



Mahamarineru: Examining Imogen S'Jet's Journey as Fleet Command in Homeworld 3 through a Kristang Creole/Indigenous Cosmological-Archetypal Lens

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Abstract

This paper analyses and comments on Imogen S'Jet's journey in Homeworld 3 as Fleet Command aboard the Khar-Kushan Mothership from a unique and little-studied but very significant perspective: that of someone, the author, a creole/indigenous scholar-practitioner who holds the same role in the creole/indigenous Kristang culture as Kabesa or leader of not just the Kristang community but of what in Kristang is called Gaia Tonakodra, the reawakened collective unconscious of the entire living planet, itself a fleet of individuated beings and collectives of individuated beings or eleidi in Kristang. Also analogous to the Cylon Hybrids of the re-imagined Battlestar Galactica series, both Imogen and I, together with Karan S'jet and Tiaa'Ma, appear to be what both the Homeworld series and Kristang culture call Navigators or Mahamarineru – people who make a wilful and deliberate choice to sacrifice some of their own individual freedom to connect and immerse themselves fully, while still lucid and awake, into a collective unconscious to guide it forward and support it on an unconscious level. I here thus explore Imogen's journey in comparison to my own in real-life, providing some insight through the Kristang cosmological-archetypal lens of Mahamarineru that emerges from this comparison into Imogen's own psychoemotional individuation or development of herself as the Mahamarineru of the Khar-Kushan fleet, and the unique underlying challenges or struggles that she might face as Mahamarineru that are emergent in the Homeworld 3 narrative but not always fully concretised.

Keywords: Homeworld, Indigenous, Archetype, Kristang, Cosmology, Mahamarineru

1. Introduction: Who Are The Kristang?

The Kristang people are a creole/indigenous ethnic community originating from the Portuguese conquest of Malacca in August 1511 and in subsequent coercive intermarriages between the arriving Portuguese soldiers and local Malay residents thereafter. Long suppressed, colonised and marginalised by both colonial and independent authorities and institutions even following decolonisation, today, the community is mainly resident in the three *Sidadi Koroza* or core cities of Melaka, Singapore and Perth, with a large-scale internationally-recognised grassroots revitalisation initiative for both the critically endangered Kristang language and for our wider culture, identity and ways of being underway in Singapore led by myself, the Kabesa or leader of the Kristang since February 2016 in terms of the language (Wong, "Kodrah Kristang"), and since August 2022 in terms of the much wider and more expansive scope of culture, identity and ways of being (Wong, "Moving from language to literature").

Today, eight years after revitalisation started in earnest and following rapid and dramatic success in achieving its aims, Kristang is unique among revitalising or regenerating



indigenous languages and cultures in that it has come to be very strongly associated with the concepts of revitalisation, reinvigoration and regeneration by those who are aware of its existence, especially in Singapore; the Kristang language itself, for example, is informally called the *Linggu Semulandu*, or the Resurrection Language of Singapore, because of the very strong focus of the effort on the future and future(s) of Kristang, sustainability initiatives, engagement with radical and rejuvenating real-world and real-time relevant concepts and ideas, including and especially restorative justice, science fiction and fantasy, mental health, and decolonisation and reindigenisation, and the involvement and leadership of the younger and future generations of Kristang people. I myself became Kabesa at just 24 years of age in February 2016 through processes of leadership natural to island Southeast Asia, and today, at 32, am already regarded as an elder within the community for not just my knowledge, wisdom, abilities and psychoemotional health, but my willingness and drive to expand Kristang identity, culture and ways of being through the use of all of the above methods and domains to support both older and younger Kristang people, as well as the people of Singapore's other constituent communities interested in breaking free of oppressive cycles of abuse and trauma (Suffian).

This ability to rapidly expand, develop and refine our culture and what it means to be Kristang is also Kristang's other unique strength and trait: our particular process of creolisation, known as *sunyeskah* or dreamfishing (Next Generation Foresight Practitioners). Most creole cultures are arguably highly adaptive and improvisational by definition and nature, working to incorporate or include sometimes highly contrastive or complex material from other progenitor or source cultures into their own, and harmonising and transmuting this material into something more familiar. Kristang is no stranger to this; however, we appear to be unique among creole cultures in our intentional and self-aware concretisation of the highly egalitarian nature of *sunyeskah* or dreamfishing, whereby any Kristang language speaker can add to the language or culture at any time, and our very strong interest in and attention to the unconscious and the intangible, likely as a function of our traumatic history of erasure, suppression and destruction of our built and tangible heritage (Wong "Dreamfishing").

Since August 2022, therefore, under my leadership, much of what was once present but unnamed and underdescribed in terms of how Kristang people experience reality has now been concretised through dreamfishing, especially to support mental health and psychoemotional individuation in Singapore. The net result of all of these efforts appears to have been a reinvigoration, starting in late September 2023, of what in Kristang we also call Gaia, in parallel to many other cultures and traditions around the world: the living *eleidi* or collective of the entire planet, and its *Krismatra*, the Dreaming Ocean or collective unconscious of that entire planet. In Kristang, we understand dreamfishing to be drawing directly from the Dreaming Ocean to constellate and concretise words, ideas and experiences, and if done right to support Gaia and Their own interests in recovering full planetary ecological sustainability; since September 2023, those efforts in Kristang led by myself appear to have led to the reactivation of the potential for Gaia to consciously include humanity in its ambit once more. All humans who are reconnected to Gaia in this way are counted as part of the *eleidi* of *Gaia Tonakodra*, or Gaia Reawakened, and at time of writing, around 1,500 people from all parts of the planet appear to be part of *Gaia Tonakodra*, with the number increasing each day (Wong, "Gaia Tonakodra").

