How is Psychology a Mythology?
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A myth is a fantasy, a preferred lie, a foundational story, a hypnotic trance, an identity game, a virtual reality, one that can be either inspirational or despairing. It is a story in which I cast myself; it is my inner cinema, the motion picture of my inner reality - one that moves all the time. No diagnosis can fix the myth, no cure can settle it, because our inner life is precisely what, in us, will not lie still.

How Facts Acquire Meaning Through Fiction

A fact is a fact. Immutable. A man tells you his story: "due to a (:an accident ten years ago, I had a leg amputated." There are no two versions of the objective fact of amputation. There is no subsequent version in which his lost leg grows back or of the collision averted. Historically, the amputation is complete.

Nevertheless, as this man starts telling not just the fact, but a story of the accident, the incident becomes infused with emotions and interpretations. In the act of editing and mixing both fact and affect, our existential freedom as well as our identity is created.

Our psychic identity derives from our fictionalization of facts that complicate the events into a story, forming a narrative that inevitably takes on some of the characteristics of a myth.

A myth has at its core a timeless, eternal quality. For example, at the core of the mother myth, there is something that is eternally present: the care and compassion for the helpless, needy, hungry, vulnerable life (a baby, a kitten, a new idea not yet formulated, a sick old person …). Whatever needs our compassion has the power to constellate the mother archetype. Without this instinct to feed and protect, our species would not have survived. Yet there are numerous ways to feed and protect both concrete and symbolic, and it is in our various interpretations of this eternal quality of compassion that we express creativity.

To stay with the example of the car accident that caused a person to lose a limb, this man can tell his story from the archetypal position of victim: "see how unlucky I am? Somebody hit me and I lost a leg.. Oh pity me!" Being victimized is a universal theme that gives the story its mythical dimension. Every human being experiences victimization in some way, which explains why it is a recurrent motif in all mythologies, all of which contain numerous stories about a character becoming a victim of circumstances, fate, or oppression.

Yet, seeing through1 to one's myth is what allows room for transformation, for what Jung called individuation. There are two avenues to allow for this psychic movement – same myth, new version, or same facts, new myth.

The first avenue of change is to remain in the same myth but interpret it anew, in a less destructive or neurotic manner. It is like a remake of a movie: same basic theme, but with a different take on it. For example a woman who feels imprisoned in her mother-myth may realize that her interpretation of the mother archetype is sacrificial and destructive, and that there are other ways to interpret, play out, express, act out the archetype of mother. She may come to see that she has bought into a culturally oppressive interpretation of the mother myth. She "sees through" her myth ("yes, I have children at home and still want to be a good mother") but she also sees how her need to immolate herself on the altar of motherhood is

not an essential quality of the archetype, not essential for her loved ones to be properly fed and protected. Her suffering came from an oppressive interpretation of the myth. Change will come for her by the creation of a new way of interpreting the essential core of the mother myth.

The other avenue of transformation is a letting go of the tired myth and moving to another archetype, another myth altogether, to stop mothering because the nest is now empty and there are other ways to relate than taking care. The man who lost his leg in a car accident, by becoming conscious this, his psyche caught in the victim myth can move into a different archetype: from the position of victim, to a position of hero. Moving from victim to hero does not change any of the facts, it is only a change of the myth through which one perceives the facts. The story of victimization and powerlessness, now morphs into a story of courage and hope: "let me tell you how I surmounted my handicap; see how proud I am of my accomplishments; I have discovered strength in myself that I did not know I had." The archetypal lens of victim is passive ("bad things just happen to me"), whereas the heroic lens is active ("here what I do with this fact"). Both the fact of having lost a leg (victim) and the new heroic attitude can reside in the story, but the myth that drives the story accounts for very different plot outcomes.

In moving from victim to hero, the man is expressing what Jean-Paul Sartre called existential freedom.[2] Sartre's notion of freedom begins with the question: what do I do with what was done to me? What he called one's situation is the sum of the objective facts: gender, class, race, amputation, having babies to take care of, or the bars in the window of the prison. Freedom begins with how one interprets that situation, creates a version of the story, and angles the plot with a certain archetypal inflection. From his prison cell, Sartre began his treatise about freedom. Being imprisoned by the Germans was his lived and inescapable situation. What he did with it (write a book) was the expression of his freedom, his mythical amplification that gave his life meaning. Rather than giving his situation the power to define him, he amplified it in the form of a treatise on what, from the outside viewer's vision, he did not have: freedom.

