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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MYTH FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MYTH FOR

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

by

Sara McClendon Stohler

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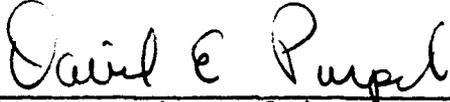
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This dissertation explores the question of whether myth
represents a kind of knowledge and a way of knowing useful
to children at particular stages of development. The question
is approached through an examination of theories about the
potential significance of myth as an element in and shaper
of modern consciousness. Myth as a way of interpreting
reality is contrasted with the scientific rationalism of our
age and is defined as a way of assigning meaning through
narratives and symbols that create a unified concept of na-
ture and human life.

The study found that the importance of myth in the learn-
ing process is different at different stages of development.
At all stages, attention to myth in education supports the
values of imagination, meaning, and community; but in child-
hood the main contribution is to developing the imagination
and in adolescence, to establishing meaning.

To explore the value of myth for culture and education,
an examination is made of works of several writers who sug-
gest that myth continues to be important to people who no
longer live in primitive or closed religious societies. Con-
cerns central to this study, such as myth in an age of science,
myth as an expression of universal characteristics of the
psyche, the role of myth in developing the imagination, the
effect of myth on our understanding of the individual in

relation to community, and the importance of myth to cultural symbols, are examined from the writings of Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, and Northrop Frye.

Studies are examined that support the idea that children of our century and culture have a significant relation to and need for myth that directly influences their educational development. Recent studies are reviewed that point to the correspondence between Piaget's early findings about the mythic elements in child thought and Bettelheim's theories about the child's close connection with fairy tales. An examination of these writings concludes that there is strong evidence that traditional stories reflect the child's conception of reality and emotional needs more accurately than do realistic stories. These findings are applied to Egan's theory of curriculum that defines the first stage of education development as the "mythic stage," as well as to concerns about educating the imagination.

Investigation into the educational needs of adolescents focuses on the importance of philosophic ideas for this age and interprets this interest as a need to construct a myth that organizes knowledge and establishes personal meaning. Erikson's writings about the importance of ideology to the adolescent task of identity formation and Piaget's observations about the philosophic abilities and needs of adolescent thinkers provide the basis for the argument that myth in its ideological function is of primary importance to youth. Educational theory and strategies are suggested that focus on

the student's need to think philosophically about cultural and personal myths.

The perspective of myth introduces community as an important value in culture and in education. The analysis of education and community from this perspective poses some fundamental value conflicts over issues such as individualism, materialism, and progress. This study uses Oliver's perspective on community as a traditional form that meets human needs better than utilitarian, corporate organization models. The argument is made that myth and community are mutually dependent and that education that focuses on the need for myth must be supportive of the student's need to understand and identify sources of community.

Suggestions are made about areas for futher study, in particular the implications of this study for approaches to children's reading, to science curricula and to moral education.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following
committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the
University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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A special thanks to my husband, Hugh, and to our children, Jacob and Sallie, for giving love, encouragement without pressure, and plenty of space on the dining room table. I am also grateful to Margaret Thompson who typed the study for her efficiency and flexibility.

Finally, I want to express my appreciation to New Garden Friends School for its existence as a unique school that demonstrates for me and others that new and sometimes "idealistic" conceptions about education can take shape and flower in "the real world."

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is the pedagogical function of myth, involving such questions as: Is there a form or content in myths that teaches in a way appropriate to children? Do myths represent a way of knowing and certain values that are missed when attention is focused on reason and empirical investigation? Do myths give a different way of viewing reality that is both useful and valid? My approach to these questions has been to examine some of the major writings about the meaning of myth from a contemporary perspective and to investigate theories supportive of the hypothesis that myth represents knowledge and a way of knowing useful to school-aged children.

It may also be important to state what I am not including in this study. This is not an investigation into how to incorporate the great myths of the world in a humanities curriculum. Little is said here about the use of Greek, Norse or Indian mythology at different levels or the value of studying those or other particular myths. One will look in vain for names like Zeus, Athena, Balder, Homer, Bullfinch. But neither is this study concerned with the examination of modern myths, those themes or ideologies that represent the stories and visions by which secular cultures in our day interpret their goals and values, although the signficance

of both modern and ancient myths is discussed at various

points. Rather the focus is on the function of myth in human

development and the significance of a "mythic perspective"

on educational issues.

Jacques Ellul (1975) observes that the attention being

given to myth in our time appears to be something of an

anachronism. The movement of western civilization over the

past several centuries has been away from myth and towards

science, technology and rationalism as the dominant modes of

thought. In fact, in the 19th century intellectual world

myths seemed to belong to the past, Ellul observes. But the

work of depth psychology gave new meaning to myths as the

expressions of deep and complex human tendencies, first in

a negative sense by Freud and then in a positive role by

Jung. Our attitude toward myth is changing:

> By a strange reversal, what now seems childish
> is not the imaginary myth but the rationalistic
> philosophy which called it in question through a
> failure to understand it. Cicero is seen to be
> more simplistic than Homer. (Ellul, 1975, p. 89)

In discovering that myths are more than the interesting

but inaccurate way that prescientific peoples explained

natural phenomena, anthoropologists, psychologists, theolo-

gians and literary critics, in particular, have developed

new theories about the place of myth in human consciousness

and its role in human society. I do not find much evidence

that these theories have made an impact on educational ideas

and they may not so long as the social and political climate

continue to insist that the schools' main function is to
prepare students to meet the needs of an industrial society.
The underlying conflict between the mythic mode of thought
and the current modes in Western culture is one of the con-
siderations of this study.

Defining Myth

In this investigation, I have had to struggle constantly
with the problem of setting limits on the term "myth," of
maintaining some reasonably consistent definition. The
problem has not been with the common misuse of "myth" to
refer to mistaken and discarded ideas. That popular use of
"myth" comes from the 19th-century attitude, which still pre-
vails, that mythic perceptions are erroneous ones. However,
it is easy enough to make a distinction between the use of
"myth" to refer to a misconception and the use of the term
to refer to those philosophic stories and themes that hu-
mans always have and continue to create. The problem with
definition is the question of whether, or to what extent,
modern ideologies and cultural themes are the extension of
myth or are a related but different conceptual form. In
working with the idea of myth I have found that its value to
us lies as much in its ancient symbolism as in its schematic
qualities, and thus modern forms that do not draw on that
body of symbolism in any significant way may be only partially
mythic. Consequently, I have sought a definition that is
specific enough in giving attention to the body of mytho-
logical stories but also broad enough to suggest an ongoing

process. The following definition provides that kind of

balance but is not quite complete:

> Myth is to be defined as a complex of stories--
> some no doubt fact, and some fantasy--which, for
> various reasons, human beings regard as demonstra-
> tions of the inner meaning of the universe and of
> human life. Myth is quite different from philosophy
> in the sense of abstract concepts--consisting of
> vivid, sensually intelligible narratives, images,
> rites, ceremonies and symbols. (Anderson & Groff,
> 1972, p. 42, quoted from Alan Watts, Myth and
> Ritual in Christianity)

Anderson and Groff (1972) add to that definition the idea

that a myth is a story that operates on the assumption that

there is order, meaning, design, and a life force behind

nature by which the myth creates a "holistic, all-encompasing

picture of nature and of man" (p. 43). Thus the essence of

myth is, they suggest, that it "endows nature with life and

purpose" (p. 54). We can say, then, that a myth is a way

of assigning meaning and order to the universe and human

life through narratives and symbols that create a holistic

picture of nature and man.

This way of defining myth is no problem when we are con-

sidering the ancient myths or those that people not influ-

enced by modern thought continue to live by. But what does

it mean for people in the West whose vision of wholeness,

if they ever had one, is seriously challenged by a natura-

listic conception of the physical world and a deterministic

conception of human nature? Once the animism is gone, how

does one again "endow nature with life and purpose"? Once

one has seen the world as absurd and has looked into the

void, how can s/he talk about order and meaning in the uni-
verse? It is understandable that many will argue that to
talk about myth again in our age is to talk about regression
or engage in hopeless fantasy.

There are, I suggest, two different ways that the person
today is connected with myth: one is the ties we continue
to have with the original form of myth and the other is the
continuation of myth-making in forms altered by the social
and intellectual changes of the last centuries.

There are several ways that people today are linked with
myths more closely than is usually recognized. Our dreams
participate in the themes and symbols common to all of the
great myths, as Jung has demonstrated (see Chapter I). At
a subconscious level the dream-myth world is one with which
we are deeply involved. Also the world of childhood is more
closely akin, both cognitively and emotionally, to myth than
has usually been acknowledged. To be a child, or to work
with children, I will argue below, is to be related to myth.
The adult's relationship to myth is primarily through reli-
gion and art, for the aesthetic and the religious are both
expressions of the inner world that works with mythic images
and patterns to create meaning and order. Also, myth influ-
ences our culture through metaphors we have derived from the
stories. Thus Prometheus represents the struggles of the
humanist and the liberator against orthodoxy; Sisyphus, the
Existentialist's concept of the dilemma of being human; and

Oedipus, the psychological complexity and tragic dimension
of human sexuality.

However, in modern, secular societies the need to have
common themes and goals that give a common purpose to the
social order is being met more by modern ideologies than by
myths. It appears that ideology is the form that the mythic
impulse for order and meaning takes in cultures that have
broken from their identity with a particular religion or myth.
To a large extent, ideologies are the transmuting of mythic
themes into a more philosophical and self-conscious mode that
can accomodate economic and political ideas, as well as sci-
entific knowledge and rational discourse. In the same way
that ideologies are more suited to the forms of thought and
the growth of knowledge in our age they are also limited
to expressing those modes of thought and thus lack the psycho-
logical and spiritual depth of myths. In that ideology and
myth share the same function of giving an ordered and meaning-
ful interpretation of history and events for a society,
ideology is considered in this study as a part of myth. But
it is also distinguished from myth, lacking the strong narra-
tive, the large repertoire of universal symbols and patterns
(archetypes), and the close tie between the human and natural
world--all of which give to myth its distinctive form and
function. Ideology, then, I shall treat as a quasi-myth.

The Mythic Perspective

A basic premise of this study is that in addition to providing useful forms of knowledge for children, myths represent a kind of perspective on reality that should inform our theories about education. There are two aspects of a mythic perspective. One dimension is what the myths of the world tell us, in their amazingly consistent themes and images, about human nature and the kind of meaning humans make of their relationships with each other and with nature. To mention a few insights, myths tell us of the need to project an ideational world beyond the actual world, e.g., that we live between a lost paradise and a yet unattained Nirvana or Holy City that makes of "the time being" not just today but a pilgrimage, trial or endurance. In continually establishing connections between the patterns of human life and those in the natural world they express the importance to the human psyche (and perhaps to the survival of life) of living in an interrelated way with nature and the universe. Basic to myth is the importance of the spiritual world, either in the sense of a relationship of the divine to the human or in cultivation of spirituality as an inward state. According to myth, the order of the world is moral and thus instruction in what is good and what is evil and learning the balance between opposing forces is of critical importance. Myths often reveal the tragic dimensions of human nature, the destructive conflicts between passion and reason, the fatal flaws within the best of persons.

The other aspect of a mythic perspective lies in the
recognition of the role of the mythic themes and symbols
that are present to all people regardless of whether they
have heard mythic stories. Here I refer to Jung's findings
about the consistency with which certain mythic ideas and
symbols recur in dreams and art. Whether one accepts Jung's
theory that the mythic content is inherited or the conclu-
sion of others that myths arise spontaneously due to common
psychological experiences of being human, there is the phe-
nomenon of certain mythic ideas and images that appear across
cultures. What is represented by the artifacts of myth found
in children, in dreams, in art and in religion is, I suggest,
universal and representative of a depth in the human psyche
that is not addressed by either rational inquiry nor the
ideas of modern philosophy.

The mythic perspective, I suggest, exists in all persons
but often in a diminished form because in our culture we
have little access to the modes of its expression, e.g.,
stories, symbols, rituals, dance, traditional communities.

To be concerned about myth in the development of children,
as well as in the life of the culture, is to take a position
regarding values and trends in Western thought. For instance,
it is to oppose the momentum technology has gained because
of the impact it is making on the social and natural environ-
ments, changing our way of viewing people and the earth. In-
stead of the intricate web of interrelatedness that myth

portrays, we have in technology a set of possibilities for manipulating conditions to the material benefit of the industrial nations. It is to be as concerned for the cultivation of the imagination and a sense of moral responsibility as much as for the achievement of intellectual skills and mastery of a given body of knowledge. It is to be more concerned with teaching cooperation and building community than with developing competitive instincts and satisfying the personal goals of individuals. Finally, it is to suggest that the mind is to be regarded and trained for intuitive and symbolic modes of knowing and expression, as well as for rational and analytic modes.

How these values and ideas related to myth fit into the education of the child, more specifically how they relate to the child's development and the curriculum we use, is the concern of this study.

The Plan of Study

The order of the chapters is the order of the inquiry which developed a step at a time. My initial investigation was into writings of this century about myth. The work in anthropology had to be excluded because it is vast and is a whole conversation in itself. I chose Jung as the beginning point because his work has been responsible, more than anything else, for the modern perspective on myth and because almost every writer on the subject has been influenced by his theory of the mythological heritage carried in the

collective unconscious. I then turned to Joseph Campbell because he is one of the great students of the world's myths. Campbell has also developed theories about how the modern person relates to myth and has written on the need to continue to know and construct myths in our age. Finally, I made a study of Northrop Frye's theory about the significance of myth in educating the imagination, a theory based on his extensive study of how myth is the structural form of literature.

When I began my investigation into how myth relates to the development and learning styles of school-aged children, I discovered two important sources: the educational theory of Kieran Egan (1979) and the early writings of Piaget, both outlining in detail the mythic characteristics of the young child's thinking. These writings provided a picture of the child's cognitive needs that corresponded to the description of the child's emotional needs in Bettelheim's The Uses of Enchantment. These perspectives reinforced the growing recognition by people in the area of children's literature and reading interests of the strong appeal of fantasy, tale, and myth.

All of these sources, however, argued that the mythic world ceases to be important once the child outgrows certain modes of thinking and resolves the kinds of emotional conflicts portrayed in fairy tales. By age ten or 12, the child is through with the mythic mode and ready to deal with the real world through logic, reason, scientific investigation.

My argument, however, is that the mythic mode does not vanish but takes on a different function, i.e., giving order and meaning to the universe and establishing one's relationship to that schema.

In earlier work with Erikson's writings I had been impressed by the importance he placed on ideology in the development of identity in adolescence. From my study of myth I now recognized that ideology serves one of the functions of myth in our age, that of providing a meaningful structure or as Erikson says, "establishing the larger framework." Indeed, the way in which Egan describes the adolescent's need for philosophy suggests that it is the need to construct a myth rather than any abstract philosophical system that he is dealing with in his analysis. Thus my study of the educational needs of the adolescent focused on the importance at that age of constructing a myth designed to organize knowledge and establish personal meaning.

From my examination of these and other faces of myth as it relates to education, I concluded that myth offers a different perspective on reality, a different way of knowing and of deciding what is important knowledge. Maxine Greene (1978) alluded to that difference when she wrote (with some dismay) about young people prefering mysticism or sensuality, "magic, ancient myth, orphic wisdom, or astrology" (p. 8), as an escape from discursive thinking, on the one hand, and the depersonalization of technology on the other. Exploring

what a mythic perspective, as opposed to a rationalistic or technologically oriented perspective, might be for education, I found that three ideas were prominent: the importance of the imagination, the importance of personal meaning, and the importance of community. The study of myth and the child led to some insights about the importance of developing the imagination and the function of myth is accomplishing that. At the adolescent level, the main contribution of myth was found to be in focusing on ways of learning that help establish personal meaning. This left me with the concern for community, a theme which had repeatedly presented itself from the beginning of the investigation of myth and a theme which is very important to me and which, in part, had led me to the study of myth and education in the beginning. The final step of the inquiry, then, was to explore how we understand education and community from the perspective that myth offers.

The analysis of education and community is based on a critique of values and problems in modern culture that, perhaps, will not be as readily accepted as the conclusions about the child's and the adolescent's need for myth in their education. Community, like myth, is a very old form that represents some of the trade-offs our culture has made in order to accommodate new knowledge, the benefits of the industrial age, and the rise of the individual. In focusing on community, as well as on myth, I am suggesting that we

need to seek a new balance, where possible, between some of our old and our new values and modes of thinking.

Overview

Chapter I is an exploration of modern theories about myth, with particular attention to the ways myth continues to be significant in contemporary thought and what function it serves vis-a-vis scientific and rational modes of thought.

Chapter II examines several studies of the thought and interests of the child that describe and interpret characteristics related to myth. Piaget's early research on the primitive characteristics of child thought is examined and its implications for education are explored in theories of curriculum development, psychological needs, and interest patterns.

Chapter III focuses on the role of myth in the adolescent's task of identity formation, with Erikson's writings about youth, identity, and ideology forming the basis of the study. Attention is given to the implications of the adolescent need for myth or ideology for curriculum development.

Chapter IV is an examination of one of the primary values derived from a mythic perspective for education, the value of community. Distinguishing the perspective of myth from that of rationalism and technicism, I examine the implications of that perspective for an understanding of education and community.

CHAPTER I

MYTH AND MODERN CONSCIOUSNESS

In order to explore what value myth has for culture to-
day, and thus for education, I have examined works of 20th-
century writers who have suggested that myth continues to
be important to people who no longer live in primitive or
closed religious societies. From this area of scholarship
I have chosen three writers whose theories seem to provide
a fairly solid and broad base from which to establish a
viewpoint useful to curriculum theory: Carl Jung, Joseph
Campbell, and Northrop Frye. If space and time permitted,
the inclusions of Mircea Eliade's perspective from religion
and Claude Lévy-Strauss' perspective from anthropology (to
name only two of many possibilities) would give a more com-
plete picture. However, from the three examined we have
access to many of the major ideas in the area and also a
perspective from which further studies might develop.

Concerns central to this study, such as myth in an age of
science, the role of myth in the development of the imagina-
tion, the effect of myth on our understanding of the individ-
ual in relation to community, and the kind of consciousness
that myth characterizes, are addressed here in different ways
by each writer. Instead of arranging the material topically,
I have chosen to treat the viewpoints separately because

their ideas are best represented within the framework of their main concerns and theories. Because each is a prolific writer, I can only give a partial perspective and have sought to emphasize those ideas about myth, modern consciousness, imagination, and community that offer the theoretical perspective needed for a theory about myth and education.

First in this study is Carl Jung who has, more than anyone else, created a new interest in myths and dreams as positive forces in the psyche. From a depth psychology perspective he approaches myths as expressions of the inward life, of psychic depths and structures closely linked to dreams and artistic symbols. For Jung, myths are of particular significance as the bearers of our moral and spiritual traditions, as well as the protectors of these from what he considers the dangerous one-sidedness of our scientific, rational and individualistic culture.

Next I will discuss Joseph Campbell who, from a literary and historical perspective, examines mythologies both for what they as a body say about the meaning of myths and for what they reveal about the role of myth in human society and individual consciousness. Resolving the myth-science conflict, finding the universals in the myths of the world, and finding ways to express and create myths beyond the dogmas of religion are some of his concerns.

Northrop Frye developed his theories about myths from his work in literary criticism. In particular, his studies of Blake led him to examine mythology as the source of literary

structures and the keystone of literary criticism. From his study he concludes not only that myths were originally essential in the development of literary forms but also that they continue to be vital in the education of the imagination and the projection of ideals in a time when realism tends to limit our social imagination.

All of these writers address the issue of what scientific and rational thinking have done to the modern consciousness and thus the ambiguity and hostility that characterize much of the Western attitude toward myths. They all imply that one of the most critical problems of modern life, alienation, stems from the break with the mythological heritage and the community-oriented perspective it held. It is not to deny the gains in terms of individual freedom and the growth of knowledge that came from that break, but to try to discover new ways to relate to the mythological heritage that they are concerned when they write about the value of myth in our time.

Carl Jung

As scientific understanding has grown, so our world has become dehumanized. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos, because he is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional 'unconscious identity' with natural phenomena. These have slowly lost their symbolic implications. Thunder is no longer the voice of an angry god, nor is lightening his avenging missle. No river contains a spirit, no tree is the life principle of a man, no snake the embodiment of wisdom, no mountain cave the home of a great demon. No voices now speak to man from stones, plants, and animals, nor does he speak

to them believing they can hear. His contact with
nature has gone, and with it has gone the profound
emotional energy that his symbolic connection sup-
plied. (Jung, 1968, p. 85)

What do myths mean to us as inhabitants of the "modern
Aristotelian city/Of darning and the eight-fifteen" (Auden)?
This question includes both the concern for whether the mode
of thought represented in mythic thinking is made useless
by the scientific rationalism of our age. Without mythologies,
Jung (1968) suggests, life is without a broader meaning than
meeting of basic needs and the acquiring of goods. Our Western
civilization is suffering the loss of its beliefs and mythic
consciousness to a degree we scarcely understand and with
consequences beyond our present considerations. Our pursuit
of the scientific and our belief in rationalism have resulted
in a disorientation and dehumanization:

> Modern man does not understand how much his 'rationa-
> lism' (which has destroyed his capacity to respond to
> numinous symbols and ideas) has put him at the mercy
> of the psychic 'underworld.' He has freed himself
> from superstitution (or so he believes) but in the
> process he has lost his spiritual values to a posi-
> tively dangerous degree. His moral and spiritual
> tradition has disintegrated, and he is now paying
> the price for this break-up in world-wide disorien-
> tation and dissociation. (Jung, 1968, p. 84)

It is this belief that myths express our moral and spirit-
ual traditions and are an expression of our search for mean-
ing, the positive integration of self and world, that charac-
terizes Jung's approach to the study of myths. The understanding
of myths begins, for him, with the study of the psyche.

Central Psychological Concepts

In writing about the layers of human consciousness, Jung
defines three levels of the psyche and their contents which
are summarized as follows:

(a) conscious--that which seems to come to us through

    sense-perceptions and is known to us through think-

    ing or reflection,

(b) personal unconscious--those things that are lost

    from consciousness because they lose their intensity

    or are repressed, as well as sense impressions not

    strong enough to enter consciousness, and

(c) collective unconscious--the images and patterns laid

    down from earliest times that form a stratum common

    to all people and reflecting the primitive interpre-

    tation of phenomena. (Progoff, 1953, pp. 66-68)

It is with the first and third of these that Jung is most in-
terested, and the concept of the "collective unconscious" is
perhaps his most definitive and provocative contribution to
psychology. Progoff (1953) observes that Jung rejects Freud's
concept of the unconscious as those drives that are suppressed
because they are destructive and unacceptable and posits,
rather, a rich and profitable realm of the psyche, the con-
tents of which may be beneficial to the individual who can
be in touch with them through dream, myth, and art. Indeed,
the full maturing and realization of creative potential is
dependent on an integration of the conscious with the uncon-
scious.

Jung (1963) finds evidence of an unconscious that is
more than personal or cultural experience and history in the
universal motifs that appear in dreams, myths, and art. It
is the phenomenon of universality that leads him to posit a
collective unconscious, a stratum of the psyche that is com-
mon to all people. The deeper one goes into the psyche the
closer one gets to the universals and to the biological/
animal dimension of man, and the more one finds unity and
less differentiation. Thus he suggests that the universals
are much like inherited instincts that reach backwards to
man's most primitive life. The origin of these patterns is
the imprinting on the psyche of regular physical events (such
as the body's need for a system of functions for adapting),
an imprinting that is fantastic or distorted because the
primitive mind did not make the distinction between subject
and object we make now. Progoff (1953) suggests that "col-
lective" is a word to contrast with "personal"; the develop-
ment of individuality requires an emergence from the collective.
The collective is also prior to and more fundamental than
the individual. Myths are, Jung thinks, the primordial images
and motifs projected from that collective unconscious.

