

---

*The Power of Myth*  
(Anchor Edition, 1991)  
by Joseph Campbell  
with Bill Moyers  
a.b.e-book v3.0 / Notes at EOF

FIRST ANCHOR BOOKS EDITION, JULY 1991  
Copyright © 1988 by Apostrophe S Productions, Inc., and  
Alfred van der Maack Editions

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American  
Copyright Conventions. Published in the United States by  
Anchor Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New  
York, and simultaneously in Canada by Random House  
of Canada Limited, Toronto. The fully illustrated edition  
of *The Power of Myth* was originally published in both  
hardcover and paperback by Doubleday in 1988. The  
Anchor Books edition is published by arrangement with  
Doubleday.

ANCHOR BOOKS and colophon are registered  
trademarks of Random House, Inc.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Barnes & Noble Books,  
Totowa, New Jersey, for permission to quote from "The  
Second Coming" by William Butler Yeats.

Campbell, Joseph, 1904-  
*The power of myth* / Joseph Campbell, with Bill Moyers;  
Betty Sue Flowers, editor. -- 1st Anchor Books ed.

p. cm.  
1. Myth. 2. Campbell, Joseph, 1904- -- Interviews.  
3. Religion historians -- United States -- Interviews.  
J. Moyers, Bill D. J.J. Flowers, Betty S. JJJ. Title.  
[BL304.C36 1990] 90-23860  
291.1'3 -- dc20 CIP

ISBN 0-385-41886-8

[www.anchorbooks.com](http://www.anchorbooks.com)

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18

*To Judith, who has long heard the music*

**Contents**

---

*Editor's Note*

*Introduction by Bill Moyers*

*I Myth and the Modern World*

*II The Journey Inward*

*III The First Storytellers*

*IV Sacrifice and Bliss*

*V The Hero's Adventure*

*VI The Gift of the Goddess*

*VII Tales of Love and Marriage*

*VIII Masks of Eternity*

*Editor's Note*

*This conversation between Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell took place in 1985 and 1986 at George Lucas' Skywalker Ranch and later at the Museum of Natural History in New York. Many of us who read the original transcripts were struck by the rich abundance of material captured during the twenty-four hours of filming -- much of which had to be cut in making the six-hour PBS series. The idea for a book arose from the desire to make this material available not only to viewers of the series but also to those who have long appreciated Campbell through reading his books.*

*In editing this book, I attempted to be faithful to the flow of the original conversation while at the same time taking advantage of the opportunity to weave in additional material on the topic from wherever it appeared in the transcripts. When I could, I followed the format of the TV series. But the book has its own shape and spirit and is designed to be a companion to the series, not a replica of it. The book exists, in part, because this is a conversation of ideas worth pondering as well as watching.*

*On a more profound level, of course, the book exists because Bill Moyers was willing to address the fundamental and difficult subject of myth -- and because Joseph Campbell was willing to answer Moyers' penetrating questions with self-revealing honesty, based on a lifetime of living with myth. I am grateful to both of them for the opportunity to witness this encounter, and to Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, the Doubleday editor, whose interest in the ideas of Joseph Campbell was the prime mover in the publication of this book. I am grateful, also, to Karen Bordelon, Alice Fisher, Lynn Cohea, Sonya Haddad, Joan Konner, and John Flowers for their support, and especially to Maggie Keeshen for her many retypings of the manuscript and for her keen editorial eye. For help with the manuscript, I am grateful to Judy Doctoroff, Andie Tucker, Becky Berman, and Judy Sandman. The major task of illustration research was done by Vera Aronow, Lynn Novick, Elizabeth Fischer, and Sabra Moore, with help from Annmarie Ronnberg. Both Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell read the manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions -- but I am grateful that they resisted the*

---

*temptation to rewrite their words into book talk. Instead, they let the conversation itself live on the page.*

-- BETTY SUE FLOWERS  
*University of Texas at Austin*

## *Introduction*

*For weeks after Joseph Campbell died, I was reminded of him just about everywhere I turned.*

*Coming up from the subway at Times Square and feeling the energy of the pressing crowd, I smiled to myself upon remembering the image that once had appeared to Campbell there: "The latest incarnation of Oedipus, the continued romance of Beauty and the Beast, stands this afternoon on the corner of Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue, waiting for the traffic light to change."*

*At a preview of John Huston's last film, *The Dead*, based on a story by James Joyce, I thought again of Campbell. One of his first important works was a key to *Finnegans Wake*. What Joyce called "the grave and constant" in human sufferings Campbell knew to be a principal theme of classic mythology. "The secret cause of all suffering," he said, "is mortality itself, which is the prime condition of life. It cannot be denied if life is to be affirmed."*

*Once, as we were discussing the subject of suffering, he mentioned in tandem Joyce and Igjugarjuk. "Who is Igjugarjuk?" I said, barely able to imitate the pronunciation. "Oh," replied Campbell, "he was the shaman of a Caribou Eskimo tribe in northern Canada, the one who told European visitors that the only true wisdom 'lives far from mankind, out in the great loneliness, and can be reached only through suffering. Privation and suffering alone open the mind to all that is hidden to others.'*"

*"Of course," I said, "Igjugarjuk."*

*Joe let pass my cultural ignorance. We had stopped walking. His eyes were alight as he said, "Can you imagine a long evening around the fire with Joyce and Igjugarjuk? Boy, I'd like to sit in on that."*

*Campbell died just before the twenty-fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination, a tragedy he had discussed in mythological terms during our first meeting years earlier. Now, as that melancholy remembrance came around again, I sat talking with my grown children about Campbell's reflections. The solemn state funeral he had described as "an illustration of the high service of ritual to a society," evoking mythological themes rooted in human need. "This was a ritualized occasion of the greatest social necessity," Campbell had written. The public murder of a president, "representing our whole society, the living social organism of which ourselves were the members, taken away at a moment of exuberant life, required a compensatory rite to reestablish the sense of solidarity. Here was an enormous nation, made those four days into a unanimous community, all of us*

---

*participating in the same way, simultaneously, in a single symbolic event.*" He said it was "the first and only thing of its kind in peacetime that has ever given me the sense of being a member of this whole national community, engaged as a unit in the observance of a deeply significant rite."

That description I recalled also when one of my colleagues had been asked by a friend about our collaboration with Campbell: "Why do you need the mythology?" She held the familiar, modern opinion that "all these Greek gods and stuff" are irrelevant to the human condition today. What she did not know -- what most do not know -- is that the remnants of all that "stuff" line the walls of our interior system of belief, like shards of broken pottery in an archaeological site. But as we are organic beings, there is energy in all that "stuff." Rituals evoke it. Consider the position of judges in our society, which Campbell saw in mythological, not sociological, terms. If this position were just a role, the judge could wear a gray suit to court instead of the magisterial black robe. For the law to hold authority beyond mere coercion, the power of the judge must be ritualized, mythologized. So must much of life today, Campbell said, from religion and war to love and death.

