Psychotherapy in a Mythic Key: The Legacy of Carl Gustav Jung

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This article presents a model of psychotherapy that emphasizes the client's evolving personal mythology—its conflicts and its transformations. While harmonious with Jungian and other transpersonal psychologies, a mythological formulation also takes the cognitive trend in clinical practice a step further by conceptually embracing the intuitive realm and the spiritual impulse in conceiving the client's assumptive world. Because personal and cultural myths evolve in tandem, a conceptual link to the social basis of human behavior is also inherent in this model.

Personal myths are complexes of concepts and images—condensed around a common theme—that shape perception, understanding, and motivation. They can be thought of as thematic structures that shape perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and behavior. When elaborated into narrative form, they are often expressed in symbols and metaphor. The roots of one's personal mythology can be traced to biology, personal history, culture, and

transcendent experiences. This article offers suggestions for conducting psychotherapy within a mythically informed framework, a perspective that may be useful for those not closely acquainted with Jung or with transpersonal psychology. The chapter also discusses the principles by which we believe personal myths develop, and it presents our model of intervention into the individual's evolving mythology.

Mythology in contemporary clinical thought

In the prologue to his autobiography, Jung announced, "I have now undertaken, in my eighty-third year, to tell my personal myth" (1961, 3). This statement reflected Jung's longstanding recognition that both individuals and groups create and maintain mythological belief systems about how, why, and when they act as they do. In addition, every theory of human personality contains its own implicit or explicit set of myths as reflected in its doctrines, mores, values, practices, and the integrative set of dom-

inant assumptions used to prioritize and categorize experience (Maduro and Wheelwright 1977, 84). Depth psychotherapy, as pioneered by Jung, is, according to James Hillman, "today's form of traditional mythology, the great carrier of the oral tradition" (1975, 20).

Rollo May (1991) has argued that contemporary psychotherapy "is almost entirely concerned . . . with the problem of the individual's search for myths" (9). J. D. Frank and J. B. Frank (1991) have pointed out that all schools of psychotherapy bolster clients' sense of mastery and self-efficacy by providing them

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with a myth or a conceptual scheme that explains their symptoms. According to Frank and Frank, psychotherapists also engage in rituals that combat client demoralization by strengthening the therapeutic relationship, arousing hope, inspiring expectations of help, arousing their clients emotionally, and affording them opportunities for rehearsal and practice. As a result, a mutually satisfactory story is constructed, one that will have beneficial consequences for a client's ability to function and for his or her sense of well-being (72). Frank and Frank propose that to be effective, these stories need to be couched in terms that capture and hold a client's attention. Indeed, they suggest that "much of the therapeutic power of psychoanalysis and of Jung's . . . psychotherapy lies in their extraordinary evocative imagery" (73).

For many individuals and groups, Jungian psychology does offer, as Hillman (1975) puts it, a contemporary "form of traditional mythology" (20). In a culture left without collectively sanctioned values and moral absolutes, members of Western industrialized societies are compelled to bring meaning to their existence by buying into a prearranged religious or secular structure, or, through education, creative work, or psychotherapy, formulating their own myths. According to Joseph Campbell (1988), who was profoundly influenced by Jung's work, myths are metaphors for what lies behind the visible world. For Campbell, myth explains the *invisible plane* that underlies the visible. For example, Campbell emphasized that myths teach people to identify not with the body but with the consciousness for which the body is a vehicle. At the same time, he also believed that myths emerge from the body and are created in part to explain such bodily mysteries as childbirth, puberty, menstruation, menopause, and sickness.

A primary concern of many approaches to psychotherapy involves uncovering the invisible plane—the unconscious motivation—that propels behavior. The invisible plane of a man who enters psychotherapy because of lifelong difficulties with authority figures, for example, may be unresolved anger toward his father. A growing body of literature suggests compelling conceptual advantages for understanding this invisible context of the individual's behavior as a personal mythology (Bagarozzi and Anderson 1989; Feinstein 1979; Feinstein, Krippner, and Granger 1988; Krippner 1986; Larsen 1990; McAdams 1985, 1993).

A myth addresses existential human concerns through narrative, and whether a myth is within or outside of consciousness affects behavior. Personal and cultural myths converge to govern every important sphere of human activity. Jung emphasized collective myths that reside in the unconscious of humankind as a whole. At the societal level, myths may be cultural, ethnic, institutional, familial, or personal. June Singer has commented, "Personal mythology is but the flower on the bush,

the family myth is the branch, society's conventions form the stem, and the root is the human condition" (1988, xi). However, Singer adds that once psychotherapists identify the parts, they must also understand how they are organized. Otherwise, therapists will "stop with the five-finger exercises and will never play the concerto" (1990, 60).

R. B. Edgerton (1992) points out that some societies have acquired religious, hygienic, or sexual customs that are maladaptive and that will, if not altered, destroy the society in which they have taken hold, or harm the well-being of individuals within that social group. Some of these customs were adaptive at one time but through the force of tradition survived long after changing circumstances made them maladaptive. Alternatively, these folkways might have become inadequate once the society was exposed to competition from neighbors with more efficient traditions. An analogue exists between these cultural patterns and personal myths; personal myths that may have been extraordinarily useful during childhood typically become maladaptive if they do not evolve as the individual matures.

We use the term *myth* to describe conscious and unconscious explanatory narratives that affect a person's experience and behavior. It is futile to judge such myths as true or false, but practitioners may evaluate certain elements of their clients' mythology as functional and others as dysfunctional. However, this evaluation will inevitably be based on the mythology embedded in the psychotherapist's clinical perspective. An individual's personal mythology is "the vibrant infrastructure that informs your life, whether or not you are aware of it" (Singer 1988, xi). Jungians hold that the most useful, functional personal myths are a part of the *collective unconscious*—the stratum of the psyche that has endured throughout time—and a personal myth often changes as one attempts to resolve its disharmony with the collective myth.

We prepared a self-help workbook (Feinstein and Krippner 1988b) that uses a series of personal rituals that attempt not only to assist individuals in their own development but also to help them bring a renewed mythology back to their family, community, or social group. The personal rituals in our workbook serve as the core of our narrative therapeutic technique, whether someone uses the book privately, works within a group, or uses it as a supplement to psychotherapy. Our students and colleagues have applied these techniques to people interested in self-development, with mild to moderately severe emotional and behavioral disorders, diagnosed as exhibiting post-traumatic stress disorder (Paulson 1992), and with schizophreniform conditions (Sperry 1981). The primary requirement is that the client has a capacity for the creation of verbal or nonverbal narrative. We have not personally used our approach with children, but J. W. Rhue and S. J. Lynn (1991) and M. E. Stevens-Guille and F. J. Boersma (1992) are among those who have used storytelling and fairy tales with children in psychotherapeutic settings, claiming salutary results, and Richard Gardner (1971) pioneered a

brilliant psychotherapeutic approach for children based on mutual storytelling.

Theoretical concepts and principles

Psychotherapy is a process that attempts to modify behavior and experience that clients and/or their social group deem dysfunctional, usually because they inhibit personal relationships, stifle competent performance, or block the actualization of one's talents and capacities (Krippner 1990, 179). Thus, psychotherapy, by its nature, is conducted within the context of the culture's broader mythological framework (Feinstein and Krippner 1989), ideological struggles (Prilleltensky 1989), and competing visions of reality (Andrews 1989). Whatever the client's presenting problem, not understanding it within this larger context misses important dimensions of his or her existential situation.

