

CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT FOR MYTHOLOGICAL STUDIES

By
Charles Andersen

In the beginning of May of this year, I encountered a reading from James Hillman which bothered me tremendously. In his book *The Dream and the Underworld*, he suggested, at least to me, that psychology was in the process of what I characterized as hijacking mythology. I was annoyed and concerned and so I wrote a story about my concerns and shared it with my classmates. Few of them shared my concerns, partly because they lacked context for the argument I was presenting. I thought it was a pretty clever story (see Appendix I), but realized that my concerns would continue to go unheeded without sufficient context to raise consciousness. Hence, I present the following ideas in order to stimulate discussion.

The following ideas are extracted from a fairly ambitious conceptual infrastructure that I call Mythogenic Theory. While containing elements of Mythogenic Phenomenology and Mythogenic Systems Theory, most of this is presented within the context of Mythogenic Field Theory. Figure 18 is a graphic representation of how all this fits together. The following is an outline of my basic argument.

- I. Mythological Studies Matrix (figure 1).
- II. Mythogenic Interfaces (figure 2).
- III. Mytho-Catalytic Experience (figure 3).
- IV. Trans-Personal Mythogenic Field (figure 4).
- V. OUTLINE OF THE DISCUSSION OF THE MYTHOGENIC FIELD:
 - A. CONSCIOUSNESS—Psycho-Mythic Consciousness (figure 5)
 1. Cosmogenic Dimension (figure 6)
 2. Ontogenic Dimension (figure 7)
 - a. Personal Mythogenic Field (figure 8)
 - b. Cybernetic Self (figure 9)
 - c. Projection Response System (figure 10)
 3. Anthrogenic Dimension (figure 11)
 - B. ACTION—Mythic Task (figure 12)
 1. Mythogenic Journey (figure 13)
 2. Anthrogenic Roles (figure 14)
 - C. MEANING—Ontogenic Themescape (figure 15)
 - D. MYTHO-DYNAMIC CONJUNCTION (figure 16)
- VI. CONCLUSION FOR MYTHOLOGICAL STUDIES (figure 17)
 - A. Conceptual Context: Integrated Conceptual Synergetics (figure 18)
 - B. Conceptual Tools: Mythogenic Field Theory (figure 19)
 - C. Primary Perspective: Mythogenic Theory (figure 20)

MYTHOLOGICAL STUDIES MATRIX (see figure 1)

I conceive of the field of mythological studies as bounded by three primary categories of thought: (1) Theoretical Context, (2) Conceptual Tools and (3) Primary Perspective. My story was concerned primarily with the third category of perspective—wanting to validate and argue on behalf of a “Mythological Perspective” as opposed to a “Psychological Perspective.” At Pacifica, in my view, there is a rather pervasive “Psychological Perspective” that ignores some important boundaries that should be maintained for the sake of academic integrity. In retrospect, I now understand that without the following context, my argument is somewhat incomprehensible.

Among the things Mythological studies deals with are three separate but related phenomena: symbols, rituals and myths. Each of these shares a common difficulty in terms of description and definition. The more one tries to define or describe them in specific or reductionistic ways, the more they elude clarity or completeness in either definition or description. Perhaps that is because they are individually and collectively “poly-modal” in nature—in that they are open to a variety of modes of perception, interpretation, explanation and experience. Things that are “poly-modal” in nature defy reduction to simpler explanatory mechanisms. Therefore, we can surmise that symbols, myths and rituals are “poly-modal phenomena.”

Another characteristic that symbols, rituals and myths have in common is that while they exist as external phenomena, they also act as a bridge to internal experience. In effect, they are individually and collectively interfaces, or more appropriately “poly-modal interfaces.” Now there may be a large number of “poly-modal interfaces.” In order to distinguish symbols, rituals and myths from other “poly-modal interfaces,” for the purposes of this discussion we are going to label them as “Mythogenic Interfaces.” Because of their poly-modal nature, symbols, rituals and myths are non-reducible “Mythogenic Interfaces.”

MYTHOGENIC INTERFACES (see figure 2)

As Mythogenic Interfaces, symbols, rituals and myths have two primary functions: (1) to invite us into a Mytho-Catalytic Experience and (2) to connect us to a Mythogenic Field. Let me explain.

Several times, from various sources, I have encountered several versions of a remarkable story of the Buddah. Because of my divergent exposure to this story, unfortunately I cannot cite the reference properly. However, the story goes something like this: The disciples of the Buddah were quite agitated among themselves, arguing over the meaning of various principles and practices. In order to prove their various points of view they went to the Buddah to solve their quarrels. As they came before him in their agitated state, he ignored their entreaties and just smiled. After a while, he simply held up a flower (for some reason I imagine it to be a rose). Of course, that was his answer to the controversies.

I would like to unpack this story a bit, because it leads us right into the presentation I would like to make. The flower is a symbol, of course, but the meaning of it is only suggestive, not definitive. My notion of the flower is that it is a “Mythogenic Interface.” As a Mythogenic

Interface it is poly-modal in the sense that there are a variety of modes of perception, interpretation, and explanation of what that flower means. Any attempt to reduce a Mythogenic Interface, like that flower, will result only in incomplete fragmentation without real clarification or definition. If my conjectures are accurate, that flower invites us to enter into a Mytho-Catalytic experience and will connect us to a Mythogenic Field.

MYTHO-CATALYTIC EXPERIENCE (see figure 3)

A mytho-catalytic experience occurs when we encounter a symbol, myth or ritual (together, alone, all or in part). Through the medium of that Mythogenic Interface we also have an encounter with elements of mystery, wisdom and/or beauty. Mystery in this sense is the “unknowable unknown,” that which cannot be reduced or understood to any meaningful degree. Wisdom is the knowledge of how to appropriately respond to reality. Beauty is the ineffable quality of something that captures our imagination. In our story of the Buddah, the flower is a gateway into the mystery of life and creation—we perceive a flower but that is only one mode of perceiving it. The flower beckons the disciples to contemplate more fully the deeper reality reflected in the Buddah’s use of it—indicating their inappropriate response to the reality in which they were participating (an invitation to wisdom). Of course, the flower has its own beauty, but also reflects the beauty and wonder of the entire created order of being.

Such an encounter engenders in us a response of some type, which enables us to more fully participate in the overall experience of the moment. Somehow, through this process we then experience a change in our consciousness, are able to derive a new or different sense of meaning and often are impelled to action of some sort. That leads us to the Mythogenic field.

TRANS-PERSONAL MYTHOGENIC FIELD (see figure 4)

Why do symbols, rituals and myths have power? Why is it that a story can move people to action, or a funeral reduce people to tears? C.G. Jung postulated the concept of the “Collective Unconscious” an ineffable field wherein archetypes and other virtual phenomena reside. In Jung’s theory, the Collective Unconscious was an undifferentiated mass of latent psychic energy. Much like “quanta” of energy, my conception is that the structure of the Collective Unconscious is discreet fields of psychic energy that I’ve called Mythogenic Fields. These fields are constellated around specific archetypes, which usually are manifested in the fabric of symbols, rituals and myths. When we encounter a Mythogenic Interface, we also encounter the Mythogenic Field of which it is a part, with all its archetypal pattern and energies. Within this framework, the Mythogenic Field then is a complex interplay of mind, matter and interfaces where action leads to consciousness, consciousness leads to meaning and meaning leads to action. These fields are inter-penetrated with the personal and transpersonal fears, beliefs and desires we may hold at any given moment, further affecting our actions and consciousness (see Appendix III for a little story about this aspect of the Mythogenic Field). There is a lot of energy in the Mythogenic field. If you consider figure 4 for a moment, you can almost feel the pulsations of power within the diagram. The balance of our discussion focuses on the ways the three primary forces (consciousness, meaning, action) work with one another.

