Chapter-I: Myths and Their Relevance

Long, long ago, when the alphabet was not known, the art of writing was not invented, and writing materials did not exist, literature and knowledge acquired by mankind was orally transmitted from generation to generation. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bible, and the Koran and many such sacred texts were visualized by the sages and prophets of mankind; and were later handed over to generation after generation by oral tradition. The greatest invention of our ancestors is the use of voice as a medium to preserve and transmit knowledge. In simple term such medium is called poetry. All our ancient literature is in the form of poetry.

The subject of the orally preserved literature varies, such as narration of valour, observation of rituals, legends, and hymns, communication of religious experiences, revelations, genealogy, fables and social laws, technique of wars, observance of sacrifices and other rituals that were relevant at the time of their creation.

Two distinctive classifications can be made among these subjects. One is the knowledge of the mind and the body which is the product of sensory experiences and their logic of understanding of natural laws. This faculty developed as a result of observation of nature, and its application to improve living conditions of early men. These together make the knowledge pertaining to worldly life, such as skills of making tools, knowledge about nature, seasons, crops, and search for new knowledge which will make mundane life
comfortable. This knowledge gradually developed into science, civilisation, and technology.

The second one, the knowledge of the heart and soul, is the imaginative aspect of the human mind. They include the belief in supernatural forces controlling the nature and human life, the values of life to be achieved, and attribution of divinity to useful natural objects and natural phenomenon. The maze of nature and natural phenomenon like rain, fire, sky, day, night, and sun compelled innocent early man to attribute divinity to nature. This aspect gradually evolved itself into culture, philosophy and religion. For example, for Vedic Indians, fire is both useful and holy. They express their knowledge of fire in the first rik (hymn) of Rig-Veda (Ch-I-1); it explains these two kinds of the knowledge cited above:

Agnimeele purohitham, Yagnasya daivam; 
Rithvijam, Hotharam, Rathna dhathamam.¹

Agni, (fire) is the keeper and Protector of townships, the chief deity of sacrifices, one of the four main conductors of the fire sacrifice, the carrier of libations to God, and giver of precious metals. Fire scared away the wild animals in the night, and thus protected towns. Fire was used to extract metals from their ores. This covered the knowledge of mind and body.

Vedic Indians regarded the Sun as god; they found some of the qualities of the sun in the fire also. So they regarded it as a representative of Sun god and attributed divinity to it. As an act of gratitude, they considered the fire as the main deity of their sacrifices; and poured libations into it, believing that they will reach God, through fire. This is knowledge of heart and soul. They may not represent truth but they represent faith of a large number of community. Such knowledge is not universally accepted as true, but some

¹ Swami Chidananda, Saswara Rig-Veda Samhitha Prathama Mandalam, 2nd Ed. (Bangalore: Ramakrishna Matha, 1998) p, 1-1-1.
cultural groups continue to believe it to be so; such knowledge is not totally discarded but is named and preserved as myths. Man leads a dual life; a life of matter or worldly life, and a life of faith, the religious (or the spiritual) life. Modern psychologists and doctors believe that the harmony between these two is essential to lead a happy and balanced life.

Philosophy forms the basis for both life and literature. The kind of life we live is determined by the philosophy that we believe. Philosophy tends us to think about some primordial questions such as what is life, how should it be lived, why are we born, who created us and why? What happens to us after death? Where were we before our birth? There is no answer for these questions in the formal scientific knowledge. Life is not merely a period between birth and death; science cannot define or explain it. All cultural groups have different concepts about life. They keep before us certain values and ideals, which one should strive to, attain in our life; for example a good education, a vocation, marriage, family, and nobility. If they are achieved, then such life is good life; if not, such a life is a waste. Our ancestors set other values of life before us like truth, kindness, helping the needy, faith in God, good deeds, courage, non-violence, contentment, austerity, marriage, fidelity to spouse, faith and regard towards elders, to avoid committing sin, repentance, confession and expiation of sin, obedience and many such lofty ideals of life. They help us to lead a good life and let others also do it. These lofty values are grouped together and named as forces of truth [nritha]. These values of truth pass on from generation to generation, penetrate our subconscious mind and direct the course and action of our life. The stories of great persons who achieved or fulfilled all these values are appreciated and they are glorified and remembered as our cultural heroes.
Opposite of these good values is untruth [anrutha]. Life for the ancient people was nothing but a battle ground between the forces of truth and untruth; ‘truth alone triumphs not untruth’. This is the mainframe of the ancient literature, all over the world. Thus study of myths is nothing but an exploratory journey to our past, our heroes, noble values and great cultural heritage: which is a revelation of collective wisdom of mankind.

Myths explain the complex behaviour of individuals in a society which is difficult to do so by any other explanation. For example, man and woman accept their hierarchical position in the society; men are superior; women are inferior. This is not only their social status, but also their psychic set up. No scholarship, no logic, and no science can explain it, but myths can do so. According to The Bible, God created man first in his own image; then He took one of the man’s ribs; and he transformed it into a woman (out of man she was taken). Woman had defied the command of the god by eating and inducing the man to eat ‘fruits of wisdom’; hence god cursed woman that man shall rule over her. So men are superior in society.

Men in every society respect women because she is the mother of mankind. Since she bears the progeny of her husband in her womb; man is reborn from woman, hence they should respect women as much as they respect their mother. [Jaya, a word in Sanskrit for a wife also means mother]. God sent his son Jesus as a son of a woman: Mary; so a woman deserves respect. This belief is the root of European Chivalry. Respecting woman is universal virtue. Manu, the ancient law maker of India, in his Manusmriti prescribes Hindus to respect women because:

Yathra Naryasthu poojyanthe, Ramanthe Thathra Devathaha. Gods are pleased where women are respected.
Primitive societies never had a systematic religion; but they had some religious consciousness, doctrine: myth or an unsystematic complex of stories. The main feature of it is the absence of any sharp boundary between the spiritual and the natural world, and thus between the human mind or ego and the surrounding world. Lucien Levy-Bruhl (1857-1939), the French philosopher called this absence of boundary as participation mystique ("mystical participation") denoting a sense of fusion between the human organism and its environment. A similar absence of boundary prevails also between the worlds of waking experience and dream; between the individual will and the spontaneous emotions and drives of the psyche. As a result the whole external world is charged with powers that may be called mental power or spiritual power. The German religious historian Rudolf Otto referred to such an atmosphere as the "numinous."

The numinous brings ecstasies as well as fears; this enthralling aspect is called hozon, a term referring to a sensation of intense beauty and peace that may be evoked by rituals of chanting, dancing, and sand painting. Such rituals have their origin in the same sense of fusion between the human and the natural world and between the events of the mind and the events of the outside world. This is the origin of myths.

There are three major categories of myths: cosmic myths, myths of gods as a family, and myths of heroes. Cosmic myths are concerned with the world and how it is ordered. They seek to explain the origin of the world, universal catastrophes such as fire or flood, and the afterlife. Nearly all mythologies have stories about creation, a type of story technically known as cosmogony, meaning "birth of the world." Creation stories include accounts of how human beings first came into existence and how death and suffering entered human experience. An example is the ancient Hebrew account of
creation by a single, all-powerful deity. Creation is a three-stage model. The first stage consists of the world of gods or primordial beings; the second stage is the world of the ancestors of man; and the third stage is the world of man. Mythologies influenced by philosophical reflections place man in the conspicuous centre of the cosmogony.

In many mythologies the gods form a divine family, or pantheon (from the Greek pan, meaning "all," and Theos, "god"). The story of a power struggle within a pantheon is common to a large number of world mythologies—for example, Greek mythology features a similar story of struggle between generations of gods. There are myths about dying god, for example, the Egyptian goddess Osiris, who is murdered and dismembered but is ultimately resurrected; and the Saviour God, for example, the Greek Prometheus, who stole fire to help humanity at the cost of incurring Zeus's anger.

Nearly all cultures have produced myths about heroes. Some heroes, such as the Greek Achilles and Ion, have one mortal and one divine parent. Others are fully human but are blessed with godlike strength or beauty. Many myths about heroes concern significant phases of the hero's career, such as the circumstances of the hero's birth, his journey or quest, and his return home. The birth and infancy of a mythological hero is often exceptional or even miraculous. For example, the Hebrew prophet Moses, the Greek hero Oedipus, and the Roman heroes Romulus and Remus were all exposed to the elements at birth and left to die; but they miraculously survived. Oedipus was born against a Delphic oracle. He was ordered to be killed; but he was saved by a Shepard out of pity. Most heroes set off on a quest or a journey of some kind. In Greek and Roman mythology, Jason sailed in quest of the Golden Fleece; like wise Oedipus and Orestes embarked on their journey to expiate their sins. Claverton in The Elder Statesman, Edward in The Cocktail Party, embark on an
introspection to realise their sins which is akin to a journey and Harry in \textit{The Family Reunion} goes on a similar journey. Becket’s period of exile to France symbolises his journey of his self introspection. Myths of the heroes depict the eternal battle we wage to release the creative energies within ourselves and in the world.

Evolution of myths in a chronological order makes a comparative study of ancient human mind and the modern mind. The time sequence of myth is extraordinary— the "other" time: the time before the conventional world came into being. In the 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC Greek thinkers began to question the validity of their traditional tales, and the word mythos came to denote an implausible story. The Greek philosophers Xenophanes, Plato, and Aristotle exalted reason and made trenchant criticisms of myth; yet Myths retained their cultural importance.

