



# THEORIZING ABOUT MYTH

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## VI • JUNG ON MYTHOLOGY

**A**T LEAST THREE MAJOR questions can be asked of myth: what is its subject matter, what is its origin, and what is its function? Theories of myth differ not only on the answers they give to these questions but also on the questions they seek to answer. Some theories concentrate on the subject matter of myth, others on the origin, still others on the function. C. G. Jung's is one of the few theories that answer fully all three questions. A single statement summarizes his answer: "Myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings, and anything but allegories of physical processes."<sup>1</sup> The subject matter is not literal but symbolic: not the external world but the human mind. Myth originates and functions to satisfy the psychological need for contact with the unconscious.

### THE SUBJECT MATTER OF MYTH

James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* provides the classic expression of the view that the subject matter of myth is physical processes. For Frazer, the chief myths of all religions describe the death and rebirth of vegetation, a process symbolized by the myth of the death and rebirth of the god of vegetation. Thus "the story that Adonis spent half, or according to others a third, of the year in the lower world and the rest of it in the upper world, is explained most simply and naturally by supposing that he represented vegetation, especially the corn, which lies buried in the earth half the year and reappears above ground the other half."<sup>2</sup>

Jung likewise interprets the myth of the death and rebirth of a god as symbolic, but symbolic of a process taking place in the mind, not in the world. That process is the return of the ego to the unconscious—a kind of temporary death of the ego—and its reemergence, or rebirth, from the unconscious: "I need only mention the whole mythological complex of the dying and resurgent god and its primitive precursors all the way down to the re-charging of fetishes and churingas

with magical force. It expresses a transformation of attitude by means of which a new potential, a new manifestation of life, a new fruitfulness, is created."<sup>3</sup>

Jung does not deny that the psychological process of the death and rebirth of the ego *parallels* the physical process of the death and rebirth of vegetation. He denies that the physical process *accounts for* the psychological one, let alone for the mythic one. For Frazer, the leap from vegetation to god is the product of logic and imagination: "primitives" observe the course of vegetation and hypothesize the existence of a god to account for it—even if for Frazer himself the god is a mere symbol of vegetation. For Jung, the leap is too great for the human imagination to make. Humans generally, not merely primitives, lack the creativity required to concoct consciously the notion of the sacred out of the profane. They can only transform the profane into a sacred that already exists for them.<sup>4</sup> Humans must already have the idea of god within their minds and can only be projecting that idea onto vegetation and the other natural phenomena that they observe:

This latter analogy [between god and natural phenomenon] explains the well-attested connection between the renewal of the god and seasonal and vegetational phenomena. One is naturally inclined to assume that seasonal, vegetational, lunar, and solar myths underlie these analogies. But that is to forget that a myth, like everything psychic, cannot be solely conditioned by external events. Anything psychic brings its own internal conditions with it, so that one might assert with equal right that the myth is purely psychological and uses meteorological or astronomical events merely as a means of expression. The whimsicality and absurdity of many primitive myths often makes the latter explanation seem far more appropriate than any other.<sup>5</sup>

Even early Jung, who was prepared to give more weight to experience than later Jung, distinguishes between the experience of the sun itself and the experience of the sun as a god. Experience of the sun provides the *occasion* for the manifestation of the sun archetype but does not *cause* that archetype:

I have often been asked where the archetypes or primordial images come from. It seems to me that their origin can only be explained by assuming them to be deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity. One of the commonest and at the same time most impressive experiences is the apparent movement of the sun every day. We certainly cannot discover anything of the kind in the unconscious, so far as the known physical process is concerned. What we do find, on the other hand, is the myth of the sun-hero in all its countless variations. It is this myth, and not the physical process, that forms the sun archetype. . . . The archetype is a kind of readiness to produce over and over again the same or similar mythical ideas.<sup>6</sup>

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nation of attitude by means of which a new fruitfulness, is created."<sup>3</sup> The natural process of the death and rebirth of the death and rebirth of vegetation. He distinguishes the psychological one, let alone for the natural one, from the vegetation to god is the product of logic and not the natural course of vegetation and hypothesize that even if for Frazer himself the god is a natural process, it is too great for the human imagination. Primitive peoples, lack the creativity required to separate the sacred out of the profane. They believe that what already exists for them.<sup>4</sup> Humans project their own ideas onto their minds and can only be projecting natural phenomena that they observe:

[The natural phenomenon] explains the well-attested seasonal and seasonal and vegetational phenomena. The seasonal, vegetational, lunar, and solar myths suggest that a myth, like everything psychic, is a natural process. Anything psychic brings its own interest with equal right that the myth is purely natural. Astronomical events merely as a means of explanation. The explanation of many primitive myths often makes the natural process more than any other.<sup>5</sup>

to give more weight to experience than to the mere knowledge of the sun itself and the experience of the sun provides the *occasion* for the myth, but not *cause* that archetype:

For primordial images come from. It seems to be derived by assuming them to be deposits of the unconscious. One of the commonest and at the same time the most recent movement of the sun every day. We know it in the unconscious, so far as the known world is concerned, on the other hand, is the myth of the sun. It is the myth, and not the physical process, that is a kind of readiness to produce over and over again.<sup>6</sup>

It is not only allegories of physical processes that Jung rejects as the real subject matter of myth. He also rejects literal interpretations of myth that still make the subject matter outer rather than inner. For example, the pioneering Victorian anthropologist Edward Tylor insists that the subject matter of myth is gods of nature rather than, as for Frazer, the natural phenomena they control and even inhabit. For Tylor, myths are actual explanations of natural phenomena and not merely, as for Frazer, colorful descriptions of them. Gods are the purported agents behind natural processes and not simply allegories of those processes. As Tylor says in exasperation at those who would interpret myths allegorically, "When the Apache Indian pointed to the sky and asked the white man, 'Do you not believe that God, the Sun, . . . sees what we do and punishes us when it is evil?' it is impossible to say that this savage was talking in rhetorical simile."<sup>7</sup>

Jung conflates Tylor's theory with Frazer's, stating, for example, that "people are very loath to give up the idea that the myth is some kind of explanatory allegory of astronomical, meteorological, or vegetative processes."<sup>8</sup> The phrase "explanatory allegory" conflates Tylor's theory—myth as explanation—with Frazer's—myth as allegory. Jung asks rhetorically "why the sun and its apparent motions do not appear direct and undisguised as a content of the myths."<sup>9</sup> Tylor's answer would be that myths describe sun gods and not merely the sun because myths are about sun gods and not merely about the sun. Yet even if Jung were to distinguish Tylor's view from Frazer's, he would still invoke his fundamental claim that human beings cannot consciously invent gods. Humans can only project onto the world gods already in their minds. For Jung, myth is no more about gods than about the physical world. It is about the human mind. Myth must be read symbolically, as for Frazer, and the symbolized subject is a process, as also for Frazer, but the process is an inner rather than an outer one.

Jung interprets as projections not only nature myths but all other kinds of myths as well. He says that "in fact, the whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious. . . . Just as the constellations were projected into the heavens, similar figures were projected into legends and fairytales or upon historical persons."<sup>10</sup> Hero myths, of which Jungians are especially enamored, are projections onto mere human beings of a divine or quasi-divine status: "the hero myth is an unconscious drama seen only in projection, like the happenings in Plato's parable of the cave. The hero himself appears as a being of more than human stature."<sup>11</sup> Moderns, while often professed atheists, still create myths by projecting onto their fellow human beings exaggerated qualities that turn them into superhuman figures: "[T]he archetypes usually appear in projection; and, because projections are unconscious, they appear on persons in the immediate environment, mostly in the form of abnormal over- or under-evaluations which provoke misunderstandings, quarrels, fanaticisms, and follies of every description.

Thus we say, 'He makes a god of so-and-so,' or, 'So-and-so is Mr. X's *bête noire*.' In this way, too, there grow up modern myth-formations, i.e., fantastic rumours, suspicions, prejudices."<sup>12</sup>

Once Jung differentiates a psychological interpretation of myth from a nonpsychological one, he must differentiate his particular psychological interpretation from Freud's. Jung grants the Freudian claim that there exist "fantasies (including dreams) of a personal character, which go back unquestionably to personal experiences, things forgotten or repressed, and can thus be completely explained by individual anamnesis [i.e., recollection]."<sup>13</sup> But he is far more concerned to vaunt his own claim that, in addition to these manifestations of the personal, Freudian unconscious, there exist "fantasies (including dreams) of an impersonal character, which cannot be reduced to experiences in the individual's past, and thus cannot be explained as something individually acquired."<sup>14</sup> These fantasies must emanate from a different unconscious, which, rather than the creation of an individual, must be inherited. Jung insists that myths are always the product of this distinctively Jungian, collective unconscious: "These fantasy-images [of an impersonal character] undoubtedly have their closest analogues in mythological types. . . . The products of this second category resemble the types of structures to be met with in myth and fairytale so much that we must regard them as related."<sup>15</sup>

On the one hand Jung employs the collective unconscious to interpret myths. On the other hand he employs myths to interpret the collective unconscious: "In order to interpret the products of the unconscious, I also found it necessary to give a quite different reading to dreams and fantasies. I did not reduce them to personal factors, as Freud does, but—and this seemed indicated by their very nature—I compared them with the symbols from mythology and the history of religion, in order to discover the meaning they were trying to express."<sup>16</sup> Myths here steer one away from a Freudian diagnosis.

