<u>The Impact of Mythology, Ideology, and Psychology in a Digital Culture</u>

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<u>Introduction</u>

In the current digital, media-saturated age, there is a growing confusion between reality and unreality. This is seen through the constant conflict between science and pseudoscience, between facts and non-facts. Though this conflict has existed throughout history, there is a major historical shift occurring in the present digital age as there is now a greater emphasis on the unreality than on the reality. This has impacted the way communities form and operate and, significantly, is pulling these communities farther apart. This paper will examine this shift through three aspects of culture: the mythological, the ideological, and the psychological.

According to Aristotle, humans have an innate desire to create community, and yet the systems and ideological structures we build seem to distance society from this goal. Despite centuries of philosophical thought, humanity seems to be no closer to achieving community than Aristotle was in his time. The mythological, ideological, and psychological have all impacted the ways in which communities operate and function throughout history, and this is never more true than in the digital age. However, the digital age also impacts the mythologies, ideologies, and psychologies of modern individuals, which also moves individuals further and further from true community. Perhaps the ancient Greeks were onto something when they created myths to explain the unexplainable – perhaps the glue of our communities exists in the illusions in which we choose to believe.

<u>Mythology</u>

According to Aristotle, humans are intrinsically social beings and require a sense of community in order to live well. Aristotle used the Greek word *Eudaimonia* to define the purpose

of human-kind – this is to live well and find happiness. To Aristotle there is also an ethical aspect of living well, which is an integral part of community (Aristotle 1999). Part of creating this community is being able to make sense of the world in which we exist, and this requires story. This is why humans, according to Aristotle, want to create mythology that serves the purpose of story. These myths or stories create a lens through which to look at the world, which helps to explain certain phenomena. For example, Zeus's lightning bolt and the phenomena of lighting, or to examine issues regarding human nature, which we would later connect to the psychological, such as the question of ego in the story of Icarus. One common critique of mythology is that myths are simply untruths or flights or imagination, and we would be better off without them in a science-based world. It is common knowledge that the phenomenon of lightning is not caused by Zeus, so why listen to untruths when we know the truth?

Gaston Bachelard argues that mythology, though at its barest definition is an untruth, is not necessarily detrimental to believe in. Humans are able to create higher purposes and goals which allow for a sense of direction in the lives of individuals, and in the life of a society as a whole. Furthermore, Bachelard, in *The Poetics of Space*, argues that mythology, rather than being simply being a lie that has been created purposelessly, instead valorizes and elevates existence (1994).

Nietzsche addresses the purposelessness and difficulty in living without mythology with the metaphor of the Last Man. The Last Man lives a meaningless existence because he is interested only in comfort and ease. The meaningless existence of the Last Man, for Nietzsche, comes in part because of the death of God. The lack of any universal belief or unifying idea causes a meandering, purposeless existence. What Nietzsche was identifying was living without mythology. Without mythology we are condemned to a meaningless, meandering existence,

without any collective unifying power. Mythology, like storytelling and imagination, requires effort, and the Last Man is not one to engage themselves in the world around them. Hannah Arendt also warns of the dangers of a lack of engagement in the world. We must all participate in the community in which we live. This is perhaps the only way to avoid the pitfalls of an existence without mythology (Arendt 2006). Through mythology and story, we must all participate in the community in which we live.

Nietzsche supported the importance of art and its unifying power as a mythological device. He suggested that art may be a replacement for religion as he believed that in the modern, secular world, religion (or Christianity for him specifically) has fallen out of favour. To Nietzsche, Christianity allowed for the creation of common and shared myths, and therefore community. When this falls out of favour, he questions how Western society will be unified if the common myths of religion are not to be relied upon. He believed this would create a society without direction, drifting aimlessly like the Last Man. Dramatically, he states, "God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!" (Nietzsche 2008, 120). The issue in our modern world is that art is not able to replace religion as a mythological device.