Walking to work one morning after Campbell's death, I stopped before a neighborhood video store that was showing scenes from George Lucas' Star Wars on a monitor in the window. I stood there thinking of the time Campbell and I had watched the movie together at Lucas' Skywalker Ranch in California. Lucas and Campbell had become good friends after the filmmaker, acknowledging a debt to Campbell's work, invited the scholar to view the Star Wars trilogy. Campbell reveled in the ancient themes and motifs of mythology unfolding on the wide screen in powerful contemporary images. On this particular visit, having again exulted over the perils and heroics of Luke Skywalker, Joe grew animated as he talked about how Lucas "has put the newest and most powerful spin" to the classic story of the hero.

"And what is that?" I asked.

"It's what Goethe said in Faust but which Lucas has dressed in modern idiom -- the message that technology is not going to save us. Our computers, our tools, our machines are not enough. We have to rely on our intuition, our true being."

"Isn't that an affront to reason?" I said. "And aren't we already beating a hasty retreat from reason, as it is?"

"That's not what the hero's journey is about. It's not to deny reason. To the contrary, by overcoming the dark passions, the hero symbolizes our ability to control the irrational savage within us." Campbell had lamented on other occasions our failure "to admit within ourselves the carnivorous, lecherous fever" that is endemic to human nature. Now he was describing the hero's journey not as a courageous act but as a life lived in self-discovery, "and Luke Skywalker was never more rational than when he found within himself the resources of character to meet his destiny."

Ironically, to Campbell the end of the hero's journey is not the aggrandizement of the hero. "It is," he said in one of his lectures, "not to identify oneself with any of the figures or powers experienced. The Indian yogi, striving for release, identifies himself with the Light and never returns. But no one with a will to the service of others would permit himself such an escape. The ultimate aim of the quest must be neither release nor ecstasy for oneself, but the wisdom and the power to serve others." One of the many distinctions between the celebrity and

---

*the hero, he said, is that one lives only for self while the other acts to redeem society.*

*Joseph Campbell affirmed life as adventure. "To hell with it," he said, after his university adviser tried to hold him to a narrow academic curriculum. He gave up on the pursuit of a doctorate and went instead into the woods to read. He continued all his life to read books about the world: anthropology, biology, philosophy, art, history, religion. And he continued to remind others that one sure path into the world runs along the printed page. A few days after his death, I received a letter from one of his former students who now helps to edit a major magazine. Hearing of the series on which I had been working with Campbell, she wrote to share how this man's "cyclone of energy blew across all the intellectual possibilities" of the students who sat "breathless in his classroom" at Sarah Lawrence College. "While all of us listened spellbound," she wrote, "we did stagger under the weight of his weekly reading assignments. Finally, one of our number stood up and confronted him (Sarah Lawrence style), saying: 'I am taking three other courses, you know. All of them assigned reading, you know. How do you expect me to complete all this in a week?' Campbell just laughed and said, 'I'm astonished you tried. You have the rest of your life to do the reading.'*"

*She concluded, "And I still haven't finished -- the never ending example of his life and work."*

*One could get a sense of that impact at the memorial service held for him at the Museum of Natural History in New York. Brought there as a boy, he had been transfixed by the totem poles and masks. Who made them? he wondered. What did they mean? He began to read everything he could about Indians, their myths and legends. By ten he was into the pursuit that made him one of the world's leading scholars of mythology and one of the most exciting teachers of our time; it was said that "he could make the bones of folklore and anthropology live." Now, at the memorial service in the museum where three quarters of a century earlier his imagination had first been excited, people gathered to pay honor to his memory. There was a performance by Mickey Hart, the drummer for the Grateful Dead, the rock group with whom Campbell shared a fascination with percussion. Robert Bly played a dulcimer and read poetry dedicated to Campbell. Former students spoke, as did friends whom he had made after he retired and moved with his wife, the dancer Jean Erdman, to Hawaii. The great publishing houses of New York were represented. So were writers and scholars, young and old, who had found their pathbreaker in Joseph Campbell.*

*And journalists. I had been drawn to him eight years earlier when, self-appointed, I was attempting to bring to television the lively minds of our time. We had taped two programs at the museum, and so compellingly had his presence permeated the screen that more than fourteen thousand people wrote asking for transcripts of the conversations. I vowed then that I would come after him again, this time for a more systematic and thorough exploration of his ideas. He wrote or edited some twenty books, but it was as a teacher that I had experienced him, one rich in the lore of the world and the imagery of language, and I wanted others to experience him as teacher, too. So the desire to share the treasure of the man inspired my PBS series and this book.*

*A journalist, it is said, enjoys a license to be educated in public; we are the lucky ones, allowed to spend our days in a continuing course of adult education. No one has taught me more of late than Campbell, and when I told him he would have to bear the responsibility for whatever comes of having me as a pupil, he laughed and quoted an old Roman: "The fates*

---

*lead him who will; him who won't they drag."*

He taught, as great teachers teach, by example. It was not his manner to try to talk anyone into anything (except once, when he persuaded Jean to marry him). Preachers err, he told me, by trying "to talk people into belief; better they reveal the radiance of their own discovery." How he did reveal a joy for learning and living! Matthew Arnold believed the highest criticism is "to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas." This is what Campbell did. It was impossible to listen to him -- truly to hear him -- without realizing in one's own consciousness a stirring of fresh life, the rising of one's own imagination.

He agreed that the "guiding idea" of his work was to find "the commonality of themes in world myths, pointing to a constant requirement in the human psyche for a centering in terms of deep principles."

"You're talking about a search for the meaning of life?" I asked.

"No, no, no," he said. "For the experience of being alive."

I have said that mythology is an interior road map of experience, drawn by people who have traveled it. He would, I suspect, not settle for the journalist's prosaic definition. To him mythology was "the song of the universe," "the music of the spheres" -- music we dance to even when we cannot name the tune. We are hearing its refrains "whether we listen with aloof amusement to the mumbo jumbo of some witch doctor of the Congo, or read with cultivated rapture translations from sonnets of Lao-tsu, or now and again crack the hard nutshell of an argument of Aquinas, or catch suddenly the shining meaning of a bizarre Eskimoan fairy tale."

