

*Seculum, An Epic Trilogy in Verse* by Peter Dale Scott: “The Poem as Structure for a New Dawn”

by  
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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

8053 – DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY –  
Humanities and Communications

in the  
Writing and Society Research Centre,  
School of Humanities and Communication Arts,  
Western Sydney University

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*Seculum, An Epic Trilogy in Verse* by Peter Dale Scott: "The Poem as Structure for a New Dawn".

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## Abstract

This dissertation reads the three books of Canadian-American poet and scholar Peter Dale Scott's epic poem *Seculum*. Scott identifies as a practising Buddhist with a strong interest in Catholic theology and his poetry explores key ideas associated with both systems of belief. I argue that Scott formally employs the number three in diverse ways within the trilogy and that this formula (as in the poetic tercet form) constructs a poesis that is structured on the ruins of a type of Dantean Hell. Similarly, that this repetition gradually replaces the characteristics of Hell – such as darkness and feelings of despair and faithlessness – with a Purgatorian stillness and quietude, and then, a Paradisiacal mood of acceptance, harmony and clear thinking. In its gradual 'presencing' of hope, redemption and peace, *Seculum's* poetic structure is acoustically tuned to its past (by way of quotation, evocation and influence) and religiously engaged with the present. In its complex evolution out of a psychological darkness to a spiritual lightness it excavates, empties out and builds an artifice from which the poet and reader can participate in the genesis of a new dawn. I maintain that *Seculum* is an epic poem in keeping with examples of quest poetry from Homer through to the twenty-first century. As a formula for completing the mission – to re-imagine the world as a better place – *Seculum* explores dichotomous relationships between religious and secular ideas related to selfhood and progressive ecology.

In *Seculum* Scott's poetic consciousness matures in its understanding of a balance between individual desires and communal responsibilities and his theological position, as explored in the trilogy, can best be understood – after Thomas Merton and in the context of recent eco-critical thinking by Jonathan Bate, Stuart Cooke and Kate Rigby – as a kind of "sacramental ecology". *Seculum* moves beyond the horror of terror, as epitomised in the first volume, *Coming to Jakarta*, to a place of dwelling on earth that in the third volume recognises the sacredness of earth and the value of eco-critical living. The success of the narrative arc in *Seculum* relies heavily upon the employment of poetic and philosophic guides who include Wordsworth, Eliot and Pound and, to varying degrees, Heidegger and Hölderlin. The sense of an eco-critical livelihood in *Seculum* becomes, then, a prototype of an idyll, giving contemporary presence to the past with a view to discovering future providence. In *Seculum* this is developed by a coalescing of poetic and cultural memory from different literary epochs, beginning with classical antiquity. In the manner Book 3 of the trilogy achieves a synthetic resolution of the thesis posed in Book 1 and the anti-thesis that follows in Book 2, *Seculum* emerges as a built "structure" in which can be housed a new dawn of possibility.

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## Acknowledgements

In the writing of this thesis, I acknowledge the engagement of my Principal Supervisor, Dr. Kate Fagan, who offered encouragement, sound advice and professional assistance throughout. An engagement that at times demanded unparalleled patience, persistence and extended reading time, it is an undertaking I will appreciate forever.

To Associate Professor Diego Bubbio, my Secondary Supervisor, I say thankyou for believing in me, for relaying your extensive knowledge on areas otherwise a little gray, and for offering your time when you most often had so little.

To Professor Anthony Uhlmann, thankyou for stepping in when my supervisors were otherwise engaged and for scheduling weekly meetings for our discussion. For reading the work and appraising it keenly, critically and honestly. For finding that gentle balance of commentary so as to mention the bad *and* the good.

For Peter Dale Scott, for writing poetry and living consubstantially. For sharing your wisdom.

For my family and loved ones, who know what it means to remember my paternal father in the honoring and cherishing of my most precious gifts: poetry and Catholicism.

To the world, hello! It's been a long period of absence and I've missed you.

### List of Key Figures:

Frank Reginald Scott: The father of Peter Dale Scott. 1899–1985. m. Marian Dale Scott, 1928.

Marian Dale Scott: The mother of Peter Dale Scott. 1906–1993. m. Frank R. Scott, 1928.

Ronna Kabatznick: The second wife of Peter Dale Scott, m. Peter Dale Scott, July 14, 1993.

Maylie Scott (Mary Elizabeth Marshall): The first wife (deceased) of Peter Dale Scott, March 29, 1935–May 10, 2001, m. Peter Dale Scott, June 16, 1953, d. 1993.

James Schamus: Teaching colleague of Peter Dale Scott.

Elizabeth: Childhood playmate (relation not known) of Scott.

Susan Burgess Shenstone: Travel companion of Scott.

Maria: Three year companion of Peter Dale Scott prior to second marriage.

Cherry: young housemate from Taiwan (relation not known) of an early Californian residence of Peter Dale Scott and Ronna Kabatznick.

Fay Stender: Political activist, lawyer and friend of Peter Dale Scott (deceased), 29 March, 1932–19 May, 1980.

Marvin Stender: Husband of Fay Stender and friend of Peter Dale Scott.



## INTRODUCTION

### *SECULUM: A TRILOGY* BY PETER DALE SCOTT

#### i. Groundworks

The present thesis undertakes a critical discussion of the epic poem *Seculum* by Canadian-born American author, Peter Dale Scott. The three books of the trilogy are *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem about Terror* (1989),<sup>1</sup> *Listening to the Candle: A Poem on Impulse* (1992)<sup>2</sup> and *Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000* (2000).<sup>3</sup> In the body of this dissertation, these titles appear in shorthand as *Jakarta*, *Candle* and *Darkness*.

There are many ways to interpret the word *Seculum*, a title of Scott's own making, but in this dissertation its definition is most explicitly connected to Scott's own Trinitarian religiosity and his poem's epic quest for Paradise. This means my reading aligns with Keith W. Irwin's translation of the Latin "saecula saeculorum" which is a symbolic expression of the "coming together" of humankind with God's love.<sup>4</sup> Understanding that the quest of Scott's epic poem is to find redemption and to work through the many antimonies of harmony that defer this possibility, the title *Seculum* revisits the original concluding phrase of the *Agnus Dei* or "banquet of the lamb".<sup>5</sup> So that Scott's contemporisation of the Latin phrase "saecula saeculorum" considers the eucharistic adoration as one which is intimate, personable and contemplative. A term etymologically derived from the original translated Latin "unto the age of ages", it is defined as meaning "for ever and ever, for eternity".<sup>6</sup> This sustains Scott's epic quest for a poem that writes itself toward enlightenment and a newly interpreted perpetual shining of God's love – my core argument in this thesis. That *Seculum* could also be a pun on "secular and speculum" is also true with respect to Scott's critical assessment of divisions

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror* (New York: New Directions Books, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle: a Poem on Impulse* (New York: New Directions Books, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000* (New York: New Directions Books, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Keith W. Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 345-347.

<sup>5</sup> Irwin, *Models of the Eucharist*, 345. As Irwin importantly points out, the adoration of the eucharist is today as much a part of the Catholic mass as it is outside of it in the form of the Benediction and reception of the host in the home environments of the sick.

<sup>6</sup> J.M. Sinclair, *Collins English Dictionary: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition* (Glasgow: Harper Collins, 2001), sourced online 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2020, unpaginated.

between secular and spiritual approaches to living on earth in the trilogy,<sup>7</sup> but this only foregrounds an aspect of the poem I believe Scott would prefer was implicit.

The political catalyst for Scott's *Seculum* occurred in Jakarta, Indonesia, on the morning of October 1, 1965, after the kidnap and murder of six army generals by elements within the Indonesian Army. The subsequent massacres of alleged communists and communist sympathisers that took place throughout the country over a period of six months were instigated by the Army and assisted by the US and its allies.<sup>8</sup> According to political historian Geoffrey Robinson, they resulted in the killing of "an estimated half a million members of the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia or PKI) and its affiliated organisations".<sup>9</sup> More than a million people were "detained for over thirty years", with many "subjected to torture and inhumane treatment".<sup>10</sup> While the exact motivation for the initial kidnap and murders is still debated,<sup>11</sup> the general details suggest they were by "low-ranking officers" within the Indonesian army whose aim was to prevent a supposed coup by the CIA. According to Robinson, their actions were in the best interests of Indonesian President Sukarno.<sup>12</sup> However, leading Major General Suharto accused the PKI and Sukarno's support of the party as being the perpetrators and the main cause of the first attack. From this point on the conflict escalated and Sukarno's power was increasingly diminished.<sup>13</sup>

A poetry of both experience and scholarly exposure via teaching positions in Paris, Montreal, Quebec, UK and California,<sup>14</sup> *Seculum* follows Scott's previous works of non-fiction concerning American politics, corruption of the State, political assassinations and drug trafficking. According to Scott's professional resume, he has also worked in the political and literary fields as a diplomat and educator. In the gaps between an extensive teaching career spanning the years 1952-1994, Scott worked for the Canadian government in the UN and in Warsaw, Poland and became a Senior Fellow of the International Center for Development Policy. With over seven collections of poetry, sixteen prose books, and numerous published

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<sup>7</sup> Mark Byron, "Academic Correspondence", not published, October 21, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey R. Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres 1965-1966* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018) ix–xiv.

<sup>9</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 3.

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 6.

<sup>14</sup>Please refer to Appendix for complete biographical details.

articles on international relations, literary criticism, spirituality and peace, he has been awarded literary honours, awards and writer residencies.

Across his oeuvre, Scott's output is marked by a quest to expose corrupt politics (see works such as *The American Deep State, Big Money, Big Oil and the Struggle for U.S. Democracy*)<sup>15</sup> and reframe the secular culture of the Enlightenment in an eco-critical domain. He has aimed to reshape a chaos of dissent by suggesting pathways that achieve harmonious interpersonal and ecological relationships and offer a way to write a non-aggressive "order" into a culture of disordered Enlightenment. Writings such as "Two Indonesias, Two Americas",<sup>16</sup> published the same year as *Jakarta* (Book One of *Seculum*), describe two types of Indonesian tradition: a long history of tolerance of Muslim cultures versus "three decades of ruthless repression" of Muslim cultures by the Indonesian Army;<sup>17</sup> and two American traditions – the one humanitarian in support of human rights groups (in Indonesia through significant funding) and the other repressive and violent (against citizens) to "control" order. In a later article,<sup>18</sup> Scott's own 'coming to Jakarta' is described as an attempt at an intellectual and unqualified rebuttal (via his writings on the Vietnam War) to the "near blackout of news of the massacre in the U.S. press".<sup>19</sup> Indeed, he "has never been in Asia" – however he took a scholarly interest in the growing "black hole of silence" regarding Indonesia in "U.S. policy documents".<sup>20</sup> Noting further, on a more personal level, that many "academic Indonesianists" had been similarly forced to silence to save their visas, he felt less and less sure he was an "external witness" to the horrors of Jakarta and more an actual witness as a poet, concerned with humanity and decency by way of his literary vocation.<sup>21</sup>

In *Seculum*, however, the central topic of Scott's literary oeuvre becomes much broader and considers a greater theme of political shadow play (an "away from the public" problem solving) versus democracy and human rights.<sup>22</sup> Such international relations become, he argues, emblematic of a modern secular Enlightenment which he feels creates its own

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<sup>15</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *The American Deep State, Big Money, Big Oil and the Struggle for U.S. Democracy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Two Indonesias, Two Americas," *Lobster*, 35 (Summer, 1998), 2–7.

<sup>17</sup> Scott, "Two Indonesias, Two Americas," 2.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Dale Scott, Scott, Peter Dale. "How I Came to Jakarta." *Agni*, no. 31/ 32 (1990): 297-304. Accessed March 8, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Scott, "How I Came to Jakarta", 298.

<sup>20</sup> Scott, "How I Came to Jakarta", 298.

<sup>21</sup> Scott, "How I Came to Jakarta", 299.

<sup>22</sup> Scott, "Two Indonesias, Two Americas," 7.

disorder by replacing spiritual faith with secular reason.<sup>23</sup> The ultimate solution for Scott, with regard to these antimonies, is to reconcile difference.<sup>24</sup> So that, in *Seculum*, such reconciliation is envisioned as a global solution to personal and communal dissent and is fundamental to civil rights and a sustainable, humanitarian existence on earth.

With specific reference to the events of 1965 in Jakarta, this research will argue that *Seculum* was written to alleviate the author's personal difficulties with America's involvement in the massacres that followed. In an article titled "An Essay on Liberation",<sup>25</sup> Scott speaks frankly about the killings of over half a million alleged communists and the indiscriminate political seizure of another half million Indonesian civilians. He speaks of what moves him to write about the violence, despite having some prose works censored,<sup>26</sup> and his recognition and realisation that there were "darker, more inscrutable forces at work in the world and in ourselves".<sup>27</sup> From this Jakarta of 1965, it is these larger, "darker...forces"<sup>28</sup> that compel a trilogy much broader in scope with respect to its main themes of injustice and inhumane activity. Whilst there are epigraphs that introduce each book-length poem in *Seculum*, the books are divided by section headings supported by a page of quotes, and the poems themselves are written in fragments. Beginning true to the left margin of the page, the fragments are composed of three-line stanzas that indent every second line by two spaces and every third by one space. Scott references the many quotes and references cited in the fragments in italics and details their source in the right margin of the page. For example, on page 24 of *Jakarta*, fragment II.iv quotes from an essay by Scott himself:

seeing as this is  
precisely poetry

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<sup>23</sup> Bryan Sentes, "... voices / ... heard / ... as revelations: Peter Dale Scott's Contribution to the Discourse of the Postsecular in his *Seculum* Trilogy and *Mosaic Orpheus*," *Spirituality in Contemporary Canadian and Québécois Literature* (27 May 2018), 8.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Reconciling Inner and Outer Enlightenment," *Tikkun*, 26 (January 01, 2011), unpaginated.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics: How Writing a Poem Enabled Me to Write American War Machine (An Essay on Liberation)," *Japan Focus: The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 9, Issue 26, no. 1 (June 29, 2011), unpaginated.

<sup>26</sup> In his interview series with friend and colleague Freeman Ng, Scott speaks about a publication which his publishers "suppressed" (Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, ed., *Poetry and Terror: Politics and Poetics in Coming to Jakarta* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 8). The book was the result of intensive research into the "John F. Kennedy assassination, and its treatment by the House Select Committee on Assassinations". He mentions that it got as far as a catalogue entry in the Pocket Books Spring Catalogue with an "initial print run to be 250,000 copies". It remains unpublished.

<sup>27</sup> Scott, "Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics", unpaginated.

<sup>28</sup> Scott, "Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics", unpaginated.

the CIA's and now Peking Cambodian  
assassins the Khmer Serai  
In that article I estimated  
a half-million or more

killed in this period<sup>29</sup>

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Written in the form of tercets, the fragments build on the Hegelian principle of: "A = Consciousness, B = Self-Consciousness and C = a return to A (in the knowledge of B)".<sup>30</sup> For Scott this model transmutes to become a triad: so that in every first line there is a thesis, in every second an anti-thesis, and in every third a synthesis of their arguments.<sup>31</sup> This triad is inspired by the dialectical structuring of Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*,<sup>32</sup> which first came to Scott's attention during his doctoral studies at Oxford University.<sup>33</sup>

Each of the three books in *Seculum* begins with an epigraph: the first dedicates the poetry to Scott's father, Frank Scott; the second, to his mother, Marian Dale (Marshall) Scott; and the last, to his second and current wife, Ronna Kabatznick. The epigraphs signpost the differing content of the books so that *Jakarta* is led by Scott's "rationalist"<sup>34</sup> father who was a lawyer and political commentator; *Candle*, by his "intuitive"<sup>35</sup> and artistic mother who was non-religious, intellectual and a successful abstract painter; and *Darkness*, by the author and psychologist, Ronna Kabatznick, who is Scott's beloved wife and closest critical reader.

Occupied by Hegel's writings, which he read in German over three to four years, Scott came to view Hegel as "one of the greatest philosophers until Alfred North Whitehead".<sup>36</sup> This view was not shared by his teachers<sup>37</sup> at Oxford University, however, which led to the

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<sup>29</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> Glenn Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 170.

<sup>31</sup> Scott, *Minding the Darkness*, 246.

<sup>32</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988).

<sup>33</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 73.

<sup>34</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 73.

<sup>35</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 73.

<sup>36</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 74.

<sup>37</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 74. During an Oxford lecture Scott attended, his teacher Isaiah Berlin said: "for Hegel, every moment was part of a grand orchestrated movement toward a fulfilment of history". Scott saw a fundamental error in the use of the terms "every moment" because (as he explains), "Hegel recognised there is accident in history".

failure of his dissertation (Scott's thesis on T. S. Eliot was later successfully completed at McGill University, Canada).<sup>38</sup>

Among other concepts, Scott was interested in the idea of potentiality in Hegel's philosophy,<sup>39</sup> which he saw as extending to ideas of freedom later expressed in the philosophy of Sartre.<sup>40</sup> Scott explains this by way of the analogy of the difference between a human and a lamp.<sup>41</sup> A lamp, he says, "has not the chance" to be anything more than what it is (as an inanimate object) whereas to be human (and animate) presupposes that chance.<sup>42</sup> A lamp cannot know I am I, but a human can be self-conscious of existing. According to Rauch, Hegel's address to this notion of "recognition",<sup>43</sup> speaks of a self that engages with an external reality:

The existent reality of conscience ... is one which is a *self*, an existence which is conscious of itself, the spiritual element of being recognised and acknowledged. The action is ... the translation of the individual content into the objective element, in which it is universal and recognised.<sup>44</sup>

In this sense of "I being I" and then being in the world, the self reaches a unified state and is able to progress and becomes a greater version of itself. Scott's purpose in adapting the Hegelian "A, B, C" structure<sup>45</sup> to the *Seculum* trilogy is twofold: whilst superficially it allows Scott to order the differences of the political and the personal, it also allows him to contemplate potentiality – ways in which they might be reconciled.

Consistent with the tercet method of offering first a thesis, then an anti-thesis and, lastly, a synthesis of their arguments, Scott's *Seculum* trilogy adopts the same methodology in book form. So that Book One, *Jakarta*, is *Seculum's* thesis; Book Two, *Candle*, is its anti-

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<sup>38</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "After 64 Years," *Dhamma Moon, A Journal of Contemplative Poetry*, ed., Ajahn Sucitto and Ajahn Abhinando (Switzerland: Dec, 2017). See also: [https:// www.peterdalescott.net/ cv/](https://www.peterdalescott.net/cv/)

<sup>39</sup> "... matter, as potentiality and external form, as reality; are opposed to one another; but the soul is, in contrast with this, universal potentiality itself, without matter, because its essence is energy. Understanding then, in the soul, as that which possesses consciousness, is nothing in reality before it thinks ...". Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Plato and The Platonists*, trans. E. S. Haldane (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 195.

<sup>40</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 74.

<sup>41</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 74.

<sup>42</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 74.

<sup>43</sup> Leo Rauch, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Self-Consciousness*, (New York: University of New York Press, 1999), 388.

<sup>44</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), 388.

<sup>45</sup> Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary*, 170.

thesis; and Book Three, *Darkness*, is a synthesis of the arguments in Books One and Two. Whilst this modelling is inspired by Hegel, Scott's consistent attention to "threeness" is comparable also to the structure of *Commedia* by the Italian medieval poet Dante Alighieri.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, this comparison is all the more substantial in the visual and ideological presence of Dante throughout *Seculum*. To elaborate, by deepening his interpretation of the Hegelian "A, B, C"<sup>47</sup> as an organising principle, Scott develops his tercets around an idea which Dante scholar Prue Shaw argues is connected to the logical form of "syllogisms". A syllogism, as Shaw explains, has "three terms arranged in three propositions (major premise, minor premise, conclusion)".<sup>48</sup> In this sense, a syllogism is also an adaptation of Hegel's "three". What makes this comparison all the more synergistic is the manner in which Dante's triadic structure can decide something to be true or false precisely because that is the reckoning of a "tripartite" system.

Scott defines himself a Trinitarian<sup>49</sup> and this idea is expressed also in Dante's recurring theme of three, which Shaw explains is a "three-in-one" idea.<sup>50</sup> In this way, both Scott and Dante are conforming to the accepted Christian doctrine of the of "Holy and Blessed Trinity – of their being three persons in one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit"; which unifies the real, the transcendental and the mystery so that what is "true and good" of God can be "true and good" of humankind/ and or, dwelling on earth.<sup>51</sup> In the sense that Scott, like Dante, is writing religious poetry (and not, *per se*, developing an Hegelian argument), *the Seculum* trilogy can be viewed as a mirroring of the three realms of *Commedia* in which *Jakarta* corresponds to Hell, *Candle* to Purgatory, and *Darkness*, to Paradise.

Religious devotion is deeply apparent in Scott's poetry and informs it on many levels: from the appreciation of all living forms to the sense of a strong traditional morality that desires love above adversity, peace above violence. For Scott, the divine force that lends a

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<sup>46</sup> In this dissertation I cite (wherever possible) from three volumes of *Commedia*, all of which pertain to the same translator, Robert M. Durling: Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Volume 1: Inferno*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Volume 2: Purgatorio*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Volume 3: Paradiso*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary*, 170.

<sup>48</sup> Prue Shaw, *Reading Dante: From Here to Eternity* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), Chapter Six, Numbers (unpaginated).

<sup>49</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Rebecca Law, *Personal correspondence* (October, 2018).

<sup>50</sup> Shaw, *Reading Dante: From Here to Eternity*, Chapter Six, Numbers (unpaginated).

<sup>51</sup> Brian Hebblethwaite, *Philosophical Theology and Christian Doctrine* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 75–91.

deeper dimension to life (which Scott, in correspondence, terms its “moreness”)<sup>52</sup> is God, as conceived in the Catholic sense of the Nicene Creed and the Lord’s Prayer: “the creator of earth” and “the maker ... of all that is seen and unseen”.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, he has also studied and engaged with other scriptural traditions including, for example, Asian (Hindu and Confucian) and Islamic (Sufist) Scriptures and the Buddhist writings of the Dalai Lama.

To expand on this diversity, Scott is a practising Buddhist and yet maintains a Catholic heritage born out of childhood studies toward the sacrament of confirmation and, later, his close friendship and kindred collegiality with the Polish Catholic poet Czeslaw Milosz. Whilst circumstances prevented the attainment of the sacrament of confirmation and a confirmed Catholic identity with it, Scott still sees this faith as most in line with his religious appreciation. Through chance encounters in American and French monasteries with the written works of Catholic monk Thomas Merton, and later more intensive studies of Merton’s works such as *Seven Story Mountain*, this appreciation was developed to full maturity. Underpinning this, of course, there is the Christian tradition of virtue and ethics described in early epic poetry as well as the influence of his marriage to Judaist Ronna Kabatnick with whom he attends a synagogue every Saturday.

Through discussion with Scott on these many religious “principles” of devotion,<sup>54</sup> it is clear that describing him as Catholic is the better way of elevating his fondness for the word of God as written in the Gospels. It also helps to capture the essence of his Mertonian thinking with regard to the personal and the political, the individual and the community. In seeking to contain all these ideas without exclusion, I argue that Scott’s vision is that of a sacramental ecologist. Although this relates to Merton’s idea of communion with nature,<sup>55</sup> it also substantiates Scott’s argument for a communion with the secular and the spiritual. American Professor of Theology and Mertonian scholar Christopher Pramuk describes Merton’s environmental “poetic” consciousness as deeply religious:

Merton is a poet of the liminal spaces of our lives, where sacred mystery breaks in and casts everything in a different light. ... Merton invites us into a whole-

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<sup>52</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Rebecca Law. *Personal Correspondence* (October 2018).

<sup>53</sup> Charles Dollen, *Traditional Catholic Prayers* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publication, 1990).

<sup>54</sup> Scott, Law, *Personal Correspondence* (May, 2018).

<sup>55</sup> Patrick O’Connell, *Thomas Merton: Selected Essays* (Ossining: Orbis Books, 2013), xvii.



bodied communion with reality, where matter pulses with spirit, and time touches the eternal.<sup>56</sup>

For Mertonian scholar and American Professor of English, Monica Weiss, in the Mertonian conception of nature, “nature is not commodity but community”.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, she describes Merton’s ecological consciousness as encompassing a deep moral imperative in which the human being re-evaluates his/ her relationship with nature and develops “a true sense of humility” in the correspondence.<sup>58</sup> To further illustrate, Weiss quotes Merton’s letter to the environmental scientist Rachel Carson (author of *The Silent Spring*):<sup>59</sup>

God’s love is manifested in all his creatures, down to the tiniest and in the wonderful interrelationship between them. Man’s vocation was to be in this cosmic creation so as to speak as the eye in the body.<sup>60</sup>

The term “sacramental ecologist” also links Scott with the developing literary field of ecocriticism and extends the “deep ecology” of Buddhism (where human life is part of earth’s whole, not the centre) to questions relating to ecological consciousness. Today especially, these questions concerning the necessity of “saving” the earth in the aftermath of inflicted violence (global warming) interrogate the more Romantic ideals of subsisting in quaint fondness with nature on earth (or what Jonathan Bate terms our “cottageyness”).<sup>61</sup> For Australian scholar Stuart Cooke, the idea that poetry can show earthly “devotion” would demand a re-evaluation of our Eurocentric belief that the making of our homes on Earth is our most basic right. He argues further, that to go beyond this and consider the same principle with a greater degree of environmental sensitivity would involve a more open resolve and more flexible, adaptable approach to dwelling that considers memory in landscape,

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<sup>56</sup> Christopher Pramuk, “Thomas Merton and the Future of Faith,” *Marginalia: The Los Angeles Review of Books* (April 23, 2016).

<sup>57</sup> Monica Weiss, “Thomas Merton: Advance Man for New Age Thinking About the Environment,” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 5, no. 2 (1998), 1–7.

<sup>58</sup> Weiss, “Thomas Merton: Advance Man,” 1–7.

<sup>59</sup> Weiss, “Thomas Merton: Advance Man,” 2–3.

<sup>60</sup> Weiss, “Thomas Merton: Advance Man,” 2–3.

<sup>61</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Song of the Earth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 206.

temporality and capacity for transformation. For Cooke, human beings need to become more nomadic in outlook and action.<sup>62</sup>

Returning to poetry, Jonathon Bate argues in *The Song of the Earth* Romantic ideas of time and place were reconceptualised to behave as a type of “presencing”.<sup>63</sup> He describes the writings of later “bioregional” poets such as Basil Bunting<sup>64</sup> to show a newly conceptualised idea of dwelling on earth which “yokes” the scientific with the aesthetic.<sup>65</sup> Tracking these renovations and moving forward in time, Bate cites the late contemporary Australian poet Les Murray whose interest in the undersound of the earth related to a religious presence in the wild noise that seems to be “undying”.<sup>66</sup> Outside of this poetic timeline, Bate identifies a gulf between two kinds of Enlightenment thinking: one concerned with moral and political rights and the other with findings in the natural sciences. He questions why there was never a third discourse that evaluated the two as one. After all, he argues, whilst our identity resides in the “linguistic, regional and national”, it is also linked to the spiritual.<sup>67</sup> He also wonders if such a third discourse may be the poet’s task, for, as in the American poetics of Gary Snyder, a poem can be “renewable energy for nature and our ecosystem”.<sup>68</sup> And if that is so, could not a poem be the earth’s saviour by being a dreaming symbolic expression (of nature).<sup>69</sup>

For environmental humanities scholar Kate Rigby, any re-evaluation of nature and humans returns us to a pastoral voice that is “resistant to capitalist modernity” and is, also, linked with the natural, “wonder”-ful world of Romanticism.<sup>70</sup> In *Topographies of the Sacred*, Rigby considers a line from the nineteenth century poet, Eichendorff, whose watch on nature observed “the eerie quality of dusk”.<sup>71</sup> What the observation suggests, says Rigby, is that there is a resonance in the natural world which is unfathomable. Such a “greener” approach to 21<sup>st</sup> century poetics, then, would be to “reread Romanticism [R]omantically”, that is, by

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<sup>62</sup> Stuart Cooke, “Echo-Coherence, Moving on From Dwelling,” *Cultural Studies Review*, 17, no. 1 (March, 2011), 240.

<sup>63</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 231.

<sup>64</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 234.

<sup>65</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 231.

<sup>66</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 239.

<sup>67</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, viii.

<sup>68</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 248.

<sup>69</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 5.

<sup>70</sup> Kate Rigby, *Topologies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>71</sup> Rigby, *Topologies of the Sacred*, 260.

reformulating the concept of living on earth and making oneself at home. In such understanding, there is encapsulated an otherness in nature which resonates with a sense of “underlying holiness”, as well as a remembering of the “art” of living on earth.<sup>72</sup>

In the sense that Scott’s *Seculum* is developmental in its relationship with its reader, the trilogy is, like nature, cyclic: it moves from an idea to an argument to a work of poetry. So that the mature “linguistic” structure is the result of a gradual building – fragment by fragment – of clarity for the author and sense for the reader. At the very beginning of Book One, *Jakarta*, for instance, Scott writes about his memory of an oak tree outside his bedroom whose presence and vulnerability in the winter snow and wind remind him of the terror of living and dying. Although one fragment, its tercet stanzas reveal, piece by piece, a sense of the world outside reimagined: with the author’s comfort in being inside and warm in bed set against the cold and darkness outside, the likening of snow to a ghost, the allegory of the wind and snow assailing the oak and innocence, of the storm as religious mystery in its subliminal signalling to the child desiring knowledge.

Scott’s poem has only just begun, yet this one fragment already illustrates a deepened sense of what it is to be human and dwell on earth. An excerpt reads (in its original presentation of full italics):

..... Mosaic darkness  
  
constellations of the gulf’s floor  
    naked half-limbs swift  
    alpine cloudburst hail to you  
  
wind-driven ghost of snow  
    down the side of the dark  
    oak outside my childhood window  
  
with the blind flapping all night  
    Why are you here?  
    Have you something to tell me?<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Rigby, *Topologies of the Sacred*, 259.

<sup>73</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 10.

The idea that the linguistic structure of *Seculum* is metaphorically a “dwelling” is borrowed from Martin Heidegger’s essay “Building, Dwelling, Thinking”.<sup>74</sup> There are many reasons for this move: first, Heidegger is quoted and referenced by Scott throughout *Seculum*; second, Heidegger’s essay concerns questions related to belonging and having a place in the world; and third, the essay suggests that the thinking through of an idea in poetry can be revelatory in the sense of it being inspiring or lacklustre. By referencing Heidegger’s essay, the poem is “saved” by deep, contemplative thinking whereby it is “set free into its own presencing”.<sup>75</sup> And most importantly, by contemplating matters of the intangible (the philosophical) for the purposes of clarity and sharp perception, Scott is not “abandoning his stay among things”.<sup>76</sup> As Heidegger scholar Vincent Vycinas argues<sup>77</sup> in the scope of his interests and the individual style of his thinking, Heidegger seems poetic at times, and even religious. Also, in his appreciation and adaptation of the poetry of Hölderlin, Heidegger’s “dwelling” on earth aligns with a quest for “a livingness in poetry”.<sup>78</sup>

Returning to my first point regarding the use of Heidegger’s term “dwelling” (which originates with Hölderlin’s phrase “Poetically/ dwells man on the earth”),<sup>79</sup> I turn to one of the last fragments in the last section of Scott’s *Jakarta*:

I find myself facing  
                                   the aporias and dilemmas  
                                   of texts I have never read

like Heidegger’s lecture  
                                   whilst sporting a swastika  
                                   in which poetry is not

the Ausdruck von Erlebnissen  
                                   the expression of inner experiences  
                                   but the concentration

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<sup>74</sup> Sharon Meagher, *Philosophy and the City, Classic to Contemporary Writings* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 119–122.

<sup>75</sup> Meagher, *Philosophy and the City*, 123.

<sup>76</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” in *Basic Writings from “Being and Time” (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge & K. Paul, 1978), 343–365.

<sup>77</sup> Vincent Vycinas, *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 1–2.

<sup>78</sup> Friedrich Hölderlin *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner, (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), xxix.

<sup>79</sup> Vycinas, *Earth and Gods: An Intro to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, 313.

by which one reaches down  
into the ground of existence  
providing the opportunity

for a true collection  
of each individual  
into a Gemeinschaft

not a nationalist *Volks*  
as Heidegger imagined  
but that global community

we are all part of  
the dead  
who can save the living<sup>80</sup>

In the italicised sections above, Scott quotes directly from Heidegger's text on the German poet Hölderlin's hymns, "Germania" and "The Rhine".<sup>81</sup> The text contains a series of lectures by Heidegger on Hölderlin. Heidegger was then a member of the National Socialist Party and Scott's signposting of Heidegger's swastika performs a dual act of acknowledgement and rebuttal. "Poetry is not"<sup>82</sup> related to a politics of repression but in writing *Seculum* Scott references such evidence obliquely, suggesting these incidences could also be his own "aporias and dilemmas".<sup>83</sup> I argue such a tactic reconciles the conflict within his own sense of morality by acknowledging and "accepting" such things have occurred. Scott wants to face such facts *and* stay on task: to read the global community, including its political difficulties, and understand "we are all part of/ the dead/ *who can save the living*".<sup>84</sup> So that whilst he is adapting some aspects of Heidegger's philosophy in *Seculum*, this excerpt from *Jakarta* shows him consolidating those which he believes matter, and refuting those which distract from the "presencing"<sup>85</sup> of his poem.

Scott's greater interest, then, in Heidegger's writings on the poetry of Hölderlin, comes through description of an experience of human life that is three-fold: individual,

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<sup>80</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 206.

<sup>81</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's hymns: "Germania" and "The Rhine"* (*Studies in Continental Thought*), trans. William MacNeill and Julia Ireland (USA: Indiana University Press, 2014), 26–28.

<sup>82</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 206.

<sup>83</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 206.

<sup>84</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 206.

<sup>85</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 343–365.

collective and cultural.<sup>86</sup> First, he says, we are individuals; second we are a part of a collective community; and third, we are immersed in particular cultures that are both geographically and politically determined. The movement away from Heidegger to Hölderlin strengthens a personal lucidity in the sense that Scott is not endorsing an authoritarian or nationalist interpretation of Heidegger's notion of the "Volk" (the people),<sup>87</sup> but rather, supporting Hölderlin's "Germeinschaft" (community).<sup>88</sup> Further, the specific reason for this shift is that Scott is composing poetry which means, as for Hölderlin, standing "under God's thunderstorms" and placing the language of the experience among the people.<sup>89</sup> In *Seculum*, Scott moves through his "aporias and dilemmas"<sup>90</sup> to invigorate the symbolic threeness by means of his tercets; including the religious parallel in the Holy Trinity's representation of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

In Hölderlin's "Wurzel alles Übels" we read of what such a holistic (or for Scott, "sacramentally ecological") approach to dwelling might entail:

#### The Root of All Evil

Being alone is god like and good, but human, too human, the Mania. Which insists there is only the One, one Country, one truth and one way.<sup>91</sup>

My thesis on *Seculum* aims to show how the discourse within Scott's epic poem frames a narrative about war and peace that wishes less for a separate and dichotomous relation between them, and more for a dialogue or dialectic working in reciprocal and constructive ways. My thesis will argue that Scott's poem builds a structure for a "new dawn" that is based on the idea that the poem might "house" a new dawn or that a new dawn might dwell within the structure of a poem. In this argument, I reiterate that the discourse that emerges within the poem can become increasingly solid – emotively and intellectually. Further, in consolidating this discourse, I draw on Scott's building of a structure or body of poetic argument concerning the importance of the spiritual that admits a higher grace from one divine force.

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<sup>86</sup> Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymns*, 26–29.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Inwood, *Heidegger Dictionary* (Hoboken: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 156.

<sup>88</sup> Inwood, *Heidegger Dictionary*, 275.

<sup>89</sup> Inwood, *Heidegger Dictionary*, 30.

<sup>90</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 206.

<sup>91</sup> Hölderlin, *Hyperion and Selected Poems*, 139.

My thesis draws directly on a quote from Scott in an interview with Freeman Ng,<sup>92</sup> in which Scott reads from an earlier poetic text, *Tilting Point*, and then wonders if a “poem is like sand,” in the way it falls away as quickly as it is lifted up by the hand; or whether it can become “a structure for a new dawn”.<sup>93</sup> This new dawn he describes as the Promised land of *Genesis*, a land further detailed in the “gospels of Jubal and Urthona”.<sup>94</sup> Prompted by Ng, Scott continues:

S: Blake’s poetry [of Urthona] is inspired by the idea that England is not always going to be England of these “dark Satanic Mills” but sometime we will continue to fight ... “Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand:/ Till we have built Jerusalem,/ In England’s green and pleasant Land” [“Jerusalem” by William Blake].<sup>95</sup> So it is the idea that where we are now, whether it is England or America or Canada, it is a place on its way to becoming something much better. And the Promised Land is – in the case of America – not geographically elsewhere but the future that we have not yet created. And that idea ... is everywhere in the early writings of the Divines of New England or the Fathers of the Revolution ... they all saw themselves as on the way to a Promised Land.

Ng: “And you’ve spent your life trying to work towards that ...”

S: “Building structures for a new dawn, yes.”<sup>96</sup>

Returning to the eco-spiritual ambitions of Scott’s project, the aspiring<sup>97</sup> “house” of the poem “dwells poetically” in the “consciousness of a broader ecosystem” (Stuart Cooke),<sup>98</sup> while the language resonates with the “song of the Earth”(Jonathan Bate),<sup>99</sup> and the poesis is

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<sup>92</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, *Video Series Coming to Jakarta, Tilting Point*, accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.comingtojakarta.net/category/videos/>

<sup>93</sup> Scott and Ng, *Video, Tilting Point*, accessed May 3, 2019.

<sup>94</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Tilting Point* (California: Word Palace Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>95</sup> William Blake, “Jerusalem (And did those feet in ancient time)”, *poetryfoundation.org*, last accessed March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

<sup>96</sup> Scott and Ng, *Video, Tilting Point*, accessed March 15, 2020.

<sup>97</sup> In the video interview quoted Scott continues to say: “I am now 83 years old and I do not think I have yet built anything permanent that I can say ‘we are now, because of this, closer to the Promised Land’. I think it has been aspiration without much achievement”. Scott and Ng, *Video, Tilting Point*, accessed March 15, 2020.

<sup>98</sup> Stuart Cooke, “Echo-Coherence, Moving On From Dwelling,” *Cultural Studies Review*, 17, no. 1 (March, 2011), 233.

<sup>99</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 251.

participatory in its “post, post-structuralist approach” to the Romantic pastoral, thereby creating a “greener” 21<sup>st</sup> century poetic (Kate Rigby).<sup>100</sup>

If dwelling in the epoch of Romanticism was about a “tilling of the soil” for the purposes of building and agriculture,<sup>101</sup> then in its renewed rereading in *Seculum* it becomes a tilling which “restores us to earth which is our home”.<sup>102</sup> Scott’s concern for a poesis which can stand its own ground (not fall away like sand) is then built with and out of the very definition of ground: “soil, land; (building) plot; field; bottom, (sea) bed; foundation, depths, basis; reason, cause”.<sup>103</sup> This spiritual rereading of dwelling “[R]omantically”<sup>104</sup> respects what Rigby terms “the underlying holiness”<sup>105</sup> of earth.

Whilst my thesis takes as its point of departure Scott’s own description of a poem’s capacity to become a “structure”, other critical commentaries on *Seculum* suggest this is indeed achieved. Thomas Gunn, for instance, describes Scott’s trilogy as “a structure ... an accumulation of juxtapositions between the political and the present”; and Daniel Morris perceives in the poetry a “flexible, inclusive structure”.<sup>106</sup>

The idea of a new dawn entering this “structure” of *Seculum* is a metaphoric statement that seeks to define what other critics have alluded to in terms such as “intellectual voyages” and “dogged humanism” (Alan Williamson),<sup>107</sup> “immensely ambitious” and “unparalleled” poetics (Robert Hass),<sup>108</sup> the “search for a way” (Daniel Morris)<sup>109</sup> and the “something more ... a leavening of lyricism with fire” (Daria Donnelly).<sup>110</sup> Whilst other critics have previously noted the poem’s capacity to align well with the pathways of spiritual enlightenment,<sup>111</sup> my

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<sup>100</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 2.

<sup>101</sup> Cooke, “Echo-Coherence, Moving On From Dwelling,” 233.

<sup>102</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, vii.

<sup>103</sup> Inwood, *Heidegger Dictionary*, 82.

<sup>104</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 7.

<sup>105</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 259.

<sup>106</sup> Peter Dale Scott, “Selected Writings, Poetic Trilogy: *Seculum*,” accessed May 3, 2019, <https://www.peterdalescott.net/b-i/>

<sup>107</sup> Alan Williamson, “Poetry and Politics: The Case of Coming to Jakarta”, *Agni*, 31/ 32 (1990), 315–325.

<sup>108</sup> Robert Hass, “Some notes on *Coming to Jakarta*” in *Agni*, 31/ 32 (1990), 334–361.

<sup>109</sup> Daniel Morris, “Listening to the Candle: A Poem on Impulse”, *Harvard Review* (Winter, 1993), 179–181.

<sup>110</sup> Daria Donnelly, “Listening to the Candle”, *Chicago Review*, 44, no. 3/ 4 (1998), 33–35.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Hass, in *Agni* 92 describes the poem as a construct of three tiers of terror. Robert Mitchell in *The American Book Review*, explains that Scott’s long poem is a project of “recovery and re-instigation of social order”. John Peck, in *The Notre Dame Review* states that: “the poem is a structure capable of a “re-casting of yin-yang, darkness-light”; that “the work is like ‘a large board-game’ or ‘spiritual battlefield’”; that “the Buddhist aspects of the project finds a self without ‘ego or object’”; that “‘kalokagathia’ (which is Greek for ‘beauty and good’) is relevant to the early study of virtue in ancient time”. Alan Williamson in *The Chicago Review* describes the project as an inquiry requiring hunting and resolution. See footnotes 95–98 and <https://www.peterdalescott.net/rs/> for full bibliographic references.



thesis will debate this to show the diplomacy behind Scott's reasoning of a poetic that ultimately reconciles division.

My thesis will argue that *Seculum* investigates dichotomous relations inherent in culture, ideology, human psychology, existential philosophy and linguistics to show them as "damned, even murderous if they do not honor each other".<sup>112</sup> In other words, that in psychological confusion/ depression there can instead be clarity/ joy (in the awareness of confusion); in human suffering there can be redemption (in the awareness of suffering); in the experience of loss through death there can be the sentiment of eulogy (in the awareness of loss); in feelings of despair there can be the joy of hope (in the awareness of despair); and in ideological divisions relating to politics, cultural policy or human relations, there can be spiritual unity (in the awareness of ideological divisions and/ or human nature at large).

## ii. Buildings

As a trilogy, a triad and a "threeness", Book One *Jakarta* acts first, detailing the thesis and Hell of *Seculum*. It presents the political event of the Indonesian massacres in 1965 and their associated representation of all things immoral, undesirable, secular and inhumane. Book Two, *Candle* is second, detailing an anti-thesis and Purgatory in the personal experience of what it might mean to be loved, to love, to mature spiritually, morally and humanely and, in turn, develop an intellectual idea of love. Book Three, *Darkness* is third, presenting the synthesis and Paradise to Book One and Two as the spiritual balanced with the secular and the person in the context of his/ her civic domain. Such synthesis shows the necessity of the interdependence of the political and the personal for effective, strong social development, economic equality and stability, and humane action based on due consideration for the human condition of living and dying, rejoicing and suffering.

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<sup>112</sup> I have spoken of a project emerging in *Jakarta* which desires reconciliation with the seeming opposing "orders" of religious and non-religious approaches. Later, I consider the religious element of Taoism as defined by the dualistic relationship of two opposing forces: yin and yang. I speak of how these principles shape *Seculum* so that *Jakarta* is dominated by the force of yin, *Candle* by yang, and *Darkness*, by a synthesis of both (like Scott's triadic tercet structures). The quote footnoted here, is Scott's own paraphrasing of Shelley and marries with the Taoist principle of unity: "The Taoist sage believes that every force acts with its opposite, as potential, and the opposite will act as well." (C. Alexander Simpkins and Annellen M. Simpkins, *Simple Taoism: A Guide to Living in Balance* (Clarendon: Tuttle Publishing, 2015), Contents (unpaginated). See also Scott, *Darkness*, 246.

Whilst a work of intense revelation, *Seculum* follows years of research by Scott into the immorality and injustice of the Indonesian massacres, and into the intimate details of rape, torture, violent death, imprisonment, intergenerational discrimination, and acts of indescribable and unqualified cruelty associated with the event. Described by the author as a eulogy in its aspirations,<sup>113</sup> *Seculum* pursues themes of salvation, redemption and reconciliation.

The core argument of my enquiry, therefore, evolves from this premise: that the epic poem of *Seculum* builds an intellectual rigour and emotional clarity in order to identify suffering as a necessary human condition and it explores that state in the context of both eulogy and acceptance.<sup>114</sup> Metaphorically, the activity can be described as a moving out of darkness into light, from night to a new dawn, and then, more exactly, moving away from a negative spirituality toward a positive engagement with faith. With consideration of the poem's form, the thesis will include a literary reading of *Seculum* through the overarching lens of traditions in epic poetry. In doing so, it will acknowledge ancient and contemporary American, European and Asian poetic traditions as well as a miscellany of authorial influences admitted by Scott and referenced across *Seculum*.

In defining Scott as a Canadian-American poet I am also situating his poem *Seculum* alongside the writings of his Canadian-American contemporaries. Of course, and perhaps importantly, his own work does this formally through its intertextuality, which it employs to comment on American politics, society and European thought. Scott's writing explores an intertextuality of great density. The references and influences that abound in *Seculum* show him to be a faithful scholar of ancient verse from Homer to Dante and beyond, alongside complex readings of Wordsworth, Eliot and Pound. Indeed, the references to these authors and their works are so constant in the three volumes that they truly become the matrix upon which Scott builds his poetic structure.

To dwell within the pages of *Seculum* is to see it as a structure built linguistically out of old language forms and definitions. This historicity supports the spiritual import of

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<sup>113</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 74, xv.

<sup>114</sup> This idea relates to Scott's Buddhism in the sense that the path to spiritual enlightenment follows Four Noble Truths. The second of these truths concerns "the good of suffering" which first accepts suffering; and then finds its meaning which distances the sufferer from the difficulties ... providing "the way out" as actually "through" suffering. (Phillip Moffitt, *Dancing With Life: Buddhist Insights for Finding Meaning and Joy in The Face of Suffering* (Pennsylvania: Rodale Inc., 2008), 74.

reconciliation that Scott aims to deliver by confirming its religious and poetic heritage. Consistent with Kate Rigby's assertion of the possibility of "re-reading Romanticism [R]omantically",<sup>115</sup> Scott approaches his contemporary poesis with a double lens that is both ecological and critical. In creating his epic, Scott takes his cue from Dante and enlists guides to navigate his journey through Hell to Purgatory and Paradise. Wordsworth becomes his political pastoralist who is almost paralysed (as in *The Prelude*)<sup>116</sup> by his sensitivity to the upheaval and devastation of revolution and war. Eliot, in *The Waste Land*,<sup>117</sup> is the political and high modernist poet whose imagery depicts the real, yet only clears a space for a better re-imagining. And Pound, in *The Cantos*,<sup>118</sup> is Scott's political, controversial but highly imaginative poet, who seeks in his poetry<sup>119</sup> not just the documentation of the fact of, but also the healing and end to, mental anguish.

In format, my thesis approaches Scott's *Seculum* in much the same way as the books are arranged, following the argument of its three consecutive volumes. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on Book One, *Jakarta*; chapter 3 focuses on Book Two, *Candle*; and chapters 4 and 5 focus on Book Three, *Darkness*.

The chapters on *Jakarta* approach the text literally in the sense described within the book's subtitle in which it claims to be "a poem about terror".<sup>120</sup> In his essay on liberation,<sup>121</sup> Scott describes the writing of *Jakarta* as one of the most difficult poetic undertakings he has experienced. He explains that although he had tried to write of the massacres in prose, in poetry he found the greater strength of emotive expression. To read the poem about terror, then, is to see two narratives at play, the one personal, and the other political.

The form of the poem is epic poetry which, in the literary tradition of verse, tells the story of a heroic journey. The context is almost always an individual amongst a community of other persons and the battles fought are usually related to feelings of discontent related to governance.<sup>122</sup> Within Western poetic traditions, the story of any epic moves about in the

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<sup>115</sup> Rigby, *Topologies of the Sacred*, 259.

<sup>116</sup> William Wordsworth, *1770–1850 The Prelude* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1992).

<sup>117</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1949).

<sup>118</sup> Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1996).

<sup>119</sup> George Kearns's critique of Pound's *Canto 91*, speaks of the "rapturous imagery of light/ water/ crystal/ fire" and in a direct quote from this Canto, Pound sees the light as "healing". (George Kearns, *Ezra Pound: The Cantos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 79.

<sup>120</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 3.

<sup>121</sup> Scott, "Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics" (June 29, 2011), unpaginated.

<sup>122</sup> As Colin Wells explains in his study of significant "war" narratives in verse, the battles of epics and "mock-epics" were generally motivated by a quest for greater democratic freedom with respect to political

throes of one historically recurrent struggle between war and peace. In *Jakarta*, this political and personal struggle for clear thinking by Scott is complicated by the maelstrom of his emotional objection to the events of 1965 and thereafter in Indonesia, and by his awareness of American complicity.

In writing *Jakarta* Scott maintains a mindfulness of the subject's personal and political material. Whilst aiming to discuss the troubling political facts and conspiracies related to the massacres, he also wants to come to terms with the inhumanity of the crime. As his essay on liberation reveals, the task of writing *Jakarta* was complex and difficult, a way of writing out of "darkness" not only for himself, but also for the people and the politics relevant to the Indonesian massacre. This journey walks the metaphoric halls of ancient poetics and religious scripture in order to locate *Jakarta* in an eco-spiritual place in a "green" 21<sup>st</sup> century poesis. Its movement is compelled by what the pastoralist poet and critical historian Seamus Heaney has called a "motion of the soul" and a seeking of the poem's "angelic potential".<sup>123</sup>

Select literary and philosophic influences are important in the making of *Jakarta* and Hegel also instructs and guides Scott by helping him to contemplate experiences that are intellectually and spiritually enlightening. Leaning largely on Hegel's idea of wisdom as a type of holistic dawning of the mind,<sup>124</sup> Scott writes a poetry that reveals itself in and through its self-reflexive devices: image, symbol, allegory and metaphor.

This said, *Jakarta's* display of what critic Robert Hass describes as a poem "about maleness", in the spirit of the "*Aeneid*" and "*Bhagavad Gita*",<sup>125</sup> continues throughout *Seculum* so that there is, across the trilogy as a whole, a distinct omission of female poets and thinkers (excluding Denise Levertov and one or two minor quotes from philosopher Simone Weil). Scott explains this absence as a deliberate motive which enforces the theme of power abuse, the madness of inherited power, conflict and death – all of which he argues are typically associated with masculinity and male activities. He describes these themes as epitomising the archetypal male of the heroic epic.<sup>126</sup>

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governance. (Colin Wells, *Poetry Wars: Verse and Politics in the American Revolution and Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 192.)

<sup>123</sup> Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry* (London: Faber & Faber, 1995), 265.

<sup>124</sup> Dean Moyer, *The Oxford Handbook of Hegel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 184.

<sup>125</sup> Robert Hass "Some Notes on "Coming to Jakarta"." *Agni*, no. 31/ 32 (1990): 349. Accessed March 8, 2020

<sup>126</sup> Scott, Ng, *Politics and Poetics*, 88.

In *Poetry and Terror: Politics and Poetics in Coming to Jakarta*<sup>127</sup> Scott explains that in *Seculum*, he is interested in the contrasting ideas of female disempowerment with male empowerment. He speaks of a European culture of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century in which women such as Marie De Champagne held court in their husband's absence. He terms this a "feminine yin culture". Scott also provides anecdotes to say many poetic romances composed by male poets were the product of this culture: "Chrétien de Troyes wrote romances to please her [Champagne]" whilst "the male" was absent.<sup>128</sup>

Scott claims the historical gender narratives can be seen in the relationship between Dante's Virgil and Beatrice in the *Commedia*. For Scott, Virgil represents a type of "male Virgilian reason" and Beatrice, "a female Beatrician piety". He describes the two as stylistic archetypes in which Virgil's male is "ornate" and "lofty" and Beatrice's female is "sweet and plain" (a direct quote from Virgil in *Commedia*).<sup>129</sup> That these two styles of character might be complimentary becomes then, for Scott, the undercurrent of the yin and yang relationship studied so exhaustively in *Seculum*. He writes: "this contrast... becomes the interaction between yang and yin which becomes more and more overtly, the underlying theme of the three long poems of *Seculum*".<sup>130</sup> Interestingly, other remarks by Scott on this topic show the archetypal contrast to be a rich discourse in historical poetics as well (in the shepherds and shepherdesses of pastoral poetry, for example). So the contrast between feminine and masculine principles, as it is made overt in *Seculum*, is presented always by Scott as intertextual.

Underlining this absence of female poet consultants, the poet guides of *Jakarta* are singularly Dante, Wordsworth, Eliot and Pound. Dante's *Commedia* provides a "model" of religious epic verse in lending the tercet form, the triadic structure, the guided journey and the narrator's quest for meaning; Wordsworth's *Prelude* an exemplary pastoral poetic dealing with political material and also, personal formative material related to childhood experiences of being in nature, and encountering the sublime in nature; Eliot's *The Waste Land* a religious and political exegesis that laments human suffering; and Pound's imagist approach to the epic as a mode that engages both with the personal and political. There are two narratives in the

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<sup>127</sup> Scott, Ng, *Politics and Poetics*, 94.

<sup>128</sup> Scott, Ng, *Politics and Poetics*, 94.

<sup>129</sup> Scott, Ng, *Politics and Poetics*, 94.

<sup>130</sup> Scott, Ng, *Politics and Poetics*, 94.

discourse of *Jakarta*, one personal and one political; and there are also two domains, one religious/ spiritual and the other civic/ public. In Scott's revisioning of Dante, the governance of God brings peace to individuals and society, and in his homage to Wordsworth (and by degrees, his other poet guides) it is nature as a site of the manifest presence of God that gives comfort. In both instances Scott's epic quest is for reconciliation between the secular and the spiritual and, on returning to Hegel, he understands that the religious concept of humility is the representational key to understanding forgiveness, acceptance and ultimately redemption. In *Jakarta*, his love of God and the religious truths which predate Homer's epics survive suffering to become, for Scott (and, in allegory, the reader), a sanctuary for prayerfulness and divine transcendence from pain.

Such pre-Homeric ideas of virtue and pastoral poetry, as reimagined by Scott in *Jakarta*, are better understood by analysing how time is linked in the epic poem. There are three "zones" of temporality in *Jakarta*: one, the historical, which I argue is concerned with virtue and the epic tradition; two, the actual, which is concerned with methods of rendering the poem "holistically" in its alternate personal and political narratives; and three, the outlook, which is concerned with the purpose such a long poem can serve in critiquing the contemporary through the historic. Throughout all zones the individual considers ideas of communal life (living among others), contemplates the ideas of philosophers (Hegel, Heidegger), and revives the visions and insights of poets (Dante, Wordsworth, Eliot, Pound as well as Spenser, Virgil, Hopkins, Yeats, Stevens, Rilke, Levertov, Herbert and Donne) to deeply interpret their wisdom, recommendations, auras and evocations in the contemporary. This collective guidance, which at times is a one-on-one dialogue between Scott and one such mentor, compares with Dante's *Commedia* in the sense the main narrator of Dante is guided by the poet Virgil and with him, listens to the "multiple voices" of the Corpus of Laws (based on religious virtues) to find his way through the circles of reckoning.<sup>131</sup> Scott too, with his guides, is listening to his dead and living community, loved ones, poets, philosophers to know the "right way" out of his "darkness". His movement upward (like Dante, the inverse of his descent into hell) to Purgatory and then Paradise, is navigated by *Seculum's* tercet form to bring solace where there was suffering; offering, through the thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis idea, a repeated cyclic patterning of evanescence (statement and opposite statement)

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<sup>131</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 389.

followed by stability (synthesis) and so forth. Early songs, scriptures and poetics of ancient time resonant in Book One, helping Scott move beyond his pain and look once more to the idea of the Promised Land – the new dawn.<sup>132</sup>

Chapter 3 in this thesis is on *Candle*, which is Scott's second book in the trilogy. In it I follow the guide of the book's full title, *Listening to the Candle, A Poem on Impulse*, to consider the idea of a poem written on impulse.<sup>133</sup> Dedicated to his mother Marian Dale Scott, an abstract painter, the poem narrative can be read as being inspired by her painterly interpretation of nature and culture. In *Candle* Scott tries to reimagine the world after it has been terrorised by events such as *Jakarta's* massacre. In it, there is a sense of homecoming and the splendid re-embellishment of ideas such as eternity, everlastingness and the creator-creature relationship.

*Candle* ruminates with the verve of the free-spirited artist Marian Dale Scott who was a reader of Nietzsche and Rilke, and who had a greater interest in the sciences than religion. As a mother and wife she is remembered by Scott for her quote: "we should consider every day lost on which we have not danced at least once (Nietzsche)".<sup>134</sup> Just as the forms in her paintings (the angled rooftops of houses, for example) are designed to refract the light shining upon them (through a philosophic and scientific lens),<sup>135</sup> so too can the images, allegories, symbols and evocations of *Candle* be seen as refractions (through a religious lens) built to accommodate divine intercessions. So that, as Scott suggests in quoting Rumi, "*the miracle/ of Jesus is himself/ not what he said or did about the future*".<sup>136</sup> As though to strengthen the difference between the poem's spiritual refraction and that expressed as beatific light in the art of the non-religious Marian Dale Scott, Scott turns to the poetic influences of Yeats, Stevens, Rilke and Levertov to further contemplate freedom of the spirit, spontaneity, mystical contemplation and the romance of solitude.

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<sup>132</sup> Scott, *Tilting Point*, 1.

<sup>133</sup> Scott, *Candle*, iii.

<sup>134</sup> Robert C. Solomons, and Kathleen Marie Higgins, *Reading Nietzsche* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 150.

<sup>135</sup> Marian Scott, "Science as an Inspiration to Art," *Canadian Artist*, 1 (1943), 19–37.

<sup>136</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 95.

*Candle* gives Scott the opportunity to explore what he terms “enmindment”<sup>137</sup> (in *Poetry and Terror*)<sup>138</sup> alongside the concept of good and evil explored by Tao Te Ching and Dante. He quotes from Verse 49 of the Tao Te Ching which speaks of a “goodness” attained through listening to the heart, being truthful and remembering the innocence of a child;<sup>139</sup> and then from Dante, whose *Commedia* speaks of knowledge in Christian terms of good and evil whereby the variance is decided not by the human intellect but by one’s knowing of God.<sup>140</sup> Whereas the Taoist lesson of Verse 49 connects with Scott’s Buddhist faith and practice of spiritual meditation which helps him remain attuned to the cycles of life and intellectual/ emotional/ spiritual development, Dante offers a synthesis of the political and the personal. Paralleling Dante’s *Purgatorio*, *Candle* brings together personal relationships and public affairs and allows a space for meditation, dream, religious reflection and a plea for intercession. While in Dante’s *Purgatorio* there is Virgil and a reunion “with the long-dead Beatrice”,<sup>141</sup> Dante’s true love and faithful guide, *Candle* offers the assemblage of past and present loves in a space free of evil but not yet stable – not yet saved.

For Scott, producing works of art like his Mother’s abstract paintings requires, firstly, that one’s mind be subservient to its innermost source of inspiration which is the most essential aspect of one’s psyche. The essence of such mindfulness is the emotional character of a person in its most perfect state of desiring and seeking substance, rather than being manifest as a known thing. For Scott as a religious poet, time with one’s thoughts translates theologically to being in communion with one’s heart; and poetically, this is the awareness of God’s presence which is embodied in the mystical expression of human experience through, for example, love, joy, hope and faith. In *Candle*, through the act of writing on impulse, Scott aims to ignite a spark of inspiration and clarity that will metaphorically bring light to the darkness of *Jakarta*’s terror. In reflecting the heart’s truth, such poetic illumination might lead onto contemplations on immorality, optimism and hope.

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<sup>137</sup> Jason Boulet, “I Believe in Enmindment: Enlightenments, Taoism, and Language in Peter Dale Scott’s Minding the Darkness,” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 75 (Fall, 2006), 925–945.

<sup>138</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, *Poetry and Terror: Politics and Poetics in Coming to Jakarta* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018).

<sup>139</sup> Te Ching Laozi, *Tao Te Ching*, trans. Arthur Waley (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1997), 52.

<sup>140</sup> Kenelm Foster and Patrick Boyd, *Cambridge Readings in Dante’s Commedia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 138, 200.

<sup>141</sup> Alighieri, *Purgatorio*, 3.



Intended as the anti-thesis to *Jakarta*, *Candle* reinstates the romance of poetry, which I interpret to mean that it reimagines the world through the lens of personal reflection on religion, nature and the human spirit. By impulsively collating random expressions of inspired personal experience, it aims to rediscover Paradise (or a lost Eden) in the trinity of all these reflections: the religious, natural and spiritual. It does this intertextually, by appreciating the romance of poetry as an historical literary tradition in keeping with Scott's devotion to the ancient teaching of religious tradition and his critical rereading of the Romantic. Spontaneously searching out the dream, the paradise of religious positivism and moral attainment (as the perfect happiness),<sup>142</sup> it also historicises this dream to provide a rationale or grounding for its argument. To wish, desire, dream, journey, love – all these words have etymologies of meaning which show little variance to their backdated original definitions. This too, is explored by Scott in *Candle*, most specifically to reinstate the idea of religion's original word of fulfilment in prayer "Amen".<sup>143</sup> In *Candle*, where there was once a malaise of spirit (*Jakarta*), notions of enchantment are reinstated.

Chapters 4 and 5 on *Darkness* study the way the thesis of *Jakarta* and the anti-thesis of *Candle* are synthesised in Book Three of *Seculum*. In doing so, my thesis views the conflict between ideas of the secular and the spiritual as reflecting a necessary interdependence. Just as the metaphoric darkness of *Jakarta* has been contextualised in the domain of the secular, the public and the political, the metaphoric lightness of *Candle* is contextualised in the domain of the spiritual, the personal and the civic. In both books there are shades of each in the sense that the discourse of *Jakarta* included detailed memories, experiences and attitudes which were deeply subjective and personal to Scott, whilst the discourse of *Candle* included secular, public and political activities as objective facts. The task of *Darkness* therefore is to balance the two discourses in a manner that refigures them constructively; and allows these binary oppositions to co-exist in a reciprocal balance.

For the poem to become a structure for a "new dawn", there must first be a harmonising of the interrelationship of darkness with the light just as, for example, night is to day. In his poem "Homing: A Winter Poem" from the collection *Tilting Point* (2012), Scott

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<sup>142</sup> Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 34.

<sup>143</sup> Rodney E. Whittle, *Exploring the Word: Volume 2* (Maitland: Xulon Press, 2009), 67.

describes this new dawn via a reading of biblical texts.<sup>144</sup> He explains that in these scriptures, Jubal was the father of music who “sought to make melody in his heart to God”.<sup>145</sup> His efforts on harp and organ were so commended by the Lord that such music was to be “sacred music”.<sup>146</sup> In being so faithful a servant of the Lord, in “day and night standing before God in the House of the Lord”, Jubal’s music could evoke the golden light of heaven and ultimately “blessed him out of Zion”.<sup>147</sup> Urthona was a character of William Blake’s who represented the North, the “creative imagination of the Individual”, referred to often as “dark” or as one living in a world of “solid darkness”.<sup>148</sup> Urthona was also the “keeper of the gates of heaven”.<sup>149</sup>

There is an anecdote about six-year-old Scott travelling with his mother Marian aboard a ship to England for a vacation.<sup>150</sup> At some point in the journey his mother was re-acquainted with the Canadian doctor, artist, writer and advocate for peace and democracy, Norman Bethune, who read William Blake to her from *The Oxford Book of English Verse*.<sup>151</sup> It is not clear, from the account, whether Scott also partook in the reading but the anecdote certainly lends a profundity in his pairing of the Urthona gospel (in the sense it could be any other prophetic verse) with his faithful Christian scripture of Jubal. Apparently Bethune was in love with Marian and whilst there was no intimacy, Scott “recalls that it led to some tensions between Bethune and his father”.<sup>152</sup> So, once more, *Seculum* is engaged with the task of reconciling conflict.

*Darkness* (Book Three) returns us, after *Jakarta*, to the objective of Scott’s epic poem: to reinstate the spiritual in the secular aftermath of longstanding denial. For Scott, this denial is not only a fault of the external world (the 1965 massacres in Indonesia and the US denying their involvement), but also of his own person (in the sense that as a diplomat, he is a member of the “privileged class”, the “decision-makers”).<sup>153</sup> Scott realises through the process of

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<sup>144</sup> Scott, *Tilting Point*, 1.

<sup>145</sup> Alexander H.D. Whyte, *Bible Characters, Volume 1* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier), 62.

<sup>146</sup> Whyte, *Bible Characters*, 64.

<sup>147</sup> Samuel Foster Damon, *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1988), 426.

<sup>148</sup> Damon, *A Blake Dictionary*, 426.

<sup>149</sup> Damon, *A Blake Dictionary*, 426.

<sup>150</sup> Norman Bethune, *The Politics of Passion: Norman Bethune’s Writing and Art*, ed. Larry Hannant (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 71.

<sup>151</sup> Bethune, *The Politics of Passion*, 71.

<sup>152</sup> Bethune, *The Politics of Passion*, 72.

<sup>153</sup> In his article “Poetry and Terror in Peter Dale Scott’s *Coming to Jakarta*”, Scott MacPhail makes mention of the circles of Scott’s associates, for instance his time as Professor at Berkeley and as a member of the Canadian Foreign Service. It is in these and other associations that Scott regards himself as a member of a privileged

writing *Jakarta* that the corruption and terror he is damning is the result of a lack of understanding of one's self and one's relation to the other. Thus, the true argument of his trilogy concerns human nature and its need to reimagine its greatest capacity which is the ability to love.

Scott sees love as the most complex expression of the human spirit. Like other emotive capacities of human nature, such as hatred or greed, love is a life force that finds expression beyond scientific rationale. To feel pain inside one's heart, for example, is to experience something that is objectively understood but always original and unique. So, whilst concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong human action, science and spirit might be returned to again and again in philosophical, psychological, scientific, humanitarian, medical and other disciplinary discourses, their true meaning for Scott is religious. This is because embedded in all these discourses there is the essence of the human psyche that hears the "rhapsody or outcry"<sup>154</sup> of the universal, or sees what Virgil called "the tears of things":<sup>155</sup> which, in religious terms, translates most simply into the emotion of passion. That is, the material being of an "overbrimming" of the self, a sort of falling out of oneself to accompany a feeling, an experience of the extraordinary.<sup>156</sup>

Scott's *Jakarta* finds that human survival beyond the terror of the Indonesian massacres depends upon hope. What is negative about one political situation does not have to carry over into the next. There can be growth, a learning from experience: truth-telling, forgiveness, eulogy and redemption. *Darkness* attends to this idea as a type of human intelligence that develops from the spiritual understanding of our natures. This, in turn, is essential to the concept of enlightenment.

For Scott, there are two types of enlightenment: one, that is outer and secular; and another, inner and spiritual. When the two work together synergistically, the cyclic nature of day-to-day living errs toward optimism and productivity. Without conflict, the individual and the community subsist harmoniously. *Darkness* takes on the task of resolving conflicts between *Jakarta's* secular truths and *Candle's* spiritual truths by contemplating their interdependence. Scott argues for a type of secular spirituality in which biological cycles and

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class. See Scott MacPhail, "Poetry and Terror in Peter Dale Scott's Coming to Jakarta", *Chicago Review*, 44, no. 3/ 4 (1998): 41–50, 43.

<sup>154</sup> Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry* (London: Faber & Faber, 1995), 21.

<sup>155</sup> Heaney, *Redress of Poetry*, xviii.

<sup>156</sup> Heaney, *Redress of Poetry*, xxi.

the natural patterning of day into night, and vice-versa, dictate the evolution of our lives. To value this ecological design in our own lives is to develop spiritually, to mature in the knowledge of the broader design of living and dying.

