



\* On Tales, Tellings, Poetics \*

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## Activations of Psycho-Mythic Knowing in Extra-Ordinary Style, Content, and Context

### Psychic Complexity and the Mirroring of Mythical Dynamism

The term psycho-mythic knowing is used here to suggest how a mythical mode of representing more-than-ordinarily-perceived levels of pluralistic status can prompt awareness of psychic complexity. This notion proposes that representation of the concurrent interactivity of entities can activate unusually reflective psychological awareness *because* such representation ‘mirrors’ the dynamic relations of the component parts of complex selfhood. Diversified self-complexity poses a primary difficulty for the ordinarily singular sense of self or “I” to acknowledge. How can ordinary self-consciousness that operates from a habitually reductive, singular identity come to know the ‘underlying’ multiplicity of its psychic origins? How can the seeming one-ness of an individual come to know and thus better represent its many-ness?

If mythical expression and the knowing it enables are accepted as deriving from an extra-ordinarily complex style of representation, then it becomes appropriate for reorienting ordinarily singular identity toward greater sensing of self-complexity. Just as societies must assert some standardized, reductively singular definitions of ‘how things are’ that enables collective agreement and practical efficiency for people ‘working together,’ so too does the egoic aspect of a person’s psyche act to generate a relatively singular, consistent, hierarchically ordered personality. Thus both the externally ordered social structures and the internally configured sense of self in personality assert reductive definitions for what is real, important, valid, and proper. Both society and personality thereby imposes restrictions upon awareness of the more-than-socialized complexities of actual phenomena of self and world.

The concept of mythical dynamism as ‘polyvalent association,’ and a mythical knowing that derives from it, are regarded here as provoking greater awareness of concurrent being’s radical complexity. Thus complex self-knowing is promoted by engagement with mythical representation and the ‘dynamical mirroring’ provided in its metaphorically metamorphic mode of expression. Psycho-dynamic complexity ‘sees’ itself in the ‘impossible realities’ of mythical association’s extra-ordinary expression of the interplay of archetypal themes—those ‘background patternings’ that are implicitly ‘at work’ below, behind, or within ‘the appearances of things.’

## Mythical Forms that Figure Radically Complex Consciousness by Their Dynamic Associations

Activating the complex logics of ‘knowing variously yet inclusively’ appears to require some extra-ordinary representation and experience. One’s habitual sense of ‘how things are’ in/as selfhood must be ‘disturbed’ if a more inclusively complex awareness of self-complexity is to become accessible. Mythical knowing of psyche’s normally ignored intricacies can be stimulated in artful expressions that ‘give form to’ more-than-ordinary reality. Such representation involves aspects of ‘content’ that manifest archetypal themes of form as well as archedynamic modes of activity that ‘figure’ the ordinarily obscured diversity and radical interactivity of consciousness as a ‘many-ness in/as oneness.’ In this way the impractically complicated, non-linearly logical associations of mind or psyche that are the larger context for being and knowing selves and the world are given dynamical reflections.

The accuracy of these reflections is not literalistic. Thus both traditional stories and contemporary art and literature that have mythic qualities tend to present rather fantastic, non-ordinary situations, events, creatures, and contextual associations. The strange images, actions, events, and causations in mythical style are not the ‘literal things’ of psyche or world. Rather, these are dynamically similar and thus can prompt a psychically experiential awareness and understanding of how such dynamics compose one’s inclusively diversified consciousness. Such departures from the familiar and socially proper present ‘the other worlds’ of more radically diversified and interactive consciousness that ‘lie behind’ and from out of which more ordinary reality reductively emerges.

Some exploration and examples of how these traits of content and style activate a ‘more than ordinary’ sense of inclusive understanding are offered on the **Stories of Knowing Otherwise** page. Both archaic traditional tales and contemporary literary modes are represented.

## Psycho-Mythic Knowing and The Resistance of Habitual Attitudes

Despite the potential for mythical representations to stimulate awareness of psychological complexities and reflection upon how humans know through imaginal processes, such shifts can be difficult to experience. Merely encountering mythical representations that somehow model the radically interactive dynamics of concurrency does not inherently prompt conscious awareness of the latter. Habitually reductive assumptions readily 'deploy' to context mythical representations in ways that limit their implications. This tendency is particularly potent in the mechanistically reductive societies of modernity. By classifying artful expressions and mythically dynamic images or stories as 'entertainment' or 'fantasy' that people engage merely for 'fun' or 'aesthetic pleasure,' their potential for displacing the dominance of ordinarily defined senses of identity and reality is deferred. Thus the way social standards and conventions 'frame' mythical representation is crucial to allowing more overt experience of psycho-mythic knowing.

\*\*\*Further elaboration of these concepts in Chapter Six, Seven, and Nine of text **Manifesting the Many in the One** on page of that title\*\*\*

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