He imagined that this grand and cacophonous chorus began when our primal ancestors told stories to themselves about the animals that they killed for food and about the supernatural world to which the animals seemed to go when they died. "Out there somewhere," beyond the visible plain of existence, was the "animal master," who held over human beings the power of life and death: if he failed to send the beasts back to be sacrificed again, the hunters and their kin would starve. Thus early societies learned that "the essence of life is that it lives by killing and eating; that's the great mystery that the myths have to deal with." The hunt became a ritual of sacrifice, and the hunters in turn performed acts of atonement to the departed spirits of the animals, hoping to coax them into returning to be sacrificed again. The beasts were seen as envoys from that other world, and Campbell surmised "a magical, wonderful accord" growing between the hunter and the hunted, as if they were locked in a "mystical, timeless" cycle of death, burial, and resurrection. Their art -- the paintings on cave walls -- and oral literature gave form to the impulse we now call religion.

As these primal folk turned from hunting to planting, the stories they told to interpret the mysteries of life changed, too. Now the seed became the magic symbol of the endless cycle. The plant died, and was buried, and its seed was born again. Campbell was fascinated by how this symbol was seized upon by the world's great religions as the revelation of eternal truth -- that from death comes life, or as he put it: "From sacrifice, bliss."

"Jesus had the eye," he said. "What a magnificent reality he saw in the mustard seed." He would quote the words of Jesus from the gospel of John -- "Truly, truly, I say unto you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies,

---

*it bears much fruit*" -- and in the next breath, the Koran: "Do you think that you shall enter the Garden of Bliss without such trials as came to those who passed away before you?" He roamed this vast literature of the spirit, even translating the Hindu scriptures from Sanskrit, and continued to collect more recent stories which he added to the wisdom of the ancients. One story he especially liked told of the troubled woman who came to the Indian saint and sage Ramakrishna, saying, "O Master, I do not find that I love God." And he asked, "Is there nothing, then, that you love?" To this she answered, "My little nephew." And he said to her, "There is your love and service to God, in your love and service to that child."

"And there," said Campbell, "is the high message of religion: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these...'"

A spiritual man, he found in the literature of faith those principles common to the human spirit. But they had to be liberated from tribal lien, or the religions of the world would remain -- as in the Middle East and Northern Ireland today -- the source of disdain and aggression. The images of God are many, he said, calling them "the masks of eternity" that both cover and reveal "the Face of Glory." He wanted to know what it means that God assumes such different masks in different cultures, yet how it is that comparable stories can be found in these divergent traditions -- stories of creation, of virgin births, incarnations, death and resurrection, second comings, and judgment days. He liked the insight of the Hindu scripture: "Truth is one; the sages call it by many names." All our names and images for God are masks, he said, signifying the ultimate reality that by definition transcends language and art. A myth is a mask of God, too -- a metaphor for what lies behind the visible world. However the mystic traditions differ, he said, they are in accord in calling us to a deeper awareness of the very act of living itself. The unpardonable sin, in Campbell's book, was the sin of inadvertence, of not being alert, not quite awake.

I never met anyone who could better tell a story. Listening to him talk of primal societies, I was transported to the wide plains under the great dome of the open sky, or to the forest dense, beneath a canopy of trees, and I began to understand how the voices of the gods spoke from the wind and thunder, and the spirit of God flowed in every mountain stream, and the whole earth bloomed as a sacred place -- the realm of mythic imagination. And I asked: Now that we moderns have stripped the earth of its mystery -- have made, in Saul Bellow's description, "a housecleaning of belief" -- how are our imaginations to be nourished? By Hollywood and made-for-TV movies?

Campbell was no pessimist. He believed there is a "point of wisdom beyond the conflicts of illusion and truth by which lives can be put back together again." Finding it is the "prime question of the time." In his final years he was striving for a new synthesis of science and spirit. "The shift from a geocentric to a heliocentric world view," he wrote after the astronauts touched the moon, "seemed to have removed man from the center -- and the center seemed so important. Spiritually, however, the center is where sight is. Stand on a height and view the horizon. Stand on the moon and view the whole earth rising -- even, by way of television, in your parlor." The result is an unprecedented expansion of horizon, one that could well serve in our age, as the ancient mythologies did in theirs, to cleanse the doors of perception "to the wonder, at once terrible and fascinating, of ourselves and of the universe." He argued that it is not science that has diminished human beings or divorced us from divinity. On the contrary, the new discoveries of science "rejoin us to the ancients" by enabling us to

---

recognize in this whole universe "a reflection magnified of our own most inward nature; so that we are indeed its ears, its eyes, its thinking, and its speech -- or, in theological terms, God's ears, God's eyes, God's thinking, and God's Word." The last time I saw him I asked him if he still believed -- as he once had written -- "that we are at this moment participating in one of the very greatest leaps of the human spirit to a knowledge not only of outside nature but also of our own deep inward mystery."

He thought a minute and answered, "The greatest ever."

When I heard the news of his death, I tarried awhile in the copy he had given me of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. And I thought of the time I first discovered the world of the mythic hero. I had wandered into the little public library of the town where I grew up and, casually exploring the stacks, pulled down a book that opened wonders to me: *Prometheus*, stealing fire from the gods for the sake of the human race; Jason, braving the dragon to seize the Golden Fleece; the Knights of the Round Table, pursuing the Holy Grail. But not until I met Joseph Campbell did I understand that the Westerns I saw at the Saturday matinees had borrowed freely from those ancient tales. And that the stories we learned in Sunday school corresponded with those of other cultures that recognized the soul's high adventure, the quest of mortals to grasp the reality of God. He helped me to see the connections, to understand how the pieces fit, and not merely to fear less but to welcome what he described as "a mighty multicultural future."

He was, of course, criticized for dwelling on the psychological interpretation of myth, for seeming to confine the contemporary role of myth to either an ideological or a therapeutic function. I am not competent to enter that debate, and leave it for others to wage. He never seemed bothered by the controversy. He just kept on teaching, opening others to a new way of seeing.

It was, above all, the authentic life he lived that instructs us. When he said that myths are clues to our deepest spiritual potential, able to lead us to delight, illumination, and even rapture, he spoke as one who had been to the places he was inviting others to visit.

What did draw me to him?

Wisdom, yes; he was very wise.

And learning; he did indeed "know the vast sweep of our panoramic past as few men have ever known it."

But there was more.

A story's the way to tell it. He was a man with a thousand stories. This was one of his favorites. In Japan for an international conference on religion, Campbell overheard another American delegate, a social philosopher from New York, say to a Shinto priest, "We've been now to a good many ceremonies and have seen quite a few of your shrines. But I don't get your ideology. I don't get your theology." The Japanese paused as though in deep thought and then slowly shook his head. "I think we don't have ideology," he said. "We don't have theology. We dance."

And so did Joseph Campbell -- to the music of the spheres.

