

A tall, narrow wooden structure, possibly a traditional ladder or a ritual object, stands in a rural landscape. The structure is made of light-colored wood and has a pointed top. It is positioned in the foreground, leaning slightly to the right. The background features a dense line of trees and a field of low-lying vegetation. The overall scene is captured in a warm, golden light, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. The entire image is framed by a thick orange border.

Does Mythology Still Matter?

*Interview with Carridine Poran
by Willi Paul*

[“Does Mythology Still Matter?”](#) - Interview with Carridine Poran, Reaction by Willi Paul. Produced by Planetshifter.com Media (+ PDF)

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PRELUDE -

“We must slay the mythology that has outlived its usefulness or was evil to begin with which is to say never useful to us”

“When I invited you to first engage in a conversation with me over two years ago I did so out of admiration for your tremendous dedication and output and based on a desire to discover through discussion something very like the elements of the new mythology you proposed. I had noticed that many people eventually came to ask you the same question, “This is all quite amazing and informative but why do you call these things myth?” - Carridine Poran

Please see: [The Quarry Men](#): A Conversation on New Mythology with Carridine Poran and Willi Paul (01/14)

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Willi: Mythology is full of pseudo community, jaw breaking egos and petty cliques. Who are these organizations, writers and TV hosts? What are the true credentials? How can we connect up? Heard any good myths lately?

Carridine: The first of 14 questions, question one appears to be half question and half accusation. Before I say anything, I would like to repeat what I said in our first talk: there is no way of fixing the definition of mythology. The thing itself is too vast and changeable and too richly tied to the vast and changeable region of the mind which dreams it to ever be captured by rational definition and generalization.

"Mythology" in your first question means I guess the whole which encompasses all groups of people who pursue mythology as either a study or a means of focus for their actions. Taken globally -- as many groups -- this Mythology is spoke of here only in terms of the themes of pseudo-community, jaw-breaking egotism and petty cliquishness. Willi wants to know who these people are and what are the true credentials for mythologizing?

And this is all followed by a question in a very different tone: how can we connect up? Why would we want to connect up with such people as are described here?

What if the question is rather: How do we connect up with people who share our more positive orientation? It is easier to answer: first I would imagine we would have to identify our orientation as our most important values and goals. What commonalities and commitments do we need to share with others to build a truly positive "mythology community"? Do we require 100% agreement? If not, I would hope not, then which values are absolutely required to be shared, and what goals?

If we find that people in cliques and pseudo-communities, with giant egos, can match up with our political goals but are completely impossible to work with, what role does mythology have in disentangling this?

That answer should be uncovered as we review all of this.

Just a note on credentials: Who are the authorities on myth? So many people make that claim -- what gives credence to a person's claim? "The proof is in the pudding," so the saying goes. Is a person capable of opening myth to others so that it transforms their experience and increases their power to understand that experience. That is the only authority to be trusted out here on the frontier.

Willi: Mythologists often carve-out their own professional silos (i.e. - specialties). How does this help / hurt the field?

Carridine: Question 2 is very similar to question 1: How does the fact that Mythologists having ensiled themselves and their studies in isolated silos affect the field? Obviously this is something you can see happening in most fields. People have an enthusiasm and they would like to make an income "doing what they love" or they want prestige where no money is available, or they want to be perceived as the Magus from Vegas. If they actually achieve that, they insulate themselves and shore up authority.

It is also true in a subject-field as vast and varied as Mythology that anyone pursuing their interest in it to any depth is likely to quickly find themselves in a rarefied setting with very few people to talk to. Their studies produce real knowledge and real discoveries but there are hardly any people who can perceive the significance of what they show for all their work. This is unfortunate and I think unavoidable. Some people are content with that, I think. Some are out to satisfy their own curiosity and don't feel a need to save the world. In theory such silos could be infinite without exhausting the subject.

If there is frustration regarding this situation, it should help to identify the aim of the missile in one's own silo. I think that is the more important question: what do you want from the field? I think you, like me, want to have a mythology that has some influence outside a profession or academy. Something that moves people and unifies them and gives them something to hold onto during the struggles to come.

If you want an actual answer to the question, "How do all these people holing up in silos help or hurt the field I would say those who are truly laboring away, building an archive of the facts and artifacts in their own little niche are creating a resource for the rest of us. How do those who are holed up in their silos concerned only with their own status hurt the field? Well, by being exactly what I don't want to be as I described it above: they have no influence outside of their little arena, they don't move or unify people or give them hope, strength or inspiration.

Now the opposite may also be damaging. I'm sure these questions of yours must have arisen at least in part from encountering people who inspire at a distance but repulse at close range. People who don't practice what they preach. They may help those who never have the misfortune of meeting them, but they do harm when they discourage pilgrims who show up on their doorstep.

But back to wanting to have an influence beyond the silo. The practical effort becomes addressing the immediate difficulties to fulfilling that wish. I might begin by conceiving my portion of "mythology" which is to say by identifying the portion of mythology that I believe has the most potential for having a broader influence.

Again it may be said that this is in itself the siloing that I assume is being criticized here. I think however that it is more productive to see it as a positive form of specialization. "Mythology" itself is always double: it is the collection of myths and it is the study of that collection. So if you look for a comparison of it in your own life it could be found in the double of Agriculture and Agricultural Science. There are many agricultural practices which you reject and the ones you accept fall under the heading of permaculture. In that field, I'm sure you've also encountered people who have negatively specialized or ensiled themselves.

But for you, your permaculture emphasis has already helped you narrow your field of activity down to a focus on what you think are top priorities. Your motives will keep your specialization positive. The question then becomes what is the relation of myth to permaculture?

Willi: Mythology is most certainly a “top-down” field. Experts First! A few kings and a lot of minions. Thoughts?

Carridine: It makes me wonder if you've had a discouraging time in the two years since we last grappled with these topics in depth together. I hope not! Or rather, I have no doubt that with the incredible amount of work you do and the scores of people with whom you talk that you have encountered an army of egoists, (a phrase which in its accurate absurdity should do something to discourage egotism) but I hope you have devised some adequate defense against them. I do believe there are at least as many sane people in the world as there are crazy people.

It also makes me wonder if it is time for you to take your next big step, whatever that might be. You may not be the Joseph Campbell Chair of the Comparative Mythology Department at a Branded Ivy League University, but you are getting to be a top in the field simply by sitting a-top such a mountain of work and research. You are certainly king of that mountain. I think you can extend your influence by bringing the mountain to all the Mohameds.

Let's drop the mountain image. You are encountering the sense of futility anyone encounters in any field when they meet the gate keepers. How will you reignite your own interest in mythology or make your own work a force for reigniting mythology as a pursuit? The gate keepers professionalize, or worse make a bargaining chip of, or worst, make mythology the widget they sell via the latest buzzwords, fads and assessment tools. What can you do when that thing which to you is the most vital thing becomes merely the name of the same old thing? What you do now is you take what you have made and you create your own center out of which the good things you imagined come.

It's an opportunity to see that the true creators are those who hold fast to the vital thing.

There's an analogy to be made to Fine Art. In its origins, Mythology is a populist production like any folk production; it is later kidnapped by the intellectual arm of the ruling class. It can be seen that -- after rejecting it as an illegitimate subject of study, as too low, the Intelligentsia take it in, drain its blood, parade it around as an establishment achievement and then begin to attack it again in self-disgust as yet another bloodless product of their contemptible parasitical class.

In Fine Arts, the ruling class eventually gets bored with the productions of its own artists (themselves working at some abstraction that began as an emulation of folk productions) and to counter what bores them they put on shows like a High-low show or an Outsider Art show. The energy emitted from outsider art makes sense of the language that is often used to describe the arts: language which seems high flown, overly ambitious and not at all representative of what is usually on display in the average fine arts gallery makes perfect sense in relation to the work of an outsider like Henry Darger.