PSYCHO-MYTHIC CONSCIOUSNESS (see figure 5)

When we encounter a Mythogenic Interface, there is commonly a change in the consciousness of the person involved in the encounter. I wrote a little paper (see Appendix II) about the Odyssey of Homer being the manifesto of human consciousness. My conception of human consciousness is what I refer to as Psycho-Mythic Consciousness. Figure 5 is a model of how the Mythogenic Field influences our consciousness, particularly in three dimensions, (1) Cosmogenic Dimension (the nature of the universe and physical reality) (2) Ontogenic Dimension (the nature of what it means to be oneself—an autonomous person) (3) Anthrogenic Dimension—what it means to be a fully functioning human being. The following is meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive in terms of presenting and understanding the material. Even in such a cursory presentation, I think you'll find the material quite remarkable. We'll postpone the discussion of the Psycho-Mythic Conjunction until later.

COSMOGENIC DIMENSION (see figure 6)

Many mythologies and mythic systems deal with creation and the evolution of the natural order. Such systems usually have several layers to them. Some systems can accommodate elements of the divine within their structure, while others are incompatible with any such ideas. Based upon ideas of the physical universe developed by the physicist David Bohm and others, Mythogenic Theory provides an important conceptual framework that allows for demons and divinities or even the purposeless randomness of modern theories. However one conceives of the universe and the world we live in, mythologies shape our consciousness of the forces at work in our experience of nature. Mythogenics offers a framework for such considerations.

ONTOGENIC DIMENSION (see figure 7)

Mind and body are equal aspects of the human experience, yet many theoretical systems largely ignore this important fact. This is the only model I know of its type, incorporating both physical and mental dimensions of being into a complete representation of the various systems and theories involved in human consciousness. It begins as a flow chart starting with the flow of perceptions and their processing. The model then bifurcates into mental and physical components, suggesting various attributes of both modes of experience. On the right side, the model deals with sensations and emotions which ultimately impact behavior. The left side of the model deals with the various mental processes we experience. Figures 8, 9, and 10 are deeper elaborations of specific areas that both extend depth psychology and elaborate on important aspects of Mythogenic Field Theory.

Figure 8 is a revised model of the Mythogenic Field, representing a Personal field. In this model the archetypal roots are more clearly evident—the Trans-Personal model is more of a process model than this one. The personal Mythogenic field is probably the power center of the whole psyche.

Figure 9 is a model of the Ego Complex, reflecting the relationship of the Mythogenic Field to some of the more mechanistic aspects of human motivation. This model reflects the

delicate balance required for optimal achievement, but also demonstrating the obsession/compulsion qualities of this extremely important mechanism of the mind.

Figure 10 is a representation of some of Maslow's ideas combined within a working model of Jungian typology representing a projection system, which also influences our responses to the external world. It is often this system that influences much of our behavior and forms the basis of our persona.

I am very excited about this paradigm of Psycho Mythic Consciousness and would love to explore it more fully with others. This model truly integrates a great many psychological ideas into a coherent model that reconciles theoretical differences of various schools—but has no therapeutic ramifications whatsoever. It is purely theoretical.

ANTHROGENIC DIMENSION (see figure 11)

Being human demands a complex interplay of various arenas of life. Each of these arenas requires time and attention on a daily basis in order to achieve rhythm, balance and synchronicity in one's life. When one or more areas become neglected or demand too much time and energy there seems to be significant problems that begin to show up in the personal Mythogenic Field.

MYTHOGENIC ACTION--(see figure 12)

Recent attention has been paid to the notion of the Mythic Task as manifested in the hero's journey. Within the context of the Mythogenic Field, elaboration of the nature of quest, burden and mission illuminate this action. This model integrates the arenas from the Anthrogenic Dimension (see above). Figures 13 and 14 further elaborate elements of the narrative that underlies the action element.

MEANING—ONTOGENIC THEMESCAPE (see figure 15)

This is a novel paradigm for this important element of the Mythogenic Field. Considerable work has been done field testing this model and the results have been remarkable. I offer Appendix IV as an amplification of this model.

PSYCHO-MYTHIC CONJUNCTION (see figure 16)

The Psycho-Mythic Conjunction is at the heart of the three dimensions of consciousness, but also if you look at figure 7 you see that it is also at the conjunction of the conscious and unconscious. I suspect that we cannot experience a Mythogenic Field directly, but only through an interface or perhaps a specialized place in our psyche—that place where artists and shamans go to bring back their treasures. Such a place would be a Psycho-Mythic Conjunction, where our experience and imagination work upon each other. Based upon the notion of Mytho-Catalytic experience, we can suggest there are a wide variety of experiential phenomena we bring to each encounter, including intuitions, emotions, perceptions, imaginings, dreams, hallucinations, fantasies and such. In conjunction with the Mythogenic field, we form a Mythogenic structure to our experience, which may or may not faithfully reconstruct the original experience. Much of the time, our Mythogenic structures are

approximations or abstractions of our original experience. No matter how careful we are in the observation of experience, we can never fully comprehend or express that which we experience. While creativity is a rather elusive and mysterious activity, within this particular framework, we can think of creativity as a product of the Psycho-Mythic Conjunction at work. One of the Mythogenic structures that emerged from this process is the whole idea of Mythogenic Theory. Perhaps most importantly, at the center lies the “ultimate” Mythogenic field—NOTHING. A great place to explore.

(REPRISE) MYTHOLOGICAL STUDIES MATRIX (see figure 17)

This is the completed version of this paradigm that I’m suggesting for consideration, guidance, discussion and adoption. In this model, Mythogenic Theory surrounds the primary concepts of symbol, ritual and myth. Integrated Conceptual Synergetics forms the theoretical context of mythological studies (see figure 18). This model integrates my ideas of the full Mythogenic Theory with other conceptual tools that are necessary to fully explore the field of mythological studies. Mythogenic Field Theory (figure 19) forms the basis of the conceptual tools that we can use to more fully explore the various Mythogenic interfaces. Finally, the primary perspective would be one of Mytho-Dynamics (figure 20).

The above is a fairly brief overview of a rather vast conceptual landscape. Because so much of the work is original in nature there is little to prepare the reader for where my ideas have come from and where they may be going. While only a cursory examination is possible within this context, my hope is that my presentation of this material might be of sufficient merit to stimulate further discussion and justify further (and perhaps collaborative) development of what I believe to be worthwhile ideas, particularly in regards to dealing with issues of mythological studies. Please let me know what you think.

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Appendix I
The Brief Chronicle of A Mythogenic War
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Bolting forth from an enormous crag in the earth, the immense black horses shot out like fiery lava and hit the earth at a dead gallop. Behind them flew a leather encased chariot and the Dark Lord, Hillmentus whipping the four black stallions with a frenzy. He was not going to be denied his prey—he had come to abduct the lovely Queen Mythogenia. Snorting fire and steam, the horses thundered toward their intended victim.

Meanwhile, unaware of the impending peril, Queen Mythogenia was singing psychomythic lullabies to the gentle Pacificans gathered round her in a meadow near the peaceful fields and vineyards of consciousness. Blissfully, the emerald green grass was shared by a grazing flock of sheep and the reclining students, basking in the beauty of the warm sun and the gentle breeze.

There in their midst was the old warrior, Entesius, a typological outcast from the Enefians, struggling to find peace in the midst of these followers of Mythogenia. It was Entesius who felt the thundering hoofs of the approaching horses and began to feel uneasy. Not daring to interrupt the idyllic moment, he listened intently to the incessant pounding and became increasingly uncomfortable. Surely, the frontiers were guarded, and he was only reacting to experience acquired over the long years of warfare he had endured. Still, he was uneasy.

Almost before he knew it, the black horses burst upon the scene, scattering the Pacificans to the four winds. Seemingly, in a single motion, the Dark Lord reached down and drew the Queen into his chariot, and began wheeling the horses about for his return to the dark underworld. Where were the guards? Why wasn't anyone protecting the queen?

Entesius sprang to his feet and grabbed his staff. Not much of a weapon, but it was all he had. Sticking his staff between the forelegs of the lead horse, he caused the horse to trip and fall, partially turning the chariot over. The Dark Lord and the Queen tumbled out and sprawled upon the ground. Entesius gathered up his staff and struck the Dark Lord Hillmentus with a mighty blow to the head, stunning him for a moment. In that instant, Entesius grabbed the Queen, and beckoned her to run, which she did instantly.

