Automotive Apotheosis: An Exploration of Promotional Culture as Contemporary Mythology

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Abstract

This thesis proposes that contemporary promotional culture is the mythology of today. This hypothesis was first put forth by Marshall McLuhan in his 1951 book, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man,* where he astutely observed that myth and poetry have been effectively colonized by promotional culture. Although it has been mainly overlooked by the academic community, this book is a cornerstone of the field of popular culture and mass media. In it, McLuhan was one of the first scholars to detect that folklore of industrial society is determined, not by education or religion, but by the mass media (McLuhan 1951). Over the decades, many scholars from various academic fields have observed the same trends, concluding that the myth-making faculty is thriving in contemporary society, and situating the strongest mythopoeic forces in worlds of entertainment and promotional culture. Nevertheless, these notions have not been sufficiently explored.

Hence, in order to uncover the prevalent myth and poetry operating in contemporary society we must turn to promotional culture, and particularly to advertising, which McLuhan believes is as equivalent to collective society as dreams are to the individual (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). Myth is defined in this work as a universal narrative that reflects humanity's collective unconscious projections and contains primordial forms, or archetypes. This thesis argues that advertising is mythopoeic and utilizes primordial archetypes. The focus of this thesis is automotive adverting, which draws on the mythology of the car as a godlike entity in contemporary popular culture.

McLuhan's observations detailing the colonization of myth and poetry in contemporary society inform a critical methodology which this thesis builds upon and modernizes. The resulting version of mythical criticism is a valid method of enquiry. It reveals underlying meaning in contemporary promotional texts that could not otherwise be observed by using methods such as semiotics alone.

Declaration

This is to certify that:

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the Masters,

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used, and

(iii) the thesis is 49,779 words in length, inclusive of footnotes, but exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

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Introduction

"What happens when the ad makers take over all the popular myths and poetry?"

- Marshall McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride,* 1951*,* p. 117.

According to Marshall McLuhan, modern individuals are trapped inside a maze whence they cannot escape without the rational detachment that will allow them to become logical spectators of their own circumstances and supply them with "the thread which will lead [them] out of the Labyrinth" (McLuhan 1951, p. v). Just as Theseus delved deep into the labyrinth to face the Minotaur, and the sailor in Edgar Allan Poe's short story *A Descent Into The Maelstrom* plunged himself into the whirlpool to escape its destructive forces, so must modern man critically examine the colonizing forces of promotional culture in order to expel himself from the 'whirling phantasmagoria' that manifests itself as a sort of collective dream, or as "the folklore of industrial man" (McLuhan 1951, p. v).

Marshall McLuhan's 1951 book, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*, is one of the most revolutionary and significant, although least explored, founding documents in the field of popular culture and mass media. In it, he offers modern men a magical thread similar to the one Ariadne gave to Theseus. Those who embark on the exploration of this important work will discover that within its vast depths Marshall McLuhan is one of the very first individuals to realize that folklore of industrial society is determined, not by education or religion, but by the mass media. He affirms that "ours is the first age in which many thousands of the best-trained individual minds have made it a full-time business to get inside the collective public mind" (McLuhan 1951, p. v). The effect of this colonization of the collective unconscious by "many ads and much entertainment alike" is the incarceration of the public "in the helpless state engendered by prolonged mental rutting" (McLuhan 1951, p. v).

Alarmed by his observations, McLuhan devised a valuable method of inquiry that will aid students of contemporary culture to uncover the archaic myth and poetry colonized by promotional culture. He uncovered several recurring myths and archetypes within popular culture and advertising of the 1950's, including: the Hero (characters played by Humphrey Bogart), the Übermensch (Superman and Tarzan), the Wise Old Man (old-aged professor as author of self-help books), the Child (Orphan Annie) and the Maiden (Coke's ad girl). McLuhan suggests such archetypes, popular myths and poetry are embedded in popular culture through symbolic technique and that the result of this appropriation is the mounting power of promotional culture.

Unfortunately, despite its age, *The Mechanical Bride* has not been fully investigated by the academic community and McLuhan's pioneering propositions concerning the relationship between contemporary promotional culture and popular myth and poetry have not been extensively examined in academic and critical literature. Many of McLuhan's technological theories have gained interest and relevance through mainstream reappraisal, while the intriguing dimension of mythical literature and observations in his early work have been overlooked. Myth criticism and analysis as envisioned by McLuhan can provide valuable insights into the inner workings of contemporary promotional culture, which are not afforded by any other method, such as semiotics, alone.

Substantial changes in technology, media and society have taken place in the Western world since McLuhan made these assertions. Nevertheless, the relationships and connections between myth, poetry and promotional culture described by Marshall McLuhan in *The Mechanical Bride* remain as prevalent, and have become even more sophisticated in contemporary culture. Inspired by McLuhan's suggestion that promotional culture colonizes popular myth and poetry, this thesis argues that promotional culture is in fact the mythology of contemporary Western society. Storytelling in the form of myth is one of the eldest human art forms. While myth can be simply defined as an interesting sacred story depicting a culture's cosmological beliefs or the lives and adventures of its gods and heroes, it also delves much deeper into our existence. Myths are resonating stories that reveal archetypal patterns of human experience (Randazzo 1993, p. 34). Seeing that myths address fundamental human experiences, such as the recurring cycle of life and death, it would be wise to assume that their relevance is timeless.

As promotional culture as a whole is vastly beyond the scope of this thesis, it focuses on advertising. While any aspect of promotional culture would reveal the same underlying processes, advertising was chosen because it is one of the most easily observable forms of promotional culture. In his search for deeper meaning within mid-twentieth century promotional texts, McLuhan (1951) discovered that the richest and most vibrant source of mythology and poetry in contemporary society is advertising, "the greatest art form of the twentieth century" (Advertising Age 1976). Likewise, American social historians, particularly David Potter and Daniel Boorstin, maintain that advertising should be included in any critical study of modern American life. In *People of Plenty*, Potter likens advertising, the "institution of abundance," to such established institutions as the school and the church in "the magnitude of its social influence" (1954 p. 167). Meanwhile, Daniel Boorstin envisions advertising to be "the rhetoric of democracy," and "the characteristic folk culture of our society" (Atwan, McQuade & Wright 1979, p. xx).

The scope of this work is further narrowed to automotive advertising as it inquires: can automotive advertising be considered mythopoeic and how does mythopoeic advertising draw on archetypes? To answer these questions this thesis develops McLuhan's methodology and improves upon the existing body of critical literature. The adaptation of McLuhan's methodology will also highlight his less known observations about the role of myth in contemporary culture, nourishing the mainstream understanding of *The Mechanical Bride* as an invaluable critical text.

Chapter Outline

The first chapter of this thesis provides a literature review, focusing on Marshall McLuhan's *The Mechanical Bride* and detailing the critical literature put forth in recent decades. The literature review reveals that this thesis is the first to undertake an in-depth examination of *The Mechanical Bride* and its methodology in order to determine whether McLuhan's observations are still equally, or perhaps even more, prevalent today than in the 1950s. It is also the first to build upon McLuhan's suggestion that promotional culture is colonizing popular myth and poetry by examining their role today and investigating whether promotional culture is the mythology of contemporary society.

The second chapter lays out a conceptual framework that establishes the underlying concepts utilized in this thesis, as it: 1) briefly examines the role that myth has had throughout history in relation to scientific, or logical, thinking and explicates the definition of myth employed in this thesis; 2) defines archetypes as primordial elements that are rearranged to form various myths while maintaining the same underlying themes and images; 3) examines the difference between myth and folklore in order to establish whether promotional culture is a projection of contemporary cultural themes and motifs (meaning it is folkloric), a reincarnation of primordial themes that have been present in the human consciousness since ancient times (meaning it is mythical and archetypal) or a combination of both; 4) examines the role of poetry as a mythopoeic process that aids promotional culture in its appropriation of myth; 5) defines promotional culture and advertising; and 6) details the historical stages of advertising throughout the twentieth century in order to determine the changes that have taken place since McLuhan wrote his book nearly sixty years ago.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, which takes the form of a literature review, rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, semiotics, and archetypal literary criticism. And finally, the investigation of critical and cultural literature surrounding the automobile and the analysis of automotive advertising comprise the final chapter. The literature review examines the prevalent symbolism surrounding the

automobile in contemporary culture. It reveals that the car: is enveloped in rituals and mythical imagery that is reminiscent of religious allusions; is fetishized, anthropomorphized, treated as a magical totem and worshiped as a deity. The second section of Chapter 4 is comprised of case studies that reveal that automotive advertising is composed of mythical narratives that reflect the themes uncovered in the automotive literature review, McLuhan's observations and archaic myth.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Written over half a century ago, Marshall McLuhan's book, *The Mechanical Bride: the Folklore of Industrial Man* is a pioneering study in the field of popular culture and can be considered one of the founding documents of early cultural studies. Despite its age, *The Mechanical Bride* itself has not been fully investigated by the academic community. This chapter begins with a detailed discussion of McLuhan's notions and observations, which have inspired many contemporary critics, laying the foundation for the argument examined in this thesis. The second part of this chapter outlines contemporary critical literature in order to identify gaps in the existing scholarship and critically examine the relevance of the underlying themes noticed by McLuhan in 1951.

Marshall McLuhan and *The Mechanical Bride*

As his first published book, *The Mechanical Bride: the Folklore of Industrial Man* lays the groundwork for McLuhan's subsequent works and establishes a critical moment in his academic career. Before selecting its current title, McLuhan considered calling the book *Guide to Chaos, Sixty Million Mama's Boys* or *Typhon in America* (Marchessault 2005, p. 46). *Guide to Chaos* echoes his perception that industrial man lives in a chaotic society, deficient of the rhythmic order of the seasons found in earlier epochs, while *Typhon* refers to the Greek mythological monster with one hundred heads and implies the complexity and peril of the bombardment of messages aimed at industrial man (Meggs 2002). The final title characterizes McLuhan's growing concern about the interfusion of sex and technology in advertising, and is likely inspired by Marcel Duchamp's large painting, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, as well as the artist's enthrallment with mechanism as portrayed in *Nude Descending a Staircase, no2* (Theall 2006, p. 76).

The significance of *The Mechanical Bride* partially lies in the fact that within it Marshall McLuhan is one of the first individuals to notice that the trend in promotional culture to utilize and colonize popular myth and poetry. To observe this phenomenon McLuhan encourages students of popular culture to learn to recognize the "morphological conformities as the folklorist and anthropologist do for the migration of symbols and situations" (McLuhan 1951, p. 96). The recurrence of the same patterns promises the existence of similar underlying dynamics, as in the midst of diverse forms and images of any society "it is reasonable to expect to find some sort of melodic curve" (McLuhan 1951, p. 96). While alterations are bound to occur frequently, the themes will remain the same. These themes can be

considered the 'laws' of a society that produces them and will shape its songs, art and social expression (McLuhan 1951, p. 96).

According to McLuhan, in order to unearth these themes one must turn to advertising agencies, as they "express for the collective society that which dreams and uncensored behavior do in individuals" (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). By tapping into the world of sub-rational impulses advertisers give spatial form to hidden desires. Hence, studying them allows us to categorize what could otherwise not be detected and discussed (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). In their determination to impact the consumer's unconscious, advertising agencies themselves unconsciously divulge the key drives behind many facets of contemporary society. McLuhan compares the advertisers' role in the commercial world to that of Hollywood in the world of entertainment. Both Madison Avenue and Hollywood venture to pierce and sway the unconscious minds of the vast public in a manner very similar to a serious novelist, but with much more sinister intentions (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). Novelists and artists hope to reveal the inner happenings occurring "on the invisible stage" of their characters' minds, whereas advertisers only attempt to break into the public mind to instill their collective dreams on that inner stage (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). When advertisers and Hollywood project unconscious behavior they clear the path for one dream to open into another until the lines between reality and fantasy are blurred entirely (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). As a result, in their effort to monitor and manipulate the events on the inner, invisible stage of the collective dream, the advertisers and Hollywood inadvertently develop into "a sort of collective novelist, whose characters, imagery, and situations are an intimate revelation of the passions of the age" (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). The effect of this colonization of the collective unconscious by "many ads and much entertainment alike" is the incarceration of the public "in the helpless state engendered by prolonged mental rutting" (McLuhan 1951, p. v).

In order to combat this state of "public helplessness" and counter the immensity and influence of what he perceives as programs of unofficial education carried out by commerce through the press, radio and movies, McLuhan proposes to devise a method of reversing this process – using the commercial education to enlighten its intended audience (McLuhan 1951, p. v; Marchessault 2005, p. 48). In the late 1940s, popular American philosopher Mortimer Adler organized the *Great Books of the Western World* series to counter this unofficial instruction with grand ideas. Contrary to Adler, McLuhan believed that the only way to successfully combat it is by studying the popular culture of the present, since it is with "the particulars of contemporary existence" that one can communicate with the great minds of the past. He beckons for "a part-time program of uninhibited inspection of popular and

commercial culture" that would encourage the superior self-awareness which is needed for harmonious life in an industrial society (McLuhan 1951, p. 45). It is only after this that "the study of the great books would be pursued with a fuller sense of the particularity of cultural conditions, past and present, without which there is no understanding either of art, philosophy, or society" (ibid). However, one should not mistake this approach with celebrating popular culture; McLuhan is simply placing ideas in the historical and social context through which they continue to survive, such that they will have an effect on, or meaning in, the present (Marchessault 2005, p. 48).

McLuhan engages with readers and invites them to analyze the culture in which they are immersed on a daily basis (Marchessault 2005, p. 48), because the "whirling phantasmagoria" that constitutes contemporary folklore is only comprehended when arrested for contemplation so that its usual participants are released from their habitual participation – somnambulism (McLuhan 1951, p. v; Marchessault 2005, p. 61). In order to achieve such an arrest, McLuhan turns to the method employed by the sailor in Edgar Allan Poe's short story *A Descent into the Maelstrom*. Poe's sailor eluded the destructive forces of the *strom* by studying the action of the whirlpool and by co-operating with it (McLuhan 1951, p. v). Likewise, McLuhan hoped that *The Mechanical Bride* would provide its readers with the rational detachment that would allow them to become logical spectators of their own circumstances and supply them with "the thread which will lead [them] out of the Labyrinth" (McLuhan 1951, p. v). According to McLuhan, it is the "amusement born of his rational detachment as a spectator" that saved Poe's sailor and that inspires yet another ongoing 'McLuhanesque' approach to cultural phenomena: the satiric use of wit and the comic to reveal hidden levels of meaning and complexity from seemingly simple cultural materials such as Blondi, Lil' Abner, laundry soap, stockings, and so forth (Theall 2006, p. 5).

McLuhan carries out this methodology in *The Mechanical Bride* through fifty-nine brief essays that present cultural artifacts, including ads, comic strips, movie posters and covers of magazines and books, accompanied by a short critical essay analyzing each one (McLuhan 1951, p. x). These cultural objects are placed into a four-part structure which includes an illustration, a parodic headline, a series of short, witty and frequently comic questions, and a text that describes fundamental intellectual, social and/or moral effects of the specific object under study (Theall 2006, p. 69). Most of the book's exhibits were chosen because they are typical or familiar, representing a world of social myths or forms (McLuhan 1951, p. v). Unity is not imposed on these diverse exhibits, as McLuhan claims that "any other selection…would reveal the same dynamic patterns" (McLuhan 1951, p. vi). Instead, these

heterogeneous surfaces are 'dislocated' to reveal patterns that uncover a 'complex situation' (ibid; Marchessault 2005, p. 61). The consistency found in the pages of *The Mechanical Bride* is not conscious, but arises from a sort of collective dream (McLuhan 1951, p. v). McLuhan demonstrates this by finding unity and cohesion of narrative structures underpinning advertising rhetoric across a wide range of commodities from pulp fiction to life insurance. These advertisements (ads, TV spots or adverts) are public displays, models of behavior and social situations that can give us insight into the society from which they emerge (Marchessault 2005, p. 58). By displacing a selection of seemingly unrelated cultural objects from newspapers and magazines, *The Mechanical Bride* attempts to discern unconscious cultural patterns and desires (Marchessault 2005, p. 47).

While some could criticize the book for its lack of the academic rigor that is common in more traditional forms of disciplinary scholarship, the open approach to media studies "in terms of a laboratory, open to experiment, thought and dialogue," is what allows *The Mechanical Bride* to be a valuable pedagogical tool (Marchessault 2005, p. 49). The book successfully introduces the importance that McLuhan places on media literacy, which permeates all his critical writing from *The Mechanical Bride* onwards (Marchessault 2005, p. 47). It provides concepts through which to capture specific tendencies in the culture that is under analysis and even introduces the phenomenological aspects of cultural studies. As emphasized by the subtitle, *The Folklore of Industrial Man*, the anthropological and ethnographic aim of this book is to devise a framework through which to observe the rhetorical forces of the modern world (Marchessault 2005, p. 50). Folklore is generally thought of as the beliefs, customs and values passed on generationally through tales and songs, in other words, it is *of* and *for* the people. Conversely, McLuhan asserts that most of the folklore of industrial man stems from the laboratory, the studio, and the advertising agencies. Nevertheless, there is a unity in such folklore that "is not conscious in origin or effect and seems to arise from a sort of collective dream" (McLuhan 1951, p. xi). Hence, McLuhan's exhibits and commentaries in *The Mechanical Bride* are meant to unfold as a single landscape (McLuhan 1951, p. v).

In order to reveal promotional culture's capture of typical visual imagery and symbols "in an effort to paralyze the mind" (McLuhan 1951, p. vii), McLuhan applied the methodology of art criticism. This methodological approach is imperative, as it offers far broader coverage of the relationship between society and myth than, for instance, French philosopher Roland Barthes' book, *Mythologies*. McLuhan's technique of applying symbolic aesthetic to the examination of promotional messages unearths the "semiotics beneath semiotics – levels of meaning beyond the messenger's intent or the

recipient's awareness" (Meggs 2002, p. xiii). At a time of reluctance within mainstream North American communication studies to accept the poetic as a mode of discovery (Theall 2006, p. 41), McLuhan introduced the use of poetic methods of analysis in a quasi-poetic style to examine popular cultural phenomena, which he considered to be another type of poem (Theall 2006, p. 5). He justified such an investigation by considering Machiavelli's revelation that a state can be turned into a work of art by "the rational manipulation of power," which has since allowed for the application of "the method of art analysis to the critical evaluation of society" (McLuhan 1951, p. vii). McLuhan observed that since the sixteenth century, the Western World has been devoted to the increase and consolidation of the power of the state and has thus developed an artistic unity of effect that makes art criticism of that effect quite viable. Hence, with regard to the modern state, art criticism "can be a citadel of inclusive awareness amid the dim dreams of collective consciousness" (McLuhan 1951, p. vii).

McLuhan did not simply adopt this idea in *The Mechanical Bride*, but in his entire body of work, as he considered himself, not a theorist or philosopher, but "a complex maker of poetic assemblages" (Theall 2006, p. 41). *The Mechanical Bride* was the first book to reveal that advertising agencies in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s had fashioned a new kind of pop poetry and pop art. McLuhan saw his book as a "defense of poetry" capable of guiding students of cultural and media studies from their immersion in popular culture to an understanding of poetry, art and culture (Theall 2006, p. 51). McLuhan borrows his understanding of the poetic process from New Criticism and in many ways he goes on to examine media and communications technologies just as New Critics analyzed a poem – by focusing on intrinsic meanings in terms of the formal aspects of a text, and attempting to understand the encounter between human consciousness and the work of art (Marchessault 2005, p. 16).

While McLuhan looks to Poe for literary influence, he turned to Charles Dickens for inspiration and the realization of the technical format of the press as a manifestation of modernity. The Victorian novel, which was adopted by the Symbolists, employed the front page of the newspaper, with its juxtapositions and simultaneous realities, as a model. Consequently, *The Mechanical Bride*'s format follows the structure of a newspaper, as McLuhan preferred to think of his book as a novel rather than a theoretical study (Marchessault 2005, pp. 61-63). *The Mechanical Bride* interchanged the traditional linear structure of print media with the fragmentation, flashbacks, and sequences used in film and television (McLuhan 1951, p. x). Just as pieces of a symbolist landscape, the exhibits in McLuhan's book can be rearranged without distorting the message, thus, it need not be read from start to finish and the reader must engage with the material in order to assemble the parts into a whole (McLuhan 1951, p. x).

By comparing the front page of a newspaper to Picasso's cubist landscape, McLuhan once again demonstrates how art can illuminate and critique the everyday modes of mass communication (Theall 2006, p. 138). The power of the press was an issue when McLuhan was writing *The Mechanical Bride,* thus he attempts to demonstrate that the front page was a mosaic arrangement of considerably juxtaposed fragments that are designed, not to merely inform, but have an effect. Of course this is an effect comparable to a cubist landscape or a symbolist poem. For McLuhan, this situation could indicate the growing fragmentation in American society, expose the emotional manipulation by the advertiser and publicist and examine how mechanization has gained control of society through the power of the press (Theall 2006, p. 9).

Despite the substantial changes in technology, media and society that have taken place in the Western world since *The Mechanical Bride* was published, "the roadmap [McLuhan] sketched for understanding and navigating the chaos and manipulation of the mass media still points in the right direction" (Meggs 2002, p. xiii). The relationships and connections between myth, poetry and promotional culture described by Marshall McLuhan in *The Mechanical Bride* seem to have remained as prevalent, and have become even more sophisticated, in contemporary culture. This may be attributed to the fact that the artifacts examined in the book were chosen by McLuhan directly after the Second World War, when North American consumer culture was already kitsch, since it was increasingly "driven by the market's need to find domestic uses for wartime technologies" (Marchessault 2005, p. 47). This new culture of seemingly senseless commodities is 'the folklore of industrial man' (ibid). Furthermore, *The Mechanical Bride* contains what can be considered the early versions of McLuhan's central ideas: the 'planet as city' created through the press is the prelude to the 'global village'; and the emphasis on the form of the newspaper rather than the content predicts his neologism 'the medium is the message' (Marchessault 2005, p. 63). These "insights into patterns of address and gesture, recurring narratives and characters are part of a consciousness-raising politic," which McLuhan thought was vital to a humanist education (ibid).

As aforementioned, writing in the late 1940s, Marshall McLuhan was one of the first scholars to identify the trend in promotional culture to make use of, and colonize myth and poetry of industrialized society. Throughout the subsequent decades, scholars from various academic fields including cultural studies, consumer behavior research, advertising research and folklore studies have continued to examine this emergent trend. Even though each contemporary scholar has distinct ideas and claims,

almost all of them agree that, in the words of American journalist Max Lerner, "the myth-making faculty is still active in contemporary America" (Lerner 1957, p. 800).

Contemporary Critical Literature

Scholars from diverse fields insist that myth in contemporary society is most discernible in entertainment and promotional culture. Seeing as McLuhan wrote *The Mechanical Bride* before the widespread use of television, one of the most interesting contributions by a contemporary scholar, Harold Foster, has been the notion that television is the prime conveyor of modern mythology. He argues that one example of this is that television displaces dreams just as myths do. This means that the more television one watches, the less one may dream. For Foster, narrative is not as psychologically meaningful in myth as are images, symbols or themes, even though plot is the main element that is usually retained in conscious memory (Foster 1984, p. 26). However, Foster laments that the most powerful myths on television are controlled by large corporations. Advertisers consciously use mythological structure in television commercials in order to endow them with a manipulative quality (ibid, p. 27). He urges for a better understanding of how television captures our unconscious with its use of primal mythological stories and powerful ritual narratives that are intended to shape and control behavior. This understanding will allow us to withstand such primitive bombardment and learn how to use and benefit from television. After all, myth on television is extremely powerful and although we need myth, not all myth affects us in ways we would consciously desire (Foster 1984, p. 30).

In his 1972 book, *Myth and Modern Man*, anthropologist Raphael Patai also maintains that mythology is as much a part of modern society as it was in ancient times. He believes that the live mythopoeic forces at work in our culture are

> not mere heritage or a survival from the past but are the outcome of an actual, live psycho-social dynamism which is at work in the psyche of modern man to no less a degree than it was in generations of the remote past. (Patai 1972, p. 5)

Patai deems promotional culture and the world of entertainment to be the central sites of these mythopoeic forces in contemporary culture. Television programs, together with "the equally miracle-laden commercials interspersed every ten or fifteen minutes," create an atmosphere filled with mythical-wondrous elements of which the conscious, and perhaps even the critical mind of the viewer, may be utterly unaware, but which still have a subtle and cunning influence on his or her thinking (Patai 1972, p. 263). Patai also warns us against assuming that promotional messages are simply designed to

sell products, because their foremost purpose is to increase pleasure in the act of consumption itself (ibid, p. 239).

In a similar vein, Classics professor Karelisa Hartigan suggests in her book, *Muse on Madison Avenue*, that the admen of Madison Avenue are modern mythmakers who draw inspiration from recognizable yet deep recesses of the human soul (Hartigan 2002, p. 17). Inspired by the Muses, writers of all genres, including poetry, novels, plays, and advertising recount our community's myths, which in turn sustain a common social order (Hartigan 2002, p. 141). Advertisers reclaim pre-existing visual images that have always been part of our human psyche, as classical myths lie beneath western art and psychological understanding (ibid). According to Hartigan, classical mythology is linked to advertising for a good reason: it is the most appropriate way to denote the good life in today's world (Hartigan 2002, p. 14). Advertisers often correlate classical gods and deities to modern products such as perfumes and women's attire (Hartigan 2002, p. 80). However, Hartigan states that tapping into myths is slightly risky for the advertisers, as they have to assume that classical learning is still prevalent. According to her, the advertisements that use or alter a classical story are fully understood only by those familiar with the original version. Of course, this understanding confers status on to the consumer, allowing him or her to "participate in the common cultural values of an educated American public" (Hartigan 2002, p. 138). Unfortunately, Hartigan seems to forgo the possibility that due to its primordial and perhaps eternal nature, an image does not have to be consciously learned in order to make an impact on one's unconscious. In other words, even a consumer who is not familiar with a classical story referenced in the advert can be drawn to the imagery simply because it contains archetypal themes that resonate with him or her.

In fact, a great deal of ancient and perhaps even classical mythological imagery now resides within popular, low-brow, culture. In his book, *TechGnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information,* Erik Davis insists that in the twentieth century, "many of the phantasms that formerly inhabited ancestral lore and folktales slipped on new disguises and colonized the fringes and gutters of media: comic books, pulp fiction, monster movies, [and] rock 'n' roll" and that 'junk' culture has "privileged access to those archetypes, fears and heretical desires that compose the collective unconscious" (Davis 2004, p. 278). Moreover, as cultural theorist Raymond Williams writes, contemporary advertising acts as a "system of magical inducements and satisfactions, functionally very similar to magical systems in simpler societies" (cited in Davis 2004 p. 209). The goal of advertising, even promotional culture as a whole is not simply to inform us about new goods, products or services, but to

seize our attention and manipulate our imagination (Davis 2004, p. 209). As Davis astutely observes, "our collective symbols are forged in the multiplex, [and] our archetypes [are] trademarked, licensed and sold." He labels this phenomenon the "corporate colonization of the unconscious" (Davis 2004, p. 211).

Folklore scholars have also identified this colonization and explored the existence of novel contemporary folklore that is specific to industrialized mass society. Whilst most professional North American folklorists are historically oriented and prefer to see folklore as existing principally in the past, a new school of 'American Folklore' is slowly emerging. These scholars maintain that phenomena such as colonization, the Western movement, industrialization, regionalism, and mass culture have given rise to a genuine American folklore (Rysan 1971, p. 3). In the 1950's, the chief proponent of this thought, American folklorist and scholar Richard M. Dorson, noted that "the mass media of communication and entertainment fill up the wells of folk tradition with the slag and refuse of gag writers, tunesmiths, Madison Avenue admen, and all the other hucksters in our midst" (Sullenberger 1974, pp. 63-64). When explicating this trend, he conceived the term 'fakelore' to describe the inventions and distortions that were being marketed as genuine folklore by "money-minded popularizers" (Sullenberger 1974, p. 53). Twenty years later, the term 'folklure' was coined to describe the deliberate "association of folkloric concepts with manufactured products, usually through one form or another of media, in the sole interest of commercial gain" (Sullenberger 1974, p. 53). Several examples of folklure include: Green Giant Company's mascot, the *Jolly Green Giant*, who clearly resembles a combination of numerous European fertility symbols or spirits of vegetation (Sullenberger 1974, p.54; Twitchell 1996, p. 130); Proctor and Gamble's *Mr. Clean*, who is reminiscent of a magic gift-bearing genie from Arabic mythology; and Proctor and Gamble's cleaning detergent *Ajax,* which encompasses not only the image of Homer's Greek warrior, but also a medieval White Knight (Sullenberger 1974, p. 57; Twitchell 1996, p. 130).

These examples are just several of the thousands of different products and brands which employ folklore-based marketing techniques in "what is rapidly becoming the great American Folk Sell" (Sullenberger 1974, p. 63). Dorson views this as a positive phenomenon that may create a rich new area of study of the relationships between mass culture and folklore patterns and ultimately fashion its own varieties of folklore (Sullenberger 1974, p. 64). Writing in the 1970's, Joseph Ryson contemplates the existence of this novel folklore, calling it 'mass-lore' (Rysan 1971, p. 4). Ryson explains that, unlike traditional folklore that emulates individual and occupational interests and attitudes of the members of

the group, mass-lore echoes mass man's de-individualized state. Mass-lore "aims at lofty and grandiose plans which deal with the Utopian future of collective mankind" (Rysan 1971, p. 6).

Advertising scholars have also made noteworthy contributions to the examination of the relationships between folklore and promotional culture. In his 1982 article, *The Myth of Madison Avenue*, David Burmester notes the existence of what he calls "medialore," which he simply defines as the cultural information which is disseminated via print and electronic media. Medialore is transmitted and codified by the image-makers of Madison Avenue, as today myth-making is no longer the function of storyteller or shaman (Burmester 1982, p. 73). In ancient societies, the shaman was responsible for the vital role of "making both visible and public the systems of symbolic fantasy that are present in the psyche of every adult member of their society" (Campbell 1949, p. 101; Randazzo 1993, p. 49). In the contemporary world of mass communications, this role of mythologization of the environment and the world belongs to the artist (Randazzo 1993, p. 49). Electronic media has allowed advertising to become a dominant art form and a powerful force in American culture; hence, advertisers have replaced the shaman, becoming the new mythmakers, albeit unwittingly (Randazzo 1993, p. 49).

Advertising is very effective in this role as it easily slips into the unconscious (Sullenberger 1974, p. 74). Furthermore, according to Varda Leymore, modern advertising is constructed like a tribal myth, or even complex Greek mythology, as it obeys the same laws of composition and upholds a similar structure. In other words, the mental process of coding and decoding is identical in both myth and advertising (Leymore 1975, p. 154). She also believes that advertising and myth act as anxiety-reducing mechanisms by addressing, on the deep level, the basic human dilemmas of the human condition, and offering a solution to them. However, the solution provided by advertising is restricted to the purchase of a certain product and the image that is attached to it (Leymore 1975, p. x).

