Jung, Sawyer, Science Fiction, and the Eupsychia:

Reconciling Opposites in the *Neanderthal Parallax* Trilogy.

In *The Creation of Consciousness: Jung's Myth for Modern Man* (1984), Edward F. Edinger proclaims:

> It is evident to thoughtful people that Western society no longer has a viable, functioning myth. Indeed, all the major world cultures are approaching, to a greater or lesser extent, the state of mythlessness. The breakdown of a central myth is like the shattering of a vessel containing a precious essence; the fluid is spilled and drains away, soaked up by the surrounding undifferentiated matter. Meaning is lost. In its place, primitive and atavistic contents are reactivated. Differentiated values disappear and are replaced by the elemental motivations of power and pleasure, or else the individual is exposed to emptiness and despair." (9-10)

Here Edinger speaks to the impoverished psyches rendered under the cultural climate Fredric Jameson (1984) calls postmodernism and producing subjects plagued by what Julia Kristeva (1995) calls the new maladies of the soul. One of the most influential means by which to revolt against the 'undifferentiated matter' of mass consumer culture was identified by Tom Moylan in his genre-defining book, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (1986). Through an examination of the novels of Samuel R. Delany, Ursula K Le Guin, Marge Piercy, and Joanna Russ Moylan observes that the utopian potential is reignited my means of the literary implementation of the 'oppositional culture' emerging from the late 1960s and 1970s. Moylan states, "A central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian

tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as a blueprint while preserving it as dream. Furthermore, the novels dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopia society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated" (10-11). Moylan's observations do work toward salvaging a sense of hope for the individual subject from the abject conditions of contemporary commodity culture: "utopia […] reduced to the consumption of pleasurable weekends, Christmas dreams, and goods purchased weekly in the pleasure-dome shopping malls of suburbia" (8).

However, insofar as the two main currents of critical theory, i.e., Marxism and Freudianism, inform Moylan's methods his conclusions are restricted, namely in terms of the status of the psyche as a site of working toward utopia. In this essay, I propose expanding the role of the psyche in terms of its function within critical utopianism by reaching into the theoretical resources of that other side of critical theory—that 'other' of psychoanalytic theory—the more mystical Carl Gustav Jung. Here I argue that Jung's analytic psychology, specifically his notion of 'marriage as a psychological relationship,' supports the utopian functions of the psyche in a way that Marxism and Freudianism do not allow; echoing Abraham Maslow, I consider Jung's notion of the psyche reconciled to be paradigmatic of what the former called the 'eupsychia.' Furthermore, I claim that one particular literary narrative of Jung's eupsychia is witnessed in Robert J. Sawyer's *Neanderthal Parallax* Trilogy (*Hominids* 2002; *Humans* 2003a; *Hybrids* 2003b). The sub-plot of Mary Vaughan and Ponter Boddit, which functionally drives most of the trilogy, can indeed be read as an instance of a Jungian analysis, a reconciliation of opposites, such that the plague of mythlessness is overcome, primitive and atavistic contents contained, and emptiness and despair vanquished.

Jung and the Eupsychia

It could be argued that the eupsychia has been in existence for some time now, perhaps evident in the Ancient world in the writings of Plato, Augustine, and Boethius; however, the modern sense of eupsychia was coined by social psychologist, Abraham Maslow. Literally meaning Good-Psyche, the eupsychia is a virtual *Aufhebung* to the traditional utopia *qua* achieved advanced economic system. By this I mean to that the eupsychia is an individually focused, or subjective, utopia beyond the otherwise strictly social utopias of the same tradition. Given that societies in the West are arranged hierarchically, Maslow states that the people of those societies gradually move from basic needs (i.e., material: food sex, shelter) to more abstract and complicated needs (non-material: psychological, spiritual, religious). "When bellies are full and we are sheltered, we turn toward the problems of safety and security in the world. […] Then we think education, and we want good schools […] I think we are now ready to conceive of a 'Eupsychia' – a psychologically healthy culture – rather than just another materially-based Utopia" (1-2).[1]

