CHAPTER I

MYTH: ITS MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

I. INTRODUCTORY

It is necessary to clarify at the outset that as this is not a general commentary on the growth of classical myths, nor a study of comparative mythology as such, or the study of myth and its literary uses, an indirect approach to the nature of myths in general will be considered as our purpose here is to help clarify the place of myth within literature and, further, to develop a definition of myth as a continuous and evolving mode of expression. A single definition cannot free the word myth from the ambiguities associated with the term and it would indeed be foolish to attempt such a task. In presenting some varying opinions on the subject, the ambiguities connected with the word's use remain; the exercise being an attempt to disengage the study of myth from some of our preconceived scruples about it. Theories about the meaning of myths were formulated as early as the sixth century B.C., given a somewhat prominent and full treatment in the works of Euhemerus
and the Neoplatonic allegorists, while the modern scholars have found much in myth to carry on investigations on a scientific basis. The results of such studies have tended to be both willful and pedantic owing on the one hand to the pedantry of the ancient tradition, and on the other to the complex nature of the subject itself. It, therefore, should be admitted that our tendencies towards the mythical world should necessarily be those which facilitate an imaginative and flexible conception of the nature of myth as a whole.

In trying to develop a definition of myth in Ancient Myth in Modern Poetry, Lillian Feder notes the difficulty of limiting the field:

The interest in myth, and with it the difficulties in limiting and defining the field, have been increased in the twentieth century by the contributions of the comparatively new sciences of anthropology and psychology. The special concerns of the anthropologist, the psychoanalyst, and the literary critic have led to disputes among the
various branches investigating the field and among specialists in the same area often terminating in an uneasy insistence on definitions applicable only to the needs and findings of a particular science or the point of view of a particular poet or scholar. But such compromises are never really satisfactory. Any valid study or use of the term myth must include the knowledge that all branches of investigations provide. (4)

Feder takes a broad look at myth for the specific reason of looking at all art as a continuous and evolving process. She is of the opinion that myth, is a form of expression which reveals a process of thought and feeling—man's awareness of and response to the universe, his fellow men, and his separate being. It is a projection in concrete and dramatic form of fears and desires undiscoverable and inexpressible in any other way. . . . it opens up the boundless reaches of man's vision, it defines the limits of individual life" (28). She, however, is not totally unconcerned of the fact that, "the revival of myth in the present time indicates . . . that in his
desire for order, for belief in some standard beyond his individual reaction, man turns back to traditional symbols, which evoke an emotional, if not spiritual, sense of permanence, recurrence, and stability . . . .
The interest in myth in the twentieth century is complicated by the fact that it is considered both truth and falsehood by some of the very poets who employ it" (27).

The classical attitude to myth has been dominated in this century by the trends initiated by Sir James G. Frazer. Frazer's commentaries on Pausanias and Ovid, The Golden Bough, and other works opened up unknown vistas in the interpretation of Greek religion and of the myths and rituals that accompanied it: "With his touching faith in reason and good sense he proved to the twentieth century how powerful are the irrational and savage elements in human civilizations" (Cox & Dyson xi). Gilbert Murray in Oxford, Jane Harrison and A.B. Cook and F.M. Cornford in Cambridge, made use of the new knowledge of comparative anthropology to the study of myth and religion. "The idea that the motives of custom and myth on primitive societies could illuminate those of more developed cultures, including that of the ancient Greeks became the driving force behind works of manifold learning and
amazing ingenuity" (Kirk 3).

It, however, may be said that even intelligent people feel that myth is not a matter to be given serious consideration, but rather it belongs to the ephemeral world of the poetic, the symbolic and the imaginary. In truth the reverse seems to be the more correct picture; myths are more than often prosaic, utilitarian and ugly. "Yet what really matters for most of us, perhaps, does lie closer to that poetical view of myths, and to the kind of value they accumulate in their literary uses" (2). While it is true to admit that myths concern us not only for their role in all primitive, illiterate, tribal or non-urban cultures - the main objects of anthropological interests - not only for the interest that versions of ancient myths have held through the centuries on the literary cultures of nations, but also because of its more universal appeal. And "Because of men's endearing insistence on carrying quasi-mythical modes of thought, expression, and communication into a supposedly scientific age" (2).
II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The most significant contribution of the anthropological school, perhaps, is that it brought about fresh approaches into the study of classical religion and myths, and enabled its followers to recover from the lethargy that had overtaken them once the nineteenth-century fallacies of the animists, the symbolists, the nature-myth school, the pan-Babylonians and the pan-Egyptians had been exhaustingly laid to rest. It also freed them from the tyranny of Christian inhibitions and preconceptions in matters affecting the investigation of the sources of religious feeling; and opened up an immense range of new comparative material, some of which undeniably gave the clue to longstanding puzzles in the religion and sociology of classical antiquity. (Kirk 3)