For example, one of the great embarrassments for the psychotherapy establishment is the hand it unwittingly lent in suppressing the brewing discontent among women in the late 1950s and 1960s. By reframing the complaints of their female clients as unresolved intrapsychic problems, therapists served as a repressive force in the lives of disaffected women. Such therapists, by focusing on their clients' failure to adjust to existing role expectations, may have been operating within a worldview supported by their training, but they were oblivious to the mythic conflict that was about to take center stage in the societal arena. The implicit value assumptions of the therapist and the deep mythology of which they are a part shape therapeutic outcomes.

What Estella Lauter and C. S. Rupprecht observed as Jung's "preoccupation with the feminine" (1985, 5) involved an ability to see beyond the culture's patriarchal myths and stereotypes. Among Jung's most controversial concepts are those of the *animus* and *anima*; he believed that the former represents a stereotypical masculine image that unconsciously presents itself (especially in dreams) to a woman, whereas the latter represents a stereotypical feminine image that presents itself to a man. These concepts have been formulated differently by Jung's followers, but the implication remains that culturally defined masculine and feminine qualities are equally available for development by either gender.

Even though Jung did not ignore the social milieu, the question drove his intellectual quest centered on the behavioral and psychological characteristics held among humankind as a species. For Jung no fundamental incompatibilities existed between peoples' biological origins and their spiritual predispositions (Stevens 1982, 21). Jung's pursuit involved his own self-study, analysis of the problems brought to him by his patients, and readings in mythology and comparative religion. Most of the ideas in the eighteen volumes of his *Collected Works* revolve around his assertion that the human psyche—like the human body—has a definable structure and that human societies, no matter what their location in space or time, all focus on similar life issues (Stevens 1982, 22–23). Jung used the term *archetype* when discussing the images humanity has found to address these common concerns—symbolism that inevitably appears in dreams, fantasy, art, and other expressions of the human psyche. As the individual, family, or group searches for meaning, archetypes, which are said to reside in the collective unconscious, become the raw material for the narratives that eventually are referred to as myths.

Anthony Stevens has taken Jung's idea that archetypes are biologically based (although socially canalized) and has reformulated it in terms of neuropsychological processes that possess the capacity to initiate, control, and mediate the everyday behavior and experiences of human beings (1982, 296). Drawing from research on the brain's subcortical structures and hemispheric asymmetry and from investigations of naturally occurring mental imagery (especially dreaming), Stevens concludes that "from the viewpoint of modern neurology, Jung's work stands as a brilliant vindication of [and] belief in the value of intuitive knowledge" (273–74).

Jung spoke of the *ego* as the center of a person's field of consciousness. C. D. Laughlin and his associates (Laughlin, McManus, and d'Aquili 1990) have reinterpreted Jung's notion of the ego in

terms of research data involving neural networks. When we are consciously aware of one (or more) of these networks, it joins the set of percepts, concepts, images, and affects that comprise our empirical ego. Those neural networks that we perceive and cognize as our ego are typically bounded by intensive neurological inhibitions. Other networks drop out of sight only from the standpoint of the conscious networks, yet they continue to function and develop over time, and may exercise unconscious volition to attain their ends (1990, 134). We may become aware of these additional networks (Jung's other complexes) only after the healthy psyche has reached midlife following a lengthy period of what Jung called ego consolidation.

Therefore, Jungian personality theory can be understood from several perspectives—biological, psychodynamic, social, or transpersonal. Psychotherapists need to be mindful of their own underlying beliefs and values and of the hermeneutic circle these deep myths create in conjunction with their client's myths (Frank and Frank 1991). It is both a possibility and a requirement during the contemporary period of unprecedented upheaval and cultural ferment that effective psychotherapists, regardless of their theoretical orientation, develop an awareness of the mythology within which they themselves operate and help clients understand the deeply personal myths that give form to the way they construct their world and shape their behavior. We will next examine the nature of personal myths and the manner by which they evolve and introduce a model by which clinicians may bring a more mythological perspective into their own practices. This perspective uses narrative as a central tool for navigating through the territory Jung brought forever into the purview of psychotherapy.

Jung's suspiciousness of metaphysical language makes him a precursor of postmodernists who have attempted to deconstruct metaphysics. Instead, Jung focused on the images and the phenomenology of the psyche, which compliments many postmodern thinkers. For him, psyche is not only expressed in images but exists in images, both at a personal and collective level. The dismissal of the collective unconscious by modern psychologists stands in sharp contrast to those postmodern thinkers who, like Jung, espouse views on language, customs, and imagination, which are largely collective in character (Casey 1990). However Jung's emphasis on the universal aspects of psychological functioning places him at odds with postmodernists. His concepts of animus and anima, for instance, focus on presumed essential differences between men and women, thus, according to some postmodernists, fostering and perpetuating power-based patterns of domination and exploitation (Clarke 1993, 1231).

Although Jung's notion of a collective unconscious that consists of archetypes—collective myths, symbols, and metaphors—is one of the most controversial aspects of his work, writers such as Plato and St. Augustine had proposed similar concepts, and these ideas have continually resurfaced, albeit with different names and descriptions. When Jean Piaget (1971) writes of innate schemata, Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) speaks of binary oppositions in cultural myths, and Noam Chomsky (1965) proposes rules for transformational grammar in linguistics, Jung's archetypes are discussed using other vocabularies. Indeed, the transparency and creativity emphasized by Jung's dream theory is clearly related to the literary exposition of texts (Hobson 1988, 65). These preoccupations with essences are at odds with those postmodernists who emphasize local phenomena particular to time and place.

Our framework fits within the emerging area of narrative psychology in that it treats narrative as an organizing metaphor for human activity. It is based on the assumption that individuals impose socially constituted narrative structures on their experience, serving as both the authors and the actors in the stories that form their own personal dramas (Lyddon and McLaughlin 1992, 96). The narrative expression of myths need not be written; it may be pictorial, oral, or expressed in dance, sculpture, or a variety of other forms that express the imagination. Using narrative in psychotherapy enhances both awareness

and responsibility as it teaches clients to redefine themselves and reconstruct their life stories, as well as shows them how to take a hermeneutic, meaning-oriented approach to personal experience (Mahoney 1991; Schafer 1992). It is for these reasons that T. R. Sarbin (1986), in *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*, nominates narrative as a root metaphor for psychology.

The nature of personal myths

Myths may be thought of as controlling images or metaphors that organize experience and regulate action (Schorer 1960). This definition is more useful than viewing myths as falsehoods, which is a popular conception that belies the reductionism of modern technological, industrialized societies, nor are myths simply values, ethics, attitudes, or beliefs, although each of these may reflect a deeper mythic structure. Unlike other psychological terms such as cognitive schemes, belief structures, or scripts, the word *myth* embraces the spiritual dimensions of human consciousness that transcend early conditioning and cultural setting. Mythmaking at the individual, familial, cultural, and collective level is the primary, though often unperceived, psychological mechanism by which human beings order reality and navigate their way through life. As the human species evolved, mythological thinking—the ability to symbolically address existential questions—replaced genetic mutation as the primary vehicle by which individual consciousness and societal innovations were carried forward (Feinstein and Krippner 1988b, 2006).

Personal as well as cultural myths are generally organized around at least one of the core themes that are customarily the concern of cultural mythology. According to Campbell (1988), these include: (1) the need to comprehend one's world in a meaningful way, (2) the search for a marked pathway through the succeeding epochs of human life, (3) the urgency to establish secure and fulfilling relationships within a community, and (4) the longing to find one's place in the vast wonder and mystery of the cosmos. Personal myths act as a lens that explains the world, guides individ-

ual development, provides social direction, and addresses spiritual yearnings in a manner that is analogous to the way cultural myths carry out these functions for entire societies.