Going further, Jung uses myths to *establish* the collective unconscious. The first step in the proof is the demonstration of the universality of motifs, and myths provide evidence of that universality. As he says, "The material brought forward—folkloristic, mythological, or historical—serves in the first place to demonstrate the uniformity of psychic events in time and space."<sup>17</sup> The next step in the proof is the refutation of Freud's account of the universality of motifs. Jung cites the recurrence of mythic motifs that supposedly defy a Freudian explanation. For example, he continually appeals to the appearance in myths of the idea of birth from two mothers to refute Freud's analysis of Leonardo da Vinci's famous depiction of Jesus' being hovered over by Anne as well as Mary as a projection of Leonardo's own childhood experience:

Freud interprets this remarkable picture in terms of the fact that Leonardo himself had two mothers. This causality is personal. We shall . . . simply point out that interwoven

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with the apparently personal psychology there is an impersonal motif well known to us  
 from other fields. This is the motif of the *dual mother*, an archetype to be found in many  
 variants in the field of mythology and comparative religion and forming the basis of  
 numerous "representations collectives." I might mention, for instance, the motif of the  
*dual descent*, that is, descent from human and divine parents, as in the case of Heracles,  
 who received immortality through being unwittingly adopted by Hera. . . . Now it is  
 absolutely out of the question that all the individuals who believe in a dual descent have  
 in reality always had two mothers, or conversely that those few who shared Leonardo's  
 fate have infected the rest of humanity with their complex. Rather, one cannot avoid  
 the assumption that the universal occurrence of the dual-birth motif together with the  
 fantasy of the two mothers answers an omnipresent human need which is reflected in  
 these motifs.<sup>18</sup>

It is a testimony to the confidence of both Jungians and Freudians in their psy-  
 chologies that mythology since the time of the masters has come to be taken by  
 both groups less as evidence of the unconscious and more as an expression of it.

Jung maintains that because the collective unconscious is inherently uncon-  
 scious, "in the last analysis, therefore, it is impossible to say what [its contents]  
 refer to. Every interpretation necessarily remains an 'as-if.' The ultimate core of  
 meaning may be circumscribed, but not described."<sup>19</sup> It is not merely Freud but  
 other theorists as well who thus wrongly assume the subject matter, or referent,  
 of myth to be specifiable. If one heeds Jung, "there is no longer any question  
 whether a myth refers to the sun or the moon, the father or the mother, sexuality  
 or fire or water; all it does is to circumscribe and give an approximate description  
 of an *unconscious core of meaning*."<sup>20</sup>

Jung is by no means abandoning the attempt to interpret myth. He is simply  
 cautioning against would-be definitive interpretations of myth. More precisely,  
 he is cautioning against would-be definitive *Jungian* interpretations of myth. He  
 is prepared to rule out all non-Jungian interpretations, but he is not prepared to  
 rule in any one Jungian interpretation. Insofar as the contents of the collective  
 unconscious are archetypes, the definitive meaning of myths is the expression of  
 archetypes. But because archetypes are innately unconscious, they can express  
 themselves only obliquely, through symbols. Furthermore, not only does every  
 myth contain multiple archetypes, but every archetype harbors inexhaustible  
 meanings. No symbol can convey even obliquely the array of meanings of the  
 archetype it expresses. As Jung says of the difficulty a poet faces in trying to  
 express an archetypal experience:

[T]he primordial experience is the source of his creativeness, but it is so dark and amor-  
 phous that it requires the related mythological imagery to give it form. In itself it is  
 wordless and imageless, for it is a vision seen "as in a glass, darkly." It is nothing but a

tremendous intuition striving for expression. . . . Since the expression can never match the richness of the vision and can never exhaust its possibilities, the poet must have at his disposal a huge store of material if he is to communicate even a fraction of what he has glimpsed, and must make use of difficult and contradictory images in order to express the strange paradoxes of his vision.<sup>21</sup>

For some theorists, myths are difficult to interpret because their meaning is symbolic rather than literal. For Jung, the greatest difficulty is not that myths are encrypted symbolically but that the symbols used to convey their meaning do so both indirectly and, worse, inadequately. The issue is epistemological, and Jung continually invokes Immanuel Kant to differentiate what we can know from what we cannot. Kant's distinction between the unknowable, noumenal reality and the knowable, phenomenal one becomes for Jung not only the distinction between metaphysics and psychology but also the distinction within psychology between the unconscious and consciousness. It becomes as well the distinction between archetypes and symbols.

For Jung, interpreting myths poses a double difficulty. The initial but less weighty difficulty is the need to recognize the motifs in myths as symbols. Jung is impatient with those who read myths literally, for they thereby mistake the symbols for the symbolized. Once motifs are recognized as symbols, the weightier difficulty is deciphering their meaning. Symbols are the only medium for conveying archetypes, but they are an imperfect medium. Nothing can bridge the divide between the unconscious and consciousness. Indeed, Jung dismisses Freud's view of the unconscious precisely because Freud seemingly bridges the divide by deriving the unconscious from consciousness. For Jung, myths, as a symbolic manifestation of archetypes, can never be deciphered exhaustively. It is not merely that one can never be sure of the correctness of the interpretation—a problem that would hold even if myths referred entirely to conscious processes. It is that no myth can convey fully the meaning invested in it by the archetypes it conveys. The point is not simply that a myth can harbor a plurality of meanings—again, a problem that would hold even if myths referred wholly to conscious processes. The point is that any myth is limited in what it can convey. In stressing that myth falls short of conveying the meanings invested in it, Jung is by no means disparaging it. On the contrary, he declares myth the best medium for conveying the unconscious: "Myth is the primordial language natural to these psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery."<sup>22</sup>

For Jung, interpreting myths poses a third difficulty as well. Myths for him do not merely convey meanings. They convey meanings to adherents. Myths are intended by the unconscious to reveal its contents to those whose myths they are. To reach their intended audience, myths must be translatable into a language the

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audience knows. Just as archetypes must be translated, however insufficiently, into  
 myths, so myths must be translated, however insufficiently, into the language of  
 those whose myths they are. Just as archetypes are dependent on myths to convey  
 their meaning, so myths are dependent on interpretations to convey *their* mean-  
 ing. Even if the meaning of a myth is the expression of the archetypes it harbors,  
 the myth must still be interpreted by whoever is to benefit from it. As Jung says,  
 "And whatever explanation or interpretation does to it [i.e., the myth], we do to  
 our own souls as well, with corresponding results for our own well-being. The  
 archetype—let us never forget this—is a psychic organ present in all of us. A bad  
 explanation means a correspondingly bad attitude to this organ, which may thus  
 be injured. But the ultimate sufferer is the bad interpreter himself."<sup>23</sup>

Tracking the relationship of archetypes to myths to interpretations is like  
 tracking the translation of a message from one language into a second language  
 which lacks many of the equivalents of the first, and then into a third language  
 which lacks many of the equivalents of the second. Yet the second language must  
 be translated into the third if the indispensable message of the first language is not  
 to be lost. To be cut off from that original message is to be cut off from one's  
 own unconscious—a psychological disaster:

In reality we can never legitimately cut loose from our archetypal foundations unless  
 we are prepared to pay the price of a neurosis, any more than we can rid ourselves of  
 our body and its organs without committing suicide. If we cannot deny the archetypes  
 or otherwise neutralize them, we are confronted, at every new stage in the differentia-  
 tion of consciousness to which civilization attains, with the task of finding a new *inter-*  
*pretation* appropriate to this stage, in order to connect the life of the past that still exists  
 in us with the life of the present, which threatens to slip away from it.<sup>24</sup>

Insofar as a new interpretation of a myth conveys some aspect of the myth (and in  
 turn of an archetype) not previously conveyed, we "dream the myth onwards."<sup>25</sup>

By nature, all theorists of myth, not just Jung, are interested in the similarities  
 rather than the differences among myths. To encompass all cases of myth, theorists  
 not only identify overt similarities but also uncover similarities beneath apparent  
 differences. Jung, however, goes further. He repeatedly declares myths to be not  
 merely similar but outright identical—an identity that he attributes to their identi-  
 cal origin: "It is the same as with myths and symbols, which can arise autochtho-  
 nously in every corner of the earth and yet are identical, because they are fash-  
 ioned out of the same worldwide human unconscious, whose contents are  
 infinitely less variable than are races and individuals."<sup>26</sup> By the identity of myths  
 worldwide, Jung must mean the identity of the archetypes they manifest. He  
 cannot mean that myths themselves are identical. He may be downplaying the  
 differences as insignificant, but he cannot be denying them.



Yet for all his insistence on the universal identity of the archetypal contents of myths, Jung is also attentive to the differences. When he analyzes specific myths, the identification of archetypes becomes only the first, not the last, step in the process. One must analyze the specific symbols used to convey those archetypes, the meaning of those archetypes in the specific myth in which they appear, and the meaning of that myth in the life of the specific adherent to the myth. A myth is not merely a myth in its own right. It is a myth for someone. The meaning of a myth is more than its general meaning for all humanity. One must understand the person or the society to understand the myth: "So it is with the individual images [in a myth]: they need a context, and the context is not only a myth but an individual anamnesis."<sup>27</sup> Hence for Jung the analysis of myth is best undertaken as part of therapy. The frequent characterization of Jung as oblivious to the particulars of a myth and its adherents is inaccurate and unfair. Undeniably, for many Jungians, including Erich Neumann and the Jungian-oriented Joseph Campbell, the meaning of a myth is exclusively the universal one. But for Jung himself and for Jungian analysts practicing today, the meaning is the particular one as well as the universal one.<sup>28</sup>

#### THE ORIGIN OF MYTH

As a theorist of myth, Jung is concerned with accounting for the similarities among myths. There are two possible explanations: diffusion and independent invention. Diffusion means that myths originate in one society and spread elsewhere. Independent invention means that every society invents myths on its own. The prime argument of diffusionists is that the similarities among myths are too precise to have arisen independently. The prime argument of independent "inventionists" is that the similarities are too widespread geographically to be the product of diffusion. Additionally, "inventionists" argue that diffusion, even when granted, fails to explain either the origin of a myth in the society in which it arises or the acceptance of the myth by the societies to which it spreads.