By that time, the Dark Lord had recovered his wits and drawn his sword. He saw what was happening, so instead of smiting Entesius on the spot, he spun and began tending to his team, righting the chariot to continue the pursuit. Not knowing what else to do, the old warrior Entesius charged the Dark Lord aiming his staff like a lance. The Dark Lord was prepared to hack Entesius in two, but the crafty old warrior stumbled and rolled toward the horses—jumped up and startled them, so they began to run. As the chariot bolted away from him, the Dark Lord lunged to try to grab the edge of the chariot. He was barely able to hold on and dropped his sword in the process. He was drug for a distance before he clambered aboard the chariot—but he was by no means in control of the panicked team. The reins were not in the chariot, so he had to jump out of the cart and onto the back of the nearest horse, where he struggled with the harness in order to grab the reins which were dragging on the ground.

By the time he got the team under control and was about to re-embark on his quest, the sounds of trumpets split the air. King Mysterion and the Mythicon guards were almost

upon them. The Dark Lord Hillmentus quickly appraised the situation and realized he had lost his opportunity. Wheeling the chariot around, he cast an angry glance at the old warrior Entesius, who had thwarted his plans, and then whipped the horses into a frenzy as they sped away to return to the underworld. He swore revenge on Entesius and the Pacificans.

The golden King Mysterion and the Mythicon guards chased after the Dark Lord of the underworld. Surrounding the crag from which he had emerged, there were now a large number of Psychonesian soldiers there to protect the retreat of the ir king. Immediately, as the Dark Lord Hillmentus thundered through their ranks, the soldiers closed in to protect him. So the Mythicon guards and the Psychonesian soldiers clashed on that field of battle. Blood flowed like crimson rivers and soaked the ground. Soon the moaning of the wounded and dying filled the air. In the ensuing mayhem, capitalizing on the confusion of battle, the Dark Lord sent forth his most able spies and saboteurs, the Archytos to obfuscate and commit categorical sabotage. With the help of Archytonic collaborators, they would prepare for the Dark Lord's eventual return. He fully intended to abduct Queen Mythogenia and have her for himself.

After the final invaders had been repulsed, the golden King Mysterion returned to the site of the attempted abduction. There gathered around Entesius were the Pacificans, who expressed their appreciation for his efforts. However, the golden King Mysterion, who disdained all mortals said nothing and offered no sign of recognition or gratitude. However, the lovely Queen Mythogenia smiled at Entesius and brought joy to his old warrior heart.

After the royal entourage had departed, the Pacificans clamored for more information about the events that had transpired. Why had the Dark Lord attacked—what did he want with Queen Mythogenia, would he be back and other questions. Before Entesius could answer their questions there was a little matter of heroism that needed to be acknowledged. While Entesius had been helping the Queen escape, one of the students, Buxanibus (a frail but scrappy female student) had stood face to face with Hillmentus when he was trying to recover from the chariot spill. Nose to nose she looked him right in the eye and dared him to smite her with his archetypal sword. Enraged, he flung her to the ground, at which time he turned to face the onrushing Entesius. For her trouble, Buxanibus received an injured shoulder and arm—but she had a courageous heart that Entesius felt needed to be acknowledged. However, the Pacificans rarely praised their own, but in this case they reluctantly acknowledged the heroic stand of the slender Buxanibus.

After the appropriate recognition was meted out, Entesius began to answer their queries. Seasoned by long years with Military Mythologistics, the aged warrior was familiar with the ongoing battle with the Psychonesians. However, before telling you about his explanation, let me explain a little about the Pacificans.

The Pacificans were a group of knowledge seekers that were basically divided into two factions. One faction, the Mythogicians, were dedicated to seeking and serving Queen Mythogenia in her fields of consciousness. There they could help her prepare the Wine of Wonder that was served at King Mysterion's banquet table to the myriad of pilgrims that passed through those halls. The other faction was the Psychognostics who were more oriented to healing and therapy by sharing the stories and rituals that were part of Queen Mythogenia's court. Both factions were motivated by the highest standards of honesty and openness.

While fully appreciating both factions, the sentiments of Entesius were clearly with the Mythogicians. This was largely because of his concern that the Psychognostics could be

vulnerable to the ongoing attacks by the Psychonesians and the seductions of their powerful Dark Lord, Hillmentus. Entesius was afraid that the Psychognostics could be duped into cooperation with the plot for the abduction of Queen Mythogenia and the sabotage of the whole Mythic realm.

However, Entesius was careful in his explanation to try to satisfy the questions and curiosity of both factions. He began by recounting the source and history of the Mythogenic Wars.

Back in the long ago, the Psychonesians felt that the treasures they had mined from the deep recesses of the psychic underworld (the unconscious) were the true treasures of life. They denigrated the treasures of the upper world as the “poor fruits from the fields of consciousness”, but from their forges they fashioned a golden necklace of exquisite grace and beauty constructed entirely of golden archetypes. Unfortunately, there was no one worthy of wearing this archetypal necklace, no one except Queen Mythogenia. However, when they approached the Queen, she made it clear that she would be happy to bear their gift on her neck, but only in the upper world, the world of her husband King Mysterion, for she truly was his handmaiden. The Psychonesians were terribly upset that she would not leave the realm of Mysterion to bear the archetypal burden they had fashioned, so they plotted to kill Mysterion in order to free the Queen from his domination. Their first act was to mock the gods of religion to try to shame people into rejecting all suggestions of the divine. One by one they assassinated the gods and suggested that they were just mental representations of psychic material that came from the deep underworld. The strategy was that since the gods were the basis of King Mysterion’s power, by eliminating them, Mysterion would gradually just disappear. They maintained to all who would listen that the gods never existed and were only understood to be metaphors by all ancient peoples.

Interestingly, each time the gods were eliminated, they came back in renewed and invigorated form—like a forest that is destroyed by fire, only to be rejuvenated by the process. After all, the gods had nourished the spiritual journeys of countless millions over thousands of years—the Psychonesians could boast of no such success. With each assault, King Mysterion shone more magnificently.

However, at an appointed time each year the King went on a sacred journey to the ancient springs in the mountains in order to renew his strength. So while he was gone, the Psychonesians began an enormous slander campaign, explaining that Mysterion was never coming back and that a new king was ascending to the throne, Emperor Empiricismus—the Scion of Science. However, the citizens of Mysteria, who had been raised on the Wine of Wonder, saw through the archytonic deception and the attempted usurpation was thwarted.

Their final ploy was an insidious plot of conceptual obfuscation. In this case they took concepts, such as home and mythic practices such as sacrifice and initiation and attempted to present them as deep archetypal processes. While of course, there are archetypal dimensions to such mythic elements, they clearly do not exist entirely within the psychic realm. Virtually any mythic neophyte could see right through their conceptual slight of hand—but they continued their conceptual sabotage for so long, that many began to accept it as truth.

Of course, there was also the problem created by the great prophet Josephus of the CampClarion Clan. Josephus was the herald of Queen Mythogenia both far and wide and brought many pilgrims to the courts of Mysteria, who drank the Wine of Wonder to restore their vigor. However, in his zeal for the Queen, Josephus all but abandoned King Mysterion,

and pretended that the monarch did not exist. Some of his pronouncements began to sound like the propaganda of the Psychonesians. The Pacificans gave his memory a place of honor, but his legacy was largely ignored even by them. Many of the Pacificans had encountered the Oracle of Dawn, who counseled that they “maintain the tension of opposites” which was truly sage advice in such a time of upheaval.

For now, Entesius assured the Pacificans, the Mythogenic War was reasonably under control, but could flare up again at any time. The archytonic spies and saboteurs had been known to try to set the fields of consciousness ablaze in order to disrupt production of the Wine of Wonder, but their attempts usually failed. However, Entesius was convinced that the Dark Lord Hillmentus and the Psychonesians would not rest until they had hijacked the entire mythic enterprise and usurped the throne from the golden king Mysterion. As he concluded his dissertation, Entesius declared that they should all retire and get some rest. So, as the golden glow of evening descended upon them, all returned to their homes for a much deserved respite.

