

Myth 1

Re-Actioning Language Horizon

Presented by Roger Weir

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Transcript:

This is *Myth 1*. And if you were to look two thirds of a century ago, you would find something like *Manual of Mythology, Greek and Roman, Norse and Old German, Hindu and Egyptian* [*Manual of mythology;: Greek and Roman, Norse and Old German, Hindoo and Egyptian mythology*] [Alexander] S. Murray. And full of little engravings. And in 1935, when this was published, this was a standard kind of a textbook on mythology.

This approach to mythology is ineffective, and so we're not going to use it. We don't need dictionaries in Mythology. Murray's *Manual of Mythology* was based upon this kind of thing. This is from 1844. This is the first of three volumes, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*. And it again is like an encyclopedic listing, not only of the mythological figures, but the historical figures and everything mulched together. And the three volumes of this were matched by three more volumes in another series, by the same editor, and so on. And this kind of presentation of mythology. A little more expensive book. Is, is useless. It's actually useless.

We are also not going to take a look at. This is Joseph Campbell *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. This is a first edition from the Bollingen Series. It came out in 1949, and it was patterned on Lord Raglan's *The Hero*, which came out in the 30's.

But Campbell's learning in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* though the book was patterned on a redoing of Lord Raglan's earlier publication, *The Hero*. Joseph Campbell learned his material, not teaching coeds at his little Sarah Lawrence College, but by being the literary executor of a

great man, a German man who studied India. They're called Indologists. The study of India. And that man's name was Heinrich Zimmer. And Joseph Campbell was his literary executor. Zimmer had died in 1943. He was lecturing at Columbia University, and he caught a cold, and he died of pneumonia. He was a young man. And all of his works were ready to be published. And so, Joseph Campbell was the one who put Zimmer's works together.

And they were all published, most of them were published, in the Bollingen Series that was set up by money by Mary Mellon and her husband, Paul Mellon, as associate work with Carl Jung. The Mellons wanted to do something for Carl Jung, and Jung said, well, why don't you put money together and make available a series of 100 volumes that will show the cultural richness of archaeology and mythology and psychology and all of these things together. Literature. And the origins of this kind of mélange, this cultural mélange, actually received great impetus from Heinrich Zimmer. Because Zimmer was one of the great geniuses, intellectual geniuses of that early part of the 20th century.

And his first book that was published in 1951, in the Bollingen Series *Philosophies of India*, edited by Joseph Campbell. And it is a presentation of the six great philosophies of India as a set. And Zimmer's book, I remember reading this about 40 years ago and a little pink meridian paperback version of it. And I remember the, the pride and the difficulty of mastering all six systems so that you could give an explication of it. And I remember at the University of Wisconsin for the first time, experiencing that kind of confidence and that triumph of being able to show detailed structures of difficult and complicated things very clearly.

That approach also is not useful. And though it can be done and has its panache, it also is not useful.

Now, Zimmer's philosophies of India, of the six systems of Indian philosophy, was a redoing of an earlier volume. And this volume is called *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* by the Right Honorable Professor Max Mueller from Oxford University. And Mueller looks a little like Richard Wagner in this photograph. And actually, it was more of an Oxford don than this promotional photograph would show.

And these this *Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* was the culmination of Mueller's lifetime. And Max Mueller is the one who set up the whole indexing of Indological work by being one of the first persons to master Sanskrit in Europe. The very first person was a British envoy named Alexander Hamilton. And he went to, he was captured, his boat was captured by Napoleon, and so he was detained indefinitely on the continent. Not allowed to go back to England. And while he was detained, he was sort of under house arrest. One of the Schlegel brothers, Friedrich Schlegel, heard that he had learned how to read Sanskrit in India. And so, Frederick Schlegel studied and learned Sanskrit and was one of the first people in Europe to be able to teach Sanskrit. And Sanskrit as a language was a great discovery in European culture. This was back in around 1810.

They discovered that Sanskrit literature, the Sanskrit language, was very close to Old Persian. It was very close to very ancient Archaic Greek. And out of this came the idea that there must have been at one time an ancient language that men and women spoke thousands of years ago, an Indo-European ur language. The German designation always goes to some ur some fundamental. This is the original source. And that somehow Sanskrit was the closest that anyone could come to that ur language.

And so Max Mueller, who became the most famous Indologist, the most famous scholar of things Indian, and then finally all things Oriental, realized that the key was in the mythological structure of India. That the Sanskrit language mythological structure would have cognates in Greek mythology and Persian mythology and Mesopotamian mythology. And so, the study that Mueller developed, he went from several universities in Europe. He got his first degree at the age of 20. He was one of these intellectual geniuses.

And his father had been a very famous poet and courtier type of a figure associated with all of the courts of Europe. Franz Schubert set some of Max Mueller's father's poetry to music, for instance. And because of this, when the father died young, all of these courtier type people took Mueller under their wing, and they made sure that he met everyone and had the best education because his father was not there to provide. And so, Mueller grew up being a friend of all of the

major German courts. And then he was taken to England by his academic concerns. And when he was there, he became over 50 years the great professor at Oxford University in England.

