Chapter 7
On "Faith in the Journey" as Metaphor for Encountering the Sacred through Personal Mythology

Introducing the Concept of "Faith in the Journey"

This dissertation has focused on the exploration of the possibility of approaching the sacred dimension of human existence—that domain of life traditionally associated with the concept of religion—through a profound personal encounter with mythology. In doing so, this work has previously considered both the general question of the role of myth in modern life, as well as the particular concept of "personal mythology," a term describing the sense of an evolving mythic dimension at the core of each human life. This work has also explored ways of contemplating both the religious or spiritual dimension of life and the concept of the sacred as these might apply in the context of personal mythology. In addition, this work has considered the contributions of the two figures most responsible for the idea that a personal encounter with myth could bring one into contact with the experience of the sacred, namely Joseph Campbell and C. G. Jung.

In this closing chapter, my intention is to bring all of this material into a more unified focus by proposing an overarching metaphor to describe both the process and the outcome of seeking the sacred through a personal engagement with mythic stories, images, and symbols. This metaphor is expressed in the simple phrase "faith in the journey." While this phrase may be grammatically quite simple, however, it nevertheless contains two of the most connotatively complex and evocative words in the English language. With the possible exception of the equally loaded religious concepts of divinity and the sacred, it is hard to imagine a religious concept that has been more discussed, argued, and fought over than that of faith. As concerns the word journey, it is equally difficult to contemplate a concept more complex and poetically evocative of both

the human condition and the process of human growth and evolution. In order to comprehend the symbolic richness and power inherent in the concept of "faith in the journey" as a metaphor for approaching the sacred through personal mythology, therefore, one must first contemplate the meaning and significance of each these two rich and potent words.

On the Concept of Religious Faith

Much as Chapter 3 of this dissertation explored a range of open-ended, individualistic, pluralistic, and universalist frames of reference for discussing the nature of the sacred and of divinity, it is important to seek similarly inclusive approaches when contemplating the potential meaning of a mythologically-based conception of religious faith. Similarly, just as the concepts of the sacred and the divine were previously considered in an experiential and phenomenological context, so too will the following discussion emphasize the idea of religious or spiritual faith as a phenomenological experience of sacredness and divinity.

In considering the concept of faith, it is first important to distinguish between this term and the word "belief." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "faith" is originally derived from the Latin verb *fidere*, meaning "to trust." This dictionary initially defines faith as "confidence, reliance, or trust" in "the ability, goodness, etc. of a person," "the efficacy or worth of a thing," or "the truth of a statement or doctrine." Also emphasizing the idea of trust, belief is initially defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "the mental action, condition, or habit, of trusting to or confiding in a person or thing." Secondarily, belief is defined as "mental acceptance of a proposition, statement, or fact […] on the ground of authority or evidence" and "assent of

the mind to a statement, or to the truth of a fact beyond observation, on the testimony of another."

In further distinguishing between faith and belief, it is helpful to next consider the view of religious scholar Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Describing what he considers the essence of faith, Smith writes that it is fundamentally "a quality of human living." He also suggests that the highest manifestation of faith takes the form of "a quiet confidence and joy which enables one to feel at home in the universe, and to find meaning in the world and in one's own life, a meaning that is profound and ultimate" (12). Also characterizing faith as "an engagement," he adds that "to know faith authentically is to become oneself involved, to know it in a personal committed fashion in one or another of its varied forms" (6). Belief, in contrast, is described by Smith as "the holding of certain ideas" about the object of one's faith and the proper ways in which to engage that object (12).

Smith's vision of religious faith as a form of committed engagement concerned with questions of profound personal meaning regarding both oneself and the world is very much relevant to the concept of a mythologically oriented approach to faith. Where Smith's conception of faith is at odds with the idea of faith based on personal mythology is his sense that, while faith "precedes and transcends" religious traditions, it also necessarily exists within the context of a particular tradition (5). Moreover, while Smith recognizes that faith is "a direct encounter with God" and therefore inherently and inevitably personal in nature, he also rejects the idea that faith can ever meaningfully thought of as "individual" because he views the content of religious faith as inherently concerned with collective religious traditions (8,11). So while Smith views faith in a

generic sense as an essential human response to the sacred, he also sees religious faith as a "quality that has been expressed in, has been elicited, nurtured, and shaped by, the religious traditions of the world" (6). Since faith for Cantwell becomes associated within religious traditions with beliefs grounded in theological doctrines, this conception of faith is ultimately too restrictive to be effective in the context of personal mythology as a religious endeavor

Paul Diel, a depth psychologist, also considers the relationship between faith and belief. Distinguishing between what he calls "mythological faith" and "theological belief," Diel writes that the difference between these concepts "amounts to the same thing" as the difference between "religiosity and religions" (29). In this context, he also comments on the distinction between the "symbolic God of the myths" and the literal "god of convention," between a "God endowed with symbolic significance" and a "god without any deep symbolic meaning" (16). Regarding one's orientation to the "symbolic God," Diel further writes, "the mythical phrase 'to love God' means to be magnetized by mystery, not to be oblivious to the mysterious depth of life" (31).

In contrast, belief, which Diel associates with conventional religion, "does not deal with mystery as such but with the façade of myths," as a result of which it becomes "attached to images mistaken for realities" (29). Believing in one set of images, he notes, "excludes belief in other images." Commenting on the ultimate significance of being able to distinguish faith from belief, Diel observes, "faith is a psychic function" while "beliefs are its products." As a psychic function, he continues, faith "can be strong or weak" and the beliefs that result from the expression of faith "can be truthful or erroneous." What is key in Diel's analysis is his observation that the function of faith "is

weak if it mistakes its own product—symbolic images—for the image of a reality that would exist independently" and "is strong if it can avoid such a fundamental error" (30). In this regard, Diel's distinction between the objects of strong versus weak faith closely resembles Campbell's distinction between God and the masks of God, as well as Jung's distinction between an archetype *an sich* and any particular symbolic manifestation of that archetype.

Another scholar who specifically addresses the mythological nature of faith is Paul Brockelman. Writing within the contemporary tradition of narrative theology, he describes an approach to religion called "narrative religious understanding," an approach that characterizes the essence of faith as "living the story" (130). The narrative approach to religious understanding, Brockelman writes, first seeks to encounter mythological stories which offer "a vision of a possible meaningful way to be" and then encourages "the embodying and living out" of such a mythologically-inspired vision of life as a deliberate act of faith. "Faith is living in the light of an interpretive understanding of life made manifest narratively and mythologically," he observes (130-1). Such faith does not entail beliefs about a particular vision of a transcendent divinity," Brockelman continues, nor is it concerned with "assertions considered true or false in some matter-of-fact way" (138). Rather, he argues, it constitutes "a mode of being, actively living out a personal story centered on [. . .] an interpretive understanding of what it means to be" (139).

