CHAPTER SIX: FINDING GOD

_In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God._

_Voss_ and _Captain Michales_ are journeys with the numinous: God an integral character, evolving, emerging as the novels progress, through the eyes and actions of the other protagonists. Living the narratives is a process of uncovering the Word. In their sum experience, moving through the repetitions of every day to the grandiose and rarefied, with gradual clarity divine and mortal reveal themselves – and their ultimate interdependence.

Both Voss and Captain Michales construe their divinity in terms of self-sufficiency. Captain Michales’ vested in manhood: his masculinity compromised in the need of another. Voss demonstrating his impervious dominance. Not merely superlative among men, but superior: immortal, invulnerable, omniscient. Both begin their journeys on the premiss of sanctified greatness: the Explorer and the Captain.

Both _Voss_ and _Captain Michales_ take their subjects through the unexpected, demonstrating the lie in such elevated self-perception. Mortal, weak and ignorant,

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1 John 1.1
2 In this, they may be read as reworkings of Bunyan’s (1960 [1672]) _Pilgrim’s Progress_: more contemporary Christians learning the mysteries of this world, and into the next.
3 Echoing Lety Russell’s (1993:115) conception that ‘salvation is a story and not an idea’.
4 Enacting the words of David Hart (1993:141): ‘God and spiritual truths are discovered nowhere outside the living and dying of our individual lives.’
5 s 16 p10, s 48 p42, s 50-51 p44-45, s 505 p439, s 314: _delvni attest, delqel attest, delqel ei touj anqwpoj_ (… did not speak, did not laugh, despised men and women. p274 my alterations)
6 P23-24, 75: ‘He was indifferent to other men. … All that was external to himself he mistrusted … he had never allowed himself the luxury of other people’s strength, preferring the illusion of his own.’
7 This is summed up during Voss’s third dream of Laura P287: “I am One”: showing intimate identification with Judeo-Christian monotheism, without having yet understood the meaning of the Christian Trinity. He is the Holy One of Israel; the LORD (Isaiah 43.3), the Tetragrammaton: _YHWH_ (the I AM, from the verb to be: _hayah_; see Exodus 3.14-15); ‘God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all’ (Ephesians 4.6); _The One_, ‘the Unique, who is forever One and has never and will never have another alongside Him’ (al-Nihaayah 1/35, Ibn al-Atheer), _Al-Ahad_: one of the ninety-nine names of Allah; Sàd 38.65: ‘There is no God save Allah, the One, the Absolute.’
8 P389: “I will not die.” s 536: _Egwmai h(Krth)_! (I am Crete. p468)
9 P17: ‘Such beautiful women were in no way necessary to him’. s 464: _h(Krth akon)_! (‘Crete still needs you.” “I no longer need her.” p401 my alterations)
10 P6: “The map? … I will first make it.” Captain Michales’ disdain for education, for example: _s 13-17 p7-11, s 297_ (not in translation): _Barda apogrammata_ (beware of letters): there is nothing that he needs to learn.
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their sanctity contained within their common humanity; passage through the novels demands they face this truth.

LIVING AND DYING

These are novels steeped in community.\textsuperscript{11} Characters range across the breadth of inclusion, but all – without exception – live in society.\textsuperscript{12} Even Jackie, the one character for whom solitary life is a genuine possibility\textsuperscript{13}, maintains close contact with his people.\textsuperscript{14}

Social living is not just a matter of physical necessity.\textsuperscript{15} It is the means for pleasure and relaxation.\textsuperscript{16} It is the site for uncovering one’s own thoughts, feelings and needs\textsuperscript{17}, and reinforces one’s personal worth\textsuperscript{18}. Individuals find their identity within community, as relationships are created and reinforced.\textsuperscript{19} Marriage, legitimacy, and

\textsuperscript{11} This is emphasised through consideration of the way that those on the peripheries are still wholly contained within their communities, for example: Charilaos $s$ 109-110 p101, oif oukaropoulej (the Hags) $s$ 24-26 p18-20, Topp P33-34 P463, Willie Pringle P68-71 P474. And in the intricate social fabric of the leper community Meskniá/(Meskiniá) $s$ 56 (not in translation), $s$ 95 p87-88, $s$ 193 (not in translation). This also reinforces the place of these novels within the Western canon: community lying at the heart of literature and philosophy since its inception, see Nussbaum 1986.

\textsuperscript{12} We see this even with Captain Michales’ grandmother, who lived her last twenty years in a cave, but maintained daily contact with one of her granddaughters. Her failing to make her morning social contact is all the indication needed to know she has died $s$ 16 p10.

\textsuperscript{13} With the skills to feed himself from the land P203-204 P258 P446 and (unlike Judd who yearns for his own fat paddocks P367, the big breasts of his wife P368) the mental disposition to find sufficient companionship with the spirits of the land – and within his own shifting and troubled mind P448.

\textsuperscript{14} Illustrated too in the language of his death P455: persuaded to melt at last into the accommodation earth, leaving behind his smile – that fundamental of interpersonal communication, (see, for example: Ekman 1984, Spitz et al. 1973).

\textsuperscript{15} Although the benefits of being part of a group, in terms of productiveness, security and protection, are obvious. Society enables, for example: Ali Aga to be fed $s$ 84-85 p76-77; Mercy to survive P239-241; white men to annex faraway lands P32; the Turks to occupy Crete and the Cretans to envisage liberation, $s$ 345, 344: kai'na pe souse kafwtsakis meroi, kai'palina'shkwqumo, na\ canarxisei tolpalena kaitouqrho h(Krhth ... Katebaionsta xwhata o(geroi, a'hebaionpal ia polla xwhata, canakainourgwmeroi, a'han te eheai h(Krhth. (And if we fall, overwhelmed, again we will rise up, and Crete will begin again to struggle and to mourn ... The old go under the earth and rise again out of the earth, made new. Crete is immortal. p303 my alterations)

\textsuperscript{16} For example: Sydney women’s companionable pastimes P167, and Una McAllister’s dissatisfied loneliness P437; Turkish men in their coffee houses $s$ 158 p149; Penelope seeking company for her spring picnic $s$ 64-66 p55-57; Voss singing with Dugald and Jackie P202-203.

\textsuperscript{17} For example: Polyxigis’ graveyard feast $s$ 202-206 (not in translation); Laura’s desperate searching for a ‘similar mind’ P12; Voss and Palfreyman mutually unmasking each other P279-282.

\textsuperscript{18} For excellent discussion of the way our social relationships define our internal identity see Midgley 2000. This is not, however, always necessarily accurate or edifying. For example: Captain Michales’ feeling dominant among his cellar feast guests, see Chapter Four: Man v Woman, note 144; Voss P202: ‘happiest with his loyal subjects’.

\textsuperscript{19} For discussion of the universal importance of kinship structures see, for example, Bohannon and Middleton 1968.
affinity are public concerns. Associations are maintained for their social value, beyond personal regard, and the trappings of appropriate intimacy scrupulously preserved.

Social living is intrinsic to human nature. Mastering interpersonal negotiation is a vital part of early development. Western spirituality has its roots in social interaction, strengthened through Judeo-Christian traditions, reaching its pinnacle in the Christian collective godhead, the Trinity. God as an indivisible, interdependent, tripartite oneness is a model for harmonious society: individual identity retained, within the functioning whole; the Word is We.

Human community is realised at a range of levels, from tiny local groupings to concepts of a global human family. Implications are similarly variform, depending upon their span of inclusiveness. Cretan identity, for example, defines a continuum

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20 See, for example: community involvement in Vangelio’s marrying Tityros sec. 66 p57, 147-152 p137-143, 211-215 p186-190, 244-245 p217-218; public approval for the marriage of Belle and Tom P335-350 P352-353; Jackie’s acceptance into the new tribe signified in his being given one of their women P401; Mercy’s social status dependent on her adopted mother P328, but the baby bringing scandal upon Laura P319 P466; Dugald’s having to justify his right to consider the unfamiliar Aboriginal group his people P235; the ostracising of Noëmi sec. 448 p385, 449 p387, Marcelle sec. 62 p53, 123 p113, and Voss P29: ‘He was uncouth’.

21 For example: Una Pringle and Laura P62-63: ‘the girls kissed most affectionately, although Una Pringle had always been of the opinion that Laura was a stick, worse still, possessed of brains, and in consequence not to be trusted.’, and Belle P64: ‘Una Pringle was one of those girls for whom she did not care, while forced by circumstance to know.’, and Mrs Bonner P329: “She is our friend … And it is by being our friend that I have got to know her.”; the Palethorpes’ secret disdain for the Bonners P373-376 P382; Kosmas’ sister Maria’s pathology evident in her refusal to embrace her sister-in-law sec. 450-451 p388, 458 p395.

22 For example: Belle’s letter-writing P168; and Penelope’s keeping private her dissatisfaction with Demetrios sec. 273 p241.

23 A discursive constant from Plato (Sayers 1999: 18) to Maurice Godelier (Carrithers 1992: 1). In the words of John Donne (1987: Meditation XVII): No man is an island.

24 See, for example, Piaget 1965:400: ‘The individual, left to himself, remains egocentric. … The individual begins by understanding and feeling everything through the medium of himself. … It is only through contact with the judgements of others that this anomie will gradually yield.’. There are, of course, circularities with such claims: presupposing the human as intrinsically social, successful personal development is construed in terms of the individual’s ability to function socially.

25 For example, Euripides’ Helen (Way 1912: 512-513): θεός γὰρ καὶ τὸ γιγνώσκειν φίλους. God moves in recognition of friends. (Paraphrase: ‘to meet again is a god’.)

26 Judaism was constructed within the identity of a chosen people, Deuteronomy 7.6: ‘For you are a people holy to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.’ The Islam self is a collective self (Rosen 2002), the Ummah, realised in the continual body of prayer around the world (Raban 2003). Christianity is founded in communal gathering, Matthew 18.20: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”


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of Us and Them\textsuperscript{29}, appropriated variously, from Captain Michales’ narrow elitism\textsuperscript{30} to Katsirmas’ comprehension of human universals\textsuperscript{31}. Differences in practical application, however, do not diminish the underlying communal constant; most evident at the limits of living: birth and death.

Mercy’s birth exposes the stratified nature of Sydney society, in the awful truth about the emancipist servant.\textsuperscript{32} As a woman attached to the Bonners’ household, Rose is their responsibility. Thus the father is dismissed and arrangements debated for the delivery and beyond; but not once is Rose herself consulted.\textsuperscript{33} As a member of the serving class, she is denied all autonomy; nor, after a lifetime’s experience of her station, does she expect any.\textsuperscript{34} When Laura suggests that the child be born at their home, the Bonner’s are scandalised\textsuperscript{35}, even though it is only a few days until the baby’s due and they have no alternative suggestions. By their own standards the options are sparse\textsuperscript{36}, but this does not override their distress at such breach of social niceties.\textsuperscript{37}

The fact that the birth does take place in their home, at their expense and against their personal preferences, highlights also the value placed by Sydney society on

\textsuperscript{28} Adopted, for example, by St Paul in his discussion of the body made of many, necessarily divers, members 1 Corinthians 12.12-26.

\textsuperscript{29} See Chapter Three: Man v Nature, pages 64-67.

