Myth, the Body and Wholeness:
Towards a More Holistic Conception of Education

© Roberto Teoli

Department of Integrated Studies in Education

McGill University, Montreal

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Abstract

The literature in education is conspicuously lacking in any meaningful or sustained discussion of the body's role in education. This absence is due to the fact that Western society continues to be dominated by a dualistic vision of reality that splits the body from the mind. In this view, the body opposes the mind. The mind is exalted, something to be cultivated and cherished. It is the higher realm of existence. In contrast, the body is denigrated. It is an encumbrance to human existence, something we must bear or somehow escape. It is the lower realm of existence. This thesis suggests that body and mind do not mutually exclude one another but rather, they are the two aspects that, together, form the whole person. Paradox is a key concept here because it offers a vision of reality that brings together "apparent opposites" into a tensed relationship thereby creating a framework that allows for the integration of body and mind into a cohesive whole. This thesis argues that myth is an expression of humankind's paradoxical nature, and that the hero myth, in particular, points to a path that leads to the embodiment of paradox, and thus to wholeness. This, however, requires a journey into the depths of the body in order to get in touch with the body and the entire range of its feelings. It is further argued that this process reconnects us to our body. To embody paradox, therefore, signifies the integration of body and mind into a unified whole. The hero's journey elucidates this movement from duality to paradox. This thesis proposes that to educate the whole person requires the education of the body. It is therefore a call to develop educational programs that include the education of the body in the curriculum.

Résumé

La littérature en éducation porte peu d'attention à l'éducation du corps. Cette absence s'explique par le fait que la société occidentale continue de porter une vision dualiste de la réalité. Dans cette perspective, la réalité est divisée en le corps et l'esprit, où le corps s'oppose à l'esprit. L'esprit est élevé tandis que le corps est dénigré. Cette thèse propose que le corps et l'esprit ne s'opposent pas. Ensemble, ces deux forment une personne entière. Dans ce contexte, le paradoxe est un concept clé car il offre une vision de la réalité qui permet à des opposés apparents de former une relation unifiante. Cette thèse soutient que le mythe exprime l'aspect paradoxal chez les humains et que le mythe de l'héros, en particulier, dirige vers un chemin qui incarne le paradoxe, ainsi que l'entièreté. Ceci exige un cheminement qui va jusqu'aux profondeurs du corps pour qu'on puisse toucher au corps et tous ses sentiments. Cette thèse prétend qu'en touchant à tous les sentiments humains, nous incarnons le paradox, et nous devenons entiers. L'incarnation du paradox signifie, alors, intégration du corps et l'esprit, le retour de l'être humain à son corps. Le cheminement du héros élucide ce mouvement de la dualité au paradoxe. Cette thèse propose que pour arriver à éduquer toute la personne, il faut éduquer le corps. Elle est un appel à inclure l'éducation du corps dans les programmes scolaires.

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Introduction

John Dewey is considered by many to be the greatest philosopher of education since Plato. A short time after completing one of his major works, *Democracy and Education*, however, he questioned its value and significance. As Bruce Wilshire (1990) writes, this came about as the result of a crisis that touched both his personal and professional life (p. 176). This crisis was set off when, after having spent his life criticizing Cartesian dualism, he detected that "his own consciousness seemed to split off from its conditions in his organism . . . Threatened was his whole philosophy of education. In a real sense, his life was threatened" (p. 176).

In an attempt to deal with this situation, Dewey sought the help of F.M. Alexander, a psycho-bio therapist, well known today for *The Alexander Technique*. After observing how Dewey held his body, and more specifically how he spoke and held his head, "Alexander said 'he was drugged with thought' -- almost as if his mind were dissociated from his body" (p. 176). Through his sessions with Alexander, Dewey was able to better identify the limits imposed on his thinking by the disconnection from his body. According to Wilshire, Dewey realized that "Somehow the body must take the lead if consciousness is to become aware of its closet; it must be jolted by the body" (p. 177).

As a result of this new awareness, Dewey wrote the book, *Experience and Nature*, in which he articulates a theory of consciousness that is "embedded in its bodily conditions, and of how these can be perceived and changed" (p. 179). Body and mind are finally integrated in his thinking. In

this work, he discusses the loss of "rectitude of organic action." He states that to arrive at this rectitude, we must connect to "our immediate organic selections, rejections, welcomings, expulsions . . . of the most minute, vibratingly delicate nature. We are not aware of the qualities of most of these acts . . . Yet they exist as feelings, qualities and have an enormous directive effect on our behavior" (cited in Wilshire, pp. 179-180). As Wilshire observes, although Dewey does not quite come out and say it, he refers here to our "aversions," to the "irrational"[1] aspects of our identity that reside in our body (p.180).

For Dewey, the task of getting in touch with his body became of utmost importance to him, the focus of his life. He felt incomplete as a person. This, he intuited, was reflected in his work. Dewey felt compelled to discover the significance of his body, and to thereby create a pathway that would allow his body to inform his mind, and thus his work. When he did gain an understanding of his body, this proved to be a turning point in his life, and changed the direction of his work in the latter part of his life. This process of integration brought calmness and balance to his life. He discovered that in order to feel complete or whole, we need to be connected to our body. It seems to me that Dewey's lesson is particularly relevant today. Like Dewey, we need to be in touch with our body as well if we wish to have a sense of harmony in our lives. His story suggests the need for educating the body.

Wilshire describes how this turn in Dewey's thought was received by the philosophical community. He states that many "professional philosophers" in Dewey's day disregarded the new aspects of his thinking, and that today there are still many who do not appreciate the significance of

"Dewey's encounter with himself as body-self" (p. 182). He discloses that these aspects of Dewey's thinking are often left out even in courses on Dewey. For Wilshire, this is quite revealing. First, it suggests that philosophers, like many other members of our society, "are in the grip of unacknowledged fears of pollution of the body" (p. 182). Secondly, it suggests the extent to which Cartesian dualism insidiously dominates our attitudes, thoughts and actions; that as a culture we continue to view the world that is divided into the physical and mental realms.

According to David Le Breton (1999), this split in reality has reached drastic proportions in contemporary society. In his book *L'Adieu au Corps,* he begins by observing that for thousands of years humans exerted themselves physically in their daily existence. Our relationship to the world was essentially a bodily one. He observes that never before have humans made so little use of their body than in modern Western society. Nervous, psychological exertion or stress has replaced physical exertion. Our muscles are becoming obsolete and in a way, are being replaced by the inexhaustible energy provided by machines. Even the most fundamental human activities like walking and running have declined, and are rarely called for in our daily lives. He notes how the automobile, and mechanical aids such a escalators and moving sidewalks, have supplanted the body and have, in a sense, rendered it anachronistic. This leads Le Breton to state, "Sous-employé, encombrant, inutile, le corps devient un souci; passif il fait entendre son malaise . . . L'ancrage corporel de l'existence perd de sa puissance. . . Le corps est une charge d'autant plus pénible à assumer que s'attrophient ses usages" (pp. 14-15).

There are inevitable consequences which ensue from this curtailment of physical and sensory experience for the individual: "Elle (which refers to this curtailment or restriction) entame sa vision du monde, limite son champ d' initiatives sur le réel, diminue le sentiment de constance du moi, afflaiblit sa connaissance des choses, et elle est un mobile permanent de mal-être" (p. 15).

While the observations above indicate how we have allowed technology to supplant the body, at a deeper level they also reveal a rift or split between our body and our mind. They indicate that we have allowed our body to slip into a passive and secondary role in our lives without fully recognizing how this has impoverished the quality of our existence. We have no meaningful relationship to our body. This is exacerbated even further by the fact that it is so minimally used in our daily living. All of this leads me to wonder what percentage of life, so to speak, do we remove from our field of vision when we relegate our body to such a negligible role?

Le Breton observes that this disconnection from the body has created a malaise in our society that needs to be addressed. We are profoundly disconnected from our body. Modern living lacks balance. For Le Breton, we are coming to see the body as superfluous. We are moving towards complete alienation from our body. From my perspective, Le Breton's observations are both revealing and perplexing. To say that our body is becoming obsolete is an incongruous statement. It simply does not make sense for we cannot exist without our body even though we may choose to ignore or deny its importance. To even entertain the idea that our body is becoming obsolete is a clear signal that, as a society, we need to reevaluate

our relationship to our body. We need to understand how we arrived to the point where we are ready to place our body in a garbage bin. This sort of thinking indicates that we have neglected our body for far too long. The time has come for us to probe what lies beneath this neglect. The challenge is to retrieve our body from the fringes of our awareness and bring it to a position where we can at least begin to consider its significance in our lives. Otherwise, this malaise, this disconnection from our body, will only deepen and worsen.

I share Wilshire's view, as stated above, that an exploration of our body will most likely uncover "aversions" and "fears", and other "irrational" or unpleasant aspects of ourselves that lurk in our body and that we do not wish to deal with. The reason why I express this view is because this is what I have experienced in my own life. At this time, I want to recount how certain key events in my life led to a process that allowed me to begin to gain an understanding of my body's significance.

It all began, when at the age of twenty five, I noticed that there was tension in my forearms. For some reason, I wanted to know why I had this tension. I wanted to understand its cause. There didn't seem to be anything missing in my life. (I had a girlfriend and a full time job as a teacher so I could not understand why I had this tension.) Things remained like this for two years. Through a close friend, I was introduced to a form of meditation called abandon corporel which is also used in a therapeutic setting.[2] As I began to practice this form of meditation, memories and feelings that had been repressed and forgotten slowly began to emerge. As this process deepened, my body's tenseness and numbness began to dissipate. My body began to

feel alive. My understanding of my body changed. As a younger person, I had no perception of it at all. It was just there, something I had to feed in order to stay alive. This process gradually bought me to a relationship with my body -- a relationship that transformed my life. I learned that self-awareness is intimately linked to awareness of my body.

The problem, however, is that I had to learn about my identity and my body on my own. I had two university degrees at the time, and never once throughout my education did a teacher ever mention a single word about the significance of our body. I do not place blame on my teachers because I know that they were not trained to teach about the body in the way that I discuss here. This changed somewhat when I entered graduate school.

During my first meeting with the chair of my department at the time, Professor Stan Nemeroff, I expressed an interest in learning about myth. I really did not know why I had this interest. I was vaguely familiar with the work of Joseph Campbell, and this was the extent of my familiarity with myth. It was subsequently arranged for me to do an independent reading course on myth with Dr. William Lawlor. This course was a real eye opener for me. For the first time in my life, my "school work" related to my personal life. As I read Campbell's books, and eventually others writers on myth, like Sam Keen, I discovered that myth is an expression of the state of our inner lives. I began to make connections between the meaning of myth and my own endeavours to understand who I was. Through my readings, I came to realize that I was learning about the myth that formed me, or as Keen writes, my *personal myth.* This astonished me. My academic learning and my personal efforts to learn about who I was complemented one another. There

were other courses that influenced me in a similar way. It was immensely satisfying to be taking courses that shed light on the meaning of my life. The story, however, does not end here.

I eventually came across a book called *Myth and the Body* in which Stanley Keleman (1999) discusses how myth is connected to the body, how it expresses the body's inner state. This book was a landmark for me because it articulates my personal efforts to know who I am in a scholarly manner. It brings together all that I have learned about the meaning of myth with the knowledge that I have acquired about my body through meditation. It crystallizes a process that began years ago. My understanding of myth and its connection to the body has been a tremendous learning experience. This is how I came to choose myth and the body as the topic for this thesis. This thesis, therefore, is as much autobiographical as it is an academic work.

The discussion above has brought together John Dewey's encounter with his body with a similar experience of my own. We both needed to relate to our bodies, and discovered that the body possesses knowledge about our identity. Although I have not fully stated either of these stories, they can serve to illustrate the fundamental importance of the body in our lives. Furthermore, the need to reconnect to our body is aptly demonstrated by Le Breton's analysis of Western society. We may choose to think that our body is not useful or has no value but, as Le Breton observes above, this way of thinking is symptomatic of a malaise permeating our society.

In this thesis, I am suggesting that self-knowledge should include knowledge of the body, of our own bodies. As it stands, however, "Minds, not

bodies are taught in the classroom. At no point in the curriculum is an effort made to help students learn to read the language of the body . . . Our schools function as if the fact of incarnation was incidental to the task of education" (Keen, 1970, pp. 46-47). Presently the education of the body is nowhere to be found in the curriculum except, as Keen observes, in courses on personal hygiene and what we traditionally call physical education or gym class (p. 47). Here in Quebec, the total number of hours of physical education has diminished. Sex education is no longer required. Moral education, where value issues on the body can be discussed, has been reduced as well (cf. M.E.Q, 2000).

This thesis represents my attempt to address these issues and to create some awareness concerning the importance of our body in the educational milieu. Education is one of the primary means of communicating knowledge to our youth. The classroom can be a good place where young people can be initiated in the awareness of their body. Fortunate circumstances allowed me to become acquainted with my body. To leave the learning of such knowledge to chance or good fortune, however, is not enough. My concern is that if our schools do not introduce courses on the body into the curriculum, we run the risk that our youth may never learn about the body's significance. The patterns of modern living described by Le Breton will persist as long as the body remains at the periphery of education. The body, therefore, needs to find a home in education.

In this thesis, I set out to show how myth and the body are closely connected. Myth is a symbolic representation of our inner lives which is intimately connected to our body, and is therefore an expression of our

relationship to it. In the first chapter, I examine the question, "What is myth?" I explore what I consider to be the main features of myth, the functions it performs for a community, and its relevance in contemporary society. Lastly, I examine the concept of the waste land which essentially represents the lack of meaningful myth in a society. In chapter two, I begin with Jamake Highwater's idea that myth is a metaphor for the body. This idea illustrates that the wasteland, the absence of meaningful myth, can be seen as a metaphor for the body as well. I also explore conceptions of the body in Western culture that convey the body as a wasteland. In chapter three, I undertake to articulate a conception of the body that reveals its depth and richness. The body is a living, breathing entity that is inherently open to relationship. I argue that the body's inheritance is a source of knowledge and thus, an aspect of the body's richness. I consider the views of David Abram, Aimé Hamann, Stanley Keleman, and Alexander Lowen. I also attempt to articulate a process that can help us reconnect to our body. The important first step in reconnecting to our body can be achieved through the recovery of the significance of touching in our lives. Moreover, there is a form of touching that goes beyond the physical, and myth points the way to this touching. I argue that a purpose of myth, particularly the hero myth, is to act as a guide to help us get in touch with all the aspects of our identity. The medieval legend of Parsifal illustrates a number of things in this regard. This process necessarily includes the body. When we are in touch with all that we are, we embody paradox and become whole. Furthermore, to embody paradox is the deepest form of touching and signifies to be reconnected to our body.

Chapter 1: The Nature of Myth

This chapter explores the meaning of myth. It is divided in two parts. Part one gives an overview of myth's distinctive features, and evaluates its relevance in contemporary society. The second section examines the concept of the waste land -- a concept encapsulating what happens when we have no meaningful myth to live by.

1.1 What is myth?

There is hardly a day when I don't come across an article, a news report, or a conversation referring to "myth" as some sort of illusion. As I write these lines, today's edition of La Presse contains a typical article using myth to signify falsehood and illusion (Lauzon, 2002, p. 13). In other places, I have seen myth understood to mean fabrication, mistake and even a lie. In this usage, myth is the opposite of a fact, the truth or reality. It is a fatuous or unfounded story that is to be dismissed, and replaced with the real story which is based on the facts. This suggests that the significance of myth has been lost, and has led to the misconceptions that I have put forth. My purpose in this chapter is to provide a richer understanding of myth. It will serve as a backdrop to the myths of the body discussed in chapter two.

Myths are narratives or stories, and they have been with us for a very long time. According to Joseph Campbell (1949), "Throughout the inhabited world, in all times and under every circumstance, the myths of man have flourished" (p. 3). Thus we may ask, "What function has myth performed that accounts for its persistent presence?"

