

## An Inquest into Common Humanity through Myths and Mythologies: Joseph Campbell's Paradigm

Okoro, Kingsley N. Ph.D

Department of Philosophy and Religion, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki –Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author: Okoro, Kingsley N. Ph.D

Email: [Okoro.kingsley.n@yahoo.com](mailto:Okoro.kingsley.n@yahoo.com)

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**Abstract:** The disintegration of the social order which has resulted in shredding humanity into ethnic grouping, racial categories, religious schisms, class stratifications etc, also introduced competitions into the socio-political system. The end point of the panorama is that wars, persecutions, humiliations and subjugations of those considered inferior in the social scheme became a benchmark for human relationship. The quest for survival in this hostile world became ingrained in our psycho-social wits and became our organizing principle, thus the win/loss relationship that has characterized human interactions in the modern world. Therefore mankind considers himself an atom within the universe of other atoms. Consequently, humanity lost the sense of his common origin. It was the pre-scientific age, structured around religious and cultural traditions that gave humanity this sense of common origin. This argument is sustained by diverse myths and mythologies found in different world cultures. The myths and mythologies range from the creation, the incarnation of Gods, the salvific death of a messiah, the hope of new world and new life etc. With these myths, our ancestors convinced themselves of their common origin and worked towards the unification of mankind separated by geographical distance. However, the birth of modern science made such a unification quest a lost dream and as such humanity is heading heedlessly towards self obliteration. Joseph Campbell made serious attempt to give a rebirth to the primeval sciences in the form of social anthropology. He organized his new anthropology around myths and mythology. Campbell surveyed various cultures as he studied their social thoughts as embedded in myths and discovered that there is common denominator in myths of all cultures. By this, Campbell came to conclusion that the modern idea of man and society is based on a faulty design and as such to see man with Kierkegaard's ideality lens as an individual is a mere illusion. This paper therefore is designed to reconsider the proto-science of Campbell couched in monomyths to find how his ideality of common humanity could be reinterpreted and applied to end crisis/ and humiliation of mankind in the modern world. .

**Keywords:** Myths, mythologies, Common humanity, Joseph Campbell, Anthropology, social order.

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### INTRODUCTION

The shredding of humanity into social, political, economic, religious, racial and ethnic categories, as strong and weak, powerful and powerless, superior and inferior, white and coloured, men and women, developed and underdeveloped, upper and lower castes etc has reached a critical stage in the modern society. The trend though not new in human history has reached an incredible state in a time in history where the cliché and aspiration of all in the world is to attain global citizenry, a world without divide. This paradox of the modern era has given scholars of various fields' food for thought. Thus they consider the trend with great reminiscence and describe the present socio-political vista as a state of emergency. Here Collins, observation and description become relevant in our understanding of the global state of affairs as he writes,

*"... the current global state of emergency is posing a complex problems of how humanity will adapt behaviours for the creation of an improved future. People of the world will have*

*to address the growing threats of burgeoning global crises (214-223).*

In the same vein, Okoro [1] accentuates the reality of the stratification of humanity in the modern world with all its negative implications as he opines, "We live in fragmented world, as though some cosmic giants had taken this ball we call the earth and hurled it against some great mass, smashing it in pieces (255-277). He summarily described the situation as near hopeless state when he writes,

*"the human race has entered a schizophrenic-like state from which it cannot possibly emerge without being reshaped to the root of its being, without being transformed, our chances of survival are just about nil (255-277)*

This fragmentation has both overt and covert effects on the world citizenry and also the environment. The overt effects range from wars, terrorism, cultural and racial cleaning, religious prejudice, fanaticism and bigotry and wanton destruction of the natural environment. Hence it seems there is no safe haven for

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humanity in the contemporary society. On the overall consequence of materialization of nature and by extension all lives, Okoro opines,

*“There is a great danger looming over the horizon as nature is at the critical stage of obliteration due to environmental crises, which have become a general experience of the global community (1-20).*

While Hourtaut reiterates, the climate change reminds the modern man the reality of inseparable relationship with nature (2) and Kovel maintains that to consider nature as planet and as natural resources that can be reduced to the status of saleable commodities is a violation of life and its essences (28)

The present panorama has also enormous invisible –psychological effects on the global citizenry. The situation has caused great fear and disillusion on the prospect of living and the essence and worth of life itself. Thus, many have lost the prospect of surviving as individual within the global community. Here Okoro gave an apt account of the outcome of the psychological effect of the disintegrated community of the modern period as he writes:

*In a situation where more and more people are utterly disillusioned about the prospect associated with the modernization and development and the capacity and willingness of the political and economic elites to deliver their promises, they (people) feel abandoned and are thrown back on the ethnic, cultural and religious identities to provide a line of coherence and purpose for their lives (566) (See also Konrad,45)*

The implication of the above state of affairs is that many within the global community have lost hope on the modern material and economic sciences, that emphasis first of all individualism and secondarily materialism and commodification of human beings and nature. It is at this point that the need to search for alternative epistemology becomes a necessity. The epistemology is therefore broadly based on the wisdom of the ancient as found in most religio-philosophical traditions of the world. This is couched in myths and mythologies and christened proto-science. Notably, myths and mythologies serve the pre-scientific age as a means of explaining the mysteries of the life. Therefore myths are part of human method of explaining ambiguities and seeming contradictions in nature. In his own words, Neil Philips describes the relationship between mankind and myths as he comments:

*It is the nature of mankind to tell stories and at the root of every human culture are the stories we call myth-stories of creation of the world and humankind of the deeds of gods and heroes and of end of time. Such stories explain and justify the world and define one’s role within creation (6)*

Though myths are stories as opined by Niel Philips in the citation above, but not all stories are myths. A critical question here becomes how to differentiate myths from ordinary stories. Here Lawai in an attempt to define myths in the context of human experiences opines that “Myths are things that never happened but are always” (1-25). Lawai here underscores the allegorical nature of mythology and interpose that myths and mythologies contain within their fairy tales and fantastical nature, hidden truths and higher meanings. Thus myths are stories about higher things and more profound subject matters. Myths therefore deal with the important issues that do with God(s), cosmic origin of everything, ultimate conclusions, purpose and destiny. Myths derive from humankind’s quest to answer the big questions concerning the nature of the divine, the nature of reality, the human origin and human condition, higher powers and our relationship to those powers and they also deal with the meaning of life (Lawai, 25) [2]. Therefore every cultural and great world religion possesses myths, which is the meaning that unlocks and explains the mysteries of this life that cannot otherwise be explained through any other means. The most striking thing about these myths in various cultures, though separated by geographical spaces, is that they are quite similar in the presentation and discussion of their subject matter. This points to the fact that world’s philosophical traditions have a mono origin and attempts to answer the ultimate questions of humanity, the origin of nature and humankind – that has been shrouded in mystical obscurity.

It is in attempt to unlock this pristine truth that Joseph Campbell dedicated his entire life to collecting mythical stories from various cultures and traditions. In conclusion he submits that all the world’s myths have the same goal in mind. This he explained in his works, ‘the power of myths’ and ‘the heroes with thousand faces’. Against the backdrop of Campbell’s subsumptions in mono myths theory, this present work undertakes a critical study of Joseph Campbell works to finding out how his theory could be used to substantiate our quest for common humanity, which has become a great challenge of the present age. Noting that if we are able to establish the facts from the world’s recessive traditional that humanity hails from one common source, as Campbell’s mono myth theory points, then the humiliation, classification and ultimate destruction of human life and nature will be a story that will only be remembered with shame.