By drawing on the historically rich concept of mythology to describe explanatory and guiding schemata at both the individual and cultural levels, the integral relationship between personal and social constructions of reality is emphasized. Each level, in fundamental ways, mirrors the other. There is evidence, for instance, that the hero or heroine's journey, a central motif in Western mythology, exists not only in the guiding images provided by societies but also as an archetype in the primordial recesses of the psyche and body. Campbell, who described the hero's (or heroine's) journey based on his comparative studies of mythologies throughout history, notes his amazement when reading psychiatrist John Weir Perry's (1976) studies of psychosis, discovering that sometimes "the imagery of schizophrenic fantasy perfectly matches that of the mythological hero journey" (208), which he outlined more than a decade earlier. Campbell discovered Jung's pioneering formulation that mythology is a product of archetypal processes that preexist individual experience.

According to Campbell, myths are ultimately "motivated from a single psychophysiological source—namely, the human imagination moved by the conflicting urgencies of the organs" (1986, 12). By taking this position, Campbell follows Jung, who assumed the inseparability of body and psyche (Rupprecht 1985). Our model also recognizes this inseparability and conceptualizes personal myths as being the

product of four interacting sources. The most obvious are *biology* (the capacities for symbolism and narrative are rooted in the structure of the brain; information and attitudes are neurochemically coded; and physiology, temperament, and hormones influence belief systems), *culture* (the individual's mythology is a microcosm of the culture's mythology), and *personal history* (every emotionally significant event leaves a mark on one's developing mythology). A fourth source is rooted in *transpersonal experiences*—those episodes, insights, dreams, and visions that have a numinous quality, expand a person's spiritual perspective, and inspire behavior that is altruistic, benevolent, and compassionate. For Jung, humanity's spiritual life can be seen not as a denial of its evolutionary origins, but as an expression of them (Stevens 1982, 22).

The spiritual dimension of human existence plays a key role in both myth and Jungian psychotherapy. In Philip Wheelwright's classic definition, "the very essence of myth [is] that haunting awareness of transcendental forces peering through the cracks of the visible universe" (1942, 10). Jung (1928/1969) once stated that his goal in psychotherapy was to cure the soul. He later wrote that "virtually everything depends on the soul" because the future of humanity "will be decided neither by the attacks of wild animals nor by the danger of world-wide epidemics but simply and solely by the psychic changes in . . . our rulers' heads [because they can] plunge the world into blood, fire, and radioactivity" (1959, 97). For Jung, mythology was of critical importance because it contained profound psychological truths not present in scientific psychology, truths essential to the art of "soul-making" (Staude 1981, 76).

Principles by which personal myths develop

We have formulated seven principles by which we believe personal myths develop. They are presented here as testable propositions:

(1) *To emerge from the mythic structure in which one has been psychologically embedded and move to another integrated set of guiding images and*

premises is a natural and periodic phase of individual development. Personal myths exist within a psychological ecology of mutation and selection in which even the fittest mythic structures must continually evolve if they are to further the person's optimal adjustment and development. Not only do circumstances continually change, but new developmental tasks also appear throughout adult life. Jung believed that during the first half of a person's life, a dominant function is established that may work well initially but later becomes problematic (Jung 1921/1971).

Personal myths that are appropriate and effective during one period of life or at one level of development may become inappropriate or dysfunctional at another. As myths grow outmoded, they fail to support the individual's psychosocial and spiritual needs and begin to restrict personal development. Psychological growth often requires a shift to more functional mythic structures. Societal attitudes regarding such changes and the rites of passage it provides or fails to provide for supporting them may promote or inhibit the success of such transitions. Sometimes a superficial mythic structure is revealed by one's *persona*—a term Jung adopted from the Greek word for mask. It feigns individuality and can sustain someone for a considerable period of time; but the persona is basically a role that is enacted to adapt to the requirements of specific life situations.

(2) *Personal conflicts—both in one's inner life and external circumstances—are natural markers of these times of transition.* When the prevailing mythic structure no longer serves the individual's adjustment or developmental needs, it is advantageous to consider the alternative guiding structures the psyche is continually generating. These are typically revealed in dreams and other windows into unconscious processes. Jung believed that dreams are often prospective, assisting the dreamers to glimpse oppositional aspects of themselves as well as what they can become if they shed or alter their dysfunctional myths. However, psychological defenses may prevent individuals from recognizing features of their experience that are incompatible with the dominant myth,

even as that myth becomes less capable of providing effective guidance. In maintaining a mythology that is failing, people generally experience an increasing degree of conflict that colors their feelings, thoughts, actions, dreams, fantasies, and the circumstances they draw to themselves. To treat such difficulties as markers of transition, rather than simply to resist them, allows a mobilization for understanding and a beginning to resolve underlying mythic conflict.

(3) *On one side of the underlying mythic conflict will be a self-limiting myth, rooted in past experience, that is best understood in terms of its constructive purposes in the individual's history.* In the early phases of our model, an effort is made to connect current difficulties with past experiences. The old myth is examined for the productive role it played at an earlier time, which reveals the functions the new myth will have to serve and brings attention to previous attempts to meet those needs. By understanding how the old myth developed, even while in the process of abandoning it, one becomes more able to embrace the valid lessons it still holds and affirm strengths and abilities that may have been called into question by the consequences of the myth's shortcomings.

When a dream reveals a mythic struggle, the Jungian technique of amplification can be used to better understand it. Amplification can be attempted on three levels: the dreamer's personal associations, the dreamer's and the therapist's cultural associations, and any cross-cultural or archetypal associations made by the dreamer or therapist (Hall 1982). Amplification differs from free association because it attempts to find parallels to the dream

image or activity; Jung compares it to the way philologists learned to read hieroglyphics and cuneiform inscriptions—by finding a parallel text. This process also resembles hermeneutics: the disciplined examination of texts in an attempt to discover their intended meaning. Similar to some literary texts, an individual's dreams may contain multiple meanings at various levels, hence Jung's hesitancy to inspect the potential personal, cultural, and archetypal mythic content. By applying the results of this hermeneutic search to one's daily behavior, the dreamer can attempt to compose a more coherent "plot" for their life (Frank and Frank 1991, 72).

(4) *On the other side of the conflict is an emerging counter-myth that serves as a force toward expanding the individual's perceptions, self-concept, worldview, and awareness of options in the very areas the old myth was limiting them.* Just as the psyche may produce inspiring dreams that point toward new directions for one's development, it also creates new mythic images whose guidance may conflict with prevailing myths. Latent qualities of the personality not supported by existing mythology naturally push toward expression, spearheaded by an emerging counter-myth. Counter-myths are woven from life experiences, a developmental readiness to accept the more useful cultural myths, or a reservoir of unconscious primal impulses and presumed archetypal materials such as the shadow and anima/animus, each of which plays a prominent role in Jung's thought.

The shadow, for instance, personifies everything a person refuses to acknowledge about himself or herself. In dreams, the shadow is generally the same gender as the dreamer. This character may be immoral, barbarous, outrageous, or distasteful. The shadow does not typically represent a final resolution of the dreamer's mythic conflict, but recognizing it may be an essential step in facing what has been repressed and ignored. Counter-myths, whether organized around primal impulses or archetypal material, are best understood as creative leaps in the psyche's problem-solving activities, but like some dreams they play a wish-fulfillment function

that lacks real-world utility. These counter-myths recapture aspects of the psyche that have been repressed under the constraints of the old myth and integrate unrecognized impulses and images into the personality.

