

Abstract of Adam Zmarzłinski's Doctoral Dissertation,

*Prelude to Cultural Necrophilia: Modernity's Degeneration of Traditional Culture through the Corruption of Archetypes and Fairytale Storytelling**

Subject Introduction

Prelude to Cultural Necrophilia examines the reasons for any culture's, but specifically modern Western one's, affinity for, or love and worship of, death, oblivion, and the stagnant ruin or self, society, and being, which it often justifies on the grounds of keeping occupied in times of mass boredom, nihilism, and purposefulness. Generally, the thesis of *Prelude*, is that every modernity has the same problems. Those being: forgetting the past in favor of contemporary sensibilities and tastes, redefining Man and culture, shifting Man's relationship with technology from *technē* to *technik*, subjecting himself to a moral struggle between tangible and permeable realities and the phantasy that blooms from grounding oneself in one or the other, and the threat of utopian ideology in everyday life. These problems appear in modernity because society, at some point in their growth, neglect archetypes and meaningful storytelling, embrace self-creation to the point of self-alienation, manipulate their own narratives to fit their ego, adhere to groupthink, worship false idols in the form of celebrities and influencers, and indulge too much in escapist phantasy over reality.

However, twenty-first century modernity differs from those that preceded it due to of a plethora of specific twenty-first century problems. Those being: cosmic horror entering the collective *zeitgeist*, systematic educational obedience training to bureaucracy and the compartmentalization of knowledge to a handful of subjects, overabundance of manipulative advertisement, *logos*-constricting political correctness, and a pandemic of academic sophism influenced by the approved ideology, which funnels scholarship toward monetary and status-related rewards instead of practical wisdom formulation. Unchecked, and often encouraged, these problems lead to a collective Will to Pleasure, mass social necrophilia, elimination of anima and animus from the collective *zeitgeist*, and the handing over of culture to emerging political and economic system of zooacracy that is defined as a decentralized structure of independently operating actors whose goals is absolute control over all aspects of Being, using idle pleasures and compartmentalized narratives that shifts attention and blame from the actor of control to an ever-shifting abstract scapegoat or distracting entity.

There are several solutions to thwart these collective problems. Those being: speaking openly about the concept of evil, return to having a social and cultural initiation process for those coming-of-age, be thoughtful creators and mentors, create things and espouse ideas with the forethought of the future, rely less on *technik* and more on *technē*, and study *logos* through the creation of Fableloriums, or storytelling museums. However, these are only temporary solution because no matter what, Man always returns to and yearns for the original problems that craft modernity-specific tribulations. And so, it goes *ad infinitum* until, as cosmic nihilists see it, all is entropy and cold.

Prelude's focus is, first, to explore and understand the shared problems of every modernity, and, second, to recognize the Anti-fable: a tale or narrative that is concerned with the obedience to and appeasement of the establishment and approved ideology; all the while, embracing neophilia for the sake of self-pleasure—be it physical or psychological; its moral is novelty: anything new is, by definition, good, however, this is a cover for the repackaging and

repurposing of old failed ideas, that it hopes to propagate onto a population unfamiliar with the old ideas, say the application of communism onto biometrics or fascism onto popular culture, for the purpose of submission. Both foci hope to enhance the understating of why archetypes and fairytale storytelling must be corrupted to degenerate traditional culture and keep the individual without purpose while awaiting the Abyss, which, for the purpose of *Prelude*, is defined as an impartial time before birth and after death when individual Man is not aware of Being.

Objective and Scope

The primary objective of *Prelude* is to provide a step-by-step analysis of the shared problems of past and current modernities and to inquiry into the meaning, symbolism, and practical application of archetypes and fairytale storytelling in the context of the degeneration of traditional culture. The secondary objective of *Prelude* is to ask *why* these shared problems are connected to the deterioration of character archetypes and fairytale storytelling.