#### **MYTHS AND MYTHOLOGIES: PERCEPTION, NATURE AND DEVELOPMENT**

Myths are found in all remote cultures of the world. There is no pre-scientific age without a myth to explain the mysteries and puzzles of life. Therefore Cynthia [3] defines myths as enduring facets of human nature (1-5) in this sense; myths allow cultures to bring

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order to chaos and to understand human behaviours and the mysterious working of the universe. Cynthia goes on to state unequivocally that despite the presence of scientific and psychological explorations that control the modern epistemology and understanding of the world that myths continue to shape our culture and literary works. In this regards, Alan [4] defines Myth as a sacred narrative explaining how the world and humankind assumed their present form (1-3), for Bruce [5], myths are ideology in narrative form (242-25)).

Following from these understanding, myths therefore may arise as either truthful depictions or over elaborated account of historical events, as allegory for or personification of natural phenomenon, or as an explanation of ritual. They are transmitted to convey religious or idealized experiences, to establish behavioural models and to teach. Philips is of the opinion that humankind in every culture also tell stories of their idealized world and such stories which we now call myths are meant to explain and perhaps justify the world and define the people's role within creation and once a civilization has been established, the myths that gave birth to the civilization then diminish into historical obscurity and relapse into superstition and often becomes a means of entertainment. However, myths never ever lose their intrinsic powers, thus the world's mythologies are the basis of all poetry, and passion of which human minds are capable (6). In justification of the ever relevance of myths even in the scientific age, Philips avers, ‘

*“...From Ancient Egypt to Greece and Rome, from West Africa to Siberia, from Hindu concept of Brahman and the endless cycle of creation to the eternal dreaming of the Australian Aborigines, the same recur, as humankind engages with great mysteries of life and death’ (6-7)*

Therefore artist, poets and epic writers in order to convey in an effective manner their abstract ideas and meanings adopt historical myths, archetypes and symbols that are universally or at least culturally understood to offer a way to exploring the often chaotic world in which we live (Cynthia,1-5). Hence throughout history, mythology which Alan defines as either the collection of myths or the study of myths (1-3) shaped much of how cultures viewed their place in the universe and responded to their desire to understand, if not control, its contradictory nature. Accordingly, the creation of pre-historic culture, biblical myths, and epic heroism etc played this role very well. Against the backdrop of this understanding, Encyclopedia Britannica, writes

*...for two and half millennia, competition among various schools of mythology has been a struggle over matters of ultimate truth, religious beliefs, political theory, cultural identity, verifiable history and social custom. Myths have been variously understood as the*

*revelation of divine mysteries, as primitive science and faulty history, as bad philosophy, as a code containing hidden truth from the uneducated, as the cultural DNA determining a people's identity, as a resource for learning about the material culture of primitive peoples, as a window into the working of human mind and as a justification for deplorable act of cruelty ... (1-25)*

To this Cynthia [3] summarizes that the reliance on mythological and symbolic imagery owe much to their ability to explicate the familiarity of human nature – emotions, ambiguities, contradiction (1-5). Notably there exists a close relationship between world mythologies and world religion. Thus Lawal considers mythology as proto-religion or an early forerunner of religion (1-21). This imagery of myth is based on the fact that many of the world religions are often regarded as myths. In his own words Lawal, opines. “We know that ancient myths found themselves incorporated into holy texts of some of the major world religions. For instance, a significant part of the Bible consists of Myths, especially in some of the earlier books such as Genesis. A similar situation exists in Hinduism, which earlier on produced an extensive and elaborate collection of myths. So mythology blends into and incorporates into religions and vice versa, hence certain religious ideas are often represented as myths (1-21). Actually, the issues and themes that mythology deals with are really the same subject matter at the heart of most world religions. These ideas and themes include the belief that ‘everyone is God’ and the idea of ‘spiritual journey’ which leads to a state of mystical awakening or enlightenment and also the prophecies contained in the world religions together with the idea of a Messiah or world savior.

With regard to the history and development of mythologies, scholars are of the opinion that there are two main traditional branches of mythology; these are philosophical and allegorical mythologies. However Allegorical mythology has developed other stands like Renaissance and Enlightenment mythologies, Cooperative mythology and ethnic Mythology. However, the intent of this section of this work will only contain a brief discussion on the two main traditional branches – Philosophical and Allegorical mythologies.

With regard to philosophical mythology, Belin maintains that the history of mythology begins with the rise of rationalism in Europe and the earliest philosopher's responses to the method of the poets, with critical; examinations of the methods and truth-value of myths. Here he maintains that both myth-telling and philosophy are pre-occupied with fundamental metaphysical questions about the origin and ultimate nature of the universe and being, however, philosophy as opposed to mythology took serious interest in

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logically consistent, rational method for arriving at answers to such questions (24-27) It is on this ground that Xenophemes, Heraclitus and Plato rejected the myths of Homer and Hesiod as lies and silly stories. E.g Hesiod claimed to know how the Kosmos began and how Zeus and the Olympians became its rulers because the Muses – breathed the truth into him. Then the early philosophical mythology became the first intellectual movement to question the basis for the common person's unquestioning faith in the mythoi of the poets. Here lies the modern definition of myth as "falsehood" or "unbelievable stories". On the early Greek philosophers, who were first to apply rational thoughts and logical analysis to metaphysical questions, therefore dispensing with unverifiable stories that appeal to supernatural entities and divine inspirations for authority (Encyclopedia Britannica, 176-204) [6] Though the contributions of philosophy of myth is quite negative, the philosophers insistence on rationale explanations, credible evidence and fair arguments has made the objective critical study of myths possible (Berlin 8)

The next development in the study of myths is the allegorical strand of mythology. This strand just like the philosophical strand was given birth by the Greek rationalism of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century B. C. According to Barry, allegory is a form of extended metaphor by which objects, persons and events refer symbolically to meaning outside the narrative itself (21). This allegorical mythology becomes a way of reading objects, persons and events depicted in myths as symbolizing something beyond the story's plot and literal meaning of its words. Accordingly, philosophers and theologians from the earliest period to the mid medieval period interpreted myths allegorically, peeping beneath their literal surfaces to find hidden references to natural phenomena, historical events or philosophical or religious truth. Here, we also notice several variants of allegorical mythologies.

The first of this variant is "Allegory of nature". The chief proponent of "allegory of nature" was Theagenes. In his method, Theagenes did not reject the mythoi of the poets out rightly as silly stories for the simple-minded, like his contemporaries in philosophical allegorism, rather he was only bothered by the supernatural elements contents in mythology and decided to give a rational interpretations to those elements. He therefore developed a system of reading myths allegorically in order to convert non rational and supernatural mythic materials into rationale and natural terms (Williams,102).

