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Let us start from the realization that “We live in a world of wonder, mystery and exquisite beauty of which human beings are in integral part” [1], where “Magic is hidden in the language we speak. The webs that you can tie and untie are at your command if only you pay attention to what you already have (language) and the structure of the incantations for growth ...” [2]. We, as thinking beings, have often been led to ask throughout our history “... what is the nature of the holding together of diverse things in a unified beauty and the recognition of this beauty by mind? Is it not ‘magical’ in the precise sense that the blending of the different and the identical as beauty, and the aesthetic response of mind to beauty in material things, is taken as real, yet cannot be described or invoked save ‘tautegorically’ by re-presenting the beautiful effect?” [3]. However, in this Twenty first Century, despite millennia of striving for answers amongst these blessings, “We live in the age of the blockbuster special effects movie, the airport novel, the TV soap. These are our modern popular myths. But do these stories fulfil the same role that myths and fairytales used to, of collectively guiding us through the journey of life? Are Tom Clancy, Seinfeld and The Terminator really expressions of the collective unconscious?” [4]. It is as a result of this that “We are facing a crisis of being with each other, and being within the world. The crisis of being must lead us to certain questions: what are we doing?, and, why are we doing it?” [1]. We find that “This is a time for a re-evaluation of all our practices” [1], and have to ask therefore how can we perform such a critical evaluation. Now if we follow Leach’s dictum that “culture communicates” [5] then “To understand culture ... one seems to need models of communication” [6]. However, impeding such modelling is the fact that “Image and thought are a unity” [7] and yet “The only true description of a language is the language itself. Anything else is just a game” [8]; and that therefore “... our goal is to overcome the duplicity of the literary word, to transcend the tragedy of thought without the word, to comprehend the whole word” [7]. We thus find that a real problem in philosophical enquiry is “... the maintenance of the human/nature dualism ... this distinction can be situated within a historical era ... [and] by situating this distinction we can recognise the role that language has played in preventing us from producing a constructive critique of our practices. Whilst we focus our critique upon our relationship with the environment, with nature, with society, with culture, and with language, we will maintain a position of separation and transcendentalism which will prevent us from properly situating ourselves within the environment, within nature, within society, within culture, and within language” [1]. We as human beings are constantly assaulted with the question that “... if human thought is a psychic and not just a material reality, then how can it act on reality and be influenced by things? How can the subtly differing inflections of the wind affect my mood? Or a pattern of shadows, or the interplay between sea and sky? Inversely, how is it that words which do not obviously resemble things can invoke things in such a manner that things become thereby more powerfully present, even in their absence, than they are present to us ‘on their own’? Unless my consciousness is an illusion thrown up by my brain – and what could it mean that the illusion is ‘there’? – is not this two-way intercourse between matter and mind a kind of ineffable, magical influence?” [3].



Now, "For Plato, truth and error are not only of the speculative order, but relate to virtue. He opposed myth (*mythos*) to argumentative discourse (*lógos*). Thus, while a 'tale' (the poet's word) is satisfied to delineate contingent events, 'science' (the word of the philosopher and sage) looks to reason or the cause of things" [9]. Indeed the Greeks believed that " ... to imagine a law (*nómos*) written in natural phenomena, frees the spirit and gives precedence to reason (*lógos*). This was the accomplishment of the Greeks at the dawn of western thought in their formulation of the ideal of the City and knowledge based on the analysis of facts and their coherent application to theory. From this perspective, as much political as scientific, the metaphysical idea of 'nature' (*physis*) took shape as the capacity for autonomous action, being regulated and balanced by a principle of order. Also formulated was the notion of 'essence' (*ousía*) which, given its invariability, could serve as the origin of secure knowledge based on universal principles (*archai*) accessible to the intelligence by way of a language that was itself subject to logical rules" [9]. Buehler expounds on humans' search to make meaning of this by saying that "Science can restrict the subjective qualities of myth and religion, but it cannot destroy their reality, since every human experience has a claim to reality. Cassirer gives the following example. In our scientific concepts we reduce the differences between two colors ... to a numeric difference [of wavelength]. But it is a very inadequate way of speaking if we declare number to be more real than color. What is really meant is that it is more general ... But to hypothesize number ... as the ultimate reality, the very essence and substance of things, is a metaphysical fallacy" [10]. And we are thus drawn into an intellectual trap, for "As Cassirer puts it, ' ... every philosopher believes he has found the mainspring and master-faculty of his own picture of human nature – Nietzsche's will to power, Freud's sexual instinct, or Marx's economic politics – with the empirical facts stretched to fit a preconceived pattern.' This leads to a strange situation in modern philosophy. Cassirer maintains that we have no real insight into the general character of human nature, despite a rich body of facts. But a wealth of facts (information) is not a wealth of thought (knowledge). How does man deal with facts, create them, and communicate? Man uses symbols to converse with himself and with the physical world. It is these symbols (language) that allows relational thought and judgment. It is this relational thought system that allows man to develop science. Science, thus, is not concerned with the 'truth of things' but the truth of propositions and judgments, i.e., the relation among symbols" [10].