Neil Postman (1995) provides part of the answer to this question. He begins by pointing out that myth is "not any kind of story" (p. 5). He explains that a myth is a story that "tells of origins and envisions a future, a story that constructs ideals, prescribes rules of conduct, provides a source of authority, and above all, gives a sense of continuity and purpose" (pp. 5-6). Here myth is essentially a world view around which a society organizes itself. Postman offers the example of the god (a synonym he uses for myth) of Technology which proclaims that, "We are the Technological Species . . . Our destiny . . . is to replace ourselves with machines, which means that technological ingenuity and human progress are one and the same." Postman points out that those who profess faith in this god "must shape their needs and aspirations to the possibilities of technology" (p. 10). This demonstrates that while a myth provides structure, coherence and meaning for human existence, it also restricts other viewpoints from emerging or being considered. (This issue will be dealt with later in this chapter.)

The god of Technology is an example of a cultural myth that we live by. This kind of myth is to be distinguished from personal myths which emerge from our own efforts to give meaning and structure to our lives. Personal myths will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Another fundamental function of myth, as Kieran Egan (1992) points out, is to fulfill the human need to remember. "In oral cultures, people only know what they can remember" (p. 10). Since there is no writing, there has to be effective ways to remember knowledge so that it can be passed on from generation to generation. There are different types of knowledge that need to be remembered. For example, David Abram (1996) refers to the need to

preserve "the diverse properties of particular animals, plants, and places" (p.120). Egan (1992) identifies another category of knowledge that pertains to "social arrangements . . . [that] . . . determine appropriate marriage partners, appropriate behavior and feelings towards relations and others within the [community], appropriate economic activities . . ." (pp. 10-11). In order to achieve the transmission of such knowledge, Abram writes that a myth "must be embedded in spoken formulas that can easily be recalled . . . " (p. 106). He suggests, as does Egan, that these spoken formulas have taken the form of "legends and mythic stories" (p. 106). This raises a question: "Why does this precious knowledge take the form of a story?"

Egan, again, sheds light on this question. He states that "recent research has confirmed what myth-users knew long ago -- that we remember a set of vivid events plotted into a story much better than we can remember lists or sets of explicit directives" (p. 11). Abram comments that it is much easier to remember a phrase like "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" than it is to remember "one should always eat fruit in order to stay healthy" (p. 106). Why is this the case? For Egan, stories, unlike lists, have the capacity to engage our emotions. He writes, "The great power of the story is that it engages us affectively as well as requiring our cognitive attention; we learn the content of the story while we are emotionally engaged by its characters or events" (p. 11; cf. Coles, 1989). It is the emotional engagement provided by story that allows us to remember things more easily, and thus makes apparent a valuable function performed by myth for a community.

In *The Cry For Myth*, May (1991) posits a further claim for the importance of myth when he states that a "myth is a way of making sense in

a senseless world" (p. 15). He uses the word senseless and even "chaotic" (p. 53) to denote a world that is in a state of flux and constant change. For May, the world makes sense insofar as we can give it a structure or ordered form that makes it intelligible. Hence, he notes that there exists an "urgent need for everyone to give form to his or her life," (1975, p. 135) which he calls a "passion for form" (p. 128). It signifies the fundamental human need for structure and meaning. He explains form as being a "pattern, an image and an order given to what would otherwise simply be chaos" (1985, p. 138). For May, myth is a "way of bringing order and form into this chaos" (p. 155). He expounds that myth provides us with a "fixed point" (1991, p. 53) or framework that acts as a reference point to bring order to the chaos, and from which we, consequently, may derive meaning. According to May, the "cry for myth" signifies a deep longing in contemporary society for a mythic story that will provide meaning, structure and order.

In his discussion of the central mythic stories of the Bible, Reynolds Price (1978) asserts that "the first - and final - aim of narrative" (meaning the mythic stories of the Bible) is "compulsion of belief in an ordered world" (p. 34). He uses the word compulsion in the sense of a deep urge that wants to be satisfied. Like May, he sees in myth a form that fulfills the human need for an ordered world.

According to Campbell (1989), myth also serves a "pedagogical" function. It has the capacity "to carry a person through the inevitable stages of a lifetime" (p. 32). Some myths instruct us on how to get from one stage of life to another, from childhood through to old age. He goes so far as to say that there is a good possibility that there exists a myth to help anyone who is

stuck at a particular stage of life. "[I]f you can find out where a person is blocked, it should be possible to find a mythological counterpart for that particular threshold problem" (1988, p.176). In the same vein, May (1991) uses the term "existential crises" (p. 38) to express the crises that are inherent in each of the stages of life. Like Campbell, he maintains that there are myths which explain and point to a resolution of such a crisis (cf. pp. 38-40). For them, myths are not remnants of less sophisticated times, but rather, possible paths to maturity.

The myths we live by often go unnoticed or even ignored. Myths can unconsciously rule our lives. It is what Keen (1993) calls "the negative aspect of mythology" (p. 33). May illustrates this aspect of myth when he writes, "Myths are like the beams of a house: not exposed to outside view, they are the structure which holds the house together so people can live in it" (p. 15). Similarly, Campbell says that "the basic theme of all mythology [is] that there is an invisible plane supporting the visible one" (1988, p. 90). Although myths may be, for the most part, "invisible" or "not exposed to outside view," their influence on our lives cannot be overlooked. This implies that while human behavior is visible, that which motivates it, is not always clear. Thus Keen (1988) aptly comments that a myth "like an iceberg, is only 10% visible; 90% lies beneath the surface of consciousness of those who live by it" (p. 44). Hence myths provide an underlying structure, a perspective, a theme, a vision that guides our actions, thoughts and attitudes whether we realize it or not, and with or without our consent.

Because myth exists beneath the surface of consciousness, it can restrict the vision of a community. I refer, again, to Keen who throws light on

this issue. He writes that while "myth unites a people, . . . offers security and identity, it also creates selective blindness, narrowness and rigidity because it encourages us to follow "the faith of our fathers" . . . to repeat the formulas and rituals exactly as they were in the old days" (p. 45).

The problem of myth's restrictiveness and rigidity cannot be ignored and requires a resolution. Myths need renewal. A myth becomes narrow, rigid and stagnant if it is not periodically reexamined and revised. May (1991) stresses that myths need to be "reinterpreted by each succeeding generation to fit the new aspects and needs of a culture" (p. 40). In this way, a myth remains vibrant, relevant and fresh. Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) notes that a healthy tradition is one "constituted by a continuous argument . . . Traditions, when vital, embody continuities of conflict," and he asserts that without continuous argument, tradition "is dying or dead" (p. 222). For a myth to become renewed, and to remain pertinent and meaningful, it must be reaffirmed and adopted within the context of each new generation.

The revision and renewal of myth can be achieved if, as Jerome Bruner (1986) writes, a culture is conceived "as . . . a *forum* for negotiating and renegotiating meaning and for explicating action" while maintaining its traditional role of providing its members with "a set of rules or specifications for action" (p. 123). Such a view of myth provides a culture with a structure for living while allowing for dialogue, questioning, and thus, the possibility of change within the prescribed structure. Bruner's notion of the "forum aspect of culture" permits the dominant myths of a culture to be renewed because it "gives its participants a role in constantly making and remaking culture" which creates a culture that is "constantly in process" (p. 123). Such a conception

of culture addresses the negative aspects of myth identified earlier by Keen as blindness, narrowness and rigidity.

There remains one final issue with respect to myth that is a major concern for contemporary society. Writers such as Keen, May, Campbell and Postman have stated that many of the great myths of Western culture no longer have the power to inspire. Carl Jung (1961) points to the decline of Christianity as an example. He writes, "The Christian nations have come to a sorry pass; their Christianity slumbers and has neglected to develop its myth further in the course of the centuries" (p. 331). Successive generations stopped to reinterpret the Christian myth in the context of their times. Consequently, as Jung observes, the Christian myth "has become mute, and gives no answers" (p. 332).

Charles Taylor (1991) provides further illumination on this matter. Although he does not speak directly about myth, his discussion on freedom can be related to the decline of myth in our society. He states, "Modern freedom was won by our breaking loose from older moral horizons. People used to see themselves as part of a larger order, . . . and modern freedom came about through the discrediting of such orders" (p. 3). With regards to our discussion on myth, Taylor's observations serve to explain how individuals sought freedom from the various institutions which embodied the powerful narratives or myths from which they derived their identity. This shift away from society's institutions as sources of identity has had far-reaching implications on the relevance of myth in our present society. This is reflected in May's comment that, "Each of us is forced to do deliberately for oneself what in previous ages was done by family, custom, church, and state,

namely, form the myths in terms of which we can make some sense of experience" (1991, p. 29).

It may be true that the great myths of the past have lost their power to inspire us and give meaning to our lives. This, however, does not mean that myths are no longer useful or of value. Keen (1988) asserts that, "The wave of rationality," which he believes has come to dominate our society, "has not washed our psyches clean of myth. Rather, it has . . . replaced old myths with new ones." He identifies two of these new myths as " 'progress' and 'modernity' " (p.44), and which Postman, more specifically, calls the gods of Economic Utility, Consumership, Technology and Separatism (pp. 37-58). Both Keen and Postman agree that these new myths lack substance and depth. As a result, writes Postman, these new gods have "failed" (pp. 37-58).

1.2 Myth and the Wasteland

May notes that the modern Western individual has been greatly influenced by "four centuries of rationality, uniformity, and mechanics. . ." (1953, p.33). This, he writes, has created a situation in which the individual has sought "with unfortunate success, to repress aspects of [her/]himself which do not fit these uniform and mechanical standards" (p. 33; cf. Barrett, 1958, p. 276). Such repression signals the inability or the refusal to come to terms with all the dimensions of our identity. May (1991) affirms that this can also be seen as an "evasion" (p. 106) of a most difficult task.

For May, "*the price for this evasion is a deep loneliness and a sense of isolation . . . "With these* [sentiments] *go. . . the conviction that we have never*

really lived, that we have been exiled from life" (p. 106). This sullen and dreary way of living which May describes can be characterized as a sort of wasteland, the absence of meaningful myth.

The term waste land seems to have gained prominence when T. S. Eliot wrote his celebrated poem by the same name in 1922. Eliot's *The Waste Land* expresses the idea that life has somehow become sterile. He writes: "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?" (1950, p. 143); "Here is no water but only rock / Rock and no water and the sandy road" (p.156). The poem conveys a sense of desolation: ". . . I was neither / Living nor dead, and I knew nothing" (p.144); "I think we are in rats' alley / Where the dead men lost their bones" (p. 148). Eliot also speaks of a restlessness that is relentless: "Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit" (p. 157). He depicts a way of living that has become lifeless, stagnant, barren and fraught with anxiety.

Campbell refers to Eliot's poem when he offers his own conception of the wasteland. His treatment of the wasteland expresses the same lifelessness and disquiet found in Eliot's poem. Campbell uses the term waste land to refer to people who are living a life in which "the sense of the vitality of life is gone" (1989, p.33); "they're wandering . . . without any sense of where the water is-- the source that makes things green" (p.67). People are cut off from the sources of their vitality. This is because they are "living an inauthentic life" by which he means "doing as other people do, doing as your told, with no courage for your own life" (1988, p. 244). This, he says, creates a situation in which "people [are] fulfilling purposes that are not

properly theirs but have been put upon them as inescapable laws" (p. 121) which ultimately results in a form of "living . . . that evokes nothing of [their] . . . potentialities" (p. 161). A life wastes away when its true potential is not fulfilled.

Campbell's ideas on the wasteland corroborate May's thought on contemporary living that begins this section. May uses the words loneliness, isolation, exile and the feeling of never having lived to describe the price that is paid by those who evade essential aspects of their identity. Similarly, Campbell's depiction of the waste land elicits the same bleakness and sense of desperation of people who are exiled from the place where nourishment and fulfillment may be found, and thus feel isolated. They are lonely because they are disconnected from themselves and so they cannot connect to others in a meaningful way. They have no sense of having truly lived because they have lived their lives according to the expectations of others and not according to their own dreams. Effectively, they are living a life that is not their own. The people who inhabit the waste land have "repressed the impulse of [their] nature" (Campbell, 1989, p. 33). How can they possibly feel content?

It seems to me that the wasteland arises when we evade aspects of our identity, and choose instead to live a fragmented life. Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham (1992) explain that, "Having split our world [and our selves], . . . we lack all sense of *balance*" (p. 59). Balance is about harmony. Alexander Lowen (1995) elucidates that balance is an essential feature in a healthy and harmonious life when he states, ". . . pain and sorrow . . . cannot be separated from pleasure and joy any more than night can be separated

from day . . . But a life in which there is pleasure and joy can make pain and sorrow bearable" (p. 302). Lowen suggests that balance is created when all the elements of our identity exist in the same space, this creates balance in our lives; our whole being is acknowledged, and this makes life bearable. However when we see ourselves as one thing or another, such a vision obliges us to repress an essential aspect of ourselves for we are denying our unity, and this pushes us away from any sense of balance. This leads us, as Kurtz and Ketcham write, "to sway precariously . . . running from one extreme to another" (p. 59). We sway in this manner because our being does not fit such extremes. Therefore the waste land may be construed as the place where we do not fit and where we can never feel at home. It is a state of homelessness.

The continuous movement or swaying helps to understand the restlessness experienced in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, cited earlier, "Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit" (1950, p. 157). How can we rest in a place where we do not fit? In such a state, we cannot grow because a part of our identity or nature is repressed. Like everything else in nature, when we cease to grow, we begin to waste away. Similarly Campbell (1989) writes, "The moment the life process stops, it starts drying up" (p. 67).

In *The Spirituality of the Body*, Lowen (1990) writes, "We humans are like trees . . . Uproot a tree and the leaves dry; uproot a person and [s/]he becomes a lifeless abstraction" (p. 105). Just as a tree that is uprooted slowly withers away, so does a human life gradually wither away as well. Living in the waste land conveys the feeling of uprootedness in the sense that it is a place that does not sustain growth. It is the place where the uprooted

ones have been cast away. Both the tree and the human need to be grounded in order to grow. What does this imply for the human? Lowen supplies an answer. He states, "When we say that a person is well grounded. . . it means that s/he knows who s/he is and where s/he stands. To be grounded is to be connected to the basic realities of life" (p. 105). In terms of this discussion, we could say that we are grounded when we are connected to the basic aspects of our being and know the myth by which we live.

To illustrate, Lowen begins with the example of an electrical circuit to convey this meaning. He explains that if an electrical circuit is not grounded, there is the possibility that a strong charge could overpower the system and blow it up. He notes that people can react similarly. "In the same way, individuals who are not grounded risk being overwhelmed by strong feelings . . . To prevent this from happening, ungrounded individuals must reduce all feelings" (p.104). Lowen indicates that we uproot ourselves and become ungrounded when we "reduce all feelings." The uprooted individual is synonymous to the ungrounded individual. To continue with Lowen's analogy of an electrical circuit, to reduce feelings can be taken to mean to reduce the intensity of the *charge* of our feelings. In this context, our aliveness can be seen as the intensity of the charge of our feelings. When we reduce this charge, we reduce the sense of our aliveness.

The reduction of feeling creates an emptiness within us since we are not allowing the full range of our feelings to be expressed. May (1953) connects this feeling of emptiness with the waste land. He writes, "[W]hen a

person feels himself inwardly empty, . . . he experiences nature around him also as empty, dried up, dead" (p. 69).

May's idea that our inner nature and earth's nature are intimately related is shared by Lowen. Lowen, however, begins with nature on the outside and makes his way inward. He draws our attention to "the pollution of the air, the earth, and the waters, with the loss of the forests and the extinction of numerous species of wild creatures" (pp. 196-197). His point is that the earth has literally become a waste land as a result of pollution, and that we are the ones who have created it. After pointing this out to us, he notes, "Accompanying this destructive activity has been . . . a corresponding deterioration in people's health and vitality" (p. 197). Lowen and May come from slightly different perspectives but seem to agree that if our inner state feels like a waste land then this feeling will be reflected in our perception of nature or in the way we act towards it. The inner waste land and the outer waste land grow out of each other and exist in a dialectical relationship. Further to this, Lowen's and May's comments imply that nature is indivisible.