(5) *While this conflict may be emotionally painful and personally disruptive, a natural, though often unconscious, mobilization toward a resolution also occurs, ultimately yielding a mythic image with new meaning.* A dialectical process naturally unfolds, which can be viewed as a subterranean struggle between conflicting myths vying to structure the individual's perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Pasqual-Leone 1987). Although much of this process occurs outside of awareness, people tend to identify consciously more with one of the myths, or some of its elements, than with the other. By being aware of this dialectic, people have a greater chance of working out the conflict internally rather than externally in society. The dialectic occurs naturally and without volition or attention, but the optimum resolution of the conflict may be enhanced through techniques that attune conscious awareness to this deeper process. Through the use of such methods, symbols of transformation eventually emerge, pointing toward resolution of the mythic conflict and greater personality integration. Jung spoke of the transcendent function of symbols, whereby an image emerges that transcends polarities and unites opposites, fostering a transition from psychic conflict to the achievement of greater inner unity.

(6) *During this process, previously unresolved mythic conflicts tend to reemerge—potentially either interfering with the resolution of the current developmental task or opening the way to deeper levels of resolution in the person's mythology.* When an individual is unable at an earlier age to successfully meet the requirements of a particular developmental task, such as reconciling oneself to being raised by an abusive parent, that issue will play a thematic role in the resolution of subsequent mythic conflicts. Certain aspects of the person's mythology become fixated at the level of this unresolved issue and interfere with later developmental steps. Taking a cue from Jung's use of imagination in psychotherapy, we often guide clients to use imagery and fantasy to enter the period of arrested development. Once there, we provide this younger version of him- or herself with an emotionally corrective rite of passage that leads them to the next developmental tier and into an expanded personal mythology.

(7) *Reconciling newly conceived personal myths with existing beliefs, goals, and lifestyle becomes a vital task in the individual's ongoing development.* Historically, rites of passage provided relatively unambiguous direction for regulating people's lives. For a variety of reasons, including the diversity that characterizes modern cultures, this guidance is no longer possible. However, the need for such

direction is ever more pressing as the myths of contemporary culture, which might guide and comfort, are themselves in unprecedented flux.

The five-stage model we developed for helping people move beyond outdated or otherwise dysfunctional personal myths and into a renewed mythology can be used at any point during adult development. It leads to a fresh guiding mythology based on an informed synthesis of the individual's history and characterological leanings with cultural and archetypal images that push for expression. The task of weaving this renewed mythology into the fabric of life can provide new meaning and purpose to the individual's journey—it addresses the vital functions that cultural rites and rituals no longer serve. It echoes Jung's stress on balance and wholeness, as individuals work toward higher, more transcendental, stages of integration (Staude 1981, 84–85).

The prototype for this unending process of emerging from the mythic structure in which one has been psychologically embedded, formulating an alternative guiding structure, and reconciling this new structure with one's earlier mythology and lifestyle can be seen in Margaret Mahler and her associates' (Mahler, Pine, and Berger 1975) description of the psychological birth of the human infant. In the infant's earliest mythology—defining mythology as simply the psychological construction of reality—representations of self and other are enmeshed. The developmental task involves differentiating oneself from this entanglement. Analogously, the maturing individual is briefly psychologically embedded in a particular personal mythology. The next developmental step will involve differentiating one's intrapsychic representations from mythic structures that have become rigid, outdated, or otherwise limiting. Through a series of events that parallel Mahler's practicing phase of individuation, a new structure is formulated and a counter-myth begins to coalesce. However, because of the repudiation of the old myth that inevitably accompanies the differentiation stage, the counter-myth is generally skewed. While it may compensate for the shortcomings of the prevailing mythology, it is often impaired in the areas that the old myth was the most adequate.

This period is often painfully disorienting and the person is caught between two realities: one that is familiar but no longer functional and another that is not yet fully formulated and thus is unable to provide reliable guidance. Jung (1932/1972) commented that feelings of alienation and depression often mark an individual's effort to supplant the domination of the ego with a search for the inner Self. A rapprochement between the old structure and the emerging direction is necessitated, ideally consolidating a new structure into which the person's identity can again, for a time, be advantageously embedded. Higher stages of ego development correlate with greater differentiation and better integration among the elements of the personality—specifically the personal

myths that people consciously and unconsciously construct as they formulate their identities (Kegan 1982; McAdams 1985). Clinicians may be useful in helping people move through periods of transition in their mythologies with such enhanced differentiation and integration. Just as adults reconstruct developmental tasks they did not successfully complete as children in their interpersonal relationships, early problems in constructing reality are also recapitulated when adults attempt to evolve from a failing mythic structure to a new guiding mythology.

Strategies and techniques

The seven principles described above are embodied in a model we developed for helping people understand, evaluate, and orchestrate transformations in their guiding myths. The model permeates five stages that we believe naturally follow one another as personal myths evolve.

A five-stage model for intervening in the individual's evolving mythology

Singer (1988) has observed that our first three stages echo the Socratic triad of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The fourth stage tests and reinforces insights to allow the new myth to move from the imaginative realm into the phase of intention and then into action. Stage five involves a series of practical steps by which the inner transformation can be actualized in the external world. As Singer has noted, these stages are informed not only by Jungian psychology but by psychoanalysis, cognitive psychology, and behavior therapy (1988, xii–xiii). We suggest various procedures for moving through the five stages. Our workbook (Feinstein and Krippner 1988b), along with an integrated set of audio cassettes, is designed to assist the process, whether the individual has engaged the help of a psychotherapist or is working privately, with a partner, or a group.

A dilemma of the modern era is that the ability of cultural myths to adapt to new conditions has been outstripped by the rate of social change (Feinstein and Krippner 1988a). The lack of unity and coherence in the culture's mythology allows and forces individuals to think and act for themselves in ways that were once unimaginable. As people in contemporary cultures are propelled to formulate distinctively personal mythologies, the culture's emerging mythology is being hammered out on the anvil of individuals' lives. The requirement that people become conscious and capable of mindfully influencing the mythologies they live is more urgent than ever before. By understanding the principles that govern their underlying myths, people can influence patterns in their lives that once seemed predetermined and were unquestioned; they are more able to creatively adjust to the bewildering contradictions in today's guiding myths. A well-articulated, carefully examined personal mythology may be one of the most effective devices available for countering the disorienting grip of a world in mythic turmoil.

For many years, we have been searching for ways to bring to the therapeutic process more focus and mastery regarding these subtle and underlying mythic dimensions of clinical practice (Feinstein 1979, 1987, 1990a, 1990b; Feinstein and Krippner 1988a, 1988b, 1989; Feinstein, Krippner, and Granger 1988; Feinstein and Mayo 1990; Krippner 1986). Helping people understand how their personal myths evolve increases their ability to meaningfully engage in the fundamental processes associated with their psychological, social, and spiritual development. When training therapists to use a mythological perspective in their clinical practices, we do not ask them to shift to a different theoretical orientation or methodology, but rather: (1) to place the diagnostic picture and therapeutic goals, as the clinician would normally conceptualize them, into the larger context of the client's evolving mythology, and (2) to evaluate therapeutic interventions and outcomes within this larger context as well as within the more precise formulations of the therapist's particular school of practice.