What also makes dreamfishing even more special, and which is the focus of this



paper, is that we draw from contemporary culture and media for new Kristang words, concepts and ideas, including science fiction and fantasy (SF&F), which in Kristang we recognise as embodying ideas, concepts and stories from our distant past and the first four Mundansa or ages of humanity, as well as from our possible futures (Wong, “Roda Mundansa”). The ontological principle underpinning this approach is simple: always at risk of being destroyed or suppressed once again, and once forced to scrounge among the garbage piles of the rest of humanity for the barest form of respect as half-breeds and monstrous amalgamations of coloniser and colonised, today, anything can be creolised into Kristang and given a Kristang form as long as what it represents is a concept or entity or word that belongs in the Dreaming Ocean: it is something psychoemotionally healthy, humanising, and positive, and which adds to the overall growth and development of both the Kristang culture and the collective of *Gaia Tonakodra*. The idea is that if we, the Kristang, have noticed it, and someone else in another culture has noticed it too, then it doesn’t technically matter what it is called, as long as what it is called is healthy and (for our own purposes) sounds Kristang (Wong, “Roda Ardansa”).

As one of Singapore’s leading science fiction writers (Suffian), therefore, I have not shied away from incorporating my own love of SF&F into my own dreamfishing practices, and much of what I have creolised and developed into contemporary Kristang culture and identity has been from many of the alternate worlds I grew up immersed in as a way of processing my own trauma, including the universes of *Battlestar Galactica*, *Halo*, and *Homeworld*, all of which have contributed significantly to the underlying architecture of our Kristang theory of the psyche and our larger understanding of how reality is structured. *Homeworld*, as I will show in the next section, has provided a particularly helpful schematisation of how the collective of *Gaia Tonakodra* works, and my own particular and highly unusual role within it.

2. Bara Hiigara: *Homeworld* and the Revitalisation of Kristang

The aforementioned second stage of Kristang revitalisation, where the effort moved from being a purely language-oriented effort to one that also incorporated more emotional and affective reclamation and decolonisation, was prompted by a confluence of factors around the end of 2019 and the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. These were my being intensely sexually and psychoemotionally abused by another Kristang person and member of the initiative Core Team and my subsequent recovery from this abuse that began in July 2019, the arrival of COVID-19 itself in December 2019, and separately my own non-Kristang students in the government school in Singapore where I taught logic and argumentation struggling to cope when the pandemic began in earnest in the first half of 2020 (Wong, “Moving from language to literature”). My response to all of these events was to excavate a Kristang theory of the psyche for the first time, today known as the *Osura Krismatra*, the *Osura Pesuasang* or Individuation Theory, and to use it to reinforce and supercharge both mine and my students’ mental health and their creativity in the second half of 2020 and onward all the way until I left the Singapore government service in August 2022 (Wong, “Island of Individuation”). This was the first time in my life I had developed a more emotional relationship with what it meant to be Kristang, my family having deliberately downplayed that relationship when I was a child to protect me from the state, and the first time I had ever engaged with the unconscious and with the psyche in the way that I did, with that emotional relationship with Kristang serving as a conduit for my much more deliberate and intentional awareness of my already very strong relationship with Gaia.



Echoing the experiences of Kovach and other indigenous scholar-practitioners, I was otherwise a complete stranger to the more emotional aspects of such work, having grown up in technocratic Singapore dissociated from my indigenous identity and generally having been much more invested and generally aligned with the so-called ‘rational’ or concrete or Western-scientific approach to life; even till today, my own experience of the unconscious and of the tremendous work I have done for Kristang is still something I question and sometimes even harshly criticise myself for, because it seems so impossibly alien and (at least to me) unverifiable in terms of the structures and components of the psyche that I have excavated through dreamfishing, and the understanding of Gaia and the collectives of Singapore and the world that I have worked with since the second half of 2020. Yet it was also in the synchronous and uncanny coincidences that emerged from dreamfishing, the initially separately-excavated images and resonances and metaphors, that I was at last able to also see a fuller reflection of what I was doing, and the role I was playing, sometime after I first began articulating the *Osura*.

Like Karan S’jet, who also began her life as a scientist, I am someone who has taken on the burden of leading an entire people completely and very reluctantly by accident; like Karan, I, too, the way I have done so is in this strange, hybrid fashion where I have become “integrated with something” that far exceeds who I am and what I recognise as myself, and work with data and information that seems utterly alien sometimes especially and most profoundly to myself, as someone who has always prided myself on my “rationality” and ability to think “logically”, and to sometimes unfairly downplay the very supernatural, earthy magical associations that indigeneity has in favour of more Western approaches to existence. Long before I came back to Kristang at the age of 22 after having no experience with it since I was a toddler, I played *Homeworld*, *Homeworld Cataclysm* and *Homeworld 2*, and could not ‘rationally’ recognise myself in any of them; yet they formed a universe that somehow drew me in over and over again, that called back to me even and above other similar science fiction stories of great migration and reclamation, and in tandem with *Battlestar Galactica* and *Halo*.