Although it was Frazer who was influential of such an approach to the study of myth it was also he who
approach to the study of myth it was also he who exem-
plified the shortcomings of the "comparative" method
when carried to social institutions and system of
beliefs. He believed that such complexes may
present certain aspects which resemble each other,
while their essential core remains completely distinct.

Frazer's influence on the thinking of the
century was most marked in the so-called 'Cambridge
School', notable exponents among them being Jane
Harrison, A.B. Cook, and F.M. Cornford, and Gilbert
Murray in Oxford. These scholars carried the
intuitions of Frazer to a new dimension of interpretation
and were responsible for the "new learning" particularly
among classical scholars. (Frazer's influence continues
till this day though in varied forms and often carried
to excess) but the fecundity of their ideas, however
abstruse their expression, compared with the sterility
of nearly all other treatments of myths in their
theoretical aspects, justifies the attention.

Bronislaw Malinowski, though considered nowadays
to be somewhat pedantic in his methods, contributed
much towards the reinterpretation of myths in the
anthropological school, and his theories have continued
to exercise a powerful domination. Studied in its totality, myth, he believed,
is not symbolic, but a direct expression of its subject-matter; it is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submission, assertions, even practical requirements. Myth fulfils in primitive culture an indispensable function: it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale, but a hardworked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom. ("The Social Psychology of Myth" 633).

And in further support of such a claim Malinowski
quotes: "Myths are stories which, however marvellous and improbable to us, are nevertheless related in all good faith, because they are intended, or believed by the teller, to explain by means of something concrete and intelligible an abstract idea or such vague and difficult conceptions as Creation, Death, distinctions of race or animal species, the different occupations of men and women; the origins of rites and customs, or striking natural objects or prehistoric monuments; the meaning of the names of persons or places. Such stories are sometimes described as aetiological, because their purpose is to explain why something exists or happens" (634).¹

In one aspect Malinowski appears to be in direct opposition to the psychological school of thought when he says that "myth is not symbolic." Kirk observes:

Malinowski . . . held that abstract ideas were entirely absent from myths in every savage community . . . . His view was

¹Reference is from Notes and Queries on Anthropology by Ms C.S. Burne and Prof. J.L. Myres.
that myths do not 'make intelligible' any of their contents. . . . in his anxiety to combat the excessive view of myth as a kind of primitive science, he added that they have no underlying meaning at all. Given this stringent and untested dogma, it is hardly surprising that he would seriously misrepresent the tone of some of the tales that he himself had collected (21).

In spite of such criticism, Malinowski's influence on anthropology has been enormous. Many of his ideas and methods have been modified or abandoned, but because he devoted so much attention to myth and its classification his influence continues.

E. O. James, writing from the anthropological point of view, is of the opinion that myths encountered in literature, ancient and modern, are really not myths at all, since they have no proved ritual connection (Myth and Ritual 302-303). He is obviously influenced by the Malinowskian doctrine that myth can be understood only as it functions in primitive society. Malinowski was influential in discrediting as myth the literary developments of mythical narrative, rejecting them as
"merely" stories, "without the context of a living faith." According to him, we noted earlier, myth is "a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements." James, too regards the recurring motif of ancient poetry and drama as "types of traditional lore," literature rather than myth. He objects to the popular conception of myth when he says that "true" myth is not a product of imagination in the sense of speculative thought or philosophizings about the origins of phenomena in the form of an aetiological tale invented to explain objects and events that arouse attention. It is not idealized history or allegorized philosophy, ethics or theology; still less is it an ideal story told for intellectual amusement or for popular entertainment according to prescribed custom; or day-dream to be interpreted by the symbols of psycholanalytical exegesis. All these may retain elements of the myth, but the myth
itself is distinct from the fantasy, poetry, philosophy and psychology with which it has become associated in its ramifications, developments and degenerations, and their interpretation. (279-81)

Unlike most anthropologists and scholars of the history of religion who consider evidence of ritual origin a criterion for identifying "true" myth, literary critics, however, in attempting to define myth, usually make no distinction between pre-literary myth and myth as it is interpreted, allegorized, or actually transformed in literature (Feder 6).

