

https://dspace.org/

The riddle of reality in Credo Mutwa's cosmogonies

Mhlahlo, Ayabulela

2021
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/33521

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/



The Riddle of Reality in Credo Mutwa's Cosmogonies

By

Ayabulela Mhlahlo

As

Supervised By

Prof. Bhekizizwe Peterson

I (Student number: ___830445_____) am a student registered for _____MA by Course work and Research_in African Literature_____ in the year ____5_____. I hereby declare the following:

- I am aware that plagiarism (the use of someone else's work without their permission and/or without acknowledging the original source) is wrong.
- I confirm that the work submitted for assessment for the above course is my own unaided work except where I have explicitly indicated otherwise.
- I have followed the required conventions in referencing the thoughts and ideas of others.
- I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

Signature: _____A.Y. Mhlahlo_____ Date: _____26/07/2021_____

For my Ancestors and Forebears.

This work honours all the beautiful labours you have so graciously passed down to us.

For always whispering in my ears:

Wisdom is built on the grounds of Knowledge,

Knowledge is extracted from the planes of Imagination,

Imagination rests upon the hidden regions of Ethics.

Contents

Acknowledgments _5

Introduction: The Riddle of Reality in Credo Mutwa's Cosmogonies _7

1: The Games of Being and Knowledge _29

2: The Riddle of Quantum Time in *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life* _40

3: The Riddle of Sur-reality in *The Song of the Stars* _58

4: The Riddle of Multidimentionality in *Kintu* _76

Epilogue: The Mystery of Reality _94

Bibliography _98

Acknowledgements

Allow me to first extend vast gratitude to my personal Ancestors and our collective Forebears of the black tradition of knowledge, arts and the imagination. The immense amount of work those before us have done enables me to swim in this endless ocean of ideas. I begin to see, as I grow, that our Ancestors have gifted us with the legacy of wonderment, a legacy of ethics and truth, and an unbreakable legacy of life. I am nothing without them. This work means nothing without them. I am particularly grateful to Credo Vusamazulu Mutwa for the worlds of imagination, wisdom and mystery he so kindly opened up for the billions of black souls suffering under the arch of antiblack deprivation. I hope the Spirit of Mutwa finds some pleasure in my meagre attempts at unravelling some of the secrets he inherited. I am also very grateful to Toni Morrison, Wilson Harris, Mazisi Kunene, Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, Sun Ra, and Amos Tutuola – among millions of others, known and unknown - for their tireless labours in resurrecting the indigenous arts of imagination. Great ones: in your words, in your worlds, in your work, I find my everlasting freedom. My personal Ancestors, Ntombikhayise Nozolile Mhlahlo, Nsikelelo Richard Mhlahlo and Cawekazi Mhlahlo: thank you for crafting my soul. I live to make you proud. My elders and teachers Bhekizizwe Peterson (my supervisor), Isabel Hofmeyr, Danai Mupotsa, Dan Ojwang, Pumla Gqola, Grace Musila and Khwezi Mkhize: thank you, from the depths of my heart, for crafting my mind and guiding my will. To Mrs. Merle Govind, I am deeply grateful for all the immense kindness you have shown me over the years, for seeing me through my journey with unshakable faith, and teaching me the impeccable art and discipline of administering multiple forms of labour. To the NEST grant, reading group and Jill Bradbury – thank you for pouring your intellectual and emotional resources into the soul of this project. To my mentors Zandi Radebe, Gregory Maxualane and Lwazi Lushaba – thank you for your constant support and intellectual nourishment. I am deeply grateful to my parents, Thobeka Mhlahlo and Sandi Mehlomakhulu, for the love, kindness and care they extend to me. My deepest gratitude to my peers and contemporaries – for the beautiful work they do for the tradition. I am grateful to the Spirit of Knowledge, the Spirit of Wisdom and the Spirit of Creativity for always guiding my hand and being so kind with their properties. None of what I say here belongs to me. None of it comes from me. All of it is a granular particle in the timeless traditions of wonderment. Finally, I want to thank everything that exists within me for carrying

me through very difficult visits to the Abysses and other strange places of the internal world. For always, holding my hand when I felt lost. For creating a home for us in the intricate puzzles which exist from the crown of my skull to the soles of my feet. My gratitude is deep. Our gratitude is ceaseless. Ayabulela-amaXaba.

Chosi.

Introduction: the Riddle of Reality in Credo Mutwa's Cosmogonies

"(Umkati) is the place."

Sun Ra and The Solar Arkestra (**Space is the Place** 1974)

"Originality is always stranger and more mysterious than novelty."

Wilson Harris (**Explorations** 1981, 125)

"Africa is a place full of surprises."

Credo Mutwa (**Zulu Shaman: Dreams, Prophecies, Mysteries** 2003, 18)

This research report aims to explore how Credo Mutwa's riddle of reality can open up a different reading of African/a metaphysics – a reading that leans towards Edouard Glissant's notion of (radical) *obscurity* (Glissant **Poetics of Relation** 1997, 193). It is from this place of radical obscurity – and through the black radical imagination – that we can, I believe, begin to conjure new (or perhaps recover old) paths of wisdom. This study, then, wonders how Mutwa has imagined and constructed a riddle of reality by presenting multiple first principles in his metaphysical frameworks through his cosmogonies.[1] Traditionally, the mythographer of any

[1] Conventionally, we often mistake 'reality' for 'materiality'. Certain strands in Western traditional thought have weaved up these distinct concepts, and have thus fooled us into thinking that they are one in the same idea. For one to enjoy this study and more so to be immersed by the riddle, one must first appreciate the fact that all ideas emerge from and largely dwell in the spheres of abstraction. Every idea, however remote or close it is to the reader or thinker, is primarily an idea belonging to abstraction. Thus, we must all imagine ourselves transported to the genesis of ideas, where we have not yet classed certain ideas to be "useful" and others to be "useless". Secondly, the reader must have a conversation with their ethic of reading and engaging with ideas. It is impossible to appreciate the girth of an idea if you meet it with the intention of manipulating it for your own benefit. Many people find abstraction unpleasant because they are frustrated by what seems to be its "uselessness". Ideas do not exist for our approval; they exist for their own perpetuity. This rings true with the issue of "reality". Before the idea of reality was reduced to mere material utility and the materialization of life, 'reality' was an expansive idea without end, without precise definition, wrapped ever so carefully in wonder. 'Reality' is the kind of idea that dazes, baffles, bewilders, and intoxicates. Therefore, we wonder about it, instead of defining and constraining it to the clutches of logic. Reality is

given culture weaves up a concrete and grounding myth, which encloses the ethical substance of his/her culture (Obiechina *Amos Tutuola and the Oral Tradition* 1968, 86). Mutwa defies this rule and instead opts to riddle multiple foundational concepts of reality - such as time, ontology and the surreal – rather than weave up a definitive structure or pattern, or conjure up a foundational principle, of reality. In this way, Mutwa invents a new category of thinking about and narrating the metaphysical wonder we call 'reality'. Instead of making the concept ('reality') or even the epistemic category ('metaphysics') *substantial* or concrete or even a matter of certitude, he warps and weaves it into, and perhaps as, multiple riddles – a play of narrative/ a deception of ideas/ a trick of narrative/ a concealment of secrets/ an unsettling of certitudes/ an opening of (and to) infinitudes. The research report wraps itself around and plays along with Mutwa's cacophony of narrative construction.

Credo Mutwa has narrated many cosmogonies that are fundamentally different in structure, event and consequence. We shall focus on three: *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life* in **Indaba, My Children** (Mutwa **Indaba** 1998)**,** *Kintu* and *The Song of the Stars* in **Zulu Shaman** (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 2003). *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life* tells of how Ninavhanu-Ma, the Goddess of Creation, came into being and how she came into the act (and art) of creation. *Kintu* is a tale of the trickster, and first Ancestor of Man, and how he tricked his way into possessing Fire. *The Song of the Stars* tells of how the Red people/ the First Men fugitively made their way towards inhabiting the Earth.

All three unravel a distinct definitional texture of reality: *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life* presents reality as being textured/ riddled by quantum time; *The Song of the Stars* presents reality

not an idea to be 'grasped'; it is an idea to be gazed at. Hence, I see it befitting to think of it as a riddle rather than say, a concept. This will become clearer as the paper unfolds.

as the surreal conjuring by a sleeping goddess; *Kintu* narrates reality as a multidimensional ontology. If the reader seeks a coherent concept of reality in Mutwa's cosmogonies, she never finds it. But what she finds instead are a collection of images and ideas that may be more productive than the search for a coherent structure of reality in the cosmogonies – a collection of image-ideas which enclose, or simply just *hold*, infinite possibilities weaved into the riddle *of* reality.

The importance of this study lies in its pursuit to understand the multiple concepts of reality that Credo Mutwa enclosed in his cosmogonies. Since Mutwa's work has been understudied, this project seeks to explore the multi-layered and complex riddle of reality that Mutwa poses in his work. The central question then becomes: how do Mutwa's cosmogonies open us up to a different metaphysics/ mysticism of reality? A metaphysics that does not enclose reality in substance, but one that transforms itself into a mysticism of incertitudes and infinitudes? A mystical-metaphysics that reconciles us with an idea of reality that shape-shifts? For the purposes of black theory, Mutwa's work, particularly his cosmogonies, is important because it explodes the metaphysical compulsion of theory (the vision-of-the-world), and rather drives theory towards the depth of radical skepticism – what we may otherwise call the re-opening of the black figurative imagination.

The three cosmogonies that I have chosen to read will enable me to lay out the different components of Mutwa's riddle of reality. The riddle, I believe, requires us to read the concept of reality at a few conceptual scales: nothingness; the metaphysics of reality; quantum time; multidimensionality and surreality.

Before we begin to explore the conceptual field in Mutwa's First Narratives, we must first delineate the aesthetic form of the riddle-myth that structures the various cosmogonies.

The Riddle-Myth

Myth, argues E.N. Obiechina, is a "sacred" genre of storytelling (Obiechina 1968, 86). By this, he means that myth encloses the ethic of existence of the community that conjures it (Obiechina 1968, 86; Eliade **The Sacred and the Profane** 1963, 15). The ethic in the myth is not only instructive of how existence should be practiced (Wynter and McKittrick *Unparalleled Catastrophe of Our Species?* 2008, 34), it is also instructive of how the world should be imagined (Harris **Explorations** 1981, 100). Benezet Bujo thinks of this ethical substance as a moral[2] (Bujo **Foundations of an African Ethic** 2013, 24). He argues that these stories are told to children "again and again, with especial emphasis on the vices and the virtues of the protagonists" (Bujo 2013, 24). On the other side of the ethical substance of the stories, however, is the mode of interpreting reality. In order to unravel the moral of the story, the reader/interpreter/listener must first be able to "interpret correctly the realities observed in daily life or in nature" (Bujo 2013, 25). In this way, the myth becomes a "guessing game," a riddle so to speak, shared between the narrator and her audience. This game[3] is one of interpretation. Bujo sees the myth as a "puzzling question", the narrator is therefore the poser of the question: "One member of the group (it may even be a child) poses a puzzling question and each one attempts to answer it" (Bujo 2013, 25). Unlike the traditional riddle, the riddle-myth does not require the

[2]The word 'moral', in this context, indicates the structure of feeling that is wrapped around or, perhaps, inspired by the ethical substance of the tale. Otherwise, we can think of these two processes occurring concurrently, where the emergence of the ethical substance is always accompanied by its own specifically and intuitively tailored structures of feeling and cognition.

[3] The idea of 'games' will be further explored in the first chapter. I must make a few clarifications before we proceed on our journey. We must be cognizant that there are endless ways of manipulating a word. By itself, a word is an arbitrary sign attached to definition so that we may transform it to an image (Gordon **Saussure For Beginners** 1996, 25). We often transform the word to a concept and drench it in meaning in order to grow its intellectual girth. We must also think of the word as an idea exploding with ceaseless wonder. When we think of the word as an idea, it becomes almost like a kaleidoscopic object emanating different dimensions of light. It would not be a crime to play with a word as if it were a toy - this is what we know as the skill of poetry.

audience to lucidly, or immediately answer the question. The attempt to resolve the sets of problems enclosed by the story comes during the process of interpretation. Furthermore, the game of interpretation does not end after the narration; one must carry/inherit/be possessed by it for a lifetime. Bujo points out that "the guessing games prepare the child to behave reflectively and creatively in all existential situations, including the ethical spheres. The child must always take care to interpret and describe events and contexts correctly and appropriately" (Bujo 2013, 25).

V.Y. Mudimbe warns, however, that like any genre of the riddle (that is, a genre of question), the riddle-myth is "a story that pretends to illustrate a normative lesson" (Mudimbe **Parables and Fables** 1991, xxi). Thus, the riddle-myth is laced with an epistemic trick. The mode of interpretation that engages the riddle-myth must be aware that a trick lies within the repertoire of questions carried by the ethical substance of the story. But what or where is the trick? Is the question posed by the story the trick? Or, is the trick within the events and contents of the story? Or, is the story-as-question the trick itself? The element of the trick signals that the ethical substance has multiple layers of meaning, some of which transcend the notion of 'substance' (a genre of metaphysics). To read (or inhabit) these layers of meaning, we must exit the epistemic world of metaphysical substance, and begin to plunge into the Deep[4] of mysticism – what Glissant calls "obscurity", and what Mutwa refers to as "Nothingness " in his cosmogonies.

Nothingness

[4] In all mythology, the "Deep" refers to the precosmic waters that enclose the mysteries of precreational time (Fotenrose **Python** 1959).

The riddle of reality, if we follow Mutwa's cosmogonies, is: if nothing is the energizing force of all that is[5], what will be left of the three structures of reality (time, surreality, and dimensional motion) when they are suspended under the order of nothingness? This riddle does not seek an answer. Any attempt at an answer will lean towards the metaphoric process of reconciling an enigmatic image/idea with a material image/idea. This process creates the brief (and sometimes permanent) epistemic and linguistic illusion of resemblance. Ricoeur writes that "resemblance ultimately is nothing else than this rapprochement which reveals a generic kinship between heterogeneous ideas" (Ricoeur *The Metaphoric Process of Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling* 1978, 147). Resemblance however bears a degree of tension:

> "This predicative assimilation involves…a specific kind of tension which is not so much between a subject and a predicate as between semantic incongruence and congruence. The insight into likeness is the perception of the conflict between the previous incompatibility and the new compatibility. "Remoteness" is preserved within "proximity." To see *the like* is to see the same in spite of, and through, the different. This tension between sameness and difference characterizes the logical structure of likeness" (Ricoeur 1978, 148).

The metaphoric impulse to unify "heterogeneous ideas" through a process of resemblance and tension is driven by the desire to "grasp" and therefore clarify or make transparent the concept at hand (Glissant 1997, 193). So however abstract we theorize the metaphoric image/ sense/ concept, by virtue of rendering it metaphoric (that is, tied in a relation between resemblance and tension), it is transformed into a material sign. The aim of opacity, according to Edouard

[5] In *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life* Nothingness is swallowed whole by its child the Living Flame, or otherwise referred to as Somethingness or Consciousness.

Glissant, is to remove the image/sense/ concept from the "totalizing" relation that is intrinsic to the metaphor (Glissant 1997, 192). Poetic, or in our case theoretic, opacity, then, moves the image/ sense/ concept more towards a sort of "open totality (of Relation) evolving upon itself" which sits comfortably with the "obscurity" of images/senses/concepts. The opaque therefore "is that which cannot be reduced, which is the most perennial guarantee of participation and confluence" (Glissant 1997, 191). Rather than grasping at a kind of reconciliation between the enigmatic and the material and thereby answering/ resolving the riddle, the opaque reveals the depths of the concepts that are focal to the riddle, that is, the opaque zooms in on the enigmatic elements of the riddle, namely: nothingness {reality [time; sureality; and dimensional motion]}.

Nothingness is a profoundly significant figure in all three of Mutwa's cosmogonies, but we cannot really say what Nothingness is because the occurrence of its existence is beyond the scope of narrative possibility in Mutwa's world of meaning. The narrator of *The Sacred Story of The Tree of Life* cautions:

> "For how this Nothingness lasted,
>
> No one will ever know;
>
> And why there was Nothing is something
>
> We must never try to learn" (Mutwa 1998, 5).

Therefore, Nothingness is beyond the parameters of epistemic and imaginary grasping; yet it is such a significant component of the world in each cosmogony. In the prologue to *Kintu* and as seen in the painting representing *The Song of the Stars*, we are informed that a sleeping goddess who "floats in the vastness of nothing" dreams up the world (Mutwa 2003, 77, 127). Within the inner-world of *The Song of the Stars*, it is said that the First Men travelled from their war-

wrecked planet to the Nalediyapiri (Sirius) constellation through the "outer darkness between the stars" (Mutwa 2003, 126). There is a "dark and empty void" in *Kintu* that riddles the dimensional plane of cosmic existence (Mutwa 2003, 79). In *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life* we are told that in the Tenth Gateway of Eternity there first existed Nothingness and it floated upon the River Time. Although Nothingness in its various manifestations is epistemically ungraspable, it is an element of the narrated world in the cosmogonies. However, we are not very certain if Nothingness is a matter of reality or if reality is a matter of Nothingness. Does Nothingness hold reality as it is defined by each myth; or does reality hold, as part of its repertoire of matter and codes, Nothingness? Or, do they hold each other? Since we are interested in understanding (sitting with the different layers of meaning) rather than answering (seeking unity between the layers of meaning) the riddles which arise from Mutwa's First Narratives, we must at least try to understand the definitive meaning of reality in each cosmogony.

Reality

In their introduction to 'Metaphysical Thinking in Africa', Lebisa. J. Teffo and Abraham P.J. Roux argue that African metaphysics has "a particular conception of reality" that situates reality "as a closed system" that contains and encloses stuff/ things/matter so that "everything hangs together and is affected by any change in the system" (Teffo and Roux *Metaphysical Thinking in Africa* 2003, 196). If we accept Lebisa and Roux's conception of reality as a system that holds and organizes the existence of things in relation to one-another, we must then say that nothing is not a matter of reality since it is no matter at all within the system of reality. What I find problematic, however, with this conception of reality is that it bears stark resemblance to Aristotelian substance. Western metaphysics, after Aristotle, concerns "the existence of enduring substances underlying all perceptible qualities" (Andler and Gorman **The Great Ideas** 1982,

158). Metaphysics can otherwise be defined as the study of the "fixed order of reality behind the sequence of phenomena in experience" (Adler and Gorman 1982, 159). Since it is concerned with the "ultimate realities" or, in Aristotelian terms, "being qua being" (what has been otherwise called "substance"), metaphysics has traditionally been hailed as the foundation of all other systems of knowledge (Aristotle **Metaphysics** 1971, 1). Thus, metaphysics is a study that deals with "the first causes and principles of all things" (Aristotle 1971, 2). In his treatise on metaphysics, Aristotle claims that "we are seeking origins, i.e. the most extreme causes" (Aristotle 1971, 1). "Hence," he continues, "we also have to find the first causes of that which is qua thing-that-is" (Aristotle 1971, 2). He then asserts that that "which is qua thing-that-is", or "substance", can be understood through its qualities or affections. However, its essence, and even the true nature of its affections can only be accessed through the "reference to one origin" (Aristototle 1971, 3).

Teffo and Roux's "reality" is distinct from Aristotelian "substance" in that it is a system of things, whereas the latter is the self-contained thing – the thing whose primary and necessary relation is with itself, and therefore does not need a relation with other things. Since the substance is the 'first cause', it is the condition of other things as they relate to each other. The substance is, therefore, the ethic of the network or matrix of things. In this way, the substance is the precondition or prepossession of reality. Teffo and Roux's metaphysics of reality is not unique to an African field of ideas after all; it is rather a sequential concept to the Aristotelian 'substance'. In other words, Teffo and Roux's metaphysics of reality still functions within the Aristotelian framework of 'substance'.