The universals are expressed symbolically in archetypal
images that arise from the collective unconscious. Jaffe
(1971) points out that Jung first wrote about the archetypes
as "primordial images," "deposits," or "inherited pathways,"
but later decided that they were not laid down or accumulated

through history but original, "the timeless constants of human nature" (p. 17). The archetypes are themselves the forms or the potentialities in the psyche, or in Progoff's (1953) words, "the symbols that represent psychic processes, generic to the human species" (p. 58). However, they are manifest only in contents that are tied to historical experiences and thus they appear in many forms in the lives of individuals and in myths. The evidence for the archetypes Jung finds in the patterns of symbol formation in myths and in dreams of people of all cultures; thus his definition of archetypes:

> forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as constitutents of myths and at the same time as autochthonous, individual products of unconscious origin. (Progoff, 1953, p. 69)

Anti-mythic Dimensions of Modern Thought

Looking at civilized man of this age, Jung (1963) sees the development of consciousness as an evolutionary product that has gone to a dangerous extreme, the correction of which is inevitable. There are both promising and threatening signs of the reassertion of the suppressed subconscious energies, but the necessity of restoring a balance between the conscious and unconscious dimension of the psyche is unquestioned. It is this concern for regaining a balance, for correcting a modern tendency, that is the background for Jung's warnings about the dangers of stressing individuality and keeping the unconscious and collective in the background. Progoff (1953) comments on Jung's concern over this imbalance:

> a main contention regarding the 'diagnosis' of the
> condition of modern man is that consciousness has
> been overstressed to the point where an unbalanced
> situation has developed in the psyche. (p. 78)

He quotes Jung on the danger in the modern attitude that "en-

tirely forgets that it carries the whole living past in the

lower stories of the skyscraper of rational consciousness"

(p. 78). The conscious will threatens to take over to the

point of losing contact with the archetypes and thus insuring

its own collapse.

In the essay, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype,"

Jung (1963) writes that the increase of freedom and rationality

is at the risk of man loosing touch with "the laws and roots

of his being." The conscious mind is by nature one-sided,

its effort being "to concentrate on relatively few contents

and to raise them to the highest pitch of clarity" (p. 81).

This capacity to train the will to attain what in his con-

sciousness and rationality man desires is deemed progressive,

but it is also potentially destructive:

> This assertion of the will means, on the one hand,
> the possibility of human freedom, but on the other
> it is a source of endless transgressions against
> one's instincts, like the animal, is characterized
> by fear of novelty and adherence to tradition. To
> our way of thinking he is painfully backward, where-
> as we exalt progress. But our progressiveness, though
> it may result in a great many delightful wish-fulfill-
> ments, piles up an equally gigantic Promethean debt
> which has to be paid off from time to time in the
> form of hideous catastrophes. . . . Our differentiated
> consciousness is in continual danger of being uprooted;
> hence it needs compensation through the still existing
> state of childhood. (Jung, 1963, p. 82)

In this article Jung (1963) points out that such "com-

pensation" appears to reflect a timid and conversative mode,

but in fact is both a protective and moral stance that seeks

to keep the psyche rooted and thus whole:

> But inasmuch as man has, in high degree, the capaci-
> ty for cutting himself off from his own roots, he
> may also be swept uncritically to catastrophe by
> his dangerous one-sidedness. The retarding ideal
> is always more primitive, more natural (in the
> good sense as in the bad), and more 'moral' in that
> it keeps faith with law and tradition. The progres-
> sive ideal is always more abstract, more unnatural,
> and less 'moral' in that it demands disloyalty to
> tradition. . . . The more differentiated conscious-
> ness becomes, the greater the danger of severance
> from the root-condition. (p. 82)

Jung thus gives us a radically different perspective

on the meaning of community to the individual from that of

Freud. The cultural heritage is not just an inevitable part

of the psychological make-up but, essentially, a positive

life-giving, fruitful source for the individual, a bearer

of the images, patterns and rootedness that are necessary

for depth. History and civilization are the sources of power-

ful psychic energy that is essential for self-realization,

creativity, integration, individual expression; not, as in

Freud, the necessary but negative forces containing our baser

drives. However, as we shall discuss below, his is not an

unqualified endorsement of a culture, a status quo; in fact,

he writes in an almost contradictory way of the importance

of the individual as an active moral agent transcending the

limits set by society.

The Individual and the Collective:

The Mythic Perspective

Individuality is, in Jung's view, but one aspect of the

self, a tip of the iceberg, which can be given too much

attention. In thus diminishing the importance of individual-
ity in the totality of the human psyche and in giving direc-
tion to human history Jung goes against the mainstream of
Western thought. He claims that the individual person as
one conscious of his/her individuality is a rather recent
occurrence in human development and that the psyche is still
largely a product of the "primitive" experience which does
not differentiate between self and world.

In discussing Jung's analysis of the individual's rela-
tion to society, Progoff (1953) observes that Jung departs
from the usual psychological approach that understands society
as a generalization of the individual by asserting that man's
social dimension is inherent in his nature. Thus Jung opposes
the liberal idea that society is made up of individuals in a
social contract. Rather the psyche must have culture, a
position that Jung comes to, Progoff thinks, from the greater
influence of sociologists like Durkheim and Burckhardt than
that of psychological writers and from his conclusion that
the deeper levels of the unconscious are derived from man-
kind's great communal experiences, not from individual ex-
periences. Progoff concludes that Jung sees individuality as
a derivitive of society and social experiences as the main
source of content for the individual psyche. And since Jung
understands the social as "essentially the unconscious, and
more particularly the deeper layers of the Collective Uncon-
scious," (p. 163), Progoff thinks we can draw a parallel
between consciousness emerging out of the unconscious and

the individual becoming differentiated from society. Jung
(1976) makes this parallel in his essay "Relations Between
the Ego and the Unconscious":

> We shall probably get nearest to the truth if we
> think of the conscious and personal psyche as rest-
> ing upon the broad basis of an inherited and univer-
> sal psychic disposition which is as such unconscious,
> and that our personal psyche bears the same relation
> to the collective psyche as the individual to society.
> (p. 93)

On the other hand, Jung continues in the essay as if he
were in the mainstream of Western liberalism in his assertions
that personality and individuality must continually assert
their independence from and superiority over society and over
forms of collective thinking. The drive toward personality
which has been a major dynamic in history since the flowering
of Greek civilization is always threatened by invasion of
the collective psyche:

> Collective thinking and feeling and collective ef-
> fort are far less a strain than individual function-
> ing and effort; hence there is always a great tempta-
> tion to allow collective functioning to take the
> place of individual differentiation of the personali-
> ty. (p. 98)

And there is the greater danger, he suggests, that discovery
of the collective through the analysis of the unconscious will
bring not only an unhealthy fusion of the personal psyche
with the collective but also an effort to enforce

> . . . the demands of his unconscious upon others,
> for identity with the collective psyche always brings
> with it a feeling of universal validity--'godlikeness'
> --which completely ignores all differences in the
> personal psyche of his fellows. (p. 99)

Jung (1976) goes on in this essay to describe the col-
lective or the social in its most destructive potential,

setting up the individual as the source of the moral. In par-

ticular, it is the large community or State that disregards

the individual and perpetuates mediocrity:

> The element of differentiation is the individual.
> All the highest achievements of virtue, as well as
> the blackest villainies, are individual. The
> larger a community is, and the more the sum total
> of collective factors peculiar to every large com-
> munity rests on conservative prejudices detrimental
> to individuality, the more will the individual be
> morally and spiritually crushed, and, as a result,
> the one source of moral and spiritual progress for
> society is choked up. Naturally the only thing that
> can thrive in such an atmosphere is sociality and
> whatever is collective in the individual. Every-
> thing individual in him goes under, i.e., is doomed
> to repression. . . . It is a notorious fact that
> the morality of society as a whole is in inverse
> ratio to its size; for the greater the aggregation
> of individuals, the more the individual factors are
> blotted out, and with them morality, which rests
> entirely on the moral sense of the individual and
> the freedom necessary for this. Hence every man is,
> in a certain sense, unconsciously a worse man when
> he is in society than when acting alone; for he is
> carried by society and to that extent relieved of
> his individual responsibility. (p. 100)

The different statements in which Jung locates morality

in the action of the free individual making conscious choices,

on the one hand, and in the tradition-bearing community up-

holding values and laws, on the other hand, are not harmonious.

What we see, rather, is the tension in which Jung perceives

the dimensions of the psyche, consciousness, and their corre-

spondents, individual and society. Consciousness, and thus

personality, is a fragile state. In Man and His Symbols,

Jung (1963) speaks of it as still in an "experimental state,"

"still a doubtful affair," (p. 8) that can be easily disrupted

and overwhelmed. Society and the unconscious care little,
if at all, for the individual and even find this differentia-
tion a threat; thus the need to support and sustain the emer-
gence of the personality. Yet to the extent that such self-
knowledge and differentiation are dependent on separation
and denial of the rootedness in the collective unconscious,
the movement toward the individual threatens both the full
realization of the self and culture.

If Jung, then, warns our age of the dangers, on the one
hand, of the individual slipping back into the collective
thought (an easier state) and thus loosing freedom to choose
the good, and, on the other hand, of carrying our drive for
freedom too far to an individuality that cuts us off from
the depths within ourselves and in the past whose traditions
carry our common symbols, he is leading us to acknowledge
the poles of a dialectic--the individual and the collective--
the dangers and powers of each we ignore to our peril. In-
dividuation is the synthesis toward which both self and, we
can speculate, culture strive. It is a process of realizing
the inter-connectedness of conscious and unconscious. Or as
Progoff (1953) defines it, an inter-weaving relationship:

> The archetypes of the collective experience, which
> are the symbols of the society, must be expressed
> through individuals; on the other hand, individuals
> must rely on collective material for the basic
> content of their personalities. This inter-weaving
> relationship, coming together from opposite directions,
> is at the heart of the interpretation of the individ-
> ual in society. (p. 176)

Myth and the Search for

Wholeness and Depth

Essential to that integration is finding a new stage of
interpretation for the archetypes in each age "in order to
connect the life of the past that still exists in us with the
life of the present, which treatens to slip from it" (Jung,
1963, p. 76). Myth and dreams are central to making that
reinterpretation and finding the connections. That "rooted-
ness" from which modern man is being cut off is more compre-
hensively represented for us in mythology, but it is also
made known to the individual in dreams.

The relationship of dream to myth is explained by the
archetypes which are found in both, for the archetypes are
the symbols and motifs that arise autochthonously from pat-
terns in the psyche. Jung's experience with the dreams and
revelations of his patients led him to believe that the cor-
respondence of images and motifs was due to an inner source:

> . . . one could almost say that if all the world's
> traditions were cut off at a single blow, the whole
> mythology and the whole history of religion would
> start all over again with the next generation.
> (Jung, 1976, xiii)

Jung (1976) writes that the collective unconscious "appears to
consist of mythological motifs or primordial images, for which
reason the myths of all nations are its real exponents." He
goes on to assert that "the whole of mythology could be taken
as a sort of projection of the collective unconscious" (p. 39).
He concludes that we can study the unconscious either through
examining mythology or the dreams and fantasies of individuals.

So long as consciousness is in control the possibilities
of being in touch with the depth of the psyche and thus with
a broader, richer vision of both self and world are greatly
reduced. Modern man, by increasing powers of conscious
thought and rationality, has made great gains but, Jung (1968)
says, "at the price of enormous losses, whose extent we have
scarcely begun to estimate" (p. 36). Mythologies originate
in times and among peoples that had not developed concentra-
tion and intensity of consciousness, and fantasies/visions
occur today for people when they are in a "state of reduced
intensity of consciousness" so that "hitherto unconscious
material streams, as though from opened side-sluices, into
the field of consciousness" (Jung, 1963, p. 74). That myth
and fairy tale correspond to our dreams and that all have a
certain antagonism to reason but also a deep meaning for us
is a phenomenon made plausible by Jung's analysis. What we
gain by paying attention to expressions of the unconscious as
well as of the conscious is, suggests Jaffe (1971), a move-
ment in the direction of "wholeness and a unitary picture of
the world" (p. 25).

Kerenyi and Jung (1963) produced several related articles
which they published together as Essays on a Science of
Mythology. In the opening essay, Kerenyi writes about the
impact of science on myth and on our mode of thinking. By
providing explanations to us, Kerenyi contends, science
seemed to give us something better than immediate experience

itself. And it has given us a truth about our world, a free-dom from falsehood we cannot do without. But in the process we have:

> . . . lost our immediate feeling for the great
> realities of the spirit--and to this world all
> true myths belong--lost it precisely because of
> our all-too-willing, helpful, and efficient sci-
> ence. (pp. 1-2)

What we need now is to be able to find a "feeling of intimacy between ourselves and scientific objects" (pp. 1-2), a task which science must help us do. The use of science in the exploration of mythology and the unconscious is a means to that end.

It is, then, in providing a way to discover a foundation, "a way back to primordial times," that myth serves man in the search for authenticity. The journey into myth is, Kerenyi (1963) writes, "a kind of immersion in ourselves that leads to the living germ of our wholeness." Such immersion enables us to see those images that come from the "ground" of our being, "the mid-point about which and from which our whole being organizes itself" (p. 9). From this perspective mythology tells us both what we were and what we still are.

Mythic Archetypes and Developmental Stages

Of particular interest to those concerned with education and child development is an application of Jungian analysis of myths to a description of archetypes that represent a development pattern from childhood to adulthood. This expli-cation by Henderson, one of a group of co-authors with Jung of Man and His Symbols, in his essay in that book, "Ancient

Myths and Modern Man," suggests a rich area for study of mythic stories and motifs that relate to stages of child development.

The hero myths represent, Henderson thinks, the universal pattern of the development of ego-consciousness, of evolutionary stages that are repeated by each individual in the development of personality. Taking as a representative mythology that of the North American Indians, particularly the Winnebago, he discusses the archetypal figures that characterize each stage. First in this sequel is Trickster, usually an animal like Brer Rabbit or Reynard the Fox, "a figure whose physical appetites dominate his behavior; he has the mentality of an infant" (p. 103). Starting at a point of pure gratification of needs and mischievous exploits, he usually shows progress in the direction of physical maturity.

The stage following Trickster is represented by Hare, or the Transformer, an animal form who offers something to human society (e.g., the Hare who gives the Winnebago their important Medicine Rite and is thus a savior as well). Thus, Henderson notes, Hare marks a progress beyond Trickster: "One can see that he is becoming a socialized being, correcting the instinctual and infantile urges found in the Trickster cycle" (p. 105).

The third figure in the sequel is Red Horn, a human with superhuman powers who must prove himself through tests of strength and courage: "With Red Horn we have reached the world of man, though an archaic world, in which the aid of superhuman powers or tutelary gods is needed to ensure man's victory over

the evil forces that beset him" (p. 106). The growth of this
archetypal figure is marked by the departure of the hero-god,
who is assisted, leaving Red Horn and his companions to face
the danger as that which comes from themselves and which they
must deal with themselves.

Finally, there are the Twins, representing the two sides
of human nature, reflection and action (introvert and extrovert)
who are powerful humans that overcome the monsters but are
unable to stop when the danger is destroyed and thus threaten
with destruction of their own. This hubris requires the
death of the hero, bringing about an equilibrium in human
nature again, or the liberation of the mature person (the
conscious ego) from the necessary excesses of adolescent
idealism and from the pull of the unconscious to return to
the security of the childhood state.

Essential for that transition and the maintenance of the
mature consciousness, in Henderson's interpretation, is the
existence of a social group to replace the parent archetype
that must be destroyed in the initiation to adulthood.
Henderson sees this process operating in the contemporary
primitive societies in the initiation rites that take the
child from parents into the clan:

> But in making this break with the childhood world,
> the original parent archetype will be injured, and
> the damage must be made good by a healing process
> of assimilation into the life of the group. . . .
> Thus the group fulfills the claims of the injured
> archetype and becomes a kind of second parent to

which the young are first symbolically sacrificed,
only to re-emerge into a new life. (pp. 120-21)

Henderson characterizes the journey of the developing

self as going from the sense of completeness of the childhood

state that is characterized by unconsciousness or lack of

differentiation between self and other, good and evil, through

the emerging forms of self-awareness or consciousness that

destroy that unity to an adult sense of completeness "achieved

through a union of the conscious with the unconscious con-

tents of the mind," the latter represented by symbols of

transcendence. There is in this process, Henderson finds,

a tension between the opposing forces of liberation and con-

tainment, our predicament of "needing freedom and security"

(p. 156).

Examining myths from this perspective could give direc-

tion to the selection of myths appropriate to particular ages.

It appears that myths might be used for moral development

stories in a curriculum using the Kohlberg approach to moral

education. For instance, the comparison of Trickster stories

with the next level Transformer stories could help generate

the kinds of questions and dilemmas needed by children moving

from pre-conventional to conventional moral reasoning. The

value of mythic stories over real-life dilemmas might be

that they more readily engage the child's imagination and

also fit the kind of moral polarity that characterizes the

child's thinking (an argument developed in Chapter II). In

addition, the myth goes straight to the heart of the moral struggle, without the many other concerns that so often distract a child's attention from the central moral dilemma that the real-life story is meant to portray.

From this brief analysis of themes, we see that from a Jungian perspective, myth is one of the keys to our past and present, to the symbols that express the universal and thus, also, that which is most basic in our nature. Myth emerges from the shadow of historical relics to a place of importance in our study of man, his development and his psychic make-up. Through Jung's interpretation we are encouraged to find there a deeper understanding of the human as capable of transcending collective thought and morality but always rooted in the communal and bearer of the values of both a people and all people.

Joseph Campbell

> Man, apparently, cannot maintain himself in the universe without belief in some arrangement of the general inheritance of myth. In fact, the fullness of his life would even seem to stand in a direct ratio to the depth and range, not of his rational thought, but of his local mythology. . . . (W)henever men have looked for something solid on which to found their lives, they have chosen, not the facts in which the world abounds, but the myths of an immemorial imagination. (Campbell, 1960, p. 20)

Joseph Campbell has not only collected myths from cultures around the world, but he has also done the important literary work of finding corresponding themes, images, and patterns of the world's mythologies and the philosophical work of seeking the meaning behind the art of myth-making

and the impact of changes in civilization on forms of consciousness. Thus he gives us not only a rich, detailed picture of the mythic mind but also a way of thinking about that heritage from our own point in history.

The loss of our traditional myths and the demise of the inclination to mythic thinking is variously described by Campbell as both a poverty of Western culture and a necessary condition for going beyond inadequate myths toward the creation of deeper and richer ones. This is perhaps the uniqueness of his perspective, for from the long and broad view gained by his study of myths from all ages and cultures he can see a necessity in the deterioration or transformation of myths that are no longer concordant with knowledge and experience and also the necessity of mythic symbols for human community and creative expression. Campbell refuses to see science as the destroyer of the mythic impulse and consciousness, but rather posits it as the other half of the sphere of knowledge and thus ultimately complementing but not competing with myth, dream, and religion. While man must pursue knowledge in both spheres, it is, Campbell believes, from the probing of the human psyche that the greatest discoveries are to be made and energy and creative power released to allow a new civilization to flower.

Nature and Function of Myth

Campbell (1972) agrees with Jung that myths represent universal impulses and experiences derived from the structure of the psyche, or from the ancient and perpetual condition of

man's being in the world. The three central conditions that drive man toward myth are the recognition of mortality (and the need to transcend it), the realization of the endurance of the social order, and the need to understand the universe and how it relates to man's existence. Because all peoples deal with these conditions there are universals and a common unity in myths, but because their experiences differ (e.g., ways of death and forms of survival) there is differentiation. From his exhaustive study of myths (especially the many vol-umned, The Masks of God) he draws together the themes and patterns that demonstrate both the unity and diversity of themes and images.

There are, Campbell (1970) suggests, four functions of mythologies. These are:

(a) mystical or metaphysical: "reconciliation of con-sciousness to the precondition of its own existence," response to the mystery of life,

(b) cosmological: to bring the image of the cosmos in accord with the scientific knowledge of the times,

(c) sociological: "validating and maintaining some spe-cific social order, authorizing its moral code", and

(d) psychological: "shaping individuals to the aims and ideals of their various social groups" (pp. 139-140).

In the course of time with the advances in knowledge and technology the cosmological and sociological dimensions of myth have changed, he concludes. This is because effective

myths must give a current view of the universe and reflect
morally and intellectually valid concepts of society and
nature. However, the psychological problems, because they
are rooted in the biology of the species, have been constant
and have controlled the myths and rites to the extent that
common strains run through all myths. The sequence of these
psychological problems are (a) dependency that comes from
the human being born too soon and needing protection for 12-14
years, (b) the necessity of becoming an adult (suddenly in
many cultures and over a very long period of time in our
society) and taking on a social role, and (c) the preparation
for bearing the aging back to nature. It is, Campbell con-
cludes, from the metaphysical and psychological dimensions of
mythology that we derive significance for the renewing of
our civilization and the recovery of valid symbols. Ancient
myths and contemporary art can both serve us in that both
speak to the same core of being and depth of human experience.

For those who view myths through these lenses they are
not reflections of a passing age but, Campbell (1969) writes,
"a permanent spiritual legacy, symbolic of the very structure
of the psyche" (p. 130). If we accept that mythological
cosmologies do not reflect so much the world of facts but
dreams and visions, can these former representations of the
macrocosom now be restored as "a universal revelation of the
microcosom" (p. 130)? If such microcosmic universals exist
they must, Campbell thinks, relate in some mysterious way

to the macrocosom, and thus an universal order not limited

to the human experience. In focusing now on the inwardness

of the psyche he is not excluding from importance man's re-

lationship to the universe but suspending that task as one

for which we are not ready, that we are as yet unable to ex-

plore.

The sciences of comparative ethnology, philosophy, phil-

ology, history, folklore and art have showed us the rich source

of our common heritage and pointed us in the direction of our

unity, but it remains for poetry and the arts, Campbell (1949)

suggests, to give birth to those symbols necessary for a

creative mythology to emerge, a mythology for the planet as

one community. We need a transmutation of the whole social

order, Campbell contends, so that in all of secular life the

image of the universal god-man may be brought to consciousness.

Consciousness cannot itself invent or predict this transfor-

mation, for it occurs on another level. And the manifesta-

tion will be a variety of symbols, but we must learn to see

beyond the diversity, "to recognize the lineaments of God

in all of the wonderful modulations of the face of man" (p. 390).

Modern Consciousness--The

Decline of Mythic Thinking

The loss of mythic consciousness, symbols and rituals

has had a negative impact on our civilization. Since 1914,

Campbell (1972) writes, there has been:

> . . . an increasing disregard and even disdain for
> those ritual forms that once brought forth, and up

to now have sustained, this infinitely rich and fruitfully developing civilization.

In The Hero with a Thousand Faces he describes our culture as a waste land (frequently referring to Eliot's poem), whose inhabitants lack both outer doctrine and inner depth and thus feel the desperation of being lost in a labyrinth. The high instance of neuroticism in our culture may come from the lack of spiritual aid that myth and rite have always given, "the symbols that carry the human spirit forward, in counteraction to those other constant human fantasies that tend to tie it back" (p. 11). We are fixated in our infancy and lack the inclination, direction to carry us to adulthood. The gods are dead, the bondage to the past is shattered, we have emerged from ancient ignorance, but we are without symbols:

> (T)he democratic ideal of the self-determining in-
> dividual, the invention of the power-driven machine
> and the development of the scientific method of
> research, have so transformed human life that the
> long-inherited, timeless universe of symbols has
> collapsed. . . . (T)he ancient human heritage of
> ritual, morality, and art is in full decay.
> (pp. 387-388)

Without working symbols, Campbell (1972) argues elsewhere, "the individual cracks away, becomes dissociated and disoriented" (p. 88).

However, he does not believe that a shoring-up of the old belief systems is either possible or desirable. In Myths to Live By, Campbell argues that the dominant mythology of the West, the biblical mythology embodied in the Hebrew and Christian religions, is totally inadequate both in its

cosmological and sociological functions. Like the North
American plains Indians, we are forced to turn inward because
our "public religious symbols (have) lost their claim to
authority and passed away" (p. 90). Through history, astono-
my, biology and all the other intellectual explorations, the
claims of Christianity and Judiasm, he asserts, have been
disqualified. Campbell is strong and unremitting in his
denunciation of biblical religion as a dogma; it has been
a wrong-headed approach to man's spirituality, insisting on
authority, dualism, and historical revelation rather than on
spirituality, unity of all life, and psychology. However
he would not have modern man disassociate himself from its
rites and symbols but only from the dogma and verbal inter-
pretations that the priest and rabbi perpetuate. The drama
of the ritual and the magic of the symbols, the affective
dimension of each, is what can bring us in touch with the
magic and depth of "what is always and forever" (p. 97).
It is the dogmatism that divides (peoples from each other
and the psyche from its depths) and the mystic experience
that unites.