Freud's use of the Oedipus myth to describe and define in concrete terms a psychic conflict common to all men, and pathological in some, is the most dramatic of the developments that characterize the present day preoccupation with myth. Freud first recognized (Interpretation of Dreams, 1900) that myth could unfold the unconscious conflicts and fears inherent in man. He provided a scientific basis for myth and couched its language in scientific terminology to explain his discoveries about the complexity of man's mind. C.G. Jung's studies on myth and archetypal patterns, of which
we will say more later, provide a much more exhaustive investigation of myth than either Freud's or Frazer's. Although Freud did not carry out a systematic investigation of myths, but made use of them occasionally when he turned to myths, legends, and fairy tales for material illustrative of his psychoanalytical findings and explored them as a possible mode of expression, his influence on twentieth-century poets' interpretation and use of myth is unmistakeable. Lillian Feder notes:

Freud's interpretations of particular myths are always original and sometimes startling in their revelations about the literary works in which they appear; but his actual references to myth itself are not the main source of his profound effect on the field. His method of probing unconscious conflict through free association, his remarks on fantasy and daydreaming, his discussion of displacement and condensation, the devices employed in dream, his whole approach to the imagination and the non-rational life of the mind—all indicated new uses for myth as a guide for exploring the past of civilization
and individuals and new possibilities for
myth as a poetic language. (39)

Freud envisioned the poet setting "himself free from
the group in his imagination" through the creation
of the hero myth, in which the hero is the poet's
idealized self. This hero myth, Freud admits, is a
fantasy, but provides the basis for tracing man's
historical development and a means of release for the
imagination.

Freud's major contribution to the study of myth
lies, therefore, in his "explicit statement and concrete
examples of myth as an expression of the instincts"
(Feder 47-48). He made no absolute claims about the
nature of myths, but speculated on the general
characteristics. However, his use of traditional myth
to express his scientific discoveries of the human
psyche, his conception of unconscious feelings and
instincts as mythical, and his co-relation of myth,
dream, and imaginative thought has provided the basis
for much scientific contemplation as well as its use
in literary studies.
THE NATURE OF THE ARCHETYPE

The terms "primordial image" and "archetype" as introduced by the analytical psychologists refer not to any concrete image existing in space and time, but to an inward image at work in the human psyche. The symbolic expression of this psychic phenomenon is what we recognize in the figures represented in the myths and artistic creations of mankind. C.G. Jung, however, cautions that archetypes are, at the same time, both images and emotions, and an archetype can exist only when these two aspects are simultaneous. He is of the opinion that, "when there is merely the image, then there is simply a word-picture of little consequence. But by being charged with emotion, the image gains numinosity (or psychic energy); it becomes dynamic . . ." (Man and His Symbols 87). The effect of this archetype manifests itself through the whole of history and may be seen most explicitly in the rites, myths, and symbols of early man and also in the dreams, fantasies, and creative works of the sound as well as the sick mind. While the nature of the archetype may be studied by its associative manifestations a precise definition of the term cannot be
formulated in a way that is satisfactory to the intellect and logic. The trouble may be recognized as beginning with the phenomenon of "affect" or emotion which evades all attempts of scientific enquiry. "The trouble with these phenomena is that the facts are undeniable and yet cannot be formulated in intellectual terms. For this one would have to be able to comprehend life itself, for it is life that produces emotions and symbolic ideas" (80). Jung is aware, he tells us, that it is difficult to grasp this concept because he is trying to use words to describe something whose very nature makes it incapable of precise definition. But since so many people have chosen to treat archetypes as if they were part of a mechanical system that can be learned by rote, it is essential to insist that they are not mere names, or even philosophical concepts. They are pieces of life itself—images that are integrally connected to the living individual by the bridge of the emotions. That is why it is impossible to give any arbitrary (or universal)
interpretation of any archetype. (87)

In order to explain, therefore, what is meant by an "archetype," it is necessary to distinguish its emotional-dynamic components, its symbolism, its material component, and its structure.