The wasteland manifests itself in contemporary society in a variety of ways. Postman (1995) observes a "proliferation of 'theme parks' in both the United States and Europe" (p.12). He recounts, for example, that such a park in Germany will use as its theme "East Germany under Communism," and explains how park employees will pretend to be government spies and place visitors in a fake jail if they speak out against the government. He cites another theme park that is being developed in Georgia which will feature the theme "Gone With The Wind Country" (p. 12). Postman explains the growth of these theme parks when he writes, "Nightmare or fantasy, these theme

parks *allow one to inhabit a world* . . ." (p. 12) (emphasis mine). The growing number of these theme parks express the need that we have to belong, and to feel part of a community. To live in the waste land is to live in isolation where there is no sense of community. In an attempt to deal with this agonizing feeling, people will go to desperate lengths to feel that they belong. As Postman indicates, "it is better to be [somewhere, even a theme park] than to be nowhere" (pp. 12-13), for to be nowhere is intolerable. Flocking to these theme parks is a way to fill this void, at least, temporarily.

Postman draws our attention to another sign of the waste land in our culture when he calls our attention to the "trivial uses to which sacred symbols are now put" (p. 25). He points to "Moses. . . depicted in a poster selling kosher chickens" and how "the infant Jesus and Mary have been invoked to promote VH-1, a rock-music television station" (p. 25). The use of sacred symbols in this manner indicates how the significance of these symbols has wasted away. For Postman, the use of such symbols in the advertising of products suggests the "obliteration of the difference between the sacred and the profane" (p. 25). As well, it evokes the sense that things are not as they should be. We must remember, however, that the waste land harbours wasting human lives so how can anything there possibly be as it should.

Finally, I want to briefly highlight other symptoms of the waste land. According to both Postman and May the increase in suicide and in the consumption of drugs and alcohol, and random violence among our youth are symptomatic of the waste land (cf. Postman, 1995, p.11; May, 1991, pp. 9,

23). Lastly, May points to the phenomenal rate of growth in the number of cults in the United States (pp. 21-24).[3]

May observes that many people have turned to psychotherapy for help and that this is good. He suggests that like psychotherapy, the use of drugs and alcohol, and the turning to cults are attempts by individuals, albeit poor and ineffective ones, "to get help holding themselves together" (p.16). The help that is sought may be a mangled form of help but represents, nevertheless, a desire to become whole. In a similar way, the random violence that Postman refers to may be seen as a distorted way to express one's aliveness or perhaps, it expresses that one is cut off from the source of one's aliveness (cf. Hamann, 1996, pp. 83-87). In this context, suicide can be an indication of just how unbearable it is to live in the waste land.

In this chapter, I have outlined what I deem to be the most salient features of myth. The next chapter is concerned with, yet, another facet of myth which is the idea that myth can be seen as a metaphor for the body.

Chapter Two: A Survey of Some of the Central Myths of the Body

According to Jamake Highwater (1990), myths are metaphors for the body. In his view, the way "we conceive of the human body" is reflected in "the most fundamental value systems of our societies" (p. 7). Furthermore, he observes that "In each culture and in each era, the conception of the physical body becomes an anthropocentric world model" (p. 8). This idea illustrates that the wasteland, the absence of meaningful myth can be seen as a metaphor for the body as well. This chapter examines myths of the body that have dominated Western culture, and convey the body as a wasteland. Furthermore, I examine the influences of these myths on our attitudes and behavior. As will be seen, these myths portray the body negatively. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the problem that is the raison d'être for this thesis.

2.1 The Body as Sin

I begin this investigation by hearkening back to the creation myth of ancient Persia. In his summary of this myth, Highwater recounts that "there were two creators": "the Lord of the Light, Ahura Mazda" and "the Demon of Darkness, Angra Mainyu" (p. 94). He describes their clashes with one another, and how the Demon of Darkness ultimately succeeds in inflicting "woe" and "evil" into the lives of the first human beings. Thus the first humans "were born into a corrupt world which is torn by the battle of good and evil" (p. 97). Even with its promise of redemption (when Zoroaster will come), this myth is fundamentally "pessimistic" and presents a "grim . . . vision of existence" because it "takes for granted the corruption of matter,

nature, the world, and the body" (p. 97). Redemption would "no longer be discovered in the physical world of nature" but through "the correct and prescribed human behavior" in the form of a "rationally determined system of ethics" (p. 101). Highwater points out that our attitudes continue to be shaped by this world view as many of us "take for granted . . . that we must redeem ourselves from the inescapable corruption of the flesh through acts of virtue" (p. 101).

This myth evolved to become the basis for the religious movement known as Zoroastrianism which, Highwater shows, greatly influenced Judaism, Christianity and Islam. (p. 97). Although these religions have their differences, they share, nonetheless, "the same negative vision of the world and the body . . ." (p. 104).

Highwater then observes that the myths and rituals of cultures that preceded ancient Persia reveal "different visions of the cosmos" that were "comparatively affirmative in their vision of existence." In particular, the visions articulated a view of life in which "[i]t was assumed that life would bring fulfillment and pleasure, rather than denial and pain. Evil was not . . . an inescapable aspect of cosmic corruption" (p. 98). This affirmative attitude did not persist and there occurred a shift in attitude toward a negative world view that Campbell (1968) calls "the Great Reversal." With this shift in perspective, Campbell writes that, "Life became known as a fiery vortex of delusion, desire, violence and death, a burning waste" (p. 420). Highwater (1990) states that the first signs of this reversal were seen not only "in the teachings of . . . Zoroastrianism" (p. 99) but also, as Campbell observes, in the teachings of the Buddha: "All things are on fire" and in Greece, as

revealed in the " 'Orphic saying *Soma sema*: The body is a tomb' " (p. 420). Highwater emphasizes that the effects of the Great Reversal were immense as it inscribed the Western world view with a deep negativism in its "concept of nature, the body and sexuality" (1990, p. 104).

Another source that contributed to the idea of body as sin is found in Gnosticism. Keen (1994) observes that right after the exploits of Alexander the Great and the demise of the Greek city-states, there emerged new sects and other groups espousing religious and philosophical beliefs who were collectively known as the Gnostics (p. 126). They held the view that "the body and the material world are a filthy prison, a dark cave, in which the pure soul is trapped." This rejection of the body was fueled by the belief that they could discover "gnosis, or secret knowledge, that would awaken the soul and cause it to remember its divine origins" (p. 126). In such a conception of life, the body is the enemy since a major goal of Gnosticism is to be released from the body. The urgency or necessity of freeing themselves from their bodies is rooted in the belief that the world was created by an evil force or "demiurge," and so anything connected to this world such as "the desires of the body for sensual and sexual pleasure" were seen as "evil impulses that should be denied" (p. 126).

Keen offers a passage from the Gnostic source, *The Book of Thomas the Contender*, to exemplify their disdain of the body: "Woe to you who put your hope in the flesh and the prison that will perish. . . Woe to you who are captives, for you are bound in caves" (p. 126). To elucidate this even further, Keen calls our attention to a metaphor of Gnostic origins: "the soul is like a pearl -- pure and immortal -- that has been dipped into the excrement and

slime of matter" (p. 126). This image expresses the intense disgust of the body harbored by the Gnostics.

I want to turn, briefly, to the figure of Jesus and examine how he contributed to the negative attitude of the body. Highwater (1990) contends that Jesus' views about celibacy led to a drastic change in attitudes about marriage and procreation that were prevalent at that time in Jewish communities. He points out that Jewish custom held that "God's first commandment to man and woman was to procreate" (p. 112). This decree would be challenged when, as Elaine Pagels states, "Jesus endorses . . . a new possibility and one he says is even better: rejecting both marriage and procreation in favor of voluntary celibacy, for the sake of following him into the new age" (cited in Highwater, pp. 112-113). Highwater believes that placing celibacy in such a context acted as a "major force" (p. 112) in directing Christianity toward the adoption of the perspective of the body as sin.

This was given further impetus when Paul the Apostle, whom Highwater calls the "zealot of celibacy," proclaimed that "marriage was not a sin but that there was great virtue in renouncing it" (p. 113). Keen explains that Paul could justify such a position because the "mood" that prevailed at this time "was one of apocalypse" (p. 127). Keen (1994) captures the essence of this apocalyptic mood:

> The world is coming to an end soon . . . Time is short . . . Christ will come again at any moment, everything will be destroyed and transformed in the twinkling of an eye. We are only sojourners here,

> so we should not settle down to cultivate and enjoy the earth. Time spent in dalliance is inexpedient, stolen from the serious business of preparing for the coming kingdom. There is no time for the pleasures of marriage. (p. 127)

This citation reveals the capacity of Paul and the early church fathers to create an ambiance, which Keen calls a state of "emergency" (p. 127), that made it very difficult to refute their denunciation of the body. Their emphasis on the coming kingdom served to diminish the importance of life on earth, and consequently all activities related to perpetuating life on earth such as marriage suffered diminishing importance.

Paul was an important influence in driving a wedge between the body and the spirit. His utter rejection of the body, and his outlook on the irreconcilable relationship between body and spirit is expressed in the following:

> For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other (Galatians 5:17) . . . For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (Romans 8: 5-6)

This view was elaborated further at the end of the fourth century A.D. by Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. Before getting to Augustine's thinking,

however, I want to make brief mention of a doctrine known as Manichaeism which arose in the third century A.D. According to Highwater, it influenced the Christian vision of the world and the body.

Highwater (1990) puts forward the main tenet of Manichaeism: "there are two primary elements in the universe, the goodness of God and the evil of matter." For the adherents of this doctrine, "matter was concupiscence" and considered " 'the mother of all demons', " and that "the soul was imprisoned in it." The goal, therefore, was "to release the soul from the body" (1990, p. 117). Highwater observes that for the most part, "Christians unanimously embraced as truth the Manichaean vision of the world as corrupt, fortifying their sex-negative point of view " (p. 118). It is at this point that I turn to Augustine.

Christianity became the official religion of Rome during Augustine's lifetime. Augustine reinterpreted Christianity "to fit the limitations of Christian freedom within the Roman world" (p. 121). One of his achievements was to give a new interpretation to Genesis. Highwater writes that for Augustine, "Adam's sin not only caused our mortality but also . . . made sex irreversibly corrupt" (p. 121). "The semen itself . . . transmits from generation to generation the damnation incurred by sin" which meant that "every human ever conceived through semen is born contaminated with sin" (p. 122). Furthermore, Pagels adds that "in the beginning, when Adam only existed and before the creation of Eve, he discovered within himself the first government -- which ruled with rational soul, 'the better part of a human being', over the body, 'the inferior part' " (cited in Highwater, p. 122).

Highwater explains that, from Augustine's viewpoint, this perfect state of existence was disrupted when Eve came into the scene causing "Adam's assertion of his own autonomy which, Augustine declared, was tantamount to rebellion against the rule of God" (p. 122). For Pagels, Augustine's thinking implies that "humankind's rebellion against God is the 'rebellion of the flesh' - a spontaneous uprising in the *disobedient members*" (cited in Highwater, p. 122). This leads Highwater to conclude that, "The Augustinian body is a manifestation of sin" (p. 123). Moreover, Augustine takes up with Paul when he promotes celibacy and pronounces it as "the rejection of this world and the way to gain control over his own life." This, writes Highwater, "represented the paradox of attaining freedom through self-denial" (p. 121).

Augustine's convictions made a profound impression on Western society. In every corner of the Western world, there remains "a residue of Augustine's dogma." This is reflected in the contemporary attitude that, even today, most of us "accept as fact the virtue of spirit and the contamination of body" (p. 126).

To end this discussion, I want to cite Keen (1994) who summarizes the historical influences which we have inherited concerning the body as sin:

> Something crazy happens when we place the words *spirituality, sensuality,* and *sexuality* in the same sentence. . . We seem to be mixing the pure and the impure, the sacred and the profane in the same container. There is something shocking about this. The same impulse that leads us to search for God in the heights leads us to segregate the sacred from the sensual and the sexual. One belongs

to the "higher" realm, the other to the "lower" realm; one is exalted and concerns our salvation, the other is base and tempts us to sin. (p. 121)[4]

2.2 The Body as Commodity

Highwater (1990) outlines the historical conditions that created our consumer society. At the beginning of the twentieth century women were increasingly finding work outside the home. He stresses that these changes first began to emerge among the working class population, and not from within the well-to-do middle class. The increased presence of women in the workplace had the effect of changing both "the stature of women and fundamentally alter[ing] their relationship with men" (p. 175). A vivid account of these changes is given to us by John D'Emilio and Estelle Freeman :

> The novelty of young women working outside the home threw men and women together in a variety of ways. On downtown sidewalks and streetcars, in offices, department stores, restaurants, and factories, and in parks at lunch hour, young men and women mingled easily, flirted with one another, made dates, and stole time together. (cited in Highwater, p. 175)

Highwater observes that our consumer society took hold at the moment when entrepreneurs recognized the economic potential of these young working people. "The originators of consumer products were after the pay checks of the growing number of working people, who were easily induced to spend what little money they had on luxuries that provided a

sense of worth and specialness to otherwise drab lives" (p. 175). They possessed a readiness for this type of spending because it gave them a source of excitement which would, perhaps, not have been present otherwise in their lives. They wanted diversion and they got it in the way of "dance halls and amusement parks which offered [them] welcome relief from the . . . dreary world of wage labor" (p. 176). These forms of amusement stimulated the economy to even greater heights as all of this activity would ultimately be connected to love relationships and give rise to our contemporary notions of romanticism. As well, romance was associated to such mundane products as "mouthwashes, beer and toothpaste" (p. 180). Highwater refers to this as the "sexualization of consumption" (p. 181), and describes how it manifested itself in romantic relationships:

> The intermingling of the sexes at working-class amusements . . . brought the practice of dating to full flower. Young men made points with the women they hoped to attract by having enough money to be able to treat the objects of their affections to rides at the amusement parks, gifts, refreshments, a night on the town, or perhaps a trip on one of the romantic lake steamers. If a young man could not afford such favors, he might have to do without the pleasure of a woman's company. (p. 178)

Our consumer society came to full fruition when, eventually, "traditional middle-class values of 'hard work and self-denial' " (p. 180) gave way to the "commercialized leisure" and "hedonistic consumption" (p. 179) which up to now had been confined to the working class. With the middle class on board, the myth of consumerism became firmly rooted in our society.

Highwater perceives advertizing and consumerism as the driving forces behind the commodification of the body. He refers to them as "forms of proselytizing" (p.170). As is commonly known, a proselyte can mean a new convert to a religion. Thus we may infer that as a society, we have been converted to the values promulgated by consumerism and advertizing which have taken on the characteristics of a religion. This religious undertone is developed further when Highwater notes that so ubiquitious and prolific has been the impact of these two that they are "far more pervasive in our society than the Christian doctrine was during the Middle Ages" (p. 170). The influence on our way of living is profound. Moreover, Highwater's usage of proselytizing lends support, as we will see, to Postman's use of the word "god" to signify the myths embodied by consumerism and economic utilitarianism.

Postman (1995) writes that much of our attitudes and behaviour is encompassed by two interrelated myths which he calls the "gods of Economic Utility and Consumerism" (p. 33). The god of Economic Utility asserts that "we are first and foremost economic creatures; our sense of worth and purpose is to be found in our capacity to secure material benefits" (p. 28). The god of Consumership states that "goodness inheres in those who buy things; evil in those who do not" (p. 33). Postman notes how these two gods complement each other as one "postulates that you *are* what you do for a living" while the other postulates that "you *are* what you accumulate" (p. 33).

Postman relates that the values of these gods are instilled in us at a very young age, through advertizing. Television is the primary medium for advertizement. According to Postman, television viewing begins at about the

age of one and a half, "getting serious at age three" (p. 33). From the ages of three to eighteen, "the average American youngster will see about 500,000 television commercials, which means that the television commercial is the single most substantial source of values to which the young are exposed" (p. 33).