Since Aristotle's "substance" signifies the meta-category of somethingness in epistemic metaphysics, 'nothingness' becomes a conceptual impossibility under this system of reality.

Mutwa's concept of reality, however, bears a more opaque openness than Teffo and Roux's (via Aristotle) enclosed systemicity. Nothingness for Mutwa is not only a matter of reality, it is matter that precedes the texture of reality. Mutwa leads us to a mysticism of reality, rather than a metaphysics of reality. Where the latter necessitates material grounding, the former refuses the theoretical impulse towards anchoring materiality in the construction of thought. In Mutwa's cosmogonies, there are figures more dubious than the antinomy of thing and non-thing, and structures more mysterious than the bifurcation of matter and nonmatter. These figures and structures constantly reshape (sometimes through negation) and reconfigure how reality appears and what it means in the cosmogonies. One such figure is that of quantum time, what Mutwa calls 'River-Time'.

Time

There are two scales of time in *The Sacred Story*: quantum time and hyper-dimensional time. Quantum time is an element of reality, whereas hyper-dimensional time is the structure of reality. Mutwa figures quantum time as the River Time which co-existed with Nothingness before the creation of the cosmos. Mutwa's cosmogony is largely correlative with Zulu cosmogony as signified in Zulu phonology. In isiZulu the word for time *iskati* mirrors, and finds deep resonance with the word *umkati* which can be loosely translated to hyper-cosmos, wherein lies Nothing. In Zulu, and other Nguni, cosmology, there are three dimensions of deep space. The first is *isibakabaka*, the place for flying. The second is *izulu*, wherein lies the eternal cosmic possibilities. The third is *umkati*, wherein resides quantum time and Nothingness[6]. The first two are hosts of reality and structural ontology. The last, however, signifies the absence of ontic

[6] I am grateful to my peers Sindile Bongela, Nkosingakhe Ndawonde, and Nonkululeko Mntambo for helping me derive this pivotal puzzle-piece from the air.

bearings and the deceptions or illusions of reality. Time at its most quantum dimension resides in, and moves from, *umkati*. Mutwa brings to light that:

> "Nothing had been floating
> For no one knows how long,
> Upon the invisible waters of Time –
> That mighty River with
> Neither source nor mouth,
> Which was –
> Which is
> And ever shall be" (Mutwa 1998, 5).

In this myth, Nothingness exists parallel to elemental time. The intersection between Nothing and the primordial waters *of* time (River-Time) only arise in the midst of narrative time, after the fact of existence:

> "Then one day –
> Or is it right to say 'one day'? –
> The River Time desired Nothingness
> Like a flesh-and-blood male beast
> Desires his female partner.
> And as a result of this strangest mating
> Of Time and Nothingness,
> A most tiny nigh invisible spark
> Of Living Fire was born" (Mutwa 1998, 3).

Mutwa describes the primordial waters of time as "invisible" and a "mighty River with/Neither source nor mouth" (Mutwa 1998, 3). Because of the self-contained and temporally unmoving essence of the River Time, the abstraction of time in this myth is, and stays at, the quantum or elemental level. Since time and nothingness begin to intersect, we are introduced to new definitions of time and nothingness at the moment of intersection. In terms of the latter, we begin to see that there are two scales of nothingness in the myth. At one scale is the grandness of Nothingness, which fills up a large amount of precosmic space. At another scale, the waters of Time are described as "invisible", thus they exist within the quantum or elemental scale of nothingness. Therefore, from the "invisible" or quantum waters, we not only get a degree of quantum time, we also get a degree of elemental or quantum nothingness. So then, within the hold of the quantum waters, in the "grey vault"[7] of the primordial waters, lies the elements of Time and Nothing. I must clarify, at this point, that Time and Nothing are neither gods nor grand spirits (spirits of great designation, who hold magnificent powers) in the myth, thus we can infer that they are precosmic elements. The precosmic element in mythology is a figurative genus[8] that emerges before, and is distinct from, gods, spirits and demons (Cavendish **Mythology** 1980). The figures are non/antimatter or presubstantial beings. The cosmic elements are the foregrounding, or a priori forces of existence. This means that existence is inconceivable without the presence of these precosmic elements.

Quantum time and Nothingness are positioned within the hyper-dimensional structure of temporal-reality. According to the myth, there are eleven dimensions of time. The first ten

[7] This is a slight reference to Derek Walcott's poem, 'The Sea is History'.

[8] In the same way that there is a concept of "biological genus, biological species and biological families" in the world of ideas, there are also "figurative genus, figurative species and figurative families". In the world of ideas, there is no true distinctions between material and non-material ideas. We determine the virtuosity of ideas not by their materiality, but by considering the layout of an idea's structure, its beauty, the semblance of its patterns and the care invested in the detail of thought/idea-construction.

dimensions are qualified as the "Ten Gates of Eternity" (Mutwa 1998, 8). Quantum time and Nothingness are situated within the tenth gate of Eternity. We are never told in any of Mutwa's myths, legends or narrative-philosophies of the worlds in the other Gates of Eternity. The eleventh dimension of temporal-reality is Infinity that rests outside the Ten Gates of Eternity. The other ten dimensions of temporal-reality (which include the other nine gates of Eternity and the separate Infinity) are therefore a complete mystery to us. However, Mutwa does present a more complete structural ontology, which is enclosed, we can infer, within the tenth gate of eternity, this he calls the "Seven Gateways of Creation".

Multidimensional Ontology

Similar to the structural conception of reality in the form of hyper-dimensional time in *The Sacred Story, Kintu* is also riddled with a multidimensional structure of reality. Unlike *The Sacred Story*, however, the dimensions are not of time but of existence. In *Kintu*, there are six dimensions or planes of existence, which we can assume are correlative with what Mutwa calls in a different myth the "Seven Gateways of Creation" (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 2003, 367). Mutwa constructs his texts like a puzzle: one has to assemble the scattered pieces in order to uncover the meaning of each piece, of every story. A figure or an ontic, a dimension or a portal, a concept or an image, found in one story can be the missing piece of another story. Such is the case in *Kintu*. The narrator only alerts us to six ontological dimensions, the seventh dimension or threshold therefore remains a mystery. We are made privy to the six dimensions through Mpungushe's quest for fire. He travels to five dimensions in order to steal the Fire, the events of the sixth dimension serve as a prelude of how the quest for Fire became necessary. The cosmic bodies reside in the sixth dimension. Of the other five there is: the realm of the living, the Valley of Nameless Evil, the crystal mountain of solitude, the Valley of Forever Night, and the Village of

the Gods from where Mpungushe stole the Fire. Reality, in this cosmogony, is therefore an amalgamation of these dimensions.

The multidimensional structure is a structure which has different and distinct degrees of definition or extension. Thus, multidimensional reality unveils the idea of a reality that has different degrees of conceptualization, manifestation, appearance and abstraction. Each degree of reality has its own depth, vibration and texture. But the dimensions in *Kintu* are laced with a texture of trickery that opens them up to obscurity. In this way they are not dimensions, as such. They are, as Mutwa says, "gates" or thresholds.

The idea of multidimensional reality is not exclusive to Mutwa. In the tradition of the figurative imagination, Malidome Some narrates his experience of travelling to "a crack between the worlds" (Some **Of Water and Spirit** 1994, 235). Of this travel to the dimension of pure light, he says: "The light was a gateway to an alternate world. Access to it required conversion of the body cells into a form of energy that is light. We would feel like spirits for as long as the experience lasted" (Some 1994, 235). The elders warned the initiates not to fall indefinitely into the dimensional abyss for they would be lost forever, instead they were to "notice the countless lines of light. They have many colors. You can see them if you keep your eyes open, but it takes an effort to open your eyes. No one can do that for you. The lines are there for you to use. Grab them and hold on to them. When you have grasped the wire of light, you will float. There is nothing to fear after that. Just float" (Some 1994, 239).

Within the materialist imagination, superstring theory suggests that there are ten dimensions of space-time (Kaku **Hyperspace** 1994, i). In superstring theory matter is primarily viewed as the "vibrations that ripple through the fabric of space and time." The fifth dimension of hyperspace has a similar texture to the "crack between the worlds" that Some describes. Light is a vibration

in the fifth dimension of hyperspace. The fifth dimension became evident to theoretical physicists when they observed light travelling through the vacuum of the four dimensions of space and one dimension of time. “By adding the fifth dimension the force of gravity and light” could be unified (Kaku 1994, 16).

Both worlds of imagination suggest that dimensions are not only degrees of reality; they can also be considered gateways or tunnels between different dimensions. The dimension is therefore both an ontological plane and a threshold. Some considered the dimension of light to be a “gateway to an alternate world”, yet it still stood and appeared as a world in itself with its own laws of nature and form of being (Some 1994, 239). Kaku admits that if space-time were to be stretched to the point where it rips or tears, hyperspace or higher dimensional space “may provide a means to tunnel through space and time” (Some 1994, xi).

In his cosmogonies, Mutwa consistently evokes the image/idea of multidimensional reality. The reality of each cosmogony has its own structure of multidimensionality. In *The Sacred Story*, reality qua Hypercosmic-time has eleven dimensions. The reality qua universe of *Song of the Stars* has at one scale indefinite dimensions of the surreal because a frozen goddess is dreaming up the universe; at another scale there are indefinite tunnels or wormholes between parallel universes and stellar constellations. The reality qua ontic of *Kintu* is structured by seven dimensions. In *The Sacred Story* and in *The Song of the Stars*, the multidimensionalities are described by the narrator(s) as “gateways” or “gates”. In the arts of the imagination, the gateway is an opening to transfiguration (Harris 1981, 45; Mackey **Discrepant Engagement** 1993, 68). The main figures of the cosmogonies have to pass through the thresholds of their distinct reality: The Great Spirit’s voice passes “from far beyond/ The Gates of Eternity” to give Ma the command to create “A perfect Universe from Chaos” (Mutwa, 9). The Red People/ First Men

must travel through the "outer darkness" between the stars in search of a colony (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 1998, 126). Mpungushe travels through the "valleys" of creation or existence in order to steal Fire from the Land of the gods (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 1998, 89).

What can be read from each gateway or dimension of distinct realities? How is each figure transfigured by their passage in multidimensional reality? These problems reveal that reality is not so much structured by multidimensionality, but that the shape of reality changes in each dimension. Reality appears to be the particular dimension that Mpungushe (in *Kintu*) finds himself in at any given point of narrative-time. Since the appearance of reality is interlocked with a given dimension of existence, to grope for a unified vision of reality – a totality of sorts – is to move deeper within obscurity, or what we may otherwise call the sureality prepossessing the real.

Surreality

The story of the sleep-dreaming goddess that prefaces *Kintu*, and that is visually represented in a painting of the Red People's arrival on Earth in *The Song of the Stars*, opens us up to a different conception of reality. This story is more of an idea than it is a myth. Mutwa points out how the image/idea of the universe has always been shaped through an imaginary that seeks closure on the mysteries it encounters:

> "…people have always tended to form things into definite shapes. Of something like the universe, of such a shapeless vastness, a person living in a cave, a person wearing skins, cannot even remotely conceive. But take that idea and give it the shape of a dark, sleeping goddess with a body of ice, floating in the vastness of nothing, then you have got something that appeals to the depths of that person's mind. He or she is now able to see the universe in his or her mind's eye as a huge slumbering goddess who is

> busy dreaming of you and me and other things on this and on other worlds" (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 2003, 77).

According to Mutwa, the fact of sleep-dreaming is not arbitrary in this mythic-idea. In the section on his delineation of Zulu philosophy titled 'Dreams, Prophecies, and Mysteries' in **Zulu Shaman**, Mutwa asserts that "the Zulu word for Sleep is *butongo*, 'the state of being one with the star gods.' The word for dreams is *ipupo*. The verb for 'pupa' refers to flight, thereby to say 'I dreamt' means 'I flew'" (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 2003, 173). The sleep-dream, then, is flight against groundedness. In his treatise on Bantu cosmology, Kimbwandende Kia Banseki Fu-Kiau further delineates the issue of sleep-dreaming as a flight towards the inward direction of being (Fu-Kiau **African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo** 1980, 134). He argues that there are seven directions that one (whom he thinks of as *umuntu* rather than the subject) encounters as one relates to the world: forward, backward, left and right – all of which designate horizontal-motion; as well as inward, downward, and upward – which designates vertical-motion. Fu-Kiau's delineation opens us up to a concept of dimensionality as motionlality. The multidimensionality of reality that constitutes reality is, from the relational scale, a motioning of sorts. Therefore, Mutwa's seven gates of creation are akin to Fu-Kiau's seven directions. The dreamscape dimension is therefore the "seventh direction, the center, the inner world which represents the essence of (one's) being" (Fu-Kiau 1980, 135). The dream-scape, in this sense, is thus conceived as the closest representation of reality. However, Mutwa's dreamscape is not the property of *umuntu*, it holds and encloses the world as *umuntu* perceives it. In other words, *umuntu* is not particularly the one who dreams, but s/he is in/ enclosed by/in the hold of the dreamscape. The

gap between reality and its perception, or how it is projected, in the dreamscape is an opening toward surreality.

In her essay, '1943: Surrealism and Us', Suzanne Cesaire argues that surreality, as an ethic of creative-being-in-the-world, "lifts the spell of the impassable barrier between the inner world and the outer world" (Cesaire *1943: Surrealism and Us* 2009, 34). The surreal, for her, is not merely an ontological demarcation in the same way that an 'inner world' and an 'outer world' are. The surreal is more fundamentally an ethic, "a unique faculty" that "endlessly sustains a massive army of negations" (Cesaire 1943, 37). In the zone of the surreal, one is able to productively negate the barrier between the inner world of perception and the external world of events. The refusal of the barrier enables a convergence of the dreamscape and the real-as-it-is-experienced, where these two points of being become conceptually inseparable.

The conceptual inseparability of the cosmic dreamscape and the world of events is particularly evident in Mutwa's painting of a scene in *The Song of the Stars*. The painting relates the particular scene in the myth when the Firebird attacked the Nommo twins, Wowane and Mpanku, who had stolen her egg and used it to transport the First Men from the planet of the Nommo in the Nalediyapiri constellation to the Earth (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 1998, 127). Within the scene (as it is represented in the painting) is also an image of the sleeping goddess while she dreams up this scene and other possible realities. This painting shows that reality, according to this cosmogony, *is* the surreal convergence of the phenomenological dimension/ direction outward and the dreamscape/direction inward. The inward, as it is understood here, is not a direction towards one's self, it is a direction towards an a priori sur-reality.

There are many layers of different natures in the heart of this study, but primarily the study is concerned with, and it radiates, wonder. If we were to think of Credo Mutwa's imagination as a

compound, it would be befitting to think of each chapter of this study as a hut encasing its own distinct and poignant spectrums of the wonder/riddle/mystery of reality. The traveler and her company must move through one threshold and must fully dwell in one hut in order to move into another. The huts (chapters) are not mere shelters of ideas and expressions; they are symbiotic, they are alive, and in many ways, they are inseparable – connected to each other as if they are a long stretch of a single expression. Let us have a quick glance of what they may encase.

In the first chapter of this research paper, I will explore the multiple ways theorists have read the narrative category of the myth. I am particularly interested in how Sylvia Wynter, Sun Ra and Wilson Harris have read the myth. For Sylvia Wynter, however, the myth is an epistemic category of the practice of being. Her argument is imperative rather than explanatory. She asserts that in order to reshape the practice and the ethic of the human-as-it-reopens-itself up-to-the-world, the myth must be transformed into an epistemic imperative (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 34). Instead of the epistemic imperative of the myth, Sun Ra suggests that the myth must become a political imperative. For him, the myth opens up an opportunity to re-imagine the governing of being (Sun *Ra Berkeley Lecture* 1971). Harris suggests that the myth is a narrative form of the intuitive or figurative imagination (Harris 1981, 98). For him, the myth is an instruction of how we should imagine the world. Furthermore, he suggests that the myth is more of a riddle than any kind of imperative. For him, the myth is a question that does not seek or suggest resolution, but deepens the problems of knowledge, imagination and existence. My reading of Credo Mutwa's various myths leans towards Harris's suggestion. Therefore, the riddling element becomes, for me, not only a constitutive aesthetic of the myth, but also a productive method of reading the various myths. I believe this hermeneutic will give us different methods of

abstraction, which do not resolve the inherent obscurity of concepts, but which sit and play with the concepts through their various obscurities.

In the second chapter, I will play with the riddle of time and try to understand how time shapes the image of reality in *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life*. As discussed above, time has two abstractions in this myth: quantum time, and hyper-dimensional time. I must reiterate the point that Mutwa shapes his texts after very complex puzzles. Quantum and hyper-dimensional time are not only mentioned in this myth. They also appear in his legends, narrative-philosophies, video interviews and lores that are dispersed in various texts. I will try to assemble these dispersed conceptual pieces. Throughout these various texts, however, quantum and hyper-dimensional time also shapeshift, therefore affecting the image of reality. This finds resonance in the broader tradition of black ideas, in and out of the continent, that relates to quantum time and how it is imagined.

In the third chapter, I will explore how the ante-cosmic dreamscape shapes the structure of reality in *The Song of The Stars*. Since the dreamscape is the conjuring of the sleeping goddess, it is the hold or enclosure of the various worlds that contain existence. This myth abstracts 'space' and 'world' by way of the dreamscape. Therefore 'space' and 'world' become a series of contingent illusions. Under this order of abstraction, 'space' loses its framing element of externality, and 'world' loses its imposition as "a context of meaning" (Hateb **Myth and Philosophy** 1990, 16). These concepts, if they were ever grounding frameworks in the idea of reality, become shapeshifting illusions. However the dreamscape, argues Suzanne Cesaire, is more of a field of interpretations than it is a field of illusions (Cesaire 2009). The central

question of this chapter then becomes: What happens to the form of the (narrative) 'event' – which can otherwise be construed as the phenomenological sequence of reality – when the structure of reality is prepossessed by the larger structure of the dreamscape?

In chapter four, I demonstrate how *Kintu* introduces the element of trickery in Mutwa's conceptualization (that is, the imagination) of reality. The element of trickery in *Kintu* opens us up to a different kind of structural ontology. Structural ontology is here imagined as a multidimensionality that does not only stratify and deepen the levels of being-in-the-world, but also unravels the games of being within each strata of being. So being in this myth, is not merely being-for a larger structural ontology, or being that signifies a grander signifier. Being, in this way, has no telos. It is a framework of being that is thoroughly obscure, or, if you will, radically skeptical. However, this field or form of obscurity is veiled with multiple layers of codes and puzzles. The presence of a different code points to a different and distinct sign of reality. The multidimensionality, in this myth, is one of codes and signs rather than one of being. The challenge of being is to navigate/motion through these shape-shifting codes without seeking resolution, but rather working through *end*(-)less questions.

The concluding epilogue will attempt to assemble all the scattered images and concepts that inform the mystery of reality. Knowing that the riddle does not seek and cannot be met with resolve, this epilogue will wonder if the initial framing of the riddle (nothing: {reality [time; sureality; dimensional motion]}) was not a misconception, or rather a trick of theory. The riddle qua question of reality in Mutwa's cosmogonies is yet to be uncovered. This epilogue will not aim to convince the reader that the riddle of reality has been unraveled since the act of

unraveling itself introduces us to new riddles of reality, but will rather muse at the various riddles that the paper and its various prepossessions have posed to the black arts of the imagination.

1.

The Games of Being and Knowledge

"Abadala balindile, boh
Utywala bugayiwo, boh
iSabelo silethiwe emsamo,
Wedlozi vumani, boh"
Buhlebendalo Mda (*Nyamazane* 2020).

