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A THEORETICAL INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY IN RELATION TO ART THERAPY

Alan Briks

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art Education and Art Therapy

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ABSTRACT

A Theoretical Inquiry into
the Nature of Personal Mythology
in Relation to Art Therapy

Alan Briks

A theoretical inquiry into the concept of personal myth in relation to art therapy practice was presented. The premise developed was that mythological motifs are intrinsic to creative visual expressions produced in art therapy, and the art therapy procedure facilitates a mythmaking process. Discussion of the nature of myth from multidisciplinary sources, as well as considerations of how psychology has sought to understand the dynamic forces of the unconscious through the myth, provided a foundation for exploring the nature of personal myth and the role of visual art as a modality of its expression. Practical implications concerned the potentials of acknowledging personal myth as a diagnostic entity in personality assessment, and an examination of the means by which transformations of personal mythology can occur through art therapy process.

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A THEORETICAL INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF PERSONAL MYTHOLOGY IN RELATION TO ART THERAPY

INTRODUCTION

This topic choice originated from art therapy clinical experience and the observation that a dynamic and highly individualized perspective on the personality could result through recognition of the communicative aspect of art as a conveyer of stories. The thesis presents a theoretical inquiry into the nature of personal mythology in relation to art therapy. It proposes that art therapy may be unique in its capacity to explore the inner dynamics of personality through a precious window to an individual's personal mythology. This study of personal mythology will develop certain theoretical considerations concerning the potentials of a personal mythological perspective for art therapy evaluation in clinical assessment as well as an exploration of the role of the mythic imagination in the art therapy process.

A focal point concerns the concept of personal myth. The personal myth is an autobiographical self-image, a dynamic symbolic entity in the structure and evolution of the personality. It is a

secret core of the personality: As a concept, it must be appreciated as an abstraction, a composite of the key inner fantasies which guide the personality; an inner story, as it were.

A view to the myth might be considered a view to what is sacred, timeless and ultimately a vision of personal truth expressed by way of an individual's inner perception. Such a vantage point could lend insight into the evolving structures of personality from an individual's own frame of reference. This perspective on the personality, as may be gained through various approaches to the image in art therapy practice, would present a contrast to the reductive, static, pathological picture of the human personality which may sometimes emerge in traditional systems of psychological classification.

In addition to discussing psychological perspectives on the myth, the first half of the thesis will place considerable emphasis on presenting a profile of the mythic imagination encompassing various contributions from multi-disciplinary sources. This discussion is not only relevant to providing an adequate foundation for this thesis, but is as well pertinent to an art therapist's comprehension and approach to the image. In this regard, McNiff wrote, "Prerequisite knowledge is needed for our profession to fully engage the image. This guidance cannot be gained exclusively through contemporary systems of psychological analysis and psychotherapeutic practice. The image can be fully understood only through cooperative studies of culture, the fine arts, literature, history, religion, philosophy and myth (1986a, p.99)."

Through an integrative approach to the theory, an attempt will be made to trace the evolution of a personal mythological system, to explore how inner myths are shaped and how they may affect the personality. Consideration will be given to the relationship between personal and transpersonal mythic components and how various theorists have perceived the latter to contribute to psychic healing and personality transformation.

The latter portion of the thesis will be directed toward the study of the interrelationships between the dialectic of mythic thought and the production of creative visual expression in the art therapy context. The premise will be developed that art therapy processes may facilitate an individual's gradual awareness of his or her inner myths. leading to insights into the nature of underlying personal conflicts and existing coping patterns.

The idea will also be introduced that the creative processes involved in the generation of new thematic contents, identifications and objects in creative visual expression in the patient's work in art therapy may be viewed in the light of active myth-making. The discussion of myth-making as a function of art therapy processes will be approached with a view to its capacities in contributing toward the resolution of inner conflict, progressive personality transformation, and hence the emergence of a more functional and adaptive mythology.

Discussion of the implications of this study for the field of art therapy includes an exploration of the viability of personal myth as a diagnostic entity in personality evaluation. The bases of the

"syncretistic", "comparative" as well as structuralist approaches to myth analysis, as applied to creative visual expression, will be presented as concepts which may assist the art therapist in gaining access and furthering an understanding of an individual's inner mythology. Finally, the therapeutic effects of art therapy processes in myth cognizance and myth-making will be broached.

CHAPTER ONE:
In Recognition of Myth:
A Multidisciplinary Introduction to Myth and Mythic Imagination

> Let us not begin in the old way by inventing, with the understanding, another set of descriptions. Rather the task is first to rethink, or, rather, "reimagine" psychopathology by examining behaviour with a mythical eye and by hearing reports as tales.... It means "case material" as a tale. (Hillman, 1972, p. 193)

No absolute definition or irreproachable theory of mythological thought presently exists. David Leeming (1973) has suggested that the basis for understanding myth and mythic imagination is necessarily reached through one's personal journey into a vast web of complex, highly abstract and often contradictory theory. In an attempt to offer acquaintance with the concepts of myth and mythic imagination, this section provides several basic definitions from a multidisciplinary perspective. The aim is to highlight major characteristics pertaining to myth with the inclusion of some key theoretical views.

While psychological perspectives of mythic imagination relating to the unconscious and visual artistic expression will be presented

in the following chapters, it is to be noted that such fields as philosophy, anthropology, theology, semiology and literature, as well as psychology have been enriched by a mutual interrelational process in the development of the understanding of mythic thought and its significance to unconscious processes and creative expression.

1.1 Myth: Toward a Definition

According to Leeming, myth, or the Greek mythos, is derived from the Greek root MV (mu), meaning "to make a sound with the mouth" (1973, p. 1). He wrote that in this respect, myth is thus the basis of human existence as we know it: "In the beginning was the Word" (1973, p. 1). To the orthodox believer, what we call myth is the Word of God - the metaphorical, symbolical, or direct expression of the unknown; "the word was with God and the word was God" (1973, p. 1).

Levin offered a similar definition for mythology: Mythos, meaning word, combined with logos, is "the word of words" (1960, p. 103).

In defining mythology, Olson pointed out that ology, derived from logos, means "the scientific word about something." He continued, "Myth has to do with a telling that seeks to bring the hearer into the presence or region of that which is told" (1980, p. 3).

While these definitions of myth center upon the word, or the act of communicating the word, Levin also made a point that is crucial

for this discussion: The basis of mythical thought arises from preverbal consciousness. "We may agree that language conditions thought; but may we agree that language antedates thought?" he asked (1960, p. 104). Rather, he asserted, we must assume that both language and thought are shaped by habits of prelogical or metaphorical thinking.

Primitive metaphysics as systemized by Ernst Cassirer in his Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (vol. 1, 1955) and Carl Jung's (1949/1973) emphasis on the link between preverbal symbolic thought and mythic imagination both address this point, which will be developed further in this thesis in seeking to explore the relationship between mythic imagination and visual art expression.

Mircea Eliade (1963b, p. 8) described the foremost function of myth as revealing "the exemplary modes for all human rites and all significant human activities - diet or marriage, work or education, art or wisdom." Mason (In Olson, 1980, p. 15) stated that "in olden times a mythic tale depicted the tragedy or comedy of the male will in its confrontations, trials and journeys to achieve glory for itself, overcome a loss, fulfill a vow, rescue a family, outwit an enemy, honour a friend, elude or uncover a truth, search for eternal life," or other such endeavours.

Originally, myth meant a correct and factual description of a lived reality (vera narratio) before it came to mean a story told, referring to "an invention, exaggeration and falsification; ultimately an equivalent of the purely fictitious" (Levin, 1960, p. 104; Hacker, 1964). The pioneering modernist, Fontanelle, in his

book On the Origins of Fables, suggested in 1685 that mythology was an "ignorant philosophy" (cited in Hacker, 1964, p. 439); mythos came finally to denote "what cannot really exist" (Eliade, 1963a, p. 8).

The word myth is subject to many and often opposing definitions, in particular as applied to the products of modern man's imagination. These definitions range all the way from those promoting myth as the only access to inner and external reality to those dismissing it as a fictitious, projective distortion, the opposite of reality (Hacker, 1964). An example of the former is the metaphysics thinker Ananda Coomaraswamy (1928/1964) who attributed to myth the penultimate truth, of which all experience is a temporal reflection. "The mythical narrative is of timeless and placeless validity, true nowhere and everywhere" (Coomaraswamy quoted by Leeming, 1973, p. 3). On the other hand, Bultmann typified the opposite view in his characterization of myth as objectifying "what is not an object and giving the appearance of the unworldly and divine to what is in fact worldly and human" (Quoted in Hacker, 1964, p. 439).

Mircea Eliade stated that in the last fifty years Western scholars have approached myth differently from 19th century scholars. Unlike their predecessors, who treated myth in the usual meaning of the word as fable, invention or fiction, they have come to accept it as was understood in archaic societies where, on the contrary, myth meant a "'true story' and, beyond that, a story that is a most precious possession because it is sacred, exemplary, significant" (1963b, p. 1).

Eliade, a foremost scholar on mythology, has pointed out the difficulty in establishing a definition of myth that would be acceptable to all scholars and at the same time intelligible to non-specialists. His attempt at such a definition:

> Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates to an event that took place in primordial Time, the fabled time of "beginnings"... Myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the Cosmos or only a fragment of reality - an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behavior, an institution. (Eliade, 1963b, pp. 5-6)

It is this formulation that has proved most pertinent to the discussion to follow.

1.2 Myth as "Story"

Olson viewed myth as having to do with "a telling that seeks to bring the hearer into the presence or region of that which is told" (1980, p. 3). As Oliver wrote, "The myth is a closed world; no one steps out of it to supplement the narrative" (In Olson, 1980, p. 77). He related this to a consideration of the literary phenomenality of myths; that they are stories. A story is both disclosure and limit: What the myth intends, it conveys; what it does not convey, it does not intend.

Eliade suggested that myth is always an account of a creation, relating to how something was produced and came into being: "The

myth tells only of that which really happened, which manifested itself completely" (1963b, p. 6). To Eliade, the story in myth recounts a true and sacred history relating to events of primordial times - the time of beginnings. Myth reveals the creative activities of supernatural beings who provide a model for human behaviour in bestowing the value and meaning of existence (1963b).

Levin (1960) described another usage of mythos, in connection with Homer and the Greek poets, as a term of literary criticism signifying plot, which Aristotle considered to be the most significant feature of tragedy. Fabula, the Latin equivalent, may signify the whole dramatic work. It has its own derivative in fable, which has moralistic connotations. The designation mythopoesis is a technical term meaning imagination at work. Poesis is making; a poet, etymologically, is a maker and the literal meaning of poetry is make believe. The term fabulation, designating the story-telling faculty, makes the function of myth-making clearer in relation to other forms of mental activity: "It stands halfway between the cognitive and the vaguely intuitive; and it is out of that limbo between rational intelligence and the unconscious that fictions are generated" (Levin, 1960, p. 105).

At this juncture we might consider Richard Chase's definition of myth: "Myth is an esthetic device for bringing the imaginary but powerful world of preternatural forces into a manageable collaboration with the objective (i.e. experienced facts of life) insuch a way as to excite a sense of reality amenable to both

unconscious passions and the unconscious mind" (Bruner, 1960, p. 276).

According to semiologist Jacques Waardenburg, an essential feature of the symbolic nature of the myth is the sense that the story, like the symbol, refers to something which is held to be real and true:

> Each element of the myth has to some extent a symbolic connotation, and the combination of these elements confers a new symbolic meaning of its own, for the plot itself unfolded in the story refers to a reality or truth which is represented as an event of great consequence and implication. These symbolizations together indicate the meaning of the myth, which in most cases is proclaimed to be a truth upon which the ordinary world and immediate reality or parts of it are based, so that through the myth, world and life can be seen in their real nature.
> (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980, p. 53)

Waardenburg's statement appears to contain traces of suppositions presented from a phenomenological perspective by Ernst Cassirer (1955). Cassirer proposed that for the creator of the myth or the performer of the rite, myth is a self-contained form of interpretation of reality. In the mythic story as such, the subject is transformed into a god or demon <u>whom he represents</u>. In Cassirer's conceptualization of the myth, there is no distinction between the real and the ideal; the mythic image is true reality and hence mythical thinking lacks the category of the ideal (Bidney, 1974).

1.3 Gestalt-forming Influence and Mythic Structure

A wide range of theorists on the myth, such as Campbell (1968b), Schorer (1946/1960), Cassirer (1955), Mann (1937/1960), Kris (1952), and Levi-Strauss (1964, 1955/1974), have made reference to an organizing principle inherent in mythical imagination, whose gestalt-forming influence has a directive effect on the patterning of the unconscious and/or the shaping of the personality.

Such organizing and directive influences are intrinsic to the nature of the mythical symbol itself. According to Joseph Campbell, every mythical symbol "touches and unites in the actuality of a person the whole range of his living present: the ultimate mystery of his being and the spectacle of his world, the order of his instincts, of his dreams, and of his thought" (1968b, p. 677).

Lonergan has suggested that mythic symbols are inner and outer events, or a combination of the two, which intimate the nature of "the kind of being that we are to be and the kind of world in which we become our true selves" (In Olson, 1980, p.34). Mark Schorer considered that all real convictions involve an imaginative symbolism, or mythology. He remarked that myths are instruments by which "we continually struggle to make our experiences intelligible to ourselves" (1946/1960, p. 355). Thus, he posited, mythic thought acts to make cohesive the occurrences of mental life, giving meaning and form to emotional experience, while functioning as its guiding force:

> A myth is a large, controlling image that gives philosophical meaning to the facts of ordinary life; that is, which has organizing value for experience. A mythology is a more or less articulated body of such images, a pantheon. Without such images, experience is chaotic, fragmentary and merely phenomenal. It is the chaos of experience that creates them, and they are intended to rectify it. (Schorer, 1946/1960, p. 355)

A principal element of Cassirer's concept of myth involves the emphasis on an underlying structural form in mythical fantasy and mythical thinking. This structural form is similar to Jung's archetypes (which will be addressed further in the next chapter), based on the concept of basic mythical configurations, an idea originally put forward by Bastian (Campbell, 1968b). Cassirer's approach to mythical structure (developed from the Kantian view of transcendental form as the means by which the human spirit constructs the physical world) is reached in a different manner from that of Jung. He pointed out that Kant had emphasized the relevance of the structure of language to this concept and that, based on the model of language, Cassirer and Levi-Strauss created their distinct developments of the Kantian position. While for Cassirer the symbolic aspect was of primary significance, for Levi-Strauss the order was reversed (Kirk, 1970).

It was Cassirer's view (1955) that the unity of myth is ultimately not to be sought in genetic and causal explanation, but in a teleological sense, as a direction followed by consciousness in constructing spiritual reality. Myths convey a multiplicity of meaning, while bringing together great complexes of related ideas.

Mythic thought does not sort out concepts and relate them in a distinct pattern, and does not give rise to discursive ideas, yet the images projected by mythical imagination may themselves imply a special kind of understanding (Bidney, 1955/1974). Cassirer (1955) stated that the products of mythic imagination are:

> Images charged with meaning, but the meanings remain implicit, so that the emotions they command seem to be centred on the image rather than anything it merely conveys; in the image, which may be a vision, a gesture, a sound-form (musical image) or a word as readily as an external object, many meanings may be concentrated, many ideas telescoped, and interfused, and incompatible emotions simultaneously expressed. (Quoted in Kirk, 1970, p. 267)

A myth is a statement about action, and its meanings are conditioned by an interrelationship between those symbols or subjects with which it is associated. This point was well put by Waardenburg, who suggested that whereas a symbol is of a static nature, a myth is more dynamic because it is a sequence of events or states. He described the dynamism of myth as a "'moving symbolism' - like a film consisting of moving pictures" (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980, p. 54).

In accordance with this view, Cassirer (1955) had acknowledged that a vital principle of myth is its dynamic nature, recognizing that myth can only be describable in terms of action. Kirk, however, focusing on this aspect of Cassirer's theory, criticized Cassirer's concentration on the multiplicity of meanings of the static symbol itself, rather than taking into account the whole structure of myth and the mutual relationships of its subjects (Kirk, 1970).

Theories generated within the fields of structural linguistics and structural anthropology offer conceptualizations of mythic thought which seek to contribute to the understanding of the dynamic structural basis of myth as a whole.

There are two distinct types of structural analysis in folklore and myth. In the syntagmatic approach developed by V. Propp (1968), the structure or formal organization of a folklorist text is described following the chronological order of the linear sequence of elements in the text as reported by the informant. The other, formulated by Claude Levi-Strauss (1955/1974) and derived in part from Propp's theory, has been termed the paradigmatic approach. In this approach, the elements are taken out of their given order and are regrouped in one or more analytic schemes. The paradigmatic analysis seeks to describe the pattern (usually based upon an a priori binary principle of opposition) which purportedly underlies the mythic text (A. Dundes in Propp, 1968).

Levi-Strauss's position, according to Dundes (Propp, 1968), is essentially that linear sequential structure constitutes only apparent or manifest content, whereas the paradigmatic structure is the more important latent structure. The task of the structural analyst, according to Levi-Strauss (1955/1974) is to see beyond the linear structure to the underlying paradigmatic pattern of organization. In Dundes' view, the syntagmatic approach tends to be both empirical and inductive and provides replicable analyses, in contrast to paradigmatic analyses which are speculative and deductive and are not easily replicated (Propp, 1968).

Levi-Strauss's interest was not primarily in the understanding of the symbolic content, of what is in myths, but in identifying the common structural basis of myth in the form of a code, which he considered capable of conferring a common significance to unconscious formulations pertaining to the individual mind, societies, and diverse civilizations (Levi-Strauss, 1964). Of significance to the concerns of this thesis is Levi-Strauss's contribution to our understanding of the means by which conscious mythic expression is organized and unfolds. His stance was that individuals allow unconscious preoccupations to emerge from the way elements of their stories are arranged. He intended not to show how men think in their myths, but "how myths think themselves in men, and without their awareness" (Kirk, 1970, p. 44). From this perspective, myths are about the human mind as such and man's general qualities as an entity involved in an environment, rather than any particular aspect of the world or human life.

From a philosophical point of view, Levi-Strauss's notion of mythic thought would appear to resemble that of Cassirer, in that both approaches observe in myth a patterning of structural elements which function in the composition of an unconscious internal reality. A central difference between the two hinges on the contrast between Cassirer's notion of the spiritual and transcendental significance of myth vs. Levi-Strauss's emphasis on the logical and virtually mathematical means of conceptualizing myth, the elements of which take on the character of autonomous objects independent of any subject (Kirk, 1970). Paul Ricoeur has accordingly characterized

Levi-Strauss's work as "Kantism without a transcendental Subject" (Levi-Strauss, 1964, p. 11).

Myth, like the rest of language, is made up of constituent units. Levi-Strauss proposed, as the core of his hypothesis: "The true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations, but bundles of such relations and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning" (1955/1974, p. 87). He argued that the meanings to be found in mythological thought do not reside in the isolated elements which enter into the composition of a myth, but rather, only in the way those elements combine. The language in myth unveils specific structural properties, which are more complex than the ordinary linguistic level. It is not the formation of the narrative which is significant, but rather, it is the underlying structure of relations that determines the real meaning of a myth (Levi-Strauss, 1955/1974).

Elsewhere he wrote, "Mythical thought surpasses itself and contemplates beyond images still clinging to concrete experience, a world of concepts...Idefinedl no longer by reference to an external reality, but according to their own mutual affinities or incompatibilities manifested in the architecture of the spirit" (Levi-Strauss, 1966a, p. 407; Kirk, 1970, p. 45).

Levi-Strauss (1955/1974) considered myth to be a logical instrument to resolve opposition in thought. The message of myth is conveyed by its structure as a whole or by an amalgam of relationships at all levels. Mythic thought always works from the

awareness of oppositions toward their progressive mediation. The hypothetical paradigmatic matrix is typically one in which contrasting polar pairs such as life/death, raw/cooked, ordinary life/extraordinary life, and male/female are mediated (Dundes, in Propp, 1968).

To Levi-Strauss, what gives the myth operative value is an "everlasting specific pattern" (1955/1974, p. 85) which pertains to the present and the past as well as the future. Mythic themes generate and regenerate out of a sequence of past happenings "a non-revertible series of events, the remote sequences of which can still be felt at present" (p. 85). In elaborating on this everlasting aspect of mythic thought, Levi-Strauss draws a cultural analogy to the French Revolution: The French Revolution is a sequence belonging to the past, yet an everlasting pattern which can be detected in the present French social structure and which provides a lead from which future developments may be inferred.

In his conceptualization of the dynamic attributes of myth, Levi-Strauss noted that "repetition has as its function to make the structure of the myth apparent" (1955/1974, p. 105). However, within the form of the specific pattern, differing variations on themes previously expressed emerge, taking new form. He pointed out that on a theoretical level, an infinite number of themes will be generated, each one slightly different from the others: "Myth flows spiralwise, until the intellectual impulse which originated it has become exhausted" (1955/1974, p. 105). Myth undergoes a continual process of growth, whereas its structure remains discontinuous. Since myth

has no definite beginnings and endings, mythical thought does not develop any theme to completion: There is always something left unfinished. Myth, thus, unfolds in a dynamic, reverberating process wherein new mythic themes will continually be generated out of an everlasting specific pattern.

1.4 Mythical Fantasy

Mythical fantasy is concerned with the use of a special kind of imagination, dealing with events which are inconceivable by real life standards. Kirk (1970) suggested that the fantasy aspect of myth tends to exceed the mere manipulation of the supernatural and to express itself in a strange dislocation of familiar and naturalistic connections. In addition to gods of human proportion, the fantastic figures of myth include myriad supernatural creatures with all manner of powers and objects at their disposal. Kirk described the world of myth thus:

> All the rules of normal action, normal reasoning and normal relationships may be suspended or distorted. The hero suddenly becomes the villain or vice versa; minor actions turn out to have profound consequences; transformations of humans into trees, animals, natural substances or stars require no more explanation than, and seem just as arbitrary as, the sudden shifts in time and space... Quite often the process of events is regular for a time; or a special kind of logic, rather like that of the Mad Hatter's tea-party, shows itself to be at work: a logic that often depends on unusual categorizations or verbal discriminations. Above all there is no consistency of tone or action and many problems are left unanswered. (Kirk, 1970, p. 268)

To some extent in these fantasy objects, but more conspicuously in their dislocation of normal associational connections, myths strongly resemble dreams. Both may present a fantastic mélange of topics, persons, places, times, sequences and styles. Their emotional tone may alter suddenly from tranquility to terror, from intense involvement to cool observation. And both dreams and myths have a strange tendency to shift from minute detail or visual brilliance and heightened realism to a colourless detachment and abstraction (Kirk, 1970).

Susanne Langer (1949) specified a sacred dream-like quality when characterizing the figurative elements of mythical thought:

> The earliest products of mythical thinking are not permanent, self-identical, and clearly distinguished "gods"; neither are they immaterial spirits. They are like dream elements - objects endowed with demonic import, haunted places, accidental shapes in nature resembling something ominous - all manner of shifting, fantastic images which speak of Good and Evil, of Life and Death, to the impressionable and creative mind of man. Their common trait is...the quality of holiness. (Quoted in Kirk, 1970, p. 265)

The problem of discerning the type of relationship which exists between the existential real and the symbolic ideal within the context of mythic expression is addressed by Cassirer. Bidney (1955/1974) cited Cassirer's notion that we understand the mythical symbol not as a representation which conceals some mystery or hidden truth, but rather as a self-contained form of interpretation of reality. There is no distinction between the real and ideal, "the image is the thing" (Bidney, pp. 8-9). Cassirer asserted that mythic perception is equally viable as the scientific, since all features of

human experience have a claim to reality. Myth may therefore be understood as a conveyance of truth, involving its own distinct, qualitative means of envisioning reality through its own symbolic forms and categories. Yet Bidney argued that since Cassirer acknowledged no metaphysical Absolute, "the mythic symbols may not be said to express an implicit religious truth, but only the delusions of the primitive human consciousness as it struggles to interpret the world of experience and reality" (Bidney, p. 11).

1.5 Function of Fantasy in Myth

The function of fantasy in myth will now be explored, both from the perspectives of the collective response to myth and the individual psychology involved in its making.

Clyde Kluckholn, who was primarily concerned with the establishment of a common psychological origin for both myths and rituals, did so by postulating that they constitute a "cultural storehouse of adjustive responses for individuals" (Kirk, 1970, p. 262). These responses have the effect of alleviating anxiety (primarily by the comforting repetition and traditionalism of myths) and of directing antisocial feelings into safe channels, presumably by a kind of Aristotelian catharsis of pity, terror or other emotion. Myths are originated, therefore, as socially sanctioned palliatives of the mental ills to which individuals are prone in society. There is a certain similarity between Kluckholn's theory of myths as alleviators of anxiety and aggression and another theory favoured by some anthro-

pologists that myths are partly shaped by wish fulfillment. Both ideas derive from Freudian thought (Kirk, 1970).

Cassirer's ideas concerning the way psychic phenomena give rise to the presence of fantasy in mythic imagination are strongly tied to his notions of myth belonging to the spheres of affectivity and the will. To Cassirer, the mythic mind never perceives passively, nor merely contemplates things. All its observations emerge from an act of participation arising from movement of the emotion and will; the spirit "confronts the force of 'impression' with an act of expression" (Cassirer, 1955, p. 23; Kirk, 1970, p.264). The significance of the forms which materialize in mythic imagination becomes clear only through an understanding of the underlying dynamic sense of life giving rise to them. Cassirer thought that the vital feelings which are stirred within aroused mythic imagination "to the pitch of excitement at which begets a definite world of representations" (Cassirer, p. 69; Kirk, 1970, p. 264).

Elaborating on this process, Cassirer wrote in 1946:

> When on the one hand, the entire self is given up to a single impression, is "possessed" by it and, on the other hand, there is the utmost tension between the subject and its object, the outer world; when external reality is not merely arrived at and contemplated, but overcomes a man in sheer immediacy, with emotions of fear or hope, terror or wish fulfillment: then the spark jumps somehow across, the tension finds release, as the subjective excitement becomes objectified and confronts the mind as a god or demon. (Quoted in Kirk, 1970, p. 265)

Waardenburg offered a view of the underlying formative processes involved in myth-making that appears to share Cassirer's emphasis on affective arousal, while suggesting a defensive function of fantasy

in altering reality as a means of coping and adjusting to it. Waardenburg contended that myth, like symbol, emerges out of the human confronta-tion with reality, expressing both a quest for and a transmission of meaning in response to this confrontation (In Olson, 1980).

Waardenburg, whose viewpoint seems tempered by the Freudian concept of wish fulfillment and the Jungian vision of the contribution of mythic imagination to the individuation process, wrote:

> Myth can be understood as a particular form in which humans mentally digest and assimilate reality insofar as it makes itself palpable as an overpowering phenomenon, incapable of being dominated or manipulated completely. Psychological experiences transpose that inner reality through psychic commotions and turbulences which result in dreams, visionary experiences, and reflections at the end of which an insight may arise. In such experiences one feels pressed by reality against the wall of existence or even felled to the ground. Consequently one cannot answer with a real response. However, once a basic structure of the situation has become perceptible, one can begin to sketch the contours of what is slowly becoming conscious. This interpretation accounts for the particular perplexity of living which speaks out of myths and which discharges them into an openness to the wonder of reality and of human being, which is then communicated to others. (Olson, 1980, p. 58)

Waardenburg (in Olson, 1980), Campbell (1968b), Schorer (1946/1960) and Keen (1988) also make reference to a double-pronged aspect of mythical fantasy. While mythic fantasy may function as a liberating entity in the service of reality, a myth which dominates the unconscious may, conversely, restrict an individual, making reality inaccessible. Myths that detract from reality can effectively bind people, keeping them under a possessive control.