-- BILL MOYERS

---

I  
MYTH AND THE MODERN WORLD

*People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive.*

**MOYERS:** Why myths? Why should we care about myths? What do they have to do with my life?

**CAMPBELL:** My first response would be, "Go on, live your life, it's a good life -- you don't need mythology." I don't believe in being interested in a subject just because it's said to be important. I believe in being caught by it somehow or other. But you may find that, with a proper introduction, mythology will catch you. And so, what can it do for you if it does catch you?

*One of our problems today is that we are not well acquainted with the literature of the spirit. We're interested in the news of the day and the problems of the hour. It used to be that the university campus was a kind of hermetically sealed-off area where the news of the day did not impinge upon your attention to the inner life and to the magnificent human heritage we have in our great tradition -- Plato, Confucius, the Buddha, Goethe, and others who speak of the eternal values that have to do with the centering of our lives. When you get to be older, and the concerns of the day have all been attended to, and you turn to the inner life -- well, if you don't know where it is or what it is, you'll be sorry.*

*Greek and Latin and biblical literature used to be part of everyone's education. Now, when these were dropped, a whole tradition of Occidental mythological information was lost. It used to be that these stories were in the minds of people. When the story is in your mind, then you see its relevance to something happening in your own life. It gives you perspective on what's happening to you. With the loss of that, we've really lost something because we don't have a comparable literature to take its place. These bits of information from ancient times, which have to do with the themes that have supported human life, built civilizations, and informed religions over the millennia, have to do with deep inner problems, inner mysteries, inner thresholds of passage, and if you don't know what the guide-signs are along the way, you have to work it out yourself. But once this subject catches you, there is such a feeling, from one or another of these traditions, of information of a deep, rich, life-vivifying sort that you don't want to give it up.*

**MOYERS:** So we tell stories to try to come to terms with the world, to harmonize our lives with reality?

**CAMPBELL:** I think so, yes. Novels -- great novels -- can be wonderfully instructive.

---

*In my twenties and thirties and even on into my forties, James Joyce and Thomas Mann were my teachers. I read everything they wrote. Both were writing in terms of what might be called the mythological traditions. Take, for example, the story of Tonio, in Thomas Mann's *Tonio Kräger*. Tonio's father was a substantial businessman, a major citizen in his hometown. Little Tonio, however, had an artistic temperament, so he moved to Munich and joined a group of literary people who felt themselves above the mere money earners and family men.*

*So here is Tonio between two poles: his father, who was a good father, responsible and all of that, but who never did the thing he wanted to in all his life -- and, on the other hand, the one who leaves his hometown and becomes a critic of that kind of life. But Tonio found that he really loved these hometown people. And although he thought himself a little superior in an intellectual way to them and could describe them with cutting words, his heart was nevertheless with them.*

*But when he left to live with the bohemians, he found that they were so disdainful of life that he couldn't stay with them, either. So he left them, and wrote a letter back to someone in the group, saying, "I admire those cold, proud beings who adventure upon the paths of great and daemonic beauty and despise 'mankind'; but I do not envy them. For if anything is capable of making a poet of a literary man, it is my hometown love of the human, the living and ordinary. All warmth derives from this love, all kindness and all humor. Indeed, to me it even seems that this must be that love of which it is written that one may 'speak with the tongues of men and of angels,' and yet, lacking love, be 'as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.' "*

*And then he says, "The writer must be true to truth." And that's a killer, because the only way you can describe a human being truly is by describing his imperfections. The perfect human being is uninteresting -- the Buddha who leaves the world, you know. It is the imperfections of life that are lovable. And when the writer sends a dart of the true word, it hurts. But it goes with love. This is what Mann called "erotic irony," the love for that which you are killing with your cruel, analytical word.*

**MOYERS:** I cherish that image: my hometown love, the feeling you get for that place, no matter how long you've been away or even if you never return. That was where you first discovered people. But why do you say you love people for their imperfections?

**CAMPBELL:** Aren't children lovable because they're falling down all the time and have little bodies with the heads too big? Didn't Walt Disney know all about this when he did the seven dwarfs? And these funny little dogs that people have -- they're lovable because they're so imperfect.

**MOYERS:** Perfection would be a bore, wouldn't it?

**CAMPBELL:** It would have to be. It would be inhuman. The umbilical point, the humanity, the thing that makes you human and not supernatural and immortal -- that's what's lovable. That is why some people have a very hard time loving God, because there's no imperfection there. You can be in awe, but that would not be real love. It's Christ on the cross

---

*that becomes lovable.*

*MOYERS: What do you mean?*

*CAMPBELL: Suffering. Suffering is imperfection, is it not?*

*MOYERS: The story of human suffering, striving, living --*

*CAMPBELL: -- and youth coming to knowledge of itself, what it has to go through.*

*MOYERS: I came to understand from reading your books -- *The Masks of God* or *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, for example -- that what human beings have in common is revealed in myths. Myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance. We all need to tell our story and to understand our story. We all need to understand death and to cope with death, and we all need help in our passages from birth to life and then to death. We need for life to signify, to touch the eternal, to understand the mysterious, to find out who we are.*

*CAMPBELL: People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive. That's what it's all finally about, and that's what these clues help us to find within ourselves.*

*MOYERS: Myths are clues? ,*

*.. CAMPBELL: Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of the human life.*

*MOYERS: What we're capable of knowing and experiencing within?*

*CAMPBELL: Yes.*

*MOYERS: You changed the definition of a myth from the search for meaning to the experience of meaning.*

*CAMPBELL: Experience of life. The mind has to do with meaning. What's the meaning of a flower? There's a Zen story about a sermon of the Buddha in which he simply lifted a flower. There was only one man who gave him a sign with his eyes that he understood what was said. Now, the Buddha himself is called "the one thus come." There's no meaning. What's the meaning of the universe? What's the meaning of a flea? It's just there. That's it. And your own meaning is that you're there. We're so engaged in doing things to achieve purposes of outer value that we forget that the inner value, the rapture that is associated with being alive, is what it's all about.*

---

MOYERS: How do you get that experience? ;

CAMPBELL: Read myths. They teach you that you can turn inward, and you begin to get the message of the symbols. Read other people's myths, not those of your own religion, because you tend to interpret your own religion in terms of facts -- but if you read the other ones, you begin to get the message. Myth helps you to put your mind in touch with this experience of being alive. It tells you what the experience is. Marriage, for example. What is marriage? The myth tells you what it is. It's the reunion of the separated duad. Originally you were one. You are now two in the world, but the recognition of the spiritual identity is what marriage is. It's different from a love affair. It has nothing to do with that. It's another mythological plane of experience. When people get married because they think it's a long-time love affair, they'll be divorced very soon, because all love affairs end in disappointment. But marriage is recognition of a spiritual identity. If we live a proper life, if our minds are on the right qualities in regarding the person of the opposite sex, we will find our proper male or female counterpart. But if we are distracted by certain sensuous interests, we'll marry the wrong person. By marrying the right person, we reconstruct the image of the incarnate God, and that's what marriage is.