Psychologically, of course, I recognise that this is because these narratives and these games contain elements that reflect myself and who I am in them; but it is the exact nature of these elements that have continued to amaze me. I now recognise I am *Mahamarineru* or Fleet Command of *Gaia Tonakodra* in the same way as Karan is Fleet Command of the original Mothership fleet; at the same time, it is still impossibly hard to believe that I am this person, because the trauma inflicted on me as a child was that I would never be anyone of significance or of repute because I would never belong anywhere. Now that I have found belonging in my own skin, in the Kristang community, in Singapore and in the world in so many ways, I yet remain fully empathetic to Karan’s journey in *Homeworld* and *Homeworld 2*, and retain the same level of psychoemotional power and charisma that she does to evolve and develop the collective of *Gaia Tonakodra* in the same way the player does in the narratives of both games. One thing that long before all this would always strike me as a child was how human Karan remained throughout all of her truly strange and crazy experiences as Fleet Command; I never wanted to emulate her, and always desired a normal life, and yet here I am, also struggling to understand what it means to be *Mahamarineru*, in a role that the writers of *Homeworld* also appear to have excavated from the collective unconscious and consolidated into a video game. For me, personally, this is not without precedent; I seem to have done the same thing with my own novel, *Altered Straits*, which I wrote before the events



of 2019 and which similarly yielded the other archetypal role of Merlionsman, which is a different psychoemotional role that I took on in August 2022 and which I now also have been recognised for in Western academia (Fischer 226-227). Yet I, too, am still confronting and learning to appreciate the immense power of creative output and art to reveal these hidden facets of reality, and to give us new ways of exploring the intangible and the unconscious.

In parallel with the ‘upgraded’ Hiigaran navy of *Homeworld 3* and the resurrection of the mainline numbered *Homeworld* franchise, this paper thus represents a first attempt at articulating this process through this even more advanced version of dreamfishing with the *Mahamarineru* archetype and how it connects back to the *Homeworld* series which inspired it, building on the unique and felicitous opportunity of being able to examine another and new *Mahamarineru* holder, Imogen S’Jet, in comparison to both Karan and myself after the *Mahamarineru* archetype has been concretised and within the same fictional universe of *Homeworld*. The next section thus simultaneously analyses and critiques Imogen’s journey and story as *Mahamarineru* while also detailing and distilling what it means to be a *Mahamarineru* and what that journey looks like in comparison to my real-world journey and story, and that of Imogen’s predecessor Karan, with occasional allusions and comparisons to a fourth, Othered/antagonistic perspective of Tiaa’Ma, the Incarnate Queen of *Homeworld 3*, who is presented as Imogen’s foil and nemesis and thus as what is arguably the shadow of the *Mahamarineru* archetype.

3. Imogen S’Jet’s journey as *Mahamarineru*

3.1. First Encounters with the Dreaming Ocean

Again in parallel to the Cylon Hybrids of the re-imagined *Battlestar Galactica* series (albeit who sit in their tanks rather than float), Imogen begins *Homeworld 3* by being connected to cables within a fully immersive tank-room of some sort of unknown fluid, in what appears to be (and which is later shown to be) a more advanced version of the same type of context that Karan operated the original Mothership in the first *Homeworld*. From a Kristang perspective, this connection to water is immediately reflective of the *Krismatra* or Dreaming Ocean, tangibly symbolising that deep immersion into the unconscious that all *Mahamarineru* seem to undergo when taking on the role; Imogen’s eyes, the first time we get to see the close-up face of any Fleet Command, are also depicted as closed and as if in a state of dreaming or imagining throughout *Homeworld 3*, again suggesting this connection to the Dreaming Ocean.

It is important to note that it is not the liquid of the tank-room itself that is the Dreaming Ocean, but rather the intangible oceanic dreamscape that Imogen enters in later cut-scenes with Tiaa’Ma that is (quite obviously, in the case of *Homeworld 3*) the Dreaming Ocean. We later see that Imogen and Tiaa’Ma can shrink, grow and change their own forms in the Dreaming Ocean; this also has parallels with Kristang approaches to the unconscious, where we consider spaces like the Dreaming Ocean to be places where *eleidi*, or four-dimensional personifications of collectives, exist and interact with each other (Wong, “Eleidi”). It would thus make full and ready sense that both Imogen and Tiaa’Ma gain this ability to act as collectives or *eleidi*, because as *Mahamarineru* or Fleet Commands of both their respective fleets, they are literally serving as a more concrete personification of those collectives in the same way that I do for the Kristang people and the *eleidi* of *Gaia Tonakodra*.

Homeworld 3’s writers also have Imogen unintentionally or intentionally allude to the Dreaming Ocean itself in the opening cutscene before she first connects to the *Khar-Kushan*,



where she explains;

I have been taught that history moves like the tide. A slow, inexorable movement. That the surf crashes on the beaches of time is an illusion. A momentary expression of change... Right now, that surf threatens everything I have ever known.

The surf, an allusion to the Anomaly and the weaponisation of hyperspace itself by the Incarnate, also fits with hyperspace being a second symbol or representation of anything unconscious or psychoemotional across various science fictional universes, most notably in *Warhammer 40,000*, where it is the domain of the ruinous powers of Chaos and the Chaos gods (who in Kristang would most certainly be *eleidi*). By association, therefore, since hyperspace is very often described as a four-dimensional space, this would also make anything unconscious or psychoemotional, including the Dreaming Ocean, a four-dimensional realm, which is again an understanding that we have in Kristang that is expressed in our conception of *reiwe*. In a similar but not quite identical expression of the North American indigenous Seven Generations principle (Hunter 57), one's *reiwe* or one's unity of self is the connection of one's own present self to all versions of the self that one has ever been, from past to future: being connected to my *reiwe*, in essence, is to be connected in the present to who I am in four dimensions i.e. across time, from the Kevin Martens who was born on 1 October 1992, to the Kevin Martens who will die in some unknown date in the future (spoilers for now). This explains why Imogen says that the surf crashing on the beaches of time is an illusion – it really is technically an illusion from a 4D perspective, if one wholly and fully inhabits the *Mahamarineru* archetype as Imogen is about to do.