"We hold the myth to be *potential*
Not self-evident but equational
Another dimension
Of another kind of Living Life"
- Sun Ra (**Space is the Place** 1974)
-
"Do it just.
Then you'll know."
Solange (*Time (is)* 2017)

In a number of her most acclaimed essays, Sylvia Wynter focuses her theoretical energies on the concept of 'Man'. Wynter does not give us a precise definition of the concept. It is, however, a concept that unravels itself as we dive deeper in Wynter's vast and complex theoretical world. There are at least four dimensions to Wynter's concept of Man. Before we focus on the matter of the concept, we must note that it is presumed by author and reader alike that 'Man' is a universally present and self-evident concept in all possible epistemic worlds (Wynter *Unsettling the Coloniality of Being* 2003, 14). However, we do get a sense that 'Man' is an ontic entity – a thing that exists; this is then the first dimension of the concept. Secondly, as she unravels in her later work with Katherine McKittrick, 'Man' is an existence not just in the name, but an existence in practice (Wynter and McKittrick *Unparalled Catastrophe for Our Species?* 2015).

Existence, in Wynter's theory of Man, centers on the biological category of knowledge; this is the third dimension of the concept. Therefore, Man, at least in the modern episteme, is a biological being (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 13). In other words, Man has a profound, and perhaps grounding, biological existence. Since Man is a being of consciousness, theoretically we consider it a subject. This element of subjectivity makes up the fourth dimension. Although the concept 'subject', here reduced to an element of the concept of 'Man', is contemporarily used in literary, social and political discourses, its origins are firmly rooted in early modern discourses of the mind and consciousness (see Descartes **Key Philosophical Writings** 1997; Heidegger **Being and Time** 1962). The subject thus owes its parentage to the earliest modern forms of idealism and phenomenology. Here, we find an epistemic shift of ontology in Western thought. No longer is existence grounded upon metaphysical substance, it is grounded upon physical (within the conceptual-scape of space and time) and phenomenological (experiential: empiricist and idealist) consciousness.

Beyond its dimensions, Wynter's 'Man' has a number of shadows, which spring from, and tether themselves to, h/im. The first is 'Man1', or homo politicus, who emerges from the Renaissance age of Europe amidst the looming rupture between the state and the church, and consequentially between subject and God (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 9). The second of these shadows emerges much later in the liberal bourgeois age, after the initial rupture subsides, and freedom and enlightenment have been cemented. Wynter calls this Man2, or homo oeconomicus (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 9). Both shadows emerge as a result - and perhaps with the spirit - of grand epistemic breakthroughs in modern Western thought. Homo politicus rises from/ with the spirit of the Copernican revolution, while homo oeconomicus comes forth in the dawn of the Darwinian revolution (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 14, 26). These shadows are not mere

consequences of the history of ideas; they are archaeological riddles. In order to illuminate the core and possible textures of these shadows, Wynter adopts Foucault's archaeological method. Gutting states, "the premise of the archaeological method is that systems of thought and knowledge are governed by rules, beyond those of grammar and logic, that operate beneath the consciousness of individual subjects and define a system of conceptual possibilities that determines the boundaries of thought in a given domain and period" of history (Gutting *Michel Foucault* 2013, 7-8).

In her later work with Katherine McKittrick (as cited above), but foreshadowed by her insightful interview with David Scott (Scott *Re-Enchantment of Humanism* 2000), Wynter brings to light a third shadow of Man – homo narrans which later evolves into the hybrid form of bios and mythoi (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 16). The hybrid form is a response to/ against the Darwinian configuration of evolutionary man, which granted the "Western liberal "(now neoliberal)" monohumanism" accessible only to the bourgeoisie (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 11). Wynter finds monohumanism to be problematic at two levels: it forecloses the radical possibilities of a democratized economy; and, it restricts new possibilities of epistemic and imaginative breakthroughs (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 16). The hybrid form/shadow is therefore a "counterhumanism, and alternative to liberal monohumanism" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 10). This unsettles the Western liberal "(now neoliberal)" "order of secular knowledge/ truth, as if it has to do with ourselves, is devastated if we are hybrid beings! If humans are conceptualized as hybrid beings, you can no longer classify human individuals, as well as human groups, as naturally selected (i.e. eugenic) and naturally dyselected (i.e. dysgenic) beings" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 17).

The unsettling element of this hybrid shadow/form of Man does not so much lie in the form itself. The form is self-evidently synthetic, as it unites the contradictions of bios and mythoi. The unity of seemingly irreconcilable contradictions is an expected consequence/ closure of any dialectic. Wynter's hybrid form unsettles because it ushers in a new episteme, a new science as it were of the Word (an idea Wynter borrows from Aime Cesaire), where "the Word (the mythoi) will condition the study of the nature (the bios)" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 27).

This proposed method of knowledge is a turning of tables. What I shall call Wynter's trap. Firstly, the method reduces the biocentric principle of being and knowledge into a contingent consequence of an undead ghost of Western thought; an antecedent completely disavowed and ignored - mythology. It therefore unravels myth and cosmogony not to signal an ambivalent promised order of knowledge by the synthetic form; but to re-center the oldest system of *memory*, the very thing that precedes and anticipates the order of modern and every other episteme. Wynter allows us to transcend the archaeological method of knowledge, from whence we can excavate the methods of memory. This is, in effect, a suspension of the teleological drive of Western systems of knowledge. Consequently, Wynter is moving us out of the game (method) of progress, a mimetic game that promises frontward motion in space and time; she moves us, instead, towards a cyclic game of riddled repetition, where we must look at being with new and perhaps more abysmal eyes. Game here means the methods from which we read, and participate in, reality. The game, for me, is not merely a transcendental fantasy we retreat to in order to escape truth. The game is the ultimate revelation, a meta-revelation that is, of the set of codes, rules and laws that define our individual forms of thought and being in the world. The question then becomes; what is Man (and its company of shadows) in this vertiginous game of mythoi?

And more importantly: Is Man a central or possible figure/category of being in this game or are there other figures and epistemes that completely unsettle Man's position of ontic coherence?

The Traps of Existence

As we begin to approach the mythic game of deep memory, what becomes clear to us is that 'Man' is not the essential category of existence. Since myth relentlessly displaces 'Man', we must briefly make the journey into the history of Western ideas in order to find the genesis of the idea of 'Man'. In Ancient Greek thought, the discourse of psychology (a profoundly humanist discourse in the modern episteme) centralized the soul rather than man. Psychology was, at that time, considered a natural science; and the soul was the object of the science. "The Greek inquiry into the soul extends, beyond man, to all living things" (Adler and Gorman **The Great Ideas** 1952, 1). Aristotle reasons that since "the soul is in some sense the principle of animal life," it therefore stands that "the knowledge of the soul admittedly contributes greatly to the advance of truth in general, and, above all, to our understanding of Nature" (Adler and Gorman 1952, 1). Both Roman and Medieval epistemes focalized Ptolemaic astronomy, which was deliberately and ideologically geocentric, in order to position the realm of man (the Earth) "at the dregs of the universe" (Adler and Gorman 1952, 2). Earth was condemned to the center of the universe, exiled from the celestial commons, denied motion and agency because man stood as an unfavourable figure of being. According to Wynter, the existential crisis for the Medieval Christian public was not phenomenological (thus not concerned with consciousness and freedom), but theological: "I am sinful because Adam and Eve fell and this Earth, divinely condemned to be nonmoving, is justly my abode" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 15). This brief screening of the Western history of the idea of 'Man' serves to show that this concept is only one possibility/ a single ontic in a multitude of ontic figures. Therefore, when Wynter opens up her

philosophy with an overarching notion of ‘Man’, we must note that the strong presence of ‘Man’ in her work favours the epistemic context of her central concerns.

However, even with this strong presence of ‘Man’ and the empirical certitude, that fortifies the concept, Wynter’s writing whispers unavoidable anxieties, which arise at the wake of the concept. These anxieties, which she calls “traps” and “paradoxes”, are inherent in the concept ‘Man’ and its various shadows. One trap becomes evident in the 1960s when all the counterhumanist movements that included, among others, the Civil Rights movement, the Feminist movement, the anti-colonial movement and various Marxist movements, had united against the hegemonic episteme of ‘Man’, but later the allegiance broke and the various fragments “retreated into the bourgeois order of things” (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 23). By breaking up, they all fell into “the remimeticized Bovaryism trap” (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 23). In other words, they all fell into the surreal - and what Fanon may call the - imprisonment of history.

For Fanon, the ensnaring liberty of bourgeois Man comes with the trap of history (Marriot *Inventions of Existence* 2011, 46). Fanon argues in **Black Skins White Masks** “that colonialism has not only immured native life but has immured the writing of history as well, and if the narratives, codes, genres, and genealogies of colonialism have tended to block the potentiality of the colonized, they seem equally to have blocked the affirmation of l’Histore” (Marriot 2011, 46). For one to break or “leap” from colonialism, they must untether themselves from history as well. Fanon’s idealist retreat takes place in the conceptual space of a reinvented European humanism (Marriot 2011, 46). He believes that a New Man will bring upon the dawn of epistemic freedom. However, Fanon seems to return to the very same ensnaring grounds he sought to leap away from. Man, for Fanon, is a fundamentally historical being. Thus, the concept

of a trans-historical Man is truly impossible. The desire to be 'Man' or for his being to be represented through the figure 'Man' traps Fanon into a cyclical game of perpetual repetition, faintly reminding us of Sisyphus' fate…

Contra Fanon's synthetic assimilation into the concept of 'Man', Sun Ra argues that in order to escape from the trap of Man we must fully abandon history for the pursuit of a mythocracy (Sun Ra *Sun Ra Speaks – Berkley Lecture* 1971). In order to unveil Sun Ra's meaning of "mythocracy" we will have to break down the word into two pieces. A myth is a story of origin. The suffix '–cracy' denotes a form of rule. Consequently, what Sun Ra means by mythocracy is an epistemic and ontological order grounded on narratives of origin. Sun Ra probes us to leave the epistemic realm of history for the mythocracy, because history, as an epistemic framework, has been antagonistic to the epistemic and ontological pursuits of blackness. Sun Ra's drive towards the Mythocracy resembles Wilson Harris' disjuncture from the trap of history. Against the imposition of history and materialism, Harris wonders if "the life of the imagination in intuitive overshadowed depth (can) genuinely breach the perfectly natural historical biases and prejudices that seek to imprison us very often in the name of common sense or reason or ritual convention?" (Harris **Explorations** 1981, 99).

Dis-enchanted by the promise (which veils a trap) of history, Harris suggests that we give up the materialist method of history for a mythic and a fabled method of historical thought. Sun Ra's stance is more radical. He suggests that we totally give up history in order to embrace the mythocratic. For both thinkers, we must rethink the conventional epistemic methods of time. The existence of the myth shows us that the organic time of the first "breakthrough" (in Wynter's words) qua creation or the Initial Moment of creation does not only belong to and occur in unspoken time. It constitutes, and is contained within, all stages of time: the ante, the present and

the post. Creation ensnares the a priori codes of the games of being and time. What Sun-Ra is therefore pushing us towards is an ontology and episteme governed by that split-second moment before Pandora opens the box, and many other split-second moments just before the… big bang/ breakthrough!

The Word as an Epistemic Riddle

Wynter argues that the mythoi-bios synthesis must carve out a "new science of the Word" which will bring upon an epistemic breakthrough. By 'Word' Wynter evokes Christian cosmogony and Greek metaphysics. According to Christian cosmogony, the self-constituted God of creation created the universe and himself through the "The Word of Life". In the Book of John, it is written: "In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From the beginning the Word was with God. Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this light brought light to humanity" (**John 1: 1 - 3**). This myth of the Word moves from Ancient Greek metaphysics of the Logos. According to Heraclitus, the Logos is the antecedent of everything (Matson **A New History of Philosophy** 1987, 24). Everything emanates from, and is materialized by, the presence of the Logos. Therefore, the Logos is the substance of the all. Moreover, the Logos is the reality of the all, as everything exists under the metaphysical order of the Logos. The central positioning of the Logos in Greek metaphysics indicates that 'reality' *is* an epistemic construct.

Wynter acknowledges these origins of the 'Word', a concept that became quite central in twentieth century structuralism. She does not heed, however, to the fact that the foregrounding of 'Word' in both cosmogony and metaphysics had its beginnings in Ancient Egyptian mythology, and has a central positioning in Yoruba 'Ife'. In the Ancient Egyptian episteme, the 'Word' came

to life in the form of the 'Spell'. The spell and the hymn are the focal structures of Ancient Egyptian texts, as evidenced in **The Book of the Dead** and **The Papyrus of Ani**. According to Egyptian cosmogony, the first act of the imperial god, Ra, was to cast a spell over his name: "He was all powerful and the secret of his power lay in his Name, which was hidden from all the world" (Green **Tales of Ancient Egypt** 1967, 1). With a spell that unraveled Ra's true name, Isis dethroned the imperial God. Furthermore, in **The Book of the Dead** all forms of discourse and knowledge are communicated in the form of spells. Thus, they serve a range of purposes:

> "Some are intended to give the deceased mystical knowledge in the afterlife, or perhaps to identify them with the gods… others are incantations to ensure the different elements of the dead person's being were preserved and reunited, and to give the deceased control over the world around him. Still others protect the deceased from various hostile forces, or guide him through the underworld past various obstacles… (other) spells deal with the judgement of the deceased in the Weighing of the Heart ritual" (Sweeney 1990, 9).

The Egyptian 'spell' bears close kinship ties to the Yoruba 'Ife'. The Ife is a riddle from the Ancestors and the Orisas, which the Babalowayo offers to the seeker of knowledge. It is the seeker's burden to solve this riddle in order to uncover the secrets to h/er well-being (Olupona *The Study of Yoruba Religious Tradition* 1993, 247). Unlike the Logos which is an epistemic substance (because it is grounded upon a certitude of existence), the spell is an epistemic riddle. In order to lay bare its truth, the spell must be constantly unveiled - its intention must be tirelessly unmasked. How can we re-think of Cesaire's/ Wynter's "new science of the Word" in light of the epistemic riddle?

By employing the word "science", Wynter and Cesaire are not merely invoking a new discourse or discipline of the Word; they are calling upon a new episteme grounded on the Word. The episteme of the Word, according to Wynter, shall be prepossessed by the synthetic formula of bios and mythois (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 27). This formula erupts from an "autopoiesis of being hybridly human" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 27). Wynter writes:

> "Our human ausocial systems are instead hybrid languaging cum storytelling (if biologically implemented) living systems; but they function according to the laws analogous to these regulatory laws of the supra-autopoietic system, which is the beehive. So I call these the laws of hybrid human auto-speciation, thereby of autopoiesis" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 28).

The single fault of Wynter's theory is that she assumes that the myth is an intrinsically humanist episteme. She believes that through the creative act of mythologizing the world "we have always rigorously and behaviourally adhered to (the extrahuman mandate) as indispensable to our respective genre-specific praxes of being hybridly human" (Wynter and McKittrick 2015, 28). She employs the hermeneutic strategies of reading the myth as an allegory of material social life – a thought pioneered by scholars such as Mircea Eliade and Francis Bacon. This interpretive act of the ancient or ante-modern myth does not consider the fact that 'human' and 'materiality' are modern categories of thought and specification. The idea of the 'human' is not as epistemically and historically ubiquitous as Wynter believes. This category is bound to her categories of Man1 and Man2. In some ante-modern epistemes, such as Bantu epistemology for example, what we know today as the 'human' is not necessarily a 'biological' or even a 'storytelling' category, or even a category of existence. *Umuntu* in Bantu epistemology finds little to no resemblance with the 'Human', because *umuntu* shares its ontological ties with *into* – the thing. There is no true

ontological distinction between *umuntu* and *into* because both are cosmically bound to *Ntu* or *Nut* (of the Egyptian variation) – the sky goddess of precreation. Therefore, *abantu* are not just *people*, they are the ontic properties of pretemporal divinity. Bantu epistemology, therefore, presents a radically different ontology to the modernist ontology that Wynter simultaneously dignifies and moves away from.

By way of introduction

The myth, and in extension the 'word', in ante-modern epistemes, is not merely a human function, or an extension of human creativity. The myth is more importantly a riddle of epistemic memory. Through the myth, we must remember, as in Sun Ra's instruction, that there are different ways of organizing existence and there are different methods of reimagining reality that do not necessitate a reworking of modernist frameworks. The challenge, in the face of the epistemic riddle, is to give up all modernist bearings which include the 'human' as either ontic or praxis, the 'materialist' imaginary of reality, and the order of ontology in accordance to Darwinian speciation. Through the epistemic riddle, we exit the modernist game of being, and re-enter mythocratic puzzles of thought. The epistemic riddle probes us to rethink everything and forge new/ uncover old paths of wisdom.

Thus, as we exit modern paradigms of existence and knowledge, we begin a journey into an everlasting well of unceasing ideas. Come with me…

2

The Riddle of Quantum Time in *The Sacred Story of Life*

"I saw things (he) imagined."

Solange (*Things I Imagined* 2017).

"And the astronomer said, Master, what of Time?

And he answered: You would measure time the measureless and the immeasurable.

You would adjust your conduct and even direct the course of your spirit according to hours and seasons.

Of time you would make a stream upon whose bank you would sit and watch its flowing."

Kahlil Gibran (**The Prophet** 2020, 73).

"An absurd cosmos which has shaped one, sculpted one, across aeons and evolutions, is a paradox no one can solve.

Can one abuse a creator that has sculpted one, written the word of being into dust and marble and flesh?"

Wilson Harris (**Selected Essays**, 256).

Credo Mutwa presents a very intricate mysticism of time in his myths. Myths of origin do not only reveal an ethic (Mhlahlo *The Ethic(s) of Creation in Credo Mutwa's 'Indaba, My Children'* 2018), they also uncover complex structure(s) and textures of reality, structure(s) defined by the element of time. In multiple traditions of thought and narrative, time imposes a structure of reality, or positions itself as a structure within reality. In narrative, we impose linear, chronological (Ricoeur *Narrative Time* 1980), episodic and circular (Kunene **Zulu Poems** 1970), elliptical and curved structures (Einstein *The Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies* 1905) to time. However, what we often find is that these narrative structures of time do not tell us anything about the concept of time. What would happen, then, if we reduce the idea of 'time' from the

grand structural level to the most minute quantum levels? If we do so, will the idea begin to speak to us? What kind of cosmogony, and method of imagination, does the idea of time as elemental produce? More importantly: could this idea of elemental time unfold the age-old mystery of time itself?

This chapter suggests that Mutwa's cosmogonies move us closer towards quantum or elemental time, because the idea of time in his 'first narratives' are the *prepossessions* of cosmogonic reality. These temporal *prepossessions* do not only emerge from the original imagination, they have their origins, I believe, in isiZulu etymology. In isiZulu, the word for time *isikati* finds its origins in, or rather mirrors, the word *umkati*, which finds resonance with the concept 'Hypercosmos'[9]. We can infer, therefore, that there is an inextricable bond between the idea of time and the idea of the Hypercosmos, which is a pivotal plane of reality in Mutwa's cosmogonies. To understand Mutwa's riddle of reality, we must begin to understand its quantum or elemental prepossession, time. In the introduction, I pointed out why I refer to the image-concept of time as elemental or quantum. I shall reiterate that what makes the image-concept of time quantum in Mutwa's first narratives is how it is touched and possessed by, and entwined with, the element of Nothingness.

Mutwa's cosmic structure has a very distinct idea and order of time. There are two senses of cosmic time in Mutwa's *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life*: Eternity, which is the basic structure of the Hypercosmos; and Infinity, which is the meta-structure of the Hypercosmos.

[9] 'Hypercosmos' is not reducible to the metaphysical concept of 'Hyperspace'. 'Hyperspace' is a concept concerned with the image (or what some may consider the physical reality) of the heavens at large (Hudson 2005, 36). It is important to note that the 'heavens', whether we think of them as a concept arranged by scientific discourse or curated by ancient mythologies, is an image-concept that has a long tradition of invention. The 'Hypercosmos', however, is a concept-image that requires a different skill or art of reading and imagination for its unraveling. It erupts from a pattern of imagination that is not as univocal, but nonetheless as (if not more) organized, as that of 'Hyperspace'. This Research Report is interested in immersing itself within these patterns of imagination and their attendant and descendant image-concepts.