At this point, we should be at pains to note that the "scientific revolution" was precipitated by " ... a group of uncommonly religious men like Copernicus, Newton, Kepler, and (much later) even Darwin, who catalyzed that separation between our knowledge of nature and what we held in our hearts. All four of them either had religious careers or were contemplating such a profession. They were brilliant questioners, and they used the sharpest tools they had to search for what was holy. They had enough confidence in the reality of the sacred to be willing to look at it as deeply as humanly possible. This unflinching search led to our greatest spiritual awakening – the modern scientific revolution. It was a spiritual breakthrough, and I think that it is our failure to recognize it as such that explains so much of the loneliness and madness in our civilization, so much of the conflict and self-hatred ... The last four centuries of disconnect between what our elders told us and what we knew was true has been costly for our civilization" [11]. And herein lies the modern trap for " ... people grow increasingly more attached to their machines, to the point at which deprivation of a phone, a computer, an electronic organizer feels much like an amputation, the severing of a natural extension of the body, [and] the [human-machine] boundary grows more ambiguous" [12] so that " ... late twentieth-century machines have made thoroughly ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial, mind and body, self-developing and externally designed, and many other



distinctions that used to apply to organisms and machines. Our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves are frighteningly inert" [13]. Thus " ... our civilization is completely dependent on science and high technology, yet most of us are alienated from science. We are estranged from its methods, its values, and its language. Who is the scientist in our culture? He is Dr. Faustus, Dr. Frankenstein, Dr. Strangelove. He's the maker of the Faustian bargain that is bound to end badly. Where does that come from? We've had a long period of unprecedented success in scientific discovery. We can do things that even our recent ancestors would consider magic, and yet our self-esteem as a species seems low. We hate and fear science. We fear science and we fear the scientist. A common theme of popular movies is some crazed scientist somewhere setting about ruining what is most precious to all of us" [11].

The problem is that such ruination is pernicious, and extend from the physical world to mental constructs, so that, in Horkheimer's words, "The more ideas have become automatic, instrumentalized, the less does anybody see in them thoughts with a meaning of their own. They are considered things, machines. Language has been reduced to just another tool in the gigantic apparatus of production in modern society ... [J]ustice, equality, happiness, centuries supposed to be inherent in or sanctioned by reason, have lost their intellectual roots" [14]. Thus if we cite our modern scientific Logos in its historical context, we are led naturally into the territory of mythology since " ... we can understand the hidden meaning and ground of a particular historical people as the Mythos. The Logos (discourse) of a particular historical people always conceals the Mythos. But ... there can be at least two kinds of Logos: (1) A Logos which denies its meaning and ground as the Logos or (2) a Logos which preserves and shelters its meaning and ground ... we live in an age, as in the former type of Logos, which denies its meaning and ground" [15]. In the modern age, this "denying its meaning and ground" manifests itself in the observation that "We've always loved good stories. From fairytales to Hollywood blockbusters, human society is almost be unthinkable without them. But are myths and legends just simple entertainments to pass the time? Or do they exert a powerful pull on our minds and in our lives? And are we at risk of losing this, in our contemporary world of mass marketing and homogenisation? Have stories, like sneakers, become branded?" [4]. And, if this is true, we must surely ask "How do we deny the meaning and ground, our Mythos, in our particular historical age? ... we do so by failing to recall that we are claimed by Being to take up things in a certain way ... The discourse of our particular age is dominated by the 'mathematical,' which, as Heidegger [16] points out in *Question Concerning Technology*, is 'that "about" things which we already know. Therefore we do not first get it out of things, but, in a certain way, we bring it already with us' ... The technological character of our everyday discourse (*gerede*) doubly conceals the Mythos our age, because it denies that it is a Mythos at all. Yet, the 'enframing' of our technological epoch is itself a form of revealing and concealing; it, too, is a form of *poesis*. By claiming it holds the sole access to 'Truth,' it marginalizes other means of seeking truth as *Aletheia* – truth as revealing what has been concealed, the revealing-concealing advent of Being" [15]. And the problem is multiply compounded in our modern age where "Other forms of revealing-concealing which send us on our way include poetry, art, history, religion, etc., all of which find themselves in our age defending themselves and attempting to legitimate themselves in the face of science. In other words, when we understand 'Myth' in this way, we are not speaking of something that is 'false' or 'untrue,' but rather, we are speaking of that which is the meaning and ground which is taken up into language with our everyday discourse or Logos. Science is not the only means of taking up our Mythos into language – in fact ... it holds the danger of holding itself as the sole arbiter of sense-making, of revealing, of *poesis*" [15]. Humankind's dilemma under these circumstances, then, is