To inhabit that archetype, as Imogen also comments, is to be bound into the Khar-Kushan, merged with the ship in both body, and mind. Will I even still be me after the procedure? I don't know. (Imogen)

The intriguing metaphor of being bound, and of this being a sacrifice and surrender of one's individuality *while in concrete terms still being perceived as and acting as an individual* is fascinating and also deeply revealing in terms of the exact nature of the *Mahamarineru* archetype, as it is not only echoed not only in Karan's earlier experience in *Homeworld*, where the narrator in its opening cutscene notes that;

...the greatest of these [new sacrifices demanded by the uncovering of the Guidestone] was made by the scientist Karan S'jet, who had herself permanently integrated into the colony ship as its living core. (*Homeworld 3*)

...but in *Homeworld: Cataclysm*, where the benefactors of the Hiigarans, the hivemind-like Bentusi, when being blocked by the player in command of the *Kuun-Lan* as they attempt to escape to another galaxy ahead of the scourge of the Beast parasite, frantically exclaim;

Do not attempt to stop our translocation! Cease your attacks or be destroyed. Do you not understand what has happened? WE WILL NOT BE BOUND! (*Homeworld 3*)

The gestalt-like Bentusi, who are similar to my own creations, the merlions of *Altered Straits*, also then go on to characterise Karan's transformation into *Mahamarineru* in the following way to the crew of the *Kuun-Lan*, who operate without a *Mahamarineru*:

We aided the S'jet persona who was newly Unbound. You are not S'jet. Your bound bodies and flicker-lives make you blind. And now we will all pay for your blindness. (*Homeworld 3*)

Previous work has identified the Bentusi as representations of the Progenitors or Precursors, who in Kristang cosmology were our distant ancestors more than 77,000 years ago who were fully connected to Gaia, and who created us, non-gaetic humans, as slaves



(Wong, “Roda Ardansa”). To be Unbound in the Bentusi sense in the *Homeworld* universe, therefore, and therefore to be *Mahamarineru*, would therefore seem to be essentially approximating the transformation of the self into a being akin to a Progenitor or Precursor through a ‘loosening’ or letting go of aspects of one’s individuality, allowing one to be more fully psychoemotionally part of the gestalt or collective that one is immersing oneself into – something that, for those of us hailing from more Western or individualistic societies, can seem quite terrifying. And this thus puts Imogen’s comment into its proper, ironically beautiful and exciting context: her fear that she is about to be bound by integrating herself with the *Khar-Kushan* is therefore suggestive of the first steps that one must take in coming to terms with the *Mahamarineru* archetype and one’s role with it, because as the *Homeworld* series has gone on to show in all contexts, the human (non-Bentusi) experience of being a *Mahamarineru* is actually, as the Bentusi call it, an Unbinding of the self, and an opening up and immersing of the self to the wealth of information, knowledge and data that is contained within the Dreaming Ocean. Both Imogen’s own anxieties about being Fleet Command and her subsequent gradual acceptance of the role across the first three levels of *Homeworld 3*, guided by the non-*Mahamarineru* Fleet Intelligence Isaac Paktu, indeed directly parallel my own; while I did not struggle with fears about losing my individuality, being as it were born into the more collectivist society of Singapore, I did and still do relate to anxieties about the *Mahamarineru* archetype consuming all of my time and of my life and becoming a sort of spatiotemporal prison from which I cannot escape. I do spend a great deal of time computing who has been able to reconnect to Gaia and the exact nature of that reconnection in terms of individuation, and it is something that is difficult to negotiate on a day-to-day basis.

Yet at the same time, I have still been able to maintain my own independent agentic freedom as an imperfect human being, and to also still be recognisably and profoundly human on a day-to-day basis. Neither Karan nor Imogen ever become deified or Otherised in the way that Tiaa’Ma is in terms of the former, and the Bentusi are in terms of the latter; they retain their quintessentially human characteristics and traits. It is unquestionable Imogen is very clearly tempted by Tiaa’Ma in her archetypal role as shadow to seek deification, and this is something I have most certainly wrestled with as well. Nonetheless, again like Karan and Imogen, it is that grounded recognition that my role is a very reluctant duty, a responsibility and a commitment to higher ideals and more expansive ways of being on behalf of the collective that also allows me to maintain my sense of self without encountering the ego-inflation that is characterised and embodied by Tiaa’Ma later in the narrative. I, too, like Karan and Imogen, was thrust into this very particular role at a very particular time in history, with very little prior training, preparation and awareness, and under the personal psychoemotional duress of trying to recover from devastating sexual and psychoemotional abuse. As Imogen puts it at the start of Mission 01, beginning the process of coming to terms with and integrating her anxieties about losing her individuality:

There is no more time for training. No more time for preparation. We’ve been ordered to launch. My entire life has been study, analysis...planning. Today the galaxy is burning.