INTRODUCTION

In writing this little story, I feel much like Tom Cruise in the title role of the film, Jerry McGuire. The main character felt compelled to share a vision statement with his colleagues in the sports management firm for which he worked—a move, while laudatory, was costly in terms of his position with the firm. This little piece is not all that visionary or laudatory, but nevertheless compelling for me to share.

To put my concern succinctly, I’m concerned with the notion that psychology may be trying to hijack mythology for it’s own purposes. In effect, I’m reacting to a statement in the book *The Dreams and the Underworld* by James Hillman. Hillman states that in his view, psychology and mythology are the same. “Mythology is a psychology of antiquity. Psychology is a mythology of modernity” [23].

I’m hoping that assertion is obviously not true and that there might be others who feel as I do. In my estimation, mythology is much older and larger than the field of psychology and has dimensions that are not reducible to mere mental processes. Obviously, such mental processes are involved, but surely not reducible. In this instance, I’m responding to a comment in the introduction to the book *The Mythological Unconscious* by Adams:

I should emphasize that when I refer to the gods in this book, I speak of “gods.” The gods do not exist in a supernatural dimension. As Blake says, “All deities reside in the human breast.” From a Jungian perspective, the gods are psychic factors (archetypes) that exist in a strictly natural dimension (the collective unconscious) and manifest as images in myths, dreams and fantasies. Thus Jung says that the gods are neither “metaphysical entities” nor “superstitious inventions” but “personifications of psychic forces” [xvi].

So, in the spirit of academic debate, I offer the following reflections for your consideration. I hope I can lay my argument out in a fairly reasonable and straightforward fashion.

MYTHOLOGY-HANDMAIDEN OF MYSTERY

In dealing with this story, the first thing we encounter is an epistemological matter—there are things we know, there are knowable things which we don't know yet, and there are things which we cannot know—in short mystery. In this sense, mystery would be the unknowable unknown.

My conundrum, an assertion I cannot prove—there is such a thing as mystery. The closest I can come is a phenomenological inference made from a principle of particle physics based on the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. The uncertainty principle establishes an impenetrable barrier beyond which human knowledge cannot go. This provides the conceptual basis for asserting there is such a thing as the unknowable unknown or “mystery,” even in the world of science.

Within my reckoning of such matters, mythology only makes sense in the presence of mystery. If there was no such thing as mystery, there would be no need for mythology. Since mythology exists in virtually every culture throughout the world, we can infer that every culture has experienced “mystery.” Within this context, mythology provides a means of dealing with mystery for virtually everyone on the planet, perhaps throughout human history.

What constitutes the boundaries, possibilities and nature of the unknowable unknown is impossible to state with certainty. Mythological speculations about mystery are all equally un-provable. One may have a preference for some particular form or type of mythological expression, but no amount of consensus can declare one mythological “truth” more true than another. The uncertainty principle is absolute, not relative: all mythologies are equal.

Deities are mythological expressions regarding aspects of the realm of mystery. Because of the whole mystery problem, one can make no meaningful assertions, outside of mythology, about the existence or nature of deities, spiritual beings, powers or forces. Only within a mythological context can one determine or refute the possibilities of what does or does not exist within the realm of mystery. If science tries to make a pronouncement about the nature of mystery, it does so only as another mythology.

Adams states that the gods don't exist. Is that a personal belief masquerading as science or science masquerading as mythology? In this instance, psychology could be masquerading as a mythology making un-provable pronouncements about the nature of mystery. Regardless of how many psychologists support that particular mythology, it doesn't change the fundamental nature of that mythology. Such pronouncements as a science are untenable, and as a mythology unsupportable. However, in the book *Mythic Image*, Joseph Campbell makes pretty much the same assertion [278].

The problem is further compounded by Hillman, conflating the categories of mythology and psychology. Unfortunately, Hillman is not alone in this process.

In a recent class at Pacifica, one of our professors called sacrifice and initiation “archetypal processes.” As we learned, archetypes exist in the unconscious. However, sacrifice and initiation are fundamentally conscious processes. They may have components in the unconscious, but they are truly mythological processes. Additionally, in another class a professor referred to “home” as an archetype. Again, home has many dimensions, but many of those aspects are not unconscious at all—so is it an archetype? Or is it a mythological symbol of fundamental importance?

I suppose if mythology and psychology are interchangeable, this is a moot question. However, if there are important distinctions between them, my position is that those

differences should be maintained for clarity and for understanding. If something is a “mythological” element, it should be expressed and understood in those terms. If it is “archetypal” or “psychological”, it seems to me it should be expressed in those terms. If it is mixed—perhaps there needs to be another category developed to fit that situation. If we maintain these particular categories of thought, then the whole notion of Adams mythological unconscious may be untenable.

Please understand, I’m not criticizing these authors, psychology, our professors, Pacifica or anyone else. I’m merely suggesting that we, as an institutional body, may have a tremendous blind spot that perhaps should be brought to consciousness.

Both the fields of mythology and psychology are anything but monolithic and seemingly beyond meaningful reduction. I have the temerity to suggest that mythology is primarily concerned with consciousness and that depth psychology is primarily concerned with the unconscious. So, in that regard the term mythological unconscious would actually be an oxymoron, as would the term archetypal mythology. I believe they are two mutually complementary understandings of important concepts, but are not interchangeable parts of the same discipline. Entesius is advocating heeding the Oracle of Dawn and maintaining the tension of opposites. Let me know what you think.

Appendix II

THE HOMERIC ODYSSEY: MANIFESTO OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

Effortlessly, the arrow leapt from the taunt string of the bow, accompanied by the stinging ring of the vibrations after the arrow had departed. Straight and true the arrow coursed through the aligned axe handles and thumped triumphantly as the point bit into the timbers at the other end of the room. With that shot, as the arrow twanged from its final position, those who had any inkling of consciousness would have known that the end was near. For, when Odysseus strung his bow he claimed his talisman of power and announced his true identity, without words, without fanfare, without equivocation. Yet, the slothful suitors remained unconscious of the reality which was about to descend on them. With that arrow (Od. XXI, 400-405), the temporal conjunction of past and present merged into the unfolding Homeric drama of the Odyssey, which in my opinion is the Manifesto of Human Consciousness.

My personal “mythology of mythology” is that mythology is about “consciousness.” Mythology focuses on three primary aspects of consciousness: phenomenetic, psychological and anthropic. Phenomenetic consciousness refers to the physical and factual elements of human experience—the world, the cosmos and all the phenomena we encounter. Psychological deals with the nature of self, both hidden and unknown aspects of psyche and archetypes. The anthropic consciousness deals with what it means to be fully human. The Odyssey explores all three of these aspects of human consciousness and boldly asserts the liberation and empowerment of human consciousness from the dark forces of the unexplored unconscious and the uncontrolled superstitious.

Beginning with Odysseus’ son, Telemachus in Book I, the Odyssey deals with consciousness on the level of an individual becoming a man. At first, unconcerned with the presence of suitors in his mansion, Telemachus becomes increasingly conscious, as he matures, of the meaning and ramifications of those carousing interlopers constantly present in his environment. Little by little, as the drama unfolds, he becomes aware that their presence is inhibiting the natural order of things and they must go. With the assistance of the goddess Athena, Telemachus realizes he must go on his own “odyssey” to acquire news of the fate of his father and to claim his own identity. So Telemachus moves towards the consciousness of one who is as a man and as part of a larger legacy.

Meanwhile, Odysseus, trapped in the bed chamber of the goddess Calypso, has become increasingly conscious of the passage of time, and again with divine intervention is freed from the entrapment of libido, of which Freud was so fond (Od. V). Once freed from the psychological bondage via a craft of his own making, Odysseus casts his fortune again on the fathomless depths of the wine dark sea. Eventually, he is washed ashore on the lands of the Phaiakians (Od. VI), where he finally tells the tales for which the Odyssey is best known. But these tales are not told in the first person in real time, but as the retrospections of a person who has come, through privation and hardship, to understand the meaning of his own experience. In short, Odysseus is conscious of the fuller meaning of his own experience, including his own strengths and short comings. Each of these stories could be analyzed from the phenomenetic, psychological or anthropic perspectives. Space does not permit that here.