\textsuperscript{30} For Captain Michales “Them” comprises all things not Cretan: (Turks \textsuperscript{27} p21, \textsuperscript{42-43} p36-37, Jews \textsuperscript{13} p7, Europe \textsuperscript{15} p9, \textsuperscript{304} p265, Greece \textsuperscript{464} p401), as well as education \textsuperscript{17} p11 \textsuperscript{49} p43, effeminacy \textsuperscript{18} p11-12, gossip \textsuperscript{22} p16, coquettes \textsuperscript{75} p66-67 and physical disability \textsuperscript{96} p88 – in fact, anything that is other to himself. The insecurity impelling such restrictive definitions of self and other are encapsulated in his fear of his daughter’s blue eyes \textsuperscript{46}: \textsuperscript{sa\nu\mathfrak{nu}o\varepsilon\mathrm{u}θ\kappa\mathrm{t}ο\lambda\mathrm{i}\kappa\mathrm{a}u\tau\nu} (as if his blood were defiled \textsuperscript{p40}). It is particularly ironic that his strongest emotional affinities are with Nuri Bey and Eminé; and that his deepest animosity is directed at Polyxigis, a man who meets all of his professed standards.

\textsuperscript{31} \textsuperscript{s497}: \textsuperscript{of \nu\nu\pi\zeta\ou\nu\{\i\}\nu\{\i\} \textsuperscript{oi} \nu\varepsilon\mathrm{m}\nu\varepsilon\mathrm{m} \tau\ou\pi\nu\{\i\} (we all smell good and stink in the same way p430-431) Such conception of elementally common human experience – across race, culture, geography, time – includes, by implication, human emotional experience; a popular idea, expressed for example in Jung’s (1969, 1964, 1959) universal archetypes and supported through research such as Eibl-Eibesfeldt’s (1971) into facial expressions as emotional indicators. It is not, however, an idea universally accepted; see, for example: Stearns and Stearns 1985, Huntington and Metcalf 1979. Karen Armstrong (2000:xii-xv) also points out fundamental differences between the Ancient world and ours now in the West in terms of spiritual and historical process, which may also suggest changes over time in emotional perception.

\textsuperscript{32} P56

\textsuperscript{33} P58 P170-171 P236-241 Mrs Pringle is given more say in what happens to Rose than the woman herself P62 P236-237.

\textsuperscript{34} P242: ‘ the maid followed, trustingly’.

\textsuperscript{35} P239: “In the best room! … I cannot believe that you have been so thoughtless.”

\textsuperscript{36} Mr Bonner P241: “I do not see how we can help but allow this misguided wretch to give birth to her child under our roof, unless we break the precepts that our religious faith teaches us.”
communal care. *Misguided wretch* she may be, but she is still a fellow human being and her wellbeing and that of her baby are their concern; and the fundamentals of social compassion outweigh those of respectability. Such comparative weight underscores appreciation of the individual’s dependence upon society and society’s dependence upon all its constituent members.

Mercy’s birth marks a personal turning point for Laura: consummating her marriage with Voss, bringing her into genuine intimacy with another through the converging of body and soul. From a *prig, repelled*, the mistress who *could not begin to like her maid*, Laura moves, through the pregnancy, to warmth and tenderness, and to accepting Rose’s confidence. These are momentous steps, driven by the will to reparation: to break through the aloofness of her privilege and make something of value of herself. Befriending Rose confronts her fear of somatic realities, experiencing vicariously the pains and pleasure of the whole birthing process, and undermines her deification of rationality, in her wonder at the miraculous emerging of a brand new soul. It also crosses the barriers of class, recognising in Rose’s illegitimate child the same humanity as in herself.

The climactic moment for Laura is not, however, the birth, but her responding to instinctive human need, clutching Rose and their developing child in joy at the promise of her husband’s love. An irretactable personal moment, terrifying to both

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37 P244-245: “‘On the good carpet!’ wailed Mrs Bonner in her distant parlour … reading a sermon … offering a prayer, for the poor sufferer, which signified: herself.”
38 P241 The ideal, of course, is when these two demands are equally matched, and equally met in ‘an arrangement combining the practical with the humane’. Nor does the requirement to treat Rose humanely necessitate emotional attachment; consider Mr Bonner’s frank discussion of passing the baby on to “some honest woman” induced by “a small consideration” and lamenting that “the unhappy mother will be more difficult to dispose of”.
39 P58 P57 P82: “‘You must not hurt yourself,’ she said ridiculously.” P82-83
40 P81: ‘However, nothing important is easy.’
41 P80-81: ‘She wanted very badly to make amends for the sins of others … and resolved to exercise that will in accepting the first stages of self-humiliation.’
42 P131, P58: ‘It is the bodies of these servants … Persistent touch was terrifying to her.’
43 P243, P246: ‘Once she had felt the child kick inside her, and she bit her lip for the certainty, the shape her love had taken. … the supreme agony of joy was twisted, twisting, twisting. … Laura Trevelyan bit the inside of her cheek, as the child came away from her body.’
44 P171: ‘The body, she was finally convinced, must sense the only true solution.’
45 P246: ‘It is moving, we are moving, we are saved … All superficial sounds were swallowed up in her own songs.’
46 P240: “It is my life, your life, anybody’s life.”
47 P175: ‘Then the girl, who in the past had barely suffered her maid to touch her, on account of a physical aversion such contact invariably caused, suddenly reached out and put her arms round the waist of the swelling woman, and buried her face in the apron, in the sleeping child, to express what emotion it was difficult to tell.’
in its *unorthodoxy*\(^{48}\), this intimate gesture represents also Laura’s embracing the soul’s desire for connection: the human drive to share life’s significant moments.\(^{49}\)

The same desire exhibits itself at the death of Séfakas. At the end of a long and full life, having acquitted himself manfully: worked well, fought hard for freedom, shown strength and tenderness, experienced joy and suffering, and left behind sufficient descendants to outwit death\(^{50}\); the old man finds himself searching for meaning. For the first time ever he needs to know: *Where do we come from? Where are we going?*\(^{51}\)

Prepared for death, Séfakas has made his confession and communion, farewelled his family, even been measured for his coffin.\(^{52}\) But he’s unable to let himself die until he has found answers to these life’s fundamentals. The place he looks to for answers is in the company of men; specifically three men, contemporaries and brothers-at-arms\(^{53}\): Captain Mándakas the collector of ears\(^{54}\), Katsirmas the pirate\(^{55}\) and the

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\(^{48}\) But one of which they would later *both be glad* P176.  
\(^{49}\) Laura’s choice of Rose as the person with whom to share this nakedness acknowledges the intimacy they already share, created through the maid’s devotion: waiting up for her, brushing her hair, waking her, bringing her treats P56 P57 P128 P130 – devotion Laura had previously reviled, in fear of its binding consequences; and also Rose’s insight P81 P172: the bonds between them are substantial, if one will see beyond the blinkered superficiality of class. The momentous consequences of this encounter are evident even to Una Pringle, driving her to hate Laura passionately for uncovering secrets which she will never have the courage to master P176.  
\(^{50}\) Séfakas has also – after a lifetime’s despising letters – learned from his grandson to write the words ‘Freedom or Death’ (‘\(\text{Eleuteri/a h} \ \text{Qanatoj}\)’ and painted them throughout the village, as the last contribution he can make to the cause P423 (not in translation), marvelling at his own actions and life’s unpredictability P461 P398.  
\(^{51}\) \(\text{a)po\ e}x\text{to/maste,} \ \text{pa=}\text{me}\);  
\(^{52}\) P489 P423 P483 P417, P487-488 P420-422 P484 P418  
\(^{53}\) P489: ‘\(\text{Adefia, qunaste th ka} \ \text{e} \ \text{e} \ \text{pana} \ \text{tash,} \ \text{pou} \ \text{se} \ \text{o} \ \text{stana} \ \text{oi} \ \text{ka} \ \text{e} \ \text{pana} \ \text{t} \ \text{e} \ \text{na} \ \text{a} \ \text{e} \ \text{ph} \ \text{na} \ \text{a} \ \text{m} \ \text{e} \ \text{n} \ \text{a} \ \text{se} \ \text{u} \ \text{nax} \ \text{ka} \ \text{i} \ \text{d} \ \text{e} \ \text{na} \ \text{m} \ \text{kouj} \ \text{ka} \ \text{i} \ \text{f} \ \text{il} \ \text{ou} \ \text{na} \ \text{stan} \ \text{giati} \ \text{phgai} \ \text{na} \ \text{na} \ \text{a} \ \text{e} \ \text{to} \ \text{Qanatoj}; \ \text{Su} \ \text{na} \ \text{c} \ \text{t} \ \text{nai} \ \text{kait} \ \text{t} \ \text{ou} \ \text{th}, \ \text{ka} \ \text{t} \ \text{w} \ \text{ap} \ \text{oth} \ \text{le} \ \text{n} \ \text{a} \ \text{ia} \ \text{to} \ \text{ger} \ \text{e} \ \text{Sh} \ \text{aka}!\) (Brothers, do you still remember how, at every rising, we captains gathered under an oak-tree or in some monastery, and took oaths and kissed one another, because we were going out to meet death? Such a gathering is this, now, under old Séfakas’ lemon-tree! P423)  
\(^{54}\) \(\text{e} \ \text{eto} \ \text{et} \ \text{h} \ \text{th} \ \text{g} \ \text{u} \ \text{a} \ \text{e} \ \text{ha} \ \text{oi} \ \text{e} \ \text{ji} \ \text{e} \ \text{e} \ \text{a} \ \text{e} \ \text{pana} \ \text{t} \ \text{a} \ \text{se} \ \text{e} \ \text{th} \ \text{=} \ \text{Kr} \ \text{t} \ \text{h} \ \text{t} \ \text{j} \) (Here in this jar are all the Cretan risings. P428 my alterations)  
\(^{55}\) P496-498 P430-432: a lifetime on the seas taught him that all races are equally ripe pickings for the pillager. P498 (not in translation): \(\text{Qerio} \ \text{e} \ \text{ka} \ \text{e} \ \text{a} \ \text{e} \ \text{a} \ \text{a} \ \text{h} \ \text{a} \ \text{ai} \ \text{n} \ \text{a} \ \text{a} \ \text{a} \ \text{n} \ \text{a}(\text{God made me a wild beast, so I behaved like a wild beast. He made me a wolf and I ate lambs.})  

schoolmaster whose ultimate words are music. The answers he receives are suitably complicated. The palikari finds his meaning in the struggle, moving Crete from slavery to freedom, the pirate in living to the fullness of his appetites and strength, and the schoolmaster in learning the language of music. The meaning garnered by Sefakas lies in the very gathering: in the sharing of their stories, their concerns, their multiple truths. It is the music of community that carries Sefakas into Paradise.

The significance of this event is further strengthened through the old man’s first response to his impending death:

_He didn’t speak, he didn’t smile, he made no conversation with his sons._
...
_He no longer needed anything or anybody. Latterly words had started drying up inside him. If any secret anxiety still gnawed at him, he could not speak of it with anyone else. Only with God._

In finding voice, expressing his last anxieties, within this company, Sefakas divinifies human relationship: God found in our communing.

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56 odaš kaloj s.499-501 p.433-435: having spent his life in talk, the schoolmaster now speaks through the lyre, taking his audience on a dream-flight, through war and springtime and love, into the beloved voice of God; then serenades Sefakas into Paradise.