The distinctions between reason and myth and between myth and history were never quite absolute. Aristotle concluded that in some of the early Greek creation myths, logos and mythos overlapped. Greek Philosophers have been known as the Stoics and much later as the Neo Platonists. They interpreted myths as allegories: narratives that employ picturesque language and images to convey a hidden message. The ancient Greek tragedies remained central to civic and religious life in Athens through the end of the 5\textsuperscript{th} century BC drew their subject matter largely from myths.

Euhemerus, a Greek writer of the 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC, traced the origin of the gods to the deification of human rulers by their grateful subjects. This explanation for the gods is consequently known as euhemerism. In the early 4\textsuperscript{th} century BC, Greek philosopher Plato systematically contrasted logos, or rational argument, with mythos which, in his view, was little better than outright falsehood. Plato himself devised many myths to explore topics like the birth of the world, death and
the afterlife which, in his view, fell outside the boundaries of logical explanation. Among these traditions were the myths of the Greeks; they were adopted and assimilated by the Romans. Some intellectuals, such as Greek writer Palaiphatos, of 4th century BC, tried to interpret the myths as having figurative (non literal) meanings.

In the work of Herodotus, the father of history, there is no incompatibility between myth and history; both historical events and the mythical patterns form part of his overall enterprise: namely, to conduct an inquiry (historia) into the past.

In the 2nd century, theologian Justin Martyr drew a comparison between Hermes, the divine messenger of Greek gods and Christ who is the representative of God. It can also be observed that on the insistence father Origen, a 3rd century church father, he reiterated that the Christian revelation of God in Jesus could best be understood in mythical terms. Theologian Saint Augustine of 4th century argued that Christians should utilize the traditions and myths of the pagan world in furthering the Christian world view. Mythos, logos, and history overlap in the prologue to the Gospel of John in the New Testament; there, Jesus, the Christ, is portrayed as the logos, which came from eternity into historical time. Early Christian theologians argued about the role of myths and history in the Biblical accounts in understanding the Christian revelation. In the Hebrew tradition, there was a source of tension: the incompatibility of Near Eastern polytheism (belief in many gods) and Hebrew monotheism. The Hebrew Bible resolved the primary tension (polytheism versus monotheism) by concentrating on the role of a supreme God and by minimizing or eliminating the roles of all other characters that could be considered divine.

As classical civilization gave way to Christianity, the traditional myths had undergone criticism and reinterpretation
by Greek writers from Xenophanes to Lucian, over a period of seven centuries. Some Christian thinkers, however, attempted to establish a parallel between Christian ideas and certain aspects of pagan mythology and early Christian common motif of pagan art. Pagan mythological themes were reinterpreted and used symbolically in early Christian art. For example, the figure of Odysseus bound to the mast of his ship so that he could hear the irresistibly sweet singing of the Sirens without danger of temptation. In Christian art, this motif was adapted to symbolise a soul bound to the wood of the cross, through which the believer enters the port of salvation.

In the Middle Ages (5th century to 15th century) allegorical interpretation of the ancient myths predominated. For example, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* includes a story of how Zeus fathered Perseus by approaching Danae in a shower of gold; this tale was interpreted in the light of the biblical story of Mary’s virgin conception. The entire *Metamorphoses* offered a rich source of material for medieval Christian allegory. In the middle Ages and the Renaissance periods, interpretations in terms of allegory and Euhemerism tended to predominate.

Mythological interpretation in the Renaissance (14th century to 17th century) continued the allegorising approach of the middle Ages. During the Renaissance astrology enjoyed a new vogue; the planets were named after the pagan gods—Venus, Jupiter, Mars, and so forth. The Neo-Platonist thinkers in Italy—especially Marsilio Ficione and Giovanni Pico and Della Mirandola—attempted to reconcile pagan mythology with Christian theology. Renaissance thinkers interpreted the material of pagan mythology in an imaginative rather than theoretical manner. The myths served as inspiration for painting and poetry.

Rene Descartes (1596-1650), the French philosopher, scientist, and mathematician, is called the father of Rationalism in modern philosophy. Rationalism (Latin ratio,
“reason”), in philosophy is a system of thought that emphasises the role of reason in obtaining knowledge, in contrast with empiricism, which emphasises the role of experience, especially sense perception. He influenced the interpretation of myths on scientific and secular plane.

During the Age of Enlightenment (17th and 18th centuries), emphasis was laid on rationality; the allegorical interpretation of myths fell into disfavour. At the beginning of this period, myths were dismissed by intellectuals as superstitious fabrications and absurd. The Enlightenment and the Romantic movement of modern European culture stimulated interest in myth, both through theories about myth and through new academic disciplines. Although the Enlightenment emphasized the rationality of human beings, it directed attention to all human expressions, including religion and mythology. Enlightenment scholars tried to make sense of the seemingly irrational and fantastic mythical stories. Their explanations included historical evolutionary theories—that human culture evolved from an early state of ignorance and irrationality to the modern culture of rationality; myths were seen as products of the early ages of ignorance and irrationality. Myths were also thought to result from euhemerism, that is, the divinising of the heroic virtues of a human being. Systematic disciplines such as social and cultural anthropology and the history of religions were devoted to the study of mythology. Scholars were forced to come to terms with myths from earlier historical periods outside the Western tradition, and they began to relate the study of myth to a broader understanding of culture and history. After the Enlightenment, the concern for myth, revived with new intensity; this could be detected in almost all the newer university disciplines—anthropology, history, psychology, and history of religions, political science, and structural linguistics.
In the late 18th century artists and intellectuals came increasingly to emphasise the role of the emotions in human life and, correspondingly, to play down the importance of reason. Those involved in this new movement were known as Romantics. The Romantic Movement turned to the older Indo-European myths as intellectual and cultural resources. Romantic scholars tended to view myth as an irreducible form of human expression; for them, myth, as a mode of thinking and perception, possessed prestige equal to or sometimes greater than the rational grasp of reality. Myths—both the stories from Greek and Roman antiquity and contemporary folktales—were regarded by the Romantics as repositories of experience far more vital and powerful than those obtainable from artificial art and poetry of the aristocratic civilisation of contemporary Europe. In Journal meiner Reise im Jahre 1769 (1769; Journal of My Travels in the Year 1769), a description of the experience, Marcel Mauss wrote:

... Ancient myths were the natural expressions of the concerns that would have confronted the ancients; and those concerns were the very ones that still confronted the Volk—e.g., ordinary sailors—in Herder's own day.  

In the late 17th century, a different approach to mythology arose in the context of new information about myth-making peoples, especially those in the Americas. Europeans had become aware of these peoples and their cultures in the course of their voyages of discovery of the 16th and 17th centuries. They assumed that these cultures could provide insight into the experience of prehistoric societies; European scholars sought the origins of mythology in the "childhood of man", when human beings supposedly first formulated myths as a response to their physical and social environment. The studies made in this period were consolidated in the work of German scholar Christian Gottlob Heyne, who was the first scholar to

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2 Marcel Mauss, Essai sur le don (1925; The Gift) Encyclopaedia Britannica, CD, 3 Vols. 1992
use the Latin term mythus (instead of fabula, meaning "fable") to refer to the tales of heroes and gods.

19th Century is the age of Science of Culture. As more and more material from other cultures became available, European scholars came to recognize even greater complexity in mythological traditions. The evidence provided by ancient Indian and Iranian texts such as the Rig-Veda, the Bhagavad-Gita and the Zend-Avesta were valuable. From these sources it became apparent that the character of myths varied widely, not only by geographical region but also by historical period.

Italian philosopher Giovanni Battista Vico raised the question of the interrelationship between myth and society. In his Scienza nuova (New Science, 1725; final ed., 1744) Vico set forth a four-stage theory of the development of myth and religion in Greece. The first stage expressed the divinisation of nature: Thunder and the heavens becomes Zeus, the sea becomes Poseidon. In the second stage, gods related to the domestication and domination of nature appears: Hephaestus, god of fire, Demeter, goddess of grain. In the third stage, the gods embody civil institutions and parties: Hera, for example, is the institution of marriage. The fourth stage is expressed by the total humanization of the gods, as found in Homer.

German scholar Karl Otfried Muller (1825) followed this line of inquiry in his Prolegomena zu einer wissenschaftlichen Mythologie (Prolegomena to a Scientific Mythology, 1825). He argued that the relatively simple Greek myth of Persephone reflects the concerns of a basic agricultural community, whereas the more involved and complex myths found later in Homer are the product of a more developed society.

The period of 18th and 19th Century is the age of discovery of Indo-European language family. Scholars also attempted to tie various myths of the world together in some way. From the late 18th century through the early 19th century, the
comparative study of languages had led to the reconstruction of a hypothetical parent language to account for striking similarities among the various languages of Europe and the Near East. These languages, the scholars concluded, belonged to an Indo-European language family. Experts on mythology likewise searched for a parent mythology that presumably stood behind the mythologies of all the European peoples.

The research of British scholar William Robertson Smith, published in Lectures on the Religion of the Semites (1889), also influenced Frazer. Hence Frazer came to believe that many myths had their origin in the ritual practices of ancient agricultural peoples, for whom the annual cycles of vegetation were of central importance.

The Myth and Ritual Theory was fully developed by British scholar Jane Ellen Harrison. Using insight gained from the work of French sociologist Émile Durkheim, Harrison argued that all myths have their origin in collective rituals of a society.

The Functional approach reached its most extreme form in the so-called functionalism of British anthropologist A. R. Radcliff-Brown, who held the view that every myth implies a ritual, and every ritual implies a myth. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, one of the fathers of British anthropology, thought that myth in archaic cultures was based on a psychological delusion and a mistaken logical inference—on a confusion of subjective and objective reality, of the real and the ideal. Tylor believed that myth, although illogical, had moral value.

