Being Many In The One
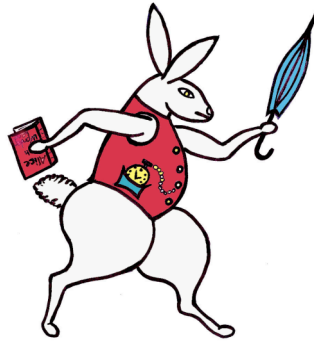**Mytho-Logos of Concurrent**

* Approaches to Presentations and Workshops *

This Text Introduces the

Web Site Author

Greetings. My name is Leslie Emery. I am the author of this web site. The writings here represent many years of contemplation and investigation, all influenced by other authors too numerous to list. Thus I regard this work as a form of collaboration, and offer it as partly mine and partly a consequence of others' efforts. I make it available here on the World Wide Web as a provocation for thinking, feeling, and acting more inclusively. I created this web site to associate diverse perspectives upon how humans relate to the irreducible complexities of mind and matter. These notions derive from a wide range of intellectual disciplines and cultural traditions.

In focusing on the relatedness of those concepts I often have omitted references to their origins. My intention is neither to claim the work of others nor to disparage disciplinary distinctions. Rather, I have sought to compress a range of complimentary notions about 'living in *and as* irreducibly complex conditions' into a broadly accessible form. Consequently there is considerable paraphrasing and commingling of the many related sources. A list of works and authors relevant to this project is found in the "Works

Cited" text, located on the **Manifesting the Many in the One** page of this site. Quotations from some of those authors are accessible by clicking on the changing images of the triskelion centerpiece on the site's **Home Page**. Paraphrasings of their concepts are provided on the **Psycho-Mythic-Philo-Sophic Maxims** page. Additional references are available on the **Sources and Resources** page.

Pragmatic Skepticism, Pluralistic Perspective, and Social Diversity

My efforts are motivated by a sense that there is always 'more to the story' than any single perspective can represent. Being a practical skeptic by nature, I have sought what seemed to me the most rigorously reasoned approaches to understanding the complexities of self and world. Such reasoning turns out to involve much more than 'mere' formal logic. It also entails extensive interdisciplinary correlations. Thus, to my own surprise, my search led me to regard 'mythical knowing' as of equal importance as mathematical, biological, or philosophical modes of logical understanding. I have become an epistemological pluralist. Thus my bias is 'against' ultimately privileging any singular mode of knowing, understanding, interpreting, or valuing by exclusively 'reducing' all valid meaning to a particular method or perspective.

However, I do not consider this orientation toward knowing to be 'utterly relativistic' in the sense that there is no 'truth' to be known and collectively validated. Rather, I find that various contrasting logical perspectives and accurate descriptions can be held as complimentary and thus *concurrently valid*. Further, I propose that such a 'non-reductive' approach to knowing is required if one seeks a logical basis for the importance of social pluralism and cultural diversity. Promoting social pluralism requires the ability to maintain and *share* a pluralistic perspective on knowing and 'truth.'

Certainly some perspectives are more useful to understanding certain phenomena, relative to specific concerns, than are others. Thus there exists a necessity for disciplinary specializations of thought and study. But if one lacks access to a variety of methods for analysis, interpretation, and representation, one's awareness and capacities to think, communicate, and act are unreasonably, even dangerously limited. I am concerned then with how epistemological modes of knowing and hermeneutic frameworks for interpreting can be diligently diversified *and interrelated*. I view this effort as having great social significance. For, in so far as one intends to create honestly egalitarian relationships among differentiated individuals, one needs to acknowledge the contradictions and paradoxes inherent in all experience, views, values, and choices. Neither our selves nor the world are as simple as we ordinarily prefer to think. To be human, I suggest, is to be contrastingly various to the point of 'valid self-contradiction.'

Thus, to be reasonably human is to be variously intelligent and 'not always in agreement with one's self.' Indeed, my studies indicate that this 'disorderly' trait of human consciousness provide its basis for creative originality and adaptive capacities.

However difficult, learning to act *from* a plurality of perspectives and contrasting reasonings ultimately proves quite practical. Simplistic assumptions, though often necessary, truncate awareness and inevitably cripple our options for 'choosing consciously' when confronting the complexities of both self and world. Thus, while I appreciate the need to 'solve problems,' I find that people typically attempt to do so without reasonable reflection upon the complexities of the issues involved or their own motivations. My focus, then, as an 'epistemological and hermeneutic pluralist,' is to promote reflection upon and amplification of the intricacies of human feeling, thought, and actions—*in relation to* a world of chaotically self-organizing phenomena. Given my view that the complexities of an individualized self in such a world are effectively irreducible, I approach efforts at rigorously diversifying awareness with a practical emphasis upon the need to defer judgment and resist hierarchical ordering.