1.6 The "Secret" and the "Sacred"

Several writers on myth make reference to hidden, secretive, and transcendental attributes latent in myth. For instance, Wilham Alfred wrote: "A myth is an ambush on reality" (Mason in Olson, 1980, p. 16). In elaboration of this statement, Mason added, "It hides within the undergrowth of one's ordinary facts, like the voice of Merlin in the Whitethorn bush and seizes an unsuspecting reality in oneself" (Mason in Olson, 1980, p. 16). Elsewhere he stated "Myth is an ambush that brings together, beyond all fears and apprehensions, the lover and the beloved in the deepest and simplest of loves, removing appearances and discrepancies of time and place while reconciling the rich diversity of facts" (In Olson, p. 19). Eric Dardell similarly accorded to the myth that which we are unable to see in ourselves, and yet "the secret spring of our vision of the world, of our devotion, of our dearest notions" (Dardell, 1954, p. 5).

Ira Progoff wrote that when the symbolic dimension is perceived in transpersonal terms, pertaining to more than the subjective experience of the individual and approaching that which is universal in man (whether the experience is in sleeping or waking), myth is involved. "It is myth because it touches what is ultimate in man and in his life, expresses it symbolically and provides an inner perspective by which the mysteries of human existence are felt and entered into" (1970, p. 177). A mystical quality is suggested in the

philosophical theism of Phillip Wheelwright when he argued that the essence of myth is "that haunting awareness of transcendental forces peering through the cracks of the visible universe" (Schorer, 1946/1960, p. 355). Myth, according to Simone de Beauvoir (1949), implies that the subject projects his wish and fear toward transcendence.

Levin (1960) stated that mythos and its verbal congeners have been associated with religion and the sacred. Eliade ascribed the language of the sacred to myth. Like other modern scholars, he has proposed that myth dissolves the world of concrete time and space; that "myth makes man once more exist in a timeless period which is in effect an illud tempus, a time of dawn and of paradise, outside history" (Quoted in Altizer, 1963, p. 34). It is important to recognize in Eliade's writing on myth that the context of history is not in the usual sense of the word, i.e.. events having taken place and which will not take place again; but rather, of exemplar history, which can be repeated and whose meaning and value lie in its very repetition (Altizer, 1963).

Similar references to the sacred quality of myth are to be found in Thomas Mann's famous lecture on myth entitled "Freud and the Future" (1937/1960). Mann described life in myth or life itself as a celebration which turns past into present: Myth is a "religious act," a performance by a "celebrant" of repeated and prescribed procedures. Mann conveys a sense of a synonymous quality to myth and the sacred: "For myth is the foundation of Life, it is the timeless

schema, the pious formula into which life flows when it reproduces its traits out of the unconscious" (Mann, p. 371).

In Eliade's view, all myths describe "the irruption of the sacred into the world" (1959, p. 97). Mythology, therefore, is ontophany, the plenary manifestation of Being. As exemplary, paradigmatic, the sacred history, mythology not only relates how things came to be, but also lays the foundations for all human behaviour and all social and cultural institutions. Eliade suggested that since man was created and civilized by extrahuman supernatural beings, his behaviour and activities belong to sacred history, which must be carefully preserved and transmitted intact to succeeding generations (Altizer, 1963).

Altizer (1963) discussed Eliade's notion that the man who truly speaks in the symbols of myth reflects in his own being on the presence of the sacred. It is not the human experience in the modern sense which is the object of Eliade's vision, Altizer wrote, but rather "a human participation in the sacred" (1963, p. 44). This participation is real, not created by the projection of a profane experience: It is reality itself.

An interesting point relating to modern man's creativity and mythic imagination emerges through Eliade's discourse when he drew a contrast between archaic man's adherence to the mythic and modern man's creative aspect. In Eliade's view, being, for the archaic man, means "living in accordance with extrahuman models, in conformity with archetypes" (Quoted in Altizer, 1963, p. 45). This implies "living at the heart of the <u>real</u>, since, for archaic man, there is

nothing truly real except the archetype" (Altizer, p. 45). Eliade pointed out a paradox: The man of a traditional culture sees himself as real only to the extent that he ceases to be himself (from the perspective of a modern observer) in his satisfaction with imitating and repeating the gestures of another. He therefore sees himself as truly himself precisely insofar as he ceases to be so. Modern man could thus reproach archaic man for being imprisoned within the mythical horizon of archetypes and repetition by his creative impotence, his inability to accept the risks entailed by every creative act (Altizer, 1963). Yet, for modern man, Eliade (1949/1954) asserted that "all creation is forbidden him except that which has its source in his own freedom; and, consequently, everything is denied him except for the freedom to make history by making himself" (Cited by Altizer, 1963, p. 47). Everything that modern man knows as truth, consciousness, or freedom is, contrariwise from the perspective of archaic man, equivalent to the profane (Altizer, 1963).

This point resonates with Joseph Campbell's view:

> ...in a traditional mythology, the symbols are presented in socially maintained rites, through which the individual is required to experience, or will pretend to have experienced, certain insights, sentiments, and commitments. In "creative" mythology, on the other hand, the order is reversed: the individual has had an experience of his own - of order, horror, beauty, or even mere exhilaration - which he seeks to communicate through signs. If his realization has been of a certain depth and import, his communication will have the value and force of living myth. (Campbell, 1968b, p. 4)

Cassirer (1955) sought to explain myth as "the unity of a specific structural form of the spirit" (Cited by Bidney, 1955/1974, pp. 6-7). He discussed an essential idea put forward in the late 18th century Romantic Movement by theological philosopher Schelling, which discarded the allegorical interpretation of myth and replaced it by a tautegorical interpretation of mythological figures as "autonomous configurations of the human spirit" (Bidney, p. 6). Myth, in this respect, is said to have its mode of necessity and its own mode of reality. Rather than viewing mythology as essentially the theory and history of the gods (as did Schelling), Cassirer adopted the view that primitive religion began with an entirely undifferentiated intuition of a magical, extraordinary power inherent in matter.

In Cassirer's view, myth does not reflect an objective reality independent of it, but is the product of true creative spiritual actions. Myth emerges as an "independent image world of the spirit as well as an active form of expression" (Bidney, 1955/1974, p. 8).

As Cassirer (1955) put it: "A critical phenomenology of the mythical consciousness will start neither from the god-head as an original metaphysical fact but will seek to apprehend the subject of the cultural process, the human spirit, solely in its pure actuality and diverse configurations whose immanent forms it will strive to ascertain" (Quoted in Bidney, 1955/1974, p. 7).

Thus, myth creates "a world of its own in accordance with a spiritual principle, a world which discloses an immanent rule and characteristic necessity. The objectivity of myth consists of its

being a concrete and necessary mode of spiritual formation" (Bidney 1955/1974, p.7). Myth is the first step in "the dialectic bondage and liberation in which the human spirit experiences its own self-made image worlds" (Bidney, 1955/1974, p. 7). As such, for Cassirer, myth primarily expresses a process of spiritual liberation, effected in the progress from the magical, mythical world view to the genuinely religious view.

CHAPTER TWO:
Psychological Perspectives on Myth

> What man is to his inward vision can only be expressed by way of myth. (Jung, 1961, p. 3)

It was Freud who postulated the presence of myth-forming structural elements in the unconscious psyche. In his Interpretation of Dreams (1900/1953, p. 26), he elaborated on parallels he observed between certain aspects of infantile psychology and the Oedipus myth and proposed that its universal validity could be explained in terms of an infantile premise. Hillman has pointed out that the creative dimension of Freud's work was that he "told us less which myth was the psyche's essence than that the essence of the psyche is myth, that our work is mythic and ritual, that psychology is ultimately mythology, the study of stories of the soul" (1972, p. 16; McNiff, 1986b, p. 23).

Psychoanalysts have looked to the myth in seeking to understand the dynamics of unconscious processes. This chapter will provide a synopsis of the Freudian and Jungian perspectives on myth within their respective psychological visions.

2.1 Some Essential Similarities and Differences in Outlook

Early psychoanalytic theorists were influenced by the idea of a commonality in myths among different peoples: The concept of elemental ideas was first discussed by Bastian and Frobenius (Campbell, 1968b). They sought to explore the essence of these myths to help reveal, as quoted by Rank, "the source from which has flowed uniformly and at all times and places, an identical mythical content" (Rank, 1932, p. 8). Freud and Jung shared the view that a collective unconscious exists, an archaic heritage appearing, unlearned, in each individual.

Freud (1939) envisaged this archaic heritage to include personality dispositions as well as ideational contents and memory traces of the experiences of previous generations.

For his part, Jung characterized early psychoanalytic impressions of such phenomena thus:

> Typical mythologems were observed among individuals to whom all knowledge of this kind was absolutely out of the question, and where indirect derivation from religious ideas that might have been known to them, or from popular figures of speech, was impossible. Such conclusions forced us to assume that we must be dealing with "autochronous" revivals independent of all tradition, and consequently, that "mythforming" elements must be present in the unconscious psyche. (Jung, 1949/1973, p. 71)

Freudian theory is primarily concerned with pathology. Freud concentrated most of his attention to distorting personal anxieties and fixations which had emerged as a result of the moral conflicts of his patients. He interpreted the symbols of dreams in a reductive and allegorical manner, as disguised references to psychological shocks experienced in childhood which usually bore relation to parental figures. In turning from dreams to mythologies, Campbell (1968b) construed that Freud understood myth allegorically, as symptomatic of equivalent psychological shocks in the collective and formative history of the people who developed them. Brown (1961) noted Freud's view that the sense of guilt from events occurring many thousands of years before, still survives and influences individuals living today. This guilt, he posited, is an essential aspect of the latent meaning of myths (Freud, 1913/1950).

While Freud and Jung both conceived of collective symbols as being in some way inherited along with the physical structure of the brain, Freud may have insisted on this to a greater extent than Jung (Brown, 1961). Progoff (1970) and Philipson (1963) have both indicated that the meaning implied by Jung's use of the term <u>kolectiv</u> (collective) signified not the multiple experience of the group, but the inherently human patterns of symbolism that pertain to mankind as a whole. The Freudian collectivity seems to be primarily limited to types of symbolism linked to experiences of the primal horde, whereas the Jungian collective unconscious is vast, upon the surface of which the ego is relatively minute (Brown, 1961).

In divergence from Freud, Jung conceptualized the unconscious as constituted of two separate parts which should be sharply distinguished from one another. One he termed the personal unconscious, which closely resembles Freud's notion of the repressed unconscious whose contents derive from the life history of the individual. As described by Jung:

> It includes all those psychic contents which have been forgotten during the course of the individual's life. Traces of them are still preserved in the unconscious, even if all conscious memory of them has been lost.... This comprises a whole group of contents, chiefly those which appear morally, aesthetically, or intellectually inadmissible and are repressed on account of their incompatibility. (Jung, 1960, pp. 310-311, quoted by Campbell, 1968b, p. 652)

Jung's concept of the collective or impersonal unconscious is not addressed in Freudian theory. Its contents stem from the collective life history of the universe rather than the individual, and are thought to exceed the comprehension of the conscious mind (Jacobi, 1957/1971, p. 89).

> Its contents are not personal but collective; that is, they do not belong to one individual alone but to a whole group of individ- uals, and generally to a whole nation, or even the whole of mankind. These contents are not acquired during the individual's lifetime but are the products of innate forms and instincts.... In the brain the instincts are preformed and so are the primordial images which have always been the basis of man's thinking - the whole treasure-house of mythological motifs. (Jung, 1960, pp, 310-311; quoted by Campbell, 1968b, p.652)

Jung's interpretations of both dreams and myths tend to give greater emphasis to the initiations into the collective essence of existence experienced in the course of a life span than to personal

history and biography. Rather than viewing all products of the unconscious strictly in the light of repression and symptomatology, Jung's concept of the collective unconscious was recognizant of a universal, mythic structure of the psyche which he envisioned to be fundamental not only to the psyche's general functioning, but to the process of psychic growth as well. For instance, according to Jung, the function of the symbol is to supply the means by which contents of the unconscious are transformed and assimilated, for the progressive well-being of the psyche as a whole. The process of individuation, the search for effective symbols which satisfy one's need for psychic integration or wholeness, he suggested, is in fact a recapitulation of individual development through the structure of the unconscious development of the history of cultures (Philipson, 1963).

2.2 Freudian and Jungian Views of the Symbol

Various theorists have concurred that symbols are the integral, perceptible components of the myth (Campbell, 1968b; Eliade, 1957/1960; Neumann, 1954; and Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). The analogy by Waardenburg presented in the preceding chapter was that symbols may be understood as the single frames of a film, whereas the entire film itself could be compared to the myth. The varying significance accorded to the symbol as conceptualized by Freud and Jung is fundamental to the divergence in their theories of the unconscious. More specific to the context of this thesis, these

approaches to the symbol provide the bases upon which modern psychology construes the role and function of the myth in relation to the personality.

Freud perceived all symbols, whether in dreams, myths or art, to be primarily libidinal in nature and to be a generalized expression of a particular object. In Jungian theory, the symbol does not point from the general to the particular, but rather from the particular symbol to the generalized idea (Brown, 1961). Jung saw the significance of symbols in the context of spirit and culture. As Victor White put it:

> Behind the particularized mother's womb lies the archetypal womb of the great Mother of all living; behind the physical father the archetypal Father, behind the child the "puer aeternus"; behind the particular manifestation of the procreative sexual libido lies the universal creative and re-creative Spirit. The second of all of the pairs appears not as a phantasy-substitute for the first, but rather the first appears as a particular manifestation and symbol of the second. (Brown, 1961, p. 44)

Freud (1900/1953) perceived the unconscious to be specifically related to the repressed contents of the personality. He viewed dreams, for instance, as essentially the carriers of repressed contents of the psyche, symbolically referring to those past experiences the individual cannot accept in the light of his conscious attitudes. The dream censor utilizes a symbolic archaic language, so as to make the forbidden wishes of the unconscious as incomprehensible as possible to the conscious mind of the individual (Progoff, 1970). The process of Freudian psychoanalysis involves

seeing behind the symbol to its real or hidden meaning which is disguised by the apparent meaning of the image (Brown, 1961).

It was suggested by Progoff (1970) that in the Freudian context, symbols are not regarded as an integral form of human experience but rather as secondary and derivative. Symbols are deemed substitutes for the original experiences which were repressed in a defensive function. In this respect, Freudian theory maintains a dualistic premise in which reality stands apart from the mode of its symbolic manifestation, so that the individual is separated from reality by his delusions, phobias and neuroses.

From the perspective of classical psychoanalytic theory, Otto Fenichal (1945) defined symbolism as an archaic, prelogical means of perceiving the world; an unconscious expression common to all humanity which serves to distort meaning. He described its function as that of "a substitute for unpleasant reality," and in no way "an attempt to master reality" (Fenichal cited by Philipson, 1963, p. 29).

Avens (1980) pointed out that Jung gave attention to symbols in and of themselves. For example, Jung considered the symbolic imagery of the dream not so much as representing disguised unconscious wishes, but as fully meaningful in its manifest content. On the inseparability of the symbolic image and its content, Avens quoted Jung as saying that "image and meaning are identical; and as the first takes shape, so the latter becomes clear. Actually, the pattern needs no interpretation: it portrays its own meaning" (Avens, 1980, p. 37).

In a synopsis of Jung's position on the Freudian approach to the symbol, Philipson suggested that, from Jung's viewpoint, Freud's psychology of instinctual processes did not go far enough, since it is not the case that all types of psychic expressions are the creations of the personal unconscious. And, secondly, he viewed Freud's reductive method as inadequate, since an approach that explains away had not proven appropriate for the analysis of the content of the collective unconscious which is essentially different from personal content (Philipson, 1963).

Jung agreed with Freud's understanding of personal symptoms expressed by the unconscious, yet he did not view these manifestations of unconscious expression to be truly symbolic. He contrasted signs, pertaining to personal symptoms, with what he considered to be the distinctly symbolic. In this respect, Jung contended that Freud's notion of the symbol failed to differentiate personal, symptomatic aspects of unconscious expression from deeper collective and autonomous aspects (Philipson, 1963).*

Jung (1949/1973, p. 74) suggested that it is because symptoms and symbols are both expressed by non-literal, non-discursive means that led to the Freudian lack of distinction between the two. Jung

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*Jung's distinction between signs and symbols is quite consistent with the philosophy of E. Cassirer (Cassirer, 1953, pp. 32, 56-57). Confusion prevails to the present day among psychological theorists concerning the distinction of the terms sign and symbol. For comparison of J. Piaget's "conscious" and "unconscious" symbols, and E. Fromm's classification of the "conventional," the "accidental" and the "universal" symbol in relation to Jung's view on the symbol, see Jacobi (1959, pp. 80-81).

that led to the Freudian lack of distinction between the two. Jung posited that symbols and symptoms differ in function, with the former directly in the service of the principle of spirit or culture, and the latter functioning indirectly in the service of nature.

According to Jung, symptoms are expressions of a dysfunction in the natural system which may present a moral problem for an individual or a society. Manifested as signs, they appear to be representations of specific, known or knowable referents. When interpreted analytically, they become the clues for possible treatment and cure. Symbols, on the other hand, are always produced from the unconscious by way of revelation or intuition. They are expressions of a function in the economy of the libido which enables the individual or a society to turn excess psychic energy to effective accomplishment. In doing so, symbols serve the purpose of unifying conscious and unconscious factors which, formerly in a state of conflict, are reconciled and transcended. The symbol then functions to enable psychic energy to be transformed into new activities of an aesthetic, religious, scientific or social value (Philipson, 1963).

The symbol, in isolation, is an expression of a complex fact not clearly grasped by consciousness. According to Jung, symbol connotes something perceptible which results from an activity of throwing together such things as have something in common, i.e., that thing

which it represents and that to which it refers.* It is part of an attempt to link a given known with an unknown, which may be understood as a token, a pledge or a premonitory sign. Jung proposed that when one gains insight into the missing part, the understanding of the whole of the symbol acts as a key which conveys possible entry into that which is hidden (Philipson, 1963).

Neumann (1954) suggested that it is not the metaphorical nature of the symbol in its isolation, but in its dynamic relations and juxtapositioning to other symbols, through which the underlying meaning and significance of symbols can more readily begin to emerge:

> The psyche blends, as does the dream; it spins and weaves together, combining each with each. The symbol is therefore an analogy, more an equivalence than an equation, and therein lies its wealth of meanings, but also its elusiveness. Only the symbol group, comprised of partly contradictory analogies, can make something unknown, and beyond the grasp of consciousness, more intelligible and more capable of becoming conscious. (Neumann, 1954, p. 8)

It is through the symbol group. Neumann suggested, that recognition of mythic patterns is possible. The symbols through which mankind has sought to understand the beginning of life in mythological terms, he explained, "are as alive now as they ever were" (1954, p. 11). The universal, symbolic themes and stories of mythology which exist in art and religion are also the "living

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* Jaffé suggested that everything can assume perceptible symbolic significance - whether natural objects, man-made things or even abstract forms; "the whole cosmos is a potential symbol" (Jung, 1964, p. 257).

processes of the individual psyche" (p. 11), occurring in dream and fantasy.

2.3 An Outline of the Classical Psychoanalytic Position on Myth

Freud postulated that myths are "thinly disguised representations of certain fundamental unconscious fantasies common to all mankind" (Quoted by Brown, 1961, p. 115). He likened a myth to a daydream of the race, symbolizing both a psychological and ethno-historical reality. Through the dynamics of the myth could be seen the universal applicability of general traits of the human psyche. In applying the principles of psychoanalysis to myth, Freud found parallels to myth and neurosis.

Early psychoanalytic theorists saw an intimate relationship between the fantasy content of dream and myth. The application of Freud's technique of dream interpretation appeared to be justified in the analysis of myth and was initially demonstrated in a paper written in 1909 by Abraham entitled "Dreams and Myth" (Rank, 1932, p. 9). In the Freudian approach to the dream, the dream censor makes use of archaic symbolic languages which disguises the forbidden wishes of the unconscious in order to make them as incomprehensible as possible to the conscious mind of the individual.

Freud (1913/1950) commented that before the dawning of civilization, human beings lived in a state of "heedless sexual and primitive egoistic motives" (Quoted in Brown, 1961, p. 115).

Throughout this period, early man had neither the ability nor the need to create myths: Representation was unnecessary. In the course of civilization, Freud postulated, it became necessary to repress primitive drives and wishes which continued to press for satisfaction and fulfillment. These wishes were of an aggressive, sexual and incestuous nature. The necessity of disguise was relative to the degree of civilization attained at a given period and these wishes in their disguised form are found in mythological tales. While the earliest myths contain overt themes such as castration, parricide, devouring monsters or incestuous relationships, the later ones tended to more carefully disguise these themes. (Brown, 1961).

Rank discussed the imaginative faculty of humanity as a whole as being the ultimate source of all myths. The origins of myth, he stated, were not the gods but were perpetuated from the source of human imagination: "Myths, originally at least, are structures of the human faculty of imagination, which were at some time projected for certain reasons upon the heavens" (Rank, 1932, p. 10). He asserted that the analogy between shared fantasies (myths) and dreams established the broader applicability of primary process to the collective phenomena of art, religion, folklore and culture.

In this same vein, Campbell quoted from an early paper by Freud, "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life," on mythology in relation to religion: "I believe that a large portion of the mythological conception of the world which reaches far into most modern religions, is nothing but psychology projected to the outer world" (Campbell, 1968b, p. 651). Religion, to Freud, represented the externalization

of man's unconscious conflicts and their projection on the cosmic level. Brown characterized Freud's view of the function of religion as to "perpetuate the illusion of a loving heavenly Father who promises happiness in the hereafter in return for the renunciation of instinctual desires on earth" (Brown, 1961, p. 117).

Treating myth primarily in terms of historical factors, Freud held that the nuclear theme of all myth came out of the human family scenario of desire, jealousy and guilt in the inevitable romance of Mother, Father and Child (Campbell, 1968b). In Totem and Taboo (1913/1950), Freud's first application of psychoanalytic knowledge to social and anthropological problems, he developed arguments that the oedipal myth, (familiar to us from Sophocles' famous tragedy) illustrated a central and universal complex which constitutes the nucleus of all neurosis. Thus, he proposed, the beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge in the Oedipus complex.

In the myth, Oedipus is told by the Oracle that he will kill his father and marry his mother, which he later does unwittingly. To Freud, this myth expressed a traumatic ethno-historical experience, resulting in the introduction of two basic taboos, ingroup marriage (incest) and ingroup murder. Freud presumed the underlying wish for the father's death and sexual intercourse with the mother to be both consistent with and illustrative of universal infantile subconscious desire (Rank, 1932).

Of the destiny of King Oedipus, Freud stated:

> His fate moves us only because it might have been our own, because the oracle laid upon us before our birth the very curse

> which rested upon him. It may be that we were all destined to direct our first sexual impulses toward our mothers, and our first impulses of hatred and resistance toward our fathers; our dreams convince us that we were. King Oedipus, who slew his father Laius and wedded his mother Jocasta, is nothing more or less than a wish-fulfillment - the fulfillment of the wish of our childhood. (Rank, 1932, p. 8, quoting Freud)

Summarizing the Oedipus complex, Brown wrote that during the oedipal phase of libidinal and ego development (ages three to five) the young boy wishes to kill his father and commit incest with his mother. He fears retaliatory castration by the father and at a later stage, since he not only hates but also loves his father, thoughts of reparation and self-punishment begin to emerge. In this respect, when Oedipus blinded himself, he was acting on a deep-seated urge to make reparation (Brown, 1961). According to classical theory, resolution of the Oedipus complex or the Electra complex (the female's counterpart to the Oedipus complex) is typically achieved by identification with the parent of the same sex and temporary renunciation of the parent of the opposite sex, who is rediscovered in his or her adult sexual partner (Rycroft, 1968).

The Freudian school of analysis moved beyond the Oedipus myth to interpret many and potentially all myths. The various classical mythological tales and the more primitive myths and folk tales were observed to have a remarkable similarity of content: Accounts of parricide, incest, castration, punishment and reparation, matricide, cannibalism and dismemberment were seen to form part of the mythology of all peoples. Melanie Klein, for instance, offered interpretation of the tales of cannibalism and dismemberment, matricide and primary

aggression. According to Klein, hostile and aggressive feelings toward the mother emerge well before the child experiences hate toward the father in the oedipal phase. The child in the oral stage expresses a wish or fantasy to devour the mother. The aggression the child projects toward the bad mother is reflected upon the child in such mythic imagery as "the devouring wicked witch with long teeth who eats little children" (Brown, 1961, p. 115).

Hacker (1964) noted that in psychoanalytic formulation, as applied to the myth, the workings of unconscious mechanisms were analogously compared to infantile fantasy and immature psychological states of development which carried over into the life of the individual or into advanced civilization. He suggested that with discovery of the projective nature of myth, the early Freudians tended to be "critical, rationalistic and iconoclastic" in treating the content of mythic fantasy as an "undesirable relic or pathological fixation" (p. 439). He explained that in the classical psychoanalytic framework, the individual is seen as driven by instinctual tensions: In a desire for immediate gratification, he or she wishfully distorts and idiosyncratically falsifies reality. Increasing maturity means that the fantasy distortions (mythic content) of the pleasure principle gives way to the reality principle of mature health. Maturity means seeing things as they really are; having the capacity to cope with an ideal never completely reached, and experiencing objectivity without the need for reassuring wishful fantasy (Hacker, 1964).

2.4 The Significance of Myth in Jungian Thought

The relation of myth to dream. Whereas for most early psychoanalytic theorists, the function of the dream was to repress primitive drives and wishes of an aggressive, sexual and incestuous nature, Jung suggested that mythical dream elements are in contact with the universal, more true and more eternal man, and that this contact serves man's wholeness. Jung viewed dreams as being, in part, products of the individual's personality and environment, although the individual psyche cannot be divorced from the psyche of the human race as a whole. "In the dream, as in the products of psychosis," he wrote, "there are numberless interconnections to which one can find parallels only in mythological associations of ideas (or perhaps in certain poetic creations which are characterized by a borrowing, not always conscious, from myths)" (Jung, 1949/1973, p. 71).

Jung thought dreams to be the products of inherited themes comparable to the motifs of mythology. The comparison of typical dream motifs with those of mythology suggested to Jung that dream-thinking should be regarded as a phylogenetically older model of thought.* Whereas myths spring from the particular problems and concerns of a given race or tribe, Jung wrote that on a deeper level, their source is the universal soul of the human race itself (1960).

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*Jung said that on this point he had been influenced by the ideas of Nietzsche.

Campbell quoted Jung:

> The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost of most secret recesses of the psyche, opening into the cosmic night which was the psyche long before there was any ego consciousness, and which will remain psyche no matter how far our ego consciousness may extend.... All consciousness separates, but in dreams we put on the likeness of that more universal, truer, more eternal man dwelling in the darkness of primordial night. There he is still whole and the whole is in him, indistinguishable from nature and bare of all egohood. (Campbell, 1968b, p. 645-646)

Jung asserted that the typical archaic motifs that were found almost universally in dreams and expressed through the form of archetypal images; "the forms of a collective nature which occur practically all over the world as constituents of myth are at the same time as autochthonous, individual products of unconscious origin" (Jung quoted by Campbell, 1949/1968a, p. 18). In acknowledgement of the Jungian position on symbolic dreams bearing dual individual and collective mythical aspects, Campbell commented: "Dream is the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream; both myth and dream are symbolic in the same general way of the psyche. But in the dream the forms are quirked by the peculiar troubles of the dreamer, whereas in myth the problems and solutions shown are directly valid for all mankind" (1949/1968a, p. 19).