MOYERS: The right person? How does one choose the right person?

CAMPBELL: Your heart tells you. It ought to.

MOYERS: Your inner being.

CAMPBELL: That's the mystery.

MOYERS: You recognize your other self.

CAMPBELL: Well, I don't know, but there's a flash that comes, and something in you knows that this is the one.

MOYERS: If marriage is this reunion of the self with the self, with the male or female grounding of ourselves, why is it that marriage is so precarious in our modern society?

CAMPBELL: Because it's not regarded as a marriage. I would say that if the marriage isn't a first priority in your life, you're not married. The marriage means the two that are one, the two become one flesh. If the marriage lasts long enough, and if you are acquiescing constantly to it instead of to individual personal whim, you come to realize that that is true -- the two really are one.

MOYERS: One not only biologically but spiritually.

CAMPBELL: Primarily spiritually. The biological is the distraction which may lead

---

*you to the wrong identification.*

*MOYERS: Then the necessary function of marriage, perpetuating ourselves in children, is not the primary one.*

*CAMPBELL: No, that's really just the elementary aspect of marriage. There are two completely different stages of marriage. First is the youthful marriage following the wonderful impulse that nature has given us in the interplay of the sexes biologically in order to produce children. But there comes a time when the child graduates from the family and the couple is left. I've been amazed at the number of my friends who in their forties or fifties go apart. They have had a perfectly decent life together with the child, but they interpreted their union in terms of their relationship through the child. They did not interpret it in terms of their own personal relationship to each other.*

*Marriage is a relationship. When you make the sacrifice in marriage, you're sacrificing not to each other but to unity in a relationship. The Chinese image of the Tao, with the dark and light interacting -- that's the relationship of yang and yin, male and female, which is what a marriage is. And that's what you have become when you have married. You're no longer this one alone; your identity is in a relationship. Marriage is not a simple love affair, it's an ordeal, and the ordeal is the sacrifice of ego to a relationship in which two have become one.*

*MOYERS: So marriage is utterly incompatible with the idea of doing one's own thing.*

*CAMPBELL: It's not simply one's own thing, you see. It is, in a sense, doing one's own thing, but the one isn't just you, it's the two together as one. And that's a purely mythological image signifying the sacrifice of the visible entity for a transcendent good. This is something that becomes beautifully realized in the second stage of marriage, what I call the alchemical stage, of the two experiencing that they are one. If they are still living as they were in the primary stage of marriage, they will go apart when their children leave. Daddy will fall in love with some little nubile girl and run off, and Mother will be left with an empty house and heart, and will have to work it out on her own, in her own way.*

*MOYERS: That's because we don't understand the two levels of marriage.*

*CAMPBELL: You don't make a commitment.*

*MOYERS: We presume to -- we make a commitment for better or for worse.*

*CAMPBELL: That's the remnant of a ritual.*

*MOYERS: And the ritual has lost its force. The ritual that once conveyed an inner reality is now merely form. And that's true in the rituals of society and in the personal rituals of marriage and religion.*

---

CAMPBELL: How many people before marriage receive spiritual instruction as to what the marriage means? You can stand up in front of a judge and in ten minutes get married. The marriage ceremony in India lasts three days. That couple is glued.

MOYERS: You're saying that marriage is not just a social arrangement, it's a spiritual exercise.

CAMPBELL: It's primarily a spiritual exercise, and the society is supposed to help us have the realization. Man should not be in the service of society, society should be in the service of man. When man is in the service of society, you have a monster state, and that's what is threatening the world at this minute.

MOYERS: What happens when a society no longer embraces a powerful mythology?

CAMPBELL: What we've got on our hands. If you want to find out what it means to have a society without any rituals, read the New York Times.

MOYERS: And you'd find?

CAMPBELL: The news of the day, including destructive and violent acts by young people who don't know how to behave in a civilized society.

MOYERS: Society has provided them no rituals by which they become members of the tribe, of the community. All children need to be twice born, to learn to function rationally in the present world, leaving childhood behind. I think of that passage in the first book of Corinthians: "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

CAMPBELL: That's exactly it. That's the significance of the puberty rites. In primal societies, there are teeth knocked out, there are scarifications, there are circumcisions, there are all kinds of things done. So you don't have your little baby body anymore, you're something else entirely.

When I was a kid, we wore short trousers, you know, knee pants. And then there was a great moment when you put on long pants. Boys now don't get that. I see even five-year-olds walking around with long trousers. When are they going to know that they're now men and must put aside childish things?

MOYERS: Where do the kids growing up in the city -- on 125th and Broadway, for example -- where do these kids get their myths today?

CAMPBELL: They make them up themselves. This is why we have graffiti all over the city. These kids have their own gangs and their own initiations and their own morality, and they're doing the best they can. But they're dangerous because their own laws are not those of the city. They have not been initiated into our society.

---

*MOYERS: Rollo May says there is so much violence in American society today because there are no more great myths to help young men and women relate to the world or to understand that world beyond what is seen.*

*CAMPBELL: Yes, but another reason for the high level of violence here is that America has no ethos.*

*MOYERS: Explain.*

*CAMPBELL: In American football, for example, the rules are very strict and complex. If you were to go to England, however, you would find that the rugby rules are not that strict. When I was a student back in the twenties, there were a couple of young men who constituted a marvelous forward-passing pair. They went to Oxford on scholarship and joined the rugby team and one day they introduced the forward pass. And the English players said, "Well, we have no rules for this, so please don't. We don't play that way."*

*Now, in a culture that has been homogeneous for some time, there are a number of understood, unwritten rules by which people live. There is an ethos there, there is a mode, an understanding that, "we don't do it that way."*

*MOYERS: A mythology.*

*CAMPBELL: An unstated mythology, you might say. This is the way we use a fork and knife, this is the way we deal with people, and so forth. It's not all written down in books. But in America we have people from all kinds of backgrounds, all in a cluster, together, and consequently law has become very important in this country. Lawyers and law are what hold us together. There is no ethos. Do you see what I mean?*

*MOYERS: Yes. It's what De Tocqueville described when he first arrived here a hundred and sixty years ago to discover "a tumult of anarchy."*

*CAMPBELL: What we have today is a demythologized world. And, as a result, the students I meet are very much interested in mythology because myths bring them messages. Now, I can't tell you what the messages are that the study of mythology is bringing to young people today. I know what it did for me. But it is doing something for them. When I go to lecture at any college, the room is bursting with students who have come to hear what I have to say. The faculty very often assigns me to a room that's a little small -- smaller than it should have been because they didn't know how much excitement there was going to be in the student body.*

*MOYERS: Take a guess. What do you think the mythology, the stories they're going to hear from you, do for them?*