57 s.495: Skla/boi gennhqia kai pol enoumes's o h aj thizwhna/ghi houme le euterio. Ki elsi monaka mporoume, ehej=oi (Krhtiko/na/ghi houme le euterioi: skotwhonta). (As slaves we were born, and have fought all our lives to become free. And we Cretans can only become free through killing. p.429)

58 s.498: ‘Apo/pou=exone, twtaj=apoltowma, kapetan Sfaka! Pousame, twtaj=stolxwma kapetan Sfaka! Polo’/nai tokrej maj: … a/nei=ai lukoj, na/ trw=j a/nei=ai a/ni/nai a/letrwwe! (“Where do we come from?” you ask: from the earth, Captain Sefakas! “Where are we going?” you ask: to the earth, Captain Sefakas. “What is our duty?” … If you’re a wolf, to eat; if you’re a lamb, to be eaten. p.432 my alterations). Echoed in The Order for the Burial of the Dead from the Book of Common Prayer (1662) page 384: _earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust_, and in the words with the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday: _From dust you came and to dust you shall return._

59 s.499: Mpai/nei, sou=ew, torwthma sel ogia, na/h(a pokrish de npai/nei.... Qa’sou= a/pokriqwe metl(ufa= auth/nai tosto na mu tola hqio/ (You can shape a question in words, but not the answer. … I shall answer you with the lyre. It is my real mouth. p.433) Both Topp (P475: ‘In the headmistress’s wooden words, he could hear the stubborn music that was waiting for release. Of rock and scrub. Of winds curled invisibly in wombs of air. Of thin rivers struggling towards seas of eternity. All flowing and uniting.’) and Willie Pringle (P476: “Common forms are continually breaking into brilliant shapes. If we will explore them.”) come to the same understanding of the sacredness inherent in the process of life, expressed through the living, not the telling.

60 s.210 p.185 (my alterations): De/nl ouse, degel ouse, de npi=ane koubenta metouj giou tou: hijkar(l)/tou genath, xorta=th, kal’a stere wmn stal sa wqikat tou, de/she ket wra pila=ajogkh apoltipa ki apolkanena. Ton tel euta=etoun kairo’tal ogia anixis anna sterebuunen sa tou, ki a/nei=ekai kmia tkrhمه npi=ane na/thk koubenti/a se metouj a hqrpwoj: monaka meto/Qeo/
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As the sum of its members, society is changed by death, which change is marked in its associated rituals. 61 Scripting the expression of loss, grief, horror, bewilderment, the community contains the impact upon itself: individuals die, but the communal essence continues. 62

Séfakas’ death is celebrated as befits his age, gender and social status. 63 He is visited by all the community, washed and shrouded by the women to whom he was closest, watched over through the night by the men, buried in the presence of the whole village and feasted according to his own designs.64 Thus does his community repair itself.65

The dead man is also replenished: renewed in the afterlife.66 Belief in life after death helps to alleviate the trauma of mortality,67 reconceptualising the end of life as a new beginning.68 Endowing the individual with an immortal soul extends community life into the past and the future, and realms beyond the physical. Crete is immortal not only through the lives that have been lived and sacrificed, but also in their ongoing perpetuity: the forefathers and foremothers who continue to appear every Sunday in

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61 As expressed by Neil Small (1997:205): ‘Death remains the great outsider. But it is an outsider which does not stay where it is put. Death and the dead keep coming back into the world of the living. One way that the world of the living and the state of the dead are linked is through ritual.’ For further discussion of the role of death rituals, see, for example: Bowlby 1980, Huntington and Metcalf 1979, Firth 1961. For death rituals particular to the cultural contexts of these novels, see: Llewellyn 1991, Garland 1989 (Victorian England); Jalland 2002, 1989 (Victorian Australia); Alexiou 1974 (Greece); Jonker 1997 (Greek and Turkish).
62 See, for example: Holst-Warhaft 1992, Durkheim 1954. Julie Burchill (2000) provides a wonderful example of rituals preserving the community whole, in the careful preparations taken with the British post-funeral finger-food buffet: ‘The British way of death … says simply that life goes on. You slice, I’ll butter. This is not life-denying; instead, it is the most life-affirming notion that the human heart can hold; that we all – living and dead alike – go on together, and that nothing can really divide us. A socialism of souls, if you like.’
63 As discussed in Field et al. 1997.
64 § 502-505 p435-438
65 The community also heals its loss through mythologising Séfakas as much-needed rain § 503-504 p437: his death made a sacrifice for the village’s benefit.
66 So strong is the conviction in life after death that a woman in the village brings to the grave her dead son’s slate for Séfakas to deliver to him § 502 p436.
67 For example: Martin Heidegger (1959:157-158) describes death as the ultimate alienation, Emmanuel Levinas (1989:41) as ‘the end of the subject’s virility and heroism’, and Mary Wollstonecraft (1976: Letter VII): ‘I cannot bear to think of being no more – of losing myself – though existence is often but a painful consciousness of misery; nay, it appears to me impossible that I should cease to exist, or that this active, restless spirit, equally alive to joy and sorrow, should only be organised dust – ready to fly abroad the moment the spring snaps, or the spark goes out which kept it together. Surely something resides in this heart that is not perishable, and life is more than a dream.’
68 Grace Jantzen (1988:137-139) points out that such belief is at least as old as Plato’s Phaedo, in which the body is represented as the prison-house of the soul, and death the means of its escape; in Christian terms expressed as this life being a preparation for the next.
the churches, holding claim to the present they’ve helped to create⁶⁹; and in the lives of those souls yet to make themselves manifest⁷⁰.

Séfakas’ is an easy dying: an old man, fulfilled, in the bosom of community, gently responding to the call into the afterlife.⁷¹ Yet the significance of the very act of dying: of leaving the living and joining the dead, evokes terror:

_It was as though the grandfather had acquired some new power, dark and sinister. As though he were standing motionless and waiting to pounce on men and drag them with him under the earth ... The beloved grandfather had suddenly become evil, a dragon from a fairy tale, who wanted to eat people._⁷²

Death is a frighteningly solemn and final event.⁷³ More frightening and solemn even than God: _A man who’s not afraid of death – even God is afraid of him_⁷⁴; signifying thus the inception of God: divinity emerging from the ashes of mortal hopelessness.⁷⁵

**MAKING GOD**

God as an antidote to death is not his only manifestation. Religious expression provides an outlet for the depths of human emotional experience⁷⁶: ecstatic⁷⁷,

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⁶⁹ s 275 p 244  s 382 p 337
⁷⁰ s 344-345 p 303
⁷¹ Such easy death marks him out as a _good_ man, Alexiou 1974: 37.
⁷² s 501-502 p 345 my alterations: _sánka pola duvn khí nò sían phè o pappouj, skoteinh' kài kopi boul h, sávıstı koun ān akıntoj kai páramuqı n' aphaeı kai nápafeı mazı tòu, na katebaıe staxwhata toh koı'mo ... Kakoı gińhe caı' nou o náphrenoj pappouj, caı' dra koı' tou pau maquı ou ki hoel e naı' fæı akı nówpouj_. Reiterated in Kosmas’ pondering the death s 527 (not in translation): _nétromı, nécımam sı/(in fear and wonder).
⁷³ A disappointing of _our most heartfelt desire_, according to Ludwig Feuerbach (1967:269): ‘... the desire not to die, to live forever; this is indeed man’s highest and ultimate desire, the desire of all desires.’ See also Eliade 1973: 170-171.
⁷⁴ s 145 p 135: _o(a) ntraj poudeı' fobatı' to qanato, ki o(Qe)j toh fobatı'!
⁷⁵ As expressed by Ludwig Feuerbach (1967:33): ‘If man did not die, if he lived forever, if there were no such thing as death, there would be no religion. ... Man’s tomb is the sole birthplace of the gods.’; and Frank Le Mesurier P385: ‘Death is creation.’ Building upon Mary Daly’s (1979:39) definition of patriarchy as _necrophilia_, Grace Jentzen (1988:2) rejects the concept of such death-focussed spirituality, proposing instead a religion founded on birth: ‘the hope and possibility and wonder implicit in ... natality and the emergence of _this_ life and _this_ world.’ For excellent discussion of some of the socio-political consequences of such religiosity, see Giles Fraser’s article: “Birth – the ultimate miracle”, _The Guardian_, 20/12/03:17.
⁷⁶ Marcus Borg (1997:38) points out that the founders of most religions have met their God through intense personal experiences of the numinous, such as Moses’ burning bush, Buddha’s enlightenment, Jesus’ baptism and forty days in the wilderness, and Muhammad’s visions.
⁷⁷ For example Joe Frank, from _Eartours: An Evening of Monologue_ at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow, 26/9/02: ‘When endowed with profound religious feeling, your skin becomes transparent and your blood begins to turn a thin watery hue until the light of the sun streaming in the window passes entirely through you.’ Described by Stanley Spencer (Pattison 1991: 6) as: ‘the state of awareness, a state of being in love’.

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Chapter Six: Finding God

Religious certainty releases us from fear, suffering and sorrow, shame and sin, and provides a model for interpreting our world. Religious practice defines our sense of belonging, sets behavioural standards and establishes modes for communicating with others.

Religious belief divides the world into sacred and profane. Theistic belief sites the sacred in the realm of the divine: God as that beyond the material. In terms of our daily life, God is Other. And religion is a means of access to this other: the means by which we hope to make a friend of God.

Aboriginal religion responds to a world of spirits: of people, animals, the land. Spirits inhabiting people and places indissolubly unites the realms of sacred and transcendent. Religious certainty releases us from fear, suffering and sorrow, shame and sin, and provides a model for interpreting our world.

Religious practice defines our sense of belonging, sets behavioural standards and establishes modes for communicating with others.

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78 For example Paul Tillich 1962: 64: ‘The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is GOD. That depth is what the word GOD means. … He who knows about depth knows about God.’ See also: Pattison 1991, Weil 1952.

79 For example Iris Murdoch (The Times 23/11/78): ‘I believe that religion is terribly important in people’s lives, because it tries to look at the world not veiled by the obsessions, fears, and egoism of everyday life.’

80 The existential fear summed up by Dorothy Porter’s (2002) poem “Bluebottles”, which has repeated thrice the awesome truth: ‘In living there is always / the terror’, and Antigone Kefala’s (1992:14) “New Born”: ‘Only your voice that / shrilled in night / born out of an / eternity of fear / was human.’ See also Tuan 1979a and Barlow 1995: 198.


82 See, for example: Pattison 2000, Akhtar 1990.


84 Consider Mr Thwackum in Henry Fielding’s (1974: Book III, Chapter III) Tom Jones: “When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.” Mircea Eliade (1973:1) finds this sense of belonging even more fundamental to Aboriginal spirituality: ‘Man was truly made when he received his present form and when the religious, social, and cultural institutions which were henceforth to constitute the most precious heritage of his tribe were revealed to him.’ Emphasised in the acknowledgement by Denis Altman (2003) – a self-professed atheist whose personal preference is for a genuinely secular world – of the important role of religion in people’s sense of meaning and belonging. And in Alfred Schutz’s (1971:91-196) account of the devastating consequences of being isolated from his religious community.


86 Both through language (see, for example, Tillich 1962) and ritual (see, for example: Driver 1991, James 1985). These do, however, run the risk of empty performance. Consider, for example, Cato in Iris Murdoch’s (1976) Henry and Cato, continuing through all the motions of his priestly vocation, after losing his faith. The liturgy communicates to his audience, while imparting nothing of himself.


