Religious Language: Myth

(Dale Hathaway)

## Dale Hathaway

## Fall, 2020

Created: 2020-07-24 Fri 10:43

## Guide to app usage

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key stroke | Effect |
| n, space | next slide |
| p | previous slide |
| f | fullscreen |
| esc, o | overview slide |
| m | toggle menu |
| audio inlay | start/stop audio playback |

## Religious Myth:

* A story that **sets up a world by describing ultimate reality and its relationship to humanity**.
  + Myths seek to **explain the ultimate meaning** of the universe (cosmos) and our existence, its ultimate origins, destiny, order (or disorder) and relationships.
  + Purpose = **revelation of the nature of the sacred**, the universe, and human nature.
  + In short, “How does reality makes sense in light of the sacred?"
* They **do not seek to record simply what happened** in ordinary reality. They do not aim at empirical or scientific truth (that can be tested via experiments).
* Myths seek to **narrate or reveal a transcendent reality** and its relation to ordinary reality.
* Mythic time **transcends ordinary time**.
* Mythic events transcend “ **empirically observable**" events.

The purpose of myth is expose the sacred in our midst. When we imagine our lives to be somehow scientifically determined, we do well to remember that myth **transcends** that **empirical** existence

* Myths do not aim at **scientific truth**
* Myths represent **collective wisdom** of a community over time
* Myths frequently communicate through **exaggeration**
* Myths provide a lense for **seeing the world**
* Rather myths **represent the collective experience and wisdom of a community over time** concerning the deepest meaning of reality
  + and the ultimate frame of reference for understanding it expressed in the most powerful and fundamental forms of human language—stories conveyed via imaginative, poetic language
  + (exaggeration = frequent vehicle because ordinary language inadequate).
  + A myth is like a pair of glasses or framework through which people “image" or see the world.
* **Note Well**: Many of us may instinctively think of "myth" as something that is **false** or **fictional**. This is not how the term is used in this course.

## Modern myths

### Giving meaning

If "myth" is what gives meaning to the world we live in, organizes community, passes it on – what are our myths?

If myth is one of the things that provides meaning in our world, all too often permeated with chaos and suffering, then we would do well to ask what are the myths that give our lives meaning?

### Mythologies around the world

Some examples of mythologies in [other cultures](https://examples.yourdictionary.com/myth-story-examples.html). These examples invite us to ask about our own culture's mythologies.

It is helpful to first look at other examples before directly turning our attention to our own culture.

### Contemporary mythologies

[modern mythology](http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Mi-Ni/Modern-Mythology.html) Here we might explore contemporary myths in our own culture: "like all myths and legends, modern mythology springs from a sense of life's wonder, excitement, mystery, and terror."

As we remind ourselves that a myth is not something that is "false" or a crude attempt to explain things we don't know. If in fact **myth** is a part of what gives our life "wonder, excitement, and mystery – as well as terror" then we myth invites us into a satisfying world of self-awareness and self-knowledge.

### Mythology and Movies

[Modern Myths in Movies and What's Missing](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/modern-myths-in-movies-an_b_3895816) . This web site gives some thought-provoking illustrations.

You might well recognize some of the themes explored in this link.

Created by Dale Hathaway.