R. R. Marett (1866–1943) is a later British anthropologist; he felt that myths arose from the emotional responses of the people in archaic cultures to their environment in rhythmic gestures that developed into dance and ritual. Narrative myth formed the oral part of the communal rites. Marett referred to his theory as pre-animism, to
distinguish it from that of Tylor, who had called his own theory animism.

The French linguist Maurice Leenhardt (1878-1954) explained myth primarily as the living experience of the community. Leenhardt, who spent a great part of his life among the Melanesians, observed that the Melanesians responded passively to the nonhuman realities of their environment. They did not try to dominate the environment conceptually or technologically, but attempted to adapt for coming to terms with its powers and forces. He coined the term cosmographic for this attitude and traced the myths of the Melanesians to their cosmographic experience of the world.

The 19th century Scottish scholar Andrew Lang and the German anthropologist Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) both noted in ethnographic literature the frequent presence of a "high god," a deity who created the world and then distanced himself from it. They saw a distinction in the myths between this kind of deity and the other deities and spirits. In their formulation, myths simultaneously encompass both the rational-logical and the intuitive entities. Later in the 19th century the theory of evolution put forward by English naturalist Charles Darwin heavily influenced the study of mythology.

Interest in myth was greatly stimulated in Germany by Friedrich von Schilling's (1775 - 1854) Philosophy of Mythology, which argued that myth was a form of expression, characteristic of a particular stage in human development, through which men imagine the Absolute. Referring to an episode in Iliad, (Book 20 verse 67) in which the gods fight each other; the critics have explained the hostilities between the gods, allegorically as an opposition between elements— dry against wet, hot against cold, light against heavy. Thus, the gods Apollo, Helios, and Hephaestus represent fire, and the god Poseidon, the river, and Scamander represents water. Similarly, the goddess Athena is interpreted as wisdom/sense,
the god Ares as the absence of that quality, the goddess Aphrodite as desire, and the god Hermes as reason. Experts on mythology searched for a parent mythology that presumably stood behind the mythologies of all the European peoples.

The most famous proponent of myth as an example of the historical development of language is Friedrich Max Muller (1823-1900), a German scholar who spent most of his academic life in England, and whose major studies dealt with the religion and myths of India. In his view, expressed in such works as Comparative Mythology (1856), the mythology of the original Indo-European people had consisted of allegorical stories about the working of nature, in particular such features as the sky, the Sun, and the dawn. Max Muller concluded that the Rig-Veda of ancient India – the oldest preserved body of literature written in an Indo-European language, Sanskrit – reflected the earliest stages of Indo-European mythology. He believed that in the Vedic texts of ancient India, the gods and their actions do not represent real beings or events; rather, they are products of an attempt, through sensual and visual images, to give expression to natural phenomena such as thunder or the sea. Muller attributed the later myths to misunderstandings that arose from the picturesque terms in which early peoples described natural phenomena. For example, an expression like “maiden dawn”, for “sunrise” resulted first in personification of the dawn (Usha), and then in myths about her. In the course of time, though, these original meanings had been lost (through, in Muller’s notorious phrasing, a “disease of language”), one Greek myth related to the pursuit of the nymph Daphne by the god Phoebus Apollo. In Muller’s interpretation it becomes one of the evidences of comparative linguistics:

"Daphne" originally meant, Dawn, and "Phoebus" meant morning sun, the original story was rationally
intelligible as "the dawn is put to flight by the morning sun."^3

Myths give legitimacy to the order of society. The British anthropologist Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough* (1890), first suggested the relation of myth to ritual. His theory was extended to explain the meaning of myth in literate societies. He proposed a three-stage evolutionary scheme. According to his scheme, human beings first attributed natural phenomena to supernatural forces (magic), later explaining them as the will of the gods (religion), and finally subjecting them to rational investigation (science). According to him, the mythical gods and heroes are personified heavenly bodies, the elements, and the so-called spirits of the crops and herds; myths are naive explanations of the ways of nature. These unconscious processes shape people's mental and spiritual growth. Frazer in his book stresses the correspondence between central Christian tenets and those of pagan, often barbaric myths and ritual. It reveals what creative and imaginative power of mankind has to say about transformation of myth into image, symbol, metaphor and nature's mystery that is, birth, death, and unknown world after death. Rituals are sometimes religious some times mantric:

If the religion has to stay in behaviour and creative works, more and more mythic episodes must be experimented.4

The French sociologist Émile Durkheim, (1858- 1917) rejected the notion that a myth arises out of extraordinary manifestations of nature. Nature to him was a model of regularity and thus is predictable and is the ordinary. He concluded that myths arise as the human response to social existence. They express the way society represents humanity and the world, and they constitute a moral system and a

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4 Ibid
cosmology as well as a history. Myths and the rituals stemming from them sustain and renew these moral and other beliefs, keeping them from being forgotten, and they strengthen people in their social natures. The Polish-born British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) refined this sociological conception of myth. For Malinowski, myth fulfils these needs in archaic and tribal societies which are an indispensable function:

It expresses, enhances, and codifies belief. It safeguards and enforces morality and contains practical rules for the guidance of the individuals in these cultures.5

Jacobsen pointed out that the imaginative mythical perception of plants was the practical and philosophical basis for the domestication of plant life and that agriculture itself became part of a perception both of cosmic order and of the structure of society. Gaster held that certain myths and rites have as their function the replenishment of life and vitality. Such myths and rites in agricultural societies are so generalised in their relation to the cosmic and social order that religious and mythical meaning is given to the entire culture.

In the 20th century, mythology has attracted scholars in many fields. The French linguist Georges Dumézil (1898-1986), who made extensive investigation of Indo-European myths in India, Greek, Roman, German, Scandinavian, and other cultures, discerned a common Cosmo sociological structure in these myths. He found in every form of Indo-European myth a tripartite structure, with a priest or ruler at the top of a hierarchy, warriors in the middle, and farmers, herdsmen, and craftsmen at the base. These classes are correlated with cosmic deities; and in the narrative form of the epic the interrelationships, antagonisms, and conflicts among these

three classes are dramatised. Dumézil does not claim that all Indo-European societies possess this social structure empirically, but rather that this structure operates as an archetypal language for the statement of ideal meanings within Indo-European cultures. Dumézil suggested that the priestly, warrior, and producing (working classes) classes in ancient Indo-European societies regarded themselves as having been ordained to particular tasks by virtue of their mythological origins.

The Romanian-born historian of religions Mircea Eliade (1907–86), held a myth as simultaneously rational, logical, intuitive, and imaginative. It reveals a primitive ontology—an explanation of the nature of being; It expresses by means of symbols, knowledge that is complete and coherent; although over the centuries they become trivialised and debased, people can use them to return to the beginning of time and rediscover and re-experience their own nature. Paul Ricoeur (1913–), a French philosopher, felt myth as expressed in symbols, is necessary for serious appraisal of the origins, processes, and depths of human thought.

Structuralist approaches to myth are based on the analogy of myth to language. Just as a language is composed of significant oppositions (e.g., between phonemes, the constituent sounds of the language), so myths are formed out of significant oppositions between certain terms and categories. Structuralist analysis aims at uncovering what it sees as the logic of myth. It is argued that supposedly primitive thought is logically consistent but that the terms of this logic are not those with which modern Western culture is familiar. Instead they are terms related to items of the everyday world in which the “primitive” culture exists. This logic is usually based on empirical categories (e.g., raw/cooked, upstream/downstream, bush/village) or empirical objects (e.g., buffalo, river, gold, eagle). In 20th-Century
depth psychologists found material to delineate the structure, order, and dynamics of both the psychic life of individuals and the collective unconscious of society.

Géza Róheim (1891-1953), is a Hungarian anthropologist, applied Freudian theory in interpreting archaic myths and religion and, more generally, in explaining the development of human culture. However the American scholar Joseph Campbell (1904-87) made the most comprehensive study of myths from the perspective of depth psychology. In The Masks of God (4 vol., 1959-67) he combined insights from depth psychology (primarily Jungian), theories of historical diffusion, and linguistic analysis to formulate a general theory of the origin, development, and unity of all human cultures.

These images are to be regarded as no more than shadows from the unfathomable reach beyond.6

Modern psychology believes that, our fears, dreams, social behaviours, and thoughts form parts of collective unconscious of our mind. Although people disbelieve it as irrational and imaginary state of mind, they respond to them unknowingly.

Sigmund Freud utilized themes from older mythological structures to exemplify the conflicts and dynamics of the unconscious psychic life. In The Interpretation of Dreams 1899 he posited a phenomenon called the Oedipus complex, that is, the male child's repressed desire for his mother and a corresponding wish to supplant his father. (The equivalent for girls was the Electra complex.) According to Freud, this phenomenon was detectable in dreams, myths, fairy tales, folktales, and even in jokes. Freud suggested that myth was the distorted wish-dreams of entire peoples. He saw the Oedipus complex as a memory of a real episode that had occurred in what he termed the "primal horde", when sons

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6 The New Milenium Encyclopaedia, CD, 1999 Simon & Schuster, Inc.
oppressed by their father had revolted, had driven out or killed him, and had taken his wives for themselves. Subsequent generations refrained from doing so; it was, due to a collective bad conscience. The formation of mythic concepts does not depend on cultural history; it is an independent, trans-historical mechanism, based on a highly personal biologic conception of man. He analysed only one theme the "repression" of conscious ideas. [Main source: Kees W. Bolle, Jonathan Z. Smith and Richard G.A. Buxton, 'Myth and Mythology', Encyclopedia Britannica, CD 3 Vols. Deluxe Edition, 1994-2002 Inc]

A myth is a confluence of natural world, cultural history and diverse unknown thoughts. It is a storehouse of cultural heritage of a social group. Many learned persons and literary critics have defined myths in various ways that baffles the vast verity of meaning to them. Richard Ellman and Charles Feidelson Jr. explain that the idea of myth points towards the realms of nature, cultural history and unconscious thoughts; it is a repossession of a cultural heritage:

Myths are public and communicable, but they express sublime mental patterns that come close to the compulsive drives of the unconscious.  

