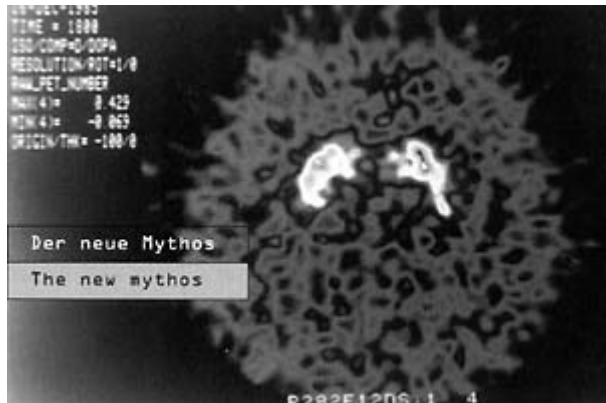


The New Mythos Frank Ogden



During the Dark Ages, which ran from the fifth to the 10th century A.D., civilized life had virtually disappeared in Western Europe. The High Middle Ages and its feudal culture, which developed during the 11th to 13th centuries, saw great change. Those days also encompassed the Crusades, a time when much of Europe was wrapped in the search for the Holy Grail — that magical silver or gold talisman associated with the chalice used at the Last Supper. Myth says that it was also used by Joseph of Arimathea to gather the blood from Christ's wounds. This then was the structure on which European culture was built. Through all those years every age had a myth reflecting the values of the times and their contributions towards progress. Each era was a time like no other.

The legend of King Arthur dates back to the 6th century. His noble knight, Sir Lancelot, ended up having an affair with Guinevere, the boss's wife. His son Galahad, if such a myth belonged to today, would be front page news in the National Enquirer as "Sir Galahad Carries Holy Grail to Heaven".

German composer Richard Wagner allowed the hero of his last opera, another knight, Parsifal, to catch a glimpse of the Holy Grail.

The history of those days is also told in the Song of Hildebrand, and the warrior Siegfried, which fitted in well with feudalism and what was happening then on the same lands surrounding the Linz Museum of the Future today.

The Renaissance carried us through the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries and firmly established art, music and architecture in European culture. Rebirth of the arts, coupled with the Iberian Age of Discovery led on to the 20th century. This long search, which lasted most of a millennia, was directed by the point of a sword. Again, a time like no other.

We find it hard to comprehend the influences these myths held, and how they gathered, controlled and directed for so long the energies of so many residents of those times.

Perhaps we now need a new myth to point the way ahead, one that contains similar challenges and can capture the imagination and energies of five billion people. Perhaps a legend of a mouse-directed cursor that points us into the magic Kingdom of Cyberspace? Consider the similarities. New lands to settle in Cyberspace — a magical land with no known boundaries, rules, regulations or sanctions. A series of unending worlds, peopled by creatures designed by the same explorers who seek to find them; a new age of gallium arsenide, quicksand and

photons - all the ingredients for myth. The bizarre and the fantastic coupled with accelerating change - a change in the meaning of time, the abolition of old rules and conventions, the collapse of "perfect" institutions.

The cycle of renewal and rebirth continues, a new religion is rising on the far horizon. The head office of the Bank of Asia in Bangkok is built in her/his/its image, that of a ROBOT. It is already worshipped. Once more, a time like no other.

Once upon a time ...

LEARNING TO THRIVE, NOT MERELY SURVIVE WITH ELECTRONIC MYTHOLOGY

After my third retirement, which lasted the longest at 30 days, I received insight into the then forthcoming computer age from a stone-age chief in the Kikori rainforest in Papua New Guinea. This led me to become, in 1979, the first Canadian subscriber to the world's first information utility, The Source. Over the next few years, founder Jack Taub and I shared thoughts on how this new world was going to develop. Taub, light years ahead of others, was already playing God with his introduction of many services popular today. Taub sold out for megabucks to The Readers Digest who then merged with CompuServe, today's largest commercial general information utility.

During those years I was a heavy user of Nexis, the sister to Lexis, the legal information supplier. Based in Ohio, Nexis had a data base of 75 billion character entries, a huge inventory. They have also recently sold out. Nexis seemed expensive at the time. It cost me about US-\$ 2,000 to learn how to enter and work the system. In retrospect, it was high return on investment. It led me into starting the world's first video clipping service. I had several clients, each paying \$ 1,000 a month per field of interest. We monitored local, then national television, then via satellite North American and through our own man in Tokyo, Asian news. By 1981 this was a busy operation. We had to watch TV in fast-forward, which showed trends instead of individual events.