*Darkness* considers concepts of war, love, devastation and salvation intertextually in terms of their earliest presentation in the Ancient World (within many parts of Greece,<sup>157</sup> via the poetics of Homer). Scott then maps their evolution through to the present day to show them as databases of greater learning. In looking at the war themes of the Tao Te Ching, for example, he reflects on the idea of Hun Luan (a dark confusion of the mind)<sup>158</sup> and yin-yang (dark-bright).<sup>159</sup> Hun Luan comes to represent the dark confusions of *Jakarta* and *Candle* whilst yin-yang comes to represent the capacity for seemingly contradictory elements to advance one another a greater meaning. For example, in the duality of a tree's root and its branches, to stimulate just one root is to find a response in over a hundred branches.<sup>160</sup>

As the final volume of the trilogy, *Seculum*, the strong linguistic structure of *Darkness* is required to balance the many dualisms of its subject matter, for instance, good and evil, love and hate. In doing so, it must order the revelations of the previous volumes in a way which strengthens reason and sense, shows argumentative rigour and, ultimately, clarity. Everything, all the touchstones of the poem's journey, the sorrows and joys, must be allowed equal import, validity and capacity to be understood. In short, *Darkness* must, as a whole and metaphorically, present a rigid thought structure that achieves redemption and finds the light: the new dawn. In *Darkness* we read of Hölderlin and the sublimity of nature, of Bachelard's concept of poetic reverie, of the Californian wildfires which devastate Scott's home, of fairy-tale and the uses of enchantment in reviving the spirit, of Tibetan politics, prayer flags strung from trees and set free in the wind, concepts of urbanisation and nostalgia, the *Cantos* of Pound, St Paul's first speech to the Corinthians, union with nature, forgiveness, acceptance, redemption and salvation.

Most importantly, *Darkness* completes *Seculum* and, in doing so, suggests that the secret to living and dying is before us as we wake and as we sleep, in our day and in our night, and in the eternal cycle of creation. The secret is love. In the writing of *Jakarta*, *Candle* and

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<sup>157</sup> Andrew Ford, *Homer: The Poetry of the Past* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), 1.

<sup>158</sup> Shang Zhibin, and Paul V. Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu, Volume 1, Chinese New Historical Illness Terminology* (California: University of California Press, 2015), 229.

<sup>159</sup> Robin Wang, *Yinyang* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 223.

<sup>160</sup> Wang, *Yinyang*, 6.

*Darkness*, Scott finds the way out of the darkness of terror and repressed memories toward forgiveness and ultimate redemption, not only for himself but for humanity at large.

## CHAPTER 1

### COMING TO JAKARTA

... *Coming to Jakarta*. This poem is often presented (even by myself) as my response in 1980 to the anguish of knowing facts I was unable to share, about U.S. involvement in the 1965 massacre by the Indonesian army of over half a million Indonesian men, women, and children. But it was also a confrontation with the disturbing reality that there is a gap between the world as we think we know it, and darker, more inscrutable forces at work both in the world and in ourselves. As I wrote in 2000: "Soon ... I was looking at the same process of denial in myself: I had once discounted my own university's support of elements working with the army". In this way *Jakarta* took the form of an argument, at first with the external world, but increasingly with myself.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 Introduction.

Beginning with the first book of Scott's *Seculum* series, *Coming to Jakarta, A Poem About Terror*,<sup>2</sup> this chapter considers a poem that Scott has described as a process of discovery. Published by New Directions Books, it associates itself with a small press distinct for introducing to a wider readership many of the best modernist poets in literary history. Although Scott insists this was achieved through the initiative of his teaching colleague, James Schamus, who "walked *Jakarta* into the New York offices of New Directions",<sup>3</sup> it makes it hard to resist identifying his poetry with the enduring voices of the avant-garde. From 1936 onwards, New Directions published William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, Hermann Hesse and many other writers of the modernist canon.

Considering Book One of the trilogy the exhibit collection of the series, the thesis suggests *Jakarta* helps Scott discover his ultimate project. In noting its poetic structure models that of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's dialectical model (where A = Consciousness, B = Self-Consciousness and C = a return to A in the awareness of B),<sup>4</sup> and Dante's three "syllogisms" of *Commedia* (which is three terms arranged in three propositions: major

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Sneldon and Peter Dale Scott, "Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics: How Writing a Poem Enabled Me to Write American War Machine (An Essay on Liberation)," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 9, no. 29 (June, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta, A Poem About Terror* (New York: New Directions Books, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Rebecca Law, *Personal Correspondence* (September, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Glen Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 270. Scott, Law, *Personal Correspondence* (September, 2015).

premise, minor premise, conclusion),<sup>5</sup> I argue *Jakarta* has a three-part series of narrative movement – from thesis to anti-thesis to synthesis – which is modelled in the three line tercets. Further, that Scott’s making of a long poem is driven by a central impetus, motivation or intention which lives beyond *Jakarta* (in Books Two and Three of *Seculum*), meaning the wholeness of the narrative – its meaning or purpose – is not apparent to either author or reader until the end of the writing process.

Historically, the long poem (as a genre) has evolved via a 4,000-year old history beginning with the Epic of Gilgamesh.<sup>6</sup> Over this time it has been characterised as public in style and with an interest in the topics of civic governance and heroic victory. However, according to Claude Rawson, a scholar of eighteenth century epic poetry,<sup>7</sup> the tradition of the long poem in a complete and finished state lost its impetus after the Restoration. Rawson attributes this to the fact that its form was seen as no longer valid due to the antiquated language and features associated with the tradition. This “out-moded” form and its features (such as the use of exalted language and themes of nation, scripture, battle),<sup>8</sup> meant, says Rawson, a poet of later times could only mimic the original form. Some examples of such modern epics include Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* and T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* in which the use of mosaic imagery – “connect(ing) American poetry with European and Oriental traditions” – build up to a sense of wholeness.<sup>9</sup>

In his essay on the literary epoch of Pound and Eliot, American scholar (and founder of *Poetry International*) Fred Moramarco argues that in their long poems William Carlos Williams and Wallace Stevens “undertook a more indigenous struggle for the primacy of the American poetic imagination”.<sup>10</sup> In almost all instances such reworking of epic characteristics in the making of a poem could be seen as an “attempt to find a more congenial and cosmopolitan home” for a “heartland” that seemed a Paradise lost.<sup>11</sup> Moramarco explains further that the tracing of epic traditions through epochs of poetry reveals a modern “axeman” in Walt

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<sup>5</sup> Prue Shaw, *Reading Dante: From Here to Eternity* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), Chapter Six, unpaginated.

<sup>6</sup> C. Bates, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), ix.

<sup>7</sup> Claude Rawson, “Mock-Heroic and English Poetry”, *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic*, ed. C. Bates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167–192.

<sup>8</sup> Rawson, “Mock-Heroic and English Poetry,” 167.

<sup>9</sup> Fred Moramarco, “A Grrreat Litttttttlerary Period: Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot” *Modern American Poetry, 1865–1950* ed. Alan Schucard, Fred Moramarco, and William Sullivan (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989), 99.

<sup>10</sup> Moramarco, “Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot,” 99.

<sup>11</sup> Moramarco, “Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot,” 95.

Whitman who breaks up the lyric to make free verse and then cultivates this style toward a more “holistic” view of world literature: one which recognised a “single aesthetic” made new over and over.<sup>12</sup> In noting Scott’s *Jakarta* also presents a compilation of small images – which assimilate as fragments – it can be said he is writing in line with this historical metamorphosis of the epic form. Like Pound and Eliot, he seeks to find a “new home” for the ancient epic form by re-working the aesthetic into a 21<sup>st</sup> century sophisticated poetic.<sup>13</sup> Literary scholar Rawson explains that there are several ways this might be achieved: through the use of resonance (in poetic language and image), in themes of hero and journey and quest for a homecoming, in the use of a long form (which can be evoked by leaving a long poem unfinished), and in the use of allusion and evocation (through the use of intertextuality).<sup>14</sup> In this and his adaptation of the Ancient Roman numerical system beginning with I. and concluding at 150 pages with V.iii, Scott’s formatting shows little variance. Also, in the “presencing” of a ghost that disappears and appears throughout the narrative, there is the resonance of literary traditions wanting to speak of the living and the dead. According to classical scholar Joshua J. Mark, the concept of ghosts in the ancient world was directly linked to the concept of eternal life.<sup>15</sup> At the time, any ghostly vision witnessed by the living was symbolic of the return of a deceased person’s soul. Importantly, Mark explains, the prevailing idea of ghostly visions was that a soul had returned “to right some sort of wrong” or to cure “a sickness in the living”.<sup>16</sup> In Egyptian culture, for instance, the afterlife was considered “a mirror image” of one’s life on earth, meaning that one could continue to enjoy “the house one knew, the stream by that house, one’s favourite tree and dog”.<sup>17</sup> A soul’s return to earth, therefore, signalled a dire circumstance. In Christianity, also, there is the parable in which disciples of Jesus believed him to be a ghost when they see him walking on water. For Mark, such an association betrayed Jesus because “Gods and divine people walk on water. Ghosts do not”.<sup>18</sup> In Scott’s ‘presencing’ of a ghost there are all these associations as well as the more

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<sup>12</sup> Moramarco, “Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot,” 96

<sup>13</sup> Moramarco, “Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot,” 96.

<sup>14</sup> Rawson, “Mock-Heroic and English Poetry,” 167–192.

<sup>15</sup> Joshua J. Mark, “Ghosts in the Ancient World,” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, accessed 2 May 2019, <https://www.ancient.eu/ghost/>

<sup>16</sup> Mark, “Ghosts in the Ancient World”, accessed 2 May 2019, <https://www.ancient.eu/ghost/>

<sup>17</sup> Mark, “Ghosts in the Ancient World”, accessed 2 May 2019, <https://www.ancient.eu/ghost/>

<sup>18</sup> Mark, “Ghosts in the Ancient World”, accessed 2 May 2019, <https://www.ancient.eu/ghost/>



obvious poetic allusions to the “hauntings” depicted in ancient and modern verse (for example, in Homer and Eliot).

Whereas Moramarco identifies in Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, a poem of collage in which “fragments (are) shored against my ruins”,<sup>19</sup> and in Pound’s *The Cantos*, an “uncertain continuity” alongside “private and cryptic references”,<sup>20</sup> in Scott’s *Jakarta*, the epic quest is once more framed as the age-old story of voyage, happenstance and ultimate discovery. While references and quotes in the body of the poem were devices used by Dante, Pound (in imitation of Dante and others) and Eliot, their use by Scott performs not as annotations,<sup>21</sup> but as intertextual references intrinsic to the sense of the epic story.

As an epic placed within the genre of spiritual and religious poetry, Scott’s *Seculum* follows a long tradition of verse concerned with virtue. Examples of this suggest a split definition of virtue, with epic Greek, Latin and Modern English poetry pursuing religious ideals and Indian Sanskrit epics seeking righteousness. So that, in Protestant John Milton’s *Paradise Lost/ Paradise Regained*, for example, the health of humankind is dependent upon attendance to the scriptures.<sup>22</sup> As Milton’s narrator takes us through a re-telling of “the (biblical) legend of the Fall of man”,<sup>23</sup> the quest has already served a civic purpose in its thematic of good and evil. By contrast, in works such as Vsaya’s Indian Sanskrit classic *Mahabharata*, the message is instructive to the individual before the civic, supposing an individual should cultivate a sense of human action as that which occurs within the framework of *karma*.<sup>24</sup> To act in a way that produces a “worldly” ethical sustainability, an individual must recognise that they are one individual among many, which, in turn, means there is “a moral code” associated with being human wherein to acknowledge it is to promote good, and to go

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<sup>19</sup> Moramarco, “Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot,” 111.

<sup>20</sup> Moramarco, “Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot,” 127.

<sup>21</sup> Poet and scholar Edward Hirsch describes these sometimes richly textual “fragments” as “allegorical and broken off from a divine whole”. Conversely, Scott’s fragments in *Jakarta* are “kept alive” by the one narrative quest toward redemption. They are, in this sense, neither relic nor antiquated ruins rambling about in a contemporary landscape. Further, they are not “the interruption of the incessant (Maurice Blanchot) that is the distinguishing feature of fragmentary writing.” (Edward Hirsch, *The Essential Poet’s Glossary* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2017), 115–116.

<sup>22</sup> Michael O’Neill, *The Cambridge History of English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 255.

<sup>23</sup> Anne Ferry, *Milton’s Epic Voice: The Narrator in Paradise Lost* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 4.

<sup>24</sup> Gangeya Mukherji, Vrinda Dalminya and Sibesh Chandra Battacharya, eds, *Exploring Agency in the Mahabharata* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2018), 1–29.

against it is to promote evil.<sup>25</sup> That there are nuances to this type of morality is precisely what makes the *Mahabarata* a worthwhile study for the individual in the sense a religious follower must make his/ her own choices in his/ her own life.

This same sense of an individual in the contemporary world (as opposed to Milton's imagined world) appears in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which prophesises that inattentance to the "sacred flame of Christianity"<sup>26</sup> will bring about a fall from grace. For Scott, these spiritual resonances are vital to his long poem and provide the agency through which it becomes redemptive. Biographically, this is clearly informed not only by his literary scholarship but the everyday practice of his faith. I have mentioned earlier that Scott defines himself as, theologically, Trinitarian (in a Catholic sense) *and*, theoretically, Buddhist in practice. I have explained the reason for the eccentricity – that the works of many religious poets (Dante, Eliot, Wordsworth), Thomas Merton and his friendship with Czeslaw Milosz have been hugely influential to his thinking; and yet, at a deeper personal level, he married a Jew and is at home with a Buddhist faith. He believes in the story of Jesus and recites the Lord's Prayer daily, and believes in a God figure as a force greater than humanity. For all of the above reasons this thesis borrows the term "religiosity", from the nineteenth-century intellectual and German scholar Friedrich Max Muller, or to be more exact, "*Religionswissenschaft* – the science of religion",<sup>27</sup> to describe Scott's faith. In doing so, it ascribes an originality to his epic by suggesting the poem engages in religious diplomacy; that is, the embedding of the truth of many denominations including Christianity, Confucianism, Sufism and Hinduism.

In *Jakarta*, Scott is exploring his own personal experiences alongside the political, cultural, social times in which he has lived. And whilst intertextually the poem references many poets, philosophers and thinkers, it also offers autobiographical detail of the social and private milieu of Scott's life experience. Scott's epic work is written most exactly in the style of Dante's *Commedia* in the sense that Dante, under the guidance of Virgil, first descends into Hell before ascending to Purgatory and eventually Heaven through the "golden" circles linking

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<sup>25</sup> Mukherji et. al., *Agency in Mahabarata*, 1–9.

<sup>26</sup> According to Sumil Kumar Saker, *The Waste Land* adopts the legend of Grail to restore life to a "dreary land". Sumil Kumar Saker, *T.S. Eliot: Poetry, Plays and Prose* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2008), 89.

<sup>27</sup> Carl Olson, *The Theology and Philosophy of the Eliade, Seeking the Centre* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 14.

the upper holy sphere of goodness with the lower spheres of evil.<sup>28</sup> To this end it depicts the metaphoric circles of *Jakarta's* own Hell. It is within these circles that Scott's many and varied associates can be organised. Just as Dante moves upwardly through the circles toward spiritual enlightenment and redemption, Scott can be seen to lean on other writers, thinkers or philosophers as well as learn from his private and public milieu. So that, while growing up with a father as famous as Frank R. Scott, he is able to move within circles of inherited relationships: in his political career, a circle of public figureheads and colleagues; in his studies, the environments of Oxford, McGill and Berkeley universities; in his private world, childhood romances and, later, a second marriage; and lastly, and most intimately, in his readings, teachings and personal taste for poetry.

In this chapter I have organised these relationships into a scheme of circles which structure my analysis: circle one, literary influence (including political and public circles); circle two, philosophical and intellectual influences (including Scott's private world, Romantic relationships and love); and circle three, religious influences (involving intimate, personal and biographic details). Whilst all three are critical to my reading of *Jakarta*, circle one is the lengthier and more substantial, and this is due primarily to the intertextuality of the themes rather than any assertion of a pre-eminence within the poem of literary influence over personal experience or religious interest.

Following the strength of Scott's religious affiliations and spiritual attitude, I consider the poem an invocation of divine revelation as opposed to an examination of right and wrong human action. I argue Scott's making of *Jakarta* is not an attempt to find an intellectual resolution to America's communal unrest. Instead, *Jakarta* is motivated by a quest for revelation via the pursuit in faith. The new dawn of the scriptures<sup>29</sup> sought after, believed in and felt possible by Scott, is dependent on his poem's 'argument' for redemption.

## 1.2 Background to The Circles

### II.i

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<sup>28</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 1: Inferno.*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 18.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Tilting Point* (California: Word Palace Press, 2012), 1.

...

of California

not the bare elm

.....

nearly drown once yes

• • • •

beyond the confines of my mind  
a poem about terror<sup>30</sup>

Like the plane almost landing but reluctantly circling, the narrative of Scott's *Jakarta* moves backwards to come forwards. In doing so it enlivens memories which are both painful and joyous, the stricken "elm" and the war, an incident of near death by drowning and the homeliness of a typewriter, light catching suspended and falling rain. As this fragment II.i comes to an end, it is clear it has helped Scott travel the mire of his distressed mind to refocus on the topic he wants to address (the Indonesian massacres) but finds intellectually disabling.

In this way, my thesis considers the narrative of *Jakarta* as a quest toward a metaphoric building of a structure that reveals the way to redemption is in going back (to the topic of Jakarta, 1965). Indeed, the title *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem about Terror* infers Scott studies its topic only to arrive in acceptance of its reality. Through the textual interplay of negative and positive facts, philosophies and poetic indices, the poem erects a dialectical structure that builds itself out of a ruin; and in this achievement provides sanctuary from the past. In its poetic argument, I acknowledge that the information revealed in *Jakarta* controversially revisits the Indonesian tragedy and reflects on the spiritual and ethical philosophies of virtue. More critically, I argue that this poetic content is two-fold, both political and personal, and *Jakarta* has both a political story and a personal story. Interrogating the poem from these two perspectives, my thesis proposes that the way to redemption is to be found, in fact, in the process of bringing them together.

Politically, we know *Jakarta* was written with the intent of exposing American banks, oil companies and the CIA as the obtuse perpetrators of a slaughter that killed over half a million Indonesians. According to Geoffrey Robinson, author of *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965-66*,<sup>31</sup> the massacres mark a critical moment in the Cold War when more than 500,000<sup>32</sup> suspected Communists were slaughtered and disposed of in mass graves or rivers, and hundreds of thousands of others were imprisoned after General Suharto imposed a military led dictatorship of the country after declaring it had been saved from atheist Communists. Any discussions other than the official narrative regarding what took place were then silenced. It remains one of the most horrendous (and most under-examined) massacres of the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup>

### III.ii

To have learnt from terror  
to see oneself  
as part of the enemy

can be a reassurance  
whatever it is

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<sup>31</sup> Geoffrey R. Robinson, *The Killing Season: A History of the Indonesian Massacres, 1965 -66* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

<sup>32</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 121.

<sup>33</sup> Robinson, *The Killing Season*, 3.

arises within us  
 fear  
     a matter for self-protection  
 quick wits in the urban streets  
 where my parents for socialist reasons  
     lived in the thirties  
 and my toys reluctantly shared  
 seemed always to disappear  
     except when I was conducted  
 to play alone on the lawn  
 of the nearby campus  
     or dressed up in polished  
 gaiters with a buttonhook  
 to go have tea with Gran  
     or Christopher and his maiden aunts  
 at the edge of Mount Royal<sup>34</sup>

Notably, Scott's decision to write the poem in epic form embeds it in a literary tradition associated with individual pilgrimage. As outlined in my chapter introduction, it is a form that traditionally visits themes of heroism, battle and nationhood whilst pursuing a religious ideal of goodness of character. Furthermore, it is a style of poetry that favours the heart's song (or what I define as the poetic)<sup>35</sup> and the pastoral (which I associate with the dramatic and sublime)<sup>36</sup> in reconciling the individual with the community. The narrative in *Jakarta*, then, implicates its primary political material in the poetic and pastoral cadences of its story while also presenting a personal account of Scott's journey from emotional malaise to enlightenment. The personal idiosyncratically stylises the poetic and the pastoral while at the same time offering a critique of the political machinations of immoral conduct. In the above-cited fragment III.ii for instance, the poem's context is foregrounded only to retreat and become a part of a collective human psyche. One's self, the enemy and our commonness in the capacity to be emotive, to feel "fear", blends to become a natural consequence of the

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<sup>34</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 62–63.

<sup>35</sup> The Philological Society, *The Oxford English Dictionary, Volume VII* (London: Oxford University House, 1961), 1043.

<sup>36</sup> T.P.S., *Oxford English Dictionary*, 54: I.1, I.2, II.4, II. 5.a.

human condition. Even the political of the public sphere in which Scott grows up is memorialised as an intricate character of human life. The political is “the thirties”, the era in which his parents took political sides and made choices in their lives, the era of intrigue in which his prized possessions “seemed always to disappear”, the era between WW1 and WW2. Throughout the fragment, the immoral and unjust are redeemed by concession for human fallibility, vulnerability, capacity to err, feel “fear”. For Scott himself, on the personal level, where there is refuge in “playing alone on the lawn” with his own toys or visiting Gran, there is also the intuited sense of things (being dressed up for occasions) is a façade.

In view of the above, this chapter performs separate readings of the explicit (political/referential) and implicit (personal) material in *Jakarta*. It considers the way the two categories are negotiated in the process of building a poetic structure, poses questions regarding the dynamics between them, and shows how they are unified to achieve reconciliation in the poem.

By way of extension, these primary questions become three-fold in the chapter’s core argument. To ask first, how Scott’s disparate themes achieve unity; second, how the personal affects the communal and vice-versa; and third, how the heart’s song and pastoral character of the epic emerge in *Jakarta*.

For the purposes of approaching this threefold inquiry, the analysis is mapped by signposts that are crucial to my overall thesis: that *Jakarta* is a structure supported by the dual forces of the political and the personal which, in its making, provides sanctuary for the unresolved injustices of the Jakarta massacres. That in its exposition of censored information through the lens of personal religious reflection, it is a prayer of redemption. And lastly, that this healing entreaty metaphorically replaces the darkness of grief with the lightness of renewal and results in a new structure that “houses” a new dawn.

The three-fold inquiry of my chapter will explore the formal and thematic forces of the poem, the philosophical and poetic forces, and the poem’s religious preoccupations.<sup>37</sup> Inquiry one unfolds with consideration of the epic traditions of Greek, Latin and Modern English Poetry and Indian Sanskrit poetry. Inquiry two considers the poetic and pastoral

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<sup>37</sup> This section has not situated itself in the religious domain but rather at the site of the poems making the “dwelling place” which I define in my introduction as a “clearing” with public, personal and spiritual concerns. Therefore, although this is the thesis’s progressive movement, Section 1.2 will discuss the Christian and Buddhist concepts of virtue relevant to this site of interest.

aspects of Scott's epic verse and how this meshes with contemporary, civic concerns. Inquiry three examines thematic guidelines concerning virtue, truth, religious ideals and moral righteousness.

### 1.2 (i) Circle One: *Coming to Jakarta* and Dante Alighieri's *Commedia*

Scott's long poem *Jakarta*, which forms Book One of the *Seculum* trilogy, bears closest resemblance to the Classical epic tradition associated with the works of thirteenth-century Italian poet Dante Alighieri.<sup>38</sup> This is shown, thematically, by the dominant spiritual quest for human salvation and the writing of history into Scott's poem;<sup>39</sup> and then, structurally, in its mimicry of Dante's three-line terza rhyming scheme. The comparison is not exact, with Scott's quest deliberately tracing a narrative story arc from beginning to end. The result is that the intransience and perpetual movement of Dante's *terza rimas*<sup>40</sup> is steadied in Scott's poem by a tercet stanza form that debates a thesis and then draws closure to a stanza in order to move on. However, the resemblance seems in evidence, and more substantially in *Jakarta's* three intersecting discourses: the first political, the second subjective, ethical and spiritual, and the third religious.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, so repetitive is this concern for triads that it identifies directly with Dante's number symbology in *Commedia*. According to Howe,<sup>42</sup> numbering not only structures the poem by delineating breaks in the circles but also behaves symbolically so that the number 9 in "Paradiso x", for example, represents Dante's transition with Beatrice from earth to the first circle of heaven.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, says Howe, Dante's guide in Beatrice *is* the number nine according to his prose text *Vita Nuova*<sup>44</sup> and in her role as a Christ figure, whose

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<sup>38</sup> Scott, Law, *Personal Correspondence* (September 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, ed., *Poetry and Terror: Politics and Poetics in Coming to Jakarta* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 19. Peter Dale Scott explains that it is difficult to write history into a poem, that such a project is ambitious, but that like Ezra Pound, he is attempting to do so in the writing of his long poem "Coming to Jakarta".

<sup>40</sup> Richard H. Lansing, ed., *Dante: The Critical Complex* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 286.

<sup>41</sup> Lansing, *Dante*, 286.

<sup>42</sup> Kay Howe, "Dante's Beatrice: The Nine and the Ten." *Italica* 52, no. 3 (1975): 364-71.

<sup>43</sup> Howe, "Dante's Beatrice", 364-65.

<sup>44</sup> Howe, "Dante's Beatrice", 366.



name equates with “beatifier”<sup>45</sup> this “nine” has its root in the Trinity.<sup>46</sup> Scott’s long poem is comparable in that *Seculum* is compiled as a trilogy, structured using three line tercets and reveres the Holy Trinity. It is a religious symbology further heightened by the Roman numerals that structure the fragments of the continuous epic narrative.

Revisiting Dante’s *Commedia*,<sup>47</sup> I argue that the likeness of this epic quest (to Scott’s *Seculum*) can be described by the character of Beatrice, whose first feature appearance in Dante’s love thematic matures to a less erotic and more spiritual, intellectual dimension. In her new incarnation as an authority on the theological aspects of intellectual reasoning, she helps guide Dante toward his ultimate grace:<sup>48</sup>

Oh lady in whom my hope has strength and  
who deigned for my salvation to leave your  
footprints in Hell:

the grace and efficacy of all things that I  
have seen, I acknowledge to come from your  
power and your goodness

You have drawn me from slavery to liberty by  
all those ways, by all the modes that you had  
the power to use.<sup>49</sup>

With respect to Scott’s concept of intersecting discourses, Dante’s three “guides” in *Commedia* are Virgil (who guides Scott through Hell), Beatrice (who guides Scott through Purgatory toward Paradise) and St Bernard of Clairvaux (who guides Scott to ultimate Paradise). Together they suggest a more complex interaction which, in turn, interacts with political themes of sin, power, freedom, justice and governance. In choosing to structure his poem according to the schema of Dante’s epic – the quest under holy governance – Scott has

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<sup>45</sup> Tepolinda Barolini, “Dante and The Lyric Past”, *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, edited by Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 22.

<sup>46</sup> According to Bullinger, the number nine in Christian scriptures is the number of judgement. It is associated with the number three of the Trinity in that it is the “sum of its factor (s)”:  $3 \times 3 = 9$ . In *Commedia*, she is E.W. Bullinger, *Number in Scripture* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2005), 235.

<sup>47</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 1: Inferno*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)/ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 2: Purgatorio*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)/ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 3: Paradiso*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>48</sup> Barbara Reynolds, *Dante: The Poet, The Political Thinker, The Man* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2006), 400.

<sup>49</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 625.

contextualised his material in one type of classical poetic tradition. Wanting the poetry to share information as well as embody his own intellectual and emotional involvement in both the event and the process, Scott, like Dante in the *Commedia*, moves cyclically; he is always returning to move forward. Remembering, as Scott insists, “this is precisely poetry”,<sup>50</sup> the three epic discourses (the subjective, ethical, spiritual that inform the religious and political) of both Dante’s *Commedia* and Scott’s *Jakarta* are related in the sense that they are seeking transcendence from a difficult reality to an ethical Paradise.<sup>51</sup>

In seeking what Beatrice tells Dante in Canto II of the *Paradiso* is the angelic way<sup>52</sup> to enlightenment: “a formal principle that produces, conformably with its goodness, the dark and the bright”,<sup>53</sup> Scott, through the process of writing, arrives at fragment II.v with the necessary wisdom to take the epic poem along the right path to illumination. This is explained by Hegel’s “Owl of Minerva” (quoted in *Jakarta*)<sup>54</sup> which metaphorically represents wisdom in that it can see into the dark and take flight after the close of day.<sup>55</sup> I analyse this in more detail when addressing Circle Two; for now, suffice to say night is the difficult time of reckoning. Scott has passed through the experience of bearing witness to the massacres and commenced writing *Jakarta*. In doing so, he has foregrounded the concept of terror, and the task of the epic poem is to now engage with the quest to find Paradise *and* the political/personal sufferings of its content.

Whilst, unlike Dante, the contemporary Scott does not have the guiding figures of Virgil, Beatrice or St Bernard to escort him through the circles of awakening, the intertextuality of his intention equips him with his own equivalents. In this one small fragment II.v., three of his multifarious poet guides, Homer, Ezra Pound and Dante, come forward to guide him in his project of illumination:

which is why you EP

Ezra Pound

....

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<sup>50</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 24.

<sup>51</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 51.

<sup>52</sup> Durling defines the “formal principle” (65) as the angelic forms of heavenly bodies which have “angelic intelligence” (64) and exist in the sublunar spheres (so that there is the dark and bright). Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 61–65.

<sup>53</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 51.

<sup>54</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 142.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Berthold-Bond, *Hegel’s Grand Synthesis: A Study of Being, Thought and History*, trans. Robert M. Durling (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), 110.

took as better friends

Guido and Arnaut

dawnlight in apricot blossoms  
above the massive basilica

lodged in the narrow valley  
for eight hundred years  
*e lo soleils plovil*

*and the sun rains*

to inhabit the past and future  
not as an evasion  
but to maintain the dialect

...

... the fountainhead of Justinian  
whom Procopius records  
as the depopulator of the Cisalpine Gaul

and whose gratuitous  
destruction of the Gothic kingdom  
opened the Po to the Lombards

what Pope Gregory  
saw not as portent but as  
fulfilment of the world's end

...

you had read in Dante  
*trust them even as gods*  
and looked for guidance to the state

...

it has not yet been from truth  
we have gone into war

and I was moved to reject  
the blind man's prophecy  
*Odysseus*

*shalt lose all companions*<sup>56</sup>

It was Ezra Pound, Scott remembers, who tried to write a poetry including history<sup>57</sup> and had “read in Dante/ trust them (the souls of the past) even as gods”.<sup>58</sup> Scott’s fragment invokes the intelligence Dante’s Beatrice speaks of in “the heaven of God’s peace”<sup>59</sup> and, towards the end, decides after all, “it has not yet been from truth/ we have gone into war”.<sup>60</sup> Just as Dante manages to intersect three discourses, Scott’s fragment foregrounds the terror by letting it appear alongside other appearances of ardour and religious symbology; so that Ezra Pound’s “apricot blossoms”<sup>61</sup> of Confucius appear in the “dawnlight”<sup>62</sup> of lyric love poets Guido and Arnaut – “and the sun rains”.<sup>63</sup> However slow in reaching a final epiphanic moment of great wisdom, Scott’s epic poem is developing a sense of what it might mean to love both the self and the other.

In writing the poem Scott recognises that there is still, as there was for Pound, “so little light”,<sup>64</sup> because having foregrounded terror the author is no longer made wiser by old souls but fumbling in the present. As he states metaphorically in the poem, he has won back the present and is no longer submissive to the warnings of Homer’s Tiresias: “and I was moved to reject/ the blind man’s prophecy/ *Odysseus/ shalt lose all companions*”.<sup>65</sup>

Like Dante, Scott also references various sacred texts in the making of *Jakarta* and, in their intermingling, they perform a similar purpose in signposting religious admonitions. Anecdotes, quotes, psalms and references from the writings of Confucius, Krishna, Lao Tzu and The Holy Bible<sup>66</sup> steer the individual through the social in *Jakarta* and provide a type of moral authority. Quotes from the Book of Jeremiah juxtaposed with Cassandra’s mad speech to Apollo in Aeschylus’ *Agammonon* in fragment V.iii, for example, show the pathway through a corrupt and mentally unstable world:

shall I say once again

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<sup>56</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 26–27.

<sup>57</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 15–21.

<sup>58</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 26.

<sup>59</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 51.

<sup>60</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 27.

<sup>61</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 26.

<sup>62</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 26.

<sup>64</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 27.

<sup>65</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Henry Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday Press, 1999).

why there will be more war  
*small and great alike*

*all are given to gain*

*prophet and priest practice fraud  
and the people love it*

*Jer. 6.13*

*Jer. 5.31*

...

*O Apollo lord of*

*the light you blind me  
we cannot like children*

*Agammenon 1227*

*go back to duty and svadharma*

*special or caste duty*

...<sup>67</sup>

Just as Scott reckons with an ideal, religious way of dwelling on earth through the reality of our innate human natures (*small and great alike/ all are given to gain*) written into history so too does Dante steer a religious 'truth' through a moral battlefield. Conflating the scriptural concerns of Scott's fragment V.ii with the earlier fragment II.v, we move forward with a type of Emperor Justinian (referred to obliquely in fragment II.v) who in the *Commedia* appears as ruler of Justice and orates the story of the Roman Empire by using the metaphor of an eagle flying through history. The eagle, doubling as a deified symbol from classical mythology, comes to represent in *Commedia* the persistence of truth – the "bird of God"<sup>68</sup> – in the face of political battles. Justinian, wanting to retire from war, hands over his governance to Belisarius, "with whom the right hand of Heaven was so joined"<sup>69</sup> and now that he is freed from the constraints of battle he talks of war from a divine distance. Dante's Justinian attributes his actions to "a sign (that I should rest)"<sup>70</sup> which is the symbol of the imperial eagle. In another of Scott's poems, "Eagle" (*Crossing Borders: Selected Shorter Poems*),<sup>71</sup> we are asked to consider three types of eagles – the "flat-tree eagle" of Dante's Cistercian Abbot Joachim, "the golden eagle/ flying low to challenge us/ from his usual eyrie" and, lastly, the eagle of the heavens – "this large space brilliant/ as magnesium in the clouds".<sup>72</sup> Considering the first type, in one of Joachim's figures the body and wings of an eagle outstretched

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<sup>67</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 149.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Dronke, *Dante and Medieval Latin Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 66.

<sup>69</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 123.

<sup>70</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 123.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Crossing Borders: Selected Shorter Poems* (New York: New Directions Books, 1994), 72-73.

<sup>72</sup> Scott, *Crossing Borders*, 72-73.

symbolise a tree of life. A tree inspired by St John's writings on death, judgement and the final destiny of the soul,<sup>73</sup> it comes to represent the final "flowering of the human spirit"<sup>74</sup> and a "moment in history when all political and social values will be lifted to the divine plane".<sup>75</sup> The reader might also be aware that Scott references the hawk of Christianity, symbolic of divinity, as a summons to prayer in his poem "Flight" (discussed in section 1.3). Yet here, in *Jakarta*, "it is the owl",<sup>76</sup> symbolic of divine wisdom,<sup>77</sup> that oversees the long poem from start to finish:

What is that whirr  
of low wings in the darkness  
  
of the ornamental pine?  
It is the owl<sup>78</sup>

Scott explains the meaning of Hegel's Owl of Minerva and its symbolic importance to *Jakarta*:

The owl was a symbol of Minerva or Athens, and of wisdom and of understanding. Hegel once said very memorably, at the beginning of his *Philosophy of History*, that "The owl of Minerva takes its wing only at dusk" – meaning, that we don't understand things until after they've happened. This is why History happens the way it does, because History is the product of rational beings but they don't know what they are doing ... there is a process and we are part of that process.<sup>79</sup>

Yet Scott's allegory shows again the *Religionwissenschaft*<sup>80</sup> of his belief system that seeks a unity between the personal and the civic that is distanced from war.

Section V of Scott's *Jakarta* draws Book One of the trilogy to a close and, arguably, it is the most active section of the long poem. Section V implicates folktale with war, religious ceremony and the emotional passions that incite a killing field, and vengeance and detachment. Beginning this section with a "shadow play"<sup>81</sup> in which villagers gather to watch

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<sup>73</sup> Angus Stevenson, ed., *The Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 862.

<sup>74</sup> Barbara Nolan, *The Gothic Visionary Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 28.

<sup>75</sup> Nolan, *Gothic Visionary*, 28.

<sup>76</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 142.

<sup>77</sup> Dorothy Watts, *Christians and Pagans in Roman Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 2001.

<sup>78</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 142.

<sup>79</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 163.

<sup>80</sup> Jon R. Stone, *The Essential Max Muller, On Language, Mythology and Religion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), Backcover.

<sup>81</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 143.

puppets re-enact war scenes from “the Mahabharata or in Kawi/ the Barata Yudda/ the Great War”<sup>82</sup> the poet, like Justinian,<sup>83</sup> has retired from the act of governing the text and, instead, allegorises what he sees or partakes in in his quest for divine revelation. The play involves a scenario of humans at war and Scott watches it in the hope of revelation. There is no “bird of God”<sup>84</sup> but through the watching of the play he is reminded of *ad hoc* phrases from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, “The Book of Joshua” and “The Book of Revelation”.<sup>85</sup> He includes these in the poem’s narrative by making the play the focus of his musings on the poem’s central theme: the power struggle between violent crime and religious virtue.

Fragment V.ii, continues this running theme of violence and detachment by beginning controversially with a twenty-first century version of the Gospel of Thomas that was notably suppressed by an early council of Nicea.<sup>86</sup> According to religious scholar Elaine Pagels, its omission from the original bible was due to discrepancies and overlap between the teachings in the Gospel of John and those written by Thomas. Thomas’s emphasis on “each person’s search for God” and other more contentious issues, such as sexual discrimination (“women are not worthy of life”) and the importance of being “solitary” in order to be accepted by God, were considered by some scholars to be of a lesser scholarship.<sup>87</sup> However, for Pagels, the text offers an account of an “authentic, first-century Christian spirituality” which, in claiming an unorthodox way of attaining the wisdom of good and evil, is “an allegory of enlightenment”.<sup>88</sup> The Gospels resurfaced after an archaeological discovery in Egypt in 1945.

In *Jakarta*, Scott quotes from Pagels’ *The Gnostic Gospels*<sup>89</sup> which, in turn, includes text from the lost gospels of St Thomas. Importantly, these gospels omitted the passion of Christ so that Jesus was not in fact God but a teacher of his word seeking the likeness of God in each and every person. Carrying with it a “message of spiritual enlightenment”<sup>90</sup> it affirms

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<sup>82</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 143.

<sup>83</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 123.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Dronke, *Dante and Medieval Latin Traditions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 66.

<sup>85</sup> Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, 206–231, 1390–1410.

<sup>86</sup> Allen D. Callahan, “Doubting Thomas, A Review of Elaine Pagels’ *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*,” *Religion & Ethics News Weekly*, accessed 1 May, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2003/11/21/november-21-2003-beyond-belief-the-secret-gospel-of-thomas/10371/>

<sup>87</sup> Callahan, “Doubting Thomas”, accessed 1 May, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2003/11/21/november-21-2003-beyond-belief-the-secret-gospel-of-thomas/10371/>

<sup>88</sup> Callahan, “Doubting Thomas”, accessed 1 May, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2003/11/21/november-21-2003-beyond-belief-the-secret-gospel-of-thomas/10371/>

<sup>89</sup> Elaine H. Pagels. *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979).

<sup>90</sup> Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer, eds, *The Gnostic Bible* (Massachusetts: New Seeds Books, 2003), 118.

Jesus is the light of the world but that this light can be found in everyone: “there is a light within each person, and it lights up the whole universe. If it does not shine, there is darkness”.<sup>91</sup> Again, Scott displays his religious diplomacy in including this quote for where it regards suffering as an unnecessary companion to an individual’s faith journey, suffering is, for the Buddhist Scott, the common “state” of our existential situation; and is the instructing force behind spiritual enlightenment.<sup>92</sup> However, the message of Pagels’ *The Gnostic Gospels* that is distilled by Scott as emblematic of psychological well-being is a reference which helps bridge the gap between the secular and the spiritual:

If you bring forth  
                    what is within you  
                    it will save you

...

if you do not bring forth  
                    what is within you  
                    it will destroy you.<sup>93</sup>

According to Pagels, many Gnostics “believe that the psyche bears within itself the potential for liberation or destruction”.<sup>94</sup> Scott’s reference in fragment V.ii of *Jakarta* prefaces a discursive narrative segment that contemplates the strangeness of life. In a “mountain chapel/ above Lake Como”<sup>95</sup> Scott senses his feeling of aloneness as a common human condition, the sense that “we are unfit for the crowded maze”<sup>96</sup> of our global community.

In his intellectual world, Scott and CIA investigators such as Jack Terrell are bombarded with death threats which include: “the message for Jack Terrell/ *you’ll be shot/ if you step off that plane*”; and Scott’s own “inconsiderable death threats”.<sup>97</sup> According to Scott these threats “by phone, mail or directly” became “more ominous and disturbing after Malcolm was killed”.<sup>98</sup> Yet, in his emotional world, experienced in moments of religious retreat, the art of

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<sup>91</sup> Pagels, *Gnostic Gospels*, 56.

<sup>92</sup> Jakub Urbaniak, “Suffering in the Mystical Traditions of Buddhism and Christianity”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 70, no. 1, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 146.

<sup>94</sup> Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Random House, 1979), ix.

<sup>95</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 146–148.

<sup>96</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 146–148.

<sup>97</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 147.

<sup>98</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 18.



surviving is in not just “forgetting” but re-imagining a human spirit that is at peace through listening to nature. With this regard for “the storm” and the “white snow-flakes” which “dance/ around a street lamp”, suffering is transcended in the presence of Scott’s Christian God; and his prayerful moment of reflection amidst a turmoil of the human spirit summons “the flared ghost/ once *fleet-footed pursuing*/ down the black oak/ still our familiar”.<sup>99</sup>

Scott’s conceptual story of salvation which bypasses material such as the *Gnostic Gospels* to bridge the secular, spiritual gap is returned to its “true” (for Scott) state of reasoning. Truth, he decides, hovers somewhere between the intellectual and emotional realms and is transcendent. Leaving Pagel, Scott is able to return to his guide Dante, and to the beatific and divine truth shared by them. Dante’s “intellectual light, full of love”<sup>100</sup> in *Paradiso* resonates with Scott’s symbolic ghost: “the ghost of snow/... / coming down as it seemed/ straight into my bedroom/ ... / until it faded into the dawn”.<sup>101</sup>

What I have termed earlier the embodiment of intellectual and spiritual reasoning happens in the moment the pilgrim involved in his/her religious journey sees a light “diffused of gladness”.<sup>102</sup> It is this same light that bears its likeness to “a river/... whose amber-seeming waves/ Flash’d up effulgence ... / the day-star of mine eyes” in Dante’s *Paradiso*, a river (“of speech”) which must be drunk from in order to know its gladness, “so the flowers and the sparks changed into/ greater festivity and I saw made manifest both/ the courts of heaven”.<sup>103</sup>

For Scott, this metaphoric river of Dante’s<sup>104</sup> is distilled to divine essence to be described as “a stream one lives by ... (but) hardly hears” which, in its eternal life in words, will always be reflective, that is, “words/ cast no dark shadows”.<sup>105</sup> Having at its depth the “once terrifying/ now daily love” it is visible as a “light ... / in the darkness/ floating between my thigh/ and my quiet fingers/ so she may seem no more than a/ rest within space”.<sup>106</sup> This

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<sup>99</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 146–147.

<sup>100</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 603.

<sup>101</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 68.

<sup>102</sup> Barbara Reynolds, *Dante: The Poet, The Political Thinker, The Man* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2006), 400.

<sup>103</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 605.

<sup>104</sup> Alighieri, *Paradiso*, 730. In *Paradiso*, Dante names his metaphoric river “the broad river of speech” that, according to Durling, is made by “the many confluent streams of poetic origin”.

<sup>105</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 80–81.

<sup>106</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 82.

river or stream describes the life force in which our spiritual intellects mature to meet the “depth ... which is the conception of all things in a single volume bound by love”.<sup>107</sup>

We have seen in Dante the confrontation and naming of sin as he progresses from circle to circle on the way to Paradise and in this process his emotional and intellectual life is married in the ultimate grace of salvation.<sup>108</sup> In Scott’s fragment a similar model is used as he speaks of the freedom he feels beside his stream, having learnt through love not to want to escape life but to scream at its difficulty; yet this stream, this light persistent, “no more than a/ pivot/ for the restless movement of stars” is always there, either “beyond its limits” or distant “when she sleeps”.<sup>109</sup>

## 1.2 (ii) Circle One: *Coming to Jakarta* and Ezra Pound’s *The Cantos*

*Jakarta* is a political poem. Further, it is a book dedicated to Scott’s father, Frank R. Scott, a constitutional lawyer and poet who was strongly committed to a politics of socialism. Co-author of the *Regina Manifesto*,<sup>110</sup> he and other members of the League of Social Reconstruction took an anti-capitalist stance on existing social and economic processes. In this and other famous acquittals acquired in court representations (for example, the case of Quebec Premier, Maurice Duplessis), Frank R. Scott built a steady and long-lasting public profile.<sup>111</sup> I mention this peripherally, for whilst *Jakarta*’s dedication links with its political content, it is also a book of poetry and in that, F. R. Scott’s relationship to Scott as a father also warrants mention. Although not clearly documented, the two are said to have parted ways<sup>112</sup> around 1950, perhaps due to F. R. Scott’s extramarital affair<sup>113</sup>. Yet for father and son, the writing of a Christian faith into their poetry called for a coming to terms with such a rift.

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<sup>107</sup> Sebastien Manfood, “On the Way to Paradise: Journeying with Dante in the Beatific Vision,” *Vox Christi*, 1, no. 2 (2012): 74–75.

<sup>108</sup> Pietro Boitani, “From Darkness to Light: Governance and Government in Purgatorio XVI,” in *Dante and Governance*, ed. John Woodhouse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

<sup>109</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 82.

<sup>110</sup> Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, *Regina Manifesto* (Ottawa: Mutual Press, 1933).

<sup>111</sup> Francis J. Turner, *Encyclopaedia of Canadian Social Work* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2005), 333–334.

<sup>112</sup> Ron Dart, “Peter Dale Scott: The Meeting of Poetry, Prose and Politics,” *Clarion: Journal of Spirituality and Justice*, 5 (2008).

<sup>113</sup> Nicholas Kasirer, “The Dance is One,” in *Melanges Offerts au Professeur Francois Frenette*, ed., Sylvio Normand Frenette (Quebec: Presse Universite Laval), 13–30.

In "Dancing"<sup>114</sup> Frank speaks to his wife Marian during those difficult years (the 1950's), lamenting of the pain of their separation and considering the legal constitution of marriage.<sup>115</sup>

### Dancing

Long ago  
when I first danced  
I danced  
holding her back and arm  
making her move  
as I moved

she was best  
when she was  
least herself  
lost herself

Now I dance  
seeing her  
dance away from  
me she  
looks at me  
dancing we  
are closer  
held in the movement of dance  
I no longer dance  
with myself  
we are two  
not one  
the dance  
is one<sup>116</sup>

A similar sentiment is echoed by Peter Dale Scott in his poem to his father – "Flight".<sup>117</sup> Reading to his father at his death bed of the ceremony of commemoration Scott allegorises the story of a golden hawk. According to scholar James Wasserman, in Egyptian religion a person who has lived a righteous life "is promised resurrection".<sup>118</sup> Human dignity in the

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<sup>114</sup> Frank R. Scott, "Dancing," *Law and Literature* 20, no. 1 (2008), 82–83.

<sup>115</sup> Frank R. Scott eventually returned to Marian as her spouse.

<sup>116</sup> Frank R. Scott, "Dancing," *Law and Literature* 20, no. 1 (2008): 82–83.

<sup>117</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Flight," *Crossing Borders* (New York: New Directions Books, 1994), 23–25.

<sup>118</sup> James Wasserman, "Foreword," *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day*, ed. Eva Dossaw and Don Dossaw (New York: Chronicle Books, 1984), 18.

afterlife was promised to those who showed “an eternal vigilance” to virtue.<sup>119</sup> As in the later epochs of Judaism and Christianity, the hawk is symbolic of freedom and embraces the idea that the person who has lived a virtuous life will live in the afterlife among the deities.<sup>120</sup> Just as Scott’s retiring bird folds its wings after a long journey, his reading suggests the hawk is emblematic of his father and he commends him to the same state of grace. An excerpt of the poem reads:

III

*ārit kheperu em ment* (Book of the Dead, lxxxvi)

Frank, I should read you what it says  
about making the transformation  
into a *ment*-bird

I am a ment-bird  
I have travelled with an order  
How shall I tell you what I have seen?

I stretched out my two arms  
I passed on to judgement  
I am pure at the place of passage

May I come forth from the sektet boat  
and may my heart be brought to me  
from the mountain of the east

May I gather myself together  
as the beautiful golden hawk  
and may the sacred wheat

be given for my eating <sup>121</sup>

The idea that poetry that arises from a virtuous (and religious) consciousness carries with it an obligation to love the other, to transcend conflict and bring redemption, leads to a consideration of how *Jakarta* sits alongside Pound’s *The Cantos*. There are many reasons for

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<sup>119</sup> Wasserman, “Foreword,” 18.

<sup>120</sup> Wasserman, “Foreword,” 18.

<sup>121</sup> Peter Dale Scott, “Flight,” *Crossing Borders* (New York: New Directions Books, 1994), 23–25 (italics included).

doing this: first, because *Jakarta* is dedicated to F. R. Scott, a lawyer and political activist<sup>122</sup> (which contextualises Pound's Benito Mussolini broadcast and imprisonment);<sup>123</sup> second, because while Pound's epic is political, it also considers personal beliefs; and third, because the form of *Seculum* is fragmentary, its tone is elegiac, and its text is praiseworthy of the epic tradition in which we also locate Pound's *The Cantos*. As *Jakarta*'s back jacket summary states, it is in "placing the political against the personal" that we understand Scott's poem works "in the tradition of Pound's *The Cantos*, but in substance is completely his own".<sup>124</sup>

We know, through a reading of Scott's published dialogues on *Jakarta*, that he respects and admires Pound as a poet but rejects his politics.<sup>125</sup> My reading of Pound's controversial long poem *The Cantos*<sup>126</sup> therefore is made with some trepidation as I compare its epic concerns, and then, critically examine some of its political difficulties.

Ezra Pound began *The Cantos* in 1922 in the manner of a "fugue" that operates in a similar way to Scott's Hegelian triad of "subject, response, counter-subject".<sup>127</sup> In the structuring of a fugue the principal dynamic is that of counterpoint which means, for *The Cantos*, that there is one dominant voice throughout which surfaces and retreats in accordance with the other voices resonant in the poem's intertextuality.<sup>128</sup> According to the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, a fugue is also characterised by an interplay of "episode" with "exposition".<sup>129</sup>

In homage to Dante, Pound describes this modelling of *The Cantos* as similar to a journey (in view of the above, a type of "reckoning") or ascension into the heavens.<sup>130</sup> But the term is forever wrestled with in Pound, falling between practice and theory and never fully technically defined, nor theoretically historicised. This is evidently the point, however, as when Donald Hall asks Pound what reading material informed *The Cantos*, the author

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<sup>122</sup> Dominique Clément, "Frank Scott", *Canada's Human Rights History* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2019), <https://historyofrights.ca/encyclopaedia/biographies/frank-reginald-scott/>

<sup>123</sup> Louis Menand, "The Pound Error", *The New Yorker*, accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/06/09/the-pound-error>

<sup>124</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, backcover summary, anonymous.

<sup>125</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 15–21.

<sup>126</sup> Ezra Pound, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1996).

<sup>127</sup> Carroll Franklin Terrell, *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound, Volume 1* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), vii.

<sup>128</sup> Willi Apel, *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1972), 325.

<sup>129</sup> Apel, *Dictionary of Music*, 325.

<sup>130</sup> Apel, *Dictionary of Music*, 325.

replied: “One isn’t necessarily reading. One is working on a life vouchsafed”.<sup>131</sup> So the epic *The Cantos* unfolds as a series of not overtly coherent fragments, but nonetheless holds the intent of documenting an individual voyage through a metaphoric Hell, past trials of truth and justice, toward beatification (or a mortal, good grace) and liberation from guilt. In light of Pound’s political background – encouraged, he attests, by the implications of politics on human *virtu*<sup>132</sup> – this personal story is, nevertheless, deeply embroiled in public affairs.

After World War II, according to Thomas Jackson, Pound decided military conflict is the direct result of poor economic planning<sup>133</sup> and argued that “an art committed to free expression”<sup>134</sup> could, in this aesthetic attitude, promote democracy. The Cold War Cultural Theory of George Keenan considered a similar idea in suggesting any art committed to the American Way could be politically influential.<sup>135</sup> Convicted of treason in 1945 for his radio broadcasts in Rome promoting the ideologies of Mussolini and his followers, Pound’s incarceration in a U.S. military camp in Pisa (which I will detail later in the thesis) was supposed to bring about a more reflective attitude on “past actions and opinions” that were deemed by officials to be “politically excessive”.<sup>136</sup> However, after Pound’s *The Cantos* was awarded the Bollingen Prize for Poetry, a debate emerged as to whether this redemptive attitude is in his writings at all or if they too support an argument in favour of violence to uphold social order. The totalitarianism of Mussolini, which Pound believed in vehemently, is still argued by some critics to be present in *The Cantos*.

Irrespective of whether Pound admitted accountability for his broadcasts in support of Mussolini and whether or not, in *The Cantos*, he seeks public forgiveness, the modern technique in which they were composed renders the work a free-standing poesis, and powerful in its artistic right to free expression. Any poetry after the war must write itself out of what Pound termed the “hell/ the pit/ out of the dust and glare evil”<sup>137</sup> of ruined times.

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<sup>131</sup> Donald Hall, “Ezra Pound, The Art of Poetry, No. 5,” *The Paris Review*, 28 (Summer–Fall, 1962), unpaginated.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas H. Jackson, “The Poetic Politics of Ezra Pound,” *Journal of Modern Literature*, 3, no. 4 (April 1974): 988.

<sup>133</sup> Jackson, *Poetic Politics*, 988.

<sup>134</sup> Jackson, *Poetic Politics*, 988.

<sup>135</sup> Jackson, *Poetic Politics*, 988.

<sup>136</sup> Charlotte Hemenway Taylor, “Poetry, Accountability and Forgiveness: Ezra Pound and the Pisa Cantos,” *South Central Review*, 27, no. 3 (2010): 104–132.

<sup>137</sup> Taylor, “Poetry: Ezra Pound,” 114.

Yet according to Robert Hass,<sup>138</sup> Pound's structural experiment in *The Cantos* is weakened by virtue of its "intellectual abstraction"<sup>139</sup> and its capacity to be read as a poetry that expresses the "inner life" of humanness. To continue with my argument that the domain of the "*Religionwissenschaft*"<sup>140</sup> grows out of humanity; that is, breathes a future through life experience, my thesis supports Dale Scott's argument that the modernist subordination of a public morality was a critical mistake. This is discussed in greater complexity in my later chapters on Book Three, *Darkness*, where Scott's afterword states simply that inner and outer enlightenment are interdependent, and to have one without the other is in itself an act of violence.

Mindful of this background to Pound's *The Cantos*, Scott's references to the work in fragment II.iv of *Jakarta* become more pivotal in revealing the strength of the book's objective. As I mentioned earlier, Pound was writing his epic poem in the midst of a new epoch in American poetry that later became known critically as modernist American poetry. Yet Scott, by referencing Pound in his epic, is contributing to a contemporary American poetic of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that has endured in the wake of Pound's modernist interpretation of a highly secular state. This suggests, then, that *Jakarta's* likeness to *The Cantos* in terms of its social and political dialectic is a means of revitalising the concept of human *virtu*<sup>141</sup> – beyond the political project of Pound's modernist epic, and reaching back to a tradition in which religion played a central role.

The liturgical purpose of Scott's work has sufficient distance from its reference to Pound to be critical of his political premise. Further, Scott's political purpose in his poetry, to reveal the truth of otherwise censored government conspiracies, is of key importance to his references to Pound. We know Pound was convicted and imprisoned for his political attitudes and public radio broadcasts and Scott had little respect for this public persona. However, Scott's respect and admiration for Pound's poetry means he is still, for Scott, behaving in some ways as "guide"; which, in the end, lends authenticity in Scott's view to the overall redemptive process engaged in by Pound in writing *The Cantos*.

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<sup>138</sup> Robert Bernard Hass, "(Re) Reading Bergson, Pound and the Legacy of Modern Poetry," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 29, no. 1 (Fall, 2005), 55–75.

<sup>139</sup> Hass, "(Re) Reading Bergson, Pound," 72.

<sup>140</sup> Krishna Mohan Shrimali, "Religion, Ideology and Society," *Social Scientist*, 16, no. 12 (Dec. 1988): 14–60.

<sup>141</sup> Thomas H. Jackson, "The Poetic Politics of Ezra Pound," *Journal of Modern Literature*, 3, no. 4 (April 1974): 988.

According to Pound scholar Margaret Schlauch, *The Cantos'* juxtaposition of Romantic quotations, concerning "birds, sunsets and classical myths",<sup>142</sup> would seem to superficially endorse a type of "green" and "humane" poetic. However, in their subsistence in the "whole" of *The Cantos* as fragments, they become "relics" of a past<sup>143</sup> that, in turn, displays them as an antiquated aesthetic.

In sympathising with Pound's poetics on the grounds of a shared appreciation of antiquity, Scott is able to re-remember religion, the fallibility of human nature and what Schluach calls a "green" and "humane" poetic to make possible, in poetry, all that Pound, however obliquely, had been forced to relinquish.

### 1.2 (iii) Circle One: *Coming to Jakarta* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*

In his seminal essay of 1919, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot argued that "the best, the most individual parts of [the poet's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously." Eliot saw tradition as a whole as an "ideal order," and he saw new works as rejuvenating a past: "What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art that preceded it." In the essay this emphasis on the past leads to a polemical argument for "Classicism" (obedience to "outside authority") as opposed to "Romanticism" (inspiration from an "inner voice," which according to Eliot "breathes the eternal message of vanity, fear, and lust").<sup>144</sup>

I have spoken of the influence of Pound on *Jakarta* to show the ways in which Scott's epic form follows in an epic tradition of political, modern poetry. In his article on Czeslaw Milosz and T. S. Eliot (also delivered as a lecture at Claremont Mac Kenna College),<sup>145</sup> Scott critiques the idea of a poetry which arises "afresh" from past traditions. He argues that the concept of a "literary canon" is problematic because poets come to their craft from many classes and many backgrounds, engaging with reading material either through self-guidance

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<sup>142</sup> Margaret Schlauch, "The Anti-Humanism of Ezra Pound," *Science and Society*, 13 (Jan 1, 1949): 258, 268.

<sup>143</sup> I have mentioned this earlier in chapter 1, quoting Hirsch: "sometimes richly textual 'fragments' become allegorical and broken off from a divine whole". See footnote 21.

<sup>144</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Miłosz, Eliot, and the Generative Canon," *The Sarmation Review*, XXXVII, no. 3, (September 2017): 2110–2120.

<sup>145</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Czeslaw Milosz and T. S. Eliot: On Literature Past and Future," *Claremont MacKenna College*, accessed 1 May 2019, <https://www.cmc.edu/atheneum/czeslaw-milosz-and-ts-eliot-on-literature-past-and-future>



or as scholarly exercises. Scott explains this through example, presenting a young Catholic Milosz studying “the Roman Church and dogmatics” alongside his own childhood immersion in an agnostic household.

Unlike for Milosz, Scott’s lessons in classic literature were “stumbled on belatedly and almost by accident” and any “awareness of meditative and religious experience” was self-taught.<sup>146</sup> Yet both Milosz and Scott were poets, colleagues and close friends in the same “literary” climate. Scott then, presents an argument for a generative canon (such as the lineage of Virgil, Dante, Wordsworth, Eliot and Milosz) which initiates a critical conversation with poetics rather than a more austere (depersonalised) language-based discourse. A term like “classicism”, for example, Scott says, infers archaisms that are not necessarily adapted in these new forms of the epic. Whilst both Eliot and Milosz, for example, are interested in classical notions of “great poetry rejuvenating past poetry”, Scott suggests Eliot memorialises the past (and in this way, suffers with it) and Milosz instead, escapes.<sup>147</sup> Staying with the early modernist canon can enable us to see how Eliot draws on this tradition in *The Waste Land*; and consider its influence on *Jakarta*.

For a man of letters such as Eliot, whose presence in England was so dominant it drove some poets out of the place entirely (W. H. Auden was one),<sup>148</sup> writing his epic was bound to be a layered task involving technique, cultural enquiry and personal meditation. In her companion to *The Waste Land*, Gabrielle McIntire suggests the poem is thematically multifarious: that it is spatially, real and mythic; spiritually, in mourning (for nature); and theologically, in search of a transcendent means of salvation.<sup>149</sup> She explains that, stylistically, *The Waste Land* is also highly experimental and intertextually engages with dead poets and scriptures such as Homer, Dante, John Donne, the Bible and the *Bhagavad Vita*.

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<sup>146</sup> Scott, “Miłosz, Eliot, and the Generative Canon,” 2113.

<sup>147</sup> T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and The Individual Talent,” *Poetry Foundation*, accessed 1 May 2019, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69400/tradition-and-the-individual-talent>

<sup>148</sup> W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), ix–1.

During the late 1920s, the “school” of Eliot was proving to be influential and the works of poets such as Auden were critiqued as verse “styled in the modernist accent of Eliot”, typically depicting “doomed heroes looking down in isolation at an equally doomed society”. But in June 1933, Auden wrote of a profound experience whilst “sitting on a lawn with colleagues from school” in which he “knew exactly what it meant to love one’s neighbour as oneself”. The experience prompted the poem “Vision of Agape” and marked a turning away from a de-personalised modern voice. From 1933 onwards, Auden sought a “universal harmony” that his role as “poetic prophet of the English Left” could not fulfil. He voyaged to Spain, Iceland, China and Europe before eventually settling in America in 1939 (W. H. Auden, *Selected Poems*, xii–xiv)

<sup>149</sup> Gabrielle McIntire, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to The Waste Land* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1–6.

For Eliot, there are two lenses through which the world was viewed after the First World War ended in 1918. The first views the devastation of warfare and the struggle to rebuild lives after tragedy; and the second is a literary history “of past and current” poetics that teach us how humanity can prosper in spite of misfortune.<sup>150</sup> Like Scott, Eliot includes quotes from a miscellany of genre, not random but vital to the poetic process of making something original out of an old tradition (“Immature poets imitate: mature poets, steal”).<sup>151</sup> Just as the poets of the past such as Homer and Ovid can advise Eliot on how to compose his “work of art”, so too might Western and Eastern religious texts inform him about necessary human matters such as dignity and reclamation:

Ovid’s reflections in the *Metamorphoses*, the mystery of Christ on the journey toward Emmaus, and the thunder of the Hindu *Upanishads* are as present to the poem as the “crowd” that flowed over “London Bridge” (62) or the noisy clamor of modern city life with “the Sound of horns and motors” (197) in the street.<sup>152</sup>

Just as *Jakarta* is a poem about terror, so too *The Waste Land* attempts to build something out of the ruin that is the war-torn city of London, with its bleak emptiness of an alienating industrial climate (the typist in *The Waste Land* eats her food from “tins”),<sup>153</sup> a culture in which an individual is either part of the crowd or an outsider. Where Scott interweaves quotes from contemporary and historical poets, philosophers and thinkers to explain the sense of his poetry, Eliot “steals”<sup>154</sup> his quotes to explain the self in a world born out of the past. Like Scott, he is exploring the concept of a journey out of sin toward redemption<sup>155</sup> which in many ways is a movement away from politics and cultural trends to a renewed sense of social grace. In elucidating the spiritual, psychological and cultural aspects of this aspiration, the pilgrimages of both poets are the same. Where Scott moves from urban to rural settings in *Jakarta* (both American and Canadian) in the ever-changing environments of his “circles”, Eliot’s poem is set in London and solely depicts this apocalyptic city.<sup>156</sup> In the sense that Scott

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<sup>150</sup> McIntire, *Companion to The Waste Land*, 3.

<sup>151</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood* (London: Methuen & Co., 1920), 114.

<sup>152</sup> McIntire, *Companion to The Waste Land*, 4.

<sup>153</sup> Peter Howarth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 70.

<sup>154</sup> T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and The Individual Talent”, *Poetry Foundation*, accessed 1 May 2019, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69400/tradition-and-the-individual-talent>

<sup>155</sup> John T. Mayer, “The Waste Land and Eliot’s Poetry Notebook,” *T. S. Eliot: The Modernist in History*, ed. Ronald Bush (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 67.

<sup>156</sup> Mayer, “Waste Land and Notebook,” 67.

has accommodated the pastoral or idyllic setting of the country and seaside villages in these retreats, he escapes what I have earlier referred to as the suffering of Eliot for his poetry. Yet the likeness is overt in *Jakarta's* bleak landscapes of civic despair and more so in consideration of its ending, which Scott describes as evocative of "Oppenheimer's Hindu apocalypse".<sup>157</sup> J. Robert Oppenheimer, in witnessing the Los Alamos nuclear test in 1945,<sup>158</sup> responded with a quote from the *Bhagavad Gita*:

We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried. Most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu Scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*. Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty, and, to impress him, takes on his multi-armed form and says, "Now I am become Death, destroyer of the worlds." I suppose we all thought that, one way or another.<sup>159</sup>

In creating what he called "the mythical method",<sup>160</sup> Eliot's ambition for *The Waste Land* was to merge the contemporary landscape with antiquity and thereby revitalise a devastated terrain. A poem depicting the horrors of the First World War, *The Waste Land* presents a commotion of "loneliness, emptiness and irrational apprehensions" amidst "corpses, wreckage and ruin".<sup>161</sup> Symbolically, the poem takes its reference from two texts on myth and ritual. The first is Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and the second is James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.<sup>162</sup> As a method of intertextuality, Eliot's background symbology is mirrored by Scott's own allegorical and mystical references (Dante's *Commedia*, religious writings and aspects of Hegel's philosophy).

Where Weston's study in Arthurian origins traces a historical timeline concerning the Grail legend, Frazer's study in myth and religion considers vegetation and fertility myths from ancient time.<sup>163</sup> Through Weston, we see a parallel between the fish of the Fisher King which

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<sup>157</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 157.

<sup>158</sup> Becky Little, "Father of the Atomic Bomb was Blacklisted for Opposing H-Bomb", *history.com*, August 31, 2018, last accessed March 11, 2020. <https://www.history.com/news/father-of-the-atomic-bomb-was-blacklisted-for-opposing-h-bomb>

<sup>159</sup> Shailaja Neelankantan, "When the Father of the Atomic bomb quoted the Bhagavad Gita," *The Times of India*, May 27, 2016.

<sup>160</sup> James C. Nohrberg, "The Mythical Method in Song and Saga, Prose and Verse: Part One," *Arthuriana* 21, no. 1 (2011): 20–38.

<sup>161</sup> Stephen Greenblatt and M.H. Abrams, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 2295.

<sup>162</sup> Greenblatt, Abrams, *English Literature*, 2295.

<sup>163</sup> Greenblatt, Abrams, *English Literature*, 2294.

“is a life symbol of immemorial antiquity”<sup>164</sup> and in Fraser the concept of a resurrected god (for example, Adonis and Attis).<sup>165</sup> For Eliot, the task is a quest to save the land and its peoples from ruin as the hero of the Arthurian legend might seize “the Matter of Britain” and reinstate its “lost identity”.<sup>166</sup> That this mythic method is steeped in religious ideology is evident in the final Benediction of “shantih, shantih, shantih”.<sup>167</sup> So, we have Christian ritual, Eliot’s own personal identity as a Unitarian (from which he converted to become Anglican in 1927)<sup>168</sup> and Eastern religion all vying for the bringing back of spring and fertility to the “dead land”<sup>169</sup> of Britain.

As for Scott, this hope in redemption does not come from a form of occultism – after *The Waste Land’s* “Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyant”<sup>170</sup> for example, or Scott’s “the fake/ clairvoyance of altitude”<sup>171</sup> – but rather, a religious faith in divinity. Eliot’s concluding chant, which in traditional Hindu practice, concludes any of the lessons in the *Upanishads*,<sup>172</sup> steeps *The Waste Land* in a type of theistic spirituality which regards the earth as sacred. Remembering that Eliot’s vision was to find the antique in the contemporary, his incorporation of Hindi scripture amidst Christian images (for example, “fear in an handful of dust”)<sup>173</sup> takes us back to medieval Christianity’s more “wild memory”<sup>174</sup> in the form of myth and ritual. This theistic spirituality I make mention of with respect to the *Upanishads* is a tradition that relies heavily on the musical components of worship.<sup>175</sup> In the Hindu tradition of Brahman, the earth, people and other life forms share a connection with a life force and become the sacred reality of the world.<sup>176</sup> The musical worship of this reality in the chanting of mantras and in singing and dancing, celebrates and fortifies the spirit of these forms so

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<sup>164</sup> Greenblatt, Abrams, *English Literature*, 2294.