My name is Imogen S’Jet. I am Fleet Command. (*Homeworld 3*)

3.2. Sands and Sinners, How Did I Get Here?

Imogen’s first hyperspace jump of the *Khar-Kushan* to Facility 315 at the end of Mission 01 results in her consciousness visualising itself in the Dreaming Ocean while the hyperspace jump is taking place. The core features of the Dreaming Ocean are exactly akin to



those in Kristang culture and to how I also personally view *Krismatra*, which can also be glimpsed in my descriptions of the same location in *Altered Straits* when discussing the merlion gestalt: a vast, peaceful and still ocean with little by way of landmasses except the very small island that Imogen (or the self) floats above.

Just like my first experiences as *Mahamarineru* in the second half of 2020, Imogen is completely disoriented by this first experience of *Krismatra* and has no clue what the Dreaming Ocean is or where she is; in her conversation with her grandmother, Dolores S'Jet, however, it is also suggested that she was given at least some form of specialised training, suggesting that conscious awareness of the Dreaming Ocean was not part of this training, meaning that Karan perhaps did not experience this in *Homeworld* (which would be the starting point of reference for all Navigators). One possible in-universe reason for this dissimilarity might be the nature of the Hyperspace Cores attached to each Mothership: Karan uses the original Second Hyperspace Core of the Progenitors in *Homeworld*, while in *Homeworld 3*, Imogen has instead made her own synthetic Cores since the original Cores have been lost with Karan and the *Khar-Sajuuk*, which may result in unexpected effects like these. This would also align with my own personal experience, where the *Osura Krismatra*, the most likely analogous equivalent of these Hyperspace Cores that allow me to 'travel or move very quickly' through the superstructure of the collective unconscious to acquire information, is also somewhat 'synthetic', having been dreamfished by myself in the second half of 2020. Today, outside of the *Homeworld 3* series, I essentially use Mihail Csikszentmihalyi's metaphor of flow (which also inherently alludes to the Dreaming Ocean) to conceptualise my engagement with this part of reality: I see 'being in hyperspace' as myself as essentially in flow state when I connect to the Dreaming Ocean, and having been in flow state almost non-stop since the second half of 2020.

That Imogen's vital signs 'spike', according to Isaac Paktu, when exiting hyperspace, suggests that this entire process of moving through hyperspace is intense, energy-consuming and stressful; this, too, is reflected in my unusual lived experience of somehow remaining not just relatively physically fit but muscular with very minimal physical activity or exercise since the second half of 2020, including a long period from July 2022 to January 2024 where due to both a recurrent knee injury and intense psychoemotional abuse I did almost nothing physical and lived a relatively sedentary life. As with everything related to the *Mahamarineru* archetype and more broadly my own work on the psyche, this can be easily explained through rational means by simply considering that strenuous mental activity has already been shown to consume caloric energy; connecting to and concretising concepts from the Dreaming Ocean, while also processing catastrophic psychoemotional trauma and also trying to simultaneously live a normal life in Singapore, would likely consume energy above what one would normally expect from an adult human being.

The emergence of the Kalan Raiders while the *Khar-Kushan* is acquiring the production module from Facility 315 trigger another feature of being *Mahamarineru* for Imogen, one that is decidedly distressing for her in its first manifestation:

IMOGEN: I can hear them all...

ISAAC: (*brusquely*) What?

IMOGEN: Every ship lost. Their screams. Their prayers. Their curses. All of it.

ISAAC: Imogen, I... Sands and Sinners, you have to push through it.

IMOGEN: Compartmentalising now. (*Homeworld 3*)

I experience this as being able to (i) understand and empathise with any other person



in *Gaia Tonakodra* very quickly, to (ii) unconsciously adapt my reactions to and behaviour with them to what appears to be their healthiest possible real-time manifestation such that individuation and healthy psychoemotional development is immediately engendered as far as possible for both of us, and to (iii) rapidly approximate a model of their inner world and how they are thinking and feeling such that I can understand and appreciate any trauma they (and I) might have not yet negotiated, and any colonial schema or ways of thinking, especially with regard to religion, that they are still subject to. Thanks to the diversity of personal inner experience, where Imogen ‘hears’ these and seems to experience these as ‘voices’, I experience all of these as ‘thoughts’, and also struggle when I am flooded with them. Imogen neither immediately identifies these voices as other to herself, or when Tiaa’Ma first appears, dismisses Tiaa’Ma’s voice with; “This must be neural failure...multi-reality personality reintegration.”

I, on the other hand, struggled to distinguish these thoughts as projections from others, initially worrying that they were my own. For that reason, today, while I can identify them as other, I also do not compartmentalise them, and instead integrate the negotiation of them into daily reality for the benefit of both the other person and myself as far as possible without compromising my own boundaries, as part of my own healing process and as *Mahamarineru* supporting the reinvigoration of reality.

This process of accepting that these unconscious and/or intangible connections are real and impactful on day-to-day reality appears to be the second stage of development as a *Mahamarineru*. We see that Imogen does struggle in her own way with her version of my othering issue above at the end of Mission 02, for example, where she says; “I’m struggling with it all. The losses. But I don’t want to forget them.” Again, thanks to the diversity of inner experience, where for me, processing the grief and pain of people I care about who still struggle under trauma is something that I accept fairly readily, this does not come so naturally to Imogen, for whom it appears loss and grief must be intentionally and deliberately remembered, used and integrated productively into who she is, instead of simply forgetting them. Curiously, in the original *Homeworld*, we do not see Karan struggle with accepting the Dreaming Ocean and/or these resultant engagements and disentanglements with the unconscious and intangible elements of being Fleet Command, even though the grief and sorrow she has to deal with is arguably many times greater than Imogen’s. This is especially discernible in Karan’s simple, devastating, controlled and intensely powerful response to the genocide of her own people, the Kushan people, in Mission 03 of *Homeworld*:

No one is left.