As Keen observes, the main purpose of advertizing is, "to remind us at every turn that real . . . successful . . . [people] . . . are big spenders. They have enough cash or credit to consume the best. Buying is status" (1991, p. 53). Thus advertizing inculcates the values put forth by the gods of Economic Utility and Consumership. Loyalty to these gods creates a situation in which we allow economics to define "(t)he horizon within which we live" and to provide "the source of our value system" (p. 53). He indicates how this affects our perception of work and remarks that when this happens, "we begin to consider it honourable . . . to do whatever [we] must to make a living" (p. 65). This gradually leads us to take on a "market orientation" (p. 65), a term he borrows from Eric Fromm. Keen construes this term to mean that we "begin to tailor our personalities to what the market requires." He points out how many of us "practice smiling and charm so we will have 'winning personalities' " and how "we learn to sell ourselves and practice the silly art of power dressing." The result is that "we mold ourselves into commodities" (p. 65). We become so immersed in living according to the dictates of the economy that we "[i]gnore [our] body time [and] body rhythms" and allow ourselves to be driven by "corporate time EST (economic standard time)." We have subscribed to the idea that "time is money." Underlying these attitudes is "the deep mythic message that your body is no longer your own" (p. 63). Keen 's analysis suggests that our bodies belong to the gods of

Economic Utility and Consumerism. They are twin gods, or at least siblings, who act together to rule our lives.

Keen explains that there are feminists who believe that the increasing presence of women in executive positions may help to change the ways in which business is conducted and bring more kindness into the workplace (p. 65). He is pessimistic about this ever happening because in the business world "[w]omen executives have proven themselves the equal of men in every way -- including callousness." The point that he wishes to drive home is that, "[t]he danger of economics is not that it turns women into men but that it destroys the fullness of both manhood and womanhood" (p. 65).

Consumerism is a very powerful myth since it affects fundamental areas of our lives, our relationships and our work. Matthew Fox feels that beneath the conspicious consumption and the lifestyle entailed by this myth, which transforms us into commodities, lies an inner need that is not being fulfilled. He states that consumerism "feeds on our unsated appetites; it feeds on the fact that we have not been nourished spiritually, that there is a gaping hole in us that cannot be filled, no matter how many goods and goodies we buy" (1993, p. 244). We are enticed by an endless array of products whose aquisition creates the illusion that they will bring contentment and satisfaction to our lives. How can external things fulfill an inner need? According to this view, consumersim may be interpreted as a reaction to an unfulfilled need whose unfulfillment we may not even be aware of.

2.3 The Body as Weapon

Keen and Highwater provide two interesting perspectives on the body as weapon. Both writers focus their attention on men because, as we will see, this myth of the body expresses sources of identity which are essentially male. Keen approaches the issue at hand by examining how men have historically been implicated in war and how this has shaped their bodies into weapons. Highwater looks at this matter from the point of view of men's reaction to their failure to live up to the ideals of manhood put forth by the consumer society. I begin with Keen's treatment of this subject.

Keen starts out by alluding to men's historical involvement in violent behavior and the tendency to explain such behavior as an innate attribute of maleness. He argues that such reasoning is to "ignore the obvious: men are systematiclly conditioned to endure pain, to kill, and to die in the service of the tribe, nation, or state" (p. 37). For thousands of years "men have been assigned the dirty work of killing and have therefore had their bodies and spirits forged into the shape of a weapon" (p. 47). For Keen, violent behavior is not something that comes naturally to men but rather it is something that historical circumstances have required of them. The differences in the frequency of violent behavior between men and women is accounted for by the fact that, historically, men "have always been expected to be able to resort to violence when necessary" (p. 37). Men did not have much choice but to comply with these demands if they wanted to fit into standards of manhood which, throughout history, have consistently included the willingness to commit violent acts that were socially and politically sanctioned.

Keen notes that contemporary attitudes and practices have not changed much with respect to war. It is not that he expects that women and children should be sent to war but rather that men continue to be subjected to a model of manhood that requires them to be violent. "[T]he myth of war" has shaped us to such an extent that "[w[e assume war is 'just the way things are' " (p. 39). He perceives that "we [still] grant the state the power to interrupt the lives of young men, to draft them into the army, and to initiate them into the ritual of violence". This, he writes, "teaches men to value what is tough and to despise what is "feminine" and tenderhearted" (p. 37). He concedes that, today, most men do not enter the military but that all men are nevertheless affected by the "warfare system" (p. 38). He demonstrates this influence by identifying questions that men ask themselves either consciously or unconsciously: "Am I a man? Could I kill? If tested would I prove myself brave? Does it matter whether I have actually killed or risk being killed?" (p. 38). He goes on with related questions all of which seem to hit the mark. I say this because I have asked myself similar questions in the past, and most recently in the wake of the war in Afghanistan and the renewed conflict in the Middle East.

According to Keen, the appearance of nuclear weaponry brought about a fundamental change in the tradional war code. Women and children must now face the same prospects of destruction that men have always had to bear in times of war. He draws our attention to this change because it contrasts with the "old war code" which assumed that women and children were to be protected while men "were expendible" (p. 47). History reveals, however, that this code was not always honoured, and that women and children were sometimes killed in war. His point is that it never occurred to

anyone to even imagine that men can lay claim to "the sanctity and protection afforded, in theory, to women and children" (p. 47). It seems that it was tacitly assumed that "[i]t is wrong to kill women and children but men are legitimate candidates for systematic slaughter -- cannon fodder" (p. 46). Men have accepted the role of warrior throughout history but this does not mean, as was stated earlier, that they have a natural predisposition to war.

Keen provides a description of the warrior's body, the body as weapon. We can all ask, as we read this, how natural is it to assume such a stance. He writes:

> So men, the designated warriors, gradually form . . . a pattern of muscular tension and rigidity that freezes them into the posture that is appropriate only for fighting -- shoulders back, chest out, stomach pulled in, anal sphincter tight, balls drawn up into the body as far as possible, eyes narrowed, breathing foreshortened and anxious, heart rate accelerated . . . The warrior' s body is perpetually uptight and ready to fight. (p. 41)

Keen next discusses how the warfare system has marked the relationships between men and women. The feminist movement has elucidated all of the ways that men have been violent toward women, and that this can no longer be denied. He reports some disturbing estimates which project that in the United States "three out of four women will be victims of at least one violent crime in their lifetime" (p. 46). He wonders how we are to make sense of this. He affirms that we must have the courage to look at the causes that lead men to behave so violently toward women. He uses the

logic that is associated with computers,"Garbage in, garbage out," and applies this to men's behavior, "Violence in, violence out." For Keen, this means that "Men are violent because of the systematic violence done to their bodies and spirits [so] . . . [b]eing hurt they become hurters" (p. 46).

Keen then observes that men's violence is not aimed only at women. He refers to various government reports which indicate that men brutalize many more men than they do women. He brings this up to point out that as a society we have yet to acknowledge that these violent outbursts are a "structual part of the warfare system that victimizes both men and women" (p. 46). This is an aspect of men's violence that tends to be overlooked. So it merits being restated that men, too, are victims of the violence that is enouraged by the warfare system.

Keen asserts that both men and women must share in the responsibility for the unpleasant consequences that the war system has produced in our society. He writes:

> When we accept the war system, men and women alike tacitly agree to sanction the violation of the flesh -- the rape of women by men who have been conditioned to be "warriors," and the gang rape of men by the brutality of war. Until women are willing to weep and accept equal responsibility for the systematic violence done to the male body and spirit by the war system, it is not likely that men will lose enough of their guilt and regain enough of their sensitivity to weep and accept responsibility for women who are raped . . . (p. 47)

This view is bound to create controversy since it is such a radical departure from the commonly held view that men, alone, are to blame for the violence perpetrated against women. Some may be offended by this stance and see it as an attempt to exonerate men from their wrongdoings. Keen is not trying to justify men's violence but explain it. For me, Keen is exposing an extremely well-hidden influence of the myth of war. His comments suggest that when men and women accept the myth of war, its acceptance does not show itself only in times of war but manifests itself at all times in all spheres of human living. It insidiously tarnishes our human relationships, and infects both men and women alike. From my viewpoint, Keen's intention is to stir us deeply enough in order to create a depth of awareness and an openness that are necessary for the eventual resolution to this situation.

Highwater (1990) offers a different interpretation. He begins his inquiry by stating that in the decades that followed the Industrial Revolution, "many men [were] transformed into lethal weapons. . . " (p. 187). A consumer society gives rise to aggressive behavior by instilling "a sense of uselessness" that is caused by either "boredom, emasculation, poverty, ignorance or brutalization" (p. 193). It creates ideals of male success that are largely unattainable for most men. These ideals are disseminated by an assault of media messages that speak of "opulence, sexual triumph, wealth and power" (p. 193). The pervasiveness of these messages aggravate, even further, feelings of frustation and failure. He observes that our consumer society has created a vision of life whereby "[s]uccess is so greatly prized that anything short of it is believed to constitute failure" (p. 193). In this conception of life, there is no continuity between success and faliure. We are either one or the other. There is no redemption from failure and so it

becomes a condemnation. Failure is, therefore, a "form of death" (p. 193). This helps us to understand why men are "suffocat[ed]" (p. 195) by their experience of failure.

Highwater states that this has left many men with a rage that must somehow be vented. For some, it is "work[ed] out. . . in their sexual relationship to women" (p. 187) and thus, sex becomes something perverse. Its erotic nature vanishes and becomes "a mechanism that, failing the obtainment of quick pleasure, takes out its frustation and rage by inducing humiliation" (p. 187). These men seek to humiliate because they, themselves, feel humiliated. Sex becomes a desperate attempt to demonstrate some semblance power in order to counteract feelings of humiliation. Highwater writes, "Today the relationship of power and sexual humiliation seems to be endemic in America" (p. 190). While we have long recognized this form of "brutality" among the so-called "savage warriors" such as "the native Indians, Africans, Huns, and Turks," we have not fully acknowledged "how obsessed our own society is with competition, aggression, power and the kind of phsyical and economic subjugation that is the basis of humiliation" (p. 190).

Moreover, Highwater writes, "Modern sex is built upon a particular type of tension" that never seems to be relieved. It is the same tension that is found in the business world which "allows for nothing short of absolute success or total failure." He concludes that "The unrelenting tension between these choices engenders the mythology of the male body as a weapon -- a weapon used to fight an internalized and hopeless war against emasculation"

(p. 195). This war is hopeless because success, in this context, is akin to a state of perfection which no human being can attain.

Highwater notes that another major consequence of the myth of consumerism is to have "created a vivid male analogy between enonomic success and sexual prowess. . . " (p. 193). He refers to the Oklahoma tragedy as an illustration of this. He recounts how a postal worker became so annoyed and discontented after being disciplined by his boss that he went into a post office and shot fourteen people whom he did not know before killing himself. Highwater sees, here, a man who considered himself "a failure in a system that worships only winners" and who felt that he could not "uphold the much-glorified role as 'breadwinner' " (p.194). Indeed, this tragedy shows how failure can be a death sentence. Moreover, it demonstrates that "exaggerated expectations and the consequent failure to achieve one's unrealistic goals" (p.194) is a pitfall created by the myth of consumerism.

Finally, Highwater observes that at the end of the twentieth century, the athlete has become a "masculine sex totem" (p.196). For many, the athlete personifies the ideals of manhood put forth by the consumer society. Highwater lists the athlete's attributes that have come to epitomize masculinity: "a barbaric position of incontestable authority and potency that commands unlimited sex, utter domination, great wealth, unthinkable luxury, as well as respect and love and the kind of fear that keeps other males in a position of submission" (p. 196). The athlete, here, is seen as godlike, and this perpetuates the illusion that perfection is a requisite of manhood as proclaimed by the myth of consumerism. As well, the use of words such as

barbaric, domination, fear and submission suggest that beneath the wealth and admiration lies an aggressive energy that is always ready to defend this position of adulation.

2.4 The Body as Machine

The seventeenth century philosopher, René Descartes, is credited with having bestowed Western culture with a mechanistic view of the world. T.Z. Lavine (1984) writes that according to this view, "all of nature can be explained by the mechanical motion of material substances. . . [T]he world is infinite in extension, with bodies of all shapes and sizes . . . All motion of bodies is due to mechanical impact, like the mechanical workings in a clock" (p. 117). Accompanying this mechanistic view of the world, Descartes' philosophy is characterized by what Lavine calls an "extreme dualism" which creates:

> a split, a division . . . between two different kinds of reality: between mental, spiritual, thinking substance (such as humans and God) and physical, spatial, extended substance (such as our bodies, the planets, mountains . . .). These two kinds of substances . . . represent two different and separate realities between which there is a gap which can never be closed. (pp. 121-122)

Descartes' dualism is given full expression when he writes:

> [S]ince on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself insofar as I am only a thinking thing and not an extended being,

> and since on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body insofar as it is only an extended substance which does not think, it is certain that this I (that is to say, my soul, by virtue of which I am what I am) is entirely and truly distinct from my body and that it can exist without it . . . I think therefore I am. (1960, pp. 132 and 24)

Highwater observes that Descartes' mechanism and dualism became the philosophical foundation for his conception of the human body as a machine. Since machines are not governed by moral precepts in the way humans are, he "assumed that humans must therefore be more than than automata in human shape" (p. 153). According to Descartes, people are distinguished from machines because they have a "soul: that part of us distinct from the body" (1960, p. 35). Highwater (1990) states that, for Descartes, it is the "incorporeal soul" that gives people freedom of action without which there would be "no basis for Christian ethics" (p. 153).

Despite Descartes' explanation of the division between the body and the soul in scientific terms, he reaffirmed, nevertheless, the Christian doctrine that denounced the "body as a source of spiritual knowledge" (p.160). In addition, Cartesian philosophy and Christianity shared similar views regarding the "immaterial spirit." "In much the way that the Church was focused upon the disembodied soul, Descartes was concerned with rationality as a disembodied process [which] stressed the reality of thought and its independence from the material world" (p. 156).

Descartes' conception of physical substance in mechanistic terms allowed him to affirm that material or "corporeal things . . . exist as the objects

of pure mathematics, or of the demonstrations of geometry" (1960, p. 126). Like his dualism which had a scientific basis, Highwater states that Descartes' mechanistic vision of the world and his denigration of the physical world are connected to Christian beliefs. "It resonated with Augustinian morality, and therefore made Christian dogma the premise upon which a supposedly nonreligious and objectified science was built" (p. 154). Lavine (1984) suggests that Descartes' philosophy was intended as a "compromise . . . between the Church and the scientists: to each its own jurisdiction -- to the scientists, matter and its mechanical laws of motion; to the theologians, mental substance, the souls of human beings" (p. 128).

Highwater and Lionel Casson elucidate the unseeming connection between Christianity, technology and Cartesian philosophy. Casson posits that according to the Christian viewpoint, history is a movement "toward a spiritual goal and there is no time to lose; thus work of all sorts is essential, and becomes. . .a form of worship. Such ideas created a mental climate highly favorable for the growth of technology" (cited in Highwater, p. 155). Highwater points to the Church in Rome which held the belief that sin was expiated through the achievement of "good works" (p. 155). Thus Casson writes, "The Western attitude toward work and technology" can be seen "as an expression of Christian faith." This attitude is reflected in a rendering of God, in Westminster around the year 1000, "as a master craftsman holding scales, a carpenter's square, and a pair of compasses." Hence, the West perceived technology as a "Christian virtue." With this "technological predisposition" in the West, it was easy for "Descartes' Mechanism to merge with Christian doctrine" (p. 155).

To sum up Descartes' thought discussed thus far, he emphasized thinking as distinct from the physical world thereby strengthening the Christian position that the body and soul exist as separate entities. This led him to assert that human existence is determined by thinking, and not the body. He perceived the world and our bodies in mechanistic terms. As Highwater observes, these principles formed "the foundation of the scientific mythology of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the basis of the industrial boom of the nineteenth century" (pp.156-157).

Highwater demonstrates the impact of Descartes' thinking when he observes that by the nineteenth century the concept of kinetic or stored energy had gained popular acceptance so that it became a common practice to refer to a human body as a "highly refined machine with a limited amount of fuel" (p. 161). Moreover, as Wayland Young points out, "It was also a mercantile age," and this brought about the idea that a person was like a bank. He writes, "It is easy to see the analogy. The more energy you draw from the machine, the less there is left; you must not overload it. The more money you draw from a bank, the less there is left; so it must not be overspent" (cited in Highwater, p.162).