A friend of mine had a stellar career very early in his youth. From age twenty to fifty, his myth was that of the hero/prodigy/savior of the family, a well-known motif of mythology. He was the one with the talent, the glory, the money, and the honey. When he turned fifty, his myth, that had supported him so well, suddenly collapsed. He grew resentful of all members of his extended family, feeling certain they were exploiting him by burdening him with the financial responsibilities for the whole clan. He began perceiving himself as their "cash cow" instead of their hero. The myth of the star/prodigy/hero recoiled into its opposite: the gullible fool, the beast of burden that carries everybody's baggage, the victim. He dreamt of empty wells, blood hemorrhage, exhausted work horses, thinning to death, losing all his medals, feeling the pangs of famine in a rich country, and falling from the roof. Jung called this kind of head-to-tail story an enantiodromia, a reversal of the myth into its opposite. The story that had been felt as glorifying was now felt as humiliating. He had become, mythically, his inverted double.

Now, after a five-year long trip to the Underworld, he is back with a new story. When he recounts his life, the myth in which he situates himself has the same sequence of events, but the role he cast himself in the play is totally different: neither that of hero, nor that of victim, but of somebody older and wiser and who feels pride at having seen through the whole fantasy that had years before shaped and indeed governed his entire existence. The cup of

bitterness was drank to the dregs. His story now looks like this: "I have been initiated, I learned a thing or two about myself and I feel wiser." This wisdom is his honey.

Even if we were to apply ourselves to write a poly-biography by adding as many perspectives as we can conjure into awareness, there would still exist enough room left over for interpretation and change. Our life-story is never hermetically sealed, air tight, unexposed to change. Our human condition, by its very nature, makes any definitive version impossible. Revision is our constant companion.

Fictionalization is Unavoidable.

We inevitably fictionalize when we talk as well as when we write. The person who writes cannot avoid fictionalizing a reader; even the most private activity of writing one's dream notebook implies fictionalizing oneself as analyst of oneself, or witness to our own dreams. In the writing of this article, I cannot help but fictionalize a conversation with new students being introduced to the concept of "myth," with former patients whose therapy allowed a radical change of personal myth, with colleagues, family, friends, and that most elusive of all characters: the unknown reader. To find the right words, I have to imagine all possible readers gathered around my computer screen, my tribe around the fire, having a conversation about the relevance of the notion of myth in the adventure of psychological transformation.

The post Jungian approach that calls itself Archetypal Psychology[3] is, more explicitly than others, an exercise in awareness of what is implied by a change of myth. The ideas of Archetypal Psychology are rich and complex but the method is quite simple, although simplicity is sometimes hard to attain. To apply the method, one starts by replacing "why" with "who," "what," "when" and "how." Who (which archetype, which sub-personality, which cultural or personal myth), is organizing my perceptions? Who is this person in front of me? A girlish princess, lonely and loveless, expecting me to play the part of the rescuing heroic prince? Or a queen, suggesting an alliance? Is this guy a big bad wolf? Has he just lost a shoe or devoured a young girl? Is this Narcissus-in-me having a fit because I wasn't introduced with fanfare? Who is this person offering me love: the Great Mother's generous breast or the hungry mouth of an unweaned baby? Who surfaced in my consciousness when I woke up this morning? How do I behave when I most feel that I am an American? A Californian? An immigrant who came from a French-Speaking country? What makes me feel like a woman? What needs to happen for my professional persona to show up, on time, and properly dressed? Who am I as a lover? A friend? A parent? What in that movie made me feel uncomfortable? When am I most furious? What is it that most bothers me in this situation? What brings out the puppy-in-me, one that wants to play when I should be grading papers and checking the punctuation in this article? Is this my puppy aeternus complex showing up again?

The Fabrication of a Myth, The Dismantling of a Lie

A myth occurs when the objective reality confuses itself with a subjective reality. The myth is, so to speak, a montage, and montages can lie -but they can inspire as well. A myth can support either revolution or the status quo; it can provoke enthusiasm or repression. To see how a myth is fabricated, one might perceive how it is deconstructed, undone, deleted. Every orthodoxy struggles to enclose individuals in a given role so as to limit the possibilities of escaping traditional boundaries and to minimize change. To break free, one needs not only the construction of a new myth but the deconstruction of the old one. Otherwise the old, worn out

myth, which may cripple or amputate one's growth, remains active but hidden, and hidden, destructive.

