"Lorn and Loan and Oansome": An Exploration of Myth and the Tools to Elicit Mythic Potential

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Contents

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> *"Thats why I finely come to writing all this down. Thinking on what the idear of us myt be. Thinking on that thing whats in us lorn and loan and oansome."* (Hoban, 1980, p.7)

I am thinking on what is in me that is lorn and loan and oansome, the inner thoughts and experiences that would bring colour and meaning to my everyday mundane life if I could find a context in which to befriend and socialise them. I am captivated, and at the same time a little disturbed, by the idear of what I myt be if I could bring my dreaming into world welcoming and celebrating what has been isolated and hidden in me.

My project title indicates where I am going with a sometimes personal and profound experience that is difficult to explain with the words of theory, science, history or even fiction. Memorable, meaningful and truly authentic, are my words to describe my otherwise indescribable first encounter with Process Work and my subsequent study of myth. I prefer "*...lorn and loan and oansome*", words that author Russell Hoban puts into the vocabulary of his fictional character, Riddley Walker.

I am the protagonist of the journey I relate in this paper. Like a storybook Dorothy or Alice, I find myself unintentionally transported from my everyday life and on the threshold of a foreign existence. Once familiar paradigms for sense-making no-longer seem purposeful and the journey evolves into an individual's quest for the restoration of meaning. This is a personal journey and Joseph Campbell described how, in today's world, all meaning is in the individual:

> *'... there the meaning is absolutely unconscious. One does not know toward what one moves. One does not know by what one is propelled. The lines of communication between the conscious and the unconscious zones of the human psyche have all been cut, and we have been split in two."* (1949, p. 388)

In this paper I narrate an odyssey, an existential search, to discover meaning. My yellow brick road follows a path of heart across boundaries, real and imagined, across countries, at times beyond language. Meaning is indeed in the individual and the quest is an inner one, as I found myself forging a path between paradigms and levels of personal awareness, and wading into the realm of myth.

While myth seems the perfect vehicle for this journey in the context of my corporate being myth is fictional and dreaming is an impediment to progress. In my field of study, Process Work, dreaming is a great strength and myth a rich source of information. The lines of communication between the two zones are tenuous. Since encountering Process Work, and then embarking on a formal academic program to study it, I have felt at times as though I inhabit two disparate worlds. In one world what counts is primarily what is quantifiable and verifiable, in the other significance is attached to what is experienced even if that experience is through the unconscious. The two worlds have both an external manifestation and an internal one. Every day the dichotomy is expressed through career and Process Work study, and within me the struggle has felt like trying to bring an unlived potential into my on-mysterious identity.

Myth is the concept that restores communication, allowing me to bring my dreaming into my everyday world. The mythical, in this essay, is the journey and process as well as the goal or outcome. Through myth I am attempting to integrate many experiences - social, natural, business and academic - into a coherent whole.

Writing about my journey is a compelling task as there are times when I have felt grabbed by something, caught up and pulled in. It is not easy to explain the sensation except perhaps to say that it is like being summoned by a force that is both outside of my being and yet deeply me. I am labelling the experience a 'mythic call' as I don't know another term for it. When it has resonated within me the imperative to respond has been neither rational nor emotional, but both, and I find that our minds are not entirely logical and nor our emotions entirely irrational. In the same way a mythic call is familiar and compelling and yet unknown and mysterious. I cannot define a mythic call in words better than those of Riddley Walker, so that is where I'm starting, with the words of a fictional character:

"Wel I cant say for cern no more if I had any of them things in my mynd befor she tol
me but ever since then it seams like they all ways ben there. Seams like I ben all ways
thinking on that thing what thinks us but dont think like us. Our woal life is a idear we
dint think of nor we don't know what it is...." (Hoban, 1980, p. 7)

Part of my attraction to myth and my reason for exploring it in this paper is a personal belief
in the potency of myth and mythic narrative to label, if not explain, a realm of experience that
would otherwise be almost impossible to articulate. In my experience myth holds an inherent
dreaming element that seeks to explain our glimpses into a profound realm beyond everyday
language.

The first part of this paper is a creative narrative. I relate from a personal viewpoint,
describing my encounter with Process Work and subsequent discovery of myth. Mindell says
that:

"There have been many ways of approaching the deepest levels of consciousness that
gives rise to everyday reality." (2001, p. 36)

Myth is one of the ways of bringing dreaming into the everyday and Campbell outlines some
of the lure I have felt towards myth:

"They have served whole societies, furthermore, as the mainstays of thought and
life.... for they actually touch and bring into play the vital energies of the whole
human psyche. They link the unconscious to the fields of practical action." (1949,
p.256 - 257)

I am exploring myth, attempting to define it in order to understand its significance to cultures
of the past and the relevance of myth today, to frame the everyday in terms of the organising
patterns that arise from our deepest levels. My approach is creative, mythically framing and
interpreting my experience using Joseph Campbell's hero's journey. As Campbell states:

"...we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path. And where we had thought to
find an abomination, we shall find a god; where we had thought to slay another, we

shall slay ourselves; where we had thought to travel outward, we shall come to the centre of our own existence; where we had thought to be alone, we shall be all with the world." (1949, p.25)

Using a mythic view of my own journey has allowed me to find meaning in my ordinary world, and to make sense of the way I perceived events that unfolded. The mythic journey, or path, is a source of understanding. Like Dorothy, whose adventures were undertaken in order to find a way home, my own adventures are taking me somewhere. I don't call Kansas home, and I am not focused on a particular destination, but I am discovering a mythic direction through illuminating meaningful elements of the interacting realities of my differing levels of consciousness and then making them at home in my every day life. The journey rather than a destination is my source of understanding.

It's quite a journey too, through myth, narrative, metaphor, and symbolism I hope to share a little of my own learned inner wisdom. In this paper I narrate a couple of personal experiences of a mythic call to provide the context and setting for my subsequent exploration of myth in cultural, personal, process work and organisational settings. The limits of the work are inherent in my description of it, as much of the narrative constitutes a personal myth for its author. It is my sincere hope that this document will show how one Process-oriented inner life connects with the world, *"that's why I finely come to writing all this down"*.

Although I am not a psychologist through my study of Process Work which has its roots in Jungian psychology and eastern philosophies I discovered the exciting and enchanting realm of myth. As I strive to define and explain just what it is that I discovered I hope, in at least some small way, to achieve what Campbell says is possible for a psychologist, working with mythic patterns, to do:

> *"Mythology in other words, is psychology misread as biography, history, and cosmology. The modern psychologist can translate it back to its proper denotations and thus rescue for the contemporary world a rich and eloquent document of the profoundest depths of human character."* (1949, p. 256)

In addressing the task I look at myth in Process Work with the objective of 'unfolding' myth. In Process Work unfolding opens communication between our everyday identities and our dreaming experiences. Unfolding is a technique to delve deeper into unknown experiences with the aim of revealing new information. This paper is centred on the unfolding of myth: the term the concept and the tools provided through Process Work. Through an exploration of myth and its inherent mysteries I hope to contribute to the study of Process Work.

I have been straddling the unknown and the familiar for so long that I am no longer certain of what is unknown and what is familiar (*...then it seams like they all ways ben there*). I don't want a reader, be they a corporate Alice or a Process Work Dorothy, to be excluded from understanding, through lack of explanation or definition on my part. As an author concerned about meaning I define and explain terms and concepts, for myself as much as for any Dorothy or Alice who wanders into this paper. By describing what is both unknown and familiar to me in order to make sense of my recent journey and experience, I hope also to make sense to the reader.

It is an unpossible task, bear with me as not only this paper but "*my woal life is an idear I dint think of nor I don't know what it is.*"

Defining Myth

On Saturday September 16 2006 Caroline Spark hosted a Research Symposium at the Process Work Institute in Portland for students and faculty members to present their project work and plans. As a student in the Institutes' Masters of Arts in Conflict Facilitation and Organisational Change (known as MACF), I was one of the presenters and was to present to my peers and the members of faculty an outline of my planned project exploring the concept of myth in Process Work and the potential to apply the knowledge in organisations to unlock meaning in that setting for individuals and teams.

As I prepared to present at the symposium, I reflected on the path that had bought me to this forum and how unlikely my colleagues at home might regard the topic of myth as an academic pursuit. Portland, Oregon, is a world away from my home base in Melbourne,

Australia. Studying Process Work, an inspired paradigm to facilitate individual and collective change, is also a world away from my conventional corporate career in management consulting. It was a little like inhabiting two disparate worlds, the modality of each domain seemed so different to the other, the language and the way of being in each world dissimilar and notionally incompatible with the other. At least that is how it seemed to me. I had come to regard my field of study and my career as so separate that I now thought of the study of Process Work, including attendance at two residencies a year in Portland, as my secret life, segregated from my everyday life and career pursuits. I found support for corralling one from the other in the attitudes of my fellow students and my work colleagues, the proponents of each existence regarding the foreign 'other' with some disdain. I was hopeful of integrating these seemingly incompatible paradigms and was contemplating ways to at least introduce one to the other.

For a management consultant direction is determined by a contract. Effort is focused on outcome, a goal must be attained and procedure is defined and followed. Managing the scope of a task in order to deliver to an agreed budget and timeframe means change is resisted. That is to say we try to manage change and minimise its effect on the task, we aim for an environment of 'no surprises' and, structure is paramount. For a Process Worker, direction is not pre-determined but discovered, a path is discerned as the way unfolds before you. Focus is on the journey rather than a destination or particular outcome. Change in all its forms, including conflict and surprises are welcomed for the information they bring to us. By aligning yourself with the nature of things that happen, other things are worked out. Creativity in approach is paramount.
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Each domain is not entirely unknown to the other. There are some individuals that broach both, like Joseph Jaworski who describes the value of an open, more creative approach to finding direction:

> *"If individuals and organisations operate from the generative orientations, from possibility rather than resignation, we can create the future into which we are living, as opposed to merely reacting to it when we get there… One of the most important roles we can play individually and collectively is to create an opening or to "listen" to the implicate order unfolding and then to create dreams, visions, and stories that*

we sense at our centre want to happen…using scenarios in this way can be an
extraordinarily powerful process – helping people to sense and actualise emerging
new realities." (1996, p.182)

My reason for focusing my project efforts on myth came from somewhere deep down in my centre. I hoped myth would be the bridge to integrating the two paradigms I inhabited, linking them into a single world.

The symposium provided a supportive forum in which to air my project plans. The audience received a creative student as opposed to a conservative consultant. I described my aim as wanting to deepen my understanding of how an organisation draws on myth and myth-making which, back then, I described as deep-seated traditional forms of story-telling and sense-making. I hoped to use story and other forms of narrative in the business world to untangle or make sense of the relationships with one another as individuals, teams or informal groups, as well using myth as a lens through which to interpret the past and architect the future.

In the question time after my presentation, I was asked about my definition of myth, and how I would recognise a myth from another form of narrative. It was an intriguing question to pose as I was unfamiliar with how to describe myth in a definitional way and I did not have clarity around what might qualify for that description. I replied that I would not be pedantic about defining myth and that I would work with stories, anecdotes and other narrative forms, and then look for, and draw out, the mythic elements for my project. I said that I would not be strictly classifying something as myth and something else as a story or fable or other narrative form. I also started to think about myth and how loosely the term is used. What exactly was it I was planning to study?

The term 'myth' begs definition or, at least, I am led to believe that my readers would like a definition of myth, as employed in this essay. Although I am still reluctant to be pedantic, I understand that definition of the topic is an important introduction to this work, and I find myself mired in the task of defining myth. The more I have looked for definition, the more elusive and intangible it has proven to be. The meaning attributed to the term 'myth' is often not outlined by the authors who espouse its value and advocate its application in

contemporary settings. I could similarly, and perhaps incorrectly, assume my reader understands myth as I employ the term.

Definition may also be required as a defence of my study and to address the detractors of myth in regard to its potential application in organisations. Corporate colleagues have looked at me askance when I have told them I am writing about myth. Part of their incredulity, apart from my inability to really define it, is their regard of myth as fictional and therefore of little value to hard-nosed organisations steeped in business reality. It is true that myth, by its nature, is mythical. Myth is accepted as largely untrue and not aligned with reality. Myths often describe the wondrous super-human feats of gods and heroes in other-worldly settings; they do not read as factual accounts of events.

There is an argument often formed around myth as truth or falsehood, as being real or fabricated and this provides a starting point for pulling together a definition. It is widely accepted that history and reality are aligned, and that myth and reality are not. However history is not an irrefutable record of fact, and any account of an event is affected by the historian's world view, politics and perspective. Despite the fact that there may be differing versions of historic accounts of any event or era, and that any one account may be questioned or held in dispute, history as our narrative of the past is still largely accepted as true. Myth is at times dismissed as more fanciful, or worse - the term myth is employed to describe something that is the antithesis of fact.