Encountering the work of Darger, ordinary people no longer need an intellectual to explain to them what is extraordinary about the artist's work. They bypass the critics and themselves struggle to articulate a higher vision of life to account for their encounter with so prodigal an expression of vitality. They seek a higher vision such as was so magnificently put forward in Shelley's DEFENSE OF POETRY.

What is the difference between Fine Art and Outsider Art? What is the relation of the academic entombment of Myth with the true grappling with Myth? Obviously it is the authentic psychic energy released in comparison to the generalization produced by intellect in its attempt to reduplicate mythic material. Rationality seeks only to revitalize itself by accosting the true mythic material. But this revitalization cannot be faked, neither by an intellectual or by ordinary folk.

The virtue of myth is that it is real: if you seek it in its true place, you can find it, but if you haven't found it, you can't convincingly pretend that you have, not to anyone who has been to that true place.

Willi: Mythology seems to be losing power, going in circles. What's new?

Carridine: This next question also makes me worry that the general nonsense of everything is starting to wear on Willi. Similar answer to the one I gave to question three. Mythology has power or lacks power on the basis of how it is treated. There needn't be anything new or old. It may be that what is needed is for people like you, Willi, to hold the course

when faced with the jaw-breaking egos and cliques. Hold your course so that, like Odysseus, in mythological terms, you can achieve your homecoming.

Willi: If the classic myths are worn-out, can the modern myths be trusted? What are the connections between the two canons?

Carridine: Well, to start with, of course, that's a big if -- but I'll go here: the first connection you've made is that they can both wear out. The twilight of the gods is a myth that is both old and new and can be made to serve the subject matter. But the issue is not trusting the myths, the issue is trusting the myth teller. One must trust one's own judgment in relation to the myth. On what basis do we make the judgment that the old is worn out and possibly the new is to be suspect in relation to it?

Those philosophers of the Late 18th Century early & 19th Century who are sometimes strung together under the name the Counter-Enlightenment made part of their liberating and rejuvenating of society a revision and reclamation of myth. They propagated new attitudes toward religion which eventually gave rise to the study of comparative religion and much of the pluralism that we enjoy today. The idea that everything wears out pervaded the new attitude; all orthodoxy is temporary, truths only serve for a certain time and then when they no longer serve, they must make way for more current more appropriate truth. Gods die just as people die. Everything is in the process of becoming rather than a permanent state of being. To make those values virtues again would be quite a positive contribution in itself.

What are the connections between the two canons? Well, we would first have to identify the new canon. Or maybe we don't. There are theories of myth, theories of art, theories of literature (there are theories of everything) which articulate the relations between these different cultural products. I think people are attracted to myth because it strikes them as being a foundation, as being something primary, something primal in comparison to other cultural products like E.L. James' 50 SHADES OF GREY or Damien Hirst's MOTHER AND CHILD.

And I think we can mark some kind of difference in consciousness between these things. But I think if we do that we have to mark a difference in consciousness between ourselves and anyone we imagine capable of "composing a myth." I liken it -- again and again and again -- to the difference between the waking mind and the dreaming mind. The dream mind is much more like the mind that authors myth.

Fairy tales are also a good example of this. "Updated fairy tales" have become familiar now or those old books, "Politically Correct Fairy Tales" where old stories are revised to satirize our efforts to make them more acceptable to modern sensibilities. Of those modern sensibilities, what results when we make those changes? The stories seem more real because the people in them are recognizable as people or more likely as more commonplace representations of people which people in turn tend to imitate. Think SHREK -- don't get me wrong, I love SHREK, especially the first one, but it is not a fairy tale or a myth, it is a contemporary comedy which uses the motifs of fairy tales for comic effect.

I wouldn't say satirical effect even because it isn't the fairy tales which are poked fun at. Here the realization (the making real) of the tale and the satire of ordinary people merge into one. The supposed idealization and romanticization of a "happily ever after" story is made to "get real," by the characters acting and speaking "the way real people do." I call this "realization by hackney." We are assured that we are being more realistic the moment we "curb our enthusiasm."

The sensation of coming into contact with reality that pervades authentic fairy tale stories is quite different. There amid strange and impossible scenes we encounter a familiar dread, a threatened horror familiar from but unrealized (if we are lucky) in our own experience. We recognize that the fairy tale represents the spirit space of our experience, a reality unrepresented in more naturalistic depictions of reality.

But to return to the idea that the myth is more primary than later forms of literature and art. It is familiar to see critics and theorists regard myths almost as skeletons underlying these later forms, providing the armature for all that will be built. But another turn on this idea is that mythology isn't more primary and that all art and all literature are the myths appropriate to their age, that everything that has come down to the present moment represents the development of culture and consciousness and should not be disregarded in favor of some assumed primary substance in myth. The

substance may change as we change, and if we attempt to tell stories in an idiom appropriate to a much earlier age, they may not resonate with people.

Willi: Hollywood is mythology: X-files, Star Wars.... "Myth" is a powerful capitalist pitch and big business. Reactions?

Carridine: Hollywood is a big business based on storytelling. Hollywood takes mythology and the ideas of people like Joseph Campbell and attempts to make them into recipes for guaranteed screenwriting success. This turns the idea of an archetype into the idea of the Can't-Fail-Script. THE WRITER'S JOURNEY by Christopher Vogler is the classic cookbook of this sort. The problem with these books and with people who "write myths" using these books is that they are attempting to program people's responses rather than address and extend people's humanity.

Willi: Myth = branding. PR agencies craft stories with Campbell's ideas. Again, "myth" is a powerful capitalist pitch and big business. Reactions?

Carridine: Again, tapping into a mythic or archetypal substrata of consciousness gives the advertisers the power to manipulate us on the basis of images. That they do this is of course not news. In 1974, the book SUBLIMINAL SEDUCTION demonstrated how products were being sold by nudie photos being hidden in advertisements. Beyond just subliminal suggestion, basic images most people would deem "mythical" have always been used to link people on a very primal level to products. I remember Richard Williams' animating a Frank Frazetta painting for a TV commercial [selling cologne](#). Of course it is far more sophisticated these days, but I recently saw a commercial for a cologne called INVICTUS which contains as much clichéd imagery of the [myth understood as power fantasy](#). I can write more about this if you like but I think it is pretty obvious when anyone looks at the ad.

Compare this INVICTUS with the [famous poem](#) of the same name that Nelson Mandela said he recited in his cell to keep himself strong. The assertion that closes the poem, "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul" is no less a bit of mythology than the foolish preening images of the TV commercial. The difference is one of elevation and depth. The poem inspires, which is better than the commercial, which manipulates and deludes; but there are uses of myth which probe and push for truth and insight which is the polar opposite of delusion and which will outlast inspiration.

There are probably many other levels of myth as a powerful capitalist pitch, but I think the one to focus on is the one that exists on the level of lived ideology. For instance, the identity of the human individual in relation to others under capitalism. This identity of the individual is subject to the mythology and mythologizing of the capitalist. Ayn Rand is a perfect example of the fascist capitalist -- end-stage capitalist -- mythologist. Her novels the Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged are nothing more than the myth of the individual as capitalist exemplar versus the great evil of the collective. It's actually a very good example of the power of what myth can do in the world. The Koch Brothers are Rand Fans, as is Speaker of the House Ryan. The question is how do we arrive at a new myth that adequately counters the Randian Atlas Myth?

Willi: How building new stories or mythologies for 12 - 15 year-olds is enhanced or limited by texting or simple symbols in the use of smart phones and programs like FB chat?