And he was commandeered several times to lecture personally to Queen Victoria. And he became very good friends with Gladstone, Queen Victoria's Prime Minister. And because he knew Bismarck and his prime ministers very often, Max Mueller was sort of the secret go between from the Germans and the British. The British Empire and the rising German continental power. And so, he was an interesting kind of a character.

Just as an aside, Max Mueller, when he met his future wife, he fell in love with her instantly. And she was an English beautiful young woman. And they absolutely forbid the marriage because German intellectual, I mean, he's studying Sanskrit, who knows what. And they were not allowed to see each other for several years. And he completely never mentioned it to anyone. And she did not know of his love. And when they met again by chance, after a couple of years, they immediately just began an affair, whether they were married or not. And of course they became married. And over 50 years they were the great couple at Oxford University. They were the arbiters of that flamboyant taste of the Victorian adventurer scholars.

And Oxford at that time had a great competitor. They had a competitor that was almost as old as Oxford and that was Cambridge. So that the Oxford Dons had a certain kind of a expertise focus. Whereas the Cambridge Dons had an encyclopedic spectrum of expertise. Sir Isaac Newton was somebody from Cambridge and Max Mueller was someone from Oxford.

And so, Mueller, towards the end of his great career, wrote the world's first great textbook in comparative mythology. It was in 1897, and he made the point that the study of language is essentially the structural explication of the myths. And that the myths in a comparative mythology would give the true original character of mankind.

And so comparative mythology at the turn of the 20th century, around 1900, became the most important, fascinating subject in the world. Kind of like what nuclear physics became later on in the 20th century. Comparative linguistics. Comparative mythology. And dominating this entire

scene on one hand was professor Max Mueller, and on the other was Sir James George Frazer, who was working on the multiple volumes of *The Golden Bough*. Eventually 13 volumes.

And in the midst of this melee, one woman stood out head and shoulders above everyone else. And that was Jane Ellen Harrison. And it's her book, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, that we're using as one of our texts. 1903.

Now, I should mention there are some people who say, why do you use books at all? If you're going to understand reality who needs books? Well, the fact is, is that reality is no longer rocks and trees. In Paleolithic times, if you wanted to study reality, you went into the caves and put your torches out and tied a twine around yourself, and you leapt off into a bottomless pit to experience the feeling of free fall death. We know that this is true because at the back of Lascaux, a cave that was used about 20,000 B.C., that's it. That's exactly what they did.

And it was just a few years ago that they found the bits of charred twine from 20,000 years ago on the in the scree at the bottom of this pit. And one of the sets of cave drawings on the side where you leap off is a great bull, a great bison, a great fearsome bull figure. The mythological bull of threatening certain death. And faced to that bull is the stick figure of a man with a bird head who has an erection because he is scared to death. Literally scared to death. And the ceremony was to leap off in the darkness into this pit and to face that threshold, that moment of oblivion.

Because the psychophysical makeup of our being is such that it can fill up. Generally, our mind is strong enough to keep at some kind of distance that fullness. That pleroma. That completeness. Or to keep its exact flip flop opposite, that openness, that emptiness. To keep it at bay. But the mind, at certain stages, especially in Paleolithic times, in a darkened cave half a mile from the surface and leaping into the unknown. The mind is not very good at keeping those at bay. And the psychophysical terror fills the entire body. It fills the entire nervous system. And it fills it right up to the hairs standing on your head.

But a curious thing happens when you are full in that way. When you are suddenly filled completely in that way, terror goes to the very ends of your hair and stops there. Because terror cannot go farther than the psychophysiological materia. But you do. And your sense of awareness hovers over your head.

Rather one time I put an infinity sign over an architect's French curve that looks very much like a bird figure, to make a symbol for that kind of event. That above the Maharashtra chakra floats there, that clarity that has no terror whatsoever. And having glimpsed that one is free forever from the cowardice of fear.

A mythological learning must base itself upon a ritual comportment to nature. It's the only way that one can deal. And yet, the nature that we really live in includes books. We have lived in a literate societal matrix for so many thousands of years now, that books are literally trees in the forest. They're a part of the reality that we have to deal with. And if we sidestep them, we sidestep a large portion of the structure of our minds. We sidestep a large portion of what is bugging us now, this civilization that's dead and won't get off this even though it's dead. And in order to extricate ourselves from this impossible cemetery like situation, we need to free ourselves by using a comportment to the complete nature. And books are a part of the nature.

So, we're looking at myth with books. Just like we looked at ritual with books. Just like we looked at nature with books. But we're doing a special kind of an end run around the hypnotic aspect of a text, the conditioning aspect of a book. Some people know only one book, *The Bible* or *The Quran*, and will beat you over the head with it. We're looking beyond that kind of a garroting condition of limiting hypnotic quality, and we're using books in pairs. Because by using books in pairs, by pairing them up, we still use books, but not as the phenomenon which they are on an integral level. But in a phenomenon which they are in a paired form turns out to be a proportionate ratio or a differentially conscious usage. And that's what we're doing.