Myth and psyche. The psychological perspectives on the myth formulated by Jung, his theory of archetypes, is largely derived from multidisciplinary sources. Jung integrated ideas and theories from

such diverse fields as philosophy, ethnology, the arts, religion and mythology because, in his view, these fields contain the most adequate formulations of the objective transpersonal psyche.*

Jung defined myths as "dramatic, personified descriptions of a non-human or quasi-human realm of tragical, monstrous, fantastic figures which are beyond the grasp of the conscious mind" (Avens, 1980, p. 41). These figures, according to Jung, constitute the "very basis, the prima materia of psychic life" (Avens, 1980, p. 41). Mythological components, or mythologems belong to the structural elements of psyche which, in his view, are constants universally expressed among men and at all times (Hillman, 1972). Hillman, quoting Jung:

> The collective unconscious - so far as we can say anything about it at all - appears to consist of mythological motifs or primordial images, for which reason the myths of all nations are its real exponents. In fact, the whole of mythology could be taken as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious....

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*For the correspondence between Jungian "archetypes" and the Aristotelian or Kantian concept of "divine imaginal forms," see Hillman (1972, p. 179).

For a survey linking eclectic influences to Jungian thought, parallels and differences to the theories of Kant, Cassirer and Levi-Strauss, see Kirk (1970, chap. 6).

For mutual influences, correspondences and differences between aspects of archetypal psychology and the philosophy of mythical thought of Cassirer and Langer with regard to their parallel assertions of an emotionality in mythical thought and the phenomenology of mythic experience, compare Jung's statement that "the primitive mentality does not invent myths, it experiences them" (Jung, 1949/1973, p. 73) with that of Cassirer that the mythical image does not represent the thing: it is the thing (Cited in Bidney, 1955/1974, pp. 8-9). Also see Avens (1980, Chap. 3).

A correspondence would seem to exist between notions of healing and psychic growth in archetypal psychology and Eliade's views on the transcendental function of mythic symbols and the regeneration effect produced by mythical imagery (Eliade, 1960, chap. 5).

> We can therefore study the collective unconscious in two ways, either in mythology or in the analysis of the individual. (Hillman, 1972, p. 17)

Jacobi (1957/1971) described Jung's recognition of a primordial kinship between the mythologems of traditional mythologies and the archetypes with their symbols, condensed into "individual mythologies" in the individual psyche. Elaborating on this point, Jacobi wrote, "The divine images of the great mythologies are nothing other than projected intrapsychic factors, nothing other than personified archetypal powers, in which human existence rises to the grandeur of the type and is concretized in its aspects" (p. 109).

Jung placed emphasis on the meaning intrinsic in the myth itself rather than on the search for a physical or historical correlative of myth. For Jung, myths, like dreams, are psychically real. "We would be deluded in assuming," he wrote, "that these demons, ogres and gods are the inventions or fancies of a vagrant mind" (Avens, 1980, p. 41). Myths, in his view, are not invented by a primitive untutored mentality, but <u>experienced</u> - "They are fundamental, real structures, prior to any attempt to project them" Rather than derive mythical figures from our psychic conditions, Jung asserted that we "derive our psychic conditions from these figures" (Avens, p. 41).

Hillman (1972) described the function of mythology as providing basic patterns for the tales of our lives. Myth is not only a description of a process, but that process itself. The inner myths of man's unconscious are dynamic; they unfold. At different junctures, they lead off into varying possibilities which lead into

other mythemes. The structure of myth is dramatic; myths resolve themselves.

Archetype and complex. The mythic structural elements of the collective unconscious were termed primordial images or archetypes by Jung. He identified these elements as mythological components, which in their typical nature comprise a variety of motifs. Archetypes are pictorial forms of the instincts. Through the archetypes, the unconscious reveals itself to the conscious by way of dream and fantasy images which initiate the process of conscious reaction and assimilation (Jung, 1949/1973).

Avens noted the importance of understanding that in Jungian psychology the word image is not equivalent to memory or after-image, a perception, or a reflection of an object. Image in the Jungian sense, is derived from poetic usage and connotes fantasy image, which is only indirectly related to perception of an external object. According to Jung, an image is "a condensed expression of the psychic situation as a whole" (Cited by Avens, 1980, p. 35). Symbolic images are not in the psyche as a container; they are the psyche. Images are the means by which reality is apprehended; that is, images mirror the psyche just as it is, as constantly imagining (Avens, 1980).

The imaginal quality of mythological expression is addressed by C. Kerényi in the prolegomena to Jung's Essays on a Science of Mythology:

> In mythology the shaping is pictorial. A torrent of mythological pictures streams out.... Various developments on

> the same ground- theme are possible side by side or in succession, just like the variations of a musical theme. For, although what "streams out" always remains pictorial in itself, the comparison with music is still applicable, certainly with definite works of music, i.e., something objective, that has become an object with a voice of its own, that one does justice to not by interpretation and explan-ation but above all by letting it alone and allowing it to utter its own meaning. (Jung, 1949/1973, p. 3)

In discerning the differences between the myth and the archetype, Jung described the myth as being of an ordered and immediately understandable context stemming from the spiritual conceptions and general conditions of the primitive world. This context contains the history of the tribe handed down from generation to generation. The archetypes, on the other hand, emerging in symbolic form through dreams, works of art, or psychotic fantasies, are of a generally unintelligible sequence of images which nonetheless do possess a certain hidden coherence. Jung held that, in the individual, archetypes emerge as "involuntary manifestations of unconscious processes whose existence and meaning can only be inferred, whereas myths deal with traditional forms," which have developed through the ages (Jung, 1949/1973, p. 72).

In discussion of Jung's definition of archetypes, Hillman (1972) wrote that the archetype functions as a principle or agency which organizes and structures psychic imagery into specific patterns or motifs (mythologems) and constellations of persons in action (mythemes). Archetypes are internal psychic stances which an individual assumes when one or another archetype or complex becomes dominant. Some archetypes commonly discussed in Jungian psychology

are those of the persona, the shadow, the ego or hero, the anima and animus, the trickster, and the great mother.

The mythological structural basis of the archetype is rooted in the collective character of the complex. Accordingly, Jung posited that it was not dreams, but the complexes beneath the dreams which provide the royal road to the unconscious.

Freud saw the complex solely in the light of pathology, having a negative character symptomatic of a disturbed instinctual life and diseased psyche. He viewed complexes as repressed psychic contents which serve to defend the ego against conflicts of a social, moral and social nature (Jacobi, 1957/1971). Jung, on the other hand, thought the concept pertained to healthy as well as ill individuals. To him, a complex signals the presence of something "incompatible, conflicting and unassimilated" (Jacobi, 1957/1971, p. 21) in the psyche, or perhaps that psychic energy is obstructed. Thus, the complex may have a positive and prospective significance with potential for creating openings to "new possibilities of achievement" (Jacobi, 1957/1971, p. 21).

According to Jung's definition, every complex consists primarily of a nuclear element beyond the realm of the conscious will, and secondarily, of a number of associations connected with the central nuclear element. He noted that "complexes owe their relative autonomy to their emotional nature"; their expression is always dependent upon an affect-charged center (Jung in forward to Jacobi, 1957/1971, p. ix). Jung stated that this central emotion seemed to be "individually acquired and therefore an exclusively personal

matter" (p. ix). He saw the peculiar autonomy that complexes display as impressive, sometimes having an obsessive or possessive character which cuts through the adapted conscious performance of the individual. He understood complexes to belong to definite categories such as the inferiority complex, the power complex, or the mother complex (Jung in forward to Jacobi, 1957/1971).

Jung implied that complexes actually constitute the structure of the psyche and he distinguished between complexes of the personal unconscious and those of the collective unconscious, unlike Freud's view of the complex as constellating solely as a result of individual psychic repression. While Jung was in agreement with Freud that certain complexes arise on account of painful or distressing experiences in a person's life, he also proposed that some complexes emerge from a collective source within the psyche and have to do with irrational contents of which the individual has never before been conscious (Jacobi, 1957/1971).

Jacobi explained that material derived from the collective unconscious cannot be pathological and can only become so if "swollen" by contents from the personal unconscious where it undergoes a specific transformation and coloration by being drawn into an area of individual conflict. If a complex becomes "overcharged" and "autonomous", if it "invades the realm of consciousness", the resultant effect could be neurosis or psychosis (Jacobi, 1957/1971, p. 27). Jacobi noted that it is "in proportion to their distance from consciousness" that complexes take on "an archaic mythological character" (p.11). With increased numinosity,

or autonomy of the complex, the complex subject can take dominance over a person's reason, perhaps resulting in a state of psychic seizure. If, on the other hand, the complex is not affected in the collective unconscious by too much personal material, it can serve a prospective purpose toward psychic growth.

Jung has stated that conscious complexes can be corrected and transformed when they "slough off their mythological envelope, and, by entering into the adaptive process going forward in consciousness, they personalize and rationalize themselves to the point where a dialectical discussion becomes possible" (Jung quoted by Jacobi, 1957/1971, p. 11). In therapeutic processes a form of healing can thus occur when the complex becomes freed of its superimposed personal contents, as repressed elements of the conflict begin to reach conscious awareness. When this happens, Jacobi suggests, "the individual who has been caught up in his personal entanglements is then confronted with a problem which no longer represents solely his personal conflict, but gives expression to a conflict that has been incumbent on man to suffer from time immemorial" (p. 26).

A Jungian perspective on myth in its relation to pathology. Hillman, in The Myth of Analysis, proposes that a precise inquiry into archetypal constellations with their effects upon disorders of personality and upon its individual development will yield "both a psychology and a psychopathology within the same description" (1972, p. 190). For example, he suggested that "special forms of torment and bizarre behaviour" observed in association with pathology are

intrinsic to myth (1972, p. 190). Assuming that the inner driving forces of personality are mythically structured, Hillman argued that correspondences between mythical fantasy and the pathological could lend invaluable insights into the nature of pathology. As he put it:

> At once our view of psychic illness changes. No longer is psychic illness that which does not fit in, that which is alien, deviate. ... Rather, these fantastic and alien events are expressions of moments within a mytheme which cannot be better expressed or lived in another way. They belong to its suffering, its pathos, its pathography. The archetype is an affliction; it makes us suffer. A pathology of the psyche is an integral, necessary part of psychology because suffering the archetype through our complexes is an integral, necessary part of psychic life. (Hillman, 1972, p. 190-191)

Hillman accentuated the notion that suffering is an integral part of the imaginal, as it is with the myth. "The great images are great passions," he wrote, as human fantasies are also "the great arenas of the inferno" - archetypal images portray human emotions and complexes, producing the afflictions of being human (1972, p. 191). Pain becomes a way of gaining insight into mythology: "We enter a myth and participate in it directly through our afflictions - the fantasies which emerge from the complexes become the gate into mythology" (p. 196). In Hillman's view, "every fantasy released by every complex is an example of the soul's naturally tortured psychology, just as every myth reveals peculiar and pathological distortions" (p. 200).

A mythological approach to understanding pathology from Hillman's point of view offers "the possibility of reuniting the profane with the sacred, the pathological behaviour with its mythical

meaning" (p. 195). In this respect, the hidden sources of psychodynamics are the divinities which emerge from collective fantasy. Hillman reasoned that if our fantasies are "God-given," then our attitude toward them should be religious. In a view resembling that of Eliade (1959) and Campbell (1968b) on the sacred and profane aspects of myth, Hillman proposed that psychology reflects "a pagan and polytheistic theology" (Hillman, 1972, p. 196).

In entering the archetypal core of the complexes, Hillman suggested that "we can be cured of what ails us by what ails us" (1972, p. 197). The nature of a conflict, the forms in which inner myths are experienced through a person's suffering, unfold and play themselves out, are expressed in the tale. Hillman thus postulated that within the imaginal, the pathology and its cure exist together. Through their dramatic structure, myths resolve themselves; "the problem may be redeemed by its own fantasy, since the fantasy makes transparent the archetypal core of the complex" (1972, p. 197).

Hillman suggested that myths and fantasies do not explain pathology, but rather <u>they are stories projecting the listener or viewer into participation with the phenomena they describe</u>. In this respect, "the need for explanation falls away". In gaining insight into mythological expression, it is possible to "see within" the concatenation of psychic manifestations known as syndromes. In gaining access to ways of truth through fantasy metaphor, substance would be provided to the purely descriptive nominalism of pathology (Hillman, 1972, p. 202).

CHAPTER THREE:
The Nature of Personal Myth

> What constitutes the unity and totality of the human spirit is precisely that it has no absolute past: it gathers up into itself what has past and preserves it as present. (Cassirer, 1953, p. 78)

Personal myth is a dynamic symbolic entity which plays a significant role in personality integration and the formation of identity. With regard to the quotation above by Cassirer, the concept of personal myth might be understood as a symbolic construct encompassing an individual's unique history, yet his statement could also point to the recognition of the capacity of personal myth to resonate with the underlying currents and varied possibilities of the collective stories of humanity as a whole. This chapter will examine the paradoxically personal and impersonal symbolic aspects of the personal myth, its functions in personality adaptation and development, and its creative and destructive roles in the evolving processes of personality transformation.

3.1 The Paradox of the Personal Myth

The conceptualizations of personal myth to be explored in this chapter embody several inherent contradictions, leading to a number of questions: Is personal myth a symbolic system referring to existential reality and truth or does it refer to personal distortion and ego defense? Is it a destructive, pathological entity which inhibits personality growth or is it a healthful, creative means of conflict resolution and identity formation? Is it a unifying and guiding agent of personality, or is it a fragmentary and restrictive aspect of personality functioning? While these and other seemingly ambivalent aspects of this concept will be addressed later in this chapter, the immediate discussion is based on the thought that the fundamental paradox of the personal myth, evident in the term itself, is that it is a symbolic entity which blends the influence of ongoing rudiments of personal experience with personal and collective symbolic motifs.

The interrelation between the Personal and the Collective. "We may wonder whether any single person - even so intense a poet as William Blake - can fabricate and promulgate his own mythology? Must not a private myth, rather, be labelled a pseudo-myth?" (Levin, 1960, p. 111).

Common to much of the literature on myth in relation to identity and personality formation is the notion of the existence of an interrelational quality between personal and transpersonal factors. The tension between the singular and universal as discussed by Mann in his lecture "Freud and the Future" (1937/1960) creates a fascinating uniqueness in the development of identity where personal fantasies are seen to merge with or take the mythic form of the universal. Bruner (1960) urged that we not be too easily tempted into thinking there is an oppositional contrast between logos and mythos; the language of experience and the grammar of myth. In his view, each complements the other and it is in the light of this complementarity that he proceeded to examine the relation between myth and personality. Similarly, central to Hacker's thesis (1964) on the role of myth-making in personality formation is the notion of a unique merging of the private event with the recurring models of human possibilities, patterned in novel forms of experience and self-knowledge.

The term <u>personal</u> implies one's own, individual, private: Personal factors belong to one individual personality and are not shared by any other individual, regardless of whether the factors are conscious or unconscious. Myth, on the other hand, denotes the transpersonal: "A traditional narrative based on collective formation" (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 7th Ed., 1982).

While Jung (1949/1973) differentiated between the contents of the personal unconscious (fantasies of a personal character stemming from things forgotten or repressed) and those of the collective

unconscious (resembling the structures encountered in myths and fairy tales), he did suggest however, that both types arise from the unconscious under quite similar conditions. Jung pointed out that the distinction between what is personal and what is collective clearly exists but may be difficult to discern (1949/1973; Zinkin, 1979). Kris (1956), the originator of the concept of personal myth, has suggested that a core of early childhood fantasies, the basis of a personal myth, arises from the unconscious as purely personal fantasies which in no way resemble mythological motifs. Kris's study focused upon the psyche's relentless lock onto repetitive fantasies generated from childhood. He observed the effects of these fantasies in the context of pathology and arrest of personality growth in patients in psychoanalysis. Other accounts of this phenomena, notably those of Campbell (1949/1968a), Neumann (1954), Hillman (1972), Hacker (1964), Keen (1988), and Feinstein and Krippner (1988), have been more recognizant of the therapeutic potential of transpersonal symbols which can emerge in a personal mythological system. Here, an emphasis has been placed on exploring the psyche's capacity to utilize collective symbolism in an evolving process of personality development and identity formation.

Transpersonal factors are supra- or extra-personal, not to be regarded as external structural elements. Neumann has suggested that the transpersonal represents a factor that is largely autonomous, which both collectively and independently is a late product of evolution (1954). Zinkin (1979), however, presented the argument that archetypes of collective symbolism need not be viewed as

distinctly separated from individual factors, but rather, function to combine collective and individual factors with one another. In this respect, Zinkin referred to the works of Mary Williams and Rosemary Gordon as showing that mythic symbols tend to act as a bridge between the personal and collective.

The early history of the collective is determined by inner primordial images whose projections appear externally as powerful entities: "gods, spirits or demons - which become objects of worship" (Neumann, 1954, p. xx). The contents and structure of unconscious symbolism show astonishing similarities to mythological images, and the psychic development of individuals (encompassing both normal and abnormal trends of development) is governed by the same primordial images which determine man's collective history (Jung, 1949/1973; Eliade, 1957/1960; Neumann, 1954). In the explicit myth, as in individual fantasy, the nature of projection involves the presupposition that what has actively been put outside oneself, previously existed inside as something psychic (Neumann, 1954). Eliade, however, stresses that mythologies should not be understood as products of the unconscious since myths are exemplar stories of a specific structural form which have been generated by culture: They announce something which has manifested itself paradigmatically (Eliade, 1959).

Viewing the problem of personal and collective aspects of the unconscious in relation to the artist and creative expression, Rank stated:

> We cannot understand the artist by a purely individual psychology - without taking account of the collective art-ideology - nor the development and changes of the latter without the psychology of the artist and the primal conflict that lies at its root and that is the cause equally of art and artists. (Rank, 1932, p. 188)

Rank saw art ultimately as a conflict between individuality and collectivity, with the creative product reflecting the dualistic struggle, within the artist, of the two impulses of his own being. The artist uses the collective ideology for his personal creativity and in this way "not only re-creates it as his own but presents it to humanity as a new collective ideology on an individual basis" (Rank, 1932, p. 169). Rank suggested that the artist of modern times differs from the collective creators of folk epics not only in the personal nature of his themes, but also because the artist himself (the individual ego) is "the real hero of the story" (Rank, 1932, p. 178).

The underlying themes utilized by the artist are not specifically personalized, since the universal structure of mythic imagination is of an impersonal nature (Neumann, 1954; Eliade, 1963b; Cassirer, 1955). Neumann suggested however that the collective psyche functions as the "living ground current from which is derived everything to do with a particularized ego possessing consciousness" (1954, p. 270). While man experiences the world through archetypes, Neumann (1954) posited that the archetypes are subjectively experienced as an individual's own unconscious experience of the world. In a similar vein, Hillman commented:

> We may very well talk of the objective psyche and may experience psychic movements in fantasy, images, and impulses as necessities that are not personally ours; still the feeling persists that the soul has a personal location. Somehow the notion of the soul implies an individual person as its carrier. (1972, p. 22)

Polycentric personalities in mythic expression. Cassirer (1955) postulated that the primitives, rather than transfer their own complete personality to the god, initially discovered themselves as an active spiritual principle through the figures of the gods. In this way, "the human 'I' finds himself only through a detour of the divine 'I'" (Cassirer cited in Avens, 1980, p. 61). Many writers on the myth have concurred that the gods who were instrumental in the emergence of human collective identity have not disappeared, but are ever-present in each individual through the imaginal and poetic basis of the psychic structure. Thus, the myth's original function of unifying the inner and the outer, of expressing the universal in the particular, continues to live and assert itself in the individual consciousness of modern man (Avens, 1980; Campbell, 1968b; Cassirer, 1955; Eliade, 1959, 1957/1960; Hillman, 1972).

Consideration of the transpersonal possibilities which potentially emerge in a personal mythology might then take into account the concept of the psyche as a polycentric field of powers and personalities operant in our lives. Avens commented that such a notion has a long and venerable tradition. For example, he noted Frazer's The Golden Bough to have demonstrated that primitive man regarded soul as "an impersonal presence with which he could

converse", and moreover, "he associated himself with a plurality of souls" (Avens, 1980, p.62; Frazer, 1934, p. 690). Freud, in "The Relation of the Poet to Daydreaming", suggested that modern writers, in creating various diverse characters in their works, "split up their ego by self-observation into many component-egos and in this way to personify the conflicting trends in their own mental life in many heros" (1908/1958, p. 51). Hillman wrote, "Where imagination reigns, personifying happens.... The persons [of the myth] present themselves as existing prior to any efforts of ours to personify. To mythic consciousness, the persons of the imagination are real" (1975, p. 17). Psychic polycentrism and personifying are not limited to the archaic thought of primitives, the mentally ill, children and artists, but are a natural and spontaneous activity of the soul of each person (Hillman, 1975; Avens, 1980).

3.2 What is Personal Myth?

The original perspective. The original conceptualization of personal myth was put forward by Ernst Kris in an article entitled "The Personal Myth: A Problem in Psychoanalytic Technique" (1956). Kris had arrived at his impressions of the personal myth through clinical observations of a group of patients diagnosed as obsessive-compulsive, over a twenty-year period of psychoanalytic treatment. Observing significant changes in patients' reported autobiographical stories over time, Kris discovered a preserved core of childhood fantasies, the basis of the personal myth, which he saw as serving

both a defensive function in protecting the ego against the memory of traumatic childhood experiences and an adaptive function in maintaining personality cohesion and continuity.

Kris (1956) recognized that the verbal autobiographical memories of his patients served a defensive purpose as a protective screen against significant emotional and developmental conflicts of early childhood. In noting that in autobiographical memory, recollections remain connected to early needs and affects, Kris observed that the firm outline and richness of detail of his patients' "screen" memories were constructed in such a way as to defend against conflictual content through significant omissions and distortions. He suggested that the autobiographical self-image had become heir to important early fantasies which it preserved.

The basis of Kris's investigation of personal myth hinges on the exploration of a nucleus of memories shaped into fantasy form, in connection with sequences of early experiences and ego dispositions, which survived various phases of scanning memory material. It is significant to Kris's approach that only through a patient's eventual disclosure of these early fantasies and the discovery of their wish-fulfilling and adaptive functions did the therapist gain access to the personal myth.

Kris posited that "what a man has experienced during infancy or childhood...may influence as a recurrent theme (or defence against it) his thought processes, dreams and artistic productions" (1952, pp. 18-19). Personal myth, by Kris's definition, is "fantasy nuclei" stemming from the time of earliest childhood "when fantasy and

reality were not sharply divided, when fantasy was fully invested as a relatively integral and indistinguishable part of the self" (p. 680). It has the character of an autobiographical self-image emerging and consolidating from important early fantasies and significant psychic events of the individual, such as traumas, separations and developmental conflicts, which it preserves (Kris, 1956).

Kris detected the personal myth to exist in relation to a coherent set of autobiographical memories, expressed by way of fantasy, which picture one's course in life as part of one's self-representation. The personal myth, he suggested, is a secret core of personality, reflecting a patterning of one's life not consciously known to the individual. As expressed in fantasy, the language of myth and dream, Kris conceived of the personal myth as extending from the past to the present. It is making a "life history to part of themselves and remaining in the history of their lives" (1956, p. 680). Through his clinical observations, Kris noted that his patients' conduct of life could be partially viewed as a re-enactment of some of the repressed fantasies they had revealed to him through their autobiographical constructions.

He suggested further that the personal myth is connected to the personal history of the individual, not only as an essential part of his or her self-representation, but as a treasured possession to which the individual attaches a particular psychic investment. The fantasy nature of personal myth serves to compensate the ego, and in doing so, preserves balance and permits continuity within the

personality. Kris wrote, "What from the ego's point of view appear as advanced and specifically invested functions - remembering and fantasy - is from the point of view of the id, a valued and treasured holding" (1956, p. 679).

Personal myth as a manner of ego defense. Kris's conceptualization of the personal myth accentuates the adaptive role of fantasy formation in defending against childhood emotional conflicts, while facilitating personality development. The psychic adherence to these fantasies, which emerge as a central pillar of personal identity, have been demonstrated to effect the shaping of later behaviour and strivings in life (Kris, 1956).

Kris's view of the nature of personal myth is based on the notion that personal fantasies serve a defensive function by way of wish-fulfillment. He stated, "A certain investment in the process of remembering seems typical of early childhood, gaining impact up to approximately four year of age, and merging imperceptibly with the pleasure in fantasy life, since in fantasy the loss is always near and the wish always fulfilled" (1956, p. 678). Unconscious fantasy thinking, according to Arlow, "is dynamically related to the persistent cathectic potential arising from the pressure of the instinctual wishes of the id" (1961, p. 375). These wishes exert a pull to activate the experiencing of sensory impressions identical to a previously perceived set of sensory impressions of a highly gratifying nature. The developing ego attempts to delay the immediate discharge of these impulses, or to facilitate their

expression in an adaptive, integrated manner, thereby avoiding intrapsychic conflict, anxiety, or a clash with the world of reality (Arlow, 1961).

Kris (1956), Arlow (1961) and Beratis (1988) discuss the formation and recurrence of early childhood fantasy as playing a role in reuniting what has been separated, and compensating and defending the ego from traumas or developmental conflicts. In so doing, the fantasy serves an adaptive function by providing the individual with a continuous life history. In the patterning of personal myth, Kris suggested, the defensive needs of the ego lead the individual to cling to screening memories with such great intensity and vividness that these early fantasies have been accepted and are experienced as a vital component of the self-concept.

Kris's approach placed emphasis on the capacity of the personal myth to defend the ego throughout the traumas of the oedipal phase. The distortion of autobiographical facts as preserved by the personal myth is thought by Kris to be a variation of the family romance fantasy. He understood the energy investment of the autobiographical screen as "anticathectic energies derived from aggression, maintaining repression,... while energies whose libidinal derivation are still traceable endow the screen with an investment originally attached to a cherished set of oedipal fantasies" (Kris, 1956, p. 665).

Beratis's study (1988) extends Kris's formulations by proposing that personal myth need not be exclusively related to the oedipal period, but may also pertain to traumatic experiences of the pre-

oedipal phase; specifically to the separation-individuation phase of development. These are traumas involving anxieties associated with separation from and loss of the maternal object. Beratis points out that these early experiences, as compared to the later experiences and wishes of the oedipal period, "are conditioned by less differentiated, more intense separation anxiety and a higher proportion of unneutralized aggression" (Beratis, 1988, p. 481). The energy involved is of a mainly aggressive nature, "invested in the primitive relationships of the early years, and not libidinal, invested in oedipal fantasies" (p. 481).

Beratis proposed that the personal myth is a "symbolic creation" of the individual, developed gradually over time and possessing a manifest and a latent content. While the manifest content serves an ego-defensive function, the latent content pertains to traumatic experiences and conflictual wishes relating to the pre-oedipal and oedipal phases of development. According to Beratis, the quality of special attachment persons have for their personal myth, or symbolic creation, functions in a way similar to that of a transitional object (Beratis, 1988).* In functioning as a transitional object, the personal myth encapsulates various conflicts of multi-determined intrapsychic significance, and, while serving to keep anxiety in check, facilitates future psychic development. In this light, the personal myth could be understood to serve as a reliant symbolic formula functioning to secure the cohesion of personality through

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*Beratis cited D.W. Winnicott's work on transitional phenomena (Winnicott, 1953).

critical periods of early development, in the service of promoting personality growth (Beratis, 1988).

As the originator of the specific concept of personal myth, Kris (1956) provided a basic definitional profile for the phenomenon. Some particular aspects of his treatment of this concept are noted to have stimulated debate among other writers in the following years. One area of contention concerns Kris's treatment of the personal myth solely in the light of a syndrome of the personality or a form of resistance. While credence is given to the notion of personal myth as a mode of ego defense, and its relation to a pathological context, some of the more recent literature has also addressed healthful attributes of this phenomenon, pertaining to the functions of reality adaptation, psychic integration and psychological growth of the individual, whether healthy or ill. Authors sharing this point of view include Hacker (1964), Arlow (1961), Progoff (1970), Bruner (1960), Hillman (1972), Keen (1988), Feinstein & Krippner (1988) and indeed Beratis (1988).