this: how do we “comprehend the whole word” and thus “the whole world,” and in so doing rediscover the “Hagia Sophia ... the ‘climax of this transformation of nature, revealing the glorious character of the material world’ ... a process that is and always existed. The Transfiguration [which] made visible the eternal procession between God and Sophia through man” [17].

The partial answer to this is that Humankind does, and has done so, through the arts of language, myth, magic, religion and science, for “Religion, science and art are all pictures of experience, symbolically created to give meaning to life. So thought Ernst Cassirer. [18] They were the emotion-laden, unmediated ‘language’ of experience, which couldn’t be interrogated for a more primary intellectual meaning. And as to where they came from, the ultimate ground of their representation, one couldn’t ask: that was extending everyday attitudes into areas where they didn’t belong” [19]. So, in order to progress and gain insight into “the ultimate ground of representation,” we need “To properly situate ourselves within the world [and to do this] we must emphasise ourselves as bodies in a worldly context and analyse our relationship with particulars within the environment, nature, society and culture of which we ourselves are integral particulars” [1]. The end-goal of this is the development of a “new science,” a “joyful science, [which] enlightens and leads us to restoration of [the] brotherhood of peoples” [7]. Now you may, or may not, agree with Young, who claims that “I think we’re in a golden age of storytelling and I think that there is great wisdom even in action movies. Stories tend to reflect human experience, stories that are very, very popular often reflect something quite profound about human experience. The fact that we have so many movies, so many more channels or opportunity to see films and dramas and more television, you know cable channels and all of this to choose from, I think has really led to a kind of flowering of the literary imagination” [4]. Regardless of your position on the “magic of cinema” in the modern world, you must nevertheless acknowledge its influence, and in the light of this we go on in the rest of this article to investigate the relationships between language, magic, myth, religion and science. In doing this we always bear in mind that “To look at the work simply as a treatise on the origins of human language or even as a cosmogony is to ignore the fact that it is a poem, characterized by devices of poetic speech ... “ [7], and that thus “ ... this story reads like a novel: and [that] in any case, doesn’t the word history itself, which designates a succession of facts through time, also encapsulate the word story: a tale, a fable, an imaginary account?” [20]. And in pursuing this investigation we seek to discover “How it came about ... [that] myth could take the place of history, and feed both fiction and utopia, that fiction in the form of dogma of various kinds could take the place of science, that science could progressively dominate fiction, that history, in eliminating myth, could itself become a science, at the cost of a ruthless battle between the imaginary and the real – a battle whose outcome, even today, remains unclear ... “ [20].

First it is useful to try and understand our ancestors’ methods for “comprehending the whole word” and through this “the whole world,” whilst remembering that these were “people who were quite incapable of telling the difference between fact and belief or between knowledge and unsupported convictions” [21]. Moreover they had no understanding that “Meaning does not occur apart from, or independent of, human beings. We can’t see, hear, feel, smell, or taste ‘meaning’ in the world. It does not exist there. It exists only and solely in the functioning of a given human nervous system. Or, if we want to talk about ‘shared meanings,’ then it exists as the shared significances and associations that lots of humans experience with regard to the same referent or object” [3]. Now we must recall that “Languages exist in some kind of space, that of the known world, but equally, when the imaginary intervenes, that of an unknown and invisible world. Languages exist in time, in historical time, but