And so, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* is paired with another book, *Inanna The Myths of Inanna, Queen of Heaven [Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer]*, written a long, long, long time ago.

So, Jane Ellen Harrison's book, the *Prolegomena*, that it means what you study before you study something. It's not the study of Greek religion. It's the study of what you have to consider before you study it. She wrote this in 1903. In 1912, she published a book called *Themis* [*Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion*], which is about Greek religion, taking it even further. And then in 1921, she published a book called the *Epilegomena* [*Epilegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*] to the end beyond. After your study is over, this is what you consider.

So, in a way, the *Prolegomena* is the zero. *Themis* are all the numbers. And the *Epilegomena* is the infinity.

She died in 1928. She was 77. And she had been lionized. She was one of the first women students at Cambridge University, and she was the brightest star at that University at a time when it contained all the bright stars. At a time when Bertrand Russell was there and Sri Aurobindo was a student there. G.E. Moore. Cambridge was the proud home of a comprehensive mentality that was in competition to the considered integral mentality of Oxford. Now, between those two places, those two disciplines, the all and the specific, the Cambridge and the Oxford, Jane Ellen Harrison was really the star.

Her book came out when Max Mueller had finished his life work. He died. He died near Halloween 1900. And her book came out, was almost finished. Would have come out in 1901 or 1902, except that she had met a figure named Gilbert Murray.

And Gilbert Murray had retired very young from Glasgow University. Later on, went to Oxford and was there for a number of years. Gilbert Murray had pioneered the specific study of one figure that he thought was the key to understanding the whole of classical antiquity. He saw that the whole basis of the Greek foundations of Western civilization was all bound up in Homer. But that the arrow of sunlight insight that illuminated the esoteric structure of Homer was the Greek tragedian Euripides. The last Greek tragedian. And he thought that the last play by the last Greek tragedian, Euripides last play, *The Bacchae*, was the finger of insight that could go to the core, the essential mystery of the Homeric worldview.

And of course, at that time, Homer had been famous for 3000 years as being the presenter of Greek mythology in its Olympic version. The Olympian family. The family of Zeus and Hera. The family of Apollo and Artemis. Of Athena and Aphrodite. Of Hermes and Hephaestus. That the 12 figures of classical Olympic Greek mythology was basically a Homeric presentation, the two epics of Homer. And that Western civilization was founded on this. Except Gilbert Murray found that there was a thread that unraveled all of that, and the thread was *The Bacchae* of Euripides. And so, he did a translation and a study.

And as he was doing this, Jane Ellen Harrison became his close friend, and her book on the *Prolegomena of the Study of Greek Religion* became completely unraveled. So that on her 52nd birthday she wrote to Gilbert Murray. She wrote,

It's rather dreadful. The whole center of gravity of the book has shifted. It began as a treatise on Ceres and Demeter as the Corn Mother, with a supplementary notice on Dionysus. It is ending as a complete screed on Dionysus, with only an introductory talk about Ceres. Who's fault is that? Never. Never again will I ask you to lecture while I am writing a book. A nice sound one too. It was.

So, all of her beautiful learning. All of her fantastic, she was 52 at the time. She was enormously accomplished. Several wonderful publications on the archaeological remains of Athens. And Murray's book ruined it for her because she saw that there was some kind of Dionysian unraveling that happens when you take a look at the other side. Not the Olympian side. Not the Homeric side of Greek mythology. But that there is a mystery play happening underneath the surface of all. And of that it's the juice, it's the energy frequency of this mystery play, the Dionysian aspect that sabotages the Apollonian form. That the Homeric Apollonian form of Greek mythology is in fact, though beautiful, though balanced, though a necessary concomitant of civilization is not the major factor. Form in mythology is not the major factor. The major factor is the electric juice of ritual action. And that its ritual action that carries the energy. And so, mythology is not about the subjects. It's not about the forms made by organizing the subjects. But it's about experiencing the existential mysterious juice of the Gods.

And as she became fascinated at the time with the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche. And Nietzsche, who was famous as a young scholar. He wrote a book called *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* when he was very young. And another book when he was very young, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1872.

Nietzsche was a great friend of Richard Wagner, and a great appreciator of Wagner's wife, loved Cosima. And as a sort of an intellectual fair [inaudible] he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*. And in fact, made a dedication of it to Wagner, and in it he showed that the Dionysian and the Apollonian are two aspects of a mystery play. Not only Greek tragedy, but the entirety of the mystery of mythology. That mythology has a mysteriousness to it wherein the flow, the energy flow, the juice of language expressing in dramatic mythic figure play, runs a deep parallel to the mystery of nature. That myth and nature are like parallel oceans that from time-to-time flood the entirety of the world. And that in these times the world is renewed by this flood, by this mythological flood, or by this flood of the mystery of nature.

And in doing so, it gave several people, late in the 19th century, the idea that one could look for correlations between the cycles of mythic ritual mysteriousness in world history. That you could find in ancient archaeological times or in deep anthropological levels, the anthropology of the deeper levels of today. The archaeology of deeper levels of yesterday. That you could find the correlations to show what this patterning is. To understand once and for all how does this work?