Walter Benjamin writes that "We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual – first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function" (Benjamin 2012, 22). Art, therefore, is an intrinsic part of mythology, which is in turn an intrinsic part of community. The importance of mythology and community is emphasized by the cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, when he explains the importance of story: "To put it paradoxically, the event must become a "story" before it can become a communicative event" (Hall 2012, 164). Stories – and therefore myths – help to communicate information about the world around us in a way that

is not direct information, and therefore more "communicative" and digestible. Information and myths are distinct entities. Communication is the key to community. Myths communicate information, but information does not communicate myths.

French philosopher Roland Barthes argues that the modern world is not a "post-mythological" world that no longer relies upon these untruths of the past and sees only "truth," but it is simply that the delivery methods of the mythology in the digital age have changed (Barthes 2012). Can digital culture be the way in which society disseminates its common myths or commonly held beliefs? In this media-saturated age, it can be easy to feel like there are many – often conflicting – pieces of information coming from all sides at once. The bombardment of information serves to create many things that can be perceived as myths, but an overload of quantity of these pseudo-myths does not assure their quality or that they will serve as a unifying belief. In fact, this bombardment of information serves only as facsimiles of mythology, as they do not ask for any kind of true faith, in the way religion might (or in the way ancient myths did), but rather serve as a temporary placeholder, which can be replaced with the swipe of a thumb on a screen.

French Marxist Guy Debord described modern society as one of spectacle. Social media, like his spectacle, presents itself as an "instrument of unification" (Debord 2012, 117). Debord continues that "The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible" (Debord 2012, 119). These terms can all be applied rather easily to social media platforms, which also claim to create community and unify the global society. However, these platforms fall short of these promises, as the global society seems to grow ever more divided – an issue that has only been exacerbated by the echo chamber of social media algorithms. The facsimiles of mythology that we are bombarded with for hours of our lives are therefore in the

category of unreality, rather than reality. True mythology, which requires genuine belief and dedication, is of course the reality of those that believe it. For the ancient Greeks, Zeus simply was the cause of lightning. There was no necessity to prove that Zeus caused lightning, as this was an accepted belief. This represented something to the community of the ancient Greeks, which served as the basis for their storytelling, ritual, economy, and social interactions. It had a timeless, lasting power, which information alone does not. The belief in the bombardment of modern facsimiles of mythology, which are not mythology in the Greek sense and do not serve the same purpose of old mythology (which, as noted above, is often much closer to being simply information) is limited by its time-sensitive relevance, and does not become the embedded reality, or "truth" of its audience. However, this does not necessarily mean that social media and the media-saturated existence is not the reality of the modern individual. Paradoxically, digital culture has become the "real," rather than the unreal we know it to be. The present issue is that the information/pseudo-mythology within this digital culture is *not "real,"* unlike in the mythology outside of digital culture, which is *"real."*

One of the problems of these modern facsimiles of mythology is that they must serve an economic purpose, when they have been co-opted by the capitalist structure under which we live. The purpose of these modern facsimiles of mythology is to sell something, which does not have the timelessness of the myths of the past – it cannot form the basis of the ritual and storytelling interactions within a community, as it is too close to bare information.

These facsimiles of mythology also do not adhere to Aristotle's ideas on the ethical nature of living well. The reason is that information as we receive it today is not ethical – it presents itself as myth and unification, but it is soulless and economic at its core. For example, advertisements frequently make their way into the speech and social interactions of modern

society – especially among youth. However, the purpose of these advertisements is to increase the profits of the company, and they are interested in creating myths only to serve this purpose. The myth of Zeus benefited no company and no profit upon its creation – it benefited only the community that then had a collective understanding of the world ("reality") around them. The focus of these facsimiles of mythology is their emphasis on the unreality of reality and the spectacle. The motive of profit surpasses that of community. The creation and maintenance of true community is supported by story, and the original concept of what mythology has the potential to do.