As an example: for individuals to even begin to see the ridiculousness of an identity defined by the color of one's skin, they must first become conscious of a lousy, narrow-minded and damaging cultural myth called Racism. "Something hurts, and it has a name: racism." Naming the oppressive myth allows the beginning of a dismantling; giving a language to it forces it into the open for scrutiny and disassembling. One of the many tricks orthodoxy implements to maintain the status quo is to minimize the task, or, if that fails, to declare the old myth gone, obsolete, antiquated: "don't worry about racism, not here; our organization exercises zero tolerance towards racism." Political correctness, for example, can hide the fact that the new myth has not quite settled in place: "racism? Where? Who? Not us! You are mistaken! How dare you!"

Like a bacteria that grows back because the antibiotics were stopped too soon, not given enough time to penetrate deeply into the vermin, an old powerful myth does not die that easily or without a fight. A young black actor who carries the hope of a post-racist society one day smells the old wounding: "you are offering me the role of Othello simply because my skin is black. The role I am interested in is that of King Lear! "The deconstruction was not yet complete, and although that young actor may have felt fine with his white friends, suddenly, the old myth begins hurting again because it is not quite dead. The insistent bacteria, still alive, begins to infect the entire organism, both individual and collective.

Another example is that of the feminist revolution; it has been declared finished, a relic now of the recent past. Many young female intellectuals will gladly take a stand to declare feminism a cause for frustrated angry old radicals. Then, one day, a young student at the university is shocked to discover that the professor she so admires, although having made a pass at her, is not really pleased by her intellectual admiration for him. More seriously, she is hurt to discover that the admired professor, although he likes the admiration of women, would rather have male followers and disciples whom he can mold into clones of himself; they carry more weight!

The more the young woman sees through the still active sexist myth, the more successfully she is able to track how it still permeates her own consciousness as, well as the psyche of her entire milieu. Only through conscious suffering can one reveal a lousy and outmoded myth 's detritus that affect language, thought and behavior. The destructive myths are exposed through the grit of suffering.

Gender identities, racial identities, professional identities: all are based on an admixture of an old and a new myth. Like a Dionysian mask, an identity can be worn with more-or-less cynicism or enthusiasm. Only when a given identity begins to pinch, however, is one provoked to peer more closely at what its foundation is; only then begins the task of dismemberment, deconstruction, destruction, and, if necessary, to murder of the old myth. In other words, only after having exploded the unbearable orthodoxies can new identities emerge. All so-called "personality traits" (of Blacks, of Jews, of Latinos, of men, of women), all of which are culturally based, are revealed as unsustainable beliefs; the myth fractures, the dramatic story collapses.

Deconstruction, Reconstruction

When myths become discernable we perceive more sharply how we all have our role to play in the vast social drama. We enact our small part on stage, strut and fret perhaps, and perform with as much brilliance as we can. We dress a certain way, act in a particular style, adapt our persona to the current trends, memorize the right lines, and generally become competent in a role. Role-playing is essential to life in society, Nevertheless, by remaining aware that it is a role, a myth, we know the script can be modified if it becomes the source of oppression. Five acts can be collapsed into four if that compression serves to realign the myth that prevails. Oppression, however, comes from the tendency of any ruling orthodoxy to interpret what is unchangeable (color of skin, gender, age, national identity) as having a predetermined meaning, one that supports the dominant myth to the exclusion of any other stories. That is why myth-debunking is a perennial and on-going task. So is mythmaking: unending creation and destruction, which is the way of the created order in its own cycles of birth and death. Such is the vitality of life's recurring cycles.

Furthermore, psychological consciousness involves a regular and vigilant editing of our scripted roles. An analyst can offer assistance in the task of revising our roles, suggesting the right words and editing our lines in the collective drama so that our role becomes more chiseled. That is why analysis appears to many as an adventure of a literary, poetical, philosophical, mythological nature, even an intense metamorpho- sis through words, bywords, and with words. If Jacques Lacan4 had had the talent, or the generosity, to express himself with more simplicity, his suggestion that "the unconscious is structured like a language" might not have ended up as one more fading faddish cliche and a larger number of practitioners would have benefited from his insight. One of the most severe and intelligent critiques of Jacques Lacan's intellectual snobbishness comes from the French psychoanalyst, Francois Roustang, who studied with Lacan and worked with the Lacanian approach for many years.5

Instead of a clutter of Lacanian buzz words, we would instead have been able to consider his idea that language is always a betrayer. Words serve more than one master. Words are not faithful; in fact, they are often traitors and betrayers. Their betrayal is obvious in the roles we playas social actors and Lacan himself was a major player at creating confusion with words in service of building his own glory. Most of all, words reveal their treachery in the analytic situation because that setting is essentially a word game. We use language to tell our story and construct our myth. By resting on language so heavily, such an enterprise is always a most unstable creation.