It turns out that the entire pattern of a Greek tragedy has a series of steps that always occur, and as they occur, the ritual basis of a mythological structure is disclosed. When people like Max Mueller or Sir James George Frazer with his *Golden Bough*, or Jane Ellen Harrison with her book on the *Prolegomena*. When that whole clan of people came together around 1900, their works were all appearing one after another. Almost like rock albums in the late 60's. Every year brought another fantastic show. In that white hot heat, it became apparent that you can't go back to mythological compendia of even 50 years ago, or 100 years ago, or even back just to the Renaissance, that you had to go back to classical antiquity itself.

And so, you found someone like Sir James George Frazer doing a translation and an editing of this set of books published by Harvard University Press and the Loeb Classical Library. It's a translation in two volumes of Apollodorus. Apollodorus' *The Library. The Bibliotheca.*

Apollodorus is a 2nd century A.D. compendia of Greek mythology. And what's curious about it as one looks through Apollodorus, his discussion of the mythic figures that all of it is in terms of literature. None of it is in terms of the ritual existential juice. That the learnedness of someone like Apollodorus is someone who does research in libraries and that's why the book is subtitled *The Library*.

This is a true student's textbook of the uses of mythic figures in literature. Sophocles, Homer, Euripides. Especially the Alexandrian writer Alexander Apollodorus of Rhodes. Whose work was very famous in Alexandria about 300, 200 to 300 B.C. This kind of learning in the 2nd century AD is just as much of a pastiche and useless as these compendia that I've been throwing here on the floor.

Deeper than that, about 100 years before Apollodorus one comes to Ovid. And Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is a discussion of mythology from the juice angle. From the energy flow angle. And that what happens when you take energy in a mythological cycle is that you notice that everything changes. It morphs. It undergoes metamorphosis.

So that the key to understanding the Gods and Goddesses, to understanding mythology, is that language is a metamorphosing process itself. And that's why it's parallel to nature. That myth is not a subject that can be understood in terms of form. In terms of ordering static items and grouping them together and making a set of objective things which one can make an encyclopedia about. And that that is what myth is. It's not that at all. It's rather a mysterious process, and it's the process where language occurs. That language itself is the metamorphosing juice, the energy frequency of myth. And that myth is feeling toned experience that oozes out of the existential action, the ritual comportment, of doing things in the world. But while myth is founded on that ritual comportment, it reaches down below the foundations. Below the foundational stones of ritual and has a deep contact with the mystery of the Earth.

So that when you really get into the process of how myth is the metamorphoses of experience in feeling toned language, you begin to see that there are two angles of presenting this that are more fruitful than any others. One of them is music because music is the process of feeling the language, of feeling almost in a pure form. And so, you have Nietzsche's friend Richard Wagner redoing the science of mythology by writing his operas.

And the other way was the great student of Max Mueller. His name was Lewis Farnell, and he did a three volumes and it's actually five big volumes, *The Cults of Greek States*. And what Farnell found was that in addition to music, you can take a look at the cult aspect of mythology. And that cults are always founded at a specific place in the landscape. A specific natural place.

The oracle of Zeus. Zeus had an oracle just like Apollo. Apollo's oracle at Delphi, but Zeus's oracle was at Dodona in the northern part of Arcadia. And his oracle, different from Apollo's. Apollo's was the semi poisonous vapors coming up through a chasm in the ground. That old Paleolithic thing. Only instead of facing death by diving into a pit in the darkness, that death that was faced was not the death of the body, but the death of the mind. And the person who faced that was not a man, a hunter in whose fear the stick figure has an erection. But the Apollonian figure was always a girl. She was the symbol, usually 12 or 13. Psychically super sensitive. A medium. And she was sat on a three-legged stool over this chasm, over this place where the vapors of the Earth came up and brought her into the threshold where madness completely took her over. She gave herself in the death of the mind. In the death of this quelling of the distance between being filled up, filled to the brim. The mind was dissolved, and she went into a prophetic, mystical madness. Where what she spoke always came through in a kind of necrotic acrostic riddle.

And so, these sayings of the oracle at Delphi were the Apollonian essence. Notice that the oracle of Apollo, the essence of it, is a Dionysian madness. That has a method in it, nevertheless. The method being that you will not have sentences that make sense, but you will have an acrostic that goes through the entire pattern of what is said. And the only way to understand what it means is not to follow the logical sequence, but to get an instant gestalt of the whole and pay no attention

to any element in between. You only listen to the wholeness, not to the build up towards that threshold.

Later on, this was used for instance, we talked a couple of weeks ago of *The Book of Lamentations* of Jeremiah. And how in *The Old Testament*, *The Book of Lamentations* has five sets of 22 verses. Each one of the verses has the beginning of a Hebrew letter. So that any one of the five *Lamentations* in Jeremiah is an acrostic of the Hebrew alphabet, and it's meant to deliver a prophetic gestalt, very much like the gestalt in any 22-letter form. Like the 22 cards in the tarot deck, in its major Arcana. It's an acrostic set of delivering a whole mystical vision. And if you try to build up to it by consulting dictionaries of what the cards mean individually, you're never going to get anywhere. All of that is a mental game compared to the mystical impress of the real.