Carridine: Now the best answer to question eight arises out of this "I'm crazy? I could have used your help!" because of course without guidance, young people turn to the internet for answers. The best critique I ever read of web culture by (a guy who wrote a book, the only good observation in the book was:) that you choose what you see online. You don't ever have to encounter or stick with heavy challenges. You can surf right passed. You only support your already existing point of view. Out in the world, in what used to be called real life, you have to answer challenges. You have to face resistance. You have to deal with people who can say, "I was you. It turned out a mess. I changed, I changed in this way by doing this. You need to follow my example"

This question is close to my heart so I find it difficult to come down strongly on any of its many sides. If the question is construed as "Is technology bad for communicating mythology to kids?" Then the answer would be either yes or no or yes but ... or no but.... But as I said this is a question close to my heart: the role of communicating wisdom stories to youth or better the acquisition by youth of wisdom. Do we older people have a role to play? For how long?

How do young people acquire the wisdom they need to be successful in life? And at 12 to 15 that has to mean successful from the bottom up, starting with the most basic. How can they know how to successfully not get themselves killed first, not kill anyone else secondly? The levels of success start from there on up. How not to join the club that is giving each other AIDS because they think it's cool? How to avoid the peer pressure that says go to a pumping party and have construction-grade silicone injected into your hips and chest to create the appearance of womanly curves? How to avoid a bio avoiding or resisting the peer pressure that says coming to a tattoo party where everyone will get that new tattoo by way of the same needle?

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I don't necessarily see Texting or Facebook as standing in the way of the acquisition of the skills, That said, I think social media can easily be seen -- if given mythic form -- as one of the Sirens of the present age, right alongside a nationalism that reveals itself to be Xenophobia or a celebration of the individual that reveals itself to be Union Busting. Before it was TV, now it is all the rest of these media that lures people to give hours upon hours of each day of their one life to what is essentially a hypnotic trance.

And older people certainly know the value of a good trance. Maybe it's not as good as actual relaxation or stress relief but it is certainly better, if one has no option to change the situation, than the screaming levels of stress so many of us experience all day at work.

But the question of myth in relation to both use or all in relation to use, technology, and wisdom or mentoring is it what does this have to do with this wisdom?

And I believe the answer is that I may think images are likely the only way to come close to conveying the struggles that young people face you can tell them from retrospect in retrospect how young they are how they don't know this that or the other thing that they don't have perspective but miss can tell them in images that may not be from their own experience but can convey the emotional agony and the psychological transfer mode transformation that they will experience in a coherent story. Would be mentors must throw themselves back into their own memory and try to recall the struggle. Recall the struggle and retell it in a compelling way. Myths and fairytales are for our full of heroes who it turns out had much to learn. They like Odysseus they go forward and their mistakes seem like mirror bravado the consequences of a mistake at the beginning it turns out is the whole of their story and the struggle to get home is the struggle to learn how not to make that mistake again.

This was the core of my idea for the mentoring murals. But we get most often in the use of mythic materials in popular culture popular consumer commercial culture is the fight between good and evil the, the grand battle the most grotesque monsters that computer graphics can supply but we often do not get any sense that these monsters are connected to the hero in any in anyway. So that is the rationale for using myth, the question would then be returned to as is necessary to use the technology of Facebook and texting in an effort to connect with young people.? And the ancillary question are these technologies shortening attention spam or making kids in another way unavailable to learning what they need to learn.?

I think it's worthwhile in presenting important information to young people to have them turn their machines off. I don't back this up with some scientific rationale that their neurons are not firing at a particular speed or that there are brain cells are being baked by the proximity of their machines. It may be that their brain waves are synchronizing with the waves coming out of these devices in a way that will mean bad things for them in the future, but that's not why I ask them to turn them off. I simply think that reinforcing the knowledge that these machines can be turned off, that these machines can be done without, is an absolute mitzvah you're doing for these young people.

Parents and children are told endlessly that they must keep up with these technologies. These technologies, they are told, are the future; they will become only more enmeshed in our living day-to-day living so kids, parents and schools have to continually upgrade to keep abreast of technological development.

If we look at the fiasco of No Child Left Behind we see it is continually revealed to be an invention of a new assessment industry -- sellers of a certain kind of textbook and curriculum -- backed by government coercion. Who has any doubt any longer that the boom in smart boards and computers in every classroom and the elimination of teaching handwriting and arts programs and gym programs, the putting of vending machines and franchise food distributors in schools, that all of this technology-based innovation is simply the advance of a certain virulent strain of capitalism into our public schools, the further division of our communal life into spoils.

So it is important to let kids know that it is still possible to simply open the door and go out into the sunshine and where necessary to teach them why they might want to do that. They should be encouraged to put the machines aside and actually engage in conversation before their technology-induced social anxiety becomes too pervasive. Before they find this once simple activity too difficult to accomplish.

I think very often when people want to include mythology in wisdom studies they think of enrichment of a dull subject-- a blast of drama and emotional vitality -- that is lacking in other forms of education. It's so exciting!

But for me the opposite is the action of a narrative-based learning. Narrative-based learning. The myth contains images that are entangling the hero making the hero's progress slow or impossible. What must happen is the hero must step back and reflect, just as the child must put down the machine and step back and get some distance from it and think about how much influence it has and in order to be able to make any choices at all, just so the hero is the one who can reflect: see the situation for what it is -- with clarity -- and make clear choices and take decisive actions.

This is basic liberation pedagogy à la Paulo Freire: if a person stands in a relationship to someone or something more powerful than themselves that is controlling them negatively and only stepping out of the relationship and being able to view it as a dynamic makes useful action possible. one sees oneself as defined by that thing and the relation to oneself of that thing. The dynamic can be seen to control the identities of everyone involved, it controls and limits the thinking of everyone involved of everyone involved. Only when that perspective, view or vision has been achieved can one act and effectively, and achieve liberation from oppression.

Willi: Have you watched the parade of mythologists, psychologists and pot scrubbers bander-it up on the History Channel? Do you know any aliens?!

Carridine: Well no, I haven't. I haven't seen any TV since Maya gave birth to our daughter. Though I believe I know the kind of TV you're talking about. Do I know any aliens? None that were so poorly disguised that I could recognize them as such.

I do have a problem with anyone discussing archetypal psychology and alien interventions in the same hour program. But I believe that the problems of television will -- as Jesus said of the Poor -- always be with us. The best we can say for it is that it will prepare some eager, receptive people for stronger stuff. If a person's curiosity is wasted by a story saying that the pyramids were built by alien invaders or that the Jews were the chosen people because their chromosomes were planted by an alien race trying to seed the galaxies beyond their present reach, well then we can only hope that our arguments and our stories are more compelling and more recognizably in line with the human experience as these people mature and grow out of such TV tales.

Pot scrubbers, that's a new one on me!

Willi: Is Mythology more regressive versus progressive? What's on the line?

Carridine: Again I don't think mythology is enough of one thing or free enough from all other things for it to be definitively progressive or regressive in and of itself. I believe mythology is a sense that human beings make out of a prime material that is at its core the means of human transformation. There is change that can occur and there are reasons why it can occur. In terms of what individual or groups of humans do with that prime material, they can make it into something that changes people regressively or changes them progressively.

I'm struggling to articulate what I mean by "There is change that can occur and there are reasons why it can occur." An analogy that would explain what I mean is the phenomena of atavism in relation to evolution. Different kinds of like animals can be interbred and changed but only for so many generations before the offspring revert to earlier characteristics. That reversion is atavism and it is sometimes taken as an argument for the fixity of species, that we will never trace evolution back to a single ancestor for all living creatures. In the place of a first animal mutating without limit would be original species which cannot be transgressed, existing in potential even before any individuals of their kind made their appearance in the world.

