

Myth And Alchemy In Creative Writing

An Exegesis Accompanying The Novel

Children Of The Earth

by

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Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopy.

Signed.....

Date.....

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Synopsis

The novel *Children Of The Earth* is about transformation. It uses Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a metaphor for the processes which occur in the psyche of each character, and is based on Jungian insights into myth and alchemy. Archetypes that underlie the unconscious processes of all humanity are seen in the symbolism of three very different religious traditions, namely Greek mythology, the Hebrew Old Testament and Australian Aboriginal beliefs. I explore the ways in which these three great mythologies might have converged in colonial South Australia.

The story deals with the troubled marriage of isolated settler couple, Hestia and Adam George, and the effects on it of three people who come into their lives.

Itinerant German mineralogist Johannes Menge (based on a real life pioneer) is a self-taught, eccentric polymath, and a devout but unorthodox exponent of the Bible. In Jungian terms he fulfils the role of an archetypal, but flawed, 'Wise Old Man.' Menge represents nineteenth century Protestantism, albeit still trailing some arcane superstitions. His protégé, a disgraced young teacher of classics, calls himself Hermes, and represents the role of Greek mythology in European civilization. Reliving the life of the mercurial god in the antipodes, he becomes messenger, trickster and seducer. Unatildi, an Indigenous girl whom Adam finds in a burnt-out tree trunk, is an archetypal maiden. She introduces the Europeans to the mythology of their new land, as sacred for her people as the Bible is for Johannes Menge. Each of these three characters plays a part in transforming the marriage of Adam and Hestia, and each, in turn, undergoes a personal metamorphosis.

Aboriginal women act as midwives at the birth of the love-child of Hestia and Hermes. Named Sophia, after the goddess of wisdom, the new child is thought to have inherited the miwi spirit of Unatildi's lost infant. On his deathbed, as Menge bequeaths his wisdom to his Australian friends, he predicts that Sophia will understand the sacredness of all spiritual life.

Eventually Hestia and Adam find themselves changed by their encounters with the archetypes of myth. News of Menge's death on the goldfields gives them the courage they need to begin rebuilding an honest relationship.

The novel is 107,400 words in length and is accompanied by an exegesis of 20,170 word, entitled *Myth And Alchemy In Creative Writing*. The exegesis describes the interactive process of researching and writing, as well as exploring the value of Jungian concepts for creative writing, and current issues of creating Indigenous characters. There is an emphasis on the Jungian approach to mythology and alchemy.