Consequently, advertising scholars envisage that, in the modern world, myth masquerades as advertising (Leymore 1975, p. 155; Twitchell 1996, p. 130). Advertising not only borrows ancient myth, it also functions as a modern mythmaker, creating and reinforcing the mythologies that shape our lives (Randazzo 1993, p. 49). Hence, contemporary advertising articulates the fundamental mythic beliefs of twentieth century Americans (Burmester 1982, p. 73). Countless advertising scholars have commented that advertising provides consumers with a feeling beyond materialism and "[occupies] the place in inspiration that religion did several hundred years ago" (Marchand 1985, p. 265). Obviously, advertising is different from the established religions in that, despite the possibility of interpreting adverts in a moral order, it does not have an articulated moral code at its core (Jhally 1989, p. 226). Whereas

established religions encompass icons that are simply ritualized expressions of their central systems of beliefs, advertising consists of the icons of the marketplace, which are the religion in and of themselves (Jhally 1989, p. 226).

According to American academic and popular writer, James Twitchell, advertising has come to be "the vulgate of the secular belief in the redemption of commerce" (Twitchell 1996, p. 130). For him, advertising and religion belong to the same meaning-making process. Religion promises redemption through faith, while advertising does the same but through purchase. Advertising promotes brands, the modern version of mythical personages, and promises to alleviate problems such as blotchy skin by what seems to be pure magic (ibid). Because of this connection between magic and advertising Twitchell refers to anthropologist James Frazer's book, *The Golden Bough* (1922), as "one of the best books ever on advertising" (Twitchell 1996, p. 31). Frazer identifies two types of magic: theoretical, which deals with far-off concerns such as death; and practical, which directly addresses ourselves and the objects around us. Practical magic is further divided into contagious and imitative. Contagious magic is present in all testimonial advertising and is parallel to religious matters such as the relics of Christ. Meanwhile, imitative magic is an adaptation of circular thinking that leads one to believe that consuming a product will allow him or her to take on its desirable properties. A car with an animal name is a clear example of imitative magic (Twitchell 1996, p. 32). For Twitchell, magical thinking is at the core of both advertising and religion as they both fetishize objects in an almost identical manner: by supplying them with an impression of added value (ibid). Likewise, the appeal of religion and advertising fundamentally resides in the same promise of rescue (Twitchell 1996, p. 38).

Perhaps upon noticing the same trend, Lord John Reith, founder of the BBC, posed an insightful question to CBS executives in 1952: "What I would like to know is how you Americans can successfully worship God and Mammon at the same time" (cited in Twitchell 1996). Sal Randazzo proposes that an answer may lie in advertising's power to align itself with previous spiritual, religious and mythological systems. He explains that similarly to art, poetry and music, impressive advertising emerges from the unconscious psyche (Randazzo 1993, p. 50). Hence, advertising is a form of mythmaking, a storied form of communication that mirrors our cultural mythologies, echoing back to us the same values and sensibilities that already shape our lives and culture (Randazzo 1993, p. ix). Advertising mythologizes products by "wrapping them in our dreams and fantasies" in order to transform them into successful long lasting brands (Randazzo 1993, pp. xi-1). It humanizes brands by enhancing them with identities, personalities and sensibilities that reflect our society. The mythology of a particular brand is composed

of a unique stock of images, feelings and associations (Randazzo 1993, p. 50). As a result, brands now serve a function comparable to that of the ancient Greek's pantheon of gods (Randazzo 1993, p. 1).

Writing in the new millennium, Mark and Pearson note that brands are the most active contemporary expressions of the imprints or patterns, which are hardwired into our psyches. Plato called these imprints 'elemental forms' and psychiatrist C.G. Jung called them 'archetypes' (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 11). Mark and Pearson argue that products can grab and keep an individual's attention precisely because they embody an archetype that appeals to him or her (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 5). However, brands do not simply borrow archetypal symbols and images, but actually gain their own symbolic significance over time (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 7). For instance, Ivory soap has utilized the ritual significance of cleansing rituals in an attempt to represent not just getting physically clean, but also renewal, purity and innocence (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 5). Once the brand became established, Ivory stopped being merely associated with innocence; it begun to embody it (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 7). Mark and Pearson also argue that archetypes often provide the missing link between consumer motivation and product sales by signaling the fulfillment of basic human desires and motivations while releasing deep emotions and yearnings (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 14). This formula applies not only to conventional products, goods and services, but also to celebrities, films, and public figures that have succeeded by drawing on archetypal themes and images (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 31).

Although he belongs to a different tradition, French cultural theorist and philosopher, Jean Baudrillard, also notes a great shift taking place in contemporary society. Similarly to Mark and Pearson, he sees consumer society as the new purveyor of mythology, with promotional manifestations such as brands functioning as mythical beings. In his 1998 book, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, Baudrillard asserts that consumer society no longer creates myth, because it *is* itself its own myth (Baudrillard 1998, p. 193). Consumption has become a "full, self-fulfilling discourse of society about itself, a general system of interpretation, a mirror in which it takes supreme delight in itself, a utopia in which it is reflected in advance" (Baudrillard 1998, p. 194). In modern society, affluence and consumption, defined by Baudrillard not as the consumption of material goods, products and services, but "the consumed image of consumption," comprise the new tribal mythology – "the morality of modernity" (Baudrillard 1998, p. 194).

Baudrillard asserts that brands are merely a cover for what advertising truly sells the consumer. In advertising, the product's "denotation or description – tends to be merely an effective mask concealing a confused process of integration" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 166). Thus, as we become more

susceptible to advertising's existence as a product to be consumed itself and as an expression of a culture, we begin to 'believe' in it (Baudrillard 1996, p. 166). It is through advertising that society exhibits itself and "consumes its own image" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 173). Baudrillard further likens advertising to a dream in a sense that: it "defines and redirects an imaginary potentiality"; "its practical character is strictly subjective and individual" and it lacks any negativity and relativity, since negative or ironic advertisements, just like dreams, make use of antiphrasis (Baudrillard 1996, p. 173). For Baudrillard, advertising is reminiscent of the totemic system described by anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, in which social order is revealed through arbitrary totemic signs. Advertising's "repertoire of 'brands'" thus seems to be the result of a cultural system that has relapsed to the "poverty of the sign codes of archaic systems" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 182). While the observation that advertising is similar to a totemic system is insightful, Baudrillard should not underestimate the symbolic richness of archaic systems, as they are the wellspring that contemporary society continually taps into.

Contemporary advertising scholar, Douglas Holt, also believes that brands are capable of creating compelling myths and becoming cultural icons (Holt 2004, p. 5). As cultural icons, brands are able to perform particular "identity myths: simple fictions that address cultural anxieties from afar, from imaginary worlds rather than from the worlds that consumers regularly encounter in their everyday lives," which a society needs at a given historical moment (Holt 2004, p. 8). Brands become symbols, or material embodiments of the identity myths that they strive to perform. When consumers consume the product, they experience a bit of the myth (ibid). Holt claims that this is a secular example of a phenomenon that anthropologists have documented in every human society, with the exception that the most influential myths in contemporary society address people's identities rather than provide religious experiences (ibid). According to him, modern brands do not simply entertain consumers, but present them with myths that they can "use to manage the exigencies of a world that increasingly threatens their identities" (Holt 2004, p. 221).

The notion that objects may provide a resolution to a social or psychosomatic conflict goes back to psychologist Ernest Dichter, founder and director of the Institute for Motivational Research. Dichter's key argument is that any source of tension, whether individual or collective, can be addressed by the purchase of a suitable object. Baudrillard links the hypothesis that there is an object for every problem to the belief that there is a saint for every day of the year. The object merely must be manufactured and launched at the right moment (Baudrillard 1996, p. 126). What advertising adds to the object is a fundamental quality of 'warmth', which effectively personalizes it (Baudrillard 1996, p. 171). Dichter

conceived that objects have 'souls' that are a basis for their 'personalities.' Hence, individuals have dynamic relationships of constant interaction with commodities in a sense that they project themselves into products. For example, in buying a car "they actually buy an extension of their own personality" (cited in Bennett 2005, p. 12). It is important to briefly note that, as explored in his book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, McLuhan placed great importance on the notion of technologies functioning as extensions of our own bodies (McLuhan 1964).

Dichter found that men unconsciously consider sedans as symbolic wives and convertibles as symbolic mistresses. Hence, many middle-aged men buy the convertible as a means of having the benefit of a (symbolic) mistress without the stress of acquiring a live human one. Even more men buy the sedan because, like the real wife, it is comfortable and safe. Ditcher utilized this observation by recommending that Chrysler put the convertible as a display in the showroom window in order to attract the male customers, who in turn would actually purchase the sedan (Bennett 2005, p. 11). Dichter's notion of the 'personality' or 'image' of a product, which is the basis for the now commonplace strategy of branding, is an insight into commodity fetishism (Bennett 2005, p. 10).

Vance Packard, author of *The Hidden Persuaders*, cited the application of motivational research by advertisers to show that consumers acted upon conditioned reflexes instead of rational thought. His main point being that a conditioning manipulation was occurring at a subconscious level (Leiss et al 2005, p. 7). David Bennett concludes that the success of the marketing and advertising philosophy that Ditcher originated may also be responsible for French cultural theorists' inclination in the 1970s to dismiss Marxism and take up semiotic analysis. For instance, using Dichter's themes in his structuralist analysis of consumer culture in the late 1960s (Bennett 2005, p. 22), Baudrillard notes that the plethora of products eliminates scarcity, while the overabundance of advertising eliminates insecurity. Advertising, even public relations as a whole, reduces psychological insecurity by "deploying an enormous solicitude to which we respond by internalizing the solicitous agency – namely, that whole immense enterprise, producing not just goods but also communicational warmth, which global consumer society actually is" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 171). For Baudrillard, advertising is no longer a commercial practice, but a theory of praxis of consumption, "which now crowns the whole social edifice" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 184). He reiterates Dichter's thesis in the following way: consumer society provides modern individuals with total liberation and self-realization, while the system of consumption comprises "a true language, a new culture" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 184). Historian and philosopher, Lewis Mumford, agrees that after a certain phase in technical development has been achieved and after

primary needs have been fulfilled, there may be further demand for a "phantasied, allegorical and subconscious edibility of the object" that goes beyond any actual functionality (Baudrillard 1996, p. 128).

Nevertheless, Burmester warns against thinking that advertisers are unremitting villains or heartless hucksters who create a mythology meant to swindle the public and shape consumer perception to suit corporate interests (Burmester 1982, p. 74). Instead, he proposes that advertisers simply mirror our own attitudes and values, as mythologies are not the creations of a few elite mythmakers, but the products of an entire culture (ibid, p. 75). Burmester suspects that the same is true of the mythology, or "medialore," imparted via advertising and that the familiar stereotypical characters such as the happy homemaker and rugged outdoorsman are not fabrications of the advertising industry, but manifestations of existing collective cultural attitudes. After all, anthropologist Edmund Carpenter notes that ads are most enjoyed by those who already own the products; ads simply add to the participation and pleasure. Burmester concludes that we are most influenced by the ads that support our own view of the world (ibid).

Perhaps it is due to a similarly astute observation that one stream of consumer research has focused on the narratives that consumers themselves create around the promotional materials that they consume. Sidney Levy proposes that promotional products are consumed symbolically and that talking about their uses is a way of symbolizing the life and nature of the family (Levy 1981, p. 52). Levy's study incorporated Levi-Strauss' binary oppositions (Levi-Strauss 1963) as descriptors of the mythic pattern in order to analyze the oppositions in consumer stories that reflect a "universal metalanguage" acted out in everyday culture (Levy 1981, p. 52; Stern 1995, p. 166). His aim is to demonstrate that, because myths are ways of assembling perceptions of realities, of indirectly articulating paradoxical human concerns, they have consumer relevance, as these realities and concerns affect people's daily lives (Levy 1981, p. 52).

Other scholars propose that the structural aspects of consumption myths should be looked at in addition to their content. Barbara Stern uses Northrop Frye's theory of mythical plots to analyze consumer myths from a literary perspective (Stern 1995, p. 166). This allows her to detect a taxonomy of mythic patterns in consumer texts and outline the way in which those patterns are used to communicate product benefits and values in advertising appeals. This close inspection of the myths embedded in the stories that consumers tell allows her to uncover the consumer values that advertising stories draw on (ibid). She concludes that the fact that consumers recount stories that conform to

culturally familiar patterns reveals the eternal and vital power of myths, which are relentlessly renewed to fit contemporary life despite being as old as humanity (Stern 1995, p. 183).

Also focusing on the form of consumer discourse, John Sherry and John Schouten propose that in uncovering the essence of meaningful consumer experiences poetry is a valuable form of research inquiry in its own right (Sherry and Schouten 2002). They contend that emotional truths are best communicated emotionally. Thus, in order to understand consumers as meaning makers a discipline like poetry should be used, since it provides a glimpse into their hearts and minds (Sherry and Schouten 2002, p. 219).

While the critical literature outlined above is imperative to the examination of the colonization of myth and poetry by promotional culture, it only partially addresses the trends that McLuhan noticed emerging in the 1950s, without comprehensively examining them. Some scholars from various disciplines have noticed that mythological forces are still at work in contemporary society and that these forces are not simply residual apparitions from the past, but vital forces shaping contemporary life. Those that have recognized the mythological forces at work today follow McLuhan's lead in locating them mainly in entertainment and promotional culture, particularly advertising. Many scholars also agree with McLuhan that popular culture, which is strongly shaped by promotional culture, is the best site to observe the existence of contemporary mythopoeic forces. In other words, there is a continuing tradition of analysis of advertising as myth. However, very few scholars have effectively examined this proposition in depth, particularly in the last decade. Fewer still have been willing to pursue the notion that the utilization of myth and poetry by promotional culture, whether consciously intended or not, as well as the powerful resonance it carries, may indicate the eternal nature of myth itself. Another point touched on, but left mostly unexplored is the possibility of promotional culture creating its own mythical beings, conceivably in the form of brands, instead of simply recycling or conforming to pre-existing myths.

It is imperative that these unexplored areas are delved into deeper, as there are numerous gaps in the contemporary scholarship. The main gap is the lack of critical examination of the mythological sources for many promotional narratives and images. It is not enough to simply note that promotional culture and entertainment utilize myth and poetry, as we must also observe why such ancient meaning structures continue to resonate with us today. Yet another gap is in the lack of detailed examinations of promotional culture as a contemporary system of mythological meaning-making that functions in a manner similar to the role of the poet, shaman or even religion in previous societies. This thesis will

address the aforementioned gaps by locating and examining the underlying mythological meaning present in promotional culture, specifically in relation to automotive advertising, in an effort to expand upon the presently available scholarship on the subject. Prior to doing so, a conceptual framework must be established.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework:

Myth, Archetype, Folklore, Poetry and Promotional Culture

The previous chapter established that nearly sixty years ago Marshall McLuhan observed a tendency in contemporary promotional culture to colonize myth and poetry, and that various scholars have continued to detect this trend in the following decades. This thesis further argues that promotional culture does not simply appropriate myth and poetry, but that it is the mythology of today. In order to carry out this argument, we must first define the fundamental concepts and discuss the key scholars that have contributed to these definitions. This chapter takes on a three part structure: 1) definition and discussion of myth, archetype and folklore; 2) definition of poetry and examination of its mythopoeic capabilities; and 3) definition of promotional culture, definition of advertising and an explanation of the historical stages of advertising as described by Leiss et al., which aid us in determining the changes that have taken place in promotional culture since McLuhan's observations.

Myth, Archetype and Folklore

Myth

The opposition in the Western tradition, between myth, from the Greek *muthos*, meaning legend, and *logos*, meaning word, truth or reason, originated in the ancient world's clan and tribal cultures that held the widespread notion that myth and fact are distinct, yet not entirely incompatible forms of discourse (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998). As rational and scientific thinking continually gained esteem, mythical thinking has remained in the shadows as a less rigorous or significant mode of thought. The growing gap between scientific and mythical thinking may have begun with early Greek philosophers, who, according to English poet Robert Graves, threatened the subsistence of myths and poetry in Ancient Greece. These philosophers feared that magical poetry endangered their "new religion of logic" and imposed on the world a new rational poetic language that was expanded for their patron Apollo (Graves 1952, p. 6).

Perhaps the best known and most uncompromising rejection of Greek poetry and mythology was made by Socrates. Graves suggests that Socrates rejected myths in favor of thinking scientifically simply because he did not understand them and they frightened or offended him (ibid). One main reason for this, as demonstrated by Socrates' views on myth and poetry in *Phaedrus,* may be that Socrates was not a poet and generally mistrusted all poets. Furthermore, he confined himself to the

town and rarely visited the countryside, thus thwarting the study of myth, which, according to Graves, is founded on "tree-lore and seasonal observations of life in the fields" (Graves 1952, p. 7). By rejecting poetic myths, Socrates also rejected the Moon-Goddess who inspired them. He further escaped from her demand that man must pay spiritual and sexual homage to woman, by taking refuge in intellectual homosexuality, or Platonic love, which Graves more aptly terms Socratic love (Graves 1952, p. 8).

German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche provides a richer and more comprehensive examination of the tension between Greek philosophers and myth and poetry. He perceives the history of Greek civilization as the product of the constant struggle between two competing but complementary impulses, the Apollonian and the Dionysian (Nietzsche 2000, p. xviii). For Nietzsche, this struggle is manifested in the myths relating the conflict between the Olympians and the Titans (ibid). The Apollonian is named after Apollo, god of light, dream and prophecy, who represents visible form, rational knowledge and moderation. The Dionysian is named after Dionysus, the god of intoxication, ritual madness and ecstasy, who is associated with formless flux, mysticism, and excess. Apollo's domain is made up of distinct moral individuals, while Dionysus oversees the uniting of human beings with nature by dissolution of individual identity into a universal spiritual community. Artistically, plastic and representational arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, as well as the visual dream-artist, belong to Apollo. Meanwhile, music, non-representational and physically formless arts, as well as the musical artist of intoxication, belong to Dionysus (Nietzsche 2000, p. xvi).

According to Nietzsche, Socrates boldly opposed Dionysus by condemning existing art and ethics even in the face of facing trial and being "torn apart by the Maenads of the Athenian court" (Nietzsche 2000, p. 73). Together with Euripides, he initiated the rise of an aggressive rationalism (Nietzsche 2000, p. xix) that destroyed the classical mythological conception of the world and robbed classical culture of its natural creativity in the name of science and reason (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 15; Nietzsche 2000, p. xx). Socrates' quest, in which he alone attempted to correct existence "with an expression of contempt and superiority" and be the antecedent of a distinctive culture, art and morality, allowed him to enter "a world to touch whose hem with reverence we today would consider the greatest good fortune" (Nietzsche 2000, p. 73).

Nietzsche condemns Socratic culture because it eventually led to the beginning of the Alexandrian age, which was the next phase in the decline of the Greek civilization (Nietzsche 2000, p. xx). Socrates brought into the world a "profound delusion" – the unfaltering belief that thought permeates into "the deepest abysses of being," and is able not only to know, but also to correct being.

According to Nietzsche, this "sublime metaphysical madness" complements science as an instinct and pushes it to its limits, where it must transform itself into art, which is the real goal of this mechanism (Nietzsche 2000, p. 82). Spurred on by this great delusion, science now dashes towards its limits "where the optimism hidden in the essence of logic" fails (Nietzsche 2000, p. 84). In these limits, logic coils around itself as Ouroboros and bites its own tail, at which point a new form of knowledge breaks through: tragic knowledge, which needs art as a safeguard and remedy in order to be tolerated (Nietzsche 2000, p. 84).

The limits of scientific thinking demonstrate that Socrates erred in thinking that he must choose between mythological and scientific thought. Nietzsche proposes that the enduring development of art is dependent on the duality of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, just as "procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, which are engaged in a continual struggle interrupted only by temporary periods of reconciliation" (Nietzsche 2000, p. 19). Nietzsche believes that the Apollonian and Dionysian are two very different drives running parallel to one another, diverging for the most part, yet stimulating each other at the same time, and periodically overcoming their antagonism in the name of 'art' (ibid). In the Greek world, the coupling of these two drives gave birth to Attic tragedy, which Nietzsche considers to be as Dionysian as it is Apollonian (ibid).

Nevertheless, it seems that Socrates did not go to his death without atonement. While incarcerated in the last days of his life, Socrates had a recurring dream in which he was instructed to make music. Having had this dream before, Socrates always assumed that he was being instructed to philosophize, which he considered the highest form of music and the highest art of the muses. Finally, in order to unburden his consciousness before death, Socrates decided to practice what is commonly referred to as music by composing a hymn to Apollo (Nietzsche 2000, p. 80). Then, assuming that to truly be a poet, one must compose myths and not arguments, Socrates transformed several Aesopian fables to verse (White 1989, p.30). This 'dream-phenomenon' is the only sign of doubt or apprehension by Socrates about the limits of the logical nature (Nietzsche 2000, p. 80) and about the possibility that philosophy can, and perhaps must, be complemented by myth (White 1989, p.31).

Structural French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss' view is similar to that of Nietzsche, as he proposes that the two modes of thought, mythical and scientific, are not mutually exclusive. He believes that magic, or mythical thought, and science should be compared as two parallel modes of obtaining knowledge, as they both demand the same sort of mental operations and differ not in kind or in the

quality of the intellectual process, but in the types of phenomena to which they are applied (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 144; Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 13). Hence, the kind of logic employed by mythical thought is as rigorous as that of modern science (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 144).

In order to demonstrate this point, Levi-Strauss introduces the concept of bricolage. A bricoleur is someone who works with his hands and uses "devious means" compared to those of a craftsman, whom he calls the engineer (Lévi-Strauss 1966, pp. 16-17). Levi-Strauss equates mythological thinking with that of the bricoleur and scientific thinking with that of the engineer. The bricoleur can perform a large number of diverse tasks; however, he does not limit them to the availability of raw material and tools set aside for a project. Therefore, his means cannot be defined in terms of a specific project but by their potential use, as the bricoleur gathers and retains elements on the principle that they may always 'come in handy' (Lévi-Strauss 1966, pp. 17-18). The bricoleur works with a closed set of instruments and makes do with whatever is available to him. Similarly, mythological thought, which can be considered as a kind of intellectual bricolage, expresses itself "by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited" (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 17).

The elements collected and used by the bricoleur are "pre-constrained," just as the fundamental units of myth, which can only be combined in limited ways because they are extracted from the "language where they already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of manoeuvre" (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 19). Thus, Levi-Strauss defines the significant images of myth, just as the materials of the bricoleur, by two criteria: they have had a use, such as words in a piece of discourse or the cogwheels of an old alarm clock; and they can be used again either for the same purpose or for a different one (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 35). Therefore, even elements that already possess a symbolic consignment and are in use in a particular mythological system can be recycled and put to use elsewhere (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 60). This results in an original re-composition or re-arranging, just as the images in a kaleidoscope (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 36; Meletinski and Lanoue 1998). Therefore, mythology is static, as the same mythical elements are combined over and over again (Lévi-Strauss 1978, p. 40). It functions like a closed system, unlike history which is an open system (ibid).

This clearly suggests that myth and history are distinct systems that both have an independent point of origin. However, some scholars give myth a historical basis. In his book, *Mythologies*, French philosopher Roland Barthes defines myth as a type of speech; hence, anything and everything that is expressed by discourse can be identified as myth (Barthes 1972, p. 109). Although nearly all expressive behavior can articulate myth, for Barthes, myth is purposely constructed in order to conceal history and

naturalize social relationships (Barthes 1972, p. 110). It is assembled from a certain substance that has already been prepared to conduct communication (Barthes 1972, p. 110). Therefore, Barthes identifies myth as a parasitic second-order semiological system (Barthes 1972, p. 114). By this reasoning, myth is "a type of speech chosen by history," or in other words, an ideology (Barthes 1972, p. 110).

Barthes' definition of myth appears to emulate the historical writings of French historian Jules Michelet. Michelet's historiography resembles myth-making, as he remythifies natural elements by attributing divine powers to them, producing myths out of history (Edelstein 2003, p. 409). While Michelet naturalizes history, thereby mythifying it, Barthes aims at demystifying history by separating it from nature, since he claims that it was myth that transformed history into nature (Edelstein 2003, p. 409). Some critics have pointed out that Barthes has not been able to distinguish and explain the vast historical difference between archaic myth and modern political myths. Thus, he can be considered more ahistorical than Levi-Strauss, whose definition of myth is also inspired by Michelet (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 69). Nevertheless, Barthes believes that mythology can only have a historical foundation, not a natural one. According to him, very ancient myths certainly exist, but there are no eternal ones (Barthes 1972, p. 110).

A similar view of myth is taken up by English poet Robert Graves, who believes that a significant part of Greek myth is "politico-religious history" (Graves 1960, p. 17). He dismisses the notion that certain aspects of mythology are "blind uprushes of the Jungian collective unconscious" or "involuntary statements about unconscious psychic happenings," and claims that Greek mythology is no more puzzling or mysterious in content than modern day political cartoons (Graves 1960, pp. 20-22). Hence, he proposes that in order to examine the true science of myth, one must turn to archeology, history and comparative religion, and not the "psycho-therapist's consulting-room" (Graves 1960, pp. 21-22).

In his book, *The White Goddess*, Graves explores how ancient European myths and poems were altered by historical events. He believes that the language of poetic myth in ancient Mediterranean and Northern Europe was closely tied to the popular religious ceremonies honoring the Moon-goddess, or Muse (Graves 1952, p. 6). This language was altered during the late Minoan times when invaders from Central Asia began to substitute patrilineal for pre-existing matrilineal institutions; and to alter or falsify myths to justify these social changes (Graves 1952, p. 6). Hence, if certain myths now seem inexplicable, it is simply because of a process that Graves calls 'iconotropy,' which is when a mythographer has accidentally or intentionally misinterpreted a sacred picture or dramatic rite. Graves further defines iconotropy as a "technique of deliberate misrepresentation by which ancient ritual icons are twisted in

meaning in order to confirm a profound change in the existing religious system – usually a change from matriarchal to patriarchal – and the new meanings are embodied in myth" (Graves 1952, p. 213). According to Graves, examples of iconotropy can be found in all sacred literature that "sets the seal upon a radical reform of ancient beliefs" (Graves 1952, p. 21).

As iconotropy usually accompanies a change from matriarchal to patriarchal society, Graves traces the three main stages in which this change had occurred in Western societies. First, the introduction of the notion of fatherhood brought with it the institution of individual marriage, prior to which the paternity of every child was debatable and irrelevant (Graves 1952, p. 375). Secondly, in what Graves called the Olympian stage, social status of women altered, and man was able to declare himself head of the household. This required a change in mythology, establishing the concept of fatherhood, and bringing forth a new child, whom the poets called the Thunder-child, the Axe-child, or the Hammer-child (Graves 1952, p. 375). This new child found various ways to remove his enemies and become the Thunder God. He married his mother and begot his divine sons and daughters on her (Graves 1952, p. 380). The third stage is purely patriarchal, demonstrated by later Judaism, Judaic Christianity, Mohammedanism and Protestant Christianity. Graves touts this stage as most unfavorable to poetry, as the Thunder God, who may be a jurist, logician and prose stylist, cannot be a poet and any possible hymns to him will fail because they deny the poet's absolute allegiance to the Muse (Graves 1952, pp. 380-381). Graves's views on poetry will be discussed in more detail below.

Contrary to Barthes and Graves, this thesis contends that myth is not entirely historical in origin, but is rooted in elemental forms, or archetypal forms that shape our perception of the world around us. Hence, myth can be defined as a universal representation of "humanity's collective dreams, instinctive yearnings, feelings, and patterns of thinking that seem to be hard-wired in humans and that function somewhat like instincts to shape our behavior" (Randazzo 1993, p. ix). Mythology allows access to the unconscious psyche and the human soul, into "our instinctual nature that lays hidden beneath the veneer of civilization" (Randazzo 1993, p. 34). These narratives, including consumption stories, sculpt both the structure and content of the culture's story stock (Stern 1995, p. 166).

In order to reconcile the varying definitions of myth we must consider that there are two main classical theories regarding the mind. One considers the mind as a *tabula rasa*, or an empty slate that fills only with experience. This theory suggests that only after seeing many round objects, although none of which are perfectly round, humans are able to abstract the idea of the circle (Lévi-Strauss 1978, p. 7). The second theory can be traced back to Plato's Doctrine of Forms, in which he claims that the

surrounding material world, which humanity is engrossed in, is a mere shadow of the 'real' world (Randazzo 1993, p. 35). Accordingly, the idea of a perfect circle, triangle and line are innate in the mind. These ideas, or Forms, are hence archetypal idea structures that create a template for materiality (Plato 2003). Since they are given to the mind, humans are capable of projecting them onto reality, which does not actually allow the perfect circle or triangle to exist (Lévi-Strauss 1978, p. 7). Plato considered these forms to be *aspatial* (outside the world) and *atemporal* (outside time).

Archetype

Plato's concept of archetypal forms has been expanded upon by many scholars from various academic fields. In linguistics, an intriguing argument that language functions more like an instinct than a learned skill or cultural artifact has been proposed by Noam Chomsky. In his book, *The Language Instinct,* cognitive scientist Steven Pinker defines language as:

> a complex, specialized skill, which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same in every individual, and is distinct from mere general abilities to process information or behave intelligently. (Pinker 1995, p. 18)

The idea that grammatical forms are hard-wired in the brain in the form of primordial or archetypal instincts implies that all languages show a basic syntactical structure and may be capable of giving expression to very similar themes and concepts. This notion is explored more deeply in psychology.

Psychologist Sigmund Freud theorized the existence of the unconscious psyche and that "the 'non ordinary' states of consciousness can be experienced in dreams, mystical states, or through the use of drugs" (Randazzo 1993, p. 35). He noted that "a conception – or any other mental element – which is now present to my consciousness may become absent the next moment, and may become present again, after an interval, unchanged, and, as we say, from memory, not as a result of a fresh perception by our senses" (Rickman 1957, p. 54). During the interval, the conception has been present in the mind, but latent in consciousness. Freud defines conscious conceptions as those which exist in the consciousness and of which we are aware, while unconscious conceptions are latent ones of which we are not aware, "but the existence of which we are nevertheless ready to admit on account of other proofs or signs" (Rickman 1957, p. 54). Such signs include various faults of function amongst healthy people, such as errors in memory[1] and speech, which are subject to the actions of strong unconscious

[1] St. Augustine has a similar conception of memory and forgetfulness. He provides the example of forgetting someone's name and being reminded of it by something that triggers the association with that name. The

ideas (Rickman 1957, p. 59). Due to the continued operation of an idea in the unconscious these parapraxes can be repetitive or they may be followed by a dream (Freud 1966, p. 233). Dreams are another example used by Freud to explicate the existence of the unconscious. He states that in the dream we encounter knowledge and memory of something that was beyond the reach of our waking memory (Freud 1954, p. 11). Hence, the unconscious system is the starting point of dream-formation (Freud 1954, p. 542).

Upon this observation, Freud recognized a similarity between dream-work and mythology. This similarity lies in the correlation of dreams and myth as processes that can unite various elements into a single symbolic expression (Freud 1954; Martin 2003, p. 9). Freud noticed that the images, or symbols, formed by dream-work fall into two categories: private and universal. Private symbols can be identified by the dreamer, while universal symbols may be mysterious to the dreamer, even though they can be easily recognized by an experienced psychoanalyst (Freud 1954; Csapo 2005, p. 90). The existence of universal symbols in dream-work led Freud to conclude that the connection between myth and the unconscious is not simply 'metonymic,' but 'metaphoric.' A metaphoric connection is based on an analogy between the maturation of the individual and the evolution of humanity from savage to civilized life (Csapo 2005, p. 93). The existence of a relationship between the development of an individual and the development of whole societies makes it "possible to transfer the concepts and the development of the tools of psychoanalysis to the explanation of myth" (Csapo 2005, p. 92).