Myths reoccur again and again as a sort of metaphorical expression in the course of human life; they have a complex and significant symbolism. Hence modern writers use myths to express modern complexities. Many contemporary artists confirm the necessity of using myths in their creative works. These artists bring the plight of modern man and that of his counterpart in the myths on the same plane, and there by, join the past and present. Each poet tries to identify himself with the society in which he is living. Myths are basic identities of a society. Hence writers, even in their fictions, use myths of their society. Encyclopaedia Britannica explains this aspect thus:

...In one way or another one lives the myth, the myths that denote sacred, exalting power of events recollected or re-enacted. Living a myth implies genuinely religious experience.\(^8\)

Man likes to learn from the past, the play re-enacts it; hence myth is an educational feat. According to Melenovsky, myth is not merely a story told but a reality lived and it is dynamic in nature. According to Carl Jung, myth is the symbol of the mind of our ancestors. Myths provide wonderful themes to enjoy experience of our ancestors again and again. They are mental life of ancient tribes.

A literary work, in order to increase its depth and levels of meaning, has to explain the difference between modern and primitive persons. One has to know mythical metaphors to have the true knowledge of mind behind modern and well dressed person. A mythical metaphor embodies within it, religion, anthropology, philosophy and science and postulates a wider vision or universal philosophy. A well-dressed modern man may have cruel, abominable, prehistoric and barbaric desires.

A mythical form or imagery is a mode and primordial element; it has a significant position in literary criticism. It has black hymns, red religion and white science, (straight knowledge acquired through observation of nature). Rene Wellek and Austin Warren confirm thus:

Myth, a favourite term of literary criticism, points to, hovers over an important area of meaning shared by a religion, folklore, anthropology, psychoanalysis and fine arts.\(^9\)

In structural and symbolic criticism, myth acquires different kind of meanings. Such mythical images are mental or internal re-enactment of perfected experiences. These are not only visible scenes, sometimes invisible and interior ones.


as well. When an image becomes internal it becomes a metaphor, which shows the qualities of significant and signified. When an image represents an abstract it becomes a symbol. Myths are used in metaphoric narration of literary works. Images are selected from myths or legends and narrated as a compliment to primordial and present way of life. Myth generates life at different levels. It is an imaginary story of the beginning of life on the Earth and of Divine powers which are the eternal carrier of life.

E.M.W. Tillyard defines a myth thus:

Myth is a universal instinct of any group, large or small, to invest almost always unconsciously certain stories or events or places or persons, real or fictional with a common significance, to turn them into instinctive centres of reference.¹⁰

According to this, a historic event or a person belonging to a large group or a nation can be given as an example of a myth. If a myth represented by a particular group is used in literary work; it breaks its limit of that community and touches universal level.

M.W. Tillyard distinguishes two kinds of literature; first kind is being developed from popular mythical episodes; second one is the voice of the community that has developed it into a myth. Raymond Williams gives meaning of the myth in this way:

Myth means many things from ‘plot’ and ‘tale’ to ‘fable’; in modern usage; it is not merely a false version but also a presentation of different kinds of meaning.¹¹

Details of contemporary life can be identified while presenting uses of myths in historical plays as they are inculcated in historic, dramatic form or design. Raymond Williams tells that, though the persons who are represented in

¹¹Raymond Williams, Drama from Ibsen to Brecht [London; Chattoo and Windus, 1968], p.220
history are not present, actors who act those characters, place them in eternity and such incidents and the diverse meaning that myth gives are kept lively. According to Raymond Williams views:

It is not contemporary action swollen to myth, but a way of defining contemporary action and a range of attitude through a precise dramatic form.\textsuperscript{12}

Modern anthropologists have found in myths the history of races and inter relation between diverse races; myths give a re-vision of early society or primordial society. After close observation of rituals, conventions, views, and behaviours of Melanesian cultural races, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) has discovered a truth. Myth is a holy heritage to Melanesian race; it has inculcated their search, controls, their rules, regulations and social behaviour in it. In his thesis \textit{The Social Psychology of Myth}, he has defined myth like this:

... Myth is a narrative, resurrection of primordial reality, told in satisfaction of religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, and even practical requirements. Myths, in primitive cultures, fulfil an indispensable; it expresses enhances and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for efficiency of rituals and contains practical rules for the guidance of man.\textsuperscript{13}

T.S. Eliot has used Greek myths for his plots as hidden themes and distended the plays' scope. Hence we can find at least three levels in design of his plays. First, one is the external universal or divine design. We can also call it as fate. Second one is inner world design, the movement of unconscious substance, and that of the third being social design or milieu. By doing this, the divine, the unconscious and the conscious social environment can be brought together on the same plane. These three qualities become complimentary.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid; 229

to the spiritual, cultural and psychological qualities of myths. Thus the heroes of the Iliad, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana move in an unmarked time and space.

Andrew Langue has defined myth thus:

"Myths are cosmic substance in human form. This unique quality of culture shows the basis for its theory of soul."  

There is a belief in Scandinavian tradition that myths and rituals are interdependent. Some tribal believe that the king is incarnation of God; king only is the reason for the pains and pleasure of his subjects. A good king brings happiness and a bad one brings hardship. In this perspective myth is the primordial element of human civilisation. For example enthronement of king, which in some traditions is (as in Fiji or ancient India), is associated with a creation or re-creation of the world. Ruling families in ancient civilizations justified their position by invoking myths—for example, that they had divine origins. A myth considers the antiquity and sacredness of rituals, religious activities, or confirmation of socio-moral laws, the ancestor’s day—a hereditary annual celebration—is an example of such myth. Ritual conducted for the peace of the dead person’s soul. Such stories help to build the integrity of a culture. Melenovsky says that:

"Their existence and influence not merely transcend the act of telling the narrative, not only do they draw of telling their substance from life and interests—they govern and control many cultural features they form the dramatic backbones of primitive civilization."  

Hence Myth is life point of a civilization. By becoming imagery in a literary work myth gives a practical explanation to tribal laws and beliefs. Mythical tales reveal primordial

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14 Patil.B.Y, (Dr.) Kannada Adhunika Natakagalalli Basava Purana (Harihar: Belagu Prakashana, 2001) p, 13
truth in the way of present life, fate and human activities are determined. Mythical accounts rate social system.

Northrop Fry is identified as a structuralist in modern criticism. His study of *The waste Land* and *Ulysses* and *Fantasia of unconscious* are important works in the modern English Literature, which confirm importance of myths. A parallel development to mythical language has given a feeling that every word in a literature has another structure. For example oracles, the foretelling of oracles that ancient Greeks believed to have come from Apollo are being seen as parallel to thoughts of modern intellectuals; they express a systematic and regular existence with this view; the present is the image of the past. Many symbolic forms are being used to create internal regulations of human life. A culture is a product of all symbolic structures. These forms or internal structures are built on the basis of symbols and myths.

Definition of myth by Robert Denham is:

> 'Myth is a structure of emotionally charged ideas or sense data' proceeds further and call them 'the communicable ideogramatic structures of Literature'.

Hence the knowledge of these inter-imagery forms, and symbols is necessary to understand any literary works. According to Casper's opinion symbolic imageries are created on the basis of physical substances. Any symbolic form of structure involves mental creative element and naturally produced substance. Hence a myth is accepted in literary criticism as literary form or constructive elementary form.

Northrop fry compares myth with folk tales and explains the distinguished features of myths. According to him, myths are serious, and explain social aspects of life like a religious ceremony. In the other words, myths build big literature: works like creation of universe myths, hero,

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16 Robert Denham, 'Myth as a information' In Northrop fry on culture and Literature [Chicago: The university of Chicago press 1978] p.74.RPT 15
ancestor, Ebbs and tide myths, and myths of divine marriage are related to social, ceremonial and natural happening.

These huge structures, along with legend, history, and memory of historical events will combine to get a conventional form. Myth is a well constructed artistic form, like Homer's Iliad, Odyssey, The Old Testament and the Mahabharata. The story comes from nature; hence myth has a plot and milieu from nature, artistic structure is human. Accordingly, Fry says, a myth is a way to see nature in human form. A collection of mythical stories and their study opens up a complete worldview:

In the universe of mythology gods represent nature in humanised form and shows man's origin, his destiny, the limits of his power and the extension of his hopes and desires.  

Myth consolidates motive force behind cyclic movement of natural beings and man's birth and death is based on principles of identity and analogy. The poetic structures in myths make it simultaneously literary and religious. That is why collection of mythical stories, of a cultural group, gets integrated in the literature of that cultural group. As an epic, Odyssey has integrated historical tradition. Gods involve dynamic creativity and give Greeks the religious thoughts in it. Knowledge of cultural history, myth, mythical episodes and folklore is necessary to understand ancient texts. If myths lose the faith in it, then it becomes a historical discourse, because basically its structure is literary. Myths not only supply substance to literary works, they also provide a literary structure that, as Northrop Frye says:

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17 Northrop Frye, 'Myth, Fiction, and Displacement in William Brookes,
Defining... A society's religious beliefs, historical tradition, chronological speculations—in short, are the whole range of its verbal expressiveness.¹⁸

Considering mythology as a literary uterus, great poets of all times have continued to re-enter it again and again. Their works reveal about eternity myths and become compatible to poetic structure. As in the structure of great poet's works like Dante and Milton, myths become revealing eternity. Elements that build a myth also build literature. The function of determining whether a play is a satire or a tragedy lies with mythical image that are used in that play. Myths that give concept of hell and heaven are defined by fry as thus:

The myths are idealised world of pastoral and romance and the absurd, suffering or frustrated world of irony and Satire.¹⁹

The type of relationship between myth and literature is determined by the literary genre, traditional norms and regulations. Fry gives a rethinking by showing that how much modern prose literature is related to ancient conventional works. A collection of mythological stories shows different facts of man.