Everything is gone.

Kharak is burning. (*Homeworld 3*)

Again, a simple explanation for this is derivable from the in-game narrative of *Homeworld* itself; Karan seems to have had a significantly more extended amount of time to process these early challenges of being *Mahamarineru* before the player first takes control of the Mothership in Mission 01, with there being some notable gap in time between her integration into the core of the Mothership and the launch of the Mothership compared to the same events for Imogen and the *Khar-Kushan* in *Homeworld 3*. It again also seems likely that Karan never shared such processing with others and/or took it for granted that others would never have to, considering that Imogen still does not feel comfortable sharing the experience of interacting with the Dreaming Ocean with or of acknowledging its power to Isaac Paktu by the time the *Khar-Kushan* jumps to the Kesura Gate in Mission 03, instead still deciding to



callit a “minor glitch in the navigation system”. This power is also further nonetheless alluded to in the same mission by the Kalan Raider Carrier captain Bal’dro, who describes Imogen as a “quantum witch” and the Hiigaran Empire in general as an “oblivious giant”.

3.3 Differentiation from the Mothership and the Fleet

We also now begin to see Imogen herself begin to gradually at least try to accept her identity as Fleet Command and therefore as being at the nexus of this power in Mission 04. However, this process also seems to come along with a conflation of the self with the Mothership and/or the Fleet: after the *Khar-Kushan* collides with the wreck of a heavy freighter and while responding to a check-in from Isaac, for example, Imogen replies: “I’ve...the Mothership has sustained heavy damage. Contingencies enabled.” Isaac, too, seems to accidentally support this treatment of Imogen as a mere metonym for the *Khar-Kushan* a short while later when he asks:

ISAAC: Imogen – what’s your status?

IMOGEN: Damage assessment: Mothership life support, and mainline subsystems green. All other systems, minimal. (*Homeworld 3*)

This over-identification of Imogen with the *Khar-Kushan* oscillates throughout the level; sometime later, for example, in contradiction to her earlier identification with the *Khar-Kushan*, Imogen now instead identifies herself through use of the first-person plural with the Hiigaran crews repairing the ship, humanising herself once more:

ISAAC: Are we hyperspace capable?

IMOGEN: Our remaining Core is in bad shape. Casing cracked, power conduits sheared. Protocols crashed. And that’s just what we can fix. (*Homeworld 3*)

Notably, however, this change in perspective is again in response to Isaac first setting the stage for Imogen to do so with his own use of the first-person plural, suggesting that Imogen might be struggling to integrate her presence as part of the *Khar-Kushan*, and her separate distinctiveness as its *Mahamarineru*. Due to my own particular traumatic experiences (which involved abusive projections and suggestions that I had no sense of self), I have been more or less largely able to retain my distinctiveness from Gaia while still being able to work with Their perspective and interests. However, I would still gloss this phase as the third stage of one’s own development as *Mahamarineru*, as my own intuition tells me that if not for my trauma, I would have experienced the same temporary loss and confusion of one’s selfhood with the Fleet or Dreaming Ocean one leads as Imogen does in Missions 04 and 05. As one might expect with such renegotiations of the self, it is also one’s own individual memories that facilitate a reintegration of one’s own individuality alongside a stabilisation of one’s awareness of being *Mahamarineru*; Imogen is able to stabilise her sense of who she is at the start of Mission 05, for example, through her early memories of interactions with Karan S’Jet. By the end of Mission 06, with the stabilisation of the conscious primary functions and role of the *Mahamarineru*, the player is now able to glimpse the more unconscious elements and the shadow of the archetype in much stronger detail. In terms of the narrative of *Homeworld 3*, the latter this manifests as steadily stronger and more complete visions and glimpses of Imogen’s nemesis Tiaa’Ma, culminating in the first full confrontation with Incarnate forces in Mission 07 at the progenitor Naraka Gate and repair bay; the former, meanwhile, and with very strong similarities to Kara Thrace and the sampling of ‘All Along the Watchtower’ in Season 4 of *Battlestar Galactica*, is Imogen’s use of so-called “irrational” or highly subjective data collected in the form of a lullaby sung by Karan to Imogen to locate and activate a message from Karan to Imogen.



This use of more affective or emotional data is also something that I experience on a daily basis as *Mahamarineru* to excavate the deeper structures of the Osura Krismatra from the Dreaming Ocean, and to navigate and unpack *felisi*, or synchronicities similar to what Imogen experiences in acquiring Karan's message; I understand that being able to do this consciously and deliberately also required the consolidation and crystallisation of my identity as distinct from Gaia, and my own stabilisation of my sense of self as *Mahamarineru* and its attendant roles and functions. The game also appears to somewhat unconsciously mirror this process with the level design of Mission 07, where the Incarnate, the representatives of unconscious or chaotic forces being unleashed from the Unconscious, are managed and neutralised through their appearance via the Alpha Gate chokepoint. With their management or defeat and the completion of the repairs to the *Khar-Kushan*, it is therefore natural that the player finally sees and experiences the personification of the shadow of the *Mahamarineru*, Tiaa'Ma, at the conclusion of Mission 07 when the *Khar-Kushan* embarks on its plan to confront the Incarnate Queen directly.