Among others, the following research questions were posed in *Prelude*: 1) How does ennui, Acadia, and entropy lead a modern individual into numerous paradoxes and schizophrenias, such as self-alienation, addiction to triviality, and longing for acknowledgment? 2) Why are there so many definition of culture, Man, and civilization? 3) What is *logos*, and what is its importance? 4) How can understating be manipulated by interest groups and individuals to achieve faulty answers and outcomes? 5) How has the decline of *technē* and the rise of *technik* hastened the emergence of a *Necro-übermensch*? 6) Has bureaucratic management of the mundane and everyday pushed Man into a schizophrenic cultural existence between the tangible and permeable? 7) What role does globalization and its associated -isms/-izations/-ocys have on the spread of the approved ideology? 8) What are archetypes and fairytales, and what is their relationship with fantasy and phantasy? 9) How is the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea a metaphor for the idealized state of culture? 10) What is narrative and how does it relate to manipulating storytelling to propagate the Anti-fable? 11) How does the obedience to the opinion of crowds degenerate individual and collective memory? 12) What are the hero, villain, and false hero archetypes and how do they relate to the Kardashian Deception? 13) Does the unreal, for example, in video games, affect Man's abstract imagine of himself?

The cultural ideals of scholar and jurist, Paweł Włodkowic—those being the protection of minority cultures and dialogue in pluralism—and the Kraków Cultural School of Thought help answering many of the posed research questions that concern the shared modernity problems. Through the analysis of the wilderness within and the wilderness without, and their role in a technologically-oriented society, one can further understand that anonymity and the need for acknowledgment from his peers, drives Man to, in a great part, pursue ambitious ventures that sit outside his survival needs. Because, as stipulated by Martin Heidegger, Man is *Dasein*, Being experiencing itself, he must use all his physical and psychological tools to understand himself and the world around him. To do so, he uses *logos* and socially elevates *logopoios* or storytellers when they unearth a part of Being not experienced or understood beforehand. However, to understand the chaotic dynamics of the world, Man must hone his understanding of *logos* through meticulous and organized definition of words. Unfortunately, language is an expansive tool full of abstractions, dualities, double-meanings, etc., and one idea may be interpreted differently among members of the same clearing or society. This leads to argument and strife. To narrow the field of potential misunderstandings, Man wields *technē* and *technik*. In doing so,

however, he does two things: creates a new set of misunderstands based on *technik*'s jargon and begins to slowly, at least according to his egoism, elevate himself to divine status, as expressed through such ideologies as transhumanism and posthumanism. Such infusion with *technik* leads Man to feel ashamed of his biological being and, to combat his own frailty, he simplifies his technology through the Cleanliness of the Task: the end of a process to make something that is complex and multi-faceted—a system, an ideology, an institution—*seem* less intellectually demanding, and, in terms of an interface, looking aesthetically pleasing, so that its user or propagator *believes* that he has complete mastery of the tool or ideology that he is wielding, while actually having a superficial level of understating of it. The goals of the Task are 1) for those who implement it, to wield and manipulate information gained from societies' use of it for their own ends, such as control, profits, marketing, asset management, etc., and 2) to have something *seem* more novice-friendly and, therefore, more easily acceptable of and submissive towards it by, initially, the individual, then by society. Due to this ease of use, which contradicts the chaotic reality of existence, Man falls into a schizophrenic place between tangible and permeable realities. It is here where boredom and spectacle meet. Where bureaucracy and entertainment merge to instill a sense of a passive acceptance of the digital as tangible leading, in no small part, to drama addiction and cultural necrophilia. This schizophrenic delineation from human to *technik* leads Man to pursue increasingly extreme forms of entertainment that culminate in the most entertaining and virtually-infinite pastime: ideological consumption, which over time climaxes in cultural chaos. To understand this phenomenon, George Modelski's work on Long Cycles stands a foundational effort by which one can interpret ideological civilizations and cycles of entropy.

From the space of cultural chaos and nihilistic impartiality arises the Anti-fable, which corrupts, redefines, and reverses the archetypical rules of fairytale storytelling and the archetypes therein. Archetypes and fairytales are important in differentiating fantasy, phantasy, and reality, and as such, their distortion, leads Man into a labyrinth of phantasy, where he succumbs to his own hauntology and $A \infty B$, or a detachment between ideas; a theory where, just as there is an infinite number of numbers between 1 and 2 ($1 \infty 2$), for example, 1.1, 1.11, 1.111 etc., there is an infinite number of intentional discontinuities and deferments between ideas and premises so that one never reaches a solid conclusion on them for the purpose of diffusing responsibility, authority, or power by one group or authority for their own benefit. Thus, to keenly aware of the Anti-fable, one must recognize character archetypes and fairytale storytelling. However, to do so one must share in the knowledge of his ancestors via the partaking in storytelling. The myth of Pygmalion and Galatea is a metaphor for how creating one's own solution to desires may in turn redefine achievement and purpose as a selfish-endeavor in service to the approved ideology. On the other hand, it is also a metaphor for how determination and will to understating leads individuals to fight against mythlessness and the eradication of the past in its own context. The duality found in the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea is fitting, as many of modernity's narratives have a dual nature them. Sacred narratives related to spirituality and divinity ground Man in his existence as a human *being*. The Anti-fable tries to fragment those narratives and replace them with spectacular dramas with constant deferment of climax so that Man is constantly thirsting for a resolution. Constant pursuit of this, for a lack of a better word, dragon of orgasm, leads individual into obedience to the crowds and the slow fading of his own individual cultural memory. The horror of the crowds, being swallowed up emotionally into the collective feeling of