Ideology

The ideologies we create form the societies in which we live. These ideologies create structural conceptions of how individuals in a society might live well together, which as Aristotle states, is a necessary component of being able to live well. Humans are social human beings and need community in order to thrive. In the modern, digital world we appear to be more connected than ever, and yet we find ourselves increasingly disconnected at the same time. Ideology is the structure we need to live well, but we struggle when we are restricted by it. The ideologies that we create, such as religious doctrine or the justice system, uphold social norms which dictate the behaviour of individuals within our society, and therefore should create a collective community in which we can all find a place. In theory, this is for the greater good, as we must all buy in to the norms and laws of our society – how else would we ever trust any other being we encounter, and therefore find community? However, in the modern world it is apparent that these systems do not function as they were meant to (if they ever truly did). In 2023, the World Health Organization declared loneliness a "global public health concern" (Do Couto 2023). The

challenge then becomes changing these systems, which is extremely difficult. Ideology is thus a double-edged sword. It is necessary for community structures (and community is a necessary component of living well for the social human being), and yet it also seems to be a rut into which we fall – one we rarely seem to be able to dig ourselves out of.

French philosopher Louis Althusser describes the process of "interpellation" (Althusser 2001) and writes that all human beings within a society are interpellated into the ideologies of that society from birth – so much so that these ideologies and structures become "logical" and the ability to question the necessity of the structure has been stripped from the individuals.

Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan writes about the medium as the message (McLuhan 2012), which in the digital age, seems more relevant than ever. For example, in our digital world, everyone must have a smartphone. This is simply necessary. It would be so difficult to achieve anything without one (such as booking an airline ticket, finding a route with public transportation, or seeking employment) that it is simply necessary to obtain one. Devices are often used in classrooms, at work, or for hobbies, and these programs all operate on the assumption that those participating will have a device by default. Parents of school-aged children are asked to download an app to communicate with their child's teacher with increasing frequency. The smartphone, according to McLuhan's framework, is the message, rather than the information it conveys. Reverting modern society to one which does not require smartphones seems a rather steep, if not impossible task, as they have changed the ways in which society (and therefore communities) function, which has in effect interpellated us as users of these devices into the ideologies they communicate. One must ask: who decides that this is the case? Do educators decide it is best to communicate with parents via smartphone app? Do big tech companies push devices into schools and work in order to ensure their success as a product? Or

is it simply that the social norms would make individuals without devices social outcasts? Perhaps the real problem is that it is a blend of all these causes (and more), which causes technology to become so integral to the fabric of our institutions.

Ideologies, like mythology and unlike technology, provide a structure for people to believe in, which brings comfort and community. Religion comforts those that subscribe to it, as it allows them to believe in something "greater" than themselves and to understand the purposefulness of every event. Religion is but one example, as the same framework can be applied to any ideology. However, Jean-Paul Sartre argues that this comfort could be dangerous. He believed that it is dangerous for an ideology to do the thinking, rather than individuals themselves. He advocated for facing reality without a "crutch," as he thought this was a necessary part of being able to live freely and well. He uses the term "bad faith" to describe the type of faith which requires belief or acceptance without question (Sartre 1966). These beliefs are also given to you by an outside force – you did not create them yourself. To Sartre, it is good to question the beliefs we hold, and he believed it was necessary to create beliefs yourself, which are not given to you by an outside force (like blindly following a religion, for example). Creating beliefs yourself, however, is significantly more difficult than following a pre-existing structure, as you must take responsibility for your own beliefs and create your own "reality." However, one might counter this idea with: so what? Does it truly matter if the ideologies and structures we believe in are not "reality" if they help us survive? Is living without the crutch of a preexisting ideology truly a better, more free life, or does this simply create misery? Is misery freedom? Furthermore, one must ask that if "reality" is simply an individual perception of the world, then does facing reality to one person might mean something entirely different to another?