Jung is staunchly committed to independent invention as the origin of myth. He makes the standard argument that there is no evidence and indeed no possibility of contact among all of the societies with similar myths: "Every endeavour has been made to explain the concordance of myth-motifs and -symbols as due to migration and tradition; Goblet d'Almellas' *Migration of Symbols* is an excellent example of this. But this explanation, which naturally has some value, is contradicted by the fact that a mythologem [i.e., archetype] can arise anywhere, at any time, without there being the slightest possibility of any such transmission."<sup>29</sup>

Jung makes the same argument in the case of individuals. His most famous example, that of the "Solar Phallus Man," is of an institutionalized patient who believed that the sun had a phallus and that the movement of the sun's phallus was

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the cause of wind. Jung then came upon a comparable fantasy in a book describ-  
 ing the vision of a member of the ancient cult of Mithras. Assuming that the  
 patient could not have known of the book, Jung forever after cited the similarity  
 as concrete evidence of independent invention:

The patient was a small business employee with no more than a secondary school edu-  
 cation. He grew up in Zurich, and by no stretch of imagination can I conceive how he  
 could have got hold of the idea of the solar phallus, of the vision moving to and fro,  
 and of the origin of the wind. I myself, who would have been in a much better position,  
 intellectually, to know about this singular concatenation of ideas, was entirely ignorant  
 of it and only discovered the parallel in a book of Dieterich's which appeared in 1910,  
 four years after my original observation (1906).<sup>30</sup>

More important, Jung further uses this example as evidence of the distinctively  
 Jungian version of independent invention: through heredity rather than through  
 experience. Independent invention as experience means that every society creates  
 myths for itself. Independent invention as heredity means that every society as  
 well as individual inherits myths. Of the Solar Phallus Man, Jung thus says, "This  
 observation [of independent invention] was not an isolated case: it was manifestly  
 not [to be sure] a question of inherited ideas, but of an inborn disposition to  
 produce parallel thought-formations, or rather of identical psychic structures  
 common to all men, which I later called the archetypes of the collective uncon-  
 scious."<sup>31</sup>

For Tylor, Frazer, and Freud, the similarities among myths stem from independ-  
 ent invention through experience. For Tylor, everyone is born with a need to  
 explain the world, but the explanations themselves are not innate. Where mod-  
 erns invent science to explain baffling experiences, primitives invent myths. Be-  
 cause all primitives for Tylor experience the same perplexing phenomena, and  
 because all primitives sensibly postulate gods to account for them, myths are  
 bound to be similar. But each primitive society invents gods and in turn myths  
 on its own, in response to the similar experiences of its members.

Likewise for Frazer, everyone is born with a need to eat, but the explanations  
 of the source of food are not innate. Where moderns invent science to explain  
 the source of food, primitives invent myths. Because all primitives experience  
 hunger, and because all primitives postulate gods to account for the source of  
 food, myths are bound to be similar. But each primitive society invents gods and  
 in turn myths on its own, in response to the similar experiences of its members.  
 Frazer provides the quintessential statement of independent invention through  
 experience: "the resemblance which may be traced in this respect between the  
 religions of the East and West is no more than what we commonly, though incor-  
 rectly, call a fortuitous coincidence, the effect of similar causes acting alike on the

similar constitution of the human mind in different countries and under different skies."<sup>32</sup>

For Freud, everyone is born with an incestuous drive that surfaces at age three to five. Everyone experiences that drive individually. From one's forebears one inherits only the drive itself, not their experiences of it. Because everyone in society also experiences frustration in trying to satisfy that drive, myths are invented as one indirect, disguised, compensatory outlet for the blocked drive. Again, similar experiences are bound to give rise to similar myths. In his classic application of Freud's theory, Otto Rank maintains that all hero myths, if not all myths, even have a similar plot, yet it is still one invented by each society on its own.<sup>33</sup>

In contrast to Tylor, Frazer, and Freud alike, Jung contends that everyone is born not merely with a need of some kind that the invention of myth fulfills but with myths themselves. More precisely, we are all born with the raw material of myths, but material already elevated to the mythic level.

For Tylor, the myth makers of each society start with the impersonal forces of the physical world and proceed to hypothesize gods to account for those forces and to invent myths to describe the actions of gods. For Frazer, the same is true. For Freud, myth makers start with a child and the child's parents and proceed to transform the child into a hero, the child's parents into royalty or nobility, and the conflicts between children and parents into hero myths.

For Jung, myth makers start with the archetypes themselves—for example, the archetype of the hero. The archetype does not symbolize something else in turn but is itself the symbolized. In every society myth makers invent specific stories that express those archetypes, but the myth makers are inventing only venues for the manifestation of already mythic material. The figure Odysseus, for example, gets either invented or appropriated to serve as a Greek expression of heroism. But heroism is not itself invented, the way it is for Tylor, Frazer, and Freud. For Jung, heroism, like divinity, constitutes so superhuman a status that humans could not consciously have invented the idea. They must therefore have inherited it. What are invented are the myths expressing heroism. The myth of Odysseus is passed on from generation to generation by acculturation, but the hero archetype that it expresses is passed on by heredity.

For Tylor, Frazer, and Freud, experience, even if it is of innate needs, provides the impetus for the creation of myths. For Freud, for example, the experience of one's parents' reaction to one's incestuous drives spurs the creation of myth. For Jung, by contrast, experience provides only the occasion for the expression of already mythic material. Myths do not transform parents into gods or heroes but only articulate the experience of parents *as* gods or heroes—that is to say, as archetypal figures. Archetypes *shape* experience rather than *derive* from it. For example, the archetype of the Great Mother does not, as Freud would assume,

result from the magnification of one's own mother but, on the contrary, expresses itself through her and thereby shapes one's experience of her. The archetype forms the core of one's "mother complex." Jung's insistence on the existence of innate fantasies that are projected onto the mother rather than derived from her is much like the emphasis of the Kleinian school of psychoanalysis.<sup>34</sup>

#### THE FUNCTION OF MYTH

For Jung, myth serves many functions, not all of them psychological. But the prime function of myth is psychological: to reveal the unconscious. As already quoted, "Myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings."<sup>35</sup> Myth does not inadvertently reveal the unconscious. Its creation is guided by the unconscious, which intentionally reveals itself. What is "involuntary" is on the part of consciousness, the recipient of the revelation. For Jung, the unconscious seeks to communicate its presence to consciousness as clearly as possible. It does not, as for Freud, speak in code to elude detection. It simply speaks its own language: "My idea is that the dream does not conceal; we simply do not understand its language. For instance, if I quote to you a Latin or a Greek passage some of you will not understand it, but that is not because the text dissimulates or conceals; it is because you do not know Greek or Latin."<sup>36</sup>

The analyst is bilingual and thus able to translate the language of the unconscious into the language of consciousness—to the extent, that is, that the language of the unconscious is translatable. The lay person takes the language of the unconscious either as mere gibberish or as the language of consciousness. In the case of dreams, the lay inclination is to dismiss the content as gibberish. But in the case of myths, which are the product of conscious as well as unconscious elaboration, the lay inclination is to take the content at face value. By contrast, a Jungian analyst takes the content symbolically, recognizing mythic speech as a foreign language rather than the native language.

Myth for Jung functions not merely to announce the existence of the unconscious but actually to enable humans to experience it. Myth provides not only information about the unconscious but also entrée to it: "The protean mythology and the shimmering symbol express the processes of the psyche far more trenchantly and, in the end, far more clearly than the clearest concept; for the symbol not only conveys a visualization of the process but—and this is perhaps just as important—it also brings a re-experiencing of it, of that twilight which we can learn to understand only through inoffensive empathy, but which too much clarity only dispels."<sup>37</sup> The telling of myths "causes these processes to come alive again and be recollected, thereby re-establishing the connection between conscious and unconscious."<sup>38</sup>

For all his scorn for those psychologically benighted theorists who take the subject matter of myth to be the external world, Jung himself often waxes romantic about the external function of myth. Myth for him links the inner world to the outer one by personifying the impersonal outer world:

Primitive man is not much interested in objective explanations of the obvious, but he has an imperative need—or, rather, his unconscious psyche has an irresistible urge—to assimilate all outer sense experiences to inner, psychic events. It is not enough for the primitive to see the sun rise and set; this external observation must at the same time be a psychic happening: the sun in its course must represent the fate of a god or hero who, in the last analysis, dwells nowhere except in the soul of man.<sup>39</sup>

Personifying the external world gives it meaningfulness and relevance. A personified world operates responsively, in accordance with the purposes of gods and the pleas of humans, rather than mechanically. To cite Jung's favorite example, "The Pueblo Indians believe that they are the sons of Father Sun, and this belief endows their life with a perspective (and a goal) that goes far beyond their limited existence. . . . Their plight is infinitely more satisfactory than that of a man in our own civilization who knows that he is (and will remain) nothing more than an underdog with no inner meaning to his life."<sup>40</sup> The function of myth here is not explanatory but existential. Myth makes humans feel at home in the world, even if it does so by explaining events in the world.