88 In the words of Shabbir Akhtar (1990:23): ‘Religious knowledge is unique, since its object is God – a reality totally other (totaliter aliter) than any mundane reality.’

89 P403: ‘All their lives haunted by spirits’. Such spiritual emanations are intertwined, as in the comet, which is both the Great Snake and the grandfather of all men, and Jackie (P448: ‘slowly becoming possessed of the secrets of the country, even of the spirits of distant tribal grounds’) after the death of Voss P446: ‘Terrible knives of thought, sharpened upon the knives of the sun, were cutting into him. At night his thoughts, less defined, became, or were interchangeable with those spirits that haunted the places where he chose to sleep.’ For further discussion, see, for example: Berndt 1970, Tonkinson 1970.
Chapter Six: Finding God

profane: the Other encountered within the everyday, while retaining its distinctness. This spirit world, outside of the boundaries of human agency, nonetheless has sufficient regularity to fall within the wisdom of experience. Events outwith the elders’ interpretative capacities, such as the comet, require new epiphanies, like the celestial visions of Jackie’s bride. But these remain descriptive, not directive: ways of understanding the cosmos, rather than controlling it.

Spirits of the Aboriginal world remain beyond human dominion, but not without interest in human society. We see this in the Aboriginal response to the comet. Interpreted within their existing cosmology, the comet is the Great Snake, angry, threatening to eat them. Clearly, propitiatory measures are required. An unknown phenomenon, the comet must be treated with caution; which, since its appearance coincided with their capturing of Voss, results in the white men being kept alive: He who had appeared with the snake was perhaps also of supernatural origin, and must be respected, even loved. Safety is bought with love, for a little.

Once the comet vanishes, the Aboriginal people feel relieved; and then angry: ‘deceived, both by the Snake and by the white man’. It appears that the comet was not, after all, evidence of their transgression; that Voss is not under the spirit world’s protection. Freed from supernatural reprisals, their anger may be satisfied: the white men’s horses slaughtered, and vengeance claimed from the man himself.

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90 Adolphus Elkin (1943:307) found this also within the Aboriginal perception of the self: not just a union of body and soul, but also of intrinsic and extrinsic soul. Every man has two souls: the real self – ‘the eternal dream-time soul which pre-existed and will exist, for a time or eternally, and which in some tribes, may be reincarnated’ - and another soul ‘which can appear in dreams, which may take up its abode within another person after its owner’s death, or may live in the bush and play tricks, scare and even damage its incarnate relations.’
91 This is emphasised in the designation of sacred places, totems and rites forbidden to the uninitiated. These also allow for human agency in matters over which we have, essentially, little control; facilitating the process of access to the Other. See, for example: Hiatt 1996, Berndt 1970, Spencer and Gillen 1968, 1912.
92 P403: ‘Even the freakish spirits of darkness behaved within the bounds of a certain convention.’
93 P403: ‘… the old men should translate this experience into terms they could understand. Only, the old men were every bit as unhappy.’
94 P415 This accords with the generally dimorphic nature of divine revelation: either through experience of creation or deliberate disclosure: sacred texts, inspiration, visions. For further discussion, see Bartholomew 1996.
95 P403
96 Inferring connection between the two arrivals does not, however, entail the white man’s ability to control the comet P403: “Snake too much magic, no good of Mr Voss.”
97 P416
98 Vengeance was, of course, the reason Voss was taken capture in the first place: his life as payment for the black man shot by Judd P388 – even though the black man had just stabbed Palfreyman P365.
The God of the white men has a more personal approach to his world: an almighty interventionist, partial to his own particular devotees. Both Cretan and Turk believe that God is on their side but that he needs a little prompting, through religious inducements. So closely is God perceived to be involved with his creation that his failure to liberate the Cretans leaves them doubting his capacities: Is he deaf and doesn’t hear? Or does he hear but he has no compassion? Or worse: has he changed sides? Similar, but far more self-interested, divine immersement in the world is exhibited by the Pasha, thanking God for killing Nuri and enabling the Pasha to take possession of his horse: *Great is Allah and good: he loves Pashas.*

The Cretan God is responsive, requiring the urging of his people to look after their interests. The Muslim God is compassionate, taking pity on the brokenness of mortals. Both Muslims and Christians give material offerings to the saints, in the

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99 Both *Foss* and *Captain Michales* present indisputably male Gods. While this reflects much of Judeo-Christian tradition, it is not the whole story. See, for example, Schäfer 2002, Schüssler Fiorenza 1983.

100 s 366 This is summed up beautifully in the narrative s 370: *Epes e h (nukta, Xristof kai Mou kanezh) xwrisan.* (Night fell. Christ and Muhammad separated. p326 my alterations)

101 s 370 p326: the Metropolitan takes communion every day. s 370 p325: the Pasha has Efendina recite the Koran. This does, however, conflict with the Pasha’s earlier assertion s 179: *Mai den to katekeij pwj o(a)hoi noj, mououl man hoj dequmwej potetou; Giati cfei pwi ofi ginetai stokos me ei kai grammeno kai kanezh de nporei ma toceg raje.* (Don’t you know that a true Muslim is never disturbed? For he knows that everything that happens in the world was already written, and no one can strike it out. p170)

102 s 387 p341 (my alterations): *gia npaj ki ehai kouf oj kai de npoueigi a kouei kai de del upatai;* It is interesting that the Cretans are able to question their God’s behaviour in such ways, without doubting his existence. Similar arguments from a Protestant perspective are atheistic cynicism, such as Ivan Southall’s (1991:11) Dr Cameron: “When Grandma was a little girl, my boy, Britannia ruled the waves and things were different then. People were different. The world was different. Millions of children all over the world kneeling beside millions of beds mumbling millions of words. The noise in heaven must have been deafening. God didn’t hear a word, unless he thought they were asking for a great noise and so gave them jet engines, atom bombs and wars.”

103 s 354 p311: allacopisthes oQeoj.

104 s 284 p252 my alterations: *megaf o ehai o(Allak, kal oj, apapaio touj pasadej.* The Muslim God’s committing acts of unpleasant intervention is cited several times, most poignantly by Mustafa Baba when tending Nuri Bey after Manúasakas stabbed him in the testicles, s 229: o ‘Allak phgetomaxari el eki pouto qel e. (Allah guided the knife where He willed it to go. p203) This is echoed in the Christian God’s testing of his people s 477: oQeoj, nayndwes ei tou= ahorw pou ta to a more na labastei. (If God would only stop loading his people with as much as we can bear. p412 my alterations)

105 s 174: ahorw pou ec ei ahorw pou, debatei nh teki autoj tolo ki to dikotoj tou. (If God sees no human hand, He doesn’t stretch out His either. p165) This is articulated much more strongly by Captain Michales s 73: *F otera qel ei ki oQeoj gia na kanei tolo na tou.* (Even God needs a threat for His miracle. p65)

106 s 110: Spl axnikoj ehai o‘Allak, spl axnikoj kai pantoduhamaj: nporei tou xoiri n kraw ej na to kanei mea sto ksta na maj probei: kai to krasiheri (Allah is merciful, merciful and mighty. He can turn pork into lamb in your mouth, and wine into water. p102)
hope of good things in return.\textsuperscript{107} And they both look forward to Heaven: the reward of eternal Paradise.\textsuperscript{108} Such similarities reflect the common roots of Christianity and Islam\textsuperscript{109} and the intermingled lives of Greek and Turk under the Ottoman Empire\textsuperscript{110}.

Community differences in \textit{Captain Michales} are delineated according to religion and religious affiliations used to political purpose.\textsuperscript{111} Muslim and Christian alike each raise their God as the standard of their separate causes.\textsuperscript{112} Yet the differences between them are significantly smaller than those between the Christian Gods of \textit{Captain Michales} and Voss.

The Cretan God is bellicose\textsuperscript{113}, irascible\textsuperscript{114}, manipulable\textsuperscript{115}, a God to be wrestled with and criticised\textsuperscript{116}. He is partisan\textsuperscript{117}, a palikari incarnate in the Cretan cause\textsuperscript{118}. He bleeds\textsuperscript{119}, he rages\textsuperscript{120}, he has appetites and moods\textsuperscript{121}.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{107} The Muslims throw small coins into the saint’s empty turban, at his shrine s 106-107: De\zhtou=san aoutoi sahtouj xristianouj, kai pol l a’ prafarta: kal of ai\k al ej gunaikej, kal hikardia\ka\d ston ko\$ met eouton ka\d ston aj o. Au’almonaka. (They did not ask for such a variety of things as the Christians: good food, good women and good courage, in this world as in the other, were enough.  p98) Katerina prays to the Archangel Michael for Captain Michales to behave well s 51 p44-45; Chrys\san te offers wine, oil and candles to St Menas: she used to pray for a man, now prays that she die before her brother in order for a good funeral s 88-89 p80-81; Vangelo asks St Nicholas and St Fanurios for a husband like her brother s 147-148 p137-138; Captain Stefanés prays to St Nicholas for safety at sea s 335 p294; Vendúsos asks St Menas to look after his wife and daughters while he goes off to get himself killed s 510 p441; Noëmi gives her gold earrings to the Virgin for protection of herself and her baby s 526 p434-435.
\item \textsuperscript{108} For example: s 140 p130, s 177 p168, s 467 p404, s 476 p412, s 495 p428-429, s 501 p434-435.
\item \textsuperscript{109} See, for example, Hart 1993.
\item \textsuperscript{110} See, for example, Greene 2000.  Such intermingling of Christian and Muslim is crystallised in Efendína’s lighting the lamp to St Menas s 108 p100.
\item \textsuperscript{111} For example: Captain Michales refusing to eat with Nuri Bey during Lent s 30 p24 – although he then holds a feast of his own s 50 p44; the Metropolitan’s rejection of the Pasha’s rabbit s 191 p178; Eminé’s conversion to Christianity s 346-347 p305, s 355-356 p312.
\item \textsuperscript{112} The extreme of this is Eminé’s invoking of her God (and remember she is a Muslim by non-voluntary conversion s 38 p32) as protection against Polyxigis’ lust s 119: O Qeoj odikoj mou sixai reta i touj Rwmioj. (My God hates Greeks.  p110)
\item \textsuperscript{113} s 74: Ei)=nai laoi ki a)no\$ poi pou\$ wazounto to Qeoj me\$ th pros eukh\$ kal meta\$ kara\$ta! (There are peoples and human beings who call to God with prayers and tears or a disciplined, reasonable self-control – or even curse Him. The Cretans called to Him with guns.  p65)
\item \textsuperscript{114} s 74: ’Agwnisth j eina i ki oQeoj … kapou al l ou sa pol ema. (God too is a fighter … He must be waging war somewhere else.  p65)
\item \textsuperscript{115} s 74: a)j touj wazounto n’ a\$ ou se. (We will call Him, till He hears us.  p65)
\item \textsuperscript{116} s 157: kai po\$ sul ogiountan the panten nh Krhthta/ baze meto Qeoj mai baria\$ blasthnia ejp le xesth akra thg j w\$ saj tou: de\$ parapoi\$ f anto Qeoj ou\$ wne nazi tou: de\$ tou\$ houte e joj, tou\$ houte toj ojo. (Always when he thought of Crete, abandoned by all, he disputed with God. A violent blasphemy pressed forward to the tip of his tongue.
\end{itemize}
God is a debatable\textsuperscript{122} and optional\textsuperscript{123} presence. He bears carnal representation.\textsuperscript{124} His celebrations are lavish and passionate affairs: his welcome manifest in largesse.\textsuperscript{125}