A second point concerns the stance that the personal myth is understood from a purely personal, non-mythological, basis. Concluding his article on personal myth, Kris stated, "The patients discussed in this paper do not borrow their autobiography from cultural tradition or any general mythology. They are the creators and their myth is a personal one" (1956, p. 680). A merit of Kris's paper is its illustration in the case examples of how purely personal or even idiosyncratic experience can work itself into the content of an individual fantasy or dream system. The essence of personal

fantasy in itself, however, may reveal a mythological or possibly collective basis. Hacker (1964), for instance, suggested that the exploration of a personal fantasy system will inevitably reveal a mythological basis if an examination should be directed toward it.

The prime case example presented by Kris (1956) involved a personal myth based upon a male patient's recurring fantasy theme of assuming a Superman identity. Kris explored the oedipal implications of this group of fantasies in the context of the individual's wish to compensate for the loss of his father who was absent. The reported fantasy of "Superman wooing a Princess" involved the wish to win the love and affection of his mother through taking on an idealized image of the father, but it was also a means of repressing a negative oedipal attachment. The perspectives of Hacker (1964) and Bruner (1960) on the role of myth in identity formation suggested that an individual, in fulfilling developmental needs, may select and adapt a popular cultural hero into his or her repertoire of personal fantasy. The views of Rank (1932), Neumann (1954), and Campbell (1949/1968a), might suggest that such a group of fantasies constitute, from a mythological perspective, a phase of the hero myth.

3.3 The Emergence of a Mythological System

The personalistic and symptomatic aspects of the myth (Kris, 1956, Beratis, 1988) will be extended, in this discussion, to

considerations of personal mythology as a process of symbolic thought, inflective of the initiatory stages and rites of passage inherent in the tales of classical mythology. The discussion will include the contributions of such authors as Rank (1932), Jung (1949/1973), Campbell (1949/1968a), Neumann (1954) and Eliade (1959, 1957/1960), who have sought to demonstrate the correspondences between the content of mythological stories and the nature of symbolic expression reflective of the turmoils of early psychic development. With a focus on the impersonal, collective backdrop, as it were, in the emergence of a personal mythological system, this section will provide a basic illustration of the early evolution of mythic imagination, including some of its central motifs, symbols of transition and developmental processes.

A transpersonal approach to the concept of personal myth.

> Whether as a reflex of a) the natural environment, b) historical tribal or national life, c) the family triangle, or d) the inevitable biological course of human maturation and aging, together with what James Joyce termed "the grave and constant in human sufferings" - to which I would add, "in human joy" - it is clear that the actual emphasis of any mythological or dream system must be derived from local experience, while the "archetypes", the "elementary ideas", the "roles" that the local images serve, must be of an order antecedent to experience; of a plot, so to say, a destiny or wyrd, inherent in the psychosomatic structure of the human species. (Campbell, 1968b, p. 654)

As a point of departure, this passage from Campbell would appear illustrative of some essential features applicable to a conceptualization of personal myth. Campbell's stance embodies the notion of

an interrelational, perhaps fluid connection between the affectively coloured, dynamic and developmental determinants of personal experience, transposed upon the intrapsychic and yet supra-personal currents of underlying mythological structures.

The upper, personal strata of a personal mythological system refer to individual experience, perhaps long forgotten or repressed memories, while those of the lower, collective strata are the messages and codes of the instincts and the gods (Campbell, 1968b). Campbell (1949/1968a) and Neumann (1954) have discussed the emergence of a personal mythological system by way of personal biography (and those experiences which have been retained in what Jung has termed the personal unconscious). It is <u>through</u> this personal system that the collective themes of the human destiny of growth, spiritual conflict, initiations, failure and achievement of powers become inflected and symbolically expressed. The individual's perception of the world evolves at every stage of his development; "the variation of archetypes and symbols, gods and myths, is both the expression, but also the instrument of this change" (Neumann, 1954, p. 39).

From an ontogenetic perspective, Rank (1932) has suggested that everyone is a hero at birth and all subsequent transformations are heroic acts. As manifested on the symbolic level, each person's internal struggles and plight can be revealed in the form of inner story plots. From the viewpoints of theorists such as Rank (1932), Neumann (1954), Eliade (1959, 1957/1960), Campbell (1949/1968a), and Leeming (1973), these "private" tales of dream and imagination may bear relation to the underlying thematic currents of the stories of

general mythology. These stories may tend to involve preternatural forces and characters, unfolding in dramatic form and which, in the words of Wellek and Warren, tell of "origins and destinies" (1942, p. 180; Bruner, 1960, p. 279).

Campbell referred to the mythological images which arise in the unconscious as marga, the Sanskrit word referring to the elementary idea, literally meaning a path left by an animal. The animal which has made the path, he suggested, is in psychological terms the collective aspect of the human psyche. The paths are psychic imprints of the human instinct. The journey inspired by the mythic imagination functions in the service of the psyche's attempt to resolve and master personal obstacles and developmental conflicts through a passage of rites and initiations (Campbell, 1982).

It was suggested by Eliade (1959) that the unconscious is the result of countless existential experiences, the processes of which resemble the various religious universes of the myth. It is the sacred aspect of the mythic imagination which provides a paradigmatic solution for each existential crisis. It offers paradigmatic solutions not only because mythic patterns can be indefinitely repeated, but also because of their transcendental origin, believed to contain revelations received from a transhuman world. Eliade stated that the religious (mythic) solution "not only resolves the crisis but at the same time makes existence open to values that are no longer contingent or particular, thus enabling man to transcend personal situations and finally gain access to the world of the spirit" (Eliade, 1959, p. 210).

It is through the fantastic tales of myth that symbolic expression is given to the unconscious desires, fears and tensions beneath the conscious patterns of human behaviour. In this respect, Campbell (1949/1968a) noted that mythology is "psychology misunderstood as biography, history and cosmology" (p. 256). In mythology, he wrote, "The entire spectacle is before us. We have only to read it, study its constant patterns, analyze its variation and therewith come to an understanding of the deep forces that have shaped man's destiny and must continue to determine both our private and public lives" (p. 256).

In grasping the nature of the mythic imagination, it is necessary to understand its symbolic phenomena not solely as symptoms of the unconscious, but also as statements of certain spiritual principles which have remained as constant throughout history as the form and structure of the human psyche itself.

Genesis.

> As the focus of (psychoanalytic) investigative curiosity is concentrated on the beginnings of time and life, the hoped for and definitionally stipulated simplicity, purity and unity evaporate. The very complexity, relatively and conditionally, which occasioned the search into the depth of time and space, mockingly point to new hiding places of the absolute and eternal. (Hacker, 1964, p. 441)

Several theorists concur that the beginnings of an individual's mythology stems from the time of earliest infancy when fantasy was invested as a relatively integral and indistinguishable part of self (Kris, 1956; Neumann, 1954; Klein, 1959; Cassirer, 1955). In this

earliest state, no reflecting, self-conscious ego has as yet developed which could refer anything to itself (Neumann, 1954). From a developmental standpoint, mythological consciousness begins to emerge from subjective reality in relation with the formation of the ego and the development of individuality (Cassirer, 1955; Neumann, 1954). Neumann postulated that, mythologically speaking, an individual experiences this beginning as the beginning of the world, the coming of light without which no process could be seen at all. He suggested that the dawn state of an individual's consciousness projects itself mythologically in cosmic form as the mythology of creation.

> Not only is the psyche open to the world, it is still identical and undifferentiated from the world; it knows itself as world and in the world and experiences our world as a world becoming, its own images as the starry heavens, and its contents as the world creating gods. (Neumann, 1954, p. 6)

Uroborcs is the term used by Neumann to designate the symbolic manifestation of the earliest beginning. It means the "Great Round", "container", the "maternal womb", but also represents "the union of masculine and feminine opposites, the World Parents joined in perpetual cohabitation" (1954, p. 13). Uroboros is the symbolic self-representation of the dawn state which stands for the infancy both of mankind and the child. The object of myth is initially formed through the intra-uterine world experience and the unconscious; ego and man are only nascent as yet and their birth, suffering and emancipation constitute universal phases of the creation myth (Neumann, 1954; Eliade, 1957/1960).

The uroboros symbol has a collective basis corresponding to an evolutionary stage, before the formation of the ego, which can be recalled in the psychic structure of every human being. The reality of this symbol is re-experienced in very early childhood as a symbolic representation of origins and the child's personal experience of this pre-ego stage (Neumann, 1954).* In alluding to Eliade's definition of myth quoted in Chapter One of this thesis, the uroboros might be said to symbolically represent the "fabled time of beginnings" from which the narration of an individual's, or a people's, "sacred history" is generated (Eliade, 1963b, pp. 5-6).

> The beginning can be laid hold of in two "places": it can be conceived in the life of mankind as the earliest dawn of human history and in the individual as the earliest dawn of childhood.... The earliest dawn of childhood, like that of mankind, is depicted in the images which rise up from the depths of the unconscious and reveal themselves to the already individualized ego. (Neumann, 1954, p. 6)

Wisdom of the Unconscious. Mythic expressions are reflective of an unconscious quest for identity. The creation story, Neumann suggested, represents the attempt by humanity's primitive, pre-scientific consciousness to achieve mastery in areas of mystery or difficulty beyond the reach of developed consciousness (Neumann, 1954). Kris, for instance, suggested that symbolic imagery involves the psychic integration of significant elements of the individual's past under the impact of a central question of origins: "How did it

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*Neumann (1954) suggested the uroboros symbol may also re-emerge in later stages of life, sometimes in the context of ego regression, and possibly in association with a death wish, a desire to return to the womb of the mother, to the eternal.

all come about?" (Kris, 1956, p. 679). Similarly, Neumann proposed that one's symbolic self-concept arises out of unconsciously posed questions stemming from the origins of one's life, questions which are simultaneously inquiries regarding the origins of man. The question "Where did I come from?", he wrote, faces every individual arriving on the threshold of consciousness (1954, p. 7). From the perspective of Eliade (1959), every myth shows how and why a reality came into existence, and thereby seeks to establish the world as a reality. In Eliade's view, origins are mythologically expressed as an "irruption of the sacred into the world," the sacred being "the ultimate cause of all real existence" (1959, p. 97).

With individual development and through the processes of the mythic imagination, further questions are generated by the unconscious, such as "What is the purpose of my life?", "What is taboo?", "Who are the heroes and the heroines?", "Who is an ally and who an enemy?", or "What does the future hold?". These are the fundamental and recurrent questions that all systems of myth attempt to answer (Keen, 1988, p. 45).

It is an unconscious wisdom inherent in the structure of the human psyche which fields these questions, often at a completely unconscious level. "The unconscious knowledge of the background of life and man's dealings with it is laid down in ritual and myth" (Neumann, 1954); these are the answers of the human soul and the human mind to questions which are very much alive for mankind, even though ego consciousness may not have consciously asked them. The

mythological answers to these questions are expressed by the psyche in symbolic form (Neumann, 1954, p. 13).

Early development and the conceptualization of world opposites. In the earliest development of the child, the entire defence from a universe of dangers is the mother, under whose protection the intra-uterine period is prolonged. The dependent child and mother constitute a dual unit from the time of the infant's birth, characterized by physical as well as psychological symbiosis. It is in this period that the infant experiences an embryonic state of ego development which is closely tied to the bliss, unity and perfection of the uroboric state (Neumann, 1954). Campbell (1949/1968a) and Neumann (1954) have both noted that the desire to maintain the contentment and unity with the maternal figure is retained in the unconscious basis of all mythological images as the dual unity of the Madonna and Bambino.

The beginning of life is marked by an original deprivation of wholeness and total, unconscious integration. This primary loss occurs at the very outset of the ego's evolution. The initial separation from the mother's body is experienced as a primary castration, which has an emotional tone and is expressed in guilt feelings. In detaching from the uroboros, the infant experiences suffering as it descends into the world of reality, which is full of dangers and discomforts. The formative ego becomes aware of pleasure and pain, whereupon the world is experienced ambivalently (Neumann, 1954).

Prolonged absences of the mother, or the child's experience of being hampered, will induce tension in the infant, arousing consequent aggressive impulses. The first object of an infant's hostility is identical to its first object of love. Campbell proposed that it is in the earliest phases of the infant's development that the dawning of a personal mythology (a state beyond the vicissitudes of time), begins to emerge. He cites the work of Melanie Klein in construing that the child's earliest mythological conceptualizations "arise out of reaction to and spontaneous defense against the body-destructive fantasies that assail the infant when deprived of the mother's breast" (Campbell, 1949/1968a, p. 173).

Melanie Klein hypothesized that the newborn baby suffers great anxiety through the process of birth as well as in adjusting to the post-natal situation. Without being able to grasp it intellectually, the infant feels every discomfort as though it were inflicted by hostile forces. The child's varied experience of nurturance (the good breast) and discomfort, giving rise to feelings of persecution (the bad breast), lead to the development of <u>good</u> and <u>bad</u> attitudes toward the mother even under the most ideal conditions (Klein, 1959).

In keeping with Klein's view, Röheim discussed the emergence of the infant's fantasy occurring in relation to hostile feelings evoked when the child feels deprived of the mother's breast:

> The infant reacts with a temper tantrum and the fantasy that goes with the temper tantrum is to tear everything out of the mother's body.... The child then fears retaliation for these impulses, i.e., that everything will be scooped out of its own inside. (Röheim quoted by Campbell, 1949/1968a, pp. 173-174)

Anxieties concerning the integrity of the infant's body give rise to fantasies of restitution. These are shaped by defensive needs for indestructibility and protection against hostile forces from within and without. Such fantasies, which begin to direct the growing psyche, remain as determining factors in later neurotic, or even normal, behaviours, spiritual efforts, and ritual practices of the adult (Campbell, 1949/1968a).

When the ego gradually becomes aware of its ties and dependence on the mother as an independent system, consciousness becomes self-conscious and a reflecting ego with awareness of itself emerges as the center of consciousness. From the mythological perspective, the creation of the world and of consciousness is accompanied by a sense of suffering and loss; "feelings of transitoriness, mortality, impotence, and isolation have come to colour the ego's picture of the uroboros, in contrast to the original situation of contentment" (Neumann, 1954, pp. 45). Concomitant to this process, the coming of light (symbol of consciousness and illumination) constellates in the psyche the apposition between heaven and earth as the basic symbol of all other opposites, such as sacred and profane, good and evil, you and I, or male and female (Neumann, 1954).

The conflicts of personal experience are conceptualized by the mythic imagination in a symbolic process by which one's perspective of self in relation to the world and the adversities encountered therein are unconsciously formulated in a mythically constructed cosmos. Corresponding to the early development of polarities in the psychic structure, myth polarizes the world into us and them, light

and dark, life force and death force, in a geography of good and evil, a realm of heaven and hell. Mythic thought thus attempts to clarify through oversimplification, personifying the conflict as "a moral struggle between righteous heroes and demonic villains" (Keen, 1988, p. 47). In this way, the mythic imagination serves a protective function in defending the hero, or ego, by means of self-justification, while at the same time providing a sort of order and form to conflict (Campbell, 1949/1968a).

The myth of the hero. The newborn hero has been metaphorically described as "the young sun rising from the waters, first confronted by lowering clouds, but finally triumphing over all obstacles" (Brodbeck cited by Rank, 1932, p. 7). Campbell (1949/1968a) wrote that the hero is symbolical of that divine creature and redemptive image which is hidden within all of us, only waiting to be known and rendered in life. Through the storylines of the various myths, the quest of the hero has been understood to involve a spiritual and developmental maturation process through a series of trials and initiations. The present focus on the rites of initiation provides a basic illustration of the correspondence between mythic imagination and the initiatory tasks of ego development through the oedipal phase. A particular emphasis will also be placed on illustrating the symbolic functions of the divine and spiritual in the processes of mythic imagination.

This section is necessarily limited in scope in its attempt to integrate a vast array of literature pertaining to this area of

study. The sole emphasis on masculine initiation rites is also to be noted as a limitation, yet concentration on both genders would not be feasible in the scope of this thesis. It should be noted that although feminine rites do not utilize the same symbolic expressions as those found in men's initiations, common elements do exist between them.

Eliade (1959) informs us that the childhood initiations of primitive societies reflected the wish to attain the ideal of humanity, which was set on a superhuman plane. The religious man of archaic times wanted to transcend what he found himself to be on the natural level, and in following the example set by the mythical hero, he sought to recreate himself in accordance with the ideal image revealed to him by myths. The initiation rites, involving ordeals, symbolic death and resurrection, were instituted by gods, cultural heroes or mythical ancestors. These rites had a superhuman origin and, by performing them, the novice initiated a superhuman, divine action.

The initiation experience usually consisted of three primary revelations: the revelation of the sacred, the revelation of death, and the revelation of sexuality. The young child knows nothing of these experiences; the initiate has acquired a spiritual maturation through knowing and assuming them. The initiate has not only been reborn or resuscitated; he has gained sacred knowledge through revelations that are metaphysical in nature. He has passed beyond the profane, unsanctified condition of the natural man who is without religious experience and is blind to the spirit (Eliade, 1959).

In the writings of psychoanalysts, the birth and trials of the mythological hero have been demonstrated to correspond to the crucial developmental struggles of the oedipal phase. The family romance centers upon the young boy's incestuous longings for his mother, which are thwarted by his father. The father represents the first radical encounter with another order of reality. The intrusion of the father threatens the child's experience of excellence within the womb. To the father is transferred the aggressive feelings which were originally attached to the bad or absent mother, while the desire attached to the good or present, nourishing mother is usually retained (Campbell, 1949/1968a). Rank (1932) postulated that the hero is the boy who kills his father and marries his mother. The hero myth is viewed to be a fantasy for the direct or indirect fulfillment of this wishful idea.

The account of the transpersonal significance in mythic consciousness of the hero's fight, as described by Campbell (1949/1968a) and Neumann (1954), provides insights into the role of the divine and spiritual in accounting for the transformational processes of the hero figure. The symbolic initiations and rites of passage of the hero's fight are viewed as playing an eternal and fundamental part in overcoming the inertia of the libido, as symbolized by the encircling mother (the dragon, or the unconscious). Extending the significance of the hero myth beyond the emphasis on killing the father (Rank, 1932), Campbell and Neumann considered the transpersonal perspective of the hero myth to be demonstrative of the

hero's battles with both the father and the mother figures, observed to have a ritually prescribed place in mythological tales.*

The initial task of the hero is, in Neumann's term, the dragon fight (1954). The hero's quest to slay monsters has symbolic reference to the initiations and rites of passage of early childhood. The dragon fight is a symbolic quest to murder one's parents. It facilitates the re-creation of one's relationships with parental figures and the birth of personal identity in the world through a process paralleling that of ego development.

By Neumann's account, the birth of the hero occurs once the uroboros has divided into opposites and the son has placed himself between his World Parents. The young hero is then challenged with the dragon fight, an intra-psychic battle with these contrary forces. The outcome of this struggle determines whether the young hero has succeeded in fighting off the powerful hold of the uroboros. Neumann has stated "The development of the conscious system which has as its center an ego capable of breaking away from the despotic rule of the unconscious, is prefigured in the hero myth" (Neumann, 1954, p. 161).

The killing of the mother forms the initial stratum in the hero's fight with the dragon. The dragon fight is always concerned with the threat to the masculine principle from the uroboric dragon, involving the dangers of being swallowed by the maternal unconscious. Neumann described the archetype of the Terrible Mother as the all-inclusive symbol of this devouring aspect of the unconscious. All

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*Both writers were influenced by Jung's ideas on this point. See Neumann (1954, pp. 153-154).

dangerous affects and impulses, the dynamic and often overwhelming monsters which arise from the imaginal aspect of the unconscious, are her progeny (1954; Eliade, 1959).

It is the ego's identification with masculine consciousness which produces a psychic split, whereupon the ego is driven into opposition with the dragon of the unconscious. What distinguishes the hero is his willful effort to overcome his fear of the mother's power, associated with the dangers of castration. The successful masculinization of the ego finds expression in its combativeness and willful exposure to the dangers which the dragon symbolizes (Neumann, 1954).

This struggle has been represented in myths by the hero's entry into a cave, the descent into the underworld, or by being swallowed by an animal, often involving symbolic death (Campbell, 1949/1968a; Eliade, 1959; Neumann, 1954). This passage has been termed by Campbell the magic threshold; a transition into the sphere of rebirth symbolized in the world-wide image of descent into the belly of the whale. Of this period of seeming retreat, Campbell wrote "The hero, instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown and would appear to have died" (1949/1968a, p. 90).

Eliade suggested that the physical sufferings endured correspond to the situation of being devoured by a feline demon. This symbolic death signifies a return to the embryonic state, equivalent to a temporary regression to the virtual, pre-cosmic mode. To experience initiatory death is a preliminary condition for mystical regeneration

and rebirth to the sacred world, the world of the gods. In emerging from the monster's belly, the hero's spiritual rebirth is equivalent to a cosmogony; initiating birth implies death to profane existence (Eliade, 1959).

Neumann interpreted this passage to represent a symbolic incest with the maternal aspect of the unconscious. If the hero succeeds and proves his higher origin and filiation to the divine forefather, then he emerges, covered in glory, from the terrible mother of fear and danger. The hero not only conquers the mother, but in killing her terrible aspect, he also liberates the fruitful and bountiful aspect. "By hacking his way out of the darkness, he is reborn as the Hero in the image of God, but at the same time, as the son of the god-impregnated virgin and of the regenerative Good Mother" (Neumann, 1954, p. 165).

The second aspect of the hero's fight involves the struggle for rulership between the transpersonal father who wants the world to change, and the personal father who speaks for the old law. Rank (1932), Neumann (1954) and Campbell (1949/1968a) concur that the persecutions and dangers the young boy perceives to be placed on his shoulders by the wicked king (or hateful personal father figure), serve as motivating factors for the hero. The obstacles set by the old patriarchal system (i.e., the tasks of fighting terrible monsters, witches, giants, etc.) for purposes of causing the young hero's undoing, become inner incentives for heroism.

Neumann stressed the importance of acknowledging the transpersonal aspects of the father and mother figures in the

symbolism of the hero's dragon fight. In this respect, the force and influence of two father figures and two mother figures must be kept in mind. Both personal and divine parental figures are necessary to form the cannon of events which symbolically presuppose the existence of the hero, who, as initiator of the new, must destroy the old. For example, the tasks set for the hero by the personal father force the hero to struggle with the uroboric Great Mother, the unconscious, against which the hero might easily encounter defeat, since it is the base of the ego's anxiety holding the threat of impotence. It is only with the aid of the divine father, however, that the hero can succeed in overcoming the dragon. The destruction that had been wished upon him by the negative father is superceded with the divine father's guidance, contributing to the hero's eventual glory and the negative father's demise (Neumann, 1954).

The "ogre" aspect of the father has been described by Campbell (1949/1968a, p. 130) to be "a reflex of the victim/hero's own ego", fixated in early development to a negative aspect of the father. The experience of guilt and fear imposed by an internalized harsh and powerful father figure constrains the individual from experiencing a better balanced, more realistic view of the father, and therewith of the world. Atonement (at-one-ment) with the father involves the difficult process of integrating the polarities of the paternal imago by tempering a self-generated double-monster: the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be sin (id). The hero's reliance on the merciful aspect of the divine father plays a key role in facilitating a personality transformation which enables the

dissolution of the dreaded influence of the ogre father. It is through this ordeal that the mythic hero may also derive hope and assurance from a helpful female figure, by whose magic he finds protection while undergoing the terrifving experiences of the father's ego-shattering initiation (Campbell, 1949/1968a).

By vanquishing the dragon, the hero gains the treasure, the sacred knowledge, which is the goal of the process symbolized by the fight. In the hero's return, the full round of his journey, he is required to begin his final task of bringing the runes of wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess back to the kingdom of humanity. In possessing the sacred knowledge, the hero can now make his contribution to the restoration of society and the renewal of the world (Campbell, 1949/1968a; Neumann, 1954; Eliade, 1959).

The hero myth in psychic processes. The present focus on the transpersonal aspect of the personal myth in relation to the hero myth would seem to be aptly approached through discussion of Jung's views on personal infantilism and the psychology of the child archetype. Jung has suggested that the vestiges of early psychological experiences may be revealed at various phases of an individual's life and will become personified in the imagination as a "vision of oneself as a child" (1949/1973, p. 81). The child-motif represents not only something that existed in the distant past, but something that the individual experiences in the present, and its purpose, according to Jung, is to compensate or correct in a meaningful way the inevitable one-sidedness of the adult conscious

mind. Jung suggested the child motif is a picture of certain forgotten events of childhood, yet since the archetype is always an image belonging to the whole human race, it represents the childhood aspect of the human race (Jung, 1949/1973).

The first manifestations of the child archetype are, as a rule, totally unconscious phenomena that occur as a means of providing psychic continuity between the past and the present. They emerge as a result of various incompatibilities or conflict between an adult's present state and his childhood state. The return to the original state of childhood offers a means of psychic renewal and purification (Jung, 1949/1973).

Both Jung (1949/1973) and Eliade (1957/1960) have discussed the spiritual, regenerative effects in both modern and archaic religions of repetitious reciting of myths of origin, wherein the participant is guided through a symbolic rebirth experience. From a mythological perspective, the modern patient suffers the effects of a shock which occurred in his own temporal history; a personal trauma that occurred in the illud tempus of childhood and has been suppressed or never brought to consciousness (Eliade, 1957/1960). Eliade suggested that the "psychic return to the past" functions in a curative manner as "a re-tracing of one's steps in order to re-enact the crisis"; to re-experience the psychic shock and "bring it back into consciousness" (p. 53).

> We might translate the operative procedure into terms of archaic thought, by saying that the cure is to begin living all over again; that is, to repeat the birth, to make oneself contemporary with "the beginning": and this is no less than an

> imitation of the supreme beginning, the cosmogony. (Eliade, 1957/1960, p. 53)

In Jung's view (1949/1973), the emergence of the child-motif reflects a compensatory tendency in the unconscious psyche to produce a symbol of the self in its own cosmic significance. These efforts, he stated, "take on the archetypal forms of the hero myth which can be observed in almost any individuation process" (p. 91). The divine child of the myth is, on the one hand, vulnerable, helpless against the powers of terrible enemies and in continual danger of extinction; while on the other hand, he obtains powers far exceeding those of ordinary humanity, powers that will eventually help him to transcend his limitations. A key feature of the child-motif, then, is its futurity: The child signifies a potential future, paving the way for future personality changes. Jung suggested that the passages of the divine child, or the hero of the mythic imagination, involve symbolic processes of "separation, detachment and the agonizing confrontation through opposites" (p. 90). These processes produce consciousness, while serving as a vehicle for insight and personality transformation. In the individuation process, the child "anticipates the figure that comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality" and is therefore "a symbol which unites opposites"; a mediator who brings healing and who makes whole (p. 83).

> Myth emphasizes...that the "child" is endowed with superior powers and, despite all dangers, will unexpectedly pull through. The "child" is born out of the womb of the unconscious, begotten out of the depths of human nature, or rather out of living

> Nature herself. It is a personification of vital forces quite outside the limited range of our conscious mind; of ways and possibilities of which our own one-sided conscious mind knows nothing; a wholeness which embraces the very depths of Nature. It represents the strongest, the most ineluctable urge in every human being, namely the urge to realize itself. (Jung, 1949/1973, p. 89)

The unconscious manifestation of the child archetype can occur spontaneously (as in dreams or art expressions) and in therapeutically induced individuation processes. The individual identifies himself with his personal infantilism, presenting a picture of an abandoned, misunderstood and unjustly treated child. Jung described how, in the therapeutic process, the patient demonstrates a gradual separation from the child, wherein the identity breaks down, accompanied by an intensification of fantasy. Mythological features become increasingly apparent through these fantasies. Concomitant transformational processes occurring through the therapy can be observed to be consistent with the hero myth (Jung, 1949/1973).