Odysseus tells of the Lotus Eaters, who like addicts and inebriates everywhere represent the psychological entrapment of seductive life styles—unproductive and incapable

of ever reaching the shores of home. There is the tale of the escape from the blinded dream monster Cyclops which then leads to the bedchamber of Kirke. Odysseus, wayfarer and shaman encounters the shades of the underworld, seeking the input of the sage Teresias. And, of course, the famous story of the Sirens—where he alone faces the music of the incomparable call to self-destruction. Then there are the dueling disasters of Charbydis and Skylla—who like life will take a toll but we must proceed onward or perish. As the Odyssey unfolds we discover life doesn't always work out the ways it's supposed to. Rather than starve to death, Odysseus' shipmates choose to eat of Helios' flock and the certain death which comes as a direct consequence of such difficult choices. The consequences of such choices are not just psychological, but also entail consequences in the phenomenal world.

Each of these stories is rendered by Odysseus, not as a psychological chronicle, but as an existential exposition of the pain, difficulty and complexity of the sojourner's life. As the raider of cities shares his story, we realize that our lives are also a journey home as much as his, (if home is a metaphor for fully possessing our own psychic landscape). Without seeking adventures, we find them along the way. Each of us is confronted from time to time with the all too appealing prospect of self-destruction (Sirens), or dealing with some demon from deep within our psychic landscape, like the Cyclops. Rarely do we get confronted with a good choice and a bad choice. More frequently we are faced with two bad choices we'd rather avoid but cannot, such as Charbydis and Skylla. For Odysseus, and for ourselves, there is seemingly always someone there to help, human or divine.

Throughout the chronicles of Homer, we encounter the elevation of consciousness about how humans are to treat one another. Whether treating beggars or princes, hospitality and courtesy to guests permeates the pages of the Odyssey, as well as indictments against those who violate this form of anthropic consciousness, such as the suitors. From the mythological perspective of the Odyssey, and the religious experience of every day people, the gods take an active part in the unfolding of events, for good or ill. This form of "synchronicity" of phenomenetic consciousness is not enjoyed by everyone, but is accepted and appreciated by many.

One can incorporate these three forms of consciousness in dealing with the whole notion of eradicating the suitors. From a psychological standpoint, one could consider the suitors as representatives of unwelcome psychic forces (complexes, neurosis, etc.) that must be eliminated in order for Odysseus to claim autonomy in his own home/mind. From the phenomenetic standpoint, the suitors represent forces of chaos and disintegration, which threaten our very ability to survive—in essence the kill or be killed ethos we try to avoid in civilized society. As for the anthropic consciousness, there is the reasonable suggestion of Eurymakhos (Od. XXII 48-62) that the death of Antinoos (because he was the ringleader of their mischief) should satisfy the need for revenge—if they were allowed to live, they could compensate Odysseus adequately for their squandering of his resources. However, being fully conscious of the situation at an anthropic level, Odysseus knew they would only regroup if allowed to live and come after him. Conscious of the power dynamics involved, he continued his slaughter of the suitors while he had the means to do it. From a literal point of view, such a slaughter was perhaps unnecessary, but this story goes way beneath the literal.

Perhaps I am overstating the value of the Odyssey as a source of important knowledge about human development. One may not accept as valid the ultimate sense of consciousness conveyed in the Odyssey, but one must then wonder why it has enjoyed such

impact for thousands of years of its retelling. While it is a rousing tale of human strength and weakness, I believe within this ancient poem is an immense source of human wisdom that has endured because, as I stated in the beginning and will reiterate again, the Odyssey truly is the Manifesto of Human Consciousness. Through familiarity with this epic, I believe we come to a fuller appreciation and acceptance of ourselves and the heroic meaning of our every day lives. Our life journey is about how we tell the tale of achieving a fuller consciousness of ourselves, our lives and the world around us.

Appendix III
THE QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN HARNESS

By
Charles Andersen

Let me tell you about my three wonderful dogs, they're enormous black Labrador Retrievers, weighing about 95 pounds apiece. These are a special breed of dog called "Wit Hounds." They normally are of good humor, except under certain circumstances which I will explain later. They're wonderful companions and we romp the meadows together joyfully exploring, discovering and playing. However, they are picky eaters and won't share one another's food. I feed them scraps—scraps of my beliefs and experiences. Cosmo eats bits of belief about the world, Otto feasts on beliefs and experiences about myself and Xeno feeds exclusively on my beliefs and experiences about other people. If I feed them platitudes they get very hungry and want "real" meat, so I must be careful to feed them properly. They have voracious appetites and are extremely loyal.

As I said before, they're not always good natured. There are times when one of them gets moody and the other two have to protect me so that I don't get attacked. Sometimes when they're playing with each other the play turns pretty vicious and I think they may be trying to kill each other. The biggest trouble is that I can never get all three of them to go along with me in an orderly manner. So while we have great times together—I can't say that I'm really their master. There are things I want to do and places I want to go and things I wish to accomplish but I'm always having to deal with one or another of them misbehaving.

I spoke with a mentor friend of mine who told me about a special harness I can use to control them, a golden harness. In order to accomplish the things I would like, I must go on a quest for that special yoke, that Golden Harness. That brings us to my special problem.

Beyond the fields and forests where I dwell are two enormous hills, upon which sit two ancient castles. One of the castles is nearly in ruins and the other is seemingly new and festive. In the newer one, imprisoned somewhere deep within those ancient walls, is a very special "divine princess" who has become the object of my desire. However, the only way to free her is with a special key that is kept in the other ruined castle. Within those decaying castle walls lurks an enormous fire breathing dragon (Phobos by name) that dwells in the dungeon of the castle, guarding that key as well as an enormous hoard of gold. Most of the time the dragon Phobos just sleeps, partially because he doesn't want to deal with my dogs. You see they keep him bottled up there most of the time. However, any time the dragon wishes, he can rush by my guard dogs and fly about the country pillaging and destroying the entire psychic landscape. Fortunately, my dogs are diligent in their duty so that Phobos (fear) rarely escapes.

The dilemma is this. In order to get the key to free the divine princess, I must drink a special elixir that is kept in the festive castle. However, unless the "elixir of desire" is mitigated by a bit of the dragon's gold it is toxic to me, as are our most intense desires unless they are mitigated by our fears. If I drink the elixir, I don't have to fear the dragon's breath or size—I'm impervious to its devilish ways. But it will not share its gold with anyone and will reek

revenge if even the smallest particle is stolen. So before I can drink the elixir I must snatch some of the gold, pour it in the cup, drink the then tonic mixture, return to the dragon's lair, secure the key, return to the princess and free her. However, in order to do all that I need my dogs to work together with me, which is where the golden harness comes in.

With the golden harness, my wit hounds, who have feasted on my experiences and beliefs, can assist me in the arduous task which lay ahead. If I don't get control of them however, they will stand between me (protecting me from both fear and desire). If I go anywhere near either of those two castles all three turn on me and chase me away. It's very frustrating, so I've got to deal with them before I can make any progress toward solving my dilemma.

So, that's why I've come to Pacifica, to learn how to make the golden harness needed to control and guide my "Wit Hounds". For in the mythic fires we encounter here at Pacifica I hope to find, forge and fashion the golden harness that will enable me to complete my quest. I figure each class is loaded with insights and information that will provide another golden strand and hopefully my personal mythology will develop sufficiently to harness my beliefs in order to achieve my ultimate quest.

APPENDIX IV
ONTOGENIC THEMESCAPE (An Introduction)
Conceived & Developed by
G. Charles Andersen

Ontogenic is a word derived from "genic", which means to produce something: i.e. hallucinogenic = producing hallucinations or carcinogenic = causing cancer. "genic" also refers to that which is produced by something, as in: psychogenic = being produced by the mind or biogenic = being produced by the body. It also denotes a derivative quality, such as photogenic. Onto is a Greek word for "being". So "ontogenic" refers to the dynamic which produces being, is produced by being or is derived from the process of being or becoming.