Even when we are delighted at having found just the right words to tell our story, there is no guarantee that a reality abides behind the fiction. Jacques Derrida was another word twister. Because of his thick and often inaccessible jargon, he reached primarily an academic audience. Few practitioners effectively or competently answered his invitation to consider the unconscious as a text and analysis as a deconstruction of that same text.

Text, in his personal dictionary, is everything and anything that can be interpreted or deconstructed. Patriarchy is a text; Feminism is a deconstruction of it. Your mother is a text for you and in therapy you attempt, with able assistance if you are fortunate, to interpret that puzzling text. Your house, your decor, the meal that you are serving: all are texts that your guests, with assumed or authentic pleasantness, struggle to read. Serving them chestnut-fennel creme soup as appetizer may lead to a few interpretations, both welcome and unpleasant.

Culture is a text. You yourself are a text to be interpreted by yourself. Not an easy task when one learns how ill-equipped he or she is for the climb! The responsibility of the patient in analysis is to read the text first and then to deconstruct its meaning. As meaning can escape even the author of the text, analysis is a lesson in humility. It can never pretend to uncover all meaning. The best one can hope for is to raise one's awareness of what is being said by the text, the context, the subtext. One can also develop an ear for what is not being said, but can nonetheless be felt. The text remains, at least in part, silent, inscrutable, deserving of another run at it.

Telling one's story does not take one to Truth with a capital "T." Truth remains elusive because it is based on facts that can be interpreted in multiple ways. Instead of looking for Truth, archetypal psychology invites us to pay attention to the distance or the proximity between the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves as well as the stories others relate about us or to us. There exists a significant distance between the old script that kept my friend going for years ("I am the /that a reality/ prodigy, the success story of the family") and in which he envisions himself as having been used ("I was naive and did not see I was just a cash cow for the whole clan"). Through words primarily this distance is felt, offering an interpretation that opens one to change by shifting the mythos one lives within.

The new myth, even if more painful than previous instances (it is not so pleasant to be going from "genius" to "cash cow"), nonetheless reveals important insights. This form of psychological creativity leads to what the Ancients used to call *amor fati* (love of one's fate), a concept I find most beautiful. Love of one's fate should not be interpreted as a fatalistic attitude and a passive acceptance of one's destiny. Rather, it means a love of one's story, a comprehensive understanding that whatever happens is happening to me; it means that I participate in the creation of the dramatic scenes. Even my messes are my own. They are the turns I took in my story, and because my story is mine, I embrace and love it. This is it. This is me. This is my life. Amor fati. Escaping it is futile and foolish.

Frederich Nietzsche used this same notion to signify the acceptance of what is and the love of what is becoming.[6] He saw this disposition as the crowning achievement of the Dionysian attitude; it was for him more than an acceptance but rather more like a desire to know the specific form in which one's destiny unfolds.

Structure versus Content

A narrative is constructed with words. Therefore, another way to explore how words betray is to examine the inherent vagueness of any metaphor. It is for this reason that scientists have to adhere to a technical language; metaphors are therefore viewed as the enemy of the kind of precision and objectivity so critical for scientific rationality. However, human emotions are not objective events. Technical language can never communicate the subjective meaning because meaning is best expressed in a style that accompanies symbolic resonance. When I tell my story, my style is very different from, say, that of a biologist reporting on the speed of multiplication of a bacteria observed through the microscope for a given duration.

When describing my inner life, I may begin with the facts. However, I cannot help falling into a flurry of adjectives and adverbs, thus revealing my imaginal inner world (my mythology). Subjectivity cannot be expressed without resorting to metaphor. I'll say for example: this relationship I is choking me (metaphor); she is a vampire (metaphor); my boss is a slave-

driver (metaphor); teenagers are tyrannical (metaphor); politics are rotten (metaphor); the economy is paranoid (metaphor).

Psychological analysis gained many invaluable insights from the structuralist approach of Levi-Strauss[7] by discerning the hidden ideological strength and abuse that language inevitably carries. For example, structures of opposition[8] (night/day[9], sky/earth[10], male/ female, raw/ cooked, sacred/profane) reveal the whole system of values that give metaphors their power.