Highwater remarks that the notion of the body as machine fitted in well with the rise of capitalism that propelled the Industrial Revolution. With the emergence of factories, "the workers became collectively known as the 'work force' . . . The factory worker became a bodily machine" (p. 167). The union of labor, machine and industry was to be expected. He writes:

> What the Catholic Church began, with its celebration of labor and technology as necessities in achieving God's good works, Descartes built into a philosophy of Mechanism that celebrated life as a visible aspect of God's "machinery." It was only a matter of time before technology gave rise to the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution, which literally turned the human body into the cog of a mercenary machine . . . in the service of production. (pp. 167-168)

Highwater's analysis elucidates that the alliance between Christian doctrine and Cartesian philosophy, together with the emergence of capitalism, created the conditions out of which the Industial Revolution was born. One reason why the Industrial Revolution is a veritable revolution is because it embodied this new alliance between labor, machine, industry and Christianity. Of course, we know that it brought about sweeping changes in all aspects of life in the Western world. What is significant with regards to this discussion, however, is that the Industrial Revolution "produced a new kind of body -- the urban factory worker" (p. 168) whose purpose was to function like a machine. This phenomenom gave concrete form to Descartes' concept of the body as being a machine.

Descartes' influence is still felt today. His formulation of the mind-body dichotomy, as Victor Seidler observes, "brought forth in Western society the idea" that "[t]he body . . . is radically separated from a sense of personal identity; the latter is defined in purely mental terms as a matter of consciousness" (cited in Highwater, p. 160). There have been, however, many challenges to Descartes' dualism. For example, existentialism and phenomenology refute Descartes' dualism in favor of a conception of human

identity that includes both the body and the mind as fundamental dimensions of human identity (cf. Abram, 1996, pp. 31-72; Barret, 1958, pp. 275-280). Despite such efforts, there is still vigorous debate, after three hundred years, as to whether the body and mind are two separate and distinct aspects of a human being, or whether, together, they compose a whole person. This issue will be explored further in the final chapter.

I have presented myths of the body that have prevailed in Western culture. In different ways, all of these conceptions denigrate the body, and present a narrow vision of life. In chapter three, I put forward a conception of the body that I believe offers a more complete vision of life, and is the basis of a richer myth.

Chapter 3: Towards a Richer Conception of the Body

In this chapter, I attempt to articulate a conception of the body that reveals its richness as well as a process that can help reconnect us to our body, and thus move towards wholeness.

3.1 The Body as a Living Process

> It is commonly held that our body is some kind of dumb animal or brute from which the. . . "person" has to be protected. . . As if intelligence, awareness and understanding were not its property . . . As if the body were a piece of meat. (Keleman, 1974, p. 65)

My first reaction to reading these lines was one of repulsion. I asked myself: "How can anyone think of the body in these terms?" This way of thinking, however, is not really surprising. It is consistent with the dualistic vision of reality deeply embedded in Western culture. Keleman effectively articulates the view of the body that continues to permeate our thinking. Even though there have been formidable challenges to it, the fact remains that, as a culture, we still adhere to this conception of the body. Is it possible that our body plays such a negligible role in our lives and is only an encumbrance to our existence? Is it possible that we cannot learn anything of value from our body? It is against this background that this chapter unfolds. I will examine, in particular, the views of David Abram (1996), Aimé Hamann (1993, 1996), Stanley Keleman (1999, 1974), and Alexander Lowen (1990, 1995).[5]

Our negative view of the body has prevented us from exploring it more fully, and consequently has resulted in it becoming, as Aimé Hamann (1993) puts it, "an unknown continent" (p. 61) (free translation). We have become distant from our body. We have lost touch with the role it plays in our experience of the world. For Hamann and Abram, it is time for us to renew our relationship to our body, and to gain a new appreciation and respect for it. Hamann, Abram, Lowen and Keleman believe that our body is our most fundamental reality. This perspective challenges the widely held view bequeathed upon us by Descartes, and by movements such as Gnosticism, that the self, our innermost essence, is incorporeal. Abram invites us to become reacquainted with our body which, as Hamann notes, has been "forgotten and ignored for too long in our civilization" (p. 19) (free translation).

The "breathing body" that Abram describes is much more than the body that we find in physiology textbooks presenting an "objectified body" (p. 45), neatly diagrammed with its various systems, like the circulatory or respiratory systems. The conception of the body that Abram has in mind vastly differs from the body as a "machine" that breaks down and is "diagnosed by our medical doctors and 'repaired' by our medical technologies" (p.46). For Abram, to perceive the body as a set of mechanisms precludes any possibility of discovering aspects of the body that dwell beneath its surface. If, however, we dare to strip these "anatomized and mechanical" conceptions from the body, we will find "the body as it actually experiences things" (p. 46).

What is, therefore, the nature of this mysterious body that Abram has in mind? He asks us to consider the following:

> Without this body, without this tongue or these ears, you could neither speak nor hear another's voice. Nor could you have anything to speak about, or even to reflect on, or to think, since without any contact, any encounter, without any glimmer of sensory experience, there could be nothing to question or to know. The living body is thus the very possibility of contact, not just with others, but with oneself. (p. 45)

This passage is representative of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's thought who, as Abram notes, perceives "the body itself [as] the true subject of experience" (p. 45). This perspective on the body suggests that the reason why we experience life is precisely because we have a body, and not in spite of it. Abram states, therefore, that the notion of an immaterial mind totally independent from the body "can only be a mirage" (p. 45). For Lowen (1990), the immaterial mind is "the product of a mind that is not fully connected to the body and its feelings" (p. 194).

According to Abram, it is inconceivable for the body not to participate in our experiencing of the world and thus, not be an integral part of our identity. Abram sees the body as multidimensional. One of these dimensions, he writes, is the body as "an active and open form" which "continually improvis[es] its relation to things and to the world" (p. 49). In this perspective, the body is a dynamic organism that has the capacity to receive stimulus from the world to which it actively responds. The body's capacity to improvise implies a certain degree of adaptability since the body constantly "adjusts" to its surroundings. Its actions and responses can never be fully determinate since it is relating "to a world and a terrain that is itself continually shifting" (p. 49). Thus Abram refers to the body as a "creative, shape-shifting

entity" (p. 47) because each situation that it encounters requires a spontaneous response. The experiencing of the world, therefore, can never resemble a programmed response since the world and nature are in a constant state of flux and the body's responses to it are innumerable. This view of the body challenges the dualistic understanding of the body as something static, inert and passive.

Abram observes that if the body were indeed a "set of closed and predetermined mechanisms, it could never come into genuine contact with anything outside itself, could never perceive anything new." Such a conception of the body implies that "[a]ll of its experiences . . . would already have been anticipated from the beginning, already programmed, as it were, into the machine" (p. 49). A genuine contact, an authentic encounter insinuates an element of the unexpected or the unknown as well as spontaneity. How can something that is programmed have any of these components? Think of the last walk you took in nature, and perhaps you may remember the discovery of a hidden brook, or something similar, that was totally unexpected. Such is the body's relationship with the world.

Since our body is "finite" and "mortal," it can be argued that this limits our interactions with our surroundings or reduces our access to it. According to Abram, however, it is precisely the body's finitude that allows us "to freely engage in things around [us and] to choose to affiliate with certain places or persons . . . " (p. 47). The body's limitations give it a sort of structure, a concrete or tangible form without which it would be a shapeless entity, and therefore incapable of relating to things. Hence the body does not restrict or

hinder experience. On the contrary, it is the only sure means we have to experience and relate to the world.

Further in his inquiry of the "experiencing body", Abram observes that it is an "incomplete entity" (p. 125). This does not denote a deficiency in the body but, to the contrary, points to its richness. He refers, once again, to the body's senses to demonstrate his point:

> I have these multiple ways of encountering and exploring the world -- listening . . . touching . . . seeing . . . tasting . . . smelling . . . -- and all of these powers or pathways continually open outward from the perceiving body, like different paths diverging from the forest. . . We may think of the sensing body as an open circuit that completes itself only in things, and in the world. The differentiation of my senses . . . ensures me that I am being destined for relationship. (p. 125)

The body feels incomplete in and by itself. It must relate to its surroundings in order to feel complete. The body derives its disposition for relationship and openness from its senses. The senses need to respond to things in order to have significance. The eyes, for example, need to see something in order to perform their function as eyes. The senses need for fulfillment prompts them to move towards forming relationships by responding to their surroundings. In this perspective, the body's incompleteness paradoxically gives it its capacity to relate to the world, its capacity for wholeness.

Abram attempts to explore the body from a wider perspective. He points out that when we recognize the "sensorial dimension" of experience,

we come to see that we are part of an "intertwined web of experience." Our bodies form part of a "living landscape" which he calls the "biosphere" and defines as "the matrix of earthly life in which we ourselves are embedded." As this definition suggests, the biosphere is not a concept "conceived by an . . . objectifying science" that is imposed upon us. Rather it is the inner experience of "the intelligent body" of a human being "who is entirely a part of the world that he, or she, experiences" (p. 65). In this view, the body and the earth are one. This connects to Stanley Keleman's (1999) observation that, "To be present in our life bodily is to be of the animate earth" (p. 20).

Abram calls our attention to Merleau-Ponty's work, *The Visible and the Invisible*, in which he puts forward a new expression that conveys "this consanguinity" (p. 66) of human beings and the world they live in. He comes up with the term " 'collective Flesh' which signifies both *our* flesh and 'the flesh of the world'. " Abram remarks that never before in the Western philosophical tradition had anyone attempted to give a name to this "elemental power," this "mysterious tissue" that "underlies" all that exists (p. 66). From this perspective, we could say, therefore, that our bodies "are organs of this world, flesh of its flesh" (p. 68). This is a far cry from calling the human body a "piece of meat."

3.2 The Body as Inheritance

In this section, I present inheritance as an aspect of the body which is connected to human potential.[6] I inquire into the role that inheritance plays in the way we experience our lives. An examination of our inheritance, however, is inextricably tied to the notion of determinism. This dimension of

the body can lead to controversy because it easily conjures up ideas of a preordained mode of existence. I feel compelled, therefore, to emphasize at the outset of this discussion that I am not about to advance the view that life is either predetermined, or that our decisions and actions exert little or no influence on the outcome of our lives. Rather the purpose of this discussion is to acknowledge the central role played by inheritance in our lives, and to present a more moderate and restrained view of determinism that differs substantially from the common understanding of it -- as some kind of tyrannical force that rules over us.

Hamann observes that, whether we like it or not, we inherit traits that will be a determining factor in the way we live out our lives. Our existence has a context which includes, among other things, our family and its history. What we are, each person's potential, is the accumulated result of past generations. It seems that many of us fail to realize that we are, as Hamann states, "the result of a long process" (1996, p. 58) (free translation).

Kelemam (1999) draws our attention to a number of pervasive attitudes and beliefs which reveal that we are far from understanding the nature of our inheritance and potential. He begins by observing that we live in a society that "believes that you can be all you want to be" (p. 37). We seem to think that since we live in a privileged society, there are no limits to what we can become. While it may be true that no one will prevent us from following the dream-like dictum, "you can be anything you want to be," this does not mean that we are fulfilling our potential. Rather, it refers to the fact that we live in a society in which a multiplicity of choices and opportunities are available to us.

Moreover, many of us turn to external sources for knowledge about what we are. As a society, we tend to accept "somebody's manufactured image about how humans should be. We should be powerful, sexy. I should look and act like this type of man, this type of woman." We try to live according to an "external image" that denies or ignores our inherited potential. Thus we strive to "find [a] role to play" that comes from outside ourselves -- as if our bodies were incapable of providing us with this knowledge (p. 37).

Keleman refers to the hero of Woody Allen's film, Zelig, to illustrate how external influences can take over a life. As the story unfolds, we observe how Zelig literally takes on the physical characteristics of famous people. He does this because, as Keleman states, "He has no sense of himself" and thus, "he borrows other people's identity. He thinks that he can be anybody" (p. 33). Zelig exemplifies the extreme case of a person who relies on extrinsic sources for his identity. The extremity of his behavior, however, accentuates how many of us depend on external influences or images to direct our lives. Aren't we "borrowing other people's identity" when we base our identify on images taken from the media, and thus try to be "powerful" or "sexy," or be this or that person? Does not our highly cherished belief that "we can be anything we want to be" resemble Zelig's belief that he "can be anybody?" Are we not like Zelig who is "without body" (p. 33) when we do not look within ourselves, and thus our bodies, for knowledge about our potential? Zelig's life can be taken to symbolize the extent to which we are disconnected from our bodies.

Many people in our culture have the attitude that we can "change and . . . turn [our lives] into something 'better' " (p. 37) through sheer will, power and determination. Failure to do so indicates a weakness in character. While this attitude demonstrates the willingness to move forward with our lives, it does not convey an accurate understanding of human capacities. Contrary to popularly-held beliefs, Kelemam advances the view that a person cannot change who s/he is or make her/himself better. This is elucidated by M.C. Richards who writes, "We can become only what we already are. . . It is not a matter of 'adding to' but of 'developing', of 'evolving'. " What we are cannot change because the implication is that we can change our "nature" or inheritance, including genetic make up, socio-economic conditions, family and tradition. What we can change or make better, however, is the degree to which we are in touch with our nature, our inheritance. Therefore, "[i]t is a matter of realizing [more fully our] potentialities" (p. 37).

The growth of a flower helps to illustrate what Keleman and Richards mean to convey. Its growth, its flourishing is a natural process that comes from within it. It follows its inherited path for growth. It does not try to change its nature, or try to become a better flower or a tree. In the same way, we are called, as Hamann (1996) puts it, "to be and not to change" (p. 28), and "[t]o be is to become what we already are" (p. 180) (free translation). Like a flower, we must follow our inherited path for growth if we are to actualize our potential and blossom. To realize our potential, therefore, does not require that we change or try to make ourselves better. In this view, the critique of "essentialism" which suggests that we are not reduced to a fixed essence remains valid. To completely negate the impact of our inheritance, however, is similarly reductionistic.

For Keleman, our body contains our potential (cf. Hamann,1996, 1993; Lowen, 1990; Abram, 1996). Here are some of his thoughts on inheritance. "Who you were meant to be was determined at the moment of conception by the way your inherited body code organized your constitutional body type" (p.12). He also writes, "the fact of the matter is that we grow to be what our body wants us to be" (p. 24). The human body is a "process." "Its structure has a way of thinking, feeling, perceiving, and organizing its experiences, an innate way of forming its responses." Because "we are embodied creatures, you could say that our body is our destiny" (p. 11).

At first sight, this view may appear deterministic. It seems to contravene the most valued beliefs held in our society, especially the belief that we are free to be whatever we want to be. Keleman reminds us that at least some aspects of who we are are determined. His thinking differs from our common understanding of freedom, and this will be addressed later. At present, however, I want to examine the implications of Keleman's views of inheritance on human living.

According to Keleman, knowledge of our potential lies within us, and not on some billboard. Human potential is inscribed in our genetic code and hence, lies in the traits that we have inherited from our ancestors. To be aware of our inherited traits is to be aware of our true potential which consequently allows us to develop it. It is to know our uniqueness. To say, therefore, that our inheritance is a determining factor in the outcome of our lives does not diminish or negate the nobility of a human life. Neither does it limit our actions or choices in any negative way. Rather, it challenges us to

consider our gifts, the gifts we inherited. Hence, an awareness of our inheritance is to have access to a valuable source of knowledge which directs us towards activities that evoke our potential. This view, however, does not imply that we should not explore and discover new things. It signifies that knowledge of our inherited traits can help to avert the tragic situation captured by Campbell (1989) when he states that there are people in late middle age who have "gotten to the top of the ladder, and found that it's against the wrong wall" (p. 24). Such knowledge, therefore, can prevent living a life in which our potential wastes away because we are unaware of it, because we were living someone else's life.

As I mentioned above, this discussion raises issues about freedom which I will address here. Essentially, I want to deal with how to reconcile the influence of our inheritance, and the determinism that it implies, with the concept of freedom.

Hamann (1996) points out that freedom means different things to different people. Some people refer to countries where freedom does not exist or has been abolished. Others are prepared to fight for freedom. As will be seen below, the freedom which concerns this discussion refers to an inner state of being which must be distinguished from democratic freedoms such as the freedom of association and the freedom of speech. In addition, it differs from the common notion that freedom means to be whatever we want to be.

Hamann (1996) observes that determinism usually elicits ideas that something is "fixed, unidirectional, immobile, controlled by superior forces" (p. 103) (free translation). This conception of determinism implies that

human beings are controlled by unknown forces without any possibility for authentic choosing or decision making. He suggests that it is possible to conceive of determinism in less absolute terms which is what I will attempt to do here.

