

## SOME DIRECT POINTING

Things that the new must know, if we're ever going to get ahead:

Course title is: Mythology and Literature

Its description in the catalogue: The mythological process and product and its relation with modern literature

Your concerns then should be: 1) the nature of the *process* itself

2) an examination of *products*  
(examples of mythology)

3) its *relations* with the present  
(its use and relevance to us)

& in that order: we cannot proceed unless you are clear about  
1) *the mythological process:*

the World	Narrative history	Cosmology
Gods & heroes	“	“ Mythology

(There is a *process* going, call it cosmological (& see Whitehead),  
which the mythological process is somehow metaphoric of:

(1), that the gods and heroes of mythology are *metaphors*:

and (2), that both gods and heroes are *conspicuous* and  
*public.*” –Olson on Havelock, April 17, 1965,  
*NFR* II, Spring-Summer.

The race must do the business which is the  
stationary dance (statue/dance) of the universe  
(cf. the Bear dance ‘ritual’ in *Themis*, pp. 112-3),  
as all other forms of ‘action’ are non-productive  
(i.e., yield no *products*).

Only *noos*, the mind as the *organ of clear images*:  
to realize, to see, to know (see Snell, p. 8 ff.),

is *productive* of: the conspicuous and political – how to make objects conspicuous, that is, capable of standing attention, and having a history (see *Preface to Plato* and *the Phenomenology of Perception*).

*Noos* is what the Muses do for Zeus (see the *Theogony*) in Neolithic epistemology, *noos* gets shifted from *action* of organ (dance of Muse) to *function* of thought, knowledge, etc., but Noos-Zeus doesn't care if the race slips a cog and forgets the Muse. The process goes on no matter what we do.

Therefore, we are not interested in what often passes for mythology (after this shift), the later Romantic stuff, the late Greek and Roman fictions, where the story (the narrative) is purely horizontal, inactive, abstracted from the real process taking place (the narrative history of the Cosmos):

as History is: 'the appliance of the substantive condition of creation' (Olson).

The originary 'hits' –wherever you find them—*create* you; so may retake through story ('istory), as Homer and Hesiod are instances of retaking or 're-fishing' their primordial mythology

the point would be to: *return to origins*, the originary or *causal* condition (of cosmology/mythology): names, nouns, the nominative-substantive condition

The Substantive evidence (of process in products):

Quantity-size-dimension—a torso, huge animals (libido animals), a horse, a bull, etc., of Pleistocene: large women, stone Venuses (no figure of men, in this sense)—see Levy, Neumann.

In Pleistocene, mythology is intact, not split as *mythos* (act) and *logos* (word):

(*Action of the object*, which is the *mouth* (muthos), instance of: in the beginning was the (mouth/chaos/ Gr. G—not lack of order) the Ganunga gap (or mouth)—see Norse myth of creation.

Other instances: Hopi, Zuni, Trobriander, Sioux Bear Dance  
(‘Stone is the only true said thing’ –see  
Miss Harrison, *Themis*, p. 328), the Gr.  
tradition which ended with Hesiod (800-770)  
the stone faces of Hawthorne & Melville,  
and Whitehead on the primordial nature of  
God (appetite of the mouth).

We ‘retake’ through consequent (Whitehead) process of  
history, which is vertical and personal, the yield  
being verbal and practical (the *use* of mythology today):

\		Muthos-Logos (mouth’s words)	
	Originary (nominal)		Consequent (verbal)
	Politics		History

Mythology is a ‘science’ of the Real, in the sense that it is never etiological;  
it keeps the contextual intact, does not abstract, preserves nexus  
of event, leaves objects alone, includes everything that is  
necessary, and is experienceable.

It makes possible psychic prepossession, a new mindedness,  
direct experience of the originary, for the ‘things and stories  
or Person are both nominal and verbal’—Olson

All of which hinges on getting back clean to instances of mythology and  
avoiding all late *fusions* (as you might get stuck in the Hellenic, and certainly in the  
Hellenistic where fusions and fictions are all over the place—as Cupid & Psyche are  
inventions of Apuleius?

Hence, “the mythological process and product and its relations with modern

literature” means just what it says. It does not mean modern writers who allude to Graeco-Roman myths in their poetry or fiction, which is dead at both ends. For a clean handling of *Zeus*, as knowing is process, the dance of the Muses (the mimetic act upon which all creating depends), & not as the static, transcendent, all-knowing (that is, once and for all) sky-god, see Ed Sanders poems.;

A final *caveat*: don't get stuck on, or stick the class with, the wealth of information, opinion, and speculation you will undoubtedly pick up along the way. Books are to be used, not read. We're not interested in Pleistocene geology, archeology, anthropology, ethnology, paleontology, and all the rest. It's not important what you have to go through to get to where you're going. All of this is a distraction. You use the historiographic method of the present, not because it's interesting or valuable as such, but simply to take advantage of the current technology to 'refish' for yourself instances of the mythological process and product wherever and whenever they occur.

You remember that Olson, before he took (I hope, temporary) leave of us, had brought up the question of what Neanderthal man does with his dead. There was no general discussion of "life in the lower Paleolithic period," etc. He fixed immediately on the two primary *symbols*: the (logarithmic) spiral or labyrinth (symbolizing the passage between life and death), and the perfect circle, the inverted saucer-slab with cup-hole indentations of about 3" (symbolizing the reversing of eternity in that space), and got to where he was going; the condition of death as knowledge, its formalization; the power of perception as the action of Time, in other words, to the 'spiritual', to the human mind, to what a man is, for as he said, all men and women still doodle these two symbols, which in this context was interesting, whereas in the midst of all that psychology and symbology it would not have been.

#### SOME NECESSARY BOOKS: for 'Theoretical' or 'Causal' Mythology

Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato*

Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind* (in paper)

A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (in paper)

R.P. Knight, *The Worship of Priapus*

Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*

Jane Harrison, *Themis: Prolegomena* (in paper)

B.L. Whorf, *Language, Thought & Reality* (in paper)  
Erich Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness* (in paper)  
Jung & Kerenyi, *Essays Toward a Science of Mythology* (in paper)  
Charles Olson, *Human Universe*

All should now have: G. R. Levy's *Religious Conceptions of the Stone Age*