While Lacan applied Levi-Strauss's structuralist approach to expose the structure of the unconscious, other depth psychologists, especially C.G. lung and some of the post-Jungians, chose a very different road by studying not only the structure but also the content of metaphors and myths. The post-Jungian author, Michael Vannoy Adams, in his *The Fantasy Principle* argues that although in classical, conventional Jungian analysis, archetypes are defined as structures, it would be more accurate, from a post-structuralist perspective, to consider archetypes like constructs. Instead of asking, for example, "does the story present a structure of opposition between night and day, or earth and sky?" the Jungians and post-Jungian archetypalists ask: "what emotion, what archetypal quality is personified by these characters, what kind of symbolism are we presented with here, which archetypes are constellated?"[11]

Of course, one could, and many do, argue that archetypes are structures, although the word structure (like paradigm, grid, pattern, or code) has multiple meanings for different authors. Jung, for instance, never achieved the academic standing that the structuralists commanded and that failure may be, in part, because an archetypal quality cannot be translated into a neat, quasi-mathematical schema such as those the structuralists were so fond of. The analysis of archetypes is much like reviewing a film; it is a battle of interpretations. There is no mathematical modeling, no putting in a formula one's archetypal perspective. It exists beyond quantification, but exists nonetheless.

Let's take the example of reporting on the quality of a wine. The grower, like the scientist, can objectively report the year, the location, and even the chemical composition. The oenophile can certainly use that information, but that is not the clue to his reputation. Like an archetypalist, the lover of wine has a rich vocabulary of metaphors to communicate to others the aroma, the color, the texture, and the taste. He might say, for instance, "cherry with a touch of blueberry," a "pepper finish," "a hint of tobacco," "an amazing leg," none of which literally appear or exist in the bottle. There is no blueberry, no tobacco, no pepper in wine, and wine certainly has no legs! The magic of metaphorical language is that others tasting the same wine understand perfectly and so feel the metaphorical ingredient. The vocabulary that comes with developing a taste for wine, although metaphorical, is precise, constant, and relatively reliable. Taste buds get it.

By contrast, a technical description of the chemical composition is more stable, but if one day a law were passed prohibiting the use of metaphorical language to describe the qualities of wine, it would be like robbing Dionysus to pay Apollo - a big pagan sin! It would be like the imposition of a totalitarian dictatorship on words. Inner life is just like wine; we need a metaphorical vocabulary to communicate the quality of our emotions. Feelings, like aromas, are spontaneously expressed by one's using rich imaginal language. For this reason among others, Archetypal Psychology is definitely in the camp of the Humanities because our inner cinema is not so concerned with objective reality that it ignores the other terrains of experience. Inner life is a virtual production whose truth is of the kind we call "artistic truth."

Just as someone who has a nose for wine, a good depth psychologist can "smell" the archetype lending flavor to the mix: an untamed shrew covering a lovely queen (Shakespeare got that one) ; a taste of whining baby mixed with a touch of sadism; a strong warrior basis, with an undercurrent of love kitten; immediate sweetness followed by a sour aftertaste of a resentful matron....

Case Study: Five Facts and a Shifting Fiction

The biographical facts of our lives do not change. In principle, a fact is something objective and verifiable, as Holmes would point out to his dear faithful pseudo-wife, the dear intuitive doctor Watson. What changes is our interpretation of the facts, an essentially subjective, unstable process shaped by personal and cultural imagination. In analysis the examination of facts usually does not take much time to establish; the work really starts with the analysis of how one imagines their meaning to be shaped, distorted, reconfigured.

One of my patients appeared at the first session with the following collection of five facts: "1) My wife and I have been married for twelve years; 2) We have three kids; 3) Our house is a new construction, with three bedrooms and two garages; 4) My wife and I both work full-time; 5) I filed for divorce."

These are the five facts established at the first session. Although this man was one of the most rational and "factual" persons I had ever met, his "facts" were not related in a way that would satisfy a detective. Inevitably, a narrator adds adjectives and adverbs, judgments, feelings, analogies and metaphors to fill out the facts with a fiction. In other words, he had a perspective on, and an interpretation of, the facts.

The full narrative from that first session looked more like this: "1) After twelve years of marriage, there is not much passion left, only a boring, domestic routine and an equally boring sexual routine; 2) My wife had wanted to have three kids and we did. I had wanted only two. Three young kids is a heavy responsibility and I resent it; 3) Our new house is badly designed, with two garages there is more space for our cars than for our kids; 4) We both are workaholics, working more and more hours every year; 5) When I asked for a divorce, I was expecting her to try to save our marriage, but she did not even argue. I want to fix the marriage. It feels like a failure. I want her back."