The identification with the mythological hero in therapeutic processes tends to reveal a corresponding sense of personality inflation. Jung explained that the tremendous pretension of identification with the hero promotes the conviction that one is extraordinary, or alternatively, the impossibility of the pretension ever being fulfilled feeds into one's sense of inferiority, resulting in the role of the heroic sufferer who takes a victimized stance. Jung observed that the mighty feats of the hero are generally absent in mythological identification, yet the mythical dangers play a great

part: Such identifications usually function as powerful forces in the psyche and can be disruptive to psychic homeostasis. Jung suggested that if the identification with the hero can be broken, then the hero figure can gradually be differentiated into a symbol of the self (Jung, 1949/1973).

3.4 Personal Myth and Personality Structure

The first three sections of this chapter have presented the concept of personal myth from dual perspectives. The focus of Kris's approach (1956) was on the relationship between a secret core of personality embodied in recurrent early childhood themes, arrest of personality development, and pathological behavioural outcomes. A transpersonal approach to mythic symbolism, in addition to Kris's insights, provides an understanding of the capacity of mythic imagination to contribute to progressive personality transformations. When examined in complement, an integration of these two approaches can provide insight into the nature of personal myth in its relation to pathology, the formation of identity and personality development. This present section will examine major attributes of the personal myth, with primary focus on exploring its function as a dynamic symbolic entity in the structure and evolution of the personality.

Myths are determining factors in the personality which have a form-giving influence on mental development. They contribute a form of adaptation to reality and to the group in which an individual lives, influencing the crystallization of the individual identity and

the formation of the superego (Arlow, 1961; Hacker, 1964). A personal mythology is an evolving construction of inner reality: It may be understood that all constructions of reality are based upon mythologies (Hacker, 1964; Feinstein & Krippner, 1988).

Myths contribute to the organization of the personality in that they are composed of symbolic representations corresponding to various levels of psychic maturation and constantly integrated into meaningful connections (Hacker, 1964; Arlow, 1961). A personal mythology is an organization of symbolic images usually based on a core theme addressing one of the domains within which mythology traditionally functions (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). Mythic themes have "organizing value for experience; without them impressions would be chaotic, fragmentary and meaningless" (Schorer, 1946/1960; Hacker, 1964, p. 439). Hillman has suggested that the assortment of passions, ideas, events and objects, charged with emotion, constituting the mythic theme, constellate together because the archetypal configuration to which these details belong gives them an inherent intelligibility. Mythic elements hold together, he stated, "not merely because of the laws of association, which are essentially external and mechanical, but because of their inherent belonging within mythical meaning" (Hillman, 1972, p. 178).

Sterba (1964) suggested that myths act as determining factors in the personality due to fusion with individually historical-dynamic factors in the ego-ideal. Mythological elements participate in the formation of the self-image as an intrapsychic gestalt which directs behaviour in a decisive way. He held that mythological forces and

contents act as strong dynamic entities in the traditional elements incorporated in the superego; hence, mythological elements have form-giving influence on mental development.

Recurring fantasy themes. There is a hierarchy in the fantasy life of each person reflecting the range of individual experience and corresponding to various levels of ego development. Arlow (1961) suggested that these fantasies form around certain basic instinctual wishes and comprise different versions of attempts to resolve the intrapsychic conflicts related to these wishes. Each version, in his view, corresponds to a different phase of the individual's development and expresses the forces in play at that moment in the ego's integration of instinctual demands in conjunction with its growing adaptive and defensive responsibilities.

Very early in life, these fantasies begin to amalgamate into the creation of an inner mythology. A central theme encompassing these fantasies arises as a symbolic construction of one's way of seeing reality. This central theme serves as a template and pattern for organizing experience, wherein complex beliefs, passionate feelings and powerful motivations attach themselves to the pattern's framework and fill out its character (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988).

By the time of the oedipal stage of development, a certain degree of organization of fantasy life has been established. The fantasy system remains fairly constant at this point as a characteristic feature of the individual psyche. The recurring themes generated from the consolidation of the fantasy system may be

understood in terms of fixation (Arlow, 1961). In relation to memory and the formation of fantasy, only those conflicts having special significance for the individual personality and especially those related to unresolved conflicts of the past, will leave a lasting psychic impression (Cameron, 1963). Kris noted that the continued persistence of conflicts similar to those of early childhood leads, during the revival of oedipal strivings in latency and particularly in adolescence, to the need for a solid defensive structure against the past, which retains essential features of the original conflict (Kris, 1956).

Hillman (1972) proposed that the repetitive themes of fantasy imagery are given conceptual form by the circular pattern in which psychic conflicts are expressed by the unconscious. He suggested that since the ego is patterned upon circularity, the imaginal ego remains faithful to the ever-recurrent themes of its afflictions. Yet, he added, that ego's tendencies toward compulsive repetition, specific fantasies, habits and familiar symptoms are also the causal form of its own mythic pattern:

> Each of these tiresome cycles compels us to recognize the force of that which coerces us, a force which feels stronger to us than a "syndrome" or a "problem" and which we tend to personalize, perhaps even to name and talk to as a tormenting demon. Even the strongest ego, hard and toughened through its repetitious coping with its "problem", is forced ever and again to submit to imaginal powers. (Hillman, 1972, p. 186).

Hillman viewed the recurrence of these fantasies as functioning out of psychic necessity. The repetition of fantasy can lead to

insights into the nature of underlying conflicts and their (archetypal) meaning. The cycle of recurring fantasies is also suggested by Hillman to be an important facet of identity: "The purgatory of faithful repetition," he wrote, is also a "redemption into individual style" (1972, p. 186).

The implicit nature of personal myth. The recurring personal fantasies cited by Kris (1956), Arlow (1961), Beratis (1988), Keen (1988) and Feinstein and Krippner (1988) in their conceptualizations of the personal myth, could be acknowledged as being the symbolic components of which myth is formed. Yet, as mere fantasies of unconscious formation, the intrinsic constitution of personal myth would then be seen as that of an unformed myth. From these authors' discussion, one gains the impression that the unconscious patterning of these personal fantasies, in relation to environmental and developmental factors and with both latent and manifest contents, constitutes an inner myth unknown to the individual but comprising an important facet of identity, informing or guiding the personality.

As characterized by Keen, a personal mythology may involve "a conscious celebration of certain values, always personified in a pantheon of heros and villains," yet largely consisting of "an invisible stew of unquestioned assumptions" (1988, p. 44). He compared a living myth to an iceberg, with ninety percent of it lying invisible below the surface of consciousness of the individual living by it. Waardenburg (In Olson, 1980), Keen (1988), Hillman (1972) and Hacker (1964) all understood the symbolic fabric of a personal myth

in terms of interlocking stories woven into the unconscious, giving a pivotal sense of meaning and direction to an individual, just as in a general mythology the mythic contents are contained in different stories within a larger connecting whole. In his conceptualization of the personal myth, Keen discussed the idea of a dominant myth that predominates in informing or directing the personality. He presented the analogy of a living myth, like information contained in the DNA of a cell, as the unconscious information or pattern which governs the way each individual perceives reality and behaves (1988).

The unconscious constitution of living myth is an unformed myth, a rudimentary primary stage of myth-making. Hacker stated that before myth-making occurs, myth will not appear as myth, nor its making to be anything like manufacture. "Myth appears and is experienced, 'it feels', as invariably and eternally given" (1964, p. 440). A differentiation between the unconsciously experienced, unformed, living myth (the essence of the personal myth), and the expressly formulated myth was addressed by Waardenburg (In Olson, 1980) who distinguished between the nature of implicit and explicit myth.

An explicit myth, in sum, is expressed with some manner of conscious intention in the form of a particular kind of story, and is composed within a certain symbolic structure. On the level of the individual psyche, an implicit myth consists of meaningful symbolic elements which are emotionally charged and internally experienced rather than explicitly formulated. These symbolic components have not been put together in a definite structure, yet may be understood

as involving the raw materials from which a potential story may be developed. Mythic elements do not act as explanations, but rather as internal suggestions, ways of comprehending reality. The elements of implicit myth give meaning to the life of an individual and are there for one to fall back on in times of crisis; they function as foundation stones for the basic assumptions of the individual. Waardenburg explained that the appearance of symbols and of implicit myth operates as a kind of safety valve against pressures of a psychological, interpersonal or spiritual nature, by enabling the expression of an individual's way of conceiving the truth, if not directly, then at least in an indirect way (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980).

The investigation of personal myth, a central concern of Kris (1956) and Beratis (1988), involves the uncovering and identification of implicit myth. Such a process, as elaborated by Hacker from the psychoanalytic perspective, involves the therapist's "recognition of introjective, projective and retrojective patterns by which the needs for gratification, explanation and consolidation" have been woven into the symbolic imagination (1964, p. 440). It is from this point that the projective slant and infantile wish component become evident. The therapist's part in the overt formulation of the personal myth (developed by way of his observations from the autobiographical reconstructions of his patients) could be considered as an elucidation of his role as mythological crystallizer or myth-maker (Hacker, 1964).

Creative and destructive possibilities. The concept of personal myth has been examined in a pathological context (in relation to obsessive-compulsive neurosis) as a personality syndrome, a distortion of life's facts (Kris, 1956; Beratis, 1988), by virtue of its effect as a mode of ego defense (Kris,1956; Beratis,1988; Arlow, 1961), and as a transitional object (Beratis, 1988). However, the formation of a personal myth as symbolic creation has also been demonstrated to serve a creative purpose throughout the pre-oedipal and oedipal phases in defending the ego from emotional conflicts and traumas and in facilitating personality development.

In their original formation, the fantasies which constitute the personal myth could be viewed in their symbolic function to have provided an escape from the emotional conflicts of childhood. In this respect, Eliade (1957/1960) named transcendence and freedom as two creative products of mythic imagination which can serve to liberate a person from his limitations, while promoting spontaneity. Campbell proposed that cherished infantile fantasies continually play a role in the unconscious as symbols of indestructible being. He remarked that these early familiar images can provide a person with a sense of security and assurance of identity (1949/1968a). Other authors have asserted that recurring childhood fantasy themes contribute to the integration of the personality, providing the individual with a way to see reality, and mapping out life's path (Arlow, 1961; Hacker, 1964; Hillman, 1972; and Keen, 1988).

In its morbid aspect, the personal myth consolidated through the early years of childhood can become so firmly entrenched as a psychic fixation as to have a constricting, oppressing effect on the personality. When people are obsessed with one specific myth or are weary of a particular set of mythical elements, developmental growth may be deterred and self-destructive patterns may become apparent (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). By Campbell's description, the feelings have "come to rest in the symbols of infantile fantasy and resist passionately every effort to go beyond" (1949/1968a, p. 177). The recurring themes of a personal myth, like neuroses, are oft-told stories we repeat to ourselves (Keen, 1988).

Campbell noted that the possessive effect of recurrent childhood fantasy themes may hold an individual back from the more progressive symbolic possibilities inherent in psychic functioning:

> It has always been the prime function of mythology and rite to supply the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back. In fact, it may well be that the very high incidence of neuroticism among ourselves follows from the decline of such spiritual aid. We remain fixated to the unexorcised images of our infancy, and hence disinclined to the necessary passages of our adulthood. (Campbell, 1949/1968a, p. 11)

Where a personal myth operates in an intrinsically conservative manner, the personality guided by it is subjected to its rigidity, narrowness and selective blindness. The living myth can bind an individual and keep him under control (Keen, 1988). Such dominant myths can be so restrictive that one can see and judge reality only in a certain light, sometimes to the extent of divorcing one's sense

of reason (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). In the previously mentioned case example of Kris (1956), for instance, the man whose personal myth revolved around Superman themes was observed to enact such a role in his adult life. Always driven to be a Superman, he continuously overextended himself in important facets of his life. Leading a dangerous race of a self-destructive nature, this man was characterized as being constrained and victimized by his inner myth.

Waardenburg suggested that a feeling of oppression by myth itself would indicate that such a myth is no longer creatively active. The myth which binds and burdens the personality no longer gives access to reality, but detracts from it. Waardenburg wrote: "If the permanent human task is to interpret reality in such a way so that one is able to cope with it, then enlightenment is a permanent human venture as an awakening from mythical consciousness experienced as a burden" (In Olson, 1980, p. 57).

Indeed, the key to moving toward freedom from the burden of the oppressing personal myth, as cited in the studies of Kris (1956) and Beratis (1988), occurred in relation to the patient's disclosure and recognition of the early core of pertinent fantasies. Such regressive reactivation of repressed wishes of an earlier phase may be permitted expression by the ego if certain conditions have been satisfied through the therapeutic alliance (Arlow, 1961). As noted by authors as varied as Kris (1956), Campbell (1949/1968a) and Hillman (1972), it is in the fantasy itself that the essence of the early conflict can be realized, that in its symbols resides the essence of the conflict. Through insights derived from the

exploration of this fantasy core in therapeutic process, Kris (1956) and Beratis (1988) suggested, resistances may be broken through and progress made. In this respect, according to Hillman (1972), the conflict can become redeemed by its own fantasy, since the fantasy elucidates the psychic core of the conflict.

Interpersonal factors and personal myth. While the symbolic content of a personal myth is connected to an intimate interplay between personal and collective factors, the way in which an individual is affected by personal circumstances is the critical stimulus in the shaping of a symbolic self-concept. Personal factors could be noted to include such aspects as early identifications, idiosyncratic occurrences and interactions in the family. Zinkin (1979) has distinguished in the mother-infant dyad, for instance, the particular differences between the personal way a mother may interact with her baby (i.e. facial expressions, her individual manner of holding or addressing the baby) as opposed to the more collective aspects of communication through sense impressions (i.e. the sight of the mother's face, the sweet taste of milk). The personal aspects of mother-child interactions, he proposed, contribute to significant and personalized psychic impressions.

Personalized or even idiosyncratic experiences which could have a bearing on the nature and content of a personal myth involve the child's psychic impressions (or distortions) of a multitude of personal phenomena having emotional impact, such as introjects from parental figures, the nature of a particular accident, the death of a

sibling, a sudden untimely departure of the mother, or the behaviour of an alcoholic parent. Kris (1956) referred to a case example wherein the name of a patient's babysitter emerged into personal fantasy in a distorted and deprecatory form, as a signifier of self-identification. This fantasy was presumed to function as a defense against feelings of rage toward the rejecting maternal object, while providing for some manner of identity needs. In such a case as that of a rejecting parent, disappointment in love may become a dominant motif in a personal mythology, with the individual tending to select partners and make choices which perpetuate that pattern (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988).

Thomas Mann noted the profound effect infantile motifs can have in shaping the life of a human being, "operating...as mythical identification, as survival, as a treading in footprints already made! The bond with the father, the imitation of the father, the game of being the father, and the transference to father - substitute pictures of a higher and more developed type - how these infantile traits work upon the life of the individual to mark and shape it!" (Mann, 1937/1960, p. 374).

The development of a personal myth should be considered against the backdrop of the family mythology. Family myths evolve as they are passed from one generation to the next, and contain the hopes and disappointments of prior generations. A family has stories and rituals that give it cohesion distinguishing it from other families; each family member's place is defined by these stories (Keen, 1988). Families will actively select and adapt from cultural myths various

components and symbols which have significance for each family member, while other themes will emerge from the family's unique history (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). The family has a large role in molding an individual's guiding mythology, and functions as a "crucible" wherein genetics and cultural mythology mesh into a unique mythic framework which shapes personal development: "The family is an institution charged with creating a person-sized mythology for each of its young" (Feinstein & Krippner, p. 18).

Personal adaptation of cultural models. Hero figures, whether imaginary or real, play a critical role in the formation of personality. Security and identification needs compel highly selected hero suggestions and other role model suggestions. Cultural mythologies are the actual stories which have been told and preserved, referring to events of crucial importance. They have exemplary, imitable and quotable significance. Myths and mythological images are to be found everywhere in modern society, yet often in degraded or disguised forms. Modern man is thus subjected to a wide spectrum of mythological influences and personages offering numerous patterns for imitation (Eliade, 1957/1960).

From a child's early years through adulthood, various exemplary figures from fairy tales, religious stories, sports, television, and other expressions of popular culture, provide models who carry mythological traditions and reveal mythical behaviour. Eliade noted that the imitation of these archetypes "betrays a certain discontent with one's own personal history," revealing a desire to "transcend

one's own local history" (1957/1960, p. 33). Campbell suggested that the exemplary personages and the initiatory images of myth are so necessary to psychic development that if they are not supplied from without through mythic models or rituals, they will have to be introduced from within (by way of the unconscious), "lest our energies should remain locked in a banal, long out-moded toyroom at the bottom of the sea" (1949/1968a, p. 12).

Myths provide a set of programmatic models for the personal identity. In what Campbell called the mythologically instructed community, there is a focus on images and models providing patterns to which the individual may aspire; a range of metaphoric identities (Campbell, 1949/1968a). The psyche unconsciously adopts mythic models from a library of scripts, transpersonal in nature, which function in resonance to an internal plight, serving to provide some manner of order, form and possible means of transcending personal conflict.

The mythologically instructed community, according to Bruner, provides the means by which an individual may judge the internal drama of his multiple identities. "It is not simply society that patterns itself on the idealizing myths, but unconsciously it is the individual man who is able to structure his clamour of identities in terms of a prevailing myth. Life then produces myth and finally imitates it," he wrote (1960, pp. 282-283). The myth functions to integrate discordant impulses within the personality by structuring them in a set of metaphoric identities. The human personality, its patterning of impulse, expresses itself as identities in an internal

drama (Bruner, 1960). As in the dream, myth converts an internal plight into a story plot. Freud, in "The Relation of the Poet to Daydreaming" (1908/1958) recognized the complexity of this internal cast of the personality when he described the writer's tendency to decompose this cast into the dramatis personae of his staged creation. This psychic process involves converting inner stimuli into seemingly outer events as a means of defending the ego. This means of symbolically externalising inner conflict plays a role in warding off feelings of guilt and anxiety (Bruner, 1960; Arlow, 1961). Myths touch and activate the vital energies of the whole psyche. In Campbell's view, they "link the unconscious to practical fields of action, not irrationally, in the manner of neurotic projection," but in a way which permits "a mature and practical comprehension" of the factual world, yet which relates back to the realms of infantile wishes and fears (Campbell, 1949/1968a, p. 256).

Personal mythology as an evolving symbolic process. A personal mythology may be understood to resemble the dynamic and structural qualities of cultural myth, as a symbolic story which represents an individual's history from his time of beginnings (Eliade, 1957/1960), with themes generated and regenerated out of a sequence of past happenings (Levi-Strauss, 1974). However, personal mythology must also be understood as an evolutionary process affected by the circumstances of ongoing experience and fashioned in keeping with the transitional stages of personality development.

Some theorists advocate the existence of an internal psychic process in which mythic elements are selectively chosen in correspondence to phase-specific developmental needs. Erikson (1950) presented the view that at any developmental stage there will inevitably be mythic elements of universal significance which represent the tendency toward sense-making, unification, explanation, and guidance through the provision of inspiring models (Hacker, 1964). Hacker elaborated on an idea first proposed by Freud that an active selective principle of personality organization in the psychic apparatus is assumed to be present as a predisposing factor, from the onset of personality development. It functions by seeking, filtering and selecting phase-specific symbolic productions and expressions. The psychic integration of these mythic models contributes to an ongoing form of adaptation to reality and to the group in which the individual lives (Hacker, 1964; Arlow, 1961). Hacker suggested that each person, according to his own unique understanding, experience and interpretation, selects and fashions his own personalized mythology from the range of culturally available models.

The gradual evolution of an inner mythology develops out of conflicts which inevitably emerge between existing mythic structures and new experience. The two phenomena establish a feedback loop: As the established inner models guide an individual toward particular actions, the consequences of these actions may either reinforce or challenge the original model. When prevailing mythic structures no longer serve emotional and developmental needs, alternative themes may be introduced, usually by way of the unconscious, through dreams,

creative expression and culturally available models (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988).

A dominant myth neither tolerates nor needs any other myth besides it. As a prevailing myth becomes outmoded, however, it fails to support psychological, social and spiritual needs and may inhibit emotional development. Psychological growth often requires shifts to a more advanced mythology. In adhering to a myth which is failing, an individual will tend to experience an increasing conflict which can permeate one's feelings, actions, dreams and fantasies. These conflicts can narrow one's potentialities, or compel one to dangerous behaviours. The inability to transcend such conflict may even have a bearing on the development of somatic symptomatology (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). As discussed in the studies of Kris (1956) and Beratis (1988), a personal myth which may have been appropriate and effective in serving adaptive and defensive purposes throughout early childhood may become inappropriate and dysfunctional at later levels of development. Psychological defenses can prohibit recognition of features of experience incompatible with the dominant myth, even though it may be incapable of adaptive guidance (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988).

With increasing differentiation through development, psychic renunciation of the limitations and specializations of the dominant myth may evoke competing myths to emerge (Hacker, 1964). Feinstein and Krippner have suggested that personal myths exist within a "psychological ecology of mutation and selection" wherein even the

"fittest" of mythic structures must continually evolve if they are to provide healthful adaptive functions (1988, p.208).

It is at the conflictual point between the personality's adherence to prevailing mythic themes and the psyche's attempt to integrate newly emerging mythic motifs, that the more dramatic changes of an inner mythology will occur. Such periods can evoke a deep inner struggle between the dying and the newly emerging myths for dominance of the individual's perceptions, values and motivations (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). Erikson's concept of identity crisis well illustrates such a period of personality transition, in marking the pivotal point between old and prevailing mythemes versus the psyche's attempts to grasp new and untried mythic models fostering progressive, adaptive functioning (Erikson, 1968). Identity crises arise naturally and periodically and are accompanied by a breakdown in the prevailing mythic structure. A crisis of identity is a painful period of transition, wherein one feels giving up the familiar myth to be dangerous, even though it is limiting to the personality. Established myths are so enmeshed with personal identity that transitions may be very disruptive to psychic homeostasis. On the experiential level, such transitions can feel like a death and a subsequent rebirth (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988).

Bruner observed that when "external mythic models fail to fit the varieties of man's plight, frustration expresses itself first in mythoclasm and then in the lonely search for internal identity" (1960, p. 285). Such a journey to the interior might be understood, in extreme cases, to lead to personality disintegration or ego

fragmentation as in the case of schizophrenia, yet could possibly facilitate the psyche's spiritual and regenerative capacity to heal through transpersonal symbolic processes. Houston (1987) has described how in Greek tragedies, the gods entered human consciousness when the soul had been wounded. "Wounding opens the door of our sensibility to a larger reality, which is blocked to our habituated and conditioned point of view." She suggested further that the wounding can become sacred when individuals demonstrate the courage to release old mythic patterns and become the vehicle through which the new story may emerge (Houston as cited by Feinstein & Krippner, 1988, p. 37).

The succession of mythological transformations proceed at varying speeds. As observed by Levi-Strauss (1974), Hillman (1972) and Hacker (1964), myths do not necessarily reach ultimate end points, but branch out to new and differing mythemes. New mythic themes invariably act as "enlightening, mythoclastic agents" in relation to the older, rival mythic patterns (Hacker, 1964, p. 441). Due to the spiral and reverberating character of myth-making, old myths may never be extinguished completely. They will serve as foundation stones upon which new themes are generated. Should the new alternative images fail to meet adaptive needs, prior mythic patterns may tend to re-emerge; the older patterns functioning to restore the security and safety of the tried and familiar.

CHAPTER FOUR:
Art Therapy and the Mythic Dialogue

He who would paint a figure, if he cannot become that figure, cannot portray it. (Dante, in his Canzoniere)

In art therapy practice, the patient in a therapeutic relationship is encouraged to create, share and sometimes discuss freely rendered, spontaneous art productions in the context of an ongoing psychotherapeutic process. Spontaneously created art productions give plastic form to psychic contents which formerly existed in a closed silent existence, the creative act involving a transformation from implicit psychic ideational contents to art products with tangible, explicit form. The symbolic content of artistic creations has a mythological basis rooted in the patient's life history, emerging from the individual's time of beginnings, the thematics of which may sometimes resonate with cultural models whose transcendant properties serve a prospective, adaptive purpose.

With regard to the capacity of art to serve as a pure medium of mythic expression and in relation to the spontaneous approach to

artistic expression in art therapy processes, a general premise will be advanced: Mythological motifs being intrinsic to creative visual expressions produced in art therapy, art therapy facilitates a myth-making process. This chapter will examine various attributes pertaining to the mythic dialectic in art, leading to consideration of the practical applications of this study in the field of art therapy.

At this point, it is thought appropriate to reiterate the guiding myth informing this paper: the notion that living myths, which originally emerged in response to events and conflicts of early childhood and continue to evolve in serving the adaptive needs of the personality, reside overtly or covertly in the symbolic fabric of patients' art works. The themes and unfolding stories that emerge in the art are symbolic ideas-in-form which constitute an inner core of personal fantasies whose symbolic contents may be seen in parallel with underlying psychological problems. This chapter will introduce the consideration that patients' developing awareness of their personal mythologies can be facilitated through the art therapy process, leading to insights into the essence of personal conflicts and current coping patterns. The generation of new thematic contents in symbolic expressive form is the essence of myth-making. Myth-making as a function of art therapy processes will be explored with attention to its role in contributing toward progressive personality transformation, played out on the level of imagination and symbolically actualized in the art form.

4.1 Art as a Pure Medium of Mythic Expression

Artistic expression and myth both spring from the same source, the same impulse of symbolic expression and mental activity; both are resolutions of inner tension; and both are representations of subjective impulses and excitations in definite objective forms and figures (Cassirer, 1946).

Cassirer's theoretical inquiry into myth posited that "in the progressive development of human consciousness, the symbolic functions of language, religion and science are gradually differentiated from the mythological-magical complex, though traces of their mythic origin remain" (Bidney, 1974, p. 11). However, he distinguished art, with its ever-present potential as a pure medium for the expression of mythic consciousness, from the evolution of other cultural forms. He suggested that only in the sphere of art does the apposition between image and meaning become resolved, that only in the aesthetic consciousness can the image be recognized in this way. Cassirer proposed that aesthetic consciousness, with the capacity to lend itself to pure contemplation, can achieve "a pure spiritualization of symbolic expression and a maximum of freedom" (Cassirer, 1946; Bidney, 1974, p. 10).

Art creations are rooted in mythic motifs, yet become emancipated from the native soil of mythic thought, or the ideal, through being rendered in aesthetic form (Cassirer, 1946). It has

been suggested by Cassirer (1946), Eliade (1954), and Campbell (1968b) that mythic images which once confronted the human mind as hard and realistic powers can, through creative expression, cast off all reality and effectuality and become an image through which the spirit can move freely. Levi-Strauss (1966, p. 22) wrote that mythic thought is "imprisoned in events and experiences that it never tires of ordering and re-ordering" in its search for meaning, yet mythic thought also acts as a liberator precisely in that it conveys meaning through form. In artistic creation, this liberation is achieved in that the psyche gives rise to mythic images as "forms of its own self-revelation" (Cassirer, 1946, p. 99), in a process by which "one makes history by making oneself" (Eliade, 1954, cited by Altizer, 1963, p. 47).

