

Personal Myth - Application 2

In Phoenix we encounter two juxtaposed and polarised motifs.

The first we will call Ahrimanic – the spirit of the darkness, betrayal, reduction and stasis or destruction, that binds the subject and casts a shadow over her, in the film, Nelly. This Ahrimanic motif is present in the shadow of Nazism, the concentration camps, the genocide, the destruction and rubble of the once proud city Berlin and the shattered German psyche post the war. It is incarnated by Johnny, but more profoundly symbolised by the Nazi regime (sidebar: both animus figures). It is also present in Nelly's desperation to relive her past life, to hold onto the past, despite being betrayed by the one she loved, to cling to an identity that is now only an ephemera.

The other motif is of redemption and re-enchantment. The possibility of rebirth, of rising like the Phoenix from the destruction and ashes of the past. Initially in the story this is portrayed principally by Lene and her myth or dream of the two of them, Lene and Nelly, relocating to the Holy Land. The surgeon and the surgery also feature here with this motif – the possibility and act of recreation and re-enchantment, as a way out of the profoundly disenchanting events that had led Nelly to this point in her life.

Later in the story, in the climactic scene Nelly fully embodies the motif of the Phoenix, with her striking red dress, her singing, her act of revealing herself and finally of walking away.

It is also worth noting, although this may not apply to all of you, it is a victory of the anima over the oppression and betrayal by the animus. A critical moment, the critical moment, is when Nelly sings in her true voice – she finds her voice and she sings out. In doing this she does something miraculous that unites the feeling of the anima with the Logos of the animus. The greatest challenge for the anima is to find her voice, for the animus it is to find his heart, which she also inadvertently or possibly intentionally (subject to interpretation) achieves.

1) With this in mind, the first question I want you to tackle is identifying the overarching themes of destruction (also: reduction, regression, stuckness, disenchantment) – the Ahrimanic impulse in your own myth.

And, also in your own myth,

2) I want you to identify the motif of rebirth, new life and re-enchantment.
To the above I want to add two more related questions.

Nelly finally reveals herself. She comes out of hiding.

3) How do you hide? And,

4) What is your true voice?

Personal Myth – Final application (application 3)

Drawing on your work over the last three weeks on the first two applications, I want you now to attempt an act of synthesis, where in you articulate your own 'personal myth'.

This can be as long or as short as you choose, but to offer you a framework to work within, I am going to suggest you do this in under 1000 words.

There are two things you should be aware of in approaching this application.

It is a metaphoric, symbolic and mythological description of your soul life, i.e we are not looking for a journalistic historical account of the events of your life.

It is an act of both profound reflection and also creativity. You are both discovering and creating your own myth.