



SEPT 9

- What makes something a “myth”?
- What does calling something a ”myth” mean colloquially?
- How does Bruce Lincoln define ”myth”?

For Wednesday

- Read Nye “Ritual” in additional readings
- Read “Potlatch” in additional readings

Last Class

- Sandwiches...
- Classification/Definition
- Does not necessarily account for all data
- Two things broadly defined (sandwiches, religions) may have nothing in common with each other other than that they are called “sandwich” or “religion”

“Religion” as a Modern Classification

- In Canada (and elsewhere) we separate “religion” from other social and cultural practices
 - *How?*
- This separation is deemed to be proper, even natural
 - *Why?*

“Religion” a Euro-Western Category

- What does this mean?
- Western Europe tends to name religions
- DOES NOT mean that the people, texts, and practices we call “religious” did not exist before

Things that could be religious

- Symbols
- Places
- Times
- Laws
- Persons
- Beliefs
- Vehicles of authority

Huh?

“the nature of the non-mundaneness of these objects is constituted through the behaviour of the society and its human subjects toward them, just as the behaviours of the subject are constituted by (or responsive to) the culturally postulated sacred nature and agency of the objects” (Paden 1996, 6).

Comparative Religion

- Uses both historical and phenomenological approaches
- Focuses on similarities, differences, and above all context
- Looks at *analogous* themes
- For us, Myth and Ritual will frame our study of World Religions



MYTH



Organizing Stories

■ How do we define:

- Fable
- Legend
- History
- Myth

Stories according to Lincoln

- May contain some or all of:
- Truth claims
- Credibility
- Authority

Myth according to Lincoln

	Truth Claims	Credibility	Authority
Fable	No	No	No
Legend	Yes	No	No
History	Yes	Yes	No
Myth	Yes	Yes	Yes

Fable: Tortoise and the Hare

- Truth Claim?
- No
- Credible?
- No
- Authority?
- No



Legend: King Arthur

- Truth Claim?
- Yes
- Credible?
- No
- Authority?
- No



History: WWI

- Truth Claim?
- Yes
- Credible?
- Yes
- Authority?
- No



Myth: Resurrection of Jesus

- Truth Claim?
- Yes
- Credible?
- Yes
- Authority?
- Yes



Myth according to Lincoln

	Truth Claims	Credibility	Authority
Fable	No	No	No
Legend	Yes	No	No
History	Yes	Yes	No
Myth	Yes	Yes	Yes