Though none of Theagenes works survived till date, however Kathleen [7] opines that Theagenes interpreted the skirmishes among the gods that Homer and Hesiod described as wars among the elemental and physical forces of the Kosmos. In his method fire and water came at the cross-road, heat and cold, heavy

elements with airy elements etc became eternal enemies and always came to war. Theagenes associated various Olympian gods with the elements. Example Appollo, Ithaca and Hephaestus represented element of fire, while Poseidon and Skannader represented water. He represented such abstract qualities like winds and desire with Athena and Aphrodite respectively. It is by this method of interpretation that Theagenes read for example the passage in the Iliad, where Hera borrows Aphrodite's girdle and distracted Zeus in her arms, while Poseidon secretly provides aid to the Greeks so that they turned the tide back against the Trojans (11.4). He considered this episode as an allegory of some kind of ongoing struggle between Hera (air) and Poseidon (water) against Zeus (the thunderstorm) that has observable manifestation in our world even today. Here Theagenes with his allegorical school does not deny that myths have some truth value but it assumes that its truths are encoded in poetic language – presumably because the ancients people lacked a truly scientific knowledge of the physical working of the Kosmos (Kathleen 18)

The next variant of allegorical School, known as historical allegory was propounded by Euhemerous, who came after Plato [8]. Notably Euhemerous joined the discussion on the value and relevance of traditional myths and brought in his historical allegory as his contribution to the development of mythic traditions in about 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. Here Euhemerous believed that his ancestors were primitives, who lacked every scientific method, philosophical principles and cognitive sophistications of the "modern" world in which he lived. He thus assumed that the ancients exaggerated the historical facts of actual persons and events and because, they did not have access to better form of knowledge accepted these embellished stories as truth (Tylor, 72) Euhemerous claimed in his sacred history that he had discovered on the Island of Panchia (somewhere off the coast of Arabia Felix) inscriptions which indicated that kronos and Zeus were at one time living, earthly kings. Based on the assumption, Euhemerous argued that all divine and semi-divine beings described in myths were, at one time, remarkable but nevertheless ordinary people whose deeds became romanticized and sentimentalized over time that they were eventually honoured as gods (Tylor, 74). He therefore argued that myths were not truth per se but fanciful tales that preserved traces of historical truth. This approach could also be called rational mythology. Euhemerous would have presumably, read a passage like Hesiod's titanomachia, the war between, the force led by Zeus against the Titans, the monstrous race of immortal beings that preceded the future Olympians, as a time-distorted history of great battle between a barbaric, primordial civilization and the forebears of what eventually became the Greek society. Modern Euhemerists, following the steps of their founder, have the tendency towards rewriting of myths in strictly rational terms.

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Following the historical allegory of Euhemerus is 'the moral allegory' of the Stoics and Neo Platonists Stoicism, notably evolved during the Hellenistic period (323-31BC) and became the most enduring philosophical movement of the period. Stoicism which was founded by Zeus of Citium in Cyprus, made great contribution in logic, grammar and philosophies of language and mind. This ancient philosophical school based on morality, cultivated freedom from the passion that disorder our lives, gives our modern adjective, stoic which means "a detached indifference to pleasure or pain (Nussbaum, 41). In this connection, Nussbaum argues that the stoics developed Theagenes loose allegorical method of reading myth into a potent and rigorous system of interpretation that would not only domesticate the wild irrationality of poet but also train the philosophic mind to reading literature dispassionately and critically rather than emotionally and egocentrically (44). Stoics followed the Theagenes model of interpretation of myths in physical terms, however, stoics became interested in reading the Iliad odyssey and other ancient literatures as encoded moral treatise. They frequently described the heroes and gods of myths as embodying their moral ideals and resisting vices and weakness they themselves wished to avoid (Nussbaum,43).

A typical example of this allegorical model, is set forth in the first century AD, when Heraclitus, who was a staunch Stoic had written the Homeric allegories in which he sought to defend Homer from charges of immorality laid against him by Xenophones about five centuries before. In this work, Heraclitus interprets Apollo's killing the Greek with his arrow in the Iliad as a plague diffused by the heat of the sun-a reading that not only interprets theologically problematic passages in the myth in terms of a moral natural process but also retains Theagenes identification of Apollo with light and heat. Similarly Heraclitus identifies the gods with a variety of abstract qualities for example. Athena embodies wisdom, Ares embodies courage and Aphrodite embodies desire (Nussbaum 1993.45) [9]. In the same direction, Heraclitus, also argues that the Odyssey is a moral allegory from start to finish. He declares that odyssey is the embodiment of all virtues and that Homer uses him to teach wisdom by depicting him as hating the vices which destroy human life (Wendy 1998:16) [10]. Notably, the Stoics takes Heraclitus moral allegory so far that they completely disconnects the literal surface meaning of the Iliad and Odyssey by assuming that its one value is its allegorical meaning.

In a further developments, the neo-Platonic philosopher, Porphyry (233-305 CE) also employed a form of allegorical mythology in his; 'The cave of the nymphs in the Odyssey' In this work, he declares that what is obviously absurd in myth positively cries out to be read allegorically so that absurdity will be

transformed into that which is meaningful. Accordingly Porphyry's cave of the Nymphs adds 'historical research' to the etymological method of the Stoics. Therefore the Homeric cave mentioned in the title of his work is said to be based on the actual Ithacan cave sacred to the Nymphs. Porphyry maintains, even if the cave where Odysseus hid his treasure upon his return to Ithacan were not actual place, its symbolism remains intact (Barry, 19). His argument is based on the assumption that the cave is a material phenomenon and as such represents a material universe. The Nymphs as water Spirits represents the on-going flow of time and change, the looms at which they were working when Odysseus arrives symbolizes the process (the stone home) whereby human souls are clothed in bodies (the women cloth). Here Porphyry found that Homer's episode of the cave allegories affirms the key doctrines of neo-Platonism-namely an ordered universe, the unworthiness of material existence and the reincarnation of souls.

Within the early Christian era, mythology received a new development. In this period mythological allegory assumed element of Christian spirituality and became known as "spiritual allegory". Notably, Christianity emerged as a religious movement during the heyday of Hellenistic philosophy and culture (Barry,21). Against this historical backdrop, the church fathers out rightly disparaged pagan culture. It was Wendy (1998) [10] that summarized the tone of events thus 'Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian in developing the "Thesis of Demonic imitation", held that the demons, perceiving that Jesus would soon come, suggested to the poets, who created (Greek) myths to give Zeus many sons and attribute monstrous adventures to them in the hope that his would make the story of Christ appear to be a fable of the same sort, when he eventually came' (68-70). According to this teaching, the gods of non-Christians myths were demonic deceptions and ignorant distortion of historical and scientific fact, which the story of Jesus-miracle filed life, death and resurrection was not myth but unquestionable fact. However, the early church fathers could not help being impressed by the allegorical mythology of the Stoics and neo-Platonists, they appreciated their intense focus on minute textual details and correct interpretation, which they also considered as having great promise for biblical scholarship and the development of sound doctrine. Therefore, Clement of Alexandria became the first to use allegorical interpretation on the Hebrew Scriptures and the writing that eventually become the New Testament. In his own worlds, "God had hidden his pearls of wisdom from the swine that despise them, intending that the true believers would search for these hidden Christian meaning' (Wendy, 69-70). Origen, one of Clements' students further developed the neo-Platonic allegorical interpretation asserting that the Holy Scripture has three levels of meaning

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corresponding to the three aspects of human being-body, soul and spirit.