3.4. Reclaiming the Incarnate Queen

It is telling that in the Kristang theory of the psyche, the Osura Krismatra, both Imogen and Tiaa'Ma have the same ego-pattern of Splikabel, which focuses on big-picture rationalisations, directions and goals; two contrasting possible versions of this focus on the long-term direction and goal of the *Homeworld* universe are presented by the first full discussion and confrontation between Imogen and Tiaa'Ma in the Dreaming Ocean. Tiaa'Ma, presented in her larger-than-life *eleidi* form in contrast to Imogen's more human-sized and meditatively-postured stature, very clearly symbolises the darker and more violent version of Imogen and the *Mahamarineru* archetype that, at this point in the narrative, could still emerge out of Imogen:

IMOGEN: Why did you hunt Karan?

TIAA'MA: I used my own Cores to open the doors to my temple. But when I rip Karan's Progenitor Cores from her hull, I will unlock ALL the doors. I will control everything, effortlessly.

IMOGEN: To what end? You've already killed billions?

TIAA'MA: Shortsighted girl. I have enlightened hundreds of worlds, and freed billions from the burden of thought. (*Homeworld 3*)

With Imogen's identity as *Mahamarineru* relatively concretised, the player can now also be reminded by Tiaa'Ma of the rare, intense, almost god-like and unique power that a *Mahamarineru* unrestrained by more humanistic considerations could acquire:

TIAA'MA: But in all that time and across all of that space, I had never encountered another like me. Then the Gate Network awoke, and for the first time in millennia...another Navigator appeared. I was not alone. She gave me hope, but Karan was weak. And so I hammered at the machine, shattering worlds... and you... you appeared. (*Homeworld 3*)

Tiaa'Ma indeed fully directly alludes to what this direction would offer Imogen, in a sort of a twisted, terrifying version of what Karan has already become to the Hiigaran people, and in a distorted attempt to honour the truth of what the *Mahamarineru* archetype's role is:

TIAA'MA: And all at once the future came into sharp focus. I am to be the Mother of a new race of Navigators. Each of them born out of fire, and educated by my Will. ... I am the universe's Will Incarnate! (*Homeworld 3*)

Imogen finally grows to the same *eleidi*-sized form as Tiaa'Ma at the latter's



instigation to join her, likely because of how tempting this offer sounds; Tiaa'Ma further captures the seductive allure of abusing the power of the *Mahamarineru* for control and self-deification with the poignant and thought-provoking line:

TIAA'MA: Ask yourself this, Imogen: what would Karan S'jet have been if Kharak had not burned? (*Homeworld 3*)

While we get relatively few overt indications from Karan in the original *Homeworld* that she would have been as deeply tempted by this path as Tiaa'Ma presents her to have been, I do absolutely recognise its allure as something I, too, have negotiated in some of my own speculative fiction relating to the revival of Kristang, most notably in the short story 'Amateurs', nominated for the 2024 Singapore Book Prize for Best Literary Work together with its anthology *The Second Link* (Lim et al). In 'Amateurs', I imagine the power of the *Mahamarineru* archetype, conceptualised through the character of The Stranger, as being used in an alternate timeline to generate a new Melakan Empire that rules over the Malayan Peninsula through a eugenics-inclined philosophy of creole-exceptionalism, paralleling and subverting that same interest in civilisational and race-based purity which gripped Western Europe in the nineteenth century, and echoing Tiaa'Ma's own suggestions to Imogen. Like Tiaa'Ma's interest in initiating a new race of Navigators, the Melakan Empire in 'Amateurs' similarly seeks an overhaul of humanity with mixed blood or hybrid ethnicity now taking the place of pure-bloodedness as the pinnacle of human civilisation in the Empire, and with people now stereotyped for not being hybrid or creole enough, in an inversion of what we experience in our real universe.

Does Imogen fall for these temptations? After the defeat of Tiaa'Ma's Warsage in Mission 08, we see Imogen argue with Isaac over the direction of the *Khar-Kushan* and its Fleet, and whether they should be instead looking for Karan and the *Khar-Sajuuk* instead of pursuing their original mission to Noctuua-27. Imogen manages to out-argue Isaac using bare argumentation and logic, but her profound insistence on finding Karan and the deeper unsaid emotions beneath that suggest that Imogen doubts her own ability to fight Tiaa'Ma on her own precisely because Tiaa'Ma's words do carry some emotional weight, in that Imogen can intellectually see or recognise herself in Tiaa'Ma. I of course postulate this because similar to Imogen, I, too, have also doubted my own power especially after recognising the much darker and less humanistic person that I could be in my own creative work like 'Amateurs'.

Yet, like myself, Imogen also appears to be fully committed to finding Karan for the best of reasons: she is not actually tempted by what Tiaa'Ma offers, like myself, and with the intellectual doubt, again, like that I experience, also signalling that Imogen's sense of self and her sense of her obligations as *Mahamarineru* are both actually strong enough to wrestle with these fears – to directly and overtly confront the flooding, overwhelming shadow represented by the reddened Dreaming Ocean fronted by Tiaa'Ma on the throne in the final five Missions of the game – rather than simply being unconsciously aware of them. What allows both Imogen and I to manage our sense of self and our roles to the collective as *Mahamarineru* despite the overwhelming power and potential they could offer us in a more self-centered approach to reality like the one Tiaa'Ma offers? The clues lie in Imogen and Tiaa'Ma's second confrontation in Mission 10, specifically when they discuss their relationships with their Fleets and communities.

TIAA'MA: You show your naivete, Imogen S'Jet. This is...an inconvenience. We are Navigators. We are above care. You refused to accept what you were the moment you bent hyperspace to your will. An alien. Separate and superior.