In *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (1979), Frank and Fritzie Manuel historically situate the modern eupsychia, although it is not referred to as such, in the philosophical and political writing of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. They state, "Rousseau's eupsychian legacy is the fantasy of a perfectly autonomous, fulfilled 'I' for everyman, the wholeness of a communal 'I' that is an organic unity, and the integration of the entire, individual 'I' with the communal 'I' with hardly a ripple on either surface" (2). Krishan Kumar (1991), on the other hand, situates that eupsychia more properly in terms of the

psychological utopias of 'individual happiness and fulfillment' as might be encountered in the work of the Freudo-Marxists of the 20th century, e.g., Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse (40). Likewise, in her book *The Concept of Utopia* (1991), sociologist Ruth Levitas aligns the idea of eupsychia with certain 20th century Freudo-Marxists, especially Marcuse, whom for her advocate—following E.P. Thompson's 'education of desire' and Bloch's *docta spes*—the debunking of 'false needs' and the revelation of 'real needs.' Quoting Marcuse, Levitas writes, "[W]hen all present subjective and objective potentialities of development have been unbound, the needs and wants themselves will change" and "for the first time in our life, we shall be free to think about what we are going to do" (142). For all intents and purposes, it is Freud that influences the vast majority of these writers and the sources they cite.

In comparison to Freud who defames the potential for society to ever become truly happy as well as refute the powers of the ameliorative affects of religious experiences or mystical 'oceanic feelings,' Jung's work suggests that these otherwise abutted phenomena of the psyche are not only exactly what modern humankind needs but furthermore that they are 'attainable.' That is to say, contrary to Freud and other so called critical thinkers, Jung does posit the presence of a transcendent something wholly accessible to the individual subject, which is not perpetually out of his or her psychic reach. For Jung it is merely a matter of finding the proper 'Image' that will allow one to make sense of—gesturing back to Edinger—the otherwise undifferentiated matter of mythlessness exercised through vulgar power pleasure *via* the resurfacing of primitive and atavistic contents. Although he does not offer a panacea for the perennial problems of humankind, Jung, unlike Freud and/or his post-linguistic successor Lacan, resists

servitude to the postmodern chain of endless deferral insofar as the impossible object of desire can never be obtained.

Central to Jung's analytical psychology, and the ability to imagine the proper Image is the idea of the 'archetype' or 'primordial image.' These are structural elements are specific to both the individual *and* the collective. They are pictorial forms of the instincts; which is to say, the unconscious. The individual will encounter "eternal images," Jung claims, such that these psychic encounters are historicized and contribute to the diversity of the history of consciousness from which all of humankind draws upon. It is the individual's ability to sustain a firm grasp on these various and diverse experiences *qua* difference, as they accumulate across history and are inherited by subsequent generations of progeny. That is to say, one must be diligent to resist the uncontrolled dissemination of the eternal image into utter chaos (i.e., undifferentiated matter) to the point where the individual loses control and these unconscious forces wield unruly power over the individual.

In *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (1954), Erich Neumann states, "The ability to perceive, to understand, and to interpret these images changes as ego consciousness changes in the course of man's phylogenetic and ontogenetic history" (xvi); hence, Jung cannot be accused of offering a cure-all to the existential/spiritual plagues of humankind, as these challenges shift: as history evolves, so to does the unconscious and the conscious resources for managing the former. In terms of the contemporary cultural landscape, perhaps science fiction has become a dominant resource that can be utilized to navigate these unconscious Images and make sense of our abject culture and psychic condition.

***Neanderthal Parallax*: Reconciling Opposites**

In what follows I seek to work through the argument that the discourse of the Jungian eupsychia (i.e., the fully reconciled split between opposites) is exercised through the relationship between Mary Vaughan, the Canadian geneticist—and main character of the trilogy in many ways—and Ponter Boddit, the Neanderthal that mistakenly falls from an Earth where Neanderthals are dominant into the present Earth where humans are dominant. Mary and Ponter relationship expresses a literary iteration of the Jungian eupsychia which can be articulated in terms of the latter's understanding of 'Marriage as a Psychological Relationship' (See essay by the same name, 1925)

I utilize Jung's structure of the marriage relationship as an apparatus that will allow me to work through the spiritual concerns that I diagnose in the trilogy. As Mary befriends Ponter during the first book, Hominids, the human world's impoverished spiritual life becomes all too apparent. Through learning to converse with the Neanderthal, Mary discovers more about Ponter's—what amounts to a—utopian world.[2] One conversation they share ends with Ponter reciting his peoples' theory about why in his history humans went extinct. Ponter says: "A popular theory is that you wiped each other out … what with being all that intelligent, you see…" (Sawyer, 2002, 258). Mary, distraught responds: "[T]he knowledge that it could have gone another way—that we didn't necessarily have to end up surviving –is probably all to the good. It will remind my people of how precious life really is" (*Ibid.*, 259). To which Ponter does not understand why such an exhortation should be needed.