In Campbell's (1972) view the importance of ritual and
myth for the person in the modern world is in one respect the
same as it has always been and in another respect distinctive
to our time. To link the individual to the group and to the
cosmos has always been a central function of myth and ritual:

> The characteristic effect of mythic themes and
> motifs translated into ritual, consequently, is

that they link the individual to transindividual
purposes and forces. (p. 57)

The ritual procedure takes one out of the self in conduct that

is not personal but of the species, of society. This movement

beyond self is necessary, he contends, not only for society's

cohesion but also for the individual in developing an aware-

ness of his/her humanity. Campbell (1949) contends that

group identification has, however, too often in the past re-

quired the loss of self, the subordination of personal exper-

ience to group role in our history (especially as peoples

moved from a hunting to an agricultural society). In recent

times, however, society has shifted from an emphasis on the

group to a focus on the individual, thus reversing the problem

that existed in the stable periods when great mythologies

emerged: "Then all meaning was in the group, . . . none in

the self-expressive individual; today no meaning is in the

group. . . all is in the individual" (p. 388). Instead of

community, the individual has become the center of our concern:

> In our present day--at least in the leading modern
> centers of cultural creativity--people have begun
> to take the existence of their supporting social
> orders for granted, and instead of aiming to de-
> fend and maintain the integrity of the community
> have begun to place at the center of concern the
> development and protection of the individual--
> the individual, moreover, not as an organ of the
> state but as an end and entity in himself.
> (Campbell, 1972, p. 24)

Emergence of the Individual

Campbell's perspective on the emergence of modern con-

sciousness, especially the discovery and celebration of the

individual, is a complex one. He writes about our civiliza-
tion as one endangered by the culmination of one of its great
discoveries: the importance of the individual and the focus
on man instead of the cosmos. And yet, he finds in this lib-
eration of the individual from a fixed social role and the
consequent humanism the potential for a new birth accompanied
by mythic symbols that can give awareness of mankind's whole-
ness.

The individual was first significant in the Greek myths,
Campbell (1949) observes, and the titans of the late Middle
Ages and Renaissance who defied the authoritarian God and
state were indeed heroes who through science and art brought
us to contemplate humanitas. He suggests that the heroes
needed today are ones who will carry us further in that quest,
not in a pursuit of individual liberation from society or
from our ground in a common unity but in search of a new con-
sciousness of self as a part of the cosmos.

The tension between the individual understood as the
hero who embarks on his quest and charts an unknown way to
the deeper experience and the individual as a being incomplete
in himself, "locked in the narrowness of the self-centered ego"
(1949, p. 19) is maintained in Campbell's writings. The re-
solution of what often seems a contradiction in his treat-
ment of "the individual" is achieved when it is understood
that the goal of the individual quest, the inward journey,
is a "transpersonal centeredness" (p. 20). In a dialectical
pattern, the hero withdraws from society and its conventions

and makes the journey inward to clarify, eradicate and break through to experiences of the archetypal images, and returns to be reintegrated with the community, bringing spiritual energy, new or renewed symbols. The hero is one who battles past the personal and singular to the generally valid, bringing insight and energy from the source through which society is reborn.

Impact of Science

In his essay, "The Impact of Science on Myth," Campbell (1972) discusses the fact that science has had at least a temporarily destructive impact on myths. But he finds no inherent contradiction between the two modes of knowing represented by each because they are quite distinct in their functions. Our knowledge gained through science and rational thought has led us irrevocably beyond the Occidental world view of a three-storied universe, a personal and authoritarian God, a moral order based on fixed laws. Our particular mythic framework has been shattered, but science does not take over mythic functions, for myth is always concerned with the unknown and unknowable, while science is concerned with what can be known and does not attempt to give the truth of the great mysteries. Campbell separates the knowledge gained from facts (science) from knowledge gained through the imagination or mystical religious experiences or through dreams, for the latter is the knowledge of the psyche, a separate system containing its own order and universals, though one

not unrelated to the physical world. That there is some ulti-
mate unity in the design of the psyche and design of the cosmos
he has little doubt, but it is a unity that as yet, and per-
haps ultimately, can only be experienced and symbolized as a
mystery or the unknown.

In his essay Campbell discusses several influential
theories. Frazer and Freud both erred, in his judgment, in
viewing mythological thinking as a negative manifestation of
consciousness. Frazer believed science would put myth behind
us because it is magical, non-rational (like religion). In
directing his concern to myth's function in controlling the
outward world Frazer ignored its relation to inward life.
Freud saw both myth and religion as public dreams manifesting
repressions, fears, and delusions. It is Jung who has showed
us, Campbell asserts, the positive end that myth and religion
serve, one not in competition with the findings and domain
of science:

> They [myths] are telling us in picture language of
> powers of the psyche to be recognized and integrated
> in our lives, powers that have been common to the
> human spirit forever, and which represent that wis-
> dom of the species by which man has weathered the
> millenniums. Thus they have not been, and can never
> be, displaced by the findings of science, which
> related rather to the outside world than to the
> depths that we enter in sleep. (p. 14)

The rejection of science and reason through some orthodoxy
can only impoverish a culture's mythology because there can
then be no interplay between the mind's discoveries and the
symbols of the civilization. In the modern Western world, a

continuity of growth, an organic flowering, has been due to
the "open-hearted and open-minded quest of a few brave men"
(p. 57), thus bringing the new and not some "canonized" truth.
Campbell closes this essay with a parable that suggests that
our scientific and intellectual probing has brought us, tem-
porarily, negative results in terms of the loss of cohesion
mentioned above, but that if we can absorb that danger we
can go deeper to realize more profound benefits. Thus Campbell
goes beyond the pessimism that usually accompanies discussions
of the impact of science on myth or religion, rejecting
neither but celebrating both, seeing the loss of mythic unity
in the modern consciousness as a challenge, not a tragedy.

Mythology and the Development of Creativity

The first function of art is, Campbell (1970) writes in
the essay, "Mythological Themes in Creative Literature", the
same as the first function of myth, "to transport the mind in
experience past the guardians--desire and fear--of the paradisal
gate to the tree within of illuminated life" (p. 168). How-
ever the artist as hero who fashions living myths cannot simply
descend into himself and reflect a private experience but
must also be a scholar who can relate inward experience to
the present world. Examples for Campbell of the artist as
such a hero who can formulate works of the stature of myth are
Joyce and Mann:

> It is an important characteristic of both James Joyce
> and Thomas Mann, that, in developing their epic works,
> they remained attentive equally to the facts and con-
> texts of the outward, and the feeling systems of the

> inward, hemispheres of the volume of experiences
> they were documenting. They were both immensely
> learned, furthermore, in the scholarship and sci-
> ences of their day. And they were able, conse-
> quently, to extend and enrich in balanced corre-
> lation the outward and the inward ranges of their
> characters' spheres of experience, progressing in
> such a way from the purely personal to the larger,
> collective orders of outward experience and inward
> sense of import that in their culminating master-
> works they achieved actually the status, the
> majesty, and validity, of contemporary myth. (p. 169)

The inward journey is, then, the means to creative mytho-

logy in our day, according to Campbell (1969), but it has as both

context and goal the deeper integration of the individual in

the community that is accomplished through "some arrangement

of the general inheritance of myth" (p. 20), an arrangement

informed by the mythic consciousness and symbols from the

past but fashioned to incorporate the knowledge of our age.

While it is the poet and artist who will fashion the

symbols of creative myths, the crisis we are experiencing of

the decay of the old mythologies and the challenge of science

must be a concern of education. How, Campbell (1972) asks,

is the conscientious teacher to respond who is as concerned

with moral as well as intellectual growth when caught be-

tween the "supporting myths of our civilization" and "the

'factualized' truths of his science" (p. 11)? The main ques-

tion now in teaching or bringing up children, Campbell asserts,

is, "is there not some point of wisdom beyond the conflicts

of illusion and truth by which lives can be put back together

again?" (p. 12). The best answer, he suggests, will come from

psychology and the study of myths, examining and comparing

until it becomes clear that they are not accounts of history but "universally cherished figures of the mythic imagination [that] must represent facts of the mind" (p. 12). Finding the unity beyond the divisions of objective truth and subjective experience and their manifestations in dreams, myths, and religion is probably not something that can be realized in the near future. But to take myth seriously, to attend to its structures and symbols, especially in childhood when modes of thought are developing and there is a closer correspondence (the animism and fantasies of the child's imagination), and to see it as a possible key to the mystery of the human psyche and the eventual reintegration of individual with the community, (both local and universal), is something we can be doing.

Northrop Frye

> Myth is the structural principle of literature
> that enters into and gives form to the verbal dis-
> ciplines where concern is relevant. Man's views of
> the world he wants to live in, of the world he does
> not want to live in, of his situation and destiny
> and heritage, of the world he is trying to make
> and of the world that resists his efforts, forms
> in every age a huge mythological structure, and
> the subjects I have just listed form the main ele-
> ments of it. (Frye, 1970, p. 18)

The education of the imagination is Northrop Frye's central pedagogical concern. For it is the imagination that makes it possible for persons to do more than adjust to the social mythology of their particular time and place. The imagination is developed from encounters with the arts,

especially literature, which provide those universal images
(archetypes) and structures of thought and provide a vision
of the world as we want it to be. Thus through the imagina-
tion, Frye (1964, 1970) contends, we see a more real, a more
universal (though not abstract) and a better human society
than the one the prevailing social mythology has created and
would have us believe in. The education of the imagination
is, then, social and moral development as much as aesthetic,
and it is based on the theory that the structures of myth
are the essential elements of the imagination.

The focus of Frye's literary criticism is the relation-
ship of literature to mythology. Rejecting historical, bio-
graphical, sociological, and new criticism as too limited,
Frye (1957) concludes that it is from within the body of
literature as a whole that a theory must be found. The
emergence of literature from primitive myths offers a key
both to the origin of genres and to the abiding similarities
in literary forms. He argues that literature reflects neither
life as we experience it nor the poet nearly so much as it
reflects the "artificial" or constructed world of literature.
And the conventional literary patterns derive their form
from the patterns of mythology.

Frye establishes a theoretical framework for a curricu-
lum in literature that is based on the study of myths and of
certain forms of literature (comedy, romance, tragedy and
irony) that express aspects of the mythic vision appropriate

to that stage of development. His concern is not primarily
better readers or more sophisticated literature students
(i.e., those well-versed in the "best" works), but the lib-
eration of the imagination from an adjustment mythology, the
capacity for a vision of a different and better social order.

Having summarized the main ideas from Frye's work that
I am here concerned with, I want to look now at how he under-
stands imagination and mythology, how literature is related
to mythology, and what the social and educational import
of his theory of literary criticism is.

Imagination

Frye (1963) defines imagination in the essay, "The Imag-
ination and the Imaginary" as one of two social contexts of
the mind: imagination and sense. "Sense" is that attitude
of the mind that man adopts in dealing with his environment,
the world of nature, to distinguish what is, what exists and
what is feasible; it is the basic starting point for the
scientist and the psychiatrist (and closely akin to "reason"
but less theoretical). The imagination or the creative is
a different attitude that creates a vision of what might be,
a model of what is desirable but non-existent, and it is
employed most by the arts, love, and religion. The imagina-
tive power of the mind has created the city out of nature;
through desire it continues to strive to realize the forms
it has the potential for, to separate what is wanted from
what is not. Imagination is not itself the unlimited vision
but, Frye suggests, a perspective between the poles of sense,

which says what is possible, and vision which is uninhibited desire. Some peoples are more controlled by sense, others more by vision. He notes that the Hebrews in response to their oppression developed a soaring vision, in contrast to the Greeks who imposed firm limits on the aspirations of gods and men.

The world of nature was thought for a long time to be identical with the mythologically structured universe, but particularly since the 17th century there has been a process of separating mythological concepts of space and time from the physical events. This process, Frye (1976) suggests, has given back to the imagination the mythic world it once created. Thus through the arts man can once again reformulate the mythic structure and so emancipate and regenerate culture (pp. 114-115).

Again and again Frye returns to the concept of imagination as the power and instinct of the mind to create a world other than the one that is, to fashion from desire on the one hand and sense on the other, the world we want to live in. Thus the works of the imagination have the capacity to promote social progress but do not necessarily do so. In The Educated Imagination, (1964), he makes this limitation clear when he notes that writers may express out-dated or even repressive political notions. The relevance of literature is based on its belonging to the world of imagination, a world constructed not out of the actual world but out of the human passions which are universal and archetypal and expressed through image and stories, not through philosophical debate. Most specifically, the imagination strives to create or

participate in a world where our lost identity is regained, where there is a vision of wholeness or oneness (e.g., the City, the Lost Paradise). These images of wholeness are predominantly images of community.

Mythology and Literature

If development of the powers of the imagination and free-ing them from the restraints of a particular social mythology is central to Frye's pedagogic concern, the clarification of the function of myth in the history and interpretation of literature is central to his theory of criticism. Frye uses the word "mythology" to refer both to the bodies of specific myths developed early in the life of a people to explain the origin of the world, the activity of the gods, the place of man, and the phenomena of nature and to the ideologies by which people interpret their world today (such as "the American way of life," Marxism).

In all of his writings Frye asserts that literary criti-cism begins with an understanding of the relation of litera-ture to myth. In The Educated Imagination (1964), he defines this relationship:

> (I)n the history of civilization literature fol-
> lows after a mythology. A myth is a simple and prim-
> itive effort of the imagination to identify the human
> with the nonhuman world, and its most typical result
> is a story about a god. Later on, mythology begins
> to merge into literature, and myth then becomes a
> structural principle of story-telling. (p. 48)

Literature being derived from myth and myth from those common experiences that are shaped by the imagination leads to the

phenomenon of "all themes and characters and stories that you encounter in literature belonging to one big interlocking family" (p. 53). The most essential story, the framework of all literature, Frye concludes, is the story of "how man once lived in a golden age or a garden of Eden or the Hesperides, or a happy island kingdom in the Atlantic, how that world was lost, and how we some day may be able to get it back again" (p. 131). The mythic framework and themes are significant not only in providing historical perspective on the development of literary forms but also in forming the imagination by restoring "the primitive perspective that mythology has" (Frye, 1963, p. 18), essentially the association of the human and natural worlds and a feeling of a lost paradise.

The structure that myth provides for literature has two sources--the natural world and the inward world of dreams or the subconscious. It is through analogy, Frye (1964) writes, that parallels are made between human life and the world of nature:

> Myth seizes on the fundamental element of design of-
> fered by nature--the cycle, as we have it daily in
> the sun and yearly in the seasons--and assimilates
> it to the human cycle of life, death, and (analogy
> again) rebirth. (p. 110)

But the world as it is, is not as man desires it and thus a dialectic is developed between the world as it is and as it is desired, a hell and a heaven. That second structure is the vision that comes from the desire for something better and it is essentially a product of the inward world.

The search for the origin of the genres or "literary anthropology," which is a search for archetypes, takes us to the preliterary forms such as ritual, myth, and folktale, according to Frye (1963), that inform and structure literature now, not just in its beginnings. Ritual is the origin of narrative, for in ritual we have the conscious effort to bring all human events into harmony with the natural cycle:

> All the important recurrences in nature, the day, the phases of the moon, the seasons and solstices of the year, the crises of existence from birth to death get ritual attached to them, and most of the higher religions are equipped with a definitive total body of rituals suggestive, if we may put it so, of the entire range of potentially significant actions in human life. (p. 18)

From these cycles myth "constructs a central narrative around a figure who is partly the sun, partly vegetative fertility and partly a god or archetypal human being" (Frye, 1957, p. 171). The work of Jung and Frazer has caused literary critics to recognize the importance of this myth, but Frye (1957) finds that the application to literature has not been sufficiently comprehensive or systematic to show the significance of the relationship.

If the stuff of rituals is what narrative derives from, the origins of imagery lie in oracular material or epiphanies where a correspondence between human life and the natural world is made. The epiphany originates in the subconscious, the dream world, the source of imagniation: "The human cycle of waking and dreaming corresponds closely to the natural cycle of light and darkness, and it is perhaps in this correspondence that all imaginative life begins" (p. 18). He interprets

the work of art as an effort to bring the inner desire and the outward circumstance into some kind of union, creating a vision of the "end of social effort, the innocent world of fulfilled desires, the free human society" (p. 19). This vision is a community, which constitutes the essence of the comic vision. He suggests that comedy and romance are the forms of literature that educate the imagination most appropriately in the younger or pre-adolescent child and that tragedy cannot begin to be understood until into adolescence.

The four basic structures of literature--comedy, tragedy, romance, irony--come from the incorporation of the natural cycle in myth, specifically, from the mythic images of how the human, animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds correspond to the four seasons:

> The absorption of the natural cycle into myth-
> ology provides myth with two of these structures;
> the rising movement that we find in myths of spring
> or the dawn, of birth, marriage and resurrection,
> and the falling movement in myths of death, metamor-
> phosis or sacrifice. These movements reappear as the
> structural principles of comedy and tragedy in litera-
> ture. Again, the dialectic in myth that projects a
> paradise or heaven above our world and a hell or
> place of shades below it reappears in literature as
> the idealized world of pastoral and romance and
> the absurd, suffering, or frustrated world of irony
> and satire. (Frye, 1970, p. 31)

This concept of the literary structures being derived from the natural cycles, as well as having the vertical component created by the imagination of a better or worse world (a heaven and a hell) is developed in Anatomy of Criticism (1957). Following is a brief summary of each genre and its mythic basis.

Comedy is the mythos of spring, for its goal is birth or rebirth, a new society forming around the hero at the end. From the confusion and mistaken identities that are part of a society controlled by habit and arbitrary laws, comedy moves through illusion toward reality, a reality that has to do with what ought to be rather than what is. Thus Frye (1957) notes that "civilizations that stress the desirable rather than the real, the religious as opposed to the scientific per-spective, think of drama almost entirely in terms of comedy" (p. 208). It is a vision of an "omnipotent personal community beyond an indifferent nature, of innocence and 'the unfallen world,' the archetype of images of symposium, communion, order, friendship and love" (p. 223).

Romance, the mythos of summer, and also of noon and heaven is, like comedy, the quest for the ideal but it focuses more on the hero and the conflicts of his journey. It is best understood in contrast to its opposite, irony, and over against realism. In The Stubborn Structure (1970), Frye develops the poles of romance and irony, represented by heaven and hell, noon and night:

> The romantic vision is of the heroic, the pleasura-
> ble, the ideal, of that which one feels impelled
> to identify oneself. The ironic vision is the
> vision of the anguished, the nauseated, and the
> absurd. (p. 34)

The romantic vision does not point toward a utopian society but to the festive occasion, the victory or marriage which brings the human community together in an event of rejoicing.

Tragedy is the mythos of fall, of decline and dissolu-
tion. The tragic figure is one who has risen to heights (like
the sun at noon or the year in full growth), whether it be
a human with almost godlike stature or power or a god who is
nonetheless vulnerable to fate, and who does not check the
use of his/her powers, thus upsetting the laws of nature.
Because this balance must right itself the hero is brought
to ruin, even if his/her moral intentions were not evil (e.g.,
Hamlet). This necessity Frye (1957) refers to as "an epiphany of
law, of that which is and must be" (p. 235), the law of
nature. The disintegrations that belong to tragedy are paral-
lel to the unions and reunions of comedy; in place of births
and marriage and feasts, there are deaths, separations and
famine. However, the disintegration is not of the same order
as that found in irony because there is in tragedy a measure
of hope and a sense of the wrong or excess being purged as
the laws of nature reestablish themselves at the end.

Irony and satire are, Frye (1957) suggests, the complet-
ing of the natural cycle, the mythos of winter. It is essen-
tially a parody of romance, "the application of romantic
mythical forms to a more realistic content" (p. 223). The
ironic vision, which is dominant in literature today, Frye
finds, is of the social hell created by the loss of communi-
cation, of commitment, of love and involvement. Through
irony and satire the artist tries to give form to the ambi-
guities of unidealized life, employing an implicit moral

standard but also expressing cynicism about philosophies or norms.

While comedy and romance are the more appropriate forms for children and the way they can come to know the structure of myth, these literary forms are neither childish nor insignificant. Indeed, Frye (1964) argues that our society has a great need for romance, not in order to escape from our problems (as many would suggest) but in order to break out of the limitations of realism and its essential conservatism. Frye (1976) believes that the Christian and Platonic influence on our concept of the function of literature has been to cause us to seek, mistakenly, the value of literature in its correspondence with what reason discovers about the world outside literature, thus pushing literature in the direction of realism. The tradition of romance is, Frye thinks, the pole toward which literature should move because it shows a world that is better than our everyday world, that the imagination can create or discover through the conventions of literature and myth. Tolkien and adult fantasy, Frye (1957) cites as hopeful signs of our turning away from the preoccupation with realism. Myth as a literary design is at an opposite pole of realism. In myth is depicted a fictional world, usually one where the gods and "the imitation of actions are near or at the conceivable limits of desire" (p. 136). Realism, in contrast, attempts to focus on content over structure, portraying the world as it is. In that realism tends to accept society as it is, it has an essential conservatism.

However, Frye (1976) contends, romance tends to put the world
of dreams in the place of everyday experience and thus be-
comes a kind of psychological quest for a better world often
related to the unconscious, dealing not with the plausible
but with the archetypes of experience. (pp. 53-57)

Comedy and romance, then, are for the child a way of
giving shape to the visions of the imagination, of thinking
about the world as we want it to be rather than as it is.
This imagined world, which is basically a mythic world, is
more real, Frye (1964) argues, than many of the illusions
of the world we see: "It is the real world, the real form
of human society hidden behind the one we see" (p. 151).

Social Function of Myth

In The Critical Path (1971), Frye discusses the social
function of myth from a somewhat different perspective, de-
fining two myths that have come to us out of our tradition
and the place of each in shaping our consciousness: the
myth of concern and the myth of freedom (or congruence).

The myth of concern refers to the way all the elements
that identify a culture--belief, language, history, stories--
come together through myth to hold society together and to
express its major concerns. What is true and what is real
is, from the perspective of the myth of concern, socially
established. Religious and social conservatism tend to
characterize the myth of concern and to influence literature
in a similar way: "the influence of social concern on

literature is to make it intensely traditional, repeating the
legends and learning which have most to do with that concern"
(p. 37). In oral cultures the myth of concern is dominant
and its influence in literature is seen in various ways:
e.g., the poet is seen as a teacher and spokesman passing on
shared beliefs; the greatest danger is seen as the break-
down of community (self-isolation is seen as abnormal).

The mental habits that developed with a writing culture
modified concern, according to Frye. With it came the "lib-
eral" elements: objectivity, tolerance, respect for individ-
uality, philosophy based on logic and dialectic, continuous
prose, loss of a high level of anxiety about community. With
these modes of thought, fostered primarily by scientific
and philosophic activity, there developed a concern for con-
gruence, for belief based on reason, evidence and repeatable
experiments. This concern for congruence Frye calls the
"myth of freedom" (p. 130) whose context is the environment
of physical nature and thus an alienating environment.

In our culture we experience a tension between these
two myths, but it is Frye's contention that we must have
both, not either/or. This tension is felt in the conflict
over authority, with "concern" pointing to the social estab-
lishment and "freedom" to reason and scientific evidence.
Positively, what comes from this conflict is "the sense of an
imaginative world as forming the wider context of belief, a
total potential of myth from which every specific myth of

concern has been crystallized" (p. 131). Thus it is, Frye concludes, that the "imaginative world opens up for us a new dimension of freedom, in which the individual finds himself again, detached but not separated from his community" (p. 131). An aspect of freedom is that it releases the language of concern but cannot supplant it, and much of the vision and energy that concern generates leaks "away through the openings of critical and analytical attitudes" (p. 137). The tension must remain, argues Frye, and, indeed, it is for us a productive one if freedom is informed by a vision from culture:

> The only genuine freedom is a freedom of the will
> which is informed by a vision, and this vision can
> only come to us through the intellect and the
> imagination, and through the arts and sciences
> which embody them. (p. 133)

Myth and Education

Frye's theories about the role of myth in the curriculum range from specific to general, including both structure and content. They are not the subject of any one work and exist more as sketches of a design.

In The Stubborn Structure (1970), Frye states that educational theory has, as its central concern, transforming society, moving it toward an ideal order or a just state. Having discussed theories about the meaning of labor and leisure in the social order, he gives a powerful definition of education:

> Education has nothing to do with this vicious
> circle of labour and idleness: it begins in that
> moment of genuine leisure in which Adam is neither
> tilling the ground nor going fishing and leaving the
> real work to Eve, but remembering his lost Paradise.

> Even as late as Milton, <u>articulating the dream of</u>
> <u>a lost Paradise is still the definition of educa-</u>
> <u>tion.</u> More prosaically, we may say that education
> is the product of a vision of human society that
> is more permanent and coherent than actual society.
> (p. 6, emphasis mine)

Frye goes on then to expand this definition by saying that education is concerned with two worlds: "the world that man lives in and the world he wants to live in" (p. 18). While these two worlds cannot be clearly separated out as the areas of science and of humanities/arts, it is through the latter, literature in particular, that education is directed toward the concern of the world we want, as well as the world we do not want, which concern "forms in every age a huge mythological structure" (p. 18).