Cretan religion is steeped in Cretan culture: impassioned, full of demons, spirits, saints and heroes\textsuperscript{126}, the Devil as incarnate as God.\textsuperscript{127} Rituals are rich mixtures of Christian and pre-Christian folklore and symbolism: icons, candles, bells, vestments, dramatic performance.\textsuperscript{128}

The English God of Protestant Sydney is polite, restrained, and reasonable.\textsuperscript{129} A figure of firm but gentle discipline: a just father to his slightly wayward children.\textsuperscript{130} Reliable\textsuperscript{131}, unchanging.\textsuperscript{132} A \textit{bore}.\textsuperscript{133}

He did not lament before God, he was angry with Him. He asked for no sympathy, he asked for justice. p147)

\textsuperscript{117} s386: \textit{Krhth} ei\textit{bai} kai\textit{krithesai}. (Thou art a Cretan and Thou shalt be tried. p341)
\textsuperscript{118} s191-192 (not in translation): \textit{Pol emou}se\textit{ki a}utoj\textit{ gialtv\textit{euteria/forouse}\textit{ki a}utoj\textit{ stibania kai/youfoul a braka kai\textit{nauro} kefal on\textit{antilo, sahtouj Krhtikouj}}. (He too fought for freedom, he too wore combat boots and army fatigues and a black headscarf, just like the Cretans.)
\textsuperscript{119} For example: s172-174 p163-165, s192 (not in translation), s408 p362.
\textsuperscript{120} s476: \textit{o(Qeoj}\textit{natoj}\textit{kaj ei}! (May God burn them! p411); s473: 'A\textit{poto/Qeojnato/}\textit{breij, dai monis me\textit{re}}! (God will pay you for this, you madman! p410)
\textsuperscript{121} s386: \textit{arhupheke o(Qeoj na strafei kai/nva de\textit{th\textit{Krth}} (God refused to turn his eyes upon Crete. p341 my alterations), s429: \textit{Mai\textit{cafnoul up\textit{hupketouj, xristianovj, nphke o(Qeoj stivnesh}. (But suddenly God took pity on the Christians and intervened. p372); s438-439 (not in translation) hanging on the cross, mistaking Crete for the Virgin, then abandoning her, \textit{dressed in black, all alone, as a widow, calling out to him} …
\textsuperscript{122} s405: \textit{denuparxei Qeoj}; (Is there no God then? p359)
\textsuperscript{123} Sefakas, for example, cites God as the fourth witness to the fact that there is no external help coming to Crete s409 p362, yet when it doesn’t suit him, such as while claiming his wife through threats of violence, he dispenses with God s473: \textit{Mh\textit{anakateu\textit{eteto/Qeoj stij doule IEJ mou}. (Don’t mix God up in my business. p410)
\textsuperscript{124} For example: a woman s172-174 p163-165; the Metropolitan s192 (not in translation), s327 p286; a leper s193 (not in translation); s498: \textit{o(Me\textit{qaj Lukoj} (the big wolf’ p432). God is also manifest in human form in the manner in which Kubelina’s fellow villagers deal with their grief (not in translation).
\textsuperscript{125} For example: s86-87 p78-79, s190-196 p179-181 (much not in translation). See also Chapter One: Food and Hunger, pages 5-6, 28-29.
\textsuperscript{126} For example: s48 p42, s57 p48-49, s88-89 p80-81, s235-238 p209-212, s308 (not in translation), s326 p283-285, s335 p294, s510 p441.
\textsuperscript{127} For example: s98 p89-90, s178 p169, s375 p330.
\textsuperscript{128} Stanford 1983: 11: ‘The liturgy of the Eastern Orthodox Church with its solemn entrances and processions, its rich robes and pageantry, its speeches and dialogues, its symbolic gestures and emotional climaxes, its singing and chanting, its alternations of grief and joy, has much in common with the pagan tragic performances.’ For example: s86-87 p78-79, s173-174 p164-165, s185-196 p176-181 (much not in translation).
\textsuperscript{129} Thus Laura exempts herself from church on the first Sunday morning on the grounds of a headache, rather than revealing the gauche truth of her new-found atheism P10 P18.
Chapter Six: Finding God

The Protestant God is a private God: each member keeping their own experience and opinions of God to themselves.\textsuperscript{134} Even rituals may occur in private.\textsuperscript{135} Public rituals are dignified, wordy and tasteful.\textsuperscript{136}

The Protestant God holds a mirror to his people, confined within the rules of their society.\textsuperscript{137} Rather than compel, he persuades: a well-bred gentleman. He is the God who responds to the people who call to him with \textit{a disciplined, reasonable self-control}.\textsuperscript{138}

Most striking difference is found in Cretan and Protestant responses to unbelief. Where the Cretans expect to question their God: his actions\textsuperscript{139}, motive\textsuperscript{140}, presence\textsuperscript{141}, existence\textsuperscript{142}; doubting the Protestant God is a rude betrayal\textsuperscript{143}, the mark of a \textit{miserable} soul\textsuperscript{144}.

\textsuperscript{130} For example: Palfreyman’s accepting the loss of his specimens on the raft as \textit{some form of retribution}, on account of his failing his sister; recognising at the same time that God gave all the men safe passage: a much more important outcome P296-297. God’s punishments are measured, and not beyond what one can bear.

\textsuperscript{131} For example: the men’s bewilderment at their suspicions of a capricious and \textit{bungling} god P286.

\textsuperscript{132} Best illustrated in the reverse: the serious consequences of the men’s illness stressed in their loss of faith in God’s dependability P286: ‘In their confused state it was difficult to distinguish act from act, motive from motive, or to question why the supreme power should be divided in two.’

\textsuperscript{133} P372-373: ‘If his God had not been a bore, Mr Bonner might have suspected Him.’

\textsuperscript{134} For example: Mr Bonner’s secretly subscribing to all denominations P372.

\textsuperscript{135} For example: P244-245: Mrs Bonner reading a sermon and praying on her own during Mercy’s birth; P216: Voss’ suggestion at Christmas, that “each man does his own part, and reads in his own book”; so ‘one or two who possessed prayer-books had taken them out, and were attempting to follow the words’.

\textsuperscript{136} For example: Belle’s wedding P351-352; ‘service’ meaning the order of service: words from the prayer book P210 P216 P366; Church incorporated within the whole social arena P15: ‘it is always like this in houses on Sunday mornings while others are at Church’.

\textsuperscript{137} Thus Laura’s passionate outbursts – even feverish – are an affront P411, P420.

\textsuperscript{138} S 74 p65

\textsuperscript{139} For example: S 157 p147.

\textsuperscript{140} For example: S 354 p311.

\textsuperscript{141} For example: S 74 p65.

\textsuperscript{142} For example: S 386-387 p341, S 405 p359.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{A defection}; committed only after serious deliberation. Consider Laura P11: ‘If she had been less proud, she might have been more afraid. Certainly she had not slept for several nights before accepting that decision which had been in the making, she realised, several years.’

\textsuperscript{144} P274: Asked by Turner whether he believes in God, Ralph Angus responds, from the heart of his social indoctrination: “I should think there are very few individuals so miserable as not to”. This, of course, reflects precisely the society of Voss, in which faith is construed as a virtue and unbelief as a sin. See, for example: Akhtar 1990:141, Adams 1987:9-10. And Lady Julia Flyte’s reasons for ending her relationship with Captain Charles Ryder in Evelyn Waugh’s (1964:373) \textit{Brideshead Revisited}: ‘But I saw today there was one thing unforgivable … to set up a rival good to God’s.’
Kazantzakis’ Crete has for centuries been under occupation. Generations of struggle toward self-rule have not diminished at all the hope of liberation: theirs is a faith of collective optimism. European colonisation, on the other hand, is riding crests of success in White’s New South Wales. In the face of such evident human accomplishment, the hand of God becomes a matter of will: of being prepared to embrace an unnecessary higher power. Proscribing doubt is society’s way of sustaining such will, indicating significant social investment in religion: as a means of individual and collective behavioural control.

MORALISING GOD

The manner in which God is conceived carries moral consequences: establishing social mores and ethical standards. The Cretan God is fallible, moody and passionate, and intractably wed to the Cretan land; and so are his people. The Protestant God is reserved, moderate, predictable; and his people consumed with self-control. See, for example: Clogg 1979, Hopkins 1977, Woodhouse 1968.

145 See, for example: Clogg 1979, Hopkins 1977, Woodhouse 1968.
146 s 453: ‘Emei ekoume mna, aitanti ma, aithest meto sufero, of o daikrua kaiquisa. (We have an ideal, a higher belief than in the individual, contrary to personal gain: tears and sacrifice. p390 my alterations)
147 Mr Bonner P32: “Look at our homes and public edifices. Look at the devotion of our administrators, and the solid achievement of those men who are settling the land.” See also Chapter Three: Man v Nature, note 59.
148 The Western God that Kosmas finds: Science s 452 p390: sklhrh, megaloudnamh, pantoudnamh (cruel, very strong, all-powerful). In the Metropolitan’s words s 453 p390: Nουj=xwri] y uxyh (mind without soul).
149 Not only unnecessary, but also irrational: an unprovable entity, which flies in the face of post-Enlightenment developments. See, for example: Coyne 2003, Dawkins 1997, Helm 1994. Polyxigis sums this up when discussing the catechism with Eminé §253 (not in translation): religious faith is not about understanding, it’s about belief. Don Cupitt (1997:85) elaborates these themes in a personal account of falling in love with God through unbelief: P85: ‘A seriously postmodern definition of true religion: religion that makes you smarter than your god. … I actually think I love God more now I know that God is voluntary. I still pray and love God, even though I fully acknowledge that no God actually exists. Perhaps God had to die in order to purify our love for him.’
150 See, for example, Adams 1987, Kant 1956. In the words of Fyodor Dostoevsky’s (1912) Ivan Karamazov: “without God, everything is permitted”.
151 Thus Captain Michales’ murder of Eminé is justified §398 p251 since she was interfering with his contribution to the liberation. Cretan morality tends to more closely resemble Ancient Greek ethics of helping friends and harming enemies (see, for example: Blundell 1989, Knox 1961) than Christ’s love your enemies (Matthew 5.43-44).
152 See, for example Kant 1963: sharing all of oneself – especially one’s natural frailties with another is morally loathsome. This is, of course, precisely the process of Voss’ wilderness experience: exposing himself in order to find the divine beauty within humanity. Transcending the social limits of Protestantism requires moving beyond the security of society altogether, into the unprotected loneliness of harsh landscape. See, for example, Lane 1998, Borg 1997, Merton 1975. In the words of John S. Dunne (1978: 55): ‘Those as hunts treasure must go alone, at night, and when they find it they have to leave a little of their blood behind them.’
153 Excess is condemned: in hospitality, see Chapter One: Food and Hunger, page 6; alcohol consumption, see Turner P47, Brendan Boyle P178-184 P440 P445, Jack Slipper P57, and the sailor
At base, these reflect fundamental differences in God’s view of creation, crystallised in the Protestant emphasis on original sin. Existential guilt feeds the Protestant psyche, demanding individual suffering in expiation of innate human sinfulness. Evil having arisen through humankind’s corruption, it is both our expectation and our responsibility. For the Cretan, in contrast, since God intends his people to be happy, their common suffering under Turkish occupation is their path to eternal life: *We shall all reach Paradise, because we’ve suffered in this world.*

Christian and Muslim morality deviate in their relations with the body. Kazantzakis’ Muhammad is a hedonist: relishing the pleasure of his own and others’ bodies. The Turks are to keep themselves undefiled in what they consume. Thus sanctified, they may indulge in practice forbidden to the Greeks:

> You’re a Christian. But I’m a Muslim. I’ve a different God and different laws. You eat pig’s flesh and aren’t defiled. But if you nibble at a strange man, you are defiled. With us it’s the other way round: pig’s flesh defiles us, a strange man doesn’t.”

who makes confession to Palfreyman on the wharf P104; emotion, see P175 P420; even religious fervour P410-411. Breaching conventional expectations entails serious moral censure; consider Laura P72: *different, peculiar, clever*, P465: *freakish*, P467: *a scarecrow*; and Willie Pringle P463-464. In the words of James Wood (2002:25): ‘It was my parents’ duty, as Christian models, to stifle their appetites in preparation for eternity’s fattening.’