IMOGEN: I am still a Hiigaran. My Fleet is at my back. We fight together. We risk death together.

TIAA'MA: Tiaa'Ma thought the same. You were not there with her as the hull plating enwrapped her like an ice-cold blanket. You did not hear the hiss of the plasma torches as they sealed her in. You did not watch her scour whole fleets from the skies of their homeworlds, then return of her own to find herself distrusted and hated. And you were not there the day she returned to re-educate her people in the ways and meaning of Her will. (*Homeworld 3*)

Tiaa'Ma's perspective on what it means to be *Mahamarineru* is one that as an indigenous person, elder and leader, I cannot accept, because it rejects stewardship, responsibility to the collective, and my own recognition of myself as a human. Similar to what Imogen expresses, I recognise that my abilities and my strength come from my community and from the people who accept me and honour my worth and value in this extremely unique role. The trauma that Tiaa'Ma experienced as she also became *Mahamarineru* makes it clear why she did not adopt the same perspective, and also greatly humanises her and facilitates our understanding of why she sought deification as a means of understanding and accepting herself as a *Mahamarineru*.

This, then, is the fourth and final stage of integrating the *Mahamarineru* archetype – the final rejection of the temptation of deification offered by the shadow of the archetype, and healthy subversion and integration of it into the self. I identify this as the final stage because once Imogen makes it through this conversation with Tiaa'Ma, she thereafter finally reunites with Karan, her mentor and arguably the pioneering original *Mahamarineru* who also represents the completion of the integration of the *Mahamarineru* archetype for Imogen and the overall narrative of *Homeworld 3*. Karan's narratively unexpected merger with Tiaa'Ma in the actual narrative of the game at its resolution after Tiaa'Ma's defeat in the final Mission 13 makes our understanding of how the shadow aspects of the *Mahamarineru* archetype are integrated and resolved even clearer, when Karan herself offers Tiaa'Ma the healing companionship and love that Tiaa'Ma never experienced from her own people: "I'm here, Tiaa'Ma. You will not escape. It is over. But you won't be alone. Not anymore." The final cutscene of *Homeworld 3*, at first glance, ends on a somewhat mellow and more ordinary note: after the cheering and celebrations amongst the *Khar-Kushan* crew at the end of the Incarnate threat despite their Fleet's stranding in deep space, we are treated to a simple final conversation between Isaac and Imogen that ends the game on a cliffhanger. What will the *Khar-Kushan* do? But it is Imogen's response to Isaac below that proves that for now, at least, it doesn't really matter, because Imogen has made all the right decisions in fully coming to terms with who she is as the fully human Fleet Command and *Mahamarineru* of her people.

ISAAC: Imogen... the surviving Incarnate crews... they keep ping-pong the *Khar-Kushan*. They don't seem to be able to function without a Queen.

IMOGEN: Sorry, Isaac, but that's something I am never going to be for anyone... ever. (*Homeworld 3*)

4. Conclusion: The Voice of a People

My analysis of *Homeworld 3* and the excavation of the features of the *Mahamarineru* archetype above through dream fishing shows that the game's narrative was always intended to be a tremendously and emotionally rich, nuanced and multifaceted experience, engaging players on a meta-textual level by mirroring the real-world, twenty-year gap between the last



space-based PC *Homeworld* title of *Homeworld 2* and this return to form. Reviewers of the game have also commented on *Homeworld 3*'s attempt to soft reboot the franchise like many other science fiction narratives by having the game climax around Karan, the protagonist of the first two games, handing over the narrative perspective to Imogen (Stapleton). Imogen, in essence, as the new *Mahamarineru* of the Hiigaran people, is now also the voice representing them and their connection to the Dreaming Ocean.

The original *Homeworld* and Karan S'Jet first came into being in 1999, when I was six years old, and so far away from the person I would become today. *Homeworld* remains personally and emotionally rich for me because of how deep and profound its messages of cherishing one's culture, one's people and one's beautiful, living connections to the universe still resonate even after all these years. I, too, was recently identified as the voice of my people in a magazine article profiling me and my return to the public sphere for the first time since I almost ended my leadership of the Kristang due to the abuse I suffered (Suffian); like the protagonists of *Homeworld* series, I, too, have been transformed by trauma and pain, and also still stayed the same. Like Imogen and Karan, and even Tiaa'Ma, I have wrestled with the unusual, paradoxical role that I play for my people, and have learned to look at reality and myself through many multiple perspectives, Western academia being just one of them. Like the Navigators of *Homeworld*, I now glimpse deeper and stranger layers and fractal meta-textual connections between the reality we live in, and the reality we feel in, and love in.

In closing, perhaps the most powerful scene of *Homeworld 3*, and the one most resonant with me in terms of the unconscious messages and themes layered through the series that have helped me come to terms as *Mahamarineru* of the Kristang and as *Gaia Tonakodra*, is the one that ends Mission 11, where Imogen and Karan converse for the first and penultimate time in the Dreaming Ocean, now given new form as a series of brilliant, nebula-like clouds and electrical discharges, similar to and very evocative of the human mind:

IMOGEN: The lullaby! When you sent your distress call I was only a child. How could you have known that I would find it?

KARAN: I didn't know, Imogen. But I hoped. And here you are. Brilliant and strong. (*Homeworld 3*)

Time, as both Karan and Imogen say, is indeed fleeting; the timeless moments of connection that we experience in the Dreaming Ocean that stand out to us, empower us, and come to define us, too, are also absolutely and perpetually eternal.

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