Through artistic creation, the unity of mythic motifs and aesthetic form maintain a connection with myth, yet reasserts it on a higher, spiritual level (Cassirer, 1946). Art works, giving voice and form to the mythic imagination, may be understood as embodiments of the psyche reflecting the sacred and the manifestations of the gods (Hillman in McNiff, 1986a). Jung held that creative processes consist of an unconscious animation of archetypes and that artistic endeavours can point to the unknown and hidden through the sacrality of symbols (Philipson, 1963). He stated that the man who expresses himself with mythic images "transmutes personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, thus evoking all those beneficial forces that have enabled man to find a rescue for every hazard and outlive the longest night" (Jung quoted in Philipson, 1963, p. 131). The sacred,

however, is not readily recognizable in contemporary art expressions, but is camouflaged in forms, purposes and meanings which appear profane in relation to traditional religious language (Eliade, 1985).

From the structuralist perspective, Levi-Strauss (1966b) suggested that works of art consist of constitutive elements closely resembling those of myth. In unravelling the complexity of the savage mind, Levi-Strauss situated art half-way between science and mythical thought. By his craftsmanship, the artist constructs a material object that is also an object of knowledge. Levi-Strauss explained that in his creative process, the artist can act as a bricoleur who collects meaningful odds and ends - mythical elements- which are then integrated with one another in the creation of the art product.

Whereas the cultural myth begins with a pre-established structure to produce an object consisting of a series of events composing a story; art, expressed in one or a series of art productions, proceeds in the opposite direction from a series of events arising from the artist's perception, imagination and creative accidents, toward the discovery of its structure. In works of art, the story may then emerge or be revealed through the structure. The aesthetic creation unifies mythic thought by revealing a common structure (Levi-Strauss, 1966b).

To semiologist Roland Barthes, a mythology is a system of communication, a message which signifies ideas-in-form. Myth is a language, a type of social usage which is added to pure matter. Anything can be a myth, provided it can pass from a closed silent

existence to an expressed open state, and so long as what is expressed has become meaningful and can be socially appropriate. Further, what constitutes myth is that it has an historical foundation: "Ancient or not, mythology can only have an historical foundation, for myth is a type of speech chosen by history" (1972, p. 110).

The realm of creative visual expression does not involve a theoretical mode of representation, but a pure and immediate mythic communication. Visual art forms are a direct and particular imaginal representation with a direct and particular signification. On the "plane of life," Barthes commented, "there is but a totality where structure and forms cannot be separated" (1972, p. 112). Mythical speech is composed of a material which has already been internally formulated, so as to make it suitable for communication. Since the composition of myth, whether pictorial or written, presupposes a signifying consciousness, myths can be reasoned about while discounting their substance. Yet Barthes distinguishes visual art from written material, exclaiming that in the former, substance is also meaningful and important: "Pictures, to be sure, are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke, without analyzing or diluting it!" (Barthes, 1972, p. 118).

Barthes reasoned that visually expressed images may be similar to written expression, since pictures become a kind of writing as soon as they are meaningful. Viewed in this manner, comprehension calls for a form of lexis. To postulate the signification of art works is not a matter of examining contents or meeting facts, but

rather the content is to be defined and explored as a token of something else, in the context of its own vocabulary. This vocabulary is characteristic of the particular usage of signs and aesthetic means by which the individual artist expresses himself (1972)

4.2 The Art Dialogue

Fundamentally, art and myth have to do with the activity of telling. The study of art is part and parcel of the study of communication: "There is a sender, there are receivers and there is a message"; a message which is conveyed on a symbolic and often enigmatic level (Kris, 1952, p. 16). The visual art communication can be explored in two capacities: as a form of social communication, a message conveyed to an individual, a group or society; or as a type of personal communication with oneself involving an inner dialectic between the maker and his art work. This inner dialogue occurs both in the process of creation as well as with the completed piece.

In creative visual expression, the sharing of one's thoughts, desires, feelings and conflicts fulfills a fundamental human need (Betensky, 1977; Aubin, 1971). Rank (1932) discussed the idea that in the romantic tradition art was thought to be created for a muse. The muse was not only a source of inspiration for the artist but, as well, was often the object to whom the message was conveyed. In

casting private experience in art forms to be received by another person or by society, the artist lessens the distance between self and the external reality of the world. The artist endows the external world with something of himself, and in this way makes his world more familiar and understandable (Milner, 1955). Through visual expression, the artist can give form to ubiquitous and sometimes guilt-laden fantasies which become rendered in a communally acceptable manner through aesthetic form (Arlow, 1961).

In art therapy, the patient's art productions could be conceived of as a form of communication between patient and therapist within the context of the therapeutic relationship. Both the therapeutic relationship and the art product may serve to contain mental illness. The deeper a therapeutic relationship, the more it can contain (Hillman, 1972); in a parallel manner, the more effective the therapeutic alliance in developing capacities for engaging in creative transformations, the richer and deeper will be the patient's quality of communication through the visual art medium (Rubin, 1978). Through the creation of the art work, inner experience is transformed to an outer reality in the separate entity of the art product. The symbolic expressions within the art work or series are pre-verbal communications the patient may share with the therapist, and compose a personal vision of the world, including fantasies, fears and personal conflicts. On the symbolic level, these comprise the essence of evolving personal stories.

The art product may transmit meaningful symbolic content in a fairly clear and discernible fashion, such as through figurative

depictions, or sometimes less decipherably, only vaguely sensed, as in the rendering of abstract impressions. These, however, may convey a no less affective quality or meaningful import (Betensky, 1973b; Rubin, 1973; Edwards, 1981). The therapist may or may not grasp the feeling-toned meaning of the image at the time of its rendering, or may note several potential meanings. Sometimes an image or elements of an image give rise to an association of ideas. This association should never be thought of as a merely external idea in the mind of the therapist, but rather as "a revelation of an inner link, a common rhythm, joining two realities to the mutual benefit of both" (Schneider in Cirlot, 1962/1971, p. lii). The dialogue through art tends to be received as an unconscious message, internally sensed and known: Art might then be understood as permitting the unconscious to speak to the unconscious (Aubin, 1971; Cirlot, 1962/1971). As described by Gilbert Murray, "This power of entering vividly into the feelings of both parties is ... the characteristic gift" (Murray quoted by Bruner, 1960, p. 279). When Hillman was asked, "How do we learn to let visual imagery speak to us?" he responded, "Abstain from declaring the meaning. Polytheism cannot appear until the feeling of judgement of good/bad, like/dislike is bracketed out. Painting tries like crazy to break us from the feeling that we know what it means. Then many possibilities begin to appear" (Hillman in McNiff, 1986a, p. 104).

Creative visual expression involves processes of dialogue within the personality. The art reflects the inner world of its maker. The ways in which this inner dialogue is constructed convey not only

conflicts, but also proposals for solutions. As such, this discourse may be thought of as a dialogue with the gods (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980; Hillman in McNiff, 1986a). If the artist has intercourse with his own work in a free give and take, he can learn to communicate with submerged parts of his personality (Ehrenzweig, 1967). Milner stated that the artist's inner dialogue with his creation is driven by an internal need for "inner organization, pattern, coherence, the basic need to discern identity in difference, without which experience becomes chaos" (Milner, 1955, p. 83).

4.3 Art Expression as Organic Form

Art exists in the world of illusion and fantasy, in a realm where pure feeling can attain full and concrete actualization in plastic form (Cassirer, 1946). An art expression symbolically actualizes the felt processes of life, its manifestations ranging from the slightest emotional impressions to the most elaborate phases of awareness and emotion (Langer, 1957; Milner, 1950/1957). A painting is an image of the psychic condition, a picture of the activity of imagination (Hillman in McNiff, 1986a). Langer suggested that art works are interwoven with subjectively experienced qualities such as inner tensions and conflicts, momentary impulses, the drives and directedness of desires, personal identity, and above all, "the rhythmic continuity of the creator's self-hood" (1957, p. 133).

In a work of art, there is a direct presentation of feeling, not a sign that points to it. Metaphors are the means by which the psyche perceives and forms its notions; in art works, symbolic metaphors are expressed as pure visual forms. The symbol in art is a metaphor, an image with overt or covert literary significance, yet it is also an abstraction which serves to formulate direct feeling or instinct. The metaphor in art need not be thought of exclusively in terms of objective symbols. Formal and sensorial aspects of an image expressed through the variation of line, form, colour, contrasts, space, tension, relief and pattern exhibit definite structural qualities which are potential symbols of feeling (Langer, 1957; Betensky, 1977).

Together in their structural unity, the symbolic elements of the image converge into meaningful emotive content and vital internal experience. The art work or art series does not objectify meaning; rather, its discourse defies precise verbal articulation, its import being a system of meaning and reality unto itself. "The import of art," like that of myth, "is perceived as something in the work, articulated by it but not further abstracted"; what it conveys does not exist apart from its imaginative expression (Langer, 1957, p. 134). When lines merge into shapes and new configurations arise, it is not a simile of nature which is created; rather, independent of the level of resemblance, nature has been recreated (Kris, 1952). In this respect, Jung suggested that the imaginal must be experienced without any reference to the real. "Art is not nature at secondhand,

and one cannot paint lemons 'better' than they paint themselves" (Jung quoted by Avens, 1980, p. 47).

Art work should be understood as a unitary art symbol, an absolute image (Langer, 1957; Milner, 1950/1957). The art symbol expresses what would otherwise be irrational and verbally ineffable. Art formulates and objectifies experience for direct intellectual perception or intuition, but does not abstract a concept for discursive thought. The symbols which emerge in art work exist on a different semantic level from the creation in which they are embodied. The meanings of incorporated symbols, however, contribute to the work, lending to its richness, intensity, repetition and transcendant quality. These symbolic elements, thus, become newly created in their mutual context in the total image. Where it may be possible to single out specific symbols or symbolic elements for analysis, the integrity of the work relies on the necessity that it be viewed as a whole (Langer, 1957). The pictorial space, therefore, is an integrative body of countless relationships wherein each element of the work is connected to every other element of the structure (Ehrenzweig, 1967). All symbolic elements of the image are projected in their simultaneity. In this respect, there is "no priority" in an image; "all parts are co-relative and contemporaneous" (Berry in Avens, 1980, p. 44).

Art is an organic form wherein symbolic elements merge as a unity to create a symbolic body of definite structural quality. Organic form may be thought of in terms of its uniqueness as opposed to its being an exemplary form. The art work is a perceptual unity

of something imagined (a partly conscious assimilation of images, sounds and forms which have acquired symbolic significance); a configuration or gestalt of an inner experience (Langer, 1957). Langer suggested its symbolism comprises "a physical or imaginal whole whereof its details are articulated, rather than a vocabulary of symbols that may be combined to present a coherent structure" (Langer, 1957, p. 166). Artistic intuition, both in the act of creation as well as in the act of viewing may be understood to begin with a perception of a total gestalt and then proceed to distinctions of ideal elements within it (Ehrenzweig, 1967). The organic form of artistic symbolism is appropriate to the conception and expression of vital experiences, the life of experience. Thus, Langer wrote, "The import of a work is its life, which like actual life, is an indivisible phenomenon" (1957, p. 135).

4.4 The Transformation of Implicit to Explicit Myth

Art symbols connect to a form a discourse which expresses symbolic ideas. The conception of art involves deep psychological processes giving connection, clarity and proportion to psychic impressions, memories and objects of judgement. Where the primitive function of symbols formulate experience as something imaginable, the art product does not merely represent the symbolic, but acts to "fix entities, formulate facts and the fact-like elements of imagination called fantasies" (Langer, 1957, p. 132). A function of art, thus, is articulation. Art products articulate experience and present it

objectively for contemplation, logical intuition, recognition and understanding (Langer, 1957; Betensky, 1973b, 1977; Rubin, 1978).

The act of creating spontaneous art in the art therapy milieu facilitates the expression of underlying symbolic structures (previously referred to in this paper as implicit myth), allowing them to become perceptible and visually tangible through the aesthetic form. In the creative processes involved in visual expression, specific existential events, fantasies and memories connect to visual, tangible form through underlying mythic structures and can achieve a transcendant relevance (McNiff, 1986b). When implicit myth becomes explicit through artistic expression, it is transformed into a type of story with a sequence of stages and events and structure, and hence presents "a more forceful claim concerning the nature of reality" than the unformed symbolic elements of implicit myth (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980, p. 55; see also Levi-Strauss, 1966, pp. 19-27).

The act of transforming implicit mythic contents to explicit form may be understood as an objectification of myth. The symbolically expressed contents of art therapy products (whether a single image or in a series) may contain a juxtapositioning of several inner myths comprising the framework of a more or less reasoned mythology. The stories embedded in the symbolic fabric of the art work represent a degree of rationalization of myth in that they become objectified through the structure (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). The symbolic messages they contain are structured in a manner

that may facilitate the communication and meaning of personal fantasies and the inner myths ordering them.

Since myths have the form of stories, they tend to be more accessible and can be comprehended in a more straightforward and naive way than can a symbol. While the latter presents itself as a mystery with a potential multitude of meanings, myth as a story or a tale seems familiar (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980).

As organic form, visual art does not present itself in a discursive manner, yet the structure of visual art form can give rise to discursive thought. Langer, for instance, pointed out "the abstractive processes in art would probably always remain unconscious if we did not know from discursive thought what abstraction is" (1957, p. 180). Inner myths expressed through art may not appear clearly set out or easy to discern. Abstractive processes tend to obscure rationally ordered thought not without purpose: The fantasy and mythic contents of art defend the ego against inner conflict through condensations, illogical displacements and the like, yet these contents are not stark indicators of the causal factors which summon their formation (Ehrenzweig, 1967). Jung, who viewed the creative act to be the "absolute antithesis of mere reaction," suggested that art can only be described in its manifestations; "it can be obscurely sensed, but never wholly grasped" (1933, p. 153).

Art facilitates an inner comprehension of psychic organization in that the externalization as well as the structuring of fantasy elements can give rise to comprehension in story-like form through the context of a visibly formed and perceivable whole. Literally

everything in the art product can be discussed. In this manner, hidden aspects and dimensions of the personality can become accessible through its visually expressed content (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). Creative visual expressions convey mythic content through an "inner dialogue of the life they represent, the symbolic world they have made and the solutions they propose for problems... solutions which may be concrete, visible and direct or less concrete, invisible and indirect" (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980, p. 64).

4.5 Hidden Stories in Art

The creative process is based on an underlying mythological system, wherefrom creative expression assumes mythological forms. Jung, who wrote that the artist "resorts to mythology in order to give his experience its most fitting expression" (1933, p. 164), suggested that the primordial experience, which is the source of the artist's creativity, cannot be otherwise expressed but through mythological imagery. As may be expressed in art works, mythic symbols function to connect the inner with the outer, unite the whole range of the artist's present and past, the mystery of his being and the order of his instincts (Campbell, 1968b).

> And if it is the case that art as a mode of knowing has precisely the function of connecting through metaphor what before had no apparent kinship, then in the present case the art form of the myth connects the daemonic world of impulse with the world of reason by a verisimilitude that conforms to each. (Bruner, 1960, p. 279).

The living myths which weave through the symbolic fabric of art works are not discursively formulated and hence may not be obvious to discern. Hillman has referred to the "divinities" which permeate our fantasies and guide our behaviours as the "hidden invisibles" of imagination (1972, p. 195). The seeming chaos of primary process imagery in art's vast substructure has been noted by Ehrenzweig (1967) to comprise a hidden order. Art's deceptive chaos is ordered by a kind of logic within which mythopoeic fantasy is expressed. The dynamic and tragic themes which emerge in an interspersed manner through the symbolic fibre of art works are the mythic substance holding art together (Ehrenzweig, 1967).

The personal stories expressed through the symbolic contents of art works are multi-leveled, diffuse and lacking an apparent sense of unity. Art structure, while lacking cohesion, is essentially polyphonic, meaning that art evolves not on a single story line, but in several simultaneous strands of thought (Ehrenzweig, 1967). Campbell thus described the mythic imagery of art to be "presentational beyond singular meaning"; hence many possible meanings simultaneously unfold on both conscious and unconscious levels (1968b, p. 676). Hillman drew a parallel between Classical mythology and individual fantasy: As the former is a collection of highly interrelated families of tales precise in detail yet without schematic system, so too do individual fantasy and psychopathology reflect a family of interrelated problems precise in detail but which cannot be systematized. "The Gods," he wrote, "... like the sufferings of the soul, melt into one another.... Mythology shows us

that each difficulty can belong to several Gods and can be fantasied in various ways" (Hillman, 1972, p. 194).

The hidden structure of art is determined by deeply unconscious perceptions which ultimately evade conscious control. The surface level of art is consciously directed by intellectual effort, yet its vast substructure is spontaneously shaped from pre-verbal, primary process techniques. In this respect, creative processes impose a tension between conscious and unconscious control, between the single track thought of secondary processes and the underlying polyphonic scattered attention (Ehrenzweig, 1967). Both Ehrenzweig (1967) and Jung (1933) have suggested that whereas conscious and unconscious matrices will be linked in creative thinking, surface thought is wholly immersed in the underlying matrix of unconscious processes.

Conscious thought is sharply focused and highly differentiated in its elements, while the deeper creative imagination penetrates into lower imagery and fantasy. It will connect to symbolic ideas and themes which cut through the layers of the genital (oedipal), anal, and oral developmental stages to the oceanic level. The deeper the levels of symbolic thought expressed, the more single track thought divides and branches into unlimited directions so that its structure appears chaotic (Ehrenzweig, 1967).

The original structure of the primary process cannot be produced for conscious inspection, but only its conscious derivatives, as may be observed on a high level of awareness. The integration of art's substructure can thus be observed only through its conscious manifestation, pictorial space. In this respect, Ehrenzweig has

noted that the unconscious structure of art will be observed through "Gestalt techniques of the secondary process" automatically tending to "infuse a more solid and compact structure into it" (1967, p. 78).

According to Ehrenzweig, the undifferentiated structure of primary process fantasy corresponds to the "primitive, still undifferentiated structure of the child's syncretistic vision of the world" (1967, p. 5). The term syncretistic vision was given currency by Piaget (1930) as the distinctive quality of the child's global manner of perceiving the world, operant in the child's creative processes and created art works. Elaborating on the nature of this quality, Ehrenzweig pointed out that the syncretistic neglect of detail in grasping a total object should not be dismissed as crude or primitive, since the child's vision embraces the whole undivided shape of the object. "The child does not break down the shape of some concrete object into smaller abstract elements, and then match the elements of his drawing one by one. His vision is still global and takes in the entire whole which remains undifferentiated as to its component details" (Ehrenzweig, 1967, p. 6).

While on the surface level, the creative expressions of adults may discriminate and analyze forms in a more rational way than the child, complex unconscious scanning processes of syncretistic vision remain as an active mechanism of unconscious integration. Through syncretistic processes, an array of meaningful feeling-toned ideas and symbolic themes will interconnect on deeper structural levels of the unconscious psyche (Ehrenzweig, 1967; Betensky, 1973a). In this way, the concept of undifferentiation, as distinct from chaos,

assumes an underlying system of psychic organization. This organization is significant to the manner in which art works are created, as well as to the means through which the viewer grasps the underlying symbolic themes and story lines beneath the art's surface structure.

4.6 Mythic Time and "Regression"

Visual creative expression, as a window to personal mythology, involves the atemporal symbolic processes of the mythic imagination. The art product rendered in the immediate is symbolically constitutive of the past, the present, and contains leads to the future. Present images will thus reveal the primitive myth of the self, while they simultaneously reflect the ongoing living processes of the individual (Ehrenzweig, 1967; Neumann, 1954). In this respect, Jung characterized image as a condensed expression of the psyche as a whole; "the primordial and immediate presentation of psychic reality" (Avens, 1980, pp. 45-46). In permitting reactivation of various wishes from different phases of psychic reality, the creative processes involved in art production will not only renew former fantasy themes, but can provide opportunities by which new themes and directions in psychic growth may occur. This is one of the most significant appeals attributed to myth and myth-making (Arlow, 1961).

In its attempt to re-create the language of myth, creative expression abolishes the current language of everyday and invents a

new, private and personal speech. Through his creations, the artist re-makes his vision of the world in such a way that time and history lose their usual chronologic sense. Eliade (1960) suggested that artistic creation implies the abolition of time and may tend toward the recovery of the paradisiac, primordial situation when one could create spontaneously with no consciousness of temporal duration. Thus, "art provides a method in adult life for reproducing states that are part of everyday experience in healthy infancy (Milner, 1955, p. 97).

> From childhood onward, the creative individual is captivated by his experience of the unitary reality of childhood; he returns over and over again to the great hieroglyphic images of archetypal existence. They were mirrored for the first time in the well of childhood and there they remain until, recollecting, we bend over the rim of the well and rediscover them forever unchanged. (Neumann, 1959, p. 181)

The abolition of time in artistic creation, or rather, art's accommodation to a sort of time travel through the primordial events of the individual's sacred history, can return the artist/patient to the time and events of significant psychic occurrences. The symbolic themes of an individual's art expressions emerge in response to, and may remain in, the gravity of the childhood trauma, the unresolved developmental conflict or conflicts that may have been forgotten or never reached consciousness. Eliade (1960) explained that in collective healing rituals, the function of memory serves not to conserve the memory of the primordial myth, but to transport the patient back to where that event is in the process of accomplishment. The creative processes in art production mirror this phenomenon of

regressus ad originum in permitting a revival of the past in order to re-enact the crisis and bring it back to consciousness.

From the Classical viewpoint, this regressive phenomenon in art production assumes retrospective significance as a means through which art contents can lend insight into the roots of the artist's psychic conflicts. Symbol formation, as a regressive phenomenon, was thought to emerge "in conditions where conscious adaptation to reality is either restricted...or completely abrogated" (Rank & Sachs cited by Milner, 1955, p. 84). Freud presumed art symbolism to arise as a substitute for instinct gratification, protecting the individual against the painful transition from the pleasure principle to the reality principle. Kris's notion that art permits regression in the service of the ego suggests that adults retain the wishes of the childhood imagination, and that indulgence in the imaginative symbolism of artistic expression can serve to reconcile the ego, while promoting adaptive functions (Kris, 1952). In his Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art (1952) as well as in his conception of the personal myth (1956), Kris conceived of the relation between psychology and personal or creative symbolism as a form of imaginative archaeology in which the diggers can search for the elements of the foundations of an individual's unconscious conflicts (Philipson, 1963).

Consideration of the prospective significance of the creative processes involved in art production has direct bearing on the capacity of artistic expression to facilitate a generative form of myth-making. The artist's regression is not solely a controlled

regression to more primitive forms of ego functioning, but can also mark the artist's capacity to transform the elements of older patterns of fantasy into an active faculty for molding new symbolic images and thematic contents which have never been achieved before (Ehrenzweig, 1967). In this respect, symbolic art processes, which seek to preserve prior experience, may permit a regression into the fantasy life of the individual in order to "take a step forward" (Milner, 1955, p. 84).

The generation of new fantasies in creative visual expression is an essential phase in contributing to the adaptation to reality, since it may mark the creative moment from which new and vital identifications are established. From the standpoint of object relations theory, the patient may be seen to safely regress through creative artistic processes to any level of developmental evolution to enact a symbolic reparation of both the wounded self and the loss of the object. Melanie Klein (1975/1959) introduced the notion that the creative impulse emerges from the need to restore and repair the lost object or the lost relation with the good object. Concomitant with their creative enactments, patients may mourn the loss and work through guilt about hostile and aggressive feelings towards the love object, in striving to restore the good object within. Milner suggested the unconscious attempt to restore the lost object in artistic expression is but secondary to the primary role of fantasy in creating new objects (1950/1957). The creative act might then be understood as motivated by deep impulses to replace, by one's own resources, missing parts not provided by other persons. The new

symbolic identifications, representative of both the self and various external fantasy objects, given tangible form in the themes of patients' auto-creations, can facilitate reparation of the loss, while strengthening or perhaps reconstructing the self in the process (Chasseguet-smirgel, 1971). Regression as a means of reparation of the self in artistic processes represents ultimately an attempt at re-creating one's own (strengthened) object without external intervention. This can progressively effect a more complete narcissism, the integration of the self, while promoting the potentials for developmental growth (Chasseguet-smirgel, 1971).

To Jung, the meaning of art works does not necessarily reside in retrospective significance, nor illusory pleasure, but rather in that its contents can give rise to future possibilities. Effective symbolism, manifested by way of metaphor and in a mythological vocabulary in art works, guides to discovery. It informs, offers hints or clues as to what one might become. Jung observed the artist's symbolisms to be intuitive perceptions of individual significance which have prospective value in contributing to psychic health (expressed metaphorically as wholeness) and in effecting progressive personality transformations which can be enacted in life (Philipson, 1963).

The prospective value of art finds a basis in the notion that archetypal structures, giving form to imaginal themes, are "impersonal and do not participate in the historical time of the individual life, but in the Time of the species" (Eliade, 1960, p. 54; Philipson, 1963). For a patient to go back in personal history

via the creative processes involved in art production, to come into contact with the wounded child within, would appear to involve a quality of regression. Yet, the wounded child is an aspect of the individual's symbolic self- concept, of his or her personal mythology: It represents not only something that existed in the distant past, but something that exists in the adult's present. The symbolic passages of the archetypal and impersonal divine child, taking form through the creative dialectic in art, may set in motion a healing psychic growth process (Jung, 1949/1973; Ehrenzweig, 1967). Hence, the emergence of the child motif signifies "an anticipation of future developments" even though it might initially appear as a regressive, retrospective configuration (Jung, 1949/1973, p. 83).

In sum, the mythic quality of timelessness in creative visual expression may imply that art products created in the present can be acknowledged to have both retrospective and prospective significance. From a retrospective standpoint, a reductive approach to analyzing art works seeks to trace through its symbolic contents the psychic knots rooted in the early events of a personal history. On this point, it could be noted that the multi-faceted nature of a symbol may simultaneously bear significance to a range of early developmental phases, and that certain of the symbolic themes emerging in patients' art products can be observed to convey an oral, anal, or genital character, indicative of corresponding developmental strivings or fixations (Ehrenzweig, 1967; Rubin, 1978). From the prospective viewpoint, Cassirer's metaphor of "man conversing with himself" is analogous to Jung's notion that an ongoing dialectic

between the collective unconscious and present consciousness can emerge in creative visual expression (Philipson, 1963, p. 195). Mythical identification processes operant in creative visual expression can function as a panacea or a catalyst to creative achievement. In the patient's symbolic identifications, the symbolized self becomes a transpersonal facet of psychic reality which can serve to promote a strengthening of the ego, psychic integration and the resolution of internal conflict. The generation of new fantasy themes within this conversation may thus not only serve adaptive purposes but can result in new lines for future development (Philipson, 1963).

4.7 The Centering of Conflict and Creative Achievement

Products of the creative imagination contain what is most peremptory and most painful for a person (Jung, 1933; Milner, 1950/1957). Freud's statement that "every dream is a repressed desire" led to a similar conclusion, suggesting that fantasy may be compensatory to the internal conflict, while also being an index of our aspirations and potentialities (Cirlot, 1971, p. xxvi). Through the contents of art expression, mythic enactments give order and form to the objects of inner conflict. While the emergence of mythological configurations may be understood as symptoms of the unconscious, they are also "controlled and intended statements of certain spiritual principles" giving an inherent intelligibility to the assortment of passions, ideas, events and objects of the

unconscious (Campbell, 1968a, p. 257; Neumann, 1954; Kris, 1952). As they unfold in therapeutic art works, products of mythic imagination function in "shaping and informing the problems and troubles" of the patient (Hillman in McNiff, 1986a, p. 103).

In his essay, "Aims of Psychotherapy" (1933), Jung characterized his patients' art products rendered in the context of psychotherapy as expressing highly meaningful contents of the individual's inner world, giving shape and form to individual existence. Paintings, he suggested, not only give form to active fantasies, but to those dynamic internal forces which activate the individual: "He strives to represent as fully as possible in his picture series that which works within him, only to discern in the end that it is the eternally unknown and alien - the hidden foundations of psychic life" (1933, p. 70). The mythic character of art expression was observed to function in bridging internal conflict with the primitive past, while reconciling it with present-day consciousness. Artistic creations serve to integrate internal oppositions and conflict in a centering process in which images become focal points of psychic life: "It is a process which brings into being a new center of equilibrium, and it is as if the ego turned in an orbit around it" (Jung, 1933, p. 72).