Undeniably, most modern myths for Jung are nonprojective. They presuppose the withdrawal of projections from the outer world, which is now experienced as impersonal and therefore meaningless: "We have stripped all things of their mystery and numinosity; nothing is holy any longer."<sup>41</sup> Put another way, modern myths for Jung are secular. They cannot do what religious myths used to do: "giving [man] the security and inner strength not to be crushed by the monstrousness of the universe."<sup>42</sup> Myths for moderns do not function to connect the inner world with the outer world, which is now the domain of science. Instead, modern myths function to connect—better, to reconnect—moderns to the inner world. Modern myths still provide meaningfulness, but that meaningfulness now lies entirely within humans rather than also within the world. While Jung bemoans the effect of "de-deification" on the modern experience of the world, he recognizes the necessity of the process for the development of consciousness.

Yet the characterization of the external world as in fact meaningless really holds for only the earlier Jung. Once Jung, in collaboration with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli, develops the concept of synchronicity, the world for him regains its meaningfulness even without its personality. Indeed, that meaningfulness is now inherent in the world rather than imposed on it through projection: "Synchronistic

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experiences serve our turn here. They point to a latent meaning which is inde-  
pendent of [our] consciousness."<sup>43</sup> Meaningfulness for later Jung stems not from  
the existence of god, or personality, in the world but from the symmetry between  
human beings and the world. Rather than alien and indifferent to humans, the  
world proves to be akin to them—not because gods respond to human wishes  
or because human wishes directly affect the world but because human thoughts  
correspond to the nature of the world. As Jung says of his favorite example of  
synchronicity, that of a resistant patient who was describing a dream about a  
golden scarab when a scarab beetle appeared, "at the moment my patient was  
telling me her dream a real 'scarab' tried to get into the room, as if it had under-  
stood that it must play its mythological role as a symbol of rebirth."<sup>44</sup> Here the  
world seemingly responds to the patient's dream, but more exactly the world  
merely, if fortuitously, matches the patient's dream. It is the patient's conscious  
attitude that is "out of sync" with the world.

Synchronicity is not itself myth. Synchronicity is the experience of the world  
as meaningful. Myth would be an account of that experience. Synchronicity is an  
acausal nexus between the inner, human world and the outer, natural one. Myth  
is a causal account of events in the outer world, and the cause is divine. Since,  
however, the payoff of myth for Jung is not an account of the world but the  
feeling of at-homeness in it, synchronicity offers an existential benefit comparable  
with that offered by myth. With the concept of synchronicity, Jung restores to  
the world a meaningfulness that the withdrawal of projections still demanded by  
Jung removes.<sup>45</sup>

For Jung, myth serves other functions as well. Parallels in myths to elements in  
a patient's dream serve heuristically to suggest archetypal interpretations of that  
dream: "For this reason it is particularly important for me to know as much as  
possible about primitive psychology, mythology, archaeology, and comparative  
religion, because these fields offer me invaluable analogies with which I can en-  
rich the associations of my patients."<sup>46</sup>

Occasionally, Jung attributes to myth a social function: providing a guide for  
behavior. The lives of characters in myth become models to be emulated: "For  
instance, the way in which a man should behave is given by an archetype. That  
is why primitives tell the stories they do. . . . Our ancestors have done so and so,  
and so shall you. Or such and such a hero has done so and so, and this is your  
model. Again, in the teachings of the Catholic Church there are several thousand  
saints. They show us what to do, they serve as models. They have their legends  
and that is Christian mythology."<sup>47</sup>

There are theorists of myth for whom the prime function of myth is the incul-  
cation of correct behavior. In the classic statement by the anthropologist Bronis-  
law Malinowski, "The myth comes into play when rite, ceremony, or a social or

moral rule demands justification, warrant of antiquity, reality, and sanctity.”<sup>48</sup> Jung’s occasional social functionalism runs less counter than askew to his focus on the individual rather than the social utility of myth.

#### MYTHS AND DREAMS

Every theorist assumes some analogue to myth. For Tylor, the analogue is science. Myth for him is the primitive counterpart to modern scientific theory, and it is by analogy to modern scientific theory that he elucidates myth. For Frazer, the analogue is also science, though less scientific theory than applied science. Myth for him is the primitive counterpart to modern technology, and it is by analogy to modern technology that he explicates myth.

For both Freud and Jung, dream provides the analogue. Like dreams, myths arise from the unconscious, serve to restore connection to the unconscious, and must be interpreted symbolically. Says Jung, “The conclusion that the myth-makers thought in much the same way as we still think in dreams is almost self-evident.”<sup>49</sup>

Yet Jung and Freud alike also recognize the differences between myths and dreams. Dreams are not usually projected onto the world, whereas myths are: myths purport to be about the world, not merely about oneself. Ordinarily, dreams are dreamed by individuals, whereas myths are believed by a group. Dreams are created anew by each dreamer; myths are passed on from one generation to the next. Myths no less than dreams are manifestations of the unconscious, but myths are consciously created, even if their creators are guided by the unconscious.

To be sure, Jung regularly declares that “the primitive mentality does not *invent* myths, it *experiences* them.”<sup>50</sup> He even states that

We can see almost daily in our patients how mythical fantasies arise: they are not thought up, but present themselves as images or chains of ideas that force their way out of the unconscious, and when they are recounted they often have the character of connected episodes resembling mythical dramas. That is how myths arise, and that is the reason why the fantasies from the unconscious have so much in common with primitive myths. [M]yth is nothing but a projection from the unconscious and not a conscious invention at all.<sup>51</sup>

Doubtless Jung is overstating his point. Surely he means merely that primitives, living so close to primordial unconsciousness, subject their myths to less conscious reworking than moderns do in, say, writing a novel or a screenplay. He cannot mean that primitive myths, let alone modern ones, involve no conscious reworking by their tellers.

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Indeed, Jung considers myths a less pristine manifestation of the unconscious than dreams: the "manifestation" of an archetype, "as we encounter it in dreams and visions, is much more individual, less understandable, and more naïve than in myths, for example."<sup>52</sup> A myth as heard or read is coherent, whereas a dream as dreamed or remembered is not: "The medium in which [myths and dreams] are embedded is, in the former case [i.e., myths], an ordered and for the most part immediately understandable context, but in the latter case [i.e., dreams] a generally unintelligible, irrational, not to say delirious sequence of images which nonetheless does not lack a certain hidden coherence."<sup>53</sup> Consequently, the interpretation of myths requires more reconstruction than the interpretation of dreams.

There is a final difference for Jung between myths and dreams. Where many dreams for Jung come from the personal unconscious, all myths emanate from the collective unconscious. Jung even identifies archetypal dreams by their mythological content:

The collective unconscious influences our dreams only occasionally, and whenever this happens, it produces strange and marvellous dreams remarkable for their beauty, or their demoniacal horror, or for their enigmatic wisdom—"big dreams," as certain primitives call them. . . . In many dreams and in certain psychoses we frequently come across archetypal material, i.e., ideas and associations whose exact equivalents can be found in mythology. From these parallels I have drawn the conclusion that there is a layer of the unconscious which functions in exactly the same way as the archaic psyche that produced the myths.<sup>54</sup>

In this respect, myths are closer to the unconscious than dreams.<sup>55</sup>

#### MYTH AS A WAY OF THINKING

While some theorists of myth are concerned with only the function or even only the origin of myth, most are concerned with the content of myth. Some theorists stress the similarities between the content of myth and the content of science. For Tylor and Frazer, for example, myth and science are explanations of the same physical events. Other theorists stress the distinctiveness of the content of myth. For the theologian Rudolf Bultmann and the philosopher Hans Jonas, for example, myth describes not the external world but the human experience of that world.<sup>56</sup>

A few theorists go beyond the distinctiveness of the content of myth to the distinctiveness of mythic thinking. Where for Tylor and Frazer myth involves the same processes of observation, inference, and generalization as science, for the philosopher and armchair anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl mythic thinking is



the opposite of scientific thinking. It involves the projection of mystical qualities onto the world and is oblivious to contradictions.<sup>57</sup> For the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, by contrast, mythic thinking is as rigorous as modern scientific thinking and is preoccupied with identifying logical contradictions. Mythic thinking here, too, involves projection, but what is projected onto the world are contradictions which myth then seeks to overcome.<sup>58</sup>

For both Freud and Jung, mythic thinking is dream thinking, but on the nature of dream thinking they differ. For Freud, myths, like dreams, represent a compromise between primary process thinking, which operates according to the pleasure principle, and secondary process thinking, which operates according to the reality principle. Male hero myths, for example, conventionally express Oedipal wishes, but in disguised form. Manifestly, the hero is a victim, a victim of fate and of his parents; latently, the hero is the culprit. Manifestly, the hero seeks power; latently, the hero seeks sex. Manifestly, the hero is the named historical or legendary figure; latently, the hero is the myth maker or any reader grabbed by the myth. The expression of Oedipal wishes in disguised form is a compromise between the pleasure principle, which seeks to vent the wishes outright, and the reality principle, which opposes the satisfaction of them altogether. While the wishes contained in myths evince the primary process thinking of the pleasure principle, the disguise that transforms the latent wishes into the manifest myth represents censorship rather than primary process thinking. What Freud calls "dream work"—the elaborate process by which the latent meaning is converted into the manifest one—is not, then, an expression of primary process thinking but, on the contrary, the conversion of primary process thinking into secondary process thinking.<sup>59</sup>