But Zeus's oracle at Dodona was not over some chasm with a young, mystical girl uttering language. There was an oak grove at Dodona. And when the wind blew through the oak grove, it was the listening to the entirety of the pattern of the grove that one could form the gestalt. It's a curious thing.

But in our time that oracular Zeus type figure was Krishnamurti, who used to speak in an oak grove out in Ojai, and whose clarity of language was the clarity of that kind of Zeus oracle. It's meant to be in ancient India. It was a yoga and was meant to show that at the very center of the Dionysian is an Apollonian seed. Just like the center of the Dionysian is an Apollonian seed. The center of the Apollonian has a Dionysian seed. And that therefore these are not two disparate things, but it's a set of a pair that's in complementarity. And what one needs to do to understand is to take that fearful journey from one center to the other. So that instead of mistaking the world's presentation of things, one goes by a mystical journey from center to center. And in that movement, one generates the tensions of the real.

Mythology and nature were the two energy vibrations that were tuned in just that way. So that ritual drama was the instrument by which these two energies were tuned into an instrument. Action, existential action, karma, tunes the pair of nature and myth. And that's what it's for.

Take a break.

Two different but complementary movements.

As Nietzsche was pointing out in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the Apollonian seeks to have a form. The Dionysian seeks to dissolve that form. And at the center of the Apollonian is a Dionysian essence. At the center of the Dionysian is an Apollonian essence.

It's easy to understand if you look at it architecturally, that when you walk into an architectural form, its essence is really space. And when you plunge into the sky, the essence of that is a form of your vector falling.

Zeus's prophetic oracular setting in an oak grove at Dodona is in direct contrast to his palace on Mount Olympus. The Homeric Zeus is the father God. That somehow, in the form of mythologies, there is a genealogy of the Gods. Dominated either by the father or the mother. Does divinity have a family structure? In mythology, yes. Always. Does nature have a father? Does nature have a mother? Only mythographically, yes. In actual fact, there's no father, no mother in the mystery of nature. But there is the mysteriousness of it. So that the deeper aspects of myth, in order to have something that it can contact, has to go to the ritual. But its deeper affinity is with the mystery of nature. The mysteriousness.

So that there's something inherently mysterious about language. Especially when it's energized by feeling. So that the flow of that kind of energy, the concourse of the language. The not the discourse, but the concourse of language. We're so imbued habitually with the discursive qualities of language that we get amazed that before there's discourse, there's concourse, there's the swirl and the flow. There's a current. There's an energy wave. And that that energy wave carries us along. Myths carry us along.

It's not so much that they provide models by which to live, but they provide the energy for livingness. And that the mythic figures as models for what to do or how to do. Or how something

came about, is all secondary. The primordiality reality in myth is that concourse of life energy that happens, and it happens in a parallel flow with the mystery of nature.

So that myths of creation, though they become rooted and founded in creation myths. What happened? What sequence? What were they? It's deeper affinity is with the mysteriousness that life is parallel to this mystery. And that our experience, our feeling toned experience, is a deep flow. And that it's flow when we are somewhat limited in our outlook, seems like a stream. Or if we deepen into the level of a tribe, it seems like a river. But you can deepen where the tribes mesh together to make vast kingdoms that mesh together, that make huge empires that make a whole world. And then that flow is no longer a stream or a river but is an ocean.

So that you find in the Homeric, in Homer's Greek mythology, the world that is structured by the Olympian Gods is surrounded by Oceanus. The world stream. The ocean flow that surrounds all of the known world, all of its structure. And then that Oceanus is so enormous, so graphically huge that it really isn't a stream that's on the Earth. It's the Milky Way in the sky. So, there's a great sky river whose flow is so over flowing that it becomes like an ocean. So that the entirety of the night sky is that ocean. The stars. That celestial realm.

And Zeus as a sky God. That blue sky, that Aegean blue sky God, is there in just the daytime. And at night it's the starry mantle. So that the figure of Zeus as a sky God, as an ordering father figure of a Greek mythological pantheon has a complement in that night cosmos. And that night cosmos was never masculine. It was always feminine.

In the Egyptian origins of that archaic Greek mythological figure. That night Goddess Nuit, whose body was filled with stars, is iconographically portrayed on the inner lid of a sarcophagus. Her overarching hands at one end and her toes at the other and her whole starry body over. And that that lid of that sarcophagus fits like the canopy over the sarcophagus. And it's true that there might be a frieze of mythological figures around the outside of the sarcophagus. But if you were to lift the lid, lift the sky Goddess' lid off that sarcophagus, the sarcophagus, if it is real, will be empty. Sarcophagus means body eater. It was always made out of limestone, so that when you put a body into a sarcophagus, the body over time would be dissolved by the limestone. Not just

that the flesh would go away and leave a skeleton, but the skeletal remains would be dissolved and absorbed into the limestone. So that given time the sarcophagus would be empty.