This is either true or not true.

I don't care either way but we can make a comparison of this notion of species and evolution to the idea of something like archetypes in the potential of human nature developed by culture and expressed in mythology.

Myths are distinguished from other stories by the presence of fantastic elements. Myths are stories of Gods and Heroes, but frequently also Winged Horses, Snake Haired Ladies. These elements are supernatural but also perhaps "para-normal" to steal a term from you, Willi, because they have at the same time a remarkable suggestiveness that entertains seemingly endless interpretations. Like dreams, the rich, suggestive images of myth have a determined quality which, given the right interpreter can be so illuminating that they alter the course of lives, release souls from misery, move whole peoples to extraordinary acts of bravery.

Anyone attempting to invent a myth that can survive comparison to those from the deep past soon discovers that the fantastic elements cannot be just any fantastic elements. That discovery makes the old stories seem somehow natural and fertile in comparison to our fictions. The challenge of the idea of new myth is how do we arrive at them? How are our fantastic elements to be found? Are they to be invented or discovered?

Why are they even there? It may be that the transformation of something in the potential nature of humanity finds proper expression only by being likened to the fantastical elements in myth.

Again, the bounds of transformation only determine the nature and limits of change, not whether individual storytellers will change things either regressively or progressively when telling an effective myth.

Willi: Who are the myth power centers in academia? What do they say they are contributing to the field? What is the price to play?

Carridine: One could limit power centers to a few groups and present a picture of a hierarchy of authorities doling out favors and making outsiders pay a higher price. That certainly is true in the disciplines studying mythology in academia that I have encountered but I think an accurate picture of this behavior in higher education would be too diverse and extensive to be useful. I think it's better.

As I said, I believe the price to play IS too high to pay, especially since the pay-out does not go to resolving the problems I want mythology to address, and so I leave it at that and I go about my own business.

But a few words in terms of the development of myth studies in academia might be worthwhile. I already mentioned myth studies (as Campbell defined mythology as the study of "a religion you don't believe in") can be traced back to the 1700s (and before if you think of Vico). Further still, if you consider the "ology" part of mythology -- the attempt to account for the presence and persistence of these strange stories -- which has been coexistent with myth since the birth of writing (which is as far as I think anybody should try to go).

Even within living memory we have witnessed the twilight of the gods at least three times in academic trends in Myth Studies in the 20th Century. It is easy to imagine them as Golden, Silver and Bronze Ages, but they are generally known as Modern, Late Modern and Post-Modern periods. The period we are in now, Post-post or Contemporary, is still a twilight time, darkness has fallen on the post-modern but no full dawn has yet come shining down.

Modern was Frazier's Golden Bough and it's like with their influence on early Modernists including James Joyce and T.S. Eliot. Anthropology was fully born as a discipline. The plurality of ideas that exploded from this period and the new vision of Humanity including ourselves in the West produced the Structuralism of Levi-Strauss and the Grand Schemers of Late Modernism like Campbell and Northrop Frye. And the phrase "new vision" in the last sentence I consider in Modernism and after to be synonymous with "mythology."

In FINNEGAN'S WAKE, Joyce's "use of mythology" is total: he soused the sacred with his contemporary world; it was an apocalypse of Western Culture and Christianity in book form, an intoxication of a decadent culture with the new blood brought by the study of world religion, simultaneously a crucifixion and a new nativity. In his nursery of nonsense words, the consciousness of Enlightenment Society met and was fully drowned out by the subconsciousness of Freud, Nietzsche, Vico and who was his fourth big influence? It slips my mind at present... Joseph Campbell actually made FINNEGAN'S WAKE intelligible not just to us masses but also to intellectuals and academics with his first book, (coauthored with Henry Morton Robinson) SKELETON KEY TO FINNEGAN'S WAKE.

One generation in Academia gives us new avenues of study like anthropology; the next, scholars the likes of Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye who have read everything in its original language and give us back the MONOMYTH, the story that apparently underlies the all of everything else; the next-generation yields Derrida and De Man and the French Deconstructivist philosophers who show us that these MONOMYTHS are MONOLITHS that actually petrify (and so preserve) the oppressions of the past into inescapable universal truths.

What at first seemed a liberation from the dogma of churches and other ancestral totalities is the inadvertent reinvention of the very same thing. The Post-Structuralist's teach us that by mincing words we can see ever tinier and more inextricable oppressions. The generation after them, our generation, in reaction to their rigorous cramped style of attack produces a pluralism based on the explosion of new media and new "inputs" -- an embrace of the incommensurability of everything with everything else. It is a more amorphous state and a more amorphous field. It is a situation in which people who decide on a practice, method or key text, ensile themselves against the endless waves of new and different.

You, my friend, are an excellent example of the new and different.

Willi: How can we re-ignite the power of myth?

Carridine: To answer this question, I will answer this one first:

Willi: How are myth and mythologists political?

Carridine: I believe I have already answered this to some extent. We talked about how mythologists can be cliquish and protective of their positions which is its own kind of political -- "office politics" -- a negative form of politics. These are the kinds of politics the novice doesn't expect in "spirit realms" -- in careers and activities that are supposed to pursue a spiritual end or a higher cause -- but then there they are. And the response is, oh, no, not here too! But of course, yes. Here too. This too is a human contour that all mythology must trace in story.

And beginning with this notion of what is pandemic to humanity we may begin to think about the saturation of human experience with myth. If we must have myths of office politics because they are part of the human mythos, how much more mythology must be involved in the substance of that politics which intends to shape human communities?

How strange it is to try to talk about this! It seems like a new terminology is required to discuss the different dimensions of influence of mythology in human life. It is something lived, something used, something told, what else?

But turn it around and see it this way: the myth of the polis -- the city -- the Republic -- is as old as history and older -- the polis -- the city -- Plato's Republic and older. Imagining the ideal city is the political act. the City -- and how its life is to be perfectly organized conducted -- how we behave, how we should behave, how we respond to other's behavior, all of these things are the subject of myth.

Where there is an imagination there is a mythology and so competing mythologies where we have different imaginations. So myths as stories communicate imagination. Stories can bring people together.

Mythology as a unifying principle, as a shaping force for the individual is of course education. Education is political. As Paolo Friere said in one of my favorite things to repeat: "The heart of the revolution is education." This brings in the role of the mentor -- the person who communicates wisdom as well as facts. Creating mentoring relationships within existing communities was the focus of my art and storytelling work for years. These relationships have to be in place to have any social force behind mythology.

Think of the Civil Rights Movement, and the Green movement, these are two examples of political movements with very conscious motivating myths. The rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement -- based on the mythology of the Bible -- allowed people to surrender their lives to the pursuit of a better world which by no means was guaranteed.

The Green Movement is, to the degree that it can be made homogeneous, bound by an Earth-first resource consciousness or idea of ecology, of systems rather than individuals; these kinds of shifts away from the norms of the larger society are possible through images put forward in stories. These images and stories make up our mythologies.

And they can be political as the thing that fires the imagination, the thing that shapes the imagination of those who would act and those who would make choices in their commitment to social change.

Mythology is always present. And usually what we are fighting against is a worn out mythology -- a Dying King who is at the same time a Dragon; you see that story again and again. And again it is the story of a twilight of the gods. We must slay the mythology that has outlived its usefulness or was evil to begin with -- which is to say never useful to us.

But as a concept of being -- on the level of understanding -- mythology is imagination. It is the totality of connections we have made or will make in the effort to understand our world. The priorities we give to those connections makes a mythos and a cosmology, a world-shape: this is mythology as imagination.

It is because there are competing mythologies and because that competition is political -- has to do with how people can live their lives and the freedom they have to make choices -- that mythology has value as story.