The dynamic aspect of the archetype is manifested "in energetic processes within the psyche, processes that take place both in the unconscious and between the unconscious and consciousness. This effect appears, for example, in positive and negative emotions, in fascinations and projections, and also in anxiety, in manic and depressive states, and in the feeling that the ego is being overpowered" (Neumann, Mother 4). This is to say that every mood that is representative of the entire personality is an expression of the dynamic effect of an archetype, and it holds true regardless of whether this effect is accepted or rejected by the human consciousness.

The symbolism of the archetype, on the other hand, manifests itself in specific psychic images which are realizable by consciousness and which are different for each archetype. The different aspects of an archetype are also manifested in different images.
The material component of an archetype in actuality is the sense content that is perceived by consciousness. When it is said that an archetypal content of the consciousness is assimilated, this assimilation (i.e. if the emotional character of the archetype is disregarded) refers to the material component.

By the structure of the archetype is meant the complex network of psychic organization, which includes dynamism, symbolism, and sense content, and "whose center and intangible unifier is the archetype itself" (4).

Commenting on the nature of the archetype, Erich Neumann in his *The Great Mother*, basing his analysis on Jung's interpretation, says that:

The archetype is manifested principally in the fact that it determines human behaviour unconsciously but in accordance with laws and independantly of the experience of the individual. "As *a priori* conditions, the archetypes represent a special psychological instance of the biologist's "pattern behaviour," which gives all living creatures
their specific nature." This dynamic component of the unconscious has a compelling character for the individual who is directed by it, and it is always accompanied by a strong emotional component.

... But the dynamic action of the archetype extends beyond unconscious instinct and continues to operate as an unconscious will that determines the personality, exerting a decisive influence on the mood, inclinations, and tendencies of the personality, and ultimately on its conceptions, intentions, interests, on consciousness and the specific direction of the mind. (4-5)

When the unconscious content is apprehended, it encounters consciousness in the symbolic form of an image, for, according to Jung, "anything psychic can be a conscious content, that is to say, it can be represented, only if it is capable of representation and possesses the quality of an image" (Neumann 5). Hence, even the instincts, the psychic dominants, appear to be linked with representations
of images, and, the function of the image symbol in the psyche is always to produce a compelling effect on consciousness. The archetypal image symbol, then can be said to correspond "in its impressiveness, significance, energetic charge, and numinosity, to the original importance of instinct for man's existence. The term 'numinous' applies to the action of beings and forces that the consciousness of primitive man experienced as fascinating, terrible, overpowering, and that is therefore attributed to an indefinite transpersonal and divine source" (5). It is further stressed that the representation of the instincts in consciousness - their manifestation in images - is one of the essential conditions of consciousness in general. "This fundamental constellation is itself a product of the unconscious, which thus constellates consciousness, and not merely an 'activity' of consciousness itself" (5). And in support of this contention Jung is quoted as saying: "One might fittingly describe the primordial image as the instinct's reflection of itself or as a self-portrait of the instinct" (6), where the instinctual plane of the drive and the pictorial plane of consciousness belong together because the compulsion to act and the freedom to reflect may occur simultaneously.
The "pictorial plane," on which the archetype becomes representative, is the plane of the symbol. It is for this reason that Jung says: "The archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif — representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern . . . ." (Man and His Symbols 58). He further corrects his detractors:

My critics have incorrectly assumed that I am dealing with "inherited representations," and on that ground they have dismissed the idea of the archetype as mere superstition. They have failed to take into account the fact that if archetypes were representations that originated in our consciousness (or were acquired by consciousness), we should surely understand them, and not be bewildered and astonished when they present themselves in our consciousness. They are, indeed, an instinctive trend . . . .