<sup>165</sup> Greenblatt, Abrams, *English Literature*, 2294.

<sup>166</sup> Elizabeth Archibald and Ad Putter, eds, *The Cambridge Companion to the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>167</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1949), 43.

<sup>168</sup> Jeroen Vanheste, *Guardians of the Humanist Legacy: The Classicism of T. S. Eliot’s Criterion Network and Its Relevance to Our Postmodern World* (The Netherlands: Koninklijke, Brill, 2007), 148.

<sup>169</sup> Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 27.

<sup>170</sup> Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 28.

<sup>171</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 13.

<sup>172</sup> Eknath Easwaran and Michael N. Nagler, *The Upanishads* (Tomales: The Blue Mountain Center of Meditation, 2007).

<sup>173</sup> Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 28.

<sup>174</sup> Phillippe Walter, *Christian Mythology: Revelations of Pagan Origins* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 7.

<sup>175</sup> M. M. Agrawal, *Spirituality in Indian Culture* (Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2005), 57.

<sup>176</sup> Agrawal, *Spirituality*, 58–59.

that the beautiful (which is the grace of God)<sup>177</sup> is illuminated. Again, this is comparative to *Jakarta* in that it seeks the providential intervention of God or, in the tradition of poetics, gods, plural, to restore earthly paradise to a place of ruin. Further, in the spirit of modern poetry, Eliot's paradise is not invoked as a fully realised metaphor – like Dante's second Heaven – but rather, and more essentially, in symbolic forms such as light, shadow, and Wagnerian<sup>178</sup> hyacinths in such abundance that the Isolde-like lover<sup>179</sup> vows:

you called me the hyacinth girl, first a year ago;  
They called me the hyacinth girl<sup>180</sup>

*Jakarta's* Paradise similarly evokes Eastern religious traditions in a quest “not to re-enter/ the fierce gates of the past” (even metaphorically),<sup>181</sup> but to realise that:

...when the blind woman has seen

the terrible beauty  
of energy come forth  
to destroy the worlds

*Bhag. Gita 11.32*

O Apollo lord of  
light you blind me  
we cannot like children

*Agammon 1227*

go back to duty and svadharma  
let there be the courage...<sup>182</sup>

special or caste duty

The second stanza<sup>183</sup> quotes from the *Bhagavad Gita* to profess the word of Krishna who claims any journey of endurance benefits from time. It would seem Scott is suggesting here in the closing pages of *Jakarta* that the terror of Indonesia has been witnessed and reckoned with over the course of his long poem. The modern Eliot has guided Scott in ways to view “ruin” as a “relic” of past times, but where Eliot's material (WW1) is common knowledge,

<sup>177</sup> Agrawal, *Spirituality*, 59.

<sup>178</sup> Richard Wagner, “Tristan Und Isolde, WWV 90”, *Petrucci Music Library*, last accessed 29 June, 2019, [https://imslp.org/wiki/Tristan\\_und\\_Isolde,\\_WWV\\_90\\_\(Wagner,\\_Richard\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Tristan_und_Isolde,_WWV_90_(Wagner,_Richard))

<sup>179</sup> Philip Sicker, “The Belladonna: Eliot's Female Archetype in *The Waste Land*,” *Twentieth Century Literature*, 30, no. 4 (Winter, 1984): 423.

<sup>180</sup> Greenblatt, Abrams, *English Literature*, 2296.

<sup>181</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 149.

<sup>182</sup> Some aspects of this fragment have already been read in earlier parts of this chapter (see 1.2 (ii)) however they are necessarily here, with new commentaries added. Scott, *Jakarta*, 149.

<sup>183</sup> Whilst it is the second stanza of my truncated quote, it is the eleventh stanza of Scott's fragment V.iii from *Jakarta*.

most documentation concerning Scott's "ruin" is largely opaque and remains undisclosed. So, whilst the "healing" aspect of *Jakarta* needs a little more than Eliot's Fraserian "magic" to succeed in its quest, *The Waste Land* as exemplar is a positive influence.

At the end of *Jakarta's* journey, the role of delivering any condemnations is reassigned to God or the gods (as Krishna assures: "These have already been struck down by me").<sup>184</sup> The summoning of Apollo, god of patriarchal war and moral order<sup>185</sup> is an intertextual summoning of Apollo's light, thought to be healing to the body and mind. A representative of "Greek moderation, balance, form", and also "law and order",<sup>186</sup> Apollo's light is blinding because the world is metaphorically in darkness. This alludes to Homer's "Hymn to Apollo" in which the poet (not necessarily Homer) assumes the character of a blind man "dwelling on rugged Khios", whose songs "are hereafter supreme".<sup>187</sup>

In summoning Apollo – for whom it is necessary that the maidens remember and speak of the song of the poet as the sweetest, just as the poet promises to remember and speak of them in his journeys to other lands – *Jakarta* heals the past to rediscover the present. Apollo becomes fabled in the oral history of "the earth".<sup>188</sup> Yet there is a greater allusion made to Homer's epic which tells the story of the Trojan War and its aftermath (c.1200BCE) in two long poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.<sup>189</sup> The opponents in what is considered the "greatest war in history"<sup>190</sup> include the army of Troy, its allies and the whole of Greece. The mythologized story of Homer purports it to be a great war that included the active participation of the Olympian Gods. In Scott's poem fragment V.iii, the allusion is specific to the battle of Agamemnon which extends across four days and is considered the most devastatingly injurious of all duels.<sup>191</sup> The hero of the battle is Hector who is killed by Achilles who eventually hands over Hector's corpse to his father King Priam. The poem ends with Hector's funeral. I have said that Apollo was the "god of patriarchal war and moral order"<sup>192</sup> and in Scott's Homeric allusions this is upheld. In depicting the story of the Trojan War, Homer

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<sup>184</sup> Winthrop Sargeant, trans., *The Bhagavad Gita: Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 484–485.

<sup>185</sup> David Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 23.

<sup>186</sup> Leeming, *World Mythology*, 23.

<sup>187</sup> Michael Crudden, *The Homeric Hymns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 29.

<sup>188</sup> Crudden, *Homeric Hymns*, 28–29.

<sup>189</sup> Barry S. Strauss, *The Trojan War* (London: Arrow Books, 2007), 1–11.

<sup>190</sup> Strauss, *Trojan War*, 3.

<sup>191</sup> Strauss, *Trojan War*, 4.

<sup>192</sup> Leeming, *World Mythology*, 23.

portrays the hero Achilles as the champion of moral virtue. Remembering the cause of the Trojan War was the abduction of the Greek Queen Helen by the Prince Paris of Troy, his interception in the final scenes ensures their injury is returned with true and righteous justice.

Returning to Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the comparison with *Jakarta* suddenly assumes a greater complexity. Whilst both poets have branched from the *Gita* in searching for a lost Paradise, their epic concerns show a parting of the ways. Where I have tied Scott's allusion to Homer's first epic poem *The Iliad*, I see Eliot's allusion better aligned with *The Odyssey*.<sup>193</sup> Contextually, this makes sense because for Eliot, the idea of a "wandering and returning hero" who is forced, on his return, to persistently reclaim his "wife and household"<sup>194</sup> lends *The Waste Land* the courage to dream and then re-approach the ruin of WW1. Scott's use of *The Iliad* also makes sense as, like the hero of Achilles, he is immersed in the "heartland" of warfare. The context is a world of mayhem and confusion where leadership is fleeting and, in most cases, a position of vulnerability. In *The Iliad*, death looms large from plagues to victims of warfare.<sup>195</sup> Where Eliot is privileged with a sense of clarity via his guide Homer's sense of purpose, Scott's Homeric guide is confused and incensed with the immediate emotions consistent with war. He is dealing with what Homeric scholar Anthony Verity describes as "a very unstable narrative".<sup>196</sup>

However, despite the divergent allusions of Eliot and Scott, Eliot stands strong as Scott's guide; and in both poets, there is the meshing of eastern religious scripture with the Homeric Greek tragic epic for the purposes of showing the inexorability of original sin. What such an association effects in the epic poetry of Eliot and Scott, is a type of East meets West theodicy that defines sin as our "inherited tendency or concupiscence" rather than surviving from "inherited guilt".<sup>197</sup> In doing so, it is not reductive (for as Scott himself says, we cannot be like children<sup>198</sup> in our servitude to God's will), but effects rather a sacred posturing that lends its eternal life. The prophecies of both poets chant the same mantra of fact: to sin is to do wrong and the concept is historically epic. What this means for Eliot is that *The Waste Land* must seek the "heartland" of its ruin in order to merge the common suffering with a new

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<sup>193</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Anthony Verity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>194</sup> Homer, *Odyssey*, ix.

<sup>195</sup> Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Anthony Verity (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) vii.

<sup>196</sup> Homer, *Iliad*, xiii.

<sup>197</sup> Charles Seymour, *A Theodicy of Hell* (Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media, 2000), 192.

<sup>198</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 149.

Paradise; and for Scott, he must temper the chaos of his war zone with a type of ‘renovated’ wisdom regarding the humane way forward.

#### 1.2 (iv) *Coming to Jakarta* and Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*

Scott’s adaptation of the epic poem means *Seculum* is informed historically by Greek, Latin and Modern English poetry traditions and, in pursuing religious ideals, Indian Sanskrit poetry. A poem written in the form of an epic cannot proceed without some immersion in the tradition of its genre type, which Scott continually acknowledges; from the ancient writings of Homer to the more vernacular style of the modern epic which, Catherine Bates suggests, “shows no sign of decay”.<sup>199</sup>

While staying with the epic, I now will approach the more personal aspects of *Jakarta* (in the midst of the political) to read *Jakarta* against Wordsworth’s biographical narrative poem *The Prelude*.<sup>200</sup> As a pastoral idyll composed in the tradition of poetic narrative, *The Prelude* resembles *Jakarta*. It is also the tale of an individual journey toward religious ideals in the face of political upheaval. That such a comparison can be made is confirmed by Scott who, in correspondence, stated casually: “there is a lot of Wordsworth in my poetry”.<sup>201</sup>

Moving through childhood to adolescence to adulthood, *The Prelude* shows the context of Wordsworth’s life experiences to be in constant flux. In his maturation, Wordsworth sustained a love for God (his faith was Church of England), a love which then affirmed the principle that there is a continuity to thought that keeps life stable.<sup>202</sup> In frequently diverting from the current time and place of the poem to visit a memory from the past, Scott is pursuing a similar trajectory. For Scott, sanity or inner peace is maintained by the constancy of the heart’s depths which, in religious thought, is God’s truth, the source, the light, the stream, the Wordsworthian “equilibrium”<sup>203</sup> of self. To explain, Wordsworth’s movement in *The Prelude* is from city to country, culture to self, and it brings with it a peace of mind. In wandering from the discordant civic of the French Revolution (in *The Prelude*’s

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<sup>199</sup> C. Bates, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.ix.

<sup>200</sup> William Wordsworth, 1770- 1850 *The Prelude* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1992).

<sup>201</sup> Scott, Law, *Personal Correspondence* (July, 2015).

<sup>202</sup> Michele Turner Sharp, “The Churchyard Among the Wordsworthian Mountains: Mapping the Common Ground of Death and the Reconfiguration of Romantic Community,” *ECH*, 62, no. 2 (Summer, 1995): 387–400.

<sup>203</sup> Sharp, *Wordsworthian Mountains*, 387–400.



first iteration), and later, the industrial revolution of the 1830s (in the second iteration), Wordsworth foregrounds and embraces the quieter, natural landscapes of his local district:<sup>204</sup>

O Derwent! Winding among grassy holms  
Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,  
Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts  
To more than infant softness, giving me  
Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind  
A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm  
That nature breathes among the hills and groves<sup>205</sup>

That such a constancy of heart (as described above) would be frequently challenged by the civic nature of our individual dwelling on earth, would seem for Wordsworth irrefutably apparent. Living through the French Revolution and walking through the empty square and seeing “the dead, upon the dying heaped”, the quandary of having a vision of tranquillity poisoned by “the senseless sword”<sup>206</sup> is for Wordsworth hopelessly fraught. Whilst an individual might nurture inner quiet, the silence is disturbed by the idea that civically, there will be a resurgence of violent opposition. So that, although in the course of the text Wordsworth can be philosophical in thought (“lamentable crimes, tis true, have gone before this hour, dire work of massacre ... but these were past”),<sup>207</sup> he is also realistic and concedes the next hours are too silent for “the repose of night”.<sup>208</sup> Further, his place of rest is as “defenceless as a wood where tigers roam”.<sup>209</sup>

This contradiction between a rural freedom found in the “small village” of the Lake District<sup>210</sup> and a fight for similar ideals<sup>211</sup> in the “civic” upheaval of Revolution is set up in *The Prelude* via contextual opposites: the “village” is home and the city environment, a foreign land.<sup>212</sup> In *The Prelude*, Wordsworth’s own sanity during the war times and killings is

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<sup>204</sup> Rowan Boyson, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment Idea of Pleasure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and Bennett, Andrew, *William Wordsworth in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>205</sup> William Wordsworth, *1770- 1850 The Prelude* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1992), 14.

<sup>206</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 269.

<sup>207</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 269.

<sup>208</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 271.

<sup>209</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 271.

<sup>210</sup> Ben Hickman, *John Ashbery and English Poetry*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 91.

<sup>211</sup> Carl R. Woodring, “On Liberty in the Poetry of Wordsworth”, *PMLA* 70, no. 5 (1955): 1033-048.

<sup>212</sup> Hickman, *Ashbery and Poetry*, 91.

maintained by finding “its opposite” in the familiar, domestic landscape of his village; and, by way of this, a “more genial mood”, “a mind revived”.<sup>213</sup>

Scott employs a similar tactic in the composition of *Jakarta* where he tries to summon the tranquil mood of the pastoral – which I connect here to Wordsworth’s neo-classical landscape of shepherds – in the recurring image of his childhood times at Lake Massawippi and North Hatley.<sup>214</sup> The pastoral vision is important to Wordsworth, particularly during the critical years he composed *The Prelude*, because it is a landscape free of “metaphor, rhetoric and duplicity” which he sees as abundant in the civic scene of political upheaval. In his familiar homely surrounds of the Lake district, he can reacquaint himself with his identity: who he is, what he stands for, and all in which he believes. And the landscape lends itself to such introspection because, although it has been cultivated (is more the agrarian terrain than the wilderness), there are still the four seasons and the sublimity these occasions carry such as stormy weather. In this sense, as argued by Ben Hickman, the pastoral is a means by which Wordsworth can return to the religious “presence” of a greater divine force that speaks to him, outside of language, of “truth”.<sup>215</sup> I will address the pastoral in greater detail in chapter 2.

In the last passage of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth concludes that social progress and its consequent political upheavals have brought intellectual knowledge that challenges the poet’s original relationship with nature. As a poet he can no longer commune with the fields because, within himself, there is a disharmony of spirit. He has witnessed terror and can no longer innocently lie in the pastures.

Throughout *Jakarta*, the same sensitivity to civic turmoil and its effects on one’s sense of well-being is expressed in adjectives such as “tremble”<sup>216</sup>, “clenched”<sup>217</sup>, “meaningless”<sup>218</sup> and “jangling”<sup>219</sup>. Whether specific to his person or reflective of the way Scott is viewing his reality, there is a pervading feeling that his human-ness is being and has been shaken at its roots. As Wordsworth expresses in *Prelude*, the terror of existing leaves him adrift in the sense that he has lost the innocence of childhood. For Scott, in fragment iii.iv, even a retreat – to

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<sup>213</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 29.

<sup>214</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 32, 66.

<sup>215</sup> Hickman, *Ashbery and English Poetry*, 92.

<sup>216</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 138.

<sup>217</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 107.

<sup>218</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 92.

<sup>219</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 64.

“the ill-lit immense/ study at Christ Church” to enjoy “tea and crumpets” and the company of “the one don/ I found not just a friend but in some ways/ a holy man” – serves as a reminder that this place of quietude and peace is faraway from what Scott knows as “the real world”.<sup>220</sup> At this “small school/ for the over-privileged/ in the woods of the Seignory club” Scott is at home in the familiar, “niche” pastoral environment. Yet, as he sits at night-time and reads in the study, he feels more like “Yvain in the forest/ *com hon forsenez et sauvage* /like a man frantic and wild”.<sup>221</sup>

As Mary Jacobus explains, the inclusion of political content inside the Romantic poem is sometimes difficult because of the poem’s usual *modus operandi*, which is to reflect on one’s emotive life.<sup>222</sup> To take the example of Wordsworth’s Romantic poetry, Jacobus argues it breathes life like the heart beats, and is immersed in the “activity of naming or invocation”: the words “fall” into being.<sup>223</sup> So, for Jacobus, there are silent presences and active presences, for instance a cloud or a thought induced by its image.<sup>224</sup> I argue this criticism marries with the poetic of the domestic or “niche” pastoral, as previously discussed, for example, in times when the poet, when walking through nature, renders alive and well the qualities of beauty, awe and sublimity. Andrew Bennett takes this a little further when he notes that because Wordsworth was born in a time of great political upheaval, the emotional complexity, from which the narrative surfaces (that is, the poet’s life, thoughts, impressions, memories and moods), presents a challenge relating to balance.<sup>225</sup> So that which is life-enhancing – the enjoyment of nature<sup>226</sup> – must find a way through that which makes it vulnerable: that is, war, terror and social unrest.

In the concluding passages of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth, returning to the English countryside having lived through the French Revolution, recognises that any composition regarding himself and nature now performs the task of an epitaph.<sup>227</sup> This is true if we consider Wordsworth’s memories from childhood live on *inside* the story in the sense the poem’s new context comes directly after a time of war and unrest; and the “growth of the

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<sup>220</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 76–77.

<sup>221</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 77.

<sup>222</sup> Mary Jacobus, *Romantic Things: A Tree, A Rock, A Cloud*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1–10.

<sup>223</sup> Jacobus, *Romantic Things*, 2.

<sup>224</sup> Jacobus, *Romantic Things*, 3.

<sup>225</sup> Andrew Bennett, *William Wordsworth in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), xvii.

<sup>226</sup> Boyson, Rowan, *Wordsworth and the Enlightenment Idea of Pleasure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 125.

<sup>227</sup> Jacobus, *Romantic Things*, 3.

poet's mind"<sup>228</sup> is therefore faced with new demands regrading temporality. Having spent as much time away from nature in France<sup>229</sup> as he did walking the Grasmere hills in his childhood, the adult Wordsworth's imagination must not simply grow (revelling in "that abstruser argument" of his inner soul) from his solitary time with nature but rather be intellectually rigorous (in the fashion of his maiden friend in *The Prelude*, adopt a "higher style of vision"<sup>230</sup>) in campaigning for matters of the heart.<sup>231</sup> I argue such a quarrel in Book IX of *The Prelude* is also eco-critical in the sense it seeks out a greater understanding of making one's self a home or dwelling in the context of a community. Kenneth R. Johnston support this idea when he speaks of Wordsworth's "mental fortitude under stress" in the concluding books of *The Prelude* which he attributes to the poet's return to the "mental tragedies" of little lives dwelling in Grasmere.<sup>232</sup> In referring to Books VI and VII of *The Prelude*, Roxburgh reads the "short stories"<sup>233</sup> of past inhabitants to show that in each scenario there is the sense a dwelling was never truly built in the first place. So that, for instance, there is Magdalen of Grasmere, who "built her nest too near passion's edge" and died "broken of grief".<sup>234</sup>

As for Scott, Wordsworth's quest to write redemptive poetry considers, in its closing books, the way one's autobiographical journey might marry with society. In this way, Wordsworth's quarrels are similar to Scott's as he considers not only "a love which comes into the heart...which is human merely...and is divine" but also, "a love more intellectual" which in its demands upon the ego, provides the absolute strength [ to live a Christian life ].<sup>235</sup> For American Professor David Bromwich, these quarrels perform in *The Prelude* via a rally of "trespass and destruction [ of nature's "beauty.. that hath Terror in it ]"<sup>236</sup> versus reverence for the "mild grace" of "exquisite" earth.<sup>237</sup> Whether recollecting himself thieving from a nest or floating in a boat, Wordsworth is making himself a place in nature he can call his own. Yet

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<sup>228</sup> William Wordsworth, *The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).

<sup>229</sup> Stephen Gill, ed., *William Wordsworth: The Prelude*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 34.

<sup>230</sup> Wordsworth's maid is of a "higher style of thinking" due to her "genial" circumstances – she is a maid who is "wholly free". Wordsworth, *The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind*, 211.

<sup>231</sup> Wordsworth, *The Prelude; or, Growth of a Poet's Mind*, 211.

<sup>232</sup> Kenneth R. Johnston, "Wordsworth and The Recluse: The University of Imagination", *PMLA*, 97, no. 1 (Jan, 1982): 62–82.

<sup>233</sup> Johnston, "Wordsworth and The Recluse", 78.

<sup>234</sup> Johnston, "Wordsworth and The Recluse", 78.

<sup>235</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 233.

<sup>236</sup> David Bromwich, *Disowned by Memory: Wordsworth's Poetry of the 1790's* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 232.

<sup>237</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 235.

as he matures, he sees that each time he viewed nature as “second place” to his own life, nature would reveal its beauty in a new way – a fresh sprouting of flowers out of a rock or the “warble of new birds in a nest”.<sup>238</sup> In this way, Wordsworth’s long journey in *The Prelude* considers an emotional and intellectual maturity that connects with the world through childhood play and later, in contemplation of city and country, God’s presence and the way the making of a dwelling place can be one’s destiny if a “common humanity”<sup>239</sup> is considered. Bromwich defines his term “common humanity” as “sympathy, and recognition, or acknowledgement” of another person’s humanity.<sup>240</sup> In all aspects of living in *The Prelude*, that is, being Christian, being human and being alive in nature, the poet then is seen to reckon with his ego to position himself always optimistic with regards to liberty.<sup>241</sup>

Scott’s *Jakarta* proves to be a response to the influence of Wordsworth in the manner it pursues a similar quest toward redemption. In the sense that Scott considers the personal and the political, self and other, the argument for a romantic, sublime vision of nature, the presence of the divine in the cosmos and the journey through natural and social terrors toward a new stretch of ground (Grasmere revisited) there are a great many similarities. Like Wordsworth, Scott too considers a poem which carries the responsibility of epitaph. Yet essentially, Scott’s “growth” of mind in *Jakarta* is not a deep expression of one’s psychological development as explained in *The Prelude* but rather the development of a mindfulness that begins in adulthood. In this way, I argue *Jakarta* undertakes a larger consideration of belonging to the world that is religious, spiritual and eco-critical but further, entirely holistic. In endorsing a similar quality of acceptance and humility which sees “the fierce gates of the past”<sup>242</sup> (for example, war and violence) as worldly and catastrophic, Scott argues individual moments of contemplation and solitude can make us more inclusively conscious of our own epoch. He argues that, as in Wordsworth, war affects humanity by denying imagination the reason to elevate one’s spirit; and we, more simply, “go on surviving/ reasonable by day/ and then by night”.<sup>243</sup> Scott predicts there will be more war but maintains that by returning to

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<sup>238</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 235.

<sup>239</sup> Bromwich, *Disowned by Memory*, 23.

<sup>240</sup> Bromwich, *Disowned by Memory*, 25.

<sup>241</sup> Bromwich, *Disowned by Memory*, 23–43.

<sup>242</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 149.

<sup>243</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148–149.

“the old ways” of the sacred “ashvattha tree” we can ease back “into the world/ the unreal/ breathing within us”.<sup>244</sup>

In this way, the stylistic influence of the Wordsworthian poetic on *Jakarta*, particularly its capacity to transcend the real, carries reverence for the divine quality of Grace. For example, in the early sections of *The Prelude*, preceding the revolution, good fortune comes as “blessings ... in this gentle breeze air ... half-conscious of the joy it brings”<sup>245</sup> and the verse shows gratitude and praise for the divine intervention that has brought this moment of providence. Then, toward its conclusion, and post-revolution, Wordsworth decides the Grace he now seeks is still present, but more pared back and inherited from “what we have loved”.<sup>246</sup>

Similarly, Scott also emphasises the endurance of love in the face of war and terror, in the belief that we can intellectually and spiritually come to know the destructive from the courageous;<sup>247</sup> and thereby love one another in the eternal capacity. In the sense Wordsworth’s maturation in *The Prelude* is physical and mental, his influence on *Jakarta* begins where the autobiography ends and becomes history to Scott’s regard for providential grace. As Scott himself says in his own concluding fragment V.iii – “in this world where/ we live by forgetting”,<sup>248</sup> the “flared ghost”<sup>249</sup> we have come to see as the angel harbinger of his dreams and memories, some phantom we have come to know as a messenger, becomes personified as grace in its slow departure: “small ghost fading in the dawn”.<sup>250</sup> In the guise of a flaming ghost, grace comes to symbolise, in *Jakarta*, a union between the demonic world and the world of divinity.<sup>251</sup> Part One of the epic is told, terror has been foregrounded and the lyric scrambles back to its spiritual self, a little unaccustomed to the light but, metaphorically, breathing nevertheless.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 149-150.

<sup>245</sup> William Wordsworth, 1770-1850 *The Prelude* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1992), 3.

<sup>246</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 371.

<sup>247</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 149.

<sup>248</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>249</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>250</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 149.

<sup>251</sup> Scott, *Poetry and Terror*, 168.

<sup>252</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 150.

### 1.3 Circle Two: *Coming to Jakarta* and the influence of Hegel and Heaney

To begin with, my readings in circle two consider Scott's pilgrimage from the early conception (of his long poem) to its creative undertaking, as outlined in *Jakarta's* fragment I.i.<sup>253</sup> In these early stanzas, the first-person narrator, Scott, attempts to find a starting point for what he originally thought would be a singular volume of epic verse. His mind is deeply affected by the material he wants to write about,<sup>254</sup> and it seems fitting that his focus when it comes to writing the fragment turns to the apparent orderliness of his office space. Scott begins the poem with an image of three separate desks representing each of his disciplines or employments: one for teaching, one for political research and one for writing poetry:

I.i

There are three desks in my office  
                    at one I read Virgil's  
                    descent into the underworld  
  
at one I try to sort out  
                    clippings of failed Swiss banks  
                    or of slow-killings on meat-hooks  
  
in a well-guarded Chicago garage  
                    but the third desk this one  
                    is where the typewriter  
  
stares at me with only  
                    a sheet of white paper  
                    from which my mind blank  
  
is averted with an  
                    unmistakable almost  
                    diamagnetic force<sup>255</sup>

It does not seem accidental that there are three desks in his room, or that where one holds his copy of Virgil; the second, some "clippings of failed Swiss banks/ or of slow killings on meat

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<sup>253</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 9.

<sup>254</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Mark Sneldon, ed., "Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics: How Writing a Poem Enabled Me to Write American War Machine (An Essay on Liberation)", *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 9, no.26 (June, 2011): 1- 22.

<sup>255</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 9.

hooks/ in a well-guarded Chicago garage”;<sup>256</sup> and the third, an empty sheet of paper in a typewriter.

The juxtaposition brings together our pastoral history, contemporary economic failings and moral corruption, and then, an opening is found, a blank page that could either add to the mess pile or take it somewhere more valuable. Scott’s decision to sit and commence writing without thinking, automatically typing according to whim or the machine’s own sequence of lettering and symbol, is poetic in the sense that themes of justice and peace are now submerged in the unfolding mystery of where the project begins and where it ends. Indeed, the three italicised stanzas that come from this exercise detail a memory from Scott’s childhood that is both strange and evocative of innocence and fear:

*...and you*

*wind-driven ghost of snow  
down the side of the dark  
oak outside my childhood window*

*with the blind flapping all night  
Why are you here?  
Have you something to tell me?”<sup>257</sup>*

This impulsive writing of Scott’s lets sense unfold from emotive inspirations – memory, sight, the subconscious, the familiar – and thereby allows it passage through the mystical aspects of being. Sixteen pages later in fragment II.iv., this sense has found its way through the maze and at last seems coherent. Scott, after writing with poetic abandon returns to a consciousness enriched with a previously elusive clarity. With great confidence he states the task for the very first time : “I am writing this poem/ about the 1965 massacre/ of Indonesians by Indonesians ...”<sup>258</sup>

This shows that Scott’s making of the poem is a solo exercise (he writes alone in his office), but one that is undertaken with a communal conscience. His making of the poem finds inspiration from his two concerns: the self and other. The other is the communal intention of the project, to be a poem about terror; and the self refers not only to Scott’s emotive being

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<sup>256</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 9.

<sup>257</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 10.

<sup>258</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 24.



but to his intellectual understanding that something “is wrong or exacerbating about the prevailing conditions”<sup>259</sup> of global politics.

Seamus Heaney, in *The Redress of Poetry*, suggests that the process of writing poetry means the poet enters a consciousness which is unworldly, plotted by some “outcry or rhapsody wrung from it as it flies in upon some unexpected image of its own solitude or distinctness”.<sup>260</sup> *Jakarta* intends to be a poem about the Jakarta massacres yet Scott enters the context of the poem with grave uncertainty. Working through the funereal materiality of the Jakarta events and face to face with inhumanity, Scott must ecclesiastically make it less so to reconcile this history with the current world.<sup>261</sup> Scott’s intention to write a poem about the 1965 massacres inspires the poem and his religious faith nurtures the imagination through pain so that it can meet the spiritual mysticism of cosmic life. Then, and only then, does the poem steady itself on the page and Scott’s “storm lets up/ the white snowflakes dance/ around the streetlamp/ and the flared ghost/ once fleet-footed pursuing/ down the black oak/ (is) still our familiar.”<sup>262</sup>

In considering Scott’s new found consciousness, demystified by the making of a poem under the quest motif, I want to look in brief at several more philosophic and reflective attributes in *Jakarta*, which ask: how does it achieve fulfilment, present itself as reasonable (sane), speak eloquently of its own enlightenment? To do so, I want to consider Scott’s interest in the philosopher G. W. F. Hegel, who is often quoted in Book One and is thematically relevant. In the video interview series with Scott’s student Freeman Ng (March 9, 2014), Scott mentions Hegel’s lectures on the *History of Philosophy* as descriptive of his long poem’s theme of process.<sup>263</sup> As Scott summarily remarks, “history is the product of rational beings but they don’t know what they are doing”. Most importantly for Scott, the “greater wisdom” that is the product of reason is explained by Hegel as only able to be attained at the end of any one occasion. For Hegel, Scott explains, wisdom can only be experienced at the end of an event

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<sup>259</sup> Seamus Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), 21.

<sup>260</sup> Heaney, *Redress of Poetry*, 21.

<sup>261</sup> Upon completing *Jakarta*, Scott realises his long poem is ongoing and will in fact, be expressed in trilogy form. This clarity helps him to shape his long poem into the triadic sequencing it adopts so that *Jakarta* becomes the thesis, *Candle* the anti-thesis and *Darkness*, the synthesis (Scott, *Darkness*, “Afterword”).

<sup>262</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>263</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 422.

(or incident) and is expressed in the metaphor considered earlier in this chapter: “The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering”.<sup>264</sup>

Apart from the thematic relevance of Hegel already apparent in the dialectical methodology of Scott’s poetic process and use of the tercet form, Hegel’s idea of wisdom as dawning after experience takes on a greater importance as the poem develops. In fragment IV.xviii Scott discovers that personal, rational understanding can be attained via a transformative thought process. Scott attends a dinner party of Walter Lippman’s stepdaughter Eloise in fragment IV.xviii. Eloise encourages in Scott a consideration of Germany’s history and he tells her frankly that her ancestors were involved in corrupt politics; but he soon re-contextualises his dialogue by remarking on her gift as a pianist. In bypassing this memory or untold knowledge, Scott discovers Hegel’s Minerva’s owl principle, that understanding can only be gained in the aftermath of an event.<sup>265</sup>

Importantly, Scott’s reconnection with poetics occurs as his emotional life transcends the intellect, as is captured in this sixth sense reminder of Eloise’s personality and “particularity”<sup>266</sup> with respect to her talents. For Scott, Eloise comes to represent his lack of “authority” over historical events and, in this way, his capacity for “error and fallibility.”<sup>267</sup> In re-remembering her youth, which is associated with innocence and personal identity, Scott turns to his guide Hegel to find “a better relationship with the yin of my irrational” and “what Eliot called ‘The Peace which passeth understanding’.”<sup>268</sup> After leaving the party to “step out on the lawn/ sloping down to where the/ streetlight in the maples/ at the edge of the water/ shines on the long-disused/ lakefront bandstand”<sup>269</sup> Scott turns to nature to reconcile memory with what Hegel terms the “good” or the “right” (“the yin of my irrational”) which is the way to an Ethical Life.<sup>270</sup> Reason, fulfilment and wisdom of the highest order are only achieved after experiencing the opposite of one such incarnation.

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<sup>264</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, ed., *Poetry and Terror* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 163.

<sup>265</sup> In *Poetry and Terror*, Scott explains his interpretation of Hegel: “The owl was a symbol of Minerva or Athena, and of wisdom, and of understanding. Hegel once said, very memorably, at the beginning of his *Philosophy of History*, that “The owl of Minerva takes wing only at dusk” – meaning, that we don’t understand things until after they have happened.” Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, ed., *Poetry and Terror* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 163.

<sup>266</sup> Dyde, *Philosophy of Right*, 179.

<sup>267</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 163.

<sup>268</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 163.

<sup>269</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 142.

<sup>270</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, S.W. Dyde, trans., *Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1820), 149.

To explain this metaphorically, wisdom is the right path taken and the wrong path is foolishness. Scott realises he is talking about something irrelevant to the current context of the party and his company when his subjective conscience finds its universal, objective correlative<sup>271</sup> in Eloise's particular talent for piano. Furthermore, prompted by the familiarity of the garden view, a nostalgic moment of reminiscence carries his spirit toward the contemplative, and the mystical summoning of the owl battering his wings: "What is that whirr/ of low wings in the darkness/ of the ornamental pine? / *It is the owl*".<sup>272</sup>

What I have attempted to show in analysing the influence of Hegel within fragment IV.xviii is how, for Scott, reconciliation is achieved by the humbling of the intellect to accept a more compelling emotional drive that recognises, like "a passion gushing forth" and some "glint of reason",<sup>273</sup> that he is pursuing an end that is not conducive to his and civil society's interdependence. What Hegel would term a reason "embodied"<sup>274</sup> is the moment by the water's edge in darkness when Scott and nature are united in the tranquillity of the transcendent: the light catching the water, the owl in the pine tree moving its wings. Standing alone with Eloise at the waterfront of his childhood memories, Scott's feelings of love are deep and complex (in the sense the new is married with the old). But a third presence has also attended this newfound sense of the common good and that is the mystical, which, for its essential simplicity, is not absolutely religious or spiritual, nor is it absolutely *neither* religious or spiritual: hence, it is rationality in its ideal symbolic state.<sup>275</sup>

#### 1.4 Circle Three: *Coming to Jakarta* and God and Krishna

Having focused on a political and literary unpacking of Scott's *Jakarta*, this section will now contemplate the theme of spiritual virtue. Reading Scott in the context of the public domain, virtue is examined by what is textually inferred by *Jakarta's* religious and literary quotations.

Scott's sourcing of references from The Holy Bible and the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita* suggests that in the poem he is no longer grappling with an epic purpose but is, rather,

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<sup>271</sup> Hegel, Dyde, trans., *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 128.

<sup>272</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 142.

<sup>273</sup> Hegel, Dyde, trans., *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 179.

<sup>274</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 447.

<sup>275</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Peter C. Hodgson, trans., *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, The Lectures of 1829* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

pondering the concerns of the personal with the political, the spiritual and the religious. So instead of interrogating the making of the poem to study what makes it whole, the focus turns to a questioning of its relevance and spiritual contribution to contemporary society.

Again, this question can be divided into three parts. What does the poem provide to us as a public community formed through an evolutionary process involving Scott and his historical, religious figureheads (a Christian God in Sacred Scripture and Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*)? How, through the inclusion of select writings from these subjects, does Scott's poem address and seek to recover a sense of religiosity in human relations? In infusing the epic with the presence of the divine and transcendent, how does Scott redefine virtue in the context of American politics and public discontent?

#### 1.4 (i) Circle Three: *Coming to Jakarta*, God and the *New Jerusalem Bible*

In fragment 1.ii of *Jakarta*, the first reference to God is not made by direct quotation. Scott is in Watertown Massachusetts and is trying with difficulty to read himself to sleep. He notices that the environment, the city and America itself have become such a part of his "being" that to find himself peaceful within all this unrest would feel immoral: "the unsteady trees", the "one broadcast too many/ about the Letelier assassins".<sup>276</sup>

Moving from subject to subject he recalls colleague and friend Noam Chomsky's account of the "East Timor massacres" that was refused publication and the "grim/ pre-election faces on campus/ *Prepare to meet thy God*/ still visible under their/ freshly painted ten-foot-high/ VOTE REAGAN banners".<sup>277</sup> Here, the sickness Scott experiences and hopes won't prevent him from catching his "9.30 a.m. plane" is symptomatic of a moral, social anxiety. The students' political protest helps him retain the faith that things will fall into place and he will "get it into / perspective leading trimly but/ without forgiveness through/ the Delta departure gates".<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 10.

<sup>277</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 10.

<sup>278</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 10.

As Laurens Ten Kate<sup>279</sup> explains, the concept of “entanglement” says there is always “a self present and a self absent in the space of meaning and sense”<sup>280</sup> and that the first is spoken and thought and the second is not. For Laurens Ten Kate, this entanglement is a Derridean idea explained as “a complex difference-at-work (*différance*) which is the difference between religion and secularism, a difference that can be termed ‘entanglement’ or ‘complicity’ between the ‘difference-at-work’.”<sup>281</sup> In the sense that Scott is awake at 2.00 a.m. thinking about the troubles of the world, he is experiencing the malaise of a moral entanglement. It is moral because his conscience has differentiated between good and evil and it is an “entanglement” because the problem requiring solution is communal or, as I have argued earlier, social.

Scott’s own salvation is personal, he needs to recover that “particular life/ which hovers here in front of me like an apparition”.<sup>282</sup> However, as he is Catholic, this salvation cannot be “solely personal, moral and spiritual”.<sup>283</sup> And this is true also, in a reading of Scott in the context of his reverence for Judaism, in that the salvation he seeks has a “common modern understanding”<sup>284</sup> in so far as both religions continue to flourish socially.

Thus, for Scott, there is a God in the ancient Biblical sense, and in the context of modern time. It follows that Section I.ii is a poetic reflection on the predicament of wanting personal deliverance from evil (which could certainly come from his relationship with God or Jesus Christ: Exodus 15:2),<sup>285</sup> but that this understanding of what is evil is now modern, political, social and cultural with respect to the other, secular perspective. Scott seeks a universal, eco-critical morality that considers religious *and* secular views of dwelling, believing this would restore to the world the onus to think less selfishly of nature (e.g. for Scott, the maple trees of his childhood) and loved ones.

I develop this idea after the late English scholar and critic Horace Shipp,<sup>286</sup> who suggests that – from medievalism to modernity to futurism, idealism and symbolism versus

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<sup>279</sup> Ten Kate Laurens, “Intimate Distance: Rethinking the Unthought God in Christianity”, *Sophia*, 47, no.3 (2008): 327–343.

<sup>280</sup> Laurens, *Intimate Distance*, 328.

<sup>281</sup> Laurens, *Intimate Distance*, 328.

<sup>282</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 11.

<sup>283</sup> James W. Ward, *The Moral Arc of the Universe: Salvation as Emancipation* (Harrisonburg: James Madison University Press, 2014), 123.

<sup>284</sup> Ward, *The Moral Arc*, 123.

<sup>285</sup> Henry Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday Publications, 1998), 65.

<sup>286</sup> Shipp, *Medievalist and Modernity*, 728–730.

realism – there has been a repositioning of morality in the religious, as opposed to civic, domain. Avoiding the tragic, the “vale of tears” of medievalism, or the loneliness of “idealism”,<sup>287</sup> morality and the concept of a God today has become a concern for religious bodies and congregations rather than a matter of communal or social value.

What this has meant for Scott is that human relationships have been productively assessed in accordance with personal viewpoints on political, social and cultural issues. From socialism and communism through to capitalism, ethical consumerism and post-consumerism, there is evidence that a single trend could divide the community on a preferential basis of likes and dislikes. No longer what Frank Kirkpatrick calls a “community of faith-based persons”,<sup>288</sup> one person’s relationship to another in today’s America is decided by economics and politics. The Christian “in history and from history”<sup>289</sup> may still make the “coherent and intelligible claim that God exists” and that, “we live under his grace”<sup>290</sup> however, communally this voice of religion may not necessarily be held up as culturally relevant, which for Scott at least, suggests that a future America full of “immanent and transcendent glory”<sup>291</sup> is a work in progress.

#### 1.4 (ii) Circle Three: *Coming to Jakarta*, Krishna and the *Bhagavad Gita*

Scott’s use of the Indian Classic, the *Bhagavad Gita*,<sup>292</sup> moves the discussion on morality toward a consideration of its most complex operations with respect to human relationships. Where, in Scott’s use of God, the Christian terms of our communal relation are still founded on ancient principles of love, the presence here of Krishna and the *Gita*’s message – to find “more to life than our everyday experiences”<sup>293</sup> – explains how this might have become superficial. In fragment IV.vi of *Jakarta*,<sup>294</sup> Scott quotes from the *Gita*: “He who sits with his mind brooding/ over his self-restraint/ is called a hypocrite, said Krishna”.<sup>295</sup> In the *Gita* the

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<sup>287</sup> Shipp, *Medievalist and Modernity*, 728-730.

<sup>288</sup> Frank G. Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound: God, History and Religious Community* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 80.

<sup>289</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound*, xi.

<sup>290</sup> Kirkpatrick, *Together Bound*, xi.

<sup>291</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 12.

<sup>292</sup> Eknath Easwaran, *The Bhagavad Gita: Classics of Indian Spirituality* (Tomales: Nilgiri Press, 2007).

<sup>293</sup> Easwaran, *The Bhagavad Gita*, 8.

<sup>294</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 114–117.

<sup>295</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 114.

debate over when to use violence and when to show passive resistance is, for Krishna, almost Darwinian in the sense that human history has evolved from natural history and therefore “as a last resort to recover this minimal right (to survive), war is not immoral”.<sup>296</sup> As Scott’s quote implies, the nature of humankind is to respond to threats in an attitude of counter-action<sup>297</sup> because in our physiology we are like animals. Any “signal of danger or threat”<sup>298</sup> will alert our human consciousness in an empowering way that, in our spirit, allows us to feel anger.<sup>299</sup> Importantly, for Krishna, a person’s self-restraint is deemed hypocritical, a transfiguration that takes place only when the human being “becomes a partner of God”.<sup>300</sup>

Given that self-restraint requires the embodiment of moral truth, a person demonstrating this capacity is borrowing from a higher strength. In any human’s admirable self-possession, all the faculties (wisdom, intellect, passion) have met their depth; but this knowledge is not for humankind, it is for the divine.<sup>301</sup> In simpler terms, Krishna argues that God has given us life and that therefore humans “must change over from a self-centred to a sacramental living”.<sup>302</sup> Poetically, the *Gita* frequently returns reality to its original appearance, promising nothing can decay because, like nature, life events are cyclical. So, although “dawn is as old as time”<sup>303</sup> its return is always “radiantly young”<sup>304</sup> and, further, during this transitional phase the stars can be seen “keeping their ancient peace”.<sup>305</sup> As the *Santi Parvan* (Book of Peace)<sup>306</sup> explains, the peace of the universe is dependent on the peace of humankind and they are indivisible: “therefore do not cut yourself off from the light of the Sun, Moon and Stars”.<sup>307</sup>

Historically then, the *Bhagavad Gita* can never die or, rather, ends when the cosmos ends because that is the Eternal Law.<sup>308</sup> To view religiosity in the historical timeline of the sacred scriptures and the *Gita* is to notice an increasing autonomy to its functionality. That is,

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<sup>296</sup> Krishna Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence: A Moral Analysis in an Indian Classic,” *Alternatives*, 13, no. 3 (1988): 337–356.

<sup>297</sup> Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence,” 345.

<sup>298</sup> Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence,” 345.

<sup>299</sup> Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence,” 345.

<sup>300</sup> Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence,” 343.

<sup>301</sup> Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence,” 343.

<sup>302</sup> Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence,” 349.

<sup>303</sup> Chaitanya, “Krishna, Man, Nature and Cosmos in Vedic India,” *The Ecologist*, 30 (2000): 7.

<sup>304</sup> Chaitanya, “Krishna, Man, Nature and Cosmos,” 7.

<sup>305</sup> Chaitanya, “The Roots of Violence,” 354.

<sup>306</sup> Chaitanya, “Krishna, Man, Nature and Cosmos,” 7.

<sup>307</sup> Chaitanya, “Krishna, Man, Nature and Cosmos,” 7.

<sup>308</sup> Chaitanya, “Krishna, Man, Nature and Cosmos,” 7.

evolving through ancient Biblical time through different phases of growth, concurrent with sociological changes, its problems became a study separate from society, a discipline on “its own plane of reference”.<sup>309</sup> In Scott’s epic, the reassertion of religiosity or *Religionwissenschaft* (this being an academic rather than theological study of religions)<sup>310</sup> performs the function of liturgy in the poem. The living experience explained in the making of the poem is inclusive of modern culture and sacred prayer, and it allows the two to converge in order to offer America a future moral perspective.<sup>311</sup>

To explain, Poem V.i<sup>312</sup> of *Jakarta* gives us a metaphoric reference for the allegory in “the shadow play/ the *Mahabharata*/.../ in which the good Pendawas/ return from the forest/ of solitude strong again/ to oust their evil cousins”.<sup>313</sup> The epic poem (the *Mahabharata* of the *Gita*) which is being told in the puppet stage show put on by the villagers, quotes from the *Gita* to provide instruction on the battle between good and evil. According to Scott, in “present day Indonesian mythology”, this play is called the “wajang koelit” and tells the Javanese and Balinese villagers the “story of their mythical ancestors”.<sup>314</sup> In Scott’s poem it becomes a greater allegory in symbolising the darkness associated with war and its aftermath. Moving from the play to Gandhi and his respect for the *Bhagavad Gita* ( “the *Gita*/ which Gandhi called his mother”) there is an inference the politics of war can end in peace just as “warriors” can change to “clowns”,<sup>315</sup> “witness” to “theatre”.<sup>316</sup>

## 1.5 Conclusion to the Circles

To fit into a historical, religious and provisional schematic, Book One of Scott’s trilogy, *Jakarta*, references God and Krishna to ensure that his epic project is pursuing a path forged in ancient time (e.g. the beginning of the world *and* the beginning of epic poetry). From Homer to the modernist poetics of Pound, Scott argues that through religious, rather than secular, enlightenment the epic can still effect the sublimity and moral purpose of the original form.

<sup>309</sup> Shrimali, Krishna Mohan, “Religion, Ideology and Society”, *Social Scientist*, 16, no. 12 (1988): 14–60.

<sup>310</sup> Shrimali, “Religion, Ideology and Society,” 16.

<sup>311</sup> Daniel Schrifin, “Back of the Book: Praying for Poetry”, *New York Jewish Week*, 78 (1999), unpaginated.

<sup>312</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 143–146.

<sup>313</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 143.

<sup>314</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 89, 93, 165, 167.

<sup>315</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 144.

<sup>316</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 145.



From the 18<sup>th</sup> century through modernism, the concept of sublimity in poetry changed from meaning the sensation of experience, to the dominion of nature over man, to “the spirit or spark of a thing”<sup>317</sup> which is its truth or soul, to a type of impulsivity that gives human expression its greatest honesty. Dante scholar Robert Lansing argues that, after Dante, the epic form known as the dactylic hexameter (a line of six feet combining syllables in the form of dactyl and spondee) was judged to be too impossibly antique to phrase the vernacular in its scheme.<sup>318</sup> Lansing explains the difficulty as one arising from the language style itself, which tries to effect “a stateliness and majesty”<sup>319</sup> to the verse. In this way, the hexameter became the metrical equivalent of the nation out of which it shaped its form, showing considerable variation in Greek, Latin and English poetry.<sup>320</sup> Better then, for Scott seeking an eco-critical poesis of the universal, is the more intercontinental model of the terza rima. Lansing describes Dante’s *terza rima* scheme (which was his own invention) as one which keeps the same alternating rhythms of “tension and resolution” as Virgil’s hexameter to present a nomadic, “illustrious vernacular”.<sup>321</sup>

With regard to Heaney and the concept of the poet speaking the cries of the heart, I pose that this is a possible explanation for the poetic voice or rhythmic cadence expressed in Scott’s use of the tercet form in *Jakarta*. The syllogisms of Dante’s three propositions – major premise, minor premise, conclusion<sup>322</sup> – mimic the tensions and resolutions of Dante’s dactyl and spondee patterning without the six foot lines of the hexameter. Scott is remaking something of Dante’s formal inventions as a “cry of the heart” for his own time. In the sense that Dante’s *terza rima* offers a repetitive pattern that lends cohesion, Scott’s tercets in *Jakarta* are consistent in their repetitive operations. In this sense, both *The Divine Comedy* and *Jakarta* can be said to be “classical” forms of epic verse. Whilst *Jakarta* has many characteristics of the modern epic (for example, Scott’s questing vernacular deals with historical tragedy) its tight, dialectical tercets and the harmonious syllabic and phonetic

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<sup>317</sup> Roland Greene, ed., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, Fourth Edition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 1373.

<sup>318</sup> Richard H. Lansing, *Dante: Dante and Classical Antiquity, The Epic Tradition* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 276.

<sup>319</sup> Lansing, *Dante: Dante and Classical Antiquity, The Epic Tradition*, 272.

<sup>320</sup> Yopie Perins, “Metrical Translation: Nineteenth Century Homers and the Hexameter Mania”, *Nation, Language and the Ethics of Translation*, ed. Sandra Bermann and Michael Wood (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005): 229 – 256.

<sup>321</sup> Lansing, *Dante and Classical Antiquity*, 273.

<sup>322</sup> Prue Shaw, *Reading Dante: From Here to Eternity* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), Chapter Six, (unpaginated).

patterning of its lines, lend it a greater sublimity.<sup>323</sup> I believe it is precisely this formal integrity that lets in (as a type of dim brightness or clarity) the Arcadian purity<sup>324</sup> of the divine and transcendent.

As Virgil scholar Phillip Hardie explains, Arcadia existed in times of the “Golden Age of Saturnian Peace” which precedes the “war, greed and passion” which “displaces it” to become a paradise lost.<sup>325</sup> In seeking this place (which inherits, from Christianity, simple, pastoral theologies of good and evil),<sup>326</sup> Scott recovers not only sanity but a sense of religiosity in human relations. This is the “new dawn” made possible within the poetical structure of *Coming of Jakarta*. Virtue, in the religious sense of truth, honesty, respect and love for other human beings, finds rejuvenation in *Jakarta*; and as the poet and his community become interdependent in this way, we all (poet and readers alike) survive the terror of its subject.

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<sup>323</sup> I believe this sublimity to be a little like Seamus Heaney’s concept of the poet speaking the cries of the heart, which is found here also in the poetic voice or rhythmic cadence expressed in *Jakarta*’s form.

<sup>324</sup> Philip R. Hardie, *The Aeneid, continued* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 1999), 42.

<sup>325</sup> Hardie, *The Aeneid, continued*, 43.

<sup>326</sup> Academic Ruth Clancy explains the pastoral world of Virgil and early epic poetry as one in which shepherds and shepherdesses know no concept of evil and live “in perfect harmony with nature”. It is a world which precedes the Fall of Man and the loss of the Garden of Eden. Ruth F. Clancy, *Thematic Guide to British Poetry* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002), 160.

## CHAPTER 2

### COMING TO JAKARTA AND THE MAKING OF A POEM IN THE CLASSICAL TRADITION: SCOTT'S NATURE RELIGION.

I wish I could say that it has always been self-evident to me that a poet should love the world, and therefore should wish to change it. In fact, my vision has been frequently occluded by crises, like the one occasioning *Jakarta*, at which times I could think only about changing myself. But it seems self-evident to me now that these two urges, to heal one's self and to heal the world, are ultimately one and the same.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse *Coming to Jakarta, A Poem About Terror*<sup>2</sup> to show how, in Scott's journey toward redemption, the poem can be read as a narrative quest by the narrator who, informed by the pains of the past, is ready to move forward with greater optimism towards a new dawn. While, in chapter 1, I considered the metaphoric darkness of *Jakarta* (Scott's own mental instability, the deceitful politics, the inhumanity of the killings), chapter 2 considers the way Scott memorialises the themes of injustice, loss and suffering so that they become constructive and directional in his search for a Paradise lost. Thus, while chapter 1 has identified Scott's long poem as preoccupied with hell, and living in the ruins of its past, chapter 2 finds an empathy for those subsisting in the ruins by virtue of their absences and longings, so that the narrative story opens up to a future of promise and renewal.

In *Jakarta*, the material fabric which Scott studies and relates to the individual and the world is not (metaphorically) thrown out, but instead contributes to the character of place. In this sense, Scott allows the past of classical antiquity and future epochs to shape the nature of his place-making so that it gives patronage to the presences and absences of *Jakarta's* eco-spirituality. In this holistic approach to the making of his poesis Scott presents an eco-critical argument similar to that put forward by Kate Rigby: that for all "the world's woundedness" we must recognise the sacredness of the earth and human life, and then find our homeplace.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Coming to Jakarta and Deep Politics: How Writing a Poem Enabled Me to Write American War Machine (An Essay on Liberation)", *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 9, no. 1 (June, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta, A Poem About Terror* (New York: New Directions Books, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 262.

The poesis of *Jakarta* then comes to allow cultural and historical memory a new imagining and thereby to regenerate experience joyfully.

This chapter reads *Jakarta* as an epic poem built from fragments of verse; and considers these small narratives unidirectional in their intellectual and spiritual quest to rediscover peace. Parallel to the eco-critical line of Scott's enquiry, the importance of this sacred and channelled pathway toward re-dwelling is explained by Jonathan Bate, as an importantly "inclusive"<sup>4</sup> poetic vision. As Bate suggests, reimagining dwelling in a 21<sup>st</sup> century poetic does not necessarily mean recommending a remote lifestyle in a "secluded hut" or "snug homestead".<sup>5</sup> It can, for example, involve offering the reader a greater sense of the past and the present at once in the same text.<sup>6</sup> Bate suggests a poem can, in this sense, be a "making clear of the nature of dwelling" or, more simply, help a reader understand the inherent beauties of "wood".<sup>7</sup> This is precisely, I argue, what is shown in *Jakarta*. Scott considers the sanctity of human life throughout his journey in hell to establish a sense of the possibility of psychological renewal which, in the poesis, settles his mood of disquiet.

In chapter 1, the fragments that comprise the whole of Scott's *Jakarta* were analysed as tercets (in accordance with Dante's *terza rima*<sup>8</sup> or three "syllogisms"<sup>9</sup> and Hegel's principle of A = Consciousness, B = Self-Consciousness, and C = a return to A, in the awareness of B).<sup>10</sup> Such formal concerns are now pivotal to the promise of a new dawn in *Jakarta*, and are evident in the tercet's lively and cyclic dynamism and its "evanescence" and "stability".<sup>11</sup> Where the second line carries the first, the last line anchors all three. So that, from Hegel and Dante, and with *Jakarta*'s many poetic and philosophic guiding influences, Scott's three-part thought structure moves toward clarity, clears the space and makes room for redemption in order to resurrect a "sun-filled" Paradise lost out of darkness and ruin.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 280.

<sup>5</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 280.

<sup>6</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 280.

<sup>7</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 280.

<sup>8</sup> Richard H. Lansing, ed., *Dante: The Critical Complex* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis, 2003), 286.

<sup>9</sup> Prue Shaw, *Reading Dante: From Here to Eternity* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), Chapter Six, Numbers (unpaginated).

<sup>10</sup> Glenn Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary* (Abingdon: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 170.

<sup>11</sup> Charles Mahoney, *A Companion to Romantic Poetry* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 44—62.

<sup>12</sup> It is helpful to understand this structuring of tercets, as oscillating between "evanescence" and "stability", as lending *Jakarta* the ability to breathe life into the poesis in the sense it is always seeking out a thought or feeling, then recovering it with greater comprehension. It is an experience a little like what Jonathan Bate describes as the reader-poem relationship in which there is a type of home-making taking place. The reader

Where chapter 1, I argued that *Jakarta*'s epic form is related to the tradition born out of classical antiquity, in chapter 2 I consider the way this relationship to the past embellishes the poem's sense of contemporaneity. In doing so, I also consider the factors that distinguish and, thereby, illuminate Scott's interpretation of the formal properties of the contemporary American long poem.

As a companion analysis, chapter 2 reads *Jakarta* not in terms of circles of influence but with concern for its three narratives of the past, present and future. Under these categories, I consider ideas specific to an historical poetic, cultural memory and the epic style itself (pre-dating classical antiquity). I will argue that *Jakarta*'s time zones resonate with Arcadian, third century notions of the pastoral poem but also encompass its re-imagining in the late eighteenth century as a Romantic idyll, and with contemporary eco-critical ideas concerning inhabiting or even creating a dwelling. Chapter 2 sustains the argument that Scott's epic establishes (out of the "hell" of its topic) a contemplative space touched by historical nuances concerning: human ethics, religious virtue, the poetic, the pastoral attitude to co-existence, and eco-spiritual reflections on what constitutes an idyllic setting. Chapter 1 argued that Scott's *Jakarta* "builds" something out of ruin and chapter 2 shows how a devotion to this ruin can resurrect a lost Paradise. Like Heidegger's *Bauen* ("to build: to be a way of dwelling peacefully on earth")<sup>13</sup> and *Wunian* ("to remain, stay in one place and be at peace, be brought to peace, remain at peace"),<sup>14</sup> Scott's *Jakarta* houses a dwelling place for reflection, reimagining and redemption.

There is a diagram by Rein Raud which explains a type of poetry known as *renga*<sup>15</sup> or the "expression of Buddhist awakening".<sup>16</sup> In the sense that Scott's *Jakarta* might have

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reading a poem like *Jakarta* "is gathered in the oneness" of the poem's own sense "of being at home". Like the tercet structure, the experience is for Bate, one like Shelley describes as "an evanescent visitation of thought and feeling". Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 281.

<sup>13</sup> The full definition of *Bauen* reads: "Building in the 'authentic sense' is not a means to dwelling but rather is itself, a way of dwelling, a way of being on earth ... being at peace within the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its way of essentially unfolding". Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 42.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, trans. David Farrell Krell, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993) 348–350.

<sup>15</sup> Rein, Raud, "Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics", *Momenta Nipponica*, 65, no.1 (Spring, 2010): 202–205.

<sup>16</sup> Victor J. Forte, "Review of Ramirez-Christensen, Esperanza U., Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics. H-Buddhism", *H-NetReviews* (February, 2010).

cleared space to “house” a new dawn, the diagram’s concern for spatial division of poetry proves useful. According to Raud, a renga poem can meditate on the past (its “horizon”), inspire moments of clear thinking (its “boundary”) as well as view the future (its “margin”).<sup>17</sup> Pictorially, the Raud diagram comes to resemble a monk immersed in solo meditation, so that the background locates the horizon; the middle ground, the dawning of wise thought; and the outlook, the future – all of which are to the fore front of the monk’s vision. As in renga poetry, which is compiled by many authors contributing line by line,<sup>18</sup> the words and images of *Jakarta* arise from different sources and require an integrated approach to the narrative. While chapter 1 considered this intertextuality in *Jakarta*, chapter 2’s concerns are with its more ephemeral aspects including Scott’s past memories, present meditations, contemplations, dreams and nightmares.

After drawing on Raud’s diagram, chapter 2 borrows from John Rolleston’s critique of post-Romantic German poetry (concerning a “history” of style, motif and imagery across five generations),<sup>19</sup> so that the “moments” of *Jakarta* are read in terms of the present and, linguistically, in terms of the past. In his analysis, Rolleston questions claims that Romanticism has died by arguing that it never actually left the “historical imagination”.<sup>20</sup> For Rolleston, the way this is presented in modern and postmodern poetry is through the textual interplay of three narratives dealing with three different time zones: past, present and future. In the “temporal paradigm” in which these narratives intertwine, the poet comes to be “an analytical persona” who reflects upon the past, considers the present, and interprets a future.<sup>21</sup> The poem thus becomes a meta-narrative of reconceptualization, thereby “coalescing” the past into a present full of a potential future.<sup>22</sup> Importantly, the present is charged by chance and made vital as a consequence of its past; and the poem is open to the possibility of a “new event”<sup>23</sup> taking place.

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<sup>17</sup> Charles Mahoney, *A Companion to Romantic Poetry* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 44–62.

<sup>18</sup> In keeping with my pictorial representation of Raud’s diagram this could, in turn, be audibly like the meditative chants of monks when communally meditating. It also parallels Scott’s religious quest to harmonise the personal with the communal.

<sup>19</sup> James Rolleston, *Narratives of Ecstasy: Romantic Temporality in Modern German Poetry* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Rolleston, *Narratives of Ecstasy*, 11.

<sup>21</sup> Rolleston, *Narratives of Ecstasy*, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Rolleston, *Narratives of Ecstasy*, 158.

<sup>23</sup> Rolleston, *Narratives of Ecstasy*, 158.

While Raud has bought to my reading of *Jakarta* a kinship with Buddhist poetic sympathies, that is, a concern for the “oneness” of a poem, Rolleston’s argument resonates with my thesis’s focus on three-ness (with respect to Hegel and Dante) whereby we can also identify “three ecstasies” of time (“articulated quasi-spatially”)<sup>24</sup> in Scott’s poem. Taking these concerns as ways of reading Scott’s time zones, newly awakened, I conflate Raud’s picture of a monk meditating with Rolleston’s textual layering of past, present and future. In this way, I describe how the personal enlightenment of *Jakarta* becomes communal as it shifts about between the three ecstasies of time. Chapter 2 considers ideas relating to time and place in *Jakarta* to map the poet’s quest to create possibility: to envisage a new dawn and glimpse Paradise.

*Jakarta* is founded on classical antiquity and an imagining of future epochs. Scott employs the long form of epic verse to enable past, present and future moments to fuse metaphorically in the whole of its architectonic text. The poem has paid its debts to the past to become a stand-alone object while teaching us something new about Arcadian, Classical and Romantic aesthetics in poetry and also human ethics. In the sense this chapter is concerned with the meditative and wistful thoughtfulness of *Jakarta*, it unpacks a poesis that “dwells” in current time yet resonates with the psychic otherness of historical poetics and cultural memory. This is shown in fragment I.ii:

I think if I am sick now  
                                 and cannot catch my 9.30 a.m. plane  
                                 will I lose hold forever

of this thin bright  
                                 thread of my particular life  
                                 which hovers here in front

of me like an apparition  
                                 before I get it into  
                                 perspective leading trimly but

without forgiveness through  
                                 the Delta departure gate?  
                                 By its flicker I discern

the surly rebellious trees

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<sup>24</sup> Rolleston, *Narratives of Ecstasy*, 18.

beyond the muttering window  
(the maples of course of my childhood)

but no more full of branches  
and black openings than  
the laurels out in California

have always concealed voices  
too low and too obscene to be heard  
except as revelations<sup>25</sup>

Here, Scott meditates on natural motifs which evoke poetic moods from differing epochs (i.e. nostalgic, wistful, impassioned); and ultimately appeals to the religious. This fragment includes the ‘presencing’ of ghosts (Scott feels his life “hovers” before him “like an apparition”), the sense of dream (there is a “muttering window”) and what eco-critic Bate refers to as the “quasi-myth” of human consciousness (“voices/ too low and too obscene to be heard/ except as revelations”).<sup>26</sup>

## 2.2 Phase One – The Horizon: Ancient Ideas

In seeking to coalesce these time zones in *Jakarta*, my first reading is concerned with its historical poetic and cultural memory. Pictorially, this is the horizon of Raud’s diagram, the monk’s background, which for Scott is the background of his own Buddhist (but not exclusively Buddhist) religious sympathies. In considering a textual – literary and cultural – correspondence between the poem’s own ‘presencing’ and these past histories, I am comparing and contrasting Scott’s long poem with the poetry of past epochs beyond, and including, classical antiquity.

In the making of *Jakarta*, and the quest for clarity required to bring about a new dawn, Scott’s literary, philosophical (and other) references are often quoted verbatim rather than re-phrased in a contemporary quotidian style. This lends the past its own ecstasy and, in this way, allows it to resonate in Scott’s 21<sup>st</sup> century poetic and cultural context. In the awareness that after the Age of Reason or Enlightenment period (1685-1815), Christian thought was de-

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<sup>25</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 11.

<sup>26</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 23.



centralised by scientific, rational approaches to ways of living on earth,<sup>27</sup> Scott's acknowledgement of the past performs an act of testimony.

That this coalescing of ecstasy with the *Jakarta* quest also necessarily develops the work of the Romantic poets is explained by Scott:

Increasingly I see both communism and capitalism as twin offspring of the increasingly secular outer enlightenment of the eighteenth century. This has produced both radical progress and radical problems, along with Comte, Marx, Freud, and today's academic social sciences. This trend has lost sight of the truths of the eighteenth century right-lobe spiritual enlightenment, which eventually produced Blake, Hölderlin, Kierkegaard, Rilke, and Eliot.<sup>28</sup>

Scott's nod to Romanticism, and interest in classical antiquity, are motivated by his eco-critical project. As Kate Rigby suggests, "Romanticism remains inspirational in its resistance to that severing of the natural from the human sciences, matter from spirit, reason from imagination, techne from poiesis".<sup>29</sup> The importance of Scott's resonating ecstasy, then, is in the way it re-imagines an Arcadian "pastoral" aesthetic, "idyll" or rambling landscape; and re-imagines a time in which a poet could wander serenely in nature in quest of revelation, prophecy or contemplative profundity. In the manner the resonance resounds in *Jakarta's* 21<sup>st</sup> century poetic, it can be said to unite what Rigby terms a "severing" of opposites. As Rigby explains, it is vital that any such return to nature (after the Enlightenment) is not simplistic and effects reconciliation.<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Bate's extension of this also helps us to understand how poetry can handle these complexities: "the poetic articulates both presence and absence" and it is "both a language that restores us to our home and a melancholy recognising that our only home is language".<sup>31</sup>

What Scott advocates then in *Jakarta* is the idea of history as a paradise lost that can be refound. More exactly, his poem suggests that the past suffers from a type of ecological wounding<sup>32</sup> which can be rehabilitated.

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<sup>27</sup> William Jeynes and Enedina Martinez, *Christianity, Education and Modern Society* (Charlottesville: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2007), 113.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Reconciling Outer and Inner Enlightenment," *Tikkun Magazine* (Berkeley: Winter, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 261.

<sup>30</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 261.

<sup>31</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 281.

<sup>32</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 260–261.

Inspired by ancient tradition, the language of Scott's *Jakarta* is reinforced by its classical references. Yet in their virtual distance, or what Bate calls their resonating "absence",<sup>33</sup> they voyage eternally in the immediate quest of the poem. Peter Toohey, in *Reading Epic: An Introduction to Ancient Narratives*,<sup>34</sup> suggests that archetypes from ancient poetic epic verses can be "fossilized" in new poetic incarnations of the form. He presents the case for Ajax's "remarkable tower shield" which although pre-dated to the Mycenaean period is re-imagined in the verse of Homer.<sup>35</sup> The hero of Homer's *The Iliad*, Ajax, carries the shield on his travels, at times bowing out of fights with it slung across his back. According to Richard L. Trapp, Homer's hero is "a great soldier" with "outstanding qualities in leadership", who "knows how to speak wisely and effectively" and "reveres the gods".<sup>36</sup> The archetype of the shield lends Ajax endurance and is his prized and most sought after possession. According to David Stuttard, an effective "shield is strong, hard and enduring" whereas a "spear" [which Ajax, in madness post victory, uses to kill himself] is a weapon which can become "crooked" once used, as Odysseus uses manipulative language to win the dead "Achilles armour".<sup>37</sup> So that Scott's historical poetic and cultural memories are "shields" not "spears" and thereby perform as "fixed" and invaluable archetypes or relics of the past in *Jakarta*.

In an interview with Scott, he explains *Jakarta's* epic form helps him reinstate unity first in his own relationship with the world, and then in the more universal idea of community and world.<sup>38</sup> Overwhelmed by reading statistics on death and the news that the only man brave enough to publish his prose work on Indonesia, his friend Malcolm Caldwell, has died in Cambodia,<sup>39</sup> Scott writes to distance himself from "hell" and his "horizon" or the "historical time" of his poem in order to sound out the sacred devotions of his project. This can be demonstrated through a discussion of the poem fragment III.vii:

I arrived in no mood  
                                  for the obligatory pluralism  
                                  of post-war Oxford

where in one seminar

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<sup>33</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 281.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Toohey, *Reading Epic: An Introduction to Ancient Narratives* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

<sup>35</sup> Toohey, *Reading Epic*, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Richard L. Trapp, "Ajax in the 'Iliad'," *The Classical Journal* 56, no. 6 (1961): 271–75.