Carl Jung furthered Freud's observations with the notion of the *collective unconscious* (Randazzo 1993, p. 35). Jung identified the collective unconscious as a "psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals" (Jung 1969, p. 43). The contents of the collective unconscious have never been present in the conscious mind; therefore, unlike the contents of the personal unconscious, they are not individually acquired, but are in existence only due to heredity (Jung 1969, p. 42). While the personal unconscious consists of *complexes*, the collective unconscious is made up of *archetypes,* which are patterns of instinctual behavior (Jung 1969, p. 42-43). Archetypes are composed of "archaic… or primordial types, that is, with universal images that have existed since the remotest times" (Jung 1969, p. 5). Jung believed that archetypes indicate the existence of distinct forms in the human psyche that appear to be "present always and everywhere" (Jung 1969, p. 42). Archetypes are structural elements of the unconscious psyche that give rise to myths, as it is in dreams and fantasies

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forgotten name hence is not consciously remembered, nor is it fully forgotten (Saint Augustine trans. 1998, p. 296). Perhaps in its time between conscious memory and forgetfulness it resides in the unconscious realm.

that people see images resembling those in myths and fairytales (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 43). In other words, archetypes are a kind of structure of the primary images of unconscious collective fantasies (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 44). Hence, Jung considered myths and fairytales to be well-known expressions of archetypal themes and images (Jung 1969, p. 5).

Many of Jung's ideas were groundbreaking; nevertheless, he has not escaped criticism for some of his more contentious views. One of the main critiques of Jung is that it is almost impossible to test his hypotheses (Frye 1957, p. 111; Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 41). Perhaps the most debated assertion made by Jung is that archetypes are inherited the same way that the morphological features of the human body are passed on. In other words, just as the human body has an anatomical conformity, so does the human mind have a universal resemblance in its fundamental structure (Gras 1981, p. 472; Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 41). Jung believes that it is possible to find traces of the archaic mind in the basic structure of the mind itself, because the brain has a history just as the body. Nevertheless, whilst the body is directly observable, the mind is not, which means that we must examine its products: the myths and universal symbols "from whose presence we infer the existence of Jung's archetypal unconscious" (Gras 1981, p. 472). Levi-Strauss specifically opposes this argument regarding the hereditary process by which archetypes are passed on generation to generation, as he believes that a greater role is played by the environment of the individual and prefers symbolization of the relationship between objects and persons to that of objects and states themselves (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 54).

In his essay, *The Structural Study of Myth*, Levi-Strauss also critiques Jung's interpretations of myth and labels it pre-scientific, comparing the idea that a certain mythological pattern, or archetype, possess a certain signification to the "long supported error" that sounds have an inherent affinity with meaning (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 29). According to him, linguistics became a science only when scholars accepted the Saussurean principle of the arbitrary character of the linguistic sign (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 429). Thus, the study of myth must accept the same premises but on a higher level in order to become scientific (Gras 1981, p. 471). Levi-Strauss asserts that meaning in mythology cannot be inherent in the isolated elements that compose the myth, but only in the way those elements are combined (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 431).

In *The Savage Mind*, Levi-Strauss suggests that theories employing the concepts of archetypes or a collective unconscious can be discarded. According to him, this is because it is only forms, and not contents, that can be either in the "objective properties of particular nature or artificial entities or in

diffusion and borrowing, in either case, that is, outside the mind" (Lévi-Strauss 1966, p. 65). This criticism may be only partially correct, as Jung's unconscious may have content, but the ambivalence of the archetypes allows them in their compensatory function to operate in as rigorously binary and formal manner as Levi-Strauss' system. Levi-Strauss also extracts from myths fairly general latent oppositions, which resemble Jung's reconciliations and operate just as flexibly (Gras 1981, p. 482).

Another interpretation of Levi-Strauss' critique is that he simply misrepresents Jung for, as Jung stresses, the collective unconscious is composed of archetypes that are *a priori* forms, not contents (Adams 2001, p. 246). Jung clearly states that, with endless repetition experiences that are represented by archetypes have been engraved into our psychic constituting, not in the form of images filled with content, but initially only as forms without content, representing purely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action (Jung 1969, p. 48). The archetype itself is empty and purely formal – it is only a possibility of representation which is given *a priori* – thus, only the forms are inherited, and not the representations themselves (Jung 1969, p. 79). Despite criticizing parts of Jung's work, and regardless of the possible responses to these critiques, Jungian views can be spotted in Levi-Strauss's work, particularly Jung's definition of mytho-logic as a form of unconscious collective activity (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 54).

Jung's work greatly influenced Joseph Campbell, a contemporary American scholar of mythology. Campbell contended that mythology is an expression of humanity's profound inner toils and triumphs; in other words it is "psychology misread as biography, history and cosmology" (Campbell 1949, p. 256). Campbell placed great significance on the archetypal patterns surrounding the role and journey of the hero. He claims that understanding of this myth can help one discover universal truths about his or her individuality and role in society (Martin 2003, p. 10).

Canadian literary critic, Northrop Frye also adopted the term 'archetype,' which he defined as a conventional, typical or recurring image in literature (Hamilton 1990, p. 108). An archetype is a communicable symbol connecting one piece of literature with another, helping to unify the reader's literary experience (Frye 1957, p. 99). According to Frye, it is not a mere coincidence that certain common images of physical nature like the sea or the forest are repeated in a large number of poems. Instead, this repetition signifies a certain unity in nature that poetry imitates and "in the communication activity of which poetry forms part" (Frye 1957, p. 99). Since archetypes are communicable symbols, they embrace at their center a group of universal symbols, which Frye refrains from defining as an archetypal code that has been memorized by all human societies. Instead, he believes that only some

symbols are images of things common to all men, and thus have a communicable power which is potentially unlimited. These symbols include food and drink, the quest or journey, light and darkness and sexual fulfillment, usually in the form of marriage (Frye 1957, p. 118).

Frye further contends that some archetypes are so deeply rooted in conventional association that they automatically suggest an association, for example the cross's association with Christ. Nevertheless, completely conventionalized archetypes have not yet occurred in Western literature. Modern writers demonstrate a natural anxiety to keep their archetypes as versatile as possible and not restrained to one interpretation (Frye 1957, p. 102). Whilst there are no necessary associations or inherent connections which must invariably be present, according to Frye, there are some remarkably obvious ones (Frye 1957, p. 103). In fact, Frye believed that one can receive a comprehensive liberal education just by picking up one conventional poem and following its archetypes as they extend into the rest of literature (Frye 1957, p. 100). He also proposes that it is easiest to study archetypes in highly conventionalized literature, meaning naïve, primitive and popular literature, and suggests that the kind of comparative and morphological study now made of folk tales and ballads should be extended into the rest of literature (Frye 1957, p. 104).

Frye felt that his concept of an archetype was overshadowed by Jung's definition of the term, which he believed to be very different from his own. However, one could argue that their definitions are quite similar, as Frye further defined a primordial image or archetype as "a figure, whether it be daemon, man, or process, that repeats itself in the course of history wherever creative phantasy is freely manifested" (Hamilton 1990, p. 109). Nevertheless, Frye felt that the concept of the collective unconscious is unnecessary in literary criticism, since the unconscious is unknowable and cannot be studied (Frye 1957, p. 111). He was uninterested in archetypes' origin, focusing only on how they operate within literature.

Frye saw great similarities between literary criticism and dream analysis. When examining a poem, a psychologist will tend to see in it a mixture of latent and manifest content, just as he would in a dream. The literary critic would consider the manifest content of a poem to be its form, and the latent content to be its actual content, its dianoia or theme. Frye believes that on the archetypal level this dianoia is a dream, a presentation of the conflict of desire and actuality (Frye 1957, p. 111). Arguably, promotional culture functions in the same way since advertisements also contain latent and manifest content. The manifest content is the form, similar to that of the poem, while the latent content is made up of various promises of wish fulfillment that are meant to relieve some psychological anxiety.

Claude Levi-Strauss himself contributed to the study of archetypes when he appropriated the technique of language analysis to the study of myth, in the belief that the system of meaning within mythic utterance closely resembles that of a language system. However, he states that myth cannot simply be treated as language, because it *is* language and as part of human speech, myth has to be told to be known (Lévi-Strauss 1955). More specifically, Levi-Strauss argues that myth is both equal to language and yet is something different from it (Lévi-Strauss 1955).

Like the rest of language, myth is made of constituent units (Klages 2007). However, myth operates on a higher, more complex order than language (Klages 2007); thus, its *gross constituent units* can be found at the sentence level (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 431). Whereas language is composed of phonemes, morphemes and semantemes, Levi-Strauss coined the term *mythemes* to describe the irreducible, unchanging elements that are the essential kernels of a myth (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 431).

Mythemes are always related, bundled or linked together with other related mythemes in order to form more complex relationships within individual myths or entire mythological cycles. In other words, the true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations, but bundles of such relations; these relations can be put to use and combined to produce meaning only as such bundles (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 431). Consequently, Levi-Strauss concludes that a myth can be experienced by any reader throughout the world for what it is because its substance does not lie in its style, original music or its syntax, but in the story that it tells. This leads Levi-Strauss to consider myth to be language functioning on an especially high level, where meaning virtually takes off "from the linguistic ground on which it keeps on rolling" (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 431).

Levi-Strauss concludes that myth functions on a higher level than language due to its double structure, as it is "altogether historical and anhistorical" (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 430). Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure made a distinction between *langue* (language) and *parole* (speech). *Langue* is language as a social system of signs, rules and conventions; it is the structural side of language that belongs to revertible time. *Parole* is the personal use of language in particular instances; it is the static aspect of language that is non-revertible. Levi-Strauss reasons that myth, while pertaining to Saussure's distinction between langue and parole, can also be an absolute object on a third level which combines the properties of the first two, though it remains linguistic by nature (Lévi-Strauss 1955). Levi-Strauss bases this notion of myth's dual structure on historical concepts developed by the nineteenth-century French historian, Jules Michelet (Edelstein 2003). Michelet proposed that the French Revolution is both a sequence belonging to the past and a timeless pattern; therefore, it does not belong to ordinary

history, but “occurs in a time out of time, the sacred time of origins” (Lévi-Strauss 1955; Edelstein 2003, p. 401). In his friend Maurice Merleau-Ponty's case study of Michelet's Revolution, Levi-Strauss noted a tangible example of an object that belonged to both Saussurean categories of synchrony and diachrony (Edelstein 2003, p. 402) – a theory that he would apply to his own analysis of myth.

Levi-Strauss describes the two dimensions of myth, as both a diachronic narrative that records the historical past and a synchronic means of describing the present and even the future. The diachronic dimension, the syntagmatic development of the plot, is necessary for reading the myth, whereas the synchronic dimension divulges its meaning (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 59). These two dimensions of myth meet in particular *mythemes* (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 59). This means that mythemes can be read *both* synchronically and diachronically due to their dual categorization (Edelstein 2003, p. 402).

Dan Edelstein criticizes Levi-Strauss by stating that Michelet’s *historical* and *ahistorical* model of the French Revolution “allowed [him] to tag on an additional level to the pre-Chomskyan conception of language as a series of interlocking levels” (Edelstein 2003, p. 402). Levi-Strauss positioned his mythemes atop the pyramid formed by these layers when he noted a missing linguistic equivalent, which, according to Edelstein, does not exist. Edelstein further contends that this pyramid was toppled by Noam Chomsky when he suggested that “a sentence’s grammar is first in determining the sentence's meaning” (Edelstein 2003, p. 403). Nevertheless, what Edelstein disregards is that the post-Saussurean Levi-Strauss and Noam Chomsky are from fairly different linguistic traditions, thus a chronological comparison of their theories is not necessarily precise. Instead, it is best to consider that both Levi-Strauss’ *mythemes* and Chomsky’s *generative grammar* suggest that some elements are hard-wired into the human brain and that all languages have fundamental or even innate aspects in common.

Jung and Frye’s archetypes, Levi-Strauss’ mythemes and even Chomsky’s generative grammar are all notions that point to the existence of underlying archaic or primordial elements that subsist in diverse cultures across time and repeatedly manifest themselves in various forms of literature. Following Frye’s suggestions that archetypes are most visible in highly conventionalized literature, this thesis explores contemporary advertising. It is important to note that while they may be captured by promotional culture, archaic myths, and the archetypes they contain, retain their essential meaning and significance, as they are not restricted to any one true form.

The erroneous quest for the true or earlier version of a particular myth, deemed by Lévi-Strauss as one of main obstacles to the progress of mythological studies, is eradicated by his method of myth interpretation (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 435). Instead, he believes that myth should be defined as consisting of all its versions. Contrary to Graves' argument, there is no one true version of which all the others are just copies or distortions, as all the versions are part of the myth (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 436). In other words, every version belongs to the myth (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 436) and a myth remains the same throughout time "as long as it is felt as such" (Lévi-Strauss 1955, p. 435). As an example, Levi-Strauss proposes that the recorded versions of the Oedipus myth should not only include Sophocles, but Freud and his use of the myth as being on par with earlier and what appear to be more 'authentic' versions (Lévi-Strauss 1955).

As noted above, Robert Graves places great importance on rituals as the source of certain mythologies, hence giving myth a historical foundation. Northrop Frye responds to this idea with the notion that anthropological ideas, as presented in books such as anthropologist James Frazer's *Golden Bough*, reconstruct an archetypal ritual "from which the structural and generic principles of drama may be logically, not chronologically, derived" (Frye 1957, p. 109). Hence, the literary relation of ritual to drama is one of content to form only, "not one of source to derivation." In other words, it does not matter to the literary critic whether a particular ritual had any historical existence or not (Frye 1957, p. 109).

Folklore

The notion that myths are not inevitably derived from a culturally specific ritual points to the fundamental distinction between myth and folklore. Levi-Strauss' concept of *mediation* is the most useful tool for explaining the difference between myth and folklore. Levi-Strauss saw myth as a logical means of resolving deep-seated contradictions by a progressive series of mediations (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 63). In other words, it is a mechanism for relieving anxiety (Csapo 2005, p. 226). The solutions provided by myth are not real, but archaic, owing to a tactic that in effect constitutes mythological bricolage (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 155). Bricolage is defined by the resolution of oppositions through a succession of progressive mediations that integrate signs from both poles of the contradiction (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 156).

Myth also uses concrete binary oppositions that surpass the fluid flow of the perception of the 'real' world by separating concepts into a series of diverse and contrasting semiotic frameworks. These

oppositions acquire a semantic charge and become ever more abstract and ideological over time (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 155). For instance, the fundamental opposition between life and death is replaced with a less dramatic one, becoming plant/animal and ending up as herbivore/carnivore. This example can be applied to the zoomorphic culture hero who eats carrion, such as the coyote among the Zuni or the Raven for the Northwest Coast societies (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 63). These mediations, and the resolutions they provide, are illusory. Nevertheless, mythological mediation still provides a practical harmonizing function (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 156), as the structuring process inherent in the human mind is exercised in reconciling the oppositions (Gras 1981, p. 478). This activity generates a pleasurable emotion that resembles aesthetic experience, but is better described as a "catharsis of clarification" (Gras 1981, p. 478).

Following this definition of myth, Levi-Strauss established the main difference between myth and folklore in the quality and potency of the oppositions they mediate. Generally, folkloric oppositions are weaker than those of myth. In myth, the oppositions are cosmological, metaphysical, and natural, while folklore contains oppositions that are local, social, and moral (Csapo 2005, p. 233). Likewise, wish-fulfillment in fairytales is relatively direct and obvious; whereas in myth it is repressed and deeply submerged, and yet its logical operations are more exuberant and extravagant (ibid). Ultimately, this dissimilarity is comparable to the relationship between nature and culture; in other words, what myth is to folklore is parallel to what nature is to culture (myth: folktale:: nature: culture) (Csapo 2005, p. 229). In promotional culture, this distinction manifests itself in the form of various advertisements that address either cultural or immediate anxieties (such as getting rid of facial blemishes) versus cosmological or metaphysical ones (such as death of a relative as depicted in insurance advertising).

While it is a distinct literary form, folklore shares with myth the use of symbols and universal representations of human experience. In fact, myth is often the base of fairytales. This can be illustrated by various examples: the prevalent theme of a marriage to a totemic being who possess marvelous powers, and who can temporarily leave his or her untamed aspect behind, is derived from totemic myths detailing the origins of the tribe or lineage; stories of conquest or theft of precious, marvelous objects or elixirs can be traced to myths involving culture heroes; and tales depicting travels to alternate worlds in a quest to free imprisoned maidens clearly resemble myth involving the shamanic journey to recapture the soul of an ill patient (Meletinski and Lanoue 1998, p. 236).

Folklore manifests itself in various forms of popular culture, embracing everything from ancient observations and customs to common people's beliefs, superstitions and traditions. Folklorist George

Laurence Gomme divided folklore into three main categories: traditional narratives (such as folk-tales and hero-tales), traditional customs (such as customs, games and witchcraft) and folk-speech (such as proverbs, riddles and rhymes) (Gomme 2006). Marshall McLuhan noted that the folklore of industrial man contains unprecedented unity, as if it stems from a collective dream, despite the fact that it generally emerges from various facets of promotional culture such as the laboratory, the studio, and the advertising agencies (McLuhan 1951, p. v). This thesis proposes that McLuhan's statement is just as relevant today as it was nearly sixty years ago.

For the purposes of this work, folklore will be defined as the traditional beliefs, stories, and customs of a community, passed on by word of mouth (Dorson 1971). In this light, this thesis defines myth as the embodiment of humanity's collective anxieties, desires and dreams, and folklore as a representation of the norms, stories and anxieties of a specific society. As far as promotional culture is concerned, the case studies undertaken in this work (see Chapter 4) explore the distinction between humanity's collective unconscious projections and contemporary Western society's norms and narratives as equivalent to the difference between the primordial archetypes and the trivial adaptations of mythical images and themes in contemporary advertising.

Poetry

Since antiquity, myth has depended on poetry and poetic expression for much of its power. Today, this dependence manifests itself in promotional culture's use of poetry as a mythopoeic mechanism that aids it in the colonization of myth. Poetry is verbal communication or "writing that formulates a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience in language chosen and arranged to create a specific emotional response through meaning, sound and rhythm" (Merriam-Webster 2001, p. 895).[2] While there are countless ways in which poets and critics tried to define poetry – art for art's sake; a formal use of language; religious, social, political, common or social wisdom, etc - the above definition is the most appropriate for this thesis. It readily demonstrates that, just as the formal aspects of poetry are applied in advertising, so are the imaginative, emotional and mythical aspects.

Robert Frost once noted that a poem is the shortest emotional distance between two points – the speaker and the reader (Sherry and Schouten 2002, p. 222). Due to its ability to create a specific

[2] Although a dictionary definition is not usually the preferable one, this specific definition is vital to this thesis, as it contains not only the formal aspects of language, such as sound, rhythms and meaning, but also its ability to capture the imagination and emotions of its readers. It should also be noted that emotional appeal is not a necessary component of poetic expression.

emotional response, many scholars have deemed poetry a powerful tool of persuasion. This power of persuasion may be attributed to poetry's fantastical origins, as envisioned by both Robert Graves and Northrop Frye. According to Graves, there are two distinct and complementary languages: the ancient, intuitive language of poetry that adorns myth and religion, and the modern, rational language or prose, which adorns science, ethics, philosophy and statistics (Graves 1952, p. 470). Graves believes that the source of poetry's creative power is not scientific intelligence, but inspiration, which can be attributed to the Lunar Muse (Graves 1952, p. 481). He suggests that poetry originated in the matriarchal age, deriving its power and magic from the moon, instead of the sun. Hence, its main theme is the relations of man and woman, rather than those of man and man, as the Apollonian Classicists would prefer (Graves 1952, p. 438). As mentioned above, Graves believes that Apollonian poetry is simply court poetry that need not be original. It is written to maintain the authority appointed to the poets by a king in the belief that they commemorate and perpetuate his magnificence and terror. Apollonian poets use diction, formal ornament and regular, sober, well-polished metre, in an effort to perpetuate the dignity of their office (Graves 1952, p. 433). After all, as Nietzsche reminds us, Apollo represents visible form, rational knowledge and moderation and his art is plastic and representational, such as painting, sculpture and architecture (Nietzsche 2000, p. xvi). Meanwhile, a true poem is necessarily an invocation of the White Goddess or Muse, the Mother of All Living, which is why "the hairs stand on end, the eyes water, the throat is constricted, the skin crawls and a shiver runs down the spine when one writes or reads a true poem" (Graves 1952, p. 20).

In order for a poet to understand the nature of poetry he[3] must have a vision of an ancient ceremonial rite in honor of the goddess, seeing the "naked King crucified to the lopped oak" and the dancers, "red-eyed from the acrid smoke of their sacrificial fires," lusting for his blood (Graves 1952, p. 439). Graves states that all true poets from Homer onwards independently documented their experience of the White Goddess, or Muse, and that a test of a poet's vision may be the accuracy of his portrayal of her and her island (Graves 1952, p. 20). True poets possess a mind so incredibly "attuned and illuminated" that it can form words into a poem that, like a living entity, exists on its own, even for centuries after the author's death, affecting readers with its stored magic (Graves 1952, p. 481).

[3] According to Graves, the poet is typically male, as archaic poetry is either "the moral or religious law laid down for man by the nine-fold Muse, or the ecstatic utterance of man in furtherance of this law and in glorification of the Muse" (Graves 1952, p. 438). Hence, a woman can only contribute to the creation of true poetry by being a silent Muse who inspires poets by her womanly presence, or by becoming the incantation of the Goddess herself and writing with antique authority (ibid).

When pondering the function of poetry in contemporary society, Graves states that the function and use of poetry has remained the religious invocation of the Muse, but its application has changed. He laments that contemporary civilization dishonors the prime emblems of poetry and allows money to purchase anything but truth and anyone but the "truth-possessed poet" (Graves 1952, p. 10).

Northrop Frye's view of poetry is very similar to that of Graves, as he believes that the process of writing poetry is involuntary, and that the invocation of the Muse is not simply tradition (Frye 1957, p. 5). According to him, poetry is not a product of a deliberate act of consciousness, but of processes that are "subconscious or preconscious or half-conscious or unconscious" (Frye 1957, p. 88). He considers the mother of a poem to always be nature, and the poet himself at best a midwife, or the womb of Mother Nature herself (Frye 1957, p. 98). The father or shaping spirit of the poem is its form, which is a manifestation of the universal spirit of poetry (Frye 1957, p. 98). When the poet makes changes to his poem he does so not simply because he likes them better, but because they are better. This shows that if his poem "is alive, it is equally anxious to be rid of him" and be born into the world (ibid).

Perhaps it is from such a fantastical delivery that poetry gains its uncanny powers of persuasion. One of the oldest and best known accounts of these powers can be found at the end of Plato's *The Republic*. Plato contends that poetry can be a "species of mental poison, and the enemy of truth," depriving one of his or her insight into reality, since it is unreal and conveys nothing about life (Havelock 1963, p. 4). According to him, art and poetry are imitations of a life that has itself only secondary reality, the first being the world of the pure forms. Thus, neither the artist nor the poet has any knowledge of what they imitate (Plato 2003). Furthermore, art and poetry appeal to, and represent the lower, less rational part of our nature (Plato 2003) and have the ability to promote moral weakness or confuse one's values, causing us to become characterless (Havelock 1963, p. 6).

While Plato's critique is insightful in describing the persuasive power of poetry, his proposal to do away with myth and poetry is refuted by many thinkers. Northrop Frye cautions against selecting and purging a tradition, and all the artists who are not suitable, which occurs when "we make culture a definite image of the future and perhaps attainable society" (Frye 1957, p. 346). He argues that while historical criticism left unchecked, or uncorrected, relates culture only to the past, ethical criticism unchecked relates culture only to the future, to the model society that can be constructed if the education of the youth is strictly guarded (Frye 1957, p. 346).

Paradoxically, Plato quite comfortably and frequently takes on the role of myth-maker and myth-teller. In his dialogues, he either recounts a traditional myth, with some modifications, or invents a new myth, which may also contain some traditional elements. It is in the recounting of a myth that Plato clearly reveals that, to him, "speech is more plastic than wax and other such media" (*Republic* IX, 588 D; Edelstein 1949, p. 463). Plato was the one to provide us with the very first known account of the Atlantis myth in his two dialogues: the *Timaeus* and the *Critias* (Encyclopedia Mythica 2004). Likewise, in *Phaedrus*, when the dialogue turns to the discussion of writing, Plato recounts the myth of Thoth or Theuth. Theuth is an ancient Egyptian god who discovered "number and arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy, of games involving draughts and dice – and especially of writing" (*Phaedrus*, 274 D). When presenting his discoveries to the King of all Egypt, the god Thamus or Ammom, Theuth argues that writing should be spread throughout Egypt, stating that it will "increase the intelligence of the people of Egypt and improve their memories" (*Phaedrus*, 274 E). Thamus responded by stating that on the contrary writing

> will atrophy people's memories. Trust in writing will make them remember things by relying on marks made by resources, from outside themselves, not on their own inner resources, and so writing will make the things they have learnt disappear from their minds. (*Phaedrus*, 275 A)

This myth is meant to express the ambiguous and disagreeable consequences of the introduction of the technology of writing. By using it in such a way, Plato himself demonstrates that some philosophical explorations would not fulfill their objective without the addition of a myth (Edelstein 1949, p. 466). Thus, mythology is an essential part of Platonic philosophy (Edelstein 1949, p. 477). Nevertheless, for Plato, myth is a story created at will; composed in accordance with the insight that he has gained through dialectical analysis (Edelstein 1949, p. 466). It is subservient to reason, which to Plato is supreme (Edelstein 1949, p. 467). In that sense, philosophy and poetry can coexist peacefully as long as poetry yields to the necessary censorship (Edelstein 1949, p. 479). Poetry must represent man as he ought to live, not as he does. Hence, Plato's dialogues provide the philosopher with a new mythology, and as such comprise a new poetry (Edelstein 1949, p. 480). Unfortunately, as this poetry will be of Apollonian variety it will encompass all of Graves' criticism as described above.

As mentioned previously, Nietzsche was critical of Socrates' views on myth and poetry, and he extends a similar critique to Plato, who "did not lag behind the naïve cynicism of his master" in his denunciation of tragedy and of art as a whole, and who even burnt his own poetry in order to become Socrates' pupil (Nietzsche 2000, p. 76). Nietzsche accuses Plato of creating an art-form, the Platonic

dialogue, which is closely related to the existing art forms rejected by him. The Platonic dialogue may have absorbed all earlier artistic genres just as tragedy had done; thus it is suspended between narrative, lyric, and drama, between prose and poetry, breaking the law of the unity of linguistic form (Nietzsche 2000, p. 77). Nietzsche further believes that in yet another new art-form which Plato gave all posterity, the novel, poetry lives in a "hierarchical relation to dialectical philosophy similar to that in which for centuries this same philosophy lived with theology." It is due to the pressure of "the daemonic Socrates" that Plato forced poetry into this new position (Nietzsche 2000, p. 78). Nietzsche is saddened that science has now eradicated myth, thus forcing poetry away from its "natural ideal soil" into homelessness (Nietzsche 2000, p. 93).

McLuhan is also very interested in role of poetry in modern society, and asserts that popular poetry, along with myth, is colonized by promotional culture through the use of symbolist technique, which utilizes symbols as a device to concentrate or intensify meaning (Jones 1944; Benamou 1964). In his essay, *The Philosophy of Composition*, Edgar Alan Poe explains that a good writer must commence his or her work of fiction with 'the unity of effect'; that is, by deciding which emotional response, or effect, it will create. Poe's work greatly influenced leading French symbolist writers such as Charles Baudelaire and Stephane Mallarme, whose poems sought to evoke a response, rather than simply describe one (Poe 1846; Jones 1944). In order to achieve this outcome, symbolist writers express their ideas, feelings, and values through the use of symbols or suggestions instead of direct statements. This technique originates from the belief that the imagination is the true interpreter of reality. In symbolist texts, the reader's attention is drawn to the relationship between the textual and the imaginary when he/she recognizes the metapoetical inferences in the text, which in turn "causes [his/her] imagining activity to become reflexive" (Reynolds 1995, p. 7). The reader's imagination is stimulated to the point that it exceeds logical and empirical boundaries, extrapolating an imaginary space which is indefinable. This imaginary space transforms the medium itself and allows the reader to become a co-creator of the text (Reynolds 1995, p. 195). With the application of symbolist aesthetic, the poetic/pictorial medium acts as a starting point for creating and exploring imaginary spaces (Reynolds 1995, p. 195). Hence, as Marshall McLuhan pointed out about the poems of T.S. Eliot, "it is not something his poems *say* but something they *do* that is essential about them" (McLuhan 1951, p. 106).

Promotional Culture and Advertising

<u>Promotional Culture</u>

Akin to great artists, advertisers aim to achieve certain effects in the minds of their audience through the use of symbolist aesthetic. They continually evoke emotion by relying on images, symbols and icons to give meaning to their communications (Marchand 1985, p. 69; Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 237). The feelings evoked by such advertisements disarm the consumer and create a product appeal that is based on emotions rather than logic and reason (Randazzo 1993, p. 150). Likewise, proficient advertisers learned to stimulate the readers empathetically by allowing them to undergo an experience specifically planned by the advertiser to prove a point (Marchand 1985, p. 12). By promising to improve the consumer in some way, or to fix a problem, advertising provides a context – it is the poetry of becoming (Levitt 1993, p. 135). People's ancient urge to reshape their environment and enhance their lives is expressed in contemporary society by commercial consumption, commercial communication and the fine arts (Levitt 1993, p. 135). Both advertisers and artists trade in symbolic systems and metaphors (Levitt 1993, p. 135). Therefore, advertisers have become as accomplished at swaying the minds of their listeners as any of the ancient rhetoricians (Marchand 1989, p. 107). Advertising and art are representational and hence a distortion, or even falsehood (Levitt 1993, p. 135). This situation, of course, inadvertently confirms Plato's righteous anger at the power of art and poetry and at the possibility that anyone should take rhetoric to be a steadfast guide to a fulfilling and meaningful life (Levitt 1993, p. 135; Plato 2002).

In his book, *Promotional Culture*, Andrew Wernick appropriately defines promotion as "a rhetorical form diffused throughout our culture," which "has come to shape not only [our] culture's symbolic and ideological contents, but also its ethos, texture and constitution as a whole" (Wernick 1991, p. vii). While publicity is composed of competing messages offering one product over another, more importantly it is a system that cumulatively only makes a single proposal: transformation through consumption (Berger 1972, p. 131). Wernick contends that within the consumer goods sector of industrial capitalism "image-making becomes a central and integrated element of the production itself" (Wernick 1991, p. 18). He maintains that promotion encompasses advertising, packaging, and design, and that it is also applicable in non-commercial activities. Secondary public institutions, whether aesthetic, intellectual, educational, religious or other, also create forms of promotional discourse specific to their needs (Wernick 1991, p. 183).