Paul Tillich is another important figure who has explored the nature of religious faith in a way that is relevant to the idea of personal mythology. As was noted in Chapter 4, a key aspect of Tillich's approach to the sacred is his concept of "ultimate concern." Ultimate concern is defined as that aspect of an individual's life that is taken with the

utmost seriousness and reflects one's ultimate values. Just as Tillich defines divinity in terms of ultimate concern, observing that whatever concerns one ultimately becomes one's god, so too does he characterize faith "as the state of being ultimately concerned," adding that "the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of being ultimately concerned" (*Dynamics of Faith* 1).

A quality of Tillich's definition of faith that is particularly interesting in the context of the religious dimension of personal mythology relates to the relationship between faith and doubt. Often considered to be opposing concepts, Tillich views faith and doubt to be inherently bound together. In this sense, Tillich argues that doubt is inevitably included in every genuine act of faith and that every genuine act of faith must recognize the possibility of doubt. "If faith is understood as belief that something is true, doubt is incompatible with the act of faith," he writes, but if "faith is understood as being ultimately concerned, doubt is a necessary element of faith" (20-1). Given that personal mythwork involves of asking ever deeper and more profound questions about the archetypal nature of one's story, such an openness to a sense of existential doubt must be seen as essential to this process.

Drawing on Tillich's concept of faith as ultimate concern, religious studies scholar James N. Fowler has developed a highly useful three-part definition of faith. First and most simply, he proposes, faith represents "people's evolved and evolving way of experiencing self, others and world." Second, he adds, faith must also describe how these ways of experiencing life "are related to and affected by the ultimate conditions of existence" (92). In the sense of this second aspect of Fowler's definition, faith also "involves how we make our life wagers" and "shapes the ways we invest our deepest

loves and our most costly loyalties" (5). Thirdly, Fowler writes, faith determines and defines how people shape "their lives' purposes and meanings, trusts and loyalties, in light of the character of being, value, and power determining the ultimate conditions of existence" (92-3). Being concerned with the process nature of evolving faith, he is also careful to point out that one's sense of the ultimate conditions of existence are not given, but rather must be individually constructed and interpreted.

Most importantly, Fowler observes, one can only comprehend the nature of the sacred as it is continuously revealed in and through the images of divinity that grip us. "We have varying degrees of consciousness regarding these working images of ultimate reality," he writes, "but conscious or unconscious, they affect the setting of our goals, the relationships we make and maintain and the ways we respond to emergencies and crises." Moreover, Fowler cautions, one's comprehension of the nature of the sacred evolves over the course of a lifetime and "only with the death of our previous image [of divinity] can a new and more adequate one arise." As a consequence, he writes, it is essential that "substantive doubt" always remain a part of evolution of faith (31).

Regarding what he calls "the contents of faith," Fowler observes, "we may say that our faith orientations [...] are shaped by three major elements." The first of these elements, he states, comprises those "*centers of value* that claim us." Defined by Fowler as "the causes, concerns or persons that consciously or unconsciously have the greatest worth to us," such centers of value are said to bring together the etymologically related ideas of "worth" and "worship." We attribute worth, he writes, "to those centers of value that give our lives meaning," just as we worship "those things in relation to which our lives have worth" (276).

Equally important in determining the contents of faith, he continues, "are the *images of power* we hold and the *powers* with which we align ourselves in the midst of life's contingencies." In "a world of wars, of natural catastrophes, of senseless random and intentional assaults, of sudden accidental death for us or for loved ones, or opportunity and denial, of good health or bad," he suggests, "we seek for images and realities of powers that can be relied upon in life or death."

Finally, according to Fowler, the contents of one's faith are shaped by "the *master stories* that we tell ourselves and by which we interpret and respond to the events that impinge upon our lives." Describing the profound impact our most sacred stories have in determining our orientation to faith, Fowler writes, "Our master stories are the characterizations of the patterns of power-in-action that disclose the ultimate meanings of our lives" (277). Given its highly open-ended and experiential qualities as an approach to defining the phenomenon of faith—and, in particular, with its emphasis on the essential role of personally relevant images and stories of the sacred—Fowler's work can be seen to be especially relevant to the idea of personal mythology as pathway to the sacred.

Robert Nozick, a scholar of philosophy, approaches the question of the nature of faith from the perspective of phenomenology. He is therefore inherently concerned with the experiential manifestation of faith, an event that he describes in the following terms:

> There is an encounter with something very real—an actual person, a person in a story, a part of nature, a book or work of art, a part of one's being—and this thing has extraordinary qualities that intimate the divine by being forms of qualities that the divine itself would have: these extraordinary qualities touch you deeply, opening your heart so that you feel in contact with a special manifestation of the divine, in that it has some form of divine qualities to a very great extent. (51)

Whether or not there is a pre-existing theological argument supporting the validity of

such an experience for the experiencer, Nozick argues, faith is not dependent upon theology, but rather "arises directly out of [. . .] being deeply touched and moved in encountering something." For this to happen, he observes, the core of one's faith would need to center on a "faith *in oneself* and in one's own responses, a faith that one would not be *so* deeply touched by something in *that* way unless it was a manifestation of the divine." Nozick is also careful to point out that such a faith would initially not be faith in any given aspect of divinity, but rather "a trust in one's *deepest* positive responses." As a result, he continues, it would not be necessary to adhere to any particular image of divinity or theological view of ultimate reality in order to explain one's experience of the sacred simply because such experience would be inherently trusted. In a such a state of religious faith, writes Nozick, the "fundamental connection to the world is not *explanatory*, but one of relation and trust" (52).

Such an affirmation and trust in the validity of one's most profound experiences, Nozick cautions, "is not the same as dogmatism," a belief that such experiences are "infallible." Indeed, he observes, one must always remain open to the possibility that "still deeper experiences might undercut those or show something different." In this way, Nozick proposes, faith "can be investigative, guiding further inquiry into the range and validity" of such experiences. "The affirmation can be wholehearted and yet tentative," he concludes, thereby always "open to being superseded" (53).

Sharon Salzburg, a founder of the Insight Meditation Society, one of the largest Buddhist communities in the Western world, also writes about faith from a perspective of the primacy of personal experience. "The tendency to equate faith with doctrine and then argue about terminology and concepts," she argues, "distracts us from what faith is all

about." In her view, the essence of faith "lies in trusting ourselves to discover the deepest truths on which we can rely." In this regard, she writes, faith "does not require a belief system," nor is it "a commodity we either have or don't have." Rather, she suggests, "it is an inner quality that unfolds as we learn to trust our own deepest experience" (xiii-xiv).