... what we properly call instincts are psychological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic
images. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world . . . . (58)

It is thus that Jung can say that "the archetypes are there preconsciously and they probably form the structural dominants of the psyche in general, being comparable to the invisible, potential presence of the crystal lattice in the saturated solution" (Neumann 6). He explains this by drawing an analogy of the archetype with a nuclear structure where the archetype not only acts "as a magnetic field, directing the unconscious behaviour of the personality through the pattern of behaviour set up by the instincts; it also operates as a pattern of vision in the consciousness, ordering the psychic material into symbolic images"(6). The symbol, thus, is the manifest visibility of the archetype, corresponding to its latent invisibility. The symbol, however, like the archetype itself, possesses a dynamic and a material component:

The material component of the symbol sets consciousness in motion; aroused by the symbol, it directs its interest toward it

\[^2\]Underlining mine."
and seeks to understand it. That is to say, the symbol, aside from its dynamic effect as an "energy transformer," is also a "molder of consciousness," impelling the psyche to assimilate the unconscious content or contents contained in the symbol. This assimilation culminates in the formation of views, orientations, and concepts by consciousness; although these have their origin in the sense content of the symbol and hence in the collective unconscious, of which the archetype is a part, they now, independent of their origin, claim an existence and validity of their own. (8)\(^3\)

In the early phases of consciousness, however, the attraction of the archetype escapes man's power of representation to the extent that at first no form can be given to it, but subsequently when the primordial archetype takes form in the imagination of man, the results are often monstrous and inhuman like the chimerical creatures —

\(^3\)Underlining mine.
It is only when consciousness learns to look at phenomena from a certain distance, to react more subtly, to differentiate and distinguish, that the mixture of symbols prevailing in the primordial archetype separates into the groups of symbols characteristic of a single archetype or a group of related archetypes; in short, that they become recognizable" (13). As the intellect, and hence, the imagination develops over a period of time and is moulded by the inward and outward forces of tradition, the archetypal images acquire a certain measure of regularity that enables man to create images.

The archetype not only functions on the dynamic plane as a sort of directing force which prompts the human psyche as in religion, but "corresponds to an unconscious 'conception,' a content. In the symbol, i.e., image of the archetype, a meaning is communicated that can be apprehended conceptually only by a highly developed consciousness . . . (15). This has led Jung to remark that "myth is the primordial language natural to these psychic processes, and no intellectual formulation comes anywhere near the richness and expressiveness of mythical imagery. Such processes
deal with the primordial images, and these are best and most succinctly reproduced by figurative speech" (Psychology and Alchemy 25). It is this "figurative speech," he claims, which is the language of the symbol - the original language of the unconscious and of mankind. Elsewhere ("The Psychology of the Child Archetype" in Essays on a Science of Mythology) he again stresses: "What an archetypal content is always expressing is first and foremost a figure of speech. If it speaks of the sun and identifies with it the lion, the king, the hoard of gold guarded by the dragon, or the force that makes for the life and health of man, it is neither the one thing nor the other, but the unknown third thing that finds more or less adequate expression in all these similes, yet - to the perpetual vexation of the intellect - remains unknown and not to be fitted into a formula" (Collected Works Vol.9 105).

The symbolic imagery of the unconscious, we may therefore conclude, is the creative source of the human spirit in all its realizations. The symbol has given rise not only to consciousness and the concepts of its philosophical understanding of the world but also
religion, rituals, customs, and art. The world of man is not a world seen by consciousness, but one experienced by the unconscious. "He perceives the world not through the functions of consciousness, as an objective world presupposing the separation of subject and object, but experiences it mythologically, in archetypal images, in symbols that are a spontaneous expression of the unconscious, that help the psyche orient itself in the world, and that, as mythological motifs, configure the mythologies of all peoples" (Neumann 16). Although the action of the symbol takes a different direction in early man and in the man of today, it is the symbol through which mankind rises from the early phase of formlessness, from a blind purely unconscious psyche without images, to the formative phase whose image making is an essential premise for the genesis and development of consciousness (Neumann, Origins and History 366). And even "as the mind explores the symbol," Jung says, it is led to ideas that lie beyond the grasp of reason. The wheel may lead our thoughts towards the concept of a "divine" sun, but at this point reason must admit its incompetence;
man is unable to define a "divine" being. When with all our intellectual limitations, we call something "divine," we have merely given it a name, which may be based on a creed, but never on factual evidence. (MHS 4).