Thus Frye establishes his central pedagogical principle, that education is not concerned to prepare children to find their place in some passing form of the social order (the present reality) but to develop their imaginations to be able to envision a better social order, a vision that is expressed in many ways in that "huge mythological structure" embodied in the arts and humanities. A theory of society is, in fact, at the heart of a theory of education:

> We cannot discuss educational theory simply in rela-
> tion to an existing society, for no educational
> theory is worth anything unless it can be conceived
> as transforming that society and, at least to some
> extent, assimilating it to its own pattern. (Frye,
> 1970, p. 7)

Generally, the education of the child in the schools, as well as in the larger world outside, is primarily in the basic

social mythology, the American way of life, and its purpose is
"to create the adjusted, that is, the docile and obedient
citizen" (Frye, 1970, p. 20). The concern for society is
strong but it may not be profound or well articulated. The
education that literature and myth provides should enable
the child to discover a deeper, more significant level of
concern and give expression to that vision that is within
himself, embryonically, and in the tradition, expressed in
myth, literature and the other arts. It is only by such a
stronger vision that the child will have the power and free-
dom to conceive of the world in terms other than adjustment
to what is. The power to fulfill possibilities and transform
the social order is the basis of true freedom and is derived
from "the continuing vision of a continuing city" (p. 21).

Central to Frye's concept of how literature should be
taught is his theory that "any effective teaching of litera-
ture has to recapitulate its history and begin, in early
childhood, with myths, folktales and legends" (1963, p. 33).
In The Educated Imagination, Frye develops an approach to
teaching myths. He suggests that education begin with the
most comprehensive and central myth that incorporates the
central theme of a lost identity that is still sought. That
myth he finds in the Bible. Thus the Bible is the beginning
point, the "lowest stratum" for teaching literature: "It
should be taught so early and thoroughly that it sinks straight
to the bottom of the mind, where everything that comes along

tells you that the cow jumped over the moon, and
you don't react until you've taken in all of what
he has to say. (pp. 116-117)

Junior or senior high school is the time to begin a sys-

tematic study of mythology, Frye (1970) concludes, learning

the archetypes, the cyclical and dialectical structures that

are the structures of all literature. Myth provides a dia-

gram of what literature is about, "an imaginative survey of

the human situation from the beginning to the end, from the

height to the depth, of what is imaginatively conceivable"

(p. 102).

Frye (1970) makes a strong argument for literature and

the mythology that informs it as an essential part of education

in a democracy because of the role it plays in educating the

imagination. He contends that "in a modern democracy a citi-

zen participates in society mainly through his imagination"

(p. 104). The power to fight against adjustment to the pre-

vailing social mythology comes from knowing the "real" society

that exists beyoung the "phantasmagoria of current events."

The imagination is even more important than the reason in a

perverted society, for only the imagination can see "reality

as a whole" and provide a better vision to correct the present

order (p. 105).

Conclusions

All of these writers contend that man perceives the world

in terms of mythology, that our psychic and social worlds

are deeply embedded in mythic concepts and structures. The modern effort to deny the mythic and emphasize the rational has been in error in its one-sidedness. Recognizing the power and function of myth in shaping consciousness, particularly in developing a social vision, is argued, in different ways, by each writer.

Both Jung and Campbell warn that rationalism destroys those moral and spiritual traditions that myths embody and that we lose those traditions to our peril. Jung, to some degree, but Campbell, even more, recognize that we are faced with a contradiction to which we have found no solution. The dissolution of myths has freed individuals from the tyranny of dogma and a closed society, allowing them to discover more about the world through scientific inquiry. But those very achievments have severed us from the mythic heritage that expresses our most fundamental human identity. Campbell offers perhaps the best response, which is to accept the difficulty of this transition and seek ways to revitalize and reconstruct our mythic inheritance, recognizing that temporarily, at least, science and myth will represent different ways of knowing and different kinds of truths.

While Jung emphasizes the psychological wholeness that can come from integration of the mythic inheritance into consciousness, Frye is concerned with the imaginative use of the mythic inheritance for creating new social ideals. Campbell shares both concerns, although with perhaps more

emphasis on the social need for reformulated mythologies.
But the concept of the archetypes bridges that gap between
individual and cultural concerns, for it represents the idea
that the most essential concerns of the individual are also
the common concerns of the species. Indeed, the universality
of mythic symbols and patterns is the feature that makes
mythology a potentially progressive rather than regressive
force in our time. The archetypes of myth, freed from dogma
(but not necessarily freed from religious content) may be
more useful than the structures of reason, these writers
suggest, in forming concepts by which different cultures
might begin to conceive of common goals, or common images of
how to dwell on our planet. Concentration on the personal,
on the rational, on realism and on scientific inquiry has led
to an imbalance that needs to be corrected by attention to
community and imagination.

In various ways these writers contend that humans are
profoundly involved in myth and that human society cannot
maintain itself without what Campbell calls "some arrangement
of the general inheritance of myth" (1970, p. 19). But at
the same time they think that it is critical that we get
beyond our inadequate myths to the deeper ones available to
us. As Frye suggests, education's goal should be to free
students from obedience to the prevailing social mythology
by helping them know the universal dimensions of mythology.

The educational significance of mythology comes from a
consideration of how the symbols and archetypes of myth operate

in our conception of the world--whether they are artifacts from our past that no longer serve our needs and are a retarding element that thwarts the development of rational and moral thought; or whether they enlarge and deepen our perception of reality in ways both personally and culturally beneficial. I have attempted to establish, through the above writers, the significance of the latter option as a basis for contending that myth, broadly understood, is an important element in curriculum theory and development.

CHAPTER II

MYTH AND THE CHILD

Frye leads us to consider the importance of educating
the imagination of the child, particularly through attention
to how myth conveys the basic framework and images with which
the imagination functions. His suggestion that a curriculum
for children give a significant place to some of the more
important and comprehensive mythologies goes against the mod-
ern emphasis on realism and relevance to contemporary life
in developing materials for children. This issue leads us
to ask one of the questions in the introduction: do children
in our age relate to mythic stories and images and do myths
fit their cognitive and emotional needs?

Support for the idea that children of our century and
of our culture relate to myth comes from several sources and
it is these sources I want to examine. Two recent studies,
Travers (1978) and Favat (1977), have noted the correspondence
between Piaget's (1926, 1928, 1929) early findings about
the mythic elements in child thought and Bettelheim's (1976)
theories about the child's close connection with fairy tales.
Both studies conclude that traditional stories reflect the
child's conception of reality and the child's emotional needs
more accurately than do realistic stories. Egan (1979)

develops a curriculum theory based on stages of development and in it draws heavily on the ideas about child thought found in the early Piaget works to define his first stage of educational development, the "mythic stage." It is these sources--Piaget, Bettelheim, Egan, Travers--that I examine now to develop the dimensions of the child's mythic consciousness and the implications of these findings for education.

A Cognitive Perspective: Piaget

In three of Piaget's early works--The Language and Thought in the Child (1926), Judgment and Learning in the Child (1928), and The Child's Conception of the World (1929)--there are descriptions of characteristics of child thought that seem to have important implications for curriculum but that have been largely ignored. Flavell notes that in these early works Piaget had not yet explicitly developed the "mathematical and physical model" that was to dominate his work (1963, p. 269). What we have here, rather, are descriptions of the prelogical thought of the child and, particularly in The Child's Conception of the World, descriptions of the mythic qualities of child thought.

In a critique of Piaget's early writings, Flavell (1963) observes that the central concept Piaget was studying in these three early works was child egocentrism and its gradual replacement by socialized thought. That egocentrism is manifested in forms of thinking very similar to those found among "primitive" (Piaget's term) or myth-oriented people, particularly

as Piaget understood that perspective from the anthropological
work of Levy-Bruhl. It is not an egocentricism that comes
from thinking about the self first or from self-consciousness
but from a perception of events that does not distinguish
self from the world, the absence of subject-object distinc-
tion, the absence of self-consciousness. And it is an ego-
centrism that comes from the child's attributing his own
kind of thought/feelings to animals and inanimate objects.
Flavell (1963) notes that in the study of causality in Judgment
and Reasoning in the Child, Piaget found that children do
not use connectives like "because," "although," "therefore"
much because they tend to juxtapose things, not connect them
by the logic of cause and effect, seeing causality rather as
a psychological event of motive or duty:

> Thus the child's questions about the causes of physi-
> cal events reveal expectations of an answer couched,
> not in terms of impersonal, physical-causal forces,
> but in anthropomorphic, quasi-intential terms.
> (p. 274)

Having examined the form and function of child thought
in the two previous works, Piaget turned to an analysis of
the content of child thought in The Child's Conception of the
World (1929) and there described the kind of egocentristic,
anthropomorphic ideas, the notions of reality and causality,
the child has. He asked children questions designed around
three characteristics of "primitive" thought: realism, animism,
and artificalism. For realism questions were asked to reveal
whether distinctions were being made between the internal and

external world (e.g., "Where is the name of the clouds?").
Animism, that tendency to give life and consciousness to non-
human things, was explored with such questions as : "Is the
sun alive? Is the bicycle alive? When is it not?" Artifi-
cialism is the belief that there is a tie between one's own
actions and natural phenomena and is seen in response to
questions such as "Where did the sun come from? Why does it
shine?" In summarizing his findings concerning these charac-
teristics of the content of child thought between the ages
of five and 12, I will focus on two things: what constitutes
each concept and how it changes as the child moves from mythic
to scientific ways of explaining natural phenomena, or as
greater accommodation is made to physical laws.

The significance of these early studies for curriculum
development I will discuss below, but two points regarding
their value should be made here to help focus our discussion.
First, I suggest that the findings of these studies have been
overlooked because educators have had so great a concern
to foster rational thought and the early acquisition of know-
ledge that accords with scientific explanations of phenomena.
Were we to shift the focus in our culture more toward the
value of imagination, creativity, and moral development we
would view the mythic content of the child's thought quite
differently. Secondly, I suggest that if we recognize the
value of making use of the knowledge that the child already
has (both as a way of assimilating more knowledge and as a

basis for learning that leads to accommodation of new ideas)
then we need to learn to make use of the realism, animism,
and artificialism that characterize much of child thought.
The following summary of Piaget's discoveries and conclusions
about these forms of child thought are from The Child's Con-
ception of the World (1929).

Realism

Piaget's approach is to ask children the kinds of questions
he has determined through previous research that children spon-
taneously ask themselves. The first set of questions seeks
to reveal the child's notion of reality, whether the child
sees the external world as external the way adults do and can
distinguish the self from it and what boundaries the child
draws between the external and internal world. Asking chil-
dren questions about where thoughts come from, how things get
their names, the nature and origin of dreams, he found that
until about age seven or eight they made no distinction be-
tween internal and external, between the sign and the thing;
that between ages eight and ten they recognized that the
thought, the name, or the dream is somehow separate from the
thing in which it manifests itself but is still a material
thing located somewhere; and that after age ten or 11 they
begin to see a sign or dream as something immaterial or origi-
nating in the mind, thus eventually making a clear distinc-
tion between internal and external. This characteristic of
child thought, the absence of a clear distinction between

internal and external, is called realism (to be distinguished from objectivity) and consists in "ignoring the existence of self and thence regarding one's own perspective as immediately objective and absolute" (p. 34).

Thus the egocentricity of the child is not, Piaget concludes, to be understood as consciousness of self but, to the contrary, unconsciousness of self as distinct from the universe. The child is as conscious of his/her thought as the adult is but does not know its source and thus confuses the physical and psychical. Consequently, many things that come from the mind have a magical appearance to the child and what happens to him, he assumes, happens to everyone. The early years, what Piaget calls the "primitive stage," are when the child thinks his/her own point of view is absolute.

> The child thinks the sun follows him, that the
> clouds follow him. . . . He believes himself the
> center of the world, whence follow a whole group
> of finalistic, animistic and quasi-magical con-
> ceptions" (p. 127).

A sense of selfhood begins when experience brings contradictions and disillusions that start the break-up of the primitive consciousness.

In addition to lack of consciousness of self, Piaget discusses realism as the basis of the primitive sense of participation and magical effects. Participation is the belief that two beings or things have a direct influence on each other where there is no discernable cause-effect relationship, such as the belief by the child that his walking causes the sun to

follow him. "Magic" refers to "the use the individual be-
lieves he can make of participation to modify reality" (p. 132).
Piaget concludes that the child constructs myths and romances
or uses animistic and artificialist concepts as a way of try-
ing to explain, when asked, that intuitive sense of connection
between things. The sense of participation begins at the
point when the child starts to make a differentiation of self
and the external world, with the self taking on magical powers
and other beings and things being attributed consciousness
and life.

Animism

Animism is the belief that many or all objects are living
and have a will; this belief is due to the child's tendency
not to set limits between the self and the external world:
"The primitive property of mind which consists in the complete
lack of differentiation between conscious action and mechani-
cal movement" (p. 231). In studying animism in the child,
Piaget sought answers to three problem areas: (a) Is con-
sciousness attributed to things and how? (b) What does "life"
mean to a child? and (c) Does the child see natural laws as
coming from moral or physical necessity?

As regards the question of consciousness, he found that
there is a progression from seeing everything active as having
consciousness to the limitation of consciousness to animals.
(Before ages four or five there is implicit animism, i.e.,
everything has purpose and conscious activity.) Having not

made a distinction between thought and physical objects, the
child cannot realize "that there can be actions unaccompanied
by consciousness" (p. 177). Activity is, by its nature, to
the child purposeful and conscious--clouds, sun, moon, rivers,
fires, bicycles all know and feel, but benches and walls do
not. However experience begins to teach the child that bi-
cycles do not move on their own, and so the child restricts
consciousness to those things that can move by themselves.
Thus wind or the clouds are said to feel things but bicycles
do not. Even when children begin to doubt that streams and
clouds are alive, they persist in believing the sun and moon
to be alive because these bodies have spontaneous and con-
trolled movement. Eventually, usually age 12 or later, the
child limits consciousness to animals.

The notion of "life" is closely linked to that of con-
sciousness, having to do with activity and purpose, with the
expectation of movement being of great importance. As with
consciousness, there is a progression through stages from
the notion that all things that move have life to the idea
that only those things that cause spontaneous movement or
have force are alive. Thus children ages five through nine
give these responses:

> Is a bicycle alive?--No, when it doesn't go it
> isn't alive. When it goes it is alive.--Is a
> mountain alive?--No.--Why not?--Because it doesn't
> do anything.--Is a tree alive?--No; when it has
> fruit it's alive. When it hasn't any, it isn't
> alive. . . . Is a lamp alive?--Yes, it shines.--
> Is the moon alive?--Yes, it sometimes hides be-
> hind the mountains. . . . Are you alive?--Yes.--

> Why?--I can walk and I go and play. Is the moon
> alive?--Yes.--Why?--It guides us at night.--
> Is the lake alive?--Not always.--Why not?--
> Sometimes there are waves and sometimes there
> aren't any. (pp. 199-200)

By age 11 or 12 most children understand life as spontaneous movement on the part of plants and animals.

Another expression of animism in child thought Piaget finds in the attribution of moral necessity to things or events in nature. Asking questions to explore whether children think of nature as "a collection of physical laws" or "a well-regulated society," Piaget found that children think in moral rather than psychological or physical terms and endow "things with consciousness principally in order to explain their obedience to a hierarchy" (p. 224). Children to age eight generally think that everything acts out a necessity to obey a moral law that regulates everything to the greatest good of man. After this age they begin to think of physical determinism in some things such as water, clouds, but the idea remains subservient to the moral law until age 11 or 12. Typical of this view of nature as acting in accord with moral law to serve man is this response:

> Can the clouds do what they like?--No, because all
> they do is to show us the way. . . . Can it (the
> sun) stop?--No.--Why not?--Because it has to shine
> for some time.--Why?--To warm us. (p. 226)

Artificialism

The essence of child artificialism, like primitive artificialism, is "regarding things as the product of human creation, rather than in attributing creating activity to the things themselves" (p. 258). As with realism and animism, Piaget

finds three stages in the child's growth from an artificialist
perspective to a view of natural events as explained by physi-
cal laws: (a) children ages seven through eight think that
humans or divine persons made the sun and moon, (b) children ages
nine through ten think the sun and moon are made partly by
natural processes and partly by humans or gods, and (c) chil-
dren ages 11-12 drop human agency as a factor.

Piaget suggests that the artificialist idea comes from
feelings of participation; the child makes up myths to ex-
plain vague feelings of participation. The young child's
basic thought is that the moon gets bigger because we do or
is alive because we are alive. For the child the connection
is not just an analogy but a matter of causality that is
related to a universal plan and order: "The universe is a
society of like beings living according to a well-ordered
code of rules" (p. 262). The essence of artificialism, as
differentiated from animism, is "the tendency to believe that
human beings control the creation and conduct of other beings"
(p. 263). Piaget suggests that myth comes, for the child,
from the need, put to him by others, to be precise.

Piaget notes that some explanations of creation or origin
may reflect religious or other adult teachings but that the
child assimilates this instruction in his/her own way. One
example is the way a child transforms what s/he is taught about
clouds to fit it to personal experience: clouds are vapors
and vapors are produced by boiling water, thus clouds come

from saucepans. Or on the evaporation of water from the sea

to make clouds, a child concludes that clouds are "water

that's been heated in the houses, when the windows are open"

(p. 302). Children often will repeat the formulas they have

learned in school about the origin or nature of a substance,

only to then add their own spontaneous explanations that

show a more "primitive" or artificial understanding, Piaget

suggests.

The essence of artificialism is that of animism, that

everything exists for a purpose and that purpose centers

around man:

> The child behaves as if nature were charged with
> purpose, as if chance or mechanical necessity did
> not exists, as if each being tended, by reason of
> an internal and volitional activity, towards a
> fixed goal. . . . But this (purposiveness) in-
> volves commands and above all commanders, to serve
> whom is precisely the raison d'etre of things.
> (p. 357)

This need to serve man is an expression of the blending, or

lack of distinction between, the physical and moral law, for

the moral law assumes there are those who give orders and

those who obey and it is humans (the parents being the proto-

types) who give the orders.

It is in the second stage of ages seven or eight to

nine or ten of artificialistic thinking that the child shifts

from a diffuse sense of everything having the kind of relations

that exist between himself and parents to a more systematic

effort to explain origins, a stage of "mythological artifi-

cialsm" (p. 371), Piaget calls it, when the answers children

give to questions or origins resemble the myths of origins
of primitive peoples. After this stage the child begins to
give technical explanations derived from his/her observations
and studies of nature and how things work, and thus mythologi-
cal answers cease, Piaget observes. Physical determinism
begins to explain events rather than moral laws, although
there remains a sense of iminant artificialism in the idea
that nature has a purpose and that sun, moon, were made for
man. If the child has been taught a religion, the artifi-
cialism will be transfered to God and will remain in explana-
tions of creation of the world, while physical phenomena will
be attributed to natural processes.

Mythic Qualities of Child Thought

By way of summary of these findings discussed from
Piaget's work, I suggest that all of the major characteris-
tics are closely paralled in myths and provide a basis for
saying that the child is a mythic thinker having the follow-
ing characteristics:

(a) lack of self-consciousness, unaware of self as
distinct from the universe and thus not separating external
from internal events. Thus many things which come from
within like dreams, visions, appear to be magical and the
child thinks what happens to him/her happens to everyone;

(b) an intuitive sense of connection between things,
the sense of participation, that leads the child to think s/he
has magical powers to cause things to happen, such as the

moon moving when s/he does, and that all things which move

do so, like himself, out of intentionality;

(c) a belief that everything that moves has conscious-

ness and feelings and that all activity is purposeful. Those

things which move do so out of obedience to moral laws and

in accord with a divine necessity that all should serve the

good of man; and

(d) a belief that humans are the creators and controllers

of those things in nature that move, particularly those things

that serve man like sun, water, because to serve humans is

why those things exist. In the second stage this idea shifts

to a more systematic explanation of creation and purpose,

attributing divine will and activity to the place and func-

tion of all things, but there continues to be a moral, not

a physical, necessity that guides all activity.

Favat (1977) reviewed the research that followed up on

Piaget's conclusions about the child's animism, artificia-

lism, and realism and found that the general configuration

of Piaget's hypotheses is confirmed. Some of these studies

suggest what I would think to be true for many American

children of this generation, that the ages suggested for the

different stages may be too old and that children begin to

take physical laws into account earlier than Piaget suggested.

The increased exposure to scientific facts and explanations

and the decreased exposure to folk or mythic ideas and tales

would, I think, force earlier accommodation to the different

stages.

What is more significant, however, than the fact that the few studies done to test Piaget's hypotheses support his conclusions, is the fact that this early work of Piaget has been largely ignored. Because Piaget himself was primarily concerned in his subsequent works with how children develop logical thinking, most of his work focused on the structures of thought and their place in the schema of development that leads to formal operations. Most of what has been written about "Piaget in the classroom" has been concerned with how logical thought can be fostered at various stages. Those taking a Piagetian approach to education view the prelogical thought of the child as a problem, a kind of temporary handicap to be overcome and that curricula should be designed to build on those tasks the child can do correctly and to ignore the areas of confused thought that we cannot do much about until the child through accommodation and assimilation moves on to new tasks. It appears that most educators seeking to apply Piaget to curriculum development would say of Piaget's findings concerning the mythic quality of child thought that they reveal a bottle half-empty, what is missing and problematic. I am suggesting that the prelogical thinking described shows a bottle half-full of rich and useable concepts that indicate a different and interesting approach to shaping curriculum materials for the elementary school.

A Curriculum Perspective: Egan

How these findings about the mythic character of child thought can be used in developing an approach to curriculum has been outlined in Egan's Education Development (1979). Even though Egan acknowledges an indebtedness to Piaget and Erikson for his stage theory, he does not cite any specific works. It seems obvious, however, that he is quite indebted to Piaget's early writings in formulating his concept of the mythic stage (the first of Egan's four stages). Although other writers have suggested guidelines or rationale for the study of myths in elementary schools (most notably Frye and Steiner), Egan is, to my knowledge, the first to focus on the structures of thinking represented by myth as a form for writing curriculum materials. In order to understand what he means by a "mythic stage" we need to look first at his general theory.

Egan is concerned to develop an educational theory of development rather than try to sketch out the educational implications of developmental theories from other disciplines. He argues that educational research and theory need to move beyond the current domination by psychology in order to deal with questions about thinking and development to the end of attaining information that "yields principles for engaging children in learning, for unit and lesson planning, for curriculum organizing" (p. 6).

He contends that educational development follows stages and that principles for learning are derived from the

characteristic of each stage:

> At each stage we make sense of the world and
> experience in significantly different ways and
> that these differences require that knowledge be
> organized differently to be most accessible and
> educationally effective at each stage. From the
> defining characteristics of the stages are derived
> principles for organizing learning and teaching.
> (p. 7)

Thus we see that, like Piaget, he is concerned with how the

child derives meaning from the world, how and what the child

can learn, or has available to learn with, at different stages.

It is the structures, the categories that frame a child's

interest, and not the content, that is the primary concern.

Taking two basic principles of curriculum building--what

knowledge the child has access to and what information is

relevant to a child's needs--Egan suggests that child-centered

advocates have made some incorrect assumptions. They have

answered these questions in terms of content and thus assumed

the child knows best what is closest at hand and that what

is relevant is what the child sees and does in the external,

everyday world. Consequently, they build curricula that

focuses on the familiar (my home, my school, grocery shopping,

etc.) and then expands outward to lesser known places--the

"expanding horizons" concept. (pp. 17-18)

The alternative to this approach is, Egan suggests, to

see the categories children use at different ages to make

sense of stories and games, to look at what they are in-

terested in. The kinds of stories young children are interested

in (fairy tales) suggest that they "know best the most profound

human emotions and the bases of morality: love, hate, joy
fear, good, bad" (p. 10). Through their inner worlds chil-
dren have "direct access to the wildest flights of fantasy
. . . to anything in the world that can be connected with
basic emotions and morality" (p. 11). The inherent struc-
tures that shape a child's interest and ability to learn,
emotions and morality, are not from the environment but a
form of heredity, coming either through the common situation
of being born into a family (Freud) or through the human con-
dition itself (not unlike Jung's collective unconscious).

The Stages

These interests just described are central to Egan's
conception of the first of four stages of education develop-
ment: (a) mythic (ages four/five to nine/ten), (b) romantic
(eight/nine to 14/15), (c) philosophic (14/15 to 19/20), and
(d) ironic (19/20 through adulthood).

The mythic stage. The first stage of educational de-
velopment is termed "mythic" because of the similarity be-
tween the thought of the child and the stories of myth-using
people.[1] There are at least four characteristics of mythic
thinking as derived from myths found in the child:

(a) A need for intellectual security through absolutes
and through significance assigned to all events,

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[1]Egan, like Piaget, suggests a correspondence between the
developmental progress of Western civilization and the pattern
of a child's intellectual growth, the idea that the child
recapitulates the stages of the culture.