Myth criticism places a literary work in the environment of its own time, moves towards displacement according to natural criticism. It leads the reader from general situation of life towards the literary world.

The structure of a word was simple when it was created. As the civilisation developed, experiences of man became complex, and the language was inculcated with integrated experiences. Still, encyclopaedia of word has not been able to inculcate myths on its own (according to Fry), It transcends

¹⁸ Northrop Frye, "Myth, Fiction, and displacement" in William Brookes
above the limits of human language; it pervades on the plane of eternity.

Northrop Frye in his essay, ‘The Recovery of Myth’, studied medieval adventure stories, their mentality of idealisation and modern novels and developed myth criticism. The dynamic modern man has idealised the hero of medieval adventure legends. Such stories create an endless world of dreams. The great work of medieval times, the Arabian Nights, the Canterbury Tales and the Fairy Queen describe the episodes of conflict between the good and the bad, the evil and the virtuous. In the end the good wins over the evil. By this virtuous deed of upholding poetic truth, one’s own soul is empowered by myths. A modern novel is real in its own plane. Main characteristics of primordial images and eternal values used in the novels are able to describe the moral and linguistic degradation in man. A good example to this is The Lord of the Flies by Noble laureate William Golding.

Society is a complex community. If myths are used in a non-literary way, many social layers are formed in its myth complex. In the lower most layers social mythology becomes compromising way of producing citizens without self-confidence, who bend and show subordinating nature, just like Indian society with hierarchy of caste system. It is also believed that this phenomenon unites individual to society. Individuals also move along within community circle. Mythical images (Mythos) in the Romance explain the life of hero and his adventure, along with relationship between past and present of the society. Such stories describe life and adventure of the hero gratifying social system of landed gentry; and rationalise rules and regulations of that time. Myth Criticism identifies excessiveness of natural emotions, which is an eternal phenomenon in nature.
Thinker's like Carlyle and Yeats have attempted to create, in their work, history in its natural form. They held the view:

Myths are internal structures of an integrated history; these are recreated in modern stories and poems.\(^{20}\)

Neo structuralist Claude Levi Strauss defines myth as signifying systems of linguistic signs. The words of a language are elements of myths: just as our body is made of five elements, myths are constituted by words. These elements unify socio-psychological aspects. Language of a culture determines form and content of a structure. In this background social psychology not only studies a person's emotions, objectives but also studies systematic human relations and their interrelations. Levy Strauss gives importance to the way thoughts are formed in a language. Symbol, physical matter or relations change from culture to culture according to geographical and social circumstances. But man's inner and emotional aspect does not change. He says:

The point at which differences are merged in sameness or correspondence predicates the structure varying from culture to culture.\(^{21}\)

A structure of a literary work differs from one culture to other. At one stage it is discarded, and it dissolves in sameness or correspondence. A myth highlights this correspondence. Sound, which shows behaviour and a correspondence, which on its own becomes behaviour, is significant. In one way it is similar to objective correlation propounded by T.S. Eliot. It shows an image and the emotion and their undifferentiated meaning is Eliot's


objective correlation. According to Levi Strauss basic objective of a myth is getting an able rational model to get rid off a true conflict. In this background it illuminates thesis and anti-thesis elements in life. Man has to develop naturally rational elements or models in order to get-rid off social and internal antithesis. This is what Melenovsky stresses:

Man has to live a myth’ which is complimentary to his saying.\(^\text{22}\)

According to Levi Strauss, myth element is built from under mentioned factors:

First is, the structure entailing the primacy of collective extrication from involvement in concrete behaviour and a frame of reference which has an objective value; secondly the thought and thirdly by the use of myth to demonstrate the first and the second.\(^\text{23}\)

In the context of comparing myth and music, Levi Strauss discovers the fact that both have eternity. These are the life pulses flowing from generation to generation. But their origin and way of reaching people are different. Music originates from an individual and touches the bottom of the heart of both producer and listener. It originates within the circle of society and stimulates basic instinct of the community. Music is used as an imagery of devotion to god in Eliot’s play The confidential Clerk. Church music is used in Murder in the Cathedral to enhance the emotion of devotion, pity, guilt helplessness, and confession.

Levi Strauss’ thoughts match the opinion of E.M.W. Tilliardi; Myth is depending upon historic models of society. Myths are created to satisfy the needs of a culture. Myth


does the function of protecting man from inhuman powers. As Levi-Strauss explains;

Music and mythology bring man face to face with potential objects of which only the shadows are actualised. Myths are anonymous.\(^\text{24}\)

While talking about Natural quality of Myth, Levi-Strauss shows two paths of scientific discourse. First one is epistemic discourse second one is Mythological discourse. Epistemic contains laws, matter, origin, and source; Mythological discourse depends upon structural shape or form. One is structure the other is quality.

Scientific study of myths is in the form of imagination, defining, and regularisation work. Maintaining integrity of myths by preventing them from dividing and thereby creating mutually conflicting fragments is the intention of such study. The origin and development of myths is obscure. They are always shadows of things that one cannot be perceived. Levi Strauss explains that everything originates with its structure, configuration or co-existent relationships. He says:

The total body of myth belongs to a community is comparable to its speech. Unless the population dies out physically or morally, this totality is never completes.\(^\text{25}\)

In this way Levi Strauss stresses importance on scientific or principle concept of myths and further he places myths and language of a community on the same structure. Schelling's definition of myth is like this. A myth takes its birth in individual's personal and social necessity. Drama of myth is exhibited on a big a spacious theatre called human consciousness. In his great book, The Philosophy of Mythology, he gives enough details on myth. A myth does not take its birth in human fantasy. He explains further:

\(^{24}\) Ibid, p. 100.
Myth has no existence outside human consciousness, even though mythological process consists solely in determination of consciousness...  

The process of building truth in human consciousness is the way of mythological process; with this background myth becomes an Odyssey of cosmic world and the inner world of human mind.

Earnest Kassairer is another myth critic. He identifies birth of a myth in human language. In his essay 'The validity and Form of mythical Thought' he says:

Mythology is inevitable; it is natural. It is an inerrant necessity of a language. Mythology in the highest sense is the power exercised by language on thought in every possible sphere of mental activity.

A language reflects physical world; it expresses physical truth; in the same way, it inculcates human imagination and actual [real] world. If images are to be created in a work of art, imagination and subject are to be united. An image represents talent; it is the real part, which represents complete circumstance. In the same way symbol is a thing recreated by mind. What the mind precepts: fear, sound, colour, are recreated as symbols or symbolic forms which are related to a culture. In this background language, and culture or myth are born by man's mental process; a language is inculcated with mythical concepts and work in mythical way and images used, imagination, and meaning of language becomes a source. The concept of a structure is developed complementary to the activities of expression from ancient time. Though mythical symbols depend upon natural emotions, they have skills to narrate behaviour patterns of world community. An unseen power in mythical symbols converts a

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form into content. Form and content in blind beliefs and religious beliefs do not separate but become an integrated phenomenon. For example, a person need not be afraid of anything if he has faith in his family deity and if he behaves in his traditional way.

A part of or an organ represents the complete whole. Every part of the whole is the whole itself. According to the above law, belief in the magic is, those who get specific energy from the unit also get energy from the whole. The examples that he gives to explain these principles are simple common witch doctors use hair, cut nails, foot marks or sometimes shadow of a person to take control of his body by magic spell. By using these things, the body of the person, to whom these things belong to, can be physically taken to control. To this person witchdoctor use the technique of analogy and identification. Myth criticism is constituted on these two words.

Thus the concepts of occult, analogy and identification, bloom in physical phenomenon. For example some persons who believe in traditional folk practices, do some ceremonies to induce raining, one among them is sprinkling water on the courtyard. By doing this, they believe, rain can be attracted. Each drop of water, the vapour that evaporated from the droplet stop showering Clouds; such drop let of water has the tremendous power of rain. (This is basis for tissue culture and cloning.)

This mystic relationship, which obtains between a whole and its part, holds also between genus and species, and between the species and its several instances.²⁸

Mythical consciousness is different from practical aspects. This does not differentiate between dream and reality, symbolic narration that separates dream and reality

is very thin and unclear. Truth in myth need not obey practical and scientific laws. Myths are related to religious ceremonies. Rites are not beliefs but facts. Myths pass those, which are natural and true to the eternity of spirituality. Human forms and other contents get released from the bondage of reality, and are bonded to much more bondage and reveal physical and spiritual relationships. Here sign and the signified dissolve into unity.

Sound and names are beads of hymns. By chanting magical sounds, early men won over wicked forces; in the same way of chanting uncountable names of god in pre-Vedic times, hymns were chanted to worship God. Even in Roman Catholic Church there was a ritual of reciting God’s name accurately. In Bhagavatha Purana, a mythical episode of Ajamila is cited to show immense power of chanting God’s name at the time of death. Ajamila was a wicked man, who was after sensual pleasures; he did many sinful acts, though he was born in a noble Brahmin family. Though Narayana was the name of his son, it was the also the name of the God. (Lord Vishnu). Because he chanted it at the time of his death, Bhagavatha Purana says, Ajamila was taken to the heaven after his death. (Anthya kalecha nameva smaram thyaktha kalevaram: those who chant my name at the time of death certainly reach my abode.) Thus Kassairer’s thoughts about myth and language introduce a new view in literary criticism.