Although the conscious mind tends towards an either/or situation or seeks a division into I and thou, subject and object, the creative or imaginative aspect of the mind is inclined towards the fundamental characteristics of the "original situation" of the unconscious which recur in the symbol where not only reason and unreason, conscious and unconscious are represented, but occur as an original and natural unity.
IV. MYTH, RELIGION, AND LITERATURE

Etymologically, the word "mythology" means merely the telling of tales. In modern terminology, however, it is used to signify a systematic examination of the traditional narratives of any people, or all peoples, with the object of understanding how they came to be told and to what extent they were or are believed, also solving various other problems connected with them, such as their connexion with religion, their origin (popular or literary), their relation, if any, to similar stories told elsewhere, and their chronology, relative or absolute (The Oxford Classical Dictionary 718). The Greek term μύθος meant a tale, or something one uttered which could be interpreted in a wide range of senses—a statement, a story, the plot of play. And the term μυθολογία, first used by Plato, simply meant the telling of stories. The ambivalence of the modern term poses a kind of problem since it seeks to impose on us "a pre-scientific and imaginative attempt to explain some phenomenon, real or supposed, which excites the curiosity of the myth-maker, or perhaps more accurately as an effort to reach a feeling of
satisfaction in place of uneasy bewilderment concerning such phenomena. It often appeals to the emotions rather than the reason and ... in its most typical forms seems to date from an age when rational explanations were not generally called for ..." (713). We have been led to this sort of interpretation by ethnologists and anthropologists who have tended to cite examples from classical literature to substantiate their theories. This has also led to the belief that myths, deal principally with the doings of gods, their ritual and their relationships to one another, or else with natural phenomena in some way striking, and they are characteristically aetiological, having for their aim to furnish an explanation of something. If the main characters of the story are human, or supposedly so, and the tale concerns their doings in battles or other adventures, it is usual to speak, not of myth but of saga or legend. Here the mental process giving rise to the story seems to be different. (718)

The apparent difference of thought between these two
basic propositions is something we have to face time and again and have to contend with according to the situation in which it is used.

The dogma that all myths are about gods can be easily dispensed with if it can be commonly agreed upon that the stories of Oedipus or Perseus and Medusa are myths in the true sense of the term, for, neither deals "principally with the doings of gods." Other examples from different cultures may be quoted in support of the above. There does persist however, the view that mythology, at least in the earlier period, is an aspect of religion: "mythology has gradually revealed that it cannot be reduced to factors outside religion, and today it is generally considered on the same plane as the other fundamental forms of religion, if not indeed as their ultimate source" (Kirk 11).

Up to Frazer's time, interest in religion was confined mainly to theology or to history, and myth was regarded with suspicion as being something pagan. But Frazer has shown how religion could appeal to the imagination just as it might to faith or reason.
His god-eating ritual points towards a kind of primitive parody of Christianity and shows how magic and superstition, even in their most phantasmal forms, can be seen as reaching out toward a genuine religious understanding. "Many myths embody a belief in the supernatural, and for most cultures that will involve polytheistic religion" (Kirk 11). The assumption that man gropes for some spiritual meaning in life—some guidance, as it were, from a supernatural force—is dealt with to some appreciable extent in Jung's writings on myth. Lilian Feder writes:

He (Jung) feels that poets are in touch with a reality beyond that which the rational mind can perceive, for they have discovered "the spirits, demons, and gods." Poets know "that a purposiveness out-reaching human ends is the life-giving secret for man." In Jung's view psychic truth is actually a step toward spiritual fulfilment, and myth is an instrument which can bring about an union between the unconscious and the supernatural. (49)

That religion functions as the unifier of the
conscious and unconscious experience holds good not only for primitive man, but, according to Jung, orthodox Christianity also serves this purpose:

Dogma takes the place of the collective unconscious by formulating its contents on a grand scale. The Catholic way of life is completely unaware of psychological problems in this sense. Almost the entire life of the collective unconscious has been channeled into the dogmatic archetypal ideas and flows along like a well-controlled stream in the symbolism of creed and ritual. It manifests itself in the inwardness of the Catholic psyche. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* 50 - 51)