So that the whole empire building authority mythology based upon deception was that you were trying to preserve your body by mummification. Whereas the in-depth Dionysian insight is that the, the sarcophagus should be empty. That you were saved because the body was no longer there. Every trace of it had been reabsorbed.

So that this Dionysian kernel is at once the myth of the dying God, a God who dies. Because only a God who dies can also then be a God who is reborn a second time. A second birth Dionysius is the dying God who is reborn. And because that figure masters the entirety of the cycle, life and death are but an alternating syncopation of an energy rhythm that transcends both life and death. And that this was then the source of the whole as a real. So that the Dionysian was always not a presentation of niceness. Not a presentation of order. But a presentation of reality beyond the ends of order, beyond the limitations of niceness.

So that the whole mode of the form of, say, a Greek tragedy was to bring you to the brink to where you would fall off the known world into a kind of a death. The Greek word for it was denouement. It meant you reached the final breaking point, and you broke. Not just you, as some Paleolithic example, exemplar in a cave by yourself, but a whole crowd of several thousand people. Like the theater of Dionysus in Athens nestled up against the Acropolis. And in that theater, those several thousand people experienced that break together. So that you had an amplification of the old Paleolithic ritual of facing death and dissolution and coming back into life again. And you did it with a population of people, not as an entertainment. Greek tragedy was not about entertainment at all. But as a ritual comportment of showing that the complications of life were. There are things like books and myths and war. And all of this swirl of life can be brought to a single focus of a breaking point of death or madness. And that that was not an end point for you. Just not an end point for you individually, but that the entire population of people who lived with you could at the same time be brought to that. The Greek word for that is an *agon* at which we get agony.

But the Greek balance in that Dionysian Apollonian was a maiden agon. Medium suffering. Nothing too much is usually how they translate it. It's like a real Sufi. Turkish coffee is always drank medium sweet. It's a, it's a quality where life and death are balanceable. And that in their balance, in that equanimity, what leaps into actuality is the real which was neither life nor death.

And that if one is trapped in either side of the polarities, one fears being shifted to the other. Someone who is alive fears the night of death and Dracula fears the death of day. And to overcome that built in structural fearfulness which polarized existence has by its nature, you can't help that. In order for things to be, they must be polarized and remain in that tension. But if you find yourself co-opted and absorbed into that material polarization, then you fear at least half of the real. The other side of anything becomes fearful to you. And even beginning to approach it becomes you dissolve into anxiety so that it's like a toothache. It is small, but it dominates your entire life. And so, we would live in total constant fear unless there were some way to leach that fear out. Not by anesthetizing it, but by pulling us out of the false condition in which it occurs in the first place.

So that the function of mythology is not to show us models by which to live, but to carry us along in a concourse of the real that actually occurs. And occurs in parallel in the way in which the mystery of nature happens. So, mythology is very deep indeed. Nature is very deep indeed. And the objectiveness of ritual is not a habitual superstition but is that ridge of existentiality that's necessary for the balance of the two. And the mind cannot serve as the balance between nature and man. Only the body can. Only the body doing. Only the body in its ritual comportment, the Dionysiac ritual here.

From Gilbert Murray's great little book on *Euripides and His Age*, published 1913, just a few months before World War One smashed the Apollonian order of Europe. Murray says, "The Dionysiac ritual, which lay at the back of tragedy, may be conjectured in its full form to have had six regular stages." Notice that, notice that hexagon. That hexagram. Snowflakes have six sides. That it's a universal form.

“Six regular stages. The first is an Aegon.” The Aegon in this Greek tragedy, ritual sense meant a contest. A strife, a vying of strife. That the polarities are exacerbated. One is really in it. That you can't, you can no longer get out of it. An Aegon is a strife which cannot be, you cannot extricate yourself from it. Only by going forward with it.

And in this the figure, the mythologic figure, called in Greek d-a-i-m-o-n, the daimon. Not demon. The daimon struggles with his enemy. So, that the Aegon is always in the form. That first stage of that ritual comportment is always surrounded by myths of the combat. And central to that combat is that there is a protagonist who has an enemy. An old enemy. An ancient enemy. So that orders ancient enemy is chaos.

But in a very subtle way, chaos has an enemy also, and its enemy is the protagonist that could pull order out of its chaos. So as general life fears chaos as the enemy. Chaos itself fears the hero who can defeat it by pulling its essential order out mysteriously against its own will. Like Mandelbrot, finding the equation for fractals. Made a lot of weeping in hell. A lot of demons lost their hold.

So, the Aegon is this combat myth against an old enemy. How did Zeus become Zeus? Because he slew Typhon, that ancient dragon. How did Apollo become Apollo? The Pythian Apollo? He defeated Python, the great snake. The great serpent. That great kind of an enemy. But notice that the positing of that sort of thing. Apollo defeating Python. Zeus defeating Typhon. You have a kind of a polarity where it's the knight slaying the dragon. But what if that dragon is the carrier of life energy? If you slay that dragon, you short circuit all the energies of life. You end the juice of reality, and you end up with a dead universe.