For me, as an advocate of the importance of myth, it is a point that goes to the validity of myth. For myth to be meaningful and to generate the power and interest that it seems to, must it contain truth? For myth to be relevant to individuals and organisations, shouldn't it be based in reality? I believe that myth must contain elements of truth in order to reveal and guide in a purposeful way. Eliade provides some clarity pointing out that in archaic societies, myths were an expression of the absolute truth:

> "... whilst current language confuses myth with fable, a man of the traditional societies sees it as the only valid revelation of reality." (1957, p. 24)

I am satisfied then that myth is an expression of truth, if not literally true. Archaic myth was expressed in the forms known to early society, a time before science. Myth explained the inexplicable, the unverifiable, using creative forms and images. Subsequently the word myth has come to mean something fictional, imaginary and unverifiable, and this is balanced by myth in religious contexts, where sacred stories can still be revered as true, despite their historic veracity being disputed by science. I conclude that profound truth is found in the meaning and message of myth, if not in literal interpretation.

Even accepting myth as an expression of truth, and without further arguing or defending its veracity, it still remains difficult to define. Heller captures the dilemma from her viewpoint:

> *"Modern myth resists precise definition because it has exploded into virtually all aspects of cultural communication."* (2006, p.8)

Myth is a contemporary, as well as an historic, concept. It seems insufficient to say, as Eliade and Heller tend to do, that once upon a time myth had a particular meaning or interpretation and today it is different. In a realm of mythical dreaming, the ancient and the modern might be transposed and I like to imagine reading Eliade say '...a man of *modern* societies sees myth as the only valid revelation of reality' and Heller explaining how '...*archaic* myth resists precise definition as it permeated all aspects of cultural communication.' All of it is possible.

The Everyday Oxford dictionary provides a concise definition of myth that is typical of, and aligned with, other dictionary records:

> *Myth (pr. mith) n. 1. a traditional story containing ideas or beliefs about ancient times or about natural events (such as the four seasons). 2. such stories collectively 3. an imaginary person or thing. 4. an idea that forms part of the beliefs of group or class but is not founded on fact.* (1981, p. 464)

To my mind, this and other similar dictionaries provide an incomplete definition. Myth originates from the Greek word *mythos* meaning a traditional story, which could explain why

dictionaries tend to capture myth as only traditional. In her discourse titled "A Short History of Myth", Armstrong ponders the loss of myth in the modern world:

> *"Our modern alienation from myth is unprecedented. In the pre-modern world mythology was indispensable. It not only helped people to make sense of their lives but also revealed regions of the human mind that would have otherwise remained inaccessible. It was an early form of psychology."* (2005, p. 10 -11)

It is of little wonder that we are alienated from the power of mythology when myth is widely regarded as little more than the fabricated stories of an ancient period. There persists an indifference to myth originating in the present day, although it is acknowledged in some arenas, like urban myths, where folklore and fiction intersect, to explain mysterious happenings. Myth is being introduced into organisational and institutional settings by some practitioners to illustrate the ideals on which business is founded. There is also wide adoption of the concept of personal myth as purposeful and guiding in respect to individual life direction. In each context part of myth's function is explaining and sense-making.

I suspect that maybe myth is best defined by its function, a part of which is sense-making according to Campbell (2004, p. 3-10), who provides a more comprehensive description of mythic function and defines four functions of cultural myth:

- Mystical - evoking a sense of grateful awe for the mystery of existence
- Cosmological – maintain and elicit awe giving a picture of the universe that allows sense-making through the reconciliation of your existence to your expectation of meaning
- Sociological – to validate and maintain a certain social order
- Psychological – teaching us how to live and develop in our world

I will take Campbell's use of the word 'cultural' to span cultures throughout all time, rather than culture of a current or previous era, and for my purposes, define as mythical that which achieves one or many of these functions. Importantly, mythology, with its origins in the

spiritual and mystical, stands timeless in a world where religion is increasingly eschewed, while at the same time spirituality, or at least a deeper purpose, is increasingly sought.

In terms of definition, it is not appropriate to say that myth in all circumstances necessarily meets all of the described functions. Nor do I believe that was Campbell's intent. The mythical, however, fulfils one or more of the functions, and I note that the non-mythical may also fulfil more than one of the described functions. However function alone is does not sufficiently define myth.

Whatever the form of the unlikely players in myth and the mystical realms they inhabit, or the dream like qualities of an individual's encounter with the mythic, at a deep or profound level I believe myths are founded in reality. To fulfil any of the described functions, certain veracity must be inherent in the tale.

Part of my attraction to myth and my reason for exploring it in this paper, is a personal belief in the potency of myth and mythic narrative to label, if not explain, a realm of experience that would otherwise be almost impossible to articulate. In my experience myth holds an inherent dreaming element that seeks to explain our glimpses of profound knowledge sourced in a realm beyond language.

To try and summarise: it is true that within our cultural history, myth resides as the stories and dreams that emerge in compelling narrative form to explain the inexplicable. It is also true that myth is experienced at a deep level and lived in the everyday. I go as far as to build on Armstrong's sentiment and state that in our modern world, as she said of pre-modern times, mythology is indispensable in its provision of meaning. Myth provides absolute truth if not literal truth.

My definition although not as concise as I would like it to be, summarises my own encounter with myth:

Myth is a timeless and essential expression of being in the world. The mythical provides profound meaning and the discovery of meaning at a profound psychological level is both sense-making and mythical.

Levels of Experience

"Now all on a sudden I wernt sure how it wer. I fealt like when youre sleapy on look out and trying to stay awake and suddn you catch yourself nodding you wunner if youve droppit off and mist some thing." (Hoban, 1980, p.70)

Now that I define myth with its meaning or significance being at a profound psychological level, I want to describe the term *profound psychological level* further. At least my own understanding and experience of what a profound level of psychological experience might be.

Myth, as reflected in my attempt to define it, is elusive and intangible, I believe it is embedded in our lives, or conversely, our lives are embedded in myth. Mythical aspects of our lives are glimpsed in the familiar abiding images, dreams, and callings at play at the edges of the lesser known territories of our conscious everyday lives. While saying we are embedded in myth, I mean that mythical images, while abiding and persistent, are those of which we may have only a subtle awareness. I stated earlier that "myth is founded in reality" and I want to acknowledge reality as subjective. I believe there is much beyond my everyday reality or consciousness that is not entirely known to me, and nor is it entirely unknown or unfamiliar. It resonates to acknowledge that there are different levels, or realms, of experience.

Mindell has extended the boundaries of our perception by defining three interacting levels of consciousness or experience. He summarises (2002, p. 76) the levels as:

- Everyday reality or consensus reality: the world people identify as being the real one
- Dream land: reality but not consensual, comprising signals and roles
- Essence or common ground: common universal principles and experience

A practical example of levels of experience comes from my work as a corporate trainer. I can work hard with a class to try and implant some new learning into the minds of the participants. What we know, and what we can discover or learn, is of importance to me in the trainer role. I know that there are things we know and things we don't know. We don't know

what we don't know and at the same time my experience with learners has informed me that we know more than we realise we know.

From time to time, in a training room, a class participant will acknowledge that a "light has gone on" for them, that something that has been explained or demonstrated that has illuminated something for them. It is a gratifying experience for both the trainer and the class participant. As a trainer I am not sure of where the 'light' goes on, and what type of learning experience that really is. I frame learning as occurring at different levels, the head, the heart, and deep down somewhere in the centre. There are things we know in our heads, logical learning that makes sense and which we accept as true. Then there is a deeper learning that happens when facts and knowledge are experienced or learned in our hearts. Something known as a fact becomes an acknowledged truth for an individual when it is more deeply acknowledged by the head and transferred to a heart level. A 'light goes on' and a piece of information becomes real knowledge. The 'light' symbolises a spontaneous recognition of knowledge as opposed to something learned through an analytical process. The third level is deeper again, profound learning at the centre of one's being. I describe it as the realisation of having learned something that you already knew. It is a deep and gratifying level of learning that Rosch (as cited in Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski & Flowers, 2004, p.99) describes as occurring when a number of learning attributes come together from a "deep heart source" or what "...Taoism calls 'the Source'. " According to Rosch's theory:

> *"It's what is 'at the heart of the heart of the heart.' When we're connected to that source, things become more and more integrated as a path – with intention, body and mind coming together rather than being all over the place."*

A profound psychological level, if it has a physiological presence, might sit at the heart of our hearts. Wherever the location, a profound learning experience is underscored by making meaning. Shore explains the experience of making meaning:

> *"To experience something as meaningful is to experience it as a kind of remembering. When something becomes meaningful for us, it is perceived as a kind of repetition or near-repetition of something already known. Something alien becomes familiar. This happens by a process of reframing. Something gains an expanded context in relation*

to which it is knowable. Rather than being an isolated experience, a meaningful event becomes more than itself. It becomes an instance of something more general, a distinct kind of experience, something like (though not always exactly like) what we have already been through." (2003, p. 16-17)

A light went on for me, meaning was made, at the first Process Work seminar I attended, when Dr. Max Schupbach described Mindell's three levels of experience, which go beyond my learning analogy and, at the same time, resonated with my classroom experiences. The terminology had evolved a little from the definitions I cited earlier in this section, Max used the terms:

- Consensus reality (CR)
- Non-consensus reality (NCR)
- Sentient reality

To picture life and experience on three levels made immediate sense. Consensus reality was familiar, and is concisely described by Diamond and Jones:

"CR describes the realm of experience that is generally consented to or agreed upon as real.... It is a collective understanding about the nature of reality..." (2002, p. 27)

In my objective CR life, I was building a career and following a path that was deemed by my contemporaries to be successful, if somewhat conventional. I was also awakened to another deep, familiar, and yet largely unexplored, more subjective reality, a level of experience Max described as non-consensus reality (NCR), which Mindell had originally defined as Dreamland. While I was drawn to perceive and view my life from this previously unrealised NCR perspective, it was a viewpoint largely marginalised by my colleagues and peers. Diamond and Jones note that:

"...while CR experiences can be discussed and described objectively, NCR experiences are those that people do not normally permit themselves to feel, talk about, or notice." (2002, p.21)

NCR is the realm of dreams, emotions and our less intentional experiences.

NCR, although alluring, was a foreign territory that, for the most part, my friends and I did not venture in to. After that first workshop encounter NCR remained largely unrecognised and unappreciated by me. I did not have the CR consent of my friends, nor the language or knowledge to explore it further. I had not developed the type of awareness needed to appreciate a deeper level of spontaneous, or heart, experiences that flicker just beyond CR.

Max outlined the third, and deeper level of experience in his workshop, as sentient or essence level reality, the source of our dreaming and NCR experiences. While marginalising NCR, I did admit some deep satisfaction and sense of connection with a sentient reality, a place of deeper awareness or common ground. The concept of sentient reality didn't need discussion or validation with my friends. Mindell describes the sentient level of consciousness as consisting of:

> *"basic energetic tendencies, deep, common universal principles and experiences...*
> *that all human beings in this universe may likely share at one time or another."*
> (2002, p.76)

I understood it as a place at the core of our individual experiences a deep and shared universal level where everything is pared back to an essential presence, Taoism's 'source'.

Myth manifests in dreams and patterns of NCR experiences and emerges from the sentient level. Mythical experiences, or those experiences at the *profound psychological level* of my definition, would be sited between NCR and the sentient level, a rich source of 'secret' knowledge which, when explored, provides context, meaning and coherence to that we might not otherwise comprehend.

Awareness of the levels is a necessary precursor to exploring a mythic journey. Jung describes a juncture in his life where he embarked upon an exploration of unconscious processes he felt were ordering his life, akin to knowledge of deeper levels of experience:

> *"So I suspected myth had a meaning which I was sure to miss if I lived outside it in*
> *the haze of my own speculations. I was driven to ask myself in all seriousness: "What*

is the myth you are living?' I found no answer to this question and had to admit that I
was not living a myth, but rather an uncertain cloud of theoretical possibilities which
I was beginning to regard with increasing distrust. I did not know that I was living a
myth and even if I had known it, I would not have known what sort of myth was
ordering my life without my knowledge. So in the most natural way, I took it upon
myself to get to know "my" myth and I regarded this as my task of tasks..." (1956, p.
xxiv)

My own similar experience was of a vague disquieting consciousness of a myth I was living
which was, at the same time, unknown and familiar. The previously described paradox of the
unknown and familiar is how I have experienced what I now frame as mythical fragments or
glimpses of patterns in my life. I had a growing but only flickering awareness of some
threads of significance woven into my past and present that gave meaning to a faintly
sketched future, and I was drawn to discover this realm of experience and become more
familiar with it. Deep down if something, is ordering my life without my knowledge, then
gaining some knowledge of that 'something' would be akin to learning something I already
knew but did not know that I knew. From within my own cloud of theoretical possibilities, I
was called to discover more of myself.