I have used this paradigm in my work for a number of years to help people understand and reconcile some of the contradictions they encounter in their experience of various religious and spiritual systems. This paradigm has proven useful in exploring and explaining the bible to people, and has proven helpful in various times and places in the decision making process of day to day living. It is a synthesis that provides a useful structure for dealing with Christianity and other "wisdom systems."

Many wisdom systems suggest that life is some version or combination of:

- 1) **Painful**
- 2) **Difficult**
- 3) **Complicated.**

Life can be *painful* because of the difficulties and complexities we encounter on our journey. Life is all too brief, health is fragile, relationships come and go and people are seemingly always in transition and encountering losses of all sorts. We are filled with uncertainty, imperfections, and all kinds of vulnerabilities. Ultimately we are nearly powerless to change or impact our lives, the lives of those we love, or the world very much.

Life can be *difficult* because of the pain and complexities we encounter. Many people are searching for something: some search for meaning, some for impact and some are searching for specific types of experience. What is the purpose of our life? Are we here to create or destroy, lead or follow and so many other choices. We are burdened by the blessings and joys of our life, our personal gifts and ultimately the mystery of it all. Through life's difficulties our identity is forged, our secrets and darkness are exposed and our destiny revealed.

Life can be *complex* because of the pains and difficulties we encounter. There are so many constraints that life imposes, so many challenges, so many choices for which we are insufficiently prepared to make. We're often limited by our perceptions and must settle for dealing in a world of incomplete approximations that are of dubious validity. We are always dealing with the ramifications of our fears, beliefs and desires and are constantly confronted the reality of death, change and uncertainty.

That doesn't mean that every moment of every day in human experience can be summed up as painful, difficult or complicated, but on the whole that seems to be a pretty accurate expression of the human journey. Whether or not we choose to accept the choices life presents us with, there are almost always consequences to the "external" circumstances of our life, as well as consequences within our own personal "inner" experience. The

Ontogenic ThemeScape is an attempt to describe some of the dynamics that occur in the never ending process of choosing and living.

Life As A Journey

Since the early years of the twentieth century, when Albert Einstein articulated his theories of relativity, we have had a new vocabulary to express the nature of reality. With the formula $E=MC^2$, we know that even matter is fundamentally energy, and all energy is in “flow.” With the “Big Bang,” when the flow of energy and “space/time” began, so did our universe. Within that flow of energy and time, there were some “fluctuations” in the flow, that we call matter. Those fluctuations in the flow of time and energy remained anonymous until human beings emerged, who were able to interpret those fluctuations and translate them into meaningful information: trees, rocks, stars and so forth. In the most basic sense then, the universe consists of the flow of time, energy and information.

In the more mundane context of human living, our lives are about keeping track of fluctuations in the flow of time and energy. Early in our evolution, people noticed that there were cyclic events in the phenomenal world (cycles of the sun, the moon, the stars, flooding etc.) that helped to differentiate aspects of the flow of experience. In order to help remember the sequence of events in life, humans began to tell stories. Undifferentiated experience could be disorienting to early humans, and this can be true in our own lives as well.

At some point in our evolution, people began thinking of their lives as a “journey” proceeding from birth to death and even beyond. In this context, our lives are a story, in which we fill in the details as we go. But as in any story, there are certain basic questions that seem to occur in nearly everyone’s life¹:

- 1.) Who am I? (identity)
- 2.) Where do I come from? (origins)
- 3.) Where am I going? (destiny)

So, at the heart of the Ontogenic ThemeScape is the journey of our life, which endeavors to discover and answer those basic questions. Figure 1 is a graphic representation and summary of this entire discussion. It might be helpful to examine it first and then keep it handy for reference as we continue.

Outward Dimension of Our Journey

The great psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, described one of the fundamental processes of being human as the process of “Individuation” where we separate from our parents and home of origin to become autonomous human beings². On the outward journey, through a variety of processes, we more or less leave our home of origin and seek our fortunes in the world. Sometimes, this process of leaving home is voluntary, and sometimes not. In any event, there’s normally a tension that arises, namely the desire to return home. A great deal of our life is dealing with the dynamics of separation and reconciliation with parents and with our past selves. In a certain sense, one could assert that the Garden of Eden story could be addressing many of these themes³.

Inward Dimension of Our Journey

As we more fully engage the outer world, oftentimes people become alienated from their inner selves. Perhaps, as we become more successful at achieving independence, we wind up ignoring what's going on inside us, until at some point we begin to experience inner turmoil. Individuation has to occur on both the inner and outer dimensions of our lives. A fairly common example of this tension might be the man who marries and begins to raise his own family (outward individuation) but continues to dote over his mother, because he has not fully separated from her within his own inner being. This inner "letting go" can be, in many ways, far more difficult than the outward process. Interestingly, one of the contradictions of life occurs after we have individuated, where at some point, in order to achieve wholeness, the parts that are separated must also be reunified⁴.

So, we can see that successful individuation/separation and reconciliation/unification can lead to both liberation and empowerment, which allows us to function more effectively in both the inner and outer dimensions of life. On the other hand, if this process is handled poorly, we can be dealing with attachment and dependence problems all our lives on either or both the external and internal levels.

Expectations of life

Depending on how we've handled the individuation/unification issues of growth, we can form certain habitual patterns of expectation that shape the ways we respond to life. For the purposes of our discussion here, we will consider these issues as if they were fully manifested one way or the other. In most people's life, these things are handled imperfectly and are characterized by different aspects of healthy and unhealthy patterns. For this discussion, we'll exaggerate both sides a little.

Outward Expectations of Life

Poor Individuation means that oftentimes we will have problems dealing with the pain, complexity and difficulties of life. These patterns are characterized by a desire and need for *immunity, compensation* or *escape*. (See fig. 1).

Expectations of Immunity: characterized by the feeling that for some reason, particular negative circumstances of life shouldn't be happening to us. "Why is this happening to me?" is the frequently asked question about the underlying expectation that somehow I should be immune to any particular set of experiences of life. "I don't deserve this" or "It just isn't fair" are commonly heard laments characterizing this expectation. When we're rational, we realize that life isn't fair and what we deserve has nothing to do with what happens in life. However, many of us feel that unwanted reality only visits other people, not us. When it inevitably intrudes in our lives, we go into psychic shock. I often refer to this as "magical" thinking.

Expectations of Compensation: when unwanted reality confronts us, the expectation can arise that somebody's going to "pay for this" experience. "Somebody has to be responsible for what I'm going through!" This is really a deflection mechanism that diverts our attention from what we're actually going through, and sets up a chain of events that can lead to compulsions such as revenge or

vindictiveness. When all is said and done, there is no sufficient compensation for the pain, difficulty and complexity of what we experience. So we begin to compensate by indulging ourselves in ways designed to make us *feel* better. This is rarely a good long term strategy.

Expectation of Escape: As a result of the other expectations, ultimately this one is under our control and eventually leads further into dependence and darkness. Whether drugs, alcohol or even suicide, there are a variety of self-destructive strategies we can employ to escape the pain of life. Oftentimes, by over indulging in our compensation strategies we begin the process of voluntary or involuntary escape that can often be dangerous and trigger additional unwanted reality. So, of course, the cycle begins again.

Proper individuation/reconciliation offers some clear alternatives. While life is no less painful, difficult or complicated for such people, they have a totally different set of expectations.

Before continuing, I must digress for a moment. As far as anyone knows, Jesus never did anything to “*deserve*” crucifixion. Even Pontius Pilate admitted his death was not “*justifiable*” in any normal sense of the term. However unjustified, his death was “*necessary*.” God does not seem to be “troubled” by injustice, but uses injustice to accomplish that which is *necessary* to fulfill the plan. God uses saints and sinners alike. All are part of the immense plan of the cosmos. Judas was just as necessary as Jesus, regardless of how we feel about Judas or his actions. Within that context I now understand the prologue of John’s gospel to mean: “*In the beginning was the plan, and the plan was with God and the plan was God. The Plan was in the beginning with God and through the Plan all things came into being.*”⁵ Granted, this is not the Neo-Platonic understanding of the “Logos” that most people understand, but in my understanding of the lexographic possibilities of the word “logos” is certainly defensible.