The narrative continues to evolve, even if the fact of the divorce happens just as announced at the first therapy session. Now, a year into the therapy, the story has new layers of complexity and further plot twists. First we had the five facts, then facts + a perspective, and now we have: facts + perspective + time. "6) The most difficult thing for me now is to sleep by myself, and to be deprived of sex. I had no idea how much I would miss her body; 7) I have responsibility for the kids every other week and I feel totally exhausted and angry; 8) She opted out of the house. She took an apartment in town with the money from the settlement. I kept the house, but I regret it. I feel trapped in suburbia; 9) I feel I have been abandoned; 10) I still hope she'll rethink that divorce and come back home."

With the work of time and therapy, the house that felt too small, ill-conceived, too suburban, slowly wears a different valence: "I took over the space of the two-car garage, made it into a kind of study, office, private space for me and I love it. I retreat there and the kids respect it. "The new meanings that emerge change his memories. For example, early in his therapy, what seemed most difficult for him was to sleep by himself and be deprived of sexual

pleasure. Two years into the therapy, he says: "the most difficult challenge for me since the beginning has been to learn to be a good father to my kids."

The perception he now has of his past emotions has shifted under the influence of the emotions of today. The present always colors the past. He now feels as a joy what was then an ordeal. Two years ago, the responsibility of fathering was a negative experience but today it is a positive one. Even the story of the divorce is no longer a story of failure. "Divorce brought me much closer to my children; I am a better person today."
The following years saw the complete disappearance of his wish for his ex-wife to return home. His notion of a happy ending ceased to involve the return of his wife. Instead, and certainly with much suffering, he created a different story of the past which significantly defined his future. The facts of a life follow a trajectory similar to a binary program in which exist only two possibilities: either an event happened (value of I) or it did not happen (value of 0). By contrast, a narrative involves infinite possibilities of interpretation and has the capacity to travel in any direction, more like a hypertext than a linear line on a page. The task of imagination, then, is to carry that hypertext, upgrade it daily to the links that constitute our identity. One can, and must, invent new interpretations, new links, all the time, and that is why the development of imagination plays such a role in the quality of inner life. Those links may be a combination of metaphorical, and literal connections.

Sartre may have been extraordinarily radical in affirming this process as the basis of freedom. Others followed with different formulations. Sartre's school friend, Paul Ricoeur, examined with phenomenological precision and academic language the dimension of time in the structure of one's narrative (Time and Narrative). First I have a vague sense of who I want to be, anticipating my identity (Ricoeur's prefiguration); then I play the role according to the persona I've created (con-figuration). Then, each time I explain who I am, I interpret anew each of these temporal elements (refiguration). Marcel Proust, in his Remembrance of Things Past, expressed the same insights, adding to the dimension of time and the dimension of place. His characters (for example, Swann) do not appear to be the same in the little village of Combray, or in Parisian society. Proust reveals how our persona varies according to the location, and how time will inevitably modify our perception of the whole cast of characters and their stories. Time does not therefore simply pass; it transforms what it passes.

Facts acquire meaning when they are made an essential part of a narrative, one that will keep evolving until our last breath. The shimmering effect of the multitude of meanings comprises the nature of the personal myth and is the basis for psychological vitality. The myth becomes oppressive and psychic vitality is lost when the narrative is forced into a genre (like that of the clinical case history, or the judicial deposition, or the one-size-fits-all narrative of redemption in the afterlife). Such forcing the narrative demeans its subtlety.

A richness of imagination is the best cure against despair. Perhaps the most important question, to remain psychologically alive, is to ask ourselves: who shall I be, until I die?

Notes
1. For James Hillman this "seeing through" to the myth operating in the background is the basis of all our psychological explorations. It defines the process of becoming conscious. See his chapter on Psychologizing, in *Re-Visioning Psychology*.
2. Jean Paul Sartre. *Being and Nothingness.*
3. See James Hillman's *Archetypal Psychology.*
4. See *Ecrits: The First Complete Edition in English and The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis.*

5. See *The Lacanian Delusion*. Also *Dire Mastery: Discipleship from Freud to Lacan*.
6. Nietzsche used the notion of Amor Fati in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and also in *Will to Power*.
7. Levi-Strauss, C. *Anthropologie Structurale* Vol. 1. See also *Anthropologie structural deux*.
8. See Gilbert Durand, *The Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary*.
9. See Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*.
10. See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*.
11. See for example how James Hillman analyses and deconstruct the content of the stories told in therapy, in *Healing Fiction*.

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