Vrasidas Karalis (2002) sums this up beautifully, in structuring Greek Orthodoxy around Genesis 1.31: ‘God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.’ In this, the Cretan cosmology reiterates that of the Stoics, as expressed by William Davidson (1979:146): ‘… unlike Buddha and Schopenhauer, the Stoic started with the acknowledgement that life is good and worth living, and that man naturally desires happiness and aims at it.’

For example: Harry Robarts P102: ‘Somewhere he had learnt that man’s first duty is to suffer.’; Mrs Sanderson P148: ‘That others did not share the perfection of their life would fill her at times with a sense of guilt’; Laura P411: “man is so shoddy, so contemptible, greedy, jealous, stubborn, ignorant”.

Evil thus becomes embodied in human terms. Rather than a supernatural entity in opposition to God (for example: s 98: *omegal ἐμποράς o(Satana/ – Satan the great trader; s 178: o(Daimon – the Evil Spirit; s 375: o(Διαβόλος – the Devil), evil is pain, separation, and helplessness (Noddings 1989: 6), gloomy, monotonous, barren, boring (Weil 1952: 120).

For example: s 157: *O Mouxamēthj hánnerakli hj ki autaj, kal aj tourkalaj, aǥapouso oti aǥapousanki o(aga de, dehtoūj zorise naajhounajgoi, dehnkrousee auluj stauromatouj wnonetj na staurwopum sthtesph tou kratoose patta e(n moukal akimurwdia(e(n kaqreftaki ki e(n xtehj: dehnkrousee – xara touj musoul nanouj – Qey, h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\\>h:\na 155
Both Turk and Cretan rest comfortably in the way God created them: pleased with his creation. But while the Turk may expand this to include even immoral appetite\textsuperscript{162}, the Christian’s liberties are more limited\textsuperscript{163}; encapsulated with Tityros and his lover covering the faces of the icons before they make love\textsuperscript{164}.

Moral systems underpin good social functioning, and are therefore focussed on behaviour rather than intention.\textsuperscript{165} Rights and responsibilities are constructed within the nexus of our interacting\textsuperscript{166}; as are the emotional conditions which shape and maintain our behaviours\textsuperscript{167}.

As an expression of our interdependence, religion is a communal entity; as such it is bound to emphasise the value of all its disparate elements, illustrating how we

\textsuperscript{156} Eminé, of course, would be the first to exploit such advantages, mirrored in her viewing conversion to Christianity fundamentally as freedom to mix with men unveiled § 302 p262.\textsuperscript{162} For example, Efendína’s justifying his desire to join in the cellar-feast by claiming it’s the will of God – and who is he to argue with that? § 111 p103.\textsuperscript{163} For example, when Captain Katsirmas tries to blame his profligacy on God § 497: \textit{Qerión ekane o(Qeoj, poreutha tol o pon ki ejws a|gerio/Luko me ekane, ef a ga ai|n|al ajh m ekane aí|n|al ejwrge o|lu|koj, xal al i tou! Autozha|f|a|t|a hta|h. Ti/taiw ejw| Ftai|e|kei|noj pouka|ne| touj lukouj kai|t aí|nial/ (God made me a wild beast, so I behaved like a wild beast. He made me a wolf and I ate lambs. If He’d made me a lamb, the wolf would have eaten me, and rightly! That’s how the order of things will have it. Is it my fault? It’s the fault of Him Who made wolves and lambs. p431 my alterations) , his comrades are affronted. § 498: \textit{Ei=jai mequs menoj, abtriye o|nuj=sou, den cer|ej ti/l ej. (You're drunk, your mind’s reeling, you don’t know what you’re saying. p432)}

\textsuperscript{164} § 352 p309

\textsuperscript{165} A constant throughout the history of society; see, for example: Cairns 2001, 1996, Armstrong 2000. An excellent illustration of this is in the Garden of the Righteous in Israel, in which a tree has been planted in honour of every person who opposed Nazi atrocities (see http://gariwo.net – accessed 6/10/03); emphasising the importance of \textit{acting} according to one’s ethical beliefs and echoing ‘the Garden which is promised unto those who keep their duty’ of Ar-Ra’d 13.35.\textsuperscript{166} Human society dependent on establishing and meeting appropriate expectations; see, for example John Stuart Mill 1972: 57. This is crystallised in the conflicts between Laura and the Bonners, such as their discrepant interpretations of their responsibilities to Rose P239-241 and Laura’s to them, to the colony and to herself P428-429; and in the different interpretations of Captain Michales’ culpability made by Séfakas and Vendússos § 395-398 p349-351. The pivotal role in social cohesion of realistic and responsible expectations on the part of the individual is summed up most forcefully by former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1987:10): ‘I think we’ve been through a period where too many people have been given to understand that if they have a problem, it's the government's job to cope with it. “I have a problem, I'll get a grant.” “I'm homeless, the government must house me.” They're casting their problem on society. And, you know, there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look to themselves first. It's our duty to look after ourselves and then, also to look after our neighbour. People have got the entitlements too much in mind, without the obligations. There's no such thing as entitlement, unless someone has first met an obligation.’\textsuperscript{167} Thus Christian love is construed in behavioural terms, 1 Corinthians 13.4-7: ‘Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.’ For further discussion, see, for example, Stocker 1976.
individuals need society as much as society needs us. The most productive community members are those convinced that their happiness depends on the success of their group. 

Laura’s sense of duty is intimately merged with her concept of God. Having uncovered herself as a rationalist, she re-engages with her faith through attachment to Voss, realising her own need for both God and community in the horrifying consequences of Voss’ delusions of self-sufficiency. Recovering herself through empathy with the other, Laura finds her humanity in relationship: with Voss, with God, and as a functional member of her society.

**MYTHOLOGISING GOD**

Laura’s God is the Word incarnate. Through her relationship with Voss she enacts the whole of the Christ myth: his virgin birth in Mercy, his passion and death through the fever, his resurrection in Voss living on in the land, and his teachings in her dedicating herself to duty. Christ and Voss intertwined in her searching for truth.
Chapter Six: Finding God

*Myths are the language of faith.*[^30] Binding together the community’s belief system, myths provide tools for uncovering meanings and exploring ways of being within particular cultural environs[^31]. They are ‘the way we express and give form to our transcendent longing, our ultimate concern’[^32]: indispensable to an understanding of human spiritual being.

Marcus Borg defines myth as *a story about God and us*,[^33] an apt description for both *Voss* and *Captain Michales*: stories which explore the relationship of human and divine within their specific social contexts. As novels, they subscribe to a genre of individualism[^34]. As *mythological* novels, they open to the reader examination of oneself as individual, within the cosmos: finding one’s subjectivity in the exploration of the fictional God.[^35]

Laura’s embracing of the Christ myth achieves all of these processes: exploring her self and her God[^36], finding her place in the world[^37], and enabling others to appropriate her epiphanies[^38]. Her acknowledgement that it is indeed myth with which she wrestles[^39], adds to the potency of her disclosures: as myth, the truth endures, for all of us to enter into and explore for ourselves, uncovering its meaning for our particular time and place.[^40]

[^30]: Tillich 1958: 45
[^32]: Holloway 2001: 58  This echoes Freud’s (1966) depiction of myth as the external projection of internal psychological process.
[^33]: Borg 1997: 101
[^34]: According to Ian Watt (1957:60), the novel emerged in strength from a society founded on individual independence ‘both from other individuals and from that multifarious allegiance to past modes of thought and action denoted by the word “tradition” – a force that is always social, not individual.’
[^35]: My language, as well as conception, here owes much to Don Cupitt (1997:33): ‘God, then, I am suggesting, began with the possibility of questioning God. God and human subjectivity were born more or less together, and God has ever since functioned as the mirror in which we look to become ourselves.’
[^36]: P411: “… there are certain beliefs a clergyman may explain to one from childhood onward, without one’s understanding, except in theory, until suddenly, almost in spite of reason, they are made clear. Here, suddenly, in this room, of which I imagined I knew all the corners, I understand!”
[^37]: P477: “I am uncomfortably aware of the very little I have seen and experienced … But the little I have seen is less, I like to feel, than what I know. … true knowledge only comes of death by torture in the country of the mind.”
[^38]: For example: Willie Pringle and Topp: *the discoverers* P475-478.
[^39]: P351: ‘Are you too, my dearest, a myth?’
[^40]: In the words of Claire Rosenfield (1967:33): ‘Myth in literature presents the reader with a special problem, for art is itself an event in time which happens once. Like the myths of civilization which now appear in sacred literature, art lacks the fluidity of pure myth. Its timelessness, however, is derived from the formalized structure which is itself a kind of ritual and from the changeless values which it mirrors in its content. Each performance, each rereading is a re-creation of the initial event.’
HUMANISING GOD

And the Word became flesh and lived among us.192

God incarnate is God at the depths of human communication: sharing our fractured subjectivity. In Word becoming flesh: embodied soul, our self-expression is deified, our selves contained in the great I AM.193

Christian religious expression manifests the divine in ritual:194 the languages of liturgy are the closest we come to the face of God.195 Judd’s request for the Christmas service is a desire for the presence of God.196 In refusing to allow public reading of the service, Voss effectively denies Judd his divinity.197 It also excludes God from the whole company, since he is contained within the communal act: the word imparting meaning only through its communication.198

Voss’ repudiation of the words of God accompanies his conviction in his own divinity, proven through his communicating outwith the constraints of language.199 Intimate connection surpasses mere words.200 The genuine bonds between Voss and Jackie allow them to communicate in three languages – and none.201 As do those

192 John 1.14
193 See note 7 above. This is language as the proof of existence; expressed by Pat Barker’s (1996: 256-257) Billy Prior, reminiscing about Sarah, with whom he’d had sex in an earlier text (1992:90): ‘in the pub, plying her with port to get her knickers off; and she wanted to talk about Johnny’s death and I didn’t want to listen. Loos, she said. I remember standing by the bar and thinking that words didn’t mean anything any more. Patriotism honour courage vomit vomit vomit. Only the names meant anything. Mons, Loos, the Somme, Arras, Verdun, Ypres. / But now I realize there’s another group of words that still mean something. Little words that trip through sentences unregarded: us, them, we, they, here, there. These are the words of power, and long after we’re gone, they’ll lie about in the language, like the unexploded grenades in these fields, and any one of them’ll take your hand off.’
194 Differences in religious ritual mark distinctions between the Gods of Crete and Protestant Sydney. Where White’s God is wordy, the Greek God’s expression is rich in non-verbal performance. See note 128 above.
195 See, for example, Hart 1993. This is most potent in the Metropolitan at Easter, embodying Christ’s resurrection § 195 p180.
196 P210
197 P216
198 See, for example: Armstrong 2000, Crichton 1978.
199 Voss demonstrates his sovereignty over the Aboriginal people by transcending linguistic limitations. For example: P181, P183; P356: ‘sustained by a belief that he must communicate intuitively with these black subjects, and finally rule them with a sympathy that was above words.’ This is not always successful, of course, such as his failure to communicate with the ‘poet’ and his company P356.
200 P181: “it is necessary to communicate without knowledge of the language”. Voss fears that words are shallow, P203: “Ach, Dugald, Wörter haben keine Bedeutung. Sinn-loss!” This is a beautiful piece of performative onomatopoeia: using language Dugald doesn’t understand to tell him that words have no meaning, that they are nonsense.
201 For example: P293-294: English, German, Jackie’s native language, and the common human symbolism expressed in the cave art.
between Voss and Laura: enabling her to comprehend his German poetry. Captain Michales’ most significant relationships are not verbally constructed. His passion for Eminé overwhelms him, although they have barely exchanged a sentence. His blood ties with Nuri Bey outweigh all bad language between them. Katerina understands him in sheer intimation: words are superfluous.