Visually expressed images rally around prominent feeling-toned unconscious ideas. The patterning of fantasy themes is manifested through underlying complexes, whereupon all unconscious contents have, as complexes, a striving to assert themselves. As Neumann wrote, "We can see in pathological cases, in fixed or compulsive ideas, manias, and states of possession, and again in every creative

process where the 'work' absorbs and drains dry all extraneous contents, how an unconscious content attracts all others to itself, consumes them, and forms with them a system of relationships dominated by itself" (1954, p. 298). The attention centered on a visually expressed image or pattern gives it energy, highlighting its importance to the individual. When an image draws awareness, it is like a magnetic force which captures attention and continues to draw increasing awareness from it (McNiff, 1986b).

In mental illness, primary process material creates an underworld with a dangerous emotional charge which tends to erupt, and so disrupt the more narrowly focused modes of conscious discursive thought. The chaos and destruction associated with the primary process - in mythic terms, the vanquished and suppressed gods, demons and titans - overwhelm the patient's reason. In contrast to illness, however, creative work will concentrate on the objects of internal conflict and can succeed in framing affective overloading and coordinating the disruptive forces of unconscious pandemonium. In the creative processes of artistic production, symbolic expression given to unconscious desires, fears and tensions may take the form of eternal dramatic struggles which are experienced within the threshold of toleration (Neumann, 1959; Ehrenzweig, 1967; Campbell, 1968a; Edwards, 1981).

Hillman contended that the imaginal closely corresponds to the pathological: "The pathognomonic awakens the imaginal," and does so with precision, so that the exaggerated and bizarre details of an individual's fantasies contain a precise parallel to his or her

pathology (1972, p. 199). He gave some general principles of the nature of the personalization of fantasy images in relation to pathology, suggestive not only of the purely morbid effects of the archetype, but also of its potential to foster psychic growth:

> First, exact pathological details are an inherent part of fantasy figures; if the details are not originally in the mytheme, the image will take on "sharpened expressions," a pathological distortion, in order to bring the pathological into the mythic. Second, the easiest, first, or best way to see into these figures, to gain entry into the imaginal and mythic, is through the "sharpened expressions" of personalized pathology. Third, merely because a memory or fantasy is "tortured", exaggerated, or obscene does not imply that it needs therapy. The damaged and queer figures who emerge from our complexes do not necessarily indicate that something has gone wrong and that the ego should set it straight. These shapes are dynamic, and their pathological detail is a goad to vivacity and insight. They are the active agents of the imagination, its vanguard, leading to profounder psychological insights. (Hillman, 1972, p. 199)

The constrictive recurring fantasy ideations of the personal myth suggestive of early developmental fixations (Kris, 1956; Beratis, 1988) have their visually expressed counterparts in recurring thematic patterns sometimes encountered in patients' art works (Betensky, 1973a; Rubin, 1978). When a particular theme is repeated several times in visual art, one can assume it has a special significance to the inner life. The obsessive and possessive character of recurring themes could in certain instances be indicative of a reductive blocking of movement in psychic growth. Psychic rigidity and the incessant possessiveness of fixation were noted by Ehrenzweig (1967) to run directly counter to the transformative potentials of the creative process. As expressed in

art products, obsessive recurring images and themes, l'idée fixé, occupy only a low rank in the hierarchy of creative man (Neumann, 1959).

The exclusivity of such possession can, however, represent creative opportunities as well as restrictive dangers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, recurrent symbolic themes of the personal myth, which had originally served creative adaptive functions throughout early development, may continue in adult life to play a role in defending the ego and in providing continuity of personal identity, yet can do so to the detriment of furthering psychic growth. Hillman (1972) suggested such fantasies continue to recur out of psychic necessity, serving as a potential means by which an individual may eventually derive insight and conscious integration of the repressed contents. A similar logic was implied by Kris (1956), who suggested that the latent meaning of the fantasy contains the key to the essence of the inner conflict. Insights which emerged through the analysis of the fantasy material were the crucial stimulus to unlocking the complex and leading to a liberation of the conflict.

The working through of a complex, however, can be facilitated on the level of imagination itself, through the processes of image-making in creative visual expression. Rank described the artistic reaction to be distinguishable from the neurotic by an "overcoming of the trauma," inhibition or fixation which had resulted from it, whether this was achieved in an art work or spanning the art series (1932, p. 164). Through artistic production, the complexes associated with a possessed consciousness can bring achievement. By

Neumann's account (1959), wherever a complex of the personal unconscious leads to achievement rather than neurosis, the personality succeeds in spontaneously moving beyond the merely personal and familiar to attain a collective significance. Through creative processes, the complex surrounding the wound goes beyond mere pathological fantasies to open up some part of the personality, symbolizing motifs with an authentic transpersonal significance.

The myth or image expressed in art production arises from the archetypal material which is constellated by the disease. Consequently, possession by the archetype can bring meaning and delivery at the same time, since the symbolic expression of the conflict frees the emotional forces that had previously been dammed up (Neumann, 1954). The wish-images and representations of omnipotence which emerge from a charged complex can have a constructive effect in giving a blocked personality new direction through a transformative process which must be deemed productive for the personality (Neumann, 1959; Ehrenzweig, 1967; Campbell, 1968a). This may occur, for instance, through the patient's symbolic identifications with the archetypal hero who represents consciousness.

Such symbolic identifications can contribute to the strengthening of the ego necessary in the progressive development toward overcoming the complex. These fantasies, which can be a form of adaptation to reality, help to foster developmental growth and natural ambition, possibly leading to achievements in the exterior environment (Arlow, 1961; Neumann, 1959). "No great achievement is

possible if one does not accept the risk, yet the notion of acceptance of the risk as implied in the hero myth presupposes far more freedom than the overpowered ego actually possesses" (Neumann, 1959, p. 177).

In the art therapy context, the creation of visual imagery can function to center and inform the patient, while simultaneously serving as a vehicle of personality transformation by which inner conflicts may actively be worked through on the symbolic level. Hillman alluded to this curative potential of the art therapy process as the capacity to "meet disorders of the imagination with imagination" (McNiff, 1986a, p. 107). Art expression is illuminating in psychotherapy: Through tangible expression of the fantasy life, the therapist can help the patient connect to feelings and experiences of the inner world, leading to the recognition of the dynamic patterns of inner myths and stories. From these insights, Betensky suggested, the way to change is at least indicated (Betensky, 1973b, p. 305).

When symbolic themes can be recognized in their collective significance, the therapeutic effect can be enhanced in sensitizing the patient to their archetypal meanings (McConeghy, 1986). The creative developments which arise in connection with the generation of new imagery and new mythic contents through therapeutic process will tend to correspond directly to the ongoing course of the underlying illness. The fundamental means to therapeutic change within the artistic context is thus creative transformation, which the patient chooses as an alternative to illness - the transformative

energies of art and healing being closely related, if not one and the same (McNiff, 1986b).

CHAPTER FIVE:
Implications for Art Therapy Practice

> The discovery of the reality of the psyche corresponds mythologically to the freeing of the captive and the unearthing of the treasure. (Neumann, 1954, p. 210)

In moving from the theoretical corpus of research to the practical implications of this study, the central ideas developed in the preceding chapters have led to two basic assumptions providing the bases for applications to art therapy practice. First, the potential of art therapy evaluation procedures to elicit fantasy-oriented imagery through the patient's production of spontaneous, creative visual expressions may provide the therapist with a unique vantage point for exploring personality dynamics through an individual's personal mythology. Secondly, art therapy procedures intrinsically facilitate a myth-making process; an understanding of art therapy processes as an effective means of self-discovery as well as psychic healing and progressive personality transformation may be enhanced through the therapist's recognition of the relationship between creative visual expression and the motive forces of the mythic imagination.

The nature of this research is seen to align with recent trends in contemporary psychology in seeking more highly personalized, phenomenological approaches to personality assessment, as well as to an enriched understanding of therapeutic processes. As an alternative to the constraints and sometimes static confines of diagnostic classifications, attunement to the mythopoeic language emerging through visual imagery may contribute to a highly personalized account of those conflicts and internal strivings which shape an individual's world-view. Mythic expression, as manifested through visual art contents, functions as a harbinger to unconscious processes.

The concluding chapter of this thesis promotes consideration that the nature of creative visual art as a pure medium of the mythic imagination, one which gives it structure and form, cannot be understated for the discipline of art therapy. In this respect, there would seem wide potential in the development of a body of theory addressing the field's capacity to illuminate personal mythology; an area of endeavour which could mark a particular distinctive quality of art therapy as compared to other related fields. Recognition of image-making as myth-making contributes to an understanding of the creation of visual imagery as a process reflecting the activity of the psyche in working toward its own solutions, rather than as symptoms of pathology or as solely projections of one's psychic conflicts.

5.1 A Prospective Focus on Personal Myth in Art Therapy Evaluation

A number of art therapists have devised strategies for applying art therapy techniques in conducting art therapy evaluations in clinical assessment. Three of these, Ulman, Kramer and Kwiatkowska (1977), suggested that the symbolic content and the formal characteristics of the art work constitute a source of information uniquely available through the visual arts. Further, they stated that a psychodynamic evaluation of such material "illuminates not only pathology, but resources of the whole personality" (p. 11).

On the understanding of creative visual expression in the art therapy context, Nolan Lewis wrote:

> The design [of the picture] like its contents has a special personal significance, although it uses a universal language which at certain levels is understood by all. The combinations are largely under the dominance of an unconsciously determined pattern of elements characteristic of phantasies, dreams, childish beliefs and impressions, primitive associations, odd, free and conditioned associations, memories and assortments of free images.... The transitional stages as well as the general progress of the emotional disorder are often presented in an interesting manner, becoming intelligible by means of the study of periodic or serial drawings. (1950, p.vi)

It has been a contention of this thesis that sensitization to the mythic in patients' art productions can open a valuable window to improved comprehension of the evolving and dynamic forces of personality. The viability of exploring personal myth as a diagnostic entity centers on the notion that the art product can provide a unique vantage point by which to explore an individual's

psychology, with potent access to the inner myths which shape and guide the personality. In addition, procedures applicable both to the art therapy process and the interpretation of art content can further enhance this exploration. Access to the personal myth relies, in simplest terms, on the art therapist-diagnostician's attunement to key inner stories which the patient communicates to him or her through the art product or art series. This thesis does not set out to define a new or specific technique of art therapy evaluation. Rather, the present consideration of personal myth as a diagnostic entity aims to generate awareness of the potentials of a phenomenalistic approach to clinical evaluation, utilizing mythic concepts. It is thought that the ideas to be discussed could be fruitfully applied to some of the previously established strategies of art therapy evaluation, particularly those encouraging the production of free, spontaneous artistic creation, in addition to a repertoire of projective drawing techniques or directed tasks.

An entry to the consideration of personal mythology as a diagnostic entity was provided by Hillman, who wrote: "Let us reimagine psychodynamics as mythic tales rather than as physical processes; as the rise and fall of dramatic themes, as genealogies, as voyages and contests, as respites, as interventions of the Gods" (1975, quoted in Feinstein & Krippner, 1988, p. 32). Mythopoesis as a diagnostic concern implies seeking insight into individuals' personalities through observation of their imagination at work: It means envisioning psychodynamics through the storytelling faculty. The myth is an instrument by which one struggles to make one's inner

experiences intelligible to oneself. Artistic creations as expressions of a personal mythology embody a self-contained form of interpretation of reality. The patterning of the structural elements of a work of art mirrors the composition of an unconscious internal reality.

The viability of art therapy procedures as an important avenue for exploring personal myth is based on the following ideas: (a) Patients, in participating in the creative act, play an active, myth-making role in giving tangible form to implicit components of their inner fantasy worlds, thereby promoting access of personal myths to conscious integration. (b) Creative visual expressions have an inherent mythological structure which may facilitate the implementation of interpretive techniques. (c) And finally, the manner of approach used by the art therapist, in both the therapeutic interaction and in relation to the image, can serve to enhance an understanding of personal mythology. This can promote a patient's self-awareness while lending to the therapist's diagnostic insight into the individual's personality.

Diagnostic orientation. The impetus for considering personal myth as a diagnostic entity comes from a refocusing in the field of clinical assessment in recent years, where a number of clinicians have pointed out limitations in the results obtained and generalizations made from the use of traditional psychological procedures (Bannister & Fransella, 1971; Glasberg, 1985, 1986; Jackson & Paunonen, 1980; Kelly, 1955; Loevinger & Knoll, 1983).

Present debate concerns such issues as discerning the adequacy of making discriminations among individuals using global or molar units of measurement, and the use of gross categorizations such as neurotic vs. psychotic or introvert vs. extrovert personality (Jackson & Paunonen, 1980). There is an increasing realization of the value of studying the data of one individual as well as that of a group (Kelly, 1955). Newer personality inventories attempt to more adequately encompass individual differences by targeting such aspects as morality, the self, empathy and interpersonal interaction (Loevinger & Knoll, 1983).

Recent interest in the use of drawings in clinical assessment has emerged as a result of the ineffectiveness of psychometrically sound testing procedures to provide insight into the subtle and complex problems which tend to emerge in therapeutic practice (Oster & Gould, 1987). Even without quantifiable diagnostic data, many clinicians highly regard the diagnostic value of personal self-expression of inner experience as objectified through a patient's creative visual expressions. The pioneers of projective techniques emphasized that empirical evidence is not an essential criterion to justify the use of a diagnostic procedure (Oster & Gould, 1987). Due to the extreme variability of responses and the wide range of information to be found in patients' drawings, evaluative drawing techniques have tended to reveal low statistical dependability. The effectiveness of art products as diagnostic aids was said by Oster & Gould (1987) to be in proportion to the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of the clinician. Anastasi, who supported the diagnostic

viability of patients' art productions in their capacity to illuminate the inner dynamics of personality, suggested that they be deemed "clinical tools rather than psychometrically sound instruments" (Anastasi, 1982, cited by Oster & Gould, 1987, p.xvi).

The task of assessment is essentially to probe, uncover and clarify conscious and unconscious patterns within the personality. Traditional psychological assessment procedures are primarily oriented toward the acquisition of diagnostic material in response to a referral question. While most diagnoses tend to imply some sort of pathology, diagnostic classifications can be limiting in their tendency to portray the personality as a static structure rather than a set of positive evolving forces. The scoring systems of traditional testing procedures, usually designed to provide a convergent answer to an assessment question, often tend to lead to a pathological portrait of the human personality (Glasberg, 1985, 1986). The particular diagnostic aims of personality inventories can often place constraints on the amount and type of diagnostic data; the information it does provide, however accurate, will tend to offer a picture of the patient's limitations or areas of dysfunction (Oster & Gould, 1987; Glasberg, 1986). Assessment protocols rarely address an individual's creativity, ideational fluency or access to fantasy, yet these factors may be important in contributing to a comprehension of internal conflicts, and as a prognostic indicator of the person's success in many issues of referral, including ego strength, creativity and therapeutic potential (Glasberg, 1986).

While art therapy approaches to clinical evaluation may contain some overlap with traditional psychological approaches (i.e. in terms of some common procedural strategies and applied theory), an art therapy orientation involving the patient's participation in the creation of spontaneous art production may, in certain respects, present the clinical inquiry with a unique perspective on personality in the overall evaluation procedure. For instance, in comparing traditional psychological testing approaches such as the Rorschach, the Thematic Apperception Test or the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory with that of spontaneous art, Glasberg pointed out that the former techniques are based on forms of associational creativity, while the latter involves patients' participation in a pure and direct form of creative activity. In the former, since the properties of the stimulus are fixed, clients are not asked to present their own reality, but to search the ego for a concept which conforms to an external reality. In spontaneous art, on the other hand, patients draw on their creative resources to create visual expressions from a personal frame of reference and thereby construct symbolic expressions of inner reality, using their own concepts. A distinction is thus made between traditional psychological approaches to assessment, wherein individuals must accommodate their reality to an outside stimulus, limiting personal creativity, and the spontaneous art approach which facilitates an open expression of the fantasy life of the individual, utilizing the language of art to express, in one's own terms, a portrait of self (Glasberg, 1986).

Projective drawing techniques such as Draw-A-Person (Machover, 1949), House-Tree-Person (Buck, 1966) or Kinetic Family Drawing (Burns & Kaufman, 1970), are utilized widely by psychologists and are often incorporated into art therapy clinical evaluation procedures. Projective drawing techniques involve a directive focusing on visually expressed contents or themes, based on the assumption that each drawing can tap certain segments of the personality. They are geared toward the evaluation of such personality determinants as cognitive maturation, intellectual ability, the identification of emotional or sexual conflicts and interpersonal relations (Hammer, 1975; Oster & Gould, 1987). These techniques are notably less structured than other of the traditional assessment methods previously mentioned, permitting the individual more free rein in personal self-expression: The directives are ambiguous in not suggesting how a given theme is to be approached, and in some procedures, the individual may be free to choose from a variety of art materials. While these tests seek to provide insight into the personality through projective means, the individual's spontaneity and creative potential are necessarily restricted, however, by the evaluator's directives which conform to the diagnostic aims of the procedure (Glasberg, 1985; Naumburg in Hammer, 1975).

Personal myth as a diagnostic entity. At the outset of the previous chapter, several theoretical viewpoints converged in consensus regarding the function of creative visual expression in serving as a pure voice for mythic thought. These viewpoints

contributed to the idea that the art therapy product can be understood as a form of mythic communication and that art therapy procedures may facilitate a myth-making process. It is thought that story-telling processes, quite naturally taking form through the symbolic content and structure of patients' spontaneous art productions and possibly being enhanced through therapeutic dialogue in relation to the imagery, could be acknowledged as having a capacity to support and enrich diagnostic data obtained by traditional assessment techniques. This consideration of the personal myth as a diagnostic entity distinguishes a particular attribute of potential diagnostic value which may be exclusive to art therapy practice.

The art therapy approach to clinical evaluation would appear to share some common ground with a diagnostic orientation proposed by Kelly. His Personal Construct Theory (1955) was at the forefront of the contemporary cognitive trend in psychology which taught patients to overcome emotionally disabling thought and behaviour patterns by altering their internal representations of the world and their place within it. Kelly, who placed an emphasis on the study of the individual, determined that valuable diagnostic data could be obtained from an individual's self-perceptions. The diagnostic technique Self Characterization (Kelly, 1955) provides a format in which patients are invited to say something about themselves. The aim is to find out how persons structure their immediate world, how they see themselves in relation to these structures, and the strategies they have developed to handle their world (Bannister &

Fransella, 1971). An art therapy approach to clinical evaluation may be similar to Kelly's orientation both in its emphasis on the study of the individual from a personal frame of reference and in its capacity to inquire into personality dynamics by exploring the ways individuals describe and structure their world and propose coping strategies to resolve conflicts. These insights may be ascertained from the visually expressed products of the creative imagination.

In its utilization of spontaneous art production as a means of exploring personality dynamics, an art therapy approach to diagnosis essentially differs from that proposed by Kelly (1955) and other more traditional assessment techniques relying on verbal or written responses. With spontaneous art, the patient's unconscious imaged experience is transposed directly into another pictorial image and is thus a reflective statement and personification of what was formerly inner experience (Edwards in Rubin, 1987; Naumburg in Hammer, 1975). Objectified pictorialization acts as an immediate symbolic communication which more easily escapes repression by the censor than verbal expression, permitting the client's direct expression of non-verbal and perhaps very early imagined experience without the restraint and repression of speech (Glasberg, 1986; Naumburg in Hammer, 1975). The type of unconscious material emerging in spontaneous art thus involves a more primary and less differentiated level of the unconscious than material from verbal data (Ehrenzweig, 1967; Glasberg, 1986). It is in this respect that the symbolic content and structural patterning of patients' art productions can reveal the spontaneous and recurring issues and themes in their

lives. Through the mythic character of spontaneous art, one can become attuned to the nature of the art product as reflecting an autobiographical construction of reality, while expressing what Watkins has termed "the constructive, purposive and prospective statements of the unconscious" (Watkins, 1981, p. 115).

Some art therapists have suggested that art therapy literature pertaining to personality assessment is too often limited in its conformity to the diagnostic aims of psychological testing procedures. The adherence to projective techniques or the use of task-oriented diagnostic procedures currently implemented in some approaches to art therapy evaluation can betray the wider diagnostic and therapeutic potential of patients' imagery, when the outcomes of such methods present a static portrait of the individual, emphasizing personality dysfunction (Watkins, 1981; Glasberg, 1985, 1986).*

When the focus is placed on illustrating psychopathology or evaluating developmental phases through art, such diagnostic procedures "can obscure how art can aid development rather than just assess it," can fail to show how art can "create conceptualizations rather than be reduced by them," and how it can "form the substance of therapy rather than only paving the way or being adjunctive to it" (Watkins, 1981, p. 109). If images are seen by patient and therapist as the portrayal of a problem, then the capacity of art to reveal

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*Mala Betensky agreed with the view that diagnostic aims of projective testing procedures in art therapy evaluation can impede therapeutic potential. Her support of the use of such procedures, however, is qualified by de-emphasizing their diagnostic function in favour of utilizing them in a therapeutic manner, promoting the patient's developing self-awareness (Betensky in Rubin, 1987).

deep or complex meanings may be obscured. Narrow treatment of the image, as for instance viewed solely as a "prognostic indicator", may be detrimental to its healing possibilities (Edwards in Rubin, 1987). When diagnostic aims limit the communicative possibilities of patients' imagery to areas of personality dysfunction, such procedures run the risk of alienating the patient and can detract from further therapeutic potential.

> Where diagnosis is the prime concern, artistic productions fall prey as utterances and interactions to a point of view which assesses weaknesses and not strength.... The image can only be evidence to support one theoretical construct rather than another, one characterization of development over another. The particularity of the image is not allowed to create its own phenomenology of the patient's world, or to suggest a possible development inherent in its own structure. (Watkins, 1981, pp. 108-109)

Clinical assessments have largely tended to disregard the language of images (primary process, mythical or primitive thought); yet consideration of the fantastic and deviate events of the mythic imagination through its own metaphors would yield recognition of authentic human experience which cannot be expressed or lived in another way (Hillman, 1972; Watkins, 1981). Hillman suggested that the mythic configurations which take form in creative visual expressions will offer a precise account of the nature of personality dysfunction: not as an "explanation", but "through projecting the observer/listener into participation with the events they tell about" (Hillman, 1972, p. 202; McNiff, 1986a). In this respect, attunement to the stories in patients' art works can offer direct, pure and rich access to the dynamism of that which has been termed a pathology or

syndrome. "Mythology can reach us, and we it, in a fresh way because it bears directly on our pain. We enter a myth and take part in it directly through our afflictions. The fantasies that emerge from our complexes become the gate into mythology" (Hillman, 1972, p. 196).

As a diagnostic resource, the fantasy themes and story plots which pervade patients' creative visual expressions reflect a dynamic portrait of self. As forms of mythic expression, art products convey what might be deemed sacred personal truths, while reflecting a timeless symbolic account of an individual's inner world whose structural patterning of symbolic elements stems from the beginnings of the individual's existence.

Personal myths act as controlling images which have an organizing value for experience. An individual's personal mythology might be understood as a system of complementary and contradictory inner myths that guides one's actions and orients one's perceptions of reality. The versatility of symbolic structures permits fantasy impressions, emerging from personal experiences and development, to blend with images reflecting culture's diverse mythology (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). The fantasies comprising the basis of an individual's inner mythology emerge in serving such adaptive purposes as defending the ego against emotional conflicts or the experience of loss or traumas, while facilitating developmental growth. Story plots generated by the imaginal may involve unconscious attempts at resolution of such inner disturbances, in movement toward progressive personality transformation. In this latter respect, Campbell alluded

to an individual's fantasy imagery as an expression of "what one is becoming" (1968a, p. 649).

When a person enters psychotherapy, the presenting problem is often formulated according to the premises of a dominant inner myth that has outlived its functional and adaptive purposes (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). A myth which is no longer creatively active can have a constrictive and oppressive effect on the personality; developmental growth can be deterred and self-destructive behavioural patterns may be evident.

Often the nature of a hidden inner myth becomes the key question for psychotherapeutic or analytic processes - and that key can be made accessible through art therapy procedures (Betensky, 1973a; Wallace in Rubin, 1987). A personal myth rarely manifests itself directly or completely through the expressed contents of art products, yet can become evident through the structural properties and symbolic themes of the art series in connection with the dialogue and story-making processes emerging in relation to the art products during the diagnostic/therapeutic procedure. The personal myth is in fact a composite: It is the inner story emerging from an assortment of symbolic themes and fantasy contents expressed by the patient; the cream that rises to the top of the milk, as it were. The art is fundamental to revealing the hidden aspects of personality as phenomena accessible to consciousness and conscious integration (Betensky in Rubin, 1987).

Consideration of the personal myth as a diagnostic entity may be understood as a means of seeing into diagnosis by way of the

patient's own metaphors. Rather than being a nominal descriptor for a pathological state or condition, the individual myth is an active psychic process which guides the personality; it is the personal, living story behind those psychic manifestations encompassed by psychiatric classification. Wallace described art therapy's potential in illuminating personal mythology as a diagnostic entity thus:

> As far as diagnosis is concerned, labels are for the safety of the therapist to the detriment of the patient. We are presented with an individual with his/her specific mixture of problems. The pieces of the puzzle are all askew. They need to be put together to make the picture which represents this particular person. For therapeutic purposes we need to "see" - and that acts as "diagnosis" - where the pieces are askew and how they might be put together. Where we see the picture, we see the real person who may find his/her individual story, which characterizes that person - the "individual myth"... That could be the end result, perhaps the ideal result. (Wallace in Rubin, 1987, p. 124)

In sum, a view of the myth in personality evaluation invites a different way of thinking about diagnosis. In providing a highly individual portrait of evolving personality dynamics created within the patient's own frame of reference, personal mythology as a diagnostic entity seems to provide a contrast to the generalized, reductionist, psychopathological assumptions about individuals as ascertained through standard assessment formats. Such a consideration would be thought to contribute to the validation of findings of traditional techniques which target pathological areas of personality functioning, since the myth gives tangible form to the objects of inner conflict, the imaginal patterns of responses

produced by patients being typical of the reactions of persons with such diagnoses as schizophrenia, paranoia, an obsessive-compulsive disorder or severe depression (Naumburg in Hammer, 1975). In this respect, Hillman (1972) suggested that the sometimes bizarre or tortured expressions of the mythic imagination provide a precise, vivid portrait of personality dysfunction which may be used to fill in the descriptive nomina of psychopathology.

Moreover, art therapy imagery could be considered in its capacity to illustrate the central myths and beliefs guiding the personality, effecting the individual's motivational drives, interactional patterns and behavioural outcomes. Symbolically expressed imagery does not serve as patients' testimony of that which is wrong with them, but rather communicates an individual's creative attempts to define identity and establish order and control over anxiety and internal conflict. The fantasies and story-lines of the creative imagination serve not only as indicators of personal weaknesses, but may also illuminate an individual's ego strengths by illustrating the attempts made to defend against inner conflict, cope with adverse circumstances and propose solutions to intrapsychic problems.

5.2 Access to the Personal Myth through Art Therapy

Access in art therapy to the inner myths of personality is primarily based on the capacity of the creative act to incorporate implicit fantasy ideations into a visually formed, tangible and

perceptible whole. The cues prompting Kris (1956) to discover the personal myths of his patients were changes noted in their autobiographical constructions over several years, in connection with the gradual revelation of early key fantasies through the analytic process. This process of ascertaining the personal myth placed upon the therapist the primary role of structuring the patient's verbally expressed fantasy contents into a type of organized whole; whereas in art therapy, the myth-making role is essentially furthered by the patient through the creative processes involved in visual expression.

