

Expository Essay Example

Mythology Essay

The word “myth” is closely related to the term “culturology”. So, in order to start talking about myths is very important to identify what is culturology. For the majority of the people culturology possesses some degree of uncertainty. Culturology is formed on the bases of the combination of the social and humanitarian knowledge. In other words, culturology is a discipline which tries to understand and explain culture as a phenomenon and trace its development in space and time. Nevertheless, it is impossible to explore culture as a whole entity. It is only possible to study its certain epochs and local manifestations. One of the brightest examples of such manifestations is the myth.

Mythological cognition is different from the scientific knowledge and actually, approaches art in a way that has a figurative character. The primary function of the myth is the satisfaction of the human inquisitiveness by answering the questions “why?”, and “where from?”. For us the myth which we attribute to the “primitive man” is only a poetic image. We call it a “myth” only in relation to the thoughts of those people who wrote it and of those to whom it was addressed. In the latest poetic products the image is no more but a mean of realization of the value, a mean which breaks into verses. In other words, the integrity collapses each time when it achieves its goal, though its meaning has an allegoric shape.

On the contrary, in a myth, the image and values are various; the allegorical meaning of an image does exist, but is not realized by the subject as the image is entirely transferred to the value. Otherwise: the myth is a verbal expression of such explanation during which the described subjective image gets an objective existence. There are no abstract concepts in a myth. There is nothing in a myth that cannot be presented visually, sensually, plastically.

We use a lot of words that do not carry an image for us: “conscience”, “tiredness”, “ignorance”, “work”, “glory” etc. A myth does not live in a word. It is a tale. Any comparison and likening in a myth is stretched really far, inevitably gravitating to a complete identification. The analogy, likening, identification undividedly dominate in a myth. They carry out the same role what in our culture is called the cause –consequence connections. A myth makes a thing axiomatic without demanding the subsequent clearing.

The central characters of any mythology were the Gods. It is a well-known fact, that mythology is definitely polytheistic. The myths aspire not only to sort out but also to form the hierarchy of the gods led by the supreme god. Zeus gets the sky and the superiority over the brothers: the sea one Poseidon and the underground one Hades. Not to mention his children: Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Dionysus etc. Yes, Zeus in the consciousness of the Greeks did win his contenders and was identified with the Supreme deity.

The myth historically was the “filling” of a soul of the “primitive” people and remains the same for modern people due to the fact that it reflects the outlook its “authors”. It actually is what we know as theology, philosophy, fiction and science. A man of any primitive society used to mythologize and a modern man creates scientific researches. Therefore our contemporary knowledge is based on the mythological thinking.

Differently, in the beginning it was a question of a myth as of some kind of informative relation, then as of a way of life it presented and eventually of the values which are born by a myth: what is proclaims and what is denies. The myth being a specifically generalized reflection of the reality in the form of sensual representations and the fantastic animated beings, always played a considerable role in religion and religious philosophy.

In the XX century the “political” myth get an extreme value as it leads to the sacralization of the state, of the nation, of the race etc. The brightest example of such myth is the ideology of fascism. This myth managed to contain religious mythology, bourgeois philosophy and demagogically absolutized such real entity as “nation” or “the people”.

Some features of mythological thinking can remain in mass consciousness along with elements of philosophical and scientific knowledge resulting in scientific logics. Under some circumstances, the mass consciousness can serve as a base for the distribution of a “social” or “political” myth, but as a whole the mythology as a level of consciousness has historically become outdated.

Various forms of mass consciousness, after a definitive allocation from mythology, still continue to use myth as a “language”, expanding and interpreting mythological symbols in a new manner. In particular, the XX century gives demonstrates the turn of the literature to the side of mythology (J. Joyce, T. Mann, Z. Kotto, etc). Reconsideration of various traditional myths takes place along with the creation of new poetic symbols.

It is very hard to underestimate the role of the myth as it teaches people the lessons of life required and used for them in certain situation. It also provides people with a set structure of the cosmic events that are to be accepted. Historically, a whole epoch of the life of humanity, the formation and the blossom of the ancient civilizations was the kingdom of myth created by the imagination of a man. Imagination is a great gift of nature,

a priceless quality of people, and their creative energy. It created such masterpieces as the “Iliad”, “Ramayana” and the “Aeneis”. Through myths people look for the answers to the philosophical questions, they try to unravel the mysteries of the Universe, the man and of the life itself. When the reality does not provide the required answers – the myths comes into play.

A myth is not a fairy-tale. A myth identifies the dream with the reality. The creation of a myth is associated with the absolute knowledge of the “truth” which has to be transferred to other individuals. No one from the contemporaries of Homere could doubt the existence of Zeus because the myth is alive as long as we believe in it!



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