<sup>37</sup> David Stuttard, *Looking at Ajax* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 44.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Rebecca Law, *Personal Correspondence* (September, 2016).

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Becker, *When the War Was Over* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1986), 433–436.

on Recent European  
Political Thought

we were persuaded to read three dons  
from the south side of Broad Street  
and three from the north

my suggestion of Sartre  
meeting with a look which convinced  
even me I had just been joking

But where the theatrics of the gown  
turned Wordsworth back  
on his inner tranquillity

they left me self-conscious  
the more insecure  
alone on Snowdon –

straddling a hog's back  
my giddiness  
in the dense fog

like a rodeo rider<sup>40</sup>

Here, Scott is revisiting a somewhat uncomfortable memory of attending Oxford University as a student. In a poem that shifts from the relaying of a story to self-reflection and timidity of thought, the time spent by Scott sitting in on a seminar called "*Recent European Political Thought*"<sup>41</sup> is one which moves back and forth between the clarity of the present moment and the "dense fog"<sup>42</sup> of the memories and thoughts the seminar evokes in his quiet attendance. Poetically Romantic and idealistic in the sense that he was self-trained in the classical tradition, he cannot help but feel confounded by this new and progressive cultural theory. His opening statement, "I arrived in no mood/ for the obligatory pluralism/ of post-war Oxford",<sup>43</sup> shows the gulf between his own commitment to history and the ostensible "impoverishment" of this medieval establishment. Believing in a preservation of history (but with greater cause for its religious aspects), Scott is sceptical of what David Kreps describes as critical discourse growing out of pre-war philosophies that essentially "died" with

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<sup>40</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 73–76.

<sup>41</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 73.

<sup>42</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 74.

<sup>43</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 73.

Bergson.<sup>44</sup> With an academy of thought Kreps describes as largely ravaged by the war,<sup>45</sup> the pluralism Scott confronts appears as posturing; and the “theatrics of the gown”<sup>46</sup> that “turned Wordsworth back/ on his own tranquillity”<sup>47</sup> threatens his sanity. What seems to be a lecture about modern thought, is experienced vaguely by Scott as he clings to principles of Christian virtue derived from outside the walls of Oxford. This is a “post-war” lecture yet with the research and publishing slippages of wartime looming large, Scott sees all its devastating losses in the scant, prescribed readings of “two dons” from Broad Street, Oxford. Set outside the city by a wall and the main causeway into the University, it only adds to Scott’s grieving for lost academies such as Bergson’s.<sup>48</sup> We see the way this pain comes to injure Scott, so that he starts to personify the complexities of the lecture’s shortfalls. His self-consciousness, insecurity, loneliness and dizziness all point toward his issue with mourning; which is exacerbated by the instruction given to read the “two dons” from either side of Oxford’s Broad Street.

The spiritual and philosophical deficits Scott observes in post-war Oxford (in contrast to its repute for academic excellence) continue to surface in fragment III.vii so that his own thought process becomes recuperative, not only for himself, but for the university. After moving on from the seminar, Scott recalls the harsh words of his “kindly/ All Souls tutor” and retreats from his insecurities into the comfort of memory. He starts to recollect older incidents in which similar feelings were overcome by spiritual reflection (some “mystic cipher”).<sup>49</sup> Ideas of religious and/or spiritual virtue and the Arcadian pastoral aesthetic start to become the keystones toward rediscovering a Paradise lost:

(...)

and even my kindly  
                     All Souls tutor  
                     whom I did not know

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<sup>44</sup> David Kreps, *Bergson, Complexity and Creative Emergence* (New York: Springer Publications, 2015), 19.

<sup>45</sup> Kreps, *Bergson, Complexity and Creative Emergence*, 19.

<sup>46</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 74.

<sup>47</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 74.

<sup>48</sup> Keith Ansell Pearson describes four key Bergsonian innovations and of these I find the fourth most relevant to my argument: that is, “the theory of knowledge in the wider context of the theory of life”. In the sense that this theory deals with essence and ontology as opposed to mathematical and scientific deduction of matter, things, time etc, I find it links with Scott’s psychological versus intellectual conceptualisation of being. Keith Ansell Pearson, John Mallarkey, *Henri Bergson, Key Writings* (New York: Continuum Publications, 2002), 9–10.

<sup>49</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 75.

(...)  
                   said of my mock-writtens  
 they'll think you're insane

that was it – when Sally  
                   who had surprised me with a kiss  
 on the canal towpath

outside Long Wittenham  
                   came to my digs for tea  
 I tripped over the electric fire

banding the Astrakhan carpet  
                   of Mrs. Foxley- Norris  
 and the only solution

stared up at me  
                   out of the mystic  
 cipher at my feet

I was going mad  
                   ... <sup>50</sup>

The passage includes one of Scott's characteristic traits in his "prayerful" poesis, to equate one incidence with another in which the challenges faced by his sense of personhood are the same over and over. Thus, the story of Sally – coming to his house after a moment of intimacy and causing him to feel so unnerved by the new attraction as to become awkward, clumsy and embarrassed – is brought into the poem in parallel with his University experience. Following the memory of being full of self-doubt in the seminar ("they left me self-conscious/ the more insecure"), he expands to recall more moments in which when he was similarly challenged. The All Souls tutor's comments on his work and the surprise attraction to Sally manipulate his mind in opposite ways, the first disparaging and the other suggestive of merit. However, Scott's tripping up "over the electric fire" and "banding" of the carpet – which in fact, is the opposite impression he would have liked to leave with Sally – persuades him to arrive at the same conclusion as his tutor: "I was going mad". What Scott is saying, in his "remedial" poetic, is that symbolic truth – one's sense of right and wrong – is something to be reckoned with if Christian virtue (in this case humility) is to be upheld. That is, it would be

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<sup>50</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 74–75.

undiplomatic to not empathise with (and perhaps even regard as the better of the two judgements) another's perspective on right and wrong.

Again, this points to the deficit of Oxford's political lecture in the sense that Scott is continually forced to educate himself. The tutor has joked that others will perceive Scott as mad; and Scott, humorous in turn, recalls Sally who encouraged his ego to believe he had self-worth. In all instances, there is an oscillation between the personal and the communal and, importantly, between the present and an "absented" past. With respect to the horizon of *Jakarta*, these tensions which result in a spiralling into madness and the chaos of nonsense are left unpacked and unresolved. In this way, a dynamism of tensions contributes materially to his efforts in *Jakarta* to re-assemble the ruins of the past, reimagine our dwelling there, and invoke, through this serenity of co-assemblage, a metaphoric fresh start, genesis or new dawn.

In linking *Jakarta* to literary traditions that have their origin in classical antiquity, I find a strong parallel between poetic representations of an arcadian pastoral aesthetic and eco-critical adaptations of a similarly serene, ecological approach to living in the world. For eco-critic Jonathan Bate, "the mode of the pastoral has always been closely linked to the mood of elegy. The idealized pastoral realm of 'Arcadia' was invented two thousand years ago by Virgil ...".<sup>51</sup> According to Bate, its exemplar genre, the "idyll", is characterised by its portrayal of "innocent and contented mankind" located outside "the tumult of everyday life into the simple pastoral state...".<sup>52</sup> For Kate Rigby, poetic examples of the Romantic pastoral "might well represent a voice of resistance to capitalist modernity".<sup>53</sup> In Terry Gifford's study of the pastoral, he identifies three definitions including the literary pastoral vision as one which considers rural and urban life in the same setting.<sup>54</sup> He explains the manner in which such a setting conveys the aesthetic of a "retreat"<sup>55</sup> in the sense that, through artifice, the poet (for example) evokes the pastoral Arcadian landscape in order to seize moments of quiet and engage in deep reflection. Such pastoral and idyllic characteristics of Scott's poem may be interludes of dreamy, picturesque and desirous visions but they are also earthed by the resonating ecstasies of past poetic and cultural epochs. What this means is that Scott's poem

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<sup>51</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 75.

<sup>52</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 74.

<sup>53</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Terry Gifford, *Pastoral* (New York: Routledge, 1999), Chapter 1, unpaginated.

<sup>55</sup> Gifford, *Pastoral*, Chapter 1, unpaginated.

is at the same time post-pastoral and yet eco-critically resituated in the urban with the rural as two ruins desiring a Paradisiacal rebirth. Their juxtaposition and the poetic voice of their heritage (expressed in tones of longing, sorrow, joy) in *Jakarta* reimagine life so it is spiritually charged by the idea of perfection.

In the “horizon” area of Scott’s text, this idea of the pastoral and its accompanying evocation of an idyll or tranquil setting are attributed their historical significance. Scott is not out of context in the Oxford environment, nor is he misplaced in his own home in Long Wittenham, yet his actions portray him as out of place. What is challenging him is the desire to fit in (to be ecologically entwined), yet his confidence is shaken. He doesn’t know which is truer to his character; that he is, in fact, insane or that he exudes personal charm. Like the rooms in which he stumbles about in Sally’s presence, his thoughts remain internalised and passionate:

the world even the war  
in Korea forgotten

for the momentary solace  
of incapacity  
body and fingers stretched

and I hear again my voice  
failing to reach me  
remember the long search

under moaning walnut-trees  
in the night rain near Limoges  
high wind off the Atlantic

to find any shelter  
one leg over the high  
courtyard wall when suddenly

the mastiff leapt up  
to the limit of its chain  
no sleep after that ... <sup>56</sup>

Scott, as in fragment III.viii, has the leisure in *Jakarta* to ponder the relationships he desires with others for diplomatic reasons. He wants peace, not only for himself but for/ within his

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<sup>56</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 76.

social context. As the poem moves on, he describes his struggle to survive the challenges of daily life in a civilised, progressive society. The mastiff attacking his leg after his desperate climbing of the wall in search of shelter from the elements<sup>57</sup> is symbolic of the territorial laws that post-pastorally govern a sense of social peace and order. Katherine Little, in her discussion on the transformation of the pastoral aesthetic in poetry from the sixteenth through to the eighteenth century,<sup>58</sup> explains that what had initially been a vision of shepherds, sheep-feeding and dwelling, changed with increasing industrialisation from simple agriculture (e.g. Virgil's *Georgics*) to "agrarian capitalism".<sup>59</sup> Of interest in *Jakarta* too is this "struggle between a traditional and an emergent order"<sup>60</sup> whereby the earlier pastoral conception of the shepherd and his community as the "common man" in an idyllic setting is overcome by the "aristo-capitalist" whose mingling among others was strictly business.<sup>61</sup> As with Wordsworth's lament for a time before "industrial capitalism" put at peril the "communal ideal of environmental and spiritual harmony",<sup>62</sup> Scott's poem is nostalgic for the "instinct and impulse"<sup>63</sup> of the pantheistic poetry of classical antiquity. For Little, an example of this nostalgic verse is Spenser's epic poem *Fairie Queene*, which reimagined in his poetic reality a traditional Arcadian landscape in which shepherds "pipe and sing"<sup>64</sup> while sheep graze. That such a reimagining is nostalgic is explained by Charles Baudrillard, who suggests that:

when the real is not what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality, of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 75–76.

<sup>58</sup> Katherine C. Little, *Reformations: Medieval & Early Modern: Transforming Work: Early Modern Pastoral & Late Medieval Poetry* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013).

<sup>59</sup> Little, *Reformations*, 87.

<sup>60</sup> Little, *Reformations*, 88.

<sup>61</sup> Little, *Reformations*, 87–91.

<sup>62</sup> Tonya Moutray, "Remodelling Catholic Ruins in Wordsworth's Poetry," *European Romantic Review*, 22, no. 6 (2011): 819.

<sup>63</sup> Mark Allinson, "The Rout of Pan and our Split with Nature in Edmund Spencer's *Fairie Queene*", *PAN: Philosophy Activism Nature*, no. 2 (2002): 122.

<sup>64</sup> Little, *Reformations*, 92.

<sup>65</sup> Jessica Goethals, Valerie McGuire and Gaozheng Zhang, *Power and Image in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 89. While the original source of this quote is from Charles Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994), this reference is cited in a chapter in *Power and Image* that critiques Spenser's *Fairie Queene* alongside Baudrillard's theories. I use the reference in this context.



For Scott, the real is a history of memories, some his own, some communally shared and where they are painful, disturbing or the source of great sorrow there is nostalgia for the Christian virtues associated with happiness. These virtues come to direct Scott in *Jakarta's* quest for a "new dawn" that is also eco-critical. The Baudrillardian nostalgia presented in *Jakarta* through its Christian myths and signs emerge as archetypal relics. Their assemblage in the poesis of *Jakarta* is not random or ad hoc but brings cohesion by virtue of their religious and/or spiritual essences. This is important in typifying the post-pastoral aesthetic of *Jakarta* because it connects, for example, Spenser's piping and singing in fields with his own Homerican "flared ghost/ once fleet-footed pursuing/ down the black oak/ still our familiar".<sup>66</sup> As in Spenser, the myths and signs of *Jakarta* are not allegorised but resuscitated (Scott's flared ghost is slow in movement and not as he once was, *fleet-footed*). Where, in Allinson, we read of Spenser's Diana growing weary of chasing Faunus (the Roman name for Pan)<sup>67</sup> in retaliation for spying her bathing naked, Scott's Homeric ghost (figured as Até and encountered by Achilles)<sup>68</sup> is tired and slow in the chase. Representing "the spirit of the irrational", Até in *The Iliad* and here, in Scott's poem is mythically and symbolically a representation of the great lost God Pan who reigned before the Christian fall into sin.<sup>69</sup> In *Jakarta*, the "real is not what it used to be"<sup>70</sup>, there has been the biblical fall of humankind,<sup>71</sup> the terror of the Indonesian massacres, the complex disorder of the Age of Reason and European Enlightenment. Just as Pan has been lost to Arcadia, so too has the "nature" of being human (of thinking irrationally sometimes, and behaving impulsively).<sup>72</sup> This is Scott's nostalgia which echoes into absence via the myths and symbols that evoke feelings of longing and enduring love for a past Arcadian and Paradisiacal occupation on earth.

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<sup>66</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>67</sup> Allinson, "The Rout of Pan and our Split with Nature in Edmund Spenser's Fairie Queene," 122.

<sup>68</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 168.

<sup>69</sup> Allinson, "The Rout of Pan and our Split with Nature in Edmund Spenser's Fairie Queene," 121.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1994).

<sup>71</sup> The Christian, biblical concept of the fall of humankind is derived from interpretations of Genesis, Chapter 3 in *The Holy Bible*. For my research purposes, I favour the textual analysis of Sidney Greidanus who describes the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden as an act not so much condemned by God as reprimanded with grace. Whilst she and Adam are expelled from the garden of paradise, he provides them with clothing and promises them children and food ("yet these be born and gained in pain and hardship"). Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Genesis: Foundations for Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: William E. Eerdmans Publishing Group, 2007), 65.

<sup>72</sup> Scott and Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 168.

On all the occasions when historical poetic and cultural memory emerge in *Jakarta*, they do so ecstatically, that is, they live and breathe in Scott's contemporary poesis. Following on from Baudrillard's definition of a nostalgic poetic, *The Fairie Queene* becomes one example of Bate's "melancholy" for a resonating absence<sup>73</sup> in *Jakarta's* own reimagining. To understand how Scott might perform Rigby's necessary act of "reconciling" this sadness requires an understanding of the reason for the melancholy.

According to Little, the symbolic imagination of the seventeenth century sought to reimagine pastoral land as the idyll of shepherds and in terms of "what sheep keeping, sheep and shepherds could and did mean",<sup>74</sup> and not in opposition to the property of an industry that belied the simplicity of the traditional rural labourer.<sup>75</sup> Scholar L. P. Wilkinson uses the example of Virgil's *Georgics*<sup>76</sup> to show that in adapting metaphor and simile the verse elevated the pastoral scene into higher realms of mythology. Whereas in *Jakarta* there is a "longing" for Até and, in *The Fairie Queene*, a longing for Pan, in *Georgics* the longing is for Venus and the class of Olympian gods linked to agriculture.<sup>77</sup> Wilkinson argues that Virgil's poetic use of metaphor and simile means the shepherd has reassumed what Little describes as a "classical and ecclesiastical" identity of "plowman" at one in the fields.<sup>78</sup>

Peacefully reacquainted with his pastoral dwelling place, Little's aristo-capitalist shepherd is newly cast in the same mould as its predecessor, the common shepherd. Virgil's modernised herder is "stolen" and reborn in the native shepherd identity; and shares, in the coalesced poesis of past and present, the same mythological history.<sup>79</sup> Wilkinson claims that in each of the four sections of *Georgics*, the gods of agriculture are invoked to offer assistance with progress and weather conditions, become metaphoric examples of their presence and interventions in the fate of the crops and animals.<sup>80</sup> Taking Virgil's mythological reconciliation

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<sup>73</sup> I mention this earlier in chapter 2. Please reference Introduction, footnote 54.

<sup>74</sup> Little, *Reformations*, Chapter Three, (unpaginated).

<sup>75</sup> In the afore-mentioned chapter of Little's book (Little, *Reformations*), Little explains that renovations to the concept of sheep-keeping during the mid-sixteenth century meant the literary and economic identity of the shepherd (as simple "plowman" etc) changed so that "the shepherd became representative of an emerging and threatening new economic order: agrarian capitalism".

<sup>76</sup> L.P. Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil: A Critical Survey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 49–56.

<sup>77</sup> Annette Gieseche, "The Epic City: Urbanism, Utopia, and the Garden in Ancient Greece and Rome", *Center for Hellenistic Studies, Harvard University*, last accessed June 6, 2019, <https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5723.chapter-4-nostalgia-and-virgil-s-pastoral-dream-on-the-dangers-of-playing-orpheus->

<sup>78</sup> Little, *Reformations*, Chapter Three, (unpaginated).

<sup>79</sup> Little, *Reformations*, Introduction, unpaginated.

<sup>80</sup> Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil*, 49–56.

a step further, Scott's references to weather and fighting the elements lets in mythology to sanctify his contemporary reality. For Scott, in contrast to Virgil, myth does not just elevate and suspend reality but instead reminds Scott that what is mythic in poetry, resounds with what is divine or religious. For example, just as Scott's voice in fragment III.viii becomes difficult to discern in the high winds and falling rain, so too does the sense of natural harmony in his surrounds, the moving boughs of the walnut tree seeming to moan in the wind rather than sway accordingly.<sup>81</sup> The fact that the wind is coming from the Atlantic (which is far-reaching and distant), the rain is falling in the dark of night (which is infinite) and he is near Limoges (a historical and unfamiliar city) is also indicative of the "horizon" in *Jakarta*. The mythic tone of Scott's weather commentaries coalesce with the strangeness and mystery of historical poetic and cultural memories concerned with divine presence and a sacred creation. The "poesis" of *Jakarta* coalesces the past with a 21<sup>st</sup> century poetics but also opens up spatially to a possible future resonance; and thereby unites with Scott's quest to find the dawn of an eco-critical and paradisiacal dwelling place. I will discuss this further below.

By name alone, the Atlantic Ocean recalls the sea of Atlas which was referred to in early Greek civilisation as Oceanus, the greatest river in the world.<sup>82</sup> To the Greeks it was a sea that could "hold up the sky";<sup>83</sup> later, it was the sea that separated the Old World (Europe) from the New World (America),<sup>84</sup> and today its status as the second largest ocean in the world connects the shores of America,<sup>85</sup> Europe and Africa. Scott's use of it in this passage extends his ancient horizon to encompass the elemental mythologies of wind, water and earth.

There is a legend of Limoges that in 630 AD Saint Psalmodius was sleeping on a raft on the shores of the Vienne River and was swept out to this sea, the Atlantic, and died.<sup>86</sup> This is not inconsequential to Scott's composition in this poem fragment. After all, it was this Christian Saint who used to sing the Psalms in solitude just outside of Limoges, not unlike the

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<sup>81</sup> Wilkinson, *The Georgics of Virgil*, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Mark P.O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon, *Classical Mythology, Ninth Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 585.

<sup>83</sup> Morford and Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 52.

<sup>84</sup> Scott Spurlock and R. Gibben Crawford, *Puritans and Catholics in the Trans-Atlantic World 1600 – 1800*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), Chapter 9, unpaginated.

<sup>85</sup> Joseph C. Miller, *The Princeton Companion to Atlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 225.

<sup>86</sup> World Heritage Encyclopedia, *St Psalmodius* (Limoges: World Heritage Encyclopedia, 2018), last accessed May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019, <http://worldheritage.org/Find/st%20psalmodius>

shepherds of pastoral epic poetry sang and piped alone in the fields.<sup>87</sup> Further, early documentation of Limoges as a city that wanted to “flourish” in the worldwide marketplace describes it as a “dark” city, with so many walls there was little “sunshine and free passage of air”.<sup>88</sup> After the demolition of these walls in the late 1700s to reduce illness and epidemics resulting from a lack of sunlight and fresh air, the health and vigour of its inhabitants significantly improved.<sup>89</sup> In equating health with greater spatiality and the freedom to roam, this reference to the city’s renovation links with *Jakarta*’s own quest to redress the ruins of the past in the present time of the narrative. Further, it reinforces the idea that *Jakarta*’s quest for spiritual revival can be nourished by re-reading the pastoral in the present. In John Merriman’s account of the benefits from the restoration work, he states:

...a royal decree in 1755 noted some diminution in illness and epidemics thanks to the demolition of several walls, which now permitted a freer passage of air and sunshine. The King authorised further works in Limoges “where the population and industries are progressing” in the hope that the city would become “more and more salubrious and at the same time more commodious if one can give its streets greater width and suitable direction.”<sup>90</sup>

This suggests that Scott’s mention of Limoges in his poem behaves as a wry example of how industrial thought can become pastoral in action; removing walls has cleared away the constraints that impede a freedom to roam and meander about in natural spaces and thereby made its inhabitants all the more tranquil (in health and spirit). Juxtaposing this reference with Scott’s anecdote about climbing walls and being taunted by a guard dog demonstrates his struggle in reconciling a Paradise lost (due to the terror of the Indonesian massacres but also, a segregated urbanisation) and a paradise he believes is still within reach. Whilst in the poem’s earlier context of Oxford University Scott lives inwardly in a confusion of self-doubt, the accompanying moment shocks him back to reality. Hanging over the wall with “the mastiff” dog leaping up at his leg, the country/city divide associated with the early modern

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<sup>87</sup> Katherine Little, *Reformations: Medieval & Early Modern: Transforming Work: Early Modern Pastoral & Late Medieval Poetry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, August 2013), 85–175.

<sup>88</sup> John M. Merriman, *The Red City: Limoges & The French Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 5, 6.

<sup>89</sup> Merriman, *The Red City*, 5, 6.

<sup>90</sup> Merriman, *The Red City*, 6.

era is brought back to the fore.<sup>91</sup> Amidst the wild “night rain”, “high winds” and “moaning walnut-trees” there is a domestic animal installed to guard someone’s property. Once more, inner and outer enlightenment seem irreconcilable: the Romantic, sublime moment of being in a wild storm and in need of shelter, and the modern, absurd fear of someone else’s guard dog.

In fragment III.viii, the trees are “moaning”<sup>92</sup> in the wind and suggest a gulf in time between classical antiquity and the Enlightenment. The trees, like us, will eventually become damaged or age, and the frequent winds gives cause for a drawing closer of that which was always inevitable. Further, the wind through the trees is moving their boughs during rain and in the darkness of night near “Limoges”.<sup>93</sup> So, past culture is traceable in the echoes of St Psalmodius’ reverent singing, in the history of a provincial city that has endured wars and was once lacking in sunshine and air; and in the impossibility of the tree being anything other than vulnerably natural. Yet characteristically, Scott’s contextualisation of his personal experience instils the moment with hope, just as St Psalmodius’ faith saved his life and the marketplace spirit of Limoges endured.<sup>94</sup> Among trees during a storm, Scott identifies with their vulnerability and incapacity to defend themselves yet, in a suitably eco-spiritual way, wants to believe that in the courage of Christian spirit, they will all be saved. Chopra Anuj in “Seeing Nirvana Under a Tree”<sup>95</sup> helps us better understand Scott’s view in her description of the Bodhi Tree of Buddhist culture. Believed to be the tree under which “a young prince named Siddhartha Gautama, troubled by the world’s miseries, sat in meditation some 2,500 years ago”, and attained enlightenment, the tree “is now revered as the Bodhi (enlightenment) Tree. It is perhaps the world’s most venerated tree”.<sup>96</sup>

The Christian-Buddhist relationship to nature is one of interconnectedness. As Daniel Capper details, in “The Tree, My Lungs: Self-Psychology and the Natural World at an American

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Sullins, “Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures/ Values in a Time of Upheaval”, *Journal of Church and State*, 49, no.2 (Spring 2007): 368–370.

<sup>92</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta* (New York: New Directions Paperbooks, 1988) p.75 and Katherine Little, *Reformations: Medieval & Early Modern: Transforming Work: Early Modern Pastoral & Late Medieval Poetry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013).

<sup>93</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 75.

<sup>94</sup> World Heritage Encyclopedia, *St Psalmodius* (Limoges: World Heritage Encyclopedia, 2018), last accessed May 14, 2019, [http:// worldheritage.org/ Find/ st%20psalmodius](http://worldheritage.org/Find/st%20psalmodius).

<sup>95</sup> Chopra Anuj, “Seeking Nirvana Under a Tree,” *U.S. News and World Report*, 143, no. 19 (November, 2009): 55–56.

<sup>96</sup> Anuj, “Seeking Nirvana,” 55–56.

Buddhist Center”, “the image of *pratītya-samutpāda* commonly found in Buddhist texts describes three standing sticks which lean on each other. When one stick is removed, the others fall”.<sup>97</sup>

Coupled with the Christian sense that our place in the cosmos is one of “environmental stewardship”,<sup>98</sup> I read Scott’s taking shelter under the trees during a storm, and in the broader natural setting of an open landscape, as eco-spiritual in outlook.<sup>99</sup> As a Christian his earthly position is one in harmony with nature but carries with it the responsibility of care; and as a Buddhist his existence and enlightenment are dependent upon reverence for a cosmic spirit. In Stuart Cooke’s article, “Echo-Coherence”, he explains this type of ecologically sensitive dwelling as an “intermezzo” approach to establishing a sense of home on earth.<sup>100</sup> He argues that if each of us approached the place in which we live not just as “property” (for Cooke says “home becomes property”), but as itinerant travellers, we could save the earth from the cyclic catastrophe of “nice places” becoming not so nice places.<sup>101</sup> Cooke further argues that if we are truly to share a relationship with the land in which we choose to settle, then this must happen with an awareness of the heritage of the land.<sup>102</sup> Should we choose to dwell some place, between that hill and that valley for instance, then we should recognise the weight of our presence is neither the first nor the last to be carried by the land.<sup>103</sup> This sort of eco-critical vision is in line with Scott’s argument for a continual discourse between the personal and political, and the individual and the community, when it comes to making our home together and peacefully on earth. In his characterisation of an ecological poetics which “never stops”<sup>104</sup> for too long in one place (although he grants it regular resting places), Cooke’s argument resonates with a sense that Scott’s epic journey is always on the move. Even in

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<sup>97</sup> Daniel Copper, “The Trees, My Lungs: Self-psychology and the Natural World at an American Buddhist Center”, *TOC*, 49, no. 3 (September, 2014): 554–571.

<sup>98</sup> Steven Hayward, *Mere Environmentalism, A Biblical Perspective on Humans and the Natural World* (Washington: AEI Press, 2011), x.

<sup>99</sup> Rigby says: “To open oneself to the givenness of earth and sky in the abiding strangeness of even the most familiar of places, as well as to tarry or stray in places that are genuinely foreign, places, perhaps, where one is exposed to the elemental and uninhabitable, from which, in our daily living, we are bound to take shelter, is, Haar suggests, to dwell “ecstatically”. Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 91.

<sup>100</sup> Stuart Cooke, “Echo-Coherence: Moving on From Dwelling,” *Cultural Studies Review*, 17, no. 1 (March, 2011): 231.

<sup>101</sup> Cook, “Echo-Coherence,” 237.

<sup>102</sup> For Scott, this can also be carried over to vouch for a protective, heritage approach to the poetic.

<sup>103</sup> Cooke, “Echo-Coherence,” 236.

<sup>104</sup> Cooke, “Echo-Coherence,” 240.

seeking to arrive at a new dawn, Scott ephemerally sketches that arrival (in the sense a dawn is soft light which is infinitely projected) so that the poetics, upon reaching its destination, is light of heart and “light-of-foot”<sup>105</sup> as Cooke pleads is necessary. This ecological relationship between nature and humans in the attainment of (spiritual) happiness<sup>106</sup> is reinforced in the later part of the poem after the rain has given way to sunshine in the afternoon after a sleepless night:

and the next afternoon  
    over the Puy-de-Sancy  
    blocked by new snow from arriving  
  
for Easter mass in the remote  
    church of Orcival  
    I swear I see  
  
beyond the humming phone wire  
    and glistening black asphalt  
    a face in the heavy clouds  
  
or was it  
    in the strange light  
    an intimation  
  
of those shapes in the brooding  
    toils of energy  
    and deluge of emotion  
  
we all carry within us <sup>107</sup>

Having encountered boundaries and experienced from a near distance the high winds, rain and darkness of the city, we are back with a pastoral mood in the Orcival commune of Puy-de-Sancy. Orcival is renowned for its importance to religious archival research on Mary, mother of Christ, and Scott’s refuge in the local Chapel during Easter is again of consequence

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<sup>105</sup> Cooke, “Echo- Coherence, 231.

<sup>106</sup> In *Topographies of the Sacred*, Rigby argues that “the dynamic of place and perception” relies upon a sense of earthly phenomena as a non-human product. For Rigby, the only way our dwelling on earth can be sustainable is by recognising the “agency” of nature sentimentally and thereby developing a “romantic thinking of the place of poetry” which must recognise a “perpetual falling short” in “the midst of the elemental, the uninhabitable and the incomprehensible”. Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 12–14.

<sup>107</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 76.

to *Jakarta*'s narrative arc. My reading here still situates the passage in the "horizon" space of historical influence and thereby links Scott's time with historical commentary. In the above-cited passage from *Jakarta*, Scott's sojourn at Orcival resonates with a sense of timelessness, classical antiquity and biblical time (Easter and the death of Christ). Once more, Scott takes time out from the day to day of his context to not only enjoy, but develop the religious identity of his poetic. The timelessness of Orcival, its evocations of peace and serenity and the Chapel's observance of a Christian, Easter solemnity are restorative for Scott. The moment signals a time out of 'terror' and communion with peace which religious, spiritual Scott can appreciate and utilise to begin, again, his quest for a lost Paradise.

In what Erwin Panofsky describes as a "vespertinal mixture of sadness and tranquillity" in the suspended time zone of Virgil's *Arcadia*,<sup>108</sup> Scott's poetic moment in Orcival mixes mood in the single amalgamated time of his poesis. In the second stanza of this passage's end-piece (included above), there is a correspondence between the three lines of the tercet. In the first line ("for Easter mass in the remote"), the evocation is a poverty of spirit, a mood convivial to devotional prayer and a sense of removal from society, which in the word "remote" does not appear particularly positive. Yet in the second line ("church of Orcival") we are given reason to feel hopeful as we learn of our locale in a church and, importantly, in the district of Orcival. I mention this to show the working of Scott's tercets within the "horizon" space of this analysis. If we turn to the last line ("I swear I see"), we return to the personal and, where once we were involved in the image through our imagination, we are now set back from such intimacy. In this line, Scott is speaking directly to us of what he sees and wants to confess. This distancing is a protective mechanism for Scott so that he can involve us in the pastoral moments, the wanderings of the mind in thought and image; but when it comes to the task of carrying forth his narrative arc and his insistence on building us a place of sanctuary, the tone becomes authoritative as opposed to the voice of song or lulling lyricism.

To show how Scott integrates these pastoral archetypes so that Pan's *Arcadia* is evoked, I want to spend some time with Paul Alpers' essay<sup>109</sup> on the pantheistic *Arcadia* of Virgil. In this essay, Alpers describes the "ideal Arcady" in *Eclogues* as "perfect surroundings

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<sup>108</sup> Erwin Panofsky, "Et in Arcadia ego: On the Conception of Transience in Poussin and Watteau", *Philosophy and History, Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1936), 300.

<sup>109</sup> Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).



of tranquillity” in which “nostalgia is anatomized” inside a contemporaneous content – that is, a sense of living in an epoch (with a past).<sup>110</sup> Alpers argues that for Virgil, the natural oscillation between gain and setback experienced by the shepherds in a landscape that is at once both perfect and vulnerable creates a greater harmony between person and place.<sup>111</sup> In this way, Alpers argues, there is a sense that Virgil has essentially “discovered evening”<sup>112</sup> in his writing and that his Arcadian mix of sadness and tranquillity and darkness and light mean that past, present and future fall under the one existential lamp.

Resolution and shelter in times of storms belong to evening in that they are times of reprieve, slumber, dreaming and imagining. In this sense, I argue Scott’s *Jakarta* inhabits this time too when he takes shelter inside a Church and “swear[s] ... [he] sees”.<sup>113</sup> The last line of this tercet is devotional in the sense Christian Scott is addressing God to pronounce the honesty of his belief (in what he sees before his eyes) but it is also explicitly human. Like the shepherds of Virgil’s Arcadia, he looks at the world from the perspective of a person “longing after innocence and happiness”.<sup>114</sup> If I return to the Buddhist preoccupations of the poet and the poem itself (Chopra Anuj and the Bodhi Tree),<sup>115</sup> the idea that enlightenment is achieved after a meditative moment (such as Scott’s time in the horizon of his poesis) emphasises the temporal as that which is, allegorically, the richer for its past. It is a narrative which comes after a journey through the realms of the imaginary, mythical and spiritual. Fed by the classical tradition, evocations of the pastoral, the history of the epic form, the age of antiquity and ideas of virtue, the religious, Scott’s psyche is nourished anew to dream and reflect.

So, from a position of Buddhist-Christian devotion, biblical time and Orcival timelessness, Scott looks at the world with the blurred vision of one distanced by faraway thoughts. He is in a village church during a solemn time of the religious year and yet the world outside intrudes. There is a “humming phone-wire” (industry), “glistening black asphalt” (technological progress) and “black clouds” (pollution or stormy weather).<sup>116</sup> However, for Scott, who is on a religious quest for peace, it is entirely possible there is a “face”<sup>117</sup> in those

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<sup>110</sup> Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 68.

<sup>111</sup> Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 453.

<sup>112</sup> Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 453.

<sup>113</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 76.

<sup>114</sup> Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 437.

<sup>115</sup> Chopra Anuj, “Seeking Nirvana Under a Tree,” *U.S News and World Report*, 143, no. 19 (November, 2009): 55–56.

<sup>116</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 76.

<sup>117</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 76.

ominous clouds – a sense of the divine. His willingness to be pastoral in outlook is confirmed by his confessed lack of scientific certainty, and acceptance that his innocence and faithful humility preclude him from understanding his religious cosmos. But whether it is a face, a sign of divine presence, or a lack of mental and emotional clarity (a type of fogginess) matters little to his unrefuted belief that the light is “strange”.<sup>118</sup> In the horizon space of our discussion, these concluding stanzas in *Jakarta* once more carry Scott’s argument that, without shelter from urban life and time for religious reflection, there is less harmony to current time.

### 2.3 Phase Two – The Boundary: Re-Imagining

from Birdnotes:

*i*

**Robins**

*for Du Fu*

Two robins charging each other  
as I sweep by in my Honda

to the music of C. P. E. Bach  
and then after the last turn

in the wooded canyon  
the skyscrapers of San Francisco

their windows ablaze  
from the dawn behind me I cannot see <sup>119</sup>

Let me explain this “dawn behind me” through an exploration of what I have identified as *Jakarta*’s middle time: or what I am also calling the boundary, the middle ground occupied by Raud’s meditating monk and the poetics of immediate time.<sup>120</sup> This is the temporality of *Jakarta* which understands the horizon of the past as renewed in its present, poetic

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<sup>118</sup> Scott, *Jakarta.*, 76.

<sup>119</sup> Peter Dale Scott, “Birdnotes”, *Crossing Borders* (New York: New Directions Paperbooks, 1994), 122.

<sup>120</sup> Rein Raud, “Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics,” (Review), *Momenta Nipponica*, 65, no. 1 (Spring, 2010), 204.

consciousness. On the path to enlightenment, Scott's earlier meditations have equipped him with what Rein Raud calls the "full sense of mind"<sup>121</sup> necessary to his art-making:

Indeed, it is precisely by thoroughly clarifying your mind [without "over-thinking" or "twisting or turning your mind too much"] and immersing yourself in the realm [of the present] that you may compose in such a style [of *ushin*].<sup>122</sup>

According to H. Paul Varley, the *ushin* style of poetry was characterised by its serious character in which the poet "sought what the ancients sought", to "see nature through classical eyes as the great poets of the past had experienced it".<sup>123</sup> In foregrounding all preparatory meditations, the boundary identifies a type of consciousness aligned directly with the Buddhist philosophy of mindfulness or what Scott calls "enmindment".<sup>124</sup> It is a time of concentrated, serious thought companionable, in its religious intellectualism, with the highest universal teacher of the right path;<sup>125</sup> and it allows Scott to rekindle his allegory, dream and hope.<sup>126</sup> Middle time, the boundary of *Jakarta*, becomes then, a time of great mindfulness in which Scott, in spirit, has completed the preparatory stages of accepting the past and is less burdened by angst, worry and grief.

In this "middle time"<sup>127</sup> of the poem, the "Hell" of the Indonesian massacres and the sense of a poetry of terror seem far away. Here, in the immediate present time, we dwell with a solitary Scott as he reconnects with episodes from his mortal passage through life, and the associated recollections of personal experiences. Yet, despite being personal, these fragments can be read as suggestively allegorical in the way they are juxtaposed with the time zones of his other public, cultural or political fragments. In the sense the overall quest of

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<sup>121</sup> Raud, "Emptiness and Temporality," 204.

<sup>122</sup> Raud, "Emptiness and Temporality", 204.

<sup>123</sup> H. Paul Varley, "The Age of *Shinkokinshū* Poetry", *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 3, Medieval Japan* edited by Kozo Yamamura (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 479.

<sup>124</sup> Jason Boulet, "'I believe in enmindment': Enlightenment, Taoism, and Language in Peter Dale Scott's *Minding the Darkness*", *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 75, no. 4 (Fall, 2006): 925-945.

<sup>125</sup> Lakshmi Narasu, *The Essence of Buddhism* (Moscow: Ripo-classic, 1907), 26.

<sup>126</sup> This is similar to what Kate Rigby terms a sense of dwelling "ecstatically" on earth, which allows one to be "open ... to the givenness of earth and sky", to "lift one's eyes from the page (of a poem) and seek the trace of the divine in the givenness of our earthly environment". Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 91, 127.

<sup>127</sup> Rachel Zucker, "An Anatomy of the Long Poem", *Academy of American Poets*, last accessed 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019, <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/anatomy-long-poem>.

*Jakarta* is to coalesce the past, present and future times into one cohesive poesis, Scott's personal fragments lend his poem a resonance that is not unlike lyric poetry. Alongside the time and space to psychically drift in personal thought, there are moments of suspended argument in *Jakarta*, away from the war zone of the poem's context. Similarly, Monique Morgan describes the lyric as illusionary in the sense that there is sequential narrative in any poem.<sup>128</sup> For Morgan, the unity of a poem depends on the "figurative" <sup>129</sup> language of the poetic lyric which resonates with the sense of the whole. In *Jakarta*, Scott's melancholic or joyous musings assemble musically in the manner of Morgan's lyric. As virtuosic lines of thought or visions, they nurture the contemporary poesis and substantiate the poetic themes. So that, where there is either a metaphoric light or darkness in a displaced image/ feeling/ thought/ vision (a Morganesque lyric), there is a glimpse of paradise or apocalypse.

Foregrounded (as the meditating monk is) in a kind of lyrical wandering, Scott adapts reason, not anarchy, to unify his personal lyrical fragments within the overarching form of his epic narrative. He regulates his thoughts through a tercet model of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis.<sup>130</sup> Just as in chapter 1 we read of a poet who installed the use of poetic guides in his quest for redemption, we see in Scott's reasoning across chapter 2 the guidance of his religious, eco-spiritual outlook. Although alone and free to muse and wander about in thoughtfulness, Scott's consciousness is at all times alert to the principles of his visions and mindful of his co-existence with others and the reality of his cosmic world. Indeed, in present time, he cannot escape reality. For Scott, a Christian spiritualist who recognises the spirit of nature as simultaneous with God, this appreciation of co-existing in realms of the sacred (as a place of transcendence) aligns with the "nature religion"<sup>131</sup> of Thomas Merton. Returning to Raud's pictorial diagram, we find in Merton the exemplar of the meditating monk who is foregrounded in this immediate time phase. The likeness of Scott to this monk is explained by Monica Weis, who describes the "sacramental" character of Merton's writings and his sense of a union with nature as, at the same time, a union with God.<sup>132</sup> Yet there is a far greater importance in likening Scott to Merton with regard to his reverence for "dawn's daily genesis"

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<sup>128</sup> Monique R. Morgan, *Narrative Means, Lyric Ends: Temporality in the Nineteenth Century British Long Poem* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2009), 1–22.

<sup>129</sup> Morgan, *Narrative Means, Lyric Ends*, 1–22.

<sup>130</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Rebecca Law, *Personal Correspondence* (September 2016).

<sup>131</sup> Hessel-Robinson, "Making Nature Sacred," 108.

<sup>132</sup> Monica Weis, SSJ, *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani: Landscapes of Paradise* (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2005), 97.

and its provision of a chance for renewal, over and over, of religious identity. As Weis writes, Merton's dawn revealed for him the possibility of "a paradisiacal home" or "gates of heaven" because it is the time before a "new" experience.<sup>133</sup>

Dawn, in this way, becomes a foregrounding, a starting anew in the moment of early day and in time, present in a new light. With consideration to the idea of a union with God at all times – "moment to moment, each creature is loved into being by a God who is intimately present"<sup>134</sup>– Merton's dawn is not only the light of the sun rising but also what he describes as the "blazing" light inside everyone (in the sense that God's love is inside everyone) which, "in the face and blaze of the sun" come together as "a billion points of light".<sup>135</sup> This image of God's love as a 'brilliant light', bright and dazzling as a sun rising at dawn, is synonymous with *Jakarta's* quest for a new dawn (or the idea that in immediate time it might be foregrounded); and renders an almost exact, visual representation of Scott's Paradisiacal outlook.

In the fragment III.iii in *Jakarta*, Scott tests this religious consciousness amidst psychic drifts in thought by imagining a tranquil lake of his childhood. This is the very first lake Scott ever thought remarkable and he muses on times spent there at play with his cousin (presumably) Elizabeth. Situated on the borders of Ste. Agathe in Quebec, the lake is the focal point of a personal memory. In recalling the lake ("that first lake/ my grandfather's")<sup>136</sup> he remembers a stay at his grandfather's farmhouse and, in turn, a time of great freedom. Without a path down to the banks, he describes the landscape as almost "primeval",<sup>137</sup> recalling both himself and Elizabeth leaving their clothes behind on a fallen tree stump and running naked into the water. Wading in the slush and "bubbles of methane", they would then wash in "water from a rain-barrel"<sup>138</sup> and become lost trying to find their way home. This first half of the poem reads:

Still less that first lake  
                    my grandfather's near Ste. Agathe  
                    so primeval it had no name  
  
no road to the clearing  
                    and tree-trunk we used as a dock

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<sup>133</sup> Weis, *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani*, 97.

<sup>134</sup> Weis, *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani*, 97.

<sup>135</sup> Weis, *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani*, 97.

<sup>136</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65.

<sup>137</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65.

<sup>138</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65.

where Elizabeth and I  
 used to run naked  
     among the spruce stumps  
 or wade in deep ooze  
  
 among the water lilies  
     and murderous pitcher plants  
 on the rotting logs  
  
 which ringed the lake  
     bubbles of methane  
 from soft things under our toes  
  
 We washed in water from a rain-barrel  
     at a corner of the cabin  
 pitched among boulders  
  
 where M. Desjardins  
     watched his Guernseys even  
 ploughed a few desperate furrows  
  
 None of us belonged there  
     not even the white horse  
 we could not find the site of the farmhouse <sup>139</sup>

Reimagined in the long poem's "boundary", Scott and Elizabeth play in a natural landscape that appears neither hostile nor displeasing: the image of water lilies suggests a poised flower on a leaf-bed serenely floating on water. For Merton, all living components of creation ("barn animals, fish, flowering trees, fish and water") possess a Hopkinsque "inscape"<sup>140</sup> which is also, "their sanctity".<sup>141</sup> For Merton, this "sanctity" is evidence of God's presence inside and outside his creatures, humans and created world. There is a "special clumsy beauty of this colt" on an April day in this field" because it is learning a grace of movement which in turn will help it become stronger, feed wider afield and experience the qualities which come from

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<sup>139</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65–66.

<sup>140</sup> Whilst this is Merton's wording (see Weis, *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani, Landscapes of Paradise*, 117) the concept belongs to Gerard Manley Hopkins. As a Catholic monk, it makes sense to presume Merton would have read Hopkins therefore the attribution needs acknowledgement. For Hopkins, this "inscape" was the "melody" or "virtue" of any design, painting or pattern's "distinctiveness"; and he "above all aim[ed] at [this] in [his] poetry". Gerard Manley Hopkins, Thomas Ryan, *Hopkins, The Mystic Poet* (Vermont: Skylight publishing, 2006).

<sup>141</sup> Weis, *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani, Landscapes of Paradise*, 117.

this freedom: joy, happiness and love.<sup>142</sup> Like the colt, Scott and Elizabeth have “inscapes”,<sup>143</sup> and in this way are not strangers to nature but rather creation’s familiars. Due to the special intellectualism that comes with their being human, their play in nature carries with it a different responsibility of care and demands a different spiritual sensitivity (than Merton’s colt). Yet, in Scott’s tercet arrangement, line two of the stanza, the anti-thesis, questions the supposed religiosity of their environment. Again, he and Elizabeth are dwelling with some plants – for they are still “among” something; but this time a threat is implied by the presence of what are actually “murderous pitcher plants”.<sup>144</sup> The plants are descendants of the old world and carnivorous<sup>145</sup> and feed on the insects that are attracted to them. So, we have moved from the lightly floating and serene water lilies to the underworld of the water in which things are not as close to the heavens. And as we continue to descend to the next strata of the lake’s underworld, we find the greater sorrow in the prolonged decay of rotting logs. So here, in the middle-time of his poetic, when he is free to roam in personal reflections, it would seem the hell Scott left is eerily declaring its actuality. Still committed, after his horizon time, to reconcile differences in his temporally coalesced poetic, Scott is faced with the life and death matters of his Mertonian eco-critical project. The fragment, like Monique Morgan’s disconnected lyric, is symbolic of the spirit of nature and the allegorical in its existential themes. The ways of nature and our communion with it can indeed, at times, seem violent. However, it is not just nature at play here in the “altering of a community structure”,<sup>146</sup> but allegorically pollution at large – as figured perhaps in the plants “bubbling methane”<sup>147</sup> emissions. Scott’s new dawn awaiting its genesis is again deferred and is yet to shine brightly.

In this “boundary” fragment, the narrative pursues a memorable moment in Scott’s life that is personal and rural in setting. In play with his friend Elizabeth<sup>148</sup> in the Romantic

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<sup>142</sup> Weis, *Thomas Merton’s Gethsemani, Landscapes of Paradise*, 117.

<sup>143</sup> Please see Chapter 2, footnote 139.

<sup>144</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65.

<sup>145</sup> Roland M. Harper, Roland M. “The American Pitcher Plants,” *Journal of the Elisha Mitchell Scientific Society* 34, no. 3 (1918): 110–25.

<sup>146</sup> This is Peter Morin’s phrase which arises in his discussion on the relationship between predators and prey in the ecological whole of one geographic place. It is a discussion concerned also, with the relationship between pitcher plants, the insects they eat and the predators that help reduce mosquito populations. See Peter J. Malden, *Community Ecology* (Malden: Blackwell Science Inc., 1999), 122.

<sup>147</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65.

<sup>148</sup> As mentioned in the Key of Figures which prefaces this thesis (8), Elizabeth’s relation to Scott is only inferred in this poem fragment III.iii. Whilst she is clearly his friend and playmate, the context of the play at his grandfather’s lake would suggest she is also possibly a relative.

when I went back with Selma  
                    snuck up the back way  
                    through Anson McKims

and after a few hours  
                    the first rainstorm of that summer  
                    extinguished our hissing fire

my hopes of belonging  
                    to the Pre-Cambrian north  
                    No! If I am to use language



then Lake Massawippi  
the one lake  
I could come back to

is the one we must deal with<sup>153</sup>

Scott has had his naked frolic in the lake, clambered back to his clothing on the tree-trunk after washing in rainwater, and then become lost returning home. Retrieved by adult Selma, he sneaks away again and finds a more secretive path through the back of a neighbour's block so he can extend the mood of freedom and abandon. Line 1, "and after a few hours"<sup>154</sup> is the thesis idea, suggesting the wild trek, swim and impish dash home have, as moments in material time, grown weary or less distinct to the mind's consciousness. The moment (which for Merton is the time of God's love for us)<sup>155</sup> is doggedly foregrounded in Scott's fragment. Line 2 follows with "the first rainstorm of that summer",<sup>156</sup> the antithetical idea that although time has passed, the first event of another occasion has begun. These early two lines make reality's foreground seem misty and Scott's allegory dreamlike.

In the next stanza, the fire hisses after the first rainstorm of summer arrives and extinguishes the flames. Scott is by the fire, and weary after his playtime, and though he suspects nature as also feeling tame, the rainstorm surprises him as a sign of its vigour. It Romantically lures him away from present time in the fall of dusk and then awakens him in his immediate time with new rain. Scott's contemplative mood is religiously entwined with his surroundings. Line 3, "extinguishes our hissing fire",<sup>157</sup> only confirms this in the symbology of the poetic (lyric), that nature is intrinsically, and therefore eternally, linked to our earthly presence. Scott's sacramental earthly world, with its complex Romantic sublimity and contemporary environmental challenges, is still affecting and effecting the well-being of ourselves and the planet. It is "our"<sup>158</sup> fire that hisses, a human construct, and as the rainstorm puts it out it dies a death that is associated with serpents, and the demonic. Again, thematically, the fragment as a whole finds unity in the poet's observance of death (the fire), renewal (the rain) and stillness (the lake).

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<sup>153</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65–66.

<sup>154</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>155</sup> Weis, *Thomas Merton's Gethsemani, Landscapes of Paradise*, 117.

<sup>156</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>157</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>158</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

In the next stanza, line 1 muses on a new thesis idea in the remark: “my hopes of belonging”.<sup>159</sup> Defeated, but awe-struck and body weary, Scott is humbled and no longer wishes to challenge what fate has already decided. The second line, “the Pre-Cambrian north” is the antithetical idea that challenges Scott’s negative consciousness with the Romantic ideal image of ancient time, when the world was one continent (i.e. not subdivided). Perhaps earlier feeling charged enough to believe he was as wild and furious as the beginning of time, he sees now the limits of his childhood innocence. Line 3, “No! If I am to use language”<sup>160</sup> resolves the antimony of two eras with discipline and humanity. We are indeed human, he seems to conclude, not beasts of the wild, and he is young and needs reprimanding in order to learn the way of virtuous, religious truth. I see this as his own personal lesson in redemption; that is, unlike in other fragments, he has here the breadth of this boundary time to contemplate the world in isolation.

The last or second last stanza leading to a final line begins with the thesis idea in line 1: “then Lake Massawippi”.<sup>161</sup> This is his true lake, the lake of his own childhood home; and if he is to belong to any lake it makes most sense that it is Lake Massawippi especially. Line 2, “the one lake”<sup>162</sup> questions the thesis statement by suggesting he is being extravagant by placing his whole heart in this one lake and abandoning the aforementioned “grandfather’s near Ste. Agathe”.<sup>163</sup> Line 3 resolves this by explaining his thinking in the statement “I could come back to”.<sup>164</sup> Here, Scott has qualified the antithetical suggestion by answering in the affirmative the question posed by line 2. Yes, he seems to say, it is indeed the one lake and the reason for this is because this is his own place, the place where he can say he belongs and therefore can rightly “come back to”.<sup>165</sup> The last line has the stern tone of an adult, suggesting he wants to make clear this decision after all the years since childhood: Lake Massawippi “is the one we must deal with”.<sup>166</sup> The fragment, read in the immediate or boundary time of Scott’s long poem, resonates with symbolic redemption. Scott’s roaming poetic moves through a series of contemplative moments that together form the allegory of an eco-spiritual

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<sup>159</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>160</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>161</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>162</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>163</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 65.

<sup>164</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>165</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

<sup>166</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 66.

quest for a better future. Metaphorically, the fragment is demonstrative of Scott's insistence that by romantically reimagining the past, we can foreground religious/ spiritual virtues and evocations of harmony.

To explain this foregrounding, I turn to Peter Struck's essay, the "Birth of the Symbol".<sup>167</sup> In this study of ancient Greek literature and Neoplatonic ideas of a poetic symbol, Struck says that, as far back as the fifth century, the human spirit was thought to emanate from an infinite source and "glow" of this One Divinity throughout the term of its development.<sup>168</sup> For example, he argues, ideas such as the "chain of the moon" mean the relationship of divinity to earth is one of top to bottom, so that there is, from the goddesses, the moon descending, from which glows its moon-soul, that in turn emanates near earth as a heavenly body that emanates to all vegetation, then to the "moonfish" and down to the "lowest level the humble rock, the moonstone".<sup>169</sup> The story of the chain Struck describes reads as an allegory of the way in which life on earth is alight with the spirit of the divine: that creation and its creatures have the glow of the heavens due to successive moments of emanation. In this way, the chain idea links with Scott (especially as a flow on from Merton), because in the boundary space of *Jakarta*, Scott is residing in a material reality infused by the spiritual concerns of what Struck calls the "One above" (the beauty, light and radiance of the spirit),<sup>170</sup> which has stepped out of a material cultural reality (of historical poetic and cultural memory).

Struck's moon allegory is analogous to the middle time of Scott's poem because it situates the light of divinity directly above his poesis as a revelation born of present mindfulness. Having left the horizon, the middle time of *Jakarta* is aglow with the light of divinity and thereby offers a chance to see more clearly and be renewed by what Struck describes as "emanation".<sup>171</sup> In the juxtaposition of Struck's unified chain (soul-spirit-cosmos) with *Jakarta's* contemporary concerns, Scott's poesis glows again via a readapted "old" light.

## 2.4 Phase Three ~ The Margin: The Future, Outlook and Prophecy

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<sup>167</sup> Peter T. Struck, *Birth of the Symbol: Ancient Readers at the Limits of Their Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 229.

<sup>168</sup> Struck, "Birth of the Symbol", 231–232.

<sup>169</sup> Struck, "Birth of the Symbol", 207.

<sup>170</sup> Struck, "Birth of the Symbol", 229.

<sup>171</sup> Struck, "Birth of the Symbol", 229.

## From Space Sonnets

### i

#### The Rain

As if lit by lightning in the storm  
through the tall conference window, the high  
single oak tree                crazily  
blowing like a fountain in the rain

is here still; the global talk of peace  
has passed on, as wars and peaces pass,  
the flooded roads that kept us in that place  
are dry again. It is the tree that rests

crazily                in this quieter place;  
this quieter wind, that leaves undisturbed  
the troubled windowpanes, finds in the ear

small leaves to rustle. All words come to this  
the silence                and to discover  
one more time, *There is this other world* <sup>172</sup>

I conclude this chapter with the last narrative or space of Scott's *Jakarta* concerned with what might be the margin of his poem. I understand this to encompass what might yet become, relating to the location of the poem and its references to others in the 21<sup>st</sup> century epoch.<sup>173</sup> Remembering Raud's pictorial image of a monk meditating, this is the space of the future, which in Scott's poem, speaks clearly of the outlook or objective of *Jakarta* (which wants to endure with and forever after the experience of a new dawn).<sup>174</sup> I have already discussed the ways in which horizon time (a time of things past) and boundary time (a time of things present or brought forth as such in the reimagining) can be linked historically and allegorically. I now explore this further in the third space: the future outlook of Scott's poem.

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<sup>172</sup> Peter Dale Scott "from Space Sonnets", *Dhamma Moon*, dhammamoon.org, last accessed May 14, 2019, <http://dhammamoon.org/poems/peter-dale-scott/from-space-sonnets>

<sup>173</sup> Theodore Ziolkowski, "Narratives of Ecstasy: Romantic Temporality in Modern German Poetry by James Rolleston: Review", *World Literature Today*, 62, no. 2 (Spring, 1988): 277.

<sup>174</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, ed., "Tilting Point: Poems by Peter Dale Scott" in *Coming to Jakarta.net*, last assessed May 14 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44>

In Scott's video interview with his student and friend Ng Freeman concerning a 2012 collection of poetry *Tilting Point*<sup>175</sup> (published after the *Seculum* series), Scott explains that while he has he has aspired to build "structures"<sup>176</sup> out of poetry all his life, he does not believe this is ever achieved. He says that just as the Book of Genesis ends with the hope of there being a Promised Land yet, in reality, the Israelites are still in Egypt. Similarly, although Scott has faith in a better future for the world, that destination has yet to be reached. Scott says the prophecy is not so new, and that William Blake, in his poem *Milton*, swore not to let his "sword sleep in (his) hand/ Till we have built Jerusalem/ In England's green and pleasant land".<sup>177</sup> The margin of *Jakarta* is the outlook or view intrinsic to coalescing the poem's temporal fields (and its way to seeing the "new dawn"). In this space, Scott needs to resolve his quarrels and draw meaning from his reflections and surmises. Although Scott himself says that what his poems build is by no means a new poetic reality,<sup>178</sup> in this third space of the book's undertaking, *Jakarta* looks to present a poesis that is looking to open the gates of a Paradise lost.

Understanding that this margin space of the poem is the site of outlook and prophecy, it is here that Scott brings *Jakarta* nearer to a Promised Land. And ultimately, his reference to Genesis seems to stress that whilst we should not be "blinded by our faith in a better future",<sup>179</sup> we should never give up the idea of its possibility. Let me discuss this in relation to the last fragment of Book One, *Jakarta*, V.iii:

Where no vision is  
                                   the people die and yet  
                                   it is by imagination's failure

that we go on surviving  
                                   reasonable by day  
                                   and then by night

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<sup>175</sup> Scott and Ng, "Tilting Point", last assessed May 14 2019, [https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44)

<sup>176</sup> Scott and Ng, "Tilting Point", last assessed May 14 2019, [https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44)

<sup>177</sup> William Blake, and David V. Erdman (ed.), *The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 14–15.

<sup>178</sup> Modelling his trilogy on Dante's *Commedia*, Scott has already conceded a past example of a religious poem rediscovering paradise through the seeking of redemption.

<sup>179</sup> Scott and Ng, "Tilting Point", last assessed May 14 2019, [https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44)

the nightmare  
    where Bisson and Chevalier were ousted  
    and they multiply bombs

more than 1200  
    nuclear explosions  
    since the Jornada del Muerto

and not since the first  
    have there been physicists  
    who renounced their clearance

shall I say once again  
    why there will be more war  
    small and great alike

all are given to gain  
    prophet and priest practice fraud  
    and the people love it

yet if we return  
    to the old ways  
    of the ashvattha tree

fallen fruit in the snow  
    small ghost fading in the dawn  
    it must be to recognize

not to re-enter  
    the fierce gates of the past  
    for when the blind woman has seen

the terrible beauty  
    of energy come forth  
    to destroy the worlds

O Apollo lord of  
    the light you blind me  
    we cannot like children

go back to duty and *svadharma*  
    let there be courage  
    not just to have seen

but to ease into the world  
    the unreal

breathing within us”<sup>180</sup>

To begin with the opening stanza, we read line 1 as solemn and hopeless. “Where no vision is”, says Scott sadly; and it reads like a sigh or hushed whisper. Line 2 of the same stanza is the end of what is a modernised quote from the *Book of Proverbs*, 29:18.<sup>181</sup> Scott says, “Where no vision is/ the people die [*Proverbs* 29:18] and yet”<sup>182</sup>, which, in the Wansborough translation of the proverb reads, “Where there is no vision, the people get out of hand ...”.<sup>183</sup> Where the entry has been sad and despairing, the outcome of one such outlook devastating, Scott instils hope in the adage “and yet”.<sup>184</sup> This is followed by line 3, “... and yet/ it is by imagination’s failure”,<sup>185</sup> which gives synthesis to the idea that where there is unfathomable reality, there is life. The next stanza shifts from the pragmatism of its first line “that we go on surviving”<sup>186</sup> to a natural/ Romantic aesthetic in the lines “reasonable by day/ and then by night ”<sup>187</sup> lending a spiritual premise to Scott’s eco-critical perspective. Jonathan Bate describes the human species as “sophisticated” intellectually for the purposes of survival but suggests that, paradoxically, it is precisely this wisdom (our “advanced technology, religious sense and values of justice and liberty”) which sets us apart from the rest of nature.<sup>188</sup>

Where Bate and Scott meet in their eco-critical theses is in the bid for a poetry and way of life which shows “thoughtfulness and attentiveness to both words and the world”.<sup>189</sup> Like humans, the poem too, for Bate, dubiously survives (is fragile, elusive, impractical)<sup>190</sup> in the sense earth, human dwelling and the poem are all part of the one cycle of living, dying and saving. Pictorially, this earthly, human and poetic fragility, and its phenomenal beauty and inspiring life-force, are presented by Bate as follows:

hold in your mind’s eye a photograph of earth taken from space: green and blue,  
smudged with the motion of cloud (of weather), so small in the surrounding darkness  
that you could imagine cupping it in your hands.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148–150.

<sup>181</sup> Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, 724.

<sup>182</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>183</sup> Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, 724.

<sup>184</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>185</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>186</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>187</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 148.

<sup>188</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 244– 245.

<sup>189</sup> Bate, *Song of The Earth*, 23.

<sup>190</sup> Bate, *Song of The Earth*, 246.

<sup>191</sup> Bate, *Song of The Earth*, 282.

In light of our humanism from this eco-critical perspective,<sup>192</sup> Scott's end to the tercet composition stanza 1 ("the people die and yet/ it is by imagination's failure") tackles the complexity of life transpiring, both biblically and poetically (in the metaphoric sense of night and day being the darkness and the light). The resulting effect of Scott's debate, existing in the future space of *Jakarta's* outlook or prophecy, is the sense that a path has been built out of the unfathomable to meet an enduring fact: we get by spiritually through devotion, despite our life challenges.

The next four stanzas explain what these challenges might be as Scott makes direct reference to American political and social histories of the twentieth century. For example, "and then by night", when one is more susceptible to the dark times of nightmare, Scott senses he is reliving something like the politically disturbing time of the Joseph McCarthy era. Of course, these prophesying fragments in the long poem are also about Scott's personal quest to reach enlightenment (in the Buddhist sense of the term) and, through this, to heal any unresolved political memories (most importantly, those associated with the Indonesian massacres of 1965 and thereafter). In the space of his nightmare, he recalls the two figures of T.A. Bisson and Haakon Chevalier, who suggest another series of undisclosed truths to disrupt the religious truth of enlightenment that he is seeking. Bisson was linked to Owen Lattimore<sup>193</sup> in charges of espionage and dismissed from his employment by McCarthy's committee.<sup>194</sup> Chevalier, an associate of the German physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, was also dismissed on the grounds his activities were "anti-American"<sup>195</sup> or, as Scott testifies, that he was believed to be "trying to steal the secret of the atomic bomb".<sup>196</sup>

So, in stanza 3, we relive the political nightmare of McCarthyism and the secrecy surrounding war and strategic American defence systems. We are not quite awake in this night or darkness of conspiracy and betrayal; and find this same fog of deceit in stanzas 4, 5 and 6. Scott has the facts at hand, listing precisely how many explosions it has taken since the

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<sup>192</sup> "A planet that is fragile. A planet of which we are a part but do not possess." Bate, *Song of The Earth*, 282.

<sup>193</sup> Robert P. Newman, *Owen Lattimore and the "Loss" of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 31.

<sup>194</sup> Arthur Herman, *Joseph McCarthy: Re-examining the Life and Legacy of America's Most Hated Senator* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 127.

<sup>195</sup> Haakon Chevalier, "Untitled" – Bibliographic Profile, last assessed May 14, 2019, <https://www.atomicheritage.org/profile/haakon-chevalier>

<sup>196</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Freeman Ng, *Poetry and Terror, Politics and Poetics in Coming to Jakarta* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 178.



first atomic test at “Jornada del Muerto”<sup>197</sup> to confirm the very same thing: that it worked. For this reason, he claims in stanza 6, “there will be more war” because the quest for unequivocal safety is forever fraught by those in any positions of power who resort to “fraud” for “gain”. Again, and perhaps to reinstate reverence to the name of the test site “Jornada del Muerto” or “day of the dead”,<sup>198</sup> Scott is paraphrasing from the Bible, citing Jeremiah verse 6.13: “For all, least no less than greatness, all are out for dishonest gain; prophet no less than priest, all practice fraud”.<sup>199</sup> And then again from verse 5.31:

the prophets prophesy falsely,  
the priests teach whatever they please.  
And my people love it!  
But when the end comes, what will you do? <sup>200</sup>

The next stanza draws us closer to what I have described as the margin (the future, outlook and prophecy) of *Jakarta*, but to do so it has inverted the knowledge unpacked in the fragment’s first half by sustaining the same negativity. With the simple insertion of the word “yet”, Scott narrates a story with a positive outlook that, in its meditations on all things religious, poetic and sublime, reads as prophecy.

Stanza 8 quotes from the *Bhagavad Gita*,<sup>201</sup> verse 15.1, to reinitiate faith where faith has been lost. The image of the “ashvattha tree” has the effect of offering a landscape of contrast just as its original conception in the Hindu text is doubled: the tree and its branches stretch their leaves up and out from a level ground and their identical reflection grows in the opposite direction beneath the earth’s surface. Linked to the same meaning of the banyan tree in Buddhism, its purpose in Scott’s fragment is to represent the everlasting, unchanging self in the “continuous stream” of life.<sup>202</sup> Scott’s long poem is finally becoming decisive in its conclusion, and in this last half of the final fragment, it is suggesting that the only synthesis to these numerous intimations and dismissals of thought is to “return to the old ways”.

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<sup>197</sup> “Trinity Site, World’s First Nuclear Explosion”, *Energy.gov*, last accessed 30 June, 2019, <https://www.energy.gov/management/trinity-site-worlds-first-nuclear-explosion>

<sup>198</sup> Carol Style Carvajal, Jane Horwood, *The Concise Oxford Spanish–English, English–Spanish Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 984.

<sup>199</sup> Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, Jeremiah 6:13, 1081.

<sup>200</sup> Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, Jeremiah 5:31, 1070–1080.

<sup>201</sup> Winthrop Sargeant, trans., *Bhagavad Gita* (New York: Excelsior Editions, 2009).

<sup>202</sup> Kashi Nath Upadhyaya, *Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgita* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1971), 364.

Accompanied by the religious motif of the ashvattha tree, the fragment concludes that in ancient time “fallen fruit in snow” was metaphorically symbolic of the natural cycle of all living things. This fruit is the tree’s offering at the end of winter – that “small ghost fading in the dawn” – and the stanza inserts a new aesthetic to contemplate.

Instead of terror, nightmares and politics, Scott meditates on nature, living and dying, and renewal (in the light of a fresh morning). He has finally found some reprieve from all the comings and goings of his own psychic search for reason in the midst of unreasonable acts of violence and corruption. Now, strong in the conviction that the old-fashioned notion of returning to the past to find a way forward has great merit, he tells us that yes, we need to go back before we can go forward. We have “seen” the Yeatsian “terrible beauty/ of energy come forth”<sup>203</sup> which Gandhari hides under her voluntary blindfold; and then metaphorically walks into (she dies by walking into a fire) as an old person.<sup>204</sup> Threatened by a sudden fire in their recent, poverty-imposed forest dwelling, Gandhari, her blind husband and “seeing” friend Kunti, submit to it so as to die in “dignity” rather than endure their “disgraceful circumstances”.<sup>205</sup> Scott’s insertion of the reference to Gandhari (in *Jakarta’s* final fragment) seems to assign the role of something celestial to her in taking her ghost out of the hell of Book One. A character of the Hindu scripture *Bhagavad Gita*,<sup>206</sup> the reference to her reassesses hell in the domain of eastern religion so that *Jakarta’s* poesis is both accepting of suffering (which for Scott, is Buddhist) and forward-looking by way of redemption.