The five stages

In addition to the methods the therapist already employs, we introduce a layer of technique designed to show the client how to work experientially with the inner symbolism the psyche continually generates. A mythological underworld exists within each individual whose content is reminiscent of the great cultural mythologies. This rich foundation of waking life is revealed in the high drama and conspicuous creativity of the individual's dream life and inner visions as they unfold. We also show clinicians how to help their clients develop and access an internalized ego state that we refer to as the *Inner Shaman* (Feinstein 1987), which is a cross between the observing ego and the higher self. Finally, based on our observations from intimate contact with the mythologies of more than four thousand people, we provide a framework for understanding the natural stages by which personal myths evolve and for formulating interventions that are attuned to the requirements for successfully completing each stage. We describe each stage and present a case history that illustrates all five of the stages.

First stage: Framing personal concerns and difficulties in terms of deeper mythological conflict

Identifying areas of conflict in the client's underlying mythology is the starting point of our five-stage model. Repetitive dysfunctional behavioral patterns such as involvement in abusive relationships or chronic vocational failures, as well as clinical symptoms such as addictions or hypertension, may provide entry into areas of the person's mythology that need attention. Dream symbols and other productions of the unconscious, such as drawings, sand play, or free association, may also highlight such areas. We attend to our clients' presenting complaints, identify self-defeating behavioral patterns, and remain alert to unconscious symbolism as we help them begin to uncover the mythic proportions of daily life and understand their difficulties as reflections of deeper conflicts in their guiding mythologies. To illustrate the five-stage model, we follow the experience of a thirty-eight-year-old psychotherapist who was receiving training in bringing a mythological perspective to his own clinical practice.

Carl's training included a series of weekly individual counseling sessions

sacrifice. His was a dutiful, passionless love." Carl probed this territory with considerable depth in previous psychotherapy. He went on to examine the other side of the conflict, which

> involved exploring my indiscriminate and unyielding passion for attractive women, always so elusive to analysis but eternally problematic in my relationships. I have tried and tried to understand this attraction in light of the Jungian idea of the anima—that my obsession is really to find the feminine aspect of my own being. It just does not feel that way when I'm confronted with a pretty waitress or bikini-clad bodies on the beach. A guided imagery journey brought me into a very interesting space. I started by focusing on the nature of my feelings when I see a beautiful woman. It was like putting the experience of arousal under a microscope instead of just being mindlessly turned on, eager for action, and by marriage contract, continually frustrated. I realized that these moments of lust are the most full-bodied experiences I encounter with any frequency—a rush of sensation in my genitals and chest radiates out to a tingling throughout my body.
>
> As I shifted my attention from the physical experience to sensing its deeper meaning, I had a powerful image of being dwarfed by a beautiful and sensual goddess, hovering like a genie above me and slightly to my left, with the bottom cone-end of the apparition emanating from the area of my first chakra, attached like a ghostly umbilical cord. Being in her presence was indescribably peaceful and warm. It was as if she could fulfill my innermost longings in a way that was far superior to any satisfaction I could find in the outer world. She told me I could have all I am looking for and more, but to receive it, I must be willing to allow my body to be torn apart. That was, literally and terrifyingly, the bargain she offered. At the same time, however, I intuited that she was beckoning me to embrace the feminine principle, and the first gateway through which I would have to pass was to open myself to the total vulnerability of living fully within my body. This led to image after image of the terrible dangers the world holds. Particularly strong were views of gruesome accidents and torture. I settled finally onto a vision of being an ancient warrior gamely reassuring his terrified family as he goes off to protect the village from savage attackers.
>
> The lines from Ann Mortifee's powerful "Beirut Song" ran through my head, "mothers searching skyward, their infants in their arms. Keep us from harm. Save us from harm!" I came into an awful realization of the vulnerability of the archetypal female, giving birth, rearing children, tending the homefires. I am aligned with a different principle. I quickly translate

danger—physical or emotional—into a mental plan and action. My attention instantly leaves my body and focuses in my mind. It may be a break with reality to leave one's body in the face of danger, but it was suddenly clear that to live fully in the body is to accept the goddess' terrible admonition to me. I have never identified much with ancient warriors, but I was not about to agree to surrender my self into the vulnerable space of just experiencing danger in my body, no matter what rewards this genie-goddess was promising. I said, "No deal," and abruptly found myself roused out of the trance, intuiting that Jung was right: Female images would probably continue to have their elusive enchantment as long as I was unwilling to accept the goddess' bargain. But, if embracing my feminine aspects meant I had to release into that kind of vulnerability, I was not interested.

As this inner story unfolded, Carl began to contact dimensions of his original conflict that he never imagined. Starting with an examination of the bodily sensations that were part of his problematic response to the lure of feminine beauty, his associations brought him to both a mythological image of the feminine principle within him and a dramatic portrayal of his fear of embracing it.

Second stage: Bringing the roots of each side of the conflict into focus

Once the mythic conflict is identified, the second stage involves excavating the foundations of the prevailing myth and the counter-myth that challenges it. Guiding myths become outmoded as the individual matures and life circumstances change. The psyche is continually trying on alternative mythic images—what we refer to as counter-myths—that compensate for the old myth's limitations. Indeed, Jung saw dreams as often producing points of view in counterpoint to the stance of the conscious ego (Hall 1982, 136). This view reflects Jung's belief that the human psyche is a self-regulating system (Singer 1972). Thus, counter-myths highlight possibilities and reveal new ways of being, often supporting underdeveloped aspects of the personality. Their imagery is imaginative and inspiring, but like wish-fulfillment dreams, to which they are psychologically akin, they are framed in the logic of magical thinking and immediate

over four months, participation in a thirty-hour class exploring the mythic foundations of thought and behavior, a three-day vision quest, a role as an assistant leader in a subsequent class, and various home reading, imagery, and journal assignments. The following includes excerpts from both his journal and a transcript of an interview that took place for the purpose of this article after the training was completed. Carl focused on an inner conflict that had plagued him throughout his three-year marriage, which also delayed the marriage for several years prior to that: "On the one side are the needs of my marriage, which involves directing my sexual passion toward my wife, and on the other side are my strong, incessant, and seemingly biological urges toward other women."

Examining the first side of the conflict, Carl traced the mythology that was guiding him regarding loyalty and fidelity back to images of his parent's marriage: "My father's loyalty was certainly unwavering, but somewhere in the bargain he traded his passion to live life 'on the edge' for a smoldering, if rarely uttered, resentment about all he was required, at least in his mind, to

gratification. Unlike the prevailing myth, the counter-myth is untried in the real world. The dilemma created when a counter-myth challenges an outmoded prevailing myth is that the person is caught between two worlds—no longer able to thrive under the guidance of what has been but not yet developing guiding images that give practicality to the new direction being intuited. The task in this stage of the work is bringing these opposing internal forces into consciousness, honoring each, and tracing their roots in the individual's culture, personal history, and psychic depths.

Having reframed his initial conflict as a contest between the urge to embrace the feminine principle within him and his fear of it, Carl was encouraged to maintain in his awareness both of the goddess's beckoning and his cringing response to the terms she offered through a variation of Jung's active imagination technique and attention to his dreams. He found that the goddess embodied a combination of maternal warmth and voluptuous beauty.

> In one active imagination session, the goddess wept and wept in sorrow that she could not persuade me to come down from my rigid mental structures and into my body where I could dance with her and play with her and make love with her. I just sat there in amazement and watched her weep, but eventually I felt myself coming closer to her and embracing her and I felt myself softening as I held her. Another time, she was furious with me. Face red, nostrils flaring, chest puffed, nipples forming hard outlines under her chiffon robe, she screamed at me for remaining so safe and aloof. I was both afraid of her and excited by her passion. I eventually rose to meet her eye to eye and take in what she was saying. I really wanted her approval, but her demands seemed so capricious and irrational. Soon I was screaming back at her and then realizing that by getting me to lose my cool, she was getting just what she wanted of me. Just as I came to this realization, I again inadvertently opened my eyes and brought myself out of the trance.