According to him, the bodily level of the scripture is the text's most literal levels, the soulish /psychic level is the less literal, embodying the moral and ethical lessons that scriptural stories impart, while the spiritual level is the least literal, most mystical (most allegorical) level of scripture. Origen posits that at this level were hidden deep mystical/spiritual truths. While positing that the entire body of Hebrew Scriptures prophesied Christ, who in turn is the key for correctly understanding what Christians eventually called the Old Testament. Origen pointed out that even the Apostle Paul saw parting of the red sea, manna from heaven and the death of the wandering Israelites in the desert as allegorical symbols for baptism, the Eucharist and the punishment for sin respectively [11] (Barry 2002:65). Here again Origen is accredited with being the first to interpret allegorically the story of the three days Jonah spent in the belly of the whale to prefigure the three days between Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. In a further development, Augustine of Hippo came to the stage and adopted Origen's allegorical approach but however, reworked Origen's three-tier interpretative system into a four-tier system. Augustine's four-part system analyzed the Bible, 1 literal, 2, allegorical, 3, moral, and 4 analogical levels. This model therefore became the primary means of reading the Bible and the pagan myths. This method has had an overwhelming influence in modern literary scholarship. Summarily, despite the thesis of Demonic imitations, Graeco-Roman myths continued to be read as allegories of church teaching. Following the neoplatonic impulse, Christian scholars saw in the 'absurd' and morally shocking passages of Greeco-Roman myths an invitation to uncover veiled references to Christian teaching about the importance of for example, chastity and sobriety.

Having taking a glide into historical development of myths and mythology within the early centuries, it became therefore necessary to consider the function of myths and its relevance in the modern world. In taking our survey, Eliade's [12] paradigm provides a good footing as he maintains that one of the foremost functions of myth is to establish models for behaviour (8). (See also Frazer, 711) and also to provide religious experiences. Thus through telling or reading of myths, members of traditional societies detach themselves from the present and return to the mythical age thereby bringing themselves closer to the divine (Eliade,19) [12]. In the same direction, Honko opines that in some cases, a society will reenact a myth in an attempt to reproduce the conditions of the mythical age (41-42). Similarly, Roland argues that modern culture explores religious experiences because it is not the jobs of science to define human morality, a religious experience is an attempt to connect with a perceived moral past, which is in contrast with

technological present (84). However, it was Joseph Campbell that proposed four essential functions of myth and mythologies as he writes:

*In the long view of the history of mankind, four essential functions of mythology can be discerned. The first and the most distinctive - vitalizing all is that of eliciting and supporting a sense of awe before the mystery of being. The second function of mythology is to render cosmology, an image of the universal that will support and be supported by this sense of awe before the mystery of the presence and the presence of a mystery. A third function of mythology is to support the current social order, to interpret the individual organically with his group. The fourth function of mythology is to initiate an individual into the order of realities of his own psyche, guarding him towards his own spiritual enrichment and realization (519-521). Campbell (1988) went further to explain the relationship between myth and civilization as he writes: 'The rise and fall of civilization in the long, broad course of history can be seen largely to be a function of the integrity and cogency of their supporting canons of myth for not authority but aspiration is the motivator, builder, and transformer of civilization. A mythological canon is an organization of symbols, ineffable in import, by which the energies of aspiration are evoked and gathered toward focus '(5) .*

### **Joseph Campbell in Perspective [18-22]**

*For Joseph Campbell, the study of myth was the exploration of the possibilities of consciousness. His lifetime of scholarship was nothing less than the search for the Holy Grail of radiant living. The dialog between Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers that became the power of myth was an event that changed many lives. It is more than a presentation of fascinating stories from all over the world. It is a vision of rich inner life available to anyone willing to go on the initiatory adventure (Centre for story and symbol, 1-7) [13]*

The American educationist, writer, renowned mythologist and orator, best known for his work in the field of comparative religion, a prolific writer and best story teller, Joseph Campbell was born to the family of Charles and Josephine Campbell, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1904. His parents belonged to the upper middle class and were of the Irish Roman Catholic faith in the White Plains of New York City (New World Encyclopedia, 1-16). When Joseph was seven (7) years old, his father took him with his brother Charlie to see Buffalo Bills wild beast show. He was fascinated by the naked Native American, who put his ear to the ground and listened with some special knowledge and this brought a turning point to the young Joe. Thereafter, he

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visited the American Museum of Native history in New York and read everything he could see about Native American society, focusing mainly on mythology. Explicating more on Joseph's Childhood background, Jonathan Tony writes:

*Joseph Campbell was born in 1904 in the suburb of New York City, His childhood was strongly Irish Catholic, the heritage led to an earnest immersion in the rituals and symbols of the church including becoming an altar boy. His interest in mythology began at the age of seven, when he saw the Indians in Buffalo Bills Wild Show in Madison square garden. Campbell developed intense fascination with native America lore that ultimately led to a vast learning. His boyhood was spent studying the Indian exhibits at the American museum of natural history and reading the entire book he could find on Native Americans, including advanced anthropological report (2-7).*

By his tenth birth day, the young Joseph had read everything about American Native society in the children section of the library and this caused the librarians to grant him access to the main library reserved for the adults to continue his studies. Thus Joseph began his lifelong passion for myth and to his mapping and studying of its seeming cohesive thread among disparate human cultures (New World Encyclopedia, 1-25). According to Robert, Campbell suffered a major setback in health and natural disaster at his thirteenth birth day. He spent one year within this period recovering from a major respiratory illness and in 1919, their home was destroyed by fire, which caused the death of Campbell's grandmother and the loss of all their possessions. However, he still went through a high school in Canterbury school, a Catholic residential high school in New Milford, Connecticut.

In 1921 Campbell graduated and attended Dartmouth College, a liberal art school, where he studied biology and mathematics. The academic aspect of this phase of his youth was lackluster and he knew that he wanted to study the humanities instead, so he transferred to Columbia University, where he shone bright. Phileousmeau gave an apt account of Campbell's school year thus:

*While at Dartmouth College, he studied biology and mathematics but decided that he preferred the humanities. He transferred to Columbia University, where he received his B.A in English Literature in 1925, M.A in Medieval literature in 1927. At Dartmouth he joined Delta tail Delta. Campbell was also an accomplished athlete, receiving awards in track and field events, for a time, he was among the fastest half mile runners in the world (5).*

Another great turning point occurred in Campbell's life in 1924, when he was travelling with his family to Europe on ship. During his return trip, he encountered Jiddu Krishnamurte. They discussed Asian philosophy, which spark off Campbell's lifelong interest in Hindi and Indian thoughts. To this Larsen Stephen and Robin (1991) accounts for the outcome of this relationship with Jiddu thus.