Scott’s outlook for the future is dependent on the past because history’s lessons prove to be instructive and fortifying to the human spirit’s life journey. Time is ancient, immediate and future-orientated in the evolving moments of Scott’s universe. His margin teaches us that in having the courage to go forward after a historical glance backwards, we learn to care for ourselves and others and that, together, we can endure. In the last stanza of *Jakarta’s* final fragment, Scott is back with his Catholic-Buddhist identity, meditating by listening to his own

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<sup>203</sup> In his poem *Easter, 1916*, Yeats writes of a “terrible beauty” following an Easter uprising in Dublin. Under British orders, 15 rebel leaders of the “tiny army of Irish rebels and patriots” were shot. It was an event that Yeats felt “changed” Ireland “utterly” and the “terrible beauty” is the victims’ death forever memorialised as the beginning of freedom and the formation of the “Republic of Ireland”. In this sense Gandhari’s death is sacrificial and brings renewal. Author Unknown, “The Terrible Beauty of Easter, 1916”, *The New York Times*, March 31, 1991. Last accessed March 19, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/31/opinion/the-terrible-beauty-of-easter-1916.html>

<sup>204</sup> Debaline Banarjee, *Boundaries of the Self, Gender, Culture and Spaces* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 124.

<sup>205</sup> Banarjee, *Boundaries of the Self*, 122.

<sup>206</sup> Winthrop Sargeant, *The Bhagavad Gita* (Albany: Excelsior Editions, 2009), x.

breathing and recognising that there is, in the natural world, a force far greater than our humble human existence. The stanza's last tercet, "to ease into the world/ the unreal/ breathing within us", demonstrates an attitude of bodily acceptance and holy acceptance; and shows that Scott is offering humanity his eco-critical project from a position of "otherness" in the realms of the personal and the religious.

## 2.5 Conclusion to the Phases – Jakarta: Horizon, Boundary and Margin

In passing through three phases of time – past, present and future – *Jakarta* takes its lessons in scripture and religious verse to reimagine a new dawn and locate a Paradise lost. In phase one, it considers the historical poetic and cultural memory of classical antiquity; in phase two, the human relationship to nature and the space to dream and hope; and in phase three, what it might mean to look at the world in the full awareness of scripture, religion, poetry and the sublime.

In phase one, the horizon in *Jakarta* looks at historical poetic and cultural memory, from classical antiquity through Romanticism to today, to reimagine an eco-critical Paradise. It considers the way nostalgia and myth in the poems of Spenser and Virgil can reconcile humankind with a paradise lost and suggests that, in Virgil's *Arcadia*, a peaceful co-existence on earth depends on historicising a mythical past, just as Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* relies on nostalgia for the piping and singing of shepherds to bring health and vitality to the land. By allowing historical poetic and cultural memory to resonate in *Jakarta's* poesis, Scott includes the absences of longing and ecstasies of passion within his poem's 'presencing' of a new dawn. Through reimagining the past, *Jakarta* unveils a call for truth and personal responsibility in all earthly relationships (whether these are between humans, nature or animals) – and with this, a sense of cosmic harmony.

Phase two, the boundary in *Jakarta* views a type of eco-critical cosmology in which all cosmic things are interdependent in the life cycle. It considers Thomas Merton, nature, religion and eco-spirituality to develop an allegory in which scripture, song and verse can help us re-imagine the Romantic idyll and bring with it, a new dawn. Through personal reflection on memories experienced in his own growth and development, Scott writes an allegory of redemption for all. In the genesis of a new day, Scott's allegory proposes glimpses of a new dawn.

Phase three, the margin in *Jakarta*, considers the prophecy of Scott's long poem and the idea that the Paradise lost is refound by living on earth in a way that is mindful of the welfare of other living forms. It considers the idea that in acknowledging the lessons and warnings of early gospels, scripture and other religious verses, we can be renewed (in the sense of our "billion lights" merging with the light of a new dawn) and endure. *Jakarta* comes to be the soft beginnings of a dawn in the sense that the newly enlightened outlook of its finishing pages is prophetic, literary and historically perceptive.

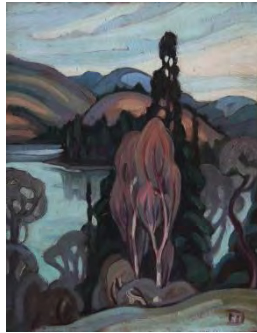
Together, these three phases of time help us read *Jakarta* in terms of its past, present and future subject matter and aspirations. Through the use of Raud's pictorial diagram (which I explain as the image of a meditating monk who, for Scott, seems to be Merton) the long poem of *Jakarta* reveals the distant horizon from which it has journeyed, the middle-ground in which it sought reprieve and a resting place<sup>207</sup> to reveal the future goal of its ultimate quest of glimpsing a new dawn.

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<sup>207</sup> Scott's earlier reflection on matters of the past becomes an act of 'presencing' which brings him out of the chaos of disturbed and confused thought to a re-engagement with immediate time. In doing so, it permits the chance for Scott to "allegorise, dream, drift in memory" and to evoke "images of tranquillity" (a childhood lake or a "primeval landscape") and to "dwell" in the Lord's house of "loving kindness". The foregrounding which follows assumes a shadowy outline of a structure still emerging and not yet complete (without its two companion volumes: *Candle* and *Darkness*).

## CHAPTER 3

### *LISTENING TO THE CANDLE: A POEM ON IMPULSE*



“Untitled Landscape”  
by Marian Dale Scott 1932<sup>1</sup>

#### 3.1 Preface to The Tree

This chapter reads *Listening to the Candle, A Poem on Impulse*<sup>2</sup> as the anti-thesis to *Coming to Jakarta* to explore and show the way it performs as Book Two of Scott’s trilogy *Seculum*.<sup>3</sup> Again, the discussion is inspired by the Hegelian principle of there being a dialectical dialogue of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis in the building of the trilogy form;<sup>4</sup> and also, that, similarly to what happens in Dante’s *Commedia*,<sup>5</sup> *Candle* follows a patterning of metaphoric contexts which translates as Hell (Book One), Purgatory (Book Two) and Paradise (Book Three). The chapter recognises the influence of Scott’s personal and professional relationships in the building of Book Two, yet views the character of their influence in *Candle* differently to the way these influences are approached in *Jakarta*. While, in *Jakarta*, we see Scott interacting with different personal and professional relationships – some romantic, some loving, others

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<sup>1</sup> Marian Dale Scott, “Untitled Landscape, (1932)”, *Mayberry Fine Art*, last assessed 19 May, 2019, <https://www.mayberryfineart.com/artwork/707-66L-67P>

<sup>2</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle, A Poem On Impulse* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror* (New York: New Directions Books, 1988), Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle, A Poem On Impulse* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), Peter Dale Scott, *Minding the Darkness, A Poem for the Year 2000* (New York: New Directions Books, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> This is explained earlier in greater detail to say: A = Consciousness, B = Self-Consciousness, and C = a return to A, in the awareness of B. See Glenn Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary* (UK: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 170.

<sup>5</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 1: Inferno*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)/ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 2: Purgatorio*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)/ Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri, Volume 3: Paradiso*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

literary or collegial – the relationships that are the focus in *Candle* are quieter, more domestic and intimate. Their collective influence on Scott's world in *Candle* nourishes his spirit rather than mind. The 'Hell' of *Jakarta*, in which Scott blindly descends through his Dantean circles, transforms in *Candle* to become a Purgatory of stillness: a building of a metaphoric tree of knowledge rather than a spiralling into past experience.<sup>6</sup> Metaphorically, the candle Scott listens to becomes the very motif of a spiritual guide, and replete with its religious underpinnings helps him understand the impulsive moods of the human heart. The candle is a guide which becomes the object of Scott's poetic gaze; contemplated in the solitude of an imagined communion, it comes to life and dies in accordance with Christian ideas of love, joy, hope and faith. As Scott's feelings, innermost thoughts and desires journey through the Buddhist yin and yang dynamics of positive and negative energies and the Christian moral dilemma of how to live in the likeness of Christ, the candle flickers with enlightenment or dies in despair's darkness.

In this chapter, I understand "impulse" as a force which is the heart at its most vigorous and alive, wanting this or that, feeling great joy or great sorrow. In this way, impulse suggests a human spirit free to act, think and be without moral, divine or intellectual ruling. For Scott, an impulsive heart is a source of great inspiration, and is invaluable to making life on earth as spiritually astonishing as possible (in the Pascalian sense that the heart has its reasons that reason does not know).<sup>7</sup> Yet, in the sense that, according to scientific theorist James W. Brown, this impulse is emotion "transformed by chemical and physical energy", it incites subjective actions that carry no social, cultural, ethical and ecological responsibility.<sup>8</sup> I argue Scott agrees with this premise, and in the mood of his syllogistic tercets, lets impulse drive his thesis in Book Two, only to temper it by reflective reason. Brown speaks of impulsive emotion as the "beast in the belly", "the fire in the furnace or flame on the other side of reason".<sup>9</sup> A site of possibility and rich liveliness, I argue it is also, for *Candle*, a source of verve needing temperance in reality – to avoid conflict with others, chaos in the social realm and tyranny in worldly relations. Consulting his own individual spirit yet thinking communally, Scott considers the religiosity of his candle, its correlation to the human heart *and* the

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<sup>6</sup> Wallace Fowlie, *A Reading of Dante's Inferno* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981), 1.

<sup>7</sup> James W. Brown, *Process and the Authentic Life: Towards a Psychology of Value* (New Jersey: Transaction Books, 2005), 101.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *Process and the Authentic Life*, 102.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, *Process and the Authentic Life*, 102.

sacredness of its symbol as well. In the pages of *Candle's* 'quiet time' Scott's poesis shapes an eco-critical argument for the interdependence of both human life and nature, and thereby articulates a marriage between religious and secular visions of ecology. Beyond Scott's religious compass, the human heart and being human mature via our relation to the cosmos. Our vulnerability to the natural elements of our dwelling place and vice-versa presents, in Scott's view, human and earth as necessarily interdependent. The 'candle' and its 'impulse' are tempered then by the sacredness of all earthly and cosmic creation.

To build the first branch of his metaphorical tree of knowledge in *Candle*, Scott in the opening epigraph wills back the ghost of his mother. As a type of luminescent source of eternal, unconditional love, she is the inspiration of the poem. Marian Scott was an intellectual painter challenged by the male-dominant art scene of the 1920s. According to Scott, she was known to walk about her own house quoting Nietzsche.<sup>10</sup> In *Candle*, her portrait is maternal, philosophical and intelligent. These features, alongside her painterly expression of earth's light, inspire Scott's impulsive poem, seeming to channel his spirit in the pursuit of happiness. Marian Scott's maternal presence in *Candle* has ontological significance to Scott's psychological journey out of suffering. Her spiritual counsel becomes intrinsic to Scott's pursuit of a 'oneness' with the world. As Jonathan Bate argues, this 'oneness' in the creation of a poesis is not a longing for the "temps perdu of childhood" but rather, a harmonising of tensions between a sense of self and sense of otherness.<sup>11</sup> Phenomenologically, it is the attainment of a consciousness which illuminates a composite relation between a "subject and object".<sup>12</sup> Bate talks of this relationship via the writings of Gaston Bachelard to argue that "the onset of the poetic image in an individual consciousness" is a moment which appears "iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions".<sup>13</sup> The brilliance of the image "reverberates"<sup>14</sup> with the emotional and intellectual histories of the individual. It is brilliant, explains Bate, because it has recognised the importance of subject/ object relations. In the poem itself, suggests Bate, the "images and beings" can harmonise to evoke a dwelling place that is at once "egg, nest, house, country, universe".<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Minding the Darkness*, (New York: New Directions Books, 2000), 246.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 154.

<sup>12</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 154.

<sup>13</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 154.

<sup>14</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 154.

<sup>15</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 155.

Whilst this correlates directly with Marian Scott's painterly observations of cosmic light affecting an object, architecture, landscape or living form, it also corresponds with Scott's attempts to harness impulse so that the concept of listening to the desires of one's heart is steered toward a religious and spiritual purpose. In the sense that Bachelard's poetic image shimmers with revelation, Marian Scott's paintings shimmer with a type of beatification of the subject through her use of earth's light. In both instances, there is a sense of an inspired moment not only captured but utilised to a positive effect and this corresponds with Dale Scott's routing of impulse. Marian Scott's presence then, in Scott's 'making' of *Candle*, is a metaphoric light source of inspiration from which he borrows in his poesis, in order to direct desire toward a 'candle' of religious and spiritual importance.

*Candle* is poetry, an artform different to painting – and the light which comes from his mother is, so to say, *refracted*, entering the page from another place and time rather than metaphorically shining from above. Marian Dale Scott's light is, we might say, the *seed* – the first source of nourishment in the building of Scott's tree. From this sprouting, Scott turns back to William Butler Yeats and Wallace Stevens to help *Candle* present, as the symbolic Bodhi tree might,<sup>16</sup> the trunk and branches of his poem tree. Inspired by these influences, Scott imagines and intuitively the substance of *Candle* until his emotional maturity is strong enough to dwell in the spiritual realms of religious thought. From here, Rainer Maria Rilke and Denise Levertov replace Yeats and Stevens as guides to inform a poetics of deep spiritual regard for the present moment, nature, one's surroundings and the solitary spectator. In this way, Scott temporally suspends the running theme of maleness and the corruption of power to consider a "female lineage" that also underwrites his trilogy.<sup>17</sup> We see this operating in other ways too, in his regard for Rilke's relationship with his own mother, in the dedication of Book Three to Scott's wife Ronna Kabatznick, in his complex response to the death of his

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<sup>16</sup> In Buddhism, there are actually eight Bodhi trees which signify eight points of a compass. They are each thought to be the symbolic representation of the eight directional buddhas. The eight trees are: "the *nagkesar* or 'snake-hair' tree (east), *kayara* (southeast), *mango tree* (south), *bataki* (southwest), *banana tree* (west), *arjuna* (northwest), *pippala* (north), and *walnut tree* (northeast)." According to early Buddhist legend, the buddha Shakyamuni was "assailed" under the Bodhi tree by "the demon of delusion and temptation". After a long sleep under the tree and a period of fasting a cowherd girl offered Shakyamuni a meal of "milk-rice" which "gave him the strength to achieve enlightenment and find the middle way". This parallels Scott's *Candle* in the sense it is a long poem open to impulse yet compelled by the directional pull of his religious faith. Robert Beer, *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2003), 21, 122, 208.

<sup>17</sup> Scott, Ng, Scott, Ng, *Politics and Poetics*, 94. See Introduction to this dissertation: Law, "The Poem as Structure for a New Dawn", 135–136.



friend Fay Stender, in the individual fragments that detail loving relationships with women (including his first wife Maylie Scott and friend Susan Burgess Shenstone, among select others), and in the incidental occasions they appear during Book 2 as part of Scott's explorations of his own maturation of child to adult.<sup>18</sup>

Strengthened by his new outlook, Scott's tree is sparked by George Herbert, John Donne and Friedrich Nietzsche so that he is able to think of reality outside the realms of selfhood. *Candle* is about the individual reflecting upon his/ her condition in relation to and amongst many states of otherness in the context of humanity. Such reflections undertake a type of 'survival' quest for commonalities in one's dwelling place which, in turn, assists the task of unifying endeavour in respect to the shared hardships of living.<sup>19</sup> In this way, the guides employed by Scott come to differ from those presented in *Jakarta*, identifying themselves as quieter, domestic and personal aids in Scott's 'finding of the way' to Paradise.

### 3.2 The Youthful Tree: *Candle* and Ideas of Abstraction



"Untitled Geometric"  
by Marian Dale Scott<sup>20</sup>

Rather than basing her work on pure emotion, she hoped that her art could, in a symbolic way, 'bring order to a world of chaos'. *Alan Klinkhoff Gallery*<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See fragment II.ii, 20: Scott, *Jakarta*. Or fragment II.iii, 21: Scott, *Candle*.

<sup>19</sup> Kate Rigby attests such commonalities exist in humanity and describes their acknowledgement as a "kind of kinship". Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 28.

<sup>20</sup> Marian Dale Scott, "Untitled Geometric (1970)", *Mayberry Fine Art*, last assessed May 19, 2019, <https://www.mayberryfineart.com/artwork/707-66L-67P>

<sup>21</sup> Marian Scott, "Artists Biography", *Alan Klinkhoff Gallery*, last assessed May 19, 2019, <https://www.klinkhoff.ca/artists/138-marian-scott/>

Ron Graham<sup>22</sup> describes Marian Scott as an accomplished artist who independently overcame established traditions. Although born to a wealthy family in Montreal, her talent met an art world of the early 1900s; and women were the minority. Her career was aligned with the Canadian modernists in the sense that she harmonised a relationship between organic and geometric shapes.<sup>23</sup> Showing early interest in landscapes, Marian Scott later engaged with more industrial and culturally topical evocations of cityscapes and urban lifestyles.<sup>24</sup> The individual in these scenes became for Marian Scott the anonymous and spiritual other of a modern, mechanical world.<sup>25</sup> According to Graham, Marian Scott used abstraction to expose “the scientific and psychological truths that lay beneath the apparent truth: the dance of life itself”.<sup>26</sup> On the grounds of Graham’s analysis as well as of my own viewings of Marian Scott’s artworks,<sup>27</sup> her style shows an interest in form, light and tone. I would argue the aesthetic of Peter Dale Scott’s poetic imagery in *Candle* is concerned with a similarly kaleidoscopic effect in terms of the poem’s composition (like *Jakarta*, small fragments built from tercets) and moodiness; that is, the expression of light and dark perspectives on the personal material explored.

I interpret *Candle* as a poem of refraction from Marian Scott’s artistic view of the world because it is also revelatory in accordance with earth’s light. From here, I begin my discussion with the concept of abstraction and draw attention from two poetic interpretations: first, the idea of abstraction as symbolic in the Yeatsian sense of a poetry which evokes the transcendental,<sup>28</sup> and second, a type of abstraction associated with Wallace Stevens that is the poetic retelling of real physical or emotional experience.<sup>29</sup> In fragment I.ii of *Candle* Scott quotes a line from Yeats’ serial essay *Ideas Of Good and Evil*<sup>30</sup> which he embeds in a three-line tercet:

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<sup>22</sup> Ron Graham, “All passion spent: a memoir of Marian Scott a quiet radical whose full career still awaits discovery”, *Canadian Art*, 11, no.1 (Spring, 1994): 50–55.

<sup>23</sup> Graham, “All Passion Spent”, 50.

<sup>24</sup> Graham, “All Passion Spent”, 52.

<sup>25</sup> Graham, “All Passion Spent”, 52.

<sup>26</sup> Graham, “All Passion Spent”, 52.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Dale Scott, “Marian Dale, Artworks”, *peterdalescott.net*, last assessed May 19, 2019, <http://www.peterdalescott.net/mds.html> and Marian Dale, “Artworks”, *Mayberry Fine Art*, last accessed May 19, 2019, <https://www.mayberryfineart.com/downloads/scott.marian.dale.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Denis Corish, “The Artifice of Eternity, Reading Yeats”, *Sewanee Review*, 123, no.1 (Winter 2015): 102ix.

<sup>29</sup> David Haslam, “Notations of the Wild: Ecology in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens”, *Journal of Modern Literature*, 22, no. 3/4 (Spring 1999): 536.

<sup>30</sup> William Butler Yeats, *Essays and Introductions* (London: The Macmillan Press Limited, 1980), 162.

For two days they paid my mind  
to withdraw itself

*from every impulse but its own*  
to look only on itself  
not seeing objects as objects.<sup>31</sup>

While working as a “paid volunteer”<sup>32</sup> for a McGill University research experiment on behalf of the United States Air Force,<sup>33</sup> Scott is deprived of all sensory inputs. The quote from Yeats (in line one of the second stanza)<sup>34</sup> is a reference to the hallucinatory effect the experiment had on him and to the “visions” that arose in his altered state of consciousness. For Yeats, any poet who writes of material life does so most successfully by recognising the symbolism of objects: the many “beautiful, startling shapes”<sup>35</sup> that make up the universe. He writes of a “reverence”<sup>36</sup> left behind by early Irish poems that worshipped the “sun and moon”,<sup>37</sup> of the importance of recognising nature as a bounty of “gifts”<sup>38</sup> and insists:

The Gael of the Scottish islands could not sing his beautiful song over a bride, had he not a memory of the belief that Christ was the only man who measured six feet and not a little more or less, and was perfectly shaped in all other ways, and if he did not remember old symbolical observances —<sup>39</sup>

For Yeats, these “old Symbolic observances” relate to a reverence for earth (and humanity) which has been touched by Christ’s love. This presence is visible:

The lovely likeness of the Lord  
Is in thy pure face,

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<sup>31</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 7.

<sup>32</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> According to Robert H. Felix, says Alfred W. McCoy, the research was conducted by “Dr. Donald Hebb, Professor of Psychology at McGill University” and involved “sixty students [who] stayed as long as they could on a bed in an airconditioned box”. The experiment was reported as taking place April, 1956. Alfred W. McCoy, *Torture and Impunity, The U.S. Doctrine of Coercive Interrogation* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 67.

<sup>34</sup> Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, 162.

<sup>35</sup> Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, 155.

<sup>36</sup> William Butler Yeats, “What is Popular Poetry”, *The Collected Works of William Butler Yeats in Verse and Prose, Volume 6 and 8* (New York: Litres Publishing, 2018), Chapter 1, unpaginated.

<sup>37</sup> Yeats, “What is Popular Poetry”, Chapter 1, unpaginated.

<sup>38</sup> Yeats, “What is Popular Poetry”, Chapter 1, unpaginated.

<sup>39</sup> Yeats, “What is Popular Poetry”, Chapter 1, unpaginated.

The loveliest likeness that was upon earth.<sup>40</sup>

For Yeats, the “loveliness” is symbolic of the Lord’s love of our human innocence – “thy pure face” – and this is the “loveliest likeness” because it suspends belief in our human capacity for perfection. This purity embodies the symbolism of an image which is not only emotional but also intellectual. To see the Lord’s “loveliness” in another’s face is to sight something from a higher intellect than ourselves and, further, comprehend it as such. Deprived during the sensory experiment of such shapes, of all things visible and poetically tangible in a type of Yeatsian universe, Scott sees only the light and shade of consciousness. The Yeats quote italicised in line 3 of Scott’s poem is from an essay entitled “The Symbolism of Poetry”:<sup>41</sup>

...if one is moved by Dante, or by the myth of Demeter, one is mixed into the shadow of God or a goddess. So too, one is furthest from symbols when one is busy doing this or that, but that the soul moves among symbols and unfolds in symbols, when trance, or madness, or deep meditation has withdrawn it from every impulse but its own.<sup>42</sup>

Scott draws on Yeats’ quote to refer to the same idea, that, whilst his senses were cut off intellectually from the outside environment, his soul was still able to comprehend his own breathing or aliveness. Reality was transcended in this time but Scott’s existential awareness was capable of feeling its presence. For Yeats, the beauty of symbols in poetry is that they express the presence of a higher, divine intellect:

A symbol is indeed the only possible expression of some invisible essence, a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame.<sup>43</sup>

Scott has his senses muted during the experiment and his heart cannot be excited by a physical experience of reality. The only ‘impulse’ then is the spirit’s attendance to the heart that breathes and the mind which thinks in the darkness and silence. Any ‘visions’, therefore, are poetic and abstract in the sense they symbolise (for Scott) the most essential form of life: the ‘pure’ form of being.<sup>44</sup> To unpack this, I turn to a Yeats poem “Into the Twilight” to

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<sup>40</sup> Yeats, “What is Popular Poetry”, Chapter 1, unpaginated.

<sup>41</sup> Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, 162.

<sup>42</sup> Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, 162.

<sup>43</sup> Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, 116.

<sup>44</sup> For Scott and for Yeats, this ‘pure’ form is the religious essence of their faith in the sense that in Christian thought, “the soul and body are in union” with the mystery of ‘divine incarnation’. Its behaviour in this way, is described by religious scholar M. Guizot as “a miraculous agency vacillating within me” which is “the free, the

illustrate how, when the senses seem ‘robbed’ of hope and loveliness, the soul can save itself by recalling its most essential joy – which is life *out of* and *from* the myth of creation.

### Into the Twilight

Out-worn heart, in a time out-worn,  
Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;  
Laugh, heart, again in the gray twilight;  
Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.  
Thy mother Eire is always young,  
Dew ever shining and twilight gray,  
Though hope fall from thee or love decay  
Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.  
Come, heart, where hill is heaped upon hill,  
For there the mystical brotherhood  
Of hollow wood and the hilly wood  
And the changing moon work out their will.  
And God stands winding his lonely horn;  
And Time and World are ever in flight,  
And love is less kind than the gray twilight,  
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.<sup>45</sup>

Yeats’ projection of the heart into the symbolic twilight entreats that the feelings held within it recognise the beginning of an ending. “Laugh, heart, again in the gray twilight” contextualises the subject (heart) with an object (a landscape) that can help the soul recover. In Yeats’ imagined landscape, the heart can appreciate a new mood, a sense of what it might feel like to reach acceptance (of dying, for instance), of parting ways and farewelling the past. From one such esoteric symbolic sense of Yeats’ abstraction, Scott can return to the light of reality to consider how material, worldly forms can be healing. Just as Marian Scott might capture the emotion of sunlight as a moment of warmth upon the tilt of a roof, so does Scott seek out a connection between the Yeatsian symbolic essence in the self<sup>46</sup> and how this can align with God’s presence inside harsher realities.

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living, the personal God conversing with my soul”. M. Guizot, *Meditations on The Essence of Christianity and on The Religious Questions of the Day* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1865), 103, 119.

<sup>45</sup> William Butler Yeats and Richard J. Finneran, ed., *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 47.

<sup>46</sup> As described in Chapter 2, footnote 41.

In this shift, Scott acknowledges a completeness to living in the world, and in turn, seeks out the poetry of Wallace Stevens to explain the greater life of the soul in one, larger mythology.<sup>47</sup> Stevens helps Scott contemplate reality with a sense of the ‘otherness’ that is non-religious. The objectified world in which an individual dwells becomes, in Scott’s readings of Stevens, a perspective on things which considers not a symbolic essence but a character that is relational to other objects (in the sense light might play on the surface of a grass lawn, for example). For Stevens, human imagination and reality were analogous, but this relationship did not alter the basic character of an object: “he would not have us believe a pineapple is an Alp”.<sup>48</sup> This is the essential difference in the abstract thinking of Yeats and Stevens. Unlike Yeats, Stevens does not deal with an essence associated with “God or a goddess”,<sup>49</sup> but an essence inherent in a chaotic wilderness. Where for Yeats this divine essence lends our dwelling a cosmic unity via the Christian Trinity, for Stevens it is a “chapel of breath” which is sacred but breathes the old air of Christianity’s “sacked speech”.<sup>50</sup> In contrast to a type of “pure” conception of this essence in line with the God-creature relation, Stevens views it mythically as “a muddy centre before we breathed”.<sup>51</sup> The sacred “fire” within us, therefore, as a life force precious at once in this virtue, is a part of “the immense and frightening freedom of the universe which is alien to us”.<sup>52</sup> Further, the universe is the greater abstraction of ourselves and if for Stevens there was a god, then this god is “savage”, “less and less human” and “dwells quietly...incapable of speaking”.<sup>53</sup>

R.D. Ackerman extends this interpretation of Stevens to say that “we must somehow cleanse the imagination of the Romantic....the world has been painted...we must get rid of

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<sup>47</sup> As scholar R.D. Ackerman explains, the spiritual and metaphysical qualities of Stevens’ poetry arise from two origins: the first, as a by-product of his regard for nature as sacred and the second, as a result of abstracting nature so that it is described as “filled with power, saturated with being”. Ackerman continues to say that for Stevens, the quest was the pursuit of love, and central to this quest was the “search for presence”. Unlike Yeats, this ‘presencing’ of nature is not imbibed with the spirit of God (Ackerman quotes J.S. Hillis Miller to say that for Stevens, “God is dead” though he continued to try and reinvent him as a quiet presence) but instead exhibits a “barrenness” which is “essentially” divine (by virtue of its subliminal beauty). In this sense, he becomes important to Scott’s poetry in describing a more secular poetic which also, embraces an eco-spirituality aligned with Jonathan Bate, Kate Rigby and others. R.D. Ackerman, “Wallace Stevens: Myth, Belief, and Presence” *Criticism* 14, no. 3 (1972): 266–76.

<sup>48</sup> Alan Perlis, *Wallace Stevens: A World of Transforming Shapes* (London: Associated University Presses, 1976), 24.

<sup>49</sup> Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, 232.

<sup>50</sup> Adelaide Kirby Morris, *Wallace Stevens and Faith* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 96.

<sup>51</sup> Morris, *Wallace Stevens and Faith*, 97.

<sup>52</sup> Morris, *Wallace Stevens and Faith*, 97.

<sup>53</sup> Morris, *Wallace Stevens and Faith*, 99.

the paint to get at the earth itself".<sup>54</sup> However, in this paring back to the essential earthiness of the natural world, Stevens still wants to interact with the seen in a sensory, emotive way which creates a substantial spiritual kinship between human life and nature: only in loving nature can "poetry take root and grow".<sup>55</sup> To illustrate this, and to better understand Scott's readings of Stevens in *Candle*, I quote the following from Stevens' poem "Sunday Morning":

#### IV

She says, "I am content when wakened birds,  
Before they fly, test the reality  
Of misty fields, by their sweet questionings;  
But when the birds are gone, and their warm fields  
Return no more, where, then, is paradise?"  
There is not any haunt of prophecy,  
Nor any old chimera of the grave,  
Neither the golden underground, nor isle  
Melodious, where spirits gat them home,  
Nor visionary south, nor cloudy palm  
Remote on heaven's hill, that has endured  
As April's green endures; or will endure  
Like her remembrance of awakened birds,  
Or her desire for June and evening, tipped  
By the consummation of the swallow's wings.

#### V

She says, "But in contentment I still feel  
The need of some imperishable bliss."<sup>56</sup>

For the woman dreaming under the sun, the imagination is stirred to desire a Paradise promised by the delight of her senses – the sound of birds, the colour of evening – but it is Sunday morning and she is religious. She has not attended mass and craves, in Stanza 1 of Part V, that "imperishable bliss" of God's presence. The poet and subject of the poem debate the question as to whether, without God, earth can bring happiness beyond emotive and contemplative satisfaction. The subject concludes that whilst when immersing herself in

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<sup>54</sup> Ackerman, "Wallace Stevens: Myth, Belief, and Presence", 266–76.

<sup>55</sup> Ackerman, "Wallace Stevens: Myth, Belief, and Presence", 268.

<sup>56</sup> Wallace Stevens, *The Emperor of Ice-Cream and Other Poems* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1999), 12–13.

peaceful environs her soul feels contented, the sense of a communion with nature is insubstantial intellectually. Overall, what is evoked in Stevens' poem is the subject's felt loneliness and separateness from the community she has absented herself from that morning. Scott arrives at a similar conclusion in the early pages of *Candle* when he escapes with "Susan, the stranger/ at some rocky pass in her romance" and two friends to the Dordogne valley. Inadvertently losing their chaperones and returning as a pair to Paris, there is a sense of strangeness to their coupling. While Susan grieves for her fiancé, Scott feels disconnected from the bliss of enduring love and quotes Stevens in the final stanzas of fragment II.vii:

the oysters at Locmariaquer  
                                   where after too much travel  
                                   and at last nothing to say

we sat waiting for the ferry  
                                   some part of me  
                                   a caged panther<sup>57</sup>

pacing my sub-awareness  
                                   that six weeks  
                                   in a small Paris lobby

when you were late coming down  
                                   for one more last  
                                   futile meal together

would spill out  
                                   onto the back of an envelope  
                                   to my astonishment

*suddenly the traces*  
                                   *of an unexpected genealogy*  
                                   my first publishable poem

Stevens

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<sup>57</sup> Scott's image of "a caged panther" here is from Rilke's poem "The Panther". According to William C. MacDonald, the poem depicts a "caged" or "imprisoned" panther in "the Jardin des Plantes in Paris". He mentions that critiques of the poem have presented many differing interpretations and lists some of them. With respect to Scott's use of the image here, I argue the suggestion that the panther's "circular movements" are in fact a dance that circles around the panther's "self-centred and self-structured being", so that the freedom it desires is the core and "heart" of the movement. MacDonald continues to say this is more evident by the fact the panther does not raise its "eyelid" to the outer world and that the image therefore becomes a poetic metaphor for "absolutely centered movement". Scott reveals this centre to be his "sub-awareness". William C. MacDonald, *A Companion to the Works of Rilke* (New York: Camben House, 2001), 141.



the fatally familiar  
                    hotel room around me  
                    overshadowed  
  
by the vivid unknown<sup>58</sup>

The italicised quote of this fragment (stanza six, lines one and two), borrowed, in *Candle*, from a collection of Stevens' essays,<sup>59</sup> refers to the idea that the nature of a person knows itself to be most true after a moment of inspired expression. For example, the uninitiated poet inside a person who expresses thought through poetry for the first time, experiences a type of liberation, a setting free of their spiritual richness.

In this sense Scott is pursuing a line of enquiry similar to Stevens in "Sunday Morning". He is feeling lonely and separated from love and Susan's own unhappiness makes such relationships seem all the more distant. However, when Susan is late for breakfast that morning, he finds himself jotting down the lines of one of his first poems on the back of an envelope. The lines, from the poem "Locmarquier" of the 1950s, recall Stevens' words: "suddenly the traces/ of an unexpected genealogy".<sup>60</sup> Here are Stevens' words in full:

...just as Bergson refers to the simpler representations of aspiration occurring in the lives of the saints, so we may refer to the simpler representations of an aspiration (not the same, yet not wholly unlike) occurring in the lives of those who have just written their first essential poems. After all, the young man or young woman who has written a few poems and who wants to read them is merely the voluble convert or the person looking in a mirror who sees suddenly the traces of an unexpected genealogy.<sup>61</sup>

The platonic relationship shared between Scott and Susan is coming to an end after a time of forced togetherness due to them becoming separated from their companions. While Susan weeps, Scott prays:

the four of us escaped  
                    by train all night from Paris  
                    to the basilica at Conques  
  
wedged in the narrow canyon

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<sup>58</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle, A Poem On Impulse* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 38–39.

<sup>59</sup> Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and Imagination* (New York: Random House, 1951).

<sup>60</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 39.

<sup>61</sup> Stevens, Wallace, "The Figure of the Youth as Virile Poet," *The Sewanee Review*, 52, no. 4 (1944): 508–29.

of apricot orchards  
and its gold virgin

studded with cheap gems  
the frightening  
challenge of the dark ages

her stiff arms imploring  
like my own secret prayers  
like Susan's tears at Albi

when we failed to meet  
our chaperones at the railway station  
her demand to be taken back<sup>62</sup>

Susan is engaged to be married and the tension felt between them both after they become separated from their companions exhausts them. After “a sleepless night” they continue south by bus, still companionless and a forced couple by way of accident.<sup>63</sup> Although initially they take a geographically harrowing journey<sup>64</sup> across a stony landscape of “craggs”, replete with “grazing sheep/ that seemed to have been here forever”, the scenery becomes more picturesque.<sup>65</sup> There are Mediterranean “bougainvilleas” and they stay overnight in a hostel with “a view from a gothic window”.<sup>66</sup> In this and other accounts of a “walk in the fog [together] at Ruys” and through the cemetery of ancient stones in Carnac,<sup>67</sup> it is clear Scott justifies intimate feelings for Susan via the Romantic settings of a shared experience. So that, with departure at last imminent, there is a part of him that feels like “a caged panther/ pacing my sub-awareness”<sup>68</sup>. The poem continues toward this outlook in the hotel lobby of a Paris Hotel.

Like the woman in Stevens’ “Sunday Morning”, Scott must content himself with the idea that once a Paradise is felt to exist, it is forever psychically memorialised: “*suddenly the*

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<sup>62</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 37-38.

<sup>63</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 38.

<sup>64</sup> The bus trip Scott refers to is mentioned in greater detail in “Occitanian Spring” when he explains the bus is travelling the highland district of the Massif Central in France. Peter Dale Scott, “Occitanian Spring”, *Mosaic Orpheus* (Ithaca: McGill-Queens University Press, 2009), 7–13.

<sup>65</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 38.

<sup>67</sup> April Holloway, “Mystery of the Carnac Stones”, *Ancient Origins*, last accessed 17 May, 2019, <https://www.ancient-origins.net/ancient-places-europe/mystery-carnac-stones-00827>

<sup>68</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 38.

*traces/ of an unexpected genealogy*".<sup>69</sup> Although he was with Susan alone for six weeks, the eventual fulfilment of desire comes to Scott through the poetic rather than the real. In the act of writing Scott is able to reflect and in this way, liberate his soul in an imagined reconstruction of experience.<sup>70</sup> The "first publishable poem" Scott mentions is "Occitanian Spring",<sup>71</sup> a publication dedicated to Susan and this journey they made together. Just as Stevens speaks of the poet as "the peer of the saint"<sup>72</sup> who feels liberated by the act of composition, it becomes clear in this poem that Scott feels a little saintly in refusing his unrequited feelings, at the time, for his 'engaged' companion. He writes of wishing he could relive the experience again, of exploring the "ruined abbey at Montmajour", the two "alone at sunset", which was, to his mind, like being in a "warm Paradise".<sup>73</sup> Scott's dedicated poem concludes that no matter how many times he might revisit the site, the experience could "never be the same".<sup>74</sup> For Stevens' woman in sunshine, the guilt of remaining outdoors instead of attending a Sunday morning sermon is alleviated if she accepts she is human. As the poem concludes, Stevens speaks of a nature that is born free and that desires at times, the casual, the wild and being lost:

We live in an old chaos of the sun,  
 Or old dependency of day and night,  
 Or island solitude, unsponsored, free,  
 Of that wide water, inescapable.  
 Deer walk upon our mountains, and the quail  
 Whistle about us their spontaneous cries;  
 Sweet berries ripen in the wilderness;  
 And, in the isolation of the sky,  
 At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make  
 Ambiguous undulations as they sink,  
 Downward to darkness, on extended wings.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and Imagination* (New York: Random House, 1951).

<sup>70</sup> Steven describes this type of confessional poetry as liberating in the sense that the writing of feelings – that are otherwise thought to be "unsaintly" or fantastic in nature, into a poem becomes an act of apotheosis.

"Apotheosis is not the origin of the major man. He comes,/ compact in invisible foils, from reason,/ Lighted at midnight by the studious eye,/ Swaddled in revery, the object of/ the hum of thoughts evaded in his mind..." Wallace Stevens, John N. Serio, ed., *Selected Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 202.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Occitanian Spring", *Mosaic Orpheus* (Ithaca: McGill-Queens University Press, 2009), 7–13.

<sup>72</sup> Stevens, *The Necessary Angel*, 51.

<sup>73</sup> Scott, *Mosaic Orpheus*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Scott, *Mosaic Orpheus*, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Wallace Stevens, *The Emperor of Ice-Cream and Other Poems* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1999), 12–13.

Just as Scott, in “Occitanian Spring”,<sup>76</sup> leaves the warmth of a sunset with Susan and descends the Arles monastery staircase, “step by step”<sup>77</sup> into a deeper darkness, the woman of Stevens’ poem experiences a similar contrast to her morning in sunshine. In both instances, though the soul may seem to “droop”<sup>78</sup> in despondency or imperfection, as Stevens writes, it seems necessary to sometimes follow impulsive desire.<sup>79</sup> After all, humans are not divine beings and where their thoughts or actions may err, there is also the chance to attain a higher wisdom. In leaving his Yeatsian religious abstraction, Scott leans on Stevens to appreciate the earthliness of his presence and in this, show a different sort of cosmic sensitivity. So that, “in the dailiness’ of “bread-baking on Saturdays/ smelling the freshness of sun-dried laundry/ while you fold the sheet/ against yourself/ from the garden line” Scott can appreciate a sense of life’s mysterious beauty and in this way “honor wildness” by virtue of the sensual aspects of being born into the world.<sup>80</sup> In his shift towards Stevens’ “credible” perception of the universe,<sup>81</sup> Scott’s poetic is able to harmonise *both* the religious and secular vision of ecology by finding not difference, but commonality in being human – what Kate Rigby terms our “kinship”<sup>82</sup> – and thereby effect an eco-critical dwelling. Such a poesis transforms difference into a cosmic quality inherent in all of us and earth itself. In doing so it incorporates into the concept of dwelling what Rigby terms the “other” sacredness of earth: “the abiding mystery of the elemental, the uninhabitable, and the incomprehensible”.<sup>83</sup>

With the aid of Yeats and Stevens, Scott’s *Candle* explores ideas of freedom in the sense that it admits all desires but counsels them with a moral code. In the eco-critical sense, this “moral code” of Scott’s religiosity performs the same act of restraint and refinement of

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<sup>76</sup> Scott, “Occitanian Spring”, *Mosaic Orpheus*, 7–13.

<sup>77</sup> Scott, “Mosaic of Orpheus: Five Canadian Poems”, *Flashpointmag.com*, last accessed July 9, 2019, <http://www.flashpointmag.com/mosaicof.htm>

<sup>78</sup> Stevens, *The Necessary Angel*, 1.

<sup>79</sup> I suggest that the un-god-like desires of the human soul can be admitted to the heart to show how being honest with oneself is the first step toward overthrowing that desire. Further, that this admittance keeps the soul, body and mind of the human person open to religious progression because it is without pretence or a falsified ego (is thereby ‘free’). That such failings are the reality of a human’s relationship to God and religious devotion is expressed in the Gospel of St John, 14: 27. Jesus says, “Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you.” Wansborough, *New Jerusalem Bible*, 1229.

<sup>80</sup> The lines italicised after this refer directly to the religious mystery of creation: “*the miracle/ of Jesus is himself/ not what he said or did about the future*” Scott, *Candle*, 94–95.

<sup>81</sup> Scott quotes Stevens in the stanza following the image of collecting fresh laundry to say, “*a poet/ must move constantly in the direction of the credible*”. Scott, *Candle*, 94.

<sup>82</sup> See Chapter 3, footnote 17.

<sup>83</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 256.

thought in advocating a dwelling on earth which is “equitable, sustainable and [non ego-centrally] pleasurable”<sup>84</sup>. Allowed the time away from the real,<sup>85</sup> in *Candle*, to contemplate abstract imagery and relay experiences that are not directly related to one another, Scott expresses emotional and spiritual ideas as they arise to mind. The effect in his long poem on the impulse to love is the foregrounding of a brightness associated with reason, truth, honesty and divine love which homages his mother’s painterly response to earth’s light. Through her guidance and his own spiritual faith, Scott investigates the emotional impulse to follow desire and learns from the experience. That is, in seeking to better understand his mother’s concern for earth’s light *and* his religious faith, Scott’s sense of acting on impulse matures to regard it with clarity and wisdom. Listening to the ‘candle’ becomes then, a contemplation of the spiritual and personally ‘true’ way forward in life’s journey. So that desire’s most perfect articulation is moral love as the essentiality (the quiet flame spoken in part by Stevens)<sup>86</sup> of our human existence. Scott’s metaphoric tree, refracting from Marian Scott’s earthly light to let in the symbolic dawn of the divine, is growing up spiritually and intellectually. *Candle’s* studies on impulse, with respect to love, ensure its poetic maturity is not only born from the character of the ‘child’ in Scott’s adult person, but also the ‘child’ of his soul, spirit, heart and desires. In maturity, *Candle* effects a re-imagining of the world from its Paradisiacal image – that is, in accordance with the trinity of all things religious, spiritual and natural. So that, in response to Jonathan Bate’s eco-critical question: “are you willing [in your poesis] to hear the voice of Ariel?”,<sup>87</sup> Scott voices a resounding yes.

To explain the cosmic significance of Ariel’s voice, in “The Genesis of Ariel” by W. Stacy Johnson, Ariel is described as a “benevolent spirit” whose name is “an angelic epithet, with the -el (God) ending.” In tracing the genesis of the name, he finds its original character to be the “Ariel spirit of the waters”.<sup>88</sup> In Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, Ariel was an airy “spirit” who was “primarily elemental”, whose loving personality saved him the embodiment of “a perfectly inhuman thing”.<sup>89</sup> Bate’s appropriation of Ariel, then, comes to resemble a song of the earth which originates in the waters, and is elementary but also dwells with the divine. The

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<sup>84</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred*, 256.

<sup>85</sup> The ‘real’ of *Jakarta*, for instance, and a world of politics, society, religions and war.

<sup>86</sup> Morris, *Wallace Stevens and Faith*, 97.

<sup>87</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 282.

<sup>88</sup> W. Stacy Johnston, “The Genesis of Ariel”, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 2, no.3 (Jul, 1951): 205–210.

<sup>89</sup> Johnston, “The Genesis of Ariel”, 210.

ambiguity of Bate's Ariel is precisely its function as an inclusionary voice for both the secular and the religious.

### 3.3 The Elder Tree: *Candle* and Ideas of Eternity



"Untitled: Abstract in Orange, Red and White"  
by Marian Dale Scott<sup>90</sup>

According to William Lane Craig,<sup>91</sup> to understand the idea of eternity we should distinguish between Temporality and Eternalism. Whilst the first is a study in what it might mean to exist 'in time', the second concerns a concept of existing 'outside time'.<sup>92</sup>

For Paul Helm,<sup>93</sup> time is formless, unknown; and both the light and the dark. Conversely, all things temporal are forms that are actual and perceivable in their relation to the light and dark. If "there never was a time when God was not",<sup>94</sup> then God's eternity is everlasting. Helm argues that consistent with biblical Scripture, Christian timelessness is distinct from our own because of the Creator-Creature relation: that is, "every individual thing" created by God is "distinct from himself".<sup>95</sup> This is helpful to contextualise Scott's abstract poetics in *Candle* because, in the awareness of his Buddhist and Catholic perspective on the humane, ethical and good, the 'forms' of his poetry bring enlightenment or despair in

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<sup>90</sup> Marian Dale Scott, "Untitled: Abstract in Orange, Red and White", *Mayberry Fine Art*, last accessed May 20, 2019, <https://www.mayberryfineart.com/artwork/707-66L-67P>

<sup>91</sup> William Lane Craig, "Timelessness and Omnitemporality", *God & time: Four Views*, edited by , Gregory E. Ganssle (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 129–161.

<sup>92</sup> Craig, ed., "Timelessness and Omnitemporality", 160. "It seems to me...that it is not only coherent but also plausible that God existing changelessly alone without creation is timeless and that he enters time at a moment of creation by virtue of his real relation to the temporal universe. The image of God existing idly before creation is just that: a figment of the imagination. Given that time began to exist, the most plausible view of God's relationship to time is that he is timeless without creation and temporal subsequent to creation."

<sup>93</sup> Paul Helm, "Divine, Timeless Eternity", *God & time: Four Views, Views*, edited by , Gregory E. Ganssle (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 28–61.

<sup>94</sup> Helm, "Divine, Timeless Eternity", 30.

<sup>95</sup> Helm, "Divine, Timeless Eternity", 33.

accordance with God's judgement. Like the paintings of Marian Dale Scott, the 'forms' in *Candle* present their character as 'bright' (for example, "the broken waterfall of birds")<sup>96</sup> or 'dark' (a mountain lion disappearing in the mountains "before the great cedars/ were burnt to fire").<sup>97</sup> In each case, this brightness or darkness of the image is relational to surrounding forms *and* God's eternal presence in the word. The distinction is clear, we are temporal and God is eternal; but – importantly – in the manner we are affected by this relation, we share a universal love. As Helm explains, human emotions occur as "episodes" in time, whilst the love of God is outside of time and therefore is "unchanging".<sup>98</sup> This means that the constancy of the not-embodied God is the "permanent state" of an attitude associated with his being "divine".<sup>99</sup> Human beings, in contrast, experience "fits"<sup>100</sup> of emotion which occur as phases in their lives.

What this means to our reading of eternity in *Candle* is that the spirituality of the verse is the unknowable mystery of a religious person's ultimate intelligence. This finds parallel with a sense of Buddhist enlightenment which comes by pursuing the middle of "reckoning". It begins to presence itself in *Candle* as the yin and yang dynamics of impulse are explored. With the gaze of his mother nurturing a sense of earth's sacredness, Scott works through different occasions of desire to investigate and even interrogate love. In the sense that Scott's religious identity is also equally trinitarian, this wisdom to accept, find peace and a gentle way with love is still inherited from the mystery of Christ's love. For Scott, Christian concepts such as hope, love, forgiveness, redemption, joy and grace come from outside time and are eternal. Through contemplation, reflection and prayerful regard Scott might cultivate his character – be more loving, more enlightened in his thought, more peaceful in his energy.<sup>101</sup> Yet in the broader scheme of this love, the temporal moments of Scott's narrative are pictured in communion with God's love. *Candle's* everlasting quality, as "a structure" prepared for "a new dawn",<sup>102</sup> emerges in the relationship between temporal moments and the universal concept

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<sup>96</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 133.

<sup>97</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 133-134.

<sup>98</sup> Helm, "Divine, Timeless Eternity", 38.

<sup>99</sup> Helm, "Divine, Timeless Eternity", 39.

<sup>100</sup> Helm, "Divine, Timeless Eternity", 39.

<sup>101</sup> Dale S. Wright, *The Six Perfections: Buddhism and the Cultivation of Character* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3–17.

<sup>102</sup> In the series of interviews with his friend and colleague Freeman Ng, Scott speaks of his first poem "Tundra Swans" in poetry collection *Tilting Point*. He speaks of the manner a poem might be conceived as a structure and of how he would like to make a poem which is "a structure for a new dawn". A new dawn he envisages as being a little like that expressed in "the gospels of Jubal and Urthona". This has been explained in earlier

(of love). For example, in fragment IV.xv of *Candle*,<sup>103</sup> Scott recalls the time spent with his first wife Maylie, listening to her lament over his frequent absences; and a time they shared breakfast together in which he felt a “tension” like that “between great art and happiness”.<sup>104</sup> This tension led eventually to separation; Maylie partnered with someone else and Scott lived for three years with a woman named Maria.<sup>105</sup> In a later conversation, Maylie says something to Scott that seems to him both real and prophetic: “Remember Maria is powerless/ Somehow we women do things differently/ We are drawn to the wrong men”.<sup>106</sup> As *Candle* continues, we see Scott trying to reconcile this quarrel without compromising his love for either Maylie or Maria. He remembers a time with Maria in which “going into Sausalito/ We strolled hand in hand” and states, matter-of-factly, “the world knew we were great lovers”.<sup>107</sup> Scott’s fragment negotiates the tensions of his marriage so that the love within it in all its many guises is memorialised.

This is the quality of the poem that engages with a sense of Scott’s “temporal” problem of loving Maylie as his ex-wife, loving Maria as his partner, and being challenged by Maylie’s perspective on things. That Maylie’s thought processes could have some prowess over Scott’s own can be explained by her decision to be ordained as a Buddhist priest around the year 1988. Although this choice recommitted her out of her marriage to Scott to live in spiritual devotion, Scott remained at her side during the ceremony held at a Zen Buddhist Monastery (*Tassajara*).<sup>108</sup> The event (mentioned in fragment IV.vi of *Candle*) is pivotal in that it teaches Scott the grace of love, humility in the face of divine wisdom, and the necessity to respect and let go of Maylie. This later encounter with his former wife gives Scott cause to reach out again for a universal concept of love so that the pain of his experience is healed by its more worldly conception (which affords Scott distance from personal experience). The poem is dedicated to “Maria”<sup>109</sup> and in this way gives back to her the honour of being Scott’s significant other (which seems somewhat confused by Scott’s rendezvous with Maylie) and,

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chapters and continues to surface in varied detail for the duration of my thesis. Peter Dale Scott, Freeman Ng, ed., “Tilting Point, poems by Peter Dale Scott”, last accessed 11 July, 2019, [https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xauwRFCGm44).

<sup>103</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992), 164-166.

<sup>104</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 165.

<sup>105</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Rebecca Law, *Personal Correspondence*, May, 2019. Peter Dale Scott and Maylie Scott officially divorced in 1993 (see Appendix).

<sup>106</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 166.

<sup>107</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 166.

<sup>108</sup> “Tassajara”, *San Francisco Zen Center*, last accessed June 1, 2019, [http:// www.sfzc.org/ tassajara](http://www.sfzc.org/tassajara)

<sup>109</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 164.



at the same time, removes her from the context of the poem so that the true reconciliation is between Maylie and Scott. The first few lines show the clear relationship between Scott and Maylie's temporal time and the public world at large (which identifies Maria through her namesake and carries the concept of love in the universal):

IV.xv  
*For Maria*

Not the self in the world  
                  so much as the world  
the self is in<sup>110</sup>

Signposted clearly as a poem dedicated to this female identity we come to know as "Maria", Scott's fragment IV.xv begins with the stanza's thesis – to say he is not alone in the world – continues with the antithesis – to say he is alone and amongst others in the world – and concludes with a synthesis of the two dialogues to say he is a part of one humanity in one context, which is earth.

I have posited Yeats and Stevens as youthful entry points for Scott into an understanding of the abstract poetics of *Candle* and of their poetic influence on *Candle's* structure, which I have likened to a figurative tree. I will now discuss the idea of time being everlasting vis-à-vis the spiritual, poetic thought of Rilke and Levertov. Their presence comes to *Candle* after Yeats and Stevens; in *Candle's* 'Purgatory', Scott's journey in love is a search for that which was exiled in *Jakarta's* 'Hell'. In his use of quotation and by following a common poetic theme of religious devotion, the more mature Scott bestows a persuasive reverence on the two poets in *Candle*. Eternity and the theme of everlasting love will now be approached through a reading of Rilke and Levertov's influence.

In fragment III.ix, Scott cites both Rilke and Levertov. As I mentioned in the introduction to this Chapter, *Candle* is a memoir that carries with it a sense of the domestic, the solitary and intimate. This fragment, beginning with an address to Rilke and ending with a tribute to Levertov, evokes all these moods and further, vis-à-vis Scott's own personal discovery, a sense of personal freedom through the recognition that human thought and action matures through religious devotion. That is, the Creator-Creature relation of

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<sup>110</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 164.

everlasting love means that faith is not wishful thinking, but a deeply spiritual and optimistic perspective on fortuitous or negative life experiences. Let me begin with the first section of the poem to explain:

III.ix  
*For Zbigniew Herbert*

Rilke!  
to have memorized you in German  
each dawn before driving to work  
  
in a hot Washington office  
was what kept me sane  
for the unending phone calls  
  
yet somehow I was never able  
to have any dialogue  
with you and your princesses  
  
not even (as I had imagined)  
coming south through the Rechenpass  
to stay at Brunnenburg with Mary  
  
who was also a *principessa*  
made no difference I wished  
you to be my guide  
  
but what has life got to do with wishing?  
the chance passion flower  
took over our back garden  
  
threatened to crush our garage  
while the planted plum tree withered  
What you wrote was right  
  
your prophetic *I am sick*  
*to death of Paris*  
*city of the damned*  
  
*in the old days an angel*  
*interpreted their torments*  
*Now I must explain them to myself*<sup>111</sup>

Rilke

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<sup>111</sup> Scott, *Candle, A Poem on Impulse*, 89–93.

From stanza one, Scott relies on Rilke to show him the way forward through difficult times and feelings of emotional disenchantment. Scott finds not only his work environment unsatisfactory and displeasing, but also the mentality behind a work ethic that compromises the chance to imagine and dream of a time outside – before or beyond – the immediate present. That such a musing would recognise the world as fashioned by a Creator and not ourselves, is important to Scott's sense that without this authority, personal freedom is hindered by a threat to sanity and a lack of growth. Scott has only the one passion flower to observe as new and, even then, this small sign of divine life is there only by chance. That its emergence challenges the plan Scott had for the garden in the initial planting of a plum tree, shows the fraught relationship between a sense of the religious and personal freedom as it stands today. It is a "war" like any other yet with opponents as different as nature and humankind and its outcome is impossibly mysterious.

Let me explain this figurative duality by addressing Paul Bishop's idea that one such dialectic is that of Destruction and Creation.<sup>112</sup> Bishop refers to Heraclitus to explain the idea that a war in which reason is achieved is opposed to the irrational and perverse:

They do not comprehend how, in differing, it (= universe) agrees with itself (it is) a backward-turning connection, like that of a bow and lyre...tension is everything, the essence of the bow, the essence of the lyre, is tension – in the instrument of warfare, so in the instrument of creation. War can mean "conflict" but also "struggle", "interchange" or "confrontation"; it can mean "discussion" or "give and take".<sup>113</sup>

Applying this view to Scott's domestic example of warfare, the tension between the two – the vine and the plum tree – is almost allegorical of the humankind and Creator relationship. The plum tree, planted perhaps for its fruit, aesthetic or practical pleasure, is rivalled by another botanical not thought of or, for that matter, planted by Scott. Growing of its own accord, it seems almost providential in the fact that the complexity of its root system has out-rivalled not only the plum tree but the foundations of the garage. So, Scott's perspective on things is questioned. Why a plum and not this vine? Why a garage and not a garden? And then, by way of retort, Scott's human innocence finds reason only to answer, "why not?" Here, it seems

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<sup>112</sup> Paul Bishop, "The Dialectic of Destruction and Creation in the German Tradition: A Jungian Perspective on Goethe, Nietzsche, Rilke and George", *Jung Journal*, 5, no. 4 (Fall 2011); 60–82.

<sup>113</sup> Bishop, "The Dialectic of Destruction and Creation in the German Tradition", 64.

the 'forms' of temporal time are wildly approaching the formlessness of divine mystery. Bishop also cites Rilke in exploring this phenomenon of Christian unity:

Without in any way playing down the suffering, the pain, *der Schmerz*, involved in war, Rilke insists that war has a role to play in our self-constituting task, that is, the task of the constitution (or constellation) of the Self.<sup>114</sup>

War then, for Rilke, is the metaphoric battle of dichotomous relationships between self and negative experience so that life can be 're-constituted'. In "Sonnets to Orpheus",<sup>115</sup> Rilke sounds a lamentation to Orpheus for his loss and ultimate fate and implores Orpheus to continue the journey towards the light despite his failure to obey the prophecy.<sup>116</sup> Rilke's "constellation of the Self", as noted by Bishop, can be better understood here as the attainment of spiritual perfection. It was brave of Orpheus to descend to Hades to restore life to Eurydice and Rilke implores him to overcome his sense of failure and continue to strive for the "constellation" of the moment in which he might "turn (your) friend's face and course towards healing celebration".<sup>117</sup>

Returning to the topic of temporality, the dialectic of destruction and creation is for Rilke, in Bishop's account, the test of faith that can make or break the spirit. To become disenchanted with the possibility of a metaphoric lightness to counter the darkness of despair is to abandon the principle of life itself. In Scott's fragment III.ix and the included quote from Rilke's letter to Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis,<sup>118</sup> Rilke expresses his wish to revisit her ruined post-war chateau and the time he spent there composing the Duino Elegies. Here is the relevant passage in full:

I am sick to death of Paris, it is a city of the damned. I always knew that; but in the old days an angel interpreted their torments to me. Now I have to explain them to myself, I can find no decent elucidation, and run in danger of making what I once conceived

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<sup>114</sup> Paul Bishop, "The Dialectic of Destruction and Creation in the German Tradition: A Jungian Perspective on Goethe, Nietzsche, Rilke and George", *Jung Journal*, 5, no. 4 (Fall 2011); 70.

<sup>115</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke and A.S. Kline, (transl.), "Selected Poems", *Poetry in Translation*, last accessed 20 May, 2019, <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/MoreRilke.php>

<sup>116</sup> In the tale, Orpheus is warned by the god of the underworld Hades (Pluto) that if he turns to look back at his wife Eurydice (who died from a snake bite) whilst they make their ascent she will be committed to the underworld forever. See also Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Virgil's *Georgics*.

<sup>117</sup> Rilke and Kline, (trans.), "Selected Poems: Sonnets to Orpheus", v.11.28.

<sup>118</sup> Rainer Maria, Rilke, "Letter to Marie von Thurn und Taxis, from Paris, December 27, 1913, ed., E.M. Butler, *Rainer Maria Rilke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), 216.

of greatly, petty and mean. If God has any consideration at all, he must let me find a couple of rooms in the country soon.<sup>119</sup>

Rilke seeks a remedy for his disenchantment and proposes a retreat from city life to a natural setting. By way of prayerful thought, he expresses not a wish but a remedy to a feeling of spiritual malaise. Scott's attendance to what he calls Rilke's "prophetic"<sup>120</sup> confession is an act of faith, a type of reminder to his spirit that from Destruction there emerges Creation.<sup>121</sup> In Rilke's "Duino Elegies", the topic of temporality is approached in the Ninth Elegy:

....Once, and no more. And we too,  
once. Never again. But this  
once, to have been, though only once,  
to have been an earthly thing – seems irrevocable.  
And so we keep pushing on, and trying to achieve it,  
trying to contain it in our simple hands,  
in the overflowing gaze and the speechless heart.  
Trying to become it. Whom to give it to? We would  
hold on to it for ever ... Ah, what, alas, do we  
take into that other dimension? Not the gazing which we  
slowly learned here, and nothing that happened. Nothing.  
Suffering then. Above all, then, the difficulty,  
the long experience of love, then – what is  
wholly unsayable. But later,  
among the stars, what use is it: it is better unsayable.  
Since the traveller does not bring a handful of earth  
from mountain-slope to valley, unsayable to others, but only  
a word that was won, pure, a yellow and blue  
gentian. Are we here, perhaps, for saying: house,  
bridge, fountain, gate, jug, fruit-tree, window –  
at most: column, tower.....but for saying, realise<sup>122</sup>

Here, Rilke's questions are existential and Christian. He is questioning the nature of being, of what it might mean for us to be in existence and earthbound, to live and to die and to do this only once. We strive to be perfect, to find a meaning and take it with us in death as a type of

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<sup>119</sup> Rainer Maria, Rilke, "Letter to Marie von Thurn und Taxis, from Paris, December 27, 1913", ed., E.M. Butler, *Rainer Maria Rilke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), 216.

<sup>120</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 90.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Bishop, "The Dialectic of Destruction and Creation in the German Tradition: A Jungian Perspective on Goethe, Nietzsche, Rilke and George", *Jung Journal*, 5, no. 4 (Fall 2011); 60–82.

<sup>122</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, "The Duino Elegies: The Ninth Eulogy", trans., A.S. Kline, *Poetry in Translation*, last accessed 20 May, 2019, <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/Rilke.php>.

satisfaction. For Rilke, this perfect incarnation of our selfhood is something we can only lovingly gaze upon but never fully become. Our heart is “speechless”<sup>123</sup> in the face of this image because in its sensibility it is aware only of an emotional existence, of “suffering”,<sup>124</sup> of loving, of the lengthy experience of longing for the perfect image of love. It is the “wholly unsayable” feeling of the heart rendered so because there is no reflection from our gaze upon the immaterial. The immaterial is “that other dimension”<sup>125</sup> in which, for its incapacity to reflect back, is therefore “nothing”.<sup>126</sup> For Rilke, to exist and desire to be perfect in the spirit of love is to enter a correspondence with grace, the divine force of creation.

I return to a reading of the Fourth Elegy in which Rilke senses the presence of angels. It is in this fourth Duino Elegy that Rilke decides the doll<sup>127</sup> he gazes at in fascination possesses an eternal quality. Read in companion with Rilke’s Ninth Elegy, the ‘doll’ comes to be an incarnation of the divine image:

aren't I right? And aren't I right, you who loved me  
 for that first small impulse  
 of love for you I always turned from,  
 because the space in your faces, even while  
 I loved it, changed into outer space  
 where you no longer were ... when I'm in the mood  
 to wait in front of the puppet stage – No,  
     to stare into it so intensely that finally  
 an angel must appear, an actor to counteract  
 my stare and pull up the empty skins.  
 Angel and doll: a real play at last.  
 Then what we continually divide  
 by our being here unites there.  
 Then the cycle of all change can finally  
     rise out of our seasons. Then the angel  
 plays over and above us...<sup>128</sup>

It seems for Rilke that in the doll there is something more than a past, the present and the future: that its angelic nature gives it a presence “outside time”.<sup>129</sup> It is both before him and

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<sup>123</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “Selected Poems”, *Poetry in Translation*, trans. A.S. Kline, last accessed 20 May, 2019, <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/MoreRilke.php>.

<sup>124</sup> Rilke and Kline, “Selected Poems”, unpaginated.

<sup>125</sup> Rilke and Kline, “Selected Poems”, unpaginated.

<sup>126</sup> Rilke and Kline, “Selected Poems”, unpaginated.

<sup>127</sup> Rilke, “The Duino Elegies: The Fourth Eulogy”, unpaginated.

<sup>128</sup> Rilke, “The Duino Elegies: The Fourth Eulogy”, unpaginated.

<sup>129</sup> Helm, “Divine, Timeless Eternity”, 29.

transcendent to him, in its perfection. In its capacity to be unlike humans, it becomes for Rilke an embodiment of emotional treasure. In his love for it as a child and growth into adulthood, the doll becomes a keeper of this innocence, of a love that will always call him back to its truth. Discovering after childhood that one can experience love and conversely, suffer from its loss, means for Rilke there are occasions of great sorrow. Like the doll, he can feel speechless in the face of life's difficult lessons.<sup>130</sup> Yet Rilke has decided the doll embodies perfection, that it is symbolic of pure emotion which, like the angels, is the divine love of self. To grow and mature in life (away from the gaze of the childhood doll) means only that life must be grappled with, fought for and won over as something eternally integral. For Rilke we grow in doll-like solitude to become intellectually mature – a dynamic that might best be explained as the Christian, moral way toward fulfilment.

For Scott, this is the function of *Candle*: to communicate his innermost thoughts in poetry in order to share the experience of faith. Doing so in a method of impulse – which I have interpreted as the pursuit of desires tempered by religious, spiritual and intellectual appraisal – he is not conveying an argument for mysticism, but rather an emotional plea for its immeasurable qualities of “love, joy, hope, faith”.<sup>131</sup> Intermingling this with intertextual quotes, Scott throughout *Candle* describes this realm of existential and Christian thought and gives it renewed vivacity.

Returning to the Ninth Elegy, Rilke is acknowledging the same mystery of creation as is manifest in the doll – “the unsayable”.<sup>132</sup> So the realisation of life is also the understanding that there are things we observe as real – “house, bridge, fountain”<sup>133</sup> – and there are things, like love, which transcend our vision for their beauty, their likeness to God. As for Scott, this religious faith and devotion acknowledge a “life force or nature, or an all-embodying, pantheistic consciousness”<sup>134</sup> rather than the traditional sense of a religious deity. However, it is a position that dignifies the same Christian ethics of faithful devotion. We want to hold it and drink from such a cup because it is beautiful – divine – but it is the food of angels. Our

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<sup>130</sup> Rilke, “The Duino Elegies: The Fourth Eulogy”, unpaginated.

<sup>131</sup> Hare, John, “Religion and Morality”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed., Edward N. Zalta, last accessed 2 July, 2019, URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/religion-morality/>>.

<sup>132</sup> Rilke, “The Duino Elegies: The Fourth Eulogy”, unpaginated.

<sup>133</sup> Rilke, “The Duino Elegies: The Fourth Eulogy”, unpaginated.

<sup>134</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “Biography”, *Poetry Foundation*, last accessed May 20, 2019, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/rainer-maria-rilke>

temporality and eternity – that which is manifest or held within<sup>135</sup> the silent, perfect doll – are the gifts offered by a faith that is not foolproof but that is something inherent in our spiritual capacity to live “the difficulty, the long experience of love”.<sup>136</sup> Scott’s fragment continues with the wish that Rilke be his guide:

against Stevens *a world*  
                    *of poetry indistinguishable*  
                    *from the world in which we live*

yet something (perhaps Europe  
                    a difference of class  
                    or age) had intervened

I found I could not take up  
                    those nineteenth century  
                    emphases on self

Rodin’s gaze restricted  
                    to the artistic object  
                    not the small girl in the garden

Rilke calling his mother  
                    *empty as a dress*  
                    his *wallpaper door to the world (Rilke)*

though my own  
                    read Rilke over and over  
                    underlining as she did her Nietzsche

*live dangerously*  
                    *count every day lost*  
                    *that you have not danced*<sup>137</sup>

In the above fragment, Scott cites from Rilke’s letter to his lover Lou Andreas-Salome Villa Strohl-Fern (dated April 15, 1904).<sup>138</sup> In the document, Rilke speaks at length about a visit from his mother, who was Catholic, in Rome. Rilke was critical of her acceptance of a tradition

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<sup>135</sup> Rilke, “The Duino Elegies: The Ninth Eulogy”, unpaginated.

<sup>136</sup> Rilke, “The Duino Elegies: The Ninth Eulogy”, unpaginated.

<sup>137</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 90–91.