Expectation of Necessity: Based upon the discussion of unjust necessity above, all that we experience has meaning. That means that any particular set of experiences, wanted or not, are necessary for our experience of life. Adversity is just part of the fabric of experience and everything is a blessing. This is the attitude that makes lemonade out of the lemons we encounter in life.

Expectation of Consolation: Properly integrated people console and can be consoled by others when confronted with the pain and difficulties of life. Their experiences often help them to be more compassionate and empathetic to the pain and struggles of others. Time and again I’ve known people, though they were going through their own trauma in life, took the time to listen and console others who were experiencing pain.

Expectation of Participation: These people are fully engaged in whatever life throws at them. If it's an illness, they study and learn all they can about it, join support groups and seek out others who have experienced similar difficulties. Even when confronted with mortal agony, they sometimes eschew pain medication so that they can be fully lucid up to their last breath. These people dance and enjoy life up until the very end. To be fully engaged with the pain, difficulties and complexities of life is to be fully alive.

Inward Experiences of Life

This area of experience is much more difficult to discuss. Rather than dichotomize the different elements as we did above, I'm going to discuss them as transformational processes, going from attachment/dependence toward liberation and empowerment.

Perhaps the best description of the inner reality of dependence/attachment is one of darkness, diffusion and despair. The pain, difficulties and complications of life are so intense and exaggerated there seems to be no way out. Everything seems difficult and there is almost no energy to deal with anything. Options, if they exist, are very limited and mostly unappealing. In this state, options that would normally be unthinkable seem like workable solutions. In this state of affairs, the only option is to do nothing or seek help.

The journey away from the precipice of darkness is to move toward and become the light. The power of light (even the merest glimmer) is a powerful beacon of hope in this darkness. Our sense of identity becomes more coherent as we begin to get in touch with parts of our inner selves from which we've been cut off for seemingly endless ages. That which felt so burdensome and heavy becomes a joy to carry. No logical explanation for this process exists that I know of, but I do have experience with it. The following is a poem I wrote about my experience:

A GLIMMER IN THE DARKNESS

G. Charles Andersen

*Now the shattered visions
And all my broken dreams
And all the tears of bitterness
Overwhelm me like a flood,
Or so it seems.*

*And yet,
Deep within my tortured soul
Some tiny, obstinate spark of hope
Holds off the darkness
From engulfing me.*

*Undaunted, unyielding
Against the irresistible onrush of night
That tiny spark remains.*

*A fragile bastion
Of unconquerable power
Pitted against the merciless
Onslaught of terror and doubt,
That vainly seeks to put out
The hidden promise
Of the coming dawn.*

The Balance of Divergent Paths

In the New Testament, Jesus talks about two divergent paths, the one he is advocating and the one that the scribes and Pharisees offer. Within the context of the ThemeScape, these two divergent paths are called the “The Way of the World” and the “The Way of Wonder.” The ways Jesus describes them is indicated often by the “You’ve heard it said...but I say to you...” sayings. My favorite outline for the Way of Wonder is the following:

²⁵ *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?”*

²⁶ *Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?*

²⁷ *Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span?*

²⁸ *Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin.*

²⁹ *But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them.*

³⁰ *If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?*

³¹ *So do not worry and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or ‘What are we to drink?’ or ‘What are we to wear?’*

³² *All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.*

³³ *But seek first the kingdom (of God) and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides.*

³⁴ *Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil.*

The Way of Wonder

Jesus seems to be advocating a path that is different from the one that most of us are willing to venture upon. This is an ancient path that leads to Wisdom, Authenticity, Integrity and Humility. This is the path Abraham was called to follow:

¹ *The LORD said to Abram: "Go forth from the land of your kinsfolk and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.*

² *"I will make of you a great nation,
and I will bless you;*

*I will make your name great,
so that you will be a blessing.*

³ *I will bless those who bless you
and curse those who curse you.*

*All the communities of the earth
shall find blessing in you."*

⁴ *Abram went as the LORD directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.*

Genesis 12:1-4

Regardless of our age, leaving the familiar and predictable behind must be a difficult and challenging decision. The qualities of Wisdom, Authenticity, Integrity and Humility are ones that we probably all would like to develop, but we want to develop them within the context of the more familiar territory offered by the Way of the World. After all, if you're on the Way of Wonder, how do you know if you're a success or not? One cannot undertake the Way of Wonder without a sense of liberation and empowerment, because there's little external support for such a choice.

The Way of Wonder requires us to lighten our load quite a bit; most of the baggage of life is unnecessary. The primary issues of this path revolve around our sense of 1) being, 2) belonging 3) becoming. These are issues directly related to the primary journey issues of: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going?

Interestingly, the Way of Wonder isn't a forced march into the future. The only way of entering this path is by letting go. Perhaps the best example of this is from scripture:

²⁶ *In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.²⁸ And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."*

²⁹ *But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.*

³¹ *Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus.*

³² *He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father,*

³³ and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

³⁴ But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?”

³⁵ And the angel said to her in reply, “The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.

³⁶ And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren;

³⁷ for nothing will be impossible for God.”

³⁸ Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38

Within this context we hear from the angels lips 1) Do not be afraid [30], 2) God is with you [28] 3) With God, all things are possible [37] The dynamic at work here is the four-fold process of: 1) acceptance 2) gratitude 3) trust 4) surrender.

(Interestingly, this four-fold process underlies so much of the success of twelve-step programs). Without going into the applicability of the twelve steps, we can explore some of the basic aspects of this four fold process.

ACCEPTANCE

God is the author of reality—we might not like it but that doesn't change the fundamental nature of what we experience. So what are we supposed to accept?

Uncertainty Even in the world of Physical Science, uncertainty rules. There is no way of knowing enough about causes or consequences or conditions to be truly certain about anything. Regardless, many people seek an unrealistic degree of predictability and remain frustrated by the mysteries of life. Acceptance of uncertainty allows us to spend our energies in more productive pursuits.

Imperfection Nearly everyone pays lip service to being “imperfect,” yet the quest for perfection is a hallmark of our culture. To be able to accept our limitations is the first step toward true liberation.

Powerlessness We can't control the people and events around us, yet time and again we try. We go so far as to try to manipulate God (by prayers and sacrifices) in order to impact circumstances to turn out our way. However, the truth is simply that nearly everything is beyond our power to control. Even if we seem to have control, however, the uncertainties of life mentioned above are almost guaranteed to provide a range of unforeseen consequences, over which we have no control.

Vulnerability There really is no poltice or panacea to protect us from the pain of life. Neither wealth nor power can protect us

from change or unwanted reality. Wisdom seems to indicate that accepting vulnerability (without seeking or creating more) allows us the freedom to live more creatively.

Responsibility (Appropriate/Un-inflated) Many people don't accept responsibility for their actions, while others burden themselves with responsibilities that are not truly theirs. Even though we're uncertain, powerless and vulnerable, we are responsible to ourselves and to others for the mistakes and injuries we cause as we journey through life. Even though we create unintended consequences, true integration requires us to accept appropriate responsibility for our words and actions.

GRATITUDE

Because of our limited perception, it's difficult to be grateful for things we don't want. In the context of the OntogenicThemeScape, all that we experience has meaning and is necessary for our personal and collective growth.

One of my favorite stories of this attitude of gratitude is in the book *The Hiding Place*, by Corrie Ten Boom. The author and her sister were incarcerated at one of the Nazi concentration camps during World War II, and the sister insisted that each night they give thanks for everything they had experienced that day. Among the many unwanted realities of that brutal experience were the endless swarms of fleas and insects that infested the barracks, so the prisoners were forced to endure additional torment. However, because of the scale of insects, the camp guards were reluctant to go into the barracks and confront the annoyance of the insects. In the long run, it turned out that people who were unable to work could stay behind in the barracks or the prisoners could enjoy a relative degree of freedom because of those insects, who, more or less, stood guard over them and chased the soldiers away. At first, the author could not bear to be grateful for the fleas, but in the end she was able to see the blessing in such an unwanted reality.

So what are we to be grateful for? Probably anything we don't want as well as that which we do want. As Job so eloquently puts it:

"If we take happiness from God's hand, must we not take sorrow too?"