Eternity has ten dimensions of time, called "Ten Gates of Eternity" (Mutwa **Indaba, My Children** 1998, 8). The author introduces us to both planes of time – Eternity and Infinity – in the myth. Between these two grand concept-images of time, lies the first riddle of reality: If time is simultaneously interlocked within, and certainly defined by, these grand structures and tiers of the cosmos: what kind of revelations does its nature unfold (and enfold)? I pose this as a riddle rather than as a question because its sense of curiosity, its need for resolution, is more of a challenge that evokes multiple streams of meditation, than it is a puzzle seeking assemblage and coherence. If it is, however, the latter then the work of assembling these multiple pieces that may/ may not constitute or signify the nature of time will itself require an eternity to complete, because these puzzles are too complicated and too ancient to attempt in a single series of lifetimes. Mutwa lays out at least three puzzling pieces of time in *The Sacred Story*. I have already introduced two of those pieces: Eternity and Infinity. The third precedes both in the narrative: the River Time.

The River Time

In *The Sacred Story*, River Time first takes the form of an element that covers the entirety of universal space prior the phenomenon of creation. Floating atop the River Time is Nothing. In this lyric of creation, the poet sings:

> "Nothing had been floating
> For no one knows how long,
> Upon the invisible waters of Time –
> That mighty River with
> Neither source nor mouth,
> Which was –

Which is

And ever shall be." (Mutwa 1998, 6).

This verse reveals that River Time has at least three natures: it takes the form of water, it is invisible, and it is eternal. After this verse, not much else is chronicled about the nature/ characteristics/ story of River Time. It may seem that we have very little to speculate on this very essential piece of the riddle. However, when we consider the natures of the element, we begin to see that the possibilities of speculation are probably too great for a single study to contain, much less a chapter in a study. What, then, do we do with these infinitesimal natures: water, invisibility, and eternity? How can we manipulate the knowledge and imaginary information we have on the three natures for the purposes of uncovering the riddle of both time and reality? I shall touch on the point of eternity later in this chapter. For now let us marvel at the "invisible water" that gives the element some, if not the bulk, of its character.

In many traditions of mythology, water is the substance that covers the planes of the universe/ cosmos before the age of creation. Modern traditions of knowledge and imagination tend to conceive of water as a material object (Mohulatsi *Black Aesthetics and the Deep Ocean* 2019). If the materiality of water is ever abstracted, figurative devices such as allegory and metaphor are used. For example, Derek Walcott's *The Sea is History* imagines the sea as "a grey vault" which encases multidimensional strands of history and memory (Walcott *The Sea is History* 2007, 1). In Walcott's poem, the sea has enclosed all the different strata of time and memory affecting the black diasporic subject. All of black modern history, the history of the new dawn/ the new dusk of modernity is enclosed within the "grey vault", from the "first" time when "there was the heaving oil/ heavy as chaos" to the setting of the "son/ that was the New Testament" and finally to the timeless "sound/ like a rumour without an echo". Walcott's poem does not only allegorize

black diasporic history and memory through the Biblical chronicle, it also allegorizes the sea. The sea in this poem is "not aqua nullius, circumscribed and mapped by the (...) oceanographer, but rather a place where the haunting of the past overtakes the present subject" (DeLoughrey *Heavy Waters: Waste and Atlantic Modernity* 2010, 703). Through the materialist imagination, the sea assumes a life. One can say that the sea is an animated site of memory and history. Although allegorical abstraction opens up novel conceptions and imaginaries of water, it circumscribes the water (and its bodies) to a materialist framework. It does not think of water beyond its materiality. It is material water which "haunts" the "present subject" (DeLoughrey 2010, 703), it is material water which encloses history (Walcott 2007, 1), it is material water which produces sacred and terrible memory (Putuma *Water* 2016).

Water is a multifaceted *concept*. The materiality of water is but one facet of the concept. Mythology forces us to take note of more figurative, or rather shadowy, conceptions of water that deserve further abstraction and consideration. For example, Mesopotamian myth makes a distinction between the categories of material waters such as fresh water and seawater, and those of abstract or ephemeral waters such as the waters of Chaos. Within the latter category, there is further distinction between the waters of chaos and the celestial waters of the "heavens, earth, sun, and so forth" (Fontenrose **Python** 1959, 220). There are different degrees, therefore, of the idea or image of water. Or rather, there are different degrees to the abstraction of water. We will pay particular attention to the meta-cosmic abstraction of water, which grounds the worlds of Chaos and Nothingness.

Chaos is not the only figuration of the primordial watery mass in mythology. In Ancient Egyptian and Bantu mythology, the primordial waters inhabit, or entwine themselves around, Nothingness. Chaos and Nothingness are similar in the sense that both are precosmic entities that

are “deep, boundless and dark” (Fotenrose 1959, 221). Like Chaos, Nothingness is a deity or a spirit within, of, or concerning the primordial waters of the precosmic age of existence[10]. Unlike Chaos, however, Nothingness is not the arch-nemesis of the gods of creation. Nothingness does not have to be subdued, defeated, antagonized or confined in order to enable the act or the art (that is, the order) of creation. In the myths of Nothingness, Nothingness is the primordial waters from which the gods of creation arise and bring about the “revolution of the world” (Cicero **Nature of the Gods** 1911, 8).

In Ancient Egyptian mythology, the primordial waters of Nothingness are deep, fathomless and unillumined (Fotenrose 1959, 221). In this myth, Nothingness is inextricable from the primordial waters. The primordial waters were “conceived as a living being called Nun (also known as Nut or Ntu), or even as eight beings, four pairs of male and female.” How these beings came into existence is never an issue of narrative (Cavendish **Mythology** 1980, 97). From Nun or the eight beings of the primordial waters, there emerged a cosmic mountain, according to the Heliopolitan version of the myth, which was “(or on which was)” the king and creator of the gods, Atun otherwise known as Amun-Ra. “Out of himself he produced Shu (the atmosphere) and Tefnut (the water)” (Fotenrose 1959, 221). Here, again, we perceive a multidimensional concept of the water. This myth portrays two dimensions or abstractions of water: the first is the pre-cosmic waters that appear in eight or perhaps, with the addition of Nun, nine spectrums of existence. This abstraction of pre-cosmic water is not only concerned with the elements of depth and fathomlessness, it is also concerned with the appearance of the pre-cosmic waters. The pre-cosmic waters appear in at least nine ontic shades, each with its own complexity and degrees of

[10] Spirits have different ways of oscillating a body: sometimes they enter the body (and are thus “within” it); sometimes they relate to the body (and are thus “of” it); and other times they perplex the body (thus “concerning” it).

refraction. The second dimension of the waters is celestial or cosmic, as evidenced by the figure 'Tefnut'. In this myth, unlike the Mesopotamian variation, water bears no existence at the material level. Instead, it transfigures itself from the pre-cosmic to the cosmic plane of existence. Cosmic waters (Tefnut) do not directly arise from the pre-cosmic waters (Nun). Since Amun produces Tefnut, it is safe to infer that creation functions as a barrier or a threshold between pre-cosmic waters and cosmic waters. So then, between the first (Nothingness) and the second (Cosmic) dimensions or abstractions of waters lies a threshold - the murky interjection of creation.

Similar to Ancient Egyptian myth, Bantu myth – as presented by Mutwa in *The Sacred Story* - gives an account of the primordial watery existence of Nothingness. Unlike the former, however, Nothingness and the primordial waters are not necessarily interlinked or inextricable. This is to say that their conception, or imaginary genesis, is not of the same *essence*. Let us re-examine the verse that we quoted earlier with great attention on Nothingness and its relation to, and perhaps how this relation defines the natures of, pre-cosmic water:

> "Nothing had been floating
> For no one knows how long,
> Upon the invisible waters of Time –
> That mighty River with neither source nor mouth,
> Which was –
> Which is
> And ever shall be" (Mutwa 1998, 3).

In this myth, Nothingness exists in cohort with the primordial waters tied to elemental time. The intersection between Nothing and the primordial waters *of* time only arise in the midst of narrative time, after the fact of existence:

> "Then one day –
> Or is it right to say 'one day'? –
> The River Time desired Nothingness
> Like a flesh-and-blood male beast
> Desires his female partner.
> And as a result of this strangest mating
> Of Time and Nothingness,
> A most tiny nigh invisible spark
> Of Living Fire was born" (Mutwa 1996, 3).

The primordial waters only stay at one dimension or level of abstraction in this cosmogony. The primordial waters are neither deep, fathomless nor dark. The primordial waters are *merely* "invisible" and they are a "mighty River with/Neither source nor mouth" (Mutwa 1998, 3). They do not, further, manifest into cosmic or material or underworld/ exiled figures. Due to the self-contained and temporally unmoving essence of the primordial waters, the abstraction of water in this myth is, and stays at, the quantum or elemental level. Since time and water are inextricable in this myth, the quantum dimension of water brings out a new definition of time and nothingness. In terms of the latter, we begin to see that there are two scales of nothingness in the myth. At one scale is the grand posturing of Nothingness that fills up a large amount of pre-cosmic space. At another scale, the waters of Time are "invisible", thus they exist within the quantum or elemental scale of nothingness. Hence, from the "invisible" or quantum waters, we not only get a degree of time, we also get a degree of elemental or quantum nothingness. So then,

within the hold of the quantum waters, in the "grey vault" of the primordial waters, therein lies the elements of Time and Nothing.

From the dimension of "invisible" or 'infinitesimal' pre-cosmic water and elemental time, we begin to see the 'infinitely divisible' character of these concepts. This means that Mutwa's strategy of reducing the suprastructural elements/ concepts to the most quantum degrees – what we may otherwise call, after Spillers (Spillers *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe* 1987), the subzero-degree level of imagination – does not make the concepts easily graspable. Instead, the concepts of time and nothingness open themselves up to the reader in a way that "gauges the eye"[11] of interpretation[12] and, again, requires a new way of seeing. A new way of relating with concepts. The concept no longer requires definition; the concept opens itself up to the reader. As the reader stares into the tiniest, sometimes negative and other times empty, spaces of the concept, she begins to see that the concept is forever shapeshifting. Since the pre-cosmic watery space of elemental time enables us to feel the initial text/ure of reality, we must begin to wonder what kind of text reality is. This musing brings us back to the initial question of this paper. The most pivotal question this paper seeks to introduce to the black world of abstract thought and imagination: How can we begin to think of the divisible zero degree level of narratology, reality? In metaphysics, reality, or referred to sometimes as substance, is definitively indivisible. However, in Mutwa's cosmogony, time and therefore in extension reality, is divisible. How then do we begin to recalibrate ourselves with a divisible and indefinite sense of time and reality? This could be the riddle in its plainest sense.

[11] After Dante's **Inferno** (Dante **The Divine Comedy** 2009).
[12] More on this in Chapter Four

We can begin to conceptualize infinitely divisible reality through a different orientation of the imagination. Wilson Harris illuminates that the imagination is a "way of reading reality" (Harris 1981, 238). The imagination is a strategy (a passageway) of accessing and interpreting reality, where reality *is* a text. Through the imagination, we gain a vision of the world, where both vision and world warp and shape themselves around the imagination (Harris 1981, 238). We often inherit the idea that the imagination is distinct from knowledge, because, goes the logic, imagination is fictive and knowledge is factual. Toni Morrison expresses that it is indeed a fallacy to separate fact from fiction (Morrison *The Site of Memory* 1995, 87). We think of 'fact' to be a species of science, whereas 'fiction' is a progeny of the imagination. In this way, we believe that ideas and concepts belong to knowledge, whereas fiction and the arts belong to the imagination. Harris and Morrison dispute these pervasive ideas. Knowledge is, like the arts, a species of the imagination. The key distinction, then, is not between knowledge and the imagination; it is between the different methods or orientations of the imagination.

What we have today, due to the modernist episteme, is a "monolithic imperative" of the imagination (Harris **Selected Essays** 1999, 57). The monolithic imperative is a central principle of the materialist imagination. In other words, the materialist orientation of the imagination warrants a "homogenous imperative" of reading reality. Under this imperative, scholars read all texts through a singular and absolute substance. The dialectic between what is true, that is, what can be judged through empirical investigation, and what is false, that which is anti(or non)-empirical, emerges from the absolutist substance. The force of the substance comes from its character of indivisibility, which makes it infallible. The substance, then, becomes the basic structure of reality and of the materialist imagination. This orientation of the imagination, however grand its posture and the beauty of its depth, has its limits. Limits which cannot

otherwise be stretched and reformulated through a different art of the imagination because of the "monolithic imperative" (Harris 1999, 57). Harris remarks that the "signal lack of imaginative daring to probe the function of roots as criterion of creativity and capacity to digest and liberate contrasting spaces" is the weakness of the materialist imagination (Harris 1999, 57). The dominating force of the "homogenous imperative very often masks or conceals from us the heterogeneous roots of a community" (Harris 1999, 57). This masking character of the materialist imagination means that it is coded with an element of trickery, an element that comes from, yet is weaponized against, it's "*pre-possessions*" (Harris 1981, 240). The materialist imagination finds its genesis in what we may call the figurative imagination (Harris 1981, 239).

The figurative imagination arms us with different tools of reading reality and all its variant properties and elements. The figurative imagination or "quantum" imagination, as Harris calls it, is the masked "native to the arts of" the homogenous imperative (Harris 1981, 235). "The quantum imagination," he says, "may be visualized as a revisionary epic which seeks to reclaim extrahuman faculties in incandescent equations between being and nonbeing. The subtle, complex rhythms of nonbeing, the intricate fiber and dimensionalities of space, have been so blocked away that living landscapes become theatres of brute conquest, media to be exploited and manipulated" (Harris 1981, 235). The quantum imagination, unlike its descendent, does not foreground the wholeness or substance of reality, but instead turns us to the "(sub-)zero degrees of (abstract) conceptualization" (Spillers 1987, 89), the abyss or nonbeing spaces of the most pivotal ideas and concepts such as reality, time and origin. It moves us towards "revising" or re-reading these concepts through an abysmal threshold. The abysmal threshold can be, but is not solely, the negative abstractions of any given concept. It moves the concept from that zero-zone of *no*thingness to the sub-zero zone of infinitude. Within the abysmal threshold lies vast and

infinite possibilities of abstraction. Possibilities that stretch simultaneously towards affirmation and negation, height and depth.

The abysmal threshold, or what Mutwa constantly refers to as the "Gateways" of Hypercosmic and ontic time are not negative abstractions of any given concept. There is nothing cynical or "of lack" in *Nothingness*. Within the abysmal threshold lies vast and infinite possibilities of abstraction. It is important to note that the abysmal threshold or "tunnel" is not the totality of the figurative imagination, but it is quite central in Mutwa's narrative world[13].

The Ten Gateways of Eternity

Similar to the phenomenon of River Time, Mutwa does not say much about the Ten Gateways of Eternity. He merely relates the fact of this grand cosmic structure of time in one verse:

> "The All-knowing Omniscient Most-merciful Goddess Ma
> Had created herself by the Great Spirit's wish
> Who, displeased with the wasteful and senseless War
> Between the Flame and the Cold
> Had come from far beyond
> The Ten Gates of Eternity
> To bring order to the Universe" (Mutwa 1998, 8).

Contained within this verse are two great cosmological structures. The first is the pre-history of the universe we currently occupy. The first Ancestors, or rather the primary elements, of this universe are River Time and Nothingness. These elements mate and produce the Living Spark. After the Living Spark exclaims to itself in the belly of Nothingness, "I exist – I am what I am!"

[13] In the proceeding chapters I will elaborate on the expansive volume of the figurative imagination, and how it relates with the different degrees of reality in Mutwa's cosmogonies.

It devours its mother, Nothingness, in an act of existential riot. Enraged by its descendant's act of cannibalism, River Time summons the Spirit of Cold to destroy the Living Spark. In this everlasting battle lies both the life and the doom of the Tenth Gate of Eternity – our universe. The narrator prays:

> "May the Great Spirit who is Lord Almighty
> And paramount Chief of all
> Grant that neither Flame nor Cold
> Shall ever win the War,
> Because whosoever beats the other –
> The sun, the moon, the earth and stars
> And all that live shall cease to be!
> May both antagonists fight forth for everlasting Time,
> Because on the unceasing conflict
> All Life depends" (Mutwa 1998, 7).

This battle gives us a different angle to the riddle of time in the Tenth Gate of Eternity, what we may otherwise call the universe. I must make some definitional clarities. As I pointed out earlier, the Bantu account of reality, according to Mutwa's cosmogonies, contains three temporal scales of cosmic existence: quantum time qua River Time, the ten gates of eternity, and infinity. The multitude of cosmic time in Mutwa's cosmogonies reveals that the idea of the cosmos is not necessarily synonymous with the idea of the universe. The Online Dictionary defines the universe as "all existing matter and space considered as a whole" (Online Dictionary 2019). The etymology of the word 'universe' roughly translates to "combined or turned into one whole" (Online Dictionary 2019). By way of this definition, we see that there is a simultaneity in the containment and systemicity of matter in the world of the universe. Perhaps, this is what

"creation" means, because the Great Mother Ninavhanu-Ma creates the universe of living matter in the wake of the mighty battle between the Living Spark and the Spirit Cold (Mutwa 1996, 7). What all of this reveals is that the phenomenon of matter solely occurs in the universe after Ninavhanu-Ma labored on creation. The other tiers or scales of cosmic existence, namely the other Nine Gates of Eternity and Infinity, do not contain matter. In fact, the Tenth Gate of Eternity, in which our universe or 'labour of creation' or 'revolution of matter', is itself not primarily constituted by matter. Primordial elements make up the bulk of the Tenth Gate of Eternity: River Time, the devoured Nothingness, Living Spark and elemental Spirits such as Cold. We can only imagine the enormity of other veiled elements, quasi-elements, anti-elements, para-elements, pseudo-elements, proto-elements and ineffable stuff that may/ may not occur in the Tenth Gate of Eternity.

Here is the great question aroused by this form of taxonomy: Why does Mutwa describe these cosmic structures through dictions of time rather than those of space? He could have chosen to describe these grand structures as the "multiverses" or the "parallel universes" or even the Ten Containers of Existence. Instead, he decided to phrase it through words and images that are suggestive of time: "Gates", "Infinity" and "Eternity". "Gates" ignites the image and concept of "passage" which is primarily initiated through temporality. "Infinity" is actually a numerical concept that signifies the absence of a finality in the phenomenon of motion. "Eternity", like infinity, indicates the absence of an end, not so much of motion, but of existence – life, in particular. So, what is so significant about *time*? Why is time the only concept, a typically metaphysical concept by the way, fit to usher us into the domain of mysticism? The last question, a question that may just be an offspring of the riddle, poses an interesting epistemic play of sorts between time – the metaphysical concept – and mysticism – an order of knowledge that often

antagonizes the materialist episteme of metaphysics. Metaphysics seeks to ascertain the substance of all matter. Mysticism cloaks itself with oddities that, at times, seek to *undo* the "substance" of all matter. How does it happen that a concept belonging to metaphysics (time) is the primary pathway (or maybe just the most apparent) to the mystical underworld of another concept belonging to metaphysics (reality)? This play of logic calls for humour, and this humour calls for a shapeshifting of ideas.