For Jung, as for Freud, there are two kinds of thinking: "fantasy" thinking, which is like primary process thinking, and "directed," or "logical," thinking, which is like secondary process thinking. Where directed thinking is deliberate, organized, and purposeful, fantasy thinking is spontaneous, associative, and directionless: "What happens when we do not think directedly? Well, our thinking then lacks all leading ideas and the sense of direction emanating from them. We no longer compel our thoughts along a definite track, but let them float, sink or rise according to their specific gravity." Fantasy thinking "leads away from reality into fantasies of the past or future."<sup>60</sup> By contrast, directed thinking turns outward to the world. While Jung would certainly not say that fantasy thinking operates by the pleasure principle, he does say that directed thinking operates by the reality principle: "To that extent, directed or logical thinking is reality-thinking, a thinking that is adapted to reality, by means of which we imitate the successiveness of objectively real things, so that the images inside our mind follow one another in the same strictly causal sequence as the events taking place outside it. We also call this 'thinking with directed attention.'"<sup>61</sup>

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For Jung, as for Freud, mythic thinking is fantasy thinking. But where for Freud myths, like most dreams, represent a compromise between primary and secondary process thinking because they represent a compromise between the pleasure principle and the reality principle, for Jung myths and dreams are the outright expression of fantasy thinking—the rough equivalent of primary process thinking. When, as noted, Jung declares that "myth is nothing but a projection from the unconscious and not a conscious invention at all," he is insisting that myth is an untampered manifestation of fantasy thinking.<sup>62</sup> Rather than a defense against the naked expression of the unconscious, as for Freud, myth for Jung is the naked expression of the unconscious. Myths and dreams must still be interpreted, but because they are like hieroglyphics rather than because they are like a secret code. They await, even beckon, interpretation rather than stymie it. For Freud, the manifest level of a myth or a dream hides, if also reveals, the latent level, and the process of interpretation is the use of the manifest level to uncover the latent one masked by it. For Jung, the latent level is manifest—for those who have ears to hear. Consequently, myths and dreams for Jung evince a distinctive way of thinking, whereas myths and dreams for Freud evince a distinctive way of masking a distinctive way of thinking.

Freud and Jung agree that myths go beyond dreams to project fantasy thinking onto the world. Myths transform the outer world into an extension of the inner one. Mythic thinking is thus not merely a way of thinking but a way of thinking about the world—and in turn a way of experiencing the world: "We move in a world of fantasies which, untroubled by the outward course of things, well up from an inner source to produce an ever-changing succession of plastic or phantasmal forms. . . . Everything was conceived anthropomorphically or theriomorphically, in the likeness of man or beast. . . . Thus there arose a picture of the universe which was completely removed from reality, but which corresponded exactly to man's subjective fantasies."<sup>63</sup> More than a story, myth becomes a worldview.

Insofar as Jung parallels myths with fantasies, myths would hardly be limited to "primitives." Yet insofar as Jung contrasts fantasy thinking to directed thinking, myths would seem to be largely primitive. For primitives are ruled entirely by fantasy thinking. Although scarcely absent among moderns, fantasy thinking has been supplemented and considerably supplanted by directed thinking, which is to be found above all in modern science. At the least, then, one would expect moderns to have far fewer myths than primitives. Certainly Jung accepts the conventional assumption of his day, summed up in Ernst Haeckel's Law of Recapitulation, that the biological development of the individual (ontogeny) duplicates that of the species (phylogeny): "The supposition that there may also be in psychology a correspondence between ontogenesis and phylogenesis therefore seems justified."<sup>64</sup> The child is therefore the counterpart to the primitive, and vice versa.

The adult is the counterpart to the modern and vice versa. Just as the child is governed wholly by fantasy thinking and only the adult guided substantially by directed thinking, so the primitive is governed wholly by fantasy thinking and only the modern guided significantly by directed thinking. Myths would therefore seem to be a predominantly primitive phenomenon. As Jung says, "These considerations tempt us to draw a parallel between the mythological thinking of ancient man and the similar thinking found in children, primitives, and in dreams."<sup>65</sup> Yet Jung argues forcefully that moderns as well as primitives have and even must have myths, though perhaps not to the same degree.

#### KINDS OF MYTHS

Jung's key essay on myth is "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," where he uses myths of the child to set forth his overall theory of myth. Typically presenting his theory by distinguishing it from Freud's, Jung contends that the figure of the child in mythology symbolizes not, as for Freud, the actual child but the archetypal child. Further, Jung contends that the figure of the child points not merely back to childhood, as for Freud, but also on to adulthood. Because myths for Freud serve to fulfill the lingering childhood wishes of neurotic adults, they perpetuate a childhood state. Because myths for Jung serve to spur normal adults to recognize their unconscious and to integrate it with ego consciousness, they advance rather than retard psychological growth. As he says of myths of the child, "One of the essential features of the child motif is its futurity. The child is potential future. . . . It is therefore not surprising that so many of the mythological saviours are child gods. This agrees exactly with our experience of the psychology of the individual, which shows that the 'child' paves the way for a future change of personality. In the individuation process, it anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality."<sup>66</sup>

The child somehow symbolizes a specific archetype on the one hand and, even more, the whole personality in its development from primordial unconscious to ego consciousness to self on the other. Thus the mythic child is less human than divine. While remaining literally a child, the mythic child symbolizes the lifelong process of psychological maturation. Child myths depict children as both youngsters and future adults. The child is truly father to the man.

By definition, theories of myth purport to cover all kinds of myths. In practice, few do. At the least, every theory is best suited to a particular kind of myth. The subject matter determines the suitability. For example, Frazer's theory, which assumes the symbolic subject matter of the chief myths to be the course of vegetation, best fits myths that literally describe the death and rebirth of gods. Tylor's wider-ranging theory, according to which the subject matter of myth is the cause of any event in the physical world, still fits only myths that literally describe the

ern and vice versa. Just as the child is only the adult guided substantially by the unconscious, the adult is governed wholly by fantasy thinking and directed thinking. Myths would therefore be a natural phenomenon. As Jung says, "These differences between the mythological thinking of children, primitives, and in moderns as well as primitives have and exist to the same degree."

## MYTHS

of the Child Archetype," where he presents his full theory of myth. Typically presenting the figure of the child, Jung contends that the figure of the child, like Freud, the actual child but the archetype, the figure of the child points not merely to childhood but on to adulthood. Because myths for children and neurotic adults, they perform a similar function for Jung serve to spur normal adults to identify themselves with ego consciousness, they advance the child's growth. As he says of myths of the child, "The child motif is its futurity. The child is potent because it is that so many of the mythological figures are in contact with our experience of the psychology of the child. The child paves the way for a future change in the personality, it anticipates the figure that comes to dominate the conscious elements in the personality."<sup>66</sup>

The child archetype on the one hand and, even more so, the element from primordial unconscious to the conscious, the mythic child is less human than the actual child. The mythic child symbolizes the lifelong process of growth. Myths depict children as both younger and older than the man.

to cover all kinds of myths. In practice, they are limited to a particular kind of myth. For example, Frazer's theory, which views myths to be the course of vegetation, the death and rebirth of gods. Tylor's theory that the subject matter of myth is the cause of death, not only myths that literally describe the

decisions of gods to bring about events in the physical world. The theory of the historian of religions Mircea Eliade, for whom the subject matter of myth is the legacy of the past actions of gods or heroes, fits only myths about the past, and really only myths about the introduction in the hoary past of cultural and natural phenomena that still exist today—for example, marriage and thunder.<sup>67</sup>

Freudian and Jungian theories best fit hero myths, for the subject matter of myth for both is striving and accomplishment. For both, heroism can evince itself at varying stages of psychological development. For Freudians, the hero can, like Oedipus, be the stereotypical rebel against the tyrannical father. Here the hero symbolizes the adult still neurotically tied to the Oedipal stage of development.<sup>68</sup> But the Freudian hero can also, like Moses vis-à-vis God, be the heir of the father, identifying himself with the father and thereby forging psychological maturity.<sup>69</sup> Alternatively, myths for Freudians can go back to pre-Oedipal states. The Freudian hero can even be the creator god himself, thereby accomplishing the same feat as the female: giving birth.<sup>70</sup>

Hero myths for Jungians begin not even with creation but with the state prior to creation, and they carry the process of psychological development all the way forward from the prenatal state to the state beyond the development of ego consciousness, which is the classic Freudian end. In Jungian terms, myths deal with the second, distinctively Jungian half of life as well as with the first, Freudian half. The key psychological feat for Freudians is the establishment of independence from one's parents. Jungians, too, seek to liberate their patients from their parents, but for them the key feat of the first half of life is the establishment of a measure of independence from the unconscious. The feat of the second half is, almost paradoxically, the restoration of contact with the unconscious. In Freudian myths the hero, who can be divine or human, is the son who either defeats his father or, better, reconciles himself with his father. In Jungian myths the hero, who can similarly be divine or human, is ego consciousness, which in the first half of life must defeat the unconscious out of which it has emerged and which in the second half of life must return to the unconscious and reconcile itself with it. The classic Jungian hero, no less than the classic Freudian one, is male, but his conventional nemesis is the mother rather than the father. The subject matter of hero myths for Jungians is realms of the mind rather than members of the family, but relations between those realms are mythically depicted in familial terms: ego consciousness is the son and the unconscious the Great Mother, herself most often depicted as a dragon. Like Freudians, Jungians subsume creation myths under hero myths by making creation itself a heroic act, which symbolizes the birth not of the external world but of ego consciousness: "Now we know that cosmogonic myths are, at bottom, symbols for the coming of consciousness."<sup>71</sup>

Myths of the child, of the hero, and of creation are group myths, as myths for Jung have traditionally been. But the decline of religion has obliged moderns to

seek their own, private myths. Jung had the creativity to forge—or to find—his own myth, and he announces at the outset of his autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, that he will proceed to “tell my personal myth,”<sup>72</sup> which refers either to the course of his whole life or, more narrowly, to his speculations about life after death. Far from an inferior alternative to a group myth, a personal myth for Jung is the ideal, for it alone is geared to the uniqueness of one’s psyche. A personal myth seeks to nurture those particular aspects of one’s personality that have been neglected. At times, Jung even defines myth as personal: “Myth is more individual and expresses life more precisely than does science. Science works with concepts of averages which are far too general to do justice to the subjective variety of an individual life.”<sup>73</sup> Jung’s emphasis here on the individuality of myths “balances”—to use the prized Jungian epithet—his emphasis elsewhere on the similarity, even identity, of myths worldwide.