*"In 1924, on a journey with his family Campbell met and became friend with Jiddu Krishnamurte., the founder of the Theosophical Society, a friendship which initiated his lifelong fascination with Hindi philosophy and mythology (42).*

In furtherance of his education, Joseph received a Fellowship provided by the Columbia University to study in Europe in 1927. With the fellowship, he studied old French, Provençal and Sanskrit at the University of Paris in France and University of Munch in Germany (Philosuenau ed, 6). By this, he learnt to read and speak French and German and remained fervent in these languages all through his life. While in Europe, he was highly influenced by the period of the lost generation, a time of enormous intellectual and artistic innovation. Brendan's opinion on Campbell development will be apt here:

*He was highly influenced in Europe by the works of the "lost Generation" a term that referred to American expatriot poets, intellectual writers, who relocated to France after the First World War. The 1920 had been a time of enormous intellectual and artistic innovation. Campbell commented on this influence, particularly, that of Irish poet James Joyce, in the Hero's Journey. Joseph Campbell on His life and work (28).*

It was within this climate that Joseph was also introduced to the works of Thomas Main, who became equally influential upon his life and ideas. While in Europe, Joseph was introduced to modern art. He became particularly interested in the works of Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso. There a new world opened up to him as he discovered the works of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, key personalities in the field of Psychology of Religion and Psycho-analysis.

Campbell returned from Europe in 1929 and consequently informed his faculty at the University of Columbia that his time in Europe had broadened his interest as he declared his interest to further his study in the Sanskrit and modern art in addition to medieval literature (Phil Cousineau, 26). However, this interest got crossed with that of his advisor, who opposed this dreams of further studies in this rare area and this consequently made Campbell to resolve not to go back to school or take any other studies in a formal school setting. A week later, the great depression began in America and with loss of hope of obtaining a teaching

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position, Joseph spent the next five (5) years of his life (1929-1934) trying to figure out what to do with his destiny. Jonathan Young, one of Joseph Campbell's students commented on this period thus;

Returning to Columbia University Campbell wanted to expand the scope of his dissertation topic beyond the Grail myth to include parallels with psychology, literature and art. His advisor made it clear that such an interdisciplinary perspective would not be acceptable. Choosing not to complete his Doctorate, Campbell spent several years in Woodstock, New York, reading extensively. He visited California in 1931-32 befriending novelist John Steinbeck and biologist Ed Rickelts. During this time, he first read Oswald Spengler's decline of the West. Campbell's sweeping vision owes much in style to Spengler (1-7)

Campbell himself commented on this period of personal rigorous study in his auto biography thus:

*I would divide into four-four hour periods, of which I would be reading in three of the four hour period and free one of them .....I would get nine hours of sheer reading done a day and this went on for five years straight (52-53).*

In 1932, after learning Russian language in order to read war and peace in its original language, he decided to leave California. Attempted securing a job to sustain himself and as such applied to 70 Colleges and finally he was employed as a headmaster for one year in the Canterbury school in East Coast. This was a difficult year for him. However, he put luster into his dark period by selling his short story "strictly on platonic". In 1933 he lived in a cottage without running water in Woodstock, New York, reading and writing science fictions (New World Encyclopedia, 1-25) In 1934, Campbell was offered a position as a Professor at Sarah Lawrence College. This opportunity came through the efforts of his former advisor in Columbia University W.W Lawrence. In 1938 Campbell married his former student, Jean Erdman. Jean was an emerging dancer with Martha Graham's new modern dance troupe and eventually became a choreographer in her own company. Campbell remained as a Professor at Sarah Lawrence institute for 38 years, until he retired in 1972. Campbell became author and editor, he edited many volumes and wrote extensively in diverse area, short stores, science fictions and in 1944 he published in the more conventional, more strictly English literature analysis genre with Grimm's fairy tales and a skeleton key to Finnegans wake, which he co-authored with Morton Robinson. The skeleton key was the first major study of James Joyce's notoriously complex novel (Brenda, 62)

In 1949 he ventured into mythological exploration, *The Hero with Thousand Faces*". This spelt an instant success for him. The work won many honours and awards, one of which was the National

Institute for Arts and letters Award for contribution in creative literature. It was in this work that Campbell introduced the concept of monomyth. Other works relating to the general theme of Monomyth are; *The Mask of God, Primitive Mythology, Oriental Mythology and Creative Mythology*. His other works include, *The flight of the wild Gander, Exploration in the Mythological dimension, Myths to live by, The Mythic image, The Inner Realities of Outer Space, Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*.

### **Campbell's Monomyth Ideology [18-22].**

Whether we listen with aloof amusement to the dream like mumbo jumbo of some red-eyed witch doctor of the Congo or read with cultivated rapture this translation from the sonnets of the mystic Lao-Tzu, now and again crack the hard nutshell of an argument of Aquinas or catch suddenly the shining meaning of a bizarre Eskimo fairy tale, it will always be the one shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find together with a challenging persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told (Campbell, 1)

Campbell takes off on his exploration of mythic traditions by cutting the boundaries of his ideology through definition. Thus after stating the scope and the Universality of myths, he then defines myth as being a universal possession of all humankind, without geographical restriction. He therefore opines in *'The Hero with A Thousand Faces'* that throughout the inhabited world in all times and under every circumstance, myths of man have flourished and they have been the living inspiration of whatever else may have appeared out of the activities of human body and mind. In his own words:

*It would not be too much to say that myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into the human cultural manifestations' religious philosophies, arts and the social form of primitive and historic man, prime discoverers in science and technology, the very dreams that blister steep boils up from basic magic rung of myth (1)*

Campbell discovered a great store of knowledge either in the traditional or modern setting in myth and maintains that myth in all generations carries with it a characteristic efficiency that touch and inspire the deep creative centre of human psychology. The pot that carries this store of knowledge is the fairy tale. In his own description of myth, he states interlia:

*The wonder is that characteristics efficacy to touch and inspire deep creative centre dwells in the smallest nursery of fairy tale-as the flavour of the ocean is contained in a droplet or the whole mystery of life within the egg of a flea, for the symbols of mythology are not manufactured, they cannot be ordered,*



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*invented or permanently suppressed. They are the spontaneous production of the psyche and each bears within it the undamaged gem power of its source (1-2).*

Campbell, being partly influenced by the ideas of Carl Jung, synthesized this concept known as the “Monomyth” which he carefully described and extensively discussed in his epic work, “The Hero with a Thousand Faces”. Campbell in his study took the pains to survey a vast array of world myth from many of the ancient cultures and also indigenous people of this world, including well known myths such as Odysseus and the Grail legends. The outgrowth of this study was his identification of certain themes and central story lines which occurred in these myths time and again (Lawrence, 25). It is therefore this distilled recurring story that Campbell called Monomyth. According to him, it is as if a common template was being used to produce most worlds’ great myths, though there would be various variations in the main storyline and perhaps differences in their details or specifics.