Exploring the inner forces that were keeping him from cooperating with the goddess, Carl was brought, through age regression, back to experiences of being ridiculed for crying in school and humiliated by his parents for having thrown temper tantrums. He remembered in his body how he learned to fight feelings of fear, anger, and emotional pain by tightening his jaw, controlling his breathing, and focusing on what he could do if not to improve the situation, at least to take his attention away from his feelings. He was encouraged to write a fairy tale to portray this history, and he wrote a story about the primitive warrior he saw in the fantasy in which the goddess first appeared.

> Born, like all children, an innocent, he was effectively and efficiently trained to kill his fears and focus his desires and passions into cunning action. His proficiency with these abilities brought him great success. He was treated with awe and respect by his family and by the other villagers. One day the gods proclaimed that there could be no more fighting among people. Giant volcanos [sic] would erupt all over the world, causing great tidal waves that would wipe out humanity, and this holocaust might be ignited by the swing of a single war ax. He thought these reports were false legends spread by the evil empire of the east, but his countrymen believed them and he was forced to destroy his weapons. Dejected, he could no longer be a warrior, and for the first time in his courage-studded adult life, he felt empty and afraid.

Carl's story allegorically portrays both his own upbringing and the way the old models were losing their viability in an age of nuclear weapons and radically-new rules for living. But, as he was later instructed, this tale is but chapter 1 of a three-part fairy tale. Chapter 2 explored an emerging counter-myth, and in writing it, Carl had the goddess visit the warrior. In his story, the goddess transported the warrior into an enchanted land where men are so fully open to their hearts that all of life is injected with a loving tint that dissolves fear, greed, and anger and makes living a joy. As Carl marveled about the miracle of transformed consciousness that would be needed to cause the world to be so altered, he was told to observe this world carefully for he would soon have to return to his village and bring with him all that he had learned.

Third stage: Conceiving a unifying mythic vision

Once both sides of the mythological conflict have been differentiated, the third stage involves integrating the old myth and the counter-myth into a higher order. Promoting such resolution of psychological conflict is a natural function of the psyche, but actively participating in the process can facilitate better life choices at a time when the person is particularly vulnerable to act out unconscious conflict in self-destructive ways, a more rapid resolution of painful inner discord, a greater sense of personal mastery, and, ultimately, a resolution of the mythological conflict that is based on carefully examined beliefs and values as well as the person's deepest intuitive wisdom. The task in this stage is skillfully mediating and facilitating as the opposing myths push toward a natural synthesis. Having embraced both sides of the conflict, images of integration become more possible. The individual is taught to recognize that facing one's own inconsistencies without a retreat into the old or a flight into the emerging may be as difficult as it is desirable. The objective is to foster a new mythic image that transcends the old myth and the counter-myth, while embodying the most functional aspects of each. This process represents the self-regulatory attempts of the deepest and most numinous part of the psyche, referred to by Jung as the Self, which represents a union of opposites, a supraordinate personality that attempts to grow toward wholeness (i.e.,
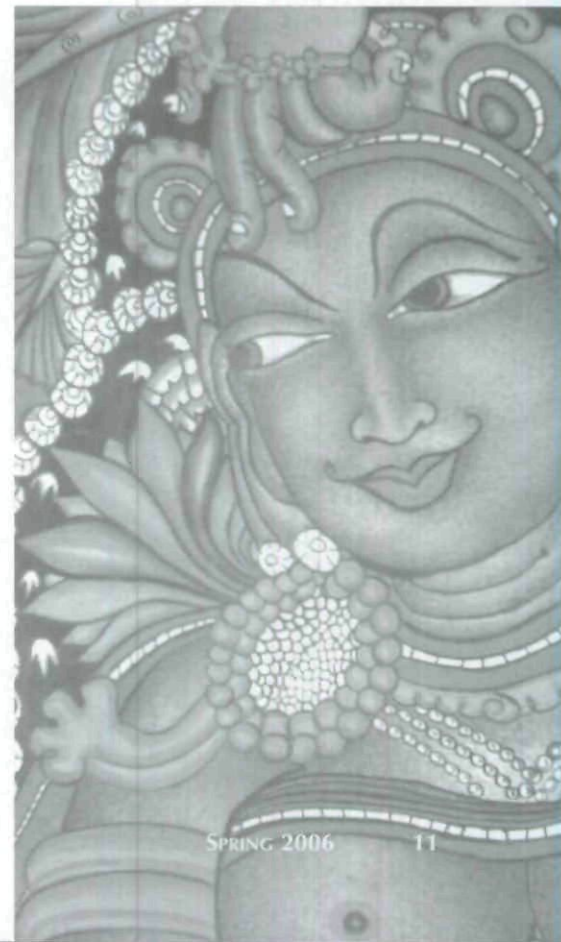
to individuate). Jung (1973) once wrote a friend that one must not linger on the steps of life because the last steps are the loveliest and most precious.

Carl orchestrated a dialogue between his inner warrior and his inner goddess. He physically assumed the posture of each as they carried out, at first a heated debate, and, after several sittings, a discussion of their differences. This excerpt is from the middle part of their deliberations:

> GODDESS: Look at yourself. Look at how stiff and joyless you have become. I could give you new life. I'm soft and juicy; you're hard and dry. But you do not trust me at all, do you?
>
> WARRIOR: Why should I trust you? After all, you are just another part of Carl's mind, just like me. I am not at all certain that you could make me any juicier. And your demand for large pockets of time in which I take my attention off my regular duties to focus on my body and on images of you, all of which would make me feel very vulnerable, is a large ransom for questionable promises of greater happiness.
>
> GODDESS. It's not a ransom. If you will simply slow your pace, tune into your feelings, and keep exploring my image, you will feel juicier. I guarantee it. It will not be as dramatic at first as you would like. And it will probably never be all you are hoping for. But you will feel juicier. Do you have any better offers going than that?

The discussion ended with the warrior reluctantly agreeing to direct his energies in the softer ways that the goddess was inviting. The goddess expressed pleasure in his decision, but skepticism about his ability to wrest his mind away from its traditional ways. The warrior said, "We'll see," and they parted. In another ritual, Carl imagined that the energies of the warrior were on one side of his body and the energies of the goddess on the other. Through a series of processes he was shown how to mingle the energies in his body and then find a new image that incorporated the essential qualities of each:

> Suddenly there was an image of a man and a woman riding together on an open wagon. Two horses were pulling them. It was all very peaceful, a scene from out of the old West. I had a strong sensing that the horses represented my emotions, and there were some situations where they needed to be governed or reigned by the man, the male aspect of my personality, and others where they needed to be gov-

erned according to the rules by which the goddess was suggesting I live.

Fourth stage: Refining the vision into a commitment toward a renewed mythology

In the fourth stage, the person is called on to examine the new mythic vision that was synthesized from the processes described above and to refine it to the point where a commitment to that vision may be maturely entered. While it is necessary to allow the natural dialectic between the old myth and the counter-myth to take its course, a time does come when consciously identifying with a judiciously cultivated mythic image both shapes and hastens the resolution. Challenging the person to formulate an explicit choice at this point exercises an active participation in the evolution of the guiding mythology and leads to an enhanced sense of mastery in that process. A series of personal rituals is introduced in this stage that induce altered states of consciousness for accessing deeper sources of awareness to examine and refashion the newly formed mythic image.