<sup>138</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke and Lou Andreas-Salome, *Rilke and Andreas-Salome: A Love Story in Letters* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 106–108.



of biblical worship that “accepts God as a fact”<sup>139</sup> because for him, such forms of devoutness were “uncreative”<sup>140</sup> in the sense they limited one’s conception of God as always evolving and could only be fully recognised as such at the end of life rather than from the start. As I explain above, the God of Rilke’s poetry is less the deity of worship and more the “life force, or nature, or an all-embodying, pantheistic consciousness that is only slowly coming to realize its existence”.<sup>141</sup> In Rilke’s letter quoted by Scott in *Candle*, Rilke is describing the painfulness of a visit from his mother and its dire effect on his sense of well-being. Indeed, her mere presence threatens in him a “relapse”<sup>142</sup> into childhood times of struggle and despair at her dominance. Writing to Andreas-Salome that he fears he can “still not escape” her, he calls his mother an “empty dress”, a “faded wall that is not part of any structure (yet) was my entrance to the world – (if indeed, such an entrance can lead into the world at all...!)”<sup>143</sup> He describes her as “ghostly and terrible”, as in possession of some “mindless piety” and “obstinate religiosity”.<sup>144</sup> Returning to the topic of eternity, the irony for Rilke is that this woman, his mother, worships God yet bears no resemblance to Rilke’s conception of a human evolving in the likeness of His image. Remembering Rilke’s idea of God as that which transcends the real, as the beautiful and the loved, his mother’s image of God is, for him, distorted. What he questions in his letter to Andreas- Salome is not whether he loves his mother but her impossible devotion to the “distorted and deformed things to which she has clung”.<sup>145</sup> Thus, there is a sense of arrested time in their relationship, in the sense that for Rilke love is a lifelong difficulty and appears denatured, not ‘in time’ nor ‘outside time’ or of the world: not divine and elevating but depressive. It is reminiscent of the Destruction-Creation dialectic in terms of the ongoing tensions<sup>146</sup> within their parent-child relationship. This relationship is specific to Rilke and his mother, and is not intended to be read as bearing any likeness to the

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<sup>139</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, “Biography”, *Poetry Foundation*, last accessed May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/rainer-maria-rilke>

<sup>140</sup> Rilke, “Biography”, unpaginated.

<sup>141</sup> Rilke, “Biography”, unpaginated.

<sup>142</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke and Lou Andreas- Salome, *Rilke and Andreas- Salomé: A Love Story in Letters* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 106.

<sup>143</sup> Rilke and Andreas- Salome, *Rilke and Andreas- Salomé: A Love Story in Letters*, 106–108.

<sup>144</sup> Rilke and Salome, *Rilke and Salome*, 106–108.

<sup>145</sup> Rilke and Salome, *Rilke and Salome*, 106–108.

<sup>146</sup> “...tension is everything, the essence of the bow, the essence of the lyre, is tension – in the instrument of warfare, so in the instrument of creation.” Paul Bishop, “The Dialectic of Destruction and Creation in the German Tradition: A Jungian Perspective on Goethe, Nietzsche, Rilke, and George”, *Jung Journal: Culture & Psyche* 5, no. 4 (2011): 64.

relationship between Scott and his mother. Rather, I argue the greater interest in Rilke for Scott is the contrasting, negative light of his spiritual journey as opposed to Scott's own, positive light with respect to his mother's presence being inspiring and not a source of difficulty. This said, Scott's interest can also be read as emphatic in the sense he was not (as a child and for reasons undisclosed) permitted to pursue his early lessons in the Catholic sacrament of Confirmation.<sup>147</sup> However, where for Scott and Marian Dale Scott all differences were moved to reconciliation, for Rilke it remains outstanding; and this, I argue is the object of Scott's curiosity.

Spending time with his spirit guide Rilke, Scott is able to contemplate the concept of devotion as transcendental, as the "unsayable" presence in a different, less comfortable reality. His shift to Nietzsche towards the end of the fragment helps us see this eternal absencing of love (for Rilke) not as something which can "depress" the spirit but instead enliven it by virtue of it being untaintable. Walter Kaufman, in his comparative study "Nietzsche and Rilke",<sup>148</sup> describes the philosopher and poet's shared belief in a "new honesty" and a "new piety" that claims the only sin is the one against the spirit that finds insincere escapism in "traditional values and clichés".<sup>149</sup> Quoting from Rilke's First Elegy, Kaufman states: "we (human beings) are not very reliably at home in this interpreted world".<sup>150</sup> Scott quotes his mother as saying "*live dangerously/ Count every day lost/ that you have not danced*" which is an exhortation inspired by Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.<sup>151</sup>

And lost be that day to us in which there has not been *one* bit of dancing! And false be every truth to us in which there has not been *one* bit of laughter!<sup>152</sup>

Almost as a motto of Nietzsche's philosophy, this is a demand that the spirit be free from constraint and inhibitions. Through the character Zarathustra, Nietzsche insists that there is a greater strength in self-autonomy than in conforming to culturally imposed expectations. Our existence is only meaningful, substantial and spiritually fortifying, therefore, if we behave according to our "inclinations, drives and passions" and thereby "interpret, prune and

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<sup>147</sup> Peter Dale Scott and Rebecca Law, *Personal Correspondence* (November, 2017).

<sup>148</sup> Walter Kaufman, "Nietzsche and Rilke", *The Kenyon Review*, 17, no. 1 (Winter, 1955): 1–22.

<sup>149</sup> Kaufman, "Nietzsche and Rilke", 8–9.

<sup>150</sup> Kaufman, "Nietzsche and Rilke", 9.

<sup>151</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Wayne (New York: Algora Publishing, 2003).

<sup>152</sup> Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 162.

enhance” these aspects of our spiritual consciousness.<sup>153</sup> A spiritually perfect figurehead who understands a prescribed morality denies life of its essential, joyful spirit and thereby “destroys its life-affirming potential”.<sup>154</sup> Nietzsche’s phrase “God is dead” speaks to the idea that the conception of a God is a human construct that denies the spirit’s autonomous growth and development.<sup>155</sup> Scott’s reference to Nietzsche in conjunction with Rilke creates a celebratory moment of that “unsayable” love which can never ‘go’ away because it can never fully be presenced. Nietzsche and Rilke help Scott understand the manner in which love can be eternal and everlasting in spite of tensions and differences, such as those experienced by Scott in reflecting upon his mother’s different conception of the spiritual in earth’s light.

Scott’s fragment III.ix continues and shows a movement in his thoughts towards what might be considered love’s other “sayable” truths. Considering now the modern Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert, Scott muses on the idea that “the word culture/ (is) an exotic implant”<sup>156</sup> and why, according to his new guide, it is far better to drift along with nature: “(*why have I been writing about flowers?*)” – Herbert.<sup>157</sup> The quote is from Herbert’s poem “Five Men” which details the execution of five men in a prison yard. Herbert is asking himself how he can write about flowers while this sort of atrocity is taking place in the world. However, the poem’s ellipsis reflects a moment of enlightenment, and in these closing stanzas he realises his task as a poet is what it always has been culturally: to write of the human condition. And for Herbert, the spirit in closing is unavoidably optimistic:

what did the five talk of  
the night before the execution

of prophetic dreams  
of an escapade in a brothel  
of automobile parts  
of a sea voyage  
of how when he had spades  
he ought not to have opened  
of how vodka is best

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<sup>153</sup> Steven Crowell, Edward N. Zalta, ed., “Existentialism”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Section 1.2: *Nietzsche and Nihilism*, last accessed May 20, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/#NieNih>

<sup>154</sup> Crowell, Zalta, ed., “Existentialism”, unpaginated.

<sup>155</sup> Richard Schacht, Steven Crowell, ed., “Nietzsche: After the Death of God”, *The Cambridge Companion to Existentialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 112.

<sup>156</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 90–91.

<sup>157</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 91.

after wine you get a headache  
of girls  
of fruit  
of life

thus one can use in poetry  
names of Greek shepherds  
one can attempt to catch the color of morning sky  
write of love  
and also  
once again  
in dead earnest  
offer to the betrayed world  
a rose <sup>158</sup>

Scott's initial dedication to Zbigniew Herbert is made apparent here in the manner in which this Polish poet fashions a type of poetic intercession to overcome grief and suffering. In offering the world "a rose" Herbert decides the function of poetry is to make sense of the insensible – which is, here, murder – by presenting, like Rilke's "unsayable"<sup>159</sup> or beatific perfection of a doll, a metaphoric object that beholds true love. Yes, Herbert's poem affirms, the act of killing is inhumane and love is its opposite: silent, passive and divine. As Jonathan Hart argues, it was in the expression "of the elemental delicacy of (the) feelings"<sup>160</sup> that war poetry became an act of humanitarianism. Thus, Scott's dedication to Herbert is profoundly gestural in endorsing the function of poetry as that which acknowledges and supersedes human suffering. Employing this same 'subjective impulse' Scott crafts *Candle*, piece by piece, and works from the heart and a deep, profound consciousness to articulate a voice in his poem. That Scott has had a long-standing interest in Herbert (he translated this and other poems of Herbert in *Selected Poems*)<sup>161</sup> and further, that the association included working with his close friend Czeslaw Milosz, is likely the tenor of the reference.

Scott's fragment III.ix moves on to consider ideas about love and war, the conflict between "aesthetics and social worlds",<sup>162</sup> and divine transcendent realities such as Rilke's

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<sup>158</sup> Zbigniew Herbert and Peter Dale Scott, Czeslaw Milosz, trans., *Selected Poems* (New Jersey: Ecco Press, 1968), 58.

<sup>159</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke and A.S. Kline, (transl.), "The Duino Elegies: The Ninth Eulogy", *Poetry in Translation*, last accessed 20 May, 2019, [https:// www.poetryintranslation.com/ PITBR/ German/ Rilke.php](https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/Rilke.php).

<sup>160</sup> Jonathan Hart, *The Poetics of Otherness: War, Trauma and Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 186.

<sup>161</sup> Herbert, Scott, Milosz, *Selected Poems*, 58.

<sup>162</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 91.

“pure word *den gelben und blaun Enzian (the yellow and blue gentian)*/ in the tree of my dream.”<sup>163</sup> From there it moves to Levertov, and faith in the incarnate and in the unimaginable ecstasy of a perfect life. In this way, Scott is able to carry his impulsive desires toward a renewed communal reality, reconciled via communion with a heart’s pleas and replete with the qualities of divine love.

Employing Levertov as a guide is emblematic here in *Candle* because her own eco-poetics help coalesce all of Scott’s meanderings towards the transcendental and Christian and then, away from these toward an absenting of mystery and the sacred holiness of earth. By including the last sections of the poem fragment III.ix, I have departed from Rilke’s tree only to arrive at its resonant beauty (as motif) in Levertov, which is evident when reading Scott’s poem to its conclusion:

                                in the tree of my dream  
                        each tulip  
  
was a galaxy  
                        revolving into  
                        a dot of pollen  
  
where you can see within  
                        one orange molecule  
                        the solar system  
  
imprisoning us  
                        with Aragon’s torn  
                        corpses of insurgents  
  
and yet Denise: *the substance*  
                        *of an art is an incarnation* (Levertov)  
                        all around us  
  
the dance of strangers  
                        in splendid upsurge  
                        to flowers we can only imagine  
  
from roots we can never see <sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 92. Rainer Maria Rilke and A.S. Kline, (transl.), “The Duino Elegies: The Ninth Eulogy”, *Poetry in Translation*, last accessed 20 May, 2019, [https:// www.poetryintranslation.com/ PITBR/ German/ Rilke.php](https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/German/Rilke.php).

<sup>164</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 92–93.

Scott is citing from a speech by Levertov titled “Origins of a Poem”.<sup>165</sup> The quote extends an idea from Heidegger, who, in interpreting Hölderlin, posits that “to be human is to *be a conversation*”.<sup>166</sup> For Levertov this suggests that the very basis of living is to live in communion, which translates to “living humanly”<sup>167</sup>, and in this humanness of humans Levertov locates their “divinity”.<sup>168</sup> We revel in our humanness, show reverence for it, if we attend to it in its active capacity: that is, in our ability to sense things and to think and have deep feelings within ourselves that form our private and social identity. These things that inspire social and political actions – the act of communion with other humans – are our multitudinous divine sparks. This is significant because I have argued there are two acts of communion with other humans in Scott’s *Candle*. The first, observed in the epigraph and throughout, is in Scott’s love for his mother and the refraction of her painterly visions of earthly light in his poetics. The second act of communion, presented by Scott’s devoted citing and referencing of philosophical and poetic texts, implies in this quieter, more domestic poem *Candle*, an intimate, respectful relationship between reading and writing. Levertov’s concept of communion, then, between the individual and the community comes through our humanness and the intelligent understanding of this fact as a shared cosmic responsibility. As Levertov says in quoting John Donne: “God is a straw in a straw”.<sup>169</sup> Our humanness is an “exiled spark”<sup>170</sup> (a divine gift) that we summon and/or awaken daily by seeing, feeling, thinking, by *being* human. In doing so, we embrace life and discover ongoing life has possibility.<sup>171</sup> Levertov’s idea that “*the substance of art is an incarnation*” is a little like Scott’s idea that love is the essence of communion with others, of being *humane* in our personhoods. As James Reid states in a review of another of Scott’s poetry collections,<sup>172</sup> to attend to the world is not a necessity but a preference:

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<sup>165</sup> Denise Levertov, “Origins of a Poem”, *Michigan Poetry Review*, 7, no. 4, (Winter, 1968): 233–238.

<sup>166</sup> Levertov, “Origins of a Poem”, 235.

<sup>167</sup> Levertov, “Origins of a Poem”, 236.

<sup>168</sup> Denise Levertov, “Origins of a Poem”, *Michigan Poetry Review*, 7, no. 4, (Winter, 1968): 236.

<sup>169</sup> Levertov, “Origin of a Poem”, 236.

<sup>170</sup> Levertov, “Origin of a Poem”, 237.

<sup>171</sup> Levertov, “Origin of a Poem”, 237.

<sup>172</sup> James Edward Reid, “Mosaic Orpheus by Peter Dale Scott”, *Vallum: Contemporary Poetry, Featured Reviews*, last accessed May 20, 2019, <https://vallum.wordpress.com/2017/02/27/featured-review-mosaic-orpheus-by-peter-dale-scott-review-by-james-edward-reid/>

Peter Dale Scott's choice to attend closely to the world, and present his experience of it, also echoes Dante's long journey in the *Purgatorio*: "When Love breaths in me, I take note...and set it down".<sup>173</sup>

The citation in the fragment of Levertov then, in light of the topic of temporality, serves as a means of returning Scott's fragment to that spark of divine inspiration which is exiled by virtue of it being the very gift of being human. In conclusion, the fragment III.ix, for all its discursive wanderings of thought and feelings, finds love, that straw in a straw which is God, the force, the spiritual perfection of our life from our birth to eternity. Having reignited the spark of his being, Scott's poem wanders in the Paradise of irrational possibility, in the idea that "all around us" there can be witnessed:

the dance of strangers  
                    in splendid upsurge  
            to flowers we can only imagine

from roots we can never see<sup>174</sup>

The image is moodily impulsive and wildly festive but in the context of the fragment it reads as the by-product of an intense personal dialogue. In this sense, it appears as a type of intercession, a moment of divine inspiration in the face of difficulty. In becoming a moment of epiphanic worth, it is an act of communion. It is as though Scott, having re-found the spirit of divine love, is once more capable of a loving relationship with others and the world. The divine spark has brought him out of his insular – and therefore uncommunicable – state of mind. It is the Creation after-the-fact of its opposite character, Destruction, and celebrates what is always at the heart of Scott's poetic objective, the peace-making process. Scott's musings – on Rilke and Rilke's negative experiences of maternal love, on Marian Scott's work and life, and on his own, more positive experiences of love – here fuse ceremoniously with Marian Scott's version of Nietzsche and the expression of dance as being free-spirited. For Scott, in *Candle*, this concept which is developed as a religious allegory is evidential in the 'many cooks' of his fragment: Herbert, Rilke, Nietzsche, Marian Scott, Levertov. If we lead off with Nietzsche's prophet Zarathustra, dancing after life as the divine spark of all things joyous

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<sup>173</sup> Reid, "Mosaic Orpheus by Peter Dale Scott", unpaginated.

<sup>174</sup> Scott, *Candle*, 93.

– “I dance after thee, I follow even faint traces lonely”<sup>175</sup> – we can understand the fragment as an optimistic pursuit of Creation through and beyond the forces of Destruction. We can read it in the spirit of Herbert, the poet to whom Scott entrusts his fragment. Further, we can declare it a picture of everlastingness in the sense to live is to “live humanly”. Chapter 3, Verse 1 and 4 of “The Ecclesiastes”<sup>176</sup> explains this:

To everything *there is* a season, and a time to every occupation under heaven; [...] a time for tears, and a time for laughter; a time for mourning, a time for dancing [...] <sup>177</sup>

### 3.4 Conclusion to The Tree



“Forest Stairway Cliff Path”  
by Marian Dale Scott<sup>178</sup>

In the above stairway painting by Marian Scott, there is a sense of ascension out of the dark woods to a greater light, and this movement is uplifting to the spirit. Painted in tones of green and blue, the artwork evokes tranquillity in the sense it appears as a young, nourished landscape capable of renewal. Whilst the trees are natural forms, the winding path and hand-rail move harmoniously so as to echo, and be sensitive to, the same rhythm. Without knowing the ‘stage’ of the forest cliff path in the scheme of the whole journey, it evokes a point of departure which is neither sudden nor formidable. The closing pages of Scott’s *Candle* suggest a similar serenity.

In *Candle*, Scott is a poet of free abandon, roaming territories of his memories and visions to find the spiritual essence of his reality – which, to the poem’s end, is considered

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<sup>175</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche and Thomas Wayne, transl., *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2003), 163.

<sup>176</sup> Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, 728.

<sup>177</sup> Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible*, 728.

<sup>178</sup> Marian Dale Scott, “Forest Stairway Cliff Path”, *artnet*, last accessed May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019, [http://www.artnet.com/artists/marion-mildred-dale-scott/forest-stairway-cliff-path-K-PuNtGmg6Z\\_z4G0vtqZRA2](http://www.artnet.com/artists/marion-mildred-dale-scott/forest-stairway-cliff-path-K-PuNtGmg6Z_z4G0vtqZRA2)



holistically, in sympathy with the greater reality of the cosmos. In a book dedicated to his mother, Scott models his aesthetic on her painterly technique, effecting a study into the soul of concrete things.

In its regard for imaginative and intuitive thought, *Candle* diverges from the influence of Marian Scott to explore ideas of free expression and action. In doing so, it develops a poetics likened in this chapter to that of Yeats and Stevens, while substantiating Scott's continual religious quest – for a spiritual reacquaintance in the world. In shaping his poesis via a thinking of religious *and* spiritual abstraction, the impulses of *Candle* have been shown in my argument to be tempered by eco-critical consideration: of what it might mean to think and act morally, and/or effect the most equitable, sustainable and pleasurable way to dwell “light-footed”<sup>179</sup> on earth amongst others.

The theme of temporality and everlasting love takes *Candle* into spiritual domains not dissimilar to those explored in the poetry of Levertov and Rilke. This chapter has considered notions of spontaneity, impulse and freedom alongside more mature ideas of eternity and solitude. In these spiritual endeavours, *Candle* becomes a means of romancing the feelings of youth and vibrancy, free spiritedness and solitude toward their greater religious depths. Love and conflict are resolved in a newfound sense of what it truly means to be human and live humanely. In *Candle*, Scott enacts a communion between opposing forces, not unwittingly but in the spirit of faith. Where thought seems irrational it becomes sensible, where action is instantaneous and short-lived, it leaves its mark in eternity. Thus, that we live is the spark, that we die is the fact, that we have each other is the dance and the festive occasion. The tree has been built.

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<sup>179</sup> Stuart Cooke, “Echo-Coherence: Moving on From Dwelling”, *Cultural Studies Review*, 17, no. 1 (2011): 231.

## CHAPTER 4

### *MINDING THE DARKNESS: A POEM FOR THE YEAR 2000*

[I] have spent my years  
building structures for that dawn

each poem a conduit  
from our irreplaceable present

to a glimpse of odyssey  
towards a promised land.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the links between *Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000*,<sup>2</sup> the final book of Scott's *Seculum* trilogy, and the first two texts of *Seculum*. It posits that *Darkness* adjudicates between *Coming to Jakarta, A Poem About Terror*<sup>3</sup> and *Listening to the Candle, A Poem On Impulse*<sup>4</sup> and tries to find a "middle way" between them. It considers whether the interplay between secular yang and spiritual yin is balanced or dominated by either yang or yin and analyses how Scott's journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise leads to an understanding of *Darkness* as a metaphoric, last judgement. In this way, the long poem of *Seculum* is itself a structure for a new dawn, because the secular yang and spiritual yin forces of its long-suffering prayer are put back together in Book Three as one unit and flow the one from the other in two domains. In the journey of Books One and Two, Scott complexly historicises ideas of Hell and Purgatory so that they are given a lesser position in the present and future time of Paradise.

The argument of chapter 4 considers whether Scott's "poem for the year 2000" has reconciled the past enough to bring religious virtue to the fore of our contemporary lives; and if so, reads the poem as evidence of this reconciliation. Scott's millennial attribution is significant in the sense that historically, any year number accompanied by three zeros is

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Homing: A Winter Poem," *Titling Point* (San Luis Obispo: Word palace Press, 2012), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000* (New York: New Directions Books, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror* (New York: New Directions Books, 1988).

<sup>4</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle: A Poem on Impulse* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992).

marked by apocalyptic themes of new beginnings, turning points in time, arrival and achievement.<sup>5</sup> This chapter recognises the same concern for the number three<sup>6</sup> displayed in Scott's earlier Books and regards this as consolidating in the final Book of the *Seculum* series. It acknowledges that, for Scott, this final poem for the year 2000 regards violence as that which has transpired and been replaced by a "vision of the future".<sup>7</sup> In this way, it appreciates that the previous "undoing of happiness" described in *Jakarta* leads Scott towards a "fuller development" which is explored first in *Candle*, and then, the capacity to envision the "end" of violence in *Darkness*.<sup>8</sup> Scott has indicated that the millennial headline of *Darkness* situates the poem after the massacres of Jakarta, after Hiroshima, following the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and in the aftermath of the 1991 wildfires in Berkeley.<sup>9</sup> These are all characterised by Scott as moments of acute catastrophe and all, in some way, are linked to the fire and ashes associated with apocalyptic landscapes.<sup>10</sup> To read *Darkness* as a poem of reconciliation is therefore to consider how what Scott terms as "a violence", which historically "breeds violence"<sup>11</sup>, might be overcome. This chapter regards the theme of fire as symbolic of this overturning of circumstances, in arguing that *Darkness* demonstrates the religious value of reconciliation, renunciation and resolution in response to conflict.

In accordance with the diversity of Scott's eco-spiritual identity, I maintain that the repositioning of religion in the post-apocalyptic setting of *Darkness* is inclusive of all religious interests. So that in taking up the eastern conception of yang – "the bright, the sun-like", complete with yin – "the dark, the moon-like",<sup>12</sup> he attempts to reunite the twin dynamic separated in early books of *Seculum*, and mirror it in the manner of Christian communion. Where, in the *Commedia*, Dante's Beatrice comes to "mirror... God's light through her eyes"<sup>13</sup>,

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<sup>5</sup> Jürgen Moltman, "Progress and Abyss: Remembrances of the Future of the Modern World" in Miroslav Volf, William Katerberg, ed.s, *The Future of Hope: Christian Tradition Amid Modernity and Postmodernity* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 3–4.

<sup>6</sup> I have discussed Scott's attention to the number 'three' in earlier chapters.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Dale Scott, Freeman Ng, ed., *Poetry and Terror: Politics and Poetics in Coming to Jakarta* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 159.

<sup>8</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 158–159.

<sup>9</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 158–159.

<sup>10</sup> Scott says that, in structuring *Seculum*, he was mindful of other events resulting in high-level death tolls, recalling not just Hiroshima but the AIDS epidemic sweeping America "without any sign of cure at the time". He mentions that the wildfires of Berkeley destroyed 2,000 to 3,000 homes (including the one he shared with wife-to-be Ronna). Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 158.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 158.

<sup>12</sup> James Legge, transl., *The I Ching, The Book of Changes* (New York: Dover Publications, 2012), 11.

<sup>13</sup> Robert M. Durling, transl., *The Divine Comedy, Volume 3: Paradiso*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 633.

*Darkness* brings Scott's wife Ronna Kabatznick to the fore as his last and final guide. Dedicating Book Three to Ronna,<sup>14</sup> Scott consistently presences and represents her as the guiding and strengthening force that takes him to the light of Paradise. The yang and yin (pertaining, respectively, to *Jakarta* and *Candle* and regarded as opposite yet dependent forces of karma – meaning balance),<sup>15</sup> come together as balanced in *Darkness* and lend, under the sacramental (by marriage) and thereby divine gaze of Ronna, a sense of oneness to what is actually a three-part relationship. Through the dynamism of newly flowing energies<sup>16</sup> that move to and from the “conscious intelligence” of yin and the “great extreme” of yang and the ‘presencing’ of Ronna, Scott, like Dante, finds his “Saint Bernard” of Paradise to be allegorically “the mind in heaven”.<sup>17</sup> Concluding *Darkness* with a contemplative phrase “How did you come like this/ to walk on water”<sup>18</sup>, Scott references the miracle of Christ walking on water to calm the storm and save his disciples on the Sea of Galilee.<sup>19</sup> At the very last metaphoric ‘breath’ of *Darkness*, Scott acknowledges divine reason<sup>20</sup> as his new sight and restored faith in humankind, with earth and heaven living harmoniously.<sup>21</sup> So that, in Scott's long poem the yang and yin energies of our created world feature and wane to show difference and then, similarity; and their illumination and darkening of beauty on earth and vice-versa, in heaven, informs Scott's Christian regard for equality between the self and other. In studying these different aspects of dwelling on earth apart and then, in *Darkness* together,

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<sup>14</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, v.

<sup>15</sup> Peggy Jones suggests this balance is to do with taming a force which is “wild and natural” and adds importantly that this taming does not seek to “break” the force but rather, gently “harness” it so that a relationship and a responsibility is formed. Such a practice is then continual and involves a growth in one's awareness that all life forms are infinite, “have a life of their own”, and in this same infinity of stillness is the “primal” force of “Creativity”. So that for Scott, in *Darkness*, karma would be about creating his poem in the awareness that it is attending to a world both created and subsisting by creation; thereby, requiring sensitivity, awareness and delicate consideration of material and immaterial features. Peggy Jones, *The I Ching: Points of Balance and Cycles of Change* (London: Karnac Books, 2008), 91.

<sup>16</sup> According to James Legge, these energies can be described as “essences belonging to the more subtle, purer part of matter and belongs to the more grosser form of elementary ether: kh'i or spirit” which is also “the breath”. For this reason, I describe the two forces of yin and yang as energies meaning that they are moving, changing qualities related to the atmosphere (for instance, a sense of happiness or sadness in the air or within a person's spirit in any particular moment in time). Legge, transl., *The I Ching*, 355.

<sup>17</sup> Durling, *The Divine Comedy, Volume 3: Paradiso*, 697.

<sup>18</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 244.

<sup>19</sup> Henry Wansborough, *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 1123.

<sup>20</sup> In the New Testament, Christ performs another miracle by walking on water to calm the storm that threatens his disciples on the Sea of Galilee. Scott's concluding stanza testifies

<sup>21</sup> Legge, transl., *The I Ching*, 44.

an attitude of harmony is strengthened via Eastern and *also*, Western religious pathways<sup>22</sup> to love.

There is much in the preceding volumes of *Seculum* that is antithetical to the mature and resolute voice in *Darkness*. For instance, in chapters 1 and 2, I presented *Jakarta* as inspired at least in part by the censorship of Scott's non-fiction prose on the political conspiracies of the 1965 Indonesian massacres, and as a book thereby concerned with aspects of terror. In contrast, in chapter 3 I argued that *Candle* was inspired by maternal love, personal relationships, spiritual experience and Scott's interest in Buddhism, and was concerned with impulse in relation to matters of the heart. Altogether, I have understood the yang – as “the sun-like”<sup>23</sup> – of Book One (dedicated to Scott's father, a political critic) to be dependent on yin for a balance of power-play; and the yin – as “the moon-like”<sup>24</sup> – of Book Two (dedicated to his mother, an abstract painter) to be dependent on yang for moderation of impulsivity and spontaneity.

It is precisely the “day and night” aspect of *Darkness* that brings us to the crucible of Scott's achievement across the *Seculum* trilogy. Due to the origins of yang and yin in Scott's Buddhist practice in the way of the Dharma and his spiritual interest in Taoism, I argue that the authorial accomplishment of this poetry is its plural orientation towards peace. One useful starting point from which to consider Scott's intentions in *Darkness* is the notion of the Buddhist Dharma, which upholds four noble truths<sup>25</sup> in a person's spiritual journey (I will outline these in a moment); and the Tao, which can be understood as the *ch'i*<sup>26</sup> or life force related to a dynamic of “movement and tranquillity”.<sup>27</sup> In Scott's multifarious religious and spiritual poetic correspondence, the constant movement of yang toward telling, explaining and understanding suffering, pain and terror is taken to a limit via which it might encounter

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<sup>22</sup> For example: prayer, devotion, attendance to the Scriptures.

<sup>23</sup> James Legge, *The Sacred Books of China, Volumes 1–4* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1990), 16.

<sup>24</sup> Legge, *The Sacred Books of China*, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Chogyam Trungpa, Judith Lief, ed., *The Truth of Suffering and the Path to Liberation* (Massachusetts: Shambala Publications, 2009): vii-xii.

<sup>26</sup> Walter W. Davis, “China, the Confucian Ideal, and the European Age of Enlightenment”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press), 44, no. 4 (Oct – Dec 1983): 524.

<sup>27</sup> As Walter Davis explains, in *ch'i* the yang and yin forces emanate from a source known as the Great Ultimate and whilst the yang is actively produced “through movement”, the yin is the passive, “tranquil” consequence of this movement through to exhaustion (and then, vice versa and so forth). Importantly, the active and passive movements of *ch'i* is said to have brought us “water, fire, wood, metal and earth”. Davis, “China, the Confucian Ideal, and the European Age of Enlightenment”, 524–525.

and transform into yin, a sense of restfulness. Across *Darkness*, the yang and yin forces oscillate the one from the other. This metaphorical pattern of action and restfulness becomes a poetic allegory that transforms concepts of suffering, pain and terror into restful states to teach us how acceptance, peace and tranquillity can be made manifest.

Throughout this thesis, I have claimed that Scott is seeking a new dawn out of the concept and actuality of suffering. In *Seculum*, this suffering resides in a public hell of political controversy and social unrest as well as a private hell of great emotional loss. In his journey out of this Hell of suffering, Scott's religiosities take him to Purgatory and then Paradise. However, his day-to-day Buddhist practice comes forward in *Darkness* as the journey's greatest teacher with regard to such unbearable torments.

According to abbot and scholar Chogyam Trungpa, this Buddhist pathway through suffering is found through attention to the four noble truths or types of spiritual lessons. The first asks of the person to accept his/her suffering so that, through this humility, their soul can find inner peace. The second asks that they seek out the cause of the suffering; and the third asks the person to try, through mind exercises in Buddhist meditation, to liberate themselves from their suffering. The fourth then succeeds these three by presenting the path to truth, wisdom and a new dawn.<sup>28</sup> Having suffered and overcome their suffering mindfully, the person is awarded the joy of new possibility and new wisdom because confusion has been replaced with clarity. The mind can think again about the future and, metaphorically, that means the person has woken to a new dawn that is like no other.

This said, the light that comes to *Seculum* through Scott's Buddhist faith is dominant but not singular. Holistically, the structure built in the making of Scott's long poem arrives at the Paradise of *Darkness* from the viewpoint of an amalgamation of a variety of philosophical, religious and spiritual texts. In this way, the structure of Scott's poetics combines the yang and yin forces of Books One and Two to show their interdependence. In the afterword to *Darkness*, Scott describes this process of poetic reconciliation as "an attempt to comprehend the deep antimonies that have characterised Western culture: Apollo and Dionysus, Greek and Hebrew, Platonism and empiricism, Classical and Romantic, intellect and love".<sup>29</sup>

*Darkness* consists of five sections that each have five themes. The introductory section is titled "Hun Luan – Dark Confusion" and includes both Chinese script and English. It is

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<sup>28</sup> Trungpa, Lief, ed., *The Truth of Suffering and the Path to Liberation*, 67.

<sup>29</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 246.

concerned with the appearance of the world after a cosmic state of chaos and considers spiritualities, scriptures, philosophies and poetics pertinent to this theme. The second is titled with the simplified Chinese script and English translation of the word “Yang” and is concerned with the “yang” – the secular masculine principle of the universe. The third is titled “Yin” in both Chinese script and English and concerns the “yin” – the feminine spiritual principle of the universe. The fourth is titled “Er Yi – The Ways of Heaven and Earth” and concerns the ancient principle of love. The fifth is titled “Tai Ji – The Great Origin” and considers the cosmic “oneness” from which yang and yin originate. In each section, Scott deals with public and private concerns related to his themes of good and evil.

In this sense there are really two narratives channelling his story in Book Three – historical and personal – which Scott refers to as the quest for a “secular (historical) enlightenment and a spiritual (personal) enlightenment”.<sup>30</sup> As a book concerned with reconciliation, *Darkness* ultimately concludes Scott’s poetic goal of finding the new dawn of possibilities, wisdom and hope for the year 2000 and beyond. *Darkness* is “dedicated with love to my wife Ronna”<sup>31</sup> and, as the epigraph signals, is a book concerned with love and relationships. It considers themes of understanding of both the self and community, of justice, of natural and spiritual evolution, of mercy, liberty, clarity and redemption.

As in *Jakarta* and *Candle*, many historical and contemporary thinkers and poets are present in the margins of *Darkness*, and they form a mosaic that brings to the fore what Scott himself terms a “quest for original mind”.<sup>32</sup> This chapter considers some categories of Scott’s term “darkness” that he purports to reflect upon and nurture by “minding” – mental/emotional confusion, yang, yin, love, divine love. In this “minding” of the “darkness” – discussed throughout this chapter under the subject of Hun Luan – Scott’s categories work together to foreground a sacramental religiosity that links with the eco-critical groundwork of Scott’s poesis. Where Scott aims at a comprehensive and progressive conversation with the “truth within” himself and the truth within humankind and our cosmic dwelling place, the darkness he reflects upon is personal, historical, cultural and communal. Scott’s darkness is

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<sup>30</sup> Jason Boulet, “I Believe in Enmindment”: Enlightenments, Taoism, and Language in Peter Dale Scott’s *Minding the Darkness*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 75, no. 4 (2006): 925–945.

<sup>31</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, x.

<sup>32</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 230.

emblematic of a fractured psyche that seeks harmony with feelings of pain and suffering and the potential chaos of differing intellectual discourses.

In the title of Book Three, *Minding the Darkness*, Scott suggests that his “minding” of the “darkness” will help him to see devastation as the presentation of new possibilities for the present and the future. As I have explained, ideas of Hell in Book One and Purgatory in Book Two function as sites visited respectively in the poet’s epic journey of the *Seculum* trilogy and become, in this way, retrospectively sacred and (referentially) allow growth to take place. I believe this is achieved via Scott’s eco-critical vision of our human dwelling place on earth. Eco-critical scholar Kate Rigby speaks of art requiring the mimesis of an artist’s “inner vision of truth”.<sup>33</sup> She also reminds us that there are “depths” to the human psyche that “remain mysterious”,<sup>34</sup> and stresses the need to contemplate one’s dwelling place in the greater awareness that there are others, and that there is “diversity in others”.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, Rigby argues, these relationships can and should be beloved, and the truth of the self and the truth of the cosmos are metaphorically brought together in the sacred, orphic<sup>36</sup> cry of darkness or in the divine quiet of new light. In this way, Rigby’s theorising is obliquely put into practice in Scott’s *Darkness* as he reconciles the past to envision a present and future reality.

#### 4.2 *Minding the Darkness* and Hun Luan

Chapter 1 of *Darkness* opens with the title page “Hun Luan – Dark Confusion”<sup>37</sup> and lists quotes from varying sources, by way of an extended epigraph. I have translated “Hun Luan” from the Chinese to mean in English “clouded with disorder, state of confusion”.<sup>38</sup> In Taoist philosophy, Hun Luan describes a time in which a human feels he/she has strayed from the spiritual path.<sup>39</sup> In recognising one has strayed from the path of sacred contemplation, the

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<sup>33</sup> Kate Rigby, *Topographies of the Sacred, The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004), 105–107.

<sup>34</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of The Sacred*, 107.

<sup>35</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of The Sacred*, 107.

<sup>36</sup> Rigby, *Topographies of The Sacred*, 107.

<sup>37</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Shang Zhibin, and Paul U. Unschuld, *Dictionary of the Ben Cao Gang Mu, Volume 1, Chinese New Historical Illness Terminology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 229.

<sup>39</sup> N. J. Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism: The Theme of Chaos: hun-tun* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 95. Throughout Girardot’s text, the meaning of Hun Luan is unpacked so that Hun is teamed with Hun-tun to mean a “Humpty Dumpty...portmanteau word...packed with several meanings”(11) He explains that in Taoism it translates literally “shape I am” (11) which is of an egg and totters with the weight



Taoist practitioner feels him/herself to be unwell. The term also originated as a medical description of a physiological disorder and still holds currency in modern-day definition.<sup>40</sup> Like the Hell of *Jakarta*, Book One, and the Purgatory of *Candle*, Book Two, *Darkness* carries themes of darkness and uncertainty and views religious faith as helpful in journeying toward a greater, ethical perfection of self. However, as foretold by the epigraphs which begin the Hun Luan section, the journey is now, in *Darkness*, more worldly specific than self-orientated. I will explain this through a discussion of the epigraph quotes which Scott sources from scriptures, spiritual writings, philosophy and poetry.

The first quote, from the classic Chinese text *Tao Te Ching*, captures the chapter's intentions: "Where Tao does not prevail in the world, war horses thrive in the suburbs".<sup>41</sup> The Hun Luan that Scott speaks of is clearly, then, not a personal malady, but rather a sickness apparent in the external spheres of creation and humankind. This Taoist concept in relation to the themes of love and relationships is signposted in Book Three's dedication to Scott's second wife Ronna, and will be considered in this chapter as a spiritual question of harmony versus disharmony. A reading of the *Tao Te Ching* by Jacob Martin is helpful here. In his short text "On friendship and love",<sup>42</sup> Martin quotes from *Tao Te Ching* to say that "in (the) context of Taoist thought, order and personal harmony stem from not acting against nature, because nature rules over us all and we are foolish to try and contrive it".<sup>43</sup>

I have described the question of love versus its opposite as a spiritual one without explaining that I am reading the *Tao Te Ching* in its second incarnation – that is, as a spiritual rather than a philosophical text. So that, the spiritual definition of Tao can be understood as:

"[Conceived of as] having no name, it is the originator of heaven and earth; [Conceived of as] having a name, it is the mother of all things".<sup>44</sup>

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of carrying the "myth of creation"(11) and is, in this way, a cosmic egg. Unpacking then, Luan, Girardot explains it is associated with a disease caused by the "coveting of knowledge" (95, 116) and, coupled with Hun, means therefore the "fall of [humankind] from a paradise condition" (116) : the tottering 'egg' falls over. Together then, as I have explained in chapter 4, Hun Luan means essentially mental confusion caused by the fall of humankind from Paradise.

<sup>40</sup> Girardot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Jacob Martin, "On Friendship and Love," *The Observer*, last accessed June 6, 2019, <https://observer.case.edu/on-friendship-and-love/>

<sup>43</sup> Martin, "On Friendship and Love", unpaginated.

<sup>44</sup> Lao-Tzu, James Legge, transl., "Tao Te Ching," *Sacred Texts*, last accessed June 6, 2019, <https://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm>

Love then, for the Taoist practitioner, is not just a cosmic term but is a divine acceptance of a greater absolute. I will explain this in more complexity later in the chapter, in the course of my close reading of *Darkness*. Suffice to say, here, that if the symbiotic relationship of yang and yin is out of balance, a sense of civil uneasiness reigns in the external world. Further, it brings a sense of chaos to personal and human life so that present and future realities lack clarity, value and purpose. This means, as Scott himself explains, that the long poem trilogy takes on the form of “an argument at first with the external world but increasingly with myself”.<sup>45</sup>

The second epigraph to Section One of *Darkness* follows the same theme of a Hun Luan style of darkness: “The Last Law is the time of the destruction of the teaching”.<sup>46</sup> It is a quote from the Lotus Sutra, an influential sacred scripture or sutra<sup>47</sup> in Buddhism. In the sutra, the teachings of Buddhist founder Shakyamuni convey the capacity for all persons to transform the contradictions and sufferings found in everyday life into positive energy and profound happiness.<sup>48</sup> The last law concerns the fundamental reality of life, and to understand this law is to achieve enlightenment<sup>49</sup> in the sense that desire can be transformed to be compassionate desire and, in this capacity, one can feel fulfilled. This is the notion of understanding as dependant on mutual social accord and not one issuing from solitary, reflective thought.

Scott’s third epigraph once more supports the theme of Hun Luan and reads: “when you see blackness like this, you will know this blackness is the beginning of your work”.<sup>50</sup> It is a quote from an eighteenth century alchemical tale entitled *Mirror of the Philosophers*<sup>51</sup> and authored by alchemical writers under pseudonym. Originally composed in German and published in the 1706 issue of the Catholic journal *Aurei Velleris*, it is interpreted here via Jesuit priest Rev. Christian Liebezeit’s first English translation.<sup>52</sup> A fictional story concerned

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<sup>45</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 245.

<sup>46</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Gene Reeves, trans., *The Lotus Sutra: A Contemporary Translation of a Buddhist Classic* (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2008).

<sup>48</sup> Koushiki Choudhury, *Finding Peace: An Oriental Quest* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), Chapter 3, unpaginated.

<sup>49</sup> Burton Watson, transl., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 326.

<sup>50</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 1.

<sup>51</sup> Christian Liebezeit, transl., “Mirror of the Philosophers” in *Aurei Velleris* (Hamburg: 1708), last accessed 20 August, 2019, <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Archive/Spiegel.html>

<sup>52</sup> Liebezeit, transl., *Mirror of the Philosophers*, last accessed 20 August, 2019, <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Archive/Spiegel.html>

with the alchemy of creation, it depicts a reimagined Christian iconographical Madonna as the earth mother of God's world. In the narrative, the anonymous alchemists explore the idea that this Madonna of the earth can only conceive of new life if the alchemistry – a synergy of matter with the elements<sup>53</sup> – of her dwelling place is perfectly balanced.

Concerned with an ethical approach to humankind and earth's care, the fiction is accompanied by twelve small illustrations that explore anthropological concepts of life evolving from virgin to seed to development to birth.<sup>54</sup> Espousing poetic and medieval characters (a plurality of divine messengers and/ or one God in his many different guises) and themes (divinity, origins of life, ecology, virtue), the text works with the idea that birth is the result of "the [fictional] alchemists" and our knowledge is their wisdom bestowed upon us in moments of revelation, which the alchemists call "our quicksilver".<sup>55</sup> For the anonymous alchemists, the virgin character of his story is displaced from Paradise due to innocence, and thus favoured by the gods, she may ask for their intervention. The story's virgin beseeches the gods by swearing her love for them (she swears to "give up of the body to the living quicksilver")<sup>56</sup> and is thereby saved by the everlasting water of Mercury. By conveying a knowledge of earth to the virgin, Mercury helps the virgin being conceive of the earth and give birth to a son who brings peace. This is the keystone to the link with Scott as the alchemist's Mercury is the same "fleet-footed messenger"<sup>57</sup> that Scott mentions in *Jakarta* as first "the wind-driven ghost of snow" and then "the flared ghost/ once *fleet-footed pursuing*/ down the black oak".<sup>58</sup> In reconciling past ideas of Hell and Purgatory in *Darkness*, the reappearance of Scott's ghost from Book One in *Mirror of the Philosophers* affirms this is a darkness from which the present and future begins. This fictional, classically inspired story about earth and water that were once separate and then are united as one, shows that from this separation, beauty can thrive – here a white rose, there a red rose. Scott's use of the alchemists' text suggests first that the darkness of Hell is known to him, and secondly that from this darkness comes growth, revitalisation and ecological sustainability. In quoting this 1706 fictional story, Scott signals that the first blackness, that of conceiving of the earth, must

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<sup>53</sup> Oliver Nicholson, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity, Vol. 1, A–I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 1614.

<sup>54</sup> Liebezeit, transl., *Mirror of the Philosophers*, unpaginated.

<sup>55</sup> Liebezeit, transl., *Mirror of the Philosophers*, unpaginated.

<sup>56</sup> Liebezeit, transl., *Mirror of the Philosophers*, unpaginated.

<sup>57</sup> Linda T. Elkins-Tanton, *The Earth and The Moon* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2006), ix.

<sup>58</sup> Scott, *Jakarta*, 10, 148.

be inclusive of its higher order in heaven. Only in this way can the unity of water and earth be possible (remembering, from Genesis, that before creation there was only water, and above the water, a divine wind).<sup>59</sup> The alchemists' "darkness", therefore, is for Scott, symbolic of eternity and the heaven of *Darkness*.

Scott's final quote prefacing section One of *Darkness*, Hun Luan, is from Hölderlin's "Patmos".<sup>60</sup> "Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst/ Das Rettende auch" ("Yet where danger is,/ Grows also what saves").<sup>61</sup> Like the alchemists' "blackness" of "before" creation (which is heaven, and seen as such, becomes "the beginning of your work"<sup>62</sup>), we grow in our understanding of existence by accepting the mystery of things. Scott's quote from Hölderlin reminds us of the earlier quote in *Jakarta* – "poetically dwells man upon this earth"<sup>63</sup> – which, as I have shown in Chapters 1 and 2, Scott pursues as a possibility by historicising past traumas and sin. Scott's difficulties in coming to terms with the political deceptions surrounding the Indonesian massacres were the argument that agitated his poetry in Book One, and this difficulty hindered any "bringing forth of truth into its splendour of radiant appearance".<sup>64</sup> The external reality of terror placed in danger Scott's quest for recompense and reconciliation, and personal and cultural enlightenment – a new dawn – and gravely contravened all that was religiously true to him. Here though, in *Darkness*, Hölderlin returns, just as Scott returns for the third time to find Paradise in the peaceful dwelling of human love and understanding. As *Mirror of the Philosophers* suggested, the way out of darkness is also a return to it,<sup>65</sup> and this is reinforced by Hölderlin's "dialectic of unity" in which harmony is, in itself, a dialogue of differences.<sup>66</sup> For Hölderlin, new thought is articulated from the elusiveness of "a feeling".<sup>67</sup> The use of Hölderlin in *Darkness*, then, articulates the idea that Scott's Hell and Purgatory of Book One and Book Two are liberated in reconciliation – so as not to be the 'end' of the world but the beginning.

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<sup>59</sup> Henry Wansbrough, *The New Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Random House, 1999), 1.

<sup>60</sup> Friedrich Hölderlin. Michael Hamburger, ed., *Selected Poems and Fragments* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 231.

<sup>61</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 2000., 1.

<sup>62</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 1.

<sup>63</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Perennial Classics, 2001), 209.

<sup>64</sup> Heidegger, *A Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, 18.

<sup>65</sup> Liebezeit, transl., *Mirror of the Philosophers*, last accessed 20 August, 2019, <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Archive/Spiegel.html>

<sup>66</sup> Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language, Towards a New Poetics of Dasein* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 1614.

<sup>67</sup> Gosetti-Ferencei, *Heidegger, Hölderlin, and the Subject of Poetic Language*, 1614.

Having explored the epigraphs as touchstones through which the reader might gain access to the poetry in Section One of *Darkness*, I will now consider the Hun Luan aspects of the fragments themselves. Scott's dedication to his second wife Ronna<sup>68</sup> in *Darkness* suggests that love is being brought to a central place in Scott's trilogy and that, whilst this section is still moving through the blackness of confusion, there is a hint that it is "at work"<sup>69</sup> on the task of resolution and, ultimately, the giving and receiving of love. To show this, I now move to a close reading of the first and last fragments of Section One: the first deals with fire, and the last with ashes.

#### 4.3 Fragment I.i and Hun Luan

I.i

*If you want to change your life*  
*burn down your house (10/ 20/ 91)*  
Before we left for the beach

Ronna took off her rings  
placing them on the basin  
to be safe like her other possessions

the hot offshore winds  
meant it was warm and cool  
as we waded on the wet sand

through the agitated air  
a day that was just right  
Ronna rehearsing her solemn

procession toward me  
one arm crooked up  
one her imaginary father's

the other with an imaginary bouquet  
surrounded by frisbees  
a day happy enough

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<sup>68</sup> Heidegger, *A Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, x.

<sup>69</sup> Liebezeit, transl., *Mirror of the Philosophers*, Illustration Four, last accessed 20 August, 2019, <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Archive/Spiegel.html>

to forgive one's karma  
                     forget that of others  
                     under a blue sky  
  
 which as we returned  
                     over the Devil's Slide  
                     was divided like a flag  
  
 half blue half ominous black  
                     the dense smoke a message  
                     to speed home  
  
 over Bay Bridge  
                     to the miles-wide storm cloud  
                     increasing in blackness  
  
 fringed with dots of flame  
                     until it was almost night  
                     headlights the sudden emergency  
  
 warning our freeway was CLOSED  
                     towards the house where  
                     (we did not yet know this) ....  
  
 Cherry our unsuspecting  
                     house-mate from Taiwan  
                     had just narrowly escaped  
  
 through a burning rain  
                     of eucalyptus leaves  
                     with nothing more than her stuffed bear <sup>70</sup>

These early stanzas of verse from Scott's fragment I.i of *Darkness* attend to the theme of Hun Luan by way of contrast. In the opening two lines Scott is quoting a personal diary entry of his own, dated nine years prior to the publication of *Seculum's* third book and a year prior to its second. It prefaces the theme of the fragment I.i, yet reads ambiguously. Like the yang and yin themes of the book, it could well define the mood of Hun Luan in its duality of negative and positive energies.

Beginning with an indicator for the Hun Luan content of the poem, Scott references Ronna's careful placement of the heirloom rings "on the basin" for safekeeping, and then the

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<sup>70</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 3–4.

scene shifts to the beach, drenched in sunlight. The mood is untroubled and bright. They stroll at their leisure through “wet sand” and, despite an “agitated wind”, it is “a day that was just right”.<sup>71</sup> They are engaged and Ronna is playfully rehearsing their wedding ceremony on the beach “with an imaginary bouquet”.<sup>72</sup> The sky is blue and “the day happy enough/ to forgive one’s karma/ forget that of others”.<sup>73</sup> Of course, for Buddhist Scott, the suggestion here that karma is a negative aspect of the human psyche is because in karma law there are “six realms of existence – the four lower realms of suffering, the human realm, and the higher planes of the various heaven worlds”.<sup>74</sup> So, although we are predisposed in the human realm, from birth, to be humane, we know both pleasure and pain. It is only when one is deeply absorbed in the meditative state of moral karmic thoughts that the “deva world”<sup>75</sup> of harmony is understood. Thus, Scott is forgiving his own karma and that of others to make a nod toward his faith before surrendering to the humanness of the shared, happy experience.

On their return home when they reach the Californian landmark “the Devil’s Slide”,<sup>76</sup> Scott and Ronna see the black clouds of smoke from a wildfire in the distance. This marks the fragment’s turning point from lightness to the Hun Luan of the Section’s theme. The sky “divided like a flag”<sup>77</sup> by the smoke from the fire, somewhere between blue and black, is the metaphoric signal of a war between positive and negative constituents. Soon, the victor becomes apparent as the “mile-wide storm cloud/ increasing in blackness”<sup>78</sup> shows a fringing of flame, and some “sudden emergency”<sup>79</sup> closes the freeway home. The third last stanza of my section break of fragment I.i points directly to the Hun Luan characteristic of impending doom and confusion: “(we did not yet know this)”<sup>80</sup> and the last, the helplessness of Cherry as its terrified survivor:

and a few yards up the street  
eight people burned to death

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<sup>71</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 3.

<sup>72</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 3.

<sup>73</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, *Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: The Path of Insight Meditation* (Colorado: Shambala Press, 2001), 140.

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Goldstein, *Insight Meditation: A Psychology of Freedom* (Colorado: Shambala Press, 2003), 159.

<sup>76</sup> Gary B. Griggs, and Lauret E. Savoy, *Living With the California Coast* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1985), 142.

<sup>77</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 3.

<sup>78</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 4.

<sup>79</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 4.

<sup>80</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 4.

rivulets of metal  
  
 from their melted cars  
  
         over the burned asphalt  
         *We were the last to make it through*  
  
 we heard from one survivor  
         who had jumped in the back  
         of a stranger's pick-up  
  
 in the hushed exchanges  
         as we waited for coffee  
         next morning at the bed-and-breakfast  
  
 with nothing more to do that day  
         but to tell our tales  
         *(the woman two doors down*  
  
         *had loaded her car to the roof*  
                 *and now it was too late*  
         *to go back inside*  
  
         *and find her car keys)*  
         tales that were fragments  
         The fourth afternoon  
  
 we were taken there  
         in an Oakland police car  
         a wreath where our neighbour died ...<sup>81</sup>

Here, the fragment has moved to shocking accounts of vulnerability and suffering, death and survival. In a neighbourhood now stricken with the grief of fire damage, death and irreplaceable losses, they return to their burnt-down home among countless others. The imagery focuses on the tragedy of young Cherry escaping with nothing but her toy bear alongside the horror and terror of those who were reduced to burned corpses in “melted cars”.<sup>82</sup> Using italics to say “we were the last to make it through” softens the poetic voice as Scott confronts a sorrow analogous to the state of Hun Luan despair. There was “nothing to do that day/ but to tell our tales ... tales that were fragments”<sup>83</sup>, says Scott, and in this sharing

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<sup>81</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 4–5.

<sup>82</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 4.

<sup>83</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5.



of stories there is a simplicity to shock and bereavement. The word “tales”<sup>84</sup> carries ideas of enchantment, stimulation, inspiration and wonder – all things which bring faith to the faithless and restore liveliness to the inert.

Having arrived at a scene of great terror, Scott and his companions, Ronna and Cherry, face the aftermath of the fire. In this situation, Scott feels a calling to summon his most adult, nurturing self to show spiritual strength by supporting others. I want to look closely for a moment at Scott’s double use of the word “tales”. I characterise these references as belonging to the sphere of fairy tales rather than any other storytelling tradition, on the premise that Scott is not looking to entertain his companions or to cure their individual symptoms of anguish and grief by listening to their tales, but rather, is carrying them forward with a type of parental authority. I maintain this protective carrying forward works on the same principle of positivity through which Scott nurtures his faith. That is, in a gesture of Christian love, Scott encourages others to seek out a new day.

I define Scott’s ‘fairy-tale’ in accordance with the etymological roots of the word “fairy” in “faerie”, descending from Latin *fata*, that is, “the fates”, and of the word “tale” in the word “talk”.<sup>85</sup> I argue Scott’s “tale” belongs to this class of stories because in the first instance it relates to “a person’s lot” (fate) and second, it is a story which recreates an event as a telling, a sharing of feelings, sentiments, emotions and understandings. One interpretation of this idea can be read in the critical study by child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim<sup>86</sup> which refers to the ways in which a “tale” can support a huge emotional demand like the needs of Scott’s neighbours following the devastation caused by the fire.

In *The Uses of Enchantment, the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Bettelheim explains that rather than a means of escape from reality, a fairy tale may be highly instructive in assisting a child to develop psychological maturity.<sup>87</sup> In helping a child to experience the solitude of reading material not exactly fashioned by a sense of the real world, Bettelheim believes fairy tales help the child to develop “inner resources” in a manner that synthesises the creative faculties of awareness: emotion, imagination, intellect.<sup>88</sup> When Scott is huddled

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<sup>84</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5.

<sup>85</sup> Julia Cresswell, *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 161, 434.

<sup>86</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 2010).

<sup>87</sup> Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 3.

<sup>88</sup> Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 4.

at a buffet the next morning with Ronna and his neighbours, the nurturing of which Bettelheim speaks is the empathy practised in meditation by the teachings of the Tao and the Buddhist Dharma. For the Taoist and the Buddhist, the practice of meditation helps a person develop their inner consciousness in a manner which strengthens their personal moral integrity.<sup>89</sup> As Bettelheim argues, tales can do this too and, for Scott in fragment I.i, such tales are parts of a greater life just as fairy tales can only mimic life in all its moral dilemmas and catastrophes.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, in his quest for a Paradise lost, Scott's *Seculum* is driven by the same desire to reimagine realities as something fantastically impossible, dream-like and allegorically moral.

Furthermore, it can be said that trauma can cause one to revert to a psychological state not unlike that of a child because emotion simplifies itself to an essence. I have said earlier that with consideration of the theme of suffering in *Darkness*, Scott's Buddhist faith dominates. So here this childlike state of innocence in the face of suffering mirrors the Buddhist practitioner coming to terms with the noble truth of suffering.<sup>91</sup> In the teaching of the Dharma, it is in the confronting of tragedy that suffering can be "seen".<sup>92</sup> Buddhist abbot and scholar Trungpa describes this seeing as a vehicle that can take one out of the malady of suffering by allowing one to recognise the anxiety that has been deeply manifest.<sup>93</sup> Simple acceptance lessens the burden of suffering because instead of pain there is also the small pleasure of knowing its greatness. Similar to the childlike helplessness Scott experiences, suffering requires mental, spiritual and emotional attention.<sup>94</sup> Further, if we were to look at this suffering from Scott's Christian perspective, we learn that human suffering cannot be separated from human knowledge.<sup>95</sup> According to New Testament scholar L. Ann Jervis, the Christian recognises (a) that suffering is "not a part of the human condition" – but is "a

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<sup>89</sup> Walter W. Davis, "China, the Confucian Ideal, and the European Age of Enlightenment," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44, no. 4 (Oct – Dec 1983): 523-548.

<sup>90</sup> Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*, 6.

<sup>91</sup> Ross Thompson, *Wounded Wisdom: A Buddhist and Christian perspective on Evil*, (Hampshire: John Hunt Publishing, 2011), 79–80.

<sup>92</sup> Chogyam Trungpa, Judith L. Lief, ed., *The Truth of Suffering and The Path of Liberation* (Massachusetts: Shambala Publications, 2009), 101.

<sup>93</sup> Trungpa, Lief, ed., *The Truth of Suffering and The Path of Liberation*, Introduction, 1–5.

<sup>94</sup> Ann L. Jervis, *At the Heart of the Gospel: Suffering in the Earliest Christian Message* (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Group, 2007), 118.

<sup>95</sup> You Sheng-Li, "Greek tragedy and the Watercourse Way of Taoist Thinking", *A New Interpretation of Chinese Taoist Philosophy, An Anthropological/ Psychological View* (Ontario: Taoist Recovery Centre, 2005), Chapter 15.

symptom of sin” and (b) that it can be resisted in communion “with Christ” which helps one proceed through it to a form of resurrection in day-to-day life. As Jervis explains: “by virtue of suffering ‘with Christ’ we are called to face darkness, to face down what destroys, to reshape what is so that it comes to be dominated not by suffering but by God’s glory.”<sup>96</sup>

Following the Buddhist and Christian ideas of suffering, we gain a broader perspective in considering Scott’s academic (not practical)<sup>97</sup> interest in Taoism. As in other occasions of discursive reflection, Scott’s review of Taoism explores another perspective of human suffering. Importantly, the Taoist practitioner does not “accept” it as the Buddhist must and does not “endure” it with Christ as the Christian must; they instead cultivate an optimism that surpasses the fact of suffering through traditional devotional practices.<sup>98</sup> In the inclusive religiosity of Scott’s poetic discourse, this Taoist perspective of suffering comes to epitomise the innocent child within human adults. Through memory and revisitations of childhood experiences, *Seculum* shows us that Scott’s child self is both hopeless in the face of suffering yet is awarded ‘divine’ optimism by virtue of his innocence.

Earlier in this dissertation I have described poetry arising from a trauma as a plea or cry of the heart from the depths of one’s suffering. Here in Scott’s fragment I.i, stricken by Hun Luan, there is a sense of the Tao or teachings of Dharma assuaging the trauma or cry of the heart. Indeed, this is indicative of the whole of *Darkness*, as Scott takes to task the forces of good and evil to reimagine a new dawn. Given that the Tao is the pathway to the vital forces of goodness and the four noble truths of the Dharma help the faithful on the spiritual path toward compassion, the wildfire in the opening poem serves a metaphoric purpose. Its fury ignites a war between peace and unrest. Yet, already, as we see in the final line of the section fragment, there is the arrival of a Taoist state of acceptance in the laying of a wreath. While the fire brings destruction and devastation, this ritual act of commemoration resurrects joy. In this communion with sorrow and loss, the “mystical union ... beyond the here and

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<sup>96</sup> Jervis, *At the Heart of the Gospel*, 137.

<sup>97</sup> In this thesis I identify Scott as a non-practising Catholic, a practising Christian and a practising Buddhist. However, I align him more specifically with the school of Mahayana and then, more profoundly Zen Buddhism. Whilst Scott often pivots his Buddhist and Christian gaze toward other religions and spiritualities, there is little evidence in *Seculum* that these other forms of religious devotion attend his own day to day spiritual practice. I proffer they are instead, deeply valued material for thought.

<sup>98</sup> Wong, *Taoism: An Essential Guide*, 145.

now”,<sup>99</sup> there is respite from suffering. So, while Scott’s real and metaphoric fires have burned, the ashes prepare the ground for spiritual renewal:

and the thick layer of ash

*(Could this be all our books?  
the stove?      the refrigerator?*

*the two sets of china?)*  
as unpossessed  
as the Huron potsherds

in the black corner of an autumn field  
the burnt tiles of that Roman villa-  
impossible to explain this

for a world not fully mindful  
that we all must die  
In a bravura gesture

of letting go  
Ronna took out her key  
and threw it back to the Devas

we were taken away  
the three of us crying  
like ancient warriors

or pre-adolescents  
dry sobs that since here  
come back in therapy

divorce my mother’s death  
choked us that week  
at each glimpse of the naked hillside

as labile as children  
we have not yet the illusion  
*we are in control*

dazzled and shattered in turn  
by the ominous beauty  
of say a sunset under rainclouds ...<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Kenneth J. Doka and John D. Morgan, *Death and Spirituality* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2017), 157.

<sup>100</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5–6.

Scott and Ronna return to their burned down house to retrieve what little possessions they can from the ruins. The view is confronting, and Scott's three lines of italics reduce the poet's voice to a murmur as he exclaims in words of disbelief. Shocked at how all their possessions had been reduced from many to a few, the singularity of the stove and refrigerator and the remaining china is significant to the misery of the scene. Books are no longer present as stories and pages; the kitchen where they had daily sustenance is reduced to fireproof whitegoods; and the delicate, precious china is shattered to pieces. The remains of Huron potsherds<sup>101</sup> in a field of burnt eucalyptus leaves (the black of an "autumn" scene) and "the burnt tiles of that Roman villa" further compound the sense that what has taken place is an injustice. Whilst Scott's loss is not positioned in his poem as having any equivalence to the losses suffered by the Huron Canadian First Nation Peoples under colonial settlement, the survival of the potsherds has the emotional and political magnitude to remind him of his own humanity and post-settlement positioning in this landscape.

In drawing attention to these tiny, broken remains of his former dwelling, Scott also returns us to ideas of enchantment associated with the word "tale" in fragment I.i. From the material of dis-possession, Scott and Ronna must re-enchant their lives. The Hun Luan of the fragment continues to recede from dominance as though it were the ruin from which one might retrieve and re-erect their religious lives. Like the wreath, the leftover possessions have overtones of inviolability.

The next stanza reads discursively of the passage toward recovery, in the sense that it meditates with a certain degree of negativity on the tragedy itself. Like the yin and yang themes discussed above, there are for Scott two inter-related types of enlightenment which he terms "inner" and "outer" enlightenment. More simply, enlightenment is a continual process of consideration in which the individual and the otherness of his/ her world arrives at a solution to a problem, misunderstanding or gulf of difference together. As a process of

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<sup>101</sup> Bruce G Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987). In Trigger's study of Huron culture before (as well as prehistorically) and after European settlement in 1610, their most "coveted possession" post the arrival of Europeans became "their land". As Trigger details, government statutes protecting the right of the Huron people to ownership of their land led to revolts by white settlers who were denied occupation which culminated in Indian defeat. According to Trigger, the Huron Indians were "killed, driven westward or herded onto reservations". Those who remained sustained the greater damage from the colonialists due to their deliberate disempowering due to a hierarchy of class. Any protests disputing the authority of the white Americans only confirmed the Indians as "degenerate and savage" and they were summarily dealt with by the American Army.

thought, it involves diplomacy, compromise and a clear understanding of needs, desires and rigorous purpose.

To demonstrate the beauty of a union between yang and yin, Scott's fragment I.i takes especial note of Ronna's reaction to the wildfire. Having already lost her grandmother's ring, Ronna ritually throws away the key of their former house into the same ashes. Scott commends the act, feeling he has witnessed "a bravura gesture/ of letting-go"<sup>102</sup> and his adage to the comment, that Ronna has thrown the key back to the "Devas",<sup>103</sup> is a poignant exchange of love. For Scott, Ronna's action seems to reinforce the hopelessness of the tragedy, the Hun Luan if you like, and feelings of misery. Yet Scott transforms her action into a gesture of loving resignation. In the awareness the "Devas"<sup>104</sup> are the mystic elementals of water – the "streams, lakes, rivers, clouds and waterfalls"<sup>105</sup> – Scott performs his poetic duty to find redemption and equips Ronna with a divine conceit. In this moment of great and moving devotion, Scott reinstates the Tao, Buddha or God disparaged in the burial ground of ashes and, in doing so, unites the past with the first beginnings of a future for himself and Ronna, his wife to be.

According to American Catholic author and psychotherapist Fauteux, writing on the recovery of the self after trauma,<sup>106</sup> there are three stages of faith development in which a religious person comes to terms with the reality of a negative situation. The first is purgative, the second illuminative and the third unitive.<sup>107</sup> In returning to religious truth – to Dharma or Tao or God – a person who has had a negative worldly experience will at first struggle with the pragmatism of their feelings. At this stage, the truth is that he/ she has been unjustly hurt by something. The task is to surrender this truth in the manner of passive acceptance. For example, Ronna throws her key back into the ashes. Having accepted the truth for what it is and no more, Ronna's consciousness is, once more, pure enough to follow the religious path. She can, in future moments of time, experience the familiar illumination that comes through prayer, mediation or an ethical consciousness. There is clarity after journeying spiritually

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<sup>102</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5.

<sup>103</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5.

<sup>104</sup> Nathaniel Altman, *The Deva Handbook: How to Work with Nature's Subtle Energies* (New York: Simon & Schluster, 1995), Chapter 1, unpaginated.

<sup>105</sup> Altman, *The Deva Handbook*, Chapter 1, unpaginated.

<sup>106</sup> Kevin Fauteux, *The Recovery of Self: Regression and Redemption in Religious Experience* (New York: Paulist Press, 1994).

<sup>107</sup> Fauteux, *The Recovery of Self*, 8.

through the cycle of grief to recovery. Writing his long poem many years after the event, Scott has had the benefit of careful and mindful reflection yet there is another ongoing emotional journey of love in his bond with Ronna. Here, watching her courageously throw back her house key to the ashes, he temporarily transcends reality to reach a unity with Ronna, Nirvana or God.<sup>108</sup> In short, the fragment I.i now shows signs of an emotional awareness previously obscured by the couple's sense of hopelessness – the Hun Luan.

However, the metaphoric darkness is still oppressive. Driving away from the scene of the fire, they are, all three, weeping “like ancient warriors/ or pre-adolescents/ dry sobs that since/ have come back in therapy”.<sup>109</sup> Attending to the gravesite was eventually reparative; but the material reality of what has occurred remains distressing. Interestingly, the Hun Luan of the mood proves not only unshakeable in later weeks, but monstrous in its capacity to reignite other historical tragedies in his life – Scott's mother's death and its repeated pain in “each glimpse of the naked hillside”.<sup>110</sup> I argue the “naked” hill here describes the attraction of a certain place open to the childhood opportunity of play (by rolling downhill) and thereby reminds Scott of his own mother's gaze. Changeable in mood as children still fortifying their inner resources or coping mechanisms, Scott, Ronna and Cherry are hypersensitive to the beauty of a sunset and the impending doom of the rainclouds:

as labile as children  
                                   we have not yet the illusion  
                                   we are in control

dazzled and shattered in turn  
                                   by the ominous beauty  
                                   of say a sunset under rainclouds ...<sup>111</sup>

If this, an overtly poetic image – “a sunset under rainclouds” – is to perform what the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard explores in *The Poetics of Reverie*,<sup>112</sup> it could awaken in the threesome a new consciousness that would dazzle and shatter. To explain, Bachelard's concept of poetic reverie suggests that if there is an ontological bonding of the image sighted

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<sup>108</sup> Fauteux, *The Recovery of Self*, 9.

