon was

intimate, infinite. The road descended and forked among the now confused meadows...I thought that a man can be an enemy of other men, of the moments of other men, but not of a country: not of fireflies, words, gardens, steams of water, sunsets. (*The Garden of Forking Paths* 23)

The narrator here realizes reality as a labyrinth. Suddenly, he lets go of his hold on limited perception and sees the world in all of its infinite beauty. His experience is a revelation with Nature, but he feels a part of a community that encompasses all reality. The man, in that instant, is all the world, and he loses his separation from it. He is conscious of being only one part of the infinite, eternal, and Divine which is God, and yet he is unaware of his isolation from the whole sphere. In that moment, the man transcends his own linear perception to find, for a moment, the Eternal Now. He encounters the Center, the Minotaur, and it is within him and all around him at once.

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