Monomyth is thus a generalization of the mythological quest and involved main character; the mythic hero, whose purpose was to realize some transcendent or spiritual goal. Though there are many huge variety among all the different stories about mythological quest from all the cultures of the world, what the concept of monomyth is saying is that there is a universal story underlying all the different myths. What we have then is the distillation of the central and recurring underlying narrative that seems common to most hero quest myths of the world. So in a sense, these tales are really about same character in different guises, inhabiting various contexts and epochs, but all the while playing out the same drama and encountering recurring situations and circumstance. Hence “The Hero with a Thousand Faces”: The title of his other great work, the three volumes” “Masks of God” also alludes to the idea of myth as religions and mystical allegory, which is one of the main idea behind his writing. This religious aspect of Campbell’s interpretation of the meaning or the hero quest myth is further highlighted by his use of the Mono-myth concept to explain the lives and experiences of some of the founders of Religions such as, Jesus Christ, Siddhartha Gautama, Mohamed, when he was interviewed at length over the course of TV series. ‘The power of Myth’

In this regard, Campbell’s concept of monomyth refers therefore to the theory that sees all mythic narratives as a variation of a single story. This stems from his observation that a common pattern exists. it was Jones Joyce, one of the great influences on Campbell that coined the world monomyth. Joyce was a strong believer and advocate of the unity of human consciousness and its poetic expression through mythology (Monomyth, 137). Here Campbell used the concept to express the idea that the whole human race

can be seen as reciting a single story, whose great spiritual importance relates to our search for the basic and eternal force that is the source of all things and into which everything will return. According to him, as the story evolves through time, it gets broken down into local form, which can take many guises (Masks) depending on the social structures that exists of the culture that interprets it, as well as its survival necessities. In contract to its meaning, which is ultimately unknowable, as it exists before words, the story’s form has a structure which can be classified using various stages of hero’s adventure through its stages like;

1. The call to adventure
2. Receiving the supernatural aid
3. Meeting with the Goddess
4. Atonement with the fathers
5. The return.

According to Campbell these stages, as well as the symbols one encounters throughout the story, provides the necessary metaphor to express the spiritual truth the story is trying to convey (Campbell L41) Metaphor for Campbell in contrast to comparison, which makes use of the word like, pretend to a literal interpretation of what they are referring to, as in the sentence, ‘Jesus is the son of God, rather than “the relationship of man to God is like that of a son to a father” (Campbell, 35). In this same direction, Campbell opines that the Genesis myth from the Bible ought not to be taken as literal description of historical events happening in our current understating of time and space, but as a metaphor for the rise of man’s cognitive consciousness as it evolved from prior animalistic state. Campbell explains God is terms of metaphor also. In his own words;

God is a metaphor for the mystery that absolutely transcends all human categories of thought, even the categories of being and non-being. Those are categories of thoughts; I mean it is as simple as that. So it depends on how much you want to think about it. Whether it is doing you any good or whether it is pulling you in touch with the mystery that is the ground of your own being, if it isn’t well, it is a lie. So half the people in the world are religious people, who think that their metaphors are facts, those are what we call theists. The other half is people who know that the metaphor is not facts. So, they are lies, those are the atheists (Campbell, 14).

However, Campbell never considered myth is a static form, therefore many of his work describes in details how mythologies evolved through time reflecting realities in which every society had to adjust. Hence various stages of cultural development have different yet identifiable mythological systems.

Here we first take a brief consideration of his scheme which he discussed under four major

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developmental epochs. The first stage is known in Campbell's ontology as "The way of the animal Powers: Hunting and gathering societies". Here, Campbell described the primitive society in animalistic category as he maintains that at the first stage of human evolution, religion was the basic social structure and took animalistic form. Here nature was seen as being infused with a spirit or divine presence. At the centre stage of this development was the main hunting animal culture, whether the buffalo for the native America or the eland for the South African tribes and a large part of religion focused on dealing with psychological tension that came from the reality of the necessity to kill versus the divinity of the animal. This was done by presenting the animal as coming from an eternal archetypal source and coming to this world as willing victims, with the understanding that their life would be returned to the soil or to the mother earth through ritual of restoration.

The act of slaughter then becomes a ritual where both parties, animal and mankind, are equal participant. In mythos and power of myth, Campbell recounts the story he calls the "Buffalos wife" as told by the Black foot tribe of North America. The story tells of a time when the Buffalos stopped coming to the hunting plains, leaving the tribe to starve. The chief's daughter promises to marry the Buffalo chief in return for their reappearance but eventually spared and taught the Buffalo dance by the animal themselves, through which the spirit of their dead will return to their eternal source. Indeed Campbell taught that throughout history mankind has held a belief that all life came from and return to another dimension which transcends temporality but which can be reached through ritual.

The second period of development known in Campbell typology as 'The way of the seeded Earth: Early Agrarian Societies', Campbell defines the paradigm of this development as he writes, 'Beginning in the fertile grassland of Europe in the Bronze Age and moving to that Levant and the ferrite crescent of Mesopotamia, the practice of agriculture spread along with a new way of understanding mankind's relationship to the world' (Campbell, 14). At this period the earth was regarded as the mother, and the myth focused around her life-giving powers. The planet and the cultivation cycle were mirrored in religious ritual, which often include human sacrifice, symbolic or literal. The main figures of this system were a female great Goddess, mother Earth and her ever-dying and ever-resurrected son (consort), a male God. At this time the focus was to participate in the repetitive rhythm the world moved and expressed as the four seasons, the birth and death of crops and the phases of the moon. At the centre of this notion was mother Goddess from whom all life spring and to whom all life returns. This often gave her a dual identify as both mother and destroyer.

In the third developmental stage, "The way of the celestial lights; the first high civilization". As the first agricultural societies evolved into the higher civilization of Mesopotamia and Babylon, the observation of the stars inspired them with the idea that life on earth must also follow a similar mathematically predetermined pattern in which individual beings are but mere participants in an eternal cosmic play. The king was symbolized by the sun with the golden crown as its main metaphor, while his court was the orbiting planets. The mother Goddess remained, but her power were now fixed within the framework of a clock world universe. However, the two barbarian invasion changed this idea. Thus as the Indo-European (Aryan) people descended from the north and the Semites swept up of from the Arabian desert, they carried with them a male dominated mythology with a warrior god, whose symbol was the thunder, and as they conquered, mainly due to their superior technology from iron smiting, their mythology blended and subjugated the previous system of the Earth Goddess (Campbell, 4).

Thus many mythologies of the world, such as those of Greece, India and Persia are the result of that fusion with gods retaining some of their original traits and characters but now belonging to a single system. Figure such as Zeus and Indra are thunder gods, who interact with Demeter and Dionysus, whose ritual sacrifice and rebirth, bearing testament to his pre-European roots, were still intact in classical Greece. However, for the most part, the focus heavily shifted towards the masculinity, with Zeus ascending the throne of the gods and Dionysus demoted to a mere demi-god.

This demotion was very profound in the case of the Biblical imaginary, where the female elements were marginalized to an extreme. Campbell opines that Eve and the snake that tempted her were once fertility Gods worship in their own rights with the tree of knowledge being the tree of life (Campbell 1964), Campbell also found significance in the biblical story of Cain and Abel, with Cain being a farmer whose agrarian offering was not accepted by God, while herder Abel's animal sacrifice was. In his lecture series on mythos, Campbell speaks of the mysteries of Eleusis in ancient Greece, where Demeter's journey in the underworld was enacted for young men and women of the time. There he observed that wheat was presented as the ultimate mystery with wine being a symbol of Dionysus, much like in the Christian mysteries, where bread and wine are considered to incarnate the body and blood of Jesus. According to him, both religions carried the same "seeded earth" Cosmology in different forms, while retaining an image of ever dying, ever-resurrected God.