Job 2:10

Among the things to be grateful for could be:

Blessings (Burdens & Joys) Some blessings are easier to be grateful for than others. Developing an attitude of gratitude is essential for a positive sense of well being.

Gifts (Personal) Many people demean their own gifts because they are not the gifts or talents they desire. Each person has particular capabilities, but some are not in touch with what their gifts truly are. Awareness and gratitude for our unique qualities is particularly important in the ongoing journey of life.

Mystery (Sacred-Holy-Real) Mystery surrounds us everywhere, but are we grateful for mystery in our lives. There are those whose lives are dedicated to eliminating and escaping from mystery, while others spend their lives trying to embrace it. What does it mean to be grateful for mystery, and how does it enrich our lives?

History Many people are filled with regrets and resentments from the past. Yet, as we look back we can see that the unwanted memories and events of our lives have shaped and defined us. Can we be truly grateful for our own being if we're not grateful for our history?

TRUST

For many of us who grew up under difficult circumstances, trust can be a very difficult issue to deal with. We experience life very much like the Charles Schultz cartoon character, Charlie Brown. Time after time, Charlie Brown goes to kick the football from the hands of Lucy, only to flop after the ball has been withdrawn suddenly. Regardless of our experience, growth can only occur when we continue to trust, even in spite of our experience. Among the things we need to trust are:

Who We Are

Where We Are

Where We're Going

SURRENDER

The circumstances (including all our possibilities and limitations) of life are filled with an endless variety of Constraints, Challenges, Choices, Changes, and Complexities, whether or not we like it. Ultimately we cannot control other people or circumstances. We can only surrender to reality and respond to it as best we can. For many, this seems somewhat fatalistic. However, there's great wisdom in not spending our energies pursuing impossible strategies. This is the attitude expressed in the serenity prayer:

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things
I cannot change...

Courage to change the things I can, and

Wisdom to know the difference.

The wisdom of Mary in the passage cited above is her faith filled response of surrender: “May it be done to me according to your word.”

Ultimately, the Way of Wonder leads to a life of compassion, creativity and contentment. However, the path is not certain, predictable or pain-free.

The Way of the World

The Way of the World is a far more alluring prospect to most people. It offers us the compelling temptations of power, perfection, security and superiority. If you want to be successful, you must be on this path. However, this is the path of the well known “rat race” of life. It’s about *getting ahead, doing more, having more* and trying to *keep* what you’ve worked so hard to attain. It’s a path that justifies whatever it takes to get where one is going or what one wants. Of course, there’s the inevitable problem of achieving what you set out to accomplish, and finding that once you’re there, it still isn’t enough, or isn’t all that it promised to be. So, inevitably the cycle must begin again. Denial is a very helpful tool in this path of condemnation and compulsion. Control becomes more and more of an issue, as it becomes more and more elusive.

Interestingly, we won’t find a lot of scriptural support for this path [except perhaps Matt. 5:28: “*So be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect,*” but even this is tempered and balanced by the parallel in Luke 6:36 “*Be merciful, just as (also) your Father is merciful.*” Indeed, I think we can conclude that this is the “wide path that leads to destruction”

Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to destruction is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Matt. 7:13-14

Final Ring of Awareness

As we explore the Ontogenic ThemeScape (fig. 1) we realize that it doesn’t describe a linear journey, but more of a spiral path. Sometimes we focus on the inward experience, while at other times our outward encounters occupy or overwhelm us. Some aspects of our life reflect the Way of Wonder, while at other times we walk squarely through the Way of the World. Surrounding the ThemeScape and forming the four outer quadrants are the elements of Magic, Mastery, Meaning and Mystery.

There are times and circumstances in our journey when we exhibit some form of “Magical Thinking” which in psychological parlance is called denial. The art of a magician is based upon illusions. To date I am unaware of people with the power to actually manipulate matter in the ways they claim. Usually they are able to fabricate an experience through deception

and misdirection, which because of our state of mind, we accept as “real.” If one stops to analyze our culture, a great deal of marketing capitalizes on this aspect of Magical Thinking. If we get such and such a product (and only that particular brand of product) we will magically achieve something that’s elusive but important to us. Rarely is there a genuine payoff for this process, but because of the pervasive nature (and the profit motive) we are continually bombarded with such messages.

Another aspect of our journey we learn through sports and other competitive aspects, the whole idea of Mastery. We want to be the best, so we work hard to gain the skills and advantages necessary to propel us to the top. However, in the journey of life there are some pitfalls. Jesus asks the question: “*What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?*” (Mark 8:36). Unfortunately, none of us are truly the master of our fate, in spite of all the hype we’re fed constantly by a world that does not have our best interests in mind. I think this is brilliantly conveyed in the story of the temptation of Jesus in the desert.

Then he took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a single instant. The devil said to him, “I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me.” Jesus said to him in reply, “It is written: ‘You shall worship the Lord, your God, and him alone shall you serve.’”

Luke 4:5-8

To be good at something is mastery in the best sense of the term. However, when mastery becomes a tool for conquest, domination and/or exploitation, there are often problems. In our growth to maturity, we often pass from the quadrant of magic to mastery. Some people vacillate between these two areas for a considerable period of their lives, and some never escape. History is filled with such examples, like Hitler who gravitated to these two areas of life’s journey and never seemed to get beyond them. Hopefully, we can progress to the next quadrant, Meaning.

Most of our discussion has been focused on this particular quadrant, regarding the meaning of our experience. Generally people get to a point where they begin to appreciate more fully some of the deeper things of life. These things are difficult to describe or explain, but certainly can be experienced. Quality becomes more important than scale or quantity: good friends, family, a good nights sleep, time in the garden and so many other things that may have been overlooked in earlier stages of development become more relevant to our experience of life. Faithfulness to our own values and the things which make us unique begin to become more evident and more important. As the years pass, the journey of other people begins to interest us as we discover that we can learn a great deal from the experience of others. However, the deeper we go into the meaning of our experience we sooner or later cross over into the realm of mystery.

Of course, for we humans, death is the most dominant and pervasive mystery that confronts us. However, backing up from that precipice we find that we are engulfed in the mystery of living, loving, learning and growing. Maybe these things have meaning and maybe they don’t. Like a mountain looming in the fog of life, mystery suddenly is painted in sharp relief in the landscape of our mind. Many people recoil at the intrusion of mystery in their lives and

seek escape once again into the territories of magic or mastery. Ultimately however, we each must face at some moment the awesome mystery of our own expiration. As contradictory as it seems, the real power for effective living comes in embracing the terror of the unknown and letting the wisdom and beauty of our sunset illuminate our lives.

IN THAT TWILIGHT MOMENT

*In that twilight moment, as the night descends
Shall I curse the daylight as it ends
Or look then for my evening star
Beyond the waning light?
Will I discover the beauty of sunset
And the promise of night?*

*In the setting sun is shone
What perhaps we've always known
But can't comprehend
That the day must end
And the night descend
On the daylight of our lives.
But then beyond the twilights glow,
Past horizons yet to know
Is there a sunrise on some distant shore?*

*So in the days that yet remain,
Filled with sunshine or with pain,
Shall we look ahead?
Not with fear and dread
But perhaps instead
Let the love light glow within.
For then beyond the twilights glow
Past horizons yet to know
There'll be a sunrise on a distant shore.*

*So in life's twilight moment, as the night descends
There's no need to curse the daylight as it ends.
Just look then for your evening star
Beyond the waning light.
And there discover the beauty of sunset
And the promise of night?*

So, that's the short tour of the Ontogenic ThemeScape. Figure 1 summarizes most of this fairly clearly. The ThemeScape provides a conceptual infrastructure to help us engage some relatively important ideas and issues. The next step is to explore how this information can be applied in a variety of settings.

NOTES:

1. These questions were posed by the anthropologist David Maybury Lewis in his wonderful film series, Millenium: Tribal Wisdom.
2. Carl Jung—individuation citation
3. Genesis citation—Garden of Eden story.
4. Edinger—Ego & Archetype quote about individuation/re-unification
5. John 1:1