



The Mythic Image

Joseph Campbell

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A paperback edition of Campbell's major study of the mythology of the world's high civilizations over five millennia. It includes nearly 450 illustrations. The text is the same as that of the 1974 edition.

Mythologist Joseph Campbell was a masterful storyteller, able to weave tales from every corner of the world into compelling, even spellbinding, narratives. His interest in comparative mythology began in childhood, when the young Joe Campbell was taken to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show at Madison Square Garden. He started writing articles on Native American mythology in high school, and the parallels between age-old myths and the mythic themes in literature and dreams became a lifelong preoccupation. Campbell's best-known work is *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), which became a *New York Times* paperback best-seller for Princeton in 1988 after Campbell's star turn on the Bill Moyers television program *The Power of Myth*.

During his early years as a professor of comparative religion at Sarah Lawrence College, Campbell made the acquaintance of Indologist Heinrich Zimmer, a kindred spirit who introduced him to Paul and Mary Mellon, the founders of Bollingen Series. They chose Campbell's *The Mythic Image* as the culmination of the series, giving it the closing position--number one hundred. A lavishly illustrated and beautifully produced study of the mythology of the world's high civilizations, *The Mythic Image* received a front-cover review in the *New York Times Book Review* upon publication. Through the medium of visual art, the book explores the relation of dreams to myth and demonstrates the important differences between oriental and occidental interpretations of dreams and life.

The Mythic Image Details

Date : Published November 21st 1981 by Princeton University Press (first published 1974)

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Author : Joseph Campbell

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Paul Nagy says

I cut my intellectual eye teeth reading Joseph Campbell's (1904–1987) *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. It was his introduction to a generic, comparative history of mythology, using the hero myth as a universal example of the origin and history of consciousness, within the individual in traditional to modern cultures. Afterward, Joseph Campbell's magnum opus, the four volume *The Masks of God* series provided the outlines of a universal history of mythology from conjectured preliterate beginnings through to the modern myths of Thomas Mann's and James Joyce's forays into the complex levels of self in society. In my view, Joseph Campbell's *The Mythic Image* bookends the full array of his studies in mythology, by providing a generic cosmological, comparative snapshot of universal myths as portrayed in story and images. It is a massive book weighing nearly 6 ½ pounds in its hardcover edition. Profusely illustrated throughout with many images supported by lengthy captions and integrated into the illustrative text, the volume not only recapitulates Joseph Campbell's oeuvre, but is meant as a summary of the Bollingen Series of one hundred extensive studies, most of which celebrate an analytical depth psychology of symbols and history, literature and art, critical studies.

The Mythic Image was produced in 1974 and subsequently Campbell went on to make many more popular studies of mythology as it related to modern and postmodern attempts at self-consciousness. His posthumous, 1988 PBS discussions with Bill Moyers, Joseph Campbell and the Power of Myth. The PBS documentary remains one of the most popular series in the history of American public television. The Power of Myth, a book based on the six-part series, has become a best-selling introduction to his mythological project. Not to take away from the near universal acclaim of this dialogue about Campbell's work, I believe that *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and *The Mythic Image* represent a more concentrated and profound summation of his mythical comparativists project.

Unfortunately, Joseph Campbell's works in their far-flung synthesizing vision have not touched the academic mainstream with its more plodding, particularistic procedures. Though his writings remain popular and are read with enjoyment and profit by any willing to give them a chance, there are far too few academics who explicitly recognize his pioneering into classic ethnographies, and Age of Reason mythographers, and critical literary studies, except a few popularizers of archetypal psychology and new age cosmologies.

The power of *The Mythic Image* is the subtlety and depth of analysis as joined to a universal arc of the cosmic-frame of human experience. A study of the photographs with their commentaries and integration into the narrative text provides a nearly unique integration of image and story that gives one a deeply poetic and meditative push into the depths of one's own mystery of human being as the mingled fresh waters of the stream and dream of life into the salty depths of ocean and immortality. Though I've often felt that Joseph Campbell never quite gave the holistic grasp of mosaics or liberation it's dizzying due, he encapsulates many levels of the mysteries of experience. In every moment a birth, it seems a window and a door into eternity that teases the clown into the trickster of creation and suffers the hero into the sacrifice of every life, a tragedy and a well-worn sleep.

Nikita Skiba says

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Tomasz says

To ksi??ka na miar? Campbella, tak pe?na, tak erudycyjna, tak nafaszerowana wiedz?, ?e trudno j? w kilku zdaniach podsumowa?. Trudno rzec, czy tu tekst pe?ni g?own? rol?, czy ogromna ilo?? ilustracji, reprodukcji i zdj?? ukazuj?cych motywy wsp?olne dla religii ?wiata. Po przeczytaniu w g?owie k??bi si? od my?li, obrazów, toposów, mam nadzieję?, ?e to si? jako? uporz?dkuje. Eseistycznym stylem Campbell przekaza? to, co w jego teorii monomitu najwa?niejsze: wspólnot? wszystkich wierze? oraz fascynacj? snem.

Dickson says

This is an amazing book on imagery and dreams which are at the root of mythology. I imagine everyone who has written, or thought about writing a screenplay, has this book on the shelf--421 black and white illustrations.

Barnaby Thieme says

I'm delighted to find at last a book by Campbell that I can recommend without hesitation. The format of this book is a superb fit with his jump-around style. In this lavishly and beautifully illustrated book, Campbell takes several core mythological symbols and explores how they have been used in different cultures. Many of the parallels he demonstrates are fascinating and extraordinary, and his gargantuan knowledge of comparative mythology is on full display. Every page contains at least one surprise. Even more than "Hero With a Thousand Faces", this is the work I would single out as Campbell's masterpiece.

giao says

i will continue to keep this near me as a guide for the study of the conscious and unconscious self and culture. Highly recommend.

Nikki says

Campbell's ability to capture the vast mythological histories of varying cultures continually amazes me. This book has it all, including a plethora of illustrations and art. I could re-read for a lifetime and never remember it all!

Luca says

I think that the value of this book is the beauty of the images and how much they are accesible thanks to the text. I like Joseph Campbell works, and I can reccomend this book to the ones who wants a tourrought some of the most recurrent image in mythologi.

Kim says

I really was not sure how to rate this book. It is a very interesting book but it is mainly images of mythic figures throughout the ages and cultures and brief explanations of their significance. Read this if you want to delve into comparative mythology, or if you are an art history major.

Raúl says

Campbell combina en su libro el texto propiamente dicho, las imágenes (reproducciones de obras de arte, esculturas, bajorrelieves, objetos arqueológicos) junto a las explicaciones a pie de página de estas imágenes para dar idea de una unicidad presente en todas las mitologías y en todas las religiones, una unicidad que admite la explicación de difusión geográfica por una parte, por otra la de la existencia de arquetipos psicológicos jungianos y quizá de forma más adecuada, la de la existencia de una forma común de considerar lo sagrado y lo divino que se manifiesta de manera similar a lo largo de todo el mundo.

Daniel says

Campbell is right!

People tend to believe in myths.

John says

The book starts with Vishnu the cosmic dreamer. And proceeds to connect various myths where the world as a dream is the central motif. The first chapter was the best of them all. Campbell is the best when it comes to connecting myths from various regions and religions of both primitive and oriental. A good book on the language of myths.

Liz DeMarco says

Love a book that is mostly pictures of incredible ancient artwork! A must read for anyone interested in

religious artwork of all kinds.

Sur Cur Lengel says

Campbell says, "Follow your bliss!" This has meaning for me; although I prefer this stunning line from Mark Strand: "Each moment is a place you've never been."