Hamann (1993) writes that determinism is "une réalité dont nous avons hérité, une réalité . . . que nous ne pouvons pas changer: nous pouvons que le reçevoir" (p.65). In this view, what we are is *determined* by what we inherited from past generations. Determinism is a fundamental aspect of human existence which cannot be changed, but only "received." Hamann prefers the word "receive" to accept because the latter suggests passivity and submission whereas to receive denotes an openness to the way our lives are organized within us (p. 34).[7] As well, to receive conveys an active response to a situation. When we are open to receiving our inheritance, we create the possibility of becoming aware of it. May (1953) shares this viewpoint when he writes, "no matter how much one argues for the deterministic viewpoint, [one] must still grant that there is a *margin in which the alive human being can be aware of what is determining him*" (p. 162). Awareness of our determinism, however, comes to those of us who are willing "to take the time" to receive it, and "deepen their understanding of who they are" (Hamann, 1993, p. 61) (free translation). This reveals the paradoxical nature of freedom, and the key to understanding the relationship between freedom and determinism. Hamann states:

> La liberté existe là ou l'être humain se reçoit, [et donc], se recevoir . . . devient ainsi le fondement de la liberté . . . La liberté ne peut être qu'une conquête. Elle ne trouvera toute sa dimension que dans le

consentement à recevoir tous les déterminismes qui nous constituent. (pp. 44 and 211)

In this view, freedom exists as a possibility that comes into being as we become aware of our determinism through the act of receiving it. The more we receive our determinism, the more we become aware of it, and thus the freer we become. Hamann states, therefore, that "determinism is not fatalistic, nor is it a negation of freedom" (p. 29) (free translation). When it is acknowledged, it becomes a part of our identity and a valuable source of knowledge which reveals our potential and individuality. It becomes a blind force that rules over us in so far as we remain unaware of it.

Seen in this light, to state that our potential dwells in our inherited genetic code does not mean that our lives are predetermined. It signifies, rather, that we acknowledge the contribution of our ancestors to the long process that has made us what we are. Freedom manifests itself in the way we deal with the realities that determine us: "Do we respond actively or passively to them?" Moreover, it is "a living thing" (May, 1953, p. 159) in the sense that it grows with our increasing awareness. Finally, this discussion reveals that freedom is not a given, it must be earned by each of us. If our body is a living, breathing organism, this suggests that the way we receive consciously our inheritance might in some way change our body, and hence represent another way in which this process is not fixed and absolutely determined.

3.3 Reconnecting to the Body: A Matter of Getting in Touch

We saw in the previous chapter that the prevalent conceptions of the body demonstrate a disconnection from the body. In this section, I argue that reconnecting to the body is intimately related to the sense of touch. In his landmark study on touching, Ashley Montagu (1971) begins by explaining the main attributes of the skin, the medium through which we touch. It is often overlooked that the skin is an organ itself, and that it is the largest organ of the body. Among the sense organs, the skin "must be ranked second only to the brain itself" in terms of "versatility." This should not be astounding since the skin "represents the external nervous system of the organism" (p. 230). The skin is highly sensitive with its capacity "to pick up and transmit so . . . wide a variety of signals" as well as its ability "to make so wide a range of responses . . . " Thus the skin is much more than the common perception of it as "a mere integument designed to keep the skeleton from falling apart" or "a mantle for all the other organs . . ." (p. 7). This raises a question which points to the main focus of the present discussion: "What are the effects on a human being when this highly sensitive organ, this "exposed portion of the central nervous system," is touched and when it is not touched?"

Montagu begins his discussion on touching, first, by defining it as "the action, or an act, of feeling something with the hand, finger, or other part of the body" (pp. 102-103). For Montagu, the key word, here, is feeling. Touching is not an emotion in itself, however "its sensory elements induce those neural, glandular, muscular, and mental changes which in combination we call emotion. Hence touch is not experienced as a simple physical modality, as sensation, but affectively, as emotion" (p. 103). Herein lies the

deeper significance of touching. When we refer to touching, we are referring to a "fundamental . . . ingredient of affection . . . " (p. 25).

According to Montagu, touching is an infant's most primal experience. "[C]ontact with the mother's body . . . constitute[s] [an infant's] first language, [his/her] first entering into touch with another human being . . ." (p.103) as well as her/his "first medium of communication with the outside world" (p.47). Moreover, in the first stages of an infant's life, E. Sylvester states that his/her security "is a matter of skin contact and kinesthetic sensations of being held and supported" (cited in Montagu, p. 198). Keen (1994) reports that "Untouched babies languish, even when all their physical needs are satisfied" (p. 142). Masters and Johnson (1975) point to evidence that strongly suggests that touching is critical to a baby's healthy development. "To deprive him [her] of it is to jeopardize his chances of becoming the healthy human being that he would otherwise be" (p. 246). Similarly, Montagu's research reveals that appropriate, affectionate touching is indispensable to both the physical and psychological development of a child. He suggests that humans can live being blind and deaf but cannot possibly survive without the functions performed by the skin.

Ronald W. Morris (2001) cites recent research that confirms the health benefits derived from touching infants as well as its benefits for older people. He reports that "infant massage enhances the physical and social development of preterm infants, improves motor activity . . . Massaged infants are more relaxed, cry less, and learn that touch can be pleasurable" (p. 169). As well, he cites evidence from The Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami Medical School which affirms that "massaged infants

sleep better, have bolstered immune systems, are less prone to colic and asthma attacks" (p. 169). Studies conducted by the institute show that massage can reduce the level of depression in adolescents and alleviate a number of medical conditions in adults such as "fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, hypertension and arthritis" (p. 170).

The discussion above suggests that touching nourishes the body. It gives and imparts a sense of security. Its role is fundamental in both the physical and psychological development of a human being. It helps alleviate certain medical conditions. It connects us to others and the world. In a sense, it sustains the body by fueling the breathing that keeps it alive. Many years ago, Bertrand Russell wrote that "our whole conception of what exists outside us is based upon the sense of touch" (cited in Montagu, 1971, p.6). The implication is that the ways in which we are touched early in life will profoundly influence how we perceive human existence and the world.

There are inevitable consequences for people who are "tactually deprived" (p. 207). Montagu writes that for many of them the result is "estrangement, uninvolvement, lack of identity, detachment, emotional shallowness, and indifference." The texture of the skin is affected. "There is a feeling of tenseness about their skin . . . as if they were wearing an ill-fitting garment or are encased in a suit of armour from which, even if they wished, they are unable to extricate themselves" (p. 207). Such individuals can become so "hardened" that they lose touch with themselves and with the "human condition" both "metaphorically" and "physiologically" (p. 208). Moreover, the tactually deprived will often be "awkward . . . in their . . . demonstrations of . . . affection" (p. 302).

The importance of touching in human behavior is evidenced by the multitude of commonly used expressions which refer, in one way or another, to the tactile function. The abundance of such expressions is a testimony, albeit an unconscious one, to the primacy of touching in human existence. Montagu writes:

> We speak of "rubbing" people the wrong way, and "stroking" them the right way. . . We get into "touch" or "contact" with others. Some people have to be "handled" carefully ("with kid gloves"). Some are "thick- skinned", others are "thin-skinned", some get "under one's skin" . . . Some people are "touchy," that is, oversensitive or easily irritated . . . When we speak of someone as removed from reality, we say that he is "out of touch with reality". . . A deeply felt experience is "touching." (pp. 5-6)

Masters and Johnson and Montagu share the view that current family practices fail to promote touching as a positive aspect of family life and human living. For his part, Montagu sees the main purpose of the family as "making each member of the family a 'success'. " To this end, parents believe that they should not give their children "too much" affection even during the developmental stages which, according to Montagu, "children . . . literally cannot receive too much affection." All sorts of reasons are provided to justify the holding back of affectionate touching: "the child will be spoiled, s/he will become too dependent upon others . . ." (p. 315).

Masters and Johnson examine another aspect of family life that shows how touching is discouraged in families. They observe that "long

before sexual attraction," young children are taught that "the mysterious feelings drawing them into the adventure of mutual exploration are excitingly, frighteningly wrong." The message from adults is loud and clear: "the body is indecent" and "touching is wrong." This message is frequently passed on silently. Parents' behavior serves as a model for "the injunction against touching." They hardly ever touch one another except for "an occasional perfunctory embrace" and "are scarcely more comfortable having physical contact with their children." Such parents cannot allow themselves to express "spontaneous physical . . . feelings . . . that . . . for the very young, is virtually indistinguishable from life itself" (pp. 244-245).

There are severe consequences that follow from an upbringing which considers touching to be wrong. It creates a "self-consciousness [that] spoils the natural hug, the casual walking hand in hand . . . with which friends manifest their bond" (p. 246). According to Masters and Johnson, "Reaching out," which expresses a need for communion with another person is, "stripped of all significance except that of sexual provocation. It becomes utilitarian, a specific means to accomplish sexually specific goals" (pp. 247-248). In their view, this is a complete misrepresentation of the significance of touch. To hold such a view is to deprive oneself of a fundamental human interaction that solidifies, confirms, and validates our relationships.

When we remove the distortions that we attach to touch, its essence is revealed. We discover that it is not a means to an end. It seems that touch expresses, better than words, the intimacy of human relationships. Masters and Johnson write:

> Touch is an end in itself. It is . . . a silent voice . . . that avoids the pitfalls of words . . . It bridges the physical separateness from which no human being is spared, literally establishing a sense of solidarity between two individuals . . . [T]ouching [like the other senses] nourishes the pleasure of being alive. . . [It] satisfies the profound creature need not to be alone . . . and to be desired as a physical presence. (pp. 253 and 255)

In this connection, Keen (1994) notes that "we have so sexualized the sense of touch that we are uncomfortable with bodily contact. Touch itself has become suspect," and this attitude has created the "tactophobic culture" we live in (p.141). This is a sad state of affairs when we consider that touch is the only tangible or visible way we have, as seen above, to express friendship, affection and solidarity. If we are ever to reconnect to our bodies, it is imperative that "we recover," as Keen remarks, "the pleasure of innocent touch" (p. 142).

At this time, I want to recount an experience that I had with my grandmother. It demonstrates the fundamental importance of touching in human existence. My grandmother and I were good friends. When I visited her, we talked about a variety of issues. Our friendship touched me deeply, and I will be forever grateful for her presence in my life. Life presented me with an opportunity to express my gratitude to her. Here is the story.

My grandmother had fallen and injured herself, and had to be admitted to the hospital. At the beginning of her stay, a nurse had inadvertantly hurt her while treating her. This incident incited my grandmother to stop eating.

Some time later, she refused to drink as well. This went on for six weeks. One day, my mother telephoned to inform me that my grandmother had recieved the last rights. With this news, I rushed to the hospital so that I might see her one last time. She was still alive when I arrived. I didn't really know what to do to comfort her so I decided to get as close to her as possible and began talking to her. I reminisced about how my family visited her on Sundays. I asked her if she remembered and she nodded yes. At this time, a woman in the room noticed that my grandmother's lips were parched. She tried to moisten them but my grandmother tightened her lips as if to say "no thank you, I know what I am doing." After this, I began to gently stroke her arms. She seemed to like the touching so I continued. Before I knew it, I had reached down into her bed and taken her into my arms. This happened so naturally that, at first, I did not even notice what I was doing. When I did realize it, I knew instantly that this was a special moment. I held her in my arms for as long as I could. My grandmother died three hours after I left the hospital. She was ninety nine years of age.

The point I wish to make here is that my grandmother refused water on her lips but she welcomed the touching that I offered her. Touching was the nourishment that she called for at the end of her life; food and drink were no longer useful to her. A short time after this event, I got the idea that its significance might be that just as life is ushered in at its beginning, so it needs to be ushered at its end. Perhaps only touching has the capacity to affirm the sacredness inherent to primal events like birth and death.

I feel very gratified that I had the opportunity to be with my grandmother at the end of her life, and to touch and hold her with all of my affection. She had touched my life in so many ways.

This story brings to mind a question raised by Keen (1970) when he discusses the nature of emotion: "Is it really possible to be . . . touch[ed] without touching, to be moved without moving?" (p. 52). This experience with my grandmother suggests that the answer to Keen's question is "no." I was emotionally touched to be with my grandmother during her final hours, and I expressed this emotion, spontaneously and without any foreknowledge, by physically touching her. Somehow the physical and the emotional aspects of touching seem to go hand in hand. The occurrence of one seems to call forth the other.

3.4 Personal Myth and the Body

In the previous section, I suggested that reconnecting to our body requires that we rediscover the importance of touch in our lives. We saw that touching has an emotional dimension. In this section, I argue that myth is an expression of our body's inner state and has the capacity to put us in touch with our body, and thus points to a deeper form of touching.

Keleman (1999) states that the prime function of myth "is to put experience into stories, because stories are the organizers of bodily experience, of ways to form ourselves as individuals" (p. 7). He shares Highwater's perspective, as discussed in chapter two, that myths are

metaphors for the body. He specifies, however, that they are "metaphors for internal body states, experiences, and development" (p. xiv).

Keleman observes that our cultural myths are "no longer grounded in bodily experience" (p. xiv), and suggests that this is why they are not meaningful to us. This has led to the creation of the wasteland which, for him, denotes that "[w]e have forsaken the body as a source of knowledge" (p. xiv). (This is fully explored in chapter two.) As a response to this, Keen (1970) states, "There is little immediate possibility that a new overarching myth will emerge to provide a common structure for Western man . . ." (p. 71). Therefore he argues that the responsibility for myth falls on the individual. Like May, he suggests that each of us must now forge an identity and construct meaning in our lives (cf. Barrett, 1958). We are being summoned to embark on a journey of self-discovery and form what Keen calls our "personal myth" (1988, p. 45).[8] For Keleman, this journey requires that we eplore the depths of our body.

To begin such a journey is to recognize that we possess a personal myth that, to a great extent, we are unaware of. This is difficult to recognize since it requires us to acknowledge that much of our lives is unknown to us. Seen from the perspecitive of our body, this signifies that we are, to a great extent, dissociated from our body and its knowledge. This acknowledgement, however, represents the ever-important first step in discovering our personal myth.

To form one's personal myth is not an easy task. This is elucidated by a well-known story in which Carl Jung becomes aware that he must discover

his personal myth. After some deliberation with himself about myth and its relevance to his life, he asked himself, "What is the myth *you* are living?" and he realized that he did not know. The story continues: "So, in the most natural way, I took it upon myself to get to know 'my' myth, and I regarded this as the task of tasks... I simply had to know what . . . myth was forming me... " (1971, p. xxi-xxii). The forming of one's myth requires much effort. It implies an awareness that is not apparent. In this context, I want to suggest that the "hero myth" can serve as a model for self-discovery.

The task is not to follow the path of some well-known hero in a step by step manner. The hero myth is a paradigm, a source of insight and clues which I believe can be helpful in discovering our personal myth. As well, I do not use the term hero to refer to "the special acts of outstanding persons," but rather to signify, "the heroic element potentially in every man" (May, 1953, p. 230). Seen in this light, the question of what is the myth that you are living means that we are all being called to be heroes in our own lives. How is this possible? How can each of us be heroes? How can the hero myth assist us in this "task of all tasks?"

Joseph Campbell has written extensively on the hero myth. His colleague, Stanley Keleman (1999) offers a brief summary of Campbell's understanding of the hero which will suffice for our purposes :

> Everyone is a hero. This is a given. We have a call to adventure. We refuse. A crisis ensues. We cannot turn back -- and we answer the call. We collect helpers, teachers, guides. And we cross a threshold into the unknown. We lose our identity and enter an abyss,

> a nadir, the belly of the whale. We emerge. We begin traveling back home to what we have known -- recrossing the threshold. We return. We have changed. (p. xv)

Like May, Campbell asserts that we are all heroes. The fundamental theme that underlies the hero myth is that of a call to a journey. The hero responds to the call which results in some sort of change or transformation. How does all of this relate to our discussion? The call to be a hero in our own lives is the response to the question, "What is the myth by which we live?" -- a call to self-awareness and self-discovery. The discovery of one's personal myth requires us to journey to the place where we may gain access to aspects of ourselves which up to now have been inaccessible.