Of course, these questions have been debated amongst philosophers for centuries and it is not in the nature of philosophy to provide answers that are conclusive, so the answers to these questions will always be inconclusive. Philosophical "answers" are not hard answers, instead they provide ways for us to ask the right questions. What makes up "reality" is entirely subjective, and the definition of freedom varies from philosopher to philosopher.

Simone de Beauvoir describes the comfort in a social contract (or ideological structure), which ensures that society runs for the benefit of all – this brings a sense of surety in one factor in our lives that we can rely on, when so much else is unsure. De Beauvoir also writes that, "freedom realizes itself only by engaging itself in the world" (de Beauvoir 1980, 78), which perhaps encapsulates the entirety of these questions down into one sentence. Engagement with the world around us, including our ideologies, is the only true way to ensure that we do not fall into "bad faith," even if we did not create our own ideologies.

Byung-Chul Han, a South Korean-German philosopher, argues that the reason we face the problems we do in the current age is that we have lost the anchor of true community because community is now a commodity. This is a result of the ideology of neo-liberalism and capitalism. He writes that "The ideology of "community" or a "collaborative commons" leads to the total capitalization of existence. It makes it impossible to be friendly without a purpose. In a society of continuous, mutual feedback, friendship, too, becomes commercialized. People are friendly to get better ratings" (Han 2015, 5). This current society, with a hyper-focus on the individual and individual identity creates a hyper-individualistic society, which is focused on the transactions between individuals, rather than collaboration or sharing in good faith. The focus is taken entirely off of community, and everything must benefit the individual. Byung-Chul Han also writes that "Neoliberalism turns the oppressed worker into a free contractor, an entrepreneur of

the self. Today, everyone is a self-exploiting worker in their own enterprise. […] Today, anyone who fails to succeed blames themself and feels ashamed. People see themselves, not society, as the problem" (Han 2015, 2). Every aspect of our lives drives towards this idea of success and "enterprising," and further from true community.

The capitalist ideology of modern society requires there be an end goal – a utopian society that is reachable if everyone strives to be their absolute best and succeed in every aspect of their lives (Camargo 2020). This draws on outdated ideas about progress and time as linear, which is neither productive nor true. For example, archaeologists today understand that there is no pre-destined or specific reason why humans evolved the way we did and created the societies we have. This is the result of many events beyond our control over a significant period of time. Furthermore, early humans were not "less" and modern humans "more evolved," as time does not equal progress (Olszewski 2020). The same framework can be applied to modern capitalistic ideology. Modern society is burning itself out trying to reach the promised capitalist utopia, and yet it never arrives. It never arrives because it is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of so-called "progress." However, as Althusser describes with his process of interpellation, this idea of "progress" is ingrained in our society, and changing this ideology is nearly impossible as it has become accepted and therefore not questioned. Of course we must all strive towards an end goal where we have a society, as in Aristotle's concept of *Eudaimonia*, where we are able to live well and find happiness. What is the point if we do not?

Psychology

In the digital, mediated age, we are encouraged to live in the unreal, online world, and almost all individuals in the digital age participate in the online world. Barcelona based researchers Lluís Mas Manchón (Pompeu Fabra University) and David Badajoz Dávila (Autonomous University), whose research focuses on communication and the influence of social networking, write that "the Pew Research Center reported in 2018 that 95% of teens in the US (from 13 to 17) had access to smartphones, 72% were using Instagram, 69% Snapchat, 51% Facebook, and 45% admitted being online almost constantly" (2022, 1). Almost half of all American teens are therefore online almost constantly – and much has changed in the seven years since this report. Social media and online use have only grown more ingrained.

Social media platforms have monetized our attention by selling advertising space to third parties, meaning that they have a vested interest in keeping users on the platform for as long as possible in order to show them as many ads as possible ("The Attention Economy" 2021). Social media algorithms therefore use psychological tricks to create addictive tendencies – to ensure their consumers continue returning. These algorithms are extremely personalized and have an intense focus on the individual, which, along with the focus on the display-of-self that posting online permeates into society, correlates with narcissistic traits among those that use social media frequently.