Also emphasizing the process nature of faith, Salzberg observes that the "first step on the journey of faith is to recognize that everything is moving onward to something else, inside us and out." With faith, one can approach "the truth of the present moment," she observes, a moment "which is dissolving into the unknown even as we meet it" (13). In this way, genuine faith opens one up, she continues, "to what is happening right now in all its mutability and evanescence" (14). Given her primary concern with the evolving nature of faith, it is not surprising that she is also concerned with the essential role of doubt in the growth of faith. "To develop a verified faith," she writes, "we need to be open to the messiness, the discordance, the ambivalence, and, above all, the vital life-force of questioning." Without a healthy openness to doubt, she states, "our faith can wither." Moreover, she continues, without the willingness to doubt what we claim to profess, "our faith will always remain in the hands of someone else, as something we borrow or abjure, but not as something we can claim fully as our own" (73).

With particular regard to a mythically-oriented approach to the nature of faith, religious studies scholar Robert E. Neale writes about three different responses to myth which he characterizes as "disbelieving," "believing," and "make-believing" (142). Neale ascribes the first response to those whose worldview is secular, materialist, mundane, and profane (as in the context of Eliade's distinction between sacred and profane). The second response, which Neale describes as "magical" in orientation,

typifies a fundamentalist and literalist orientation to myth. While the former approach dismisses myth as "useless" because it is powerless to alter material reality, the latter view embraces the validity of myth with the intention of magically either receiving a benefit or averting some form of harm. Neale suggests that most people live in between these two poles, "shuffling back and forth between disappointment and hope." He further observes that while disbelief may dominate in most situations, "belief gains ascendancy in times of crisis" (143).

The third response to myth, described by Neale as "make-believing," is considered by him to be the truly "religious" one (144). In this third way of responding to myth, "the conflict between believing and disbelieving is transcended in make-believing." This orientation recognizes that myth "is purposeless and the attempt to use it irreligious." In the religious response, Neale observes, "the myth is acknowledged as autonomous," as a result of which the "story is neither doubted nor buttressed by belief," but accepted because 'it is there.' " Judging the truth or falsity of a mythic story—that is, whether the story can or cannot affect the material world—requires standing "outside the story in the profane world," which is precisely what a mythic perspective refuses to do. For one "who fully participates in the story," Neale suggests, "questions of truth and falsity remain irrelevant, indeed, even incomprehensible" (144). In the end, he notes, "the magical person tries to make myth effective in daily life, the secular person unhappily accepts that this is impossible, and the religious person rejoices in myth for its own sake (145).

David L. Miller, an authority in both the field of religious studies and depth psychology, also writes about the relationship between faith and make-believe. "Faith is

not mental assent or emotional assent," he writes, "whose object is a belief in some supernatural or historical datum which dogmatically and zealously insists on its truth" (*Gods and Games* 167). Instead of this outmoded view of faith, Miller proposes a radically postmodern one. Faith, he suggests simply, "is being gripped by a story." Such faith, he adds, means "being gripped by a pattern of meaning, a pattern of meaning that affects one's life pattern, that becomes a paradigm for the way one sees the world." He further observes that the "efficacy and meaning-function" of myth is not dependent "believing in the truth of something." Authentic faith is not belief, he asserts, but rather "being turned on by an incredible vision" (168).

Particularly within the context of the concept of faith in the journey as a metaphor for a mythically-oriented approach to the religious dimension of life, one final approach to the question of the nature of religious faith is useful to consider. C. Daniel Batson, Patricia Schoenrade, and W. Larry Ventis, three social psychologists, have explored the phenomenon of "individual religion." In the process, they have identified three aspects of the personal experience of religion, aspects they characterize as the "extrinsic, means dimension," the "intrinsic, end dimension" and the "quest dimension" (373, 375).

The first of these is described as involving "the use of religion as a means to attain self-serving ends such as going to church for social reasons or praying for a new car, a good grade, or a needed cure" (373). This religious dimension, these researchers suggest, "is not associated with more meaning in life or less anxiety about death" (374). An extrinsic/means religious orientation is also generally "associated with a perception of religion as an oppressive set of restrictions." As a result, one might describe this orientation as characterized by the lack of any deeply held religious faith.

The second religious orientation described by Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis involves a "sincere, devout commitment" to a set of dogma-based religious beliefs (375). These devoutly-held beliefs, they observe, "are not to be used in the service of other needs," but rather are meant "to define the master motive in life." This form of religion, the authors suggest, "is associated with freedom from existential concerns such as meaningless and anxiety over death." However, they caution, "with this freedom comes bondage to the beliefs," because the believer is no longer able to reflect openly and honestly on their truth. Indeed, in the context of an experiential orientation to faith, this second approach might more accurately be described as belief-driven rather than faith-based.

The third orientation to religion, described in terms of the metaphor of the quest, "involves an open-ended readiness to confront ultimate, existential questions, coupled with a skepticism of definitive answers to these questions" (375-6). Not surprisingly, this third dimension "does not provide the same sense of freedom from existential concerns" as the intrinsic, ends orientation, "but neither does it produce the same bondage" to particular beliefs. "Religion as quest," these three researchers observe, is a highly personal approach to religion:

> that involves honestly facing existential questions in all their complexity, while at the same time resisting clear-cut, pat answers. An individual who approaches religion in this way recognizes that he or she does not know, and probably never will know, the final truth about such matters. Still the questions are deemed important, and however tentative and subject to change, answers are sought. They may or may not have a clear belief in a transcendent reality, but there is a transcendent, religious aspect to the individual's life […]. It involves the individual hammering out his or her own stance on religious questions, refusing to be dominated by the views advocated by the religious institutions of society. (166-7)

Commenting on the possibility of such an open-ended kind of faith, Keith Ward suggests that "true faith" might actually "decrease our 'religious' certainties, as we realize how little we know or can say about God, and how much depends on the wordless experience that all religious doctrines only dimly and inadequately point towards" (59-60). Given its highly experiential and existential nature, as well as its firm refusal to conform to any sort of religious dogma, this questing form of religious orientation is particularly suited to a mythologically-based approach to religious experience.