Northrop Frye reacts differently to this issue. He is of the opinion that:

Catholic theology supplies a set of existential or objective counterparts to the archetypes of the unconscious (the Father-God, the Mother Church, the Virgin, and the Son manifest in the world), and this enables
the believing Catholic to project his archetypes, and so attain a pragmatic balance between his inner and outer worlds. For all those who feel compelled to regard these personal entities as psychological fictions, the archetypes have to be dealt with in the psyche itself. This is very difficult to do, and the upheavals of mass neurosis in the twentieth century are the result. ("Forming Fours" 120 – 21)

While considering the above statement of Frye's it is necessary at the same time to see what he means by the term "religion." By "religion," he says,

I mean religion considered as a universal human cultural phenomenon, as distinct from "a" religion, which is a specific and exclusive institution, almost always claiming the result from a specific and exclusive revelation. "Religion" in this sense might be called a way of life that expresses a search for identification. As such it does not need a personal God, for it may identify man simply with his own society through a symbol of solidarity, as in totemism or Communism. The
religions tendency seeks the existential, usually some functioning institution that responds to faith and commands loyalty. In any period of crisis or uncertainty, the need for some sort of identification becomes very strong, and a great variety of objects of it are proposed, all of them advertised with much the same formula: "we're in a bad state; this is what will help." But while the pitch, so to speak, is usually thrown into discursive language, the effective appeal is through symbolism and myth; hence, all studies of "comparative religion" tend to become comparisons of mythology rather than doctrine. ("World Enough Without Time" 98).

This conception, which Frye calls the "grammar of religious symbolism," has been the subject of contemplation among scholars for centuries and has had an even greater fascination for poets. The reason for this, he says, is that poetry, as distinct from discursive language, uses the language of identification which is based on the metaphor and which
in its turn is a relation of identity. "In Christianity, many important doctrines, such as the divinity of Christ or the real presence or the Trinity, can only be expressed grammatically by Metaphor." There is, therefore, Frye argues, a strong natural alliance between the language of poetry (and the imaginative language of works of culture generally) and the aim of the religious impulse, which in the long run can find no other speech than that of the poetic symbol (98-99). This is amply borne out by "Rilke's reenvisagement of the Christian mythos ('Every angel is ringed with terror'). Yeat's gradual construction of a highly individual but nonetheless powerfully expressive mythology out of the marriage of Irish folklore with gnostic theosophy, and Eliot's synthesis of anthropology, Christian mysticism, and Greek and Hindu metaphysics... Outstanding examples of the poetic revitalization of myth and the fresh exploration of the philosophical and religious possibilities of mythic experience through the medium of poetry in our time" (Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics 541). From such a premise it is perhaps possible to agree that myth is "the primitive imaginative structure which provides the main outlines and the circumstance of a
verbal universe which is later occupied by literature' and is thus the 'matrix' to which 'major poetry keeps returning'" (Borklund 216). And on this score also it is now possible to generalize that on only one point have scholars agreed—that myths are a form of literature be they about gods or demigods.

According to Jung, myths go back to the primitive story-teller and his dreams, to men moved by the stirring of their fantasies. "These people," he says,

were not very different from those whom later generations have called poets or philosophers. Primitive story tellers did not concern themselves with the origin of their fantasies; it was very much later that people began to wonder where a story originated. Yet, centuries ago, in what we now call "ancient" Greece, men's minds were advanced enough to surmise that the tales of the gods were nothing but archaic and exaggerated traditions of long-buried kings or chieftains. Men already took the view that the myth was too improbable to mean what it said. They therefore tried to reduce it to a generally
understandable form. (MHS 78)

Even as such, when a poet makes use of stories that have been traditionally handed down, it is not his individual sensibility alone that he objectifies. He responds with unusual sensitiveness to the words and images which already express the emotional experience of the community and arranges these so as to exploit to the full their evocative power. He thus realizes for himself vision and possession of the experience fostered between his psyche and the life around him, and communicates that experience, which is both individual and collective, to others, depending, however, on their response to the words and images he uses (Bodkin 9). Every poet, moreover, is aware that "one cannot use a word without being affected by its traditional associations, and as long as illusion is used as a central idea about art, it will have the overtones of something opposed to reality, and will not cut itself loose from delusion or the acceptance of the unreal . . ." (Frye, "Art in a New Modulation" 115).