Manchón and Dávila define narcissism with the following:

Narcissism was conceptualized in 1988 as 'a grandiose sense of self-importance or uniqueness; a preoccupation with (. . .) power, beauty, or ideal love; exhibitionism; (. . .) interpersonal exploitativeness, relationships that alternate between extremes of overidealization and devaluation; and a lack of empathy' (2022, 2).

Further, "The correlation between social media use (SNS use) and narcissism is positive for all countries and for males and females" (Manchón & Dávila 2022, 18). The self-centered social media use that is so prevalent today shifts the focus to the individual, and away from community, which as previously discussed, negatively impacts how the social human being operates in the world. Community requires empathy and an understanding of the experiences of others, which those with narcissistic traits have a more difficult time experiencing. This focus on the self bleeds over from the online world into the real world, as Manchón and Dávila's study tracked narcissistic traits in the offline world. Social media algorithms teach individuals (especially impressionable youth) that the world is all about them, and so they must wonder: how do other people matter – online or in the real world?

German philosopher Jürgen Habermas believed that in order for the public sphere to function properly, everyone within that public sphere should adhere to some sort of communicative integrity (Habermas 1987). Everyone within a society has a responsibility to communicate by engaging themselves with the material in a way that makes it their own. This ensures everyone fully understands the subjects they discuss and communicates in a way that is effective and truthful. When communicative integrity is not upheld, and individuals do not engage themselves with matters of discourse, communication becomes what the existentialist Martin Heidegger calls "idle talk" (2001, 211). To him, this is a degraded form of communication and does not call for the engagement of communicators within a discussion – there is a sort of passivity to it. In the online world, we often see Heidegger's "idle talk." It is easier than ever in the modern age to give an opinion on any subject of one's choosing, whether or not there is any understanding or background in that subject. This, along with the anonymous nature of online discourse, means that there is a lack of integrity in communication in the digital

age. This, of course, can bleed over into the "real" world. Louis Leung and Renwen Zhang, in their study on narcissism and its correlation to social media use in youth write that "The anonymity and reduced nonverbal cues in the online environment offer perpetrators the cloak of disguise, reducing their risk of being condemned and punished and thus intensifying their bullying behaviors" (2017, 50). They continue that "narcissists are likely to employ aggression and bullying as a means of dominating others in order to attain their desired goals and maintain their grandiose sense of self […] adolescents with high levels of narcissism were not concerned about portraying themselves as aggressive because they deemed aggression acceptable" (2017, 55). The individualistic nature of online interactions, which frequently occur when one is alone, only further contribute to the narcissistic traits of those that participate. Aggression, or incivility, is acceptable because everything is about them anyway, and the feelings of others are not taken into account. The lack of face-to-face interaction causes Habermas' communicative integrity to break down, which means that our society's ability to form proper discourses is also breaking down. This has had an effect on modern politics, which often makes appeals to emotion, and debates often devolve into name-calling (such as the first presidential debate in the American 2020 election, in which President Donald Trump refused to listen to the moderator or answer his questions (Seitz-Wald 2020)). In a democracy, moderators and the rules of debate are important for allowing discourse and debate – which is one path of collaboration and is supposed to allow voters to understand their candidates' platforms. Losing the ability to discuss with integrity only pushes us further from our goals of democracy and community, as it actively inhibits voters from making decisions based solely on the politics that might benefit them most. In this example, President Trump set the example, as the President of the United States, that incivility is not only acceptable, but the correct way to conduct oneself in political discourse. This actively inhibits the

productive discussion of important issues and actively breaks down communicative integrity within the public sphere.