In closing this discussion of the nature of religious faith as viewed from the perspective of personal mythology, it is noteworthy that both Campbell and Jung offered highly publicized declarations regarding their own views on this subject. Interestingly, while Campbell refers to "faith" and Jung to "belief" in their respective declarations, both are actually distancing themselves from any sort of relationship to the sacred that is not fundamentally symbolic and experiential in origin. In a statement expressed in a 1989 *Power of Myth* television broadcast, Campbell declares, "I don't have to have faith, I have experience." Clarifying this statement, he goes on to say:

> I have the experience of the wonder of life. I have experience of love. I have experience of hatred, malice, and wanting to punch this guy in the jaw. From the point of view of symbolic imaging, those are different forces operating in my mind. One may think of them—wonder, love, hatred—as inspired by different divinities. (208)

Three decades earlier, Jung was asked during the course of a television interview with the BBC whether he believed in God. "It is difficult to answer," Jung replied thoughtfully. After a moment's pause, he added with assurance, "I know; I don't need to believe; I know" (qtd. in Costello). Elsewhere Jung offers a similar sentiment on the nature of his orientation to the sacred. "Either I know a thing and I don't need to believe it," he writes,

"or I believe it because I am not sure I know it." In this regard, he declares, "I am well satisfied with the fact that I know experiences which I cannot avoid calling numinous or divine" (*CW* 18: 706; para. 1589).

On General Nature of the Archetype of the Journey

In contemplating the metaphor of "faith in the journey," it is next important to reflect on the symbolic significance of the concept of journeying. Among the most perennial and complex of archetypal themes, the journey has served as the focus of myths and epics, of legends and fairy tales, from the most ancient of times to the present day. "The myth of the human as traveler or wanderer is an ancient one, perhaps rooted in hundreds of thousands of years our species spent wandering in nomadic bands of gatherers and hunters," observes Ralph Metzner (226). In addition, the symbolism of being on a journey is as personal as it is universal, as timeless as it is contemporary. "It is Adam's tale of exile, Ulysses' saga of wandering, the search for the Holy Grail, my autobiography and yours," writes Sam Keen (*Hymns to an Unknown God* 9-10). Regarding the particularly religious or spiritual significance of the symbolism of the "journey of life," Jerome Berryman observes that "each generation produces and leaves behind it a literature of concern about this journey," adding that "evidence of such 'faith maps' is, in fact, strewn about us from every century and every part of the earth" (4).

Commenting on the essential human quality of perpetually being on a journey of one sort or another, David Leeming observes, "Poets from the Gilgamesh bard and Homer to John Bunyan, Robert Frost, and Jack Kerouac have always explicitly or implicitly celebrated this fact." As Leeming further observes, "we are all significant sojourners because we live with the constantly present metaphor of a journey" (133).

Leeming also suggests that the imaginal power of this metaphor is directly connected to the idea of story itself, of narratives with plots that flow from beginnings to endings. In a sense, every story takes the form of an imaginal journey, transporting the listener or reader through a series of episodes in time and space, culminating in some sort of resolution or denouement.

Describing this process of imaginal journeying, Laura Sims writes of the storyteller who "guides us into an unseen realm," leading the listener or reader through a recognizable series of doorways or thresholds along the way. The first of these, described as "the threshold of longing" begins when one first engages the voice of the narrator, yearning to follow him or her into the imaginal landscape and encounter the story's characters. Sims likens this stage of the story-journey to "entering the grounds that surround a sacred temple, a place where one will have the opportunity to come face to face with the divine," a "temenos […] dedicated to a god." At this stage, one is "literally carried away, as if a little trap door in the inner world falls open" and one descends fully into the imaginal realm (63).

This passage brings the listener or reader to the next doorway, "the threshold of no return," wherein one becomes identified with the characters and the action of the story and is totally swept up in the activity of make-believe. Following this comes the "threshold of death," the doorway leading to the place of disappointment and danger, the place in the story that "calls forth our greatest fear and attachment to the world as we know it" (64). The only way out of this impasse, Sims observes, appears when "we let go of our expectation and preconceptions, defying all logic in our pilgrimage toward the end of the story" (66).

Once one has passed through this place of symbolic death, one arrives at "the threshold of mystery" and enters the inner sanctum, the magical and enchanted heart of the story. Here the surrender to the inner logic of the narrative is at its most profound and the heart is most open to the world of possibilities inherent in the tale. At the same time, one is also most open to embracing its inevitable and fated outcome. Finally, Sims writes, the storyteller must bring the listener or reader to "the threshold of return," the necessary homecoming to the world of one's everyday life (67). At the end of the imaginal journey, she concludes, like the hero or heroine of the story, "we bring back a secret treasure of awareness that is priceless" (68).

In addition to its primal correspondence to story, the archetypal theme of the journey also derives much of its fascination from the richness of its many-layered symbolism. In its many forms, the theme of the journey generally serves as a primary image for the concept of process. In this regard, it is most simply a metaphor for the flow of each human life, the journey that encompasses the lifespan from birth to death. The journey can also be viewed as a symbolic reflection of the soul's passage from incarnation into the world of time and space to the mystery of whatever follows death. In addition, the theme of the journey has often been employed to symbolize the process of psychological or spiritual transformation, the often-painful journey from simpler to more complex levels of human consciousness.

Another source of the power of the theme of the journey derives from the many distinct forms in which it can manifest. Among the most ancient of these archetypal forms is that of the quest or the heroic journey. Another ancient variation on the theme of the journey is that of the pilgrimage, a journey undertaken for specifically religious or

spiritual ends. In addition, the process of initiation often has been described in the context of a journey from one stage of life to another. The themes of exile and wandering are also aspects contained within the larger symbolism of journeying, as are the themes of homecoming and return.

Of course, while each of these differing themes defines a particular quality or aspect of the archetype of journey, they also inevitably overlap and merge in countless ways. In addition, as Metzner observes, people "differ greatly in the quality if their experience of life's journeys, and for each one of us, there may be a different type of journey at different stages of life." In this regard, he continues, "Some of us—probably all of us at some time—wander restlessly and aimlessly through life," while at other times, "we may be seized by a sudden sense of destiny" and start off "for a destination, a definite goal" (226).

In considering the deep significance of the image of being on a journey, it is appropriate to consider the work of the philosopher Gabriel Marcel. In describing the spiritual nature of humanity, Marcel coined the term *homo viator*, meaning "man the traveler" or "man the wayfarer" (153). Fulfilling the role of *homo viator*, Marcel writes, obliges each human being "to cut a dangerous path across the unsteady blocks of a universe which has collapsed and seems to be crumbling in every direction." Such a path, he suggests, "leads to a world more firmly established in Being, a world whose changing and uncertain gleams are all that we discern here below" (154). One of the basic tenets of Marcel's vision of *homo viator*, writes Keen, is the idea that "there is in the basic structure of human existence a certain restlessness." This restlessness, Keen continues, results from the fact that each human is "a nostalgic being, forever longing for

fulfillment which eludes him," perpetually "anxious about his condition, ill at ease with himself, constantly seeking to transcend his estrangement." According to Keen, Marcel's work suggests that meaningfully dealing with this aspect of the human condition requires that one embrace one's role as "a wayfarer in time… wondering as we wander, yet daring to have faith that the mystery of being intends fulfillment and not frustration as the ultimate destiny of man" (*Gabriel Marcel* 16).