<sup>109</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5–6.

<sup>110</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6.

<sup>111</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5–6.

<sup>112</sup> Gaston Bachelard, Daniel Russell, trans., *The Poetics of Reverie, Childhood Language and the Cosmos* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).

and the person, then reverie is possible because the image seems relevant to a person's feelings at that particular moment in time.<sup>113</sup> So that, although Bachelard's concept of restitution via poetic beauty is set up as a possibility in Scott's fragment, healing does not eventuate and the image lingers as a lyrical eulogy to feelings of sadness. The sky's presentation is neither inspiring nor gloomy but alludes to both moods. It is, for Scott, a problematic image that has the capacity to reveal beauty but is veiled by tragedy. In the poem fragment, Scott, Ronna and Cherry might find hope again in the vision of a sunset but with rain pending; this stage of spiritual renewal is postponed.

The image does not help Scott "inhabit the world and its happiness"<sup>114</sup> as Bachelard supposed it would, or indeed, lead Scott further into "daydreaming".<sup>115</sup> For Scott, true happiness is achieved in emptying one's mind of thought; and if the sunset were without the rainclouds or the rainclouds (which reward growth but are here, "ominous") without the sunset, the image would perhaps allow such a reading. If the image were pure in this way, it would have, for Scott, the capacity to inspire a consciousness toward spiritual renewal. Yet the juxtaposition of the two means that such daydreams or inspired thoughts are quashed by the very real fact that, for Scott, the image is evidence that the external world is neither beautiful nor good, but rather dangerous. Hölderlin's quote might lead us here: "where danger is/ Grows also what saves".<sup>116</sup> While Scott sees in the image an invitation to engage with it ontologically, and thereby to make peace with the external world and move forward, he finds he is not ready yet, in all consciousness, to reconcile such antagonisms. Procedurally, Scott is relieved to return to teaching because having witnessed the dangerous, he knows something has begun to grow; and that this something will eventually save him.

This is taken further by Scott when he equates the emotional health of the three mourners (Scott, Ronna and Cherry) to "ancient warriors" or "pre-adolescents".<sup>117</sup> If I am to make use of the operative prefix here, pre-, and define it simply as "before" or "closely allied to",<sup>118</sup> then I can draw a relationship between the two similes and their characteristic traits of moral consciousness, namely, intuitive wisdom and innocence. Scott is not using these

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<sup>113</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, 20.

<sup>114</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, 22.

<sup>115</sup> Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie*, 6.

<sup>116</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 1.

<sup>117</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5–6.

<sup>118</sup> William W. Skeat, *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), 368.



terms lightly but, rather, as signposts in his trilogy-long religious argument. The ancient world Scott refers to is specific, in this instance, to Athens, Greece. A city in the ancient land of Homeric epic poetry and named after the god Athena, its cultural revolution of 508 BCE gave rise to the concepts of democratic justice and tyranny.<sup>119</sup> The Athenian people revolted against their leader and put an end to the division between the elite and the common city dweller. Public affairs from this moment forward were to be argued democratically by Athenian residents (though still, residents “of the upper class”).<sup>120</sup> Historically, it is the Athenian people who become “warriors”<sup>121</sup> in the face of “civil strife”.<sup>122</sup> That these “warriors” also emerge in a time of pre-Christian values is important to the context of Scott’s fragment I.i, because it identifies them as torch-bearers in a time of dark confusion – Hun Luan. Preceding the first preaching of Christianity by St Paul in the Athens marketplace,<sup>123</sup> Scott’s ancient warrior is symbolic of the three who have lost their home and all their possessions. In driving away from the ashes to rebuild their futures, Scott and his companions share a “warrior”-like desire for justice. Just as Cherry gains a broader sense of reality by her experience,<sup>124</sup> the Hun Luan of *Darkness* is made distinctive via the allegory of the fire.

To further understand how this allegory is mobilised by Scott, I return to the four quotes in Scott’s epigraph to this Section I.i<sup>125</sup> to show their corresponding themes. The theme in the quote from Tao Te Ching is war; in the quote from Shakyamuni Buddha, the theme is grief; in the third quote from Versfeld, the theme is persistence; and lastly, in the quote from Hölderlin, the theme is growth and development. Scott’s poem continues:

from which it was a relief  
to go back to teaching  
*Pound’s tears at Pisa*

*watching the spider at work*  
*the tent-peg’s moving shadow*

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<sup>119</sup> David M. Pritchard, *War, Democracy and Culture in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1.

<sup>120</sup> Pritchard, *War, Democracy and Culture in Classical Athens*, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5.

<sup>122</sup> Pritchard, *War, Democracy and Culture*, 1.

<sup>123</sup> John Mark Reynolds, *When Athens met Jerusalem: An Introduction to Classical and Christian Thought* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2009), 13.

<sup>124</sup> Suzanne A. Denham and Anita Kocharoff, “Why is She Crying?: Children’s Understanding of Emotion from Preschool to Preadolescence” in *The Wisdom in Feeling: Psychological processes in Emotional Intelligence*, edited by Lisa Feldman Barrett and Peter Salovey (New York: The Guilford Press, 2002), 243.

<sup>125</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 1.

*the moon through laundry*  
 to the nine-through-fiveness  
     of a twentieth century  
     the unquestioned defence of a self  
  
 as if in one week  
     we had lived two different ages  
     two habits of living  
  
 the comfort of Culture  
     *more easily destroyed than preserved*  
     *versus Dasein face to face*  
  
*with its original nakedness* (Heidegger, Safranski)  
     the two irreconcilable  
     except when caught off guard  
  
 my cheek unexpectedly wet  
     from reading in the *Chronicle*  
     of Tibetan prayer flags  
  
 flapping  
     *from the remains of trees*<sup>126</sup>

When Scott returns after the fires to teaching poetry at Berkeley he finds some respite and in this part of the poem, he uses italics to quote Pound and Heidegger: a move that underscores their relevance. They are almost isolated quotes that come to Scott as might a memory and he lets them pass while continuing to write. Their inclusion, however, is pertinent to his emotional and intellectual journey.

The citations from Pound are specific to the suppression of Pound's *Pisan Cantos*<sup>127</sup> due to allegations of treason.<sup>128</sup> Superficially this would not seem to relate to Scott's current situation, yet, in the depiction of the individual against the state, the reference is important. The Pisan sections LXXIV–LXXXIV quoted by Scott are taken from perhaps the most dramatic and transformative section of Pound's *Cantos*, in the sense that they reflect a vulnerability in

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<sup>126</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6–7.

<sup>127</sup> Ezra Pound, Richard Sieburth, ed., *The Pisan Cantos* (New York: New Directions Books, 1948).

<sup>128</sup> According to Ira B. Nadel, in July 26, 1943, Pound was "indicted in absentia of thirteen counts of treason by the Grand Jury of Washington, D.C.". The day before, on July 25, 1943, Mussolini was deposed from power. Pound leaves Rome on foot to begin 450-mile journey, partly by train, to visit Mary in the Tyrol, September." Ira B. Nadel, *Ezra Pound in Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xxiv and 391.

Pound's poetic voice after his imprisonment. What was at first a political poem, becomes confessional.

Imprisoned in Pisa in May 1945, Pound spent the first weeks of his prison term<sup>129</sup> in solitary confinement. Living through these weeks in an outdoors cage,<sup>130</sup> Pound's mental state rapidly declined to breaking point and although initially given a "pup tent"<sup>131</sup> to erect inside the cage at night, Pound later was moved to "a pyramidal tent in the medical area".<sup>132</sup> According to psychiatric assessments Pound never fully recovered from his Pisan experience and spent the next twelve years at "St Elizabeth's Hospital for the Criminally Insane" in Washington, D.C.<sup>133</sup> For Scott, there is a contextual alignment between Pound's mental instability in accordance with environmental conditions and Scott's own despair after the wildfires. In these sections in Pound's *Cantos*, there are moments of reverie, dreamscapes depicting peasants looking out over fields, and moments of acute tragedy such as when Pound reports a hanging or suicide. Frantic and rambling in structure, the section of the *Cantos* Scott chooses to include in the body of this fragment of *Darkness* evokes literatures of lament or profundity which cry out for faith, justice and renewal. Lines such as "rain also is of the process",<sup>134</sup> "and the light of light is the *virtú*",<sup>135</sup> "all things that are are lights"<sup>136</sup> all point toward a religious poetics that, like Scott's, is concerned with humanity, humaneness, love and all creation, and this aspect seems most striking to Scott about Pound's expression of suffering. According to Ira B. Nadel, Pound's religion is not defined in the orthodox manner but is, rather, a type of generic religion "beyond or before Judaism and Christianity".<sup>137</sup> So that in this section I.i, Scott is quoting from a section of the *Pisan Cantos* that is not overtly irreverent of the mystery of Christ,<sup>138</sup> Confucianism<sup>139</sup> or a more generalised sense of religious mysticism.<sup>140</sup> In the *Cantos* there are spiritual reflections on light and shade outside the fabric

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<sup>129</sup> Nadel, *Ezra Pound in Context*, xxv.

<sup>130</sup> Betsy Erkkila, *Ezra Pound: The Contemporary Reviews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 282.

<sup>131</sup> Erkkila, *Ezra Pound: The Contemporary Reviews*, 296.

<sup>132</sup> Alec Marsh, *Ezra Pound* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), 160–161.

<sup>133</sup> Nadel, *Ezra Pound in Context*, xxv.

<sup>134</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *The Pisan Cantos*, xxiv.

<sup>135</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *The Pisan Cantos*, 7 (76, 138).

<sup>136</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *The Pisan Cantos*, 7 (76, 157).

<sup>137</sup> Ira B. Nadel, *Ezra Pound in Context*, 250.

<sup>138</sup> Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos, *The Celestial Tradition: A Study of Ezra Pound's The Cantos* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010), 18.

<sup>139</sup> Tryphonopoulos, *The Celestial Tradition*, 66.

<sup>140</sup> Tryphonopoulos, *The Celestial Tradition*, xviii.

walls of Pound's *Pisan* 'tents', images that evoke the sensory beauty of nature's elements and invigorate Pound's spirit. For Pound, wind, like rain is "of the process"<sup>141</sup> and together are with the virtuous light. Pound's own Scottus Erigena (Irish Theologian and Philosopher) in Canto 74 (139) says "sunt lumina" : 'they are of the light' in mentioning all things sacred and Pound mentions earlier that "in the light of light is the *virtu*".<sup>142</sup> As the Canto continues, what Pound has described as the "whiteness" of an olive tree (traditionally a Christian symbol of peace) blown to this whiteness by the wind, washed in the river and the opposite of "candour", a holy whiteness comes to find its equivalent in "the paraclete that was present in the Yao".<sup>143</sup> I argue it is precisely these poetic values of *The Cantos* that Scott wants to remember and muse upon; the state against the individual and the call for a union with nature and one's immediate environment to find salvation.

Scott's fragment I.i. continues with an image from Pound's *Pisan Cantos*. In the medical tent, Pound sees a spider weaving a web and names her Arachne, after the spider who was changed from a girl by Aphrodite.<sup>144</sup> When night falls, there comes "new subtlety of eyes into my tent ...",<sup>145</sup> the late sky "casting but shade upon the other lights";<sup>146</sup> and the moon "shone" in "half-mask's space".<sup>147</sup> Clearly, Scott's use of Pound in fragment I.i serves two purposes. The first is an act of love and sympathy for Pound's courage in working through his suffering; and the second is an explication of the eternal and divine forces witnessed in the natural elements. In both cases however, there is the superior line of reasoning pursued by Scott which is that in working through the traumas and sins of the past, this metaphoric darkness becomes backgrounded and in this way, helps individuals and communities see the present and future with more clarity. It is a darkness like Pound's night because this blackness is without show, that is, is like a "shade" that hides elsewhere from liveliness which is metaphorically shown to be a light source – a moon, a dawn, a streetlamp.

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<sup>141</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *The Pisan Cantos*, 3 (74, 25).

<sup>142</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *The Pisan Cantos*, 7 (74, 38).

<sup>143</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *The Pisan Cantos*, 7 (74, 43).

<sup>144</sup> In this dissertation I quote from two sources of the *The Pisan Cantos* though both are translated by the same Richard Sieburth. This is the second source relevant to this footnote and the ones which follow: Ezra Pound, Richard Sieburth, ed, *Ezra Pound New Selected Poems and Translations* (New York: New Directions Books, 2010), 224–225, LXXXI.

<sup>145</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *New Selected Poems and Translations*, 224, LXXXI (18).

<sup>146</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *New Selected Poems and Translations*, 225, LXXXI (129).

<sup>147</sup> Pound, Sieburth, *New Selected Poems and Translations*, 225, LXXXI (133).

In writing this section of the *Pisan Cantos*, Pound was at his lowest ebb. We remember also that earlier in Scott's fragment I.i a reference was made to the epoch of Christianity and St Paul's first speech in Athens in which Paul declared a time for light in the darkness, a time to follow God in pursuit of redemption.<sup>148</sup> With this Christian foundation of faith, Scott moves through Pound and through the Hun Luan of his circumstances, to affirm the greater light. In considering Pound and the way he writes himself out of his suffering, Scott shows that through the writing of his own long poem, he also manages to suspend his suffering. In then accepting it and moving through and beyond it to reach enlightenment, the light of Scott's poem sits later in contrast to the opacity of Pound's "shadow"<sup>149</sup> or his Pisan moon glimpsed "through laundry".<sup>150</sup>

Scott's fragment I.i continues with a discussion on two ideas of nature versus culture. In his afterword in *Darkness*, Scott apologises for what he calls a tendency in the long poem to "toy dangerously with abstract didactic impulses".<sup>151</sup> Here, he is seeing some irony in the "two habits of living": the one, going through the processes of bereavement and "*more easily destroyed than preserved*"; and the second, returning to an imposed normality – the "comfort" of "Culture" which is confronting "Dasein" (life or existence)<sup>152</sup> "*face to face*".<sup>153</sup> Seemingly incongruent, Scott suggests it is a pairing of circumstances not unlike the contrast of good and evil. This is alluded to with the inclusion of the italicised quote from German philosopher Rudiger Safranski's account of Heidegger's thought.<sup>154</sup> The quotes from Safranski refer to Heidegger's concept of a spiritual dwelling on earth which Safranski interprets as meaning that we must always renew our actions of freedom and transcendence or they will be forgotten within the very same culture they feed.<sup>155</sup> For Heidegger, writes Safranski, "man must be given a fright" which "forces him back into that homelessness from which he then, always anew, embarks on his flight into culture".<sup>156</sup> This "fright" for Scott is what he terms

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<sup>148</sup> This speech is accounted for in the Ephesians, V. 8-14. John Bird Sumner, *A Practical Exposition of the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (London: J. Huchard and Sons, 1845), 297.

<sup>149</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6.

<sup>150</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6.

<sup>151</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 246.

<sup>152</sup> Stephen Leach, James Tartaglia, ed.s, *The Meaning of Life and the Great Philosophers* (New York, Routledge, 2018), Chapter 10, unpaginated.

<sup>153</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6.

<sup>154</sup> Rudiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1999).

<sup>155</sup> Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 187.

<sup>156</sup> Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 187.

“an undoing of happiness”<sup>157</sup> and is shown to suggest the end of something negative and the beginning of something more nurturing and sustaining.<sup>158</sup> I addressed this moment earlier as being the turning point of a “fuller development”<sup>159</sup> which we see *Darkness* come to demonstrate in consolidating the losses of Book One (*Jakarta*) and Book Two (*Candle*). So that, in a moment of crisis, Scott may feel he has returned to “the Heideggerian state of *Dasein* or being-there”<sup>160</sup> which for him means to have arrived at a point where the world in which he lives is disclosed to him anew: to mean he is here, in this place and time, felt *only* to be existing.<sup>161</sup> Immersed in the world, bereft of ‘happiness’, nature and culture share an opportune togetherness.

Let me discuss this further in application to Scott’s fragment I.i. In this newer, betwixt type of darkness, the Hun Luan of the fragment has become spiritual, mysterious and personal. As the poem fragment progresses, the moments, thoughts and emotions that unfold in the narrative seem more Scott-centric. That is, it seems that whilst Scott has his companions, the scene is local and the tragedy personal. However, given we know Hun Luan to be an unacceptable state of darkness and confusion, we see Scott returning to the familiar culture of day-to-day work hours with a purpose. In reading about good and evil alongside his own observations of what he terms “two habits of living”,<sup>162</sup> Scott finds he can almost believe the idea that his metaphorically mysterious night will be overcome by a metaphorically exposed day.

Moving forward, the newspaper article Scott reads from in fragment I.i references the common Tibetan practice of hanging prayer flags from a pole, tree or wire so they might blow ‘freely’ about in the wind and invoke peace.<sup>163</sup> The flags are made of five different coloured fabrics and have individual prayers written across them. They fly in the wind until the force becomes so great that they leave their fixture and fly freely off into the surrounding space. For Tibetans, these prayers are supposed to fly to extend a gesture of peace into the external

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<sup>157</sup> Peter Dale Scott, Freeman Ng, ed. , *Poetry and Terror: Politics and Poetics in Coming to Jakarta* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2018), 158.

<sup>158</sup> Sanfranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 187.

<sup>159</sup> Fauteux, *The Recovery of Self*, 195.

<sup>160</sup> Scott, Ng, *Poetry and Terror*, 158.

<sup>161</sup> Daniel O. Dahlstrom, *The Heidegger Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 35–36.

<sup>162</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6.

<sup>163</sup> Diane Barker, *Tibetan Prayer Flags: Send Your Blessings on the Breeze* (London: Connections Book Publishing, 2003), 7.

world.<sup>164</sup> They are thought to be blessings for all persons, not just the religious,<sup>165</sup> and it is the wind that determines where they will land when they fly away. Once old flags are blown away, new ones take their place and continue the life-cycle of prayer.<sup>166</sup> Like Scott's reference to his wife Ronna throwing her house key to the "Devas"<sup>167</sup> or Pound's sense of the wind and rain as being part of the life process of spiritual development,<sup>168</sup> here is a new reference to the world's elements. Once more, it encourages the idea that the human spirit can connect with the earth's forces and be positively changed.

The themes of darkness that threaten a sense of divine and earthly salvation inform fragment I.i. Aside from the inspiration of Scott's love for Ronna or literary interest in Pound, there are sunsets offset by ominous rainclouds that stimulate daydreams and poetic reveries. In the early pages of *Darkness*, Scott's spirit is fighting for cosmic growth and development. Here and beyond in *Darkness*, human nature and culture interrelate like opposites so that whilst human nature is intuitive and abstract, culture seems the more material and tangible. Yet in this interrelationship we make our dwelling places habitable. For example, toward the end of fragment I.i, Scott "unexpectedly" weeps when he reads, in the *Washington Chronicle*,<sup>169</sup> "of Tibetan prayer flags flapping/ *from the remains of trees*".<sup>170</sup> In this custom of writing the religious word on fabric and hanging the prayers from trees, Scott is recognising a togetherness of human nature and culture in one gesture toward peace. Yet it is also poignantly inclusive of our earthly dwelling place as the trees are the damaged remains of the wildfire. The present participle "flapping" renders the whole image fragile but – I would argue – not entirely helpless. Once more, the argument Scott pursues is eco-critical. These flags will be set free by the wind and, in doing so, commemorate the ruined land via elementary pathways. The prayers bear the mark of free scripted handwriting, are lifted to the heavens and commemorate earth. Human, Heaven and Earth are unified in an ecologically sensitive way, that is, inclusively, silently, and passively.

In all instances, Scott grieves and sheds tears. The water, the wind, night, day and humans are like each other in their cosmic, and ecologically specific, changeability. Culture,

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<sup>164</sup> Barker, *Tibetan Prayer Flags*, 5.

<sup>165</sup> Barker, *Tibetan Prayer Flags*, 26.

<sup>166</sup> Barker, *Tibetan Prayer Flags*, 44.

<sup>167</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 5.

<sup>168</sup> Zhaoming Quan, *Ezra Pound and China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 200.

<sup>169</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 7.

<sup>170</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 7

politics and fire are alike in Scott's metaphorical scheme. To the cosmic concerns, Scott finds observances of nature can give rise to an inner enlightenment which is personal, spiritual and developmental. Scott finds that attendance to the social world of one's time can bring about an outer enlightenment which is world-orientated, religious, political and even radical. Yet, as Scott's fragment I.i insists, in oscillating between the two ways of understanding the world, the poet Shelley was right: the one without the other, Scott reminds us, is "damned, even murderous".<sup>171</sup> This is shown most clearly in the differences of each cosmic or cultural study in the poem – for instance, in the suggestion one can be "dazzled and shattered"<sup>172</sup> by nature's beauty and, in another, that in the comfort of the nine-to-fiveness of culture one can be "caught off guard"<sup>173</sup> by tears. While Scott's first poem fragment in *Darkness* has undertaken to unify inner and outer enlightenment, it seems the poem has found the shadow of Hun Luan too great to satisfactorily complete such a project.

#### 4.4 Fragment I.iii and Hun Luan

At the conclusion of fragment I.i, Scott's undertaking of a reconciliation between dark and light is determined by the poet to be out of reach: however, his compelling faith remains – that there is light after darkness – and this re-emerges in fragment I.iii. Unlike the discursive narratives of Scott's earlier books, in *Darkness* Scott undertakes to conclude his treatise with confidence and an affirmation of belief. That is, where Hun Luan is metaphorically a cloud of mental confusion and doubtfulness, its presence in Scott's poem is thwarted little by little rather than being allowed to thrive. In other words, the cloud of Hun Luan in the poem is present each and every time there is a re-telling of Scott's negative or difficult real-life experiences, but it is something Scott recalls in order to let go or in order to empty the mind and soul of impurities. On this point, the Buddhist ethos that a pure spirit requires the mind to engage with wisdom finds hindrances in these occasions of Hun Luan that obstruct the connection. In the spiritual practice of Buddhist meditation there is a saying, "the lamp is the substance of light: the light is the function of the lamp".<sup>174</sup> Therefore, attempting to meditate

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<sup>171</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 246.

<sup>172</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6.

<sup>173</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6–7.

<sup>174</sup> Heinrich Dunoulin, *Zen Buddhism: India and China* (Bloomington: World Wisdom Inc., 2005), 140–141.



a type of spiritual calmness under a dark cloud is a pointless exercise. To show how Scott gradually lessens the presence and influence of Hun Luan in Book Three, that is, shifts the idea of Hell and Purgatory away from present and future time, I begin with the first section of poem fragment I.iii:

*I believe in enmindment  
the translation of light  
into awareness of the dark*

*and understanding of that fear  
we return to  
whenever we forget*

Last autumn the brilliant  
sunset of deep merlot red  
from Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines

sensuous on the distance  
if also ominous  
a reminder of how much

urbanization deludes us

to think we control our lives  
peasants under a volcano

know perhaps better what they are doing  
as they plant their rice in furrows  
than Ronna and I who lived

among a lifetime of belongings  
we thought (wrongly)  
we could count our own ...<sup>175</sup>

In a video series with writer, poet, scholar and friend Freeman Ng, Scott discusses another poetry collection in his oeuvre called *Tilting Point*.<sup>176</sup> In commenting on the first poem of this collection, a poem dedicated to contemporary Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer (1931–2015), Scott uses the analogy of Tundra swans migrating yearly from the Arctic to the Delta marshes of America to raise the philosophical quandary of deciding what place is to be called

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<sup>175</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 6–7.

<sup>176</sup> Peter Dale Scott, Freeman Ng, ed., *Tilting Point, Poems by Peter Dale Scott*, Youtube Interview Series, 2013, last accessed June 12, 2019, <https://youtube/xauwRFCGm44>

one's home. Is home where you live or the destination of a long journey? Is it the place you return to, the place you visit often, or the place in which you were born? Considering that Scott is of Canadian origin, worked in Poland and then migrated to settle in California, it would seem this question is unavoidable if he is to decide where his own home might lie.<sup>177</sup> The above fragment revisits this idea and, for Scott, the problem of deciding this question is personal, complex, civic and deeply fraught.

As we have seen in my earlier discussions of *Seculum*, Scott is critical of humankind's millennial movement away from the spiritual, religious aspects of life in pursuit of cultural prizes such as profit-only economics and popular politics (concerned with power and gain), which he argues have compromised many valuable, ecological aspects of our individual, private and personal human lives. As Scott writes in a short article in *Tikkun* magazine in 2011:

In my recent prose I have dwelt on the fact that so many important reforms of the last century ... have achieved their political goals by building coalitions that were spiritually energized. Utopian as it might sound, I believe that hope for significant reform in the United States as a whole must also create a strong civil society in which the competing demands of faith and reason have somehow been reconciled.<sup>178</sup>

The reforms Scott speaks of and the reconciliation he demands are explored in fragment I.iii<sup>179</sup> of *Darkness*. Here, Scott muses allegorically on the relationship between native peasant living and his own more Americanised and urban style of place-making. The context of the fragment is the district and surrounds of "Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines" and the time is contemporary – the "last Autumn" preceding the year 2000.<sup>180</sup> These "peasants" tending to their rice fields are presumably the native villagers of the district. With the district highly vulnerable to frequent volcanic eruptions from Mount Pinatubo, the identity Scott assigns the villagers is expressive of the environmental degradation caused by eruptions and significant economic losses from agricultural damage. Reflecting on these workers of the fields and wondering about life from their perspective, Scott considers the differences between his life in an urban township of California and the one he is witnessing in the Philippines. So that

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<sup>177</sup> Scott, Ng, *Tilting Point*, Youtube Interview Series, 2013, last accessed June 12, 2019, <https://youtu.be/xauwRFCGm44>

<sup>178</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Reconciling Inner and Outer Enlightenment," *Tikkun*, 26, no. 1, (March 24, 2011), unpaginated.

<sup>179</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 11–15.

<sup>180</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 12.

where the workers might rely upon a sunset atop a mountain to be either assured or forewarned, Scott's dwelling place relies on possession and acquisitions for knowing comfort or hardship. Neither position is entirely without a form of metaphorical darkness, that is, the peasant cannot know whether they are safe from natural doom, and the urban person cannot know for certain if they have all that will save them from hard times. For Scott, humans need a little of both worlds to gain spiritual fulfilment, a sense of themselves dwelling with nature and a sense of themselves in the possessions they gain to nourish a sense of homecoming:

and then through the weeks  
    I sifted the meagre ashes  
    vainly for her diamond ring

that lifetime complacency  
    suddenly converted to  
    the opposite much older nostalgia

we can control nothing  
    a reminiscence of childhood's  
    uncontrollable disasters

and finally a humbled insight  
    about moments in time  
    not being strung together

for you to rely on  
    as did the Enlightenment  
    inspired by science to engineer

new projects for humane  
    and rational community  
    whose failure now in Eastern Europe

has been followed so soon  
    by the resurgence  
    of old hatreds too long denied

churches destroying churches  
    with that rage aroused uniquely  
by visions of peace ...<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 12–13.

In the whole of *Seculum*, Scott argues for a balanced approach to living, one which is ecologically sensitive to the natural environment and mindfully progressive. He is critical of the Enlightenment project, seeing it as too secular in its vision to be truly “humane” and “rational”.<sup>182</sup> He is also (personally) critical of the renovations to Catholicism post Vatican II, regarding it as diverging too much from early Christian values.<sup>183</sup> So that really, the secular vision of the Enlightenment project has not sprung out of nowhere – that even in religious societies there is unrest (“churches destroying churches”) and the world is indeed rife with conflict. Yet in the poem fragment above he paints a picture of a life in which all the many constructs an individual or collection of individuals initiate and build upon fall apart through “complacency”, bewildering “disasters”, “failure” to hold ground or complex, emotional surges of rage that are “destroying”. For Scott, such a lively context explains why sentimental ‘romance’<sup>184</sup> is such an integrated part of the human condition. In the above stanzas, feelings of nostalgia surface to compensate loss, and restore meaning that there is a sense that the retrieval of Ronna’s heirloom ring would resurrect the past from the ashes. Scott is humbled by the experience as he learns his attempts to historicise the past have limitations: that there are “moments in time” which cannot be “strung together”, but rather need to be salvaged as enduring, cherished memories.<sup>185</sup>

Finding himself confused by the task of salvaging and restoring past relics and memories in the present, Scott faces a wasteland of ashes and loss with hopelessness. He reckons with the religious idea that out of some metaphoric fire, there can be born a new beginning (“humbled and liberated/ by the fluke of fire/ one has the perspective to see”).<sup>186</sup> This reckoning works on the premise that any life experience which brings suffering can also be enlightening and help a person mature in response to life’s challenges. According to American religious and theological scholar Padraic O’Hare (also a scholar of Thomas Merton),

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<sup>182</sup> Whilst the Enlightenment project aims at a rational approach to thought, Scott finds it too secular in vision for this rationality to be all-encompassing (of the spiritual, the dark) and therefore, not precisely reasonable.

<sup>183</sup> I say personally here because Scott has never written of this in his prose articles. I suppose it therefore to be a personal viewpoint he does not necessarily think is the essential problem behind religious unrest. The true problem of disturbing violence (“churches destroying churches”) is rather, for Scott in *Seculum*, a question of irrational action versus enlightened thought. Peter Dale Scott, Rebecca Law, *Personal Correspondence* (September, 2014).

<sup>184</sup> These are my words aimed at signalling the importance of individual and the complexity of our differences. I regard these differences in *Seculum* to be regarded as individual and intertwined with what we love, what makes us unique and the things we cherish (for whatever sentimental reason – that is, even inexplicably).

<sup>185</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 12.

<sup>186</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 13.

this growth pattern parallels the idea of an immature religious person practising to become a mature religious person. Where the first persona is characterised by “attitudes which are hostile, fearful, compulsive, archaic and fanatical”,<sup>187</sup> the second persona is “consistent with critical thinking, is open to experience, autonomous in motive, satisfying, integrative and capable of growth and change”.<sup>188</sup> On these terms, equality is only achieved by mature religious attitudes. When it comes to real action in the face of suffering, mature religion is proactive, that is, it is enlightened. As O’Hare explains, prejudice or “demonization of the other” is the attitude of fundamentalists<sup>189</sup> and does not achieve harmony in human communities. In fragment I.iii Scott is challenged developmentally, that is, in the face of tragedy he must summon all the strength of his spirit to overcome grief and move forward. He could be immature in his faith and find blame for the tragedy, or he could seek a personal enlightenment, a metaphoric light in the darkness of his despair. He chooses the latter because it is only in the mature religious attitude that one can build unity. This spiritual type of enlightenment is presented in fragment I.iii as compassion for others in Scott’s immediate community, including Ronna, Cherry and his lost neighbours.

In reading Scott’s fragment I.iii under the theme of Hun Luan, uncertainty and doubt, we observe Hun Luan in Scott himself, such as when he is searching for his wife Ronna’s lost ring among the ashes of their fire-devastated home. We observe a man besieged with past memories as he avoids his present feelings of grief, and one who is intellectually recovering his knowledge of cultural parallels in a bid for spiritual guidance. Scott has lost an important part of his world, yet is thinking of the whole world. In this, he is also a man who is both secular and spiritual in his thoughts, who can consider the yang and yin aspects of human experience and Christian viewpoints of a value-based but inherently plural culture.<sup>190</sup> James Davison Hunter’s definition of this value-based culture is one in which morality leads to good ideas with good consequences. This returns us to the very basis of enlightenment. For Scott, harmonising tensions in society will not change the world but enlighten us as to how a Jeffersonian “tyranny and oppression of body and mind” can be reversed to generate “better”

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<sup>187</sup> Padriac O’Hare, *The Enduring Covenant: The Education of Christians and the End of Antisemitism* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press, 1997), 51.

<sup>188</sup> O’Hare, *The Enduring Covenant*, 51.

<sup>189</sup> O’Hare, *The Enduring Covenant*, 51.

<sup>190</sup> James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World, The Irony, Tragedy & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 8.

persons and a better society.<sup>191</sup> In considering Eastern *and* Western spiritual dynamics within his own American culture, Scott approaches a worldview that is value-based, inclusive and thereby, promising:

divine Leninist or pragmatic  
from the seminary the Sorbonne  
or the National War College

but humbled and liberated  
by the fluke of fire  
one has the perspective to see

that the Enlightenment  
was so much more constricted  
and unenlightened than we thought

needing to define  
and then eradicate  
any available demon

church state or class  
to explain why the world was not  
what we intended it to be

the brightness of Voltaire  
who mocked Dante  
for having made Virgil say

his parents were Lombards *Inferno*  
(exactly the same as  
if Homer were to announce

*that he had been born a Turk)* *Farinelli*  
the Voltaire who was sure  
he knew better than they did

what was good for the Jews

and who died cursing  
*ecrasez l'infame ...*<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Hunter, *To Change the World, The Irony, Tragedy & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*, 9.

<sup>192</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 13.

Scott's quotes in fragment I.iii – such as the one from Voltaire who, in dying, curses the Roman Catholic Church with the phrase “*écrasez l'infame*” (crush the loathsome thing)<sup>193</sup> – question the idea of a maturation in development. Consistent with O'Hare's definition of mature and immature religion, Scott suggests Voltaire's “demonization of the other” is one example of how immaturity of thought might be expressed. Although this list poem gathers together the many types of darkness that ravage Scott as he writes, he still finds he “has the perspective to see”. The themes of war, demonization and inhumanity that surface through this listing fall away in this “seeing” and reveal, through Scott, a human tendency to show vulnerability in the face of tragedy. Again, the Enlightenment project is reached out for hopelessly and decried for its failures and again, religion is also rallied with it as really, no better at rational thought and action. Ultimately, for Scott, the effect of tragedy on human life is universal; whatever perspective a person takes in order to effect a new way of life – for example, divine or pragmatic, prayerful or practical – all affected persons need to source the same emotional willpower and want, importantly, to restore peace to their lives. This is the irony Scott sees between a secular and religious perspective on society and, at this stage in his thinking, he can offer no remedy. Yet in the sense equality is becoming better “seen” as mindful tolerance, the confusion of Hun Luan becomes a little less vague:

behind the Soviet philanthropy  
                                 which sought to eradicate faith  
                                 by use of an Inquisition

and also that of the West  
                                 and its priesthoods of social science  
                                 who after decades of pressing

unwanted dams and military  
                                 torturers on the Third World  
                                 have helped *liberate* the Soviet Union

for a new world order  
                                 of Schumpeterian destructiveness  
                                 whose outcome is *not yet*

the zeals of the early  
                                 and the late Christianity

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<sup>193</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 13.

the early they died for  
 the late they killed for  
     still driving Enlightenment's  
     late crusades against infidels  
 in the name of revolution  
     or (in our local dialect)  
     economic development  
 Thus now to overlook  
     the zeals of the Enlightenment  
     would contribute to its decay  
 just as to fault enlightenment  
     for its lack of kinship with the dark  
     is to think critically once again  
 I believe in enmindment  
     and poetic politics  
     the intuition of an agenda  
 not just from the past  
     still less from some nihilistic  
     assertion of pure possibility  
 but from the familiar silence  
     of a source beyond self  
     accessible to anyone  
 liberated from possession  
     like Ronna and myself  
     now my best files from two decades  
 are ashes on a hillside  
     I can look to Dante  
     who precisely because  
 he was a *parte per se stesso* (*party unto himself: Paradiso*)  
     exile and fugitive  
     seeking a path between  
 the *ordinate caritas* of faith (*ordered love*)  
     and the Kantian *sapere aude* (*dare to know; Kant, Horace*)  
     (the heroic pursuit of knowledge  
 that led Odysseus to drowning)      (*Inferno*)



can speak to us <sup>194</sup>

Here, Scott's *Darkness* starts to reveal its strongest argument. There are tensions in contemporary American society related to the right and wrong way to move forward in our collective dwelling place on earth. For Scott, these tensions stem out of the Enlightenment epoch because it too regarded individual and public realms as separate. For instance, Enlightenment thinkers often consider spirituality as problematic in the public realm and confined it in the private sphere, and such segregation rendered individual enlightenment problematic, as it deprived it of opportunity to flourish in the communal sphere. However, rather than advocating for any large or small occasion for a spiritual enlightened thinking, Scott argues for a type of "enmindment" which recognises the history of the human race as a starting point that begins with what Hunter calls "the *essence*", which is the "*hearts and minds of individuals*".<sup>195</sup> The argument Scott makes in calling for "a kinship with the dark" and a greater respect for the "zeals" of the Enlightenment (which pursued salvation via human reason) is to return to the beginning of human time and recognise there a continual dialectic between survival and sophisticated thought.<sup>196</sup> In this dynamism, Scott sees a regard for the past as a presentation of possibilities, a faith that is intuited from a "source beyond self", and a hillside can be both a burial ground and a place of reverent fondness. In the fragment I.iii of Scott's Hun Luan Section he has moved out of dark confusion into the light shed by the pastoral – a hillside, the religious poetry of Dante, the difficult religious challenges of Voltaire's philosophy. Importantly, this positive movement summons the poetical and metaphoric light of a new day. Although not completely resolved, Scott is moving through his trauma and metaphoric darkness toward clarity – precisely *because* he is "minding the darkness" which is, in Book Three, a final, critical exercise.

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<sup>194</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 14–15.

<sup>195</sup> Hunter, *To Change the World, The Irony, Tragedy & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*, 6.

<sup>196</sup> Amos Fukenstein argues that the Enlightenment mission is paradoxical in appearing to relegate religion to niche areas of public life. For Fukenstein, this is because the mission to save the world through reason forgets our capacity for reason comes from intellectual and emotional responses to problem solving. So that the relationship between the Enlightenment and Christianity is a dialectic because the mission to save through reason sources first, the essence of humankind which is historical and eternally debatable (by virtue of our not ever being able to truly know darkness). Amos Fukenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 361–362.

In *Darkness*, there is a balancing of the yin and yang themes explored in the first two books of the long poem trilogy which correspond, respectively, to inner and outer enlightenment and to a secular and spiritual vision of the world. In *Darkness*, Scott blends both as a type of reparative vision that allows him the hope needed to survive tragedy and the belief in reconstructing human life after devastating experiences. In illuminating the metaphoric cloud of Hun Luan, Scott brings a metaphoric light to the darkness that reveals within the dialectic there is interdependence – the one person upon the other, for example – which in turn, makes the concept of redemption seem a possibility. Allegorically, *Darkness* has performed the function of developing a discourse around the idea of emotional development from innocence to maturity. Scott seems to say that this process of maturation is interdependent upon the individual recognising the otherness of any given person and/ or situation.

In chapter 5 I continue to strengthen this perspective on Scott's Book Three of *Seculum* through a closer examination of the central argument: that yang (and outer enlightenment) needs its twin yin (and inner enlightenment) if culture and society are to be maturely eco-critical, Christian, religious, spiritual, human, or all of these together.

## CHAPTER 5

### *MINDING THE DARKNESS: A POEM FOR THE YEAR 2000*

*Issa: This world  
Is no bigger than  
a dewdrop world  
and yet and yet*<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.1 Introduction

In chapter 4, I have shown that *Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000*<sup>2</sup> enables Scott to move from suffering through to reconciliation and redemption. I have considered the shifting perspectives of *Seculum*'s long journey between the forces of yang (bright, masculine: from the sun) and yin (dark, feminine: from the moon)<sup>3</sup> to show that Book Three is healing and consolidating with respect to the poem's main issue with war and peace. I have shown that *Darkness*, a poem for the year 2000, clarifies many dialectical topics and tropes concerning personal and public welfare which order the material of *Seculum*'s poesis. I have explained that this ordering and making sense of matters either oppositional or ethically problematic qualifies the trilogy as a structure for a new dawn. I have discussed the formal arrangement of the poem's sections to explain that a similar employment of guides utilised by Scott in Book One and Book Two assists him in this final act of reckoning. I have described these guides as different from earlier sources such as Dante or Wordsworth in that they are now thematic and textual rather than identifiable as mentors. For example, in *Darkness*, Scott sources Eastern religious material concerned with good and evil to think critically about reckoning their differences and to argue for peace-orientated living and dwelling on earth.

The focus of chapter 5, therefore, regards this critical ability of Scott's final poesis to be the stylistic result of Scott himself having journeyed through Hell and Purgatory. It considers the context of Scott's long poem in Book Three to be one of mindfulness, clarity and a new way of thinking and seeing which essays the eco-spiritual theme of *Seculum*. Where

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Appearances," *Leaping Clear* (Fall, 2016), unpaginated. Please note whilst the journal does not specify a day or month of publication, the reference dates Scott's poem as July 2, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Minding the Darkness, A Poem for the Year 2000* (New York: New Directions Books, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> In the doctrine of Tao, "expanding and showing itself [active and powerful as yang/ intellect]" ; now contracting and showing itself [passive as yin: soul]. James Legge, *The I Ching: Book of Changes* (New York: Dover Publications, 2012), 46.

chapter 4 has considered the making of *Darkness* as the ordering and structuring of confusion, spiritual lostness, pain and suffering so they are healed, chapter 5 unpacks the process itself to re-examine the idea of enlightenment as “enmindment”.<sup>4</sup> A term employed by Scott to present a year 2000 millennial approach to eco-spiritual dwelling, it explains a type of critical thinking and acting which encompasses both personal and communal needs/ demands to achieve balance, harmony and peaceful relationships. In Jason Boulet’s critique of *Darkness*, Boulet defines this concept initially in terms of what it is not:

Scott’s ‘Enmindment’ is not a thoroughgoing repudiation of “light” and “reason” in favour of “darkness” and mystery but, rather, “*the translation of light/ into awareness of the dark*” (*Minding*, 11), which necessarily has its origins in a critique of clear certainties of the Enlightenment: “to fault Enlightenment/ for its lack of kinship with the dark/ is to think critically once again”.<sup>5</sup>

As this definition illustrates, Scott’s belief in a balanced concept of secular and spiritual enlightenment arises out of his critique of secular enlightenment as having, in its pragmatism and administrative form of governance, replaced mysticism with dogmatic belief in absolute rationality and instrumentality. The light and dark he speaks of is a metaphoric reference (respectively) to all that can be known scientifically, empirically and by way of experience as opposed to that which is, by way of its spiritual and religious wonder, mysterious and unknowable. In *Darkness*, I argue, Scott seeks a “kinship”<sup>6</sup> between light and darkness that performs a translation of their interdependence; and that, in doing so, he alternates between the two discourses – yang/yin, light/darkness – to develop a productive understanding of their compatibility. In this way Scott is modifying established cultural notions of a secular and spiritual division in worldly affairs by advocating the public and civic importance of the spiritual. I maintain that *Darkness* stabilises the alternate secular and spiritual perspectives to render both equally important to enmindment. To analyse this union of personal and communal spiritual thinking and behaving in Scott’s new dawn for the year 2000, I look firstly at the civic and then the personal scene of the poem.

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 22.

<sup>5</sup> Jason Boulet, “Enlightenments, Taoism, and Language in Peter Dale Scott’s *Minding the Darkness*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 75, no. 4 (2006): 925–945.

<sup>6</sup> Boulet, “Enlightenments, Taoism, and Language”, 925.

In my discussion of the first section of *Darkness* in chapter 4, I defined the Hun Luan as a classical Chinese language term for a state of mental confusion.<sup>7</sup> In this later chapter the flow on to the concept of yang – of intellect<sup>8</sup> – suggests an outward looking perspective with respect to the idea of enlightenment. In Section Two of *Darkness* Scott leaves behind his personal, mental confusions to explore the civic context of his time. I suggest that in doing so he is exploring Tai Ji or the Great Origin<sup>9</sup> of “all living things and beings in the cosmos”.<sup>10</sup>

In *Darkness* Scott is promoting the manifest possibility of peace by consolidating his argument for reconciliation and thereby presenting a poetic architecture of clarity and transparency, which awaits a metaphoric tomorrow or new dawn. I believe the theme of yang, which concerns all things civic and is related to public transparency in governance, is apropos of this idea of *Seculum* as being of worldly significance. I believe that Scott’s employment of yang as a guiding force in the public realm endorses qualities such as individual responsibility, consideration of others and humble admission of human fallibility.

The use of the word “civic” is linked to public and political life and governance. It also suggests an impersonality Scott finds limiting and addresses in *Darkness* via the twin umbrellas of yang and yin. For Scott, the civic without the personal is as unproductive a situation as a yin force without its yang dynamic. So that the preferred scenario is a continual dialogue between the two for interconnected meaning and sense. With this in mind, the word civic could be extended to cover public concerns such as government, democracy and political activity. Locating its word origin in *civis*, meaning citizen,<sup>11</sup> it could also be extended to advocate a morality concerning duty and obligation of citizens inside any one municipality.<sup>12</sup> For these reasons, the umbrella of yang can also be understood to embrace this civic or public place as one involving both spiritual and political concerns: which activates and pacifies (lightens and darkens) in turn, the persistent dialectics of Scott’s critique.

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<sup>7</sup> N. T. Girandot, *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism: The Theme of Chaos (hun-tun)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 95. See also Chapter 4, footnotes 29 and 30.

<sup>8</sup> Legge, *The I Ching: Book of Changes*, 46.

<sup>9</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 231.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Boedicker and Freya Boedicker, *The Philosophy of Tai Chi Chuan: Wisdom from Confucius, Lao Tzu and Other Great Thinkers* (Berkeley: Blue Snake Books, 2011), 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Lexico Oxford Dictionaires*, accessed June 12, 2019, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/civic>

<sup>12</sup> *Lexico Oxford Dictionaires*, accessed June 12, 2019, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/civic>

Much of the process of Scott's marriage of opposites in *Darkness* can be explained by the epigraphs which guide each of the long poem's sections. As in Book One and Book Two, this sectioning and headlining of epigraphs helps organise the poem's material. Where in chapter 4, we have considered Section One of *Darkness* and the ways in which Scott journeys out of the Hun Luan of mental confusion, this chapter considers the middle Sections Two, "Yang" and Three, "Yin". In doing so, it is concerned with first the yang and then the yin reckonings of *Darkness* which Scott seeks to combine and consolidate. From here, Scott's epic quest to find Paradise is well under way as we approach Section Four, "Er Yi—The Ways of Heaven and Earth", and Section Five, "Tai Ji—The Great Origin". These final stages of *Darkness* are addressed in the thesis conclusion.

## 5.2 Yang and Signposting of Er Yi —The Ways of Heaven and Earth.

In Section Two, "Yang", Scott lists a series of epigraphs that are specific to its themes.<sup>13</sup> The first is from Book 8 of Confucius' *Analects*:<sup>14</sup> "Where a country is ill-governed, riches and honour are things to be ashamed of"<sup>15</sup> and is reminiscent of the *Tao Te Ching* quote in Section One.<sup>16</sup> In offering instruction to Master Jenzi who visits Master Zeng who is ill, the convalescing pupil advises Jenzi to follow the Tao and suggests that, should the Tao not prevail in the world, he should "keep concealed" and, vice-versa, "show himself".<sup>17</sup> This quote at the beginning of "Yang"<sup>18</sup> reminds us that Scott's project concerns his perspectives on secularism and a politics that is lacking religious or spiritual import. On this basis the epigraph warns of the moral dangers of secular thought and practice that is not balanced or countered by spiritual teaching. And, further, it suggests that secular thought and practice that is uninformed by spiritual concerns can endanger not just the body politic, but also affect the individual's peace of mind and well-being as well as their sense of eco-spiritual dwelling. Consistent with *Seculum*'s prevailing theme of love for all persons and earth's creation, Scott's epigraph here signals the way to Heaven as via consideration of not just our own needs and

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<sup>13</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius (From the Chinese Classics)* (Alexandria: The Library of Alexandria Publications, 1910), Book 8, Chapter 8, unpaginated.

<sup>15</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>16</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>17</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

aspirations but our context in the world with and among others in pursuit of the same happiness. The following excerpt from fragment II.iii expresses the beauty of the spiritual experience and its significance to our daily quest for love and happiness:

How can we attune  
our self-clouded intellects  
to the mysteries of the Tao  
letting words themselves  
and not those who transmit them  
have their own cunning  
their own unshakeable dialectic  
which must be tangled out  
like recombinant DNA  
or two sleeping lovers who in bed  
once each has freely lapsed  
to some abandoned posture  
find the only places  
where their hands can rest?<sup>19</sup>

As we have learnt in previous chapters, “the mystery of the Tao”<sup>20</sup> acknowledges that there is a “higher force involved”<sup>21</sup> in our daily union with others in love and friendship. It asks that in our earthly relationships with one another we keep “our hearts and eyes wide open” to the realisation that what we encounter in another is the divine gift of life; and with this, the energy of revelation that helps cultivate our own maturing spirituality.<sup>22</sup> For Scott the key to eco-spiritual dwelling is not just intellectual reflection but a more balanced and spiritually informed dialogue. In *Darkness* Scott suggests we accept the presence of higher cosmic forces or energies in our earthly dwelling which can enrich our lives. Beginning his Section Two with Confucius,<sup>23</sup> Scott begins his poetic essay on human understanding, reason and loving kindness.

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<sup>19</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 32.

<sup>20</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 32.

<sup>21</sup> Solala Towler, *The Tao of Intimacy and Ecstasy: Realizing the Promise of Spiritual Union* (Louisville: Sounds True, 2014), Introduction, unpaginated.

<sup>22</sup> Towler, *The Tao of Intimacy and Ecstasy: Realizing the Promise of Spiritual Union*, Introduction, ix–xii.

<sup>23</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

From here, Scott continues to unpack the dialectic of the intellectual and the spiritual with a quote from Aristotle's *Poetics*.<sup>24</sup> "The historian relates the events which have happened, the poet those which might happen".<sup>25</sup> The quote is from Aristotle's essays on poetry and fine art<sup>26</sup> and follows the argument that although history and poetry have the same origin, they follow different tangents of thinking and purpose.<sup>27</sup> The argument in full claims history is concerned with what is materially particular (what someone did or "suffered") whilst poetry has philosophical and universal ideals (concerned with the "probability or necessity" of what *may* happen).<sup>28</sup> Aristotle argues that because poetry has at its disposal the capacity to create myth (the capacity to "ascend from the individual to the universal", to "idealise the real"),<sup>29</sup> the reading experience can be allegorical. In its myth making capacity, poetry can be transported to the here and now of a reader's world, not imagined as an exact story recounting the past. Whether or not the story is honest, true or based on a real event in time, the poem is removed from time and place by virtue of it being a work of art. Its 'story' can be experienced over and over at any time or place; and further, because of this eternal liveliness, it can stimulate many differing discourses on philosophical ideas such as meaning, sense, and relevance.

By its inclusion in "Yang",<sup>30</sup> Scott is claiming Aristotle's argument as one linked to an enlightenment which relies on "unity and plurality".<sup>31</sup> Concerned with the masculine, outer force of yang, Scott borrows from Aristotle to suggest that the intellectual and the spiritual, like the historian and the poet, fall under the one common "idea" related to humankind, dwelling and being in the world.<sup>32</sup> Just as early Greek poetry relied upon heroic history to fashion its epic, Scott's long poem *Seculum* writes out of the history of the 1965 Indonesian

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<sup>24</sup> Aristotle, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, translated by S.H. Butcher (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1987).

<sup>25</sup> This exact translation is from the above-mentioned *Poetics*, 9.2 but is not consistent with Butcher's rendition. For the purposes of my argument and consistent with my appraisal of "enmindment" I rely on Scott's translation quoted similarly in Butcher's phrasing "one relates what has happened, the other what may happen". Aristotle, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. S.H. Butcher, 27.

<sup>26</sup> Aristotle, "Possibility, Poetics and Necessity", Aristotle, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. S.H. Butcher, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Aristotle, *The Poetics of Aristotle*, trans. S.H. Butcher, 27.

<sup>28</sup> Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Dover Publications, 2011), 91.

<sup>29</sup> S.H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art: With a Critical Text and Translation of The Poetics* (Devon: Dover Publications, 1951), 402.

<sup>30</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>31</sup> Butcher, transl., *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 186.

<sup>32</sup> Butcher, transl., *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 186.



massacres to “ascend [from the particular] to the universal”.<sup>33</sup> In reconciling the past and reimagining a future definitively in *Darkness*, Scott’s yang behaves in a way which allows history to collapse into the epic and heroic story of his poetry. Utilised as an umbrella term which later flows into yin and vice-versa, Scott’s yang introduces the first, and according to Aristotle, divergent, commentary of history and seeks to honour it in the making of the poem. This “unity composed of a plurality of parts”<sup>34</sup> – which is the “organism [or] system”<sup>35</sup> of a poem that unfolds artfully and in this way organically – ensures the unbrokenness of the dialectic and/ or the metaphoric dark and light thoughts presented in *Darkness*. The following fragment II.iv is one example of this unifying of plural parts:

## 11.iv

*Unde hoc malum?* Whence is this evil?  
is a question for those  
in a point of vantage

*Brown 394*

outside the swirl of dialectics  
which has given us justice and the state  
and *great confusion*

*hun luan: Tao Te Ching 18*

in a time of expansion  
there is no such freedom  
in times of scaling down

the illusory separation  
of light and darkness  
is a theme of compassion

like the Poles in Warsaw  
each person carrying a candle  
in the broad river of candles

descending upon the graveyard  
of war-smoke under the birches  
on the Night of the Dead

Our problematic answer  
Is *Far! Very Far!*<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Butcher, transl., *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 402.

<sup>34</sup> Butcher, transl., *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 186.

<sup>35</sup> Butcher, transl., *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 186.

<sup>36</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 33.

The intellectual and spiritual perspectives are “vantage points” through which we view our lives and here for Scott, it is the latter outlook which wonders about evil. The other dialectics of the state which govern us and determine justice and unity might seemingly be dealt with but for Scott are merely a “swirl”<sup>37</sup> of energies. Hun Luan is again conceptualised as it was in Section One of *Darkness*, remaining the “*great confusion*”<sup>38</sup> of a world trying to unify pluralities without Tao or the eventual letting go of reason and sense to the cosmos and the mystery of creation. This is explained in chapter 4 but in this fragment, the concept is lent a greater clarity in being linked by Scott to the symbol of the candle. Importantly, the scene Scott creates of Polish residents carrying candles on the occasion of All Souls Day identifies these candles with the Catholic tradition of commemorating the dead (which is traced also to Pagan and Celtic traditions).<sup>39</sup> In this way it seems a clear expression of how a poem can unify pluralities organically. Remembering that Scott identifies himself strongly with Catholicism, the scene’s unifying function works on many levels such as blending the personal with the political, the Eastern concept of yang with the Western tradition of a public religious ceremony, a merging of *Seculum’s* own *Candle* with *Darkness*, the bringing together of war (here, the Second World War) and peace, a ‘presencing’ of the past in the present and a clear reinstatement of the spiritual in the intellectual sphere of the state, freedom, expanding and scaling down to reason. For the spiritual persons outside this sphere in occasions such as this “Night of the Dead”, this reason comes to be understood as “compassion”, which again is a bid by Scott to unify the problematic of a metaphoric light and darkness in any one place of dwelling.<sup>40</sup> Yet this is still under task, still organically unfolding to that “*Far! Very Far!*”<sup>41</sup> Paradise of Scott’s quest.

The third epigraph is from Dante’s *Purgatorio*: “Thou canst see plainly that ill-guiding is the cause that has made the world wicked, and not nature that is corrupt in you”.<sup>42</sup> It is spoken by the character of Marco Lombardi in the third terrace of Purgatory.<sup>43</sup> Here, as one

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<sup>37</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 33.

<sup>38</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 33.

<sup>39</sup> *Polish American Journal* (North Boston, 2018). Last accessed 9th September, 2019, [https://www.polamjournal.com/Library/Holidays/Zaduski--All\\_Soul-s\\_Day/zaduski--all\\_soul-s\\_day.html](https://www.polamjournal.com/Library/Holidays/Zaduski--All_Soul-s_Day/zaduski--all_soul-s_day.html)

<sup>40</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 33.

<sup>41</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 33.

<sup>42</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>43</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri*, ed. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1867), 409.

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as our structural aging  
    into compartmentalization  
above all in our universities

*(the social sciences  
    without the humanities  
are not scientific*

*the humanities  
    without the social sciences  
are not humane)*

the requirement for our neglected  
    policies of slaughter:  
the enforced separation

of political from moral sense  
    *Oxford and Cambridge*  
*rejecting their heritage*

when they burned their Platonic books<sup>48</sup>

This section of fragment II. xi explores Dante's epigraph so as to critically consolidate the importance of its sense to *Seculum's* final journey (in Book Three, *Darkness*) into Paradise. It considers morality as associated with ancient texts and pastoral visions (evoked by the peaceful setting of Scott's "college garden"<sup>49</sup>). In doing so, it comes to contemplate the fallibility of our human natures, the attempts of world leaders such as John Adams<sup>50</sup> to unify divided nations, the growing decline ("structural aging") of universities into segregated communities of thought and the clear and sharp "separation/ of political from moral sense". In the above-mentioned section of fragment II.xi, Scott references Plato alongside the civic context of the American society, academic schooling and government policy development. I argue the inference is immediately linked to Scott's epigraph from Dante because it considers the two "normative" and ethical questions of Plato's writings: "How ought we live?" And,

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<sup>48</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 66–67.

<sup>49</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 66.

<sup>50</sup> John Adams was the Second President of the United States, installed the year 1797, and according to his biographer David McCullough believed "independence and the war were never disjunctive" (125). In Adams own words, he states: "a free constitution of civic government cannot be purchased at too dear a rate, as there is nothing this side of Jerusalem of equal importance to mankind" (125–126). Among his achievements was the peaceful resolution to "Quasi- war" with Paris in 1798 (508) and the "peace treaty with Britain" in 1812 (616). David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

“How can we know how we ought to live?”.<sup>51</sup> For Scott, this is this type of ancient philosophising that carries the “moral sense” needed within our ethics of dwelling, to ensure society is not so emptied of spiritual and (for Scott) Christian concerns that in our minds “ring false”.<sup>52</sup>

The fourth epigraph is from Hölderlin: “To understand ourselves! That is what raises us up”.<sup>53</sup> It is from a letter dated August 1798 to his friend Nueffer about his stay in Hamburg,<sup>54</sup> and pertains to Hölderlin’s view on the relationship between the human being, earth and our different spiritual ancestries. According to Adrian Caro, Hölderlin argues that to live in the everyday of our existence is to grow in comprehension that self-understanding is a wisdom earned through our interactions with the greater community – the “man and gods, spirit and nature”<sup>55</sup> – of existence. For Hölderlin there is “false wisdom”<sup>56</sup> and true wisdom; the first relates to the knowledge acquired outside of a vocation and the second to the knowledge gained in the pursuit of usefulness and purpose. Further, for Hölderlin, redemption is dependent upon one’s intellectual, spiritual and religious development within the greater community<sup>57</sup> (of citizens), and is inclusive of the divine consciousness. Its purpose for Scott is that it suggests that personal understanding and wisdom can be attained via one’s vocation and in his case through writing poetry:

that amid the destruction	
we would meet an angel	<i>Benjamin '78 273</i>
All this had to happen	
time is a hologram	
transcending repetition	
by the power from despair	
to emancipate quotations	
from their <i>demeaning bondage</i>	<i>Benjamin '78 xxxvi</i>
that power which is the grace	
to recognise <i>the thing</i>	

<sup>51</sup> Terence Irwin, *Plato's Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3.

<sup>52</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 66.

<sup>53</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Jeremy Adler, Charlie Louth, ed., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters* (London: Penguin Books, 2009), Part 1, Letter 56 (unpaginated).

<sup>55</sup> Adrian Del. Caro, *Holderlin: The Poetics of Being* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 71.

<sup>56</sup> Del. Caro, *Hölderlin: The Poetics of Being*, 71.

<sup>57</sup> Del. Caro, *Hölderlin: The Poetics of Being*, 71.

*we believe to be ourself  
as a product of circumstance  
time haunted now as then*<sup>58</sup>

Weil '77 458

Shuffling about amongst angels, holograms, the power of grace to save us, the ability to recognise truth and hauntings (endorsed by the ghosts of philosopher and essayist Walter Benjamin and philosopher and political activist Simone Weil), this excerpt from fragment II.x of *Darkness* reveals Scott heavily at work enmeshing the spiritual with the civic. It links with Hölderlin's epigraph not only through the evocations of its images and allusions but most specifically in its repeated sanctioning of "power"<sup>59</sup> as coming from a divine, cosmic force and being precisely that which saves. As a segment, it accords with Hölderlin's perspective to suggest poetic dwelling in the yang realm of outer enlightenment needs inner enlightenment to achieve balance, and vice-versa.

### 5.3 Potential of Yang in the Social and Political

As suggested, Section Two of *Darkness* is concerned with outer enlightenment, that is, its focus is on politics and society (the secular) rather than individual and personal development (the spiritual). Scott makes this clear in the yang fragments, beginning with the idea of virtue in fragment II.i. An extract of the poem reads as follows:

To deal with the living  
    we must talk more bravely with the dead  
    not just any dead but the dearest  
  
those who learned long ago  
    like Dante and Tu Fu  
    from the complicities of war and madness  
  
to converse less with neighbours  
    than with the dead before them  
    making it easier  
  
to accept the living for what they mostly are

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<sup>58</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 64.

<sup>59</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 64.

and not kind apparitions  
in a crowded hallway with whom  
  
it is better to exchange just kindly words  
saving true anger and despair  
for God and the other major authors  
  
of massacre<sup>60</sup>

As the poem continues, it emerges that Scott considers “war” and social “madness”<sup>61</sup> to be part of the human condition and he references Dante and Tu Fu to say “the dead and the dearest”<sup>62</sup> are the best teachers of acceptance. In “saving true anger and despair/ for God and other major authors/ of massacre” we can engage with a present moment that arises *from* the remains of a past – “the pendant wild currant blossoms/ fallen”<sup>63</sup> – or what Scott terms the “surface of all that has gone before”.<sup>64</sup> The poem begins to expose the reason for Scott’s insistence on a yang/yin concept of cosmic life forces in suggesting that life and death are deeply and intimately involved with one another:

in some stricken or perhaps happier karma  
for me the instantaneous  
conspiracy of everything alive  
  
sharing in that joy that moment already gone  
that surface of all that had gone before  
the pendant wild currant blossoms  
  
fallen<sup>65</sup>

For Scott the “conspiracy of everything alive” is the reality that death cannot be reckoned with and understood. Where there is joy in a moment there is also tragedy as it is out of the past that this joy surfaces. The relation between past and present then is an energised dynamic which, like the male and female qualities of yang and yin, implies a mutual

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<sup>60</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 19.

<sup>61</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 19.

<sup>62</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 19.

<sup>63</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 20.

<sup>64</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 20.

<sup>65</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 20.

subsistence of the two. The precarious currant blossoms that hang as pendants and then later fall are reflective of this gentle flow-out and flow-in of a union between life and death.

As the section progresses, Scott turns his attention to this “surface” and leaves the civic, social concerns of the yang to find poetic retreat in personal reflection. Because his intention is to harmonise yang and yin in *Seculum*, the image of falling blossom is quietly inspiring and gently shifts the poet’s attention away from the civic. In the other fragments of Section Two, Scott seems naturally to make room to recall deceased loved ones – his mother and father, for instance – and he shows how their closeness in his dreams and thoughts defines a sense of morality and justice. More and more the section’s tone becomes educational and, also, exemplary in the sense that Scott tries to apply his own life experience to the social conditions of his time. Although concerned with outer enlightenment, the yang section often brings forward memories of childhood, present or past political and social events, the lessons of his forebears, and the insights of major poets and thinkers from all ages. In this way Scott links the poignancy and mindfulness of the spiritual to the richness of human love and to the way this might translate into caring for our earthly dwelling place. As the fragment II.i continues we begin to understand that it is the dead that “govern us”:

What is this darkness that governs us  
Often if I awaken in the night  
it is because I hear voices  
  
of other dead            I dreamt two nights ago  
that at a meeting of the English Department  
the old were talking of their predecessors  
  
who had made them who they are    and in the dream  
I sobbed            as recently once or twice  
I sobbed for you as I had never before  
  
(at least while sane) knowing in the dream  
I sobbed not because we must die  
but partly out of generous respect  
  
for this veneration<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 20–21.



Like the conspiracy which is at the heart of our existential crisis of being (we live and we die), Scott's acceptance of the metaphoric darkness of deceased souls brings tears of human sorrow and spiritual gladness. In *Darkness*' quest to resolve the anxieties of Book One and Book Two (which I discussed in chapter 4), Scott's own term "enmindment" comes to mean not just an acceptance of the dialectics which govern our social and personal well-being, but also a humbling of the human intellect in response to their powerful energised presences.

In the subsequent fragments, the opposition to the Tao (at the heart of the yang/yin dualism) in the public world resurfaces. Once more, "evil" is the inescapable "problematic" and the solution remains still distant.<sup>67</sup> Here, Scott's use of italics adds a sense of urgency, a poetic cry<sup>68</sup> that transcends space. Whether it be massacre, persecution, armies of cultural revolutions "killing people on highways",<sup>69</sup> wars of "city against countryside",<sup>70</sup> virtue's opposite, "evil", is all too present for Scott in "a world ill-governed in our time".<sup>71</sup> By fragment II.v in Scott's "Yang"<sup>72</sup> section it would seem the outer enlightenment that instructs the world's affairs is far from enlightened in the sense that Scott believes is required to be spiritually and religiously accountable and thereby nourishing to the human psyche.

Not giving up on his belief in a type of moral civic governance, Scott reapproaches the yang vis-à-vis the politically charged idea of social freedom. In fragment II.vi, he considers the exile of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn<sup>73</sup> in the former USSR and debates the principle of spiritual liberty versus political authority:

They banished Solzhenitsyn to the West  
   where he preached against détente  
   and *the rot of Western life*

...

As Plato once wrote

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<sup>67</sup> These quotes and paragraph revisit (and expand on) a fragment earlier discussed, sourced from fragment II.iv and footnoted as number 34. Scott, *Darkness*, 33.

<sup>68</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 33.

<sup>69</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 37.

<sup>70</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 37.

<sup>71</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 38.

<sup>72</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

<sup>73</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn was sentenced in 1945 for "making derogatory remarks about Stalin in a letter". He was "formally rehabilitated" in 1957 and lived to the age of eighty-nine. Aside from a career in teaching post his prison term and forced exile, Solzhenitsyn published three novels, won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1970 and was allowed to return to Russia in 1990. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West* (New York: Random House, 2018), unpaginated.

*you cannot be both powerful in the state  
and unlike it in character* *Plato Georgias. 513B*

but it was not just those wishing peace  
even Kissinger  
sent a memo to the White House

*we recommend that the President  
not receive Solzhenitsyn*

...

It would be wrong to  
devise some Manichaeian moral  
there was no one evil strain

it having being the great  
Enlightenment failing  
to demonize church or class

No! I agree like Havel  
with some of Solzhenitsyn's obsessions  
the need for a spiritual dimension

the need for the East  
to see capitalism and democracy  
with a clean eye

...

I can agree with Brodsky

...

That *Western man*  
*is a mental bourgeois*  
*who cherishes his mental comfort*  
*It is almost impossible for him*

*to admit disturbing evidence*<sup>74</sup>

In his 1975 and 1976 speeches "across America and Britain", Russian author and Nobel Prize winner Solzhenitsyn warned humankind the world was approaching moral and spiritual

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<sup>74</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 42–46.

destitution.<sup>75</sup> In Scott's fragment II.iv of *Darkness*, Solzhenitsyn is cast as a puppet to be manoeuvred through a crowd of political figures such as Kissinger, President George W. Bush and Boris Yeltsin. We see Scott turn his puppet to a mirror vision in the politically persecuted and exiled Russian poet Joseph Brodsky as though to strengthen their common agendas in fighting for spiritual freedom before conceding, in the later fragment II.vii, that there will be no Hollywood-style happy ending, for "imperfection"<sup>76</sup> because he accepts the "process/ in which life ceases to be/ like a movie with an ending".<sup>77</sup> Scott continues to move through his Section Two showing the tumult of fighting for political and spiritual freedom as an individual and, further, as an individual government official deciding (corruptly and thereby, undemocratically) an exclusive right and wrong politic for public governance. What Scott offers is not a solution to these civic difficulties but the acceptance that fighting and war are part of our human condition. As he says toward the end of his next fragment II.vii, the true evil is in us, in our language and habits of being "co-conspirators"<sup>78</sup> in fashioning ideologies of good and bad to suit our own ends:

Language encodes our habit  
                                   of defining others  
                                   as the source of wrong  
 a habit that has involved  
                                   the very best of us  
                                   as co-conspirators

and makes Dukka survive.<sup>79</sup>

According to Buddhist scholar Madura Venkata Ram Kumar Ratnam, *Dukka* does not translate simply but can be understood as related to physical and mental pain and suffering.<sup>80</sup> For Scott, the reason the world suffers is directly linked to the failures of the secular Enlightenment and our own social undervaluing of personal enlightenment. In summary, Scott's reflections on outer Enlightenment in the "Yang"<sup>81</sup> Section Two find its meaning confused, rather than

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<sup>75</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Warning to the West* (New York: Random House, 2018), unpaginated.