Promotional culture is a vast mechanism that extends beyond the scope of this thesis, where advertising will be the main focal point. Nevertheless, it is important to note that any other facet of promotional culture may be chosen to carry out the investigation proposed by this thesis. The choice to

focus on advertising stems from McLuhan's insightful pronouncement that "historians and archaeologists will one day discover that the ads of our times are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities" (McLuhan 1964, p. 257). It is also inspired by Aldous Huxley's assertion that he has

> discovered the most exciting, the most arduous literary form of all, the most difficult to master, the most pregnant in curious possibilities. I mean the advertisement....Advertisement writers may not be lyrical, or obscure, or in any way esoteric. They must be universally intelligible. A good advertisement has this in common with drama and oratory, that it must be immediately comprehensible and directly moving. But at the same time it must possess all the succinctness of epigram.... The advertisement is one of the most interesting and difficult of modern literary forms. Its potentialities are not yet half explored. Already the most interesting and, in some cases, the only readable part of most American periodicals is the advertisement section. (Aldous Huxley, *Advertisement*, 1968; cited in Twitchell 1996, p. 14)

Advertising

The American Marketing Association defines advertising as:

> the placement of announcements and persuasive messages in time or space purchased in any of the mass media by business firms, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and individuals who seek to inform and/or persuade members of a particular target market or audience about their products, services, organizations, or ideas. (American Marketing Association 2010)

In the twentieth century, advertising cemented itself as a stable and regulated industry with a professional status and a distinct role in the business community (Brierley 2001, p. 33). Since then, the term advertising has come to mean paid-for-mass-media communication, rather than all promotional activity (Brierley 2001, p. 2).

The principal purpose of advertising today is the same as it was for businesses three hundred years ago – to address the micro-economic needs of business and to stimulate demand (Brierley 2001, p. 5). Nevertheless, the basis of contemporary mass advertising is rooted in the industrial revolution. At the dawn of the 20th century, North American culture had transformed from a predominantly industrial to a consumer society, shifting the emphasis from a 'production ethic' to a 'consumption ethic' and creating 'the culture of consumption' (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 51). The new technology-driven factory system resulted in over-production due to its ability to provide enormous volumes of cheaply produced goods (Brierley 2001, p. 5). Because of this over-production brand advertising appeared in the nineteenth century as a means to stimulate consumption (Brierley 2001, p. 233). Previously, generic ads, such as those for sugar, milk and meat, and wool, strove to increase the overall market for consumption of the goods (Brierley 2001, p. 229). Meanwhile, in mature advertising markets with well-established

brands most advertising aims at reminding loyal consumers to purchase goods traded under the banner of ever-present dynamic consumer brands, such as Coca-Cola (Brierley 2001, p. 47). Such promotion became possible when manufacturers managed to bypass retailers and develop a direct relationship with consumers through the mass media. This method also allowed them to command prices and distribution (Brierley 2001, p. 233). In 1923, the term 'Madison Avenue' was first used as shorthand for advertising agencies, reflecting their rapid growth not only in uptown Manhattan, but throughout the United States (Marchand 1985, p. 7). By the late 1920's, advertising had secured a position of authority and status, allowing advertisers to present various products as solutions to the anxieties and dilemmas facing contemporary individuals in the new era (Marchand 1985, p. 4).

Advertising is most certainly a commercial industry; nevertheless, in addition to selling products and stimulating demand it also promotes ideas, attitudes, and values (Burmester 1982, p. 74). At the beginning of the twentieth-century, advertisers revealed their prowess at identifying the public's sense of excitement and anxiety, as well as emphasizing or magnifying it for their own purposes (Marchand 1985, p. 4). Ever since then, advertising has become a fundamental part of modern culture. It colonizes and modifies an immense scope of symbols and ideas and has "communicative powers [that] recycle cultural models and references back through the networks of social interactions" (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 5). Adverts usually convey two kinds of information: a verbal or pictorial account of the product or service being sold, and the effects, whether real or illusory, described or implied, that such products or services will have on the consumer's private or public life. Advertising's endeavors are fused by the discourse about and through objects that unites images of persons, products and well-being (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 5). While urging people to purchase certain goods over others, adverts also denote a particular vision of the good life, validating a way of existing in the world (Lears 1994, p. 1; Leiss et al. 2005, p. 19). Advertising relies on the vast library of commercial fables, fairy tales, and tropes, which is itself cultural discourse in and through goods (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 19). Hence, advertisements can reveal a great deal about an entire civilization, "its actual material life and interlocking collective fantasies" (Atwan, McQuade & Wright 1979).

Advertisements quickly learned to camouflage or transcend their economic nature as mass communications and began addressing the public with a 'personal' tone (Marchand 1985, p. 9; Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 52). As soon as relatively inexpensive mass-produced consumer goods began to flood the marketplace, traditional divisions between economic and cultural classes became blurred and long-established notions of distinction began to collapse (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 51). The mass

audience emerged as the newest and largest *nouveau riche* class with a strong drive for advancement and a yearning to display modern tastes (Marchand 1985, p. 87). Advertising immediately associated itself with civilizing influences, promising to improve the economic status of the masses and even raise their cultural and intellectual standards (ibid). In order to achieve this, advertisers portrayed the ideals and aspirations of the capitalist system more truthfully than its reality (Marchand 1985, p. xviii). In other words, advertisers mirrored not how individuals were acting, but what and how they were dreaming (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 152). Each advertisement that addressed the active desires of some consumers, who have already been aroused by images of new choices and extravagances, also coaxed thousands of consumers who have not yet experienced such desires (Marchand 1985, p. 160). As a result, each response to the desires of a few became an amplified form of a siren call to the millions (Marchand 1985, p. 160).

Hence, in order to understand the changing nature of American, and perhaps even Western, society, one must turn to advertisements, as they undoubtedly form one of the most important sets of cultural artifacts. Advertising emulates the attitudes of massive segments of society, rather than elites alone; thus, it dependably illustrates the values and customs of particular historical periods. In their book, *Social Communication in Advertising*, Leiss, Kline and Jhally describe five developmental stages of advertising and marketing that took place in North America over the last hundred years. Leiss et al. call these stages *cultural frames* for goods. A cultural frame is "the representation of the relation between person, product and image of wellbeing that is most characteristic of a specific epoch in marketing and advertising history" (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 566). Leiss at al. do not contend that these cultural frames overshadow everything else that was happening at the time or replace what occurred before them. They are simply meant to provide the general design principles for the "masks for goods that highlight what is distinctive and unique about each period" (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 278). Furthermore, they are not mutually exclusive, but cumulative, as specific forms that arise in different periods are segregated for particular audiences instead of simply disappearing (Jhally 1989, p. 224).

The first cultural frame identified by Leiss et al. is Idolatry (1890-1925). This frame emphasized the useful characteristics of goods by presenting the product's use value, qualities and price. During this period, advertising messages venerated products as great new innovations of mass production (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 279). Thus, commodities were depicted as idols in early advertising (Jhally 1989). This approach was extremely successful because advertisers saw an opportunity in the weakening of the traditional religious realm that allowed them to address the public's craving for moments of

enhancement, awe and rapture (Jhally 1989, p. 222). As Roland Marchand describes, advertisers utilized sacred symbolism, depicting radiating light beams or a halo above the product, to demonstrate "divine intervention in the world of commodities" (Jhally 1989, p. 223). These strategies allowed advertisers to secularize images without abandoning their initial spiritual connotations (Jhally 1989, p. 223). Such sacred imagery "represented a final step in the successful, though largely unconscious adaptation of religious imagery to the advertising tableaux, the modern icons of a faith in mass consumption" (Jhally 1989, p. 223).

In the second cultural frame, Iconology (1925-1945), qualities of goods became more intangible, although they were still closely connected to the products themselves. Advertising at this time became abstract, or symbolic, describing the products in a connotative discourse, rooted in suggestion, metaphor, analogy, and inference (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 284). In other words, goods were seen as impressive not only because of what they could do, but also because of what they could mean (Jhally 1989, p. 223). In the third frame, Narcissism (1945-1965), the focal point shifted closer to the individual and brought emotion to the foreground. Advertisers promised that their products could serve the individual consumer personally and selfishly by controlling other people's judgments, as if by using 'black magic' to mesmerize other people (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 289). During this time, the world of objects performed in magical ways (Jhally 1989, p. 224). It was during this frame that McLuhan observed and collected most of the advertisements and cultural exhibits that he analyses in *The Mechanical Bride*.

In the fourth cultural frame, Totemism (1965-1986), consumption was portrayed as a spectacle, or a public enterprise centered around totemic consumer goods, which became emblems of various group consumption practices or lifestyles (Leiss, Kline, & Jhally 1986, p. 295). In lifestyle advertising, products are perceived as badges of group membership that provide magical admittance to a world of group activities (Jhally 1989, p. 224). In the fifth and most recent frame, Mise-en-Scene (meaning 'to put into the scene') (1980-2000), products were displayed as props for the self-construction of changing scenes and life-scripts. Three decades after he uttered it, Andy Warhol's apocryphal 1968 statement – "In the future everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes" – took on great significance (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 566). Reality television, talk shows, the internet and innovative new technologies celebrated "the triumph of meritocracy, where everyday heroes were lifted out of the crowd and the shadow of obscurity into the bright light of fame" (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 566). During this period, the individual was invited to become a director or script writer of his or her own life, which was a blank slate that could be

filled with elements of personality, “freely assembled from the person’s inner psyche; the desired type of social grouping and role playing; the subtle signals of group identity; a natural or built environment; possibly exotic; and a set of actions” made possible by modern technology (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 568).

Leiss et al.’s frames also bring to light the mythopoeic aspects of advertising. The Idolatry stage calls on sacred symbolism, Iconology and Narcissism invoke white and black magic, respectively, whereas Totemism utilizes totemic myths that unite a particular group. Meanwhile, Mise-en-Scene employs an anthropological marketing strategy in which objects are transformed into props for self-construction of changing scenes and life scripts (Leiss et al. 2005, p. 22) in a manner reminiscent of ritual. Although they are assigned a specific historical period, these five frames may point to a possible permanent constellation of forms, only one of which comes to the fore at any one time. As demonstrated by Leiss, Kline and Jhally, a selective and systematic examination of these visual and verbal artifacts unveils an astonishingly accurate analysis of American principals and ideals (Atwan, McQuade & Wright 1979, p. xx). With the use of these frames we can explore whether only apparent differences have taken place between the time of McLuhan’s observations (Narcissism frame) and now (possibly beyond the Mise-en-Scene frame). This exploration is best illustrated by an analysis of contemporary advertising. The methodology for this analysis is outlined in the next chapter, while the analysis itself is undertaken in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Methodology

On the basis of the above literature review and conceptual framework, this thesis explores whether contemporary promotional culture is the mythology of today. The whole of promotional culture is beyond the scope of this thesis, thus the focus is directed towards advertising, and further narrowed to automotive advertising. While advertising from other sectors may reveal the same underlying patterns, automotive advertising was chosen for several reasons. Despite being the most proverbial of industrial society's products, cars are still most evocative and desirable. It is in cars that all the skills and anxieties of our age are invested (Bayley 1986, p. 69). Furthermore, Cynthia Dettelbach boldly asserted that automobiles are America's newest gods (Dettelbach 1976, p. 11). Accordingly, both Roland Barthes and Marshall McLuhan have remarked on the presence of mythopoeic processes in automotive advertising.

In *The Mechanical Bride*, McLuhan makes note of the infusion of sex and technology in advertising. He locates this infusion specifically in automotive advertising by uncovering the mechanized dream filled with desire for speed articulated in the amalgamation of women and cars (Marchessault 2005, pp. 57-58). He observes that the "body as a living machine is now correlative with cars as vibrant and attractive organisms" (McLuhan 1951, p. 84). Consequently, car ads display that "there is a widespread acceptance of the car as a womb symbol and, paradoxically enough, as a phallic power symbol" (ibid). In other words, the car is anthropomorphized, wrapped in mythical allusions and presented as a mechanical companion.

Writing about the new Citroen DS, nicknamed *De'esse,* or Goddess, released in 1955, Barthes noted that, just as medieval cathedrals used symbolic sculpture and mysterious harmonic proportions to encode the beliefs of their civilization, so car designs do today (Bayley 1986, p. 69). He states: "cars today are almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object" (Barthes 1972, p. 88).

Barthes, McLuhan and countless other contemporary thinkers' interest in the mythological dimensions of automotive advertising demonstrate that further enquiry into its archetypal meaning builds on an established line of analysis. As automobiles only became prominent in the twentieth-century, they symbolize modernization, industrial innovation, mass-production, technology and progress. Cars have come to represent the 'myth of the machine' as they are seen as almost having

supernatural powers. Furthermore, as the car did not exist in archaic times during which most of the well-known and classical mythology was formed, it provides a more apposite opportunity to examine whether its surrounding contemporary mythology has an inherent archetypal or purely historical basis.

In order to undertake this examination this thesis puts forth the following research questions: can automotive advertising be considered mythopoeic and how does mythopoeic advertising draw on archetypes? The first question is answered in part by an extensive literature analysis on automotive culture that will uncover the mythical themes in which the car is enveloped. Furthermore, both questions are addressed through three case studies of automotive campaigns. These case studies are assessed in order to determine whether the chosen ads take the form of mythology and poetry in contemporary society. Once this is determined, this thesis asks whether the myth possibly embedded in advertising is archetypal, or if advertising simply functions as historically based folklore. While they also have historical connotations, archetypes contain meanings that are primordial and timeless, whereas folkloric meaning is merely reflective of the time and culture from which it originates. In order to carry out these case studies this thesis combines rhetorical analysis with discourse analysis, semiotics, and archetypal literary criticism.

It should be noted that alternative methods were considered and deemed unfit for undertaking the examination proposed by this thesis. For instance, empirical studies, consumer focus groups, direct observations, in-depth interviews, etc. In answering the aforementioned research questions regarding whether advertising can be considered mythopoeic and how it draws on archetypes, case studies offer the most appropriate methodology. Furthermore, this work focuses on reading the production content of the promotions examined instead of investigating the empirical framework of consumers and users. While cognitive science, behavioral and perception experiments or various methods associated with marketing would offer a fascinating glance at how the advertisers develop their techniques, they do not conform to McLuhan's line of enquiry explored by this thesis. The levels of meaning that this thesis examines are "beyond the messenger's intent or the recipient's awareness" (Meggs 2002, p. xiii). In other words, neither the advertisers nor the consumers are consciously aware of the archetypal meanings stored within the promotional messages that they produce or consume.

Nevertheless, the contemporary practice of advertising is no longer the same as the practice that McLuhan addressed. As mentioned above, advertising has undergone five main stages of development in the last century. In that time, it has moved from appealing to rationality by emphasizing use value of the product to, in McLuhan's time, promising that the product can alter other's opinions of

ourselves and finally to transforming objects into props for self-construction of changing scenes and life scripts and beyond (Leiss et al. 2005). Advertising has varied to reflect upon and appeal to a changing society. The changing social context has surely modified the role of certain myths but only in regards to the ratio of their importance. The archetypes themselves are likely to stay intact, while their resonance and the manner in which they are combined will shift and change depending on their importance to a society at any given time. Hence, despite these changes, McLuhan's methodology developed in *The Mechanical Bride* is still an indispensible tool to analyzing modern promotional culture.

Modern advertisers share uncanny similarities with the earliest practitioners of rhetoric; the sophists, whom truth-seeking philosophers deemed offensive and dishonest in a manner similar to countless condemnations of advertising (McQuarrie and Phillips 2008, p. 7). Indeed, one may easily substitute 'advertising' for 'rhetoric' in Plato's works such as *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias* in order to grasp Plato's indignation at the idea that rhetoric may be used as a steadfast guide to a rewarding and meaningful life (Plato 2002). Nevertheless, Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, a touchstone for the twentieth century concept of rhetoric, operates from the assumption that rhetoric has built-in ethics (Garver 1994). McQuarrie and Phillips assert that mass-media brand advertising is "the largest organized persuasive endeavor" in the contemporary world, and that advertisements today are our versions of ancient public oratory (McQuarrie and Phillips 2008, p. 15). Advertising rhetoric is very pragmatic, as "the primary goal of advertising is always to cause a specified consumer response." Rhetoric has always had a similar goal, persuasion, thus, "rhetorical perspectives can contribute substantially to the understanding of advertising" (McQuarrie and Phillips 2008, p. 7). Furthermore, "only rhetoric shares the same aim as advertising: how to assemble words, signs, poems, and other text elements so as to maximize the probability of a specified audience response" (McQuarrie and Phillips 2008, p. 8).

Rhetoric is a very ambiguous term, until its more recent recuperation at least, but it has been generally more concerned with the style of communication than its content (Dijk 1997; McQuarrie and Phillips 2008, p. 7). Rhetoric's key interest is with method and manner, as it aims to determine the most effective way to express a thought in a specific situation and how to modify its expression to fit various circumstances (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 424). This thesis will define rhetoric as instrumental discourse, or more specifically "a vehicle for responding to, reinforcing, or altering the understandings of an audience or the social fabric or the community" (Dijk 1997, p. 157). Rhetoric is also "an interpretive theory that frames a message as an interested party's attempt to influence an audience" (Scott 1994, p. 252). The argument, the style of the delivery, the evidence and the order of argumentation all reveal the

author's intent. The author creates the message with the hope of a specific audience response by using common knowledge of various vocabularies and conventions, as well as common experiences (Scott 1994, p. 252). The audience uses the same body of knowledge to decode and read the messages, deduce the author's intention, consider the argument and devise a response. Hence, cultural knowledge creates the foundation for normative interaction and persuasion (Scott 1994, p. 253).

According to Gill and Whedbee, there are two schools of rhetorical criticism: the first aims to broaden the appreciation of the text's historical importance; and the second strives to "determine how rhetoric invites a construction or reconstruction of events and phenomena" (Gill and Whedbee 1997, p. 160). It is the second school that informs this methodology. Since as early as the 1800s, rhetoric has been used in advertising as a tool to persuade consumers as well as aid them in comprehending images quickly (Kenyon and Hutchinshon 2007, p. 594). According to rhetoricians, any proposition can be articulated in a manner of ways, only one of which is the most effective in swaying an audience in any given situation. Hence, when the main goal of communication is persuasion, such as in advertising, the rhetorical perspective proposes that the style or manner of the expression may be more important than its propositional content (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 424).

McQuarrie and Mick have created a taxonomy of rhetoric in advertising in 1996 that is to this date the foundation for rhetoric in advertising (Kenyon and Hutchinshon 2007, pp. 594-596). They identify the three premises on which the rhetorical approach to advertising rests: 1) that differences in the style of advertising language, and especially the presence of rhetorical figures, can be expected to have vital effects on the way the ad is processed, 2) that these effects can be obtained from the formal properties of the rhetorical figures themselves, and 3) that these formal properties are systematically interconnected (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 425). Hence, their taxonomy model is constructed of three layers, spanning in complexity from figuration through to figurative and eventually rhetorical operation. These operations are shown on a scale of deviation including rhetorical de-stabilizations (Kenyon and Hutchinshon 2007, p. 596). This framework underlines the concepts that consumers encounter when processing advertisements.

The first layer is figuration. McQuarrie and Mick define a rhetorical figure as artful deviation that occurs when "an expression deviates from expectation, the expression is not rejected as nonsensical or faulty, the deviation conforms to a template that is invariant across a variety of content and context" (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 425; Tom and Eves 1999, p. 39). The second layer of the model, figurative mode, corresponds to the classical distinction between schemes and tropes. A figure in the schematic

mode occurs when a text "contains excessive order and regularity, while a figure in the tropic mode occurs when a text contains a deficiency of order or irregularities." Hence, schemes and tropes include two separate modes of formal deviation. Schematic figures are exemplified by rhyme and alliteration, while tropic figures by metaphors and puns (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 427).

The third layer of the framework, rhetorical operations, separates simple schemes and tropes from complex ones in order to generate four rhetorical operations that lie beneath individual figures – repetition, reversal, substitution, and destabilization. These operations are the direct foundations of "the excessive order or disorder that produces the deviation that constitutes a rhetorical figure" (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 429). The first operation, repetition merges multiple occurrences of some component of the expression without altering the meaning of that element. In advertising, figures of rhyme, chime and alliteration or assonance are created by the repetition of sounds (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 429). Meanwhile, figures of anaphora (beginning words), epistrophe (ending words), epanalepsis (beginning and ending), and anadiplosis (ending and beginning) are created by the repetition of words (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 432). The second operation, reversal, merges components that are mirror images of one another in an expression. Just as a reflection, one of the components is a reversed version of the other. In classical literature, this figure was called 'antimetabole.' Furthermore, semantic reversal is also possible in the form of binary forms (i.e. high/low, easy/tough). Another figure, called antithesis, arises when both such pairs are present in one message (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 432).

Another operation, substitution, "selects an expression that requires an adjustment by the message recipient in order to grasp the intended content" (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 432). McQuirrie and Mick found four dimensions that seemed most relevant to their advertising research: exaggerated/understated claims (such as hyperbole), absence/plentitude of expression elements (such as ellipsis), strong/weak assertive force (such as rhetorical question), and part/whole relations (such as metonym). According to McQuirrie and Mick, a metonym "makes use of the fact that objects and events in the world are represented mentally as complex schemata built up from molecular concepts" (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 433). In other words, metonymy is where a related element stands for the whole (Kenyon and Hutchinshon 2007, p. 597). The final operation of destabilization chooses an expression in such a way that the initial context renders its meaning indeterminate, which means that multiple coexisting meanings are available. The figures of metaphor, pun, irony and paradox are prevalent in this operation (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 433). McQuirrie and Mick conclude that these

four rhetorical operations permit the advertiser to oblige audiences with various resources for processing while continuing to benefit from artfully deviant messages (McQuarrie and Mick 1996, p. 434).

Linda Scott proposes that in addition to this taxonomy a theory of visual rhetoric is also very vital to analysis of advertising. According to her, all pictographies employ a mix of contextualization and stylization of the pictures in order to be able to signify concepts, actions and modifiers. This is how a system shifts from concrete reference to complex communication. Scott suggests that advertising visuals function in a similar manner. Advertisers use view-point, style, context and references or interactions with other texts and systems to transform images into highly sophisticated rhetorical tasks. To form the simplest response, consumers must utilize a learned vocabulary of pictorial symbols and use complex cognitive skills. Therefore, "advertising images can be understood as a discursive form, like writing, capable of subtle nuances in communication or, like numbers, capable of facilitating abstraction and analysis" (Scott 1994, p. 264). Scott proposes a system of visual rhetoric that operates on three levels: the inventions of an argument (positioning, copy, strategy and concept); the arrangement of a visual argument (choice and placement of visual elements); and delivery of an object or proposition (point of view shown and the manner of rendering) (Scott 1994, p. 265).

Alexander Kenyon also proposes a visual typology. This typology is similar to the taxonomy outlined above in that it also suggests a scale of 'richness' that supports the idea of the existence of many 'visual artful deviations.' The typology of visual rhetoric consists of two elements: the visual structure of the elements, which may include juxtaposition, fusion or replacement; and the meaning operation which is the cognitive process required to interpret the visual image. The meaning operations include connection, comparison for similarity and comparison for opposition (Kenyon and Hutchinshon 2007, p. 598)[4].

In addition to rhetorical analysis, this thesis will employ discourse analysis. Rhetoric, in its antique form of the art or study of persuasive public discourse, is the predecessor of discourse studies (Van Dijk 1997, p. 12). In its contemporary form, rhetorical analysis is a dimension of discourse concerned with identifying figures, or "rhetorical structures," while discourse analysis is broader and incorporates sound, sight and body, order and form, meaning, style and schemata (Van Dijk 1997, p. 12).

[4] Kenneth Burke is yet another important contributor to the field of rhetoric studies; however, due to space restrictions of the thesis, his *Rhetoric of Motives* will have to be excluded.

Nevertheless, a distinction should be made between discourse analysis (DA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Cook defines discourse as "text and context together, interacting in a way which is perceived as meaningful and unified by the participants (who are both part of the context and observers of it)" (Cook, Cardno & Middlewood, 2001 p. 43). Meanwhile, according to Wodak, CDA regards language as social practice, and "takes consideration of the context of language use to be crucial" (Wodak and Meyer 2001, p. 1). Van Dijk further states that CDA is discourse analysis 'with an attitude' that focuses on social problems (ibid). CDA is an important tool for the analysis of unequal power relationships (Wodak and Meyer 2001); however, the use of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination is not of relevance to my thesis.

While CDA itself is not applicable to this thesis, some of its tools are. CDA scholar, Siegfried Jager, develops a helpful 'toolbox' for conducting discourse analysis. First, the researcher must locate the object to be investigated while focusing on one discursive plane (Jager 2001, pp. 52-53). For this thesis, automotive advertising campaigns have been chosen. Auto advertising is a partial sector of the discourse plane that is promotional culture. The reasons for selecting this sector, as discussed in detail below, include the fact that it effectively demonstrates how a theme that this thesis is examining is disseminated to the masses. Once the object is chosen, the researcher must analyze it according to Jager's method for discourse analysis. This analysis utilizes the following steps: 1) brief characterization (of the section) of the discursive plane; 2) establishing and processing the material base or archive; 3) structure analysis; 4) fine analysis of one or several discourse fragments; and 5) overall analysis of the sector concerned (Jager 2001, p. 53).

Archetypal literary criticism, as presented by Northrop Frye, is another invaluable method for this thesis. Frye's method imbricates with rhetorical and discourse analysis since critics also identify 'archetypal metaphors' in rhetorical texts. Archetypal metaphors operate across generations and ascribe to value judgments on the subjects. Gill and Whedbee site Osborn in suggesting that "the speaker must turn to the ancient archetypal verities, to the cycle of light and darkness, to the cycle of life and death and rebirth again…and find them all unchanged, all still appealing symbolically to the human heart and thus reassuring one that man himself, despite all the surface turbulence, remains after all human" (Gill and Whedbee 1997, p. 173).

Barbara Stern demonstrates how Frye's taxonomy may be adapted to the analysis of consumer texts. Frye suggested that there is a single monomythic pattern amalgamating Western cultural products. Stern applies Frye's taxonomy as a framework for plot analysis by categorizing four mythoi,

"pregeneric narrative categories," into which Western mythic stories fit (Stern 1995, p. 166). A portion of the central monomyth of birth/death/rebirth coupled with nature's seasons and the human life cycle is presented in each category. Stern suggests that due to the common ancestry of Western cultural texts, consumer myths will correspond to these categories, as they establish the available plot patterns. She builds on Randazzo's view that mythic images are "hard-wired into the human species" (Randazzo 1993, p. 35) by asserting the same for mythic plots and argues that "Frye's taxonomy situates these plots in relation to narrative structures typical of a culture" (Stern 1995, p. 166). Frye defines four basic plot patterns that have the following relationship with the seasons: comedy (Spring), romance (Summer), tragedy (Autumn), irony (Winter). These mythoi are arranged in a wheel and can intermix with the neighboring two mythoi to create submythoi (Stern 1995, p. 167). Stern contends that "understanding plot in terms of Frye's taxonomy can also contribute to the creation of better persuasive appeals" (Stern 1995, p. 167).

Yet another methodological tool is semiotics. The origin of semiotics extends to the pre-Socratic era, where bodily manifested symptoms (signs) were recognized by Hippocrates as conveyers of messages about physical and mental states. However, it was not until the 20th century that semiotics became what it is today, which is mostly attributable to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure creates a theory of semiology in which he "described a language as a system of signs which have meaning by virtue of their relationship to each other" (Cook, Cardno & Middlewood 2001 p. 61). Semiotics shares with discourse analysis the examination of the system of rules governing discourse (Chandler 2005).

In its contemporary mode, semiotics has two forms: 1) general semiotics that asks, "What is the nature of meaning?" and 2) specific semiotics that inquires, "How does our reality – words, gestures, myths, products/services, theories – acquire meaning?" (Mick 1986, p. 197). Roland Barthes is a key contributor to the field of semiotics in contemporary scholarship. For him, semiotics is a way of revealing the dominant bourgeois ideology in various cultural materials (Barthes 1972). In *Image, Music, Text*, Barthes states that "all images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a 'floating chain' of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others" (Barthes 1977, p. 39). Nevertheless, the variety of readings, which depend on different kinds of knowledge, can wholly co-exist in a single individual, as "the one lexia mobilizes different lexicons" (Barthes 1977, p. 46). Barthes defines a lexicon as "a portion of the symbolic plane (of language) which corresponds to a body of practices and techniques" (ibid, p. 47). Within an individual these various lexicons form one's idiolect

(Barthes 1977, p. 47). According to him, the connotations of an image are composed of an "architecture of signs drawn from a variable depth of lexicons (of idiolects)" which signals that "the psyche itself is articulated like a language; indeed, the further one 'descends' into the psychic depths of an individual, the more rarified and the more classifiable the signs become" (Barthes 1977, p. 47). Hence, the multiplicities of reading are not a "threat to the 'language' of the image," as we must consider that language is composed of idiolects, lexicons and sub-codes. Barthes also observes that the rhetoric of advertising uses the rhetorical figures identified by the Ancients and the Classics (Barthes 1977, p. 50).

Cook provides an interesting critique of semiotics as a method of inquiry into advertising. According to him, semiotics is weakened by its attachment to similarities. He states that "although it undoubtedly contributes to the analysis of an ad to see what it has in common with the myths of earlier cultures, or with other discourse types of its own period and place, or with other ads, there are also important elements which are unique in advertising, or in a given ad, as there are in any discourse type or instance of it" (Cook, Cardno & Middlewood, 2001 p. 70). Cook also warns that even the concentration on underlying deep grammatical structures in Chomskian linguistics "neglects the fact that there may also be surface forms which are important in themselves" (ibid, p. 71). While semiotics may be weak in these areas, when combined with rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis and archetypal literary criticism it is still the most suitable method for the purposes of this thesis as it effectively reveals underlying symbolic meaning of texts.

In summation, this thesis will employ a combination of rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, archetypal literary criticism and semiotics to three automotive advertising case studies in order to examine whether it can be considered mythopoeic and how mythopoeic advertising draws on archetypes. The combination of these methods will determine the mythologies employed by the advertisements and extract the archetypes that are embedded within these mythologies and narratives.

Selection of Case Studies

A wide selection of over two hundred and fifty contemporary automotive advertisements from around the world, particularly Australia and North America, was gathered in order to broadly observe various types of automotive advertising. Subsequently, three main advertising campaign case studies were chosen in order to carry out a detailed examination. These case studies were chosen on several bases. First, each case study will encompass several national campaigns for the same vehicle make and model in order determine whether these campaigns from varying geographical areas have a basic

archetypal similarity. Second, these campaigns, just as McLuhan's exhibits, were chosen because they are familiar and typical of contemporary automotive advertising. It is suggested that any other selection would also reveal a presence of the same underlying themes, although in various capacities. Hence, these ads were chosen because they appear to have the most evident mythopoeic potential and would allow for an in-depth analysis of all the ways in which advertisements are mythical. The sampling was purposive and not intended to be representative of all advertising. Upon primary inspection, these ads seem to be the most poetic: they utilize a cohesive or enthralling narrative, evoke emotion, provide an experience and explore the personable or personified dimensions of the advertised automobile. They also have a high potential of being archetypal as they appear to incorporate primordial characters such as the hero and the maiden. A thorough and detailed assessment is carried out in order to determine whether these campaigns contain archetypal imagery.

Nevertheless, this investigation is limited by the scope of this thesis. A detailed assessment of each advert in terms of: sound effects, colors, designs, light, atmosphere, set designs, actors, performance, voice, melody, rhythm, etc., would fill thousands of pages. Hence, since this is not possible, only the elements that contribute most to the uncovering of the underlying mythopoeic forces and archetypes in the advertisements will be analyzed in detail. The elements examined will fall in various categories from sounds to symbolism and their relevance is tied into the overall analysis of the campaign.