The move to a digitally based society had direct impacts on our ability to form and uphold communities. Jonathan Haidt writes about this in *The Anxious Generation*:

> The Great Rewiring of Childhood pulled young people out of real-world communities, including their own families, and created a new kind of childhood lived in multiple rapidly shifting networks. One inevitable result was anomie, or normlessness, because stable and binding moralities cannot form when everything is in flux, including the members of the network. (Haidt 2024, 138)

As previously discussed, we require structure and norms to hold our communities together. Without these things, we see a break down in ethical structures, which the social contract of ideological structures requires for a society to function for the benefit of all, which brings comfort. The breakdown of ethical structures can create rampant individualism – which as we have seen correlates with narcissistic behaviours. The commodification of our attention creates an exploitation of our attention for profit, which drives us further from our goal of community. The more social media corporations turn a profit over appealing to our psychology to keep us on their apps, the more obsessed with ourselves as individuals we become, and therefore the more narcissistic traits we display. If we are focused on ourselves, we are being taken out of communities, and if we are taken out of real-world communities, as Haidt writes, "stable and binding moralities cannot form." If we cannot form stable moralities, there is nothing upholding communicative integrity, and the fabric of our democratic community begins to crumble.

As the digital and screen world has become so intensely addictive, for some this bleeds over into their everyday lives. Maladaptive daydreaming is a form of dissociation in which individuals cannot stop themselves from daydreaming as often as is physically possible. It is a

"compulsive fantasy activity that becomes one's main priority in life" (Nowacki 2024, 1). It also often occurs when individuals feel the events in their real life are overwhelming or not as they wish them to be. The daydream world is therefore associated with perfection and control – daydreamers have control over the characters and events that take place, and report that they cannot feel disappointed by these things as they do in real life. In Nowacki's study, participants remarked that their expectations of real life were high, which meant that nothing could compare to it. They could come up with the best scenarios and events in daydreams, which meant everything else was a let-down. Maladaptive daydreaming negatively impacts the life of those that suffer from it, as they struggle to stop themselves from daydreaming, which impacts their ability to complete necessary tasks day to day (even those required for living and bodily functions). Sufferers of maladaptive daydreaming also struggle to form real connections with others and be able to communicate with them effectively. Individuals that suffer from maladaptive daydreaming also frequently report a number of other diagnoses, including depression (Nowacki 2024). This is another example of the "unreal" pulling individuals from communities, as the focus is on the self and the experiences of the self. The fear of disappointment means that those that suffer from maladaptive daydreaming struggle to form and participate in communities, as they believe being isolated is a more fulfilling experience for themselves. However, this is not necessarily the case, as the Nowacki study observes. In order to cope with loneliness, many turn to daydreams to feel connected to others, which results in their further isolation. Due to their lack of community, they continue to push themselves away from others, and this creates a feedback loop which is extremely difficult to escape.

In terms of our addiction to screens and our exploitation by social media algorithms, this psychological phenomenon reflects Lacan's theory of projection identification, and the desire to

close the gap between audience and screen. Reality can be challenging and disappointing, and perhaps by taking away the community in childhood, we have lessened our children's ability to cope with this. We desire true community, as a fundamental core concept of our beings. Closing the gap between the audience and the screen in a cinema allows the audience to feel connected to the story – which brings them closer to this goal of community. However, it is not true community, as it does not exist in reality. Yet, with the online, "unreal" world, we are losing our ability to tell the difference between these two, as we exist in both simultaneously at all times. If, in 2018, 45% of youth admitted to being online almost constantly, 45% of youth existed perhaps more in unreality than they did in reality. This is a problem, as unreality is only a facsimile of community. Social media pretends to bring us together, but it is only interested in the exploitation of users for profit – not their well-being in a community. Due to the rise in the use of screens and therefore the rise of incivilities, true community is rapidly disappearing. Many youth do not seem to be able to tell the difference – though it is evidenced that there is a difference by the increasing mental health issues among youth (Abrams 2023). We are not able to live together, and therefore live well as a community, because we live separated from each other – both mentally and physically. This disconnection between individuals has led loneliness to be a "global public health concern" according to the World Health Organization (Do Couto 2023).