A Call to Adventure

"Everybody looking at me agen. I cud stil hear them words in my ears; 'took by 1of
ours.' Lorna looking at me as wel. That wer when I begun to feal like the dog wernt
no where near the end of it. I begun to feal like people wer looking to me for some
thing mor." (Hoban 1980, p.25)

The agency for honing a greater awareness of myself and my world beyond self has been the
study of Process Work. Process Work is a school of thinking, being, and practice that
emerged from Jungian principles in the early seventies through the work and study of its
founder, Arnold Mindell. He describes it as:

> *"...a multicultural, multileveled awareness practice. Process work is an evolving, transdisciplinary approach supporting individuals, relationships and organizations to discover themselves. PW focuses on awareness to track "real" and "imaginary" psychological and physical processes that illuminate and possibly resolve inner, relationship, team, and world issues."* (http://www.aamindell.net/process-work-history.htm)

This is a holistic description of Process Work and there are many ways to describe and define it, as it is multi-faceted awareness training. It explores all parts and dimensions of experience, and is particularly interested in the parts that might be less known to us, the things that disturb or surprise us, including the mythical patterns we live by.

I have been surprised and disturbed by Process Work since the first workshop I attended, and throughout my subsequent study of this practice. I discovered Process Work when attending a six day workshop, An Encounter Diversity, conducted by Dr. Max Schupbach in Australia in 2003. More importantly, it was a foray into an unconventional and exceptional framework and an introduction to its method and application. It was a deeply moving experience and one that was difficult to frame from my corporate, and perhaps more orthodox, perspective. The experience was almost impossible to articulate, and thankfully, the impact which was so personal and profound didn't necessarily need words. I acknowledge there are some things that can't be described in words, particularly experiences at the deeper sentient level, and yet I sought a description so I could share my foray with others.

For the reader already versed in Process Work, I want to make explicit why explaining Process Work is a necessary mythic element of my own story (myth). Joseph Campbell, often regarded as the preeminent scholar of mythology, published his book "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" in 1949. It is perhaps his seminal piece, in which he traces a hero's journey in myths from cultures throughout the world and constructs an archetypal hero's journey, a commanding view of the hero's journey and its elements:

> *"...the first stage of the mythological journey – which we have designated the "call to adventure" – signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his*

spiritual centre of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknow."
(1949, p. 58)

My own call to adventure, although apparent only in retrospect, occurred at my first Process Work forum in Queensland in 2003. Process Work seeks empowerment through awareness, by noticing and following yourself and unfolding the things that happen in your life. For me Process Work was *a zone unknown*. I glimpsed personal empowerment through Max's kaleidoscope; it was a colourful, alluring perspective from which to envision the future.

The workshop harnessed the simple skills of listening, talking and reflecting, and doing those with empathy for our individual differences and discovering shared experiences. For me, it was about discovering a potential role in collective life, through interacting with, and appreciating the views and experiences, of the group, through explorative dialogue and being open to all points of view. Integral to opening to other points of view is using reflective inner-work to develop a more open and inclusive attitude. After Max's workshop my head was swimming, and I felt the learning was largely in the heart, much deeper and more meaningful than facts that reside in one's head. Although I didn't quite know it then, I had begun a journey led by a fascination with myth and the mythical processes.

Refusing the Call

"So sad I felt then. Sad and empy with a cryin in me. I felt like that Other Voyce
Owl of the Worl musve lissent the woal worl away and every thing gone. Every thing
emtyd out of the worl and out of me." (Hoban, 1980, p. 158)

New information had arisen from the workshop and I enjoyed a sense of enlightenment from
my introduction to a Process Work perspective of being. While Process Work is not a
spiritual discipline, necessarily, I was awakened to a fundamental concern for greater
meaning and purpose in life.

I returned home carrying to workshop experience with me, and although it was an experience
largely beyond description, it was also a taste of potent medicine for all that ails us in our
various relationships.

In my life, an existence I regarded as almost perfect, remedial intervention was not required,
and as weeks passed, Process Work, which had completely beguiled me at first, seemed to
beckon less. I found some support for this new knowledge in some, less conventional,
management texts but not in my day to day corporate life, where NCR experiences were
largely marginalised. A new reality did not fully emerge back then and I continued living a
(more or less) happy CR life and holding disturbances from less conscious realms at bay.
With a busy workload, family commitments and adventurous holiday plans, mine was a full
life lived at an unrelenting pace. It was my own version of creating a future. In retrospect I
did little more than react to the demands of the everyday life I had created.

Campbell explains this stage in the journey:

"often in actual life, and not infrequently in the myths and popular tales we encounter
the dull case of the call unanswered; for it is always possible to turn the ear to other
interests. Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in
boredom, hard work or 'culture,' the subject loses the power of significant affirmative

> *action and becomes a victim to be saved. His flowering world becomes a wasteland of dry stones and his life feels meaningless..."* (1949, p. 59)

Some months after that first workshop my world was unexpectedly devastated by a personal tragedy that left me estranged from the beautiful life I had lived and the future I anticipated. My life did indeed feel meaningless. Support was difficult to find, and while I leant on friends and sought psychological counselling, I struggled to find a context for what had happened, and to reconstruct an image of a future worth pursuing. The counselling experience seemed only to go through the motions of working toward recovery, I remained desolate, but with enough resilience to continue with the day to day task of CR living. I was consumed by grief and remorse haunted by the memory of a recurring dream which at intervals over the previous five years had predicted the very tragedy which had occurred. I felt guilty, lost in grieving and drowning in tears. There were no means to bring NCR and dreaming into CR. A whole segment of my being was marginalised and unsupported. My experience was mostly unwelcome. It disturbed everyday normality, it was something unexpected, not understood, embedded within my being and yet largely unacknowledged by others on a CR level.

After a period of mourning, there were two typical reactions from my close band of supporters, one where the event was ignored and conversation and life were expected to continue without acknowledging my loss, and the other, curiously, which drew out the stories of the troubles of my friends. There is an old adage that misery loves company and in my misery I learned much of the normally unspoken woes of others. I was dealing with my own distress and horror at what had happened and also the deep distress of others. Some experiences which disturb our everyday lives are shared at a deeply human level, while displaced and marginalised by society at large. Others like mine, are difficult to integrate and I found my presence being regarded as disturbing due to my experience. It felt impossible to integrate a nightmarish experience into the normal. I struggled to maintain a foothold and place in the world, even with the knowledge that others experienced similar or even worse situations.

Campbell points out that call may be answered after an initial refusal:

> *"Some of the victims remain spellbound forever (at least, so we are told),but others are destined to be saved...Not all who hesitate are lost...So it is sometimes the predicament following the obstinate refusal of call proves to be the occasion of a providential revelation of some unsuspected principle of release. "* (1949, p.63- 64)

I continued my journey not realising that my experience was to become the catalyst for a providential revelation.

Finding a Mentor

> *"He said 'Oh dear o dear you don't know nothing do you.' Then he began to tel me."*
> (Hoban,1980, p. 80)

Seeking solace and support, I sought out Max Schupbach. Warmly embraced by the loving invitation extended by his partner and co-facilitator, Dr Ellen Schupbach, I travelled to Yachats on the untamed Oregon Coast to attend my second Process Work seminar. The experience was life affirming and consoling. I was once again enthralled by Process Work, after my initial intoxication a year earlier; I was again intrigued by its potency. My interest, which had been in hibernation, was awakened from dormancy, and I immediately looked for further opportunities to study and continue to be informed about Process Work.

I was in the right place, and fortunate, to learn of a new program, the Master of Arts in Conflict Facilitation and Organisational Change (known as MACF) being offered by the Process Work Institute (PWI) in Portland, Oregon - the institute where Max, himself, was a member of faculty. Enrolments were closed, as the program was due to start in a week. I was grabbed by the prospect of studying Process Work, and this program, particularly, spoke to my corporate world, as well as my forlorn state of being.

Pulled in with an urge, a physical pang I sensed from deep within, I acted with an almost unseemly haste, wanting to learn how to infuse corporate life with Process Work and to work on resolving my inner relationship trauma. I was able to convince Dr Julie Diamond, the MACF Academic Officer of my urgency and the importance of this course of study. I am

grateful for her support in duly processing my application and accepting me into the program, at the very last minute.

It was a week later, after delaying my return home, that I, as a strictly corporate and CR woman, stranded amid the debris of her personal life, made my first foray into the formal study of Process Work and its alluring NCR possibilities. This adventure into Process Work, a paradigm still somewhat mysterious to me, and until then largely removed from my conventional life, had grabbed me.

From the moment I first heard the MACF course title I was drawn to it, called, as if it were something foreordained. The course title spoke to my corporate background and the course description:

 "…understanding that emotions and personal experience are intrinsic to conflict and change, the program blends academic study and research with experiential skills, personal growth and awareness…." (MACF handbook p6)

Spoke to my aspirations and personal ambition. MACF linked emerging wisdom and techniques to an organisational context. I had come to the Oregon coast to try and discover something about my personal journey and it was there for the discovery.

I anticipated rediscovering meaning through the study of Process Work. As McAdams says:

> *"… each of us must try to comprehend the specific nature of our unique life course and personal journey if we are to know who we are and how our own life may be made most meaningful."* (1993, p.12)

A member of faculty, Dr. Joe Goodbread, hosted our first lecture. He said that "...the basis of this course is how to bring dreaming into the CR world…" By studying facilitation skills and becoming conflict facilitators, our task was to inform parties in conflict about possibilities and connections beyond CR frameworks to achieve a resolution, at least temporary to conflicts. Bringing dreaming into the CR world was our quest as students, and it perfectly described my own objectives. I hoped to integrate my marginalised experiences with the

everyday, and achieve a resolution to my own conflicted state of being. I aspired to personal growth through integration of my displaced parts, hoping it would facilitate and emotional recovery, allowing me to regain a meaningful place in the world.

What of the hero and her hero's journey? Campbell outlines the next stage of the hero's quest, that of finding a mentor:

> *"...for those who have not refused the call, the first encounter of the hero-journey is with a protective figure ...who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass."* (1949, p.69)

> *"Having responded to his own call, and continuing to follow courageously as the consequences unfold the hero finds all the forces of the unconscious at his side."* (1949, p. 72)

In my journey the mentor has been a role filled by various figures, in a manner consistent with Mindell's description of a role as:

> *"...a cultural rank, position or viewpoint that depends on time and place. Roles and timespirits change rapidly because they are a function of the moment and locality. Roles in groups are not fixed, but fluid. They are filled by different individuals and parties over time, keeping the roles in a constant state of flux"* (1995, p. 42)

As I have related in my story, Max Schupbach and Julie Diamond have been important guides and teachers; both have filled the important role of supernatural aid (Campbells description) and mentor (my description). The support provided by Julie and Max has been supernatural, ongoing, and unconditional. The role has at times been filled by other members of faculty from PWI. I am indebted to Norio Hiromizu who held my hand when I most needed support. He encouraged the development of an awareness and appreciation of dreaming; chiding me to notice things beyond what is said or what is heard and modelling that same awareness. At times the amulets against dragon forces have also been provided by my dear friend Barbara Burkhardt and fellow traveller Penny Watson. Together we formed a

study peer group within the MACF program. Other members of the MACF cohort have stepped into the role as needed, and the MACF program itself has become a supernatural aid: mentors, guardians, and teachers all.

Crossing the Threshold

> *"My head begun to feal like it wer widening like circles on water I dint know if it wud ever stop I dint know wher the end of it wud be. The stranger it took me the mor i fealt at hoam with it. The more I fealt like Iwd be long where ever it was widening me to."* (Hoban, 1980, p. 120-121)

So that was Portland, and I returned to Melbourne. Bringing dreaming into my CR world seemed an impossible quest when I contemplated it, as dreaming, along with other NCR experiences, is not an appreciated realm within the business world. Campbell sums up the challenge:

> *"...the adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky..."* (1949, p. 82)

There were two significant issues, or threshold guardians, as I perceived them, at the bounds of the threshold that I needed to encounter in order to progress.