(b) a lack of sense of otherness and thus of history
and change; myth provides "the eternally valid charter for
things as they are" (p. 12),

(c) a lack of a sense of the world as autonomous and
objective, and

(d) stories based on binary opposites.
These features manifest themselves in the child's orientation,
Egan says, as a difficulty in finding meaning in ambiguous
and complex ideas, as the lack of experience with which to
understand change and historical causality, as a tendency to
see and interpret the outer world in terms of personal feel-
ings and imaginative inner life, and as a tendency to under-
stand things in terms of basic oppositions such as "big/little,
love/hate, security/fear, courage/cowardice, good/bad" (pp. 12-
13). Two of the characteristics listed, (b) and (c), are
among those Piaget found in the studies discussed above, and
(a) is implied in the child's artificialism. The fourth, the
need for binary opposites, is the need for a moral law, a
hierarchy, that Piaget discussed.

From these characteristics Egan suggests that we can find
directions for how to teach children in the mythic stage.
Thus the teacher or curriculum writer's job is not to take
materials written from an adult perspective and simplify
them but to use qualitatively different forms based on the
child's grasp of emotional and moral polarities and lack of
distinction between the inner and outer as a basis for build-
ing connections with the outside world. In this way children

can learn to use the outside world to think with from their
own perspectives, with the result, Egan thinks, or modifi-
cation and growth as their own categories are altered by
this interaction:

> True learning at this stage must involve their
> being able to absorb the world to the categories of
> their own vivid mental life and to dialectically use
> the world to expand the intellectual categories they
> have available. The most effective teaching will be
> that which provides best access to the world, by
> organizing what is to be known in terms that chil-
> dren can best absorb and use. (pp. 15-16)

Stories provide us with the best clues, Egan suggests,
for organization, and the stories that interest children most
are fairy tales. The story form itself is essential, he thinks,
because it fixes meaning and that is a requirement for chil-
dren if they are to absorb, not just repeat, knowledge. Thus
Egan proposes that most teaching at this stage should make use
of the story form, casting countries, events, movements as
characters in a drama with beginning, middle, and end. Even
science should concentrate on the story of how people make
discoveries, not on doing isolated experiments unless the
game form can be used, the game being the other form besides
story that this age can relate to, according to Egan.

Egan does not give any evidence or theory for his asser-
tion that children learn best from the story form, but if
we accept the parallel of child thought with premodern
thought (as outlined above with Piaget), we can suggest that
for the most of human history the story was used as the
vehicle for teaching most important knowledge. The conception

of all life as a part of a purposeful plan to serve man (the artificialist concept) leads one to expect that everything has its story: the story fixes meaning because it explains an event as a segment of life with intentionality, action and consequences. Pushing each answer back to its predecessor with a succession of "why's", the child seeks the whole story, the link between each thing. For the young child it means nothing to say that a rock falls down the hill because a tree fell on it; s/he needs to know why the tree wanted to fall and make the rock roll down. Often adults fail to get the point: the moral necessity that the child expects to lie behind all events. It is the story that explains the moral necessity.

The first question an educator should ask when organizing material for children at this stage is, according to Egan, "What is mythic about this?" (p. 20). The task, then, is to find the "two most powerful and conflicting forces in our topic" (p. 20) and to personify those forces. Instead of being understood as false later on, the student will understand such personifications as metaphors. Successful teaching at this level, Egan argues, requires a repertoire of story plots and ways to put knowledge into these stories.

This mode of learning not only gives children access to knowledge that might otherwise be out of reach conceptually and/or boring, but also develops the imagination through enabling children to connect their rich inner life

with the outer world and create an appetite for more of such
wonderful knowledge of the world. Children know about the
conflict between survival and destruction, Egan points out,
and thus it is more meaningful for them to understand cul-
ture as a defense against destruction than to have bits and
pieces of information about shelters, clothing and food.
Those bits and pieces, which are the subject matter of much
of the elementary school social studies curriculum, con-
stitute the essence of what Egan calls "the tyranny of pro-
vincial knowledge and experience over so many modern Western
children's minds" (p. 24).

The mythic stage is, then, the time for developing con-
fidence that the world can be meaningful, that the outer
world can be related to one's inner world. The content of
learning should not, according to this perspective, be in-
formation about the everyday world but the life and death
struggles that myths and fairy tales represent. These and
other fictional stories should be central in the curriculum,
fostering the development of imagination, of language rich
in contrasts, and of a sense of the drama and mystery of
existence. The main threat to educational development, in
Egan's theory, is a curriculum that suppresses "children's
vivid forms of thinking in local detail and trivia." Life
is not about "the secure surface of daily routine and local
custom" but the great struggles. Thus the first task is
"to destroy the tyranny of this local knowledge over children's
imaginations by introducing them to knowledge about the world

that is, in its dramatic power and human significance, analogous to their own earlier inner struggles" (pp. 121-122).

I want to describe the next stage in Egan's schema because it shows how mythic thinking is changed by the child's experience and learning, but still retains many mythic themes. The pattern fits the development that Piaget found of the increasing accommodation of thought to physical laws, but a perspective that has not lost all of its mythic features.

The romantic stage. The primary characteristic of the shift from the mythic to the romantic stage, as Egan describes it, is seen in the way the child views the world. For now the world is viewed as more than an extension of the self; it is rather a realm distinct from the inner world, filled with strangeness, wonders, and extremes. The opposites within which reality exists are still prominent but now they are conceived in terms of the limits of reality, thus there is a "sudden fascination with the extremes of what exists and what is known" (p. 31). It is an age characterized by The Guinness Book of Records and Ripley's Believe It or Not. At this stage myth is confined to the real world but pushes against its boundaries, Egan suggests.

The student at this stage has two primary tasks: (a) finding a new relationship and connectedness to a now autonomous world in order to deal with its threatening aliveness, and (b) developing a sense of identity. Connection and identity with the world are made at this stage, Egan finds,

not through learning about the familiar but by making romantic associations with the most powerful and transcendent, and often the more remote. Thus it is a time for identifying with heroes, through the transcendent human qualities of courage, honor, faithfulness, creativity. It is this identification which glorifies and gives security to the emerging ego and provides a means of access to knowledge.

Egan emphasizes the desire to explore the limits of reality at this age. Students have a desire to get a feel for different ways of living, to explore the strangeness of other worlds, cultures and times, to get a sense of the scope of things in the universe. The everyday environment is boring and often alienating, Egan thinks, unless the student is exploring some facet of knowledge in infinite detail.

The implications of curriculum development for students at the romantic stage are similar in several ways to those for the mythic stage. The educator should, Egan suggest, avoid the rational, logical, everyday, provencial, "relevant," and look instead for story forms, the polarities, and an unsophisticated approach. More specifically, s/he should look to the unusual or bizarre person in history or literature whose life expresses some great theme (e.g., creativity vs. security) and to whom the student can relate by means of identification with the person's courage, nobility, ingenuity.

We find here echoes of what Frye says about the impor-
tance of romance to the development of the imagination,
especially for children. Romance, as we recall, expresses
the limits of desire, the world at its extremes of good and
evil (heaven and hell). From romance the child begins to
form a sense of the limits of human aspiration and degradation
and the models who embody it, the heroes and villains. Thus,
it is significant in forming a moral sense of the world and
a vision of the ideal, the world we want rather than the
world we presently live in.

The romantic view is, I suggest, what the child retains
of the mythic perspective during a time when experience is
teaching him/her about the physical laws that supplant the
magic and animism of nature and events. The imagination
keeps alive those images of the strange, the extreme, the
wonderful and the terrifying, the good and evil. It is from
this accumulation of symbols and archetypes that the student
will draw ideas as s/he begins to develop a philosophy,
a vision of a better world. The philosophic stage, the
third in Egan's educational schema, will be examined in the
next chapter.

A Psychological Perspective: Bettelheim

What Piaget and Egan reveal about the cognitive needs of
the child is paralleled by Bettelheim's theories about the
psychological needs of the child in The Uses of Enchantment
(1976). In the introduction I discussed the idea that in

many respects myth and tale partake of the same characteristics, while maintaining some obvious differences. Given the close relationship between these two kinds of ancient tales, it is not surprising to find that much of what Bettelheim says about children's interest in fairy tales bears a strong resemblance to what Egan writes about the interest in mythic materials.[2] In his study, <u>Child and Tale</u>, Favat (1977) refers to the reality of the child described in the early works of Piaget and that in the fairy tales as being essentially the same. Indeed, we can say that although Piaget talks about the correspondence between what he discovered about child thought and the thought of myth-bound people, we could establish most, if not all, the same parallels between child thought and folk/fairy tales. I want to show here that Bettelheim's description of how fairy tales match and serve the child's psychological world complements the picture of the child's view of reality established above and thus gives us a more complete picture of the child's need for and interest in mythic materials, in this case an emotional need that corresponds to and supports a cognitive need.

In <u>The Uses of Enchantment</u> (1976), Bettelheim develops the thesis that what children need and want most for their psychological development that can be gained from books

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[2]Bettelheim dislikes myths and tries to make a sharp distinction; however, his distinction, I suggest, is based more on the religious and potentially dogmatic characteristics of myths than on the kind of reality depicted or the themes involved.

and stories is found in fairy tales. He has found through
his clinical experiences that their great interest in these
tales is quite sound. They are seeking, unconsciously, the
stories that tell them what they most need to know: how to
deal with inner conflicts created by social relationships,
mainly the family setting, and how to project hope and mean-
ing into their present struggles.

Bettelheim is interested in the structure and form stories
provide for the child's thought, particularly the adequacy
of the structures to bring unconscious material into conscious-
ness so that the conflicts can be worked through and the imag-
ination expanded and enriched. Contemporary stories, both
realism and simplified fantasies, are not able, Bettelheim
thinks, to promote the development of imagination that psy-
chological growth requires because these stories are based
on false assumptions. They are stories that yield to modern
parents' beliefs that we ought to be truthful with children,
that too much fantasy will lead to neglect of reality, that
the world already has too much that is frightening in it
without giants and beasts, and that children's ambivalent
feelings about parents should not be encouraged. He argues
that such persons miss the purpose of stories and the nature
of psychological problems. There is a need to see that
fairy tales deal with a truth more important than literalism,
the truth of the imagination, that reality threatens fantasy
because fantasy is a way of bringing emotions in line with

reality, that tales do not add monsters to the child's thought but give a way to deal with the fierce stuff there anyway, and that it is quite helpful to portray parent-child conflict in stories that bring it to a happy conclusion.

Bettelheim views the child's inner world and development in Freudian categories of certain basic, universal struggles and suggests that the structure the emerging psyche needs is one that allows these conflicts to be expressed and resolved. Fairy tales are expressions of these psychological struggles and offer not only a vicarious way of expressing them but also reassurance that they are okay and can be resolved success- fully, even that it is an attractive venture to be engaged in. The structure of the tales matches the structure of the child's mind--a clear polarization of moral and emotional concepts (good/evil, happy/sad, etc.). This polarization is necessary, he argues, for the comprehension of the concepts; complexi- ties and subtleties are understood only much later (also Egan's argument). The child learns morality through iden- tification with the hero and thus learns goodness and its desirability because of the hero's attractiveness or learns to desire success or achievement because of the hero's suc- cess and great reward.

Bettelheim contends that the child's thinking is quali- tatively different from the adult's to a greater degree than Piaget does. He contends that while Piaget describes the animistic character of child thought, he still often tries

to understand a child's thinking from a rational framework
and thus does not see the child's point (p. 119). The child
works from the inner world out toward reality; learning to
bridge the "immense gap between inner experiences and the
real world" (p. 66) is the developmental task. Reasoning is,
at this point, still too immature, he thinks, to give form
and meaning to the "rapidly expanding collection of often ill-
assorted and only partially integrated impressions" (p. 61).
Attempts to explain phenomena in objective terms and sci-
entific reasoning about the sun, moon, gravity fail to reach
children even though they may be able to give it back verbally.
Scientific explanations, Bettelheim thinks, are lonely and
isolating images to children whose way of imaging the world
is according to the family setting. Some realism can help
the emerging rationality, but it is fantasy that gives the
form by which the child gains order and meaning out of the
inner needs and the demands of reality. He projects a recapi-
tulation theory for the intellectual and emotional pattern of
the development of the child's thinking:

> What seems desirable for the individual is to
> repeat in his life span the process involved his-
> torically in the genesis of scientific thought. For
> a long time in his history man used emotional pro-
> jections--such as gods--born of his immature hopes
> and anxieties to explain man, his society, and the
> universe; these explanations gave him a feeling of
> security. Then slowly, by his own social, scien-
> tific, and technological progress, man freed him-
> self of the constant fear for his very existence.
> . . . From there man's childish projections dis-
> solved and more rational explanations took their
> place. (p. 51)

Growth toward maturity is facilitated best, Bettelheim
thinks, by the development of the imagination. And it is
through fantasy that the imagination is fostered. He writes
that "the ability to spin fantasies beyond the present is
the new achievement which makes all others possible" (p. 125).
Because fantasy is the way of projecting hope into the future
beyond the disappointments of the present it makes it possi-
ble for the child to take on new achievements even though each
step in growth is threatening. Without such projections de-
velopment is arrested. The fairy tales are, Bettelheim
thinks, the kind of fantasy that best facilitates   this de-
velopment of the imagination because they use stock characters
and "universal symbols that permit the child to choose, select,
neglect, and interpret the tale in ways congruent with his
state of intellectual and psychological development" (p. 130).
The implication of his theory is that the development of an
imagination rich enough in images and stories to assist with
conflict and growth throughout life is what is most needed
in the child's education and that is what fairy tales do best.

Bettelheim gives a rationale for the child's emotional
need for mythic images and stories (assuming, as we are here,
that fairy tales are derived from myths and express many of
the archetypes) that parallels Piaget's and Egan's findings
about the child's cognitive needs. The basic assumption is
that the child's conception of reality is qualitatively dif-
ferent from the adult's and thus the simplifying of adult

ideas will not produce the kinds of ideas and materials needed
by the child. The child relates best to stories in which
basic concepts like good/evil, happy/sad are polarized and
where events are portrayed not in naturalistic but in per-
sonalized terms. It is not to deny the importance of ex-
periences and learning that bring to the child an ever clearer
sense of how the physical world operates to say that the child
also continues to need expressions of the more "primitive"
ideas and emotions that are his/her inheritance. In terms
of emotional development, Bettelheim finds that the fairy
tales have the great advantage of strengthening the child's
imagination and hope through the projection of personal vic-
tories over difficult or fearful situations paralleled in the
stories.

Patterns in Children's Interests: Travers

The significance of myth/tale materials for curriculum
is extended by the theory Robert Travers has developed about
the link between interests and stage-related intellectual and
emotional needs. Travers brings together Piaget and Bettelheim
in his analysis of why fairy tales are of great interest to
children.

In the monography, Children's Interests (1978), Travers
examines the cognitive basis of interests which he has ex-
plored in colaboration with four other educators. He suggests
that most studies of interests have been based on the theory
that hedonism is the basis of motivation and have thus missed

the major motivation for learning--the need to structure know-
ledge. His thesis is that interests are tied to cognitive
development and thus are best understood for curriculum in
terms of developmental theory and the universalities of chil-
dren's interests rather than individual differences.

Following Piaget's assumption that interests are part
of the survival need to know about the physical environment,
he suggests that the curriculum becomes important, interest-
ing to the child when it fosters the assimilation of the
knowledge the child needs at that point and helps improve
the organization of knowledge. Essential to this approach is
a recognition that the child grasps knowledge in a different
way from the adult and needs a different kind of knowledge,
thus that interests are stage-related.

Since in Piaget's findings, cognitive tasks are universal,
then interests, according to Traver's theory, are universal
because they are motivated by these tasks and follow the pat-
tern of cognitive growth even though cultural characteristics
will restrict some more than others. Travers thinks such
patterns of interest are evident and characterize human be-
havior: "there is a permeating picture of an inherent interest
pattern that is peculiar to the human species and which becomes
the very foundation of the humanness of the human" (p. 30).
It is from such universal patterns of interest that the best
curriculum can be developed, he thinks, on the assumption
that the "growing individual seeks structure, and that the
discovery of structure is highly energizing to behavior" (p. 76).

While the emphasis in Piaget is more on the need to understand the physical environment, Travers suggests that the deeper need of the child is understanding his/her social world and the way the social needs help determine an understanding of the physical. For example, the study of flight may be an extension of the wish to fly, a desire to find the magic.

Travers focuses his study of social interest in the elementary school age child on the strong interests in stories. Noting what a number of persons have found concerning the strong interest in fairy tales between ages five and ten, he suggests that the beginning of that interest lies in the need to interact with adults and then focuses on these particular stories because of the simple structure with which the child can identify. However, this does not in itself explain the strong appeal of stories that appear to be so different from other interests that the child shows, such as environmental phenomena, concrete relationships within the family. Following Bettelheim, Travers suggests that the fairy tales reflect the inner world of the child and the way childish conceptions construct reality:

> Yet the child probably sees in the fairy tale a
> deep similarity to the real world because of his
> childish conception of the world. The fairy story
> is told through symbols and refers to a world dif-
> ferent from that which he knows through his contact
> with reality; yet it is close enough to his reality
> that he can understand it. For the first time, the
> child becomes interested and preoccupied with an
> ideational world. (pp. 88-89)

Thus he is in agreement with Bettelheim about the importance of fairy tales for helping the child to understand and give form to relationships with others, "a symbolic form of structure for the child's social world" (p. 93).

Travers concludes that there is an impressive "overlap" between the Bettelheim and Piaget concepts of how children gradually evolve an understanding of the physical world and how they ascribe meaning to their social relationships, beginning from the egocentric perspective that does not clearly distinguish between properties of people and those of objects and sees all things as directed to personal needs. For both Bettelheim and Piaget the process of assimilation is essential for learning and growth, Travers notes, and assimilation is dependent on the child's being able to use the intellectual structures s/he has:

> The child's intellect places great limitation on the interpretation he can give to his social world. His intense interest in fairy stories results from the fact that they suggest ways of viewing the social world which he can understand at his intellectual level and ways with which he feels empathy at the emotional level. (p. 99)

Not only is the fairy tale an appropriate form for giving structure to the social world for the child's intellect, but it also introduces the child to metaphorical language which will continue to be used as a medium for describing complex family, human relationships into adulthood, Travers thinks. Thus he suggests that while science is the language for comprehending the physical world, metaphor is the language for the social world. (p. 100)

Travers concludes that the search for an understanding of interests that will help in the developing of curriculum should be neither in the subject matter areas (for these are adult forms that do not relate to the cognitive needs of the child) nor in the influence of individual differences which is where Americans want to look because they tend to reject the idea that humans are very much the same. Rather the key to interests can be found in those universal characteristics of the developing intellect as it moves through stages. Through these we should seek what knowledge the child needs and can use to understand the physical and the social world.

My only argument with Travers is that he gives too much attention to the fairy tales as a structure for the social world and too little to the way tale and myth provide structure for relating to the natural world as well. He implies a greater distinction between how the child understands the social and physical worlds than I think is appropriate in the light of what Piaget reveals about the mythic qualities of the child's thinking about the physical world. It is, I suggest, that strong link between the human and physical worlds, that unified picture of a moral universe where all events are connected and purposeful, that makes the tale and myth so powerful for the child. These natural events always mirror the human (or divine) action; fish, tree and wind all participate on one side or the other, assisting or threatening the human venture. As the child learns more about the

laws of nature, s/he must give up this magical view, but the images and the sense of a lost world remain in the imagination. Favat (1977) argues quite plausibly that the reason many children around age ten have a brief but intense renewed interest in the fairy tales they had about stopped reading is that they recognize they are leaving that worldview behind and are reluctant to do so.

Conclusions

An important feature of myth, then, for the child is that is provides an order with which to begin to arrange the many bits and pieces of information about the world. P. Farmer (1977) suggests that myth is essentially about creating order:

> . . . ordering--ordering experience, both in order
> to make tolerable the immeasurable vastness of the
> universe that the myth-makers encountered all
> about them . . . , and to come to terms with its
> more intolerable events. That way, taking your
> cue from the god, you in your own way recreate
> the world. (p. 181)

Apparently the child's view of the world is quite similar to that in myth and folktale, and thus the child can use these materials to understand his/her experiences, to create order.

The story form is also an important part of the child's need to create order, as Egan suggested above. Higgins (1970) writes that the world of story is closer to the child than the world of science and is important as a means of organizing knowledge:

> A story artfully told is perhaps the best model of
> organizing actions that a child can find amidst
> the confines of the visible and apprehensible world.

Story offers the child another key to the under-
standing of the universe.   (p. 50)

The importance of the story form for children's learning is
one of the interesting insights these writers offer. It sug-
gests that for children, knowledge to be assimilated needs
to be about something, connected to a kind of plot that has
meaning. While the importance of using existent stories,
especially traditional ones, is discussed, Egan also suggests
the value of teachers constructing stories out of the infor-
mation they want to teach, giving it not just drama but also
significance by using those mythic characteristics of polariz-
ing good-evil, strong-weak, happy-sad.

The importance of moral categories to the child is seen
in the tendency to ascribe moral necessity to the way things
operate in the natural and the human world. Gaining a clear
sense of good and evil, not moral ambiguities, is important
to the child, Bettelheim and Egan argue, as well as learning
that one can prevail if on the side of good. This view runs
counter to the kind of reasoning that currently influences
much of the realistic fiction being written for children, the
idea that children need most those stories and characters
that show people and events the way they really are--both
good and bad, strong and weak, sometimes right and often
wrong, not heroes but real people.

Educating children in the stories and images of myths
and tales, we can conclude, gives them access to forms of
tacit knowledge, as well as to the central ideas and images

of the culture. The world of myth is not a strange and alien world, but a pattern from the most essential experiences that the child intuitively understands. As Frye makes clear, the essential structures and images of myths are drawn from the cycles of nature and the dialectic of day and night in order to establish analogies between the human and natural world. Lacking a clear distinction between the subjective and objective world, children intuitively understand those analogies for they project onto the natural world their own feelings and motivations. Higgins (1970), in writing about fantasy in literature that children read (both traditional and modern), observes that fantasy reflects the child's world in which "the material and the spiritual are so intricately entwined that they are one" (p. 49). This dimension of child thought has been neglected, Higgins notes, because of a negative attitude toward what has been labeled "superstition" and "imagination." But now it needs to be recalled, "psycho-analyzed back into being when its spark is snuffed out" (p. 3).

Such an education also begins to develop the imagination. Myths and tales embody the ideas and images that humans have always used to interpret their reality. The child is a "natural myth-maker," Anderson and Groff (1972, p. 54) claim, and can begin learning, as Framer says above, to "recreate the world." The purpose in educating the imagination, Frye contends, is to liberate the child from an adjustment

mythology by enabling him/her to do that kind of recreation, and it begins with knowing the mythic stories in childhood.

A major contribution of myth-based stories and tales is that they provide the child with a great repository of mythic images and themes at a time when they can be assimilated easily. The child learns to manipulate the symbols and patterns of mythical thought and thus use an important part of his/her cognitive and emotional world that is not evoked by realistic fiction and rational inquiry. The plots, characters and images of mythic stories are the basic "tools" of the artistic, literary, and political imagination which the child needs as much as the tools of grammar and arithmetic.

CHAPTER III

ADOLESCENCE: FINDING A MYTH TO LIVE BY

> At the philosophic stage, contentious value issues,
> ideologies, metaphysical beliefs are properly not
> just inconvenient incidentals, but rather the
> central focus of education. (Egan, 1979, p. 78)

In this chapter, I draw again on Egan's curriculum

theory, as well as on some of Piaget's conclusions, this time

as regards the cognitive needs and abilities of the adolescent.

Also I examine Erikson's theories about the psychological

tasks and needs of youth. Together these viewpoints suggest

that the main motivation or task for adolescents is find-

ing a philosophy, ideology or myth around which to organize

learning so that their education serves their primary goal

of establishing an identity and finding a meaningful place

in a world that itself has meaning. In the final part of

the chapter I develop some suggestions for how curriculum

can be developed that meets the student's need for myth and

ideology.