Composition and Depth: Conclusion

Mythology might be untruth, however the importance of the purpose it has served across the history of humanity cannot be understated. Through mythology we are able to participate and engage in the society in which we live, as myths allow for common beliefs, which is integral in creating community. In the modern, digital age, however, myths have been co-opted by the

capitalist drive for profit and are no longer true mythology. They are instead facsimiles of mythology, which is much closer to information than story and does not have the lasting power and longevity of mythology of the past. These facsimiles of mythology also cannot support the creation and maintenance of true community in the real world, due to their co-opted and informational nature. They do not communicate anything of value beyond a push to purchase the next product, and as communication is the key to community, are a driving force behind the disconnection between individuals in the online age. The ideology of community has been commodified by our capitalist structure, which has created a hyper-individualism as a result of the disillusionment many have with the structures and communities that should care for them.

Social media also emphasizes the self and self-image and has been shown to be associated with an increase in narcissistic traits, especially among youth, as noted by Lluís Mas Manchón and and David Badajoz Dávila. The narcissism that social media promotes also actively discourages communicative integrity, and this has impacted the way youth (especially those with more narcissistic traits) behave in the offline world, as they are more prone to bullying and aggression. These factors all actively detract from our ability to form and maintain consistent communities, as the psychological focus is on the self. Other people are rarely, if ever, taken into account. The increasing frequency with which youth are diagnosed with and report mental health issues would indicate that the lack of community is having real-world impacts on the psychology of our society.

Human beings crave community. We all desire connection and a sense of unity among our peers. We are also sensitive to being excluded or criticized. Philosophers, like those discussed in this essay, have spent centuries discussing and thinking on the best ways to build and maintain communities in ways that work for the majority, and in ways that would sustain

over long periods of time. Yet, we do not adhere to any of the ideas of these thinkers and instead seem to continue to drift further from our real-world communities. The digital age has exacerbated the distance between individuals and their real-world communities and has altered the way our myths, ideologies, and even our psychologies function.

What we believe in holds strong importance in the function of community. The systems we give power are rooted in our ability as a society to uphold them, or to allow them to be upheld. Truth, as we have seen, is subjective. It is another system we give power – and that power is readily co-opted by politicians, CEOs, and anyone else who might gain from it (especially monetarily). However, this susceptibility to being co-opted should not be mistaken for a lack of control on the part of the masses. It is the belief or apathy of the masses that allows for truth to be co-opted, as noted in Althusser's process of interpellation. Should the masses wish to apply the thinking of the philosophers discussed in this paper, we might begin to be able to co-opt myths, ideologies, and our psyches for ourselves. The truth may be subjective, but it still serves a purpose as a foundation for our society upon which to build. Mythology may deal with untruths, yet it is true in how it binds communities together. Sometimes these myths are sinister, sometimes they are positive, but the upholding of these myths is the decision we make as a community, and this is ultimately the glue that binds us together. The upholding of these myths may come through culture, and specifically creative culture such as art and film. Rick Groen writes, in *The Globe and Mail*, "Paradise may be an illusion, but art isn't – or, at least, it's an illusion of a different sort, whose necessary deceptions mirror life's multiple deceits. [Filmmaker] Ang Lee once remarked: 'Sometimes I feel illusions are life's essence. I can trust them even more than real life that's full of deceit and covering up'" (Groen 2013). The revisiting of our mythological, ideological, and philosophical structures cannot be an individual effort –

results of this nature will only happen through intentional community building and a focus on the collective. This is the mythology and the ideology of the future: created by communities in a way that will serve the interests of those that belong to it. As Simone de Beauvoir writes, "And the truth is that outside of existence there is nobody. Man exists." (de Beauvoir 1980, 15). In other words, our fellow human beings are all that we have. It is high time we gave them the priority they deserve. After all, to paraphrase de Beauvoir, for one of us to have a good life, we all must have a good life.

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