The fourth period is known in Campbell scheme as "The way of man: Medieval mythology, Romantic love and the birth of modern spirit. In this development, Campbell observed that the poetic form

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of courtly love, carried through medieval Europe by the travelling troubadours, contained a complete mythology of its own right (Joseph Campbell 1988 Power). In the power of myth and also in occidental mythology, volumes of the masks of God, Campbell describes the emergence of a new kind of erotic experience as a “person to person” affair, in contrast to the purely physical definition given to Eros in the ancient world and the communal Agape founded in Christian religion. An archetypal story of this kind is the legend of Tavistan and Isolde, which apart from its mystical function, shows the transition from an arranged-marriage society as practiced in the middle ages and sanctified by the church, into the form a marriage by “falling in love” with another person that we recognize today. So what essentially started from a mythological theme has since become a social reality, mainly due to a change in perception brought about by a new mythology and represents a central manifestation of Campbell’s overriding interpretive message, “Follow your bliss”.

Campbell also believes that in the modern world the function served by formal, traditional mythological system has been taken on by individual creators, such as artists and philosophers. Accordingly, he saw in the works of some of his friends. Thomas Mann, Pablo Picasso and James Joyce, mythological themes that could serve the same life-giving purpose that mythology once played. Accordingly, Campbell believed that the religions of the world to be the various culturally influenced “masks” of the same fundamental transcendent truth. All religions can bring one to an elevated awareness above and beyond a dualistic conception of reality or idea of pairs of opposites such as being and non- being or right and wrong. Indeed, he quoted from the Rig-Veda in the preface to “The Hero with A thousand Faces”, Truth is one, the sages speak of it by many names. Summarily the reappearance of certain themes, time and again, in different mythologies leads to the realization that these theme portray universal and eternal truth about mankind. This mythology functions as provision of a cultural framework for a society or people to educate their young and provide them with a means of coping with their passage though the different stages of life from birth to death. Here mythology inevitably bound to the society and time in which it occurs and cannot be divorced from this culture and environment.

The record of history of the development of a culture and society in its mythology, for example, the Bible describes the evolution of the “Judeo-Christian” conception of God from the time when the Jews were in Babylon and the God they worshipped corresponded to the local tribal god, to when the concept became that of a world savior as result of the Hebrews becoming major force in the East Mediterranean region. The geographical context of a specific mythology also plays a role in its evolution. The physical scope of the

Biblical mythology was limited to the general area of the middle East but in other parts of the world, Chinese and Aztec religions and cultures emerged as separate and distinct belief system, when different cultures expand their sphere of influence they eventually come into contact with each other and the outcome of the collision, be it conquest, subjugation or amalgamation, will be evident in the resultant mythology. Using his childhood experiences, Campbell concludes that the motif of creation, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, which the nuns were teaching him at his school also occurred in American Indian myths, he also found the same universal themes in Hinduism and in the medieval Arthurian Legends.

### **An inquest into common Humanity through Myths and Mythologies Joseph Campbell’s Paradigm [18-22].**

Through his painstaking study of myths and ancient religious cultures, Campbell came to conclusion that myths and mythologies were primitive science – proto science that clearly defines the mono-origin and unity of the entire human race. This germane ideology is aptly stated in the New World Encyclopedia thus:

*In mythology of the world, Campbell tried to summarize the main spiritual thread of the world, in support of his idea on the unity of the race of man. Tied In what was the idea that most of the belief system of the world had a common geographic ancestry starting off on the fertile grassland of Europe or Bronze age and moving to the Levant and the fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia and back to Europe (and far east) where it mixed with newly emerging Indo-European (Aryan) Culture (1-2).*

Campbell believes that all spirituality is in search for the unknown force which he spoke of as both immanent and transcendent or that which is both within and without as opposed to being without only-- from which everything came, in which everything currently exists and into which everything will return. It is this that he called metaphor, the metaphor being the various deities and objects of spirituality in the world.

What then is the implication of Campbell’s mythological paradigm for today’s world in search of meaning and new culture of Peace? What is the Campbell mythological relevance in an age of science and technology? Of what use is Campbell In a time when myths and mythologies have been used to make caste or create division among human race? These and more related bourgeoning questions questing for answers in the minds of scholars of the contemporary period. In an attempt to provided reasonable answers to these critical question Sir William Jones posits what could be considered a misinterpretation of myth, as he made use of myth within the age of renaissance to posit the existence of a strong technological superior race that

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conquered the prehistoric world from India to Iceland, thus leaving its indelible marks on the language, myths, and gene pool of this vast territory. The hypothetical race, which they called the Aryans, provided the 19<sup>th</sup> century German nationalist with an ancient, heroic golden age, which based their theories of national greatness. In consequence of the misinterpretation of myths, the world lost its ideal of unity and entered a state of individualism both of persons and nations or/and races. Therefore universal consciousness of the “other” was destroyed in the favour of self. The overall effect of the situation is described by Michelle Brenner, as she writes:

*What comes to light now with the modern day physics is the comprehension of energy. Of how movement, vibration and energy all relate to how we feel and the power it takes to move us. With how capacity of energy or consciousness, it is hard to embrace others, to care for others, to relate in peaceful way to others (106-109).*

In describing the present state of human relationship, Michelle reiterates that our journey to assertiveness started with the American and French Revolution and has ended in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has given us cause for disillusionment in the hope peace (37-38). To this Okoro adds, wars and conflict though not new in human history but the ferocity with which it occurs in our world at a time our rhetoric about global village has intensified beats our imagination. The cliché that is universal is that violence has escalated and intensified around the world at horrifying level (38-52)

Now with the current state of affair in the global family, how do we achieve freedom from fear of humiliation, intimidation, and classification of human family, conflicts and wars that have blotted our social history? In an attempt to provide an answer, scholars and practitioners of peace and conflict studies have proffered such solutions as forming local groups and civil societies. Against the background Okoro and Osunwoke, note thus:

*In the present age known as the age of globalization, the popular cliché is community living “one world” global village, family hood of world community, global citizen. The importance of this cliché is their emphasis on common community which will facilitate the peaceful existence of all mankind in a world without boundary (12-23).*

Globalization therefore becomes a modern myth or rather metaphor which was introduced with the aim of bringing the whole world, races, sex, nations, castes, white or colored into one big global family. In the opinion of Orji [14, it is the process of universalization of ideals, cultures and mankind into one big global family and culture as the growing

interactions of economies and societies around the world as a result of the flowing of goods and services, capital, people and ideas (12). Notably, it is the general observation of all humanity that the modern myth – globalization based on the science of economics and market has failed to heal the millennial wounds of a broken society and humanity. Therefore, we are in search of a new myth and of course have not found any, therefore we betook ourselves to reconsider the monomyth paradigm of Joseph Campbell as a solution to our case of the disintegrated self. It is Michelle who underscores the goal of monomyth paradigm as she interpolated:

*...This leads us expand the paradigm of who is me. This brings us to create a holistic paradigm, a model of me that includes the environment; a holistic approach includes relating to others, it includes a moral significance. Moral because there is an energetic consciousness sense that increases our vibrations towards embracing others and on the other hand can reduce our capacity to hold close to others, with a holistic model of me we recognize the human ethical needs (107).*

Michelle enunciates her ideology to include but not limited to the relatedness of me, how I am with others is not limited to the others that are in close physical proximity. Relating to others includes our memories, our ancestors and future generation. This is not easily understood in the modern world where the here and now is privileged .Michelle, (109). Substantiating Michelle’s ideology, Kunnumparam, gave more modern interpretations of Campbell’s monomyth ideal as relating to the unity of all. According to him, this not simply the one large story or the universal story of humanity but in his own words:

*Everything in the universe, everything from the simplest known particles of matter to the most complex or conceivable life form is simultaneously a whole in its own right and a mere fact of something large, wider, more encompassing and more whole. To understand the part we need to understand the whole (72).*

Against this backdrop Okoro [15] clearly opines that all lives within the planetary system are part and parcel of the whole and are all interlocked in the unitary web of existence (87-112). In a further discussion Okoro extrapolates that the basic interpretation of Campbell’s monomyth ideology is that:

*We are sons and daughter of one father, our original nature though has been beclouded by our human passions and depravity, our differences in colors are ordered by geographical and environmental overture and variations inherent in the material universe. Nevertheless, amid all our differences, we still*

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*share the unchangeable essence - life of our father (creator) this informs our notion of common origin and common humanity (273).*

Here Okoro underscores the ideal of monomyth that gave birth to Campbell's monomyth paradigm. The monomyth ideology maintains the presence of one reality as the absolute manifestation of all life without distinction of race or colour. This concept assumes the interconnectedness and absolute inseparability of origin and common source of existence. Accordingly, it is illusionary to think of the individual/racial self existence. Therefore it could be noted that Joseph Campbell presented a way to understand the underlying unity of human culture and he presented substantial evidence to support a belief in the unity of mankind (New world Encyclopedia 203-25). Against this backdrop, Lincoln in assessing mythological relevance in the modern age writes:

The linguistic and mystical speculation of Johann George Hermann (1930-1788) and the book of Johann Gottfried Von Herdger (1744-1803) all bear witness to the fact that, by the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, myth was widely assumed to be a crucial resource for collective ideality and myths convey histories, cultural and practical knowledge, while also guarding people distinctive values... against forgetfulness and change (53).

In substantiating the relevance of myths in the understanding of the common origin of humanity, Helder in his organicist Volk mythology assumed the literal existence of a primordial, divinely sanctioned and linguistically unified humanity. According to him, it is from this unity which he observed that he claimed that human being devolved into various linguistically, geographically and culturally separate folk-people that we see today. So one important interpretation of the mythic cycle of Joseph Campbell which cast higher and deeper meaning behind human life cycle, is the idea that there exist an image of God, a sort of cosmic template or blue print from which all patterns and processes of the universe are themselves derived and which therefore reflects this in their make up and dynamics. In the words of Hawaii, it is really this image of God, manifested as an evolving process, which is behind both mythic cycle and human life (1-26).

Rabindranath Tagore in his opus magna, "Towards the Universal Man" describes this image of God that underlies every creature as "cosmic consciousness". Here, he emphasized the bond of common humanity that transcends the boundaries of religion, race and politics (Ahmad 2001 :1-4, Okoro, 2010,66-82) [16-17]. Hence in Campbell monomyth paradigm, we find the needed holistic approach to understanding human relatedness that Michelle was questing for. In her own words:

A holistic approach includes valuing the present, the past and the future beyond and now. The whole that includes all has to be bigger than the sum of all its parts. The holistic perceptive must have a hidden realm to it. It has to, because we are as humans, not all aware, not all obvious and not all explicit. We live in a world which has a nature which is not all revealed, not all known. There is the heaven or the rose bush that takes us to question, to wonder, to be in awe and this place then can be called beauty, rapture or transcendence, is something that is bigger than our knowing. So to be holistic as well as the known, as well as the obvious or observable, there has to be a sense of appreciating a dimension of otherness. The otherness that is outside of our knowing (108).

It is this unknown but knowable "otherness" that myths in general and Campbell mythic category in particular have come to make explicit or manifest. This idea of cosmic consciousness or otherness is represented in African ideology in the word "Inochi", which is present in all lives. Thus Okoro subsumes "Africans ... accept that life force of the creator is present in all creations (87-112). To this Davidson adds. 'The overall relationship of God (Inochi), man and nature constitute an integrated whole. It is not that God breath life separately into each individual, who then goes off by him or her, rather the creative divine breath continues to flow as it were' (28).

The idea, that somehow in our lives, we reflect something of divine is already familiar with lot of people. It is an often global paraphrase from the Bible that we are all made in the image of God. It is this idea that somehow we in our daily lives and in ordinary existence reflect the nature of God. This notion is expressed in many other ways, for instance, in the mystical text, "*The corpus Hermiteum*", we find the often quoted passage, "As above so below" in Taoism, there is the true symbol which reflects the essential unity between man, Heaven and Earth. In the Western occult and Kabbalistic traditions this concept is called, "Correspondence" which states that for every essential element of the persons, there is a correspondence aspect of the divine. In the Upanishads, a revered Hindu text, it is stated "As the human body, so is the cosmic body, Therefore, this idea of human being reflecting the divine is quite universal. So what we have to do and may hope to do is to extend the idea somewhat and to picture the transient image of God, as manifested in human being, not as some static form but rather as dynamic process evolving in time which makes up human life cycle and which is reflected in all mythic traditions, especially in Campbell's monomyth tradition.

If all humankind inhere from a common source/origin as shown through their creator. then what

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shall be our attitude towards each other? To this Masahiro having accepted this sublime unity opines:

*We have realized that all life's are connected and formed into one, while each individual life is voluntary and independent, that all lives are equal in value, that every life exists in its adequate position giving to every other, that human attitude towards nature is the same as human attitude towards themselves and that our life get sick and die when greenery gets sick and die (99)*

The basic recurrent ideology of life in all religio-cultural tradition is that we need to love all lives. This love must certainly translates practically to meeting the human needs in the society. These needs are aptly defined as follow by Michelle (2011).

*Human needs include physical needs such as to eat, to rest, to speak and have a role in life. Psychological needs includes the need to belong, to love, to feel safe and secure, as well as the needs that relate to being in a group. Sociological needs such as dignity, that comes when we are recognized or acknowledged, include the need for bonding and for being with others in meaningful ways that make our lives feel purposeful as well as need to be needed (67).*

When these needs are solved by all as a people, then the peace dream that has eluded the contemporary society will be a history.

## CONCLUSION

This work has taken a critical survey of the relevance of myth and mythology as found in most ancient religio-cultural societies, the pre-historic period of human existence. It discovered that myths were an authentic epistemology that defines man and his place in the ordered universe. With aim of teaching them values, responsibilities, privileges and morality. It embodies the basic notion of common origin of humanity. Myth also was seen as proto-sciences or mystic sciences as opposed to physical sciences of the modern era that defines man as an atomic individual. This work also noted that it was at the wake of 20<sup>th</sup> century that Joseph Campbell took a painstaking study of prominent myths across culture and made a discovery that great myths are found in almost all the cultures and in all the cultures, myths speak the same language of unity of all creations with a single creator as its source of origin. He came up with his idea of monomyth, underscoring the fact that all the myths when critically examined show great similarity. Thus he interpolated the unity of humankind and culture of the world. Here we conclude that if the language of common origin of humanity begins to reverberate in our modern society, and all become consciousness of our common origin, then there shall be a free flow of human relationship borne out of respect, candor and reciprocity. Then crisis and war will cease and mankind

will begin to enjoy a peaceful human society of her dream.

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