*CAMPBELL: They're stories about the wisdom of life, they really are. What we're learning in our schools is not the wisdom of life. We're learning technologies, we're getting*

---

*information. There's a curious reluctance on the part of faculties to indicate the life values of their subjects. In our sciences today -- and this includes anthropology, linguistics, the study of religions, and so forth -- there is a tendency to specialization. And when you know how much a specialist scholar has to know in order to be a competent specialist, you can understand this tendency. To study Buddhism, for instance, you have to be able to handle not only all the European languages in which the discussions of the Oriental come, particularly French, German, English, and Italian, but also Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, and several other languages. Now, this is a tremendous task. Such a specialist can't also be wondering about the difference between the Iroquois and Algonquin.*

*Specialization tends to limit the field of problems that the specialist is concerned with. Now, the person who isn't a specialist, but a generalist like myself, sees something over here that he has learned from one specialist, something over there that he has learned from another specialist -- and neither of them has considered the problem of why this occurs here and also there. So the generalist -- and that's a derogatory term, by the way, for academics -- gets into a range of other problems that are more genuinely human, you might say, than specifically cultural.*

*MOYERS: Then along comes the journalist who has a license to explain things he doesn't understand.*

*CAMPBELL: That is not only a license but something that is put upon him -- he has an obligation to educate himself in public. Now, I remember when I was a young man going to hear Heinrich Zimmer lecture. He was the first man I knew of to speak about myths as though they had messages that were valid for life, not just interesting things for scholars to fool around with. And that confirmed me in a feeling I had had ever since boyhood.*

*MOYERS: Do you remember the first time you discovered myth? The first time the story came alive in you?*

*CAMPBELL: I was brought up as a Roman Catholic. Now, one of the great advantages of being brought up a Roman Catholic is that you're taught to take myth seriously and to let it operate on your life and to live in terms of these mythic motifs. I was brought up in terms of the seasonal relationships to the cycle of Christ's coming into the world, teaching in the world, dying, resurrecting, and returning to heaven. The ceremonies all through the year keep you in mind of the eternal core of all that changes in time. Sin is simply getting out of touch with that harmony.*

*And then I fell in love with American Indians because Buffalo Bill used to come to Madison Square Garden every year with his marvelous Wild West Show. And I wanted to know more about Indians. My father and mother were very generous parents and found what books were being written for boys about Indians at that time. So I began to read American Indian myths, and it wasn't long before I found the same motifs in the American Indian stories that I was being taught by the nuns at school.*

*MOYERS: Creation --*

---

CAMPBELL: -- creation, death and resurrection, ascension to heaven, virgin births -- I didn't know what it was, but I recognized the vocabulary. One after another.

MOYERS: And what happened?

CAMPBELL: I was excited. That was the beginning of my interest in comparative mythology.

MOYERS: Did you begin by asking, "Why does it say it this way while the Bible says it that way?"

CAMPBELL: No, I didn't start the comparative analysis until many years later.

MOYERS: What appealed to you about the Indian stories?

CAMPBELL: In those days there was still American Indian lore in the air. Indians were still around. Even now, when I deal with myths from all parts of the world, I find the American Indian tales and narratives to be very rich, very well developed.

And then my parents had a place out in the woods where the Delaware Indians had lived, and the Iroquois had come down and fought them. There was a big ledge where we could dig for Indian arrowheads and things like that. And the very animals that play the role in the Indian stories were there in the woods around me. It was a grand introduction to this material.

MOYERS: Did these stories begin to collide with your Catholic faith?

CAMPBELL: No, there was no collision. The collision with my religion came much later in relation to scientific studies and things of that kind. Later I became interested in Hinduism, and there were the same stories again. And in my graduate work I was dealing with the Arthurian medieval material, and there were the same stories again. So you can't tell me that they're not the same stories. I've been with them all my life.

MOYERS: They come from every culture but with timeless themes.

CAMPBELL: The themes are timeless, and the inflection is to the culture.

MOYERS: So the stories may take the same universal theme but apply it slightly differently, depending upon the accent of the people who are speaking?

CAMPBELL: Oh, yes. If you were not alert to the parallel themes, you perhaps would think they were quite different stories, but they're not.

MOYERS: You taught mythology for thirty-eight years at Sarah Lawrence. How did

---

*you get these young women, coming to college from their middle-class backgrounds, from their orthodox religions -- how did you get them interested in myths?*

*CAMPBELL: Young people just grab this stuff. Mythology teaches you what's behind literature and the arts, it teaches you about your own life. It's a great, exciting, life-nourishing subject. Mythology has a great deal to do with the stages of life, the initiation ceremonies as you move from childhood to adult responsibilities, from the unmarried state into the married state. All of those rituals are mythological rites. They have to do with your recognition of the new role that you're in, the process of throwing off the old one and coming out in the new, and entering into a responsible profession.*

*When a judge walks into the room, and everybody stands up, you're not standing up to that guy, you're standing up to the robe that he's wearing and the role that he's going to play. What makes him worthy of that role is his integrity, as a representative of the principles of that role, and not some group of prejudices of his own. So what you're standing up to is a mythological character. I imagine some kings and queens are the most stupid, absurd, banal people you could run into, probably interested only in horses and women, you know. But you're not responding to them as personalities, you're responding to them in their mythological roles. When someone becomes a judge, or President of the United States, the man is no longer that man, he's the representative of an eternal office; he has to sacrifice his personal desires and even life possibilities to the role that he now signifies.*

*MOYERS: So there are mythological rituals at work in our society. The ceremony of marriage is one. The ceremony of the inauguration of a President or judge is another. What are some of the other rituals that are important to society today?*

*CAMPBELL: Joining the army, putting on a uniform, is another. You're giving up your personal life and accepting a socially determined manner of life in the service of the society of which you are a member. This is why I think it is obscene to judge people in terms of civil law for performances that they rendered in time of war. They were acting not as individuals, they were acting as agents of something above them and to which they had by dedication given themselves. To judge them as though they were individual human beings is totally improper.*

*MOYERS: You've seen what happens when primitive societies are unsettled by white man's civilization. They go to pieces, they disintegrate, they become diseased. Hasn't the same thing been happening to us since our myths began to disappear?*

*CAMPBELL: Absolutely, it has.*

*MOYERS: Isn't that why conservative religions today are calling for the old-time religion?*

*CAMPBELL: Yes, and they're making a terrible mistake. They are going back to something that is vestigial, that doesn't serve life.*