On the Archetypal Journey as Quest, Initiation, and Pilgrimage

As was noted above, the journey archetype has appeared throughout history in a variety of different aspects and forms. While these variations share many archetypal qualities, they each also impart a particular connotative shading to the generalized symbolism of the image of the journey. In this context, when considering the symbolism of the journey as an overarching metaphor for the religious dimension of personal mythology, it is useful to explore the interrelationship between three specific forms or dimensions of this archetype, namely those of quest, pilgrimage, and initiation.

Among the most ancient and ubiquitous versions of the archetype of journeying is that of the quest. In this regard, writes Robert M. Torrance, "We shall not look far in search of the quest: it will meet us at every turn of the way." Torrance characterizes the quest as the "business of seeking, of setting off in determined pursuit of what we are lacking and may never attain." In keeping with Marcel's concept of *homo viator*, Torrance observes that the symbolic quest is "no incidental theme of our literature and thought, no bypath of history, but a fundamental activity that contributes in no small measure toward defining our existence *as* human" (3). The quest, he argues, "is the creative process par excellence, the process by which human beings continually remake

themselves in accord with goals forever beyond them." In the process of such questing, he continues, lies "our essential humanity, our fidelity to our unfinished selves" (57).

This quality of seeking something totally unknown is a defining aspect of the quest as an archetype. In this regard, Torrance further observes, there is an intrinsic connection between "the quest and the question," since both are derived from the Latin *quaerere*, meaning "to seek" or "to ask." Given its nature as "the animal that must seek to acquire what it characteristically lacks to begin with and to actualize by directed effort what is potential in its being but never knowable in advance," Torrrance suggests, "the human species may be designated *animal quaerens* with at least as much right as *animal rationale*" (3). Also commenting on this relationship between quests and questions, Keen writes, "I have come to believe that 'the quest' is a metaphor for the willingness to live and wrestle with the perennial questions that underlie the mythic answers that religions offer." As a result, he observes, "My 'question' is the 'quest-I'm-on'" (*Hymns to an Unknown God* 15).

Regarding the mythological basis of the archetype of the quest, few writers have written as extensively on this subject as Campbell. Core to his work is the metamyth of hero's journey, a form of the heroic quest considered by Campbell to underlie much of the world's mythological traditions. He describes this pattern as having three primary stages, the first of which relates to the hero's separation from an old way of life, a going off in some radically new direction precipitated by a perceived "call" from some sort of divine presence. The middle stage of the journey focuses on the initiation of the hero into a new mode of existence in the world, following which the hero typically meets with helpers who present him with magical instruments of power. This section climaxes with a

life-or-death confrontation with a demon or some other sort of supreme ordeal, which symbolizes the hero's own inner struggle as much as it represents a battle with external forces of destruction. At the end of the heroic quest, Campbell states, the adventurer must return with "the life-transmuting trophy," bringing this gift "back into the kingdom of humanity," where it "may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds" (*Hero with a Thousand Faces* 193).

Commenting on the basic nature of this form of the journey, Campbell writes that hero must leave the world of the known, predictable, and familiar and encounter a realm that is strange, ambiguous, and incredible. This mysterious and fateful realm, he continues, "may be variously represented: as a distant land, a forest, a kingdom underground, beneath the waves, or above the sky, a secret island, lofty mountaintop, or profound dream state," further noting that "it is always a place of strangely fluid and polymorphous beings, unimaginable torments, superhuman deeds, and impossible delights" (*Hero* 58). Remarking on the universality of this story and its perennial relevance to the human condition, he observes, "we do not even have to risk the adventure alone; for the heroes of all time have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path" (25).

While the heroic quest typically takes the form of an outer adventure, as with all of the forms of the archetypal journey, its real purpose is personal and collective transformation. "While the heroic adventure of our tribal memory takes some outer form," writes James Hollis, "the same motif of summons, descent, struggle, wounding, and return are part of the everyday life of the individual." To recognize, he suggests, "that each of us is part of such a rich pattern [. . .] is to discover the depth principle," the

core insight of both depth psychology and a mythic orientation to the sacred (*Tracking the Gods* 72).

In many ways parallel to Campbell's concept of the quest as hero's journey is Jung's vision of the process of individuation, the lifelong movement of the individual toward greater psychic wholeness. In this context, Edward C. Whitmont describes the process of individuation as the "symbolic quest." Regarding the quest-like quality of the individuation process, he observes that the "hero or heroine's quest and his or her encounter with mythological antagonists can be summarized in psychological language as the ego's encounter with the ever-recurring typical form elements of the psyche" (*Symbolic Quest* 137).

Most important, particularly given the topic of this dissertation, is the recognition of the underlying religious or spiritual dimension of the quest archetype. In this context, Keen observes, "I have come to believe that 'the quest' is a metaphor for the willingness to live and wrestle with the perennial questions that underlie the mythic answers that religions offer" (*Hymns to an Unknown God* 15). In a similar vein, Torrance comments, the "quest is [. . .] a continuous questioning on the subject of life itself as an open system or structured process defined most fundamentally by a transcendent potentiality" (56).

Writing specifically about the spiritual aspect of the hero's journey, Campbell writes of bridging "the two worlds, the divine and the human," worlds which normally are thought to be "as different as life and death, as day and night." While the hero is typically portrayed as venturing between the seemingly opposing and irreconcilable realms of the spiritual and material worlds, the ultimate heroic discovery, Campbell writes, is that "the two kingdoms are actually one," that the "realm of the gods" is

actually “a forgotten dimension of the world we know” (*Hero with a Thousand Faces* 217). In this way, he observes, the hero comes to learn “that the perilous journey was a labor not of attainment but of reattainment, not discovery but rediscovery.” As a result, he continues, the “godly powers sought and dangerously won are revealed to have been within the heart of the hero all the time” (39).

Another important form of the archetypal journey—and one related in a number of ways to the archetype of the quest—is that of initiation. According to Mircea Eliade, the process of initiation “is equivalent to a basic change in existential condition” in that “the initiate emerges from the ordeal endowed with a totally different being from that which he possessed before his initiation.” With regard to the generalized form of this archetype, he further observes, “the same initiatory patterns are found in the dreams and in the imaginative life both of modern men and of the primitive” (*Rites and Symbols of Initiation* 131). Also commenting on the general nature of this form of symbolic journey, Eliade writes, the “foundation of all rites and rituals of initiation is always a deep religious experience” (*Sacred and Profane* 193).