In this analysis I will use several terms that in this

context refer to the same general idea, even though each

differs in some significant ways. Thus we need definitions

for what is meant by each term, particularly as it relates

to myth. Ideology is a modern concept that refers to an

ideational or belief system of a culture or a sociopolitical

system. An ideology is more abstract than a traditional myth, but it does have something of a story line which interprets those essentials of a meaning system that are found in a myth. An ideology is often called a quasi-myth, performing many functions of myth but not being as comprehensive, detailed, or bound to a people's everyday life as a myth. Instead it is more concerned with economics, historical trends, and social theories. The term philosophy is used here in the sense of "a philosophy of life," rather than as an academic discipline, and thus is similar to myth and ideology in that it represents an attempt to deal with the great metaphysical questions of meaning and purpose. The term story is used for cultural and personal narratives that, like the myth, explain the meaning and direction of a society or an individual, e.g., one's story is one's personal myth. Myth shares with these terms the common idea of a schema that orders and explains existence, or some aspect of it, in a meaningful way.

From the rites of passage or initiation ceremonies of traditional cultures to the recognition of idealism and commitment to causes in Western cultures, adolescence is known to be a time of fixing beliefs, of commitment to the ideals of the community, and of impatience with compromise, but many of the values and attitudes of the modern world work against such a commitment. The youth of modern Western societies are seldom offered a firm, clear myth, a powerful

story about what it means to become an adult. What has been lost in terms of fixed meaning and a strong community has been compensated for, to some degree, by a new freedom to find what one chooses to affirm and by liberation from the community's fixed roles and expectations.

The possibility of being free from having to live out of a particular myth and from being bound to a community is a characteristic of this age celebrated not only in the academic world but, increasingly, in the popular culture. But we are beginning to see, particularly in the youth of the past decade, that the experience of freedom and liberation may often lead not to greater fulfillment but to drift, alienation, or hedonism. In the 1960's there was much said about freeing youth from authority and tradition so that they could use reason to see what is needed in the world and thus bring about social and political change. But we have seen that a recognition of social problems, a rational critique of needed change, has not been sufficient to bring commitment.

The rapid changes brought by technology, the loss of roots in particular communities, the acceptance of cultural pluralism and the ideology of progress are all aspects of modern life that have undercut the basis for commitment to common goals (although these same changes have made possible some new alliances for social and political action and thus are not viewed as negative in all their implications). As Novak (1971) describes it, the absence of a story or myth to

live by is the basis of the alienation of the young:

> In a pluralistic culture, in which many stories are simultaneously and powerfully presented to the young, a certain confusion, malaise, and loss of confidence often result. No one story commands allegiance. Action, therefore, lacking a story to give it significance, seems pointless. Why bother to do anything at all? What is worth trying to become? The young often begin to sleep a lot. Not to have a story to live out is to experience nothingness. (p. 52)

Freedom "from" community norms and authority has meant a liberation from fixed roles but it has not been sufficient in terms of the individual's need for meaning. The synthesis that we now need, I suggest, between the poles of individual freedom and social solidarity is expressed in the phrase, "freedom for," which refers to choosing one's commitment, willing one's participation in community. It is in that sense that I suggest that the adolescent's need for a myth or philosophy for identity and for giving purpose to learning is not a regressive idea.

The Adolescent Need for Ideology: Erikson

In <u>Identity: Youth and Culture</u> (1968), Erikson defines the central task of adolescence as the formation of a personal identity, and contends that this cannot take place without affirming some ideology. It is this study of adolescence that is considered in the following discussion.

Adolescence begins with the "crisis" of identity, by which Erikson means the recognition of the task of establishing an identity as the most essential work of that period of

development, and it continues through various events of testing out possibilities until the time of adolescence ends with the attainment of a firm sense of identity. How difficult this process is will depend, in large measure, on the ideologies the culture offers for establishing one's relationship to the culture. In some periods of history some individuals more than others feel alienated from the dominant ideology and develop a negative identity, while others prolong the resolution through a moratorium, an extended time of searching for an acceptable and meaningful self-image. The failure of psychology to take into account the environment, particularly the ideological possibilities the culture has to offer at a particular time in history, is one of Erikson's themes in describing the task of identity-formation.

The culture is, Erikson asserts, one of the two central dimensions of the identity process, the other being the self. Identity is, he writes, "a process 'located' in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture" (p. 22). The culture offers the system of meaning that gives purpose, a role, to the individual and thus a direction and focus: in adolescence "the ideological structure of the environment becomes essential for the ego, because without an ideological simplification of the universe the adolescent ego cannot organize experience" (p. 26, emphasis mine). In other words, without some form of myth a young person cannot "find himself."

While the interaction of youth with the ideology of the culture is essential for the individual, it is also important for renewal and even change of the cultural myth. Contrary to Freud's interpretation of the role of culture as necessary but repressive, Erikson suggests an essential, often positive, and somewhat flexible relationship between the individual and the culture: the cultural ideology is the "guardian of identity" (p. 26), but the youth of the society also contribute to the change of the culture and its ideology by supporting those aspects that feel true and rejecting those that do not (see pp. 133-134).

Erikson finds that for the current generation of youth the dominant ideology, technology, is more implicit than explicit but nonetheless a powerful influence on both those youth who affirm it and on those who reject or are rejected by it. Adolescence is easiest now for those youth who are, Erikson writes, "gifted and trained for technological pursuits" (p. 130). The machine age has produced an ideology that many youth identify with, and for these youth it can be an exciting time because the present and the future seem both assured and full of opportunity. These are the youth often overlooked by cultural analysts, Erikson observes, the youth who do not rebel against their parents or the system:

> If the majority of young people, therefore, can go
> along with their parents in a kind of fraternal
> identification, it is because they jointly leave
> it to technology and science to carry the burden

of providing a self-perpetuating and self-accel-
erating way of life. (p. 259)

Erikson suggests that those who are not willing or able
to let technology be the primary shaper of life-style and
values are, on the one hand, the "new humanists" and, on
the other, those from minority and poorer families where there
is limited access to the jobs and benefits of the technological
age. It is characteristic of revolutionary times, Erikson
notes, that the over-privileged and the under-privileged form
a bond against the majority (p. 36). The humanistic youth
respond to those ideas in the culture that are concerned with
an ethic to guide and check what science and technology can
do. They identify with those seeking a universal order, a
world-wide identity, transcending the group-based identity
that cultures have always offered to each generation. See-
ing technology as a false or evil ideology, they respond
strongly to anti-technology causes and heroes, identifying
with "naked heroism anywhere in the world where 'machine'
threatens to crush man's will" (p. 37). These youth who do
not respond to the implicit ideology of technology and who
are unsatisfied by the complex and uncertain goals of con-
temporary democracy have to search for an explicit ideology,
Erikson writes, "some inspiring unification of tradition or
anticipated techniques, ideas, and ideals" (p. 130). They
need persons and ideas to have faith in, "men and ideas in
whose service it would seem worthwhile to prove oneself
trustworthy" (pp. 128-129).

While it may be that adults can go beyond ideology, and Erikson thinks that our hope lies in doing just that in the formation of an ethical view of historical reality, youth need to have a belief system, to have "the larger framework settled" which accounts for "the acceptance by youth of myth-ologies and ideologies predicting the course of the universe or the historical trend" (p. 247, emphasis mine). Erikson thinks that youth do not come to such tasks empty-handed but with a history that started in childhood with the good and evil prototypes from such sources as fairy tales and parental teaching. And they enter upon their first efforts at philo-sophic thinking in a particular historical context that limits, sometimes severely, the possibilities. In particular, Erikson observes, the historical era limits the real and fictitious people with whom the child can identify. For each generation the task is to "find an identity with its own childhood and with an ideological promise in the perceptible historical process" (p. 258). If what they bring from their own child-hood or what their culture offers in terms of economic, ethnic, and religious foundations is weak or inadequate, a positive identity will be more difficult to attain.

Erikson also points out that some forms of delinquency and refusals to "grow up" are a response to the inadequacy of the ideology with which they are asked to identify. The moratorium on establishing an identity that many humanistic youth declare is to be understood largely in these terms:

"they will certainly take their time, and take it with a ven-
geance, until they are sure whether or not they want any of
the identity offered in a conformist world" (p. 26).

Focusing on adolescent development as a process depen-
dent on the ideological potential of society, Erikson estab-
lishes a rationale for what I want here to term the need for
myth. He suggests that there are basically two ideological
responses in our time. One is the acceptance of the "myth
of the machine," the belief that civilization will now be
carried forward toward a better society for all through the
production of more and better goods, the increase of harvests
through use of scientific methods, the eventual eradication
of disease and finally the end of wars through the elimina-
tion of economic ills. The other is the belief in the re-
establishment of human primacy over machines, the limitation
of technological development so that individual freedom and
cultural values can be maintained. The latter being more
explicitly ideological, the more mythical, and with ties to
our past that technology does not have, it avails itself more
of the stories and images of the hero defying the anti-human
or evil forces. These two dominant ideologies or myths that
Erikson identifies, technology and humanism, may not adequately
cover the possibilites but they provide one good starting
point for helping students think about the ideologies with
which they can identify.

The psychological need in adolescence to embrace an
ideology, in our terms here, to find a myth to live by,

corresponds with the developing cognitive skills during this time. Building theoretical systems and developing a life plan are the appropriate intellectual tasks of the youth as formal operations are attained, Piaget contends, and Egan extends that theory to argue that developing a philosophic system is the main educational task of the adolescent.

The Importance of Philosophic Thinking:
Piaget and Inhelder

In the concluding chapter of The Growth of Logical Thinking: From Childhood to Adolescent (1958) Piaget and Inhelder write about "Adolescent Thinking," citing the change in role and thinking as the distinctive events marking adolescence rather than the onset of puberty. Adolescence, they contend, is when the young person begins to take up adult roles, seeing himself as an equal and able to judge adults. The ability to see oneself in an adult role is a sign of a change in mode of thinking, i.e., the shift into formal operations. Formal operations is characterized by the ability to handle abstract concepts, to think of possibilities, to think beyond the present, and to fit these projections into larger designs or systems: "the adolescent is the individual who begins to build 'systems' or 'theories,' in the largest sense of the term" (p. 339). The adult role requires that such a life-plan be developed, even though crude and subject to change.

It is the adolescent thinking as a philosopher or theoretician that Piaget and Inhelder describe. They have observed

that somewhere between the ages of 14 and 19 most youth de-
velop political and social theories, seeking explanations and
reforms for world problems, engaging in philosophic specula-
tion, re-examining religious beliefs and seeking a universal
system: "adolescence is the metaphysical age par excellence"
(p. 340). Even though the concepts or philosophies formed
may be oversimplified and unoriginal, their effort enables
youth to see and to integrate social values and to assert
themselves over against adults in a creative way.

This new ability to form concepts of the possible is the
basis of the idealism that is characteristic of adolescence,
the writers suggest. At first the power to create a new world
seems unlimited and the egocentricity of thought prevents youth
from distinguishing their own point of view from that of the
people they would like to reform. If the idealism that forms
the adolescent's philosophy is naive as a plan for social
action, it does serve the individual in beginning to have a
life plan, course of action, a set of values to which s/he
submits his/her ego. They note that adolescent systems/theories
are most often plans for personal action in which the indi-
vidual sees him/herself as having a significant role in ef-
fecting change and achieving goals. Thus by setting a life
plan the young person brings emotions into harmony with in-
tellectual framework, consolidating personality and preparing
to assume a role in society, not in a passive sense, but as
someone new, doing something better or different (p. 350).

The Philosophic as an Educational Stage: Egan

Drawing on Piaget and Erikson, Egan in <u>Educational Develop-</u><u>ment</u> (1979) describes adolescence as a time when the central educational task is to construct, utilize, and test out a philosophical position. It is a time when the guiding interest is in finding general truths, forming schemas into which particular knowledge will fit, developing hierarchies for the organization of information.

At about age 14 or 15 most students enter a new stage in their learning, Egan finds, when they begin to realize that the bits and pieces of the world that have fascinated them-- heroes, great events, true but strange facts (of the Ripley's and Guiness Records variety), collectable items--are no longer what is most important to know because now they are beginning to see that there are laws of nature and human nature, systems operating that influence and to some degree determine their own lives. Thus romantic connections dissolve in light of the "growing realization that their proper connection to the world is by means of enormously complicated causal chains and networks" (p. 51). As students begin searching for their place in the scheme of things they seek both knowledge about human psychology, the laws of history, and social forms as well as a context to fit this information into, an ideology like Marxism or liberal progressivism. Learning particulars, a concern and often an obsession at the romantic stage, now seems trivial compared to the search for great

truths, which search, Egan thinks, becomes the motivation

for developing abstract intellectual tools.

Egan concludes that it is learning itself, not just phys-

ical maturation, that is responsible for the shift in per-

spective at this new stage and for keeping philosophical in-

quiry going. Through the accumulation of a sheer amount and

variety of information the student becomes aware of the world

as a much more complicated place, which recognition, coupled

with a new subjective sense of oneself that begins with ado-

lescence, creates the feeling that there needs to be some

philosophy to explain the world and give one a purposeful

place in it. Whether the student's philosophy is adequately

developed depends a lot on the wealth of knowledge the stu-

dent brings to it, Egan contends.

The learning process at this stage is, Egan argues, a

dialectic between the philosophical position and the particu-

lar knowledge that continually must be assimilated to it or

alter it:

> The more knowledge the student acquires, the
> more likely it is to generate anomalies, and so
> require revisions in the general scheme, which in
> turn will require further inquiry, the accumulation
> of yet more knowledge, which in turn will contain
> further anomalies, which will lead to increasingly
> sophisticated general schemes. (p. 39)

The teacher's need is, on the one hand, to help students find

knowledge that aids in the development of their schema and,

on the other hand, to expose them to more information and

ideas that do not fit, i.e., anomalies, so that they must

expand and alter their views and not close themselves within a crude and inadequate ideology.

Students are not motivated to organize knowledge just in order to know about the world but rather they are motivated by the need to find their own place, to know what will influence them, to find meaning for their lives. The educational task at this stage is to recognize and assist the emerging capacity and need for ideologies and metaphysical schemes in order that students may use these to organize their learning. Egan argues the need to recognize this source of interest:

> The students are interested in psychology, sociology, literature, religion, women's studies, ethnic studies because they are looking, not for the particulars that interest scholars, but the essences, the regularities, the general order that tells them about the world and their place in it. (p. 63).

The teacher needs, on the one hand, to help students find knowledge that aids development of their schemas, and on the other hand, to help them see anomalies that then require further revisions of their ideas.

On the whole, teachers and curriculum developers will not be comfortable with this approach, Egan thinks, because the notion of encouraging ideological commitment runs counter to most thinking in education today. Humanistic thinking about education has encouraged teachers to think that they should not interfere in any way with students' development of values and beliefs, but, Egan says, such a notion misses the essence of education: "To believe that it is possible to

educate in a value-free way is like believing it is possible
to be in love unemotionally" (p. 78). Educators need, Egan
thinks, to recognize that intellectual growth for adolescents
is directly linked to their need to deal with ideas, values,
and beliefs, and to deal with these in the simplistic way
that thinking at this stage often requires. The teacher's task
is not to show students where their ideas are false but to
help them discover the additional knowledge that will keep
the dialectic described above going. Egan suggests also that
curriculum and teaching need to be prepared to make use of
the story form which coninues to be important for learning,
although in a less recognizable form. What is important for
students at this stage is that their philosophical schemes
have both a beginning and a projected end, history being a
single process toward some goal or resolution. In this sense
the story form fixes meaning. In the terms I am using in
this study, the student needs a philosophy in the form of an
ideology or a myth that imposes order on human events and
thus interprets them in a meaningful way.

In Erickson, Piaget and Egan we see the common emphasis
on the adolescent's need to find an organizing principle,
a system that gives meaning to the larger world of which
s/he is now becoming aware. The psychological need for
identity and the new intellectual ability to think abstractly
and form systems converge at this time on the task of finding
a philosophy, a myth to shape one's sense of self and organize

one's learning. But the value of acquiring a myth or ideology beyond meeting certain psychological and intellectual needs of a particular stage of development is less certain. Somewhat cynically, Egan (1979) suggests that it does not matter what schemas students use because if they continue to grow intellectually they will learn that there is no universal pattern, no truth, only little truths that come from careful observations of the external world. The educator, Egan maintains, makes use of the student's drive to find meaning in order to further the student's education. Erikson (1968), on the other hand, sees the need for ideology as something that binds human communities and that is not outgrown, except in the belief that there is some universal truth or way of living in the world that supercedes the limited ideologies of the various cultures.

Frye's argument that education in the great myths is a way of educating the imagination to envision a different and better social order than the present social mythology that calls itself reality suggests that adolescence myth-making can be a way of breaking out of an adjustment mythology. Myth for the adolescent is different from the myth for the child. The primitive kinship of thought has receded and the supernatural events are now understood as metaphors (unless they are part of religious belief). Fairy tales are put aside, although their influence continues at a subconscious level because they are not just about children's problems but the essential human dilemma.

Educational Strategies

A curriculum that focuses on the student's need for myth needs to provide both for the interpretation of myth and the construction of the student's personal myth. There are different ways of learning from the different kinds of myths: the traditional/religious and the modern/ideological. I will discuss ways that each can be approached to meet the kinds of educational, personal needs outlined above, and then look at what it might mean to construct a personal myth or story.

Ancient/Religious Myths

The most common rationale for studying mythology in high schools is that it gives the students a foundation for the study of literature. The emphasis is mostly on Greek and Roman mythology, particularly on those stories and themes that have been most influential in our literary tradition. Sometimes Hebraic mythology is studied indirectly in a course on the Bible as literature. While these studies have their validity, I think that the significance of these myths, along with the Indian, African, Asian which are seldom considered, lies in their philosophic and psychological perspectives, in how they help students envision the possibilities of ways of being in the world. Thus I suggest three other approaches to the study of the ancient/religious myths.

The approach of studying myths and religions suggested by Barbour in Myths, Models, and Paradigms (1974) is to find

the model within the myth, those basic components that make

of the myth a systematic organization of ideas. A model is,

he points out, a symbolic representation, "an imaginative

tool for ordering experience, rather than a description of

the world" (p. 6). The model is the systematic, structural

component of the myth, the abstract form derived from reflec-

tion on a myth, and thus the means by which the myth can be

critically analyzed and evaluated. Barbour seems to suggest

that while the appeal of the myth may depend a lot on the

affective qualities of the story, the value of the myth in

cognitive and moral terms can be judged by examining the mo-

del it provides for ordering reality. Discerning the model

also helps one transcend the particularity of the myth and

find the commonality of several myths. A single model can

be derived from a number of myths, Barbour finds: "models

summarize the structural elements of a set of myths" (p. 27).

While models lack the richness and appeal of the myths

themselves, they give us a way to talk about the truth and

value of myths without having to deal with the issues of

whether particular events in the story actually did or could

happen (a level beyond which discussion of a myth often never

goes). In addition the models give us a way of comparing

myths. Seeking the model within the myth allows us to deal

with living religious myths as well as ancient or secular

myths because it does not require that we deny the unscien-

tific elements of the myth the way demytholgizing does, thus

raising questions of literal truth. It leaves the myth intact but gives a means for critiquing and understanding its implications.

Thus by asking what kind of worldview or cosmic framework is embodied in a myth, what kind of identity and personal involvement it offers, what ideal state it envisions and how that can be attained, what ethical patterns and moral norms are defined (Barbour, 1974, pp. 21-21), the value of the myth as a model for human existence can be examined and compared with other models. While these elements of the mythic model are drawn from traditional religious myths, most of them are present also in modern secular philosophies like Marxism and evolutionary naturalism, Barbour observes.

What can be learned through a study of the models embodied in myths are some different ways of being in the world, as well as developing some critical perspective on the kinds of social visions human cultures have created. The effort of man as myth-maker to order and explain the universe, to answer the important questions of meaning and destiny, speaks to the young person's interest in such philosophic issues.

A second approach is to study myths as representations of universal characteristics of the human psyche. As was discussed in Chapter I, the renewed interest in myth in our time has focused largely on the way the ancient stories use the same themes and symbols, which is interpreted to mean

that they depict not the outward world so much as inward reality. Thus the student of myth who looks at the stories comparatively can begin to see not so much a strange conception of the world but a more familiar landscape of the mind. While some aspects of such a study will be beyond the ability of many junior and senior high school students, some initial exploration of the recurring archetypes and symbols could prove both valuable and interesting, particularly as these may be related to their own dreams. The importance of coming to understand and give some expression to one's subjectivity is something that a curriculum for adolescence needs to consider; the study of myth from a Jungian perspective would be one possible approach. Such an approach is based on the idea that, as Campbell suggests, there is, in the whole body of mythology, a philosophia perennis of the human race. Learning to identify and relate one's own experience to some of those universals is what I am talking about here as a way the curriculum can foster self-knowledge and identity.

A third approach is one suggested by Frye in The Educated Imagination (1964) and involves both a study of ancient/ religious myths, particularly the Old and New Testaments and Greek and Roman mythology, and our literature, which has evolved out of the myths. What we learn from the myths and literature is a vision of the ideal, Frye contends, a reality created by the imagination. Once we recognize that the society we live in is not some unchanging reality but a

particular social mythology (middle-class, 20th century) that
will change, we may also realize that there is another world,
one we want to live in, "a vision inside our minds, born and
fostered by the imagination, yet real enough for us to try
to make the world we see conform to its shape" (p. 151). What
Frye is suggesting is that from our myths and our cultural
expressions we can begin to construct a vision of the world
as it might be and thus have a perspective on the inadequacies
of the social mythology we live in—this constitutes the
education of the imagination. Such a perspective could come
only from a curriculum that placed a strong emphasis on
mythology, literature, and cultural history through a number
of grades, but it could have interesting political, as well
as intellectual, consequences. Those who decry the idealism
of envisioning the world as it might be are often those who
have most to defend in the status quo, those who want educa-
tion to be concerned with the real world, i.e., the current
social mythology.

Modern/Ideological Myths

The older myths, unless they are part of a living reli-
gious tradition that has continually modified them, even
when interpreted symbolically, do not reflect the knowledge
and experience of recent centuries and thus cannot provide
an adequate philosophy for us now. In particular, they leave
us without a way to understand economic forces, historical
trends, scientific discoveries. Societies, and individuals,

have continued to construct all-encompassing stories and
schemas to interpret our new knowledge and experience. These
quasi-myths or ideologies serve some mythological functions
well, particularly defining the purpose of history, man's
role vis-a-vis nature, social patterns and organization, but
they often ignore the inner (or spiritual) self and the im-
portance of rituals. Thus a modern ideology may be linked
by the individual or the society to a religious myth (e.g.,
Christian or Buddhist Marxists). There was a time when the
central myth of the Old Testament, God's leading His people
out of slavery and into the Promised Land, was the basis for
the American Dream. Theologian Michael Allen tells of how
his grandmother used to intermingle the stories of the Old
Testament and the stories of their ancestors settling this
country in such a way that he never quite knew where the
Bible left off and the American story of his relatives took
up.

Developing specific ways to learn about modern myths and
how they influence our lives both personally and collectively
is not within the scope of this study, but I suggest that
any approach needs to recognize that these secular ideologies
are another form of man's myth-making and that they are sig-
nificant to students both as myth and as ties to the communi-
ties to which they belong or with which they wish to be
identified. While the relative merits and various dimensions
of an ideology can be examined intellectually, it is at the

point of a search for identity and for meaning that students are concerned to understand and accept or reject them. Balancing one's approach between the objectivity of scholarship and consideration for the commitment that goes with deeply held beliefs is one of the educator's tasks. Also an approach should consider that for some students who feel alienated from family or lack ties to political/social goals, any system or philosophy will be dismissed as nothing more than propaganda; such alienation and skepticism seems to be manifested in an ever younger population.

There is a concern in our society that the schools teach something about the major ideologies in the world. From the right side of the political spectrum schools are expected to teach young people about communism and its propaganda in order that they may learn to hate it and to teach them the values of capitalism or "the American way" so that they will promote and defend it. From the left or liberal constituency schools are urged to teach young people the major ideologies in order to understand and learn to be critical of the nationalistic ideologies; the implied goal is to get beyond all ideologies and myths to a place where only reason prevails. Thus to develop a curriculum that includes a study of modern ideologies is to become involved in political issues. I do not think that the teacher can or should encourage the student to develop a philosophical position without much regard to its implications for the student in the context of the larger

community, as Egan seems to suggest. A student's philosophy
or mythical perspective is an expression of his/her ties to
real or potential communities, and it is to this dimension
of myth as an activity of constructing a personal myth that
I now turn.

Personal Myths or Stories

The term "personal myth" can only be understood from a
modern perspective and it still is a questionable label be-
cause a myth in a true sense of the word belongs to a people,
to a community; it is the expression of a collective vision
and of the values of a people. Perhaps a better term to use
is Novak's "personal story."