equally in mythological and utopian time" [20]. We can follow this up with the observation that "To begin with in Greece, *mythos* and *logos*, narrative and reason, were synonymous – they began to be distinguished when history separated itself from false tale or rumour, ethical religion from scandalous tales about the gods, and philosophical abstraction from mythological personification" [3]. We must therefore muse on the meaning of the ancients' mythologizing " ... and many conflicting answers were supplied. Myth was proto-science (Comte); it was language without abstraction (Tylor); it was the deceit of metaphor (Max Müller); it was the trace of the subconscious (Freud); it was the detritus of an archaic humanity which confused subject and object (Lévy-Bruhl), or it was rather the work of a strictly rational classification and grasping of contradictions, albeit in concrete terms..." [3]. Furthermore we can now forge another link in the chain myth–language–magic–religion–science with the realization that "Mythology ... as Cassirer noted, 'is from its very beginning potential religion,' [and] can be understood as a function of language ... The nineteenth-century linguist Muller described mythology as a 'disease of language' in just this sense; language deforms thought by its inability to describe things directly. 'Mythology is inevitable, it is natural, it is an inherent necessity of language ... [It is] the dark shadow which throws upon thought, and which can never disappear till language becomes entirely commensurate with thought, which it never will'" [22]. We could say that "Myth is the speech and the imaginings of the psyche. It is our way of experiencing ourselves from the inside out" [23]. And so in trying to make mythical meaning in the natural world "You juggle with shifts in meaning, with metonymies, metaphors, antiphrases, comparison of antonyms, ... metatheses, epentheses, and goodness knows what else. Everything is grist to your mill" [20]. In this way "Different themes and myths are born, grow, die and are sometimes reborn, in direct correlation with the changing picture man has of the world. These myths and themes will often overlap and intertwine, when not opposed by one another (the notion of contradiction is however alien to myth)" [20]. We thus realize along with Greimas [24] that the "... connection between signification and the real world is completely arbitrary; however, signification is in itself not arbitrary since language tends to follow structural rules. Humans are therefore caught in a system of rules and deep structures that bear no relation to the real world [25], and we can therefore understand Greimas' struggle "... to find the 'deep structure' of all narrativity ... the formal elements in a narrative that create implicit (if not always consciously recognized) oppositions ... he wishes to find behind any 'manifestation of narrativity' a '*fundamental semantics and grammar*' ... "[25]. We shall return to the formal analysis of myth below. And we may well ask "So who are the privileged bearers of this utopian and mythical current of thought which develops on the fringes of science and history, but nonetheless permeates them? They are precisely the ... lunatics in love with language. That's who they are, the sort of dreamers who have the gift of mistaking their dreams for reality" [20]. Now "A dream is a product of the unconscious, but it can also be something constructed by a conscious subject. With dreams, as with lunacy, and this is particularly apparent when it comes to language, there is no clear dividing line. One is indeed dealing with a continuum, for 'there always exists between theory and delirium, between an empire builder and a deranged mind a degree of connivance which takes in its share of paranoia' [26]. And more generally, without going as far as pathological excesses, is there a single linguist, a single poet, who isn't something of a logophile, something of a sorcerer's apprentice with language or individual languages?" [20]. So, in our desire to understand mythical language and the language of myths we are led to the understanding that "Myth blends in with a message and denies its own existence through its apparent subordination to the content of the ... signifiers. When we become aware of myth, it shifts" [27]. And "Therein lies the nature of myth when the message is read as the meaning rather than a form of communication making