During a vision quest, a three-day solitary wilderness experience in the northern California redwoods, Carl chose as his power object a tree that guarded the entrance to a glen and had "a wisdom I could not fathom." Lying at the trunk of the tree and looking skyward at its immense proportions, Carl carefully attuned himself to hear what the tree had to tell him. He felt that he received in images and intuition an entire rendition of history, reflections from this "ageless giant of the forest" on humanity's evolution and his place in it. Later, in his journal, he wrote about the essence of what the tree conveyed:

> I have silently watched humanity's struggle through the centuries. So much of the paradise I love has been destroyed in your great experiment, your leap from your roots so that you might walk, your leap out of total harmony with the old laws of nature and into the painful situation where you are co-creating the laws at the same time you are living by them.
>
> Even in your brief lifetime, the laws governing the human story have again changed. The warrior, one of the most sophisticated though most terrible forms you have created, cannot protect his loved ones from nuclear bombs. The disciplines

of mind over feelings, action over patience, and suspicion over trust, like the way of the warrior, no longer keep you on a path that will lead to a future for your children.
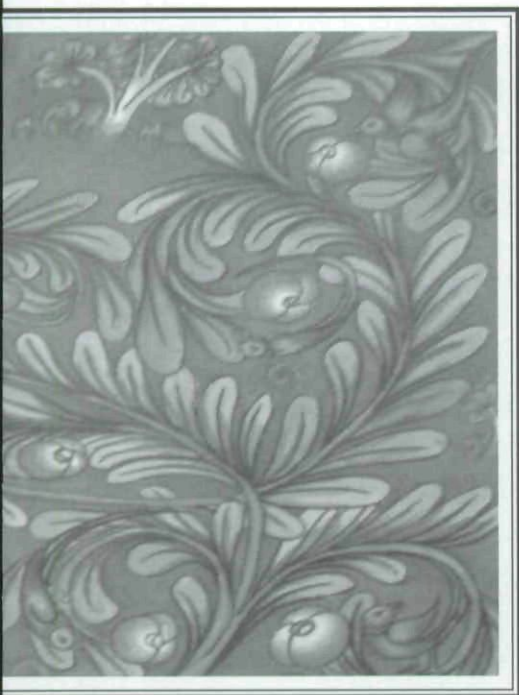
> Another law has changed. You are a man. Your biological objective is to produce offspring. For aeons [sic] of evolution, the best reproductive strategy for the great apes has been for the strongest males to impregnate as many reproductively desirable females as possible—not so for humans. Your technology has given you [an] unbalanced advantage so Earth is overpopulated with your species. The need is not for more humans but for more humane humans. This means humans that come from partnerships of equals, both committed to the needs of the family they are creating and one another. It is no
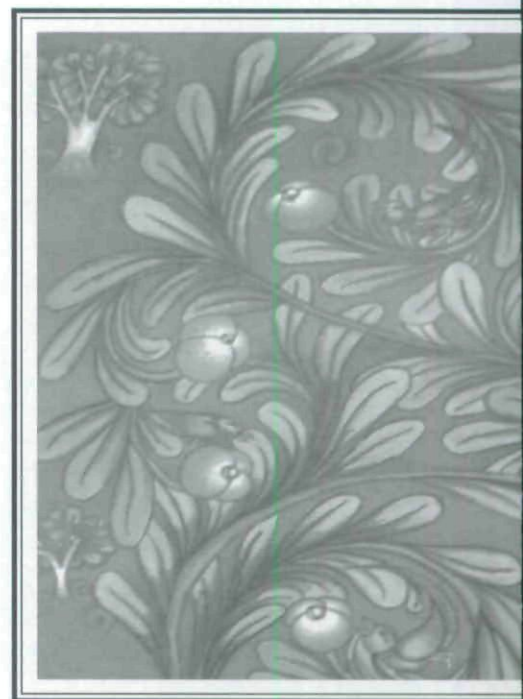
> longer evolutionarily advantageous to be spreading your seed to every reproductively desirable female who would have you, however much you may still be wired for that response. Your new role in co-creation is to direct that response to eroticize a lifelong partnership, where your age old marriage ceremony promising that two shall become one creates a new form of two souls embracing in their fullness. However much your impulses may keep your energies divided from truly engaging this objective, it is the highest objective, and it is up to you to work out the details.

Another ritual Carl found instructive was creating chapter 3 of his fairy tale. The warrior returned to the village. This

chapter follows the motif of the classic hero's journey and chronicles the practical steps the warrior takes to bring back home the insights he gained during his enchanted journey in chapter 2. The warrior directed his finely honed battlefield discipline toward developing the new qualities required of him: patience, trust, and vulnerability. He opened his heart to his wife, and his physical passions were drawn toward her. By watching his warrior "work out the details" in the fairy tale, such as when he rephrased the complaints of an angry merchant instead of killing him, Carl gained con-

crete images that would help him create his own personal rites of passage.

Fifth stage: Weaving the renewed mythology into daily life

To prevent individuation from resulting in ego-centeredness, Jung stressed the importance of interacting with the world. The final stage of the model requires clients to become practical and vigilant monitors of their commitment to achieve a harmony between daily life and the renewed guiding mythology they have been formulating. The threads of the new myth now need to be woven into everyday behaviors, thoughts, and

actions. The essence of our five-stage model is conveyed in an old Hassidic saying that counsels: "We should each carefully observe what way our heart draws us and then choose that way with all our strength." The first four stages are a way of carefully observing which way the heart beckons. By advising people to choose that way with all their strength, the proverb recognizes that the old behavioral patterns, conditioning, and character armoring that were associated with the old myth will tend to persist. Choosing the way one's heart beckons with all one's strength is the fifth stage. Focus is required to anchor even a wisely formulated, inspiring new myth. In this phase, we draw particularly from cognitive and behavioral therapies—using techniques such as behavior rehearsal, visualization, and monitoring of subvocalizations—to help people integrate the new mythology into their lives.

One of the most effective ongoing tools for Carl was a daily ritual. He spent the first few minutes of his daily morning shower closing his eyes, contacting the goddess, and asking her to think through his day with him, showing him where he might approach significant situations in light of her wisdom and teachings. In a technique he discovered during an exercise that helps people use mental aikido, he used autosuggestion to program himself so that whenever he was aroused by the sight of a pretty woman, he used the stimulation to contact his inner goddess. While the bulk of his inner work explored a theme that was tangential to his original concern, this technique completed the circle by directly touching the conflict between his marriage and his response to other women.

People move through this five-stage process at varying rates, and the normal course involves periods of turning back to rework issues from earlier stages of the model even after embarking on later stages. There are a number of ways of introducing this five-stage process into a clinical setting. The clinical practice of one of the authors, for instance, is oriented toward in-depth psychodynamic psychotherapy. Early in the treatment, he introduces clients capable of self-directed inquiry to the self-help workbook that leads them through the five-stage model via more

than thirty exercises, or personal rituals, which are carried out at home. This task informs but does not govern the weekly therapy sessions—the content is not dictated by the five-stage model—yet this self-study frequently catalyzes feelings and insights that become topics in therapy. Simply having the client become familiar with the program frames therapy within a mythological context. The workbook is completed over a few months, but the personal symbolism and constructs that emerge provide a context for ongoing work and understanding long after the therapy has been completed.

The five-stage model offers a framework for therapist and client to understand and track the basic tasks that must be accomplished for mindfully transforming an area of one's mythology. It is possible through this model to reliably teach people to: (1) identify outdated or otherwise dysfunctional personal myths that operate largely outside their awareness, (2) revise these guiding myths based on a balanced integration of deep intuitive sources and an informed cognitive analysis, and (3) bring this renewed mythology to bear on their daily lives. In addition, by coming to understand their own internal mythic processes, individuals become more adept at understanding the mythology of their culture and able to participate skillfully in its evolution.