Novak (1971) writes about a person's "story" as that
which "ties a person's actions together in a sequence . . .
(and) unites past and future" (p. 60). One does not invent
but discovers his/her story out of his/her personal unique-
ness, on the one hand, and, on the other, out of the cultural
stories inherited. While one's story ought to allow for
realizing one's own potential, it also ought to be "appropriate
to the stories of those to whom I am bound by family, friend-
ship, community" (p. 61). These stories are larger than any
set of principles and more than any particular situation--
they give perspective on both one's past and one's future.
As Novak describes it, the story is both one's philosophy
and one's ethical system; it is how the person defines his/
her own life in relationship to those myths and communities
of which s/he is a part.

The modern person, being influenced by more than one myth and, theoretically, having the freedom to accept or reject all or parts of any of these, can rarely immerse him/herself in a single myth. Thus the act of developing one's own narrative, making a story out of those various perspectives that have meaning in one's life becomes crucial. The student today finds it necessary to construct a personal myth, in the sense of a story that pulls together fragments of older myths and the modern ideologies that have personal meaning, although one main myth (often a religious one) will most likely give one's story its basic shape. While that act of construction is difficult and charts an uncertain course through the Scylla of totalitarian ideologies and the Charybdis of meaninglessness, it is a way of making meaningful one's education and of staying in touch with one's roots, as well of taking a stance that is open to new experience and new knowledge. I am, obviously, talking about a story that is continuously in the making, that is, for all its indebtedness to other stories, an act of creation.

What goes into the personal story and how education facilitates this activity are difficult questions. Some students will have some rich resources while others have very few; some will find that their various myths reinforce a common story while others will find conflicting ones. For one student his Jewish faith's myth of suffering and deliverance is reinforced by the family's commitment to political activities and groups that work on behalf of politically oppressed people.

For another student her Southern heritage has created a myth that justifies slavery and unequal racial status that conflicts with her Christian myth of all persons being the same in Christ. A black student is caught between the myth that his grandparents and great-grandparents lived by, that of taking risks for the deliverance of their people, and his parents' belief in the American success story where each gets what s/he can.

The myths of religion, family, region or country, racial or ethnic group all contribute to the student's story but not always in a mutually supportive way. Finding a common theme, or choosing one theme out of several, is necessary for a clear sense of identity. Moral education will help the student weigh the relative merits of a particular viewpoint. Thus if the student from the South attains a fairly mature sense of justice, s/he will reject the Southern racial myth in favor of the religious one. Another way to approach this aspect of constructing one's story is to help the student find other mythic themes that are presently hidden in those traditions and communities to which s/he belongs. For example, there is a pacifist tradition in both Judaism and Christianity, even though it is ignored by the dominant theologies of those religions. By coming to know this tradition the student who rejects war need not be alienated from the whole religious tradition. Another example would be the student from the South who, in an inquiry into the past, finds ancestors who rejected slavery while living in the midst of it. Such a

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discovery makes it more possible to maintain both family and regional ties while being a critic of the region's history. Such a discovery also enriches the student's potential story as one who can act on a principle that is rejected by the peer culture.

I am suggesting that helping students find ties to particular myths while also learning to make judgments about the validity and morality of their inherited myths is a more positive way to help them toward identity and a personal philosophy than through attempting to create a critical distance between them and their parochial views. This position is based on the premise of this study that myth, and the communities to which myths link us, are valuable and something we destroy to our peril. Myths need not be static nor accepted authoritatively. They can be an act of creation that we are involved in collectively, and to some degree, individually. It is toward re-mythologizing instead of demythologizing that we can direct the inquiry of students as they are engaged in that central task of finding an identity.

Strickland (1978), writing about developing social studies curricula, discusses the shift in young people's interest in history away from analytic studies of large movements and toward the more personal and immediate concerns. Students are responding much more to the new attention in history to ways of establishing personal ties to the past, finding the stories that link anonymous or ordinary people to their

"roots." This approach to history, writes Strickland, re-
flects the human need for "the personal, the private, the
concrete and, ultimately, the mythic dimensions of the past"
(p. 28, emphasis mine). This "Roots phenomenon" is basically
a healthy reaction, he thinks, to the abstract, analytical,
and anti-parochial character of much history, a reaction that
expresses the need for personal meaning and continuity with
the past.

This kind of shift from treating the "mythic dimensions
of the past" as errors to be corrected by education to a
recognition of their potential as a source for education
that is personally meaningful is one of the curriculum changes
that I would suggest.

Bruner's essay on "Myth and Identity" (1962) underscores
my main argument in this chapter about the role of myth in
adolescent development and points to the link between myth
and community that is the concern of the last chapter. He
points out that myth provides a pattern and a set of possi-
bilities that direct the growth and identity of the young
person:

> One may speak of the corpus of myth as providing
> a set of possible identities for the individual
> personality. It would perhaps be more appro-
> priate to say that the mythologically instructed
> community provides its members with a library of
> scripts upon which the individual may judge the
> play of his multiple identities. (p. 36)

However, at this point in history, Bruner observes, our
"mythologically instructed community" (Campbell's phrase)
is itself fractured and the search for identity often becomes

a lonely, internal affair. He suggests that in the transi-
tion from old myths to new ones the inward journey, the
"Culte de moi" may be inevitable. The importance of myth for
establishing identity is underscored by Bruner. He also
points to the importance of the community for providing and
validating mythic themes. Identity, he suggests, needs both
myth and community, and where these are not available in the
society the search goes inward, fostering subjectivity and
individualism.

Once again we encounter Frye's theme of the importance
of educating the imagination in such a way that it is em-
powered to think   more adequately of a potential world,
to create new myths in order to create better ideas about the
social order, the human community.

CHAPTER IV

MYTH AND COMMUNITY

I have discussed the importance of myth in a developmental perspective of the education of the young child and the adolescent. One can, at this point, draw different conclusions about what part myth might play in the perspective of the adult. One view would be that the child, like the species, has a need for myth until s/he becomes a mature person able to view the world rationally and empirically. Mythic polarities, animism, stories that explain creation and history, identification with a metaphysical plan—these all serve their developmental purposes and then are shed, like an old skin, to allow the growing mind to attain the mature knowledge that the only truths are those that are empirical and material. This is the conclusion of Egan (1979), for the final stage of development in his schema (the adult perspective) is the ironic stage.

The other conclusion is that the importance of myth continues into adulthood, once again changed in form, but still carrying some of the childhood and adolescent insights, e.g., a sense of good and evil, a connection with the natural world, a vision of an ideal world, a sense of order and destiny, heroic images and metaphysical or archetypal symbols. As

suggested in the first chapter, the mature learner is not nec-
essarily the one who has outgrown the need for myth but may
be the one who understands its functions and cognitive value
in a deeper way. Mythic thinking, I have tried to show, has
not gone away nor does it remain only in the immature or in
enclaves that civilization and education have not touched,
but is present to us often in hidden or disguised form. In-
deed, we often do not see the child's mythic ideas because
we tend to look for the emergence of reason, and we do not
see the significance of the adolescent's need for myth because
we see it as immature idealism.

I want to suggest in this chapter that there is a mythic
perspective, a way of viewing reality that is informed by the
great human myths as well as by those mythic themes that are
part of the psychic contents of people, that needs to inform
our curriculum theory. One of the main contributions of this
perspective is to direct us toward a reconsideration of the
importance of community. As both Jung and Campbell argue,
myth always points us away from the individual and back to-
ward the community. What the hero does in the myth defines
who the people are; his/her actions are never singular in
significance. Myths are the collective consciousness of a
people, and when the myths are destroyed the whole fabric of
the society is altered, sometimes destroyed. Modern societies
that have ceased to place much significance in their reli-
gious myths have, nonetheless, ideologies, mythic themes

that provide some of that function of defining the collective character of the people, or of groups within the larger society. Without exploring further what is a complex relationship, the nature of which is much debated (especially in anthropology), we can say that myth and community exist symbiotically and that a curriculum concerned to give attention to the mythic dimension of human thought and development will also need to concern itself with how education relates to community.

Myth and community are terms that refer to a conception of human existence different from the kind of social relations most evident in the Western industrialized societies. Under the influence of the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment we have created modes of inquiry and forms of living together that have sought to replace our older dependence on myths and the close bonds of traditional communities. These new forms have addressed well our material needs, our need to find liberation from fixed roles and political control, and our need to discover, invent and know. But as rational inquiry has come to dominate our intellectual life and the needs of an industrial system to shape our social forms we are beginning to discover that by ignoring forms of knowing and of social organization that evolved over the centuries of human history we have created an imbalance in the human psyche and inadequate forms of community. We are in danger of destroying the ecology of social relations that, like the great

swamps and deserts of the world, has proven to be more intri-
cate and essential than we thought. We are discovering that
humans need rituals, neighborliness, intimate connection with
the sources of their material goods and their work, stories
and metaphors of common significance, and a place to call
home just as much as they need to read, to express their own
ideas, material comforts, the hope of being successful, the
experience of liberation, scholarly inquiry, freedom of
association, and the chance to go somewhere new and begin
again.

In order to understand a "mythic" perspective on commun-
ity as it relates to education, I want to clarify what "mythic"
means by contrasting it with two other perspectives, those
derived from rationalism and from technology.

Mythos, Logos, and Technicism

I am using the terms mythos, logos, and technicism as a
way of distinguishing what I suggest are the main philoso-
phical perspectives operating in our culture. I am taking
the terms logos and mythos from an essay by Underwood, "Myth,
Dream, and Contemporary Philosophy" (1970), in which the author
develops a helpful perspective on the renewed interest in
myth and dream and the role of philosophy in our age. He
suggests that the role of myth in relationship to contemporary
philosophy is to restore a balance in modern consciousness
by bringing to attention aspects of existence and conscious-
ness which have been neglected by a prolonged attention to

reason and logic. Philosophy itself, Underwood claims, was a birth of a new kind of consciousness, the emergence from unconscious participation in the natural and political order as defined by myths to conscious reflection about how we think and exist in the world. This he calls the movement from mythos to logos. While this was a development that contributed positively and significantly to human development for many centuries, it now contributes to an imbalance and narrowness in our philosophy. In the way the ancient world was in the grip of mythos, we are now in the grip of logos, or in Husseral's terms, a "mistaken rationalism," Underwood contends (p. 244). He concludes that the task of philosophy today is to help give birth to a new consciousness that once again puts us in touch with what is common and lifegiving, with the depth and fullness of being:

> If the vocation of Greek philosophy can be understood as a movement from mythos to logos, then perhaps we can understand the vocation of contemporary philosophy as a movement from logos to mythos.
> (pp. 244-45)

Thus myths, dreams, and symbols become for us important signs for the direction of a new philosophy or persepctive and for helping us understand better who we are.

Logos, then, represents the position of the rationalists that emphasizes the value of logic over the senses and the emotions, the control humans can have over themselves and their environment through increased knowledge about human nature and physical laws, the priority of the individual over

the collective, a belief in human perfectability. Technicism
is both an extension of rationalism and a turning away from
it. The great discoveries made through reason and science
developed technology and the freedom from the taboos of myth
allowed us to use that technology to change radically the
forms of our social existence.

The meteoric rise of technology and the organizational
forms developed for industry that are now applied throughout
the society, e.g., the corporate organization model and the
systems approach, threaten to leave not only mythos but also
logos behind as archaic perspectives. The philosophical im-
pact of technicism was noted earlier in Erikson's observation
that an increasing number of youths are bypassing the need for
explicit ideologies because they find in technology a way of
being at home in the world that offers both an identity and
a new universalism. The argument is made that technology it-
self is neutral and that it is only human decisions that make
of the use of it something helpful or destructive (i.e., that
is only an extension of rationalism). But this view tends to
disguise the fact that technology not only has a way of cre-
ating its own demands but also of fostering ways of thinking
about values and goals that perpetuate a need for and depen-
dence on modern technology. The way we relate to nature, to
work, and to each other has been profoundly changed by tech-
nology; it is, increasingly, creating its own reality and
placing not thinkers or priests but technicians in control.

If _logos_ represents that development of Greek philosophy that introduced reason and freedom (or individual autonomy) as concepts and that had its major cultural impact beginning with the European Renaissance, then we can contrast it with _technicism_, that way of thinking initiated by the Industrial Revolution that focuses on the application of scientific discoveries and industrial organizational patterns to achieve greater material benefits and more control over society and that is achieving its greatest influence in this century in the West. One sign of _technicism_ supplanting _logos_ or rationalism is when a society is driven by its capabilities to create those things which reason knows are not needed or in the best interest of human existence, things such as nuclear weapons, baby formula for marketing in impoverished countries, as well as endless gadgets and luxuries. Obviously, it is not just because we know how to make such things that we do it but because they serve the economic or political interests of those with power. But our society accepts these uses of technology in part, at least, because we have come to pride ourselves in our technology more than in our use of reason. Thus as _logos_ replaced _mythos_, _technicism_ is now replacing _logos_. I am suggesting this pattern of ascendency at different historical times, but it is important to note that all three continue to exist in our time and to provide alternative ways of viewing what is important and good. Most of us operate, to some extent, out of all three perspectives. Although

we least recognize the mythic, it continues to be a powerful
shaping force, both through the unconscious in the Jungian
sense and through the unrecognized impact it has had on how
we think about the world, particularly in the images and
symbols carried in our language.

Education and Community: An Overview

Writings about and discussions of community reflect our
ambivalence about a social form that seems to be rapidly de-
clining. We seem to be unable to restore community or to
live full lives without it; thus we seek cautiously for ideas
because we are uncertain about what would constitute meaning-
ful community or for what we can realistically hope. Part of
the dilemma is the conflict between developing a sense of
community with other positive goals. Keyes (1975) points out
that we cherish mobility, privacy and convenience--all of
which undermine community. In order to have community, he
points out, we must sacrifice some individuality. Those things
that foster individual freedom in the sense of pursuing one's
own interests, cultural diversity, equality of the sexes,
racial integration are often destructive of community because
they involve such things as severing ties with a particular
place, changing lifestyle, supplanting local with centralized
control or guidelines. For example, in regard to schools,
the black community has probably lost more in terms of com-
munity from integration and busing than most white neighbor-
hoods or towns--a point that is not often discussed. Even so,

South Boston has become the most poignant example of the struggle between the value of community and the value of racial integration. In this instance as with others, like the Kanawha County, West Virginia, controversy over the language in books, most liberal commentaries have failed to recognize the dilemma because they have looked for the values of freedom of speech and integration but failed to see the issue of community.

We need, I suggest, to get beyond the fear of labels like "conservative" and "liberal" in order to examine the impact of social change and to recognize the losses that accompany many of our important gains. The dismantling of traditional social forms may, on the one hand, provide opportunities for liberation but, on the other, it also may leave people more vulnerable to the values and control of a more diffuse but powerful ethic, such as the individualism and consumerism of the American success ideal. To work out of the tension between progressive and traditional values is to work in an uncertain and difficult, but creative, area. To seek images and models of community that can exist without denying cultural diversity, equality for women, racial justice is one of those tasks.

There are several different educational approaches to the relationship between curriculum and community, the main difference being in how "community" is interpreted. In order to distinguish the different concepts I suggest three categories:

community as a <u>geographic</u> unit, community as a <u>created</u> event, and community as a <u>traditional</u> social form. The following brief discussion of each approach is to help clarify the concept of education and community developed below.

What "education and community" means from the <u>geographic</u> perspective is how the school relates to the local political structure, to other institutions, to the adults who live in the city, town, neighborhood, and how the school can extend its services to adults in the area. Education as a life-long event (adult classes) and use of school facilities for shop work, recreation, child-care and public meetings are some major examples. The other side of this approach is finding ways to include more community people in the school instructional program. Artists, business persons, skilled laborers and professionals are invited to teach mini-courses, talk with students about careers, etc. Some plans combine both aspects to gain maximum interaction between the school as place or as institution and people of the area, but the school itself is the place where the events take place. A different approach within this same perspective is to find ways for students to learn from institutions and persons in the community, leaving the school building for a small or large part of their school day (e.g., Philadelphia's "Schools Without Walls"). In all of these plans the concern is to make education more a part of the total life of an area, integrating life and learning, child and adult, school and community.

A very different concept of community, what I will call the "created" community, often referred to as "a sense of community," refers to that feeling of belonging that can be developed among any group of people who share something meaningful or that develops within a person because of a network of significant relationships. The school itself can become such a place of community, some suggest, by the way it plans the curriculum, establishes policies and sets goals. Activities to bring students close to each other and to teachers, shared decision-making about rules and courses of study activities beyond the school building and inclusion of parents and other adults in the life of the school are all a part of making a school a community. Kohlberg's work to create a "just community" in a high school by a plan to develop shared decision-making in policies and their enforcement is one example of an effort to make the school an experience of community.

Historically, communities have been both specific geographic areas and groups to which the members felt a strong sense of belonging. It is a measure of the degree of social change in our times that so many people seek community, asking if where I live is also where I belong or how I can be connected to the people with whom I live and work. The third approach to education and community is what I call the traditional concept. It focuses on ways that students can learn from adults the way children did when the town was a community.

Tyler (1975) points out that young people used to learn adult roles, jobs, character development, moral principles and the economic and political structure of society just by the regular activities of life in a community. Now that they are cut off from so many of these immediate contacts and experiences the school needs to find ways to re-institute these kinds of educative activities by planning student participation in adult work and activities outside the school. While this idea is similar in several respects to those programs mentioned above of letting students learn from places of work in the town or city, it differs in that its primary concern is that students learn values and a way of relating in ways that community has traditionally performed that function.

I share with all the varied efforts to link education with community a concern over how much schools have become isolated and isolating institutions, segregating school age children from adults, from the work place, and from the life of the town. And I think that all of these efforts in some way have the potential to help restore a child's belonging to meaningful groups. But the efforts to increase contact between students and the people who live in their area will not establish the kind of ties and sense of belonging that are needed because that "community" out there is rapidly ceasing to be community and has less to offer once the interaction is established than we would hope. The creation of communities within schools is very difficult both logistically

and philosophically, but where it can be done it will be an important experience that will, temporarily at least, overcome much of the isolation and alienation that students and teachers and parents experience with regard to school. There is, however, a serious limitation to the school's potential to be a place of community, as Oliver (1976) points out below, and that is its lack of a diversity of ages that is one of the essentials of a community, in the traditional sense. Community in its traditional form is most significant, I suggest, for meeting human needs. I want to discuss one approach to education and community that develops this concept of community.

Education and Community: The Theory of D. Oliver

I have focused on Oliver's Education and Community (1976) because his analysis is related to the function of myth in education, although this link is more implicit than explicit in this work. However he does comment on the importance of myth in another work that will be considered later. What is important is that his theory of education and community gives us insight into curriculum questions from the perspective of myth and community.

Oliver locates his analysis of community and education in the context of a choice between two conflicting theories of society: the corporate organization theory and the community theory. These ideologies correspond to two of the perspectives described above, corporate organization being a technic model and community a mythic model. Although Oliver

does not often use the term "myth" in Education and Community, he describes community as a form that has evolved out of and is still expressive of primitive or premodern social forms, as a people bound together not only by place and economics but by belief and ritual as well. Thus, from Oliver's analysis, when we consider community as a value to be concerned with in education we are not talking about how to change the patterns within school walls or how to spend more time in the town or city, but how to educate children to see society differently and to seek certain values or activities by relating to places of genuine (or traditional) community beyond the school.

His educational recommendations, like his theory of social forms, expresses a fundamental argument with our present social order and with much of the thinking about how education should help students relate to their communities. While those who point to the great social changes as evidence of how much catch-up work the school has to do in order to adapt itself and help students adapt to the new order, Oliver argues that the new social structures are the problem and that the task of educators is to help students gain a different perspective both in their studies and in their experiences.

The corporate organization theory, an expression of utilitarian perfectionism, now dominates the thinking of social planners in Western countries, Oliver argues, primarily because the technical order has replaced the moral order in our

culture. Even though the social planning that is based on
this ideal has a concern to see that the material needs of
all persons are met, this is an inadequate and finally de-
structive system, Oliver believes, because it replaces the
rituals that express meaning from a moral order with material
gains and thus strips away those patterns of living that in
the past gave life significance. He interprets this ideology
as resting on several beliefs: material well-being is society's
prime goal; man is not only at the center of things but also
can, through technology, separate himself from many of his
dependencies on the natural world; through reason and sci-
ence man is perfecting not only the environment but also his
own nature (progress); personal freedom includes liberation
from previous cultural patterns that bound individuals to
groups. Indeed, utilitarian perfectionism has linked its
view of man to a belief in the "necessity of rapid techno-
logical growth" (p. 33) with the consequence that technology
and the corporate model now provide the patterns that man
must fit into. This is a social theory, Oliver concludes,
that fails to understand human nature and thus cannot sustain
the quality of life that humans are capable of, even though
it can, through meeting physical needs and providing tem-
porary solutions, keep a society going.

Some of the consequences of the dominance of the corporate-
technological model in our society are, Oliver argues, a great
deal of social stress, alienation, loss of such tendencies
as cooperation, play, generosity, feeling of purpose, as well

as the institutionalization of the young, old, and abnormal.
To meet these new conditions our society has created the
"helping professions" which operate on the assumption that
by rational planning, research, and better systems these
human needs can be met by institutions or professional ser-
vices.

Oliver's argument is that Western culture has developed
a social form and a symbol of man that are expressions of
social, economic and symbolic development of the past few
centuries but that ignore the more significant social pat-
terns that were developed over a much longer period of time.
The idea that we could make radical changes in forms of work and
patterns of living together and make human changes to fit
the new social forms has been an erroneous one. No amount
of refinement, he contends, can correct the weaknesses of
the corporate organization model.

His choice of the community model over the corporate
organization model is an ideological one based on the follow-
ing assumptions: humans are not perfectible and thus their
differences are not a basis for segregation from the group
to which they belong; human society is intricately bound to
the natural environment and thus exploiting nature destroys
a vital relationship; humans have a complex set of social
and biological needs that can best be met by belonging to a
"band" or group with a common set of practices and beliefs.
For their development children need a range of people and

experiences that the current primary social groups--nuclear
family, school, and corporation--do not provide.

The two key factors in Oliver's concept of community
seem to be diversity and parochialism. A community must be,
to some degree, an in group that shares, in addition to a com-
mon space, a history, experience, set of beliefs and myths.
But it must also have diversity in ages, types of personalities,
education, and income. He finds the nuclear family too lim-
ited in range of persons (as compared with the extended fami-
ly), the school too limited in age range, and the corporate
organization having neither the common beliefs and rituals
nor the age/personality diversity to be places of community.
For characteristics of community he looks to our evolutionary
past where living in bands was understood as a basic, primi-
tive social need and from these he derives the following
characteristics of community:

> --commitment to care for all humans born into the
>   group, the aged, sick, and poor
> --absence of control by a centralized elite
> --attachments, work, celebrations, decisions woven
>   together by symbol, ritual, and religion
> --nuclear family less critical; extended family
>   gives greater range of adults to relate to
>   early in life
> --sense of home, place one will always be shel-
>   tered and accepted
> --variety of human differences accepted or tol-
>   erated. (pp. 23-24)

The community is unified not just by shared beliefs in
the sense of ideas, myths, or religion but also by the ties
of a common experience that reaches back into time, the

connections of kinship, territory, and history. It is that

connectedness to a number of elements in life that once were

taken for granted that civilization now threatens. The evo-

lutionist's concern, Oliver says, is not to return to primi-

tive life or abandon civilization but to try to restore a

balance between our older and our present social form.

Oliver does not believe that public schools can be them-

selves communities because they are required to minimize dif-

ference and be accepting of pluralism (which tends to reinforce

relativism rather than belief), and because of the dominant

utilitarian philosophy that requires preparing children for

life in a business-oriented society. This kind of emphasis

tends to draw children away from parochial beliefs and the

specialness of their families, religions, and ethnic identi-

ties. Because the corporation does not need or value diver-

sity of skills and originality and uses a singular, linear

measure for competency, the schools are expected either to

prepare people to take a place in the organization or to be

a member of a helping profession to work in or through insti-

tutions to care for those who, because of age or being dif-

ferent, do not fit into the system. Traditionally, the main

reason for schooling was to transmit a common culture, but

in the absence of such a common life, Oliver contends that

the goal has been reduced to promoting instrumental self-

interest or obedience to authority. As schools have lost

touch with the "common life of communities" there has been

a decrease in the variety of kinds of schools. Even alternative schools which have sought a different model have often failed, Oliver suggests, in large part because they have lacked myths to give common meaning to life.