The nature of initiation rituals has been studied by cultural anthropologists since the start of the twentieth century, most notably by Arnold Van Gennep and later by Victor Turner. Both men observed that such rituals traditionally passed through three distinct stages which are described respectively as a period of “separation,” followed by an intervening transformative phase described as “liminal” in nature, and ending with a return or “reaggregation” (Turner *Ritual Process* 94-5). This three-stage model is also remarkably similar to Campbell’s three phases of the hero’s journey, namely the stage of departure, the intervening initiatory period, and the stage of return.

While the first and the last of Gennep's and Turner's three stages of the initiation process are relatively simple to comprehend, the central liminal phase of the initiation process is substantially more enigmatic and paradoxical in nature. In addition, the mysterious nature of the experience of liminality is core to the unique archetypal quality of the journey-as-initiation. Derived from the Latin word *limen*, meaning threshold, liminality describes a state of profound transition, the experience of being outside of chronological time and conventional space and entering instead into a world of sacred space and sacred time. In this topsy-turvy world, ordinary assumptions about both one's own life and nature of existence must be discarded in favor of an extreme openness to the unstructured and the unpredictable. This liminal realm is both a no man's land of the mysterious and the unfamiliar, as well as being, in Turner's words, "the realm of pure possibility" ("Betwixt and Between" 97). Characterizing the transitional nature of this primal state, Turner observes, "liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon" (*Ritual Process* 95). It is precisely this amorphous, enigmatic, and paradoxical quality of liminality that makes the initiatory journey a profoundly numinous experience, simultaneously fascinating and frightening for the initiate.

While initiatory journeys are most commonly associated with youth and the process of becoming an adult, this is only one of two principal types of initiation. The other primary form of initiation is that undergone by a candidate seeking admission to a secret organization. The prototype for this second form of initiation is the initiatory rituals of the mystery religions of the ancient world. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "mystery" comes from the Greek noun *mysteria*, which is derived

from the Greek verb *myein*, meaning “to close the lips or eyes.” This verb is thought to refer to the closing of the eyes of the initiate when entering into the darkness of the ritual space and to the closing of the initiate’s lips because of the vow of silence typically required by these mystery cults. According to Walter Burkert, the word "initiation" comes from the Latin term *initiare*, which, in turn, is a translation from the Greek of *myein* (7). Because of their common derivation, both the words mystery and initiation connote some kind of mystical process which may not be spoken of or described, ostensibly because of strict ancient prohibitions against doing so and more likely because of the ineffable nature of the experiential revelation received by initiates.

With regard to the contemporary relevance of these mystery religions of the ancient world, Burkert suggests that they were not truly religions at all, at least in the sense that one refers to the term religion today. “Initiation at Eleusis or worship of Isis or Mithras does not constitute adherence to a religion in the sense that we are familiar with,” he writes. Whereas modern theistic religions tend to focus on demarcating their distinctive and exclusive natures and conceptions of the sacred, Burkhart observes, in the ancient world “the various forms of worship, including new and foreign gods in general and the institution of the mysteries in particular, are never exclusive.” These traditions, he continues, “appear as varying forms, trends, or options within the one disparate yet continuous conglomerate of ancient religion.” In this sense, Burkhert observes, these mysteries “are a form of personal religion, depending on a private decision and aiming at some form of salvation through closeness to the divine” (10).

Reflecting on the relationship of the individuation process to the archetype of the initiatory journey, Jung writes that the “transformation of consciousness that occurs under

analysis makes it the natural analogue of religious initiation ceremonies" (*CW* 11: 523; para. 854). Also writing about the archetype of initiation from a Jungian perspective, Joseph L. Henderson specifically associates the youthful type of initiation into adulthood with the individuation process in the first half of life, the process of effectively establishing one's role within the community and taking on life responsibilities appropriate to that role. The second type of initiation, that of the aspirant to a mystery, on the other hand, is thought by Henderson to have a kinship with the individuation process in the second half of life and the encounter with the archetype of the self.

In relating the totality of the initiation archetype to the process of depth psychological analysis, Henderson observes, "At first this ritual tends to recapitulate in significant ways the initiation of youth," in the sense that "such rites always have been expressed as the need to outgrow old, repressive childhood patterns and to become adapted to the social group" (18). Later on, he continues, "especially for people who have already made a satisfactory social adaption, individuation appears as a wish to withdraw in order to discover some secret knowledge, to participate in some mystery" (19). This latter stage of initiation, he suggests, "is represented by no rite of entrance or of exit; it is not a state of containment or incubation, nor is it a state of release or liberation" (200). As a result, he continues, the final outcome of this form of psychic initiation "might best be called the state of immanence, in the sense that individuation forces a man to obey the immanent law of his own nature in order to know himself as an individual" (201). Even this second stage of initiation does not halt the process of psychological and spiritual development. Just as the individuation process goes on all the way through life, Henderson concludes, after the passage of "a long period of time and in

response to another inward pull," one may yet again embark "upon the way of initiation." (221).

While the versions of the journey archetype symbolized by the quest and the initiation both possesses a clearly religious or spiritual dimension, it is in the concept of pilgrimage that one finds the most inherently religious or spiritual form of symbolic journey. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word pilgrim is derived from the Latin *peregrinus*, meaning "a traveler." Interestingly, the dictionary's first definition of pilgrim—that is, "a wayfarer, a traveler, a wanderer, a sojourner"—emphasizes the displaced quality of such a person, the fact that a pilgrim is first and foremost a person far from home. It is only in the second definition that a pilgrim is defined as "one who journeys (usually a long distance) to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion." Regarding the significance of this definition of a pilgrim, Mary Jo Leddy writes, when beginning a pilgrimage, "we become, by choice, displaced persons; we leave our usual place of life or work and go to a place that is holy," (104-105).

As with the archetypes of quest and the initiation, the pilgrimage also takes the form of a three-stage process. The first of these stages, according to Jean Dalby Clift and Wallace B. Clift, is an initial decision to embark on a pilgrimage, a decision prompted by a "call" to leave the concerns of everyday life and depart for some place deemed to be sacred. In a traditional pilgrimage, for example, one may feel called to go "to some distant holy place renowned for miracles where one might hope to be physically healed or renewed in one's faith in the divine" (11). Emphasizing the fact that not all sacred places are conventionally religious in nature, however, the Clifts also observe that "one may find oneself longing to go back to the scene of some childhood experience, perhaps to

where one experienced a hurt or wounding" with the hope of finding some sort of personal redemption or absolution there (12).

The second stage of a pilgrimage consists of the actual journeying to the place of veneration. This stage of the journey, the Clifts observe, is characterized "by an awareness of a temporary release from social ties which in itself can contribute to a sense of renewal or refreshment" (11-2). More problematic is the fact that sacred places are often in hard-to-reach or out-of-the-way locations, as a result of which this stage of the journey can also be arduous and challenging to the pilgrim. This difficulty of gaining access to the pilgrimage site, the Clifts suggest, "may be expressive or symbolic of the fact that growth, like all change in life, requires effort, requires a movement away from the place where we have been, requires a willingness to leave the comfort of the status quo behind" (69).