Archetypes, therefore, "are most easily studied in highly conventionalized literature, which means, for the most part, naive, primitive, or popular literature,"
which, according to Frye:

attempts to extend the kind of comparative study now made of folktales and ballads into the rest of literature and seizes on the primitive and popular formulas in great art: the formulas of Shakespeare's last period, or the book of Revelation, with its fairy tale about a damsel in distress, a hero killing dragons, a wicked witch, and a wonderful city glittering with jewels. We may distinguish two kinds of archetypes: structural or narrative archetypes with a ritual content, and modal or emblematic archetypes with a dream content. The former are most easily studied in drama . . . . Modal archetypes are best studied first in naive, romance, which includes the folktales and fairy tales that are so closely related to dreams of wonderful wishes coming true and to nightmares of ogres and witches. ("Forming Fours" 124 - 25).

Poets from the earliest times to the present have not tried to draw any distinction between myth, legend, and
folktale when drawing upon the source material of gods, heroes, and demons, and their various escapades, trials, and triumphs as recorded in the literature of the ages. In the twentieth century, however, some sort of a distinction is unavoidable owing to the opposing influence of the various schools of thought that are prevalent. Poets and critics alike, it must be admitted, have been influenced by the sciences—comparative mythology, archeology, anthropology, and psychology. Moreover, there has been a conscious effort to recognize and exploit ritual elements in myths as also the psychological implications of mythical tales. And, perhaps most important, there is a strong tendency to consciously revive myth as a literary device.

"The critic takes over where the poet leaves off," writes Frye, "and criticism can hardly do without a kind of literary psychology" (Fables, Borklund 215). Literary criticism as a kind of science, however, occupies only a secondary claim, and that too, as a social science. But, as Frye observes, The Golden Bough was intended to be a book on anthropology, but it was also a book on
literary criticism, and seems to have had far more influence in literature than in its alleged field. Similarly, Jung's book on libido symbols (Symbols of Transformation) extracts a single dream type from a great variety of individuals. He has done something which may be largely meaningless to most therapeutic psychologists, but places the book squarely within the orbit of literary criticism. ("Forming Fours" 123).

Frazer's Golden Bough is, as literary criticism, a critique on the ritual content of naive drama. It reconstructs an archetypal ritual from which the structural and generic principles of drama may be studied. The critic is not moved by considerations of any historical existence of the ritual for, "the relation of ritual to drama is a relation of content to form, not of source to derivation" (125). In the same way, "the dream content of naive romance is the communicable dream content" (125). Jung's book on libido symbols, Symbols of Transformation, as literary criticism, is a critique on the dream content of naive romance. "Jungian criticism is always most
illuminating when it deals with romance. . . . And the central dream in Jung is essentially identical with the central ritual in Frazer" (125).

No school of criticism, however, can offer us a single theory that will account for the multiple levels of meaning in a literary work built from the materials of myth. For some the Jungian approach is more encouraging because Jung considered the mythical archetypes to be the source of all artistic creation and that myth offers the poet a sure means of uniting his own experience with the continuous psychic history of man. Irrespective of affiliations, myth continues to assert itself because myth makes no attempt to explain the outside world. "The logic of myth," writes Philip Wheelwright, proceeds on different assumptions from the logic of science and of secular realism, and moves by different laws. Attempts to deal with myth by methods of science fail inevitably short of the mark. While objective methods can trace the occasions of myth, the conditions under which it may flourish, they are quite incapable of understanding the
mythical consciousness itself. For science and myth are basically incommensurate ways of experiencing, and science cannot "explain" myth without explaining it away. Its explanations are not interpretive but pragmatically reductive. The questions which science poses about myth are never quite relevant, for the questions essential to myth are patterned on a different syntax. ("Poetry, Myth, and Reality" 20 - 21)

In scientific thinking there is always the implicit assumption of an either-or situation; but such assumptions do not provide any logically clear answer. Whereas myth gives us the pure vision, it imaginatively constructs a human world that should exist, against which individual and communal life is measured, forming a vision of a human landscape where none exists (Lavin 20).