The first shapeshifter comes in the form of repetition, a repeating of a subordinated question: What is time? And perhaps, the repetitive nature of time: What is time? Franz Fanon revises this question by uncovering its invisible traits, instead he asks: What is the phenomenon of black time? He states that the subject or the self is caught in the encircling temporal and spatial world, framed by the phenomenological schema (Fanon **Black Skins, White Masks** 2008, 83). This schema and its attendant phenomena (time-space/ space shapeshifted by time) "do not impose itself on me; it is, rather a definitive structuring of the self and of the world – definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world" (Fanon 2008, 83). However, when the other appears, the schema does become more imposing, it suffocates the black subject with the temporal compression of nowness as he becomes "responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors" (Fanon 2008, 84). This phenomenological time-space that encapsulates the black subject does not only shapeshift itself into three zones of chronological temporality: present ("my body"), structural ("my race"), and past ("my ancestors"). It also shapeshifts the black subject into three phenomena (not merely ontics): "body", "race", and "ancestors". Fanon is not only disrupting phenomenological and chronological images of time, he is also drawing us towards an idea of the phenomenology of time as an abyssal threshold. 'Abyssal' because the passing between these zones of time does not require motion, but rather an

alchemic (a possible play on surrealist forms of imagining the) wor(l)d)-breaking of conceptual forms (another way to say 'shapeshifting')[14]. 'Threshold' because one shape, "my body", passes onto another, "my race", which shifts into another, "my ancestors". Therefore, Fanon, in an unlikely dialogue with Mutwa, gives us an idea of what it means to move through the "Gates of Eternity".

In his seminal paper 'On Repetition in Black Culture', James A. Snead notes that the absence of chronology or teleology in black time opens us up to the repetitive element of black time, which is a distinct *prepossession* of black culture (Snead *On Repetition in Black Culture* 1981). He calls this repetitive prepossession of black time a "cut". He defines the "cut" through a musical paradigm of meaning which is "an abrupt, seemingly unmotivated break with a series already in progress and a willed return to a prior series" (Snead 1981, 150). Since black culture (and black patterns of thought) finds genetic coherence through the cut, it "builds 'accidents' into its coverage, almost as if to control their unpredictability. Itself a kind of cultural coverage, the magic of the "cut" attempts to confront accident and rupture not by covering them over, but by making room inside the system itself" (Snead 1981, 150). The "magic" of the cut is not particularly outside of the materiality of the culture, as it functions as a structural mechanism of the "cut"/ the element of repetitious time. For Snead, the 'accident' and 'break' are structural points of the "cut", inherent in black cultural coverage. These are not arbitrary tricks; they are, however, strategic, in-built cogs that re-produce the mechanism of time. Through the idea of a mechanism of time ordered by the foregrounding phenomenon of a 'cut', a breakage of sorts, Snead's magical 'cut' brings us to a better vision of the 'Gates of Eternity'. The 'Gates' appear

[14] Certain oddities in Fanon's imagination or phrasing of ideas should not shock us when we note that surrealists, namely Aime Cesaire and Suzanne Cesaire, trained him in the arts of thinking.

to not only be "thresholds" (as Fanon suggests), but they could also be "cuts" or cacophonic "breakages" of time. Each "break" marking a different temporal zone.

Snead's conception of the mechanized cut is similar to Moten's archeological 'break'. In Moten's concept of the 'break', we can think of sonic temporality through a sense of sonic excavation of the initial/ original sound, what he posits to be Aunt Hester's scream (Moten **In the Break** 2003). For Moten, then, the song is not only an archive of knowledge and sound, but the scream of the voice is a signifier of an unexplored conception of time. The voice, by way of the timbre of Aunt Hester's scream (Moten 2003, 3), is not only a genealogical source, it is also an archaeological site. Moten's rapturous (due to the "breaking" of vocal boundaries) archaeology perhaps gives us an idea of what this pattern of time may *sound* like. This piece of the riddle, the Gates of Eternity, has tricked us! When we initially encounter the image of the gates of eternity in *The Sacred Story*, the image leads us to feel that looking and imagining were the prerequisite senses, which give shape to its form. Perhaps this trick may conceal a truth. However, as we play more with this important piece of the riddle, we begin to see that it needs us to listen to the pattern of time. Therefore, the 'Gates of Eternity' are, on top of being a threshold and a cut of the order of time, a buried (an underworld)[15] cacophony of infinitesimal breakages in the rhythm/s of time.

Snead points out that the materialist episteme falls apart when we do away with dialectics, and its attendant teleological mutations such as dialogism (Snead 1981, 150). When we truly surrender to a non-teleological concept of time, and its different abstract manifestations (such as

[15] The underworld is an important zone of being in all traditions of African imagination. We can think of it through either Moten / Wynter/Mudimbe's "archeology", or black popular culture's "underground" movements, or Amos Tutuola's "Land of Deads", or ancient epistemes' "world of the ancestors". There is no end to what the underworld signifies and unravels in black traditions of thought and imagination.

rhythm), we move into a groundless (underworld) zone of theory making. However, it is difficult to let go of the ground, to lose the totality of one's bearings, which a certain group of one's forebears has laboriously gathered since the dusk of modernity. What do we see/hear of time when we decide to leap from the ground? Snead has already opened up an immaterial time, but he chooses to remain in the hold of real or structural/ mechanical time. Leaping from Snead's resting place, we must move deeper towards an irreal time, the time of nothingness. This concept leads us back to the first piece of the riddle: the problem of River Time. We temporarily end where we began.

In isiZulu etymology, as noted in the introduction (this begs for repetition!), the word for 'time' iskati mirrors, and finds deep resonance with the word 'umkati' which can be loosely translated to hyper-cosmos, wherein lies Nothing (a new unfolding to the repetition…). In Zulu, and other Nguni, cosmology, there are three dimensions of deep space. The first is *isibakaka*, the place for flying. The second is *izulu*, wherein lies the eternal cosmic possibilities. The third is *umkati*, wherein resides quantum time and Nothingness. The first two are hosts of reality and structural ontology. The last, however, signifies the absence of ontic bearings and the deceptions or illusions of reality. Time at its most quantum dimension resides and moves from *umkati*. In one of his other cosmogonies, *The Song of the Stars*, Mutwa tells of a frozen sleeping goddess floating in Nothingness as she dreams up all the different possible realities (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 1998, 63). This cosmogony opens up two further concepts of reality: the first is that of reality, as we know it or reality as we can imagine it is an illusion; the second is that the true ontic state is irreal, it rests on the nothingness of reality. It seems now that reality is an illusory function of irreality. Since infinitesimal time and the irreal zone of nothingness coincide, time itself is subject to sureality.

3.

The Riddle of Sur-reality in *The Song of the Stars*

"There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before
Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone, and
Undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted)!
It may be regarded as the Mother of all things."
Lao-Tzu, (**The Tao Te Ching** 2016, 222).

"There is a place
Where the dream is dreaming us,
We who are the shepherds of the stars."
Mazisi Kunene (*Place of Dreams* 1970, 85).

"Before yesterday
Dreams
Yesterday
Dreams
Today
Dreams
Tomorrow
Dreams
Dreams
Dreams
Dreams and Dreams."
Kimbwandende Kia-Bunseki Fu-Kiau, (**African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo** 1980, 152).

1. The Sleep-dreaming Goddess: Entering the Dream through the Infinite Passage

In the last chapter, I indicated that there is a trinity of quantum time in Mutwa's *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life*: River Time, the Ten Gateways of Eternity, and Infinity. I only managed to touch on the first two, hence I did not discuss the last of these. Like the other zones of quantum time, Infinity is a vague image. All we know of it is that it is a region that surpasses the

borders of the Ten Gates of Eternity, and it is uNkulunkulu's, the Great Spirit, dwelling place. After Ma completes her labours of inventing the universe of the Tenth Gate of Eternity, she calls on the Great Spirit to resolve some of her existential problems, such as the meaning of her existence and the irresolvable void of loneliness. uNkulunkulu answers all of Ma's questions by introducing her to the concepts of "duty" and "obedience". It is not the lesson that uNkulunkulu gives Ma that is the subject of my interest; it is what she sees in the midst of that lesson:

> "The Goddess rose and stood on the summit of Mount Taba-Zimbi –
> The eternal Iron Mountain.
> She stood erect, a pillar of incredible beauty
> Such as no mortal has ever or will ever see.
> Her golden glittering eyes pierced the dark and the starry sky
> And peered into the remote reaches of Infinity
> Where, far, oh so far away
> She could vaguely discern the blaze of Light,
> The formless, ageless, immortal uNkulunkulu,
> The Highest of the High" (Mutwa **Indaba, My Children** 1998, 10).

Unlike the other regions or zones of time, Infinity is enshrined with a darkness that marks its distinction. Where the River Time twists itself around Nothingness, and the Eternities envelop the mystery and an incredible emptiness of sight and perception, Infinity erupts from the element of darkness. Moreover, Infinity comes off as a spatialized temporal zone, rather than as a structure of time that is either quantum (River Time) or organized (the Ten Gates of Eternity). So how does the darkened element and the spatialized feature of Infinity unfold the image for us? We will have to look to another riddle-myth, and we will have to ask another question in order to

unfold the image of Infinity. Mutwa makes us privy to darkness in another riddle-myth. In fact, this riddle does not come in the form of a tale; it first comes in the form of an explanatory idea and then later comes in the form of a painting. Mutwa disperses the idea and the painting in different chapters of **Zulu Shaman: Dreams, Prophecies and Mysteries** (Mutwa **Zulu Shaman** 2003). The idea comes as a preface to a chapter about the myth of Kintu, the trickster ancestral god. The painting comes as a visual representation of an extraterrestrial myth of origins. We know that the picture and the idea are united, or they signify the same narrative, because in the lower, right region of the painting lies a sleeping female figure who is dreaming up the events of the myth. The idea, as previously cited, goes thus:

> "Since the inception of the human race on this world (or any other where man may have had his origin), people have always tended to form things into definite shapes. Of something like the universe, of such a shapeless vastness, a person living in a cave, a person wearing skins, cannot even remotely conceive. But take the idea and give it the shape of a dark, sleeping goddess with a body of ice, floating in the vastness of nothing, then you have got something that appeals to the depths of that person's mind. He or she is now able to see the universe in his or her mind's eye as a huge slumbering goddess who is busy dreaming of you and me and other things on this and on other worlds." (Mutwa 2003, 77).

The idea of nothingness appears once more in this mythic idea. However, nothingness has a different currency to the nothingness of quantum time. Here, nothingness is an element of space, than it is an element of time. Moreover, nothingness has subtle undertones of the darkness that rests in the spatial zones of Infinity. Both nothingness and darkness hold a sense of "vastness" or "remoteness" that can only be related to, or reminiscent of, an infinitude.

The puzzle of infinity has a longevity that surpasses the conception of many irresolvable problems. This puzzle exists in all regions of the histories of ideas. In the Arabic traditions of abstract knowledge, for example, infinity sits as a dubitable temporal concept that contradicts the very idea of time itself. The classical Arabic philosopher, al-Kindi (801 – 866) observes that to "reach any point in time, one must first pass through the intervening periods of time… (So) if the world has existed infinitely into the past, it must have gone through an infinite number of days, but traversing an infinite is presumably impossible. Hence, the world has not existed into the (infinite) past" (McGinnis *Creation and Eternity in Medieval Philosophy* 2016, 79). al-Kindi, like many classical and modern scholars, thinks of the reality of time through a chronological series of motion. Hence, he reasons that infinity, at least in its negative expression qua negative infinity, is a concept closely tied up to the regressive movement of time. A time that motions through negation, or a time that moves backwards. Augustine reiterates this pattern of thought by resolving that infinity is an impossible concept because all points of time – past, present and future – have a finitude. If, reasons Augustine, time emerged in the moment of creation, then time has no infinitude. The question and its resolution go thus: "If God creates at some moment in the finite past, then what was the divinity doing during the time before that moment?" (McGinnis 2016, 78). Augustine resolves that there was no celestial or divine labour before creation, for creation is the revolution of labour and existence, thus there must have been no time before creation as there was no other prior existence before creation (McGinnis 2016, 78). Mythology argues otherwise. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter, there are endless chronicles the world over of orders of labour and existence that precede accounts, ideas and stories of creation. *The Song of the Stars* wipes away the chance of creation, and solely privileges an image of reality built on the dreamscape. The dream has no beginning, no middle and no end.

It eradicates any possible conception of a fixed sense of chronology. If there is a "past", "present", and "future", the sequence from one point to the next has many dark spaces in between. More importantly, there is no finitude of any point, thus no end to or passing of points, because a point is susceptible to being stretched infinitely towards any series of possibilities (or impossibilities), thus making coherence a futile strategy of interpretation.

Let us look to a dreamer to help us elaborate this point. In Ben Okri's **The Famished Road** (Okri **The Famished Road** 2016, 8), Azaro remembers, "I was still very young when in a daze I saw Dad swallowed up by a hole in the road. Another time I saw Mum dangling from the branches of a blue tree. I was seven years old when I dreamt that my hands were covered with the yellow blood of a stranger. I had no idea whether these images belonged to this life, or to a previous one, or to one that was yet to come, or even if they were merely the host of images that invades the mind of all children." Azaro's series of dreams demonstrates that durational time is an inapt method of capturing reality. The dreamscape is clearly a collection of disjointed images. The dreamscape can randomly unite any two images in order to create an event. That is, an image does not necessarily have a relation with the image that follows it, accompanies it, opposed to it, shadowing it, or adjacent to it. Therefore, a durational scale cannot measure the time between one image and another; or better, a chronological pattern of interpretation is unable to make dreamtime comprehensible. The unity between images, however random it may be, is not without systematization. The dreamscape, it seems, is able to conjure an image, and then subdue it to an order of patterns that make a story out of the dream-incident. Thus, we retain images without durational time as a means of suture. We retain stories without chronological time as a means of coherence and comprehension. What remains in the absence of these tethering modes? Dispersed images. Incomprehensible stories. Otherwise known as the stuff of dreams.

Let us look to Mutwa's painting, 'The Firebird's Egg (A Creation Myth)', in order to elaborate this point:



The Firebird's Egg (A Creation Myth) by Credo Mutwa (Mutwa 2003, 127)

We see the Sleep-dreaming Goddess in the lower, right region of the painting. The painting itself is an incident within the complete story of *The Song of the Stars*. If one followed the pattern of the myth or the chronological sequence of the creation story narrated in the book, one would think that the picture is a mere representation of the portrayed scene of events. However, when one looks closer and notes the presence of the Sleep-dreaming Goddess in the picture as well as the breaking of the clouds that opens up a new, unknown world, one begins to see that the picture transcends the act of representation. The picture emerges from an order of artistry that surpasses representation, but one that suggests an intuitive order of imagination. Let us hold this thought for a few breaths. First, allow me to delineate the events of the mythic scene.

The entirety of the myth tells of the Red People's sojourning through an undisclosed planetary system in order to find a new planet to colonize (Mutwa 2003, 126). The Red People escaped the Red World due to an unceasing gender war between the occupants of that planet. The Red World was under the rule of a gratuitous matriarchal regime, which subdued the men of that race to infernal servitude, rape and cannibalism. A war ensued between the Red Women and their male subjects. A few of the parties from the opposing sides made peace and decided to abandon the planet and colonize a new world. They traveled in a "gigantic iron belly" that traversed different zones of deep space, and emerged in a new galaxy – one ruled by the mighty star, *Nalediyapiri*. There, they found a Water World populated by the Nommo. The Red People took refuge in this peaceful Water World, until a member of their race ate a Nommo. For this crime, the Nommo exiled the Red People to a different planet in a distant galaxy. The twin sons of the Nommo king, Wowane and Mpanku, transported the Red People to this new colony (Mutwa 2003, 127). A planet we now know as the planet Earth, which the Red People populated and thus became the first ancestors of the species we know today as human beings. (Mutwa 2003, 128).

Mutwa's '*The Firebird's Egg (A Creation Story)'* is a landscape picture that portrays a scene, which proceeds the landing of the Red People on the planet Earth. The eye first catches a glimpse of two humanoid creatures suspended in mid-air. One falls onto an erected rock, the other dives into the ocean on the far-left lower region of the picture. Above the descending creatures is a magnificent bird that seems to be pursuing the falling quasi-men. The scene seems to have a relation to a part in the story where the Firebird of the deep space (known in isiZulu as *iMpungulu*) pursues the Nommo twins in order to punish them for stealing one of her eggs. The twins used the egg to transport the Red People from the Water World to the Earth (Mutwa 2003, 128). So, when

> "Wowane saw (the Firebird's) approach and said to Mpanku, "My brother, you must get away; you must dive into the sea below. There you will be safe. And Mpanku dived down. But the bird caught Wowane and took him away. And it tied him to a great big stone, which is presented as a standing stone, and then slowly ripped his guts out, while he was tied to the stone. He tore out his liver, his guts out, while he was tied to the stone. He tore out his liver, his heart, and everything else, telling him that he would scream for many thousands of years, because he had robbed her of her egg. Even to this day, when a person who does something and is punished out of all proportion to the crime, we say that "He has stolen the egg of the Firebird."" (Mutwa 2003, 128).

A few breaths ago, I suggested that the picture moves beyond representation into artistic zones of imagination. This is to say that the picture does not merely reiterate the events of the story – however unified (the drama between the Nommo twins and the Firebird) or dispersed (the presence of the Sleep-dreaming Goddess and the world beyond the clouds) they are. The picture, rather, completely reimagines the structure of the myth. Mutwa does this by focalizing the image

rather the than story. Although a painting, especially one of the symbolic or historical type, is able to tell, reinterpret or contain a story (Hagan and Hagan **Bruegel the Elder** 1985, 78); a painting's primary mode of artistry is not the story, it is the image. There are conceptual fields that the image can open up, which the story cannot reach. First among the plethora of said fields is the suspension of durational time and motioning narrative. Earlier, I pointed out that by virtue of its nature, the dreamscape renders chronological time and narrative coherence useless. Time does not move in the dreamscape, as it does not move in the image. Where time is still in the image, the dreamscape suspends it to an infinitesimal level of existence. At this level, it can follow one or both of these channels: the stream of nothingness (leading us back to the riddle of quantum time); or the path of infinity (more on this, later). Due to the absence of motioning (or structural) time in the dreamscape, the narrative suspends unto stillness. It no longer moves from one image to the next, for example the myth moves from the image of the Red World to that of the Water World and then that of the Earth. The story, as we can see, motions from one collection of images to the next.

Toni Morrison remarks that a story is always uncovered through the archeology of images (Morrison *The Site of Memory* 1995, 92). The word she uses is "picture", by way of specificity. It becomes clear, therefore, that image is a category of creation, and 'picture' is just one of its types. Morrison's mention of "picture", however specific it is, signifies the image. The artist gathers the picture, according to Morrison, through sensory perception. She sees it, thus making the picture a sensory material. Sensory material has a more complicated mechanism than meaning. Where meaning comes from either external or internal sources, sensory material finds its vitality from both of these sources (Morrison 1995, 93). Through employing the sensory material, the artist enables herself to "journey to a site to see what remains were left behind and

to reconstruct the world that these remains imply" (Morrison 1995, 92). The artist employs the pictorial materials of the site in order to fashion a story. Therefore, the reality of the story rests on the picture. The story finds its motive, its coherence and its essence in the picture. The reality of the story finds its anchorage in a combination of pictorial forces: the first is the picture that rests at the a priori (hidden) basement of the story; the second is the collection of pictures, which drive the motion of the story. The picture functions as both the motivation and mechanical force of the reality of the story. When, as in Mutwa, there is a dispersion of story and picture: what is left of the reality of the narrative? This is the second riddle of reality in Mutwa's cosmogonies.

The first riddle of reality, the riddle of quantum time, has to do with the abstract dimensions of the myth. This riddle, however, has to do with the story itself. The riddle points more towards methods than it points to ideas. At least it seems. Let us look more closely at the riddle-question: it first indicates the dispersion of story and picture; and then goes onto suggest that the narrative has a reality. However, the most important part of the riddle-question is how it is suspicious of narrative reality, yet provokes us to look for the remnants of that reality after the untethering of picture and story. The question now is what shall we do? The riddle-question cannot be trusted for it will surely lead us to an irresolvable conclusion (as it is itself irresolvable). This path of no-resolutions will surely lead us to another gateway of anti-resolution. Do we, alternatively, circle ourselves back to the dream in order to uncover different obscurities?