The hero myth, through symbolic form, elucidates this journey. Campbell writes, "The hero adventures out of the land we know into darkness; there he accomplishes his adventure . . . and his return is described as coming back out of the yonder zone" (1949, p. 217). For us, this means a journey into the darkness within our body. Keleman notes that journeys are pervasive in myth because they represent "the process of embodiment" which he takes to mean the process whereby we gradually return to our body. It is an adventure because we must dare to venture into the unknown. Our personal myths are to be discovered by journeying to the "yonder zone" located within each of our bodies.

It seems to me that the darkness, the unknown, the yonder zone that we need to explore is connected to Campbell's observation, as stated earlier, that myth contains an invisible plane that supports a visible one. Thus the

hero's journey described in so many myths, and ultimately our personal journeys (into self-discovery) may be seen as a journey from the visible to the invisible aspects of our lives that reside *in our body*. To be actively involved in discovering one's myth is to be engaged in what M.C. Richards calls "a dialogue of the visible and the invisible" (1962, p. 19). The hero myth invites us to, and encapsulates, this dialogue which for Keleman (1974) signifies "holding a conversation with our *board members*, . . . a conversation in which silent or unknown parts of ourselves begin to speak." (my emphasis). This, he writes "is a way to connect with aspects of experience" that dwell in the body but "are unverbalized. . . Compared to a stage play, the introduction of each character into the body of the play could be the introduction of each unspoken desire, feeling and need" which are raw materials, to use Keen's term (1970, p. 72) that go to form our personal myth (1974, p. 134).

Keen's image of myth as an iceberg, which was referred to in chapter one, articulates well this aspect of myth. Our dialogue may be perceived as plunging below the surface of our lives and exploring the body's depths so as to make the invisible, visible. May (1985) offers an image comparable to Keen's. He recounts how one of his art teachers constantly advised him to "[f]ind the ground form" with regards to his art work, after which he remembers his teacher making a "gesture with his thumb as though he were boring deeply into the sand" (p. 14). May interprets this advice to mean, "Get below the surface, below all your superficial whims and find the . . . structure on which your life is built" (p. 201). Both Keen and May understand knowledge or awareness of one's myth as an inner movement that probes our depths. For Keleman, this means to get in touch with our body's knowledge.

This brings us to the notion of authorship. Since our personal myths may also be called our life stories, lack of awareness implies that someone else is writing the story of our lives. In a way, "[you are] living someone else's story" (p. 146), writes Nancy Napier (1993), and as Campbell puts it, "you've lost your life" because "you're on the path of someone else" (cited in Keleman, 1999, p. 39). In the context of this discussion, we can add, "you've lost your body as well since someone else's body is writing your life story and directing your life." Seen in this light, the purpose of the inner journey is to regain authorship of our life stories through the authority inherent in our body.

Authorship and authority are intimately connected. According to Keen, their relationship "tells us a great deal about power" (1973, p. xiv). He aptly notes that, "Whoever authors your story authorizes your actions" (p. xiv) and thus, "we become people who are written on from the outside" (1993, p. 28). He remarks that, "We gain personal authority and power in the measure that we question the myth that is upheld by 'the authorities' " (p. xiv). In addition to this, Keen states that we must "learn to distinguish between our own story . . . and the official myths that have previously governed our minds, feelings, and actions" (1991, pp. 33-34). This signifies that we must distinguish the life story that emerges from our body from stories about us that emerge from another's body or the body politic.

Similarly Campbell (1989) writes that an important function of the hero myth is to help in "finding the dynamic source in your life so that its trajectory is out of your center and not something put on you by society" (pp. 33-34). This points to the importance of living from within the body, of being in touch

with our body's nature. This is not, however, to deny the importance of family, tradition and society. These are the very things that provide our lives with a context of meaning (cf. MacIntyre, 1984, p. 220; Taylor, 1991, pp. 31-41). As mentioned above, it is, rather, to transpose the responsibility for the meaning of one's life from an outer authority to an inner one. The transposition of responsibility indicates a major shift in perspective on the part of the individual. Indeed, the hero myth reveals that we do have a choice about who is going to organize "the raw materials of [our] experience into a coherent story" (Keen, 1970, p. 72). This is essentially the challenge of living authentic lives.

This shift is not always easy because we get stuck in a particular way of living. We often prefer safety and security in our lives even though we are not really content. Keleman (1974) addresses this issue in the form of two penetrating questions: "[W]hat is the place that [you] are afraid of not being able to get back to? Where are [you] now that makes [you] think this is a place not worth losing?" (p. 142). In terms of the body, this can indicate, as Lowen (1995) notes, that we are "split off [or] dissociated from the body" because of "painful experiences" (p. 220). Some of us may prefer not to deal with the pain which gives us some comfort, although of a precarious variety, and consequently we remain stuck in the same place. Lowen observes that "Returning to the body is a painful process, but in the reexperience of the pain one reconnects to the aliveness and feelings that one had suppressed in order to survive" (p. 220). This is what the hero myth points to.

Similarly, May and Keen warn us that the descent into the unknown will inevitably uncover other unpleasant features of ourselves. Keen (1991)

refers to them as "negative emotions" (p. 128) by which he means emotions like "anger, grief...fear" (p.135). In a way, this is prefigured by the fact that to become aware that someone else has been allowed to write the script of our lives will inevitably awaken some kind of negative feelings. For his part, May (1991) notes that these negative emotions can be construed as a "private hell" (p. 155) that must necessarily be confronted. He states, "The journey through hell is a part of the journey that cannot be omitted -- indeed, what one learns in hell is prerequisite to arriving at any good value thereafter" (pp. 165-166). To be able to journey into our private hells signifies that we have reached the point in our heroic journeys whereby we can embrace all that we are -- our totality which is made up of positive and negative elements. There is the inner realization that "[t]o be human is to embody paradox" (Kurtz and Ketcham, 1992, p. 2). To embody paradox, therefore, is the goal of the hero's journey. (In the next section, I explore the nature of paradox and its connection to myth and the body.)

To conclude this section, the discovery of the myth by which we live is to embark upon a heroic journey of self-discovery. It intimates the bringing together of lost and forgotten aspects of ourselves into a cohesive whole. It is a process that, to a large extent, takes place within our body. Our body contains our relationships to the world. It harbours our life experiences, and thus includes the role played by family, society and tradition in our lives. Therefore the exploration of our body does not shut us off from the world. It awakens our relationships to it and brings them to light. To express the awareness of these relationships in a story is essentially what a personal myth consists of. To know the myth that forms us is to become whole.[9]

The hero myth illustrates that the drive toward wholeness is always a struggle and never an achievement. It is a process that never ends as we incorporate new experiences into our life stories. For me, the ultimate aim of the hero myth is to help redirect our focus from externally generated images to ones that emanate from the body so that we can form a personal myth that is meaningful and authentic.

3.5 From Duality to Paradox: The Body as Paradox

According to Hamann (1993), touching has the capacity to unearth buried memories and feelings within us. He refers here to a specific form of touching that he calls "toucher-présence", and characterizes as "un toucher qui ne cherche pas à provoquer, qui n'attend rien, qui ne dirige pas, mais est réceptif, qui accueille" (p. 25). It is simply presence.[10] In his view, touching has the capacity to reconnect us to our feelings. Feelings are of central importance to this discussion for to be reconnected to them implies a reconnection to our body which holds them. To have access to the entire range of the feelings that constitute us is a movement toward wholeness. In this section, I present the view that this movement toward wholeness is captured by the concept of paradox. Moreover, I argue that when we are in touch with the whole range of our feelings, we *embody* paradox, and thus we become whole. To embody paradox, therefore, is to be in touch or be reconnected to our body and its feelings.

My study of myth has led me to the realization that mythical stories are an expression of humankind's paradoxical nature, and reveal our deep desire for wholeness. According to Jung, there is "a secret unrest that gnaws at the

roots of our being" (cited in Campbell, 1949, p.105). Myths are one way that humanity has devised to deal with the gnawing unrest that comes from inner division -- the result of refusing to accept our totality. As May (1991) points out, "myth unites the antinomies of life." (p. 26) "[C]ruel facts are welded together with beneficent facts into a pattern which we can cherish . . . " (p. 49). This same movement to wholeness in myth is echoed by Jung when he observes that, "Man must not dissolve into a whirl of warring possibilities and tendencies . . . but must become the unity that embraces them all" (cited in S. Larsen, 1990, p.14). I want to examine the concept of paradox in order to show how it embodies the longing for wholeness that is expressed in myth, especially the hero myth.

Neils Bohr, the Nobel Prize-winning physicist states, "The opposite of a true statement is a false statement, but the opposite of a profound truth is another profound truth" (cited in Palmer, 1998, p. 62). For Palmer, this statement captures the essence of paradox. Two seemingly opposite truths can coexist in a relationship without one nullifying the other. Palmer states, "truth is found not by splitting the world into either-ors but by embracing it as both-and." It is "a paradoxical joining of apparent opposites, and if we want to know the truth, we must learn to embrace those opposites as one" (p. 63). A key phrase here is "apparent opposites." It seems that we tend to consider opposites as mutually excluding one another, that they cannot exist together in the same space. "Apparent opposites" can come together and form a unified pair. To see pairs of opposites as paradoxical requires that we go beyond what opposites seem to be on the surface, and toward a deeper understanding of the relationship between them.

As Kurtz and Ketcham (1992) write "to be human is to be imperfect." Human imperfection is "irrevocable and immutable." We are beings who err. "Errors...are part of the game. They are part of our truth as human beings" and, "(t)o deny our errors is to deny ourself, for to be human is to be imperfect, somehow *error-prone*" (p. 2). Similarly, to repress negative aspects or feelings of ourselves is to deny what we really are, and thus, to cut ourselves off from a part of our being. It is a movement away from wholeness. To accept imperfection as the essential state of our being opens the door to an understanding of human nature as being fundamentally paradoxical. According to Kurtz and Ketcham, "Openness to paradox allows both the understanding and the acceptance of our human condition as "both/and" (both a sinner and a saint) rather than "either-or" (either a sinner or a saint)" (p. 62). Such a perception of our humanity provides us with a kind of internal framework that allows us to accept all aspects of our identity and make them bearable. More specifically, it creates a space within us that allows us to acknowledge what are considered negative emotions such as anger and hatred, and to welcome them back into our field of vision. This signifies a movement toward wholeness.

As stated earlier, myth expresses our desire for wholeness. The impulse toward wholeness is vividly demonstrated in the legend of Parsifal. Briefly stated, Parsifal is the knight who is destined to heal the Grail king who has been wounded for a long time. In order to heal the ailing king, Parsifal must become compassionate, that is, to "experience the pain and danger of another" (Campbell, cited in Keleman, 1999, p. 59). It must be noted that Parsifal has been trained to be a knight and thus to be a fighting man. When he has the opportunity to heal the king, he fails because he responds

according to the code of knighthood. He has not learned the significance of compassion. The legend is about how Parsifal becomes a compassionate person and fulfills his quest to heal the king.

Keleman astutely explains how Parsifal's quest is about an individual's journey toward wholeness through the embodiment of paradox. His quest "reveals how he brings together different qualities such as assertiveness and tenderness, the fighting man and the compassionate man . . . to form an individual" (pp. 63-64). He identifies this process of bringing together opposites as "integration." He refers to this embodiment as "the creative tension that holds the person together." When we are capable of embodying the tensions of opposites, "we form our individuality" (p.64). For Keleman, the hero is the person who holds apparent opposites in a creative tension (cf. Palmer, 1990, p.15).

As Campbell notes, compassion means "suffering with" (cited in Keleman, 1999, p. 59). "Suffering with" implies a relationship to another individual. In the legend of Parsifal, the king is healed when Parsifal suffers with the king or relates to his suffering. The same idea of relationship comes through when Palmer observes that to embody paradox requires that "we are willing to suffer the tension of opposites" (p. 85). The act of suffering allows one opposite to form a relationship with the other. Seen from this vantage point, the bringing together of opposites within us is an act that is both compassionate and relational.

On another level, Parsifal and the Grail king can represent two aspects of the same person, and so the legend can be construed as a metaphor for

our inner states. In this way, it may be said that in order to achieve wholeness, we need to be *compassionate* toward ourselves which means to suffer the opposites within us back into a *relationship* that forms a paradox.

The forgoing discussion suggests that suffering can exist in two states. There is the suffering that stagnates, moves inward, leads to isolation and the splitting of opposites. There is also the suffering that Campbell and Palmer refer to that moves outward, toward relationship and wholeness. Hence, there is suffering that creates division, and suffering that creates wholeness. From this we may glean that to embody paradox entails suffering that moves outward toward relationship and integrity.

Since suffering implies a struggle of sorts it can be said that integrity is attained and maintained through struggle. Struggle, in this context, is both positive and constructive. It is struggle that keeps the tension between opposites vibrant. As well, it is struggle that leads to deeper levels of self-understanding. To live with struggle is to accept that humans are both "sinners and saints," and thus to acknowledge the entirety of human experience. The legend of Parsifal is a symbolic representation of the struggle that is required to bring together the positive and negative elements in our lives, the struggle to embody paradox that takes place within us.

Keleman interprets Parsifal's journey in bodily terms. As a youth, Parsifal is captivated by the "image of knighthood" and "use[s] his body as a knight." As time goes on, he realizes that his allegience to the warrior code does not permit him "to recieve, be compassionate, . . . be his own person . . . " He can no longer abide by the warrior code, and the use of his body as

warrior becomes "inappropriate." "As this code becomes less useful, Parsifal begins to disorganize his attitude. As Parsifal disorganizes the warrior stance, he is able to receive kindness and share it." His body takes on a new shape, one of compassion. "This new body shape . . . is a man who understands, empathizes and embraces. It is tough as well as protective" (p. 47). This indicates that Parsifal embodies paradox and has become whole.

An important insight that comes out of this legend is that Parsifal was a person who "didn't trust his visceral responses; he was proceding by social rules" (p. 61). In vernacular language, he did not act according to his "gut feeling." He sensed, however, that his initial response to the king's suffering did not correspond to what he was feeling within himself. Later, he learns to be "faithful to his body's inner processes" (p. 62) which is to be faithful to its nature, and not to repress or deny it. In the context of this discussion, this means to be faithful to our paradoxical nature. Therefore, Parsifal heals the king because, through the embodiment of his paradoxical nature, he is in touch with his own feelings which gives him the capacity to be touched by the king's suffering and thus show compassion toward him. The legend of Parsifal illustrates that the embodiment of paradox is the most profound form of touching in sense that it allows opposites that dwell in our depths to touch. When opposites touch, our feelings are whole, and we become reconnected to our body.

According to Keleman, Parsifal's capacity to embody paradox and exhibit compassion transforms his body into the Grail (p. 63). How is this so? As stated above, compassion means to suffer with, and to embody paradox is to have compassion for oneself in the sense that we suffer opposites back

into a relationship. Hence, to embody paradox signifies to be compassionate as well. To be compassionate, however, also implies to be able to receive ourselves and acknowledge all that we are, and thus to receive others as they are. A grail is a cup, and a cup's defining feature is that it is a vessel that has an opening which gives it the capacity to receive. To state that Parsifal becomes the Grail, therefore, symbolizes the person who has cultivated the capacity to be open to receive all that s/he is and consequently receive others. This is what constitutes a compassionate person.

This legend illustrates Parsifal's maturing process as well. His path to maturity is a series of bodily shapes "from unformed boy to mature adult." The body changes shape from within. He "[becomes] an adult from inside, from his own bodily process . . ." (p.63). In this perspective, becoming an adult is a process that takes place within our body. For Keleman, this demonstrates that "the transmission of experience is somatic." When we change an attitude or mature, this experience is incorporated into the body. "[A] new inner structure . . . is being created, another body realilty" (1999, p. 78). The body's form changes as we *take in* new experiences. This leads Keleman to the view that, "Experiencing yourself as bodily, you experience body and mind as one" (1974, p.19). "[Y]our body's mind supports [your body's processes] rather than the social orders that you were given" (1999, p. 62). In terms of this discussion, this represents a movement from duality and division to paradox and wholeness.