The realisation that words alone are an inadequate tool to intimacy impels Laura beyond her natural repulsions into embracing the body. The problem is not, however, simply with words, but in our communicative abilities: the often unbridgeable distance between individual souls.

The process of reading another requires interpreting verbal and non-verbal signals. Neither is simple. Deciphering words is more complex than mere linguistic understanding, for there are multiple renderings within each utterance, illustrated powerfully by Voss’ use of his mother tongue: the language of love, tenderness, emotion, and for reaching the divine. This is the language through which he most easily imparts his self. German for Voss won’t bear translation; it is too personal: it is the verbalising of his soul.

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202 P87 The poem he reads is a segment from Heinrich Heine’s (1825) Die Nordsee (The North Sea): the first seven lines of the second part: “Abenddämmerung” (Dusk). P89: “I did understand in a sense, if not the sense of words.”

203 The sum total of their verbal interchange: s37: – Kal h spera, kapetan Mixahl … – Kal h spera, ‘Eminéxanoumth. (Good evening, Captain Michales … Good evening, Eminé Hanum)

204 s35: gi ’autoki enaj ap ’touj duo/maj zei akoma. (That’s why one of us is still alive. p29)

205 For example s47-48 p41-42.

206 Literally in her embracing Rose P175; figuratively in her sexual relationship with Voss P227: ‘this union of earth with light’; and spiritually in her comprehension of Mercy’s incarnation P255: ‘my token of love’.

207 P293-294: ‘the souls of those we know are perhaps no more communicative than their words’. In the context of this study, this gains particular poignancy, since these two novels communicate entirely through words.

208 See, for example, Eibl-Eibesfeldt 1989.

209 See, for example: Jardine 1985, Cixous 1976.

210 Most of Voss’ German utterances are made to Laura (most poignant P200: nie nie nie, niemals. Nein, … zusammen) or Dugald and Jackie (for example P202-203 P229 P233 P292-294).

211 For example with Harry Robarts P412, P414: “Harry? Wie lang sind wir schon hier? … come and read to me … Ein guter Junge.”

212 For example P215: Nutzlos (useless), P317: Irrsinn! (insanity); and the poem he sings as he rides, euphoric, in the company of his Aboriginal subjects P202-203. My translation: A naked soul was riding out / On a horse towards the Blue … / His coat was flying freely. / His white horse with the clouds / Raced for the Prize … / Only the noble coat came to grief. / The tatters fell / Along the sky. Teyssandier 1995: 67 confirms that the poem is White’s own creation.

213 P154: ‘Yes. GOTT. He had remembered. He had sung it. It rang out, shatteringly, like a trumpet blast.’; P415: “O Jesus,” he cried, “rette mich nur! Du lieber!” (Just save me. Dear one!)

214 P87
Chapter Six: Finding God

Idomenéas reveals his soul in his unceasing letter-writing: his revolutionary contribution.²¹⁶ Frank’s soul is written in his poetry²¹⁷: *those rather poor, but bleeding poems that he had torn out and put on paper.*²¹⁸ Without words, his only recourse is to pour out himself: *his last attempt at poetry.*²¹⁹

Dugald describes the written word as ‘the thoughts of which the whites wished to be rid.’²²⁰ This misinterpretation results in Voss’ letters never reaching their intended recipients, destroying their communicative properties, while emphasising the association of word with self: a truth uncovered by Harry Robarts at Palfreyman’s death.²²¹ The fear and antipathy for words exhibited by Captain Michales and Séfakas reinforce this: language has the power to transform.²²² Words are powerful tools: with which to control others and ourselves, or be ourselves controlled:

> Now they would not have dared laugh, for fear of the sounds that might have issued out of their mouths. Nor did they speak ... Words that did not belong to them – illuminating, true, naked words – had a habit of coming out.²²³

²¹⁵ Harry Robarts understands this, expressing his desire for intimacy with Voss as enthusiasm to “learn languages”, to “learn what Mr Voss will understand, and tell what I have inside of me” P263.
²¹⁶ Writing letters to international leaders, requesting assistance in the fight for freedom is the task for which Idomenéas has been dedicated since childhood s 198 (not in translation): Μιανέας, ο διάλογο Μου εκτρώησες ... αυτή την Κρήτη. (One day this son of mine ... will set Crete free.) He writes continuously, undeterred by receiving no reply, because this is his duty, and the path to his salvation s 261: Θα περάσω να ευτυχήσω, γιατί ξέρω πως μου θα ναίπολεμώ παράλληλα για τη ζωή μου ... Ευτυχία, (I will die a free man, because all my life I was fighting for freedom. p226 my alterations) He continues his letter-writing up till the very end, having eschewed flight to the mountains, in order to persist with his campaign. He dies at his desk s 321: ‘Εδώ τούτο, τούτο θα σκοτώνω, (Here is my post ... here I fight, here I shall die! p281 my alterations), writing himself in blood. His words are his soul, revealed when the Turks demand to know where he’s hidden his treasure s 322: ‘Εδώ, αποκρίθηκε υπέρικα κι εδώ θα σκοτώνω τού. (“Here”, he answered calmly, and pointed to his forehead. p281)
²¹⁷ His journal P186: ‘contained the most secret part of himself’. P152: ‘All that this man had not lived began to be written down. ... So, he was truly strong.’ Sharing his poems entails sharing himself, which he will not do P289: “I am not yet ready.” Voss’ reading of them without permission is the deepest violation P313-317.
²¹⁸ P404. This is echoed too in Voss recording the expedition in his presumptuous notebooks P228.
²¹⁹ P405
²²⁰ P234
²²¹ P366: ‘Truth descended upon ignorance in a blinding light. He saw into the meaning of words, and watched the white bird depart out of the hole in Mr Palfreyman’s side as they lowered the body into the ground.’
²²² s 297 (not in translation): Χτίκιο/ναι, μην κολλήσει! (They’re a plague – don’t get infected!)
²²³ P355: The men emerging from their cave, at the rains’ end. We see this also in Palfreyman on his way to death, who P363: ‘no longer had any control over the words he was using’. Harry is similarly silenced by fear P364: ‘Harry Robarts would have called out, if his voice had not been frozen.’
Incarnating the word is crucial to one’s self-consummation. Judd, illiterate, disintegrates. Jackie’s inability to communicate leaves him isolated, welcoming death. Captain Michales, afraid of words till the end, dies struggling, mid-sentence: the sundered utterance mirroring his shattered soul. Séfakas, in contrast, grasps finally the awesome power of language; as does Voss, sharing with Laura their sacramental words of love. Embracing the true intimacy of words, Voss finds himself through a unity of body and soul: manifesting his comprehension and acceptance of an incarnate God.

“\textit{Atheismus is self-murder\textsuperscript{232}} declares Voss in the Bonners’ garden, dismissing Laura’s new-found unbelief as \textit{mean} and \textit{pitiful}.\textsuperscript{233} Yet it is not until, close to death, he at last embraces his own humanness, that he reaches God. It is not until he accepts the pleasures and value of the body\textsuperscript{234} that he can accept the possibility of God in human form; compelled to admit that it is not, after all, Laura whose misanthropy has rejected God, but himself, mortally frightened of the great legend becoming truth.\textsuperscript{236}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{224} P217: ‘All the scraps of knowledge with which he was filled, all those raw hunks of life that, for choice, or by force, he had swallowed down, were reduced by the great mystery of words to the most shameful matter. Words were not the servants of life, but life, rather, was the slave of words. So the black print of other people’s books became a swarm of victorious ants that carried off a man’s self-respect.’
\item \textsuperscript{225} See \textit{Chapter Five: Coming Home}, note 39.
\item \textsuperscript{226} P448-449 P455
\item \textsuperscript{227} See Chapter Five: Coming Home, note 39.
\item \textsuperscript{228} P449
\item \textsuperscript{229} P419
\item \textsuperscript{230} P418: Amongst the \textit{objects of wonder} he discovers with Laura is ‘a species of soul … of substance similar to human flesh’.
\item \textsuperscript{231} Echoed in Tityros’ recognition of his manhood as an equal union of body and soul S 350 p307-308.
\item \textsuperscript{232} P95 This echoes Paul Tillich 1962: 64: ‘Being itself is surface only. If you could say this in complete seriousness, you would be an atheist; but otherwise you are not.’
\item \textsuperscript{233} We see this also in Captain Michales’ suicide: proof of his conviction in his own irredeemableness, of his lack of faith in omnipotent divine benevolence.
\item \textsuperscript{234} For example P408: ‘So they were growing together, and loving. No sore was so scrofulous on his body that she would not touch it with her kindness. He would kiss her wounds, even the deepest ones, that he had inflicted himself and left to suppurate.’
\item \textsuperscript{235} As Voss accuses her P95: so lacking in magnificence that she cannot conceive of divinity — or her only conception is easily destroyed, because of the paltriness of her own self-image.
\item \textsuperscript{236} P415 This echoes Ludwig Feuerbach (Harvey 1995:159): ‘To believe is but to change the “There is a God and a Christ” into the “\textit{I am a God and a Christ}”. The mere belief “There is a God” or “God
Chapter Six: Finding God

For the Cretans, God incarnate is intrinsic to their struggle against the Turks. Easter rituals confuse the sufferings of Christ with those of Crete, associating the Jews’ crucifying of Jesus with the Turkish occupation. The crucified Christ is a palikari killed by the Turks. The Good Friday vigil watches for Crete’s resurrection. And the resurrected Easter Christ is Crete’s liberation: Captain Manólis is not dead, Crete has been freed!

