Frankfort
Before Philosophy (1946)

Frankfort, Henri, Henrichte Antonia Groenewegen Frankfort, John Albert Wilson, and
        Thorkild Jacobsen. _Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient_
        Man; an Essay on Speculative Thought in the Ancient near East, A Pelican Book.
   Baltimore, Md.,: Penguin Books, 1967.

Chapter 1

_(14) "Primitive man had only one mode of thought, one mode of expression, one part of
speech - the personal."_

_(16) "Ancient man did not think out answers in the beginning of the world; an answer
had to be revealed to him in a reciprocal relationship with nature."_

This book (written in 1946) is an attempt to understand the view of the world of ancient
people in Egypt and Mesopotamia; precisely, how they understood natural phenomena
and the intangible.
Basic Premise: Ancient man did not think in terms of impersonal universal laws, rather,
he took each individual event at face value. Nature is a live presence, whose qualities
can not be discovered by active inquiry, but only by the presence **revealing** itself. It is
experienced, not merely contemplated or understood. Nature and man were
dependent upon one another.
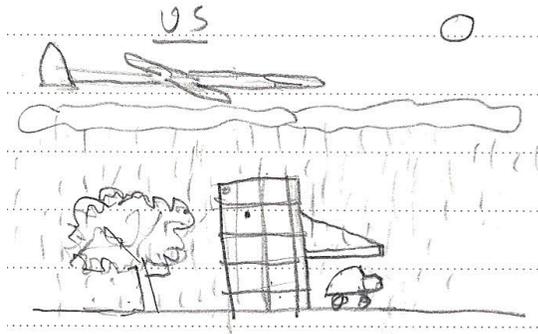
Mythopoeic Thought: "Thou"
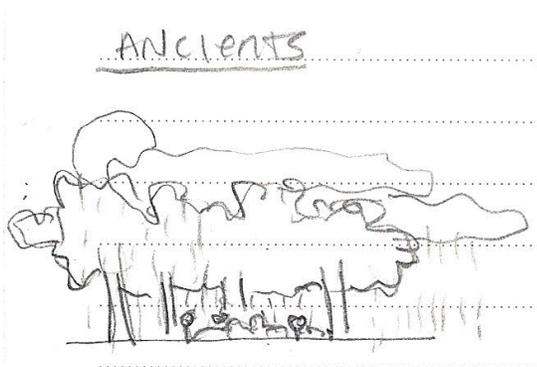
Mythopoeic: from Greek Muthos "myth"
and poiein "to create". The act of myth-
making.

The curious, direct knowledge one gets
when we **understand** something, the
form of knowledge we share with
animals.

Natural phenomena were seen as
individual events - **an act of will** brought
about by nature.

Modern Thought: "It"

Scientific thinking
Discovery by active inquiry
Nature is more objectified; "Us and It" -
    two different things, not
    necessarily dependent
Natural phenomena is predicable
behavior under a set of circumstances
Related to other groups of objects,
    categorized
Articulate

Causality
Because the ancients view everything as living, as individual, they accept that different individuals have different causalities and different consequences.
Cause and effect; ancients did not look for "how", but for **"who"** when searching for explanation of an event. He does not look for an impersonal "law" that regulates an effect, rather he looks for a **purposeful will** committing an act.
       : If the rivers refuse to rise, it is not suggested that a lack of rainfall caused
        the calamity, it has *refused to rise* and must be angry. (p. 24)

A Language of Myth
Although entangled in the immediacy of his perceptions, ancient man recognized the existence of certain problems which transcend the phenomena:
- problem of origin
- purpose of being
- the invisible order made by customs
Different from legend, saga, fable or fairy tale, myth is presented with compelling authority. *Myth reveals a metaphysical truth*, recited through dramatization.

Several Avenues of Approach
How can there be one truth? The mythopoeic mind expressed the irrational by admitting the validity of several avenues of approach at one and the same time. Ancients had a tendency to present various descriptions of identical phenomena side by side even though they are mutually exclusive. Ancient man wants to find a cause **as specific and personal and the individual himself**. The event is willed, not intellectually analyzed.
       : Dualism in death - Death can be both willed and/or created. They didn't ask
        "how" the person died, they asked "why" and "who".

Not "Symbolical"
The mythopoeic mind expressed a phenomenon by numerous images corresponding to **unconnected avenues of approach** (exactly opposite of what we do - we look for identical causes for identical effects throughout the phenomenal world). The many sidedness of mythological images serve to do justice to the complexity of the phenomena. At any moment, the symbol may be felt to be filled with the full

significance of the person. Imagery of myth is inseparable from the thought and represents the form for the experience.

Not Personification
Primitive man does not explain natural phenomena by imparting human characteristics to an inanimate world; primitive man simply does not know an inanimate world

COALESCENCE:
   of Symbols and significance - Names, objects, a lock of hair, a shadow = there is a coalescence of the symbol and what is signifies and a part can stand for the whole. The ancients felt that real harm would come to the enemies whose names were destroyed in ritual (p. 21).
   of Time - Deliberate coordination of social and natural forces, increasing the chances of success.
   of Space - Several archetypal localities existed in several sites throughout the land.
   : in Egypt, the creator was said to have emerged from the waters of chaos and to have made a mound of dry land upon which he could stand - this was the center where creative forces ordered life and the universe began. This became the first temple. When a new temple was formed, because it possessed the essential the primitive hill, it was equally sacred.

Dreams and hallucinations are real
Whatever is capable of affecting the mind, feeling or will has established its reality. There is not reason to consider why dreams should be considered less real (p. 20). We understand dreams as a product of our subconscious mind, but primitive man can not withdraw from the presence of the phenomenon. In the immediacy of the primitive experience, there is no room for critical resolution of perception.

Heaven and Earth
Mythopoeic thought does not require its explanation to represent a continuous process. It accepts an initial situation and a final situation connected by no more than the conviction that one came forth from the other.
  : Heaven was originally laying upon the earth, but the two were seperated and
  the sky was lifted up to its present position (by the God of Air, Shu, who is now
  between the earth and sky).
Changes
Explained simply as two different states, one of which comes from the other, a transformation, a metamorphosis. No insistence on an intelligible process is necessary. (p. 26). When there is a change, there is a cause; and a cause has a will.

More thoughts:
Even tho there were records, an offering was still made to the Nile, complete with the contract outlining the Nile's oblgations

Inconsistency bothers modern man, but ancient man does not isolate an event from it's attending circumstances or look for one explanation that must hold together for all circumstances (that's modern scientific thinking).

Heaven is depicted as a woman bending over the earth with outstreatched arms while the good Shu supports her. (image)

Shu is the god of the wind, the atmosphere, the space between the heavens and the earth. As Lord of the atmosphere it is his duty to separate his children. Shu can be seen supporting the sky goddess and daughter Nuit above his head while his son and earth god Geb resides below his feet. It has been said that if Shu were to ever be removed from his place, chaos would come to the universe and all life would cease.