According to Kurtz and Ketcham (1992), to embody paradox is a "coming home to ourselves" (p. 232). "Coming home" is a prominent theme in myth. Parsifal's quest can be construed in this way as can other mythic

stories like, Homer's Ulysses and the Prodigal Son, who come home to their families and communities after much trial and tribulation. Thus myth teaches us that it is possible to come home. It conveys a message of hope.[11] Moreover, we learn that as we discover the home within, we also find our home without. We discover community. The home within and the home without exist in a dialectical relationship. This elucidates how myth enables us to connect to ourselves as well as to community. In light of this discussion on the body, we might say that coming home to ourselves is coming home to our bodies and becoming a true *members* of the community (body politic), and, as many writers have stated, *organs* of the world.

In this chapter, I presented the body as a living, pulsating organism that feels complete when its senses relate to the world. I argued that inheritance is a part of the body's richness since it is a source of knowledge. As well, I presented the view that touching has the capacity to reconnect us to our body, and that myth points to a deeper form of touching that allows us to touch all the aspects of our identity and therefore achieve wholeness.

Conclusion : Summary and Reflections Arising

Summary

This thesis has attempted to show the connection between myth and the body. I presented the view that the myths we live by reflect how we conceive of the body, and are thus an expression of our relationship to it. I observed the absence of the body in education, and I set out to lay a foundation for its inclusion in educational programs. I did not, however, outline practical ways to incorporate the body in education. This is a matter for further study.

In chapter one, I discussed the nature of myth. I suggested that myth has existed throughout history and the world because it performs valuable functions for us. I showed how a myth is a story that articulates a world view around which a society organizes itself. It gives direction, stability and coherence to a community. I pointed out that such myths are known as cultural myths which are to be distinguished from personal myths which express an individual's efforts to create meaning and structure in his/her life.

Myth continues to inhabit the human landscape because it helps us remember things. As Egan elucidated, the events of a story are much easier to remember than items on a list. Unlike lists, stories engage the emotions. Like other story forms, the capacity of myth to engage the emotions helps us to remember.

Myth also has negative aspects. It can govern our lives unconsciously. It can restrict our vision of the world and create, as Keen observed, "selective blindness, narrowness and rigidity." This issue is addressed by Bruner's notion that a culture is a forum for negotiation. This permits myth to be renewed through active dialogue and questioning by a culture's members while maintaining a basic structure for living.

In chapter one, I also examined the concept of the waste land and discussed how it signifies the absence of meaningful myths in a society and denotes a disconnection from ourselves and life in general. It conveys a lack of structure, direction or meaning that myth provides.

In chapter two, I discussed how the waste land metaphorically represents a disconnection from the body as well. Here I pointed to Highwater's idea that myth is a metaphor for the body, and examined some of the prevailing conceptions of the body in Western culture: body as sin, commodity, weapon, and machine. I showed how each conception is influential in shaping our thinking ; that our relationship to the body, the way we conceive it, reflects how a particular myth organizes our relationships with the world.

In chapter three, I set out to present a conception of the body that reveals its richness. I began with Abram's view of the body as a living, breathing entity that relates to the world through its senses. I argued that the senses need for fulfillment paradoxically gives the body both its capacity to relate to the world and its capacity for wholeness.

In this chapter, I also discussed the notion of inheritance as a dimension of our body's richness. Awareness of our inherited traits reveals our potential. Paradoxicaly inheritance also means that at least some of the aspects that form our identity are determined. This does not imply, however, the acceptance of a predetermined existence. Rather it points us to our inherited gifts which we are free to develop or not. Freedom exists in so far as we become aware of the realities that determine us; and the depth of our freedom increases as our awareness deepens.

In chapter three, I also attempted to articulate a process that can help return us to our bodies. I argued that touching has the capacity to put us in touch or reconnect us to our body. To be touched physically insinuates being touched emotionally as well. The emotional dimension of touching can put us in touch with the feelings contained in our body. Several authors including Montagu, Masters and Johnson, Keen and Morris all agree that touching is indispensable to the development of a healthy human being.

Myth is an expression of our body's inner state. To know the myth by which we live, to know our personal myth is a form of touching. It signifies to be in touch with who we are and our body, and thus points to touching that transcends the physical realm. The hero myth symbolically represents this process.

In the final section of chapter three, I presented the view that humans yearn to be whole, and that myth is an expression of our desire for wholeness. The concept of paradox elucidates the longing for wholeness that is expressed in myth. Paradox is the bringing together of "apparent

opposites" into a tensed relationship. The goal of the hero's journey is to embody paradox, that is, to be in touch with our body and its feelings, and thus become whole. The legend of Parsifal illustrates the meaning of paradox and wholeness, and its connection to the body. The embodiment of paradox is the deepest form of touching is because it signifies that we are reconnected with the innermost aspects of ourselves, selves that are inextricably body-selves. We become whole. The journey toward wholeness is fundamentally about returning home to our body-selves.

Reflections Arising

> As a rule, . . . the individual is so unconscious that he fails to see his own potentialities for decision. Instead he is constantly and anxiously looking around for external rules and regulations which can guide him in his perplexity. . . [A] good deal of the blame for this rests with education, which promulgates the old generalizations and says nothing about the secrets of private existence. (Jung, 1961, p. 330)

Jung observes how many of us lack awareness of what we are, awareness of our potential. As noted in chapter three, we look to external sources to help us form our identity. Jung understands this to be, for the most part, the result of the failure of education to include "private existence" in the curriculum. In spite of several reforms, education still excludes, to a large degree, the integration of our life stories into the curriculum. Even if it were to do so, as the new curriculum in Quebec attempts, I wonder how this can possibly succeed (cf. M.E.Q., 2000, pp. 34-43, 55-57, 447-567). Can teachers effectively help their students examine their lives if they have not

done so themselves? At its deepest level, writes Palmer (1998), "To educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world." Therefore he asks, "How can schools educate students if they fail to support the teacher's inner life?" "How can schools perform their mission without encouraging the guides to scout out [their] inner terrain?" (p. 6). If students are ever to seriously explore their private existence within a school context, it only seems reasonable for teachers to have done so as part of their training. As Palmer suggests, this calls for teacher education programs that provide much more than technical competencies.

Palmer argues that whether we like it or not, our teaching reflects our inner state. The way we relate to our students, and even how we teach our subject is rooted in and "emerges from [our] inwardness." He goes so far as to say that we cannot truly know our students and our subject without a deep understanding of who we are. "When I do not know myself, I cannot know who my students are. I will see them . . . in the shadows of my unexamined life. . . When I do not know myself, I cannot know my subject -- not at the deepest levels of *embodied, personal meaning*" (p. 2) (emphasis mine). For Palmer, "what we are" informs our teaching. Teachers, therefore, need to develop the capacity "to stand where . . . opposites meet" (p. 63), "[to] hold the tensions of paradox" (p. 83).[12] This sort of presence in the classroom can incite students to do the same, and thus create the conditions "[to] learn at deeper levels" (p. 83), where opposites meet, levels that ultimately hit home and touch our depths. It seems to me that the type of learning described here is delineated in the hero's journey towards wholeness, and elucidated in the legend of Parsifal.

It may be somewhat unconventional to deliberate on the inner life of teachers regarding educational reform. I share, however, Palmer's view that any effective and meaningful reform in education necessitates that the teacher's inner life ceases to be taken for granted, and brought to the forefront of educational debate and reform. This is a risky and potentially dangerous proposition because, as this paper pointed out, the examination of one's life involves taking a look at unpleasant things. Are governments and teachers prepared to embark on such a perilous journey? Are they prepared to deal with resistances from parents who may not fully understand the significance of such changes? Do we fully comprehend the implications of including "private existence" in education?

Richards (1962) argues that an important task of the teacher is "to remove obstacles that exist between a child and his [her] free development." "These obstacles," she writes, "are often physical, since fears or griefs are [often] locked in the body's organs . . . " (p. 40). Here, again, the implication is that a teacher cannot do for a student what s/he has not done for her/himself.

Connected to this, Richards writes that the teacher "must hear the inner questions, the unspoken ones: the inner hopes and misgivings and dreams . . . One must listen carefully in order to serve as a proper midwife to the birth of consciousness in the student" (p. 21). Although she does not use terms like personal myth or life story, her words suggest that one of the teacher's roles be that of guiding a student to the place where s/he may find the elements that form a personal myth. Two other points emerge from this passage which concern this discussion. First, to perform this function

requires a great deal of self awareness and sensitivity on the part of the teacher that can be acquired through self knowledge, which, in the context of this paper, means to know our personal myth and its relationship to our body. Secondly, the image of the midwife suggests that learning is done with the body. After all, in its biblical sense, "To know is to unite with in the flesh" (p. xxii). This suggests that as educators, we need to encourage, as Richards writes, "the process of waking up to life," a way of "being awake to the world throughout our organism" (p. 15). To embody paradox is to be awake to the world with our body. To be in touch with our body is to be awakened to its significance.

As Abram observed in chapter three, we relate to the world with our senses. Both Montagu (1971, p. 1) and Hamann (1996, p. 42) perceive touching as the parent of our other senses. Hamann notes that these other senses are "touching at a distance" (p. 42) (free translation). In fact, he notes that the human voice is a form of touching in the sense that it brings us into contact with another. In this perspective, relating can be seen as a form of touching since we relate to each other with our senses and our voices. In this view, the body literally and metaphorically underlies and informs the process of learning.

A common complaint among students, today, is that school is boring. In recent years, attempts have been made to identify the reasons for the failure of schools to make education more interesting and relevant to the lives of students. Postman (1995) suggests that we need a myth or guiding tale that brings meaning and purpose to learning. Students must be provided with a meaningful context for their learning. This tale, therefore, must relate to

their lives. This thesis suggests that any such tale must be grounded in the body.

Footnotes

1. In his book, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*, William Barrett (1958) discusses the irrational aspects of human identity: Existentialism . . . seeks to bring the whole of man . . . into philosophy . . . Naturally, the attempt to see the whole or integral man, in place of the rational . . . fragment of him, involves our taking a look at some unpleasant things . . . [for] . . . the whole man is not whole without such unpleasant things . . . We are still so rooted in the Enlightenment - or *up*rooted in it - that these unpleasant aspects of life are like the Furies for us: hostile forces from which we would escape. And of course the easiest way to escape the Furies, we think, is to deny that they exist." "[I]n giving the Furies their place, we may come to recognize that they are not such alien presences as we think in our moments of evading them. In fact, far from being alien, they are part of ourselves . . . The conspiracy to forget them, or to deny they exist, thus turns out to be only one more contrivance . . . by modern society to flee from the self. (pp. 275-276, 280)

In this view, the irrational element of our identity does not oppose the rational one but is distinguished from it, and that, together, they form the whole picture of a human being. Although I do not use the term irrational, as will be seen in chapter three, one of the purposes of the hero's journey is to get in touch with the irrational aspects of our identity. Therefore, existentialism can contribute to the philosophical foundations of a conception of education that includes the education of the body.

2. For a complete discussion of l'abandon corporel see Hamann 1993, 1996.

3. I know that there is literature on "good" cults. However it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss these and I restrict the use of the term to refer to the cults which falsely promise happiness and love, and other such things.

4. Alexander Lowen (1999) observes how the gods gradually moved upwards and away from the earth, and became associated with what Keen calls "the higher realm". He begins by noting how the gods of the earliest religions resided here on earth, in nature. The evolution of religious beliefs in Western civilization, however, was accompanied by a movement of the gods or god to higher places. He writes: "They first moved to a mountain top -- Mt. Olympus, where the Greek gods lived - and then the supreme God was removed to some remote place in heaven inaccessible to mortal man" (p.304). The point I want to bring up here is that, perhaps, this movement of the gods from within nature to a far-removed mountain top to a remote place in the sky represents the slow, gradual process that led to the disconnection from our body.

5. Of course, I will give special attention to Scotty Bowman's influential book *The Body as Hockey Puck* in which he discusses the resilience of the human body as it is knocked about and slapped around the hockey rink of life. For your information, this book is a runaway bestseller in northern Siberia especially among prison inmates up there who have curiously adopted hockey and its illustrious puck as the myth they live by. This is definitely an area for further investigation. (Just a moment of levity amid the laborious work of writing a thesis!)

6. Keleman (1999), Hamann (1993, 1996) and Jung (1961) refer to a dimension of the body that is connected to the body's inheritance. It is the idea that each human being carries within him/herself the history of the human race. For example, Keleman states that "We have the caveman in us as well as modern man" (1999, p. 29). In another place, he disccusses the concept of the "long body" which he explains as "the chain of bodies we are part of, . . . the parade of bodies that we have had from the outset of human conception. These bodies exist now . . . They are still there, functioning . . . Mostly we are in touch with the surface body, because perception is mostly a surface phenomenom. This doesn't mean that the other bodies do not exist" (p. 29).

Hamann refers to this aspect of the body throughout his two books. He writes, for example: "Chacun des humains . . . est l'organisation unique de tout le processus d'hominisation et d'humanisation parvenu jusqu'à lui à travers ses lignées d'appartenance" (1996, p. 21). The fact that our body contains the history of the human race points to the body's memory. "[L]e corps humain constitue une 'organisation corporelle' beaucoup plus profonde que la biologie, . . . il constitue une immense mémoire: une mémoire globale à la fois de nous-mêmes et de l'humanité en nous" (1993, p. 33).

In this regard, Jung writes: "Our souls as well as our bodies are composed of individual elements which were already present in the ranks of our ancestors. The "newness" in the individual psyche is an endlessly varied recombination of age-old components. Body and soul therefore have an intensely historical character and find no proper place in what is new, in things that have just come into being. That is to say, our ancestral

components are only partly at home in such things. We are very far from having finished completely with the Middle Ages, classical antiquity, and primitivity, as our modern psyches pretend . . . Inner peace and contentment depend in large measure upon whether or not the historical family which is inherent in the individual can be harmonized with the ephemeral conditions of the present." (pp. 235-236, 237)

7. "To receive" is a central notion in Hamann's thinking. He uses it in the context of receiving our being, our determinism, all that we are. For Hamann, the act of receiving is the most human of acts. It signifies "acceuillir, laisser être, prendre le temps de ressentir, ne pas empêcher. C'est un acte éminemment actif et toujours à refaire chaque fois que surgit un autre vécu, un autre événement. . . C'est l'acte d'existence, d'humanité par excellence" (1993, p. 31).

8. This process, however, can be informed by the great mythic traditions of the past. As Keen (1988) states, "Ancient stories. . . still have a place in our society and our psyches" (p. 44). May (1953) suggests that this journey begin with the following question, " What does . . . tradition have to teach me about human life, in my particular time and with my problems?" This sort of questioning attitude, he writes, is "using the wealth of wisdom accumulated through historical tradition for [one's] own enrichment and guidance . . ." (p. 209). It is having "a creative relation to the wisdom of the past" (p. 238). Since the factors that determine us are traits we inherit from our ancestors, we could say that having knowledge of our great mythic traditions is one way to deal with our determinism, the knowledge contained in the bodies of our ancestors.

9. From my perspective, there is a process of forgiveness and healing that underlies this inner journey toward wholeness. A movement toward wholeness implies an inner brokenness or woundedness that must be healed. Healing requires that we forgive those who hurt us and be forgiven by those whom we hurt. Wholeness is gained as we begin this process of healing. For a discussion of these issues see Monbourquette (1992); Muller-Fahrenholz (1997); Kurtz, & Ketcham (1992), pp. 213-226.

10. Hamann explains how this aspect of touching emerged from experiments that were conducted by a research group that he heads on l'abandon corporel (cf. Hamann, 1996, pp. 39-42 and 1993, pp. 24-25).

11. The hero myth, and myth in general, evoke a powerful message of hope. Myth informs us that things do not have to remain the same. Change and self-- renewal are possible. Campbell conveys this sense of hope very movingly when he asserts: "One thing that comes out in myths is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light" (p. 44). For a thorough discussion of the meaning of hope, see Lynch (1965).

12. Clémence Dubé, a colleague of Aimé Hamann, teaches educational psychology at the Université de Laval. In her article, *Abandon corporel et éducation*, she discusses how a teacher's identity is inextricably tied to the quality of his/her teaching. She emphasizes the importance of self-knowledge and its relationship to the body. She agrees with Palmer that

such knowledge implies the embodiment of paradox (cf. pp. 179-205 especially pp. 196-201 in Hamann, 1993).

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