This second stage culminates in the arrival at the sacred place and the hoped-for encounter with the sacred. As a part of that encounter, the Clifts observe, it is traditional to "leave something behind," as well as "taking something home" (76, 83). That which is left behind is typically thought of as an offering or sacrifice of some kind made in honor of the divinity or sacred principle enshrined at the place of pilgrimage. Commenting on the Jungian implications of such an offering, the Clifts suggest that in terms of the pilgrimage as a symbol of individuation, "the ego must bring the sacrifice." In this sense, the ego "must give up some of its control in order to listen to and to integrate material from the unconscious" and in the process "leave behind its old understanding of itself" (69).

It is with the last stage of the pilgrimage, the return home, that the pilgrim takes with him or her, as the Clifts observe, a precious gift of some kind. Unlike the boon granted at the end of the hero's journey, however, this gift is personal in nature. Generally, the Clifts suggest, the gift takes the form of "new sense of relationship with the divine or with some value of importance" (12). In Jungian terms, they add, because the sacred place which is the destination of the pilgrimage is symbolic of the self, the pilgrim's outward journey to the shrine is simultaneously an inward journey to their own center. In this sense, the ultimate gift the pilgrim brings home and back into his or her daily life is a deepened and renewed relationship with the self (13).

In commenting on the nature of the pilgrim experience, Richard Niebuhr describes pilgrims as "persons in motion—passing through territories not their own—seeking something we might call completion, or perhaps the word clarity will do as well, a goal to which only the spirit's compass points the way" (7). The concept of the pilgrimage, he continues:

> reinterprets the word 'experience' for us, a word that has grown pale and weak in our usage, and restores it to its strong meaning. In its weak form, experience means simply the continuum of moments scarcely distinct from one another—the run of day-to-day life. In its strong form, it means [. . .] the passage into ourselves of places and being previously unfamiliar and an accompanying enlargement of ourselves. (12)

In contrasting those engaged on a pilgrimage from "tourists or sightseers"—the other sort of traveler one is likely to meet on the journey—Niebuhr observes that the latter "travel merely wishing to find something new to see, to hear, to touch, without so much as glimmering that they themselves may be altered." Those engaged on a pilgrimage, on the other hand, "pass over thresholds aware of their need to be changed." Pilgrims "see symbols everywhere," Niebuhr continues, with the result that "each particular thing

beckons the pilgrim as a potential icon and cipher of what is to come" (10). In this sense, Mircea Eliade suggests, for the religious person "every road can symbolize the 'road of life,' and any walk a 'pilgrimage,' a peregrination to the Center of the World" (*Sacred* 183).

Regarding the relationship between the archetype of the quest and that of the pilgrimage, Leeming observes, "much of the mythology surrounding the mystical aspect of the heroic journey is derived from a particular understanding of the rite of pilgrimage." A pilgrim, he continues, "is a person who leaves home to travel to an important place with the intention not of staying but of bringing something of spiritual value back into his or her ordinary life." In this sense, Leeming suggests, one can recognize the archetypal similarity between the pilgrimage and the quest. Both, he observes, "are based on the frame of Departure, Adventure, Return, the process of threshold crossing, the achievement of higher knowledge, and union with the Absolute" (132).

Conversely, Leeming also recognizes the differences between these two kinds of archetypal journeys, observing that the "pilgrimage is a ritual journey" wherein the "pilgrim knows exactly where he is going, exactly what he will find there, and exactly what he is supposed to do when he gets there" (133). In other words, while the quest is fundamentally a journey to an unknown destination for an as-yet unknown purpose, the pilgrimage is a journey undertaken to a known place for the ostensible reason of seeking an experience of the sacred. However even this distinction may not be quite so definite or clear if one bears in mind the testimony of those pilgrims who paradoxically found that it was some unexpected encounter or adventure along the way to the shrine that actually brought the revelation they sought.

On the Concept of Amor Fati as Faith in the Journey

In contemplating the idea of religious or spiritual faith as a reverence for and devotion to the unfolding of the sacred dimension of one's personal mythology, it is meaningful to conclude this dissertation with an exploration of a relevant concept from the work of Friedrich Nietzsche. Known by the Latin phrase *amor fati*, or "love of fate," this idea predicates the existence of an internal, necessary, autonomous, and unique ordering of the significant events of a person's life. This internal patterning of every human life is thought to play a central role in the shaping of one's character, as well as in influencing the particular way in which one tends to experience life. In addition, the concept of *amor fati* fully recognizes that the destiny of every individual inevitably includes a range of painful and distressing occurrences as well as joyful and uplifting ones.

The key to meaningfully experiencing one's own uniqueness as a conscious being, Nietzsche states, is the wholehearted embracing of the totality of this innate pattern. "My formula for the greatness of a human being is *amor fati*," he writes, "that one wants nothing to be different—not forward, not backward, not in all eternity." Moreover, he adds, in contemplating the totality of one's life experience, it is not sufficient that one "merely bear what is necessary," but indeed to "love it" (258). Commenting on Nietzsche's vision of destiny, Greg Mogenson writes that one's relationship to "a sense of the fatal" is "the ink-well out of which we write our personal mythology, our *amor fati*, our 'yes' in the face of necessity" (155).

Given their life orientations as well as their orientations to mythology, it is hardly surprising that both Campbell and Jung were attracted to the concept of *amor fati.* Commenting on this idea, Campbell states, "if you say no to a single factor in your life,

you have unraveled the whole thing." Further commenting on Nietzsche's explication of this idea, he adds, "the more challenging or threatening the situation or context to be assimilated and affirmed, the greater the stature of the person who can achieve it." In this way, he observes, the "demon that you can swallow gives you its power, and the greater life's pain, the greater life's reply" (*Power of Myth* 161). With particular regard to the mythic implications of *amor fati*, Campbell argues that thinking mythologically helps put one "in accord with the inevitables of this vale of tears." As a result, he continues, "You learn to recognize the positive values in what appear to be the negative moments and aspects of your life." Only then, he cautions, is one "able to say a hearty yes" to one's adventure (163).