The story of gods and heroes who represent our cosmos and our values in conflict with those who oppose it can be loosed in the public space between imaginations. The story can fly from one person to another [like a rock song at a concert] it is what can win minds and hearts.

Willi: How can we re-ignite the power of myth?

Carridine: Same answer: stories. If you're talking about how to get a movement going, how to unify the people of a movement -- yes, stories. But you may then ask, "But if story is mythology, and mythology has been extinguished, what can re-ignite it?" This reminds me of Matthew 5:13: "But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?"

If we imagine myth as a body to be reanimated, like Lazarus, do we know anyone who can work that trick? Anyone we can call up and have here by the end of the week? But if we imagine myth as a fire to be reignited in the souls of those who hear it, we might have stumbled upon some concrete steps we can take. We can call up a good story teller who knows what story is needed in our situation.

I'll put it this way: Myth is not a thing in itself that needs to be reignited. Myth considered as "myth" is barely a thing at all. It is a generality which, as I've already said, can't even be precisely defined. We do not need nor can we sustain ourselves on generalities and broad categories. We believe a thing must be done -- pick any crisis in your quiver -- and we can't do it alone: the thing itself and why it needs doing and why it is not yet done itself provides the singular myth that can re-ignite in a new generation the fire necessary to stand up and act.

But again, it must be told in a way that fires the imagination. Answering question 13 might give us the material to elucidate that way. Again, please note that for me, it is always the material that comes first. An intuition helps me select my material and the material directs my work and eventually the insight emerges. Attempting the opposite, to bring an idea -- rationally derived or logically produced -- and to attempt to drape it over the material, is, in terms of myth, a thing doomed to fail.

Willi: Please critique The 12 Elements of New Mythology (W. Paul, 2015) -

- + Para-normal
- + Universal struggle
- + Journey, Initiation, Community as Hero
- + Symbols
- + Alchemy
- + Nature is Sacred
- + Threat of apocalypse
- + Digital - Non-Digital Collision
- + Future/ Sci-Fi-based
- + Permaculture and Transition
- + New ritual and tradition
- + Rewilding

Carridine: When I invited you to first engage in a conversation with me over two years ago I did so out of admiration for your tremendous dedication and output and based on a desire to discover through discussion something very like the elements of the new mythology you proposed. I had noticed that many people eventually came to ask you the same question, "This is all quite amazing and informative but why do you call these things myth?"

These 12 terms (themselves termed elements of mythology) draw out of me the same question. Not so much, "Why is this mythology?" but rather "How will we arrive at good stories through a list such as this?"

I have more than exhaustively overstated my commitment to a an intuitive creative process, trusting in that process as a direct and truly affirming out- flowing of the same vital intelligence-in-nature that produced mythology in the first place. With all that said I will give my impressions of these terms in the hope that (1) where I am incorrect you will understand that they are not self-explanatory and (2) in an effort to share my own understanding of these terms, to show the amount of room in them for both alternative meanings and development.

So **paranormal:** [to restate my own use of earlier:] Myths are distinguished by the presence of fantastic elements, but can they be any fantastic elements -- any in the sense of arbitrarily chosen? How are the fantastic elements to be found? Why are they there? If myths are made up true stories of Gods and Heroes with the occasional Snake-haired Lady thrown in, these elements are "para-normal" in the sense that I tried to suggest when writing of fairy tales above: There is in them a reality that spans and intersects the normal: contact with this reality offers entry to the underground of myth, to the story time, to the journey Campbell talked about, it is "a reality unrepresented in more naturalistic depictions of reality" because there is quite literally no space for it.

Often when I talk this way of fantastical elements people respond by saying I have disenchanting the story -- no "real dragons?" Oh, how disappointing! But look at the stories with dragons with this kind of reality: what happens in them? Only fighting. Only war. Chasing, pursuing. Looking for a magic object and finding it or not finding it. But mostly fighting - - Chopping, stabbing and hacking.

This is what happens when the imagination is committed to "real dragons" When the dragons are not limited to being flesh and blood fire-breathing dinosaurs, that is what ignites the imagination and possibilities for both the story and the lives of those who listen proliferate.

"**Universal struggle.**" We have talked enough or enough in this correspondence of the political nature of myth, that it is natural and that it is naturally occurring, that is an intuitive product and also an ideological or a partisan ideological document: the tellers are always positioned politically and employ the primary stuff to tell their own story. There is no universal.

There is only this primary stuff, this life urge that is bonded to the nature of life and given over into the hands of those who must struggle to survive. We are faced in the present with a global struggle against a small group of international billionaires who seem intent on being as destructive as they can be. They said they will never embrace our ideology as their birthright, as part of a universal humanity. What is the story we tell about that? What do we embrace that braces us against them?

"Journey, initiation, community as hero": the Hero's Journey as Campbell has it I have already commented is a perfectly true account of one dimension of myth, but as I've tried to make clear the characterization in general terms is not necessarily helpful in the struggle to produce new myths. The myth must arise out of struggle, out of what the author of Ecclesiasticus calls "the furnace of humiliation."

A story that is rendered by checking off the boxes in a neat list of the absolute must-haves for a can't-miss script can only (98% of the time) produce trite shallow ineffective stories. A good story -- if Campbell's theories are correct -- no matter what their outward shape and expression can be construed by the able critic as containing or possessing the exactly correct number of the right elements to qualify and be appropriate to Campbell's theory. Such concerns cannot be our concerns.

I will comment less on the "**community as hero**" as I'm still not sure I understand it. I believe you are putting forward the community as the premiere value and trying to fight the individualism that runs rampant in our society. But I think the hero understood in the following way is actually what properly addresses those concerns: the hero is the one who's values best represent the community. The hero is the person whose actions advance the community.

That hero in story gives people an example, someone to emulate in their desire to be both good and outstanding. In a very true way, the heroic individual is the community represented in story. The community maintained through the individual. Your listeners will always be individual members of a community that will only ever manifest itself through their willingness to act in the interest of the group. Stories of the hero let them know what those interests are.

"**Symbols**" is a contested term. I have tried in the instance of each term to find among the materials you sent me links to an adequate explanation of what you mean. By "symbols" I believe you mean emblems that may be used as heralds of ideas and meanings important to permaculture and other means to better future. For me a symbol is not a term I would often use. I am most aware of its use in Modernist literary criticism particularly that criticism that arose out of MH Abrams and the study of Romanticism. The Romantics seem to have put forward an idea of the symbol as an image of inexhaustible significance produced in the course of a narrative or a lyric poem.

In that role a symbol hardly needs a name: the thing itself and its multivalent and inexhaustible openness to the investigation of the curious reader should be adequately named by its own name. It doesn't require to be attached to any kind of general term or generalization.

But such quibbles aside whether we collect symbol or metaphor or allegory, the new mythology involves images in the sense of focal points which make order within narratives and concentrate meaning within representations to make them true representation of human life. Vague again: see alchemy below:

"**Alchemy**" as I stated in our first correspondence is of very little importance to me. I can make importance out of it as alternative science, more holistic science on one side and another -- alchemy is the processing out of meaning. Mythology is an alchemy. I gave a description of this process in our first conversation.

I pulled it out to repeat here. "When I ask this question of process, I mean how do we arrive at the new myths? The process Campbell describes is one of many. For example, there is the process described by Robert Bosnak in his recent free lecture, Introduction to the course on [Alchemical Psychology](#).

"Bosnak describes an alchemical process parallel to Campbell's Creative Mythology. It involves the same elements as Campbell's does: a person's experience, a sign or image (in alchemical terms, a tincture/corpus) used to communicate the inspiration, and the inspiration itself — "the force and value of living myth." Bosnak is applying his alchemy to psychology and individual healing whereas Campbell is talking about stories for the individual as a socially responsible self. A more significant difference I think is the source of the creative inspiration.