Let us go back to the dream in order to recover the obscurities we have already encountered.

2. The Mind that Dreams The Sleep-dreaming Goddess: Entering the Dream through the Unconscious Passage

In the picture, The Sleep-dreaming Goddess rests in mid-air as she does in the mythic-idea. There are spiraling coils around her. Could these coils be other universes containing surrealities?

We cannot say for sure. This question may even be inappropriate. When we re-examine the mythic idea, we begin to see that it is not about cosmologies, but it is about ideas suspended upon other ideas. Let us once again reconsider Mutwa's words: "Of something like the universe, of such a shapeless vastness, a person living in a cave, a person wearing skins, cannot even remotely conceive. But take that idea and give it the shape of a dark, sleeping goddess with a body of ice, floating in the vastness of nothing, then you have got something that appeals to the depths of that person's mind" (Mutwa 2003, 77). This statement contains a number of critical ideas. Each idea lends itself to rich definitions.

The first is the idea of the universe. In Mutwa's pondering, the universe is an inconceivable idea at best, or an idea that has very remote conception at the least. The universe has two conceptual points, each standing at a polar end: the impossibility of conception and the remote or quantum possibility of conception. The possibility of the universe's conception stands at the point of the highest negation (negative infinity) on one end, and it hangs at the point of the lowest affirmation (a positive point closest to zero – hence quantum or "remote" to use Mutwa's word) at the other end. Before the 'universe' even becomes an idea, Mutwa suspends it to the sub-zero zone of conceptualization. We might give up at this point of imagination and wonderment because it seems impossible to think of an idea having life at zero or negative intervals of conceptualization/ conception. However, Mutwa alerts us that in this zone of inconceivability, which spans between negative infinity and quantum perception (remoteness), there exists shapelessness and vastness. How does the cave man wearing skins, who seems to be the pre-ancient Ancestor of the black traditions of figurative imagination, begin to conjure images immersed so thoroughly in a darkness of vision? Vastness has no luminescent image when summoned to the thinking regions of the mind. Imagine now, dear reader, vastness. Darkness

reigns over your mind in the attempt to conjure such an impossible image. Impossible because it is irrational to the conscious, thinking mind. Rationality tells us that vastness is not a thing, like space. It is an attribute of a thing, like space. How does one imagine something that is no-thing at all? But, merely an attribute, and may even be a principle, or a shadow, or worst (/best) of all a distortion, of a thing. How does one begin to imagine shapelessness? The very attribute that reaches its hand from the darkness of vision to the illuminated world of rational images, and seeks to sink the neat and clean image of a thing to the zone of murky darkness where all images fade. The conscious mind spirals into delirium.

It is at this point that the furthest "depths of the mind" take over. Here, reason holds no value. Clarity of images do not exist. Thus emerges the dreamscape. The dreamscape is a zone of imagination, which necessitates a principle of navigation that privileges the processes of unconscious scanning.

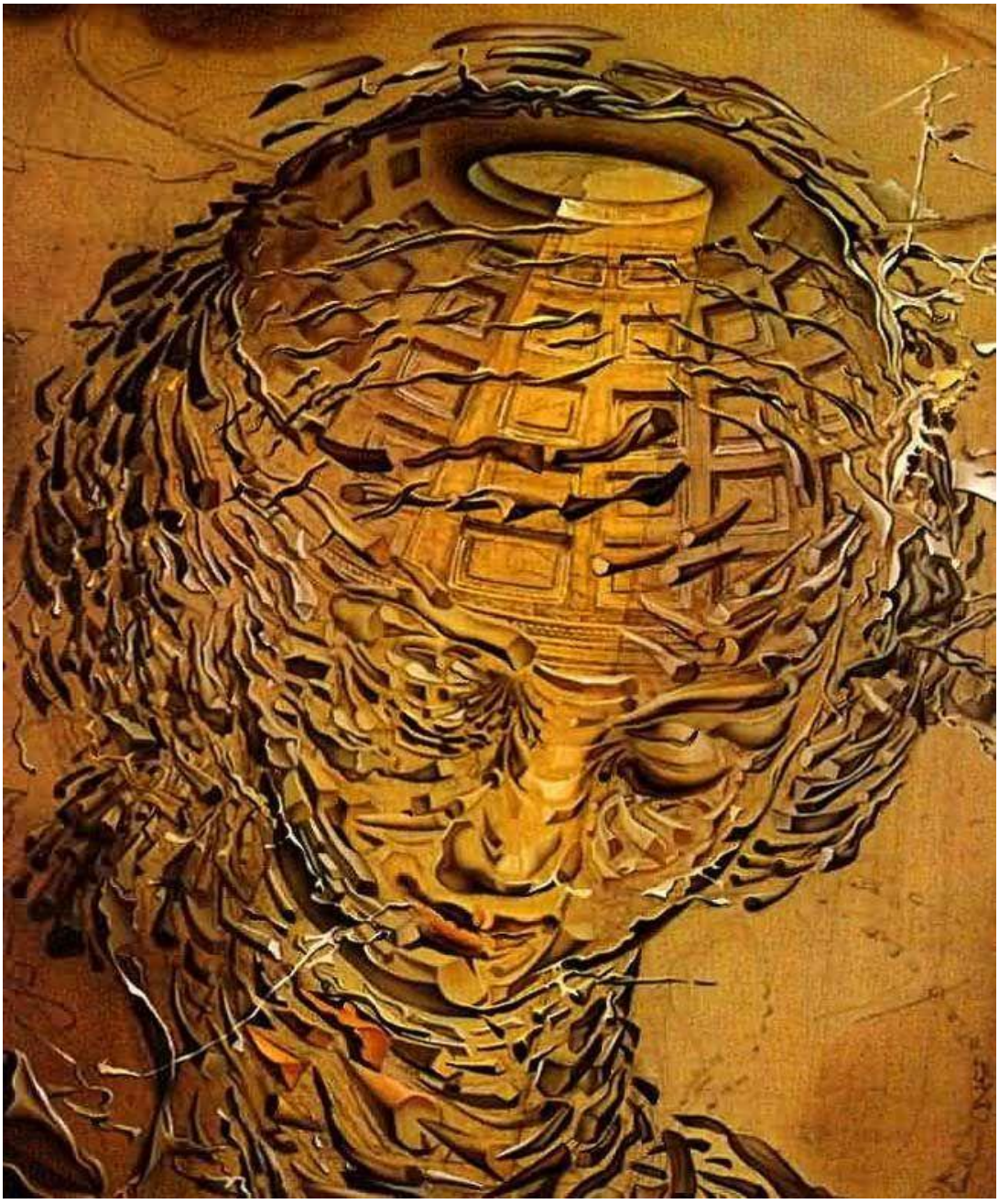
Anton Ehrenzweig argues that creative work "succeeds in coordinating the results of unconscious differentiation and conscious differentiation." (Ehrenzweig **The Hidden Order of Art** 1967, 4). Thus, the labour of creativity unravels the "hidden order in the unconscious." The hidden order in the unconscious contains what may seem to be impossible ideas, irrational images, and unreachable conceptions to the conscious mind. According to Ehrenzweig, there are two mental techniques of creating art. The first is conscious differentiation, which enables the artist to represent objects, and the detail of those objects or the elements that define the objects, as it appears in the physical world (Ehrenzweig 1967, 6). The second is unconscious differentiation, which takes more of an interest in representing hidden structures and patterns so far removed from the object, that they become imperceptible to the eye (Ehrenzweig 1967, 6). One may wonder: How is it possible for this technique to represent an imperceptible

phenomenon or ontic? Ehrenzweig's answer: in order to stay true to the imperceptible, one must represent it through imperceptible images (Ehrenzweig 1967, 6). Take the child's scribbles, for example. "A scribble," says Ehrenzweig, "can represent a great number of objects that would look very different to different spectators. However 'abstract' the infant's drawing may appear to the adult, to (the child) himself it is a correct rendering of a concrete, individual object. His syncretic vision allows him to disregard matching detail to detail" (Ehrenzweig 1967, 6).

The method of unconscious differentiation, therefore, disregards detail. Detail gives us access to clarity of vision and, more importantly, the distinction of an object. When it falls away, perception itself falls away. Thus, calling forward the reign of the chaotic unconscious mind over the logical, rational mind of consciousness. "Unconscious scanning," continues Ehrenzweig, "makes use of undifferentiated modes of vision that to normal awareness would seem chaotic. Hence comes the impression that the primary process (of creating art) produces chaotic phantasy material that has to be ordered and shaped by the ego's secondary process. On the contrary, the primary process is a precision instrument of creating creative scanning that is far superior to discursive reason and logic" (Ehrenzweig 1967, 4).

Unconscious differentiation is, therefore, the first process of creating art. The abstract artist decides to stay with this process and follows it into deeper unfathomable zones of imagination. Salvador Dali is such an artist. The surrealist painter notes, in his memoire, that "the irrational spurts constantly from our minds and the shock of reality, but we do not perceive it, for we are so deeply conditioned to recognize only good sense, reason, and acquired experience. Yet, miracle is ever present, and we possess all the necessary keys to live within the secret of the soul of the world. But we have forgotten the ways of the truth. We have eyes yet see not, ears yet hear not" (Dali **Maniac Eyeball** 1973, 18). According to Dali, then, just as the processes of the rational

forms of thinking dictate our artistic and analytical training, we must re-orientate our vision (our ways of interpreting and seeing the world) through the play of the irrational. By means of this play, Dali proclaims that he has "discovered the pathways of revelation and joy, the dazzle of happiness shown only to lucid eyes. My whole being participates in the great cosmic pulse. My reason becomes a mere instrument to decipher the nature of things and detect my delirium the better to appreciate it" (Dali 1973, 18). Dali portrays the coming unto the playfield of the irrational, or the state of being possessed by the processes of the unconscious, or the condition of being puzzled by the dreamscape, through his painting, 'Exploding Raphaelesque Head' (Neret **Dali** 1985, 74):



Salvador Dali *'Exploding Raphaelesque Head'* (Neret 1985, 74)

As the picture shows, the unconscious world of chaotic imperception opens up when materiality of flesh is unsutured – an unsuturing that is reminiscent of Wowane's disembowelment in *The Song of the Stars*. That it is chaotic, imperceptible, irrational, dark and vast does not mean that the unconscious world is empty. Dali exhibits a zone of the unconscious that has a citadel styled-

wall; floating cylindrical entities that have evolved from, or may still be, scattered flesh; light that travels through a hole in the roof of what could be a head - a deteriorating face whose shape is dying. The viewer who stares without pause or interruption at this picture is plunged deeper into the surreal passages of the imagination when she begins to see the picture beyond itself. In the midst of the stare, she notices that the picture assumes motion. The floating flesh entities spiral in an anti-clockwise motion. The motion is ceaseless and it is rapid. As they continue to spiral around the object that first seemed to be a face, they wipe away the shape of the face and begin to reveal the deception of shapes, and thus the deception of objects. Every detail of the image begins to disappear, until the ceaseless spiral of these obscure, untethered and dispersed objects consumes the entire picture. It is indeed a dream. Dali transcends the limits of perception; "More powerful than cyclotrons and cybernetic calculators, I can penetrate to the mysteries of the real in a moment… Mine the ecstasy! ... By reviving Spanish mysticism, I, Dali, shall use my work to demonstrate the unity of the universe, by showing the spirituality of all substance" (Neret 1985, 72).

Similar to the pre-ancient Ancestor who conceived of the Sleep-Dreaming Goddess in place of the vast, dark and inconceivable universe in Mutwa's mythic-idea, Dali also ruminates over the universe. Instead of a vastness, his universe has a "unity". Instead of a darkness, his universe has a "spirituality". Instead of inconceivability, his universe has "substance". Where the ancient Ancestor beautifies the universe with a mystical episteme, Dali's universe – following his Latin and classical Ancestors – is adorned by metaphysics. Whatever differences may occur between the epistemes (what we may otherwise call an aesthetics of the epistemological kind), I must admit that both occur in the dreamscape. A dreamscape Andre Breton, and many other artists after him, refer to as the surreal.

In his **Manifesto of Surrealism**, Andre Breton states, "surrealism rests on the belief in the highest reality of certain hitherto neglected forms of association; in the omnipotence of dreams; in the disinterested play of thought" (Breton **Manifesto of Surrealism** 1924, 10). Surrealism turns us away from the materialist or "physical mechanism and" then "substitute(s) itself for them in the solution of life's principle problems." Breton argues that the work of surrealism is more than unsettling literary and aesthetic standards; but rather it evokes meditation and wonderment of the veiled, and at times ineffable, regions of imperceptible reality (Breton 1924, 8). The surrealist imagination seeks to excavate, and possibly unveil, the "unspeakable reality" which is "concealed behind this forest of symbols" (Breton 1924, 8). In order to do this the surrealist writer or artist must "attempt to express the inexpressible…through the alchemy of language in order to reach" the dreamscape, or the 'dynamic reality' (Breton 1924, 10). Therefore, the grounding motivation of surrealism lies in its "impossible quest of (the) infinite expansion (or deconstruction) of reality" (Breton 1924, 12).

In her essay, '1943: Surrealism and Us', Suzanne Cesaire argues that surreality, as an ethic of creative-being-in-the-world, "lifts the spell of the impassable barrier between the inner world and the outer world" (Cesaire *1943: Surrealism and Us* 2009, 34). The surreal, for her, is not merely an ontological demarcation in the same way that an 'inner world' and an 'outer world' are. The surreal is more fundamentally an ethic, "a unique faculty" that "endlessly sustains a massive army of negations" (Cesaire 2009, 37). In the zone of the surreal, the barrier between the inner world of perception and the external world of events hangs on the gulf of negation. The refusal of the barrier enables a convergence of the dreamscape and the real-as-it-is-experienced, where these two points of existence become conceptually inseparable, or may even become conceptually null.

What, then, is a dream? Whatever its proportion, whether its nature is of a cosmic kind or it is of an epistemic and imaginative kind, the dream is an unreachable realm. I struggle to typify the dream: Is it a space - is it a temporal zone - is it a principle - is it an ethic - is it an endless series of obscurities? Is it a species of nothingness - is it a hidden system of imperceptible images and structures - is it the dark mirror of luminescent perceptions - is it the wish-fulfillment of the romantic subject - is it the play of the twisted and tormented soul against the rational mind - or is it an extension of infinity? Does the dream break the bonds of grammar? All this pondering confirms one irresolvable problem. If the dream implodes into an infinite amount of scattered images, does the riddle of reality, at its core, experience a combustion? Earlier on, we had escaped one surreal riddle (a riddle I phrased thus, "When, as in Mutwa, there is a dispersion of story and picture: what is left of the reality of the narrative?") for fear that it would bring us to a place without resolution. By starting over, that is by re-entering the dream from a different passageway; we have come to another riddle: a combusted reality that causes a spiraling into multidimensional channels of tricks, as we shall witness soon.

4.

The Riddle of Multidimensional Ontology in *Kintu*

"If by chance we come across those who are old
Who have seen into the heart of the night
We must not flee in terror of their secrets
But watch their eyes slowly reveal the chameleon."
Mazisi Kunene (*Encounter with the Ancestors* 1982, 37)

"I stayed between two inaccessible planets,
One dead in a chasm of centuries,
Peopled with past men and dinosaurs,
Breeding time with visions of death.
I saw the other in the tears of an afternoon
Young, tender, and struggling from the womb
Tormented by the titanic images of dawn
In the gulf of the night, of rising stars.
I stood on the third world,
Bitter, neither young nor old
Heaving and heaving like a volcano,
Multiplying with fire:
I was all things."
Mazisi Kunene (*Three Worlds* 1970, 78).

In the first epigraph, taken from the poem *Encounter with the Ancestors*, the poet-philosopher Mazisi Kunene probes the reader of black enigmatic ideas to never "flee in terror" from the "secrets" of black classical thought or thinkers, classified in the poem as "those who are old" (Kunene 1982, 37). Instead, Kunene instructs us to "watch their eyes slowly reveal the chameleon." The chameleon, in African poetic abstraction, symbolizes the presence of a truth that tricks or riddles. The reader, the one who looks into the eyes of the old ones (in our case, the

eyes of black classical texts), must be prepared to appreciate the riddled nature of the truths that are buried deep within those eyes. The riddle does not ask for resolve; it does not beg for synthesis. To move towards a resolve, to do the work of unmasking or unveiling, proves to be futile when one faces this kind of riddle because when grasped, it will change its hue – it will re-conceal itself with a new mask, a new veil. This kind of riddle, however, begs us to "create a new path of wisdom" whereupon "begins the story, the beginning of seeing" (Kunene 1982, 37). Kunene's poem is therefore an instruction and an epistemic method. In order to uncover the riddle of black truth, one must create "a new path". If the task of epistemology is to uncover or make more transparent the mysteries of existence (Hateb **Myth and Philosophy** 1990, 11), Kunene proposes the opposite. Kunene's episteme requires that we: firstly, understand and embrace the enigmatic elements and perhaps essences of thought; and in the light of such enigmas, create a theory (seeing, wisdom) of these mysteries.

Such mystery encases the Sleep-Dreaming Goddess. The mythic-idea of the Sleep-dreaming Goddess preludes the myth of *Kintu*. In the last chapter, we discussed how this mythic idea precedes the intergalactic myth and picture of *The Song of the Stars*. The hidden text of the surreal mythic-idea prepossess the worlds portrayed in the two myths. The structure of the texts contain a trick, it seems. When the reader reads either *Kintu* or *The Song of the Stars*, she is lead to believe, just by the act of reading, that the text contains a language awaiting decipherment. She continues to play a language-game with the text. The text speaks in codes, and she listens to decipher these codes. When both writer and reader engage in the puzzle of the text, it becomes clear that language is a game (Wittgenstein in Ehrenzweig **The Hidden Order of Art** 1969, 39). Language is a creative process of play, a field where all parties of the game play with signs, symbols, grammar, linguistic systems and taxonomies, which may foreclose, enclose, or re-

interpret various traditions of knowledge. In the game of language, we begin to see that knowledge itself is a puzzle that holds different passageways of interpretations. One must juggle these multiple passageways in order to get a glimpse of the truth. Even when one sees, faintly, the shadow and/or radiance of the truth, one begins to see that the shadow and/or radiance is itself a passageway of interpretation that leads to – or distracts the seeker from – another gateway of the truth. Such a game, says Ehrenzweig, requires one to use "images creatively (words are only a specific case of mental image making)" in order to formulate "our rules of the game as we go along. A clear view of their use will emerge only after the creative search is over" (Ehrenzweig 1969, 40). The cultural point of the game is that "we know how to play the language game; although – as in a real game – we cannot anticipate all the possible moves that are open according to the rules which we are still making up" (Ehrenzweig 1969, 42). Since we are still making up the rules as we play the game, it is starkly evident that the creative search never ends. The seeking for a truth/ a knowledge/ an answer/ a genesis/ a question is an infinitely perplexing process of searching, stretching, weaving patterns, engulfment, and wonderment.

If the game of language, contained in the text, is so tricky and is as vexing as it appears; what then of the game of silence enclosed in the hidden text that possesses the apparent text? For the game of silence to open itself up, for the silence to become a bit more audible, we must engage in a game of interpretation that enables a different way of reading the story and its suggestions of reality. That is, we must know the world differently, or, by way of Wilson Harris, we must re-imagine the world *as it is*. The world, as Lawrence J. Hateb argues, is a context of meaning (Hateb 1990, 16). That is, there are as many worlds as there are variations of meaning and interpretation. Since there are unceasing planes and passageways of interpretation in the language game, there are unceasing worlds. The question is: How do we develop a game of

reading the silent and hidden worlds (hidden texts) that parallels the games of reading the visible worlds (apparent texts)? Unlike other traditions of re-imagining, Harris' form of imagination is not an imperative that calls for a different world. It initiates us into different ways of seeing the world, as we know it/ the world as it is. He argues that beyond the visible text of the world(s), there lies an "invisible text" that encloses the ethical substance of the world (Harris **Selected Essays** 1999, 238). Harris reads the world as a text: a text that has two, amongst many, structuring layers. The first is material visibility; the second is an ante-material invisibility. Our modes of interpretation allow us entrance into the former. We must now figure out a way to enter the worlds of ante-material invisibility.