Speaking in terms of his theory of the archetypes Jung remarks, “It is an almost regular occurrence for a woman to be wholly contained, spiritually, in her husband, and for a husband to be wholly contained, emotionally, in his wife” (1925, 195). The archetypes of ‘the eternal image of woman’ and the ‘inborn image of man’ that males and females inherit, according to Jung, are perhaps the best known of the archetypes.[3] For Jung these archetypes are in conflict, whether in the man or woman. Jung claims that the challenge posed to reconcile the conflicting aspects of the psyche can best be described as solving the problem of what he calls the ‘contained’ (e.g., Ponter) and the ‘container’ (e.g., Mary). For Jung, the contained feels himself or herself to be living entirely within the confines of the marriage, which is to say the attitude he or she holds with respect to the marriage partner, is undivided. On the other hand, the container has a special need to unify himself or herself in the undivided love for another (*Ibid*., 195). This sketch can help frame the interpretation of Mary/Ponter that I wish to develop in this essay: Ponter’s character is excessively level headed and rational, and he comes from a world of Neanderthals where if a phenomenon cannot be predicted then the behavior associated with that failed pattern is abandoned. Thus his commitment to Mary from the beginning foreshadows their eventual union; he would not bother if it could not be predicted. Mary’s character on the other hand is beset with the plague of having to work through the trauma of having been raped earlier in the first book. Due to her deep-seated tie to this primal event she is the character that Jung says, “will therefore achieve complete adaptation only later, and because it is won with greater difficulty, it may even prove the more durable” (*Ibid.*, 194).

I remind the listener that this is only a sketch for the relationship between Mary/Ponter, which is to say I do not mean to suggest that Ponter's character is dilemma free. The two do, however, stand in for competing value systems that seek to transcend their respective limitations. It is entertaining for my purposes here that the second book of the trilogy, *Humans*, is structured by alternating chapters containing dialogue between Ponter and his 'Personality Sculptor' Jurard Segan, a Neanderthal adaptation of a psychoanalyst/therapist, and the main string of the narrative. More than allow a platform for Ponter to work through the actions taken against the man that raped Mary (he castrates him!), I believe the 'analytic' chapters provide the necessary structural backdrop against which the significance of various philosophical exchanges between characters can best be illuminated. One such exchange between Bedros and Tukana, two ambassadors from the Neanderthal planet, struggles with the value theory that the Neanderthal's diagnose as specific to humans (i.e., humanity's existential and/or spiritual angst).

Bedros proclaims humans infantile for believing, on the whole, that there is transcendent purpose to existence. Tukana provides the necessary skepticism of rendering all interpretation to cold hard fact, and instead posits humanity as the beacon of hope, their psyche as a possible site wherein "a new enlightenment" is immanent (2003a, 134). Humans, not Neanderthals, are the kind of beings that are capable of experiencing enlightenment and therefore capable of imagining a better way of being, so long as the fluidity of a psychic space is sustained, unreified *qua* scientific instrumentalization. But one must not be careful to champion this aspect of humanity blindly. Such enlightenments are paid for at the expense of great violence, whether upon the psyche or body.

Building throughout *Humans*, concern begins to stir over the precarious nature of the human Earth's magnetic poles and their potential reversal. Speculation is that if the poles were to reverse—allowing radiation that would normally be deflected from an intact magnetic field, to bombard human brains—a fundamental shift in consciousness might occur. The concern is negative at first because the last time such a 'reversal' happened consciousness as such was 'born' into the universe or "booted up" as Louise Benoit says (i.e., the Great Leap Forward). This time, Louise states, "consciousness might … well, not to stretch the metaphor too much, but this time consciousness might *crash*" (*Ibid.*, 314). Projected against the Mary/Ponter relationship and their efforts to 'become one' while simultaneously respecting each other's customs, one must consider the fact that such strife is essential to happiness and pleasure, or for my purposes here, the production and appreciation of a eupsychia. Jung states, "Seldom or never does a marriage develop into an individual relationship smoothly and without crises. There is no birth of consciousness without pain" (1925, 193).