Chapter 4: Automotive Literature Review and Case Studies

Section 1: Automobile Literature Review

> Full twenty tripods for his hall he framed,/ That placed on living wheels of massy gold,/ (Wondrous to tell,) instinct with spirit roll'd/From place to place, around the bless'd abodes/ Self-moved, obedient to the beck of gods.
>
> – Homer, *The Iliad* (*Il, 19, 440*; cited in Silk 1984, p. 27)

In order to uncover the mythopoeic significance of automotive advertising we must first examine the cultural importance of the car as an artifact of contemporary culture. While still evocative and desirable, cars are the most emblematic of industrial society's products. It is in cars that all the skills and anxieties of our age are invested (Bayley 1986, p. 69). Throughout the last century cars have mirrored, encapsulated and enhanced the consumer's desires and tastes while enshrining and projecting the values of the culture which created them (Bayley 1986, p. 101).

The automobile is often hailed as the central driving force behind twentieth-century modernization (Ross 1995). Symbolically, the car has stood for material prosperity, mobility, personal freedom, individualism and a higher standard of living – all important elements in an increasingly collectivized and bureaucratized society (Flink 1975, p. 161). It provided the twentieth century with the great romantic nineteenth century dream of personal independence (Silk 1984, p. 13). Together with other mass-produced objects such as refrigerators, cameras, radios, etc., cars began to represent "a world of the new…that industry and science were sensed as ushering in," thereby becoming a sign of modernity itself. More so than any other technological invention, the car has transformed human life by shaping cities, the landscape and the way it is perceived, the environment, architecture and our lifestyles (Silk 1984, p. 13). In his article, *Vehicles for Myth: The Shifting Image of the Modern Car*, Andrew Wernick asserts that cars altered

> the whole ecology of life, both at the individual level (affecting private and occupational mobility, indeed our whole sense of time and space) and socially (creating massive dependent industries, road systems and transformed cities). Promoting cars as symbols of Modernity, Technology, and Progress, then, has never been entirely arbitrary. For cars really became, for better or worse, a powerful element in that civilizational change to which these mythicized terms ultimately refer. (Wernick 1989, pp. 203-204)

Conceivably one of the most resonating witness accounts of such 'civilizational changes' was written by American historian Henry Adams in *The Education of Henry Adams*. At the turn of the twentieth century, Adams, an old man at the time, found himself frequenting the Great Exposition in an

attempt to make sense of the technological forces and innovations in front of him. His attention gravitated toward the dynamo, which he began to see as a symbol of infinity. He writes that within

> the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross…The planet itself seemed less impressive, in its old-fashioned, deliberate, annual or daily revolution, than this huge wheel… Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force. Among the thousand symbols of ultimate energy the dynamo was not so human as some, but it was the most expressive. (Cited in Dettelbach 1976, p. 10; American Studies at University of Virginia 1996)

Adams' revelation succinctly expresses the profound impact that the automobile has had on the world since its birth more than a century ago. A 1904 Richard-Brasier automotive advert also portrays a classical image of Aurora, goddess of Dawn, guiding the way for Apollo's sun-carrying chariot, depicted in the ad as the car. This imagery represents the car as a modern-day chariot of Apollo that ushers in technological power, energy, and light to the world (Silk 1983, p. 206). Gerald Silk considers the correlation of the automobile with a classical figure or artifact to be indicative of the twentieth-century development of the 'myth of the machine' (Silk 1983, p. 207). Myths are typically created to explicate intricate and often consciously incomprehensible phenomena. Hence, Silk believes that it is to be expected that a mythology would arise "around a class of objects felt to possess nearly supernatural powers, objects which were both altering the environment and changing man's perception of the world" (Silk 1983, p. 207; Silk 1984, p. 35).

Today, automobiles are at the center of our daily lives as well as our fantasies, as we practice what Lewis Mumford termed "the religion of the motorcar, [which] stands outside the realm of rational criticism" (Mumford 1964, p. 176). What sets the car apart from other man-made consumer objects is that it is deeply embedded into our unconscious (Silk 1984, p. 13). As noted by Stephen Bayley in *Sex, Drink, and Fast Cars*, "the allure of cars is indestructible," since their splendor and power "evidently touches a universally sensitive part of the human soul" (Bayley 1986, p. 7). In her book, *In the Driver's Seat*, Cynthia Dettelbach notes that, simply put, automobiles are America's newest gods (Dettelbach 1976, p. 11). Though this statement may seem baffling or embellished at first, it accurately encompasses the role that the automobile plays in contemporary society. In our time, the car is fetishized as an object of worship not a great deal different from the religious artifacts of ages past. It is adulated through rituals, personified, anthropomorphized and perceived as an intricate totem capable of great magic.

Automotive Rituals

Anthropologist Andre Greeley connects American "automania" to mythico-religious thinking by describing the highly ritualized religious performances of annual automobile shows. He notes the resemblance that the worshiping attendees who flock to the show, the colors, light and music and the temple priestesses (fashion models) bear to a liturgical service (Dettelbach 1976, p. 99). According to him:

> The cult of the sacred car has its adepts and its initiati. No gnostic more eagerly awaited a revelation from an oracle than does an automobile worshipper await the first rumors about the new models. It is at this time of the annual seasonal cycle that the high priests of the cult—the auto dealers—take on a new importance as an anxious public eagerly expects the coming of a new form of salvation. (Cited in Dettelbach 1976, p. 99; Belk 2004, p. 275)

Wernick also discusses the ritualization of the car, which he locates in the spectator sport of car racing, "a powerful ritual of male competitive prowess," that has inspired all the modern muscle-car models (Wernick 1989, p. 204). In addition to annual car shows and racing tracks, even the average car owner has a ritualized routine which includes habitually washing the car, polishing it and using it for the family's Sunday outing (Dettelbach 1976, p. 99). When these everyday acts are performed with appropriate admiration, they can be interpreted as a baptismal ritual (Belk 2004, p. 275).

Automotive Fetishes

Objects that are highly ritualized are often fetishized as well. Fetishism is a cultural practice of attributing supernatural powers or inherent value to an inanimate, or particularly a man-made object. Varying forms of fetishism have existed in all historical periods. Based on the miraculous status ascribed to technology today, it is no surprise that the car is revered as a magical object and wrapped in religious illusions. Bayley notices that the car was "the ultimate talisman" of the nineteenth and early twentieth century (Bayley 1986, p. 45). Today, safety buzzwords such as airbags, rear seat belts, roll cages, central locking and crumple zones, which are repeatedly used in car commercials, thrive as semantic talismans to ward off the evil eye (Brottman 2004, p. 48). Manufacturers present the car as a four-wheeled womb, while marketers tap into memories of infantile cosseting, reinforcing the subconscious desire for the childlike state free from responsibility while under vigorous protection. The car is incessantly presented as a second home, where the driver and passenger-inhabitants are sheltered from all evil (Brottman 2004, p. 50).

A fascinating description of the fetishization of the automobile can be found in Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*. He writes:

> I think that cars today are almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object. It is obvious that the new Citroën has fallen from the sky inasmuch as it appears at first sight as a superlative object ... We must not forget that an object is the best messenger of a world above that of nature: one can easily see in an object at once a perfection and an absence of origin, a closure and a brilliance, a transformation of life into matter (matter is much more magical than life), and in a word a silence which belongs to the realm of fairy-tales. (Barthes 1972, p. 88)

Barthes' essay was inspired by the exhibit of the new Citroën DS 19 at the Paris Motor Show of 1955. The car's moniker, DS, represents the factory code name, *'Voiture de Grande Diffusion*,' however, due to a phonetic slip when spoken in French, the car became known as *De'esse,* or Goddess (Bayley 1986, pp. 71-72). This title was exceptionally fitting for the car, which was mounted on a pylon during the show for fear that "the vulgar necessity of road wheels" may draw attention away from the beauty of its silhouette or negate its status as a ferociously stunning sculpture (Bayley 1986, pp. 71-72). Not surprisingly, the designer and stylist of the DS, Flaminio Bertoni, was a sculptor before becoming an industrial designer. Bertoni also worked closely with engineer André Lefèvre, who had a background in the airplane industry and thus strove for the DS to appear aerodynamic (Citroen 2009). Due to the influences of these two men, Deese's perfectly aerodynamic teardrop shape is beyond doubt a work of modern art. After all, more than 50 years later, the car is still being hailed as one of the greatest design triumphs of the last century (Schofield 2005). As Barthes appropriately notes, the striking Deese is "humanized art" that "marks a change in the mythology of cars" (Barthes 1972, p. 89).

The 'Goddess' nickname also affirmed Barthes' inference about the role of imagery in modern life (Bayley 1986, p. 71). As part of its introduction to the public, the car appeared on the cover of *Paris Match* magazine with actress Gina Lollobrigida behind its futuristic single spoke steering wheel (Bayley 1986, p. 72). True to its status as an object of cult following, the Citroën DS itself featured in countless films and musical clips (AutoHistory Expert 2006). One such appearance is in the popular French comedy *Fantômas se déchaîne* (*Fantomas Strikes Back*), staring famous comedian Louis de Funès. In this film, the villain, Fantomas, escapes via a stylish white Citroën DS equipped with retractable wings and rockets that transform it into an airplane with a push of a button. This may be a literal interpretation of Lefèvre's aerodynamics or Barthes' observation that the Citroën arrow emblem has sprung wings, "as if

one was proceeding from the category of propulsion to that of spontaneous motion, from that of the engine to that of the organism" (Barthes 1972, p. 89). No wonder Mario Morasso, Italian nationalist thinker and writer, terms the car "a vehement God of a race of steel," likening it to a modern manifestation of Pegasus. To him, the car possesses mechanical supremacy similar to that of the supernatural powers of the mythological winged horse (Silk 1984, p. 67).

Fascinatingly, the Citroën DS never lost its appeal and is as revered today as ever; a fact attested by a 2005 parade celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of its launch. During the parade, hundreds of restored or well preserved DS cars from around Europe drove in procession around the Arc de Triomphe in central Paris (Schofield 2005). Furthermore, in an effort to capitalize on its long-lasting popularity, Citroën re-launched new DS3 and DS4 models in 2010.

Expanding upon Barthes' observations, Bayley argues that cars embody all the skills and anxieties of our age. According to him, car designers today utilize "symbolic sculpture and mysterious harmonic proportions to encode the beliefs of [our] civilization" just as medieval cathedrals did in theirs. Worship has simply moved from the cathedral of the Middle Ages to the contemporary car park (Bayley 1986, p. 71). In *The Mechanical Bride*, McLuhan also offers a clue pertaining to the "religious intensity of modern technology and business" (McLuhan 1951, p. 33). After all, it was the monks who created the methods of abstract finance and provided a wondrous illustration of systematic time economy with the clockwork order of their communal lives (McLuhan 1951, p. 33). McLuhan insists that:

> it is scarcely fantastic to say that a great modern business is a secular adaptation of some of the most striking features of medieval scholastic culture… The object of this systematic process is now production and finance rather than God. And evangelical zeal is now centered in the department of sales and distribution rather than in preaching…Instead of an intelligible map of man and creation, modern technology offers immediate comfort and profit. But it is still paradoxically permeated with a medieval spirit of religious intensity and moral duty, which causes much conflict of mind and confusion of purpose in producers and consumers alike. (McLuhan 1951, pp. 33-34)

Previously, time keeping was a way to bring one closer to God, but as a result of the industrial revolution spirituality was separated from the clock and applied to the factory. However, the "medieval spirit of religious intensity and moral duty" (ibid), and with it the perfection of ordered life, has also been applied to the product of the factory, the consumer good. In the passage above, Barthes addresses such perfection of the object. He also observes that "smoothness is always an attribute of perfection because its opposite reveals a technical and typical human operation of assembling" (Barthes 1972, p.

88). Christ's robe was seamless, and science-fiction rocket ships are made of unbroken metal; hence, by replicating such smoothness modern consumer objects attain perfection (ibid).

Barry Richards argues that, in psycho-analytical terms, it is a phantasy of perfection that "can be projected onto all sorts of things," rather than a love of one's body or oneself. He sees the car as an incarnation of a narcissistic phantasy, which is precisely when it is venerated for its magical properties. By overestimating the car's power and sensuous characteristics, and identifying with it, the driver will feel omnipotent. This technophilic state of mind is most prominently and succinctly expressed in car advertisements with "their invitations to omnipotence and transcendence" (Richards 1994, p. 72).

Daringly, Julian Darius puts forth a conceivably even more interesting proposition of the car as a mythological equivalent to the cross itself. He argues that despite existing in different times and cultures, "the cross and the car, as well as the crucifixion and the car crash, have analogous mythological significance" (Darius 2002, p. 305). This is possible because cultures have long memories and are able to transfer older patterns on to new occurrences. Thus, for Darius, "God may be dead, but the geography of his corpse continues to define us" (Darius 2002, p. 305).

The cross gained its mythological significance when "Christianity transformed a common instrument of public death into a totem of worship and popular fixation," dumbfounding Romans as to "this cult's strange obsession with a torture implement" (Darius 2002, p. 305). The conventional execution of Christ, who at the time was just one of the countless messiahs roaming the land, was entirely mundane. Nevertheless, this spectacular and yet commonplace crucifixion perfectly articulated Christ's dual nature – both purely human and purely divine – pronouncing both human death and divine myth (Darius 2002, p. 305). The fetishization of Christ's body occurred in the late Middle Ages with the depictions of "Christ as a hunk" and in the Cult of the Wounds (Darius 2002, p. 306). The cross became the central symbol of the Middle Ages just as the car acts as totem for the twentieth, and possibly twenty-first-century Western civilization. According to Darius, this is a logical progression. Military imperialism was substituted by cultural imperialism and thus physical torture was replaced with transportation, whether of data, materials or humans, as a means of hegemonic control (Darius 2002, p. 306).

As a phallic symbol publicly exhibited – an exotic version of the age's everyday instrument – only the car provides suitable supplement to the cross (Darius 2002, p. 307). While both are phallic symbols, the car and the cross vary only in composition. The cross, a simple instrument of wood, signifies the

earthy phallus of agrarian society and of Dionysus – the mythological inspiration to Christ. Meanwhile, the car is the synthetic, yet sleek and powerful phallus of Hollywood, "closer to a stylish vibrator than a human penis," which is perfectly fitting to the current age of simulacra (Darius 2002, p. 307). Imaginably, it is also the phallus of scientifically propelled Apollonian society.

Whilst the car serves as cross, the car crash presents the (post)industrial equivalent of the crucifixion. Nevertheless, it is only celebrity automotive accidents that truly embody the dual nature of the crucifixion as a concurrently mundane and spectacular end to a life that was both human and divine (Darius 2002, p. 308). In our age, celebrities are icons of worship, whose likeness graces glossy images of posters and plastic effigies of toy store aisles (Darius 2002, p. 308). The adulation provided by television, tabloid magazines and fanatic fans is yet another contributor to the divine status of celebrities and the accompanying intense religious ecstasy. Disquietingly, a celebrity's godliness is most visibly affirmed by a crucifixion via car crash. This phenomenon is best illustrated by James Dean, whose 1955 death in his Porsche 550 Spyder, named Little Bastard, solidified his cult status. Celebrity accidents such as this are often followed by a trade in relics that are connected to the death and believed to posses supernatural powers in a manner similar to medieval relic cults (Darius 2002, p. 310).

After the crash, Little Bastard became a legend in its own right, as it was said to be cursed or haunted. According to one version of the tale, the wreckage of Dean's 'death car' was bought by a famous car customizer, George Barris, with the intention of selling its valuable parts. When on its way to Barris, the wreckage slipped off the, truck breaking a mechanic's leg (Darius 2002, p. 310). Subsequently, many of those purchasing the parts met a dire fate: one Beverly Hills physician who obtained the engine died using it, while another doctor was seriously wounded while using Little Bastard's drive train; a man who purchased the unharmed tires died when they both exploded at the same time; and even thieves attempting to steal parts of the car were injured by it (Bayley 1986, p. 56; Darius 2002, p. 310). Those who simply came in contact with the car also fared disastrously when the wreckage was toured by the Greater Los Angeles Safety Council as a part of a safety exhibit. The garage where Little Bastard was stored went up in flames, destroying everything except the car itself, which suffered almost no damage. During the safety show in Sacramento, the car fell off the display and broke the hip of a teenage spectator. After causing more problems during its transport, Little Bastard broke into its component parts in the late 1950s (Bayley 1986, p. 56; Darius 2002, p. 310). Most pieces of Dean's car, like those of Christ's true cross, are now lost to history, though some parts are still rumored to be either in the possession of fans, museums or car collectors (Darius 2002, p. 310).

Mechanical Bride: Sex, Death and Technology

Celebrity car crashes, from James Dean to Princess Diana, are iconic ritual sacrifices – archetypal means of celebrity death – exercises in "hermetic synchronicity or harbinger[s] of a new age" (Brottman 2004, pp. xv-xxv). Conceivably, our age's enthrallment with car crashes, particularly those including celebrities, signifies a superimposition onto the crucifixion in the cultural consciousness, or an attempt to replace the absent crucifixion and fill that Nietzchean void (Darius 2002, p. 317). Lewis Mumford believes that "The [American] car has been the result of a secret collaboration between the beautician and the mortician; and, according to sales and accident statistics, both have reason to be satisfied" (Brottman 2004, p. xxxii).

Mumford's observation emphasizes an intriguing erotic link between violent death and sex. This link may explain why after James Dean's crash, and partly as a result of it, Porsche became the most infamous and sought-after sport car (Bayley 1986, p. 55). Bayley points out that the fascinating link between speed and sex may originate from the fact that during acceleration, as one's blood pools in the legs less is delivered to the heart, causing a euphoric feeling of being high (Bayley 1986, p. 32). Wernick offers another explanation, stating that the race car, and all road models derived from it, represent the ideal symbol of "masculinist technology values" – "a male identified machine, shaped like a bullet, and experienced from within as an exhilarating rush towards orgasm, death, and the future" (Wernick 1989, p. 204). In his novel *Crash*, J.G. Ballard appropriately asks "do we see in the car crash, a sinister portent of a nightmare marriage between sex and technology?" (Cited in Bayley 1986, p. 26).

McLuhan suggests that it is "a metaphysical hunger to experience everything sexually, to pluck out the heart of the mystery for a super-thrill" that draws people to the "death shows of the speedways and fills the press and magazines with close-ups of executions, suicides and smashed bodies" (McLuhan 1951, p. 101). It is a kind of ghoulishness, an unearthly hunger, perpetuating a search for some uncertain and unattainable satisfaction (McLuhan 1951, p. 101). "Sensation and sadism are near twins" as even for "the satiated, both sex and speed are boring until an element of danger and even death is introduced" (McLuhan 1951, p. 100). Whatever the reason behind it, the equation of sex and speed "clearly suggests that the idea of mechanical intercourse….lies only a little beneath the surface of people who are fascinated by fast cars" (Bayley 1986, p. 34). It is this fusion of sex, technology and death that lies at the heart of McLuhan's mysterious *Mechanical Bride* (McLuhan 1951, p. 101).

The strange relationship between sex, death and technology may also submit to movement from pantheistic to monotheistic to secular society. For example, under pantheistic understanding the car might be an extension of the body and the car crash may be seen as unavoidable, an act of God or a force of nature, just as a natural disaster. In the monotheistic phase, the car is a fetishized symbol similar to that of the cross, and the crash is the crucifixion, a ritual sacrifice. Meanwhile, in the secular phase, the car is a consumer product of industrial society, and the car crash is the manifestation of the unconscious death drive. In his essay on J.G. Ballard's *Crash*, Baudrillard describes the accident as "the residual bricolage of the death drive for the new leisure classes," a figure of "the banality of the anomaly of death" (Baudrillard 1994, p. 113).

Let us once again turn to Barthes' analogy of cars as the Gothic cathedrals of our time. As a cathedral is not merely a shelter from the weather for the faithful, so a car is much more than just a means of transportation. They are both the "material representations of a culture," towards which the energies of an epoch are directed, "whether that be the love of God or the love of speed" (Sachs 1992, p. 91). It is this love of speed that defines our society's adoration of the automobile and underlines the relationship between death, sex and technology in a secular culture. Aldous Huxley observed that speed is the only utterly new sensation of the twentieth century. Trains made speed a democratic experience, while jet travel simply removed the sensation. Hence, only the automobile is responsible for making speed personal (Bayley 1986, p. 30). The importance of this occurrence is described by Italian Futurist Leader Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's hymn to speed in *The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism*:

> We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath – a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace. We want to hymn the man at the wheel, who hurls the lance of his spirit across the Earth, along the circle of its orbit. (cited in Zurbrugg 1998, p. 29)

Speed, as Baudrillard explains, is at once "transcendent and intimate" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 68). It demands mastery of space "qua abstract sign of the real world," which in turn requires narcissistic projection. Driving cultivates an erotic relationship by incorporating a dual narcissistic projection onto the car, a single phallic object, or onto speed, a single objectified phallic function (Baudrillard 1996, p. 68). Hence, while the car serves its driver, in return he or she must accept a certain destiny, such as, the death in a road accident as ritually depicted by Hollywood (Baudrillard 1996, p. 123). Baudrillard describes the car accident, which is always understood to be inevitable, as a manifestation of the "intimacy with oneself, that formal liberty, which is never so beautiful as in death" (Baudrillard 1996, p.

67). Of course, in the secular world, this death is an end in itself and not a passage to an idealized afterlife.

According to Baudrillard, the deep-rooted phantasy of speed is arrested to the level of pure sign (i.e. tail fins) where “unconscious desire is forever chewing over an arrested discourse.” Once it is seized in this manner it stops being a result of an active process, but, “of pleasure taken in speed-in-effigy” (Baudrillard 1996, p. 60). Thus, the eroticism of the car does not result from an active sexual attitude, but from a “passive eroticism of narcissistic seduction in both partners, or of a shared narcissistic communion in the same object.” Here the erotic connotation of the car acts in a similar manner to that of the image, real or mental, in masturbation (Baudrillard 1996, p. 68).

This connection between a car crash and sex is succinctly expressed in an instance of Futurist poetry by Mario de Leone titled *Fornication of Automobiles*, which anthropomorphizes the car and likens a car crash to the act of copulation:

tra...ta...ra...ta...mbu
Involuntary collision,
furious fornication
of two automobiles—energy,
embrace of two warriors
bold of movement
syncopation of two "heart-motors."
spilling of "blood-gas."
Stopping of the coming and going
stagnation immobile of curiosity.
moaning. Moaning of the wounded.
Coagulation of business.
Cumbersome remainder
of the two dead machines,
rapidly swept
from a heat of hands,
sweeping of the enormous misshapen skeletons (cited in Silk 1984, p. 68).

One of the deepest and most disturbing explorations into the eroticism of the car crash can be found in J.G. Ballard’s Crash, where he notes that “the crash between … two cars was a model of some ultimate and yet undreamt sexual union” (Ballard 1973, p. 29). The wounds inflicted by these accidents are “keys to a new sexuality born from a perverse technology” (Ballard 1973, p. 13). William Burroughs notes that Ballard explores the “nonsexual roots of sexuality with a surgeon’s precision” (Zurbrugg 1998,

p. 17; Ballardian 2010) and uncovers that the car crash can be "more sexually stimulating than a pornographic picture" (Zurbrugg 1998, p. 17; Ballardian 2010). This symbolic union between death, sex and technology, together with the fetishization of the car and the rituals that surround it, indicate a presence of a well-developed mythology of the automobile that bubbles to the surface in popular literature and advertising alike. The following sections examine the role of the car as an anthropomorphized and totemic deity at the core of this mythology.

Automotive Anthropomorphism

The notion of the car as a 'mechanical bride,' which materializes from the sex, death and technology relationship, is not so extraordinary when one considers that drivers name, anthropomorphize, ritualize and exalt their cars in an effort to possess and understand them. It is not startling that drivers construct "myths and 'momentary gods' out of the machines that affect them most personally" (Dettelbach 1976, p. 91). Indeed, humans appear to demonstrate a universal perceptual strategy that results in animism and anthropomorphism. Animism is the ascription of life to the nonliving and inanimate, whereas anthropomorphism is the perception and understanding of non-human beings and things in human terms (Winshanger et al 2008).

Animism is most easily recognized in the practice of tool-worship. Ernst Cassirer wrote that, in pre-industrial societies, tools such as axes and hammers were objects of special veneration and religious significance:

> as soon as man employs a tool, he views it not as a mere artifact of which he is the recognized maker, but a Being in its own right, endowed with powers of its own. Instead of being governed by his will, it becomes a god or daemon on whose will he depends – to which he feels subjected, and which he adores with the rites of a religious cult. (Cassirer 1953, p. 59)

According to Dettelbach this mind-set survives in contemporary society, as the Western attitude toward the automobile vividly exemplifies twentieth-century, and perhaps even twenty-first century, tool worship (Dettelbach 1976, p. 99).

Contemporary drivers have a habit of naming their cars, just as ancient warriors did with their most spectacular weapons. A recent survey by British auto insurer, Swinton, found that as many as eight out of ten drivers name their cars. While women are more likely than men to give their car a pet name, both genders tend to refer to their car according to the opposite sex (ArticlesBase 2009). Another study, performed by Canada's Bellevue University found very similar results in North American drivers (Car

Insurance List 2009). Automotive pet names compel car owners to feel closer to their cars and to "make those vehicles a more integral part of the world they live in or dream about" (Dettelbach 1976, p. 92).

A great example of this phenomenon is the once very popular Ford T-Model, produced from 1908 through 1927. This car received a fair share of folksy nicknames: Flivver, Henry, Henrietta, tin can, can opener, sardine box, sputter bus, road louse, perpetual pest and Tin Lizzie were among the most popular. The most intriguing of these monikers is "Tin Lizzie." "Liz" or "Lizzie" was a colloquialism for a typical maid employed by many families at the time. These maids worked hard during the week and proudly attended church on Sundays. Living up to her name, the Model T also aided the family in hard work during the week, but on Sunday she was gussied up to take her family to church (Dettelbach 1976, p. 92). In the heyday of the Model T, people may have thought of cars as tools, maids or servants, but, as cars further permeated into everyday life, that relationship grew into a more familiar role of companion or even lover. It is in such close relations that anthropomorphism of the automobile is most clearly observable. Car owners form emotional attachments with their cars because they, although perhaps mainly unconsciously, perceive them as living organisms possessing human features or characteristics.

The notion of cars possessing identifiable human-like faces is not at all novel. It has been proposed by researchers (e.g. Coss 2003; Erk et al. 2002), scientific textbooks (Enlow and Hans 1996) and product designers (Kerssenbrock Hum Nat 2008; 19:331-346 2005). A recent study performed by researchers from University of Vienna found that car fronts do indeed contain certain cues from which characteristics such as maturity, gender, attitudes, emotions and personality can be deduced (Winshanger et al 2008). In addition to specifying such characteristics, the study participants also agreed on the degree of "faciness," thus demonstrating that humans are predisposed to seeing faces in cars. Furthermore, the study discovered that the most preferred cars were the ones that appeared dominant, masculine and angry (Winshanger et al. 2008). According to Andrew Wernick, such animism displayed by automobiles coming to life in the guise of a machine is not "merely a matter of consumer transference." Instead, it is formed by promotion and design during which "the engine radiator, mounted at the front, was given a grille (mouth)…two separated headlights (eyes) were added, and a pointed hood (nose) – compensating, presumably for the vanished face of the horse" (Wernick 1989, p. 207).

Popular culture is bursting with examples of anthropomorphized cars, Hollywood's greatest stars (Silk 1984, p. 13). American audiences paid close attention to everything from a sixties sitcom, "My Mother, The Car" to the antics of Herbie, the Volkswagen Beetle, as depicted in six Walt Disney movies (Dettelbach 1976, p. 92). Most recent and popular anthropomorphic vehicles star in the 2006

Disney/Pixar animated movie, *Cars*. This animated film has an entirely non-human cast, although many of the characters are directly based on real people that the Pixar crew met on their travels along Historic Route 66, also known as 'The Mother Road' (Route66News 2006). The heroic main character of the movie is a race car named Lightning McQueen. Pixar chose a racecar as the main character because "racecars represent the ultimate symbol of our passion for speed, power and uncompromising individuality" (Pixar 2010). *Cars* is a depiction of the anthropomorphism of automobiles and our culture's love for them. This love is also clearly depicted by the success of the movie's merchandise, which sold $600 million USD just in the first two weeks after the film's release (Marsal 2008). In 2008, the *Cars* franchise was projected to generate $2.5 billion in global sales (Fields 2008). The popularity of the movie continues to grow as a new spin off cartoon series titled *Monster Truck Mater* premiered on the Disney Channel on July 30th, 2010 and the sequel *Cars 2* is planned for June 2011 (BBC 2010). In a time when the popularity of automotive transportation is dropping due to environmental concerns, fuel prices, and the economic crisis, the *Cars* franchise successfully introduces and initiates a new generation of young consumers to automotive culture.

It would be a mistake to assume that it is only Western or industrialized societies that forge such a close relationship with the automobile. In her article, *The Life and Death of Cars: Private cars on the Pitjantjatjara Lands, South Australia*, anthropologist Diana Young argues that the Anangu people use cars as social bodies. For them, the car is an extension of the body, as drivers must recreate the intricate choreography of special etiquette of a person on foot (Miller 2001, p. 35). As anthropomorphized objects, cars in Anangu culture operate as windbreakers, light and music creators, ceremonial props, and when at the end of their lifespan they modify the topography as spatial markers (Miller 2001, p. 35).

The anthropomorphosis of the car has reached such levels that it behaves as a person in its own right, often eliciting the same emotional response and attachment from its owners that previously could only be afforded by a human relationship (Dettelbach 1976, p. 95; Belk 2004, p. 274). This has been particularly true of the bond between a man and his car, which can be described as a love affair – "encompassing all the erotic and emotional complexity the metaphor conveys" (Scharff 1991, p. 166). According to Dettlebach, in certain 'primitive' societies, the concept of ownership grew out of man's ownership of the woman. Although in contemporary Western societies ownership excludes that of humans, primitive thinking endures in the contemplation of mechanical possession as female. Boats, airplanes, and obviously, cars often take on the female gender (Dettelbach 1976, p. 97). Baudrillard also notes that in order to be bought, objects become feminized. For him, this is a function of the cultural

system that is propagated by advertising, which has made the woman-object a lucrative persuasive device and social myth (Baudrillard 1996, p. 69). Writing at the end of the 1950s, famous American novelist, journalist and screenwriter, Norman Mailer, observed that a car is not purchased in order to help one get a girl, but "because it is already a girl. The leather of its seats is worked to a near-skin, the colour is lipstick-pink, or a blonde's pale green, the taillights are cloacal, the rear is split like the cheeks of a drum majorette" (Atwan et al. 1979, p. 332).

Another cultural reference to the eroticized automobile is Chuck Berry's song, *Maybelline*, in which the singer is driving in his V8 Ford when he spots his beloved Maybelline in a Cadillac Coup de Ville with another man (Heining 1998, p. 97). He chases after the Cadillac and overtakes it on top of the hill, leaving it "sittin' like a ton of lead" (Heining 1998, p. 97). *Maybelline* addresses "an ideology of sexual jealousy, of pursuit and capture" (Cubitt 1984, p. 220). Nevertheless, its greatest contribution is the eroticization of the automobile, which is not simply concerned with a car-sex signification, but rather with the depiction of how men characterize their own sexuality and how they endeavor to comprehend female sexuality (Cubitt 1984, p. 220; Heining 1998, p. 97). This song focuses on a depiction of power in sexuality that "reproduces the subject in a patriarchal ideology of masculinity" (Cubitt 1984, p. 220).