Harris argues that for one to be privy to these enigmatic elements of the text, whether it is the world as a text, or the story as a text, or any type of narrative textuality, one must embrace (rather than grasp) the inherent pre-possessions of the text. That is, one's senses must be open to "the subtle abysses that make strangeness into intimacy, intimacy into what is at first unrecognized until one perceives there a medium of extraordinary re-visionary momentum and truth" (Harris 1999, 240). The "extraordinary revisionary momentum," or rather, a push to re-theorize the text, is preceded by "a new way of reading reality", or an ante-modern act and art of imagination. Interpretation, for Harris, is code for imagination. In one way, we can think of the imagination as the a priori structure of interpretation: as the art that pre-possesses the art/act of reading. However, it is more fruitful, according to Harris, to think of imagination and interpretation as occurring concurrently. Re-reading the world, then, would mean that we simultaneously inhabit the quantum or figurative mode of imagination as much as we invest our labours of interpretation in the 'invisible' text/ pre-possessions of the text. For us to pass through the Gates of the invisible text, the silent passages of the celestial dreamscape, we must be

meticulous about both the arts of imagination and the acts of interpretation. Since the invisible text lies hidden within the visible text, we must journey into the internal world of the text. A journey that requires us to spiral into the very depths of the text's soul.

The spiral, according to Kiatezua Lubanzadio Luyaluka is the very architecture of the internal world (Luyaluka *The Spiral as the Basic Semiotic of the Kongo Religion, the Bukongo* 2017, 91). Bakongo cosmology is a system primarily populated by geometric symbols, shapes and patterns, which signify the tiers of knowledge and mystery in Bakongo epistemology (Fu-Kiau **African Cosmology of the Bantu Kongo** 1980, 17). The spiral, states Luyaluka, explains the origin of the temporal universe. Bakongo riddle-sages say that in order for one to unlock the secrets hidden at the centre of the genesis of the temporal universe, the student must unlock this adage: the creator "has prepared the fufu, and we men are the condiment" (Luyaluka 2017, 102). Luyaluka unlocks the adage thus, "The fufu is a paste prepared by kneading cassava dough in a pot of boiling water. While it is being mixed by a spatula, the paste descends and ascends by spiralling. The cosmological meaning of these two spiralling movements is that we men came down from heaven and are tripping back to the celestial plane through cycles of life" (Luyaluka 2017, 102). There are two points of focus in this incredibly illuminating analysis: the four-dimensional shape of the spiral; and the movement of men as dictated by the spiral. The ascending and descending nature of the spiral gives off the vision of its liveliness. By so contracting and expanding towards height and depth, the spiral breaks out of the classically geometrical three-dimensional fixation. To the naked eye, the spiral thus takes on a curved definition. This sense of curvature sets the spiral at a four-dimensional scale.

In quantum mechanics, the fourth dimension belongs to time (Kaku **Hyperspace** 1994, 46). Quantum physics believes that four dimensions make up space: three belong to space (length,

breadth, and width), while the last belongs to time. Kaku jests that the fourth dimension of quantum physics is more likely to host ghosts than any God of Creation. Ghosts, after all, are disembodied temporal forces that transcend various boundaries of serial and paradigmatic time (Kaku 1994, 17). That is, a ghost can move between the different phases of time; they can move in and out of circular patterns of time; they can leap from one quantum point of time to another. What happens to objects in this fourth dimension? This is to ask: What happens to the very body of men caught in the pattern of this curved spiral? According to Kaku, the fourth dimension transposes the object from one geometrical landscape to another. That is, it converts "a rigid left-handed object into a right-handed one" (Kaku 1994, 51). He continues to say, "(I)n higher dimensions, knots are easily unravelled and rings can be intertwined. This is because there is 'more room' in which to move ropes past each other and rings could be lifted off our universe, intertwined, and then returned to our (three dimensional) world. In fact, in the fourth dimension, knots can never remain tied. They can always be unravelled without cutting the rope. This feat is impossible in three dimensions, but trivial in the fourth. The third dimension, as it turns out, is the only dimension in which knots stay knotted" (Kaku 1994, 51). Objects do not only assume different positional points in the geometric scale, they begin to assume essentially different natures in the fourth dimension. What, then, happens to the very essence of *umuntu's* soul as he or she moves in the coils of the spiral? It begins the completion of the process of its creation (Luyaluka 2017, 103). The soul must journey inward, through the various dimensional gates of its inner-world. The focal way a soul can journey inward, and pursue its own metamorphosis, is through sliding down the various entwined coils of the dreamscape (Luyaluka 2017, 104).

The dreamscape patterns itself after, in some of its multiple degrees, the curved spiral. In the last chapter, we focused a great deal of our energies on just one dream the Sleep-dreaming

Goddess experiences. There are many other dreams of possible and impossible worlds contained within her dreamscape. The dreamscape, therefore, contains an infinite series of dreams. A dream may contain a world, or it may contain something that has a completely different conceptual make up from the concept of the 'world'. The more we meditate on these celestial dreams; it becomes apparent that each dream has its own intricate structural design. One such dream is *Kintu*. The dream designs the world in *Kintu* to resemble the infinite dimensional regression into the internal world. The dream, however, designs the world in *The Song of the Stars* in the form of a celestial landscape. The players in that dream-world move from one planet, one galactic system, and one cosmic hold to another. Therefore, we have - as a basic map of this dream-world - three tiers of the cosmic landscape. Each tier seems to be external to the other. In *Kintu*, however, the tiers or dimensions of the world are all internal to one another. The world in *Kintu* moves in a spiralling pattern of infinite regression(s).

The first internal regression occurs at the celestial level. The internal regions of the Earth experience a death-striking erosion after the Sun, her husband, refuses to radiate his light unto her. This refusal is a trick. A trick of punishment. The Sun and the Earth, together with their daughter, the Moon, and other celestial beings exist in a cosmic void (Mutwa 2003, 80). The void is the first ontic dimension in this myth. In the void, this solar family has its own homestead among the expansive community of the stars. Games of deception and cunning govern the solar homestead. The prime deceiver is the Moon.

> "The Moon was a cunning little girl in that she often stole her father's light in order to illuminate her mother's house, especially when she went inside that house, or when she plaited her mother's green hair. This stealing of the light of the Sun by the moon often caused a lot of quarrelling between the Sun and the Earth in their house, because, like all

> young married couples, the Sun and the Earth had their bright moments as well as their dark moments. (T)their bright moments when they made love passionately, causing the blue skies to smile and the clouds to dance, and their dark moments when they quarrelled and fought and screamed at each other and storm clouds overspread the Earth; and we are told that very often the Moon was the cause of all this domestic squabbling." (Mutwa 2003, 78 – 79).

The first play of deception is that of light. The Moon steals away some of her father's light "to illuminate her mother's house", as we are told. Her deception is primarily an act of mockery. Without his light, the Sun loses his raison de'etre. Moreover, if the Sun loses his light, and more severely the essence of that light, the Moon becomes the only celestial body that radiates light to the Earth. The play of light between the Moon and the Sun is an interesting twist on the oedipal deception. In the latter, the son unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother (Sophocles *Oedipus the King* 2006, 124 – 166). The prime deceiver in the oedipal game is not Oedipus himself; he does not kill his father in order to win the patriarchal stool of power. He wins the priced Name of the Father (patronymic power) due to the cunning hand of the Fates. The Fates set out the field of destiny in such a manner that no man or god can escape its ensnaring patterns of doom and despair. However, the lunar play for light is not an issue of destiny. It is not even a matter of conquest and dominion. It is merely a game of mockery for its own sake. The daughter seeks to unseat her father, so that she may gain her mother's favour and eternally mock her fading father. The Moon, therefore, is more than an envious offspring in pursuit of her father's glory. She is a trickster. "Tricks," argues Roger Hewitt, "like jokes, proceed by a kind of semantic reversal: what was thought to be one state suddenly becomes another unexpected state, although still possessing most of the features of the original start. It is as though a different set of relationships were suddenly imposed upon a familiar form of social intercourse is suddenly

converted into an unfamiliar form" when the trickster performs one of her anti-communal tricks (Hewitt **Structure, Meaning and Ritual** 1986, 178).

The Sun, however, has his own bag of tricks against his daughter and his wife. Upon hearing foul words shared between his daughter and wife about him, the Sun decides to play the game of light through his daughter's modalities (Mutwa 2003, 78). He steals away his own light, through the means of concealment, in order to humble his wife and mock his daughter. He decides, "I am going to teach this wife of mine a lesson, and I'm also going to teach our fat mischief of a daughter a lesson. I'm going to show those two that without my light they are nothing. I'm going to show them that they need me even more than I need them. The Sun can shine in the dark void amongst the stars without the Earth to dance around him, but can the Earth live without the light of the Sun?" The Sun conceals his light, and leaves his wife to suffer the cold. If we recall, the River Time, in *The Sacred Story of the Tree Of Life*, ushered in the Spirit of Cold to destroy his offspring, the Living Spark for devouring its mother, Nothingness. From the spoils of this battle, Ninavhanu-Ma created herself. Thus, cold is both an instrument of destruction and an element of invention in Mutwa's cosmogonies.

In the *Kintu* dream world, cold is a force of paralysis. It stiffens the Earth, and paralyses her internal world: "The forests were dark, brittle and frozen. The plains were covered under a thick blanket of rock-hard snow. The streams and the rivers no longer flowed, being held captive. Under great snarling boulders of merciless ice, the waves of the ocean were frozen and the sand of the coasts was hard, cold, and cruel with ice" (Mutwa 2003, 81). The internal world of the Earth is the second dimension of this dream-text/ dream-world. In the dark recesses of this dimension - a remote cave hidden in the furthest regions of the Earth's world - exists Kintu and Mamaravi, the first Ancestors of the Bantu, who shiver in "cold misery". Mpungushe, the jackal,

who brings the promise of light, comes to their aid. Kintu informs Mpungushe that he once met a wandering god who told him "that the gods in heaven in their great village of light keep a certain thing they call "Fire"; and this thing can warm you and also cause light to shine inside my cave" (Mutwa 2003, 84). Fire is a genre of light. It is a genre not afforded to humans; it is itself a toy in the language game used by the gods for their own amusement. The gods keep this modality of light in their village, and often "play with it, and they hurl it around from cloud to cloud during a thunderstorm, for it is the same thing that we human beings call lightning" (Mutwa 2003, 84). Mpungushe volunteers to steal this modality/genre of light from the village of the gods, for the price of Mamaravi's sex.

Mpungushe must pass through four dimensions of "nameless terror" in order to reach the fifth dimension of glory, the Village of the Gods. These dimensions of "nameless terror" are firstly, "The Valley of Nameless Evil" populated by shadows, shapes that live in the darkness, and gibbering and screaming apparitions. The second dimension is the Crystal Mountain of solitude that torments the climber with unbearable temporal illusions. The third dimension is the Gulf of Oblivion, which contains everything cast into the regions of anti-memory. The last dimension, and worse of all, is the Valley of Eternal Night that shapeshifts into Valley of Eternal Danger, wherein lies layers upon layers of deathly tricks.

As Mpungushe moves from one dimension to the next, I wonder what kinds of invisible or quantum channels he employs. The only explanation Mutwa affords us is a semi-colon and a blank space. Observe, for example, the semi-colon and the blank space between the "Valley of Nameless Evil" and the Crystal Mountain of Solitude: "Jackal went through this valley at great speed, among the many apparitions that gibbered and screamed at him; and he went up a tall mountain whose slopes were of wind-blown crystal" (Mutwa 2003, 80). It is very clear to a

student of the figurative imagination that everything signals information. Silence, blank spaces, periods, pauses, parenthesis, black spaces, demonic grounds (Wynter in McKittrick **Demonic Grounds** 2001, 15), sub-zero fields of flesh (Spillers *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe* 1987, 87), polyphonic whispers, ghostly gulfs. These may not belong to the word or logos of the text, but they are taxonomies that are as (even not more) imperative as the word in textual space-time. The coupling of the semi-colon and the blank space point to an image of the dimensional passageway, which may resemble Ndebele window-passage in architecture, or the quantum gate of light in Dagara liminal mysticism.



A photograph of a Ndebele window-passage by Margaret Courtney-Clarke. She captions it thus, “Back wall of the Mkwebani home, Pieterskraal, kwaNdebele. Johanna, seen through the window, has used black soil from a nearby river and slaked lime to decorate the clay and cow-dung walls” (Courtney-Clarke **Ndebele: The Art of an African Tribe** 2002, 162).

The Dagarain mystic, Malidome Some had to travel through the quantum gate of light, or what he calls “the light hole”, as part of his initiation into manhood (Some **Of Water and Spirit** 1994,

241). He describes his entrance into the gate as a rapid descent. “My body was weightless. I could barely feel it. I could see the circle of light rushing closer and closer, as if it were not me going toward it but the gate coming toward me. Soon it filled my entire field of vision. About a meter away, I jumped high above the gateway and dived in.” In the world beyond the gate, he loses every aspect of physicality, from the weight of the body to the miniscule scream. He finds himself in a world of luminescence, which transforms itself into “countless colours, a symphony of luminescent wires, all in motion and breathing life.” The wires contain a “bundle of countless fibres clustered together to form an environment of light waves that reminded me of the Milky Way. The Milky Way, however, looks commonplace by comparison. It is one colour, hazy and boring. The light strands I held in my hand were a live bundle in which tiny cells of changing colours moved slowly upward within what looked like a thin tube of translucent glass. Each cell twinkled. They were alive – and so was the whole bundle. Each cell lived as a whole within a whole” (Some 1994, 242). In this world of unceasing light, Some’s body transforms into an “invisible presence.”

Some’s experience as an invisible presence in the world of unceasing light enables us to unlock certain puzzles in Mpungushe’s journey. From early on in the myth, we sense a cunning play of light between the Moon and the Sun. As we spiral down to inner dimensions of the myth, we sense another degree of the play of light. This time, the play involves multiple characters. The first play is between the wandering god and Kintu, in the distant regions of Kintu’s memory. The god gives Kintu a visual map of the dimensions, to guide him to the Village of the Gods. This map, however, is encoded with traps hidden in each point of direction. Mpungushe immediately decodes the traps when Kintu discloses the contents of his memory. “I think the god was lying a trap for you, oh man. But listen, give me the directions, and I the jackal will easily find my way

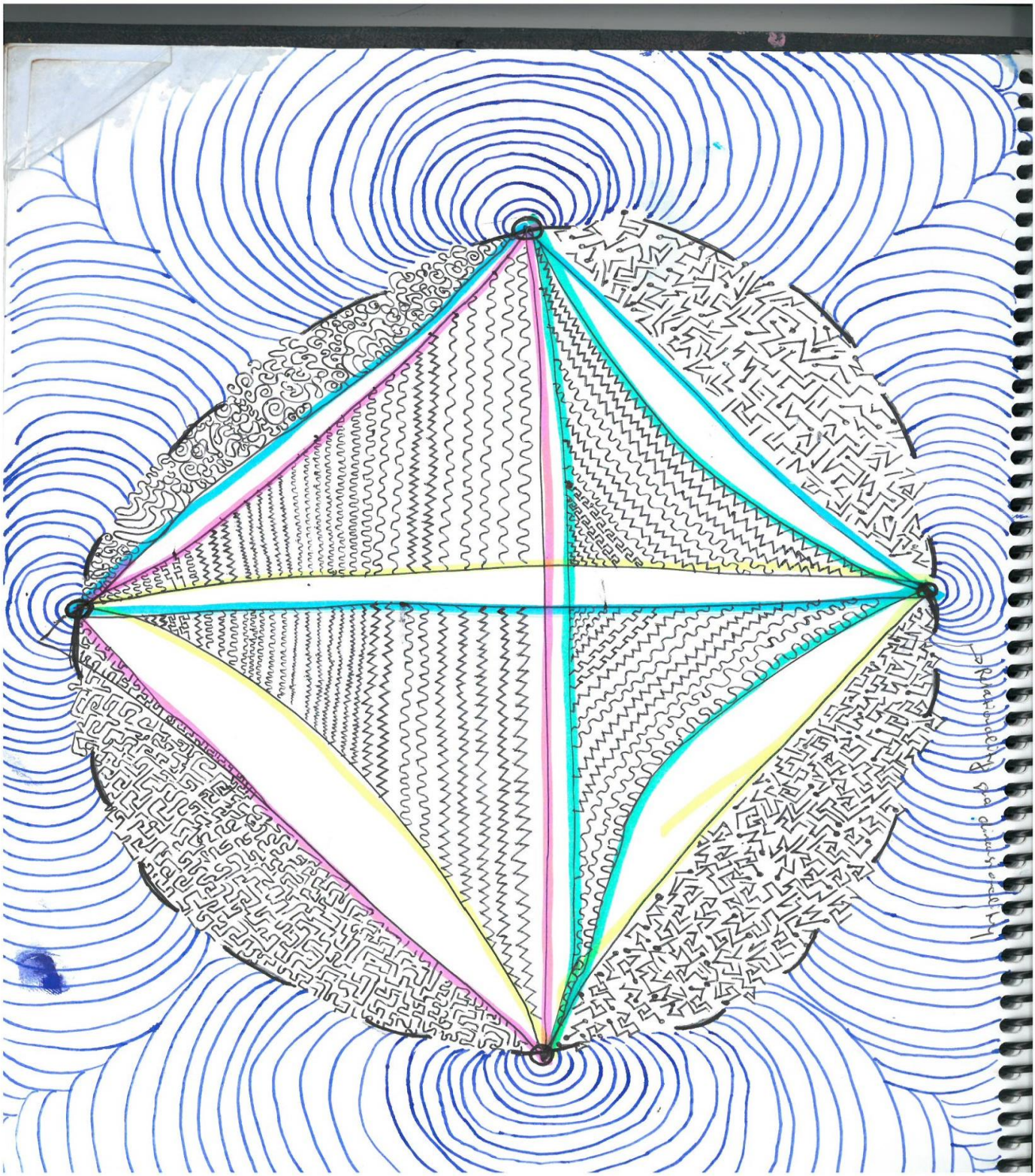
into the great village. Nobody will notice me, but they could certainly notice a gigantic human being like yourself" (Mutwa 2003, 84). The very fact of his body makes Kintu susceptible to the intrinsic traps of the journey. He must lose his body, he must overcome the rigidity of his physicality, he must quieten the enormity of his presence – that is, he must transform into an "invisible presence" – for him to spiral successfully into the Village of the Gods. Noticing Kintu's inability to stretch the bounds of his physicality, Mpungushe engages Kintu to a second degree of the cunning play for light. By virtue of winning the labour to journey, we are deceived into believing that Mpungushe wins this play over Kintu, and therefore wins the cartographic game between Kintu and the wandering god. In this game of multiple deceptions, a player can overcome others players in a play he is not involved in, simply by manipulating one or both of the player's mnemonic structures. Through manipulating – by way of interpretation – Kintu's memory of the god, Mpungushe takes hold of the visual map, thereby winning the cartographic game. Mpungushe goes onto engage in other cunning plays for the light, listed as: the horrific play with the gruesome ante-physical creatures of the Valley of Nameless Evil; the tempting game of oblivion with the darkened shades of memory in the Gulfs of Oblivion:the play of endless time with himself in the Crystal Mountain of Solitude: and the shapeshifting play of vanities with Dragon, a messenger of the Gods, at the top of the Crystal Mountain. Mpungushe tricks the dragon to deliver him to the Village of the Gods with two prime hypnotic deceptions of vanity: music from the flute; and compliments of beauty. Mpungushe also wins the hypnotic play of envy with the metallic guardian of the Village Gates of the divine abode. It is in the triumph of this final play, that he wins the game of light. He finally steals the firesticks of the Gods, and speedily makes his way back home.