The first issue, or guardian, was that business tends to be analytical and scientific in approach, focusing on CR facts, figures and measurable results. The business world is an impersonal world, as is evidenced by the body of organisational theory centred on the quantifiable science of organisational development, the rules, best practice and the task of calibrating, measuring, reporting and delivering exceptional results. The hardnosed business reality is overlaid with the more intuitive art of organisational development, reading the situation, and climate, along with an awareness of individual capabilities, styles, and limitations. Business leaders, managers and employees are well informed on to how compete and succeed in organisations and are vigilant for a way to gain an edge through the efficient deployment of resources. Individuals form teams, departments and divisions and are

collectively known as human resources, one of many types of resources to be managed and driven to deliver better and better results. It is this impersonal world that I felt undervalued what I was learning and valued about Process Work, in particular not appreciating the feeling quality behind what we do, and the encouragement to develop any given human resource's whole self. Even the idea of noticing and following a process and being open to new experiences was foreign to my corporate ideals of maintaining a goal orientation and trying to ensure predictability in the work environment. Business wants to harness the known and Process Work is interested in discovering and welcoming the unknown.

The second issue at the threshold of my awaiting journey was that my particular and growing interest from my Process Work studies was myth. In business a myth is almost the opposite of what I was awakening to, which made it difficult to discuss and explore with my colleagues. In business, myth is something misleading or false and commonly understood as a fallacy. For example, Harvard Business Review on-line archives (http://www.hbr.org) provided 156 matches when searched for the keyword 'myth'. None of them were about myth as I have described it, as an essential expression of being in the world, and the articles used the term myth to highlight a misconception. A sample of titles from the list illustrate my point:

- Six Dangerous Myths About Pay
- Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All
- Exploding the Self-Service Myth

Myth in the Harvard Business Review archives and in the world of business beyond that resource is something representing the opposite to reality. Rather than revealing any profound knowledge or insight to mysteries myth, on a surface level, was not something to be taken seriously.

Discussions with colleagues confirmed the belief that myth is regarded as fabricated and untrue and therefore not applicable or relevant to everyday corporate life. What troubled me more than the definitional problems of the central theme of my proposed work were the gaping looks of incredulity as I outlined my project plans. Troubling, as I did not want to argue and defend something of such significance to me. Rather than debate, I wanted to

inform, inspire and enthuse my colleagues but I did not yet have the background information or language to express or translate my ideas.

One colleague indirectly suggested I was a little weird for presenting ideas outside of the accepted norm of our work environment. Of course you can be worse than weird in the business world, but weird does not lend itself to credibility or acceptance. I craved acceptance for my emerging beliefs and while I wanted to believe in myself - whatever myself was - I was also tentative about bringing in the unfamiliar to my conventional and familiar world.

That same colleague related a story about an acronym she had learned from a consulting team she had worked with, Hanafin and Kitson Associates. Hanafin and Kitson are a US-based team who train executives to develop their relationship and strategic selling skills. I understand, from my friend, and forgive me for not having firsthand knowledge of this, that Hanafin and Kitson coined the acronym 'PWI' to frame what an executive might experience as a little foreign and outside of typical corporate dealings. PWI somewhere ticking inside us is the Perceived Weirdness Indicator. Hanafin and Kitson's warning was that, when working with emotional or relational material, a key to success was to not rate too high on the PWI of an audience in order to maintain that audience's focus and interest.

I related to the concept imagining we all have a PWI somewhere within us, noting that it would be calibrated differently in each of us. This is not a particularly scientific concept nor is it a physiological one, but it is a useful concept that is readily understood. If things get a little outside of our familiar frames of reference, our PWI will move up the scale of what is acceptable and at some point tick into the too weird zone. We can, then, readily dismiss a challenging idea or concept as 'too weird', breathe a sigh of relief and return to more familiar territory.

You may have experienced your PWI ticking with some alarm when you encounter something unorthodox and outside of accepted mainstream thinking. The topic might be appreciated with a laugh, and the conversation then steered to safer, more objective, topics.

Taking night time dreaming too seriously can score high on a PWI. If I relate a dream to a friend it is likely to be with consternation for the machinations of my unconscious states. The friend will laugh, unsurprised, and remind me that dreams by their nature are weird and then we'll both laugh, dismiss the secondary, the unknown, the 'too weird' and move on.

Anticipating that what is coming might register significantly on the perceived weirdness indicator, and framing it as such, allows the listener to maintain objectivity for a little longer and occasionally not dismiss unfamiliar experiences. This is an insufficient opening to allow for the transfer of my subjective and imaginative experiences into the rational corporate world. I don't want to start conversations with the disclaimer "This might sound a little weird but..."

While organisational life and Process Work are not mutually exclusive, I experienced a disconnection between the two. I was troubled by how to open communication between my everyday business identity and my dreaming experiences, without seeming weird. I hoped paradigms were not incompatible although they appeared to be.

I found it amusing to note that PWI is also the acronym used by the Process Work Institute where I study. The coincidence encouraged me. I also found encouragement in early reading for this project. Levi Strauss (1979) explains our quantitative approaches are starting to integrate the qualitative as well, and that each explains and lends validity to the other. He does not put scientific and more mythic theories on an equal footing and he does not use one to diminish the other but seeks to integrate them, suggesting that by closing the gap between primitive thinking and the civilised mind "...then perhaps we will reach more wisdom, let us say, than we think we are capable of..." (1979,p.24). In a similar vein was Mindell's description of Deep Democracy:

> *"..our sense that the world is here to help us become our entire selves, and that we are here to help the world become whole."* (1992, p.13)

Both authors (and I) seek to find a point beyond the differences of divergent thinking, integrating and accepting diverse perspectives.

There was no denying the importance of the quest and, like the journeying hero, I was realising the enormity of my task and considering how to make real progress. While not feeling particularly heroic I was well supported while stepping into the unexplored, unlike Joseph Campbell's "usual person":

> *"The usual person is more than content, he is even proud, to remain within the indicated bounds, and popular belief gives him every reason to fear so much as the first step into the unexplored."* (1949, p.78)

I resolved to believe in myself and my work, whatever that is, or whatever it wants to be. Arnold Mindell might have smiled at that simple resolution. I was learning something central to his philosophy of Process Work   - "Being your total self in the world is an important and difficult task." (1985, p. 140). My journey continued.

The Belly of the Whale: A Mytherious Mythical Awakening

> *"I cud feal all them bees humming in me but they wer humming the emptiness what I cudnt hol...Yet Id knowit the shape of the nite Id gone in to the nite in the day time."* (Hoban,1980, p. 160)

 When author Isabelle Allende spoke at a conference in 2007, she opened her presentation by explaining that: "...there is a Jewish saying that I love: What is truer than truth? Answer: a story...' (http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/204)

Lakoff and Johnson agree "Truth is a matter of fitting words into the world." (1980, p.196) Rouse explains the truth inherent in stories:

> *"A tale much embellished but truthful even so for truth is not simply what happened but how we felt about when it was happening, and how we feel about it now."* (cited in McAdams, 1993, p.29)

Grant further explains:

> *"Storytelling is a poetic activity. The storyteller transforms an event into an experience that can then be shared between the teller and the listener. In other words telling a story involves the transformation of everyday events into meaningful events."* (2005, p.110)

Emboldened by the thought that myth-makers and their sense-making tales are primarily storytellers, and knowing that in essence we are our stories, I turn to the art of story-telling to relate a curious experience which is my truth.

I was on an airplane travelling from Hobart home to Melbourne after completing a work assignment. My few days in Hobart had been busy and demanding, as assignments away from home tend to be. It wasn't until the plane trip that there was the first opportunity in days to dip into something related to my secret and, back then, still marginalised, non-corporate life. I opened a book that I had stowed, out of public gaze, in the bottom of my briefcase. The book, Joseph Campbell's ""Pathways to Bliss: Mythology and Personal Transformation was with me thanks to my study at the PW Institute and it was a book I suspected would rattle many PW Indicators. As I opened the cover, I was ready to embrace Campbell's world and as equally prepared to dismiss it, my internal PWI was primed for reaction. I was open enough to read Campbell, his exploration of myth and mythology and wary enough to conceal the cover and title from my fellow passengers.

I flicked through the book looking for a passage of sufficient interest to while away the flight time. I was immediately drawn in by Campbell's writing and read enraptured, with a dawning reverence for his work on the psychology of myth and its application in personal transformation.

It was 21 May 2006, flight QF1012 and I was sitting in 4C. The boarding pass has been pressed between the pages of the book, treasured and preserved, endowed with significant memories of the trip that awakened the enthusiasm and passion now being described. Today I gaze at the boarding pass with reverence, still somewhat mystified at what overcame me on

that short flight. That is the power of myth as I experienced it. It is a concept that captivates the imagination. It grabbed me and pulled me in. I was left yearning to know more.

Back in seat 4C, I sat and read and wept with the recognition of something I had struggled with. Every page, stanza and word seemed to validate the part of me that had been dreaming. I read on, discovering something potent and it instructed me about my path, not with directions but with illumination. I was following 'something' and Joseph Campbell knew something of this path.

Campbell (2004, p. 108) says that we must each find our own path. I had been looking for mine, and feeling overwhelmed by the seeming impossibility of discovering it amid the detritus of my personal life. "… the idea is to find your own pathway to bliss" (Campbell 2004, p. xxvi). It is a daunting and yet compelling task, I was gripped by the feeling "… of being seized by something, so that you are pulled out" (2004, p. 89) even as I was seized and pulled while reading on a plane.

> *"You might ask yourself the question: if I were confronted with a situation of total disaster, if everything I loved and thought I lived for were devastated, what would I live for? If I were to come home and find my family murdered, my house burned up, or my career wiped out by some disaster or another, what would sustain me? We read about these thing every day and we think, well that only happens to other people. But what if it happened to me? What would lead me to know that I could go on living and not just crack up and quit?*
>
> *...Now what do you have in your life that would play this role for you? What is the great thing for which you would sacrifice your life? What makes you do what you do; what is the call of your life to you – do you know it? The old traditions provided this mythic support for people; it held whole cultures and worlds together. Every great civilisation has grown out of a mythic base.*
>
> *In our day, however, there is great confusion. We're thrown back on ourselves and we have to find that thing which, in truth, works for us as individuals. Now how does one do this?" (2004, p. 88)*

Affected by the dreaming potential in these words I was moved to tears. I experienced permission to stand clear of the world and just be. Something whelled up, a flood of both loss and promise and a calm sense of wellbeing ensued with a dawning exhilaration of being and becoming. I had been thrown back on myself and I was discovering support in the world.

Everything I had loved and lived for had been devastated in March 2004. Something that happens to someone else happened to me. I had gone on afterwards but blind and dull, stoic rather than inspired. One friend told me that in the same situation she would have run around the street naked wearing only her desperate grief. Such a public display was not quite my style nor perhaps appropriate for the situation. It was more of a resignation that had carried me, a resignation to my lot.

Others, looking at my struggle to recover after the devastation, saw an inspirational resilience. It was an observation that was flattering but largely untrue. It was a dull acceptance, rather than resilience, that allowed me to see each next day inevitably dawn, waking, rising and plodding through mechanically. It seemed the only option. Now,suddenly, from seat 4C, another option was unfolding. I was awakening to a quest and something was taking over and pulling me out. Maybe a passenger or two glanced my way observed my tears and felt an unnecessary pity for an imagined grief. These were new tears, however, of wonderment at the potential of the unknown forces at play in the cosmos.

Again Campbell articulated it perfectly:

> '... *that awakening of awe, that awakening of zeal, is the beginning, and, curiously enough, that's what pulls people together...*' (2004, p. 91)

Now curiously, I felt a little inspired to run around the streets naked. Thankfully I was restrained by a seatbelt 30,000 feet above street level. Powerful unknown forces were at play in my mind.

 Consider the potent symbolism apparent in my story. Eliade (1957, p. 99 -110) discusses the symbolism of ascension and flight. He describes how, mythically, flight expresses a break with everyday experience and signifies an associated freedom. My insight was an unusual

break with everyday experience and occurred while flying, albeit in a plane, above the world, and Eliade says that "flight signifies intelligence, the understanding of secret things and metaphysical truths" (p.105). My flight was a CR one, on board QF1012, and an NCR one, awakening to the capacity and potential of myth, and on a dreaming level, a significant step on the life path I had been always been walking.

Returned safely to the ground I stood dry eyed and composed at the baggage carousel, smiling contently to myself, appreciating secret things and starting to wonder about what I should do next.

What did Campbell do as he awakened to his bliss?