For many male car owners, the car even takes on a role of a mistress. Lewis Mumford equates many drivers' choice to forgo their life for the motorcar to someone who "wrecks his home in order to lavish his income on a capricious mistress who promises delights he can only occasionally enjoy" (Mumford 1964, p. 177). These men steal away from their spouses and families to spend quality time alone washing, polishing and admiring their cars (Belk 2004, p. 247). Steven King's novel, *Christine*, and its adaptation on the silver screen by John Carpenter also demonstrate this phenomenon succinctly. The main character, a teenage boy named Arnie, purchases his first car, named Christine. Alas, Christine has a mind of her own due to an uncertain form of supernatural possession and uses her bizarre powers to murder all those who offend her or Arnie. While oblivious to her murderous tendencies, Arnie is so romantically enthralled with Christine that he forgoes his human relationships, particularly the one with his attractive girlfriend, Leigh. In a jealous rage resulted from Arnie spending more time with Christine, Leigh screams: "cars are girls. Didn't you know that?" (Carpenter 1983). Leigh's protests fell on deaf ears as Arne and Christine "were welded together in a disturbing parody of the act of love" (King 1983).

In his appropriately titled book, *The Mechanical Bride*, Marshall McLuhan notes that the common outlook of the "body as living machine is now correlative with cars as vibrant and attractive organisms" (McLuhan 1951, p. 84). McLuhan discovered that many of the glamour and beauty adverts

directed towards women "insist on their relation to the machine" (McLuhan 1951, p. 94). Hence, modern women began to utilize their body parts "as power points" and "display objects like the grill work of a car" (McLuhan 1951, p. 98). Likewise, automotive advertisements, such as the *Bodies by Fisher* campaign asserted an intimate connection between "motorcar glamour" and sex (McLuhan 1951, p. 84). This "interfusion of sex and technology" is not an invention of the ad men, but instead a construction of our society's "hungry curiosity to explore and enlarge the domain of sex by mechanical technique, on one hand, and, on the other, to *possess* machines in a sexually gratifying way" (McLuhan 1951, p. 94).

If owning a car is "a disturbing parody of the act of love," as King wrote, than gazing at one is a prologue to desire (Bayley 1986, p. 101). In his essay on the Citroën DS, Barthes describes this sensuous physical relationship between an object and human touch, which poignantly suggests the possibility of copulation with the machine:

> In the exhibition halls, the car on show is explored with an intense, amorous studiousness: it is the great tactile phase of discovery, the moment when visual wonder is about to receive the reasoned assault of touch (for touch is the most demystifying of all senses, unlike sight, which is the most magical). The bodywork, the lines of union are touched, the upholstery palpated, the seats tried, the doors caressed, the cushions fondled; before the wheel, one pretends to drive with one's whole body. The object here is totally prostituted, appropriated: originating from the heaven of Metropolis, the Goddess is in a quarter of an hour mediatized, actualizing through this exorcism the very essence of petit-bourgeois advancement. (Barthes 1972, p. 90)

Bayley maintains that with a Porsche, for instance, one's senses are stimulated by the car's appearance, which is similar to "the winning look which weapons have"– functional, firm, rather aggressive, but softened by "sensitive details and the odd feminine radius" (Bayley 1986, p. 42). This paradoxical duality of the automobile as a conventionally accepted womb symbol and as a phallic power symbol is repeatedly reinforced in car ads (McLuhan 1951, p. 84). In addition to advertising their cars as sex objects, automakers also consciously or subconsciously designed dreams of sex into their vehicles. Long and lowered cars with an elongated, sleek radiator/hood ornament were perceived as male phallic symbols. Meanwhile, buxom headlamps, bumper guards and radiators grilles, most notably that of the 1958 Ford Edsel, were interpreted as female sexual symbols (Lewis 1983, p. 127). As a male body, the car punches its way through traffic, while as a female body, it is filled with grace (Richards 1994, p. 69). Andrew Wernick calls the automobile's gender ambiguity its most striking symbolic feature:

> In the first instance, and from the side of the male driver, it has been projected as Woman: whether a flashy possession, boy-toy (as in E. E. Cumming's car-as-virgin poem "XIX"), or wife. But in this (variously nuanced) scene of the male-led couple the car has also figured as rocket, bullet, or gun, i.e. as a sexual

> extension of the male; while for both sexes, as an enclosed place in which to escape, it has at the same time played the part of a womb… If promotion and use have tied it, like Adam's rib, to the cosmos of phallic technology, they have also given it the character of an androgyne. (Wernick 1989, p. 207)

Baudrillard explains the car's dual gender in terms of its transformation within fantasy. The car takes on various meanings depending on its features and the way it is used, becoming either a source of power or a place of refuge, a projectile or a dwelling-place (Richards 1994, p. 71; Baudrillard 1996, p. 69). For instance, anthropologist Margaret Mead claims that women are adamant about driving their own cars because of their desire for an instrument of power – similarly to the envy of the male organ, which is not a deep psychic wound in United States as it is in Europe (McLuhan 1951, p. 84). Furthermore, in fantasies and unconscious projections, an object can become invested with various, even conflicting meanings simultaneously, allowing the car to have both sexes, and none. As many advertisements demonstrate, in fantasy the car may be, at the deepest levels of meaning: the sexual instrument, object and act all at once (Richards delight, p. 69). Nevertheless, Baudrillard insists that, on a basic level, the car is a phallic and narcissistic projection. Akin to all functional mechanical objects, it is experienced by everyone as a phallus, "as an object of manipulation, care, and fascination" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 69). Meanwhile, McLuhan deems that the unconscious amalgamation of the desires for comfort and power into countless popular objects "testifies at once to their prevalence and to the character of the collective trance which prevents the recognition of the tensions" (McLuhan 1951, p. 84).

Dettelbach believes that the phenomenon of regarding the car as a surrogate human being is just a small step away from treating it as a surrogate god (Dettelbach 1976, p. 98). Arguably, we have already taken this step. Once again Henry Adams springs to mind. Adams contemplates how the woman was once supreme, not as a sentiment, but as a force. He reflects that neither "Diana of the Ephesians nor any of the Oriental goddesses was worshipped for her beauty," but instead for her fecund force, as "she was the animated dynamo" (American Studies at University of Virginia 1996). While nostalgically longing for the Virgin of Chartres, Adams unexpectedly discovered her in the huge electric dynamo, which he declared to be the twentieth-century equivalent of the twelfth-century "cult of the Virgin" (McLuhan 1951, p. 96).

Such degrees of anthropomorphosis, or better yet 'mechanomorphism,' of the car elevate the integration process even further. Once endowed with animate qualities, the automobile is perceived as an extension of the ecological self or even as an autonomous surrogate (Dettelbach 1976, p. 92; Silk 1984, p. 66; Belk 2004, p. 273). Drivers often utter phrases like "he drove into me" instead of "he drove

into my car" (Brottman 2004, p. 15). For Baudrillard, this phenomenon illustrates a projective process that is concerned not with possessing, but with 'being' the object. It is the mechanical nature of the car that allows for this process, which could never occur with the horse. The horse, despite being a mechanism of "power and transcendence for man," is sexed and thus does not lend itself to the "symbolic appropriation" that occurs with the functions and 'organs' of the car (Baudrillard 1996, p. 101).

Design-wise, cars have been physically molded as "cyborg-like extension of their own drivers" (Wernick 1989, p. 207). Car owners treat their cars in a matter very similar to their own bodies, they feed it; manage its waste products; clean and bathe it and apply cosmetic pastes; even tend to it during breakdowns or ailments; and provide it with cosmetic surgery or car transplants to extend its life and ward off aging (Richards 1994, p. 71; Belk 2004, p. 273). Sculptor Claes Oldenburg envisions the man in his car as a breed of modern, mechanical centaur, "a mythical revitalization of that ancient race, half human, half wild animal, translated in terms of superman behind the wheel" (Dettelbach 1976, p. 109; Silk 1984, p. 66). BMW, for instance, is advertised as "the ultimate driving machine" – mortal limits of human bodies find ultimate transcendence in the inhuman power of the metal machine (Richards 1994, p. 70). American sociologist, Todd Gitlin, asserts that cars have taken on the role of: chariots, wheels, throne rooms, sedan chairs, tickets to the suburbs, homes away from home, couches of sexual initiation, and tickets out of the suburbs. Nevertheless, in all these roles the car "has been a kind of centaur: half conveyance, half fantasy" (Gitlin 1987, p. 140). On a more sinister note, in a middle of a massive automotive collision, professor of language and literature, Mikita Brottman, believes that "a human body has just been transformed into something special – a man-machine centaur, an obscure roadside saint" (Brottman 2004, p. xi).

Ironically, as the car becomes more organic, acquiring demands and perpetual needs, humans and their environment become ever more mechanized, robotic, inorganic and impotent (Dettelbach 1976, p. 113). McLuhan points out that, in pre-industrial societies, a great swordsman, animal-breeder or horseman frequently took on some of the qualities of his craft, thus in industrial society the "great crowds of people who spend their waking energies on using and improving machines with powers so very much greater than theirs" take on "the rigidity and thoughtless behaviorism of the machine" (McLuhan 1951, p. 99). Lewis Mumford also observed this phenomenon when he wrote that the humanization of the machine has mechanized our culture. As this humanization turns to eroticization, human sexual intercourse itself becomes mechanized. McLuhan even jokes that it is no surprise that

England, as the first country to develop industrial technique, was also the first to produce the *ideal* of the frigid woman (McLuhan 1951, p. 99). The troubling aspect of this is that the individuals who see sex as purely mechanical develop a metaphysical hunger that can only be satisfied in physical danger, torture, suicide and murder (McLuhan 1951, p. 100).

Conceivably, in order to understand these forces we must be reminded that the dichotomy of organic versus mechanical is questionable. McLuhan reiterates the argument of mathematician, professor and architect of mechanical brains, Norbert Wiener, who asserts that "since all organic characteristics can now be mechanically produced, the old rivalry between mechanism and vitalism is finished" (McLuhan 1951, p. 98). After all, to the Greeks 'organism' meant 'instrument' or 'tool' and 'organic' referred to 'machine' (McLuhan 1951, p. 98). If at some previous time myth distinguished between human versus god, and at another between human versus nature, than now it also differentiates between human versus mechanical. In our day, the boundaries between these dichotomies are as blurred as in the days of demigods and possession by animal spirits.

In his book, *Autokind vs Mankind*, anthropologist Kenneth Schneider implies that humans have transferred their "mammalian inheritance" to cars while themselves becoming a new species of being – "a society of invertebrates as clumsy as a convention of turtles" (Schneider 1971, p. 71). According to him, cars have taken over our lives and environment to such an extent that one can consider them "the greatest self-generating, self-sustaining development since the living cell first appeared on earth" (Schneider 1971, p. 265). As a result, factories, new car dealers, used-car lots, gas stations, garages and junkyards are "the urban spaces devoted to delivering newborn cars, feeding and nursing them, holding them for readoption, and burying them" (Cited in Dettelbach 1976, p. 113). In his novel *Erewhon*, Samuel Butler implies that machines increasingly resemble organisms not only in the way they digest fuel for energy, but also in their ability to evolve and perhaps even develop a consciousness with the aid of machine caretakers (McLuhan 1951, p. 99). This theme of "the horror of a synthetic robot running amok in revenge of its lack of a 'soul, '" pioneered by Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, has been utilized by countless stories (McLuhan 1951, p. 100). Most notably, it was taken up in Stephen King's *Christine* and Stephen Spielberg's 1971 film *Duel* in which riderless vehicles also set out "to destroy their human creators for giving them no soul" (Wernick 1989, p. 207).

An intriguing alteration to this theme can be found in the 2009 animated movie *9*. It recounts a story of a scientist who inadvertently creates an enormous robotic machine that, in light of its ability to reproduce by creating other machines, annihilates all mankind. In order to destroy the machine, the

scientist creates nine small mechanical humanoid homunculi, or stitchpunks, and endows each of them with pieces of his own soul. The concept of machines being supplied with human souls also gives a more literal interpretation to McLuhan's observation that as a result of the blind pursuit of science and technology and advanced mechanization, individuals will begin to lose their humanity, becoming "so mechanized that they feel a dim resentment at being deprived of full human status" (McLuhan 1951, p. 100).

As humanity maintains its blind and uncritical pursuit of science and technology in its quest for power and success, "the world of the machines begins to assume the threatening and unfriendly countenance of an inhuman wilderness even less manageable than that which once confronted prehistoric man" (McLuhan 1951, p. 34). It is at this time that fear and panic turn to a desire for protective collaboration – just as pre-historic men "got ritually and psychologically into animal skins, so we already have gone far to assume and to propagate the behavior mechanisms of the machines that frighten and overpower us" (McLuhan 1951, p. 34).

Automotive Totems

This phenomenon may also alert us to the totemic status of the car. Lewis Mumford maintains that the machine has become contemporary society's main source of magic – Western culture's totem animal: half god, half slave (Mumford 1952, p. 16). Dettelbach observes that Americans tend to cope with the motor car in a manner identical to the way that nature-worshiping societies dealt with the trepidations and mysteries of nature (Dettelbach 1976, p. 91). As Joseph Campbell describes in his book, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, the 'primitive' hunting people were faced with the dilemma of sharing the wilderness with animals such as the sabertooth tiger and the mammoth, which were a source of danger and sustenance. They resolved this dilemma with an unconscious identification that entered consciousness in the half-human, half-animal figure of the totem ancestors. Campbell asserts that "through acts of literal imitation ... an effective annihilation of the human ego was accomplished and society achieved a cohesive organization" (McLuhan 1951, p. 33).

McLuhan maintains that the same annihilation of the human ego is occurring today (McLuhan 1951, p. 33). The only difference is that instead of getting into "animal strait jackets" modern humans get into "mechanical strait jackets" (McLuhan 1951, p. 33). It is no stretch of the imagination to see the similarities between a primitive hunter who, because he deems the ferret very hard to kill sports a replica of that animal as a charm against demise, or a native wearing a wingbone of the vulture in order

to be ascribed its stamina and strength, from "the frustrated executive, who because he wishes to be swift, sleek, and virile is attracted to a three-hundred-horsepower Cougar, Wildcat, or Sting Ray" (Sullenberger 1974, pp. 59-60).

This may explain why cars so frequently take on equine names of Chargers, Mustangs, Pintos, and Colts; feline names of Wildcats, Cougars, Jaguars and Panteros; avian names of Falcons, Skylarks, Hawks, and Roadrunners; fish and reptile names of Cobras, Barracudas, Sting Rays, etc. (Sullenberger 1974, p. 59). Conceivably even in our mechanized world, people's fantasies are still filled with primordial images of animals, wild and tame, as close association with these creatures still maintains its mythical magnetism (Patai 1972, pp. 254-255). By purchasing an automobile that bears an animal's name, the person is able to identify themselves with that animal, despite their own lack of agility, speed, fierceness or strength. The mythical association of the car with a wild, swift, untamed and ferocious animal gratifies a veiled desire for control and power, which realistically are beyond the reach of an ordinary contemporary individual (Patai 1972, p. 254). Through sympathetic magic, the owner of a Mustang or Pinto can imagine riding a wild horse, unchained from the constraints of an urban life (Dettelbach 1976, p. 92). Nevertheless, as McLuhan cautions, people may feel safe and strong inside their mechanical strait jackets, and yet they can actually "exercise very little of [their] human character or dignity," as "technology is an abstract tyrant that carries its ravages into deeper recesses of the psyche than did the sabertooth tiger or the grizzly bear" (McLuhan 1951, p. 33).

In Western society, the automobile also serves as an essential totem of sexual maturity, "a symbolic indicator of the fully functioning adult libido," particularly that of men (Brottman 2004, p. 56). As described above, the automobile performs as a phallic symbol, an association that is constantly emphasized in advertisements, movies and television shows (Brottman 2004, p. 56). In contemporary culture, "driving performance has become one of the most common methods of male sexual display" (Brottman 2004, p. 57). Men seem to have a particularly interesting relationship with their cars, a considerable characteristic of which is the element of power (Bayley 1986, p. 7). Bayley contends that powerful sports cars are aphrodisiacs, not transport. Hence, automobiles such as Porsches are "sold as costumes and worn for sexual display" (Bayley 1986, p. 8).

Automobile Mythology

It is advertising and entertainment alike that offer insights into such totem images and enlighten us to this process (McLuhan 1951, p. 33), yet the reasons as to why they are able to do so remain

contested. One of the most popular theories comes from Karl Marx, who was writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, in the early stages of the growth of industrial capitalism and thus before advertising became a national institution. Marx predicted that it is the social relations between individuals that will emulate the fantastic relation between things (Jhally 1989, p. 218). The world of commodities thus functions in a manner otherwise found only in religion, where the constructs of the human imagination materialize as sovereign characters endowed with autonomous existence and are able to interact and relate to each other and the human race (Jhally 1989, p. 218). Marx termed this 'commodity fetishism' (Marx 1944).

Other writers claim that advertising is so in tune with these processes simply because it is responsible for creating most associations found in it. For instance, Bayley argues that the association of the automobile with sex was "the greatest marketing coup of the twentieth century" (Bayley 1986, p. 25). Undoubtedly, advertising is "persistently wrapping the commodity in so many layers of sociocultural abstractions that it becomes nearly impossible to use or merely look at the object without participating in the collective fiction" (Atwan et al 1979, p. 154). However, as mentioned above, McLuhan reminds us that themes such as the "interfusion of sex and technology" are not simply an invention of the ad men, as "no culture will give popular nourishment and support to images or patterns which are alien to its dominant impulses and aspirations" (McLuhan 1951, pp. 94-96). Instead, these themes are a form of cultural laws of a society that "will mould its songs and art and social expression" (McLuhan 1951, p. 96). In other words, advertising is responsible for shaping and communicating the narrative surrounding the commodity, but it does not invent the underlying forces and themes, as these are already embedded in the public's unconscious mind. Although the car is a functional object, which provides many practical benefits to its user, its purchase is not driven chiefly by rational contemplation. Otherwise, there would be no need to continually promote safety features so heavily via adverts that address fantasies of invulnerability and the desire for an enduring family harmony instead of rational concerns about accidents (Richards 1994, p. 70).

Nevertheless, the automobile was not instantly wrapped up in the above mythical connotations at its invention, but gained its symbolic status through several stages in history. In 1905, very early automobiles were purchased only by the bourgeoisie, as their prices of $600 to $7,500 made them extravagant expenditures for the average American, who earned an average of $450 annually (Gartman 1994, p. 33). The car became associated with great wealth and status. Furthermore, it was a symbol of the emerging therapeutic ethos of the American bourgeoisie who felt that they were being stifled by

bureaucratized industrial corporations, and hence found their personal worth in privatized leisure activities centered on consumption (Gartman 1994, p. 34). By assuring escape from the urban industrialism composed of routine and regimentation to the fresh air of the suburbs or country, the car promised the bourgeoisie increased individual freedom (Gartman 1994, p. 35; Sachs 1992, p. 10).

However, by 1908, the car became more accessible to less affluent consumers with the introduction of Ford's Model T, the sturdy, reliable, cheap car for the masses (Richards 1994, p. 53). Cheaper cars, together with increasing farming income, allowed farmers to adopt the auto for various uses such as work applications, transportation of produce to the market, social visits to distant neighbors, trips to and from rural schools, trips into town and simple pleasure driving (Gartman 1994, p. 37). At this time, the car took on a mass personality as the T Model gained various nicknames such as Tin Lizzie, Mechanical Cockroach, the Galloping Snail, Leaping Lena etc. Tin Lizzie was treated as a farm hand or like the farm wife herself, who, powerful and tough, never shied away from a hard day's work (Scharff 1991, p. 55).

By the late twenties, when Herbert Hoover campaigned for presidency by promising "two cars in every garage," America entered the age of "mass automobility," as auto historian James J. Flink coined it (Silk 1984, p. 100; Scharff 1991, p. 170). As observed by sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd in Middletown, lower prices and the possibility of purchasing on credit made cars a crucial part of normal living (Silk 1984, p. 100). Nevertheless, soon enough the American public grew weary of Fordism, forcing consumer products to hide all their disquieting associations with Fordist production, which in turn allowed for "the domestication of the Machine" in the words of designer Paul Frankl (Gartman 1994, p. 72). Goods took on the superficial appearance of individuality, progress and class without actually changing the foundation of Fordism. Color and ornamentation gave the look of uniqueness to mass produced objects, hiding the standardized reality remaining underneath (Gartman 1994, pp. 71-72).

By the 1950's, auto styling led by Harley Earl produced dream machines that articulated stratospheric travel over mundane transportation (Gartman 1994, p. 136). In these post-war years, cars became the leading consumer totem that heralded the emergence of mass consumer society. The automobile myth "reached its apogee" at this time as cars became "fancier, faster and more fetishized" (Thomas, Holden & Claydon 1998, p. 30). In the 1950s, cars finally transformed from mechanical assemblages of separate parts into a one unified, organic shape (Gartman 1994, p. 151). At this time auto consumers fantasized about the realization of their desires for freedom, power, and distinction as

they sped to and from their suburban sites of consumption and their urban centers of alienated production (Gartman 1994, p. 151). Dream cars were put forth by the production line with only slight constraints by the ordinary considerations of production cost and utility (Gartman 1994, p. 160). Technological fetishism and futurism were quickly adapted by car owners, especially the young. Ever since then, the car has become deeply enveloped in the symbolic and mythological connotation described above.

Throughout the decades, cars have mirrored, arrested and enhanced the consumer's desires and tastes: "from plutocratic to sexual display, through environmental concern to latter-day technophilia" (Bayley 1986, p. 101). The history of automobility can be also viewed in terms of Leiss et al.'s five cultural frames for goods as described in Chapter 2. During the Idolatry period (1890-1925), cars were praised for their use value and their purchase was based on rational reasoning. In the second cultural frame, Iconology (1925-1945), cars took on symbolic attributes and purchasing was non-rational, as the car became an essential part of North American life. Meanwhile, in Narcissism (1945-1965), the time of McLuhan and Barthes' observations, automobiles became wrapped in romance, glamour and sensuality, promising self-transformation for their owners as if through black magic. During the Totemism (1965-1986) phase, products became emblems of group-related consumption practices. The automotive market was fragmented into niche segments specialized by age, sex, region, and lifestyle (Gartman 1994, p. 184). In Mise-en-Scene (1980-2000) products acquired authenticity, reflexivity and diversity, acting as personalized props (Leiss et al. 2005, pp. 22-23), as consumers began to choose the real economy of small fuel-efficient German and Japanese cars over Detroit's *faux* functionalism. All the same, in the 1980s, sports/utility vehicles entered the mainstream market promising average drivers the opportunity to leave the crowded highways and indulge in countryside off-roading (Gartman 1994, pp. 222-223).

Nevertheless, there is some dispute regarding the status of cars during the last two frames. According to Flink, by the early 1970, America's love affair with the automobile was over and "automobility had lost the quasi-religious connotation criticized by Lewis Mumford in the early 1960s and had become mainly utilitarian" (Flink 1976, p. 210; Gartman 1994, p. 203). Conversely, Silk states that by the 1970s, the car was clearly a positive embodiment of manhood, sexuality and emancipation, predominantly for the counterculture and the working class (Silk 1984, p. 173). Meanwhile, Bayley believes that, as automotive production shifts to Japan after the 1980s, an entirely novel symbolic language will be devised (Bayley 1986, p. 102). Hence, we are left questioning where automotive

symbolism lies today in relation to individuation, speed, fetishism, etc. The following three automotive advertising case studies will examine this question and demonstrate that a deeper level of analysis is needed to determine why advertisements are able to resonate with us so powerfully.

Section 2: Case Studies Analysis and Discussion

The above literature review encapsulates the mythology enveloping the car, which is an embodiment of a modern-day technological deity. It also establishes that advertising is one of the most appropriate aspects of popular culture in which to locate this mythology and arrest it for analysis. The following three case studies uncover mythopoeic processes present in contemporary automotive advertising in order to examine what aspects of this contemporary mythology and which primordial archetypes persist within it. This in turn will reveal whether promotional culture is the mythology of today.

Case 1: Honda Fit and Honda Jazz

Background Information: Honda Fit

The Honda Fit, a five-door hatchback compact car, was introduced by the Honda Motor Company of Japan in 2001 and entered its second generation in 2008. While known as the *Fit* in Japan, China and the Americas, it is sold under the nameplate *Jazz* in Europe, Australia and Oceania, the Middle East and parts of Asia.

As part of the 2006 North American launch of the first generation Fit, Honda and its advertising agency, Rubin Postaer and Associates (RPA), created an advertising campaign with the slogan "The Fit is Go." This campaign consisted of two thirty-second and six five-second television adverts as well as print, outdoor, online and direct mailing materials and sponsorships (Businessweek 2006). In 2008, following the launch of the second generation Honda Fit in U.S.A., RPA introduced a fully integrated advertising campaign which continued the tagline "The Fit is Go." RPA's main goal was to communicate the "sporty, aggressively stylish qualities of the all-new Fit" as well as promote its fuel efficiency, spaciousness, safety and nimble handling to its intended target audience – young metropolitan, or "metro-funky," individuals who pride themselves on being unique (Businessweek 2006; RPA 2008).

The campaign consists of print materials, billboards, wallscapes, an interactive website and three TV spots. The TV adverts were produced by Digital Domain, a visual-effects company that is also credited with *Titanic* and *Transformers*, and aired in the U.S. during NFL games and top-rated network

programs. Online, the Fit was promoted via collaboration with MTV.com, where Honda created a one-day, rich media, homepage roadblock, becoming the first automotive company to ever do so (RPA 2008). The dedicated microsite, http://fit.honda.com, showcases games and interactive experiences that feature the characters from the TV spots (Greenberg 2008). During the online gameplay, users learn about Fit product features, such as fuel efficiency, safety, interior space and its fun-to-drive character, as they defend Fit City from gas-guzzling "Fuelivores" (RPA 2008). This fully integrated campaign for the Fit is an ideal example of extended story-telling across numerous media.

Campaign Analysis: Honda Fit

The Fit Is Go campaign is set in familiar, yet futuristic city. While the urban design of a skyscraper-filled city center is recognizable, the geometric and curvilinear architecture of the buildings is clearly not contemporary. In the television spot titled *Defense Mechanism*, the twisted bridge and the strange, unrecognizable structures have a distinct futuristic feel. Indeed, we are told on the Fit microsite that the events of the campaign take place in an age when society has "evolved through advanced technology" and "massive, mechanized mutants, known as Fuelivores, dominate the world" (Honda Fit 2010). In this advanced age, sentient cars have replaced humans as the inhabitants of the city. In fact, the campaign contains almost no organic beings, except for the colony of bats stored inside the Fit. In the fantastical world of the campaign, the machines reign supreme and the Fit is a "super sentient champion" who opposes Fuelivore aggression (Honda Fit 2010).

Whereas the Fit is anthropomorphized, his Fuelivore foes take on animal forms. Zoomorphic cars are a recognizable phenomenon for many viewers because they played a small part in Disney's animated feature *Cars*, where tractors became cows and Volkswagen Beatles turned into tiny flies. However, unlike the animal-like autos in *Cars*, the Fuelivores are predatory. The name 'Fuelivore' is an interesting term in and of itself, as it is a combination of the word *fuel* and the latin *vorare*, meaning 'to devour.' Thus, it represents a car that devours fuel. The obvious meaning is that it is a gas guzzler, or a car that consumes large amounts of fuel. However, the underlying meaning is that of a predator that needs to consume fuel, the mechanical life-blood, from other cars and tankers in order to continue its existence. The correlation between fuel and blood is explicit considering that some of the Fuelivores take on the form of mechanical mosquitoes that use their piercing mouth parts to "gorge on hemorrhaging tanks" (Honda Fit 2010). The other Fuelivores are shark-like predators that prowl Fit City streets on the hunt. In *Defense Mechanism*, a Fuelivore car cruises the road, swerving back and forth like a shark on a hunt, while defenseless cars flee in fear and hide in garage crevices in the same way that

small fish do when they spot a shark. The sharp teeth on the Fuelivore's grill and the protruding exaggerated fins further reinforce this image. The underwater metaphor continues as the Fit inflates like a puffer fish on the defensive.

In his book, *The System of Objects*, Baudrillard explicates the connection between cars and animals, particularly sharks. In the mid-20th-century, tail fins, a clear connotation of a shark-like being, became purely a sign of the object's victory over space, while at the same time having no direct connection to that victory, as they often made cars heavier and more unwieldy (Baudrillard 1996, p. 59). Hence, tail fins were not a sign of actual, real speed, but of the sublime, unquantifiable speed. With the addition of tail fins, cars appeared to take flight, moving as a higher form of organism. Indeed, cars first appropriated the characteristics of the airplane before they went on to borrow directly from nature's creatures such as sharks, birds, etc. (Baudrillard 1996, p. 59). According to Baudrillard, design motifs previously emerged mainly from the vegetable kingdom, using the static elements of earth or flora, whereas now we have "a systematization based on fluidity," which incorporates air and water and the dynamic world of animals. Nevertheless, the modern version of naturalness still refers to nature; in other words, elements such as tail fins still provide technical objects with natural connotations (Baudrillard 1996, p. 60). These connotations are allegorical, as "the car's form does no more than signify the idea of the function" (Baudrillard 1996, p. 60). Tail fins are our modern allegory, and it is through allegory that "the discourse of the unconscious makes itself heard," in this case it is the fantasy of speed that is articulated (Baudrillard 1996, p. 60). In short, the depiction of a Fuelivore car as a shark, the Fit as a puffer fish and the other cars as mosquitoes all signify unconscious projections, whether of sublime speed or the desire to give expression to a totem animal as described in Section 1 above.

Whilst anthropomorphic and zoomorphic automobiles are familiar to us from recent animated movies such as Disney's *Cars*, in fact, the idea of mechanical objects coming to life is not novel at all. In the ancient mythological cycle describing the adventures of the Argonauts, we encounter a sentient ship, the Argo. Argo was said to be made of a magical wood from a sacred oak, which allowed it to think, speak and prophesy (Myth Encyclopedia 2010). The Argo's ability to think touches on yet another theme present in the Fit campaign – artificial intelligence. In addition to mechanical beings merely taking on human characteristics, the campaign also implies that technology continued to progress or advance without the need for human intervention. Fit society evolved through advanced technology, not through human innovation, which is especially evident from the non-existence of humans themselves.

The absence of any humans in the campaign makes such a vision of the future seem quite bleak and disturbing. Humans are only present in the online video describing the Fit's features, but not in any of the major campaign spots. What happened to the entire human race is unknown, but it seems that machines, or specifically cars, have replaced it. While in *Cars* humans are absent in a similar manner and cars take on human roles, the atmosphere and implications are very different. *Cars* uses bright colors, cheery voices and familiar settings to create a sense of security, reassuring the viewer that the world is as it always was. Meanwhile, in the Fit campaign, the colors are muted and grey, the sky seems foggy or polluted and the constant danger of Fuelivore attacks is menacing. Even the narrator's voice is robotic, hiding his humanity. Hence, the campaign hints at a sinister vision of a future overtaken by renegade technology.