Instead of recording on expensive one-inch and two-inch Quad tape, as it was called, I recorded on a good consumer brand, Sony half-inch video tape. At a cost of about \$ 8 a tape, I could record for three hours. Commercial TV stations quickly found out even they couldn't afford up to \$ 200 for every 20 minute tape, or the storage fees for this growing mountain of tin cans. Consequently, most North American networks erased a lot of their news between 1981 and 1988. During that time I recorded more than one billion video frames of North American news, and taped about half a billion frames of Asian news. I gambled that with rapidly-improving electronic enhancement one could convert lowly "home movies" into broadcast quality within 10 years. That has now been possible for four years. I could afford to keep such low cost tapes, not erase and reuse like the networks. I saved all of mine. That's mine, as in gold mine.

I gradually shifted to other forms of accessing information, mainly by computer. I still monitored satellite television but used the data for speaking and consulting engagements, which are far more profitable and require no staff. I operate a one-man business generating more than a million dollars a year. Outsourcing is the key. My former assistant Jim Semenick, now with his own company Scanix, does work for me. I hired him when he was 13. I couldn't find a competent adult. My daughter, Lodei, is my videographer. My wife's company Baker Communications edits my columns, Gutenberg-format and electronic books. The National

Speakers Bureau is the booking agent for my 70-a-year speaking engagements. I work with three small Washington companies to produce videos, CD-ROMs and info for my World Wide Web pages.

I have taken up residence on a World Wide Web page. My address is: <http://www.dr tomorrow.com/-drtom>. The WWW may be either the world's largest fiasco or it may be profitable enlightenment. Nobody really knows how many people are using it. But seemingly sound figures show the world flocking to the site at a rate of a quarter million a month. That's a lot of people joining a new community ... the fastest growing in the world. The word "community" no longer refers only to "a group with similar interests residing in the same geographical areas". The really active community is already in cyberspace. On April 27, 1993, I applied in the U.S.A. for a registered trademark for the name "Cyberspace University". Unless there is some major objection, the trademark will be granted April 21. Notice of pending approval appeared in the necessary U.S. publication March 21.

This may be the first trademark granted for something (cyberspace) that does not physically exist. I had previously applied for the term "Dr. Tomorrow" in 1992 and that trademark was granted a year later. Both trademarks appear in the title of my new multi-media CD-ROM Dr. Tomorrow's Cyberspace University. The first distributor to whom it was shown purchased 2,000 copies -to use as a samples! The CD-ROM retails at US-\$ 30. The same distributor has products in 33,000 American outlets. Who knows where this will go?

For the first time in human history, the web allows anyone so inclined, potential access to all our planet's citizens. They aren't all there yet by any means, but the system is so downright cheap that almost everyone in the Western world and many in Asia can gain access. Even in India, China and Sri Lanka, many are also hooked up. Eastern Europe has already caught the fever.

The Industrial Age divided our world into the haves and the have-nots. During that period, the wealth of the world increased about 30 times. Wealth was not evenly distributed, and North America and Europe profited most. At the time, many parts of the world did not have the education, due to a long and expensive teaching process, nor the finances to move into this world that commanded a hefty entrance fee for capital expenditures.

Today the world is dividing into the "knows" and the "know-nots". Agricultural Age land-owners were rich from what the land produced. Industrial machinery equated with wealth in the age that followed, because machines too created wealth.

Huge amounts of capital are not required to set up factories full of money-making machinery today. I could generate \$ 90,000 a day making electronic books on the same computer (available today for \$ 200) on which I wrote them. A book can be made in 42 seconds — on a 35-cent disc with little inventory required and no factory, no warehouse. Even marketing is inexpensive compared to the huge marketing expenditures that accompanied the Industrial Age. Big offices, vast spaces and numerous personnel are no longer necessary. You do not need a lot of money to get into this new age because it is a time of experiential learning, not formal education. It is time to honor Buckminster Fuller's design axiom of "doing more with less". Small is beautiful. But you must be entrepreneurial and take risks. You think Bill Gates, now the wealthiest man in America, just made it by himself? No. He had lots of help from others who caught his dream and joined him on the trip. About 2,000 of them are now non-union millionaires. Few have quit their jobs. Why? Because they couldn't imagine anything

more exciting than what they were doing to reach millionaire status. Almost all are under 35 years of age. The mythos of Silicon Valley contributed to their success and happiness.

The mythos of Zoroaster affected Babylon. The Millennium Myth worked on the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment. Myth aided the Russian Revolution and Germany's Hitler, Myth is already abroad in the Land of Gaia. Some are already spreading the myth of the technocalypse.

This is our time. It is the eve of a new millennium. Let's create our own myths. The time is right.

The brass rings are a lot closer this time around. Reach for tomorrow.



Brain Scan
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