#### MYTHS AND PRIMITIVES

For Jung, myths serve primarily to open adults up to their unconscious, from which, in the course of growing up, they have ineluctably become severed. Myths “compensate or correct, in a meaningful manner, the inevitable one-sidednesses and extravagances of the conscious mind.”<sup>74</sup> But for Jung it is only the ego consciousness of moderns that is sufficiently developed to be severed from the unconscious. As he says, “Since the differentiated consciousness of civilized man has been granted an effective instrument for the practical realization of its contents through the dynamics of his will, there is all the more danger, the more he trains his will, of his getting lost in one-sidedness and deviating further and further from the laws and roots of his being.”<sup>75</sup> It is therefore hard to see how myths “compensate” primitives, who for Jung hover so close to unconsciousness that their ego consciousness has barely begun to develop: “Primitive mentality differs from the civilized chiefly in that the conscious mind is far less developed in scope and intensity. Functions such as thinking, willing, etc. are not yet differentiated; they are pre-conscious, and in the case of thinking, for instance, this shows itself in the circumstances that the primitive does not think *consciously*, but that thoughts appear. . . . Moreover, he is incapable of any conscious effort of will.”<sup>76</sup> The primitive mind for Jung is no less one-sided than the modern one, but it is one-sidedly unconscious rather than, like the modern one, one-sidedly conscious.

Nevertheless, Jung considers myths to be as indispensable for primitives as for moderns. Indeed, he is referring to primitives, if not to them alone, when, as quoted, he states that “myths are original revelations of the preconscious psyche, involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings, and anything but allegories of physical processes.”<sup>77</sup> Primitives may live far closer to the unconscious than moderns do, but the primitive unconscious is still unconscious and still seeks

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to reveal itself to primitives. Just as primitives as well as moderns have dreams, so  
 primitives as well as moderns have myths. Surely Jung’s linkage of mythic thinking  
 to fantasy thinking to children’s thinking to primitive thinking dictates that primi-  
 tives will have at least as many myths as moderns, and may well rely on them  
 even more.

Jung assumes that primitives interpret their myths literally, as referring to the  
 outer world. But primitive myths still function to reveal to primitives their own  
 inner world. Their myths merely do so circuitously, via projection onto the outer  
 world: “All the mythologized processes of nature, such as summer and winter, the  
 phases of the moon, the rainy seasons, and so forth, are in no sense allegories of  
 these objective [i.e., external] occurrences; rather they are symbolic expressions  
 of the inner, unconscious drama of the psyche which becomes accessible to man’s  
 consciousness by way of projection—that is, mirrored in the events of nature.”<sup>78</sup>

Despite Jung’s own association of mythic with childish with primitive, he casti-  
 gates Freudians for making the same associations: “The first attempts at myth-  
 making can, of course, be observed in children, whose games of make-believe  
 often contain historical echoes. But one must certainly put a large question-mark  
 after the [Freudian] assertion that myths spring from the ‘infantile’ psychic life of  
 the race. . . . [T]he myth-making and myth-inhabiting man was a grown reality  
 and not a four-year-old child. Myth is certainly not an infantile phantasm, but  
 one of the most important requisites of primitive life.”<sup>79</sup> Since Jung’s own linkage  
 of myths to children to primitives does not denigrate myths, the supposed Freud-  
 ian denigration must stem from more than the linkage.

#### MYTHS AND MODERNS

Moderns for Jung have largely withdrawn their forebears’ projections from the  
 external world, which they therefore both experience and explain naturally rather  
 than supernaturally. In “de-deifying” the world, moderns have demythicized it:  
 “Only in the following centuries, with the growth of natural science, was the  
 projection withdrawn from matter and entirely abolished together with the psy-  
 che. . . . Nobody, it is true, any longer endows matter with mythological proper-  
 ties.”<sup>80</sup> Moderns still project, but their projections are chiefly onto other human  
 beings: “Projection is now confined to personal and social relationships.”<sup>81</sup>

Yet Jung hardly denies the continued existence of myths. Myths in modernity  
 can take several forms. Minimally, there is the invocation of traditional myths by  
 artists: “Dante decks out his experience in all the imagery of heaven, purgatory,  
 and hell; Goethe brings in the Blocksberg and the Greek underworld; Wagner  
 needs the whole corpus of Nordic myth, including the Parsifal saga; Nietzsche  
 resorts to the hieratic style of the bard and legendary seer; Blake presses into his  
 service the phantasmagoric world of India, the Old Testament, and the Apoca-

lypse."<sup>82</sup> Artists often update traditional myths by recasting them in modern garb: "Mythological motifs frequently appear, but clothed in modern dress; for instance, instead of the eagle of Zeus, or the great roc, there is an airplane; the fight with the dragon is a railway smash; the dragon-slaying hero is an operatic tenor; the Earth Mother is a stout lady selling vegetables; the Pluto who abducts Persephone is a reckless chauffeur, and so on."<sup>83</sup>

More significant for Jung has been the outright revival of traditional myth, of which his grandest example is the revival of the worship of Wotan in twentieth-century Germany: "But what is more than curious—indeed, piquant to a degree—is that an ancient god of storm and frenzy, the long quiescent Wotan, should awake, like an extinct volcano, to new activity, in a civilized country that had long been supposed to have outgrown the Middle Ages."<sup>84</sup> In parts of Germany Wotan was taken as no mere literary metaphor but a real god, worshiped with the slaughtering of sheep. Here myth is lived out, not merely interpreted. While Wotan was not considered a weather god, he was considered the divine force behind Germany's destiny.

Still more significant for Jung has been the creation of new, distinctively secular myths, of which his best example is the belief in flying saucers. Because flying saucers are a technologically advanced phenomenon, they fit the modern scientific self-image and make for an ideal kind of modern myth: "It is characteristic of our time that the archetype . . . should now take the form of an object, a technological construction, in order to avoid the odiousness of mythological personification. Anything that looks technological goes down without difficulty with modern man."<sup>85</sup> Even though the belief in flying saucers is not tied to a story, the belief still qualifies as a myth, for it is a belief in something superhuman in the external world, and it is a widely shared belief.

What interests Jung about the belief in flying saucers is what interests him about myths generally: the psychology of their adherents. At the same time Jung appreciates that the myth of flying saucers, like earlier myths, serves not only psychological needs but also existential ones. The myth personifies the external world and thereby makes it akin to the human one. About the possible reality of flying saucers, Jung remains typically open-minded.<sup>86</sup> The reality of them would not dissolve the psychology of them, for they already belong to what he calls "the reality of the psyche." The outer reality of them would constitute synchronicity.

For some theorists, such as Tylor and Frazer, myth is an exclusively primitive phenomenon. Whenever found among moderns, it is either a mere "survival" or an atavism. For other theorists, such as Rudolf Bultmann, myth can be made acceptable to moderns. For still other theorists, notably Eliade and Campbell, myth is panhuman. While less insistent on this point than Eliade or Campbell, Jung certainly considers myth to be a continuing phenomenon, even if not quite a panhuman one: "Has mankind ever really got away from myths? . . . One could

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almost say that if all the world’s traditions were cut off at a single blow, the whole of mythology and the whole history of religion would start all over again with the next generation. Only a very few individuals succeed in throwing off mythology in epochs of exceptional intellectual exuberance—the masses never.”<sup>87</sup>

#### EARLIER PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF MYTH

For Jung, the recognition of the psychological nature of myth comes gradually. The stages are not simply primitive and modern. While Jung takes for granted that primitives are oblivious to the psychological meaning of their myths, he points to a “philosophical interpretation of myths . . . already grown up among the Stoics, which today we should not hesitate to describe as psychological.”<sup>88</sup> Jung sees the continuation of that tradition in the Church Fathers and down into the medieval and Renaissance periods. The tradition that he traces from Gnosticism to alchemy to modern science involves ever more psychological self-consciousness, though he fluctuates in the degree of self-consciousness he finds. At his most charitable, he is prepared to say that

Since all cognition is akin to recognition, it should not come as a surprise to find that what I have described as a gradual process of development had already been anticipated, and more or less prefigured, at the beginning of our era. . . . The alchemists . . . in their own way knew more about the nature of the individuation process than we moderns do. . . . The same knowledge, formulated differently to suit the age they lived in, was possessed by the Gnostics. The idea of an unconscious was not unknown to them.<sup>89</sup>

More typically, Jung traces a sharp progression in self-consciousness from the Gnostics to, especially, the later alchemists: “The older alchemists were still so unconscious of the psychological implications of the opus that they understood their own symbols as mere allegories—or semiotically—as secret names for chemical combinations, thus stripping mythology, of which they made such copious use, of its true meaning and using only its terminology. Later this was to change, and already in the fourteenth century it began to dawn on them that the lapis was more than a chemical compound.”<sup>90</sup>

#### MYTH AND RELIGION

There are theorists of myth who subsume myth under religion. For Tylor and Frazer, for example, all myths are religious myths. For them, a secular myth would be a contradiction in terms. Other theorists allow for secular as well as religious myths. For Eliade, for example, myths prior to modernity are religious myths; modern myths are secular ones. Jung is here like Eliade.