Levy Brule reasons about ancient minds and ancient man’s pre logical extrasensory qualities; Frazer identifies ancient man’s logical intelligent mind; Kassairer concentrates his brilliant knowledge on emotional creative power and secret nature of mind.²⁹

In the background of mythical images, a language is a product of talent and emotionionality. [Sentiment] Kassairer

builds a metaphor between a child’s experiences and mental evolution of mankind.

Jung begins his essay, ‘The collective Unconscious and Archetype’ by a hypothesis: If unconscious is personified it can be called as collective human being. It will have male and female nature, transcends above youth, old age, birth and death and will be a hero of an eternal experiences for one or two million years and be eternal. As this earth sees its rise and fall, it remains for uncountable years, changes its form — as a person, family, a tribal race, or a civilized citizen — undergoes a series of metamorphosis as a substance in this nature. Unconscious is seen in dreams, there is no possibility of it being a person, and probably this is an eternal stream or an ocean with structure [content] and images. Such an image, forms flow through dreams to conscious or it is just an Abyss. Massive structure of unconscious’s experiences can not be dismissed as an illusion, because this body which is visible and perceptible to us is a system which caries early signs of primeval evolution of early times and is moving. The very existence of man is here. That is why this is not an illusion but it is a perceptible flow of knowledge.

Eternal images or Archetypes, this term is used for the first time in the works of Phyla Judeans while stating about God’s image in man. According to Iranaeus, creator of the world did not fashion these things directly from him but copied them from the archetypes outside him. In Plato’s ethos, for our purpose, archetypes may be considered as an ancient content, embedded deeply in the layers collective unconscious. This ancient content in early periods or primeval time contains universal images. Levy Brule call these symbolic forms narrating the ancient world as ‘representation collectives’. Carl Jung calls them unconscious contents. Life of ancient tribal groups is the expression of unconscious content transformed in a specific way. Then they do not
remain as unconscious contents, but transform themselves into conscious formulae according to tradition.

Carl Jung differentiates between historical formulae and Archetypes. In the background of Archetypes, myth is an extra-sensory phenomenon showing its natural (soul) self. Early man had strong impulses of joining external worldly experiences with internal extra-sensory activities (events). Ancient man was not content enough in enjoying Sunset or Sunrise. He believed that detail study of natural things become extra sensory phenomenon. Because Sun, represents God or hero in his soul. Early man believed that Myths or mythical stories are episodes of extra sensory or mental field.

Ancient mentality does not discover myths, but experience them. Myths have significant meaning. They are extra sensory forms (metaphors) of ancient tribal life. A man separated from mythical literary tradition and tribal life style is like a ghost who has lost his soul. Mythology of a tribal group is its living religion. If this is lost, it is its moral end. This is applicable to civilised society as well.

According to Frederic Shlegel through myth literature we can see it again and again that which is put away from consciousness. Spiritual and aesthetic subject furthers the consciousness just as soul is lingered to matter of the surrounding physical world. Myth literature is a natural poetry. In its scope good values take their shape from art. Those who understand this period’s general reformations and [eternal] ever going revolutions they understand two gods of humanity. The first god is our ancestor’s activities; the second god is the forth-coming golden age’s specific nature. If man can understand his position and understand the earth and the sun it is enough. According to Richard Chase, myth is a story, narrative or poetic literature:
... Myth is studied as an art and, as Myth is a mode of cognition, a system of thought and a way of life as art is.30

Myth in literature is a metaphorical discourse. So it can be viewed as an art form. As art has inculcated the ways of life, and discipline of thought, so also a myth does. Famous writers like T.S Eliot, W.B Yeats. Mann, James Joyce, Sigmund Freud and others in different way take myths towards creative literature. Richard chase sees myth as a value. He gives a beautiful meaning to myths. According to him:

Myth for them is philosophy; it is a system of metaphysical or symbolic thought; it is a theology a body of dogma or a worldview; it is in direct opposition to science, it is indeed the other side of scientific coin. Myth, like science, is at once a method and body of ordered experience.31

Then Richard Chase discards all these views. He sees myth and science as a complementary to each other. Freud’s scientific mentality establishes true nature of the myth. All cultures have power to create myths. There is a necessity for us to understand our ancient culture. Study of culture encourages us to stride towards future. If a work of art, in order to achieve an intended objective, he teaches that, the natural should dissolve itself in supernatural; it is mythical; a writer uses impersonal forces present in the nature or in the universe in order to fulfil emotional necessities. Richard chase has identified three important functions of myths to understand the problems of modern man. It reflects the facts of primeval period.

1. Myths are social customs, which are very ancient, holy, and protect moral regulations [laws] of that society. In this way they transport men towards future. Though they look authoritative, they have creative and motive force. They

31 Ibid; p.244 RPT Patil p.28
have social, moral and psychological functions as explained by Melenovsky.

2. Culture of Stone Age is dynamic, responsive and thrilling. Ancient culture’s consciousness has to face frequent struggle for its existence, for ancient man, the truth is pragmatic. Life is not a museum or a science textbook; it is a theatre or activities of motive forces, unknown forces, forces comparable to emotional forces of man and magical forces of compulsion. Extra-sensory or super natural powers are omniscient to early men.

As the ancient man’s human emotions went on pervading the universe, natural phenomenon became dramatic. For example, there may be sad, beautiful, satyr, conflicting solacing, and mentally torturing circumstances. Mantra chanting unifies matter, quality and force. This is an art and aesthetic activity of appreciating beauty. If, in any case, human feelings do not pervade this material world, the world becomes chaotic and dangerous. Mantra is a unifying means. It joins (unifies) human emotional life and nature's secret truths. The ancient literature which explains importance of mantra; it enshrines its principle, and for this reason it becomes mythical. It also imbibes moral strength to mind and re-confirms the creativity of the universe.

3. Myths perform the cathartic function of dramatising the clashes, the harmonies of life, in a social and natural environment. There is always a conflict between mantra and religion. Priests have secured an honourable position in the society and act as administrators of religion. These priests are half responsible for this conflict. Mantra is a divine power, which is above limited power of man. The responsibility of priests is to transform the mantric power into religion. Priests transferred the power of mantras to gods to control men and to make them faithful to them. For example if we study the mythology of any society we can find the examples like,
Kali, Veerabhadra, and Naga deities who control the nature in mythology, are the destroyers of evil forces. Mantra can make them act. We can see conflict between mantra and religion. (Actually it a conflict between forces of evil and good) Myths keep this conflict and helplessness in force and convert contending forces into useful order to workout an agreeable objective; it is like the literary act of bringing together mutually conflicting forces.

The natural religion studies the benefits of learning pragmatic lessons from historical events on the plane of 'cause and effect' which is also a useful way of myths. Mythical discourse may look childish and irrelevant, but it depends up on how we explain a myth. Myth is always alive in moral and intellectual background. Symbolism and hidden meaning in them can be explained. The myth of Oedipus can be a very good example to it. Events that occur in the life of king Oedipus may look childish and irrelevant, the meaning of life that story has hidden within it are splendid, remarkable. We see king Oedipus as a way that searches for his being, his existence, his origin, and his integrity. As and when the society changes, myth gives different meaning to life accordingly. Myth is philosophical, myth of Oedipus philosophises man's misery. In the poems of T.S Eliot, and W.B Yeats, mythical images give philosophical form to emotions. They did not come from beyond this universe. They are built from man's society. That is why Richard Chase calls myths as simultaneous humanity also.

In this way myths began from wonder and then combine mantra with literature. In the mythical world of ancients, a peculiar animal, or a stone or a tree has the power of life. In Vishnu Purana [mythology of Lord Vishnu] animal like incarnations of Lord Vishnu, like white wild boar (Karaha), great turtle (Koorma), great fish (Matsya), are mythical, they give a frame and content to the discourse. To Sophocles and
Freud, Oedipus myth is a concept. Epic emotionally creates mythical stories and compile them faithfully with a firm belief. A mythical image takes the movement of poetry beyond its limits.

In this contemporary world, another literary critic, who tries to identify the levels or layers of poetry, Phillip Wheelwright, finds the importance of myth in giving perfection to Poetry. According to him:

Myth involves the rediscovery of the original and essentially unchangeable condition of human insight human blessedness.32

Building history on non-historic past would be a weak endeavour. Modern intellectual complexity rejects the recurrence of historic episode. Scientific attitude does not believe in episodes of Ramayana. Wheelwright says that recollecting inferences of the past in mind is scientific; fact is different than this fundamental, basic, natural attitudes and ordinary experiences of parallel relationships. Religious and poetic truths are not unexperimentable just because world is seen physically. Science has attained a position of dictatorship; religious, poetic, and spiritual republics lose their own sovereign domains. But religious preachers like Jesus Christ or great poets like Sophocles or Shakespeare and many others in their mystic experience have searched for eternal truths. Myth and mythical consciousness’ correct understanding makes the [experience] true knowledge of the mysterious truth. Myth is not only a magical story, or symbolic representation of truth in nature of man and physical nature; it is also the narration of abstract forces.

Wheelwright’s opinion is like thus:

Myth is the expression of a profound sense of togetherness, not merely on the plain of intellect...but togetherness of feeling and of action:

wholeness of living. Such togetherness must have more over history.\(^\text{33}\)

Mythology is the manifestation of life. The community (myth) has its own history of development. Folk-dances, prayers, behaviours, and folk songs of ordinary persons create the mind of a community. In the circle of community consciousness is hidden the top most truth of eternity. The remembrance of community and the community life has indisputable logical truth and can become befitting content for poetry. Thus myth has poetry in its soul. Poets of romantic period thought that in the language of the ancients, the myths, metaphors and images were profusely used; hence that language itself was poetry. There was community mind in the ancient man’s speech and metamorphic aspects of their speech that introduced secret elements inherent from primeval period. For example let us consider the Upanishadic verse Shanti Mantra: sahanavavathu, sahanau bhunakthu....