Artificial intelligence is one of the major themes discussed in the literature review above (see Section 1). As aforementioned, this theme relates to the subject matter of Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, as well as McLuhan's insight that it is "[i]n this period of passionate acceleration that the world of the machines begins to assume the unfriendly countenance of an inhuman wilderness even less imaginable than that which once confronted prehistoric man" (McLuhan 1951, p. 34). Butler was the first to write of the possibility of machines evolving by Darwinian selection and developing consciousness; however, the premise of technological creations developing consciousness and coming to life is very ancient and has remnants in archaic literature and mythology. Perhaps the most popular story, told by Ovid in *Metamorphoses*, is that of Pygmalion and Galatea. Pygmalion carved Galatea in ivory in such a realistic and stunning manner that he fell in love with her. Aphrodite heard his heartfelt pleas and turned the statue into a real woman, allowing them to marry (Ovid 2004). Other instances include: Daedalus using quicksilver to enhance statues with voices, although this is not intelligence per se; Talos, the mechanical man of bronze; the automatons and golden robots created by Hephaestus; and possibly Pandora, who was fashioned out of clay and given human life at Zeus's command. Unmistakably, the myth of artificial intelligence is ancient, but it is one that resonates deeply in today's society.

At first glance it seems odd that an automotive campaign chose to presents a bleak future of the world possibly devastated by technology, however, it starts to seem sensible once we consider that the Fit is portrayed as a heroic antecedent to such a reality. The Fit is a fuel-efficient warrior on a mission to save his city from enemy Fuelivores, who are damaging the environment with their gas-guzzling habits. Hence, the Fit embodies the Hero archetype. While the campaign may be targeting young urban

individuals of both sexes, the Fit appears to take on a male persona in the ads. The campaign brazenly coins the Fit a "hero of efficiency," a "super sentient champion," and "a small car of heroic proportions." As many heroes before him, the Fit is a champion that must rise up to protect its society from the villains who plague it. The Fit is a sardonic and clever hero, similar to Odysseus: he is agile, vigilant, edgy, adaptable, fast and smarter than his barbaric or dim-witted opponents. Similarly to Odysseus, the Fit is also a hero that is undertaking an archetypal quest, or hero's journey. Usually, the hero embarks on a journey to return to the tribe with something of value for all (Myss 2007). Indeed, the Fit must retrieve the Superbolt, which will power a security network of bug zappers and provide protection for his entire city.

Northrop Frye sees the quest as a universal narrative and categorizes it as a romantic mythoi of summer. According to him, a successful quest is made up of three stages: a perilous journey and minor adventure; a decisive conflict to the death; and the exaltation of the hero (Frye 1957, p. 187). In the quest mythoi, the opponent is linked with darkness, winter, confusion, sterility and old age, while the hero with spring, order, fertility, vigor and youth (Frye 1957, pp. 187-188). Indeed, this is what we see in the campaign; the Fit is a new model compact car that is in line with the modern environmental ethos. In car terms, it is fair to say that the Fit is associated with youth. Meanwhile, the Fuelivores are modeled on 1960s muscle cars that are now outdated, hence they can be described as old. Furthermore, the Fit resides in Fit City, while the Fuelivores are barbaric and appear to be living on the city fringes or in the wild. Hellbiter, a shark-like vehicle, is described on the microsite as a primitive, "barbaric leader of a gang of late model Fuelivores," while the mosquito-like Gasperado is the "alpha gas sucker in a swarm of parasitic Fuelivores" (Honda Fit 2010). The civilized Fit is clearly allied with order, while his enemies with chaotic disorder.

Frye also notes that the quest-romance resonates with both rituals (as examined by Frazer) and dreams (as explored by Jung), which in turn are symbolic structures very similar to one another. In the dream, the quest is the libido's pursuit "for a fulfillment that will deliver it from the anxieties of reality but still contain that reality." In the ritual, it is the triumph of fecundity over the waste land (Frye 1957, pp. 193-4). The campaign associates the Fuelivores with demolition, as for example, in *Defense Mechanism* a Fuelivore car knocks over everything in sight; and, due to their fuel inefficiency, with the destruction of the environment. The defeat of Fuelivores is what gives expression to the triumph of fecundity over devastation. Meanwhile, the Fit's quest is certainly a young man's libidinal journey into adulthood.

The Fit's quest can also be interpreted as a form of initiation rites, an appropriate motif to appeal to the young, predominantly male target market. In fact, all hero myths are "ultimately a paradigm for the process of self-discovery" (Randazzo 1993, p. 109). Joseph Campbell states that the quest is an exaggeration of the rites of passage as it includes separation, initiation and return (Campbell 1949). The best clues about Fit's undertaking of initiation rites are depicted in the TV spot *Bats* and the print ad *Cavernous*. In both of these ads, the Fit is described as cavernous and containing a colony of bats, hence it is likened to a cave. Meanwhile, it is also coined a "nocturnal flyer" (*Cavernous* 2008), and in a 2006 ad, it directly takes on the form of a bat (*Nocturnal Flyer* 2006).

Partially, these transformations are calling upon the Shape-shifter archetype. Therianthropy, or human to animal transformation, is a common theme found in most mythologies around the world. Conceivably, as machines become more a part of our unconscious mind this myth is altered to include machine to animal transformations. The 2006 Fit campaign explores this archetype in more detail as it depicts the Fit embodying a variety of quirky characters to highlight its various features. In the five-second TV ads the Fit becomes a bat, a silver bullet, a speedy demon, a mechanized feline, a wrestler and a robot. Meanwhile, the thirty-second ads highlight Fit's cat-like reflexes and the dominating and predatory presence it has on the road despite its small size.

In order to understand the paradox of the Fit embodying a bat and a cave simultaneously and observe the connection this has to initiation rites, we must consider the role of caves in ancient societies and the symbolism surrounding bats to this day. From the dawn of humanity, caves have provided not only shelter, but also sites for spiritual ceremonies, as depicted in various ancient cave paintings. Oftentimes, caves were used for initiation rites of the young males. For instance, Grotta di Porto Badisco, also known as Grotta dei Cervi cave, or Stag's Cave, located along the Adriatic coast of South Italy famously lent its many passageways to various stages of male initiation. Meanwhile, bats are creatures of the night often associated with vampires, witches, witchcraft and all things occult. Bats also represent fear, the foreboding nature of the night and the Underworld. There is a Finnish belief that when one is asleep one's soul takes the shape of a bat (Stefko 2008). Likewise, ancient Babylonians, certain Australian Aborigines and other Pacific peoples believe that bats are synonymous with the human soul (Steiger 1997). Furthermore, bats are a symbol of shamanic death and rebirth. They live in the womb of Mother Earth, the cave, hang upside-down, the position through which babies enter the world and emerge every night after dusk as if continuously reborn (Sams and Carson 1999).

According to Joseph Campbell, the hero's journey always includes a passage into the unknown, perhaps the underworld, where he appears to have died. The hero undergoes a transformation and metamorphosis by going inward into himself, to be reborn again (Campbell 1949). Hence, by taking on the symbolism of the cave and the bat, the Fit is implied to be a hero who undergoes initiation rites similar to those that occurred in ancient caves. He enters the darkness or the unknown, deep within himself, where he undergoes a transformation and is reborn again. The ad campaign and especially the online game-play provide the viewer with a chance to also undertake this archetypal journey. By identifying with the Fit, the viewer "ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won" (Campbell 1949, p. 30).

An indication of the Fit's transformation and completion of initiation rites is its independence from a mother figure in the 2008 print ad *Gas Hog*s. The ad depicts a fuel tanker lying on its side with five large utility vehicles trying to suckle fuel from it just as piglets or kittens would from their mother. Clearly, the Mother archetype is briefly evoked in this image. In the side panel, the Fit is shown standing independently, not partaking in the suckling. The text states that it has been weaned off the gas nozzle becoming a "warrior of efficiency" that threatens all gas guzzlers (*Gas Hog* 2008). The Fit has triumphantly undergone its journey by completing the initiation rites, emancipating itself from the mother's teat and being reborn as a warrior.

The Warrior archetype has been one of the most pervasive and enduring universal male images. It represents independence, strength and courage (Randazzo 1993, p. 100). For over 60 years, this archetype has been a guiding symbol for countless men who wish to regain their independence and identity from an increasingly anonymous contemporary existence. Unlike the Knight, the Warrior archetype represents erotic energy, the height of virility and physical power. Toughness of will and spirit is required, and a fight to the death is a usual element of this archetype, which is also connected with the passage from boyhood to manhood (Myss 2007). Indeed, throughout the 2008 campaign, the Fit is continually described as aggressive and fierce, and in the 2006 adverts, it is violent to the point of devouring larger cars on the road (*Ferocious Small Dominator* 2006).

Interestingly, Randazzo observes that the figure of the Warrior has diminished in our unconscious with the coming of the technological age, as it has been neutered and dwarfed by technology. According to him, the modern Warrior is no longer someone wielding a sword with a strong

arm, but a "technician, a machine operator" (Randazzo 1993, p. 110). The Fit campaign challenges this notion by representing the warrior as a machine. Today, the strong arm wielding the sword does not have to be human as a technological being or object can also embody the Warrior archetype. Hence, while Randazzo may be right in his prediction of the warrior no longer being a powerful human being, he may be wrong in that the future Warrior needs to have any connection to humanity at all. On the contrary, future Warriors may be machines with conscious minds that no longer even require human operators.

The Fit is also heralded as a defender, of his society, and, through metaphor, of his passengers. In the online gameplay, the Fit must rise up to protect his society by delivering the Superbolt. Here the Fit embodies the Defender or Guardian archetype. However, in the *Defense Mechanism* advert, the Fit is not truly represented as a protector of the weaker cars around him. Instead of defending the other cars, the Fit simply stands his ground and continues on his own way after the danger is over. The Fit's puffer defense mechanism is implied as a metaphor of protection (airbags) for the driver within the Fit and not anyone else in the vicinity. Fit's encounter with the menacing Fuelivore in *Defense Mechanism* is reminiscent of a school yard fight, or a 'showdown' in which one male has to prove that "he 'has the balls' to stand up to other males" in order to prove his manhood before other men (Randazzo 1993, p. 115).

The Fit's opponents, the Fuelivores, represent the Addict archetype as they are addicted to consuming large quantities of fuel. The efficient Fit requires much less fuel and hence is praised for its independence. Moreover, additional characters and motifs emerge when the overall style of the campaign is considered. As the adverts, and even the online gameplay[5], take on a comic book style in terms of appearance, action, music, sounds, text and narration etc., they call on the cultural story stock of comic book heroes such as Batman, the cloaked defender. The presence of many bats alone warrants such a connection, not to mention the correlation that a viewer may make with the Batmobile, a slick technologically advanced street machine that is kept in a Batcave. Even the tagline of "The Fit is go!" and the constant use of exclamation points draws on comic book-style rhetoric. Described as a "colossus of capability," and a "true wonder of the digital age," the Fit is promoted as an avenue for young urban dwellers to transform themselves into a type of a comic book hero aided by his technologically advanced vehicle. Comic books and other "hero serials" allow people to not only identify with their heroes, but

[5] A great deal of work can be done in applying archetypal analysis to gaming, specifically the mytho-poetics of totems or anthropomorphism; however, the margins of this thesis are not large enough to engage in this analysis.

also to “derive a deep emotional-moral satisfaction from the feats that they (and, through them, we) perform” (Patai 1972, p. 215).

In addition to the aforementioned themes, characters and archetypes, the campaign encompasses several archetypal places such as: the futuristic urban metropolis; the apocalyptic world of renegade technology; the highway as a site of the climactic chase, and a moonlit, yet dark brooding road surrounded by craggy leafless trees that seem to reach out like unearthly hands. The highway, together with the city and its streets, are categorized by Northrop Frye as apocalyptic imagery. Frye also notes that the metaphor of the “way” is “inseparable from all quest-literature” (Frye 1957, p. 144). Hence, the city streets and the highway are the most fitting settings for the campaign since they clearly reinforce the quest theme.

Background Information: Honda Jazz

Just like its North American counterpart, the Honda Jazz was launched in Australia in 2006 with an animated campaign titled *Ever so Nice*. This campaign was inspired by the Thomas the Tank Engine character and narrated by British actor Tony Robinson. Due to the campaign’s high likability rates of 90%, Honda’s advertising agency, DraftFCB Melbourne, decided to expand on it for the 2009 launch of the second generation Jazz (DraftFCB 2010). The new 2009 campaign is fully integrated and consists of one animated television commercial, print ads, street furniture, point of sale and brochures at dealerships, as well as a microsite, honda.com.au/vroom, featuring an animated online magazine and a playful viral casting session (The Inspiration Room 2008). The storyline of the 2009 campaign follows a female cartoon car, Jazz, on her first trip to London. The animated magazine on microsites details and discusses Jazz’s adventures as an actress in search of her big break after leaving the small town drama, *Village Green* (the 2006 campaign) and making her first feature film, *Jazz comes to Town* (the 2009 advert). According to the advertising agency, the 2009 campaign was a great success with likeability rates of 94% and high recognition of key messages in all respondents of the advertising and brand tracking research (DraftFCB 2010). This campaign is targeted towards young, urban females who will use the car for driving in the city. The appeal of a small and compact car in cities like London and Melbourne is its easy maneuverability, fuel-efficiency and spaciousness.

Campaign Analysis: Honda Jazz

The Honda Jazz Australian campaign is also animated but set in a very recognizable and modern city of London. All the characters are mechanical and even the capsules of the London Eye and the short

circuit television cameras come to life. However, unlike in the Fit campaign, there is no sign of zoomorphic cars, and small creatures like pigeons are in their common organic form. Nevertheless, the underlying themes of anthropomorphic technology, cars as sentient beings and artificial intelligence are present in the same capacity. Furthermore, while there are no humans in the ads, the Jazz campaign lacks the underlying element of fear and destruction that their absence signifies in the Fit campaign; hence, the implication is not as sinister. Perhaps this is because the Jazz ads are set in a modern city and not in a future that holds any possibility of danger to the human race. There is no looming threat as Jazz simply enjoys a drive through London streets, chases pigeons in the park and glances into shop windows. The colors in the ad are bright, the sun is shining and the music is very soft, pop-like and cheery. In the same way as the *Cars* franchise, this ad simply places cars in the roles of humans living in the modern world, but it does not address the fear of manmade technology surpassing or usurping its creators. Hence, the overall feel of the Jazz campaign is much more optimistic in this regard than that of the Fit.

To get to London, Jazz had to make the journey from the countryside setting of the 2006 campaign to the busy city metropolis. Set on the village green of what appears to be a small British town, the 2006 campaign associates the automobile, in its anthropomorphic form, with the idyllic countryside and pristine nature that lies outside big city limits. The irony of this association lies in the fact that the idyllic agricultural past evoked by the image of the village green has been usurped or destroyed by a developmental process of which cars are a key part. While advertising continually tries to associate the car with the freedom to drive into the countryside, it is common knowledge that, as Lewis Mumford declares, when "using the car to flee from the metropolis the motorist finds that he has merely transferred congestion to the highway and thereby doubled it" and, when at his destination, the driver notes that "the countryside he sought has disappeared: beyond him, thanks to the motorway, lies only another suburb, just as dull as his own" (Mumford 1964, p. 177). Hence, the car is commonly perceived as the antithesis of the countryside and what it represents. Furthermore, the car is also a continual threat to the countryside and the environment in general. And yet, the discourses of the countryside and the car share a common link which has two parts: discourse of nature and discourse of technology. In fact, nature and technology are often tied together, although as opposites (Richards 1994, p. 67).

As the setting for the Jazz campaign is the city and its streets (similarly to the Fit campaign), it also encompasses Frye's apocalyptic imagery of the city and its roads, which are affiliated with the quest

as described above. Just as the Fit, Jazz is undertaking an archetypal journey. She appears to be embarking on a female journey that is a variation of the hero's quest, but still related to the underlying theme of maturing. In the online interactive magazine, we are told that Jazz's trip to London is "a classic story; a girl arrives in town and soon wins everyone over with her fresh good looks and sunny personality" (Honda Jazz 2010). There is no confusion over Jazz's gender, as it is constantly referred to as 'she' in all the campaign literature. Jazz has a youthful female voice, long eyelashes above her headlights, bright blue eyes and pouty lips. Her activities are fun and carefree, as she entertains herself by chasing the pigeons in the park, sitting by the fountain and window shopping. The music in the *Jazz Comes to Town* ad is upbeat, light and feminine, and the colors are vibrant and youthful. All of these elements contribute to the fact that Jazz is an embodiment of a cute, young, lively girl with a bouncy personality. Jazz is shown as a young girl who, while independent also wants reassurance, strives to be well-liked and constantly fusses over her appearance. Hence, the campaign is clearly trying to position itself in a way that best addresses young females.

The recurrent allusions to Jazz being fit but not too heavy despite her spacious insides; attractive while intelligent; sassy, but with a sunny personality; and alluring to males while self-assured, address the perceived insecurities or anxieties of modern-day young females. From the 2006 model (after leaving the small-town drama series) Jazz has undergone a "head to toe make over" (Honda Jazz 2010), and received a full "facelift" (Top Gear 2010). The campaign underlines that her "tiny figure" is a result of "Jazz's well designed body," that "helps eliminate noise and vibration without increasing her overall weight:" "[n]ow that's something every girls loves to hear" (Honda Jazz 2010b). Drivers are also reminded to have Jazz serviced regularly, "after all, a girl needs to pamper herself every now and then" (Honda Jazz 2010b).

Jazz is clearly representative of the Maiden archetype, which symbolizes spring, fertility, innocence, childhood intuition and phantasy, as well as the time when a young woman gains the interest of men combined with coming of age and maturity. It also represents the woman as alluring, enchanting and seductive (Randazzo 1993, p. 70), and stands for beauty without overt sexuality, which has always been considered an important aspect of femininity. A woman's beauty is connected to her overall sense of self-worth and her ability to influence men (Randazzo 1993, p. 69). Examples of the Maiden archetype can be found in ancient literature in the form of muses, fairies, and young virgins (Randazzo 1993, p. 69). In the 1960's, the radical feminist movement destabilized the way women viewed their appearances by condemning existing conceptions of feminine beauty as too "passive." A

study performed by Randazzo in the early 1990's demonstrated that, despite past uncertainties, young women are still very preoccupied with feminine beauty; a fact that is also reflected in the usage of the Maiden archetype in contemporary advertising (Randazzo 1993, p. 69).

However, Jazz is not only an innocent maiden but also somewhat of a Seductress. The Seductress archetype represents sexually alluring, yet undomesticated women; hence, it is presented as a threat to the pre-established family structure in patriarchal Judeo-Christian mythologies (Randazzo 1993, p. 70). In ancient mythologies, this archetype took the form of nymphs, nixies, sirens, mermaids, etc. Jazz is presented as a Seductress in the 2006 campaign, in which she repeatedly drives past the captivated male cars with a flirty smile and a seductive "morning boys" greeting (*Dreaming* 2006). She is the object of desire of male cars and potential buyers alike. In the 2006 ad, *Parking*, Jazz has intimate relations (parking all night) with one of the male cars and is described as being "ever so sexy". In the 2009 brochure, Jazz is continually described as having an "attractive grille," "sexy alloy wheels" and being "smoother and sexier" (Honda Jazz 2010b). The repetition helps drive the point home. Jazz is also a constant point of male cars' attention. The entire 2006 campaign consists of male cars discussing Jazz as she just passes by and gives them flirty glances. In *Jazz Comes to Town* (2009), Jazz is approached by an amorous four wheel drive car, who admires her inner beauty (interior) and unsuccessfully asks her out for a drink. She cleverly responds that she does not drink much (she is fuel-efficient), drives off while giggling and gives flirtatious glance back at the cars behind her.

Nevertheless, Jazz's flirtations are innocent; hence, she is not a Femme Fatale, but simply a sassy girl with "a sunny personality" (Honda Jazz 2010). This is attested by the innocent and childlike dimension of both the 2006 and 2009 campaigns. The 2006 campaign has an air of lighthearted innocence since it is based on a children's cartoon of *Thomas and Friends*; it has simple animation, an idyllic setting and a rainbow at the end of each ad. Similarly, in the 2009 campaign, the music is happy, light and although the visual elements are more dynamic and less childlike, there is still a lighthearted, innocent feel to the ads. Jazz also gets away with her flirting without seeming like a temptress because, after all, she is just an actress playing a role in a small town drama (2006 ads) or a feature film (2009 advert).

In addition to being sexy and flirty, Jazz is also presented as suitable for a long-term relationship. She is a girl who is intelligent, sophisticated, reliable, and safe – all the qualities that make her wife-like. Jazz is the modern incarnation of Galatea brought to life as the perfect companion whom one "can't

help but fall in love with" (Honda Jazz 2010b). This theme relates to McLuhan's observations of a car as mechanical bride and the perception of the car as a woman, as described in Section 1 above.

In her role as an actress, Jazz also exemplifies the Goddess archetype. The Goddess archetype is present in modern life in the form of a movie starlet or celebrity. McLuhan asserted that Hollywood floods the night world with daytime imagery in which synthetic gods and goddesses (film stars) appear to assume the roles of our wakeaday existence in order to flatter and console us for the failures of our daily lives (McLuhan 1951, p. 97). Nevertheless, people have been worshiping goddesses from very early on, as the woman is a source of all life. Robert Graves even suggests that the various European goddesses are just incarnations of the one White Goddess of Birth, Love and Death (Graves 1952). There is a clear connection between fertility and exaggerated sexual attributes, as can be seen in ancient statues and modern day screen goddesses such as Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. The Goddess archetype incorporates wisdom, guidance, physical grace, athletic prowess and sensuality (Myss 2007). Jazz displays all such qualities; she is intelligent, powerful, athletic, "smooth, unbelievably agile and so trim and taut" (Honda Jazz 2010b). Another aspect of this archetype is Jazz as the "'it' girl", the "popular girl" and a cover girl beloved by all. Jazz is continually described as beautiful and lovable with "a big heart and lots of room inside" and while she has a "much admired body" she also possesses "inner beauty" (Honda Jazz 2010).

The notion of car as woman may also invoke the Shape-shifter archetype. While the campaign does not explicitly demonstrate a woman turning into a car, the metaphor is vivid enough to draw the connection. Myth of shifting and transformation from one form to another exists in almost every culture. Therianthropy, or human to animal transformation, is the most common version of this myth and we have already observed in the Fit campaign. However, it is logical that, as technology becomes an ever greater part of contemporary life, such myths would begin to incorporate transformations into mechanical beings as well. This echoes McLuhan's observation of modern humans getting into mechanical straitjackets instead of animal ones (McLuhan 1951, p. 33) as discussed in Section 1.

Interestingly, Jazz also appears to personify the Athlete archetype, as many of her capabilities are described in terms of human athletic performance. She has "two athletic yet remarkably fuel efficient engines;" she is sporty, "with enhanced aerodynamics, sharper lines, a wider stance and superior rear suspension;" and "part sprinter, part marathoner and part gymnast" (Honda Jazz 2010; Honda Jazz 2010b). The theme of mechanical performance as human prowess raises the notion of a human-mechanical hybrid – a strange variation of the centaur as described in Section 1 above. Jazz as a

powerful, fit and athletic goddess also recalls the imagery surrounding Artemis, or Diana, goddess of the hunt, wilderness and protector of women, especially during childbirth.

Jazz is not only pretty, sporty and fun; she is also a Protector or Guardian. With her safety features such as airbags and seat belts she is "your own personal bodyguard." Jazz creates a G-Con cage that "cocoons everyone inside" (Honda Jazz 2010b). In addition to drawing on the Protector archetype, this is also a reference to the car as womb, a protective space that envelops the passengers and driver. As Richards notes, "inside the rigid cage there is a soft, uterine environment to nurture the driver thorough the journey" (Richards 1994, p. 71). Perhaps there may be traces of the Mother archetype in the campaign as well. Jazz's womb-like cocoon and her protective qualities are reminiscent of the safe and comfortable protection provided by a mother.

Case 2: Mercedes-Benz E-Class

Background Information: Mercedes-Benz E-Class

In 2009, Mercedes-Benz launched the 9th generation E-Class, a range of executive-size cars, which are the "heart and soul of [the] brand" (The Auto Channel 2009). The E-Class starts at $48,600 USD and is being marketed as a car that sets the new standard in safety, comfort and advanced technology in the luxury market segment. This model also encompasses "luxurious design and comfort with sustainable mobility" (ibid). The E-Class is advertised throughout the world in different capacities. This case examines campaigns from North America, Australia and the United Kingdom. The North American campaign consists of television spots and website videos and the German campaign is comprised of several television ads. The Australian and UK campaigns employ an almost identical website; however, the opening text of the UK website focuses on the notion of pleasure, whereas the Australian website focuses on emotion. The UK advertising agency, Weapon 7, noted that this is an economically challenging time with declining car sales and thus decided to focus on the notion of pleasure, presenting the E-Class as "an antidote to the economic gloom" (Weapon 7 2010). Throughout the world the E-Class is marketed to a broad target market, from those working in the corporate sector to young males in search of a luxury sports car.

Campaign Analysis: Mercedes-Benz E-Class

While the Mercedes-Benz E-Class campaigns differ from country to country, there are some underlying themes present in all the ads once they are considered together. One such underlying theme

is that of the idyllic countryside. Almost every Mercedes-Benz E-Class ad contains scenes of a drive through the countryside or an empty road next to rolling hills or forests. Just as in the Honda Jazz campaign, this reminds us of Mumford's criticism of such imagery, as beyond the city there are only more suburbs and idyllic drives are much less possible today due to high automotive usage. Hence, the ads offer an escape to a fantastical world that does not actually exist.

A related theme is that of environmentalism. The American advert, *Hippie*, best portrays the environmentalist side of the vehicle. The story that unfolds follows Frye's mythoi of comedy, where the hero (the owner of the car) and his bride (the daughter of the protagonist) face the opposition of her father who grumbles about his daughter always dating hippies. The father is confronted with the fact that a Mercedes-Benz can simultaneously be a luxury car and environmentally friendly. The ad is comedic with a happy ending that includes a reduction of the feast, as described by Frye, into a family dinner. This also draws on the Advocate/Environmentalist archetype, which is gaining importance as we become more concerned with preserving our environment.

Another recurring theme throughout all the campaigns is of the E-Class as an anthropomorphized vehicle. Unlike the Honda ads, none of the E-Class campaigns are animated with cars as cartoon-like characters, hence the anthropomorphism is much more subtle, but just as valid. The E-Class is continually described in organic terms. It has a "muscular shoulder" (Mercedes-Benz Australia and UK 2010, *Attraction*) and a face that "conveys feelings like sympathy or antipathy." In an online video, we are told that cars have various expressions, which in turn help determine the character of the car, hence, "there are cars which appear aggressive, others appear harmless" (*Blink of an eye* 2010). The E-Class is described as possessing human emotions or mindsets. It is continually described as "considerate" to other drivers; able to alert the driver of danger "gently, but firmly;" and as a "friend" that gently hints when the driver is in the wrong lane (Mercedes-Benz Australia and UK 2010, *Considerate, Awaken, Friend*). The E-Class is occasionally depicted as sentient and driverless, such as in the USA advert *Museum Trip*. Logic dictates that the driver must be present, but the camera angles prevent the viewer from noticing anyone at the wheel. Likewise, the narrator describes the car's actions as intentionally "[taking] its rightful place in a long line of amazing performance machines" by breaking through a glass window into the museum right in front of the admiring public. In addition to such anthropomorphism, the E-Class is described in animistic terms as having "angles and interesting lines again, almost a little bit like a predator or like muscle structure" (*Welcome home* 2010).

More specifically than just being anthropomorphized, the E-Class is likened to a woman. All of the E-Class campaigns examined demonstrate some element of this phenomenon. The simplest example is the car being described as "supple" due to its comfortable leather interior and "sleek" due to its aerodynamic efficiency, both of which contribute to it receiving many admiring glances (Mercedes-Benz Australia and UK 2010, *Sleek, Supple*). But the imagery goes deeper. The international E-Class Coupe website labels the car as "pure attraction" and through visual metaphor connects it to the surrounding beautiful women (Mercedes-Benz International 2010). The website coins the E-Class an "object of desire" and welcomes the viewer to "discover its beauty through the eyes of 30 beauties" (Mercedes-Benz International 2010). While it is encircled by the admiring glances of beautiful models, the E-Class itself is presented as the model and centre of attention. The car is a darker grey color, whereas the models are in white, pearl or light grey dresses that fade into the white background. This once again puts all the focus on the car. The viewer is invited to take a picture of the E-Class from the viewpoint of the models or from their own chosen angle. By being presented as an object to be photographed and engaged with through the models, the car takes on the characteristics of the female models themselves.

The online international promotional video, *Blink of an Eye*, uses visual metaphor to compare the car to a woman. In the video, a designer compares the proportions of the car's face to that of a human's, particularly equating the headlights to the eyes. But more specifically, the video draws parallels to a female eye. The images of a female eye being painted and made up to resemble the car's headlights are intermixed with images of the car. A strip of crystals is even added to the eye make-up to resemble the small lights within the headlights. At the end of the video, the car's lights turn on and in the next image the woman opens her eyes. In the following scene, after the car flashes its red turning signal in one of its headlights, the woman blinks one of her eyes. Clearly, the visual metaphor implies the parallel between the car and its headlights and the woman and her eyes.

The international E-Class website appropriates the analogy of the car as woman even further with the line "resistance is useless." This phrase seems to draw on the famous line from *Star Trek*, 'resistance is futile,' which was spoken by Borgs, the cybernetically enhanced humanoids. This reference to the Borg Collective is interesting in this context, as one of the most popular Borgs was the striking female cyborg, Seven of Nine. The underlying implication may be of the car as an alluring mechanical-human hybrid or cyborg. This once again reminds us of ancient myths such as those of Pygmalion and Galatea and the blurring divide between the organic and mechanic described in Section 1.

The German ad, *Beauty*, also contains metaphors comparing the alluring woman to the car, while incorporating the imagery of the stallion, thus adding a phallic dimension. The group of beautiful women in flowing gowns riding into a European town on horseback is reminiscent of the imagery that McLuhan (1951) describes in chapters *Woman in the Mirror* and *Husband's Choice*. The ad juxtaposes the snorting and grunting stallions, which are a phallic image, with the gracious, classy and gentle women, which are ambrosial. The women are a type of "somnambule," or dream walker. They are "stately dream girl[s] [that come] trailing clouds of culture as from some European castle" (McLuhan 1951, pp. 81-82). The imagery in this ad attempts to seep directly into the unconscious mind and presents the car as both a phallic and womb-like object. While the horses are partially a literal interpretation of the E-Class' horsepower, the women represent its attractiveness and charisma. The old men shown in the ad state that they love car commercials before even seeing the car, thus the metaphor of women on horseback as a representation of a car is not too puzzling. In fact, the women seem to transform into the car as it comes around the corner, once again attesting to it being "pure attraction" (*Beauty* 2009). The women may also be reminiscent of Valkyries, the Norse women-warriors on horseback, although in a much less sinister and military aspect. While the women in the ad are dressed in gowns and appear much more somnambulic, or dream like, than confronting, they are in a large group riding on horseback, in slow motion, which appears as if they are floating. This imagery evokes the symbolism of the Valkyries.

The notion of the car as woman once again touches on the themes of the 'mechanical bride' as well as the Shape-shifter archetype described in the Honda Jazz analysis above. Furthermore, just as in the Honda Jazz campaign, the idea of car as woman leads to the next theme of car as womb. Cars create a uterine environment in which the driver is 'cocooned' (Mercedes-Benz Australia and UK 2010, *Cocooned*). Mercedes-Benz advertises its safety features in terms of the driver being enveloped by the protective car, whose interior is reminiscent of the womb, allowing the driver to have all the possible comforts due to temperature controls, leather seats and an overall customized environment.