reference to someone else ... Myth is constituted by the form of communication. It neglects historical, socially constructed perspective and privileges a natural order of understanding" [27]. In other words, "Myth is ... a form that provides understanding derived from, but beyond denotation and connotation. The veracity of meaning is embodied in the framework of communication" [27], and we note that in all the cases mentioned above, where story and logic began to diverge " ... the 'critical' turn against myth failed to reflect that it was in large part substituting the protocols of a *written* culture for those of an oral one" [3]. We can make the comparison that "In a somewhat parallel fashion, the abstract concept in philosophy concerns something delimitable and precisely repeatable, like a passage of writing. This tends to insinuate the idea that behind the processes of nature lie regularly operating forces rather than capricious and quasi-wilful ones, as mythology often suggests" [3], although we do also recognize that "Pictures, to be sure, are more imperative than writing, [since] they impose meaning at one stroke, without analyzing or diluting it" [28]. Now in this context we find that Detienne " ... notes that in terms of written culture there is a great difference between the hieroglyphic imperial worlds of Egypt, Babylon or China and the phonetic alphabets of Greece, and, we can add, Israel. In the case of the former the graphic is linked to secrecy, elitism, centralisation and bureaucratic control. We are talking about the records office. In the case of Greece, by contrast, remarkably few public records were kept and democratic procedures remained predominantly oral. Phonetic writing was, here, an exoteric instrument which made news more publicly available and allowed greater ease of access to collective memory" [3]. However on closer examination we might say that " ... in this connection Detienne perhaps exaggerates the differences between oral and written cultures: in so far, as he says, that oral narration constantly obliterates older versions, it can also exhibit a bias towards the paradigmatic and atemporal, and tends gradually to distil certain stable features of a tale which survive all retellings, like Mr Punch and his club" [29]. In contrast to this " ... the moderate alphabetisation of Greece and Israel actually assisted the more syntagmatic aspect of orality: a record of earlier versions of a story or of earlier oracular predictions can serve to bring about a consciousness of non-identical repetition which swerves away from the mythical sense of a repeated static foundation towards one of an irrecoverable loss of origin which can only be saved by eschatological recovery [29]" [3]. We can extend this discussion by noting that "In *Language and Form* Cassirer wrote that language and myth began as one, originally standing 'in an indissoluble correlation with one another, from which they both emerge but gradually as independent elements ...' Language also bears within self, from its very beginning, the power of logic ... Myth develops into art and the development of written language leads eventually toward mathematics and science, although in poetry language still has its original power. 'The greatest lyric poets, for instance Hölderlin or Keats, are men in whom the mythic power of insight breaks forth again in its full intensity and objectifying power'" [30]. So we can go on say that "If we can see philosophy growing out of mythic thought in Greek history, the difficulty arises about just how we are to then distinguish philosophy from religion, as the two later coexist but are distinguished from each other. Socrates talks about the gods all the time, and it is not clear why he should not be regarded as a religious figure rather than a secular philosopher. As it happens, the relatively easy distinction between religion and philosophy in Western history occurs because of the historical accident that the religion of people like Socrates and Plato later ceased to exist. The old gods of the Greeks, Egyptian, Babylonians, Phoenicians, Romans, Celts, Germans, Slavs, etc. were later entirely replaced by one old religion, Judaism, and two new ones from the same tradition, Christianity and Islam. It is now possible to say 'religion' and mean one of those and to say 'philosophy' and simply mean 'that Greek stuff' (*falsafah* in Arabic), where the religious side of Greek thought just need not be taken seriously" [31]. The importance of this is that "Cassirer considered all forms of



intellectual activity creative. As a symbol-creating animal, human being is the product of a new mutation in life. Science, language, art, religion, mythology – they all are man-made worlds, expressing the creativity of spirit, or mind, itself. In this capacity they help us to articulate our experience and our knowledge. Symbolic forms have great creative powers but they can also be destructive ... When intellectual, ethical and artistic forces lose their strength, mythical thoughts start to emerge and pervade the whole of man's cultural and social life" [30].

So, in conclusion, if we were to ask "Has Hollywood bought the rights to the collective unconscious?" [4], we could answer with a heroic "No!" – *if* we accept, and act on the understanding, that "Not to have a story is in fact not to be human, that one's disconnected from one's actual being. So we have to in some ways continue to re-mythologize ourselves, that is, we have to continue to stay in touch with our imaginative life and begin to construct if you like and renew the stories that we've had of who we are" [4] – "For it is when our metaphors obtain to a reality greater than lived reality that myths, monsters, and madness are born" [12]. And in learning to "re-mythologize ourselves" we must each learn that the whole struggle is about " ... language on the boundaries, language about language, about 'access to the power to signify' [13]" [12], and that in this way we can each become a "Langwiz'd of Is" – " ... a writer and a rewriter, a reshaper, an appropriator, a refigurer ... [using] language 'self-consciously spliced' ... [eschewing] 'an original language before violation'" [12], to create an unfolding, enfolding logo-myth "in which everything is always that which it is only because it becomes that which it is not" [32]. We will thus be able to use our Psycho-chaotic, and Neuro-linguistic, tools to change core beliefs and values from those indoctrinated by the prevailing religious or scientific ideologies of our society, and fill the resulting "vacuum of choice" with empowering personal logo-myths which lead to true psychic freedom and power [33]. And this is the true creative nature of modern language, myth, magic, religion and science, melding to form a holistic unity, a "mascirelgic" for the new Millennium.

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