---

*MOYERS: But didn't it serve us?*

*CAMPBELL: Sure it did.*

*MOYERS: I understand the yearning. In my youth I had fixed stars. They comforted me with their permanence. They gave me a known horizon. And they told me there was a loving, kind, and just father out there looking down on me, ready to receive me, thinking of my concerns all the time. Now, Saul Bellow says that science has made a housecleaning of beliefs. But there was value in these things for me. I am today what I am because of those beliefs. I wonder what happens to children who don't have those fixed stars, that known horizon -- those myths?*

*CAMPBELL: Well, as I said, all you have to do is read the newspaper. It's a mess. On this immediate level of life and structure, myths offer life models. But the models have to be appropriate to the time in which you are living, and our time has changed so fast that what was proper fifty years ago is not proper today. The virtues of the past are the vices of today. And many of what were thought to be the vices of the past are the necessities of today. The moral order has to catch up with the moral necessities of actual life in time, here and now. And that is what we are not doing. The old-time religion belongs to another age, another people, another set of human values, another universe. By going back you throw yourself out of sync with history. Our kids lose their faith in the religions that were taught to them, and they go inside.*

*MOYERS: Often with the help of a drug.*

*CAMPBELL: Yes. The mechanically induced mystical experience is what you have there. I have attended a number of psychological conferences dealing with this whole problem of the difference between the mystical experience and the psychological crack-up. The difference is that the one who cracks up is drowning in the water in which the mystic swims. You have to be prepared for this experience.*

*MOYERS: You talk about this peyote culture emerging and becoming dominant among Indians as a consequence of the loss of the buffalo and their earlier way of life.*

*CAMPBELL: Yes. Ours is one of the worst histories in relation to the native peoples of any civilized nation. They are nonpersons. They are not even reckoned in the statistics of the voting population of the United States. There was a moment shortly after the American Revolution when there were a number of distinguished Indians who actually participated in American government and life. George Washington said that Indians should be incorporated as members of our culture. But instead, they were turned into vestiges of the past. In the nineteenth century, all the Indians of the southeast were put into wagons and shipped under military guard out to what was then called Indian Territory, which was given to the Indians in perpetuity as their own world -- then a couple of years later was taken away from them.*

---

*Recently, anthropologists studied a group of Indians in northwestern Mexico who live within a few miles of a major area for the natural growth of peyote. Peyote is their animal -- that is to say, they associate it with the deer. And they have very special missions to go collect peyote and bring it back.*

*These missions are mystical journeys with all of the details of the typical mystical journey. First, there is disengagement from secular life. Everybody who is going to go on this expedition has to make a complete confession of all the faults of his or her recent living. And if they don't, the magic is not going to work. Then they start on the journey. They even speak a special language, a negative language. Instead of saying yes, for example, they say no, or instead of saying, "We are going," they say, "We are coming." They are in another world.*

*Then they come to the threshold of the adventure. There are special shrines that represent stages of mental transformation on the way. And then comes the great business of collecting the peyote. The peyote is killed as though it were a deer. They sneak up on it, shoot a little arrow at it, and then perform the ritual of collecting the peyote.*

*The whole thing is a complete duplication of the kind of experience that is associated with the inward journey, when you leave the outer world and come into the realm of spiritual beings. They identify each little stage as a spiritual transformation. They are in a sacred place all the way.*

*MOYERS: Why do they make such an intricate process out of it?*

*CAMPBELL: Well, it has to do with the peyote being not simply a biological, mechanical, chemical effect but one of spiritual transformation. If you undergo a spiritual transformation and have not had preparation for it, you do not know how to evaluate what has happened to you, and you get the terrible experiences of a bad trip, as they used to call it with LSD. If you know where you are going, you won't have a bad trip.*

*MOYERS: So this is why it is a psychological crisis if you are drowning in the water where --*

*CAMPBELL: -- where you ought to be able to swim, but you weren't prepared. That is true of the spiritual life, anyhow. It is a terrifying experience to have your consciousness transformed.*

*MOYERS: You talk a lot about consciousness.*

*CAMPBELL: Yes.*

*MOYERS: What do you mean by it?*

*CAMPBELL: It is a part of the Cartesian mode to think of consciousness as being something peculiar to the head, that the head is the organ originating consciousness. It isn't. The head is an organ that inflects consciousness in a certain direction, or to a certain set of purposes. But there is a consciousness here in the body. The whole living world is informed by*

---

consciousness.

*I have a feeling that consciousness and energy are the same thing somehow. Where you really see life energy, there's consciousness. Certainly the vegetable world is conscious. And when you live in the woods, as I did as a kid, you can see all these different consciousnesses relating to themselves. There is a plant consciousness and there is an animal consciousness, and we share both these things. You eat certain foods, and the bile knows whether there's something there for it to go to work on. The whole process is consciousness. Trying to interpret it in simply mechanistic terms won't work.*

**MOYERS:** How do we transform our consciousness?

*CAMPBELL: That's a matter of what you are disposed to think about. And that's what meditation is for. All of life is a meditation, most of it unintentional. A lot of people spend most of life in meditating on where their money is coming from and where it's going to go. If you have a family to bring up, you're concerned for the family. These are all very important concerns, but they have to do with physical conditions, mostly. But how are you going to communicate spiritual consciousness to the children if you don't have it yourself? How do you get that? What the myths are for is to bring us into a level of consciousness that is spiritual.*

*Just for example: I walk off Fifty-first Street and Fifth Avenue into St. Patrick's Cathedral. I've left a very busy city and one of the most economically inspired cities on the planet. I walk into that cathedral, and everything around me speaks of spiritual mysteries. The mystery of the cross, what's that all about there? The stained glass windows, which bring another atmosphere in. My consciousness has been brought up onto another level altogether, and I am on a different platform. And then I walk out, and I'm back on the level of the street again. Now, can I hold something from the cathedral consciousness? Certain prayers or meditations are designed to hold your consciousness on that level instead of letting it drop down here all the way. And then what you can finally do is to recognize that this is simply a lower level of that higher consciousness. The mystery that is expressed there is operating in the field of your money, for example. All money is congealed energy. I think that that's the clue to how to transform your consciousness.*

**MOYERS:** Don't you sometimes think, as you consider these stories, that you are drowning in other people's dreams?

**CAMPBELL:** I don't listen to other people's dreams.

**MOYERS:** But all of these myths are other people's dreams.

*CAMPBELL: Oh, no, they're not. They are the world's dreams. They are archetypal dreams and deal with great human problems. I know when I come to one of these thresholds now. The myth tells me about it, how to respond to certain crises of disappointment or delight or failure or success. The myths tell me where I am.*

---

*MOYERS: What happens when people become legends? Can you say, for example, that John Wayne has become a myth?*

*CAMPBELL: When a person becomes a model for other people's lives, he has moved into the sphere of being mythologized.*

*MOYERS: This happens so often to actors in films, where we get so many of our models.*