> *"What did I do? I read I followed the path from one book to another, from one thinker to another. I followed my bliss, though I didn't know that was what I was doing..."* (2004, p. 121)

Thankfully it is a short trip from the airport arrivals area to www.amazon.com. A substantial order for books on myth was placed, and rambling, exuberant emails were penned to friends. Something was awakening - a potential - and I was a little incoherent with the mysterious possibilities of this path. There was a touch of delirium in my actions. I had ordered a library of texts on myth and I am sure my friends, the recipients of the email about my discovery, thought I had lost, rather than found, something. If they understood that something was unravelling, they also appreciated that this was a good thing. My dilemma was resolving. I was finding an approach that might allow the invisible NCR elements that exist in my inner world to emerge and face scrutiny.

To ground the experience in process work theory, I turn to Diamond and Jones:

> *"...when people speak about sentient experience, their descriptions often sound vague and incomplete. They naturally tend to describe their experiences poetically."*(2004, p.106)

An inarticulate, rather than poetic, excitement was welling up from my secret life and reaching out to my corporate life from a newly apparent common ground.

In the adventure of the hero, my experience aligned with the last stage of the departure which Campbell describes as the belly of the whale:

> *"...the idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero instead of conquering or conciliating the power of the threshold is swallowed into the unknown...instead of passing outward beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward... "* (1949, p.90-91)

My major project, this paper, as a deliverable for the MACF program, was incubating. Finally after a couple of false starts to identify a research topic, the topic found me. Exploring myth, the inner stories we live by presented a deeply democratic way to review my life and the two paths that had seemed disparate until now. I was seized by the idea - my secret life was stealing into CR and I was going to explore linking each dimension of the same existence more strongly to the other.

Through Joseph Campbell's writing on myth, I discovered something with enough depth and potential to allow me to use it to span both existences. It became apparent that there was an avenue for bringing dreaming into my CR world by starting, not in one place or the other but, from somewhere more essential again. This was an inner experience of deep democracy.

So far I have framed my own story around the stages of the departure phase of the archetypal hero's journey. Campbell summarises:

> *"A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure to bestow boons on his fellow man."* (1949, p.30)

From there, I hope to bring my boon back into the business world, attempting to bestow and share the riches I gained by exploring myth and perhaps encouraging others to discover something of their own mythic selves. Lakoff and Johnson collude "Science is of no use to us when it comes to the most important things in our lives." (1980, p.189) and :

> *"...any really deep understanding of why we do what we do, feel what we feel, change as we change and even what we believe takes us beyond ourselves."* (1980, p. 232).

My journey continues in this study of myth.

Myth

Myth is a term that is loosely used. Understanding and defining myth has been important to me: I have become immersed in and occasionally overwhelmed by an extensive body reading material.

For me my attraction to the topic has been the sense-making function myth provides. In trying to make sense of myth I am going to describe it from four precincts:

- Traditional mythology
- Personal myth
- Organisational myth
- Myth in Process Work

The described domains overlap and converge from an engrossing body of work.

Traditional Myth

Myth is generally regarded as a traditional legend to which significance is attached by society. Funk and Wagnells provide a definition of myth as:

> *"...a story presented as having actually occurred in a previous age, explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a people - their god's, heroes, cultural traits and religious beliefs."* (1984, p.778)

Traditional myth is woven into our cultural heritage as explanatory stories retold and passed to ensuing generations. It is an ancient form of storytelling, mysterious in its origins and ritualised, bearing essential truths that humanity is still informed by today.

Cultural myth complements our historic and scientific knowledge of the ancient world. Science and logic can be employed to disprove the content of mythical stories but not their intent. They are historically enduring, expressing ancient sentiment and thoughts. Armstrong (2005, p. 3) documents five important aspects of myth from its origins:

1. it is nearly always based in death experiences
2. it is usually inseparable from ritual
3. myth is about the unknown
4. it put us into the right position, spiritually and psychologically, for action
5. it is a perennial philosophy that reminds, by participating in the divine, that we fulfil our potential

Armstrong also notes that mythology is essentially, and importantly, about human experience, "It helped people find their place in the world and their true orientation." (2005, p.6) It is the function of myth, beyond its content, that speaks to the world today. Scoles, Phelan and Kellogg concur:

> *"...because mythic narrative is the expression in story form of deep seated human concerns, fears, and aspirations, the plots of mythic tales are a storehouse of narrative correlatives – keys to the human psyche in story form- guaranteed to reach an audience and move them deeply. Though rationalistic attacks on myth as falsehood tend to invalidate it historically, they are powerless against its psychological potency."* (2006, p. 220)

Whatever debates continue about historic veracity, there is no debate that myth has endured and flourished throughout time and across cultures. There is timelessness about the symbols, images, and stories that recur in diverse settings, and the significant patterns that can be discerned. Essential themes are played out and elemental meaning is endowed at the deepest level.

Levi Strauss discerns patterns and parallels in meaning across continents and says:

> *"Mythical stories are, or seem, arbitrary meaningless, absurd, yet nevertheless they seem to appear all over the world."* (1979, p.11)

Jung also gave voice to the enduring mysterious origins of myth saying "myth is what is believed by everyone everywhere" (1956, p. xxiv), or least he says that is what others would say if asked. Both Levi-Strauss and Jung imply myth emerges from an essential sentient level of existence, more inherited than created, and both writers support a deep significance drawn from myth, as legends that continue to be lived today. As an aside, I want to note that the Levi-Strauss statement encapsulates a characteristic that makes something recognisably mythical in Process Work when translated to a personal level. In Process Work, occurrences that are seemingly arbitrary and disturbing, yet nevertheless appear and reappear in our lives can be realised as mythical when a pattern, or an organising principle, can be discerned.

Traditional myth was a means to understand our world and our place in it, permeating all cultures and enduring in form and significance. Bowles cites Jung and Kerenyi as emphasising:

> *"...that cultural and mythological similarities occur not as a result of society or diffusion, but due to the fact that human beings posses not only physical characteristics in common but psychological ones as well."* (1989, p. 407)

The abiding presence of myth is attributed to the role it played for ancient societies, mysterious and sense-making, validating and informing. As Armstrong noted myth was important to put us into the right position for action, beckoning us to fulfil our potential, and enduring in its appeal to our common humanity. Today the form of myth is a little different,

less ritualised by a society and more often taken up by an individual. Nonetheless, the role or function of the mythic today is much the same as it was for older cultures.

Personal Myth

Today myth endures, providing meaning for the human experience, but in a more personal context. It is a creative way to give shape to our quests for personal meaning. Eliade describes myth at an individual, level:

> *"… it makes itself felt in the dreams, the fantasies and the longings of the modern man: and an abundant psychological literature has now accustomed us to rediscoveries of the big and little mythologies in the unconscious and half-conscious activity of every individual." (*1957, p. 27)

Heller notes that myth is used to derive personal meaning from experience as we seek to link the individual with the cultural as a way to validate individual experience:

> *"The narrative now serves the ego, rather than the ego serving the narrative. What was once in living myth free from interference ("we do what our sacred Ancestors did"), although, to be sure, not directed specifically towards the individual is now to be sculpted and monitored as each individual consciously carves out his or her niche of meaning."* (2006, p. 71-72)

She suggests that "personal myth may be little more than ego driven fantasy doomed to fail in a modern world..." (2006, p. 111). Personal myth is a popular term and a concept much debated as to its relevance to traditional mythology. I prefer the term creative mythology borrowed from Joseph Campbell and occurring when:

> *"...an individual has an experience of his own – of order of horror, beauty, or even mere exhilaration – which he seeks to communicate through signs: and if his realisation has been of a certain depth and import, his communication will have the value and force of living myth..."* (1968, p.4)

Modern creative application of myth to the personal does not seem doomed to fail; to me it is of importance. After all Joseph Campbell states that:

> *"the fourth and most vital, most critical function of mythology then, is to foster the centering and unfolding of the individual in integrity, in accord with d) himself (the microcosm), c) his culture (the mesocosm), b) the universe (the macrocosm), and a) that awesome ultimate mystery which is both beyond and within himself and all things"* (1949, p. 6)

The psychological function of mythology is perhaps more important in the modern world than it was in the ancient one. Maybe today there is less about the world that has not been explained by science and perhaps there is more of ourselves that we seek knowledge of through the mythical. There is a view that personal myth has a compensatory role in a world increasingly estranged from religion. Religion does fill all of the functions of myth, and more. Myth in its origins was to express the sacred. If today myth fills a compensatory function, its power is not diluted by that role. The fourth function of myth is one facet and while 'most vital' and 'most critical', and perhaps most relevant to the modern world, it is not the only function prevalent today, and it is not operating in isolation of the other functions.

Myth as it persists is commonly focused on the psychological function, personal and guiding or directional, helping to find an individual path. Hollis explains;

> *"Myth ...refers to those affectively charged images (imagos) which serve to activate the psyche and to channel the libido in service to some value...When one serves an imago consonant with the desires of the soul, then one feels a sense of harmony and ready energy flow. When one serves an imago inimical to the soul, then one suffers, consciously or unconsciously."* (2001, p. 44-45)

Personal, or creative, myth arises from the unconscious. Our task in seeking existential meaning is to make sense of our being through aligning our conscious life choices with the summons of the unconscious. Harmony is experienced when one gives "assent...to what one is summoned to do by the Self." (Hollis, 2001, p. 46)

Centering of the individual without delivery on the promises of the other functions of myth may not constitute something mythic per se. My own experience centred on the cosmological function providing a sense of awe while allowing me to start to reconcile my expectation of meaning with my existence in this world. I define my experience as mythical because it was multifaceted, extraordinary and relieving. This is exactly the experience encapsulated in finding one's own myth, being freed from the ambivalence of the mundane as Hollis describes:

> *"When something is of us, is for us, it sets of a tuning fork inside us. It resounds because it has always been there archetypally. The resonance within us cannot be willed, it happens. No amount of willing it will make it happen. But resonance is the surest guide to finding our own right path...Resonance is the deep resounding of our truth, when we find it or it finds us. "* (2001, p. 61)

Some degree of creativity or awareness is required to connect with the mythic plane that pervades our lives, rather like placing pieces into a jigsaw puzzle. Sentient experiences that provide meaning when creating our lives may not be obvious when they are experienced; a greater meaning is endowed through subsequent reflection and inner work.

Houston summarises the potency of personal myth and why we are drawn to be allied with myth:

> *"I think it is built into our very being. Myth is not a no thing, an insubstantial conceptual will-o'-the-wisp. It is coded into our cells and waters the seas of the unconscious. It dwells in our little finger and plays along the spine as well as the spirit. It grants us access to the DNA of the human psyche, the source patterns originating in the ground of our being. It gives us the key to our personal and historical existence."* (1996, p. 94)

Kaye encapsulates the nature of myth, in a simpler form, saying that:

"Myth can do what our tendency to think in linear ways cannot do and puts us in touch with alternative ways of examining our world." (1996, p. 55)

His words allude to the influence and promise of myth in application to the personal, and beyond that, in other settings. When searching for the keys to existence that Houston referred to, myth is a way to give form to something vivifying and non-linear that arises from within, guiding, purposeful and sense-making.

McAdams defines personal myth, in an accessible way as:

"...a special kind of story that each of naturally constructs to bring together the different parts of ourselves and our lives into a purposeful and convincing whole." (1993, p.12)

It is problematic that the mythic sits, often untapped, below the conscious without rational structure or words to bring it into the everyday, as elusive as it is captivating. It is also reassuring that myth is regarded as being more about meaning than facts, the veracity being most important to the mythmaker herself. Shore agrees: "They provide many of the general models humans use to interpret the ongoing events of their lives..." (2003, p. 17)

 I have sought to understand myth on a personal level for its sense-making promise. I have felt that through myth I could align my own being with potential, even without words to describe it succinctly, and become familiar with a mythic identity, being, and path. Through all of that I seek resonance, wanting to experience the deep resounding of my own truth.

I mentioned Rosch's theory and his description of the source, something "at the heart of the heart." Hoban describes something similar in the world of his character Riddely Walker, the '*hart of the wud'* and then defines wud:

"Wud: Means wood as in forest; also 'would' intention, volition or desire. The hart of the wud is where Eusa saw the stag who was the hart of the wud. The heart of the would is also the essence of one's wanting, the heart of one's deepest desire." (1980, p.235)

I have also been drawn to the belief that I could infuse a dose of the mythic in the lives of others, particularly through my work with organisations providing coherence between work or team environments and the resonance found by discovering the hart of the wud within oneself.