the masses, leads to individual doing and saying things they would never do or say otherwise. Malicious actors and interest groups take malformed narratives and use them to manipulate masses for their own ends. One of such narrates, in recent memory, is virtue signaling. Anti-fable's narratives borrow heavily from the archetype of the false hero and rebrand him as a celebrity through the Kardashian Deception, or a *theatrical pretending*—an effect—of doing something worthy that can lead to *perceived* or real riches and multi-faceted fame, while the superficiality of one's actions and words in the performance are redefined and supposed by the unsuspecting audience as sincere, substantive, and even heroic. Bestowed with social and cultural praise by the audience, the performer's heroic or generous façade overshadows his many flaws, envies, and desire for attention. It manufactures false heroes. It is a deception by which an unqualified person takes up a position of cultural and social authority without any of the embodied or needed characteristics to *actually* take up that position. Such a Deception begs to be imitated, and it does through the herds of social media celebrity wanna-bes. Unfortunately, for those who subscribe to the Aft-fable of the Kardashian Deception, they objectify themselves into a brand. They reject their humanity in favor of becoming a narrative of their own. These individuals embrace unreality and phantasy, and rather tragically, succumb to myriad of mental illnesses and delusions.

As per the above description, the scope of *Prelude* is rather large as it encompasses a plethora of topics and ideas that are usually treated as unconnected, but which this work, hopefully, unites and provides philosophical and historical backing. *Prelude's* scope is wide because the human experience of storytelling and its understating is wide.

Research Methodology

While *Prelude* is drafted in a framework of cultural and religious studies, it leans heavily into political science, philosophy, and folklore. As such, its whole is made up interdisciplinary elements, not because of the trendiness of those elements, but because to accommodate the work's scope, it is only reasonable—in the context of itself—to borrow from adjacent disciplines. Because some of the terms in *Prelude* refer to abstract and multi-defined concepts, philosophical prisms—existentialism, ontology, and structuralism, to name a few—are utilized to explore the metaphysical and moral aspects of culture, archetypes, and fairytale storytelling. Therefore, philosophers who have pondered degeneracy, existentialism, or evil, are incorporated into *Prelude*, to ground the tangible aspects discussed in the work, with those more permeable ones. Where no terms existed for some of the more novel ideas, language was created to, hopefully, convey the intended meaning as clearly as possible.

As is the case with any large work done in the humanities, the application of qualitative content analysis was vital for its development. Taking the intricate details outlined in, say, Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* and applying them to the Anti-fable's patterns, yielded an insight that no matter the branch of *paramýthi*—myth, legend, fairytale, fable, parable, etc.—the general patterns almost always bear the same design, especially, when a moral or anti-moral is the end. Regarding the Anti-fable section, various perspectives on folklore and fairytales were used—Rollo May, Stith Thompson, Jack Zipes, Marie-Louise Von Franz, among others—to provide a full spectrum of analysis from a varied stream of ideological perspectives, thus giving the work a multi-layered aspect, as opposed to looking at them through a singular prism. This approach helped in finding various patterns in the way narratives are composed by

institutions, governments, and corporations driven by an approved ideology. In the shared modernity problems section, analyzing the aforementioned work by George Modelski not only put the declines and upturns in the context of their political origins, but also supplied content for the anti-fable section when discussing character archetypes that appeared during these ups and downs. In that sense, the content analyzed in one chapter or section helped clarify other content in a different part of the work, thus, providing an analytical loop of a sorts.

Additionally, *Prelude* was composed on the foundations of ontological frame analysis, historical-comparative analysis, functional theory, Propp's structuralism, Lüthi's literary analysis, Jungian symbolic psychoanalysis, and a smidge of diachronic perspectives, among others. For more on the methodology, please see *Prelude*'s 'Methodological Preamble' section for details.

Selected Foundational Literature

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