Appraisal and conclusion

The psychological exemplar of modernity is Freudian psychoanalysis with its claim, "Where id was, there ego shall be." But this modern worldview ignores or undervalues what postmodernists consider the *other*. Specifically, the other includes the unconscious, the feminine, racial and oppressed minorities, members of other cultures, and members of other species in the natural environment. In addition, postmodern writers attempt to close the gap between the investigator and the other, as they attempt to close other gaps endemic to modernity (e.g., the gap between subject and object, mind and body, observable reality and transcendental reality, and the scientific observer and the phenomena being observed). In their research, postmodern scientists attempt to incorporate intuition and feeling into intellectual knowing, understand how

their attitudes and research procedures become an integral part of the study itself, and to consider the ways in which the identity of a person who serves as a research participant has been socially constructed (Krippner 1988; Lather 1990). Through Jung's dialogue with marginalized aspects of Western culture (e.g., the feminine, the occult, fantasy, and myth) and his rejection of Western cultural hegemony, he anticipated some perspectives of postmodernism. Because certain aspects of Jung's work foreshadowed postmodernism, it is one reason that it still reaches new audiences and is used in fresh, contemporary contexts.

Using the term *imagoes* (i.e., mythic images), Dan McAdams's research also falls into this category. He postulated that, beginning in late adolescence, "each of us constructs a self-defining narrative—a life story that promises to . . . provide our lives with a sense of inner sameness and continuity" (1985, 127). In one study, McAdams asked twenty men and thirty women to take the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and, by answering questions in a semistructured interview, to tell their life stories. From twenty-five of these accounts, McAdams pieced together the imagoes that represented each person, finding that the most useful taxonomy was one grounded in the mythology of ancient Greece.

> Each of the major deities . . . personified a distinctive set of personality traits, which were repeatedly manifested in the myths and legends in which his or her behavior can be observed . . . We chose twelve major gods and goddesses as our models for imagoes. Taken together, the group embodies most of the idealized and personified self-images, which were observed in the initial twenty-five cases. (187)

Our model, which was an attempt to integrate various psychoanalytic, cognitive, behavioral, and transpersonal trends in contemporary clinical practice, landed squarely within both Jungian and postmodern borders. In Jungian thought, polarity is the result of the differentiation required in the process of ego-development—the determination of what is "I" and what is "not I." However, the process of individuation requires a transcendence of polarity (Pruitt 1992, 51–52). In postmodern thought, many pairs of opposites and dualities can be deconstructed. The opposites interact and may even be inter-

dependent (Levin 1991). The dialectic that underlies the design of the personal rituals used in our approach leads to a creative synthesis or transcendence that can be appreciated from both the Jungian and postmodern perspectives.

Jung's preoccupation with myth also has helped to inspire the refinement of personal mythology as a concept open to disciplined inquiry. Ralph Sperry (1981), for instance, worked with three male clients diagnosed as manifesting schizophreniform disorders. Using individual therapy described as "Jungian-existential," Sperry found that his clients' imagery took the form of such myths of renewal as sacral kingships, shamanic initiations, alchemical transformation, and the Greek stories of Dionysus and Orestes. The resulting mythic stories that emerged during psy-

chotherapy indicated that the clients were reforming their basic mythological assumptions by developing a more productive and integrative existence.

Phillip Mengel (1992) adapted McAdams's (1985) Life Story Questionnaire for individual interviews with forty research participants who had engaged in either group shamanistic drumming circles or the use (six times or more) of MDMA (3, 4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine), a drug that supposedly enhances empathic experience and self-development. Mengel used a personal mythology framework to explain the catalytic role both groups of respondents claimed their activities played in enhancing personal development.

Michael Pieracci (1990) asked twenty people who spent time in psychotherapy to write narratives describing their expe-

riences. These accounts yielded more than one hundred instances of archetypal themes. Pieracci used the term *narrative myth* to refer to stories that explained one of these archetypes, finding that most focus on a quest or journey, wisdom, acceptance, nurturance, and intimacy. For James Hillman (1972), the basic mythic psychotherapeutic theme is the story of Psyche and Eros, but only two of Pieracci's respondents mentioned this theme ("a soul in need of love" and "a love in search of psychic understanding" [102]). A more common theme in the psychotherapeutic narratives Pieracci analyzed was "the hero's journey," a metaphor of the psychotherapeutic process often portrayed in Jung's writings.

Pieracci used the term *ontic myth* to identify the basic beliefs contained in people's discourses about their reality, i.e., how one understands what is and should be in the world. For example, if one believes, "Men are strong," this belief will impact the way he or she engages in life activities, as would the belief, "Men must be strong." According to Pieracci, both are ontic myths because they reflect and express a belief about the world, even though neither expresses itself as a narrative as does, "Men must be strong because God made them that way." Pieracci then constructed a "mythic matrix" with personal and cultural myths as the poles of one axis and narrative and ontic myths as the poles of the other.

Daryl Paulson (1992), conducting intensive interviews with ten Vietnam veterans, reported that reframing their combat experiences in terms of time-dependent personal myths helped them achieve a constructive integration of these events. Paulson also reported that for many veterans, the stage in which the mythic protagonist returns to the community never occurred. He commented that this unfulfilled phase of the hero's journey myth holds significant implications, if they are to overcome the traumatic psychological wounds of their experiences in Vietnam.

Bruce Carpenter and Stanley Krippner (1990) explored the dreams of a Balinese artist who used them as a source of inspiration for his creative work, including his masks of Hindu deities and woodcarvings of mythological creatures. Three of these

dreams also helped resolve personal conflicts, and the interplay of cultural and personal myths could be identified in this dream series. For instance, an encounter with his deceased father crossing a bamboo bridge in one dream illustrated the Balinese emphasis on balance, but this cultural message was delivered in the personalized form of a revered family member. This study also supports Jung's (1959) admonition that dreams be studied as a series; many patterns and themes become evident when examining several dreams that could be missed if only a single dream were considered.

The utility of the personal mythology concept in stimulating original research, with its resulting provocative implications for psychotherapy, altered states of consciousness, and dream interpretation, supports those writers who tout narrative psychotherapy as a cardinal example of postmodern therapy (O'Hara and Anderson 1992). Narrative psychotherapy allows no expert to superimpose his or her own mythology on a client. Instead, the therapist and client embark on a joint quest, one in which the therapist mindfully brings his or her training, experience, and mythology to each session but uses them as points of departure for the encounter rather than as a template into which each client's mythology must fit. By paving the way for a mythically informed psychotherapy, the ideas of Carl Gustav Jung have been remarkably resilient and flexible, especially in the hands of therapists who see them as compasses for clients who are finding their way toward greater self-realization, rather than as road maps by which each client must find his or her predetermined destination.

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In Memoriam

Douglas J. Kirkpatrick

The board of the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation is saddened to announce the death of Douglas J. Kirkpatrick, executive director and general counsel of Heldref Publications.

Inspired by the example of his father, political scientist and publisher Evron M. Kirkpatrick, Douglas was long committed to the support of scholarly publishing. As a young man, he began at Heldref as an intern to learn all aspects of the company, and he carried his enthusiasm for international law and intellectual property issues into his studies at Georgetown University. During his eleven years as executive director, he was a champion of fair copyright agreements for academic authors and a steadfast friend to learned periodicals experiencing financial and other difficulties.