For Jung, myth and religion have traditionally worked in tandem. Religion has preserved myth, and myth has sustained religion. The heart of religion for Jung is neither belief nor practice but experience, and myth provides the best entrée to the experience of God, which means to the unconscious. Jung thus praises early Christianity for both adopting and adapting various pre-Christian myths: "The fact that the myth [of the phoenix] was assimilated into Christianity by interpretation is proof, first of all, of the myth's vitality; but it also proves the vitality of Christianity, which was able to interpret and assimilate so many myths." A religion that fails to reinterpret its myths is dead. The "spiritual vitality" of a religion "depends on the continuity of myth, and this can be preserved only if each age translates the myth into its own language and makes it an essential content of its view of the world."<sup>91</sup>

Unlike early Christianity, modern Christianity, according to Jung, has failed to update its myths. That failure is an aspect of its overall failure to reinvigorate itself. Sometimes Jung says that modern Christianity has gone astray by severing belief from experience and trying in vain to rely on sheer belief. Jung's objection here is twofold: that belief without experience is empty, and that the belief is often incompatible with modern scientific and historical knowledge. Other times Jung says that modern Christianity has gone awry in seeking to meet the challenge of modernity by turning belief into faith severed from knowledge. Jung's objection here is that even faith requires experience to sustain itself. As Jung sums up his criticisms of both options:

The Churches stand for traditional and collective convictions which in the case of many of their adherents are no longer based on their own inner experience but on *unreflecting belief*, which is notoriously apt to disappear as soon as one begins thinking about it. The content of belief then comes into collision with knowledge, and it often turns out that the irrationality of the former is no match for the ratiocinations of the latter. Belief is no adequate substitute for inner experience, and where this is absent even a strong faith which came miraculously as a gift of grace may depart equally miraculously.<sup>92</sup>

While these particular criticisms do not involve myth, still other times Jung says that modern Christianity has erred in its attempt to update itself by *eliminating* myth—as if myth were a gangrenous limb that must be amputated to save the patient. Jung is here referring to Bultmann's "demythologization" of the New Testament. Jung's first objection is that the supposed incompatibility of myth with modern knowledge stems from a false, literal interpretation of myth: "Theology [wrongly] rejects any tendency to take the assertions of its earliest records as written myths and, accordingly, to understand them symbolically."<sup>93</sup> Jung's second objection is that myth is indispensable to experience and thereby to religion: "Indeed, it is the theologians themselves who have recently made the attempt—

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no doubt as a concession to "knowledge"—to "demythologize" the object of  
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an integral component of all religions and therefore cannot be excluded from  
the assertions of faith without injuring them."<sup>94</sup> Here Christianity has sought to  
overcome the opposition between faith and modern knowledge by discarding be-  
lief at odds with knowledge. But in eliminating myth, it has eliminated experience  
as well.

At yet other times Jung says that modern Christianity has rightly turned to  
myth to resurrect itself but has still failed to reinterpret myth symbolically and  
thereby make it palatable to moderns: "[R]eligions have long turned to myths for  
help. . . . But you cannot, artificially and with an effort of will, believe the state-  
ments of myth if you have not previously been gripped by them. If you are honest,  
you will doubt the truth of the myth because our present-day consciousness has  
no means of understanding it. Historical and scientific criteria do not lend them-  
selves to a recognition of mythological truth; it can be grasped only by the intu-  
itions of faith or by psychology."<sup>95</sup>

Ironically, Bultmann, despite the misleading term "demythologization," strives  
to do the same as Jung: not to eliminate myth from the New Testament but, on  
the contrary, to reinterpret myth symbolically in order to make it acceptable to  
moderns. And Bultmann, also like Jung, contends that the true meaning of the  
New Testament has always been symbolic, though for Bultmann myth read sym-  
bolically describes the human condition rather than, as for Jung, the human mind.

By Christian mythology, Jung means the life of Christ. Read literally, the Gos-  
pels are incompatible with both history and science. But if, says Jung, "the state-  
ment that Christ rose from the dead is to be understood not literally but symboli-  
cally, then it is capable of various interpretations that do not conflict with  
knowledge and do not impair the meaning of the statement."<sup>96</sup> Read psychologi-  
cally, the life of Christ becomes a symbol of the archetypal journey of the hero  
from primordial unconsciousness (birth) to ego consciousness (adulthood) to re-  
turn to the unconscious (crucifixion) to reemergence from it to form the self  
(resurrection). Understood symbolically, Christ serves as a model for Christians  
seeking to cultivate their relation to the self. Without denying the historicity of  
Christ, Jung maintains that Christ can be inspirational even as a mythical hero.  
Indeed, for Jung the prime appeal of Christ's life has always been mythical, which  
for Jung means psychological:

Christ lived a concrete, personal, and unique life which, in all essential features, had at  
the same time an archetypal character. This character can be recognized from the nu-  
merous connections of the biographical details with worldwide myth-motifs. . . . The  
life of Christ is no exception in that not a few of the great figures of history have

realized, more or less clearly, the archetype of the hero's life with its characteristic changes of fortune. . . . Since the life of Christ is archetypal to a high degree, it represents to just that degree the life of the archetype. But since the archetype is the unconscious precondition of every human life, its life, when revealed, also reveals the hidden, unconscious ground-life of every individual.<sup>97</sup>

Jung argues, further, that the Gospels themselves present a combined mythical and historical figure: "In the gospels themselves factual reports, legends, and myths are woven into a whole. This is precisely what constitutes the meaning of the gospels, and they would immediately lose their character of wholeness if one tried to separate the individual from the archetypal with a critical scalpel."<sup>98</sup> Just like Bultmann, to whom he is in fact so close, Jung thus claims to be explicating the symbolic meaning intended by the Gospels all along. For both Jung and Bultmann, the obstacles that modernity poses to a literal rendition of Christ's life offer an opportunity to make clear for the first time the meaning intended from the outset. A virtue is truly made out of a necessity.

Jung never faults Christian mythology itself for its outdatedness, only its interpreters: "Our myth has become mute, and gives no answers. The fault lies not in it as it is set down in the Scriptures, but solely in us, who have not developed it further, who, rather, have suppressed any such attempts."<sup>99</sup> Jung does lambaste mainstream Christianity for its one-sidedness—above all, for its failure to give sufficient credence to evil: "The old question posed by the Gnostics, 'Whence comes evil?' has been given no answer by the Christian world."<sup>100</sup> But this limitation is a separate issue. Even if one-sided, Christian mythology can still be interpreted anew by each generation. In fact, Jung hopes that modern Christians will not only psychologize their mythology but also broaden it to include evil, as epitomized by nuclear war.

Yet for all Jung's efforts to make Christianity acceptable to moderns by psychologizing it, he recognizes that religion has simply ceased to be an option for many moderns, surely including to some degree Jung himself.<sup>101</sup> Nonreligious moderns must either adopt secular myths such as that of flying saucers or else forge their own, personal myths, as Jung was able to do. Or they must find a substitute for myth such as art or dreams.

#### TERMS

Jung uses various terms which must be distinguished: instinct, archetype, image, symbol, sign, allegory, "mythological motif," "mythologem," and myth. Instincts and archetypes are related but distinct. An instinct is a reflex action. An archetype is the emotional and intellectual significance of that action: "What we properly call instincts are physiological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the

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same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call the archetypes. . . . The unconscious . . . seems to be guided chiefly by instinctive trends, represented by corresponding thought forms—that is, by the archetypes.”<sup>102</sup> Shutting one’s eyes upon looking at the sun is clearly instinctual. Even feeling terrified or fascinated by the sight is still instinctual. By contrast, experiencing the sun as a god is archetypal. An archetypal experience is not any emotional event but only an overwhelming one, the extraordinariness of which stems exactly from the power of the archetype encountered through projection. Many, though certainly not all, phenomena experienced archetypally are experienced as gods. The key evidence of the modern withdrawal of projections from the external world is the experience of the world as natural rather than divine.

Despite Jung’s somewhat misleading synonym “primordial images,” archetypes are not themselves pictures but rather the inclination to form them in typical ways. Symbols are the actual pictures formed. Symbols are the means by which archetypes, themselves unconscious, communicate to consciousness. Each archetype requires an infinite number of symbols—as many symbols as there are dimensions of the archetype. Archetypes are transmitted by heredity; symbols, by acculturation. Archetypes are the same universally; symbols vary from culture to culture:

Again and again I encounter the mistaken notion that an archetype is determined in regard to its content, in other words that it is a kind of unconscious idea. . . . It is necessary to point out once more that archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form and then only to a very limited degree. . . . Its form . . . might perhaps be compared to the axial system of a crystal, which, as it were, preforms the crystalline structure in the mother liquid, although it has no material existence of its own. This first appears according to the specific way in which the ions and molecules aggregate. The archetype in itself is empty and purely formal, nothing but a *facultas praeformandi*, a possibility of representation which is given *a priori*. The [symbolic] representations themselves are not inherited, only the forms.<sup>103</sup>

For example, a specific savior like Buddha would be a symbol. The archetype manifested through the Buddha would be the category *saviors*. Through the Buddha, Buddhists would encounter those aspects of the savior archetype captured by the symbol. Other saviors like Jesus would capture other aspects of the savior archetype. Any symbol, however rich, is capable of capturing only a limited number of aspects of its archetype. Which symbol is employed by the archetype depends on which aspects of the archetype the subject, whether individual or group, needs to cultivate.