It preaches mankind the community mind ... Let us live together, let us eat together, let us employ all our energy together, let the divine shine up on us, let us not steel from others and let their be peace among us.

Metamorphic factors used in the ancient poetry of of Phrygian and Egyptian races give the concepts of their community relationship. Their folk songs deify their king rather than gratifying him. These songs though seem to show rituals to respect the dead king, in the deeper level, they search for the way of his resurrection; they see him in their deity Osiris and sun god Ra: - [so also the Indians see their ancients’ soul in sun god]

Their senses of mystical communication in Egypt as else where, found it’s natural expression, in the type of poetry characteristics of imaginary, which is aesthetic correlates of the lower and upper poles of myth consciousness.\(^\text{34}\)

\(^{33}\) Ibid, p, 256.
\(^{34}\) Ibid p: 260 p 33.
A myth is made out of sound and symbols. In modern and ancient poetry myth imageries imprint and increase the scope of grandeur. The viewers have the knowledge of myths; a great dramatist converts myths into imageries to express his emotions and views to create a suitable background and social surroundings. There is a complimentary relationship between present perceptions and artistic use of myth imageries. When Sophocles wrote his plays his contemporary spectators believed that the myths used in his works were literary truths. During reformation myths were used for aesthetic purpose. Modern men think that myths represent ancient life concepts and also think that in this present materialistic world his existence is sterility [The waste land]. Moderns use the episodes of mythical stories with a responsible desire for regaining the ancient grandeur. The concepts of god and sin are complimentary to each other; they were concentrated in Greek mind. The basic concept of Sophocles and Aeschylus is the re-enactment of sin and its expiation. This is the philosophy hidden in the Greek culture. William Shakespeare, the lord of English plays, has shown in his plays myth of love, and also myth of divine earth and governance. These plays' primary objective is to depict the consciousness of contemporary commons.

The myth of love shows that, how man grows beyond his moral existence through art. Myth of universal governance shows the unique relationship between man’s life, divinity and nature.^^

In the ancient epics, myth shows the firm faith of the poet on the one hand; and the futility of the contemporary world, and ineffective level of present poetry on the other hand. Philip Wheeler Wright argues that, myth which unites men with one another unites with the unknown truth by which

^^ Patil.B.Y, (Dr.) Kannada Adhunika Natakagalalli Basava Purana (Harihar: Belagu Prakashana, 2001) p, 33-34
mankind has flourished. Accordingly Thomas Becket shows not only social and religious views of twelfth century AD; but he also shows along with it, the depth of historic tradition and its scope and a view to build future. The bond of myth consciousness in great epics unifies the ancient tribes and their progenies, who are, at present, contemporary people. Northrop Fry confirms this as thus:

To me myth is not simply an effect of historical process but a social vision that look towards transcending of history, which explains how it is able to hold two periods of history together, the authors and ours in direct communication.\[^{36}\]

Carl Jung calls four factors around which a myth forms as a sphere [a circle]. Art, literature and religion, or self-quality, or soul is a core around which, a circle is constructed. Jung calls individualisation as a process in which core content is transferred to truthfulness of the soul. This results with the help of Archetype, which arises from community unconscious.

Rainer Emig gives a look at the uses of myths and treatment, because, it is essential to dig and analyse modern poetry. According to him, myth is a form of narration of story, content or structure, which pervades at lower level a basic text, which is the part of another basic text. A source text voices many texts. The main function of a myth is to provide a frame. This is a structure [form] logically used as a supplement of speech. Since it is a frame, a myth is series of symbols in the background unifying logical system. Rainer Emig says:

Myth transposes a complete portion of discourse into another sphere, which is not merely metaphoric, but also Meta linguistic.37

Claude Levi Strauss defines the relationship between emotional thought and myth that gives sustaining value to emotional thinking or philosophic myth. In modern society an alternative word used to myth is politics; in its general perception the concluding meaning is institutional reaction or principle on reason or degree [profession]. If seen in the context of the values politics evaluates [reviews] our social status [strata]. Myth evaluates our very existence.

Roland Barthes, one among the leaders of modern criticism calls myth, a metaphor, which changes history into nature and instinct. And it is a historic [measurement] evaluation of identification of our social and internal strata [layer]. So it is a value determined by a historic event.

Carl Jaspers explains myths as principles that are given a visible form: visualisation of principles. He faithfully believes that philosophy takes its birth from myths and mythical stories. Myth is an indiscardable dress of truth.38

Though modernism is furthering itself from conventional behaviour; myth has profound impact and the power to attract modern poetry. The political doctrine of survival is helpful to myth in present day’s speed and hard facts. In this environment, art protects itself by intellectual dominance; to achieve this, it takes the help from myths. The art is loosing its beauty and liberty due to present’s hardness and cruelty. The language used in the contemporary literature is becoming complex and loosing its beauty by mechanisation. In this background, Edward Wilson wishes to say that when ever a language becomes technical and globalised, and then it

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decreases its capacity to produce myths and images that are necessary to the literature. But best poets like Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats have enriched it by their profuse use of myths in their literary works. Myths have increased the scope and depth of the whole poetry. They prevent English from becoming barren by their profound use of ancient myth and introducing their basic emotion and principles; and they have used such myths as images, symbols and patterns [models]. Due to the impact of First World War, social life of England seems to have become barren. That sterility spread to language and literature but myth imageries have rightly been convinced of necessity of myths at lower layers. Mythical frame narrates coherent text. Eliot’s ‘Love song of ... Profrock’ and Pound’s ‘Cino’ poems give many examples. The contents like, the complexity of the contemporary period and history, disruption of culture and its reconstruction are concentrated in the poems of Eliot and Pound. Pound in his poem ‘Culture’ says:

A man does not know his own address until he knows where his time and milieu stand in relation to other times and conditions.  

The importance of myth’s unifying capacity is hidden here. Just as T.S. Eliot’s every play has a Greek classic at its bottom layer, The Canto has Dante’s The Divine Comedy and Homer’s Odyssey underneath it. These two works explain the adventurous journeys of the hero. Popular stories told by commons are the subject of these two great works. But they differ in techniques of structure. Narrator is not a part of the work but is an outsider as of Sutradhara in Sanskrit plays. He becomes a text in the different stories of the work. Homer’s Odysseus faces many hardships while making his return voyage, after Trojan War, to his to his native country Ithaca. He becomes a dynamic internal text of the epic. Homer and Dante’s heroes follow specific firm principles of a cult and

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keep their names anonymous. But pounds Cantos engage in a voyage without a definite hero and definite beliefs. Their diversities show history and historic marks by showing the use of myth imageries. Thus without explaining historic, cultural and linguistics explanation myths thus become themselves imageries (metaphors) of that language, culture and history. Myth content of the text change poetry into fact. Modern mind is reflected in pounds Cantos. Every poem becomes cultural criticism; ancient noble values are reflected in modern (form) genre. For example plays, novels, poetry on stage provide suitable values to the fast changing world.

On such artistic platforms, past and present blend harmoniously and influence each other. This function shows the necessity of symbolic interpretation of myth, or stimulates the creation of new myths.  

This probably has an objective of interpretation of myths.

Creation of poetic myths or dramatic myths takes its shape in the concept of Archetypes. Modern stories and novels use myths profusely. James Joyce’s Ulysses is an example to name such one. Myths re-interpret cyclic changes in history to suit the changes that take place in natural seasons. Breaking relationship with tradition and traditional values is the main characteristics of modern life. But severed traditional values are inculcated in myth story structure. James Joyce has built his story structure like that of Odyssey by Homer. The novelist has created an epic like circumstance and place by using stories from odyssey; such environment is in the streets of Dublin where the hero travels, against natural circumstances. Collective conscious shows the relationship between mythical and historic content. He takes up two examples from history.

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40 Patil.B.Y, (Dr.) Kannada Adhunika Natakagalalli Basava Purana (Harihar: Belagu Prakashana, 2001) p, 30. p,
1. At a place called Thermo Philly Spartans fought war with Persians. This historic event explains the importance of heroic courage at the time of disappointment. The defeat of the Persians is not only a historic event but also has mythical value. The historic event of Indian King Porus' clash with Alexander, the great, is not only a subject pertaining to royal dynasties; not only a war between two races, but it also introduces world's two cultural minds; in this respect it becomes a myth. A myth determines and creates a national character or national mind that is why Tilliard propounds the importance of myths to new nations. The America, the country without an ancient mythology, has accepted the historical events that gave rise to its independence, as myth in principle. Even though India had ancient myths, new myths were created based on its freedom struggle. He explains that:

Even great political movements too need their mythology. One of the best known of these is the classless society of the communists.41

Transforming an historic event into a myth is a method of humanisation. This humanisation is the power of building of nation. Tilliard gives a few historic and religious myths as example. He explains how the entire medieval creative imagination, the English mind and literature were influenced by myths.

The Harrowing of Hell is a religious myth epic, which flows eternally from English mind. Limbo is the neglected part of the hell, a jail filled with noble persons who were dead before birth of Jesus Christ and innocent children who died before baptism. This epic tells the story of Jesus Christ who forced himself, deep into the dreadful hell and from that underworld rescued Adam and other persons explained in The Old Testament. The aim of creating this epic is to depict the

interest arrived in the minds of medieval persons to know, feel and understand the social truth of each and every corner of the world. Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, works of Aqirus, and murals drawn on walls of Churches are many such examples.