In order to transform inner fantasy ideations into the creative act in art therapy, an individual must be able to examine the contents of his or her own psyche to the most frightening primary depths and express them through sophisticated socialized channels. Insofar as art entails the construction of images representing inner wishes, fears and conflicts, it does to some extent permit the patient to confront, organize and gain perspective on these qualities of the inner life (Glasberg, 1986). Compared to verbal techniques, artistic expression can accelerate the identification of the central myths governing the personality, since its symbolic contents offer a pure, direct expression of the fantasy, feeling life of the individual, and since it is the patients who play the active role in constructing the mythology of their inner world.

Personal myth is a secret story of the personality, and the problems in recognizing it through myth analysis are compounded by its hidden nature. The recognition of living myths through an individual's verbal ideational contents which have not been set in

structural form is a task that Waardenburg viewed as extremely difficult (Olson, 1980). Yet, notably, this was achieved through Kris's technique (1956).

The problems of discerning personal myths through artistic expression are numerous as well, since art is non-discursive, symbolic expression prone to disguise, with a multitude of meanings and levels. The reason artistic expression can serve as a viable means of exploring personal myth, however, is that the formal characteristics and structure of visual expressions can reveal cues to unconscious patterns through which the inner story may be ascertained. The visual cues unlocking the nature of a personal myth can emerge in a single visual expression, but may tend to become more apparent through the identification of visual patterns in an art series (Betensky, 1973a).

The identification of personal myths in art therapy would not seem to depend on the retrieval of an early core of fantasies (Beratis, 1988; Kris, 1956), but may be discernable through the symbolic contents and structural organization of patients' current art products. In this respect, it might be considered that a person's symbolic expressions have a timeless quality generated from a specific everlasting pattern (Levi-Strauss, 1955/1974) which relates back to the origins of the individual's consciousness (Eliade, 1960; Neumann, 1954). Therefore, should an oppressive inner myth currently guiding the personality have its roots in an unresolved childhood developmental issue or an early trauma, the essence of those fantasies spawning the myth may be evident in the

patient's current symbolic expressions. The art product created in the immediate is symbolically constituted of the past, the present, and contains leads to the future: Present images can reveal the primitive myth of self.

The problem of the hermeneutics of mythic expression is that its symbolic contents cannot be thought out discursively in a completely satisfactory manner (Neumann, 1954; Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). Creative visual expression, embodying the actual felt processes of life as expressed through the symbolic metaphor, defies the power of discursive reasoning (Langer, 1957). Should an attempt be made to translate the language of the image into that of abstract thought, the precision of the image will be lost; "in introducing primary process modes of thought into systematic thinking,...we contaminate the explanation with what is to be explained" (Shafer quoted by Watkins, 1981, p.108). Thus, "the contents of mythic expression cannot easily be reduced, desymbolized, or demythologized without being damaged" (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980, p. 60).

The fundamental means by which one attempts to objectify mythic expression, as may be applied to art therapy products, utilizes phenomenological and structuralist principles for mythic interpretation, wherein knowledge about a myth is ascertained directly from the mythical system itself. One attempts to understand what the myth signifies or communicates on the basis of its own assumptions. Knowledge of myth, in this sense, is a rationalization of mythological elements which brings them together within an overall framework. A phenomenological approach to myth includes the idea

that mythic expression conveys inherent truths which can be recuperated and are still valid (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). Cassirer's writings about mythic interpretation stressed the need "to analyze the constructive functions of symbolism in constituting objective reality" (Quoted by Waardenburg, 1955, p. 54). The myth, in this manner, is understood as a symbolic construction of reality (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980).

The bases of three approaches to myth analysis are presented for consideration, as tools in facilitating access or comprehension of personal myths expressed in the symbolic contents of creative visual expression. Use of these methods could prove helpful in developing hypotheses about the nature of an individual's personal myth.

The syncretistic approach. The understanding of syncretistic processes can be a potent analytic tool in gaining access to the hidden story lines in patients' art productions. Betensky, whose elaboration on the syncretistic approach to analyzing patients' art products combined the considerations of syncretistic vision (Ehrenzweig, 1967; Piaget, 1930) with Gestalt techniques and the application of phenomenological principles, suggested that careful study of patterns and cues in the art may transcend other disciplines in gaining knowledge about the inner depths of the personality (Betensky, 1973a). Scanning art works for cues to patterns in a patient's overall output, Betensky suggested, can reveal concealed assumptions, beliefs, and feeling-toned ideas: the focal points of the patterns of personal myths.

This technique seeks to restore or understand the fragmented or multi-leveled symbolic components of artistic expressions in the context of a meaningful whole. It aims to tune into the underlying system of psychic organization as may be reflected through visual expression by a careful scanning of the work's formal characteristics and thematic contents, taking note of visual cues which may stand out in individual art works, or patterns emerging among a group of art products. "In a serial study of a patient's art work, a cue is soon observed which turns out to be a component of an ordered but hidden pattern of the patient's emotional relationships, for a patient's disorder has a hidden order of its own" (Betensky, 1972, p. 121).

Some of the artistic and organizational elements to be aware of as cues to patterns in patients' art expressions are omissions of particular details or deviation from schemata representing reality; a repeated stroke or line; form or formlessness; correspondences or stark contrasts in the application of colour; chaotic or orderly method; pressure of crayon or chalk; the use of pictorial space pertaining to the overall gestalt of the images. Another essential indicator to be considered would be the presence of specific recurring themes or motifs relating to, for example, aggression, competition, loss or the need for affection (Rubin, 1978). In observing various cues, patterns and thematic motifs in the art work or series, patient and therapist can begin to become attuned to what is becoming conscious, leading to reflections giving rise to insights (Betensky, 1973a, 1973b, 1977; Rubin, 1978; Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). The objectification of these patterns by means of

syncretistic scanning will begin to take shape in the mind of the therapist/diagnostician in the form of a story reflecting the essence of the inner myth of the patient (Ehrenzweig, 1967; Waardenburg in Olson, 1980).

This method, designed and centered specifically on art therapy practice, would seem of particular value in the diagnostic processing of art material in art therapy evaluation. While this method strives toward the presentation of an objective perspective on the patient's inner mythology, it necessarily involves a form of synthesis of symbolic contents and an attempt to see into the inner story as expressed by the patient through the art work, in a manner which tends to view the disguises of the symbolism as gateways to inner truths rather than as barriers to defend against them. As an interpretive technique, the syncretistic approach can fall prey to the subjective biases and distortions of the interpreter. Its formulations would stand to be enriched by knowledge of the patient's history, observations of behaviours during the evaluation procedure, and the patient's associations and relevant insights into the art works. The result, which could appear in hypothesis form, would seem best illustrated by way of the art work itself and, if possible in the presentation format used, through the patient's own use of symbolic metaphor. The validity of such hypotheses might tend to be substantiated by the patient's own revelations and self-discoveries through the course of psychotherapeutic treatment.

The structuralist approach. An application of structural analysis to artistic expressions can be a useful tool in the identification of the inner myths of personality (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980). A basic description of the paradigmatic approach to structural analysis (Levi-Strauss, 1955/1974) was presented in the first chapter of this thesis. Utilization of this approach would aid in the identification of the central unconscious conflicts of the individual as may be revealed on a latent level, by way of the structural analysis of contrasting themes presented in the art series, as well as illustrating the means by which an individual unconsciously strives toward the resolution of these conflicts through the progressive mediation of opposing themes.

A formal structural analysis of patients' art products in the art therapy evaluation context would seem unwarranted, due to the small sampling of spontaneous art works obtained in these procedures, and since the use of directed tasks in addition to spontaneous creations may confound such an analysis. However, an applied knowledge of structuralist principles could provide an enriched outlook to diagnostic formulations of art works in the evaluation context. Rubin suggested, for instance, that observation of the interrelation of symbolic themes, "one often being the wished for or feared response to the other" (as may emerge in the context of a short series of spontaneous drawings), may reveal unconscious patterns through which one may begin to discern the nature of ego defenses and underlying conflicts (1978, p. 72). The use of a formal structural analysis would seem applicable to the longer series of

works in the art therapy process itself, wherein the analysis of evolving mythic structures and thematic contents might be examined in relation to perceived therapeutic developments occurring over the course of the ongoing therapy.

The comparative approach. The comparative method of analytical psychology collates the symbolic and collective material found in individuals with the corresponding products from, for example, the history of religion, myth, fairy tales, or primitive psychology. The utilization of this material can serve to enrich the understanding of the inner dynamics of the personality by establishing a collective context.

Often the symbolic contents of a person's creative visual expressions will resonate with a sense of familiarity in reflecting or portraying certain personages, story plots and themes found in collective stories or popular culture. In some cases the individual may be casting his identifications onto a particular (mythic) figure or figures from, for instance, a fairy tale or a recent film. Such projections may be compensatory to the ego, and on unconscious levels, they may best express metaphorically a particular passage or plight of the patient. In other instances, with a view to the symbolic contents of art works and mindful of such information as the patient's verbal associations, presenting problems, behaviours, and past history, the individual's inner psychology may be observed to reveal striking parallels to that of a (mythic) dramatic or tragic figure. In view of these transpersonal considerations, the

individual might appear to be psychologically living a myth, corresponding in some way, for example, to Oedipus, Medussa, the Beauty or the Beast (Campbell, 1968a; Eliade, 1960). The patient's inner myth would seem to be symbolically enacted in resonance with universal or collective correlates.

It can be helpful, from both diagnostic and therapeutic perspectives, "to place images against a symbolic, archetypal, or mythical background, giving them depth and cultural resonance" (Hillman in McNiff, 1986b, p. 102; McConeghy, 1986; McNiff, 1986a). This can be facilitated by comparative studies between relevant aspects of the visual imagery and other factors such as the patient's associated discussion, presenting problems or history, and the actual mythic characters and stories which the patient appears to resemble or emulate. Reference to a wide range of analytic studies on myths, fairy tales and other data from various psychological schools may be helpful resources. Neumann discussed the evolutionary approach in which comparisons with elements in such material are considered from the standpoint of the stage reached by an individual's developing consciousness, with the aim of assessing ego development in its relation to the unconscious (1954). McConeghy (1986) and McNiff (1986a) have suggested that, in the context of the art therapy process, a patient's awareness of such correspondences can serve to enhance self-understanding and may facilitate the healing process through an objectification of the archetypal or mythic patterns. Such knowledge may lead to the realization that his or her particular

illness is not the patient's alone, but is a universal ailment, thus easing the sense of isolation the patient may be experiencing.

5.3 Personal Myth and Therapeutic Process

The mythic imagination becomes manifest in art psychotherapy, wherein tangible artistic productions may be observed to reflect intra-psychic mythic processes. In this section it is proposed that the accommodation of specific techniques to art therapy practice can aid in facilitating an individual's comprehension of his or her inner myths, while the continuing art therapy process itself will be viewed in its capacity to stimulate a generative form of myth-making. The discipline of art therapy has not as yet consolidated a global theory on myth in its relationship to creative visual expression. Efforts in encompassing diverse approaches to the myth from multi-disciplinary sources pose great challenges, yet the attempts to integrate such a body of knowledge in specific application to art therapy practice would seem a highly promising endeavour, contributing to the theoretical development of the field. At present, three modes of approach to patients' imagery have been selected for review as possible means to facilitate patients' awareness of their personal mythology. While these methods represent separate, distinctly different avenues to myth knowledge, it is thought they can be mutually deployed into an overall therapeutic technique. Following this, a model offering a basic

conceptualization of myth-making in application to art therapy process will be presented.

Self-discovery through the creative dialectic. While the essence of the personal myth may be grasped, in some measure, by the discerning art therapist/diagnostician through the previously discussed methods, understanding of the inner myth can also be facilitated by various ways of relating to the imagery in the therapeutic context. Indeed, a therapeutic effect can arise as patients develop insight into their inner mythologies through ongoing therapeutic processes. Approaching the imagery phenomenologically can be a catalyst to self-discovery; the patient's gradual insight into personal myths may provide incentives to change old patterns, while paving the way for therapeutic change (Betensky, 1973a, 1973b; Edwards in Rubin, 1987). A challenge to the art therapist, equally relevant to art therapy evaluations as to the art therapy process itself, could center on the question of how best to relate to images so that they most effectively communicate to both patient and therapist their depth of meaning - "historical, existential, mythic and poetic, as lived by the patient" (Watkins, 1981, p. 107). This section will consider ways the therapist may foster patients' insights and understanding into their personal mythologies.

One way the art therapist can facilitate patients' attunement to their inner mythologies is through assisting patients in the recognition of particular patterns or repeated themes that may emerge in the structure and formal organization of art works (Betensky, 1973b, 1977; Rubin, 1978; Watkins, 1981). Helping patients observe

these characteristics in the overall gestalt of the image or picture series can bring about psychological experiences having impact and serving as the basis for change in thinking, feeling and behaviour. Betensky suggested that an interaction occurs in such a process between aspects of the whole of the observed object and those of the whole of the observing subject. "When the therapist is able to locate an art expression within the wider whole of its maker's personality or within the configuration of problems, he/she is reaching to help the patient become aware of the proper connection between the expression and the specific problem" (Betensky, 1973b, p. 336).

The creative act involves a formulation of the maker's inner perceptions put into tangible structural form in the visual expression. The completed work is an objectified expression of the patient's inner reality which pertains directly or indirectly to personal life situations. Artistic expression can promote discovery of hidden dimensions of the personality by first giving rise to awareness on a preverbal level and then on a verbal level. Through observation, one can develop a cognitive, visual and emotional overall perception of one's own creative products pertaining to one's inner processes and experiences over a period of time. Recognition of patterns in the structural elements of art works may have the effect of clarifying formerly vague feelings, while contributing to the patient's capacity to develop personal insights. The patient may experience creative excitement in recognizing these patterns; on an emotional level such perceptions can stimulate strong affective

arousal, touching one's inner core. These self-discoveries pertain to the individual's personal encounter with inner and outer realities. They may contribute to the patient's overall awareness of intrapsychic patterns in fantasy and how these patterns can correspond to one's interpersonal relations, feelings and memories (Betensky, 1973b, 1977; Betensky in Rubin, 1987).

An individual's developing awareness of the myths constricting and oppressing the personality is often a very slow and gradual process. The patient may be able to glimpse such underlying myths through recognition of repeated themes as well as recurring mannerisms of expression (which may become detectable in the art series), in connection with insights developing in the context of the therapeutic relationship. While recognition of a series of repetitions in the art works may at once be visually or intellectually discernable to the patient, the urge to acknowledge the underlying myth represents an important confrontation. In this manner, a personal myth plays a vital role in the maintenance of psychological equilibrium as a means of defending the ego, in coping or escaping from a situation which is emotionally difficult to accept and as a foundation stone for personal identity. Thus, the therapist's role in facilitating the patient's awareness of the personal myth should be carefully paced. When the process of repetition has served its constructive function, the patient may begin to develop insights into the meaning of the repetitive pattern, or may be assisted in doing so by the therapist (Hillman, 1972; Betensky, 1973b). In viewing the repetitive aspects of art

productions in a group, the pattern becomes striking and realizations may begin to occur. This may give rise to discovery of an underlying pattern of thought and conduct which may have begun to emerge and take form throughout the patient's early development. The individual's ability to discern such patterns in art can lead to the recognition of corresponding patterns in behaviour. The patient's questioning of such patterns can bring out the futility and falsehood of the old conduct, perhaps eventually leading to change (Betensky, 1973b, 1977; Betensky in Rubin, 1987; Feinstein & Krippner, 1988).

Another means by which the therapist may assist in facilitating the patient's awareness of his or her inner mythology can arise through efforts to deepen or extend the patient's own lines of imagining (Watkins, 1981; Wallace in Rubin, 1987; Edwards in Rubin, 1987; Hillman in McNiff, 1986a). The art work is not a static snapshot of a single moment; rather it is a mythopoeic expression which contains the past, present and future of its characters. The phenomenology of the image beckons to be heard: The patient's observations and dialogues with the imagery can lead to storytelling. Encouraging the patient to go with the imagery, to elaborate on its characters on the level of the metaphor, permits the story to emerge. These stories can help to bring forward hidden aspects of the personality: "It is difficult not to respond to myth, for myths awaken something, certain intentions make themselves valid as a consequence and certain longings and wishes arise in connection with such intentions" (Waardenburg in Olson, 1980, p. 58). Through these stories, patients may become attuned to the spontaneous and recurring

issues and themes of their lives; insights can develop into what individuals strive for and what are their deficits (Watkins, 1981).

The notion of nurturing the image, of encouraging the patient to expand on the imaginal contents in the art on the metaphoric level is akin to Jung's method of active imagination, a technique promoting introspection of a stream of interior images (Jung, 1949/1973, 1961). In its application to art therapy practice, a relationship is encouraged between the image and its maker by actively stimulating imaginal inquiry and dialogue (Edwards in Rubin, 1987). The aim is for the conscious and the unconscious to communicate with each other. Through this process of dialogue, the story-lines developed in association to the imagery may begin to give rise to implicit truths about the individual. Exploration of the stories emerging from this dialogue may reveal messages from the unconscious which can serve to promote understanding, consciousness, growth and transformation (Wallace in Rubin, 1987).

The created image becomes an actual object which confronts its maker with a variety of possibilities. It may be regarded in a number of different contexts and perspectives. As the symbolic visual expression essentially has a polyphonic nature, it may reflect many levels of thought; multiple narratives can emerge from the complexity of the image. Often, it may be a matter of determining which is the better story; which narrative adheres most closely to the image and best illustrates a psychological experience of the patient's inner world (Hillman in McNiff, 1986a; Watkins, 1981). In guiding the patient through the imagery, it is important that the

patient is encouraged to initially maintain an objective stance toward the personified characters of the visual expression so as to permit an imaginative dialogue on a metaphoric level (Edwards in Rubin, 1987).

The dialogue begins with oneself (the ego) and the many figures of one's inner household. The story which emerges from the image involves a projection of the image-maker's scattered parts - the individual in his or her many facets. The ego is usually served by the narrative, the storyteller tending to relate a single plot wherein he or she will be portrayed as the hero or victim, the superior observer or loyal servant (Hillman in McNiff, 1986a). Yet the dialogue may also permit the patient to confront those other characters and figures in the image and to learn about what they represent in the individual's personality (Hillman in McNiff, 1986a; Wallace in Rubin, 1987; Edwards in Rubin, 1987; Rubin, 1978). When this occurs, the patient discovers hidden aspects of the personality, various alter egos such as (in Jungian terms) the shadow or the anima or animus, which confront the conscious ego. The task of the therapist is to assist the patient in recognizing these figures and, as far as possible, integrating them (Edwards in Rubin, 1987).

A further aspect in promoting patients' understanding of their personal myths may be the therapist's efforts to establish connections to the meaning of the archetypal material which may become apparent through the visual expressions. In recognizing the collective significance of a patient's imagery, the therapist sees how the pathology revealed through the individual's self-expression

may correspond with a cross-cultural correlate. The patient's problem is thus not viewed as an entirely personal affair, but as an attribute which crosses individual boundaries to touch the problems of mankind in general (McConeghy, 1986). Attuning patients to a collective consideration of the illness may foster greater flexibility and choice, in lending to comprehension of the psychological determinants of the situation (Edwards in Rubin, 1987).

In summary, this section has presented three approaches to the image which may help facilitate the patient's awareness of unacknowledged aspects of the personality. Through this increased consciousness, the patient may come to comprehend the nature of the inner myths which have guided his or her personality, rather than continuing to live them blindly. This new awareness can also provide the motivation for change. Not only can art therapy stimulate the patient's awareness of the old patterns and beliefs; through the creation of new imagery, the myth-making processes occurring in the ongoing art therapeutic process may lead to the development of a more adaptive mythology which more adequately serves the present realities of the patient.

Art therapy as a myth-making process.

> Unless my illness changes my myth of myself, I shall not have distilled from the trauma of illness the opportunity for new insight into myself and self-realization in life, and I shall not attain anything that can be rightly called "cure". (May, 1970, p. 210)

While art therapy participants may be engaged in developing an awareness of unacknowledged aspects of personality through therapeutic processes, assisted by the therapist, they may also be actively involved in a process of working through troubles and problems on the level of the imagery. Exploring the past from a new, spirited and mythically informed vantage point may permit patients to recreate their inner stories in a manner which beckons higher possibilities (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988). Through the creation of tangible artistic expressions, art therapy procedures may facilitate a forum for generative myth-making. An individual's life loosens up in fantasy: Mythic enactments occurring through the creation of new imagery may contribute to what Hillman has referred to as a "healing of the maladies of a person's phantasy" (1972, p. 192). These processes may eventually give rise to a new mythology of the self. Depth psychology teaches that changes in consciousness will not be lasting unless they go hand in hand with changes in the unconscious components of the personality: In the arts, the primary process is engaged directly and therapeutic transformations can occur on the primary level of the senses, where inner coding takes place (Neumann, 1959; McNiff, 1986b).

Following is a basic model of myth-making processes in the art therapy context based on the views of Neumann (1959), Progoff (1970): The potentials of a person's individuality take the form of drives toward particular types of activity. These activities become expressed through images as well as symbolic patterns, both of visions and patterns of behaviour. They begin to take shape at deep

levels of the unconscious, then moving outward to take tangible form in creative visual expressions. These outer expressions correspond to the inner drive toward growth. They contribute to the integration of the personality, while tending to draw the entire personality into a progressively centered condition. The creative force has a character of revelation, wherein personal discoveries are intimately bound up with the character of the individual's psychic structure. As the image becomes actualized in an art work, content is given to the personality. A sense of unique personal meaning, a conceptualization of the personality's inner myth, begins to develop in the individual's conscious awareness, contributing to an understanding of the inner aspect of one's relationship with the surrounding world.

As this occurs, a continuous process of creative transformation begins to unfold. New constellations of the unconscious and consciousness interact with new productions and transformational phases of the personality. A dialectical exchange takes place between the assimilating consciousness and the contents that are continuously being constellated. As new gestalts or constellations of the personality are formed, the old conflicts begin to lose their relevance in the new contexts. As the process of development proceeds, it will tend to carry with it new art works which correspond to the successive personality gestalts (Neumann, 1959; Progoff, 1970).

Personality transformations tend to evoke, within the personality structure, tensions between old, established patterns and the emergence of the new. While these internal processes may

eventually give rise to a new mythology of the self, what is most often encountered are partial changes, partial transformations of the personality (Neumann, 1959). In accordance with historically validated principles of the artistic process, Maxwell Jones has suggested that change and transformation will involve a breakdown of patterns that are no longer useful:

> There must be a "destructuring" of what exists. One has to take a risk and become insecure and vulnerable to reach this stage of transformation. It involves a sort of "loss of identity", where a person or organization or idea is breaking apart and there is a period of necessary exploration of a new unknown environment (a new disorder). It is only through this "unknown" that a new order and a new combination or a new identity can be discovered. (Jones quoted in McNiff, 1986b, p. 25)

An artistic theory of psychotherapy maintains that curative possibilities can arise when creative expression is permitted to manifest itself freely (McNiff, 1986b). While conflict, tension and psychic stress may be the motivating forces behind artistic transformations, the vehicle for the participant's engagement in such transformations emerges through facilitating the one's capacity to play. Winnicott (1953) for instance, recognized the close connection between creativity and play, allocating both to the transitional world between the subjective and the objective. The term <u>poesis</u>, in fact, denotes "the play function". There is a profound connection between play and the ordering of the psyche, with the latter originating within "the playground of the mind" (Storr, 1972, p. 156).

The playground or theatre of the psyche takes tangible form through the patient's creative visual expressions. The image, as theatre, supplies the external stage on which new objects of identification can emerge and where the eternal struggles between ego and cruel superego may be enacted and fought out (Milner, 1950/1957; Ehrenzweig, 1967). Whereas normal development may be characterized by a number of transformations guided in part by archetypal dominants, the expression of fantasy contents in creative visual art may provide the catalyst to open new possibilities for persons with psychological illnesses. Mythic identifications may help motivate an individual's journey through the necessary rites of passage: The processes of separation, detachment and the agonizing confrontation of opposites can produce personal insight, representing a model for inner transformations and the individuation process (Jung, 1949/1973; Ehrenzweig, 1967). Through therapeutic intervention, the patient may come to be guided by the inner message or messages needed for growth and development, with new stories arising, reflecting the emergence of a new and more adaptive mythology.

CONCLUSION

The principal objective of this inquiry has been to inform art therapists or other interested professionals concerning the dynamic nature of personal mythology in relation to art therapy procedures and processes, providing a theoretical foundation which may lead to direct clinical application. In conclusion, pragmatic and theoretical concerns pertaining to future directions of study will be briefly addressed.

A first consideration concerns the pragmatics of implementing systems of myth analysis in gaining access or deepening understanding of personal mythology in images and therapeutic interventions. Here, there may be a need to clarify the theory, simplifying and modifying concepts to render them suitably adaptable to the analysis of art therapy products. The structural approach to mythic analysis lends itself most readily to the analysis of oral or literary texts, yet this theory has fruitfully been adapted to other forms of artistic expression such as the analysis of musical forms (Levi-Strauss, 1964, 1977 tape 5). Visual art, as an organic form of creative expression, may require a special set of theoretical considerations and modifications to best facilitate its application to the art product. The pioneering efforts of Betensky (1973a, 1973b) in adapting a

syncretistic approach to the analysis of visual imagery seem a most valuable achievement, yet the field of art therapy appears sadly deficient in following through on her initial efforts to further develop the potential of this means of inquiry. The syncretistic approach as it presently stands would seem to be enhanced through further amplification and clarification of technique. Also, more attention must be directed toward greater depth of approach in connecting the entity of personal myth to the overall psychodynamics of the individual, with elaboration of how such connections may be illustrated through the visual imagery. The development of a means by which to best verbally express a personal myth in a written format would be another matter for consideration.

From a theoretical perspective, an attempt has been made in this paper to demonstrate how the phenomena expressed in a patient's art works may reveal an autobiographical construction of an individual's inner reality. An argument has been presented suggesting that efforts should be made to comprehend the nature and function of personal mythology as it is expressed from the individual's own perspective, possibly reflecting the constructive, purposive and prospective statements of the unconscious. Apart from this recognition, however, further study could also be directed toward exploring myth in the light of certain psychoanalytic conceptualizations. This approach was in fact introduced in the studies of Kris (1956) and Beratis (1988) who examined the nature and contents of patients' personal myths in connection with oedipal and pre-oedipal stage fixations. Neumann (1954, 1959) similarly proposed

that the contents of an individual's inner mythology can be studied from the standpoint of developmental stages reached, as a means of assessing ego development. Another area of possible study, addressed by Hillman (1972, 1975), would seek to explore the nature and contents of an individual's inner myth, in both its personal and transpersonal aspects, in its correspondence with certain diagnoses. In this manner, psychic adherence to specific myths, as a means of giving order and form to a particular set of conflicts and problems, might be demonstrated to reveal correspondences to specific types of pathology.

Finally, the implications of this thesis might also stimulate future research in two areas of clinical application. The first would concern the utilization of personal myth as a diagnostic entity in a multidisciplinary approach to clinical assessment. Research might be designed to explore actual assessment data from the standpoint of the combined input of various contributing disciplines. A focus might be directed toward examining precisely how and where the consideration of personal myth might most usefully augment or enrich the overall clinical picture.

The other area of clinical application would pertain to the study of personal myth and the myth-making processes which may develop through art psychotherapeutic intervention. Research in this area could be directed toward the identification of personal myth in the early stages of treatment and would proceed to trace mythic processes emerging in the art work in relation to therapeutic developments over the course of ongoing therapy.

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