An archetype for Jung is not the symbol of something else but the symbolized

itself. The archetype of the child, for example, refers not to any actual children but to itself. The archetype is irreducible. An actual child can symbolize the child archetype but not vice versa:

It may not be superfluous to point out that lay prejudice is always inclined to identify the child motif [i.e., archetype] with the concrete experience "child," as though the real child were the cause and pre-condition of the existence of the child motif. In psychological reality, however, the empirical idea "child" is only the means (and not the only one) by which to express a psychic fact that cannot be formulated more exactly. Hence by the same token the mythological idea of the child is emphatically not a copy of the empirical child but a *symbol* clearly recognizable as such: it is a wonder-child, a divine child, begotten, born, and brought up in quite extraordinary circumstances, and not—this is the point—a human child.<sup>104</sup>

Identifying archetypes is not easy. First, the number of archetypes is unlimited: "There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life."<sup>105</sup> Second, archetypes can take the most disparate of forms: natural objects like the moon and fire, artifacts like rings and weapons, human beings like mothers and children, superhuman figures like gods and witches, legendary figures like heroes and monsters, abstractions like circles and squares, ideas like the anima and the self, and events like birth and death. Third, the same entity can be both a symbol and an archetype. For example, Zeus may be a clear-cut symbol, but sky gods can be both an archetype and a set of symbols in turn of the god archetype, which itself can be both an archetype and a set of symbols of the self archetype.

Jung vigorously distinguishes symbols from mere "signs" or "allegories"—terms he uses interchangeably. A sign or allegory has only a single meaning. A symbol has multiple meanings. The meaning of a sign or allegory is denotative. The meaning of a symbol is connotative. The meaning of a sign or allegory is conscious. The deepest meaning of a symbol is unconscious. A sign or allegory is consciously chosen to convey its meaning. A symbol may arise spontaneously, as in dreams, and even a conscious choice is directed by the unconscious. A sign or allegory conveys fully the signified or allegorized, so that to know the meaning of a sign or allegory is to know the complete meaning of the signified or allegorized. A symbol conveys only a portion of what it symbolizes, so that to know the meaning of a symbol is to gain only a glimpse of the symbolized.

Jung never makes clear what accounts for the limitations of symbols. Seemingly, the finiteness of any symbol, however rich, restricts the number of aspects of an archetype it can convey. For example, Homer's Helen can convey only the erotic and seductive aspects of the anima archetype; the Virgin Mary, only the motherly, compassionate ones. Alternatively, the limits may lie in the ability of

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human beings to decipher the array of meanings of any symbol. Perhaps for Jung both limitations hold.

Presumably, the Freudian unconscious expresses itself through signs and allegories because its contents were originally conscious and are therefore in principle wholly retrievable. But when Jung says that "an allegory is a paraphrase of a conscious content, whereas a symbol is the best possible expression for an unconscious content whose nature can only be guessed, because it is still unknown," he is seemingly excluding Freudian meanings as allegories and is confining allegories to the signified of, say, nature mythology.<sup>106</sup> As he states, "Symbols are not signs or allegories for something known; they seek rather to express something that is little known or completely unknown."<sup>107</sup> But by "unknown" Jung doubtless means forever, not just presently, unknown. Therefore only the Jungian unconscious expresses itself through symbols because only its contents are inherently unconscious and so cannot be directly accessed by conscious effort.

Jung also calls archetypes "mythological motifs" and "mythologems." But sometimes he applies these terms to the symbols expressing archetypes. Still other times he applies the terms neither to archetypes nor to symbols but to parts of myths—for example, to the virgin birth portion of the myth of Jesus. The terms never refer to whole myths. As he says, "These products [i.e., mythologems] are never (or at least very seldom) myths with a definite form, but rather mythological components."<sup>108</sup>

Myths are more than archetypes. They are stories which, read symbolically, contain archetypes. Archetypes are "mythological components which, because of their typical nature, we can call 'motifs,' 'primordial images,' types or—as I have named them—*archetypes*."<sup>109</sup> An archetype is a motif found not merely within one myth but within many myths. A motif found in only one myth would not qualify as an archetype. Any myth ordinarily contains multiple archetypes, though one archetype is often dominant. The plot of myth is not only the manifestation of one or more archetypes but also the development of them and their interaction. On the literal level the subject of a myth is a particular like Zeus. On the symbolic level the subject is the archetype symbolized by Zeus—for example, sky gods. The activities of Zeus symbolize the development of the archetype of the sky god and its relationship to other archetypes, as symbolized by Hera, Prometheus, and other gods.

#### DEVELOPMENTS IN JUNGIAN THEORY

The most influential Jungian theorists of myth after the master himself have been Erich Neumann (1905–1960), Marie-Louise von Franz (1915–1998), and James Hillman (1926–). One might consider adding Joseph Campbell (1904–1987), the

greatest popularizer of myth of this century, but Campbell is too eclectic to qualify as a full-fledged Jungian. Neumann systematizes the developmental, or evolutionary, aspect of Jungian theory. Jung himself certainly correlates myths with stages of psychological development, but Neumann works out the stages, beginning with the "uroboric" state of sheer unconsciousness and proceeding to the incipient emergence of the ego out of the unconscious, the development of an independent ego consciousness, and the eventual return of the ego to the unconscious to create the self. Like Jung, Neumann characterizes the course of psychological development as one of continuing heroism. Neumann concentrates on heroism in the first half of life, both in *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (1949, trans. 1954) and even more in *The Great Mother* (1955), which indeed focuses on primordial unconsciousness itself as the matrix of all subsequent development. Neumann's emphasis on heroism in the first half of life complements Campbell's devotion to heroism in the second half in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949, 2d ed. 1968).

Von Franz is best known for her many books on fairy tales—among them *An Introduction to the Psychology [or Interpretation] of Fairy Tales* (1970, rev. 1996), *A Psychological Interpretation of "The Golden Ass" of Apuleius* (1970, rev. 1980), *Problems of the Feminine in Fairytales* (1972), *Shadow and Evil in Fairy Tales* (1974, rev. 1995), *Individuation in Fairy Tales* (1977, rev. 1990), and *The Psychological Meaning of Redemption in Fairytales* (1980). But she is also the author of the fullest Jungian book on creation myths, *Patterns of Creativity Mirrored in Creation Myths* (1972, rev. 1995). For von Franz, creation myths symbolize the same process of the emergence and development of the ego out of the primordial unconscious as hero myths of the first half of life do for Neumann. But for her, creation myths are far more abstract and impersonal than hero myths since their literal subject matter is the birth of the whole world rather than of a single figure within it. No less than Neumann does von Franz deem the act of creation heroic, but she focuses on myths of creation of the cosmos itself. Rather than classifying stages in the process of creation like Neumann, she classifies means of creation—for example, creation by two creators instead of one. Like Neumann, von Franz stresses the difficulty of creation, which likewise represents the ego's difficulty in breaking free of the unconscious. For her, myths that present creation as a long and arduous effort better fit the development of the psyche than those that depict it as a quick, effortless act.

By far the most radical innovation in the Jungian theory of myth has been the development of "archetypal" psychology, which in fact considers itself post-Jungian. The chief figure in this movement is Hillman, whose main theoretical works include *The Myth of Analysis* (1972), *Loose Ends* (1975), *Re-Visioning Psychology* (1975), *The Dream and the Underworld* (1979), *Puer Papers* (ed. 1979), *Archetypal Psychology* (1983), and (with Karl Kerényi) *Oedipus Variations* (1991). Another im-

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portant figure in the movement is David Miller, perhaps best known for *The New Polytheism* (1979). Archetypal psychology faults classical Jungian psychology on multiple grounds. By emphasizing the compensatory, therapeutic message of mythology, classical Jungian psychology purportedly reduces mythology to psychology and gods to concepts. In espousing a unified self (or "Self") as the ideal psychological authority, Jungian psychology supposedly projects onto psychology a Western, specifically monotheistic, more specifically Christian, even more specifically Protestant, outlook. The Western emphasis on progress is purportedly reflected in the primacy Jungian psychology accords both hero myths and the ego, even in the ego's encounter with the unconscious: the encounter is intended to abet development. Finally, Jungian psychology is berated for placing archetypes in an unknowable realm distinct from the knowable realm of symbols.

As a corrective, Hillman and his followers advocate that psychology be viewed as irreducibly mythological. Myth is still to be interpreted psychologically, but psychology is itself to be interpreted mythologically. One grasps the psychological meaning of the myth of Saturn by imagining oneself to be the figure Saturn, not by translating Saturn's plight into clinical terms like depression. Moreover, the depressed Saturn represents a legitimate aspect of one's personality. Each god deserves its due. The psychological ideal should be pluralistic rather than monolithic—in mythological terms, polytheistic rather than monotheistic. Hillman takes his mythic cues from the Greeks rather than from the Bible, however simplistic his equation of Greece with polytheism and of the Bible with monotheism may be. Insisting that archetypes are to be found *in* symbols rather than outside them, Hillman espouses a relation to the gods in themselves and not to something beyond them. The ego becomes but one more archetype with its attendant kind of god, and it is the "soul" rather than the ego that experiences the archetypes through myths. Myth serves to open one up to the soul's own depths. The payoff is aesthetic rather than moral: one gains a sense of wonder and contemplation, not a guide to living. The most apposite myths for the archetypal school are those of the playful puer and of the receptive anima rather than, as for classical Jungians, those of the striving hero and of the fully integrated wise old man.