"Bosnak talks about the lyrical organization of our perceptions in relation to these elements: (1) experience, (2) image and (3) inspiration (approx. 10 minutes into his lecture.) And what is this lyrical organization of our perceptions? As I understand it, as it resonates with my interests, lyrical organization would be reality apprehended or judged as that which makes sense or has meaning rather than the more familiar material organization of our perceptions which apprehends Reality as anything which has an existence independent of us — in spite of us, regardless of us. For me, this may be the whole of the question regarding new mythology and our attempts to tackle the huge problems of our time. What is our relation to reality, to truth, to nature?

"Following this introduction about lyrical organization, Bosnak starts talking about the acquisition of an image from a dream encounter and an interpretive processing of the image through alchemical stages of "heat." There are two chief differences between Campbell's process and the process Bosnak is describing. First rather than a person having an experience and then "seeking to communicate it through signs" Bosnak describes the person being given an image from "deep deep down." It's not that the person has an experience which they understand and then chooses a way of narrating it to others. In Bosnak's process, the person doesn't understand the image. The second difference then is the discovery of the meaning of the image through these stages of interpretation.

"I think it is this difference in process that allows for a truly powerful, healing realization in Bosnak's alchemy: the dream image is created by a much deeper source than our conscious inventiveness. Coming as an influx from a more earth-connected or natural, more ecological mind, the image speaks the language of Nature. Because of this deep source, free from our alienated ways of thinking, it is capable of offering great insight with which the soul can be tied to the contemporary disaster in a much more intimate and holistic way. This does not exclude conscious inventiveness: it only adds the requirement that that inventiveness be interpreted by this more ecological mind."

Now in the last year one of the familiar Depth Psychologists from Bonnie Bright's Depth Psychology Alliance who espouses an interest in alchemy, whether it's Bosnak or Chalquist or someone else I don't remember, in a podcast with Bonnie Bright, talked about the tendency of modern contemporary alchemists to reduce alchemy to depth psychology. Using its processes (the historical references to its processes) much as Jung did, in a limited way -- metaphorically -- to refer to psychological processes. for example, with the process of alchemical heating you represent the process of individuation.

He said though that he had recently come across some record of a scientific finding which proved the actual transformation of lead into gold. Not metaphorically, not symbolically, not as a representation of a psychic occurrence, but the actual transformation of one metal into another, and he rightly saw this as a chance to revolutionize one's attitudes towards the relation of the human psyche to the rest of nature as well as one's own attitudes towards scientists (alchemists) of the past and all their doings.

Now I'm hesitant to put any energy into such discussions, interesting though they may be. This for me is abstract. This discovery may lead to the ability to change any metal into any other metal or to change a car into a carnival or a person into an ass, with all of the attendant changes of the bounds of life in relation to the magical center of all being. But for me the struggle is elsewhere. For me the transformation of nature into dream and, upon waking, dream into revolutionized awareness accesses that same magical center of being.

"Nature is sacred." Blake said "for everything that lives is holy." Holy and sacred, I'm not sure in this moment how to distinguish them. What is the sacred? The sacred is an action as much as it is a state of being. Such double status, action and state, or triple or quadruple status, is often a sign of mythological or concrete imagery: a better way to think of it is - - as Owen Barfield asserted in *POETIC DICTION* -- myth meanings are original unities which we have divided into concepts, like the oft-used example of *spiritus*, a word once having undivided meaning which over time we have divided into the separate concepts physical wind, physical breath and nonphysical spirit (and more meanings now unknown to us Barfield said.)

But let's concentrate on the holding aspect of the sacred. We must hold things sacred -- hold the line so it isn't crossed -- to keep things sacred in the sense of the old commandment: Keep the Sabbath holy. It feels almost completely forgotten that human action itself is the sacralizing action. Humanity is the sole sacralizing agent. We make and keep things holy.

We live in a time of debunking where people rejoice in the downfall of the smug and pretentious, and anyone who we even think smells of such things. We can have good reason to hammer down the nail that sticks out but we live in a hammering age, and good reasons are less essential than the opportunity to hammer.

Our notions of what is real -- as in the phrase "get real" are so gross and prejudiced in favor of the physical that a notion of the sacred which does not point to some "Sacred Ingredient" in the thing itself is hard to defend. And a sacred that must be protected by human hands cannot possibly be imagined as really sacred in any substantial way. But it is a good training for the mind to keep exactly that at the forefront at all times. We make and keep sacred. In *THE FOUR LOVES* CS Lewis said, "A garden is a good thing but tending itself is not the kind of goodness it has."

Threat of apocalypse. Threats that would bring about an apocalypse I imagine here would be ecological and economical catastrophes leading to a total collapse of human civilization: our failure to restrain ourselves and to reign in those among us who refuse to honor the world community and the delicate ecology of the earth might very well lead to the transformation of our environment into a place that we ourselves find unlivable or we ourselves cannot abide or survive in.

Likewise disastrous and equally imminent is the creation of a society so split between rich and poor that the rule of law and institutional oppression become synonymous, with major portions of the world's people being rendered incapable of feeding themselves and suffer from inadequate water to drink. Meanwhile a precious few live off the rest in obscene opulence: this too is an insupportable situation which will inevitably lead to a catastrophic collapse. These are of course the central themes of any new mythology.

But of course "apocalypse" itself means "revelation." The end of the world is technically called the "eschaton" in the tradition that brings us the word "apocalypse." If we desire apocalypse, revelation, we should ask ourselves what does the way we are ending the world say about us. What stories can we tell the younger generation about why we couldn't prevent total catastrophe.

If no one survives the end of the world, then of course we needn't worry any further. But if some do survive we must be ready with stories to tell about our failures, our weaknesses and our evils. But what is the revelation? Do you know? Does anyone know?

The end of the world traditionally of course doesn't end with the end. It is the beginning times of a different age to come. The age of Pisces we know is giving way now to the age of Aquarius, and we belatedly learned that all the predictions of the 2012 end of the Mayan world were astronomical predictions or readings of the end of one epoch and the beginning of the next.

"Digital/non-digital collision." This I would like to definitely hear Willi elaborate on. I can imagine scenarios where this phrase would be meaningful but I don't believe anything that I could come up with on my own in the few minutes I have to give such a question would be in any way of comparable worth to what Willi could say if he has given it the kind of dedicated meditation that I know he gives to every subject that comes within his purview.

"Future/sci-fi based." This sounds to me very like a simple prescription for the genre of the new mythology. You may see it as setting in the future or in a familiar sci-fi scenario the myths you would be composing just as in the past myths were most often placed in the deep past, near the time of the creation of the human world. That we would want to stick to the future and sci-fi is of no concern to me.

I would actually be very interested to hear Willis attitudes toward the mythic qualities he has expressed perceiving at rock concerts rather than continue to make my little speculations about sci-fi based settings for future mythologies.

The power evidenced in music at a rock concert, here is how I see its relevance: the ability of music to touch each individual present and through that contact unify all individuals has a much more focused capacity to communicate the potential power in effective stories. Music shows the power of human murmuration (as I talked about it in the last correspondence) to judge a new myth a success, we should require that it display the same kind of influence on the individual and the crowd as the one displayed by music at a concert. If the story teller actually worked at it until the means were found to place that power in the story, then the teller would surely have made the contribution desired.

The speeches of Martin Luther King, their use of known Biblical myths and the lyrics of the church songs familiar to his audience are a good transition from Willi's rock concert example. The use of myth in the service of the Permaculture Revolution has a marvelous example in Dr. King's sermons. King's ability to make a kind of music with anecdotal recitation of his own experience, interwoven with the lyrics of church songs, the most common of the Bible stories and the stories of true bravery, tragedy, and true perils from the world of the movement around him to which the members of his congregation had committed their lives, amply displays the power of myth in the struggle for social change. And it also demonstrates the partisan rather than universal quality of these new myths, the ideological focus of the given community: through its shared values, the community crafts a living story with which to power through the barricades of the establishment.