So, one of the peculiarities and the subtlety is that a hero must know not only how to slay those minor dragons, must learn that you do not slay the great dragon. You tame the great dragon so that the combat myth has a secret in it. It has a secret that only a universal warrior like an Arjuna would understand. This enemy you do not kill. This enemy, when tamed, is your protector. What does that tamed enemy as a protector of? Of the fact that your life energies, that the energies of that feeling toned experience are able to be real. And the mind, never understands that. The mind

with its ability to abstract, always sees an enemy should be an enemy. That's what enemies are for, is to overcome them. To kill them. And so, a deeper quality of ritual is needed to wise up the intellectual hero to the fact that this dragon, this snake you do not kill.

I remember one time a friend of mine who ran the Galactic Federation on Hollywood Boulevard about 20 years ago, 25 years ago. He was from Central America. And when he was a little boy, he had a pet green snake. And when he would come home from school, the green snake was trained to put his mouth over his tail and make a hoop. And my friend would go along and take this green snake whoop and skip home. And later on, he became enmeshed in the esoterica of ancient Egypt because he had learned this peculiar little lesson.

I remember one time I was lecturing at the Philosophic Research Society on Los Feliz Boulevard, and I was through one night and a particularly, you know, energetic lecture. And so, a whole bunch of us went down to Mulholland Fountain about 11:00 at night, and there was this figure intoning on Mulholland Fountain to the night, to the sky. And then the figure turned and said, good evening, Roger. It was my friend who was doing these ceremonies, still in his late 50's here in Los Angeles.

It's a kind of a thing where one understands that the mystery of nature and the concourse of myth flow together in a balance when the ritual comportment is complete. So that one of the qualities of good ritual is for completeness.

And to parallel that and balance that, we'll see that one of the qualities of symbolic objectivity is Perfection. Ritual can't perfect, but it can complete. The body can complete. The body can fill completely. The body can share completely. Can give completely. The physiological love is a completeness. Whereas the symbol is a perfection that also has its place. But not here, not now.

So, the Aegon are the context, contests, where the daimon, the God, fights against his enemy. And very often this enemy is seen as some kind of a circularity. And in a nature which has a seasonal cycle, the ritual will always be the ritual year based on the seasonal cycle. So that

wherever you are in that seasonal cycle, those rituals are about that stage and that phase. You wouldn't have harvest rituals in the spring. And it was the spring when you had Greek tragedy.

The Greek tragedies, always presented in the early spring. Always presented where the crack of life returning to nature happens. And that the deeper aspect of that is not so much the that Dionysus, the Dionysus is the God who comes back. That a masculine is the God who comes back. The essential quality of that was more primordially a woman. Persephone. Ceres. The Grain Goddess. The Corn Mother. She comes back to life. That the foundation of life is that she can come back. But she will only come back because she is appealed to, invited to, in a primordial way.

And in that primordially who sought for Persephone? Not the knight whose going to be killing all these snakes? But her mother, Demeter. She was the one who, in her feminine motherhood, invited the daughter to come back and rejoin life. So that Jane Ellen Harrison, while she began her study as a monograph on Ceres. Found it dominated by Dionysus.

And later on, she influenced the way in Gilbert Murray saw that his, his researches into *The Bacchae*, into Dionysus, led him to appreciate something else, that there was a great cycle. And so, towards the end of his life, much more profound than his translation and study of *The Bacchae* or of Euripides or several others. He wrote a great book called *The Five Stages of Greek Religion*. The completeness of this cycle. The understanding from his contact with Jane Ellen Harrison that all of this makes a cycle of completeness. Here he saw that it was a cycle of completeness in a Greek tragedy, but when she matured him, he began to see that this cycle of this form is but a stage in a larger cycle that has to do with life. And that myth is that comprehension, that concourse of comprehension and feeling toned experience where language is able to tell the entire narrative to its point of completeness.

How do you know when a narrative is finished? Because then you can be silent. When you have said it all not one more word. And that there are always in great ritual cycles that are woven and rooted into that mythography in such a way that they're inseparable, there comes a point of completeness. It's like an exchange satiation, not another word. And that in that space of silence.

The Greek word for it was *Epiclesis*, divinity lays the gift of renewal. When you have said everything that you can say, and you have reached the point of saying no more than in silence you receive the blessing.

In the *Old Testament*, it's in *The Psalms of David*. David, who danced before the Lord with all his might. But it was David who sang the royal psalms. And when the cycle of David's psalms were over, there was a kingly silence of receiving. And that's what made David King. Not the fact that he could dance or slay Goliath or even make psalms. And so deep once was the understanding of this truth that psalmody was synonymous with choral singing of populations who worship together. Psalms were synonymous with hymns. And religious communities for 3000 years were based on that.

