

The Brief Chronicle of A Mythogenic War
By
Charles Andersen

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 psycho-mythic 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 was now a large number of Psychonesian soldiers there to protect the retreat of their 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 Archytors 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 counselled 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 its 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.