Furthering the notion of the car as human, the Australian campaign invites the driver to become emotionally attached to the car. While the UK website chooses to focus on the pleasure of driving the E-Class, presenting it as an indulgence and a pleasure (but not a guilty one), the exact same website launched in Australia alters the tag line to "E-motional attraction" (Mercedes-Benz Australia 2010). Both websites feature the image of a pupil dilating from the enjoyment of seeing something pleasing. Once again, while the UK website simply states that seeing the E-class is a pleasure, the Australian website

proclaims that the E-Class can stir our emotions in every sense. The idea of emotional attraction, and following that, emotional attachment to the car, further reinforces the vision of it as an anthropomorphic being and references the themes discussed in Section 1 above. It especially relates to the phenomenon of drivers naming their cars and treating them as surrogate humans.

Another theme often employed by Mercedes-Benz is that of a car as an extension of the human body and senses. In the online campaigns for UK, Australia and US, the E-class is promoted as being able to assist its driver in various situations. It has features such as Attention assist, Presafe, Adaptive high beam assist, Parktronic with advance parking guidance, and Optional reversing camera, Lane keep assist, Selective damping system, Radar sensors and Distonic Plus. Due to these features, the E-Class is "a car that can help awaken its driver if he begins to doze, keep him in his lane if he starts to wonder, even stop itself if he becomes distracted" (*Ignite* 2009; Mercedes-Benz Australia and UK 2010, *Awaken, Considerate, Cocooned, Extra sensory, Friend, Measured, Poise, Vision*). By providing the driver with eyes at the back of his or her head and even being able to determine his or her driving style and conform to it, the E-class acts as a protective armor around the driver; a second skin. This is evocative of a sort of mechanical-human centaur or hybrid creature that is a combination of two wholes functioning as one.

More so than just an extension of the human body or senses, the car appears to trespass into the realm of artificial intelligence. The use of words such as "evolving" and "generations," highlights the notion of the car intelligently advancing and reproducing as if with no human involvement (*What it's made of* 2009). The E-Class is marketed as more intelligent and even more alert and aware than its driver. The USA website exemplifies this with several consumer quotes such as: "I had no idea I was drifting out of my lane. But my car did" and "I didn't realize there was anything wrong. But my car did" (Mercedes-Benz USA 2010). The idea of a car having more knowledge or conscious awareness than the driver suggests that it possesses intelligence more advanced than that of a simple mode of transport. Instead, the car is described as "considerate" and a "friend" (Mercedes-Benz Australia and UK 2010, *Considerate, Friend*).

Unlike in the Fit campaign, the artificial intelligence theme is painted in a positive light in these commercials, with no visible drawbacks or dangers to humanity. On the contrary, like a magical talisman the E-class even helps people stave off other sentient or profound natural phenomena such as accidental death. In the ad *Sorry*, death is personified by the Grim Reaper, who smugly tells the driver that he will die. Unfortunately for the Reaper, the E-Class senses the danger and stops just in the nick of

time, even though the driver is distracted. In helping the driver avoid a certain tragic death the E-Class is nearly supernatural.

The E-Class indeed belongs to the mystical realm. It is described as pillarless, with windswept designs (Mercedes-Benz USA 2010, *Visionary Proportions*), which is suggestive of Barthes' description of the Citroen as seamless just as Christ's robe (Barthes 1972). The implied perfection exalts the car as a magical object not created by men but as if fallen from the heavens. Accordingly, we are told that the E-Class will "illuminate your soul" (Mercedes-Benz USA 2010, *Internal gratification*) reinforcing the hint that its consumption constitutes a spiritual experience.

Case 3: Lexus RX 350 and 450h

Background Information: Lexus RX

The third case examines the Lexus RX, a luxury crossover SUV that comes in multiple V6 and hybrid-powered models. While the RX is promoted all over the world, this analysis will focus on campaigns from Russia, Middle-East, South Africa, Canada and the USA. The USA campaign concentrates on the theme of reinvention and the way in which the new RX can transform the world around the driver. It is composed of broadcast, print and online advertising elements (Iancu 2009). The Canadian, South African, Middle Eastern and Russian campaigns are much smaller in scope and are comprised of only one or two adverts. Starting around $42,500 USD, the target market for the RX is wealthier than average males and females around 40 years of age.

Campaign Analysis: Lexus RX

The Lexus RX 350 and 450h campaigns are much more divided and disconnected between the various regions; hence, the themes are not as cohesive as in the Honda and Mercedes-Benz campaigns. The Russian and Middle Eastern campaigns are almost identical except for a small detail; a wolf. The campaigns also seemingly stress slightly different notions. The Russian advert and website are centered on the idea of the future. When entering the website, the viewer must put the current time forward into the future position in order to enter "Lexus time" (Lexus Russia 2010). Meanwhile, the Middle Eastern website and print ads stress the concept of leaders; people who embrace the future. Of course, the idea of the future is still key as the ads affirm that "only when you embrace the future, can you shape it" (*Welcome to forward living* 2009). The archetype evoked by these ads is that of the Leader or King. The King archetype is of great magnitude, epitomizing the loftiness of worldly male power and authority. The

Leader aspect of the archetype does not involve the royal bloodline, but acquiring authority through skill and ambition (Myss 2007). The Leader is capable of shaping the future for himself and those around him.

One element that is puzzlingly different between the two campaigns is the wolf. In the Russian version, the wolf is shown when it is already in the middle of the road and in front of the RX. The wolf opens its mouth to show its teeth, but not in an angry manner. In the Middle Eastern ad, the wolf is shown coming out onto the road, then curiously and somewhat innocently looking at the driver without opening its mouth. In the wild, wolves look into each other's eyes as an invitation to interact. They greet one another by bearing their teeth, but without scrunching the face in the way that is distinctive of an aggressive wolf (Lopez 1978). Seemingly, the wolf in the Russian ad greets the driver by baring his teeth, while the one in the Middle Eastern ad is simply curiously engaging the driver.

Wolves are also associated with leaders. They are social and run in packs, but allow only the alpha male and female to mate. In Eurasian and North American symbolism, the wolf is associated with the cult leader or god of war who could transform into a wolf. In Slavic symbolism, the wolf is a mediator between the human world and the 'other' world. Similarly, in Nordic myth, Odin's two companion wolves, Geri and Freki, guard the underworld. Wolves are also thought to be able to predict the future, another theme relevant to the Lexus ads. Furthermore, in Slavic mythology, a wolf crossing the path of a traveler meant that he or she will have success, happiness and prosperity in the future (Ponomareva 2009).

While it is puzzling why the wolf is the only different element between these two ads, it seems that the underlying meaning of the wolf is the same in both ads. The wolf represents both leadership and the possibility of foreseeing or even shaping the future. By making eye contact with the driver and, in one instance, even greeting him with his teeth, the wolf shows his respect or perhaps even approval of the car. When driving the Lexus, one is a leader who is respected and accepted by such great forces of nature as the wolf. With the wolf crossing his path he or she will have prosperity in the future, or in 'Lexus time' as the ad coins it.

Although the Russian and Middle Eastern ads evoke male kingly or fatherly archetypes, the South African ad is much more feminine. The narrator in this ad is female, which is rare amongst car ads and the only instance of a female narrator in any of the campaigns analyzed here. The ad begins with a bee in the process of pollinating a wild flower in Namaqualand. Pollination is used by the ad as an

example of a complex system. The car is described as the culmination of every system working together in the perfect moment. This analogy proposes that petrol and electric systems can work in harmony within the hybrid vehicle, but more interestingly "as an expression of eco-consciousness, it shows the Lexus RX450h as a non-disruptive part of nature's cycle" (DraftFCB 2010b). Once again, similarly to the Russian and Middle Eastern ads, the Lexus appears to be at one with nature, in perfect harmony with it and accepted by it. Even more than that, the Lexus is presented as part of the nature's cycle itself, as if it were an organic element. This touches on the discussion of the debatable nature between the notions of organic and mechanic described above in Section 1.

The theme of the idyllic drive in the countryside is also once again evident and once again contradictory. The drive depicted in the campaign aims to appeal to the target audience on an emotional and intellectual level; its presents itself as "aspirational" (ibid). The wildflowers of the Namaqualand, an arid region most of the year, bloom only during the rainy season. However, the constant reliance on automobiles and fossil fuels threaten the delicate ecosystems with which the Lexus is associating itself. In fact, the ad was not actually filmed entirely in Namaqualand, since, as Lexus general manager, Kevin Flynn puts it, Mother Nature could not provide the shots needed when they were needed, thus the agency "turned to BUF in Paris to 'help out' Mother Nature, if you will, with her television performance" (DraftFCB 2010b). The background was captured in Touws River and in the Karoo National Park and the only live action shot is the RX driving on the wintery roads – all the flowers were shot separately and added later (ibid).

The archetype evoked here is that of Mother Nature. The Great Mother is full of natural wonder as she is mother earth herself. She is a "universal image of woman as the eternal womb and nurturer; [i]t is an image of woman that has existed since the remotest times, across all cultures" (Randazzo 1993, p. 60). The Lexus hopes to present itself as one of her children, and thus in tune and in harmony with all her other creatures. Harmony with Mother Nature is evocative of the Advocate/Environmentalist archetype. The correlation of pollination to fertility and reproduction also calls to mind another female archetype, one related to Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love and Sexuality. Pollination is closely linked with fertility and reproduction, and so is the bee, a symbol of industry, wealth and also of the goddess Aphrodite herself. This link to Aphrodite may originate from a story in which she ordered the bees to buzz drowsily above her when she lay with Anchises, King of the Dardanians (Graves 1960).

The Lexus is once again shown as being one with nature in the Canadian ad *H is for Hybrid*, which directly addresses environmental concerns through an emotional appeal using this poem:

H is for many things. H is for home, H is for habitat, H is for human and humane and humility.
H is for help, it is for heroes and history, healing and harmony.
H is for making headway and H is for hope, hope for wonderful moments today,
hope for even more moments tomorrow.
H is for hybrid. Lexus, the world's only luxury hybrids.

The poem is accompanied by images of our home and habitat (earth from space; a city); humans (a baby); environmental disasters and concerns (a seagull covered in oil; people gathering garbage at a beach); environmental redemption (green roof; wind power; a man swimming with a whale) and finally of the Lexus driving down an idyllic scenic road.

This ad invokes the idea of humanity becoming a more close-knit society while attempting to be in touch with Mother-Earth, all with the help of the Lexus. It proposes that it is through technology that we will once again restore harmony with earth and nature. Technology is presented as a redeemer of humanity's behavior towards the environment. Interestedly, the ad chooses to show the disastrous implications of an oil spill. Hybrid vehicles do lower exhaust emission in comparison to standard SUVs; however, in reality, they are only a small step away from society's dependence on fossil fuels. Another interesting consideration is that RX determines which power source to use, as it is not up to the driver. At lower speeds it will use electric power, while with increased speed the petrol engine is called upon for additional power. Finally, at cruising speeds, the sole source of power is the petrol engine (Lexus Europe 2010). Hence, the reliance on petrol does not seem to be significantly diminished by this vehicle. The archetypes evoked here are once again that of the Environmentalist and a form of Mother Earth.

The Australian advert is very different from the aforementioned Lexus RX ads. It begins with stunning night-time imagery of an ominous empty countryside road with a full moon reflecting in a nearby lake. The scenery and music create a feeling of suspense. Suddenly, the car comes rushing forth down the road, blowing leaves into the camera while still at a distance. The cinematography creates a sense that the camera is chasing after the car, which is escaping in a way that only a sentient being can. No driver can be seen in the RX. The narrator begins saying, "We've pursued it for thousands of miles" (*We've never been closer* 2009), as we are shown images of the car entering a tunnel juxtaposed with scenes of greyhounds running on a track. Then, the music and narration stop as we see the car standing at an empty intersection in a small town. As soon as some water is splashed onto the car, it moves its headlights, as if glancing to the side to see where the water came from. The car continues escaping while the narrator states that "now it's looking over its shoulder" and "it can feel our warm breath on the back of its neck" (*We've never been closer* 2009). Suddenly, the music starts up again as the car

comes directly at the camera, which is interceded with images of the greyhounds racing towards the camera. In the end we are told that "we've been close to perfection before, but we've never been this close" (ibid).

The most obvious reference here is to the car as the embodiment of perfection itself. Once again this is reminiscent of Barthes' description of the Citroën as seamless in a manner similar to Christ's robe. The notion of an object obtaining perfection places it out of the human realm "to the realm of fairy-tales" (Barthes 1972, p. 88). This theme is described in more detail in Section 1 above. Yet another reference is that of the car as a greyhound. While zoomorphism of the car was discussed above in relation to the Fit campaign, here is it not as literal but makes use of images of actual animals. The visual metaphor connecting the Lexus to the running greyhounds is much more subtle. It is meant to connect the car with the symbolism of the greyhound, which includes speed, agility, pride and nobility. It also presents the car as the perfectly loyal companion. It is speculated that Odysseus's dog, Argos, who loyally and beguilingly waited for his owner to return from a 20 year journey just to die right after seeing him one last time, was a greyhound or a similar breed (Branigan 2004).

The USA Lexus RX campaign is more developed than those of other regions. This campaign centers around the idea of reinvention. In *Assembled* (2009), mechanical arms and belts spring up all around the driver, including his home and office in order to build the car with technology and features that "not only anticipate [his] needs, but help improve [his] focus on the road ahead". In the ad *City*, massive cranes descend upon the city streets from the sky to eliminate traffic and lift buildings from their foundations so that the driver can effortlessly move along to his destination. This is presented as a metaphor for the navigation system. Likewise, in the ad *Intersection*, time is stopped and reversed just before a collision, as men and women dressed in black – metaphors for the night-vision features – silently alter the events.

One of the themes emerging from this campaign is that of the car as an extension of the human body and senses. Just as the Mercedes-Benz E-Class, the Lexus RX is presented as a technologically advanced automobile that is perfectly fitted to the driver and his life, able to help the driver know which streets to take in order to avoid traffic and even allow him or her to see at night. This is once again presenting the driver in his or her car as of a sort of mechanical-human centaur or hybrid creature, a theme discussed in detail in Section 1.

Another underlying theme is that of the Wizard or Magician. The seemingly magical reinventions that the Lexus is able to perform in the campaign defy the rules of natural life. Although the campaigns use the robotic arms, cranes capable of lifting building and time-traveling people in black as metaphors for the car's features, the implication is still that the car is a magical object or the wizard himself that will reinvent the way the driver travels through the world, navigates through traffic and sees at night. The car is also presented as a sort of talisman, magically created for the driver, not in a factory but in his surroundings to help him navigate the car and protect him from harm.

The *Intersection* ad is a version of Frye's mythoi of tragedy, as advertising only tells stories of tragedies avoided (Stern 1995). This ad is very similar to the Mercedes-Benz's *Sorry* ad, since both depict what could have been a dangerous and most certainly deadly collision with a large commercial truck being avoided due to the powers of the car. In both ads, the driver would not have been at fault for the accident, as the circumstances were beyond his control and thus his death would be tragic.

Case Studies Discussion

The Honda, Mercedes-Benz and Lexus campaigns from around the world were collected and analyzed in order to determine whether automotive advertising can be considered mythopoeic and whether it utilizes archetypal imagery. The automotive literature review above (see Section 1) revealed that the automobile is wrapped up in a mythology that has ancient roots as well as contemporary folkloric motifs and significations. The literature surrounding the car is certainly mythopoeic and the case studies analysis presented above demonstrates that automotive advertising is a vital part of it. Even in the sample of three campaigns, the major mythical themes and motifs surrounding the car were clearly observable. With the utilization of the methodology outlined above the analysis revealed that even ads that seemed entirely different from one another contain underlying themes that lie at the heart of the mythology of the car.

Some campaigns are noticeably more cohesive than others; however, once taken as a whole, the promotional narrative surrounding the car is unified. The underlying themes regarding technology and human relations are especially comparable in all the campaigns. Cars are presented as technological advancements that will bless humanity with greater powers of movement and awareness. The car has become almost a second-skin for its driver, improving his or her senses to the point of magical abilities. Just like clothes and houses, cars function as prostheses for many men (Belk 1988). The car is presented as an object that can allow the mortal limits of human bodies to find ultimate transcendence in the

inhuman power of the metal machine (Richards 1994, p. 70). This union is reminiscent of mythological hybrid beings such as centaurs and Marshall McLuhan's observation that men now place themselves into mechanical straitjackets instead of animal ones.

Nevertheless, the car is also portrayed as a miraculous means for humans to get closer to nature; although in reality, it may be the cause for many environmental problems. The car is shown as an object that can counterbalance the destruction it has caused by protecting the driver and can provide consolation for the circumstance it brought on (Ross 1995, p. 55). Wernick suggests that once the car became associated with the destruction of the environment and dystopia, the advertisers aimed to reverse the bad associations by making the car into Nature (Wernick 1989, p. 210). Mother Nature appears to accept the car as one of her children, or at least subjects, as each campaign depicts the car in an idyllic setting of the countryside or even as an embodiment of nature's own wondrous system (Lexus). Reflecting the totemic connection that man has had with animals since the remotest times all the campaigns also have some reference to animals, either of the car as zoomorphic being (Honda), the car taking on animal symbolism (Mercedes-Benz, Lexus) or the car being accepted by a majestic animal (Lexus).

Paradoxically, while being portrayed as part of Mother Nature, the car is also depicted as a magic object of perfection that appears to have fallen from the sky just as the Citroën did to Barthes. The Mercedes-Benz's "pillarless" and "windswept" design is proclaimed as being capable of illuminating one's soul, while the Lexus' magical abilities to transform the world and turn back time reinvent reality itself. Both campaigns present the car as a purely perfect and magical object that functions as a talisman of protection or even as a source of spiritual experience.

Anthropomorphosis of the car represents yet another key theme that is present in all the campaigns. The cars are described in human terms, and more specifically depicted as a woman. Clearly, the car still maintains its paradoxical symbolism of both phallic and womb-like, but the latter seems to be more prevalent in contemporary mythology of the car. This is not surprising, as it was foreseen by McLuhan nearly sixty years ago (McLuhan 1951). It seems that man's relationship with his 'mechanical bride' has only intensified in the last few decades. The car as woman has become even more alluring, sexy as well as protective and reliable.

The presence of all these themes within the campaigns clearly demonstrates that mythopoeic forces are at work in automotive advertising. McLuhan noticed them in *The Mechanical Bride* back in

1951, and as promotional culture has continued to gain a foothold on the production of cultural messages in contemporary society, their presence has intensified. Furthermore, following another of McLuhan's observations, automotive advertising is teaming with primordial archetypes. The Honda Jazz and Fit campaigns are the most mythically vibrant of the three, as they present the most obvious and predominant archetypes, that of the Hero, Warrior, Defender, Maiden and Goddess. Both cars are given distinct anthropomorphic personalities, hence they cease being pieces of metal and become "full of life" (Honda Jazz 2010b). Both Fit and Jazz campaigns also detail an archetypal journey that corresponds to Frye's summer romance mythoi. Fit's journey is the hero's quest in which he battles ferocious and terrifying obstacles to help his society and ultimately complete his initiation rites. Meanwhile, Jazz is on an adventure to achieve success and reassurance by discovering and exploring new places and making a name for herself. The underlying similarity between these two campaigns lies in the fact that they both appeal to the different journeys embarked upon by men and women in contemporary society.

While the Mercedes-Benz and Lexus campaigns are not composed of a mythological narrative as lucid as that of the Honda ads, they do encompass several important archetypes such as those of the Great Mother, Advocate/Environmentalist, King/Leader and Shape-shifter. All of the campaigns also depict mythical places and narratives that conform to Frye's four mythoi. Each ad has countless mythical elements, similar to Levi-Strauss's mythemes, though these are too lengthy to discuss in detail in this thesis.

Some elements in the ads appeared puzzling and could not be connected to the grand narrative of the campaigns or tied into the aforementioned themes. One such element is that of the wolf in the Russian and Middle Eastern ads. It is unclear why the wolf was changed in the ad for one of these countries. Perhaps this could be explained by culturally specific knowledge or a detailed analysis of the symbolic and mythical meaning of the wolf in both countries. This additional research is beyond the reach of this thesis, as it is far too detailed and large in scope. Furthermore, it is also possible that such puzzling elements are an intrusion of non-mythical discourse and hence not explainable in mythical terms alone.

Of a vital note is the fact that, as our society changes and the social context becomes altered, a shift takes place in the mythologies and archetypes that resonate with us the most. As this thesis argues for an eternal basis of myths, the case studies highlight that despite any changes in the social context, the myths remain available in essentially the same form to be recalled in various practices and textual production. This is not to say that historical factors have no influence on the matter, but just that their

effects are on the changing importance of certain myths at any given time, and not on their actual composition. Clearly, the social context has changed since McLuhan wrote *The Mechanical Bride* in the 1950's and hence this thesis has observed that more importance has been placed on some archetypes over others. For instance, the Advocate/Environmentalist archetype is not itself new as it can be traced to ancient mythologies; however, it has significantly gained importance in the last few decades due to more importance being placed on environment preservation. Many myths and archetypes, in their most basic form are unchanging regardless of the shifting social context.

The methodology employed by this thesis proved very valuable in detecting layers of underlying meaning which would otherwise go undetected with the use of structural methods such as semiotics alone. As Randazzo decrees, the "symbolic material found in mythology and other mythopoeic sources often brings insights and a depth of understanding that would be impossible using traditional research" (Randazzo 1993, p. 58). By first uncovering the archaic roots of the mythology enveloping the car in contemporary society and then locating the same mythological themes, as well as primordial archetypes in the case studies, this analysis has demonstrated that automotive advertising indeed appears to be mythopoeic and archetypal.

Conclusion and Reflections

In contemporary culture, the automobile is immersed in religious illusions, bestowed with magical powers and perceived as a god-like entity. Karl Marx observed that:

> Religion is, in fact, the self-conscious and self-esteem of man who has either not yet gained himself or has lost himself again…It is the fantastic realization of the human being because the human being has attained no true reality…The wretchedness of religion is at once an expression of and a protest against real wretchedness. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. (Karl Marx 1977)

Meanwhile, *Fortune* has proclaimed the "fact is that the automobile became a hypnosis. The automobile became the opium of the American people" (*Fortune,* 8-9). In order to observe this relationship between our culture and the automobile, we must turn to one of the most vibrant sources of cultural meaning in today's society, promotional culture, and particularly advertising. Such an exploration is warranted by the observations made in Marshall McLuhan's 1951 book, *The Mechanical Bride: Folklore of Industrial Man*, in which he discovers that amongst other themes detected in various forms of popular culture, the modern depiction of the relationship between humanity and technology has its roots in archaic mythology.

McLuhan discovered that a society has underlying themes that can be best unearthed in advertising, because it taps into the world of sub-rational impulses in order to express hidden desires (McLuhan 1951, p.97). McLuhan's contribution includes his development of a valid method of enquiry that penetrates to the deepest level of meaning in a manner not possible with other methods such as semiotics. McLuhan's technique of applying aesthetic criticism to the study of promotional messages examines the "semiotics beneath semiotics – levels of meaning beyond the messenger's intent or the recipient's awareness" (Meggs 2002, p. xiii).

Inspired by McLuhan's observations and methods of inquiry, this thesis proposes that promotional culture is the mythology of today. A review of critical contemporary literature undertaken in Chapter 1 reveals that, over the decades following McLuhan, scholars from various fields have continued the tradition of locating and analyzing the mythopoeic forces embedded in advertising. Nevertheless, many gaps in contemporary scholarship remain. This thesis addresses such gaps by examining contemporary manifestations of McLuhan's observations and building upon them by determining how automotive advertising can be considered mythopoeic and how mythopoeic automotive advertising employs archetypes. Following the definitions put forth in the conceptual

framework (Chapter 2), this thesis also establishes that myth is form of thought and analysis as valid as scientific thinking and that it contains universal representations in the form of primordial archetypes. Myth is different from folklore, which is a representation of beliefs and traditions specific to a given culture and is mainly historically based. Through its appropriation and utilization of ancient myth, contemporary advertising creates novel forms of industrial or post-industrial folklore unique to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Meanwhile, it is through the mythopoeic powers of poetry that promotional culture is able to transform itself into myth.

By performing an extensive analysis of literature surrounding the automobile and examining three automotive campaigns this thesis has determined that automotive advertising is indeed mythopoeic and contains various primordial archetypes such as the Hero, Warrior, Maiden and Goddess, which have maintained their relevance to this day. Hence, seeing that promotional culture contains mythopoeic forces, incorporates narratives that address universal themes, draws on ancient archetypes, while also presenting novel mythical motifs, it becomes apparent that it functions as the mythology of today.

Furthermore, in regards to the mythology of the car and the relationship between humanity and technology, McLuhan's observations have held steadfast, as they are as relevant today as sixty years ago. There have been important alterations, such as the appearance of environmental themes and the presentation of technology as a part of nature, which McLuhan did not observe in his book, and which point to the evolution or creation of particular mythological themes. Nonetheless, the mechanism with which promotional culture appropriates ancient myth, popular poetry and modern folklore is unaffected. The fact that McLuhan's predictions and observations ring true today is also alarming, as he also foresaw various negative consequences stemming from the colonization of myth and poetry by promotional culture.

McLuhan describes the modern symbolic world as a situation similar to that of Edgar Allan Poe's sailor in "*A Descent into the Maelstrom*" (McLuhan 1951, p. 148). He believes that the only means of release from the *strom* is by studying it and its operation (McLuhan 1951, p. 148). Andrew Wernick depicts the same situation as a giant vortex in which all signifying gestures are swallowed up (Wernick 1991, p. 187). Additionally, considering the promises of happiness, which promotional discourse continually offers and defers, the vortex can be thought of as an infinite maze, "in which there is no final destination, no final reward, and where the walls are pictures (and pictures of pictures) of ever-multiplying varieties of cheese" (Wernick 1991, p. 188). As the symbolic universe becomes

dereferentialized, modern individuals are unsure of "how to build an identity and an orientation from the materials of a culture whose meanings are unstable and behind which…no genuine expressive intention can be read" (Wernick, 1991, p. 192).

Under these conditions, affluent society becomes its own myth (Baudrillard 1998, p. 194). An immense collective narcissism is inducing modern society "to merge into itself – and absolve itself in – the image it presents of itself, to be convinced of itself" (Baudrillard 1998, p. 194). Affluent society allows no heresy against itself. Counter-discourse and denunciations of consumption are as embedded in consumer society as any of its other aspects; they are themselves part of the myth (Baudrillard 1998, p. 196). A society with no balance between God and the Devil, black magic and white magic or, in this case, consumption and its denunciation, is "a society with no history and no dizzying heights, a society with no other myth than itself" (Baudrillard 1998, p. 196). Accordingly, late capitalism is drifting toward an immense spiritual-cum-ideological crisis (Wernick 1991, p. 196).

There is also great danger in promotional culture evoking the grand primordial archetypes to fulfill its commercial purposes, as archetypes ennoble life by heightening its meaning. Mark and Pearson argue that practicing meaning management without proper archetypal knowledge is as preposterous as practicing medicine without understanding anatomy (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 33). Unfortunately, Hollywood and Madison Avenue, the great myth machines of our time, create an abundance of meaning "without a clue or a thought as to what they are doing" (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 44). As unsettling as it is, contemporary promotional apparatuses are making meaning without managing meaning (Mark and Pearson 2001, p. 44).

Nerveless, James Twitchell warns us against simply crying out that malicious advertisers capture our imagination and manipulate it for their own profit. He does not dispute that the gods that we need so much are "now in the hands of commercial manipulators, that folklore has become fakelore and folklure, that holy grails have become spot removers, and that the magic of the Eucharist has been stolen by liquor campaigns" (Twitchell 1996, p. 40). He only reminds us that this is possible because of the yearning of humans and institutions' power to guide those yearnings is as powerful as ever. Twitchell believes that we only have ourselves to blame as, while advertising does exploit these relationships, it does not create them; "they were established long before Christianity" (Twitchell 1996, p. 41).

Hence, a better understanding of promotional culture as the mythology of today is of great importance to the modern individual and society as a whole. Critically examining promotional culture's echoes and reflections of our deepest universal yearnings, dreams, feelings and beliefs is vital to understanding the forces that shape our daily life and avoiding the negative observations and predictions detailed above. Additional research in this field may further build upon the methodology used in this thesis by harmoniously incorporating structuralist methods with rhetorical and discourse analysis and archetypal literary criticism. Promotional culture is a vast mechanism of which advertising is only a small part, thus, further research should also examine other facets of promotional culture including films, celebrities, television shows, etc., in an attempt to ponder on McLuhan's insightful question, "What happens when the ad makers take over all the popular myth and poetry?" (McLuhan 1951, p. 117).

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Appendix A:

List of Case Studies Advertisements

Honda Fit

2006

- Appetite for Cargo
- Speedy Demon
- Werewolves Beware
- Catlike Reflexes (30 seconds)
- Ferocious Small Dominator (30 seconds)
- Frisky Predator
- Mucho Muscle
- Nocturnal Flyer

2008

- USA Honda Fit Website http://fit.honda.com
- Bats
- Cavernous (Print)
- Defense Mechanism
- Gas Hogs (Print)
- Mecha Mosquitoes

Honda Jazz

2006

- Australian Honda Jazz Website http://www.eversonice.com.au/
- Dreaming
- Ever so nice
- Parking

2009

- Australian Honda Jazz Website honda.com.au/vroom
- Jazz Comes to Town
- Jazz Comes to Town (print)
- Casting Session
- Honda Jazz Brochure
- Adshell
- Banner

- Print ad
- Point of Sale

Lexus RX

Australia

- We've Never Been Closer

Canada

- Moments
- Vancouver
- H is for Hybrid

Middle East

- Welcome to Forward Living (Print)
- RX 350 Commercial

Russian

- RX 350 Commercial

South Africa

- Moment

USA

- Assembled
- City
- Intersection
- Power of h

Mercedes-Benz E-Class

Australia

- Print Ad
- Australian Mercedes-Benz E-Class Website http://www.allneweclass.com.au/
    - Attraction
    - Awaken
    - Clean
    - Cocooned

- Considerate
- Extensive
- Extra Sensory
- Feel
- Friend
- Green
- Intelligence
- Measured
- Poise
- Sleek
- Supple
- Tailored
- Temperate
- Vision

Germany

- Dreams
- Beauty
- Lullaby

International Promotional Videos

- Blink of an Eye
- Making Room for Beauty
- Welcome Home
- Dog
- Sorry
- Jung von Matt Ideas
- International Mercedes-Benz E-Class Website http://www3.mercedes-benz.com/mbcom_v4/xx/e-class-coupe/en.html

UK

- Print Ad
- UK Mercedes-Benz E-Class Website http://www.everymomentapleasure.com/
  - Accessible
  - Easy
  - Pleasure (identical to Intelligence from Australian Website)
  - Soft
  - (All others are identical to the videos on the Australian Website above)

USA

- Hippie
- Ignite
- Museum Trip
- What it's Made of
- Print Ad
- USA Mercedes-Benz E-Class Website http://www.mbusa.com/mercedes/vehicles/class/class-E
    - Adaptive High Beam Assist
    - Attention Assist
    - Blind Spot Assist
    - Distonic Plus
    - Internal Gratification
    - Night View Assist Plus
    - Peace of Mind
    - Visionary Proportions