Organisational Myth

If myths are embedded in cultures and individuals then myths could also be embedded in organisations, as cultural hubs where people gather into working tribes. Organisations have a rational 'business' orientation and, as I have described, myth is often regarded as the antithesis of fact. Even so there is an emerging body of work, centred on myth within organisations as a source for understanding the past and framing the future. Myth is increasingly recognised as a valuable artefact able to provide a more informed understanding of the complex nature of competing in the business world. Within organisations, myth is expressed through stories, narrative, metaphor, symbols, and ritual, providing purposeful and sense-making avenues for the expression of corporate identity, most powerful when the exterior image is aligned with the internal world of corporate culture. As Kurtz and Snowden states:

> *"Organisational identity is strongest when it is shared and reflects the goals and beliefs of its founders or managers. From an integration point of view, "alignment" between expressed values and informal beliefs is desirable, leading to increased loyalty and coherence."* (2007, p.4)

In referring to alignment, Snowden alludes to the same sort of congruence often sought on a personal level through creative myth, it is a natural progression to seek the same within the working society of an organisation. Organisational identity is expressed in a number of ways through brand, vision, mission statements and values, all of which are elements of a functioning mythology but do not in themselves constitute a working mythology. Bowles in presenting the case for a new mythology in work organisations notes that "...for many the experience of work fails to render any form of meaning." (1989, p. 414), suggesting that the functions essential to Campbell's "adequate mythology" (1968, p. 623) are not apparent in

many work settings. In my view there is a challenge, or an opportunity, to work with espoused management ideologies, or what is understood, to achieve resonance with what is being aimed for, the organisation's mission and goals. If a mythology is functioning properly, it will be experienced, in terms of Campbell's third function, as "accord with the social order and of harmony with the universe." (1968, p. 5). Some translation of Campbell's words into business terms is possible. Social order becomes organisational structure and in a business context the *universe* is the world of commerce that ideally legitimises our working values. Within this corporate world the experience of a functioning mythology is desired partly for its sense-making and essentially for the well being and survival of its constituent members. Campbell warns that if:

> "...*coerced to the social pattern, the individual can only harden to some figure of living death; and if any considerable number of the members of a civilisation are in this predicament, a point of no return will have been passed.*" (1949, p. 5-6).

It is a dire warning and perhaps if given the opportunity to translate the words for business environments, Campbell would express the cost of lacking an adequate mythology differently and maybe not as figuratively. I perceive the coercion to conform to organisational norms as a modern malaise and I believe Campbell's statement may be true for many business people.

In my work as a corporate trainer for a global management consulting organisation I've delivered training in many cities across Asia Pacific and in the US. As a part of any two or three day workshop around the development of core consulting skills, the participants were asked to bring a *burning* question, a consulting dilemma for which they had not found an answer, perhaps something that kept them awake at night, a question that was front of mind and one for which they would like an answer. The challenge was framed in a way that important issues could be brought forward, or aired and shared. I was not surprised when I collated two hundred questions asked over multiple workshops and classified them by domain; few related to business acumen or cognitive skills, and the majority were relationship questions around interpersonal and communication areas. Again and again the questions were about how to motivate, convince or understand others and how to achieve successful working relationships within teams and across client organisations, all differing societies. I was disquieted by the evidence of hardening that the questions provided. One

example is offered to highlight that while the numinous is experienced more than understood, so too is its obverse. "*Recently I am facing a decline of working productivity but can't determine the reason why.*" (Workshop participant, Seoul, September 2006).This and other questions describe a work setting in need of the functions of myth, I take the burning questions as evidence that working in an environment within which a living mythology functions, is preferable to one bereft of the meaning and the functions of myth.

Organisations are characterised by complexity, and there is no simple or single way to understand or decode the challenges inherent in the situations faced by organisational leaders, managers and employees day after day. Boleman and Deal (2003) analysed and synthesised a lot of organisational development theory structuring the prevailing themes into four frames through which to gain insight where complexity and ambiguity persist. Of particular interest is their Symbolic frame and its central concepts of "culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes" (2003, p. 16) While Boleman and Deal shy away from defining myth they do iterate the function of myth in organisations:

> "*They explain. They express. They maintain solidarity and cohesion. They legitimise. They communicate unconscious wishes and conflicts. They mediate contradictions.*" (2003, p. 251)

Boje, Fedor, and Rowland (1982, p.27) concur that myths emerge in a mediating role when there is organisational ambiguity uncertainty, or turbulence. Expanding upon a basic sense making function they detail five functions of myth in organisations, environments, they note, that are not entirely rational or logical:

1. legitimising and rationalising actions and consequences
2. moderating political interests
3. explaining and creating cause and effect relationships
4. buffering complexity and turbulence
5. enriching human interaction

Described thus, myth is indeed embedded in organisational culture perhaps to the point of being indiscernible from that culture. Boje, Fedor, and Rowland define myth as a belief structure that is:

> *"...a major part of the taken-for granted assumptions....constructed to exemplify why the given practices and procedures are the only way the organisation can function effectively."* (1982, p.18)

Boje, Fedor, and Rowland's definition of myth precisely echoes a definition of corporate culture provided by Deal and Kennedy as "the way we do things around here" (quoted in Boleman and Deal, 2003, p. 243). A more cynical view can be adopted, as Bowles does:

> *"...corporate culture can be argued to represent the latest in a series of slogans designed to conceal the attempt to manipulate the interests of employees in the service of management."* (1989, p. 417).

Grant mediates the two views in her definition of tacit knowledge as "...knowledge that is undocumented, existing outside the confines of policy and procedure." (2005, p.165). She then delineates culture and myth by explaining their relationship and recognizing that culture runs deeper than slogans:

> *"It has been my experience that tacit knowledge can be found and brought to consciousness through an examination of corporate culture by way of the stories or mythos of the organisation itself."* (2005, p.166)

Myth manifests in stories, symbols and patterns within organisations assuming many forms; visions, values, metaphors, stories, fables, beliefs, mission statements, heroes, traditions, rituals and norms. Each of the listed symbolic forms contributes to the culture of a workplace, providing some tangible definitional element to cultural "norms". Importantly not all are *official* or necessarily sanctioned by the corporation. Organisational culture is as pervasive as it is invisible. Culture is the accepted way that things are done within a given context or setting, and ideally, but not necessarily aligned with the espoused version of 'how we do things here'. Culture, and how things are done, is accepted, known and lived more than

necessarily spoken about. The norms are learned by newcomers through various symbolic notations and occasionally by doing something differently, or outside of the mainstream way, and then being informed "...that is not how we do things around here."

The mythic abounds in organisations in stories, conversations, gossip, jokes, and tales. Various story forms are the vehicles for organisational myths. Peters observes that:

> *"People including managers, do not live by pie-charts alone – or by bar graphs or three inch statistical appendices to 300 page reports. People live, reason, and are moved by symbols and stories."*(as cited in Kaye, 1995, p.3)

Grant also espouses the power of organisational stories and follows Jungian thinking to conclude that:

> *'Collective organisational beliefs can also be carried within the container of story and used to further the relationship between individuals. Stories told in an organisational setting carry the core values and beliefs of the organisation in the same way that the stories told by an individual carry personal beliefs, prejudices and core values. All provide information that can be utilized in understanding behaviour."*
> (2005, p. 57)

Both authors look at stories beyond founding tales, or the legends in organisations, to the rich collection of stories that are related every day for what they might reveal. Pink quotes a senior executive as saying:

> *"Scratch the surface in a typical boardroom and we're all just cavemen with briefcases, hungry for a wise person to tell us stories."* (2005, p.109)

Stories will serve to highlight any dissonance between 'how things are done around here' and how things are 'supposed to be done around here'. Mythic potential arises when resonance is heard between 'how things could be best done around here' and 'how things are actually done around here', work becomes meaningful. I quote Scholes Phelan and Kellogg to expound on my previous statement:

> *"Man's strongest impulse is not to destroy the empirical world, rather to transform it into the mythical world, to regain Eden in this life and to synchronise, once and for all mythical and empirical reality."* (2006, p. 135)

Through the synchronisation of differing realities, the resonance sought through personal myth might resound in organisations, enabling us to find meaning through the recognition of our values, beliefs and attitudes within the workplace. It might take a transformation in organisational thinking, as business, according to Buckingham and Clifton, already struggles to make the most of employees' skills and strengths let alone their beliefs and attitudes:

> *"...most organisations remain startlingly inefficient at capitalising on the strengths of their people. In Gallup's total database we have asked the "opportunity to do what I do best' question of more than 1.7 million employees in 101 companies from 63 countries. What percentage do you think strongly agrees that they have an opportunity to do what they do best every day?   What percentage truly feels that their strengths are at play? Twenty percent."* (cited in Grant 2005, p. 33)

Perhaps it is little wonder that Drucker encouraged organisations to focus on the strengths of their people:

> "*It takes far more energy and work to improve from incompetence to mediocrity than it takes to improve from first-rate performance to excellence. And yet most people -- especially most teachers and most organizations -- concentrate on making incompetent performers into mediocre ones. Energy, resources, and time should go instead to making a competent person into a star performer.*"
> (1999, p.66)

Myth is understood, by many, to be a potential tool for interpreting and envisioning corporate culture, it is the 'how' of myth, or how to harness myth as a tool that has not been widely explored. How myth can be harnessed is somewhat as mysterious as the origins of cultural myths in society. The parallels and potential relevance of societal myths to organisational settings are only just becoming apparent. While myth may not yet be widely seen or

understood as necessary, it is being explored for potential application. Shore explains a difficulty of myth work as well as the potential:

> *"Though ritual and myth may seem a bit abstract at times as resources, understanding their importance in our family lives gives as perhaps the single most powerful tool for helping us to reshape our lives together in a constructive way."* (2003, p.20)

Shore's paper centres on myth in American working families and I hope it is not too big a step to draw parallels between families and work teams. The reshaping of organisational life and the harnessing of myth for the making and dissemination of meaning would seem particularly desirable in many business environments. Senge states that:

> *"One is hard pressed to think of an organisation that that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organisation."* (1990, p. 9)

The missing element, in my experience, is something 'deeply shared'. Employees are often not aligned with an organisation's mainstream, or goals and their roles may, as a result lack meaning. Not being aligned with an employer's direction or sharing organisational goals, leaves an employee disconnected and disgruntled. If mythic work, and all it promises to deliver, is an answer, I return to the 'how' of tapping the mythic veins of business in order to draw on the innermost capability (or dreaming) of an organisation. Grant is one of the few to address how to collect mythic data noting:

> *"One story may provide specific insight into an aspect of organisational life. In the collection of organisational stories however, a pattern begins to reveal itself which defines the relationship between the organisation and the individuals who comprise it. The core values that permeate the organization can be exposed. Von Franz suggests;*
>> *But if we put many stories together, we see that each one enlightens some typical archetypal process in the collective unconscious. If you put two or three hundred together then you get a kind of intuitive mapping of the*

structure of the collective unconscious and the possible structure and processes in it. " (2005, p. 126)

It is the most practical idea I could discern through my reading, and I am dismayed by the size of the task. The task of collecting, transcribing and analysing even two or three hundred narratives is overwhelming, and it is a small organisation, with today's global reach across continents, where two or three hundred stories could be considered representative. I have colleagues who specialise in corporate Knowledge Management who are advocates of harvesting stories, with a keen appreciation of this data form, and they are hampered by a lack of effective method, and tools, to store, catalogue and reference stories. This is an area for further research.

Proponents of mythology in business settings, and the exponents of Mindell's Process Oriented Psychology, may be viewed as pioneering the revelation of the potency of myth for insight into organisations. There are many authors, corporate and more esoteric, with many opinions on what counts as business and/or personal success. It is a matter of strategy as to what to adopt and embrace, and what to discard. Within case studies the reasons for failure or success are attributed to many factors, as the texts testify, with each protagonist annunciating their advice as the path to be followed. By going deeper to address issues, and returning to symbolic thinking, a chord might be struck that resonates across a diverse audience. Is it possible to touch a community by addressing a deeply personal level in each member that is somehow shared with others within the same community? For me, it is a leading question as a foundation of Process Work is Deep Democracy, an inclusive paradigm that attempts to represent and value all points of view, I will explore this concept in the next section.

Process Work and Mythology

Process work has its origins in Eastern philosophy and Jungian psychology. Rather than being state-oriented and trying to solve what appears to be a problem, a process-oriented approach provides a holistic or unifying view of one's life experiences as part of a larger pattern or flow.

Myth in Process Work has relevance, in both the present and the past, as a framework that both helps to explain or interpret the past as well as to envision the future. Myth is used in the practice of Process Work to illuminate past experience with meaning, perhaps discovering significance in experiences that might otherwise make little sense. Mythical meaning needs to be sought out as it is not always immediately apparent to us, and the symbols and signs of mythic patterns are rarely conscious or obvious. Jung described the importance of integrating the unconscious with the conscious:

> *"When we are unconscious of a thing which is constellated we are identified with it, and it moves us or activates us as if we were marionettes. We can only escape that effect by making it conscious and objectifying it, putting it outside of ourselves, taking it out of the unconscious."* (1984, p. 217)

An understanding of what is constellated in our unconscious may alleviate the feeling that that 'thing' needs fixing. As outlined by Jung, the information provided by gaining familiarity with the lesser known, or unconscious, aspects of ourselves, frees us. Midori Kiriyama, a student colleague of mine made the same point from a Process Work perspective during a presentation she gave in Portland (June 2007), when she said that "… if we live our more secondary process we live more wholly". Midori used the term 'secondary process' a Process Work term to describe our less conscious experiences.