Many incidents of *The Old Testament* give understanding about the world, because one event will be the replica of the other. And every incident is the premonition of Christ’s Harrowing of Hell. According to Catholic faith, these incidents point towards future miracles. In this way, history before the birth of Christ, as explained in *The Old Testament*, becomes a storehouse for myths. Myths or Epics based on this resource become pointers to know about religious law’s scope and help to relate with other events as well. Worldly facts again show the necessity of this myth due to factual necessity. Tilliards explains its historic necessity:

> Once a feeling or mode of action has been embedded in the mythology of a large group of people, it acquires an incalculable power. A healthy mythology is a nation’s most precious possession.  

Harrowing of the hell is re-enacted in a new form; every form has main objective and content. The eternal principle in it is the victory of the son of God over dark evil; and the victory of the light over darkness. According to Christian doctrine Christ’s fight with death is a universal myth. Light always chases away darkness. Life always pushes back death. In this myth the matter that dissolves is always Christ, who represents light which is necessary for life. These experiences guide new generation and blend the inner life of past and present peoples. EMW Tilliards, while explaining Tudor myths, shows how historical events can also become myths. During renaissance people used to relate political affairs with natural cycle. They identified human mind in

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nature. History has also shown remedies for their moral and political problems.

The mirror for the Magistrate was written when the Renaissance resurged from Italy. It is a collection of great works that has some moral episodes. This work has rectified the political and social behaviour of many Elizabethans. Tilliard tells about the mind of the people then and there:

... It was thought that in a royal line, a thing that happened in one generation, was likely to repeat itself in the third... thinking thus Elizabethans would be more prone ... to isolate and make certain important political events and ideas, in other words, to make myth of them.  

Tilliards selects two diverse events and calls them political or Tudor myths. The first incident belongs to 'coronation of King Henry VII', and the second is about 'Wars of Roses'. These Two incidents are related to horror of internal strife in the minds of the British people. These two incidents are converted into historical myths and he explains how two of these were used in English literature and art. King Henry’s documents, to prove his hereditary geniality, were weak; hence he created many false myths to prove his descent. Arthur myths and Cadmar myths episodes indoctrinate the descent of King Henry VII, which were created by his own order. King Henry uses another myth episode as evidence to show Brutus, the son of Aeneous as the source of British royal dynasty. Mythical stories are usually accepted as evidence to prove the antiquity of a religion. All these mythical episodes are re-documented and reused and in Renaissance Literature.

Spenser’s Fairy Queen, William Warner’s Albion England and Drayton’s England’s heroic Epistles provide documents to prove the genealogy of British Kings. Tudor Kings wrote historic mythical episodes, including ‘Roses War’ to terminate the war which was fought for hundred years. Harassed gods in

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43 Ibid; p. 42.
the end appointed Tudor Kings to rule England. It is believed that to end the war, to end pride, to free England and to herald an era of happiness, the royal dynasty came to England. Then the people had a happy and healthy understanding.

EMW Tilliards mentions the name of yet another historical myth, which helped in the creation English national character, which has remained relevant even today; it is myth of Retirement, which was created in the seventeenth country. In modern society man is bored and tired with restless labour. To over come this bore, he has to live alone among river, valley, and maintain for a few days; he must feel and enjoy the existence of God in that natural environment. In principle he has to think [meditate] about death sitting among lively nature. The desire of W.B. Yeats to go and live lonely in 'Instree Island' in a small hut is because of myth of Retirement.

According to Robert frost’s desire, in the magic of newness, the tired and bored life gets rid of its tiredness; invigorate itself with new hope and desires [the old stem sprouts to new leaf] in mind and body. If this should happen one has to take resort in nature compulsorily. This myth resembles vanaprastha Ashrama, one of the four ashram’s among Hindus. It is a concept of ancient philosophical practice and heritage. Many philosophers who propound philosophy of life have been stressing the importance of solitude in human life. Their principle is temporary withdrawal from miseries of life, which is necessary for human health. Epicureans, Stoics, Horace, Virgil, Lucretus, Charvakas (Indian Atheists), and Meemamsakas (follower of one among the six types of visionaries of life), though they have discovered their own path of life, they propound that to attain seclusion is universal phenomenon. All philosophers and those who like to understand God in pagan way have selected this path.
In the first phase of internal strife in England, when the king lost the war, it not only idealised the Myth of Retirement, but also converted the event into a myth. Political fall like this also becomes the theme to many mythical episodes and folk-tales. Philosophical concept behind this myth is, the loss in this life is the possible victory in the next world. In this way a historical event has, in a way created myth of Retirement.

Historical myth of England has been woven with threads of freedom and equality. The internal strength of historical myths stimulates the people to study history. Its objective is not only resurrection of the heritage and antiquity but also to give mental power to identify the limits of rule of King from the ancient heritage. Lord Claverton’s in T.S. Eliot’s The Elder Statesman, retreat to Badgley Court is a sort of myth of retirement. Living there for sometime made him to make a deep introspection, realises his past sins, makes confession and gains peace of mind.

By using various definitions by various critics as explained as above, and their viewpoint, we can identify certain common qualities of myths. Here the word myth is used according to the definition of myth theory. After viewing theories of different literary critics, a common framework is worked out as given below

1. Myth is a diverse and vivid concept of natural world, cultural history and unconscious views.
2. Myth is a true hereditary story of a cultural group. It is a fictitious story of origin of life on this earth by divine power.
3. A myth is an eternal flow of life.
4. A myth is a true and holy heritage of a cultural group; which is involved in their invention, which controls their rules, regulations, and social behaviour.
5. Mythical stories reveal the primordial truth and create a social system with all their power and influence.
6. Myth has nature as its content and environment and its artistic structure is human.
7. Myth is a way to see nature in human shape. Many have believed that mythology is a storehouse of literature and has re-entered into it many a times, all the times. [To look out subject for their work of art]
8. Myth is made up of symbols of sound. Just as human body is made up of five elements; myths give ideal or logical Principles to get over internal and social hardships of man, 9. A myth takes its birth at social and individual necessity.
10. The Drama of myth is played on a stage of human consciousness.
11. Analogy and identification are the two words in physical phenomenon which are born with the help of Magic; they are the basis of myth criticism.
12. Myths are manifestation of eternal models or archetypes, which are hidden in the deep layers of collective unconscious
13. Myth literature is a natural poetry; in its fold higher values take shape by art. Just like art myth has a way of life, and an intellectual discipline,
14. Myth converts conflicting forces into useful experiences by keeping the conflict between Magic and Religion in force.
15. Myth gives perfection to poetry.
16. Myth is the lively community consciousness, which shows precise [definite] relationship between mythical and historic content.
17. Humanisation is the act of transforming an historical event into a myth. Humanisation is the power that builds national characters.
18. A historical myth is woven with the threads named equality and freedom.
19. A myth can become a source to an integrated study of tribal community, and also a word of voice to its objectives and desires. Hence it is necessary to understand the relationship between a community and myth. In S. Thomson’s opinion, folk stories provide a definite form [structure?] to myths. The difference between a folk story and a mythical story depends up on the characters and the frame works of the stories. Bose explains their differences as thus.

20. The milieu of myths is time in which this universe has not taken a form [shape] [procreative period] while that of folk stories is post creation or modern.

21. Characters in myths are noble and divine; generally they may be gods or cultural heroes. In Folk-tales hero is a common man or animal with human qualities are main characters.

22. People believe their cultural myths as true. They live their present life based on past myths; hence myths are holy. On the other hand common man may or may not believe in folk-tales. Main objectives of these folk-tales are preaching, pleasing and entertaining.

23. If the content of the stories is same, it may become myth in one culture and a folk-tale in the other. Hence structural changes are not seen in these, if any that may be found, will be an internal subject of the story and pattern of working only. A story of a youth setting out in search of a bride, and returning after marrying such a bride may become a folk-tale. If this story is appealing to a whole community, it may become a myth.

Life of man is polarised in this time of globalisation, commercialisation and privatisation. Myth, which is an ambassador of cultural evolution, forces conventional beliefs, forces certain social organisations; create stability and faith in a particular path (religion). Because myth does this function, it is called ‘Human Religion’. But today’s society is fragmented due to false religion. Study of myths, for
example, Becket myth, helps us in understanding a convention (heritage). It protects social unity and human values.

Wherever there is political instability in the history of nations, there will be social unrest. There will be always conflict between ruling class and intellectualism of social reformers. This conflict between ignorance and enlightenment is the main subject of the history. This Conflict is not only between religion and politics; but also it is a fight between good and the bad, good intention and bad intention, order and mutiny. Sometimes feud and division happens as a kind of unavoidable destiny. Destiny played its role for the feud between King Henry and Archbishop Becket.

Some subjects like globalisation, trans-culture, Neocolonialism, commercialisation, Sex-discrimination and human rights are debatable. Such debates are aimed at understanding of integral humanitarian system. This understanding elevates into spiritual evolution. The main responsibility of literature is to nudge the strayed modern human life by moral reasoning and to stimulate him to move towards spiritual strata. Becket myth is time tested through history. In the same way dramatists have used Greek myths of Oedipus, Orestes, Electra, Alcestis, and Ion; this modern trend shows that Greek myths still have relevance and can be used by the artists to reinforce modern men to make appropriate mental adjustment to face the complexity of the modern life. The theatre is the main medium to artistic exhibition of the lives of great personalities who exhibit such tendencies. They appeal the common man better than any other literary genre. Greek Myths furnished literary, philosophical, and artistic inspiration to such later periods as the Renaissance and the romantic era and they have continued to do so in our contemporary period as well.