Takana's sympathy for the psychic potential of humans seems to serve an uncanny function in the narrative, insofar as it bestows upon humans a 'special' quality, one that Darwinian evolution served to formally debunk: human's being capable of becoming enlightened, whereas the Neanderthal's have no prospect of enlightenment on their horizon. Humans are open; Neanderthals are closed. This is brought to fore when in the last book of the trilogy, *Hybrids*, when both Mary and Ponter willingly undergo an experiment at Laurentian University conducted by Veronica Shannon. Veronica is a post-doc continuing the work of Michael Persinger who "invented a device … that can induce religious experiences in people, through magnetic stimulation of their brains" (2003b,

57). Mary's experience brings upon her a vision of Virgin Mary; for Ponter: "not a blessed thing" (*Ibid.,* 75); "Just me alone with my thoughts" (*Ibid.*), he reports.

I do not wish to be mistaken for glamorizing madness or insanity in the guise of associating women with Divine mystical powers or perceptions; rather my point is to observe in Sawyer's trilogy what I understand to be a question posed at the foot of an experience of the sacred and the potential for such an experience to usher humans into a new era of evolution, a psychic evolution, yielding a eupsychia in the Jungina sense by way of reconciliation of opposites. Such an evolution requires a "Two-becoming-One," metaphorized in the mating ritual that takes place on Ponter's world, and is played out imperfectly in his relationship with his 'other,' Mary, throughout the course of the trilogy. Mary is, as her name might suggest, the only one in the trilogy truly open to the possibility of such an experience of Two-becoming-One, on an inter-cosmic level no less. The haste with which she falls in love with Ponter after his quantum slip into her human world—and the graphic sexual relationship that ensues (these scenes do focus on her experience primarily)—speaks to a kind of 'madness.' Mary takes pleasure and refuge in the body of Ponter, gradually allowing her to break free of the traumatic image caused to her body and mind by the rape she suffered at the beginning of *Hominids*.

This reading of Mary's struggle echoes the words of Jung on the marriage relationship: "It is a metamorphosis from a state in which man is only a tool of instinctive nature, to another in which he is no longer a tool, but himself: a transformation of nature into culture, of instinct into spirit" (1925, 197). The psychological connection that is established at the culmination of the novel (and I will spare the spoiler for those who have not yet read the trilogy in its entirety, suffice to say there is one last astounding

religious experience that takes place on a global scale!) between—Mary and Ponter / Human and Neanderthal / Self and Other—is not ideal proper but rather utopian, that is, eupsychian. This is such, because following a massive world wide religious experience, Mary decides that the child she and Ponter seek to bear together should *not* have a 'god organ' (this is relating to the psychical composition of the brain that Veronica's experiment was aimed at triggering and that can be selected for or against using the technology to meld human and Neanderthal genetic material).

Conclusion

Foregrounding much of Sawyer's trilogy is the philosophical battle between secularism (Ponter) and religious belief (Mary). By choosing not to have the 'religious module' as part of their child, Mary is not actively choosing secularism over religion, nor is she disavowing religion as such. Instead what I understand her decision to be symbolic of is a dialectical overcoming of such a false-dichotomy, a Two-becoming-One for example, such that their future child be endowed with the reconciled yet open-ended consciousness that she experiences at that moment in the narrative. Mary acknowledges the limitations of both scientific rationalism/secularism and religious belief in the traditional sense, but transcends both in favor of the transcendent *feeling* that she experiences of that which lies beyond the dichotomy. That 'something' is unspeakable at present, but nonetheless *is there*: "a feeling at being one with the universe" (2003b, 63). Gesturing back to Jung, Mary can also be interpreted as preserving open-endedness by choosing the properly spiritual over the religious or scientific worldview. Jung writes: "[N]ew possibilities of psychological development are discerned, touching on the sphere

of religion where critical judgment comes to a halt" (1925, 201). The eupsychia that Sawyer writes into his Neanderthal Parallax Trilogy is one of critical self-awareness and welcoming open-endedness, the literary portrayal of a future psyche where Two have finally become One.

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Notes

[1] From an interview between Abraham Maslow and Trevor Thomas, of the Pacific Foundation, "Eupsychia – The Good Society." Originally part of a radio broadcast on KPFA-FM, August 1960. Available online. Accessed April 2012.

[2] Although the reader is later made aware that a great deal of what allows for this utopia is a genetic selection and technological surveillance that would make any bleeding-heart liberal cringe.

[3] It is important to notice too that these Image/archetypes should not be misunderstood as projecting biological or social prejudices upon individuals but rather limited to being interpreted as symbols and/or structural tools for working through the struggles of the unconscious.