Within existing school settings there are, however, at least two approaches that Oliver outlines that educators can take toward shifting the emphasis from utilitarian philosophy and the dominance of corporate life structures in the direction of an evolutionary perspective and recovering community. One is to seek out and teach from a different ideological perspective, particularly the evolutionary perspective, so that in history, biology, and other areas, a different emphasis and different questions are dealt with. This would mean not attempting the almost impossible job of changing the institution but revising the curriculum one is responsible for: "Revising curricular content so as to stop glorifying the utilitarian perfectionist view of nature, man and society; and creating a new view of how man might inhabit this planet" (p. 49). The other approach is to find different kinds of learning activities and to help make administrative/ bureaucratic changes that stand in the way of doing them. Oliver envisions such activities as working with neighborly places that have the potential for community: parent-run day care centers, food co-ops, church-sponsored community programs.

What Oliver suggests for education at first seems minimal. However, his first option is, I think, more powerful

than it may appear. Decisions about the way we design and
teach social studies, the goals and materials we choose for
reading, the way we teach and use science vis-a-vis nature
and the environment are curricular choices of real signifi-
cance. Extending this analysis we see other ways that the
practices in schools could be altered to support the value
of community: not minimizing but supporting the diversity in
the student's interests and beliefs; not attempting to sep-
arate the students from their community ties and traditions
by creating intellectual disdain for regional, ethnic, or
religious values unless there are moral issues involved;
career counseling that does not focus narrowly on the stu-
dent's interests but includes the community's needs; class-
room practices that foster cooperation, and school policies
that allow parents and relatives to have a more significant
relationship to the school. These suggestions by themselves
are not adequate as moral guidelines. Considerations of com-
munity always need to be made along with attention to meaning
and moral vision.

In summary, Oliver contends that in replacing the moral
order with the technical order in our society, schools have
increasingly shifted from education in a common culture that
is tied to our past, to a concern to educate children for a
business-oriented life. Concern for instrumental self-interest
and obedience, values compatible with the corporate organi-
zation, now dominates. To restore a balance in our culture

between the need for parochialism, shared beliefs, the ties

of symbol and ritual, shared histories, on the one hand, and

the demands and benefits of technology on the other, is what

Oliver is advocating. His argument that human consciousness

and social forms are evolutionary products that we cannot

alter quickly without great peril is quite similar to Jung's

contention that modern consciousness is but the tip of an

iceberg that reaches deep into a common past that we must not

ignore. Community, like myth, is an ancient form that tells

us much about our humanity that we tend to ignore in an age

of reason and technology.

Oliver speaks of the importance of myth to education

more directly in an article with Bane (1976) about the prob-

lems they experienced in efforts to do moral education through

the rational inquiry approach. Their conclusion is that

structured discussions or rational responses to moral dilemmas

become "another schoolroom game" that students do not relate

to personally. It is, they suggest, the "nonrational moral

sensitivities" (p. 349) of the students that the curriculum

needs to be dealing with, including the dark and tragic side

of human nature:

> [P]erhaps a sensitivity to paradox and tragedy in
> human nature is a far more powerful force in the
> expression of man's inherent humanity than the use
> of reasoning strategies in the development of
> flexible moral principles. (p. 349)

Those virtues of principled reasoning and impartiality

in judgment are not what are needed most for creating a moral

community, Oliver and Bane conclude. Rather the curriculum

of moral education needs to be directed toward, on the one
hand, a better understanding of and greater sensitivity to
the tragic dimension of human weakness, and, on the other
hand, to seeking a way to create or recover myth:

> We somehow need to create myths and celebra-
> tions by which we can project the common joys,
> sorrows, and compassions that we share simply by
> the fact that we are human. (p. 360)

For this task they suggest that educators work with
theologians and others to find "a kind of powerful metaphor
with which our Christian heritage once provided us" (p. 360).
They suggest that one of the ways such a curriculum can be
developed is through finding new ways to teach the humanities,
getting away from the organization imposed by academic dis-
ciplines and including movies and television, along with art
and literature, to try to understand a deeper and broader range
of human experiences. Young people need not so much to dis-
cuss decisions about events in the world, they argue, as the
"opportunity to project themselves in rich hypothetical worlds
created by their own imaginations or those of dramatists"
(p. 368, emphasis mine).

This analysis suggests that to educate by relying on rea-
son to the exclusion of the mythic is often to fail to engage
students personally and imaginatively at a level where sig-
nificant understanding can take place. It also points to the
significance of myth, along with ritual, as the way we have
of focusing on our common life, of drawing us into community.

Community: The Need for a New Myth

Oliver and Bane's proposal that educators join with theologians to find a powerful metaphor by which we can re-conceptualize our way of being together in the world is one that has much promise. Gibson Winter, a theologian, has provided us with just such a critique of our dominant metaphor and its destructive impact on community. However, because I find that Winter's suggested new metaphor, the work of art, to be problematic, I want to discuss here only his analysis of the problem.

In a paper presented to educators, Winter (1979) focuses on the centrality of symbols in human society and the impact of the mechanistic model on the West, particularly the degree to which it has fostered individualism over community. It is Winter's view that people always live according to a symbol system that is interpreted through myth, story, forms of work, etc. and that our efforts to make needed social changes should involve re-interpretation of our symbols and finding new metaphors to represent our life together. Our need in Western culture is to shift away from the mechanical metaphors that emerged with the Enlightenment because they have led us to an individualism and privatism that do not serve us well. However, at the time the mechanistic metaphor was introduced it offered, Winter observes, a way to liberate thought from the authority of state and church and from the idea that decay always followed growth according to the organic metaphor.

Winter (1979) points out that the mechanistic conception

derived from the idea of a rational order based on universal

laws and became the basis for two important concepts: indi-

vidual autonomy and freedom from traditional authority. We

have gained, he concludes, some important values from the

mechanistic age: "freedom of inquiry, economic development,

political motivation, moral relativity, and religious liberty"

(p. 7). But the rationality and freedom which laid the basis

for an industrial society have been in turn stiffled by eco-

nomic production because the control of production has been

concentrated in the hands of a few. Thus, Winter observes,

"the flight from family and community into the liberated

world of industrial work has proved to be a chimera for some

and a bad dream for others" (p. 9). With the individual as

the only entity, communities become merely aggregates of in-

dividuals and negotiation replaces belonging. At a time when

culture is pushing individuals to optimize their interests,

the family is viable only so long as it meets one's interests.

Winter argues that freedom in this context means autonomy,

"doing as I wish with my own powers, pursuing my own trajec-

tory" (p. 10). Thus the mechanistic symbolization has ceased

to be life-giving and is destructive in that it now fails to

"open horizons of creativity in dealing with environmental,

economic, international and spiritual tensions" (p. 14).

Education in the mechanistic age has been primarily

through schooling that is aimed toward liberation from family

and tradition and preparation for the discipline and skills
needed for the industrial work place, "conformity to the
imperious system of production" (p. 10), Winter (1979) writes.
Alienation and loss of community have been the effect of
mechanization and the economic system on school and society:

> Schooling and work became a path to alienation and
> subordination. Meanwhile, the fabric of human
> communities was being torn by the mobility and
> fragmentation which the productive system generated.
> The techno-economic drive to rational control sun-
> dered personal bonds in local communities and with-
> in the economic order. This degenerative process
> eroded the fabric of urban life, reducing every
> bond to a cash nexus. (p. 10)

Winter (1979) observes that many individuals have turned
to a private world of consumerism and "life-style" because they
have lost a sense of freedom, as well as community. The
economic system benefits from this privatism by creating goods
that foster the life-style. Other persons have sought belonging
and meaning through communal living, some expressions of which
are healthy attempts to rediscover community, Winter thinks,
while other communities are a dangerous regression to authori-
ty (such as Jonestown). Our need is to recover from our
heritage symbols that give meaning to our common life, meta-
phors that can reinterpret and renew our heritage and allow
us to find community in positive, life-giving ways. The con-
cept of community that we need is not the idea of solidarity
that sacrifices freedom nor peer group support for personal
goals, but that "shared work of disclosure of decency, moral
responsibility, personal contribution in which each person is

called to contribute to an enrichment of the quality of life in which we are dwelling" (p. 15). Winter suggests that each tradition has within it archetypal symbols of our common humanity on which we can draw for resymbolization.

Winter, like Oliver, understands our need for community as a need to reestablish our links with our mythologically based past in order to recover and renew images of wholeness and connectedness that have been shattered by the mechanistic age. Neither thinks that efforts in this direction need to sacrifice individuality. Rather the pursuit of individual interests needs to be balanced by a concern for the common good, for our wholeness is not just a matter of self-realization but also of belonging.

Political Implications for Education for Community

In order to understand why it is difficult to establish community as an educational theory we need to recognize some of the ways that the present economic system works against it. Communities and the myths that informed them have not vanished just because they have been expressions of primitive social relations, I suggest, but at least in part because they do not encourage individualism or conformity to the values of the corporate order such as intra-group competition and social mobility. As Winter (1979) points out, it is in the best interest of business to foster the idea of freedom as the expression of personal interests and life-style dependent on consumerism. It is commonly recognized that the mobility

of our society has been accelerated by corporate practices such as moving employees and closing plants in one place only to rebuild in another in order to save costs. Much has been written about how schools have adopted the administrative and organizational practices of business with the result that stratification, competition, measures of productivity (grades, standardized tests), obedience to authority, class and school size based on economic efficiency have all become accepted practices in American education. The value conflict between individualism and community is deeply rooted in our political and economic structures.

A socialist critique of American education helps us to see why community is such a hard value to try to promote in our schools and curriculum. Even though one may not share fully the socialists' vision of the good society or all of their educational goals, their analysis of the conflict between the value of individualism and of community in our culture is most helpful. In the area of educating for community, socialist schools in some countries are helpful models, particularly in encouraging cooperation and in doing tasks that are needed by the village or city. But I would also contend that the Marxist perspective is, in itself, too materialistic and too narrow, eclipsing the significance of imagination and spiritual depth that characterize human achievements and goals at their best. Myth directs us to aspects of human consciousness and to values that a socialist pedagogy does not include.

In the article, <u>Individualism, Collectivism, and Radical Educational Reform</u>, Cagen (1978) gives a socialist analysis of how the individualism in American culture is a barrier to achieving the goals of self-realization, community, and improving society, an analysis that identifies some of the political implications of placing a high priority on community.

The most distinctive characteristic of American culture is individualism, Cagen claims. Personal liberty, individual initiative and the private search for happiness are deeply rooted values. While these are in themselves positive values, they have become the legitimation for selfishness and for placing individual concerns over group needs. In the place of moral commitment, we increasingly appeal to a personality ethic that evalutes actions by how they meet personal needs and desires, a "morality of individual whim" in Becker's terms (p. 230). The growing concern with "healing psychic wounds and liberating persons from oppressive guilt" has led to a more negative perspective on family and community life and a down-playing of such values as responsibility, loyalty and caring (p. 230). While individualism in America has always been strong, Cagen suggests, religion restrained it in earlier times and helped maintain those values that promote the common good. But with the decline of religion, individualism in its more destructive forms has flourished.

Responsible for this growing self-centeredness and isolation is our economic and political order, Cagen argues.

Individualism is not incompatible with conformity, and indeed, our mass institutions often promote both, particularly through a materialistic, consumer orientation that a free enterprise system promotes. Reacting against the conformity and dehumanizing settings of our institutions, many persons withdraw and declare their own independence. But such a stance is neither a way to self-realization nor to social change and solidarity, Cagen points out. Indeed, it is the economically privileged who can withdraw and seek their own way to self-realization. What is needed, she argues, is a commitment to economic and social changes that will liberate all classes, one that is based on a sense of solidarity and a moral commitment to a better society for all. Cagen criticizes radical, free school educational reforms for having ignored how selective, class-based, and individualistic their concepts of liberation are and for omitting concerns for cooperation, ways to work for social change, and altruistic attitudes.

Cagen advocates a pedagogy that goes beyond the idea that personal liberation and social responsibility are antithetical, proposing one that is founded on the idea that it is human nature to live in a social context, that self-realization takes place in community. With a concept that human development is concerned both with individuality and community, an educational theory can maintain a dialectic between authority and personal values. She notes that while free schools are one-sided in the direction of personal values, collectivist

education tends to be one-sided in direction of authority.
Cagen is particularly concerned that we develop educational
models that give an important place to cultivating behavior
and attitudes reflecting concern and respect for human beings
and commitment to social action:

> The goal of collectivist education . . . is
> to make moral ideas into moving forces, to educate
> and raise children whose sympathies for other hu-
> man beings become as important in determining
> their actions as their ability to use reason and
> intellect. (p. 248)

While Cagen seems to be too sanguine about the heavy hand
of authority in socialist schools and, for me, too dogmatic
in Marxist rhetoric, she nonetheless articulates well the con-
cern that individualism has overpowered community in our society
and in our schools and that most concepts of educational re-
form give too little attention to the need for altruism, com-
munity, and commitment to work for the common good. Cagen,
Giroux (1980), Bowles and Gintis (1976) and others from this
perspective make clear that we cannot talk effectively about
a concern for alternative values and structures in education
without becoming aware ourselves and helping students develop
a critical consciousness about how the social, political, and
economic forces influence those structures and have a vested
interest in maintaining them.

Recognition that the loss of community and its values
is closely linked to our economic system is essential, I
suggest, for any significant understanding of why community
is a difficult value for Americans in this century to achieve.

However, we do not have to turn to some ideology outside our tradition, like Marxism, because there are significant community themes (such as "We the people" of the Declaration of Independence and truly democratic political models), other versions of the American myth, as well as religious traditions, that offer an alternative to the dominance of our social and economic life by the concerns of the capitalist system. Indeed, I find that the social vision of Marxism is not adequate, even though it offers a profound critique of the weaknesses of our society. Human solidarity based on class struggle and common economic concerns is not sufficient for a lasting or comprehensive community. Based on the idea that social existence creates consciousness, Marxism tends to reduce the human spirit and imagination to materialistic concerns. A more complete vision of human community is the kind seen in the Polish workers' strike where men and women joined in solidarity to gain both their economic and political rights and their right to maintain their mythic heritage, i.e., their Christianity.

Without seeing the mythic dimension of human conscious-ness and community, an education that seeks to develop in students a critical awareness of the economic and political powers that shape and control their institutions runs the risk of alienating youth from their families, traditions and places of community. While some degree of alienation is probably necessary and inevitable, the mythic perspective

suggests that to be fully human is to be deeply rooted in the common life of a people and to share visions of common goals that are broader than economic and political concerns, but that include these concerns in a significant way. The task is to educate the imagination for such visions, to discover through art, literature and even the metaphors of science the potential world as well as the real world.

In Conclusion

The problem of alienation is the most serious social and educational problem which community addresses. Attention to the value of community requires that we re-examine some of the fundamental liberal principles, suggesting that they may not be wrong so much as incomplete or one-sided. While much of the alienation in our society is due to the impact of the corporate organization on our institutions and social forms, some of it is also due to our movements toward liberation. The "liberated" woman is very often alienated from her family, the liberated black person is frequently alienated from the black community, and the liberated student is quite often alienated from the ideas and values of his/her parochial world. The dilemma of liberation vs. commitment suggests that we need to direct more attention to ideas and models that represent a synthesis, ways to overcome alienation without simply abandoning the idea of self-realization contained in the movement toward liberation.

Maxine Greene (1978) addresses the concern for overcoming the alienation that often accompanies learning through helping students recover their own "primordial landscape." Drawing from the writings of Merlou Ponty, Greene explores the importance of finding one's own ground, a lived reality, the space out of which the self emerges. An example of this kind of process she finds in Wordsworth's Prelude, in which the poet returns to his homeplace to begin to shape a meaningful world. In this process of regaining "the primordial landscape," Greene writes, "he feels present to himself, in touch with himself as never before." His learning, his self-knowledge, takes place "against an awareness that rooted him in a landscape and provided an enduring ground" (p. 15). This perspective could not be gained from a disembodied, abstract exploration, she concludes. The goal of such a process is to locate one's being in a context and then to transcend through reflection and analysis to the creation of the self, not abstracting oneself from the background but finding a range of perspectives that help one create a network of relationships that make being in the world not an isolated and random event but a direction of possibility and responsibility.

Becoming reconnected with one's background, with the primordial landscape is very similar, I think, to the concern expressed above for education that helps students to find and, if necessary, to reinterpret ties with their own

mythological inheritance and communities. While this is an

individual task, it is also a communal task, for it will be

through the discovery or creation of common symbols that stu-

dents will begin to be able to talk with each other about

common tasks and meanings. This seeking of the deep connec-

tions is what myth is concerned with, both in a psychological

sense and in the social realm of shared history and rituals.

The image of being rooted and grounded in a given landscape

exists in tension with the image of transcendence; together

they suggest the poles between which the student searches

for an education that is personally meaningful. A curriculum

that is designed for liberation alone risks alienation, while

one designed for accommodation to tradition and authority

sacrifices self-realization and moral criticism.

Education and community sounds like a good, safe issue,

and it is if we accept the superficial interpretation often

given to community. However, when we understand that com-

munity is a social form that is not compatible with the values

encouraged by our economic system we realize we are talking

about the need for political confrontation. When we find

that what supports community conflicts with some of our other

personally held values, we realize that we are dealing with

a classic human dilemma--there is not a right answer.

Besides seeking some changes in curriculum material,

changes in attitudes toward what we are educating students

for, and changes in how we view the school's relationship to

the community, there is another kind of task we can be in-
volved in at a theoretical level that is the major sort of
shift for which we would hope. That task is the search for
a new metaphor or a new story that will symbolize for us a
way of dwelling together that represents the human dimensions
of community and myth and overcomes the isolation of our
mechanistic metaphors. Approaches to community that do not
include the mythic dimension, that search for common metaphors
or stories, are without the depth that a meaningful concept of
community requires. What Jung, Campbell, Frye and other
writers about myth tell us is that we have a rich common
stratum of images from which to draw.

EPILOGUE

This investigation into the various dimensions of myth and education has stopped short of making many specific suggestions for curricula in specific areas. How some of the ideas developed here could be applied to decisions about what is to be taught in schools is an area for further inquiry. I want to suggest several directions such investigations might take. In doing this I want to make clear that these suggestions do not represent the main goal or primary concern of this study. Indeed, I hope that the main ideas about how myth is related to learning at different developmental stages and how it helps us to focus on the significance of imagination, meaning, and community in curriculum development have already been established.

The recognition of the importance of myth and fairy tale to the child's cognitive and emotional development can provide a new perspective on what literature we select and encourage for children. Not only does it suggest that the traditional stories are important, but it also indicates that fantasy is as "relevant" to the child's needs as realism. In recent decades there has been a great flowering of children's literature, including a large outpouring of both contemporary realistic fiction and modern fantasy. While most approaches to children's literature suggest that children need

both kinds of fiction, too little attention has been given
to how these different forms help shape or are matched with
the child's conceptions of the world and how to strengthen
the developing imagination and ego.

Advocates of realistic fiction argue that children will
deal with their own problems better and be more sensitive to
others' needs if they can read about people like themselves
going through similar difficulties. This idea seems to be
based more on adult logic than on what we know about how
children think and how they deal with emotional conflict.
Also, I find that realistic fiction runs the danger of being
didactic, showing children how they should adjust to modern
life, as well as carrying strong messages about personal and
social values that are current but, I think, often superficial
and at times destructive of the confidence and hope children
need in order to want to grow up.

Fantasy, on the other hand, because it offers experiences
and images more universal and related to needs at a level of-
ten below consciousness, strengthens the child's ability to
use the imagination to organize knowledge and to deal with
problems in a way more flexible and meaningful. Because of
the flux and relativity of their everyday world, children
need, as much as ever, experiences of an ideational world
where ideals, absolutes, and firm values exist and where trage-
dy is not senseless but takes place in a context of meaning.
The strong appeal of myth-based fantasies, starting with

Tolkien and C. S. Lewis and continued by other good writers,
is indicative of the significance of this kind of fiction
for children.

The importance of fantasy to adolescents is a phenomenon
that has been more difficult to understand. Why do teen-agers
read Tolkien, play Dungeons and Dragons, read and create
comic books based on ancient legends and myths? Because
these interests are strongest in youth who identify with what
is left of the "counter-culture," it indicates that they are
part of the rejection of one myth the culture offers and the
seeking of another.

I am suggesting that more study is needed to explore how
the literature children read relates to the development of
the ego and the imagination and how it corresponds to the
knowledge children can use. Also, more investigation is
needed into Travers' theory that it is not from individual
interests but from those patterns of interest that indicate
universal characteristics of children's needs and the conceptual
framework at particular ages. Such investigation can help us
understand the role of fiction in child development at a
deeper level than it is usually treated.

Approaches to teaching science need to be examined from
this perspective. The way younger children relate to natural
phenomena is, as we see from the Piaget study, not detached
or scientific. Instead of teaching younger children to use
the scientific method, it may be more appropriate and

meaningful to allow them to explore the natural world and
express their discoveries and questions in terms of the ani-
mism and artificialistic modes with which they think. The
child's sense of connectedness with natural phenomena is
the basis of metaphor and the sense of belonging in the world
that could be reinforced rather than weakened by what is taught
in a science curriculum. Questions to be asked might be:
What basic metaphors about the natural world do we want our
children to think with, Earth as Mother or Home, or Earth as
a gold mine or a factory producing goods? What might be
the long-range consequences of establishing mythic and or-
ganic metaphors rather than mechanistic metaphors?

For adolescents the approach to science will shift.
Children, having gradually replaced their mythic sense of
participation in nature and events, have learned many of the
facts of the physical world. During adolescence more than
the facts become important, for now students seek to know
the laws and systems that govern the natural world. However,
the approach developed here suggests that it is also a time
when raising philosophical and ethical questions is important.
This suggests that learning about the moral and ideological
choices made in regard to science and its applications in
technology should be an important concern of a science curricu-
lum at this level.

In the area of moral education there is the need for more
investigation of ways to address the problems Oliver and

Bane (1976) found with the approach that focused on the rational discussion of principles. Their suggestion that attention shift from seeking principles to understanding human dilemmas and seeking common myths is a concern addressed also by Novak (1970):

> Contemporary studies in ethics, in Anglo-American circles, concentrate upon logic and language; I wish, instead, to concentrate upon the drive to understand and upon myths and symbols. My reason for doing so is that men seldom, if ever, act according to principles and rules stated in words and logically arranged. They act, rather, according to models, metaphors, stories, and myths. Their action is imitative rather than rule-abiding. Prior to their attention to obey sets of rules, they are trying to become a certain type of person.
> Rules are to myths what single words are to sentences. The same word may have different meanings in different sentences; the same rule may be obeyed differently by men living out different myths. (p. 23)

Greene (1978) also contends that moral education needs to direct more attention to the identity students are trying to work out and the kind of communities they want to be linked with and less to the consideration of principles:

> Moral education, it would seem, must be as specifically concerned with self-identification in a community as it is with judgments persons are equipped to make at different ages. It has as much to do with interest and action in concrete situations as it does with the course of moral reasoning. It has as much to do with consciousness and imagination as it does with principles. (pp. 47-48)

This task of "self-identification in a community" is, as I attempted to show above, a part of the function of myth.

Finding modes of moral education that focus on the myths and stories, as well as the communities with which students

want to identify, and seeking ways to make moral choices as regards those myths, is an important area for study.

Beyond specific curriculum areas, attention needs to be directed toward what the school symbolizes by the kinds of studies and kinds of space for learning that are provided. For example, Charity James (1980) recommends that schools think about other kinds of centers than just skills centers, such as a "myth center" where students can reflect on and be in touch with that level of consciousness where myths reside. Time and space for art and dance are also ways that the school says to the students that _mythos_ as well as _logos_ is important.

It is my general conclusion from having done this study that myth refers not to just some rather vague feelings about a deeper level of consciousness, or to a retreat from the modern world into "primitive" ways of thinking and living, or to any narrow conception of the religious experience. Rather I see it as itself a kind of metaphor for ways of knowing and organizing knowledge, as well as for kinds of knowledge inherent in different forms at certain stages of development. At times the mythic way of knowing stands in opposition to the rational way of knowing, but this conflict is one that can often be resolved or understood differently when we recognize the ideological conflicts that usually underlie commitment to the rational versus the mythic, or individualism versus community. What knowledge is important

is, we know, as much a political as an objective decision. Attention to myth will, I hope, help us to reexamine some of our social and political assumptions about education, as well as allow us to look in a new way at the world of the child and the dilemma of the adolescent in our society.

Bruner and Campbell both suggest that while we seek myths as external and communal images of our identity, we may be forced in our time to turn inward in our search in an effort that is lonely and not complete because the common myths and communities are present only in fragmented ways. But neither suggests that we abandon the effort to know and explore the mythic, and Campbell is optimistic that beyond this period of fragmentation we can achieve more adequate myths than those we are being forced to leave behind. That kind of hope gives the study of myth in our time integrity.

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