The way back home is a point of interest because it reminds us of the pattern of the inward journey. If, as we supposed, Mpungushe assumes a downward motion through the four-dimensional spiral in order to access gateways to the five ontic dimensions; he must surely spiral upward in order to access the second dimension of the dreamscape, a place he calls home, and claim Mamaravi's (the first maternal Ancestor of aBantu) sex as his reward for winning the game. Let us pause for a second to cast our focus, once more, on these dimensions. Before us, we have three different orders of multidimensionality. The two dimensions of the dreamscape (the celestial bodies and the earthly internality), the five ontic dimensions of supra-natural forces, and the four dimensions of the spiral. Each order marks a matrix that contains itself; that is, each matrix maintains its own independent existence. However, when we stack up the orders on top of or beside each other, we begin to see a clearly defined architecture of the imagination.

This, or any other, architecture of the imagination finds its prepossession in intuitive clues spread across "the mysterious fauna and flora of legend, in which philosophies of time gesticulate" (Harris 1981, 175). These "intuitive dimensionalities and clues" of precolonial/ ante-conquest epistemes are encoded or written deep "within the roots of nature as from the ancestral dead, from rivers, from rocks, from birds and other species, from the rhythm of landscapes, skyscapes" (Harris 1981, 175). The artisan of the imagination, therefore, looks to these intuitive clues in order to resurrect orders of knowledge, which were exiled to regions of incomprehension in the wake of modernity. The myth "a despised concept in an age of realism" is the most pivotal of all these intuitive clues, for it encloses yet deeper intuitive clues and it contains endless architectural zones of the imagination.

The myth not only preceded metaphysics, metaphysics meets its crisis in certain passage points of the myth. What is the crisis of metaphysics, we may wonder. It may go something like this:

What are the intricacies of any system of intricacy? Metaphysics is such a system, because it seeks to excavate the integral points of the physical world/ the various texts of matter. Super-string theorists, metaphysicians in essence but mathematicians by training, assert that multidimensional vibrating strings constitute the very essential points of matter and space-time. However, there is no end, no essence, to the nature of matter and space-time. According to this theory, "matter is nothing but the harmonies erected by the vibrating string… there are an infinite number of forms of matter that can be constructed out of vibrating strings" (Kaku 1994, 153). Therefore, quantum strings erect the very dimensions from which they vibrate. The theory accounts for eleven verified dimensions of space-time: ten dimensions of space, and one dimension of time. The question that haunts every evolution of metaphysics is: What is the riddle that horrifically taunts the implacable centre of this particular inquiry of intricacy? This is the third riddle of reality. The third riddle of reality is not solely directed to metaphysics as a method of truth, but it is pointed to the infinite worlds (contexts of meaning) that are unceasingly engaged in the games of knowledge.



A sketch of the three orders of dimensions in *Kintu*: the four dimensions of the spiral vibrating outward; the two dimensions of the dreamscape (the first, celestial dimension represented vertically; the second, terrestrial dimension represented horizontally); the five (or more) ontic dimensions of play. Drawn by me. This is a very rough sketch of the architecture of Mutwa's imagination, as portrayed in *Kintu*.

I must say that metaphysics is not the only "inquiry into intricacy." Many others exist. The dreamscape, mysticism, and polyphonic systems of sound are examples of this genre of question. There is, however, a very serious, yet small, distinction between the dreamscape and metaphysics. Where metaphysics desperately seeks for resolution, an answer, a silencing of all questions… a theory of everything! The dreamscape, as an architectural zone of the imagination, has no such ambition. A numerical scale does not circumscribe the dimensions of the dreamscape, and the myth by extension. It is very tempting, for the sake of coherence, to tally the orders of multidimensionality in *Kintu*, and reveal that they add up to eleven dimensional points (the seven dimensions of multidimensional deception/ tricks + the four dimensions of the spiral). This is the same number as the temporal dimensional points found in *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life* (the Ten Gates of Eternity + One vastness of Infinity). However, these orders are remarkably, and essentially, different. The spiral will lose its essence, in fact it will transform into something completely different, if joined with the dreamscape or the ontic passages. These orders of multidimensionality can keep their integrity and maintain a harmonious relation without suffering under the suppression of a heterogeneous law. Each order of multidimensionality reveals itself as a modality of truth, engaged in its own games of knowledge (and other mysteries). The cunning play of light does not end at any dimensional scale. Mpungushe ultimately loses the firesticks to Kintu. However, Kintu may lose the firesticks to the wandering god, because his own debt of knowledge was not paid and his mnemonic guilt cannot be resolved…

Epilogue: The Mystery of Reality

> "I am the last one. I am the last one, Now, you are left with the cattle of my father[-in-law], you are left with the horses of my father, you are left with the goats of my father, the sheep of my father, the fowl of my father, the hogs of my father, you are left with the old men of my father, you are left with the dogs of my father. You must travel with those because now you are all alone. You alone have hands which to work. Those things do not know how to work. I say to you then, you must go with these things to my mother's parents' place."
>
> Nongenile Masithathu Zenani (**The World and the Word** 1992, 159).

"Idlozi liyaphilisa."
Buhlebendalo Mda *Bayangihleka*

"The tree grows well and strong, Oh Children mine,
That hath its roots deep in the native earth;
So honour always thy ancestral line
And traditions of thy land of birth."
Credo Mutwa**, (Indaba My Children** 1998, 4).

How does one conclude a work of this nature? Conventionally, conclusions bind up all the imperative resolutions that the author has reached in a given text. This particular Master's Report presents an interesting problem because of its design – one that is made of irresolvable questions, riddles and paradigmatic tricks, which lead us back to our initial departure: mysticism. Perhaps the work calls for us to meditate upon it rather than conclude it.

In the introduction, I suggested that the riddles of reality in Credo Mutwa's cosmogonies instruct us to weave our intelligence from the grounds of mysticism rather that the obvious logics of metaphysics. There were two astounding struggles in this: the first was that mysticism, by way of its essence, impedes us from finding settlement and therefore constructing cases, arguments and a thesis of any nature. Consequently, the second problem with this route was the fact that it

seemed to almost contradict the form of the Report, or rather the demand of the Report for the researcher to settle at some locus within the vast arena of knowledge, and thereafter make a case.

Here we must think of these two paths: mysticism, and what I am inclined to call logic. Logic, a method of truth making, is used to develop an argument and cement a considerably high degree of its certainty. If logic has a single ambition, it is to gather, take hold of and claim the truth. If it cannot find a uniform and supreme truth, it will settle for multiple truths. Logic will then split itself up and then morph itself into multiple disciplines, voices and discourses in order to gather and possess these illusive truths. Mysticism may also be preoccupied with the notion of the truth. Instead of a claim on the truth, mysticism is interested in the intricate puzzles that make up the various architectures of the said truth. The mystical route has the ability to veil and unveil the most imperative pillars of knowledge. This is indeed a path of revealing, at first glance, the tricks of the truth(s). The truth is no longer an ideal to be reached and claimed by a seeker; rather, it transforms into an element with a very puzzling character. Who can say what the methods and the ways of mysticism are? However, the student of mystery must learn to exist well with the puzzled and puzzling nature of many well-constructed, highly durable and fashioned truths. Truths, which have had a longevity that surpass any measure of comprehension.

This work has been interested in excavating masqueraded truths, which are both hidden and banal. I sought to understand the internal processes, which manufacture such constructions of truths – primarily the truth of reality. One can say that truth is constructed; there is no mistake in this statement. However, one must consider that like many things that are subject to the law and order of creation, these truths come alive and claim their stake in the arena of existence. Reality has such a constitution. As we have seen in the four chapters that constitute the body of this report, reality is not only a shapeshifting truth; it is also a multifaceted and finely masqueraded

question. My intention with this report was to excavate Mutwa's encounter with and interpretation of this living concept. The anticipation in any journey of excavation is to find artefacts and other forms of material that will certainly lead one to one's destination. If one has a vanity to fulfill, one interprets the journey as a treasure, a win, a triumph over some illusive enemy, or gaining an exceptional station in the society of thinkers. However, the journey has its own mind. Minds contain secrets, puzzles, silences, confusions and tricks. The journey swallows the seeker and encases her in some peripheral zone of its own mind. Nongenile Masithathu Zenani describes the internal landscape of the journey's mind (or its soul, or spirit) in this way:

> "On one side, it was fire only. On the other, it was rock. On yet another side, it was a forest. He saw no head, no feet. As the thing came toward him, he could feel its warmth. Nor was it disjointed in the middle – it was one object altogether. It was composed of various elements. When it was a short distance from him, it was hot to him; he seemed to be burning. But this thing was also cold; there seemed to be frost, and he felt as if he were freezing. On one side, it was a cliff; it tended to be continually falling, and he felt that he would be crushed" (Zenani 1992, 164).

The seeker must enter the mazes weaved into its heat, and she must be careful to not be consumed by the cannibals who live within its frost. She must ensure that she does not find a home in the entanglements of its Abysses. She must make a story out of herself in order to understand the enigmatic patterns of the riddle-myth. Finally, she must see that the prize was never some treasure rooted in vanity (however productive vanity could be) – the sole possession of a truth, be it grand or miniscule. The prize has always been the engulfment. The opportunity and privilege of being swallowed by the journey is the life-giving prize: the entrance into the

soul-consuming gates of the journey, the horrific experience of growing, of coming into life and going unto wisdom. That is the victory.

After all is said and done, after one has experienced the bone-twisting torture of entering gates of ancient mysticism. After one has been entangled into the negative zones of quantum time. Drowning in the deep and dark waters of River Time. After one has been imprisoned by a dream and spiraling down the numberless dimensions of deceptive existence. All of this has been the victory. The experience of being consumed by Credo Mutwa's expansive imagination and trying to play games of language, comprehension and concealment with it was the treasure.

The reader of this report should not make the mistake of reading it as a display of fanaticism. At some level, it is indeed excavation; at another, it is a journey of designing a sort of knowledge of the ineffable. Primarily, however, this report displays what it means to read.[16]

We must continue to read, for there is no end to the infinite art/play of question making and the construction of wonder.

[16] Period.

Bibliography

Introduction: The Riddle of Reality in Credo Mutwa's Cosmogonies

Adler, Mortimer and William Gorman. *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1982.

Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

Bujo, Benezet. *Foundations of an African Ethic*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2013.

Cavendish, Richard. *Mythology*. New York: Rizzoli, 1980.

Cesaire, Suzanne. "1943: Surrealism & Us." (trans), Keith Walker. *The Great Camouflage*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2009. 34 - 39.

Chinkwita, Mary. *The Usefulness of Dreams: An African Perspective*. London: Janus Publishing Company, 1993.

Corey, J. (Director). (1974). *Space if the Place* [Motion Picture].

Fotenrose, Joseph. *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origin*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of Carlifonia Press, 1959.

Fu-Kiau, Kimbwandende Kia Banseki. *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo*. Toronto: Athelia Henrieth Press, 1980.

Glissant, Edouard. *Poetics of Relation*. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1997.

Harris, Wilson. *Explorations*. Denmark: Dangaroo Press, 1981.

Kaku, Michio. *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps, and the Tenth Dimension*. New York; London: Doubleday, 1994.

Mudimbe, V.Y. *Parables and Fables: Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Central Africa*. London: The University of Wisconsis, 1991.

Mutwa, Credo. *Indaba, My Children*. London; Edinburgh: Canongate, 1998.

—. *Zulu Shaman*. Rochester: Destiny Books, 1996.

Obiechina, E.N. "Amos Tutuola and the Oral Tradition." *Presence Africaine* (1968): 85 - 106.

Ricoeur, Paul. "The Metaphoric Process of Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling ." *Critical Inquiry* (1978): 143 - 159.

Some, Malidome. *Of Water and Spirit*. New York: Penguin Group, 1994.

Sun Ra Speaks - Berkley Lecture. Perf. Sun Ra. 1971. Youtube.

Teffo, Lebisa J. and A.P. Roux. "Metaphysical Thinking in Africa." Coetzee, P.H. and A.P Roux. *The African Philosophy Reader*. New York; London: Routledge, 2003. 192 - 258.

Walcott, Derek. *Selected Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Wynter, Sylvia and Katherine McKittrick. "Unparalled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations." (editor), Katherine McKittrick. *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2015. 9 - 89.

Chapter 1: Games of Being and Knowledge

Adler, Mortimer and William Gorman. *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*. London; Chicago: William Benton, 1952.

Descartes, Rene. *Key Philosophical Writings*. London: Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 1997.

Good News Bible. Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1977.

Green, Roger L. *Tales of Ancient Egypt*. London: Puffin Classics, 1967.

Gutting, Gary. *Michel Foucault*. 22 May 2018. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Harris, Wilson. *Explorations*. Denmark: Dangaroo Press, 1981.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. London: Blackwell, 1962.

Knowles, Solange. "Time (is)." *When I Get Home*. cond. Sampha Sisay. By Solange Knowles. New York, 2017. Album.

Marriot, David. "Inventions of Existence: Sylvia Wynter, Frantz Fanon, Sociogeny, and "the Damned" ." *CR: The New Centennial Review* (2011): 45 - 89.

Mda, Buhlebendalo. "Nyamazane." *Chosi*. By Buhlebendalo Mda. Johannesburg, 2020. Album.

Matson, Wallace I. *A New History of Philosophy: Ancient and Medieval*. San Diego; New York: HBJ, 1987.

Ohupona, Jacob K. "The Study of Yoruba Religious Tradition in Historical Perspective." *Numen* (2003): 240 - 273.

Scott, David. "Re-Enchantment of Hamnism: An Interview with Sylvia Wynter." *Small Axe* (2000): 119 - 207.

Sun Ra Speaks - Berkley Lecture. Perf. Sun Ra. 1971. Youtube.

Sweeney, John F. "The Egyptian Book of the Dead, Nuclear Physics and the Substratum." (1990): 1 - 46.

Wynter, Sylvia and Katherine McKittrick. "Unparalled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations." (editor), Katherine McKittrick. *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2015. 9 - 89.

Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/ Power/ Truth/ Freedom." *CR: The New Centennial Review* (2003): 257 - 337.

Chapter 2: The Riddle of Quantum in *The Sacred Story of the Tree of Life*

Works Cited

Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. New York: Chartwell Books, 2016.

Cicero. *Nature of the Gods*. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1911.

Dictionary, The Online. *The Online Dictionary*. n.d. 22 May 2019.

Deloughrey, Elizabeth. "Heavy Waters: Waste and Atlantic Modernity." *The Modern Language Association of America* (2010): 703-711.

Einstein, Albert. "The Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies." (1905): 1 - 24.

Fanon, Franz. *Black Skins, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press, 2008.

Fotenrose, Joseph. *Python: A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origin*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of Carlifonia Press, 1959.

Greene, Brian. *The Hidden Reality*. New York : Alfred A. Knof, 2011.

Harris, Wilson. *Explorations*. Denmark: Dangaroo Press, 1981.

—. *Selected Essays*. London; New York: Routledge, 1999.

Hudson, Hud. *The Metaphysics of Hyperspace*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Kunene, Mazizi. *Zulu Poems*. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1970.

Knowles, Solange. "Things I Imagines." *When I Get Home*. By Solange Knowles. New York, 2017. Album.

Mhlahlo, Ayabulela. "Honours Long Paper: The Ethic(s) of Creation in Credo Mutwa's 'Indaba My Children'." (2018).

Mohulatsi, Mapule. *Black Aesthetics and the Deep Ocean*. 2019.

Morrison, Toni. "The Site of Memory." Zinsser, William. *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir,*. New York; Boston: Houghton Miffin, 1995. 83 - 102.

Moten, Fred. *In the Break*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Mudimbe, V.Y. *Parables and Fables: Exegesis, Textuality, and Politics in Central Africa*. London: The University of Wisconsis, 1991.

Mutwa, Credo. *Indaba, My Children*. London; Edinburgh: Canongate, 1998.

Ricouer, Paul. "Narrative Time." *Social Inquiry* (1980): 169-190.

Snead, James A. "On Repetition in Black Culture." *Black American Literature Forum* (1981): 146 - 154.

Some, Malidome. *Of Water and Spirit*. New York: Penguin Group, 1994.

Space is the Place. Dir. John Coney. Perf. Sun Ra and the Arkestra. 1974.

Spillers, Hortense. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* (1987): 64-81.

Tutuola, Amos. *The Palm-wine Drinkard*. London: Faber and Faber, 1952.

Walcott, Derek. *Selected Poems*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

Chapter 3: The Riddle of Surreality in *The Song of the Stars*

Breton, Andre. *Manifesto of Surrealism*. 1984.

Cesaire, Suzanne. "1943: Surrealism & Us." (trans), Keith Walker. *The Great Camouflage*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2009. 34 - 39.

Dali, Salvador. *Maniac Eyeball*. New York: Elektron Books, 1973.

Ehrenzweig, Anton. *The Hidden Order of Art*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.

Fu-Kiau, Kimbwandende Kia Banseki. *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo*. Toronto: Athelia Henrieth Press, 1980.

Hagen, Rose-Marie and Rainer Hagen. *Bruegel the Elder: Peasants, Fools, and Demons*. London: Taschen, 1985.

Kunene, Mazisi. *Zulu Poems*. New York: African Publishing Corporation, 1970.

McGinnis, Jon. "Creation and Eternity in Medieval Philosophy." Dyke, Heather and Adrian Bardon. *A Companion to the Philosophy of Time*. New York: Wiley Blackwell, 2016. 73 - 86.

Morrison, Toni. "The Site of Memory." e.d., William Zinsser. *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft ofMemoir, 2d ed*. Boston; New York: : Houghton Mifflin, 1995. 83-102.

Mutwa, Credo. *Zulu Shaman: Dreams, Prophecies, and Mysteries*. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books, 2003.

Neret, Gilles. *Dali*. New York: Taschen, 1985.

Okri, Ben. *The Famished Road*. London: Penguin Random House, 2016.

Tzu, Lao. "The Tao Te Ching." Mondschein, Ken. *The Art of War and Other Classics of Eastern Philosophy*. San Diego: Canterbury Classics, 2016. 2013 - 236.

Chapter 4: The Riddle of Multidimensionality in *Kintu*

Harris, Wilson. *Explorations*. Denmark: Dangaroo Press, 1981.

—. *Selected Essays*. London; New York: Routledge, 1999.

Ehrenzweig, Anton. *The Hidden Order of Art*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.

Fu-Kiau, Kimbwandende Kia Banseki. *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo*. Toronto: Athelia Henrieth Press, 1980.

Hatab, Lawrence J. *Myth and Philosophy: A Contest of Truths*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1990.

Hewitt, Roger. *Structure, Meaning and Ritual in the Narratives of the Southern San*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 1986.

Kaku, Michio. *Hyperspace: A Scientific Odyssey Through Parallel Universes, Time Warps, and the Tenth Dimension*. New York; London: Doubleday, 1994.

Kunene, Mazisi. *Zulu Poems*. New York: African Publishing Corporation, 1970.

Luyaluka, Kiatezua Lubanzadio. "The Spiral as the Basic Semiotic of the Kongo Religion, the Bukongo." *Journal of Black Studies* (2017): 91 - 112.

McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. London; Minesotta: Minnesota Press, 2003.

Some, Malidome. *Of Water and Spirit*. New York: Penguin Group, 1994.

Sophocles. "Oedipus the King." Gassner, John. *Greek Drama*. New York: Bantam Classics, 2006. 124 - 166.

Wessels, Michael. *Bushman Letters: Interpreting |Xam Narrative*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2010.

Epilogue: The Mystery of Reality

Mda, Buhlebendalo. "Bayangihleka." *Chosi*. By Buhlebendalo Mda. Johannesburg, 2020. Album.

Zenani, Nongenile Masithathu. *The World and the Word*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.