"Permaculture and transition." Of the elements on this 12 point list, these two terms alone serve as analogous to what I just described concerning the elements of myth-making of Dr. King's sermons; anecdotal recitation of true acts of bravery, true telling of tragedies and the perils of the movement interwoven with music and old myths exhibiting important values to those who have committed themselves to Permaculture and Transition. They quite clearly provide the settings and subject matters that concern Willi in his composition of new myths.

Through developing a mythology of the Permaculture and Transition movement Willi is attempting to accomplish what Dr. King did when his speeches became a kind of Psalmody of the Civil Rights Movement. King (and others of course) employed imagery from the Bible based on the faith that the characters of the Bible were struggling in a God-sanctioned effort to achieve the Holy Land or the Holy Purpose, applying these stories to the struggle of a downtrodden and disempowered people dismissed by the ruling class of their country. This identification inspired those dismissed people, those stones that the builders had thrown away to great acts of heroism.

Of course the great value of a shared tradition can be seen in this example. The churches all over the South, the deep history of shared stories employed to invigorate the people coming to the movement were tools of inestimable value to the storytellers seeking to inspire people to put their lives on the line. A movement that would invent its own myths faces a tremendous challenge.

On the other hand, it might be equally difficult to inspire people coming to Permaculture with Bible stories. But instead of whole cloth invention, it might be worthwhile to look to the culture at large and see what stories are already alive in what's going on out there.

"New ritual and tradition" are even harder to invent than new mythology. Tradition of course is a concept usually tied to a relationship to the past. A tradition is a practice that people carry on. It is something that is continued from the past into the future. The effort to invent such things whole cloth is nearly always a failure -- it is at least, as difficult as smoothing a stone. A stream smooths a stone quite easily, in a way that is natural to it, all it needs are hundreds and thousands of years.

Likewise the ritual. Inventing a new ritual can be done but what is produced like the new myth is always in danger of being a rationally rendered replicant of the vital, rich, meaning-saturated rituals that have come down to us via tradition. Each element of traditional ritual has been fussed over and wondered at for hundreds of years by millions of people such that no one thing in the ritual remains without countless significances. When you talk about "community as hero" there is an analog for you; the nameless numberless inventors of the endless richness of ritual stand as a heroic challenge to anyone who would invent a new ritual.

My own wedding is my example of ritual for me. Maya, my spouse, and I both had a basic contempt for the notion of marriage and we resisted a long time because we regarded it as an exclusive club which we would not join until every citizen in our country was able to partake of its benefice. When we decided we would get married (17 years into our relationship) still the ritual aspect of the wedding itself was not something we treated with great seriousness. We treated it like having a color "theme" for our reception: we were asked what our colors were by the person who would be setting up the tables at the restaurant where we were having our reception. We had no idea what they were talking about. When we were told that people had color schemes we did not know how to respond -- it simply held no significance for us -- so we simply said that the usual white table cloths would be fine. We did not regard the wedding ceremony itself any differently.

The ritual itself just didn't mean anything to us. We were interested in being married, not in the wedding. Then an invitee who couldn't come rsvp'd that he was so disappointed that he wanted to throw a party for us and for all of the other people who couldn't attend our wedding. That way, he said, he could show us how much he wanted to honor us. So we agreed to that and volunteered to come in our wedding attire and even have the ceremony over again so that no one would have a feeling of having missed anything.

We even joke saying that we wondered if we would be able to tell the difference between a real ritual and the fake ritual, both seeming to us to have as their chief characteristic artifice.

So the day of our wedding came and much preparation had gone into it even though it was a very low-key affair. We walked down the aisle to David Bowie's HEROES. We stood under a beautiful handcrafted chupa made by one of my Maya's former students as a gift. We heard recited to us and we recited back the vows that we ourselves have crafted. And when we turned and walked back down the aisle,(to the sound of the Little Rascals caterwauling THE DARING YOUNG MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE) Maya and I, without speaking, shared the same thought. We would have the party for all the people who couldn't attend this ceremony but we could never repeat the ceremony itself.

Something magic had occurred and we couldn't risk screwing it up. We had, in other words, to hold it sacred. And in what did that magic consist? I don't feel prepared to say for sure, but almost 200 of our beloved friends, some of them traveling for thousands of miles, all converged on a single point on a single day to see Maya and I stand up and make a promise. That had in it a power is not to be underestimated.

Beyond all the elaborations like I have already hinted at, "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue," the ritual of the wedding contained within it a knowledge which neither Maya nor I possessed until the ritual itself conveyed it to us: The Simple Power Of The Public Oath. We missed it, knowing so much about so much else. The danger of our inventions is that they miss the point and dismiss what may still work in all that old stuff we've already sent to the Dump.

One last note here: When we speak of myth, ritual and tradition we can see how easily we could add to that list "identity," "values," "initiation," "adulthood," "childhood," all of these things are concepts as well as current substances. And myth should never be isolated from any of those things. As a story, it is a portable thing that can pass between people, and that is its virtue. Otherwise though it is, and should be, indivisible from the rest of culture. It should be the expression of culture in the same way that costumes and customs are expressions of culture. In the same way that the first thing that pops into your mind when you wake up in the morning is an expression of culture.

I think some careful meditation on this idea of the inseparability of myth from culture, of myth from identity, is a profound starting point for this effort at new mythologies. Even to give thought to why we experience and feel a

profound separation from any authenticating myth or ritual or tradition, why we feel that our identities are inadequate, why we feel our lives are not in our control or are being shaped by ruling forces that we would not choose.

How quickly a little meditation leads us directly into the troubled heart that can produce our substantial myths: That we live in a country that a generation ago defined itself by the idea of individual liberty but today students have to be prompted to associated America with Freedom. Consumerism comes first. Others' myths are winning the day. The majority of citizens feel powerless, that is the beginning of the Myth. How does that happen? What is our condition? What is the way out?

I expect that some of my descriptions and guesses are a bit distant from your actual ideas. I hope you see them as useful. The last one, "**Rewilding**" is actually a good place to pass this correspondence back to you, I think. "Rewilding." My mind goes in two directions with this word. I can imagine something like the farming practice of rotating crops, a practice taking leaving a field fallow one step further: letting it go wild. My second direction is if we relate it to a return to myth thinking, and associate myth with a wildness, I think that is a wrong turn. I think of the Central Park Jogger and "Wilding." Bad. I think of the countless myths that warn and threaten and in every which way possible pull the human being out of wildness -- myths of drunken centaurs and the like. But I imagine rewilding, which I couldn't find an explanation of in the materials you sent Willi, is something like Permaculture and the Transition movement. A term with an actual use outside the literal meaning of the word itself, a term of which I simply haven't heard.

So from here I hope to learn from you, Willi.

* * * * *

Willi's Reaction -

A huge thank you to Carridine for his search and rescue of the prime matter. My rescue aside, I am happy to be treading water in the shallow end of all things myth, breaking down the waves of ego and screen shots into manageable drops. While I agree that the 2336 Hail Mary's on Planetshifter.com are "dense", one can trickle down my portfolio at Academia.edu for a thumbnail view.

An ego breaking down silos? Or a barn building a rescue plan?

For many years I have been investigating the many "components" in mythology and connecting things like symbols, alchemy, archetypes, sacred to rising trends like permaculture, the Transition Movement and Nature. My attempts to attract youth to Campbell are an uncertain success. But is there too much selfishness and destruction to save the human race? I continuously flop between an old bull walrus in the toxoid depths of SF Bay and lounging, half-asleep start-up on a sun drenched Embarcadero pier.