The symbols that manifest in our dreams are one of the things we can unfold, and more deeply understand to inform us about our lesser known secondary processes. The same is also true of body symptoms, signals and events that disturb us. In Process Work, the disturber is an ally needing to be known. A process Taoistic framework allows us to understand that our lives and relationships are governed by organising patterns, like myths and beliefs, that flow and repeat through time.

I have witnessed participants in various Process Work forums clamour for knowledge of the esoteric, asking to have the myth of their significant relationship explored, revealed or explained. Is it that myth, or its cosmological promise, might free us from the ordinariness of everyday existence? Perhaps we want to persist in story and can only do so to the extent

which our stories are worth telling. If episodes in my life are part of a story that connects me to others in a meaningful, rather than coincidental, way then is my story more worthy of telling? If some light is shed on some essential human mystery, the cosmos might no longer be viewed as a vast void but more a magnificent tapestry into which stories and myths are threaded. A tapestry that is being created and interwoven with the myths of others and is patterned by events from all time. My personal myth, lived through my relationship(s), is at once mine and a part of the greater whole. I am a part of the tapestry while also being the complete work, mythical meaning is endowed and a picture emerges. In viewing the world this way, Campbell's mystical function of myth is at play, providing a sense of awe in people's worlds and existence.

It is, perhaps, not surprising that myth evokes curiosity and excitement particularly in Process Work forums as these forums encourage self-discovery and provide the opportunity for greater psychological accord. Congruence is achieved through understanding and then aligning one's actions, reactions or responses with the deeper behavioural tendencies that prevail. An individual's tendencies are like the motifs in the patterns of our being and determine the directions of our relationships. The less conscious the tendencies, the less harmonious our actions and behaviours might be and the less meaningful our direction seems. Myth in a Process Work workshop context is endowed with a revelatory potential, providing illumination to patterns, paths, and directions, all of which can become more conscious and intentional making our existence more purposeful.

In Process Work, as in other disciplines, myth remains an intangible and elusive concept. I have not found find myth explicitly defined in Process Work texts. Rather, the significance of myth to Process Work theory and its role in the practice of Process Work is often implied in the writings of Process Work exponents. Myth and the meaning it provides are folded into Process Work theory and practice. Remembering back to QANTAS flight 1012, I was enthralled, excited and disturbed by something when reading about myth. The experience begged me to know more, to unfold myth, a mythical aspect of myself and expand my knowledge of myth through the theory and practice of Process Work.

In Process Work, unfolding opens communication between our everyday identities and our dreaming experiences. Unfolding is a technique used to go deeper into unknown experiences

to reveal new information. In this paper's exploration of myth, the term and the concept, as a not fully unfolded aspect of Process Work, I hope it contributes to the study of Process Work.

According to Dr. Julie Diamond (workshop 2007) myth in Process Work arises out of Jung's work on myth and childhood dream patterns. Dream and myth are containers for the less identified aspects of what lies outside of our awareness - both are forms of story. Myth and dreams speaks to the story nature of human existence - how we make sense of ourselves and our lives Jung used myth and the recognition of mythical patterns to link or interpret an individual's experience with the collective experiences of humanity in general. The 'collective unconscious' is Jung's description of humanity's common psychological inheritance of shared meta-life patterns. Myth emerges as a meta-life pattern, describing the familiar patterns that shape our lives. The same patterns occur across societies and cultures, often in parallel, and throughout time.

Much of Jung's contribution to psychology is regarded as moving from the individualistic and subjective approach of his contemporaries to "...understand the unconscious as an objective and collective psyche" (Symbols p xxiv). As part of his work, Jung explored how myths, and their symbols, structures and patterns inextricably link us with our past as well as with our contemporaries, and of course, the pasts of those contemporaries. He came to view life patterns as having a universal, common and connecting quality that can be explained by framing them from a mythical standpoint. Campbell's description of the hero's journey is an illustrative example:

> "*Whether the hero be ridiculous or sublime, Greek or barbarian, gentile or Jew, his journey varies little in essential plan. Popular tales represent the heroic action a physical; the higher religions show the deed to be moral; nevertheless, there will be found astonishingly little variation in the morphology of the adventure, the character roles involved, the victories gained.*" (1949, p.38)

Campbell terms the hero's journey a mono-myth, and in doing so reflects a Jungian attitude in recognising the common shared aspects as archetypal. A meta-life pattern, when mythically framed is analogous to a mono-myth. Both terms capture how, from chaotic lives, diverse stories, and disparate experiences, patterns arise. As the patterns become apparent and

are pared back to the essential recurring and shared elements, what is revealed is both more simple and absolute. From stories embedded in cultural histories, a mono-myth can be divined. From episodes in daily life and our relationships meta-life patterns are discerned.

Jung described one attraction of myth, and the reason for his pursuit of it, when he said "...the deeper you go the broader the base becomes." (1968, p. xxv) The more he delved into personal tendencies and patterns, the more the shared and collective nature of these patterns became apparent, woven into different families, societies and cultures. For me, Jung's statement describes something mythic that is evident at the essence level of experience - how our humanity, our journeys and processes, are similarly patterned and broadly shared.

It is striking how much Jung's simple statement supports the philosophy underpinning Mindell's concept of Deep Democracy. The broad base of Deep Democracy is an attitudinal one, appreciating the diversity of others with openness to and respect. Somewhere from the depths of individuality and being greatness wells up, and as it becomes wondrously apparent, I am more able to see the same potential residing in others. I recall Max Schupbach (Yachats 2004) encouraging workshop participants to look in the mirror and see God looking back at you. I say that Max was 'encouraging', and I experienced his words as an exhortation, challenging us to attempt an almost impossible task. Me and God? In the same mirror, one seeing and one reflected until each is both and both are one? It seemed impossible initially, but, almost wondrously, over time and aided by the practice of innerwork and reflection, attaining self knowledge and some acceptance of that self, there are mornings when God looks back at me from the mirror, and shyly smiles.

Similar attitudes of noticing and acknowledging the God within are shared and venerated in many cultures. I see this evidenced in the Zulu greeting "Sawubona" which means "I see you" and similarly in the Namaste gesture of many Asian cultures - a gesture symbolising respect and love. Both are a recognition and acknowledgement of God in another, and thus implicitly in oneself. The mythic promise of Process Work for me is that if I can appreciate myself at my essence of being, then through that experience my inherent greatness emerges, and I can see it more in another. Process Work encourages each of us to know that inherent greatness, the biggest parts of ourselves, and one path to that knowledge is through working to understand things that most trouble and disturb us. A paradox within the practice of

Process Work is that a transformation is possible by getting to know and befriending the attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and reactions that most trouble us. The transformation is akin to spinning gold from garbage. The Process Work facilitator takes what we would disown, and frames it so that the disturbance, even in the form of chronic physical symptoms, can be recognised as something that needs to be better known. If we can develop enough of a democratic attitude to integrate even the most painful and hateful occurrences with love and respect, recognising 'me' in what would otherwise be 'not me', we become more whole and little greater. The God within smiles back as we start to develop a deeply democratic attitude and value all of our garbage as well as our gold, as Mindell says:

> *"Deep democracy touches upon all levels of our lives. In personal life it means openness to all of our inner voices, feelings, and movements, not just the ones we know and support but also the ones we fear and do not know well."* (1992, p. 173)

Through understanding, or starting to understand, my myth I can get to know my own inner self. I also begin to appreciate how myth orders my life and the patterns of my experience. Joe Goodbread framed patterning from a Process Work perspective:

> *"There comes a time when the here and now is too small for the process at hand.… There are patterns to process which transcend our immediate signals complexes and dream figures. These long range patterns are one aspect of what Jung referred to as the personal myth. They seem to shape our lives over long periods of time in ways which only become obvious much later perhaps after we have passed into another stage of life."* (1997, p. 175 -176)

Goodbread explains that patterns can be most apparent at times when we, individually, are dealing with life changes or face big challenges. Our most confronting concerns have an essential human quality in that the same life patterns are known to our ancestors and will be faced by our descendants. Goodbread states the mythical quality of these patterns is that they "are a common heritage of people", and says that:

> *"…the basic long-term patterns remain the same and somehow, oddly impersonal.*

It is for this reason that amplifying an individual's personal problems, dreams, and fantasies with mythological material often has a soothing effect....there is something awesome in knowing that the agonies we suffer are distinctly human, and that our suffering connects us with something eternal and transpersonal." (1997, p.177)

The role of the Process Work facilitator, or practitioner, using myth as an intervention, is to discover an organising principle for individuals. Investing life with meaning is where myth begins to function and I am left with questions of how that is achieved in practice. For example, where does the Process Work facilitator source the mythological material with which to amplify the disturbance at the source of the individual's problems? How does the Process Work facilitator amplify a problem with that material?

I am fortunate to have worked with Joe Goodbread in person, with a couple of peers. We had turned to him for advice, as we were struggling to collaborate together. We were trying to find a way to work together - each of us wanted to cooperate with the others, yet at the same time, none of us wanted to be directed by one of the others. After working with us and listening to us for a short time Joe sat back and framed what he was witnessing using a mythical lens "…you look like three titans…." he said (Consultation Portland March 2006). We, the three colleagues, paused, and looked at each other, seeing for almost the first time the power and the will of each. Then we smiled in acknowledgment. In an instant we identified as three titans no-one really wanting to lead the others, nor relinquish any of her personal power by being led. Joe gave us a new lens through which to view our situation, three titans we were, and we instantly recognised that our situation had become a friendly but unproductive power struggle. We were relieved to understand that our difference had a mythic dimension that was familiar and known to us. We readily identified the mythical aspect and it helped our subsequent interactions. Each titan was able to acknowledge the similar power in one and other; it allowed us to work as powerful equals and resist each other less. Joe took our garbage, our power struggle, and spun gold, or a renewed appreciation from the personal power of each of us.

The facilitator's task, as described in this example, is of course not to solve intractable problems but to console or reconcile the personal experience with something greater, as is described by Campbell's cosmological function of myth. The facilitator was able to summon

an appropriate mythological archetype which brought a deep dreaming level of our interactions into the everyday in a way which allowed us to agree about the nature of the disturbance. If the facilitator has access to a mythical figure or tale that shares the same age-old pattern of the everyday disturbance being presented, then to bring in the mythical material can be a powerful intervention.

It is apparent from my reading of the theory that Process Work facilitators believe that life is allied with myth, that myths are a road map of common human experience. The facilitator's belief is not necessarily greater than a similar understanding that may be innate for many of us. Nor is an extensive knowledge of myth required to use it with effect.

In myth, for example, the power of love is transformative; love allows mythical players to overcome extraordinary circumstances and to triumph, becoming who they are truly meant to be. I imagine there are few who would deny the power of love evident for example, in the Ancient Greek story of Pyramus and Thisbe or in the more modern story of Romeo and Juliet. A facilitator could speak of these characters and stories to make the point about the powerful nature of love, that love gives meaning to life, and can transcend even death.

Both stories have sufficient mythical elements to be purposeful, in that they contain the same meta-life patterns. Romeo and Juliet's travails are more likely to be familiar to the subject, and therefore more useful as an intervention.

In the practice of Process Work, if a meta-life pattern, something of a nature that has repeated in a person's life, can be discerned through an individual's process and is presenting problems, then the person's experience may be deemed as intrinsically mythical without further drawing on society's repositories of mythical tales for an explicit link. It can be sufficient to unfold a particular problem and notice how it is part of a recurring pattern in that individual's life process to label the experience as mythical, in order to endow personal meaning and purpose.

The recognition of a mythical or organising aspect beyond the personal to the interpersonal and through relationships is a subsequent step. Mindell, during a case analysis, writes:

"…here we see how the myth governs not only the momentary situation, but the whole relationship process." (1987, p. 85)

He describes further, saying:

> *". . . there is almost always a creative, unlived, unusual, and mythical part in each individual which the individual finds difficult to support and which finds understanding, recognition, and appreciation in the new partner."* (1987, p.89)

The concept of partner, although Mindell's use of the term 'partner' is in the context of a significant other, is applicable in many relationships within societies, groups, organisations, families, teams, as well as between couples, and 'partner' can be broadly interpreted as another with whom you have a relationship. Gaining some understanding of the underlying or not fully realised elements that drive and govern a relationship provides information from a deep level of experience that we may not have access to without the experience of self through another. That knowledge can bring greater accord with our identity and self image, and what is needed from a relationship.