Reality, though, cleaves the perfect union of God with man. Christ is risen from the dead, but Crete is still under Turkish dominion; God has left his humanity behind on Golgotha:

*How long will the people of the Hellenes hang from the cross? We are men, Christ; we are not gods like you. We cannot bear it. Bring the resurrection at last!*  

So complete is the abandonment by God of his mortalness that the crucified Crete has become not man, but woman: ‘a tortured mother in black, whose blood is running down onto the remains of her children.’

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237 Such association of Christ’s suffering with extant oppression is at the root of contemporary liberation theology; see, for example: Rowland 1999, Vaage 1997, Boesak 1995; and discussions of God and suffering by, for example, black women such as Delores Williams (1994), Emilie Townes (1993), Audre Lord (1984).

238 S 185-187 p176-178 (much not in translation) This is augmented by Tityros’ teaching the children that Herod looked just like the Pasha and Judas like Suleiman s 513 (not in translation).

239 S 408 p362. This is familiar contraction of Emmanuel (Emmanuel) which means ‘God is with us’ (Matthew 1.23).

240 S 192 (not in translation): Dehtolbastouseh ikadria tou na blepei thh Krth, menol ajkapinostefan, nabasanetastaveria tou Tourkou kali na staurwetai ... Pote qa qadoume kai'se na, Krth, thh ehdoch/sou ahastash; (His heart couldn’t bear to see Crete, with her crown of thorns, tortured at the hands of the Turks and crucified ... When, Crete, will we also see your glorious resurrection?)

241 S 195 (not in translation): depeqaiei o(kapetamanoj hj leuterwhkeh(Krth!)

242 S 327-328 p287: Wj potetolehoj twv Ellhwn, ahastash, qastaurwetai; ‘Anqwrpo ejhaste, Xristemou, de ejhaste sa kalaisena, qedi/dehahtekoume, fede pia thh’ Anastash!

243 S 173 p164: mauromentil ousa, xarokamenh maha, kaitekountaiafnta/thj apafw stakokal a twmpaidwmthj. Although as woman – therefore matter – the gulf between Crete and God is extended, hope is retained in her maternity. As Mother, Crete is rescued from the sulling of carnal flesh. Further, as the sons of the sacred Mother, all the Cretan palikares are themselves construed as Christ, their personal resurrections assured, even if the sufferings of Crete are not at a foreseeable end. Connections between Crete and the Virgin are strengthened by Kriarás’
Christ’s passion and death as a model for Crete’s fight for freedom is embodied most powerfully in the Abbot’s sacrifice of himself for the monastery. In a gesture as apparently foolish as God’s allowing himself to be crucified, the Abbot goes voluntarily to the gallows, a paragon of dignity in the face of his captors’ derision.

Similarly willing self-sacrifice is made by Palfreyman. But where the Abbot’s faith propels him into the noose, Palfreyman’s weakness leaves him ‘clutching the pieces of his life’. Yet Palfreyman’s emulation of Christ is indubitably the more complete – in its redemptive impact upon his companions. The Abbot may have saved his own soul, but Palfreyman saves Voss.

In joining the expedition, Palfreyman hoped to assuage his guilt at having failed his sister – unable to help her accept her disfigured body, because his love for her was insufficient. Attempting to make good this failing through deliberate self-abasement, Palfreyman is finally offered the chance to expiate his shortcomings in humble sacrifice for his fellow travellers. All of the men recognise him as Christ, even before he is killed, on his long walk to Calvary; reinforced by the spear in his side, and his own last moments of doubt.

depiction of the island at the feet of Christ, still awaiting her fate: is she beloved or bondaged? S 438-439 (not in translation)

244 S 372-377 p327-332
245 1 Corinthians 1.18-31
246 P365 In this, though, Palfreyman enacts the exhortation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1971:337) to ‘drink the earthly cup to the dregs’ – Palfreyman’s emotional agonies epitomising his union with the crucified Christ.
247 P281-282
248 P259: predominantly in the service of Turner, whom he abhors: growing mustard and cress to treat his scurvy P305, shaving him P306, lancing his boils P259.
249 Summed up in his own opinion as his inability to communicate P259; mirroring Jackie P448-449.
250 P364: ‘All remembered the face of Christ that they had seen at some point in their lives, either in churches or visions, before retreating from what they had not understood, the paradox of man in Christ, and Christ in man.’
251 P364: ‘slowly, but deliberately … Palfreyman walked on. … Palfreyman continued to advance.’ John 18.17: ‘carrying the cross by himself, he went to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Gol’gotha.’
252 P365: ‘Then one black man warded off the white mysteries with terrible dignity. He flung his spear. It stuck in the white man’s side, and hung down, quivering.’ John 19.34: ‘one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear’.
253 P364-365: ‘If his faith had been strong enough, he would have known what to do … “Ah, Lord,” he said, upon his knees, “if I had been stronger.” … Ah, Lord, Lord, his mind repeated, before tremendous pressure from above compelled him to lay down the last of his weakness. He had failed evidently.’ Matthew 27. 46: ‘Jesus cried with a loud voice, “E`li, E`li, le ma` sa/bach`tha/ni?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”’ Note that these are also the words of the crucified Cretan Mother s 173: ‘Hl i/’Hl i/l ama`s abaxqani/…
Initially repulsed by the sanctity of Palfreyman’s humility, Voss finds his own salvation through re-enacting his passion and death. Called to account for the death of Palfreyman’s assailant, Voss is made oblation for the sins of another. Approximating humility, he models his sacrifice upon the ornithologist: the professional saint leading him in the steps of Christ.

MEETING GOD

Voss finds God in surrender to the other: stepping down from the throne of magnificence, to embrace the broken body: God with a spear in his side. His journey through the wilderness takes him into the heart of self-knowledge. Alone, he is even at the height of his divine power, a frail god upon a rickety throne. It is in communion that he is glorified.

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254 P366: ‘Pious peasants wore their knees out worshipping similar effigies, Voss remembered with disgust.’ P96 Voss: “My God is above humility.”

255 This is an interesting irony, given that Voss effectively played the role of Pontius Pilate to Palfreyman’s Christ (Matthew 27.15-23), in the choice of who should confront the Aboriginal men.

256 P388-389 There is some further irony here, since it was in fact Judd who was responsible for the Aboriginal man’s death – acting entirely against Voss’ wishes P365.

257 P389: ‘Because he was not accustomed to the gestures of humility, he tried to think how Palfreyman might have acted in similar circumstances’.

258 P231

259 Voss emulates Palfreyman emulating Christ, for example: (1) Fear and weakness: Christ (Mark 15.34): “E’lo·i, E’lo·i, le·ma’ sa-bach’tha·nî?”; Palfreyman P365: “Ah, Lord, … if I had been stronger.”; Voss P415: “O Jesus … rette mich nur! Du lieber!”; P417: ‘Ah, Lord, let him bear it.’

(2) Faith: Christ (Luke 23.46): “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”; Palfreyman P364: “I will trust to my faith.”; Voss P403: ‘I will trust to God.’ Acknowledging his debt to Palfreyman P404: ‘He spoke wryly, for the words had been put into his mouth.’

(3) Death: Christ (Luke 23.53): ‘Then he took the body down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb’; Palfreyman P365: ‘his toes turned in’; Voss dies a mortal death P419: is reduced to ‘the head-thing’.

(4) Resurrection: Christ (Luke 24.5) ‘He is not here, but has risen.’; Palfreyman P366: his body is buried, but his spirit ‘the white bird’ is freed; Voss P477: ‘He is there in the country, and always will be’. Voss’ modelling himself upon Palfreyman is reinforced by Judd’s confusion of the two of them P472-473: “He would wash the sores of the men. He would sit all night with them when they were sick, and clean up their filth with his own hands. I cried, I tell you, after he was dead. There was none of us could believe it when we saw the spear, hanging from his side, and shaking … It was me who closed his eyes.” Voss did indeed clean Frank Le Mesurier’s filth P288, P302. But it was Palfreyman who tended Turner’s sores P305-306. It was Palfreyman who was speared P365: ‘stuck in the white man’s side, and hung down, quivering’, who was given the rites of the dead P366, and after whose death Judd wept P367: “I will not! I will not!” he cried at last, shaking his emaciated body.

260 This process is most powerfully depicted in Bill Viola’s Surrender: a video installation of man and woman falling into themselves and each other, driven together by the powerful sorrow of grief in isolation. (2001 Diptych, video on plasma flat panel displays. Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.) In the words of Howard Dossor (2002:5): we are born into we-ness.

261 See also Chapter Two: Body and Soul, page 45.

262 In addition to mirroring the desert experience of the mystics (see note 152 above) the expedition journey also enacts the process of relationship, specifically his learning love with Laura P205: ‘Human relationships are vast as deserts: they demand all daring, she seemed to suggest.’

263 P414

264 The dual meanings of the word communion: relationship and Eucharist, underline Voss’ passage to God: his acceptance of Christ through Laura’s love enacted in his receiving the Aboriginal man’s witchetty grub host P413.
Chapter Six: Finding God

The approach to God requires accepting one’s own weakness and learning to forgive. Both processes prove stumbling blocks to Captain Michales. Unwilling to relinquish his own self-sufficiency, he takes his guilt and shame to Selena, and destroys himself, in a mixture of pride, defiance and contempt; his impotent hubris exposed through the triumph of death.

Captain Michales ends his text as fractured matter: the manifestation of his fragmented soul. Voss lives on: this familiar spirit, whose name is upon everybody’s lips. Humbled, weak, vulnerable, Voss gains immortality through accepting his inadequacies:

When man is truly humbled, when he has learnt that he is not God, then he is nearest to becoming so.

Voss achieves humility through Laura: finally accepting her devotion, and the mirror of his own fragility. Their relationship completes him in every way. In the true marriage of man with woman, body with soul, he is brought home, to rest forever with the spirits of the land; their union consummated in the great feast: their Eucharist of mutual love.

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265 Voss’ passage to God mirrors the Eucharistic ritual: moving from Liturgy of the Word to Liturgy of the Sacrament through Confession and Absolution, in peace with one’s fellow communicants. Richard Holloway (2002) and Hannah Arendt (2000:180-181) stress the need for forgiveness: of self and other, for functional human relationship; Michael Slote (1997) emphasises its role in approaching God; it is an essential part of Luce Irigaray’s (1993:68) divine imperative to become; echoed by Michel Foucault (Martin et al. 1988: 40): ‘Each person has the duty to know who he is, that is, to try to know what is happening inside him, to acknowledge faults, to recognize temptations, to locate desires, and everyone is obliged to disclose these things either to God or to others in the community’.

266 s 541 p472


268 s541: skopisanoi(mal oi tou sti) pefrej. (His brains spattered the stones. p472)

269 P477

270 P411

271 P408: ‘they were growing together, and loving’, P414: ‘at last he was truly humbled’.

272 Love is portrayed as the channel to completion of oneself by, for example: Luce Irigaray (1991:37), David Hume (1888:353), and René Descartes (1985:356): ‘Love is an emotion of the soul caused by a movement of the spirits, which impels the soul to join itself willingly to objects that appear to be agreeable to it.’ Summed up by W. H. Auden’s (1950:118) “Heavy Date”: ‘Bless you, darling, I have / Found myself in you.’

273 P232 See also Chapter Four: Man v Woman, pages 112-113.

274 See Chapter Two: Body and Soul, pages 51-53.


276 P477-478 See also Chapter Three: Man v Nature, note 112.

277 P418 See also Chapter One: Food and Hunger, pages 31-32.