While Jung rarely referred to the concept of *amor fati* by name, he offers many observations in keeping with the spirit of Nietzsche's idea. Citing a letter Jung wrote in March of 1933, for example, Aniela Jaffé quotes Jung as observing that when one does "the next and most necessary thing without fuss and with conviction, one is always doing something meaningful and intended by fate" (*Myth of Meaning* 150). Indeed, Jung's embracing of the idea of *amor fati* is so total that he is able to define God as "the name by which I designate all things which cross my willful path violently and recklessly, all things which upset my subjective views, plans and intentions and change the course of my life for better or worse" (*Letters* 525). Perhaps the most insightful Jungian commentary on the value of *amor fati*, however, comes not from Jung himself, but rather from one of his patients. In a letter later quoted by Jung, this former client writes:

> Out of evil, much good has come to me. By keeping quiet, repressing nothing, remaining attentive, and by accepting reality—taking things as they are, and not as I wanted them to be—by doing all this, unusual knowledge has come to me, and unusual powers as well, such as I could

> never have imagined before. I always thought that when we accepted things they over-powered us in some way or other. This turns out not to be true at all, and it is only by accepting them that one can assume an attitude towards them. So now I intend to play the game of life, being receptive to whatever comes to me, good and bad, sun and shadow that are forever alternating, and, in this way, also accepting my own nature with its positive and negative sides. Thus everything becomes more alive to me. What a fool I was! How I tried to force everything to go according to the way I though it ought to! (*CW* 13: 5; para. 18)

This statement both fully embraces the concept of *amor fati*, as well as powerfully emphasizing its profoundly affirming quality as a philosophy of life.

In keeping with the Jungian vision of the process of individuation, Whitmont equates the pattern implicit in one's destiny with "the unfoldment of the self-archetype in time and space." While this pattern autonomously arises from the self, he writes, it nevertheless "needs the cooperation of consciousness for its realization in actual life." This process, he concludes, depends "largely on the individual's capacity for awareness," as well as "his ability to experience symbolic significance and to attempt a cooperative acceptance of the tragic as well as the joyful patterns of his life" ("Destiny Concept in Psychotherapy" 73). In this regard, Whitmont cautions, it is important to remember that *amor fati* "does not imply absolute determinism" (74). Echoing this sentiment, Hollis observes, "the love of one's fate is not fatalism, resignation, defeat, or passivity." Rather, he suggests, it is "an heroic submission to the gods—not my will but Thine—which leads to the blessing of a life lived as it was meant to be lived" (*Creating a Life* 69).

With regard to the particular aspects of consciousness that must be brought to bear in order for one to embrace the concept of *amor fati*, Hollis also writes of the necessity for confronting what he calls "Triple A's," namely the forces of anxiety, ambiguity, and ambivalence. Describing the source of the first of these sources of

psychological tension, Hollis observes that anxiety always rises under conditions of uncertainty and open-endedness. Ambiguity, the second of these forces, he continues, "confounds the ego's lust for security," and seeks "to fix the world in a permanently knowable place." Ambivalence, the third of these disruptive forces, arises from the inevitable presence of opposites, Hollis writes, and "obliges one to deal with capacity for dialogue with that other" (57).

Far from becoming a barrier to the experience of the sacred in the context of one's life story, Hollis argues, consciously opening oneself to life's anxiety, ambiguity, and ambivalence offers a powerful means of accessing the personally sacred. In this context, he further observes, the way in which one handles "the inescapable problem of the Triple A's" implicitly raises questions with regard to spiritual authority. "Is one to project authority outside to a received package of values, the institutionalization of dogma, rite and cult," he asks, "or is one willing to assume responsibility for tracking the spirit as it arises from new venues?" Engaging the second option, he argues, requires "the capacity to stay open to the dynamism of life, to grant autonomy to the gods, to allow enlargement through revelation," and finally, "to open a more respectful relationship to the mystery that moves through all events" (58).

In this regard, Hollis further argues, it is precisely those individuals "who are strong enough to suffer the angst of modernism consciously" while trying to hold "the necessary tension of opposites rather than tumble into fundamentalist pieties" who remain open to the possibility of personal revelation. Indeed, it *because* such people remain open to the developmental and the dialogical, he suggests, that the divine is made accessible, "for the gods are most present when our dogmas and attitudes are not

enclosing and containing them" (56). Summarizing his view of the relevance of the concept of the love of fate to the idea of a mythically-based religious faith, Hollis writes:

> *Amor fati* [. . .] is in the end a recognition that it is *here*, in *this place*, in *this time*, in *this arena* that we are called to live our lives. Surely meaning will be found not in the ego's triumphant conquest of fate, but by its interaction with, enlargement through, and sometimes defeat by, fate. To live our lives here, in this world, in this time, is richly pregnant with possibilities of meaning. Meaning is not something abstract, something sought [...]. It is an experiential byproduct of a life lived in the way it is supposed to be lived—as defined by forces transcendent to consciousness. (68)

Another reason why the concept of *amor fati* is particularly relevant to the idea of a mythic orientation to the sacred is that love of fate also inherently involves the embracing of one's personal myth. For this reason, seeking a sense of existential meaning purely through the embracing of collective myths will always prove insufficient to the task of *amor fati*. In this regard, Sam Keen writes, "The cosmic story fails in an essential way to provide me with a map for my spiritual journey." While such a story "locates human beings in the grand scheme of things," he continues, "it does not locate that one individual who is the center of my quest for meaning." In the end, he states, "My quest, like yours, is driven primarily by a personal-existential need to discover how I fit in with the scheme of things, not by an abstract need to understand how human beings fit within the cosmos." In this regard, Keen further argues, "If I am ever to feel at home in the world, I must discover how a single life fits into Life, how my story fits into the universal story" so that by "examining my own story, I can at least bring into focus one small part of the sacred whole" (*Hymns to an Unknown God* 37).

Keen further proposes that where traditional religion tends to require "a broad leap into the arms of authority," the personal spiritual quest "only requires a short step

over the void" (41). The basic assumption of such a spiritual quest, Keen declares is this: "My life is the text in which I must find the revelation of the sacred." Given their respective orientations to the religious dimension of life, it seems unlikely that either Campbell or Jung would find much to disagree with regarding this simple, yet revolutionary, assumption. Both Campbell and Jung would also agree that an individual can only comprehend the revelation of the sacred concealed in the text of his or her life by consciously choosing to interpret that text in mythic terms, meaning in terms that are inherently archetypal, symbolic, and imaginal.

It is my contention that by seeking the sacred through the mythic text of one's life, one also inevitably finds a faith in the inherent rightness and necessity of one's unique journey through life. In the presence of such a mythic faith, one realizes that the sacred lies not in obtaining the object of the quest or in reaching the shrine that is the destination of the pilgrimage, but rather in the act of consciously journeying itself. Such faith would also lead one to understand that discovering a sense of the meaning of one's life lies not in solving the great cosmic mysteries, but rather in actively encountering and embracing them. Finally and most importantly, if one were to experience such an existential kind of faith, it would matter little what one believed about the unknown and unknowable God behind the many masks and images because one's faith in the journey would be enough.