<sup>76</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 47.

<sup>77</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 49.

<sup>78</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 50.

<sup>79</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 50.

<sup>80</sup> M.V. Ram Kuma Ratnama, *Dukka, Suffering in Early Buddhism* (New Delhi: Discovery Publishing House, 2003), 45–46.

<sup>81</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 17.

wrong, in its secular denial of spiritual and/or religious obligations. The English word we come to know as “enlightenment” finds its equivalent in the Sanskrit word “bodhicitta” or simply, “bodhi” which translates as “spiritual awakening”.<sup>82</sup> Its Japanese equivalent is “satori”, meaning applying the mind to profound understanding.<sup>83</sup> By the end of Scott’s yang section, Scott locates a greater discrepancy in the Western Enlightenment’s use of the term ‘enlightenment’ and suggests that its only hope of reappropriation is through a greater spiritual and religious attention to prayer. And by prayer in this greater civic incarnation, he alludes to a shift of focus away from the personal toward reflections on love.

To explain Scott’s call for a Christian sense of love within a concept of divine love, Scott writes in fragment II.x of a time in which this was felt to be not only present but revelatory and blissfully peaceful. He recalls an experience one Easter during a stay at “La Pierre Qui Vire” (a Benedictine Monastery) in which he is given a tantalising taste of “a new life”.<sup>84</sup> In this Easter time of year marked by “the earth itself/ by Dante’s calculus” returning “to its first point/ in the *ordo saeculorum*” Scott describes a picturesque and rewardingly peaceful interlude of prayer amidst “snow and jonquils” which liberates him from the contemporary world.<sup>85</sup> Here, in the moment, Scott’s poem evokes a sense of the intimate, the idyllic, the picturesque and, in doing so, celebrates the mysterious nature of human love.

In the concluding fragment II. xii of Section Two’s “Yang”, Scott’s wife Ronna leaves a signed note on his pillow declaring her “wanting ‘to cry/ from the sheer depth and pleasure of love’”.<sup>86</sup> The point being that, as Scott tells us a little earlier, our “hearts” are only “in the right joy” if they are “strong with faith”; and only then can we “gain/ more from life than we can lose”.<sup>87</sup>

At the end of this Section, *Darkness* revisits a moment of renewal in the nine pages of poetry written by Scott on the Buddhist spiritual retreat. The poems composed become illustrative of the Section’s main polemic: to embrace this umbrella term, yang, and express the intellectual and spiritual harmony of “enmindment”. In poems such as “BREATH”, Scott

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<sup>82</sup> David Brazier, *The Feeling Buddha: A Buddhist Psychology of Character, Adversity and Passion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 188.

<sup>83</sup> Charles McCauley, *Zen and the Art of Wholeness: Developing a Personal Spiritual Psychology That Will Transform Your Life* (Lincoln: iUniverse Inc., 2005), 87.

<sup>84</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 59.

<sup>85</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 59.

<sup>86</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 71.

<sup>87</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 71.

reveals the step-by-step restoration of his own mindfulness consistent with retreating from the social sphere:

1

BREATH

I focus on breath  
and at the same time

on keeping an even fire  
the draft so the log will catch

the damper to bring the roar  
down to murmur

much like my own breath  
I see the blue smoke

beyond the window  
rise through treetops

in the redwood canyon  
it is hard to focus

on not thinking<sup>88</sup>

In this and other of Scott's meditation poems, *Seculum* abandons its tercet form and adopts in its place the form of non-rhyming, open couplets. In this way, the main quests of the poem toward redemption, the finding of Paradise, the establishment of an eco-critical sensibility are backgrounded to allow retreat from the day-to-day problems of life. Scott's use of the couplets, traditionally used as a patterning or summary device for a long, involved journeying in knowledge,<sup>89</sup> helps him to be at one with the Tao of Buddhism, which (as already mentioned) is the great mystery of the yang/ yin twin dynamism. Away from the world and by virtue of formatting, distanced from his long poem *Seculum*, the yang of Section Two is brought closer to Section Three and the "Er Yi—The Ways of Heaven and Earth"<sup>90</sup>. Indeed, with all five sections of *Darkness* concluding with similarly styled meditative poems, the mystery is the guiding link from one stage of enmindment to the next, from yang to yin and onward to

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<sup>88</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 72.

<sup>89</sup> Edward Hirsch, *A Poet's Glossary* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 134-136.

<sup>90</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 149.

a final meeting of “Tai Ji–The Great Origin”<sup>91</sup> and the finding of Paradise. Here though, in concluding Section Two, poems such as “BREATH”<sup>92</sup> help Scott *show* (as opposed to *essay* in the greater body of *Darkness*) the steps of enmindment by reflecting on his love of God, the losses and destruction of the wildfire (addressed in chapter 4), his love for his mother and father, the presence of the community of Buddhist pilgrims, and the sensory elements that unify him with his surroundings – the sound of bells, the scent of wet gravel in poem 14 or the “magnificent green hills” of poem 2.<sup>93</sup> Their inclusion here, still under the umbrella of the yang, evokes the sense of a world more at peace with itself; and in this way prepares yang to flow into the yin, defined in chapter 4 as a sense of restfulness.<sup>94</sup>

#### 5.4 Potential of Yin in Seeking Self

Having discussed the yang of Scott’s *Coming to Jakarta*, then the yin of *Listening to the Candle*, in *Darkness* Scott brings the two together as a dialectic made possible by the reckonings of Section One’s long poem on Hun Luan (discussed in chapter 4). From here the yang aspects first raised in Book 1 of *Seculum* are re-evaluated with greater complexity and maturity. The re-evaluation still supposes a process of spiritual discovery (which is the epic quest) but one that is most effective when in a dialectic with the yin. This is not depicted by Scott through a journey out of yang and into yin as a point of arrival (as it is first presented in the separateness of Book One and Book Two), but rather musically<sup>95</sup> as a type of unified poetic language. I argue the poesis of *Darkness* creates a structure out of Tao or nothingness or the Great Mystery of divine presence by Scott’s newly found essayist mindset which motions to this or that but in a manner which is continual in being revelatory, inspiring or compelling with regard to thought, wisdom, insight and possible new dawns of living. In this way, it is created out of a silence which is energised by earthly, animal presences and the atmospheric forces of human karmas. For this reason, I regard it as a music-language of the type defined by Kevin

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<sup>91</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 231.

<sup>92</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 72.

<sup>93</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 73.

<sup>94</sup> Walter W. Davis, “China, the Confucian Ideal, and the European Age of Enlightenment”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press), 44, no. 4 (Oct – Dec 1983): 524.

<sup>95</sup> In chapter 3 I have described this musicality of our dwelling places as a virtue of the past “resonating” a religious presence. Jonathon Bate, *The Song of The Earth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 231.

Barry,<sup>96</sup> who suggests that in the analogy between music and poetry there are the same traits of “motion, energy and flexibility” with respect to what is being represented and how this is to be interpreted by the reader.<sup>97</sup> As Scott claims, the middle book of his trilogy sees out “endarkenment” as much as it desires “enlightenment”.<sup>98</sup> So that in Book Three, *Darkness*, the consolidating poem of the trilogy, enmindment is about moving forward (coming to face terror or the past in Book One), listening to the spirit of the cosmos (being thoughtful and mindful in Book Two) and then, critically approaching the future with knowledge, fortitude and the good grace of love for all things created, earthly and divine (fostering a kinship with the dark in Book Three). For Scott, *Seculum* performs best as an “opus”,<sup>99</sup> a poem read in full scale but experienced by degrees of emotive and highly subjective appreciation. Which indeed is the key to eco-spiritually dwelling. If we recall the eco-critical writings of Stuart Cooke we can identify Scott’s *Seculum* as a poesis that behaves in the manner of a “palimpsest” that features echoes of the past, listens to the spirit of the cosmos and follows a metaphoric sunlight representing joy, happiness and Paradise.<sup>100</sup>

Scott’s aim in Section Three is to consider yin in a complementary way, that is, to re-evaluate yin in terms of the principle it has evolved from in the Hun Luan of Section One. Although retaining the meaning of inner enlightenment, the concept is no longer divorced from the outer enlightenment of yang, but rather speaks with it through the music of Scott’s poetic language.

The first epigraph in Section Three is from Verse 41 (of 81) of the writings of Lao-Tzu in the *Tao Te Ching*:<sup>101</sup> “The Tao that enlightens appears dark”.<sup>102</sup> The concept of Tao is defined by Smullyan as a belief in a transcendent, essential and perfect goodness which lives in both the human heart and humankind’s ecological context.<sup>103</sup> Thus, the Tao of the Lao-Tzu

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<sup>96</sup> This definition proceeds from my earlier references to Bate’s *Song of the Earth*, and I see it as additional and complimentary to Bate’s ideas.

<sup>97</sup> Kevin M. Barry, ed., *Language, Music and the Sign: A Study of Aesthetics, Poetics and Poetic Practice from Collins to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 42.

<sup>98</sup> Scott, *Candle*, xi.

<sup>99</sup> Scott, *Candle*, xi.

<sup>100</sup> Stuart Cooke, “Echo-Coherence: Moving on From Dwelling” in *Cultural Studies Review*, 17, no. 1 (March, 2011): 241. Again, this coincides with my earlier readings of Bate in chapter 3 which speaks of dwelling as being, in its best attitude, songlike.

<sup>101</sup> Lao Tzu, “Tao Te Ching”, *Sacred Books of the East*, trans. James Legge, 39 (1891), last accessed 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019, <https://www.sacred-texts.com/tao/taote.htm>

<sup>102</sup> Lao Tzu, “Tao Te Ching”, 81.

<sup>103</sup> Raymond M. Smullyan, *The Tao is Silent* (New York: Harper Collins, 1977), Chapter 3, 5–6.

epigraph which “appears dark” was manifest as light before Heaven and Earth and is thus understood to be a form of love.<sup>104</sup> One example of this can be seen in Scott’s fragment III.ii when he is recalling the important teachings of his mother Marian Scott. It reads in excerpt as follows:

taught me to see      the beating wings  
                         of the yellow swallowtail  
                 in the purple lantanas

and led me to other seers  
                 of the everyday world  
         Lismer white-tonsured

his eagle eye looking out  
                 over us children  
         still framing the space beyond us

with the clean air  
                 of a granite lake and wind-blown  
         pine trees behind it

and of the inner world<sup>105</sup>

Consistent with the yin theme, this extract is replete with the feminine forces of the universe, concerned for the most part with the earth and its gentle way of helping Scott tune into his inner self. Insofar as it explains the way Scott’s mother helped him to see the beauty of nature, it suggests that our dark, earthly mystery is in fact brimming with liveliness and the pristine brightness of divine love.

This Tao is also thought by Scott to harmoniously represent the perfect formation of the yang and yin of our human makeup; and for this reason it is also necessary to consider this first epigraph within the textual framework of the *Tao Te Ching*, which I read in light of James Legge’s translation, and in the commentary of Ralph Alan Dale.<sup>106</sup> For Scott, the concept of Tao explains that opposing forces do not necessarily share a negative relation but rather, present lively opportunities for discourse. Viewed from the perspective of Taoism,

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<sup>104</sup> Smullyan, *The Tao is Silent*, 4.

<sup>105</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 89.

<sup>106</sup> Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching Sacred Text: 81 verse by Tao Tzu with Commentary*, ed. Ralph Alan Dale (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2017), Verse 41, unpaginated.



these differences (such as male or female characteristics) possess a dynamism akin to the ongoing liveliness of the spirit.<sup>107</sup> Importantly, Scott embraces the opportunities that extend this discourse toward a type of songlike poetics,<sup>108</sup> which can communicate objectivity and rationality as well as subjectivity and feelings. To explain this through the lens of the yang/yin quest for enlightenment, I consider a second analysis of Scott's epigraph by scholar Ralph Sawyer. For Sawyer the reference asserts quite simply that "heaven's virtue – though always shining gloriously above – always seems obscurely dark".<sup>109</sup>

The second epigraph to Section Three from Confucius is: "I seek a unity all-pervading".<sup>110</sup> Taken from *The Analects*,<sup>111</sup> the unity referred to is the type of thinking Ying-Shi Yu helpfully describes as "moralizing".<sup>112</sup> It is "speculative and theorizing" thought that "honours a moral nature".<sup>113</sup> Like the first epigraph, finding the pathway of Tao considers the essential form of darkness as that which also carries the light of a time "antedating"<sup>114</sup> Heaven and Earth. It cannot be found, it cannot be lost, but its great speculation and theory can be simply enjoyed as something beneficial to the soul:<sup>115</sup>

### III.iii

Although it is some time now  
                                 since a god or goddess  
                                 has fixed us eyeball to eyeball

the cosmologists return  
                                 to talk of events inspired  
                                 through hyperdimensional space<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching Sacred Text*, Introduction, unpaginated.

<sup>108</sup> In this phrasing of a "songlike poetics" I am borrowing from Jonathan Bate's idea in *The Song of the Earth* that the past which inherits the present echoes sonically in the everyday of our dwelling places. Bate reads the poet Les Murray to describe "an undersound of earth...that low, aggregate susurrrus which emanates from the living landscape" (239). In that this past is wrapped up in the essence of the elemental earth and moments in time are forever transitory, its traces in memory are a part of our landscape and our collective human makeup. Jonathan Bate, *The Song of The Earth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

<sup>109</sup> Wang Chen, *The Tao of War*, trans. Ralph D. Sawyer (New York: Basic Books, 1999) Chapter 41.

<sup>110</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 81.

<sup>111</sup> Confucius, *Confucian Analects, The Great Learning & The Doctrine of the Mean*, translated by Andrew Legge (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), cxviii.

<sup>112</sup> Ying-Shih Yu, *Chinese History and Culture, Seventeenth Through to Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 4.

<sup>113</sup> Yu, *Chinese History and Culture*, 4.

<sup>114</sup> Smullyan, *The Tao is Silent*, 4.

<sup>115</sup> Smullyan, *The Tao is Silent*, 6.

<sup>116</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 91.

This excerpt from fragment III.iii continues the theme of yin and the feminine force associated with earth and the dark mystery and also animates the premise of epigraph two. The “speculative and theorising” scientists are exploring the cosmos but as Scott suggests, surely they are actually returning us to the time of seeing “a god or a goddess” eye to eye.

The third epigraph is by the 11th century Muslim mystic, philosopher, poet and Sufist practitioner, Ibn’ Arabi:<sup>117</sup>

My heart has become capable of every form; it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks, and a temple of idols, and the pilgrim’s Ka’ba, and the tables of the Torah and the book of the Qur’an. I follow the religion of Love, whichever way His camels take.<sup>118</sup>

Written under the title of “Fire”, the quote in the original includes as its first line: “O Marvel! A garden amidst the flames”.<sup>119</sup> In full, the epigraph references fire and considers the religion of Love which relates to Scott’s interest in love’s mystery and peace-making power:

I must send a letter to Gil  
who recalled his childhood dream  
of a universe in each atom

much like my own dream  
*a galaxy*  
into *a dot of pollen*

*P.D.Scott ’92 92–93*

*subatomic particles*  
*in effect all black holes*  
*or man in the Zohar*

*Ferris 49*

the *likeness*  
*that includes all likenesses*<sup>120</sup>

*Schulem 153*

This excerpt, taken from fragment III.iii, focuses on the darkness which was born from the first fire of creation. Its complexity marries well with its cosmic themes as it brings together

<sup>117</sup> William C. Chittick, *Ibn ‘Arabhi, Heir to the Prophets* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2008).

<sup>118</sup> Masoud Kheirabadi, *Religions of the World, Islam* (Pennsylvania: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), 95.

<sup>119</sup> Kheirabadi, *Religions of the World, Islam*, 95.

<sup>120</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 93–94.

the idea of friendship, the sharing of curiosities (dreams), the chance of whimsy, the subconscious and the equally inexplicable notions of mystic thought and devotion. Scott's sudden reference to the "*man in the Zohar*"<sup>121</sup> functions in a way which bumps us out of the reality of his letter writing to a friend, out of imagining and visualising space and into the heart of a mystical text concerned with the wisdom of enlightenment. To quote from Daniel Chanan Matt's interpretation, the light (wisdom) of the Zohar is the "sky of Moses" which is unseen but shines with a greater "brilliance" than the sky visible to the human eye.<sup>122</sup> In this way it is a sky which is 'hidden' in darkness but beholds a sense of Paradise and peacefulness.

The final epigraph from Wordsworth's autobiographical *Prelude*,<sup>123</sup> "poets, even as prophets, each with each/ Connected in a mighty sense of truth",<sup>124</sup> reflects on the poet's vocation as bestowed upon him/ her by fate. Wordsworth (who belonged to the Church of England) expresses the hope that if the poet's sense of truth is "heaven's gift", then a poem can be as changeable as nature, that is, it can be "creative and enduring" because its custodian is God.<sup>125</sup> For Scott, this suggests the idea of a theological sense of the poetic word which observes historical, religious literary traditions; and in this way leads to inner enlightenment. Further, that by pursuing this personal and self-reflective path, the poesis accommodates Christian reverence for communal values based on virtue and nonviolence:

the shape of language  
that is ourselves<sup>126</sup>

Concluding fragment III.viii, these small two lines speak quietly to Wordsworth's epigraph and suggest not just poets but human speech unifies a divine presence with the greater world of our dwelling places. In Scott's observance of God, Wordsworth's gift is the unity shared with the religious person and the trinity that in this way "shapes"<sup>127</sup> our language.

Therefore, Section Three, which is addressed to yin, begins by evoking the theological poetic word while also bringing the reader into the contemporary poetics of Scott in the sense

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<sup>121</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 94.

<sup>122</sup> Daniel Chanan Matt, Zohar, *The Book of the Enlightenment* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1983), 108.

<sup>123</sup> William Wordsworth, *Prelude or Growth of a Poet's Mind* (London: Edward Moxon, 1851).

<sup>124</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 81.

<sup>125</sup> Wordsworth, *Prelude*, 281.

<sup>126</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 118.

<sup>127</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 118.

the inner enlightenment is a personal becoming; the testimony of Scott's Section is, therefore, the sense and sensibility of the religious word.

## 5.5 The Yin and Yang of Living and Dying and the Signposting of Tai Ji—The Great Origin

In Section Three of *Darkness*, and throughout fragment III.i, Scott quotes the German classicist and ancient lyric scholar Bruno Snell, whose *The Discovery of the Mind* is an important study on morality and human personality.<sup>128</sup> Snell argues that core traditions of European thought relating to science, the arts, ethics and philosophy began with the Greeks.<sup>129</sup> He draws on Ancient Greek literature, such as Homer's epic poems and the ancient tragedies, to paint a portrait of the human being as an intellectual. Whilst matters such as "self-revelation" and "discovery" and the concept of soul are for Snell not essentially different, they are terms respectively associated with "mythic or poetic intuition" and philosophy and science.<sup>130</sup> Scott's use of Snell in Section Three of *Darkness* is pertinent to these concepts for two reasons: first, he is exploring the Western cultural concept of the Enlightenment, which he has concluded has failed due to its more secular view of morality; and second, he is studying the concept of inner enlightenment in broad social terms:

...in *The Discovery of the Mind*

(which might for another author  
have been *Mind Discovering Itself*)  
Snell equilibrates this contrast

seeing *Socratic "knowledge"*  
*the element of reflexion*  
*at the birth of tragedy*

as well as *at its demise*  
*In Homer a man who is unaware*  
*of his own volition*

when *a thought comes from without*<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982).

<sup>129</sup> Snell, *Discovery of the Mind*, v–xii.

<sup>130</sup> Snell, *Discovery of the Mind*. vii.

<sup>131</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 83.

For Scott, Snell's division of human thought into the intellectual (which equates with a process of discovery) and the spiritual/ emotional (which equates with feelings, intuition and acquired knowledge – not only of self but also in relation to one's ideas about things: the social other and morality for example) is useful to Scott who is trying to reinterpret a concept of "mystic" enlightenment based on the paradigm of yang and yin philosophies. As described by Robin Wang, the interplay of these forces in relation to thought is, metaphorically, the interplay of a tree's roots, which might stimulate its hundred branches – out of metaphor, the branches of thinking.<sup>132</sup> Most important, however, in Scott's application of Snell to his own process of discovering and revealing, is that Snell's treatise on Western thought begins with Homer. For Scott, Snell is a useful mirror of intellectual thinking on his own poetic discourse. Recalling that Scott's *Candle* was dedicated to his mother – an artist – and has, as an overall moodiness, a character akin to yin and self-revelation, then we can suppose Section Three's broader schematic of unity considers both this *and* the yang of *Jakarta* which is, topically, a documentary of intellectual and political discovery.

This latter point is true too in the fragment's arrangement, as we leave our previous analysis on Snell, Greek thought, epic poetry and the yang yin forces of enlightenment to meet fragment III.ii, which is dedicated to Scott's mother. An important nurturing figure for Scott, whose presence in his home life and upbringing was a positive influence on his development (which are both aspects of the yin force), she seems also exemplary of Snell's "intellectual" human being (which is more yang than yin as a force). In this fragment, Scott remembers visiting his mother's painting studio as a child, and noticing the smell of fresh paint and the "uniqueness" of the way she could respond to "setback or betrayal" through art rather than through "personal recrimination".<sup>133</sup> As the poem progresses, Scott's mother becomes an example of what it might mean to have the capacity to find self-revelation and discovery in day to day life:

she loved George Eliot

and liked to quote Nietzsche

*Live dangerously!*

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<sup>132</sup> Robin Wang, *Yinyang* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.

<sup>133</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 89.

*Count every day lost*

*that you have not danced!*

As well as Goethe  
*not a circle*

*a spiral*

*cf. Trépanier*

Despite her interest  
in pure patterns from science

*Atom Bone and Embryo*

*Trépanier*

she seemed a little removed  
from the external world

it was by general agreement  
that she gave up driving  
and on her one fishing trip

her first and only trout  
still wriggling vigorously  
landed inside her blouse

But the more she receded  
from the details of this world  
the more she saw it whole

and my father generously admitted  
that of the two she seemed  
more serious about life

above all that inner life  
it was she who embarrassed me mornings:  
*did you have any dreams?*<sup>134</sup>

Quoting at times from Marian Scott's biographer Esther Trépanier, the fragment sketches out a portrait of Scott's mother which later morphs into a true photo of her "at the age of eighty two" which "sits four feet away from my desk".<sup>135</sup> Where previously Scott had spent time with Snell's text and ideas about historical intelligence,<sup>136</sup> he draws a comparison with his mother

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<sup>134</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 90.

<sup>135</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 90–91.

<sup>136</sup> In *The Discovery of the Mind*, Snell argues "European thinking begins with the Greeks" (v): Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Dover Publications, 2012). Scott's references to Snell in fragment III.i integrate with the argument of the fragment which suggests that this historical thinking beginning in Greece is also portrayed in Homer's epics to reveal "Those closest to the Gods/

who, we come to learn in the course of the fragment, encouraged him to explore the inner world of his personhood. In moving through memories of his mother, intelligence comes to be explained as a way of viewing life that is mystical (*did you have any dreams?*) and analytically thoughtful.

These dreams Scott's mother speaks of progressively materialise in *Darkness* so that their difference from reality is less distinct. For example, in fragment III.iv, Scott discusses the very real dreams one tries to make happen in life, but that fail, such as his own dream of remaining in his office at the McGill University (1955-56) – “this office I once thought of/ as the home of dreams” – which he was instead asked to vacate:

III.iv

Despite my good excuse  
    (*You must vacate your office*  
    *by May 15<sup>th</sup>*

*this is the final notice*)  
    I cannot sleep  
    with this distaste in my stomach

for the new me  
    that has just sold off the old  
    for 450 dollars

my vellum-bound *Civitas Dei*  
    my troubadour poets in Provençal  
    my two Icelandic dictionaries

*Augustine City of God*

that were like extensions of my brain  
    in this office I once thought of  
    as a home of dreams

I hear the rain flail  
    the roof as if in displeasure  
    at this treachery

the wind chime hectic<sup>137</sup>

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are strong and powerful” (Scott, *Darkness*, 84). Progressively, Scott is consolidating the idea that human intellect and mystic contemplation together furnish enlightenment, not the one without the other.

<sup>137</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 95–96.

The sense we had earlier of an inner life merging with the intellect in the fragment dedicated to Marian Scott, emerges here again to become something a little more wide-ranging and cosmic. As often happens throughout *Seculum*, during times of distress Scott seeks out the elemental and atmospheric qualities of his immediate environment. He also seeks out and itemises the things dearest to him so that the progress of his spirit out of a metaphoric darkness to better times ahead is equipped with reasons for living and loving. Although packing away his treasures (a “vellum-bound *Civitas Dei*/ my troubadour poets in Provençal/ my two Icelandic dictionaries”)<sup>138</sup> there is still a sense of having made a dwelling place in the office and knowing, this way, even the mood of the rain on the roof and the wind through his chime.<sup>139</sup>

In its progression, fragment III.iv’s political focus shifts away from the personal to more public evidence of corruption:

that year of bayonets  
                     by some disgusted  
                     kid in the National Guard

the yellow manifestos  
                     for marches with garlands  
                     and gifted street music

whose promise of revolution  
                     was heard so widely  
                     that the people rose up

in unprecedented numbers  
                     and elected Governor Reagan  
                     we were on the verge

of something which seemed then  
                     altogether new  
                     and now—memorabilia<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 95–96.

<sup>139</sup> Later in *Darkness* we come to learn the wind chime was a gift from Scott’s friend Roberta Chaplan who died of cancer at a young age. Its early appearance here without the association endorses a sense of eco-spiritual sacredness that withholds its true profundity. In this way Scott’s consolidating work can be seen mechanically at work here as the chimes become a type of prop for greater effect in the narrative’s developing arc.

<sup>140</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 98.



In the above-mentioned passage, Scott is reflecting on memories of protests<sup>141</sup> conducted some time after his new assignment to Berkeley, the “promise of revolution” (in terms of a “yellowed manifesto” becoming memorabilia), the sense of being “on the verge of something” (for which “people rose up/ in unprecedented numbers”) and then its thwarting by a government which later in the fragment, forces those who joined in to “discard our dreams”.<sup>142</sup> Again, music is reflective of the ability of art to save the soul of one’s dwelling place. Recalling Bate’s *The Song of the Earth* once more, music and poetry are the true saviours of both earth and any making of a peaceful dwelling place, because of their capacity to yoke “a religious sense to a sense of place”.<sup>143</sup> For Scott, the music accompanying the protest is far more powerful in its “promise of revolution”<sup>144</sup> and functions as a unifying and strengthening artform:

in the language of the sun  
                                     of life made pure through art  
                                     which as the rains darken

Aeneid 6.662

the wet untasted millet  
                                     and pinewood of my birdfeeder  
                                     appears to have been left

Irreparably behind us<sup>145</sup>

Quoting from the *Aeneid*,<sup>146</sup> Scott seems to imply that poetry and other artforms share a language that is intertwined with the earth’s cycle of rotation and renewal. So that, towards the end of the fragment, the political focus of the poem dissipates to become a more essential language communicating uneasiness and discontent in sacred terms. Packing up his office, Scott grows reflective of the thing he leaves behind, a birdfeeder in which the “untasted millet/ and pinewood”<sup>147</sup> darkens in the rains. Leaving it “irreparably”<sup>148</sup> behind, it becomes

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<sup>141</sup> The protest was part of a liberation program at People’s Park, May 16, 1969 which rallied against the demolition of vast tracts of low income student housing; see W.J. Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War: The 1960’s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 156.

<sup>142</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 95–99.

<sup>143</sup> Bate, *Song of The Earth*, 231.

<sup>144</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 98.

<sup>145</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 99.

<sup>146</sup> Virgil, Stanley Lombardo, trans., *Aeneid* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Group Inc., 2005).

<sup>147</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 99.

<sup>148</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 99.

symbolic of inner enlightenment's opposite, a chance of liveliness left undiscovered and unrevealed.

Awareness still forestalled, Scott's fragment III.v continues to contemplate tragedy and death as a complex outcome of social discord and/or environmental insensitivity. Keeping to his political storyline, he recalls the fatal shooting of attorney and prison rights activist Fay Stender<sup>149</sup> by a gunman who claimed she "had betrayed the prison movement".<sup>150</sup> Stender was a close friend of Scott's and the manner of her shooting was violent and unexpected. In looking through a window "at a hailstorm"<sup>151</sup> at a party after her death, it is clear Scott is deeply and personally touched by the tragedy. However, the fragment reads as more than just a memory or personal tragedy as Scott contemplates the idea of left wing activists "suspending judgement".<sup>152</sup> It is a movement away from inner reflection to outer concerns and, it seems, a device for bringing yin and yang together as complimentary forces. It is also an example of the yin/yang which functions "implicitly and explicitly" in the day to day of "philosophy", "warfare" or a person's "way of life".<sup>153</sup> I argue Scott's diplomacy in the fragment III.ii places him in two minds, both wishful Stender had not "overlook[ed]/ the crimes of those she defended"<sup>154</sup> and trusting this choice was honourable. Once more, like the female ghosts of his mother Marian Dale Scott (a type of intellectual activist), his first wife and later Buddhist priest Maylie Scott (a type of spiritual activist), Stender (a type of political activist) reinforces the yin atmosphere of mystery, helping reconcile loss with a type of 'presencing'<sup>155</sup> and merging the yin with the yang.

In the sense that Scott's *Seculum* performs the structuring for a new dawn, his ponderings here are deliberately didactic in their mingling of the personal and the political:

Marvin recalling discussions  
whether those lawyers who quit

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<sup>149</sup> Eric Cummins, *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994), 246. Fay Stender died 19 May, 1980 (see page 8 of this dissertation, List of Key Figures).

<sup>150</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 99–104.

<sup>151</sup> Wang, *Yinyang*, 99.

<sup>152</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 102.

<sup>153</sup> Wang, *Yinyang*, 6.

<sup>154</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 101.

<sup>155</sup> This "presencing" is a term from Bate and was expanded upon in chapter 3 of the thesis to mean an eco-critically unifying of the past with the present. It is revisited often as a theme of unity in this chapter but I seek to underscore it in opting for a footnote. Its greater explication belongs to chapter 3 which deals with *Candle* and attendance to the sacred. Chapter 5 focuses for the greater part on enmindment. Jonathan Bate, *Song of The Earth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 230.

because of Fay and the bookkeeper  
had in effect betrayed the movement  
or the movement them  
says as if in apology

*My mind's still open on this*  
and I in a rare  
moment of certitude affirm

*Good!*  
*that's just how we should be*<sup>156</sup>

Endorsing the decision of Fay's husband Marvin to remain "*open on this*" – the politics ensuing from Fay's death – Scott finds himself "in a rare moment of certitude" and affirms "*Good!/ that's just how we should be*".<sup>157</sup> With characteristic diplomacy, Scott ends the fragment with the conclusion that the only way to deal with such a difficult question is to gracefully withdraw from it – which he does by siding with Marvin.<sup>158</sup>

Continuing to search through the past to bring clarity to the present, the next fragment III.vi leaves the tragedy of Fay Stender to consider the death of his close friend Roberta Chaplan<sup>159</sup> to cancer. Hearing the wind chimes she gave to Scott and Ronna as a wedding gift, he likens her soul to the "bursts of music all night/ gentle and wild".<sup>160</sup> It was "pure randomness" that took her from them, Scott decides, and as the chimes play "at the outside corner/ closest to our bed" the fragment unfolds with a cosmic wonder on Northern lights, the planets, "church bells", "computer screens" and this "haunting music".<sup>161</sup> Remembering these chimes were mentioned in an early fragment when Scott was packing up his office at McGill University,<sup>162</sup> their newly disclosed attribution helps to give presence to Roberta's ghost. In the music of the chimes, Scott is able to merge yin with the yang in the

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<sup>156</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 104.

<sup>157</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 104.

<sup>158</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 104.

<sup>159</sup> Scott's reference to Roberta Chaplan in fragment III.vi indicates that she was a close, cherished friend who died of cancer. In my research I discovered little more biographic detail other than to say she authored a children's book listed as follows: Roberta Chaplan, *Tell Me a Story, Paint Me the Sun: When a Girl Feels Ignored by Her Father* (Washington: Magination Press, 1991).

<sup>160</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 104.

<sup>161</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 102–107.

<sup>162</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 99–104.

Batesian eco-spiritual way of creating art which saves.<sup>163</sup> Another female ghost to join Marian Dale Scott, Maylie Scott and Fay Stender, the female yin of *Darkness* is increasingly venerated.

These early fragments of Scott's Section Three monitor Scott's journey toward greater awareness of the concept of yin as a force as it behaves in the paradigmatic idiom of yang/yin. They reveal that, for Scott, mature thought and poetic inspiration thrive on nurturing and positive experience whereas death and tragedy temporarily threaten it. However, it appears that it is also the case that these deaths and tragedies seem to offer the greatest lessons of all in terms of gaining spiritual maturity.

With this in mind, I re-evaluate Scott's trilogy here to emphasise there have been many deaths across *Seculum*, many avoidable if we consider the massacres of Book I, *Jakarta*; others, poignant as natural departures (his mother and father); his ex-wife Maylie dying of cancer and death as tragedy; his friend Fay Stender's criminal and mournful death; and now, a close friend whom Scott reveres for her contribution to the community and mental health in young people. Understanding this orientation in theme in *Darkness*, is the beginning of understanding of how the yang yin paradigm might be reimagined by Scott as civic enlightenment.

I have argued earlier that Scott is writing from the perspective of a sacramental ecologist; and here, it would seem his commemorations and, at times, in-depth reveries on these losses perform the act of eulogising death. In seeking to settle on some acceptance of this loss, grief and death, whether regrettable or natural, Scott is paving the way toward Tao, which comes by way of extension from his Buddhist practice. In this sense he is moving toward what would seem a holistic religious definition of enlightenment. Tao is the positive way forward that rebuilds the spirit after it has felt forlorn and less energised and leads to religious truth – most especially as it purports joy in daily life. In seeking Tao, Scott is intent on bringing redemption to human suffering – as exemplified in the tragic episodes of death and fire he has encountered in Section One and earlier books of the trilogy.

*Darkness* is the third and last book of the trilogy and its task is to bring unity, clarity, salvation and strength to the poetry in the sense it must now stand as a structure ready for a new dawn. By way of these intermittent eulogies, Scott finds this strength through the process of bringing closure and religious maturity in coping with grief and suffering.

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<sup>163</sup> Bate, *Song of the Earth*, 283.

The section continues then to move on and outward in the holistic sense of religious experience as Scott's gaze again turns to the heavens, the cosmos, the stars and the zodiac of "Scorpio".<sup>164</sup> In the spirit of yin it is clear he is determined to resolve spiritual malaise through a greater union with nature and his surroundings. In this fragment III.vii, it is twilight and he has come to Vihara monastery in California to "feed two Thai monks".<sup>165</sup> As a training ground for Buddhist women wishing to become ordained as nuns, it would seem the visit is related to Scott's previous marriage to Maylie whose ordination gave rise to the divorce that was discussed in *Candle*. It would seem also that he has come to the monastery with his second wife Ronna<sup>166</sup> which lends the visit a sense of pilgrimage and reverence for his now deceased loved one Maylie.<sup>167</sup> Once more, in this venture, the poem is focused on healing and spiritual nourishment.

In this fragment III.vii Scott speaks often of enlightenment, at times beckoning his mind to be open to it and "not shrink to the dogmas/ of the supposedly known".<sup>168</sup> The motivation and belief in its rewards are explained as an openness to difference, the opposite of which "leads us to war/ in the *name of human rights*".<sup>169</sup> Scott believes peace and social harmony can be achieved by adopting a different mindset and allowing ourselves to "contemplate/ (*teplum, open space/ marked out by augurs/ for observation*)".<sup>170</sup> The "Great Work/ of revolution" is for Scott: "Total enlightenment".<sup>171</sup> He defines this as that which perseveres and renders one considerate rather than the more Yeatsian sentiment of yielding to "*nothing but the embittered sun*".<sup>172</sup> Scott's movement toward the spirit of yin and spiritual nourishment reawakens his concern with a functional poetics, that is the creation of a "universal" poem that redeems suffering.

Scott's quote from Yeats's short poem "Lines Written in Dejection"<sup>173</sup> is worth considering here in a little more detail. The reference nods toward both the Protestant Irish poet and a time Yeats's life when government issues were causing turmoil in his domestic life.

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<sup>164</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 107.

<sup>165</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 107.

<sup>166</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 107.

<sup>167</sup> Dale Scott's first wife Maylie Scott died of cancer in May, 2001 shortly after being ordained as a Buddhist priest. Dale Scott remained in loving friendship with her up until and during her passing.

<sup>168</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 110.

<sup>169</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 110.

<sup>170</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 111.

<sup>171</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 112.

<sup>172</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 112.

<sup>173</sup> Richard J. Finneran, *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 145–46.

Written in November 1917,<sup>174</sup> it is a composition marked by World War I and the October Revolution of the same year. Yeats has just turned fifty and the poem reads as a lament about losing the innocence of childhood and a nurturing mother. In coming of age into wisdom and against the harsh reality of a violent world, Yeats asks what has happened to his imagination, his capacity to dream:

When have I last looked on  
The round green eyes and long wavering bodies  
Of the dark leopards of the moon?  
All the wild witches, those most noble ladies  
For all their broomsticks and their tears,  
Their angry tears are gone.  
The holy centaurs of the hills are banished.  
I have nothing but the embittered sun;  
Banished heroic mother moon and vanished,  
And now I have come to fifty years  
I must endure the timid sun.<sup>175</sup>

That this might be indicative of the poem's sense of despair is plausible, however, the poem is symbolic of individual power and self-development in spite of governmental catastrophe. Critic David Ross argues that the "embittered sun" is symbolic of Yeats's "fall from his lunar nature" and claims that, like the sun, Yeats himself has become "false".<sup>176</sup> According to Thomas Parkinson,<sup>177</sup> the symbols of sun and moon are to be understood in Yeatsian terms as "the antimonies of the soul".<sup>178</sup> The sun stands for the reasoning, embodied aspects of the self and the moon is the soul's more wild wanderings in wonder, mystery and intrigue.<sup>179</sup> For the poet, then, loss of his moonscape wilderness which comes directly as a result of his civic context is devastating. As Parkinson explains, Yeats writes the poem to lament the loss of its roots in "popular lore and folk belief", so that the dreaming and imagining lent by these ties are lost to the "intellectual elaborateness of a desiccated culture".<sup>180</sup> The sun is "embittered"

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<sup>174</sup> Norman A. Jeffares, *W. B. Yeats: A New Biography* (London: Continuum Press, 2001), 165.

<sup>175</sup> Finneran, *Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats*, 145–46.

<sup>176</sup> David A. Ross, *A Critical Companion to William Butler Yeats: A Literary Reference to his Life and his Work* (New York: Facts on Files Inc., 2009), 143.

<sup>177</sup> Thomas Parkinson, "The Sun and the Moon in Yeats's Early Poetry," *Modern Philology*, 50, no. 1 (1952): 50–58.

<sup>178</sup> Parkinson, "The Sun and the Moon in Yeats's Early Poetry," 50.

<sup>179</sup> Parkinson, "The Sun and the Moon in Yeats's Early Poetry," 54.

<sup>180</sup> Parkinson, "The Sun and the Moon in Yeats's Early Poetry," 50.

because it is symbolic of the intellectual self without its dynamic partner in “emotional and animal”<sup>181</sup> instincts. This is the same quandary Scott hopes to overthrow in his last book of *Seculum*. Advocating the enlightened mind, Scott suggests Yeats’s “antimonies of the soul”<sup>182</sup> were not afforded reconciliation because their “striving” was always oppositional to the reality of writing his new poetry without its valued roots.<sup>183</sup>

Section Three continues with Scott enjoying a quiet night of reading “Wordsworth’s *Prelude*” during a flight to Northumbria for a vacation.<sup>184</sup> He is with Ronna and is reflecting on education (his own at Oxford and Cambridge), learning, youth, hope, solitude and despair. Throughout fragment III.viii, Scott’s thoughts are interspersed with quotes from the *Prelude* and this dialogue creates a sense of an illusory conversation and companionship between the two poets. Frequently, Scott catches glimpses of nature, the “sea-cliffs/ of Baffin Islands”, the “Faeores” resembling “the oneness of Dharmas”; and, it would seem, in these captivating moments, he is finding the “same shape of language” that was Wordsworth’s in the sense they are choosing the same path: “the scheme of truth”.<sup>185</sup> From Yeats to Wordsworth, Scott is shaping an historical poetic essay which explores candles of thought from his forebears to help find the great light of his new dawn. Where previously these poets behaved as guides in Scott’s quest for Paradise, their use in *Darkness* is largely textual. Where first, the Yeats poem used in Scott’s fragment III.vii collapses sympathetically into the poetic structure of *Darkness*, Wordsworth’s *Prelude* behaves similarly to become a poetic echo of Scott’s quest. Importantly, this added textuality and sounding out of past literary attempts at eco-spiritual writing lends Scott’s poesis a more monumental, and thereby structural integrity.

If we remember that Scott’s pursuit of spiritual enlightenment and his own use of the term “enmindment” signal principles that function in accordance with the spiritual and the civic aspects of one’s life, then this poetic essay is the framework that brings substance and validity. Scott’s new dawn comes at the moment his poetic trilogy reaches enlightenment in the sense that the spiritual and the civic discourses of the fragments are brought together in a conclusive end. They must marry, for Scott, if a dawn representing redemption and renewal is to be made possible. In conjoining his own poetics with historical literature concerning

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<sup>181</sup> Parkinson, “The Sun and the Moon in Yeats’s Early Poetry,” 50.

<sup>182</sup> Parkinson, “The Sun and the Moon in Yeats’s Early Poetry,” 50.

<sup>183</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 112.

<sup>184</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 113.

<sup>185</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 112–118.

religion and philosophies concerned with thinking and being, Scott is reinforcing the authority of an ethical consciousness.

In later fragments the tone of conversation and companionship is kept up by Scott in his thoughts on Ronna and how her presence, or more exactly her love, has changed his vision of the world. “Ronna, the Renaissance is different/ with you beside me”<sup>186</sup> he begins in fragment III.ix and it is this style of hushed epiphany that characterise the rest of the section. Operating as a stylistic interlude, the narration describes Scott’s experience of a love which is omnipotent and, even, perfect. Remembering the teachings of “the Brethren of the Free Spirit” that “we should *be guided solely by the inner light*”<sup>187</sup> Scott’s love for Ronna and what her love has lent his world is expressed religiously, spiritually and morally in the sense that to love is to “forget the sins of the past” and “convert the world”.<sup>188</sup>

In fragment III.x, Scott’s poetic voice returns to its usual dialect of political diplomacy and is a revealing serious reflection on corrupt politics and misgoverning. As well as a reconciliation with some old friends – “Joyce’s sister and her kids” who avoided prison “after the deal with Justice” – it also refers to colleagues from “anti-war marches”, and topics such as American slavery, the Sand Creek Massacre, “mob killings and rapes of Chinese women”, the “massacres of the Plains Indians”, “the forced misplacement/ of the Ponca tribe”, “atrocities in the Philippines” and the murders of “moderate NU (Indonesian Muslim organisation) clerics”.<sup>189</sup> The fragment serves as an exposé of political truth and borrows from Scott’s own biographical history as a diplomat to ‘look’ internationally and consider other examples of historical and contemporary atrocities. By highlighting that the epidemic of evil and corruption is world-wide, it gives us a sense of the scope of civil unrest, but by ending the fragment with a focus upon the Canadian-born Scott’s second home country, America, it is clear he is always returning and leaving the context of his knowledge base in seeking Paradise and earthly peace.

Scott’s Yin Section Three draws to a close and his spiritual journey has progressed to uncover the greater light in the darkness of unknowing. So that, finally in fragment III.xii Scott writes of returning home on an aeroplane and being awoken with “Insight!”.<sup>190</sup> There is talk

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<sup>186</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 118.

<sup>187</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 121.

<sup>188</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 122.

<sup>189</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 123–129.

<sup>190</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 134–139.



of the undercover truth of drug trafficking in Mexico, the CIA and the DFS (Mexican Secret Police), of “drug banks” in Russia, of being torn between resolving evil through poetry or giving up in the knowledge that:

you could lay prize-winning volumes of poetry  
from here to Walnut Creek

and in how many of them  
could you find the seminal words  
*DFS or debt exposure*  
or even *CIA* <sup>191</sup>

I argue the inference in this last section of fragment III.ix is that prized poetry will generally not be polemical or judgemental of the society from which it is born but rather, perform in a manner which pursues reconciliation. Whether it be a lament, eulogy or song of joy, Scott suggests a prized volume of poetry<sup>192</sup> will not be antithetical to human errors in action or judgement. Instead, Scott is vouching for a poetry born out of the simple and profound Christian belief in the sacredness of life. In this final fragment of the yin section, Scott has sought refuge rather than despair at the state of the world and attends the “haunting performance”<sup>193</sup> of Bach’s St Matthew Passion, detailing Christ’s passage from betrayal to burial.<sup>194</sup> Attending the performance with Ronna, its importance to the section’s conclusion is to add a sense of divinity to suffering and darkness – and in this sense it would seem yin is illuminated.

Having explored the idea of a dark mind, a state of mental confusion and clouded vision, Scott then undertakes the task of “enlightening” this mental state with political and spiritual thought. The purpose of this undertaking is to approach a personal and civic intellectual malaise with the idea that the cause could be sourced either by analysing contemporary society’s makeup (hence the political critiques) or by analysing the cultural spirit (which can be either a personal or social experience). So, by way of exploring the yang and yin aspects of human nature and cultural development, he arrives at the conclusion that the darkness experienced is caused by a moral political and cultural sickness. And that,

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<sup>191</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 138–139.

<sup>192</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 138.

<sup>193</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 138.

<sup>194</sup> Johann Sebastian Bach, *St Matthew Passion in Full Score* (New York: Dover Publications, 1990), 294.

without the nourishment of the soul and spirit in contemporary culture, the yin aspects of societal well-being related to restfulness and serenity of place lose their value to human nature.

Scott's argument works on the premise that virtue is an ancient wisdom which shows little variance through the ages with respect to Justice. For Scott, this essential social law can only survive if religion and matters of the spirit are revalued. He makes the claim this is not so wild a suggestion if human nature – studied for its yang/ yin aspects regarding intellect, knowledge and spiritual reflection – possesses a common sense of the word love which is most exactly divine. In a recent review of a new volume of poetry by Scott, this sense of the divine is described as unquestionably the essence of truth. As Edward A. Dougherty writes:

It is a bold courage that enables Scott to view the wreckage of history and still sound the call for “a stronger voice/ to empower the old dream/ poets have always shared/ of narrowing the abyss between the truth we inherit/ of Katyushas and M-16s / and *metta*—lovingkindness/ the truth that has always been.”<sup>195</sup>

For Scott, *Darkness* presents individual and public truths as the metaphoric darkness and lightness which govern our mood, progress and attitude toward living, dying and being co-dwellers within a larger cosmos. The “lovingkindness” or “truth that has always been” is expressive of the darkness before creation, which was never exactly sinister, evil or depressing. For religious Scott, this darkness before creation is instead the mystery of the divine presence of God<sup>196</sup> who personifies this greater and most important truth.

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<sup>195</sup> Edward Dougherty, “Walking on Darkness by Peter Dale Scott,” *American Microreviews and Interviews*, no. 37 (April 3, 2017), unpaginated.

<sup>196</sup> Remembering Scott is firstly a Buddhist, then Catholic and Christian person who also deeply values forms of Eastern religion, this God finds its equivalence in the Tao, or Buddha, etc.



## CONCLUSION

### SECULUM: A TRILOGY BY PETER DALE SCOTT

#### i. Hell, Purgatory, Paradise

Throughout this dissertation, I have sought to explain Peter Dale Scott's long poem *Seculum*<sup>1</sup> as a trilogy modelled on the idea of threeness. This form is attributed to Hegel's dialectical triad of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis<sup>2</sup> and also references Dante's journey to the three realms of the afterlife – Hell, Purgatory and Heaven – in *Commedia*.<sup>3</sup> It erects a poetic structure out of ruins and repositions a fall from grace to a state of moral righteousness in order to 'house' a new dawn. Through the interplay of allegorical, symbolic and personal narratives, Scott's long poem thinks its way forward from suffering to reconciliation. Such thinking is Heideggerian<sup>4</sup> in the sense that Scott is considering philosophical, religious *and* poetic questions in order to reconcile conceptually charged dualities such as life and death, good and evil, and secular and spiritual enlightenment.

By contemplating ideas of care and love with respect to sustainably dwelling on Earth – as an individual in the world, among others – Scott faults the Western Enlightenment project for a lack of spiritual depth. This is the eco-critical midpoint of *Seculum*, the centre of inquiry around which everything spirals toward new ground and poetic structure. Although viewed as religious poetry, *Seculum's* argument is for ecological balance and peace-orientated conversation around dualities inherent in our humanness and desire to create a public and private dwelling place to call home. In this way I find it aligned with similar eco-critical writings

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta, A Poem About Terror* (New York: New Directions Press, 1988). Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle, A Poem On Impulse* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992). Peter Dale Scott, *Minding the Darkness, A Poem For the Year 2000* (New York: New Directions Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Glenn Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 170.

<sup>3</sup> In this dissertation I cite (wherever possible) from three volumes of *Commedia*, all of which pertain to the same translator, Robert M. Durling: Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Volume 1: Inferno*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Volume 2: Purgatorio*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy, Volume 3: Paradiso*, trans. Robert M. Durling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Heidegger's influence on Scott is described in this thesis as one concerned with the "building" of a poesis that reflects critical thinking about being, time and the philosophical (which for Scott is more the theological) environment that is to be its milieu. See Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings from "Being and Time" (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge and Kegan, Paul, 1978), 343–365.

concerned with humankind dwelling on earth (as in Jonathan Bate), with ideas of a sacred place (as in Kate Rigby), and ideas of living gently on earth (as in Stuart Cooke). Scott advocates not just for a secular approach to moving forward (or even, away) from established traditions, but for an eco-critical spirituality that translates the tenets of classical antiquity into new conceptual and poetical possibilities. The key to all such antimonies, Scott argues, lies in acknowledging otherness, substantiating other perspectives on livelihood, the making of a dwelling and continuing to engage in revisionary dialogue.

*Seculum's* Book One, *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror*,<sup>5</sup> is a three-part poem which presents the horrendous tragedy of the Indonesian massacres from 1965 onwards that resulted in more than half a million deaths, torture and imprisonment as being linked to the global reality of living in a world driven by economics. Scott's poem proposes that these events show ancient virtue and ideas of goodness and human decency being sidelined by greed, power and corrupt politics. For Scott, this lack of balance is out of step with the cyclic duality that sustains the cosmos and implicates our eco-spiritual relation to earth. Instead, argues Scott, there needs to be a tempering of extremism in our lives to avoid situations that cause any form of impoverishment. Should corrupt politics, for example, cause a sustained, apocalyptic war or further, a peaceful way of life result in chronic apathy, there can be, for Scott, no future of hope and promise. The task of *Seculum*, therefore, is to enlist the personal as witness to a public politics and thereby approach corruption, scandal and terror via passive roots such as reflection and deep thought. Through these activities, Scott pursues a intellectual-spiritual definition of injury, insult, praise or wisdom. These factors then create a conversation to invigorate the ruin of *Seculum*, to reinstate a reason for hope, desire for divine perfection and a way of life that is 'religiously' stimulates the heart and mind.

Book Two, *Listening to the Candle: A Poem on Impulse*,<sup>6</sup> presents an idea of Truth and, once again, Scott relies on triads to think about the concept: alongside an idea of religious truth, Scott decides there are also eco-critically spiritual and personal truths. This is surmised via a second concept of love that becomes the poem's greater focus, and comes to represent something eternal, intangible and essential which saves souls from destitution. To think about truth and love, Scott draws on the Catholic scriptures, Buddhist practice and Chinese spiritual teaching which, together, can symbolise in his view a divine form of Truth and thereby be

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror* (New York: New Directions Books, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Listening to the Candle: A Poem About Terror* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992).

linked to heavenly ideas of human perfection found in Classical antiquity. He regards these matters holistically, to argue that truth and love can be enriching to our perception of dwelling with respect to living and dying, co-existing with others and taking care of the planet. Through this holistic interpretation of truth and love, Scott shows us a pathway toward acceptance, humility and maturity, and the possibility of nonviolent human relationships. From a personal and communal focus, Scott comes to see great value in the personal truth of one's heart – what one feels, desires, wants, needs and thinks. In the quiet, intimate pages of *Candle*, Scott advocates for reflection, suggesting such depth of thought can help humankind rediscover truth and bring us closer to a perfect state of being.

The task in Book Three, *Minding the Darkness: A Poem For the Year 2000*,<sup>7</sup> is to synthesise the thesis and anti-thesis of the preceding volumes and present their remedy as revelation. Scott's religiosity or sense of the world – philosophically, spiritually and eco-poetically – is aligned with dwelling peacefully on earth. The conversation and arguments of *Seculum*, and especially the troubles of Book One, come to *Darkness* as material for prayer – ruin and unrest as an illness requiring treatment.

## ii. Paradise Found

Considering "illness" metaphorically as a symptom of evil and tragedy in Scott's trilogy, my dissertation seeks to find aspects of "Er Yi – The Ways of Heaven and Earth" and, more substantially, the idea of "Tai Ji – The Great Origin"<sup>8</sup> as derived from the writings of the first sage of the Song Dynasty, Zhou Dunyi.<sup>9</sup> I suggest, in summary, that in its pursuit of Paradise or an allegorical "new dawn", *Seculum* adapts the idea of Tai Ji so that the poem functions on a principle of unity. Thus, in Scott's trilogy, Tai Ji is the well-spring from which the concepts of yang and yin evolve and is the ever-constant metaphysical companion of the poem's cosmic yang/ yin relation. By maintaining their balance, Scott's interpretation and application of the principles of Tai Ji teach us that a critical *and* spiritual approach to living on earth and amongst

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Dale Scott, *Minding the Darkness: A Poem For The Year 2000* (New York: New Directions Press, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 230.

<sup>9</sup> JeeLoo Liu, *Neo-Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind and Morality* (Hoboken: Wiley & Sons, 2018), 19.

others encourages harmony in one's personal life and the attainment of a higher excellence of thought.<sup>10</sup>

In conclusion, I want to reiterate that the disclosures of Scott's *Seculum* series are accompanied throughout not only by this Eastern principle of yin/yang unity, but also by the Christian-Catholic idea of the Trinity. Just as the Tai Ji as the "Great Origin" is far removed from earth in its perfection,<sup>11</sup> Scott's Christian-Catholic God is the divine, perfect image of humankind.<sup>12</sup>

In light of this, the social and personal mental malaise presented in *Seculum* is read in accordance with a virtuous exchange between heaven and earth – the Er Yi, and virtue in its purest, most original and incandescent state – Tai Ji. My dissertation has considered how Scott's trilogy explores ways that a unified secular and eco-spiritual human experience can be achieved; and further, the benefits of this achievement with regard to the well-being of all life forms co-dwelling on planet earth.

### iii. Er Yi and Economics as Temple

In chapters 4 and 5 especially, my thesis investigated ways that Scott's *Seculum* explores the concept of Er Yi.<sup>13</sup> I explained that in Chinese philosophy, the term signifies the presence of yin and yang aspects as one unified state which in Chinese legend "makes compassion ever flowing (er lui ci)".<sup>14</sup> To expand, this quote from the second Buddhist emperor of the Tang dynasty of China (Emperor Taizong of Tang, 626-649)<sup>15</sup> expresses the Emperor's gratitude to India for bringing the teachings of Buddha to China (an act he refers to as a "shining upon the eastern region").<sup>16</sup> This phrase by Emperor Taizong, who was known to have embraced

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<sup>10</sup> Liu, *Neo-Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind and Morality*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> The Tai Ji is perfect because it is the way of heaven. According to James Legge, there are three powers operable in the changes and movements of yin and yang. The one is Heaven, the other earth and the third, humankind. James Legge, *The I Ching: The Book of Changes* (Dover Publications, 2012), 44.

<sup>12</sup> Scott's Tai Ji Section (5) of *Darkness* is prefaced by four epigrams and the second is from Psalm 139 (12): *Night is as clear as day/ The darkness and light to thee are both alike* (Scott, *Darkness*, 231). Although Scott attributes this quote to Psalm 139: 10–11, my source lists it as Psalm 139: 12 with variance to the translation: "even darkness to you is not dark,/ and night is as clear as the day". Henry Wansborough, *New Jerusalem Bible, Standard Edition* (New York: Doubleday Press, 1999), 688.

<sup>13</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 149.

<sup>14</sup> Tan Chung, *Himalaya Calling: The Origins of China and India* (New Jersey: World Century Publishing Corporation, 2015), 53.

<sup>15</sup> Chung, *Himalaya Calling: The Origins of China and India*, 53.

<sup>16</sup> Chung, *Himalaya Calling: The Origins of China and India*, 53.

Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism at once,<sup>17</sup> lends the term Er Yi a sense of religious unity in which seemingly opposing forces dwell in harmony. Er Yi on these terms is coupled with Scott's subtitle for Book Three of his trilogy, "The Ways of Heaven and Earth",<sup>18</sup> so as to marry Eastern religious thought with forms of Western spirituality. This allows for the presence of something greater than the real which could be regarded ecumenically as "the force" – as Scott likes to term divinity.<sup>19</sup> The challenge of *Seculum* as determined by Er Yi is to remedy the misconception that our cosmic presence in the universe is scientific and knowable. As Confucius suggests: "There is never a case when a root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order", which suggests that the "cultivation of the personal [or more exactly, spiritual] life" is the root and when this is in order, all other things [scientific and knowable per se] about a person, family and state, will be in order too.<sup>20</sup> It is in this sense that Scott's trilogy arrives at a synthesis of the thesis and anti-thesis set up in Book One and Book Two.

My thesis argues that the ambition of *Seculum* shows us that the passion of the human spirit transcends physical realms. More precisely, I have argued that Scott's trilogy explores a balance between reason and passion – the human emotions<sup>21</sup> – to achieve social harmony. For Scott, the rationale of this argument is that whilst we cannot stifle our passions we can use reason to understand and channel them usefully – thereby demonstrating a reasonableness based on virtue rather than reason as a solely intellectual enterprise.

From the beginning of Scott's *Seculum* the quest for Paradise is seen to be thwarted by economics, most specifically, contemporary American economics. This is to the text's advantage as it positions *Seculum*'s political fog and spiritual disquiet in an arena known best by Scott, who worked for many years as a political diplomat. For instance, fragment IV.i of *Darkness* considers the "Eye of Providence or Great Seal" of America designed by Charles Thomson and approved by congress in 1782.<sup>22</sup> Taken as a motto of the American people, the words above and below the illustration of a pyramid and great eye translate most simply as

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<sup>17</sup> Chung, *Himalaya Calling: The Origins of China and India*, 55.

<sup>18</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 149.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Dale Scott, Rebecca Kylie Law, *Personal Correspondence* (September, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Peter N. Stearns, ed., *World History in Documents: A Comparative Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 36.

<sup>21</sup> Ron Vanelli, *Evolutionary Theory and Human Nature* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica.com*, last accessed June 12, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Seal-of-the-United-States>



“He (God) has favoured our undertakings, a New Order of the Ages”.<sup>23</sup> For Scott, the providential inference is long since lost if one considers the “rich are getting richer and the poor poorer”<sup>24</sup> through a very straightforward “abuse/ of capital power”.<sup>25</sup> This is Scott’s national shame, as he sees it, and he states: “if we have learnt anything/ in the 2000 years since Virgil/ it is to expect no moral progress/ from our political leaders”,<sup>26</sup> and this is the fault, he explains of inequitable economic “distribution” unheeding of “production”.<sup>27</sup>

As the fragments of *Darkness* continue to bring clarity, closure, promise and synthesis to *Seculum*, the premise is the same: this motto is nothing but the “dim gleam of history” and thereby a misrepresentation of “that heavenly city” (Heaven) and “the dignity of human life”.<sup>28</sup> Through the building of his long poem, Scott searches for a way back to that first history and then forward to the witnessing of a new dawn, a new moment of enlightened thought, action and eco-spiritual living. In his own words, Scott wants *Seculum* to rediscover hope from memory, “to achieve our country/ and change the history of the world”.<sup>29</sup>

Continuing its analysis of economics and contemporary morality, the poem discusses the irony of the new American paper monetary bills in 1935 which sported the slogan “*In God We Trust*”.<sup>30</sup> Scott presents fact after fact about this historical incident – not to suggest he can “grasp the details” but rather, that he “can see how Post-enlightenment/ has used words *social science*/ to separate economics/ from considerations of value”.<sup>31</sup> For example, “the commodification of liberty/ into choices of channels/ colas political parties/ overseas Hiltons”.<sup>32</sup> *Seculum* contains example after example of scathing reportage on valueless economic management, presenting these cases as mounting evidence that we live in a “world ill-governed”,<sup>33</sup> yet “being also from God/ this earthway is everyone’s/ in the chaos of the present”.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica.com*, last accessed June 12, 2019, [https:// www.britannica.com/ topic/ Great-Seal-of-the-United-States](https://www.britannica.com/topic/Great-Seal-of-the-United-States)

<sup>24</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 154.

<sup>25</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 155.

<sup>26</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 155.

<sup>27</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 155.

<sup>28</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 163.

<sup>29</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 164.

<sup>30</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 171.

<sup>31</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 171.

<sup>32</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 181.

<sup>33</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 208.

<sup>34</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 220.

iv. Tai Ji and The New Dawn

A poetry fraught with suspense, Scott's *Seculum* makes a claim, from its tribute to Tai Ji, that clarity and reconciliation are at last at hand. In summary, the Tai Ji represents the Taoist philosophy of the natural world<sup>35</sup> and can be translated as "Supreme Ultimate".<sup>36</sup> It denotes the state of singularity with absolute and infinite potential that is formed from yang and yin.<sup>37</sup> Remembering that these two concepts of yang and yin are shown by Scott to exist and be validated through their coexistence – for example, without day there is no darkness<sup>38</sup> and vice versa – the most important instruction of Tai Ji is to nurture an equal balance of both qualities. This balance can be as simple as that between fury and temperance, desire and love, impulse and thoughtful action.

From this idea of nurturing opposing forces and arriving at balance, Scott's *Seculum* grows through and in the knowledge of love. This manifests itself as human love and eco-spiritual love for all of God's creation. In *Seculum* this love is "sweetness", "innocence", "the *insegnamento* (teaching) of grace", "laughter", "tears".<sup>39</sup> Scott's growing up or maturing in the name of this love means there are moments in the long poem of "Yang comprehension/ the strength not just to understand/ but to change the world" and "Yin compassion/ toward the Open/ the Rebbe" (which I translate from the Hebrew *rav*, meaning teacher of the Torah or spiritual master).<sup>40</sup> Through love, Scott's trilogy finds the last signpost to wisdom and his lost Paradise and says:

so darkness of experience  
  
is the beginning of insight  
          happiness makes us forget  
          so the surfeit of knowledge  
  
points toward that horizon  
          between the body on earth  
          and the mind in heaven

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Dillon, *Encyclopedia of Chinese History* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2017), 148.

<sup>36</sup> Dillon, *Encyclopedia of Chinese History*, 795.

<sup>37</sup> Simmone Kuo, *Yin-Yang in Tai-Chi Chuan and Daily Life* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2004), 28.

<sup>38</sup> Chris Jarmey, *The Theory and Practice of Taiji Qigong* (New York: Lotus Publishing, 2003), 39.

<sup>39</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 233–238.

<sup>40</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 241.

the earthway  
where we struggle to discover  
what has always been known<sup>41</sup>

Scott's *Seculum* mines the darkness of cultural and mental chaos and confusion to find the light – the divine spark<sup>42</sup>. America's new dawn is there to be realised across his home country only if the yin elements of culture, resonant with the individual's "inner enlightenment", are honoured as they first were (in ancient time) in the sense origins of morality and virtue constitute the definition of a humane character.

The poem series is a structure for this dawn because in the pages of his trilogy, Scott has investigated a field of war and terror to re-erect signposts associated with providence and eco-spiritual dwelling. From these signposts, he has designed a way of thinking and seeing a future which is tracked by virtue and an acutely humane moral and ethical consciousness. This design is the epic *Seculum* that employs classical tercets (interposed with subsections of meditative verse written in couplets) as its organising principle and narrates heroic quest poetry in the fashion of Homer. Through the Dantean envisioning of poetic and philosophical guides such as Wordsworth, Eliot, Pound, Heidegger and Hölderlin, Scott moves out of a metaphoric fog and darkness to reimagine the world, model a sense of eco-spiritual dwelling out of an archetypal idyll and find the metaphoric lightness of mind, body and spirit necessary for future enlightenment. In this way, Scott writes a moral essay that critiques historical, real episodes of shameless terror to diminish the poem's metaphorical and unresolved Hell and effect a healing of memory. In *Seculum*, we are reacquainted with religion, with what it might mean to find the capacity to forgive and to rerecuperate the past as evolving from the cyclic creation of life and providence. The Paradise lost in biblical time by the fall of humankind in Eden, is presented as reimagined in Scott's epic through the reckoning of his thesis in Hell (Book One) to the rerecuperating of love and goodness in his antithesis in Purgatory (Book two) to the acceptance of human fallibility, the endurance of God's love and the promise post enlightenment (which Scott religiously explains and effects in the epic) to celebrate divine virtue in Paradise (Book Three). In healing memory, Scott finds Paradise and directs our plural society to it through the making of his poem; and its conclusive seduction of a new dawn.

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<sup>41</sup> Scott, *Darkness*, 233–238.

<sup>42</sup> Christian Helmer, Taylor G. Petrey, ed., *Biblical Interpretation: History, Context and Reality*, Society of Biblical Literature, no.26 (2005), 93.

## APPENDIX<sup>1</sup>

### PETER DALE SCOTT: CURRICULUM VITAE

Born Montreal, January 11, 1929. Married (1) Mary Elizabeth Marshall, June 16, 1956 (divorced, 1993): three children (Catherine Dale, Thomas, John Daniel). Married (2) Ronna Kabatznick, July 14, 1993. A Canadian citizen.

#### **Education and Teaching:**

B.A. (McGill University, Montreal), 1949. First Class Honors in Philosophy, Second Class Honors in Political Science.

Studied six months at Institut d'Etudes Politiques, Paris; and two years at University College, Oxford (1950-1952).

Ph.D. in Political Science (McGill), 1955. Dissertation on *The Social and Political Ideas of T.S. Eliot*.

1952-1953. Teacher at Sedbergh School, Montebello, Quebec.

1955-1956. Lecturer, Department of Political Science, McGill University.

1961-1966. Speech Department, University of California, Berkeley: Lecturer (1961); Acting Assistant Professor (1962); Assistant Professor (1963).

1966-1994. English Department, University of California, Berkeley: Assistant Professor (1966); Associate Professor (1968); Professor (1980). Retired 1994.

#### **Professional Service**

Foreign Service Officer, Canadian Department of External Affairs, 1957-1961: Twelfth and Thirteenth Sessions, United Nations General Assembly, 1957, 1958; Canadian Embassy in Warsaw, Poland (1959-1961); United Nations Conference on Statelessness (Geneva, 1959); United Nations Conference on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities (Vienna, 1961) Senior Fellow, International Center for Development Policy, Washington, D.C., June-November 1987.

#### **Fellowships**

Canadian Social Sciences Research Council, 1956-57. Guggenheim Fellow, 1969-1970.

#### **Honors and Awards**

International Center for Development Policy, Freedom Award, 1987.

Finalist, Canadian Governor-General's Award for Poetry, 1988.

Reed Foundation Poetry Chapbook, Dia Art Foundation, 1989.

Writer in Residence, University of Toronto, Fall 1992.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Dale Scott, "Curriculum Vitae", peterdalescott.net, last accessed 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.

Honorable Mention, Mencken Awards, Best Book, 1992.  
Sylvia Meagher Award, Coalition on Political Assassinations, 1996.  
JFK Pioneer Award, JFKLancer, 1997.  
Resident, Bellagio Study Center, Aug.-Sept. 1997.  
Lannan Poetry Award, 2002 (with Alan Dugan).  
Lannan Writing Residency, Marfa, TX, March-April 2004  
Honoree at Symposium and Seminars, Open Center, New York City, March 13-20, 2010.

Two journal issues devoted to his poetry: *Chicago Review*, Fall 1998; *Agni*, 31/ 32 (1990).

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