My Applications of the Notions on this Website

The practical purpose of this work then is to enable people to perceive and engage greater degrees of complexity in relations with self, others, and world. I seek to enhance the various ways people can know and experience the intricacies of their own lives and contexts. That effort involves making distinctions between ordinary and extra-ordinary conditions of awareness. These I associate with reductively singular and non-reductively pluralistic modes of understanding. By differentiating these inherent but typically unacknowledged ways of knowing I attempt to promote a dialogue between them. This amounts to a conversation between parts of our minds that 'see things *in* oppositions' versus those that 'see things *as* relationships.' Much conflict and confusion come from not being able to distinguish these perspectives in our minds.

In contemporary society I observe that we are trained to be reflexive mechanists. We are, in effect, the children of a technological culture whose instrumental reasoning is obsessed with measurement and definition. Assumptions about self and world thus tend to be profoundly reductive, manipulative, and control oriented. Awareness thereby tends to reflexively favor thinking in terms of number and simple linear sequences. I attempt to offer a rigorously logical examination of how this condition exists and why it constitutes a dangerously distorted development of human cognitive capacities. Mechanism is an essential mode of understanding, but it is inadequate to understanding large-scale phenomena—such as weather, ecologies, societies, history, institutions, economies, living organisms, and individual human minds.

Learning to Think and Enact Irreducible Complexity

I take pains to emphasize the difficulty of evading the grip of ordinary socialized reductions so as to enable extra-ordinary awareness in a way that feels valid. Serious efforts of intellect and imagination are required. I approach such efforts with a rigorous concern for the importance of both logical analysis and experience of its insights. One basic way I engage both concerns involves exploring the following five topics:

1. Ordinary Reduction: Revealing the reflexively simplistic, inherently reductive, prejudicial biases of 'ordinary status.'
2. Extra-Ordinary Complexity: Acknowledging how actual phenomena manifest non-linear, chaotic self-organization, constituting a condition of irreducible interactivity, thereby posing a relatively extra-ordinary status.
3. Non-Reductive Understanding: Re-orienting logical perspectives toward the task of validating concurrently diversified, radically interactive states of being and thus experience of complementary contrast and contradiction in self and world
4. Trouble: Learning to appreciate conflict and trauma as providing potential access to understanding irreducible complexities in the actual conundrums of particular lives and events.
5. Non-Reductive Expression and Experience: Enacting representations of the coherent discontinuities of self and world that promote actual experience of radically interactive complexity.

Exploring these general topics facilitates associating concepts from various intellectual disciplines and cultural traditions, drawing upon philosophical, psychological, sociological, religious, historical, scientific, and mythical references, in order to elaborate hidden complexities in personal experience. The intention is to make these notions tangible and practicable.

Presentations and Workshops

In making presentations about the topics engaged on this webs site, I favor approaching them through the concerns of a particular audience. Specific contexts of concern, activity, and experience thus provide the 'grounding' for unfamiliar and often abstract notions. Topics of focus for such elaboration can include education and learning, art and performance, literature and writing, personal lives and relationships, social issues and cultural identity, childhood development and parenting, religion and spirituality, power and politics, science and technology, gender and sexuality, illness and dying, or psychology and psychotherapy. My intention is to facilitate a collaborative exploration of the extra-ordinary traits of seemingly ordinary conditions. That involves reexamining

assumptions, habits, priorities, beliefs, identities, and ways of using language to represent our selves, others, work, and the world.

As abstract as much of the theoretical material presented on this web site might appear, my personal presentations of it are designed to be tangibly accessible. Rather than simply lecture, I seek to demonstrate not only the logic of extra-ordinary awareness but provide active means for 'inhabiting radical complexity.' My approach employs elements of performance, storytelling, image media, interactive discourse, experiential participation, and cooperative creativity. Groups already motivated to move beyond habitual assumptions and conventional definitions are obviously the most responsive. If you are interested in either a general presentation of the concepts on this web site or in focusing them to engage your particular areas of concern in unfamiliar and radically complex ways you can contact me at: LeslieEmery@mytho-logos.net .

My Background and Method

My PhD specifically involves combining theories and methodologies from depth psychological and mythological studies. That interdisciplinary conjunction provides the basis for an unusual trans-disciplinary perspective that *sees through* diverse modes of knowing *as archetypal methods for engaging reality*. Differing disciplines engage phenomena through particular priorities, thus generating distinctive qualities of understanding. Their differences are as important as their similarities, providing a means of differentiating the variousness that composes the interactive totality of radically complex phenomena. By arranging multiple modes of knowing in a complimentary constellation, rather than a hierarchical order, typically unacknowledged relationships and meanings become accessible. This enables an archetypal perspective in that it elaborates 'background' or 'originating' elements that are 'seen from' contrasting perspectives. As such, this is not a methodology for enhancing 'control' but rather for elaborating intricacies of association usually obscured by more exclusive, control-oriented perspectives.

Other texts on the **Presentations and Workshops** page of this site provides further details on my approaches for thinking and experiencing the concurrencies of singularity and multiplicity, or 'being the many in/of/as the one.' See links to the texts:
> "An Approach to Applying these Concepts"
> "Engaging Extra-Ordinary Understanding"
> "Practicing Archetypal Analysis"
> "Manifesting Mythical Knowing"

Leslie Emery, PhD.