*CAMPBELL: I remember, when I was a boy, Douglas Fairbanks was the model for me. Adolphe Menjou was the model for my brother. Of course those men were playing the roles of mythic figures. They were educators toward life.*

*MOYERS: No figure in movie history is more engaging to me than Shane. Did you see the movie *Shane*?*

*CAMPBELL: No, I didn't.*

*MOYERS: It is the classic story of the stranger who rides in from outside and does good for others and rides away, not waiting for his reward. Why is it that films affect us this way?*

*CAMPBELL: There is something magical about films. The person you are looking at is also somewhere else at the same time. That is a condition of the god. If a movie actor comes into the theater, everybody turns and looks at the movie actor. He is the real hero of the occasion. He is on another plane. He is a multiple presence.*

*What you are seeing on the screen really isn't he, and yet the "he" comes. Through the multiple forms, the form of forms out of which all of this comes is right there.*

*MOYERS: Movies seem to create these large figures, while television merely creates celebrities. They don't become models as much as they do objects of gossip.*

*CAMPBELL: Perhaps that's because we see TV personalities in the home instead of in a special temple like the movie theater.*

*MOYERS: I saw a photograph yesterday of this latest cult figure from Hollywood, Rambo, the Vietnam veteran who returns to rescue prisoners of war, and through violent swaths of death and destruction he brings them back. I understand it is the most popular movie in Beirut. The photograph showed the new Rambo doll that has been created and is being sold by the same company that produces the Cabbage Patch dolls. In the foreground is the image of a sweet, lovable Cabbage Patch doll, and behind it, the brute force, Rambo.*

*CAMPBELL: Those are two mythic figures. The image that comes to my mind now is of Picasso's *Minotauroromachy*, an engraving that shows a great monster bull approaching. The*

---

*philosopher is climbing up a ladder in terror to get away. In the bullring there is a horse, which has been killed, and on the sacrificed horse lies a female matador who has also been killed. The only creature facing this terrific monster is a little girl with a flower. Those are the two figures you have just spoken of -- the simple, innocent, childlike one, and the terrific threat. You see the problems of the modern day.*

*MOYERS: The poet Yeats felt we were living in the last of a great Christian cycle. His poem "The Second Coming" says, "Turning and turning in the widening gyre/The falcon cannot hear the falconer;/Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;/ Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,/The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/The ceremony of innocence is drowned." What do you see "slouching towards Bethlehem to be born"?*

*CAMPBELL: I don't know what's coming, any more than Yeats knew, but when you come to the end of one time and the beginning of a new one, it's a period of tremendous pain and turmoil. The threat we feel, and everybody feels -- well, there is this notion of Armageddon coming, you know.*

*MOYERS: "I have become Death, the Destroyer of worlds," Oppenheimer said when he saw the first atomic bomb explode. But you don't think that will be our end, do you?*

*CAMPBELL: It won't be the end. Maybe it will be the end of life on this planet, but that is not the end of the universe. It is just a bungled explosion in terms of all the explosions that are going on in all the suns of the universe. The universe is a bunch of exploding atomic furnaces like our sun. So this is just a little imitation of the whole big job.*

*MOYERS: Can you imagine that somewhere else other creatures can be sitting, investing their transient journey with the kind of significance that our myths and great stories do?*

*CAMPBELL: No. When you realize that if the temperature goes up fifty degrees and stays there, life will not exist on this earth, and that if it drops, let's say, another hundred degrees and stays there, life will not be on this earth; when you realize how very delicate this balance is, how the quantity of water is so important -- well, when you think of all the accidents of the environment that have fostered life, how can you think that the life we know would exist on any other particle of the universe, no matter how many of these satellites around stars there may be?*

*MOYERS: This fragile life always exists in the crucible of terror and possible extinction. And the image of the Cabbage Patch doll juxtaposed with the vicious Rambo is not at odds with what we know of life through mythology?*

*CAMPBELL: No, it isn't.*

*MOYERS: Do you see some new metaphors emerging in a modern medium for the old*

---

*universal truths?*

*CAMPBELL: I see the possibility of new metaphors, but I don't see that they have become mythological yet.*

*MOYERS: What do you think will be the myths that will incorporate the machine into the new world?*

*CAMPBELL: Well, automobiles have gotten into mythology. They have gotten into dreams. And airplanes are very much in the service of the imagination. The flight of the airplane, for example, is in the imagination as the release from earth. This is the same thing that birds symbolize, in a certain way. The bird is symbolic of the release of the spirit from bondage to the earth, just as the serpent is symbolic of the bondage to the earth. The airplane plays that role now.*

*MOYERS: Any others?*

*CAMPBELL: Weapons, of course. Every movie that I have seen on the airplane as I traveled back and forth between California and Hawaii shows people with revolvers. There is the Lord Death, carrying his weapon. Different instruments take over the roles that earlier instruments now no longer serve. But I don't see any more than that.*

*MOYERS: So the new myths will serve the old stories. When I saw Star Wars, I remembered the phrase from the apostle Paul, "I wrestle against principalities and powers." That was two thousand years ago. And in the caves of the early Stone Age hunter, there are scenes of wrestling against principalities and powers. Here in our modern technological myths we are still wrestling.*

*CAMPBELL: Man should not submit to the powers from outside but command them. How to do it is the problem.*

*MOYERS: After our youngest son had seen Star Wars for the twelfth or thirteenth time, I said, "Why do you go so often?" He said, "For the same reason you have been reading the Old Testament all of your life." He was in a new world of myth.*

*CAMPBELL: Certainly Star Wars has a valid mythological perspective. It shows the state as a machine and asks, "Is the machine going to crush humanity or serve humanity? Humanity comes not from the machine but from the heart. What I see in Star Wars is the same problem that Faust gives us: Mephistopheles, the machine man, can provide us with all the means, and is thus likely to determine the aims of life as well. But of course the characteristic of Faust, which makes him eligible to be saved, is that he seeks aims that are not those of the machine.*

*Now, when Luke Skywalker unmasks his father, he is taking off the machine role that the father has played. The father was the uniform. That is power, the state role.*

---

## sample content of The Power of Myth

- [read online The Last Horror Novel in the History of the World pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [click The Psychology of Human Sexuality](#)
- [L'amour dure trois ans pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [click Alone \(Detective D.D. Warren, Book 1\) online](#)
- <http://aircon.servicessingaporecompany.com/?lib/The-Last-Horror-Novel-in-the-History-of-the-World.pdf>
- <http://honareavalmusic.com/?books/On-Being-a-Muslim--Finding-a-Religious-Path-in-the-World-Today.pdf>
- <http://tuscalaural.com/library/Bacardi-y-la-larga-lucha-por-Cuba.pdf>
- <http://interactmg.com/ebooks/Alone--Detective-D-D--Warren--Book-1-.pdf>