David's Psalms are contemporaneous with Homer's epics. And *The Psalms of David* are very much like Homer's epics, but on the other side. Both show that in Homer it's a Olympic pantheon for the mythology. And David's Psalms, it's only Yahweh, no others. They're a compliment. The one and the many. And so, 1000 B.C. you find that kind of a structure.

But deeper than Homer, deeper than David is far before Homer. And David, as someone like Plotinus is to us, was Inanna. The cycle of Inanna, the mythology of Inanna [*Inanna: Queen of Heaven and Earth Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer*], written by a woman. Her father was Sargon of Akkad, the maker of the Fertile Crescent. About 2350 B.C.

And Enheduanna in writing the mythic cycle of Inanna presents for the first time in the written literature of this particular planet. It's the first time that an entire mythological cycle is presented in the concourse of its absorptive, emotional, experiential, completeness. And at the core, at the center of the architecture of Inanna's myth is the staged descent into hell. The staged descent into the netherworld. Not going to a land of demons, but Inanna, the Queen of Heaven, goes to visit her sister, who is the queen of the netherworld. And that, as Inanna would be at the zenith of the day, her sister is at the nadir of the night. And in order to go below that horizon of the Earth, the horizon of the Earth, midway between the zenith of the day and the nadir of the night, she must progress. And the only way in which she can progress in the negative. She must divest herself

step by step of the mythic emblems that make her the Queen of Heaven. She must take off. Take off her scepter. Take off her cloak. So that when she arrives at the center of the netherworld, she arrives nude. With no defining mythological iconographic marks whatsoever. She can only arrive there nude. And when she does, she is killed. But only when she is killed can she be brought back to life. So that the mythology of Inanna is about the courage of facing both death and life and emerging into the real.

So, when we talk here about we're having an education, that's a wisdom education. We have 12 lectures on myth. It's not about a subject matter myth yet. 12 lectures on ritual. It's not about a subject matter. That is so archaic compared to what's going on here. It's not even within the realm. This is a wisdom concourse that's deliverable only if you do it. It's not in the speaker. It's not in the presentation. It's not in the books. It's in the electric juice that you doing it generate. And without that, there's nothing happening. Without that, it's an entertainment. But when you do, do that because it is real, it will happen.

In the Aegon in that first stage in Greek tragedy. Just to give the second stage, just so you can see how this moves. The second stage is a pathos. Pathos. Pathetic. Not pathetic as in despicable, but a pathos in that the agony, the suffering, is effective. In the sense that feeling toned experience is crushed or broken or shredded in a particular way. And that is that you realize that everything is lost. Lost in some kind of a deep realization. Not a realization that you lost because of this or that, but that you lost because there was no chance for victory under the circumstances in which you thought. You were not of the kind of stuff that could ever have won. That identifying yourself with a physiological material body was already putting you in the loser's ring. And that priding yourself because you had what it takes one way or the other, was a hubris, was a pride, that goes before the fall. Not because, oh, somebody worked it out that way, because that's the way it is. So that the pathos follows the Aegon.

Then comes the sense that there is a language incursion. A kind of like a sliver of sunlight that's brought in out of nowhere. In Greek tragedy, it's usually a messenger. Now who was the messenger in Greek mythology? Hermes. So, it's a Hermetic moment of language. What would a Hermetic message be? In the Renaissance you found it graphically portrayed all the time,

because it was renewed after a thousand years of never having been seen. What does, Hermes doesn't come in and say, hey, he comes in and says. So that the Hermetic Messenger is a moment of profound silence. Not only a silence in which you can hear a pin drop, but a silence in which you can hear the silence.

There's a, there's a section in Philo of Alexandria who was a Jewish Platonic writer who lived in Alexandria around the turn of the millennium. 2000 years ago. And he went out to the Therapeutae community, the healers, meditative community. And he listened to the president of that community at the time. And just before he was speaking, Philo says, the silence was so profound that you could hear the silence within the silence.

And only then did that teacher begin to teach that he taught not out of language. That he taught out of the silence behind language. Because in that way, whatever energy that the words had, whatever concourse they had, they bubbled out of eternity and not out of the world. And so, the teacher was called the word because that's what was happening.

So that there is a deeper mystery in mythology. It's not a subject for academic programs to study. It's not something that one gets tired of. Well, it's boring. I want to do something else. It's all that is really happening. Because it isn't mythology of the Greeks back then. Or the Sumerians back then. Or the Sanskrit back then. It's that it always is occurring. That this is a pattern of unfoldment that's always occurring, and all of the stages are all there, all the time. It's just that our limited experience goes into that jewel and diffracts in such a way that at whatever insight angle we begin with, that's the stage that we find unfolding now. And so that is really mysterious.

And the only way that it becomes understandable is that one patiently does it long enough to have gone through the cycle. And when you've gone through the cycle, you come back to where you began, wherever you began, and you realize that you have come through a cycle. And having come through it, having experienced the fullness of it, you also experience the Hermetic silence. And because you did, because you had that interval along with the cycle, the cycle now

has a center which is open. The silence generated an architectonic interior. And that's the beginning of the mind.

We'll have some more next week.

END OF RECORDING