I am a community of One.

* * * * *

Some cathartic reflections on Carridine's interview:

Carridine: The question then becomes what is the relation of myth to permaculture?

Willi: Permaculture is the place and the vision to grow new myths. Land use, new values, new rituals and traditions, environmental justice. Primordial soup. Not science fiction but soil, till and harvest. A new world flower. Heavy symbols; all alchemy!

Carridine: The virtue of myth is that it is real: if you seek it in its true place, you can find it, but if you haven't found it, you can convincingly pretend that you have, not to anyone who has been to that true place.

Willi: Bliss or something equally poetic, has been necking with me in the back seat of my VW Van for many years. This true place is my heart, my sadness and hope.

Carridine: On what basis do we make the judgment that the old is worn out and possibly the new is to be suspect in relation to it?

Willi: A gut judgement based on observation and many, many interviews. The old myths are slithering on the hot sidewalk as new stories, battles and outcomes flow up the volcanic tubes.

Carridine: We recognize that the fairy tale represents the spirit space of our experience, a reality unrepresented in more naturalistic depictions of reality ...

Willi: This so-called "spirit space" for most is now dormant. A victim of the Wal-Martism and Sports Illustrated.

Carridine: The question is how do we arrive at a new myth that adequately counters the Randian Atlas Myth?

Willi: By building communities from our homes up with our neighbors to the City Councils. Mythsters must be activists to connect us back to the Earth and the new sustainability stories.

Carridine: Scholars the likes of Joseph Campbell and Northrop Frye who have read everything in its original language and give us back the MONOMYTH, the story that apparently underlies the all of everything else

Willi: I don't believe this so-called MONOMYTH, as a wonder plan, is a real force now. Too much Sci-fi. I would be hard-pressed to turn it on to my African American friends in Oakland or my Episcopalian Papa in southern Minnesota.

Carridine: The Green Movement is, to the degree that it can be made homogeneous, bound by an Earth-first resource consciousness or idea of ecology, of systems rather than individuals; these kinds of shifts away from the norms of the larger society are possible through images put forward in stories. These images and stories make up our mythologies. And they can be political as the thing that fires the imagination, the thing that shapes the imagination of those who would act and those who would make choices in their commitment to social change. But as a concept of being -- on the level of understanding -- mythology is imagination.

Willi: Nature-brewed imagination-fired political action? Sounds like the new mythology to me.

Carridine: The story of gods and heroes who represent our cosmos and our values In conflict with those who oppose it can be loosed in the public space between imaginations. The story can fly from one person to another [like a rock song at a concert] it is what can win minds and hearts.

Willi: Keep in mind that many concert goers are drunk, stoned, still trying to sell tickets or married.

Carridine: ... why do you call these things myth?

Willi: Pre-myths or wanna-be myths perhaps. Today the supportive / integrated alchemies change the seasoning and re-charge the soup!

Carridine: The hero is the person whose actions most represent the community.

Willi: Ideally, but there are many (anti-Heroes) that control the jobs, mortgages and benevolent Clubs of the middle class. You can represent something or someone to death.

Carridine: "I think it is this difference in process that allows for a truly powerful, healing realization in Bosnak's alchemy: the dream image is created by a much deeper source than our conscious inventiveness. Coming as an influx from a more earth-connected or natural, more ecological mind, the image speaks the language of Nature. For me the transformation of nature into dream and, upon waking, dream into revolutionized awareness accesses that same magical center of being.

Willi: Very interesting but most of the time my dreams are not recalled and not consciously utilized. Nature to many is clear-cutting, toxic aquifers, Redwood sent postcards and Walt Disney lunch boxes.

Carridine: "Digital/non-digital collision."

Willi: Machines make toast, vacuum the floor and soon drive us to work. As a template, the robotic-based assembly line at Tesla Motors will have a huge impact on our ability to find a job and raise a family. The Orwellian nightmare is here. Collide.

Carridine: 'Future/sci-fi based.' This sounds to me very like a simple prescription for the genre of the new mythology.

Willi: Back to our Nature as core. Sci-Fi without a Nature as base is just dried-up super glue.

Carridine: I would actually be very interested to hear Willis attitudes toward the mythic qualities he has expressed perceiving at rock concerts rather than continue to make my little speculations about sci-fi based settings for future mythologies.

Willi: The shaman, or medicine man, or healer, or Buddha, is an ancient title and community role, a hero and teacher common to many world people and their myths. Are there shamans with guitars today? Some artists feel that this role is possible, that the rock show is more than a performance. Some feel that they are evoking and/or invoking something through their work and live gigs.

["The Shaman in Our Musical Universe:"](#) GreenSource Knowledge Paper #6. (11/09)

Carridine: "New ritual and tradition" are even harder to invent than new mythology. Likewise the ritual. Inventing a new ritual can be done but what is produced like the new myth is always in danger of being a rationally rendered replicant of the vital, rich, meaning-saturated rituals that have come down to us via tradition.

Willi: All good. We need and must create new movements, traditions, calendars and supportive rituals if we are to break the chains of our Masters in the Church and in the Board Rooms. Capitalism is killing us. We are running out of time and soul to participate in the Aquarian Round Table.

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Carridine Poran's Bio -

Carridine Poran is an artist, storyteller and teacher.

In his career as an artist, Kerry has been a galleried Fine Arts Painter and Sculptor, an illustrator of literary fiction as well as an actor and voice performer, a playwright, novelist and essayist. Overall, his career has been characterized by the effort to find new, more socially relevant roles for the artist.

First and foremost through his work he seeks to demonstrate the connection between the Imagination's Visionary Landscape and the Socially Committed Life. It was his early experience as an Adult Literacy Instructor and his exposure to the Liberatory Pedagogy developed by Paulo Freire which demonstrated this connection to him.

Running seminars and workshops and mentoring LGBTQ youth was an equally transformative experience which was cemented by his experience of the death of his own mentor. The art Kerry did over a period of seven years as a memorial, The Mentor's Grove, finally brought together all of the elements of his creative life.

In response to suddenly being capable of a vision of that whole, he founded Carridine Poran Creative Services which, in addition to traditional art instruction, offers programs in which artists work with community organizations to produce large scale public art. The lead artists instruct community volunteers in the skills necessary to design and carry out the

artwork. Projects have included murals, graphic novels, and oral history archives. These projects help communities visualize local narratives and encourage mentoring relationships

Willi Paul's Bio –

Willi is active in the sustainability, permaculture, transition, sacred Nature, new alchemy and mythology space since the launch of PlanetShifter.com Magazine on EarthDay 2009. Willi's network now includes multiple blog sites and numerous list serves with a global presence.

SF. Mr. Paul has released 25 eBooks, 2335 + posts on PlanetShifter.com Magazine, and over 350 interviews with global leaders. He has created 76 New Myths to date and has been interviewed over 30 times in blogs and journals. Please see his cutting-edge article at the Joseph Campbell Foundation and his pioneering videos on YouTube.

In 1996 Mr. Paul was instrumental in the emerging online community space in his Master's Thesis: "The Electronic Charrette." He volunteered for many small town re-designs with the Minnesota Design Team. Willi earned his permaculture design certification in August 2011 at the Urban Permaculture Institute.

Willi's current focus includes the integration of permaculture, mythology and the Transition Movement.

Mr. Paul's eGroups -

- + Depth Psychology Alliance - New Global Mythology Group Founder
- + LinkedIn - New Mythology, Permaculture and Transition Group Founder
- + G+ Permaculture Age Group Founder

Connections –

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Willi Paul, Mythologist

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