



Cultural Mythology: " The Similarities of Mythology Across Cultures "

Edited by Paul F. Kisak


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Mythology can refer to the collected myths of a group of people—their collection of stories they tell to explain nature, history, and customs—or to the study of such myths. As a collection of explanatory stories, mythology is a vital feature of every culture. Many sources for myths have been proposed, ranging from personification of nature or personification of natural phenomena, to truthful or hyperbolic accounts of historical events to explanations of existing rituals. Although the term is complicated by its implicit condescension, mythologizing is not just an ancient or primitive practice, as shown by contemporary mythopoeia such as urban legends and the expansive fictional mythoi created by fantasy novels and comics. A culture's collective mythology helps convey belonging, shared and religious experiences, behavioral models, and moral and practical lessons. The study of myth dates back to ancient history. Rival classes of the Greek myths by Euhemerus, Plato, and Sallustius were developed by the Neoplatonists and later revived by Renaissance mythographers. The nineteenth-century comparative mythology reinterpreted myth as a primitive and failed counterpart of science (E. B. Tylor), a "disease of language" (Max Müller), or a misinterpretation of magical ritual (James Frazer). Recent approaches have rejected conflict between the value of myth and rational thought, often viewing myths as expressions to understand general psychological, cultural, or societal truths, rather than as inaccurate historical accounts. This book discusses the cultural mythologies that have been propagated throughout history by various world cultures.

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