Gary Reiss makes a similar point to Mindell saying:

> *"That Carl Jung talked about parts of ourselves that we can only learn about in relationship and about the myth of waking up in a relationship. Certain parts of myself I can only see through your reflecting them back to me. I must see you so that I can eventually see and own who I am, and you must see me so that you can see and own who you are."* (2000, p.181)

Self-image is something deeply held and embedded, and very much a part of 'me'. It is true, although ironic, that my own self-image may be only partly known to me. In exploring and discovering why I am drawn to certain others I have the chance to gain information and become conscious of my own emotional being. The mythic element is that self-image, like motive, is deeply held below an entirely conscious level and it is something that needs expression. I may find myself in similar situations or repeating relationship patterns until some lesser known aspect is realised and consciously integrated with the known me. A part

of a mythic purpose for being together, whether the relationship is as partners, family, or colleagues, is to experience oneself through another. There is a gap to be bridged between what we know of our self and how we experience that self in a relationship. Process work is interested in finding or brining awareness to the pattern or myth that is trying to realize itself or complete itself through a relationship and the consequent self-knowledge that can be elicited in order to lessen the gap and allow for the expression of a more congruent whole self.

I have pondered on the point of myth and origin - does myth exist before an event or, as is typical in cultural mythology is it primarily to explain an event? Jung suggests myth comes from our unconscious and even our pre-conscious. In Process Work, myth is seen as existing prior to, and giving coherence to ,relationships, rather than merely describing them. Mindell describes myth as an organising principle:

> *"It seems that couples, families and groups have a dream or myth behind them, a saga searching for people to populate it. The myth dreams up the people to come together."* (1987, p. 89)

Thus described, myths are the stories or archetypal patterns embedded within one's unconscious that are looking for expression. In others, and through relationship with them, we can find support for the expression of aspects of ourselves that have not been entirely conscious or socialised, akin to Campbell's psychological aspect of myth, informing us about how to live. We can bring together disconnected elements - the seemingly meaningless and the sometimes absurd can be integrated into a more meaningful and purposeful whole.

Myth in Process Work, although guiding or defining how to live, or, more accurately, recognising patterns needing to be lived with congruence, is not interpreted as directing toward a particular outcome. The Spanish poet Antonio Machado's quote used to open Diamond and Jones book (2004) "*Walker there is no path. The path is made by walking.*" reminds us of the foundational concept of process work whereby the journey (process) and dealing with events as they occur, rather than targeting particular goals, is paramount to this paradigm. Diamond and Jones explain that a personal myth is more like an astrological chart than a predetermined path, a patterning that:

"… can be seen in recurrent and long-term experiences, such as chronic symptoms, illness, addictions and relationship patterns." (2004, p.148)

A myth or a pattern can be apparent in an event like the first meeting between people, and a significant or memorable event can be seen as the realisation of a mythical aspect of one's process. Myth is then purposeful, representing something, wanting to be known or expressed. Max Schupbach acknowledged this saying that "...your first dream or experience of a relationship is a deep pattern or myth trying to express itself." (Yachats Sept 2006). Max's statement echoes with Campbell's cosmological function of myth, reconciling the psyche to one's expectation of meaning in the external world.

Myth also explains, providing coherence and a sense of purpose. Mindell (1985, p.83) explains that "…our individual human process is not simply individual but has collective and universal aspects." Goodbread (1997, p.178) describes the power of understanding a mythical interpretation of one's process, "These largest of patterns, although often impersonal, can exert great power over us." Both describe the importance of discovering your personal myth, understanding and aligning decisions, actions and relationships to achieve resonance, the alternative being a disquieting dissonance, or worse. Mindell (1987, p. 92) goes so far as to advise "Trying to live a myth which does not belong to the individual creates violent psychosomatic reactions." It is little wonder that we clamour to know something of our personal and relationship myths, things that we know deeply and yet may not know that we know. There is a transformative potential in, "Thinking on what the idear of us myt be.", one of my earlier already quotes from Hoban,

Process Work Tools for Working with Myth

Process Work provides practical tools for work with the mythic. Perhaps thanks to its origins in psychology there is a strong practical and experiential orientation.

Earlier in this paper, I described the importance of inner work to bring and discover potential. Inner work is a tool available to a Process Work facilitator for use in the form of exercises

that can be facilitated, or, for a subject who has knowledge of and respect for inner work, exercises can be outlined for the subject to complete alone. The advantage of facilitation is that the subject may need gentle support and encouragement to embrace, or even just acknowledge, disavowed aspects of themselves. If working alone, you may become stuck, unable to make progress.

In the previous section I looked at the intervention of amplifying problems with mythological material. More commonly described, in organisational texts and within the practice of Process Work, as a way to express or give form to the mythical, is the relating of stories. Myth is fused into Process Work and typically elicited through stories and dreams. Gary Mindell and Reiss describe the use of narrative saying that stories told to describe the start of a relationship have the potential to reveal a mythic seed of what each party is looking for in the other. There are many examples and anecdotes in Process Work literature of working with early memories or dreams to understand myth and its potential psychological inheritance. Mindell explains:

> "*The therapist may also ask a couple or family about the first dreams, fantasies or events that happened around the time of their original meeting or at the birth of their first child. Or, the therapist could ask about any big, accidental events which occurred at a significant moment in their relationship. Each couple has its own stories. . . . All these stories are important dreams, mythical patterns which often, perhaps always, foretell and explain the meaning of problems which occur later.*" (2002, p. 71)

Julie Diamond used storytelling effectively to work with teams in a recent workshop (Tao of Teams Brisbane 2006). She encouraged small teams of 3 to 5 people to tell a story of their history and background, and then a problem they were struggling to deal with. Julie was as creative as she was supportive, encouraging the team to create a shared story about themselves. "Once upon a time......." she would start and allow various team members to build sentence by sentence. The resulting co-created story contained important shared elements that she could amplify and feedback the relevance and significance to the team. She was able to capture ways to address a current problem that fitted with the style and history of the team and a seemingly intractable problem became less obdurate as a result.

Gary Reiss outlines a similar technique for use by an individual and calls it "myth making" (2000, p.172) - "...myth making means creating stories that integrate our dreams and our waking experiences." An individual weaves their own story to bring clarity to something that has been experienced as a dream or body symptom. The story weaves all of the pieces of information into a form more easily understood and enacted.

Max Schupbach (consultation 2005) suggested drawing as another potential tool for creatively working the mythical. He described drawing and the associated symbolism as a shortcut to listening to individual stories when working with a team, when it was not possible to build a collective tale as Julie had demonstrated. Max suggested asking each team member to think of a peak experience and to draw, sketch or scribble something that represented that experience. The task of the Process Work facilitator then is to sit back and look for patterns and the symbols expressed in the works or to encourage the divulging of further explanation.

Salome Schwartz (consultation 2007) provided a further tool when she disclosed that she occasionally reaches for a Dictionary of Symbols when working with dreams, stories and pictures. Where meaning might not be apparent, it can be helpful to look for cultural significance and use the information provided to amplify and explain. Salome was pleased at the relevance typically brought by her use of additional referencing, and any interpretation of meaning she left to the person she was working with, who gave form to the symbol.

Vector work is an emerging tool that I have seen most of the Process Work practitioners named above employ. Vector work or path walking, is advocated by Mindell (2007) as a form of walking meditation that slows the active mind. Path walking involves selecting directions to walk in response to questions posed by a facilitator and then noticing body experiences that arise in order to access deeply sourced information:

In describing vector walking, Mindell (2007) explains that by allowing the body to choose its own direction in answer to questions and problems that disturb the mind, path walking shifts attention from deliberate mental processes to emergent forms of consciousness through sensing, feeling, and moving. This gives rise to spontaneous experiences which are in some way answers to the problems or questions of the everyday mind.

A subject walks vectors, each direction representing a different experience, and then finds a directional super or meta-position to walk. The meta-position is walked and experienced with the whole body to allow new information to arise. Finding a meta-position or a super-position is similar to finding an ally, or more particularly the message of an ally – what is it that I need to bring out in the world?

Simply stated, vector work is a form of inner work, and meditative in nature. A super-position is mythical knowledge accessed through inner work practices.

Julie Diamond conducted a powerful exercise using vectors (Tao of Teams Brisbane 2007) that sought to identify the superhero traits within each person. She surmised that our super-powers were known to us and we were often a little shy to express them. When working in teams, identification of the super-powers of each could provide something to draw on in a tight spot for an individual and their team. Julie noted that the powers we possess are also connected to our biggest troubles, the two are typically related. Starting with a problem and then walking vectors will help to access the power or skills needed to overcome the original problem. For a team, knowing the super-powers of the team members could give a greater understanding of the complementary, and maybe dormant or unrecognised, skills and abilities available to draw on. Working with concepts like super heroes and super-powers draws on the mythic potential of a team.

Myth is fused into Process Work and typically elicited through creative and inner work techniques each attempting to bring lesser known parts of ourselves into CR. From the work I have described of Mindell, Goodbread, Diamond, Reiss, Schwartz and Schupbach, it is easy to extrapolate how myth provides a vehicle for discovering an unlived potential and for integrating dreaming with CR, the task set by Joe Goodbread in the first MACF lecture. In terms of Process Work's levels of experience, outlined earlier, myth can be sited between NCR or dreaming level experiences and the essence level. It is a rich source of 'secret' knowledge, which, when explored, provides context, meaning and coherence to that which we may not otherwise comprehend.

Final Comments

Myth and its potential to reveal secondary information flirts with us calling us to discover and know our profound mythical selves. It is a mystical and typically unknown realm that begs discovery for what it might reveal and connect us to beyond our ordinary selves. For those who experience myth as I do, just the use of the term 'myth' is enough to evoke Campbell's cosmological function. The prospect of a mythical self grabs the imagination and elicits a sense of awe, that my ordinary mundane self might have another greater dimension, one that "…allows sense-making through the reconciliation of your existence to your expectation of meaning." (2004, p.7).

Working with myth is a creative and compelling task and the fact that there is so little information available on how to elicit mythic potential in any forum, is a situation that begs further exploration. The role of an external party, be they consultant, researcher, therapist, or facilitator, is to bring, or help to bring, the interior to the exterior in some form. The outsider may be instrumental in identifying significant patterns rhythms or symbols and noticing threads that fit into a greater tapestry. However I cannot contemplate that the functions of myth could be brought to bear by an external party. Any sense-making or reconciliation is the task of the individual - a mythic framing of the energies and tendencies that might reside deep down in someone's middle only provides the potential for them to make sense for themselves of why they feel and behave the way they do. It is not feasible for an outsider to understand or interpret what sits inside, at the heart of another. The facilitator's role is to encourage reflection, support, to welcome, and socialise, the untapped energies that could be ordering another's life. Interpretation of any inner stirrings that guide, by providing meaning or direction, is the prerogative of the individual. It can be too easy to misread a story and interpret events in a way that is not meaningful or relevant for the protagonist.

The same applies within organisations where a mythically oriented consultant's role is to elicit, identify, synthesise, analyse, and formulate a picture of what might not otherwise be apparent or accessible to the involved 'players'. I see the task of the consultant as illuminating and revealing the patterns that direct effort or determine frustration and reward. Any subsequent problem definition, proposal of solutions and identification of potential

actions after that initial phase need be done by the team, group, department or organisation. The consultant may facilitate further effort to enable consensus to be gained and if action is taken as a result the consultant will ideally become an observer of the process in order to provide feedback.

On a personal level my participating in, and then reflecting on, my mythic journey has not left me in any doubt about the potential of myth to bring meaning, meaning so profound that although I might struggle to articulate it and have it understood by another I have a growing confidence to bring at least a little of my dreams into the everyday, as Joe Goodbread challenged my peers and I to do in the first MACF lecture.

In one of the last MACF lectures, Julie Diamond (June 2007) advised us we had two tasks:

   i.   to make the most of our gifts and abilities
  ii.   allow others to shine

In saying so, Julie perfectly framed an ongoing quest that will undoubtedly lead me to further reading, further research and practical application within the realm of myth and stories in various contexts. There is more to know, and of course, more to acknowledge as unknowable.

I know that.

I have quoted a number of authors as stating that stories are truths, even truer than true. In a logical and linear way I could argue that myths as stories are true butI believe it is an unnecessary argument. For the profound functions they perform and the potentially indispensible meaning they endow, myths and many other story forms are beyond truth.

I know that too.

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