

WEEK III



Vishnu lying on Ananta

MYTHOLOGY

- Science shares **explanation** with mythology. What distinguishes science from mythology is verification.
- A creation myth or cosmology myth offers an explanation that is to be believed. Acceptance, not verification, is what is called for.

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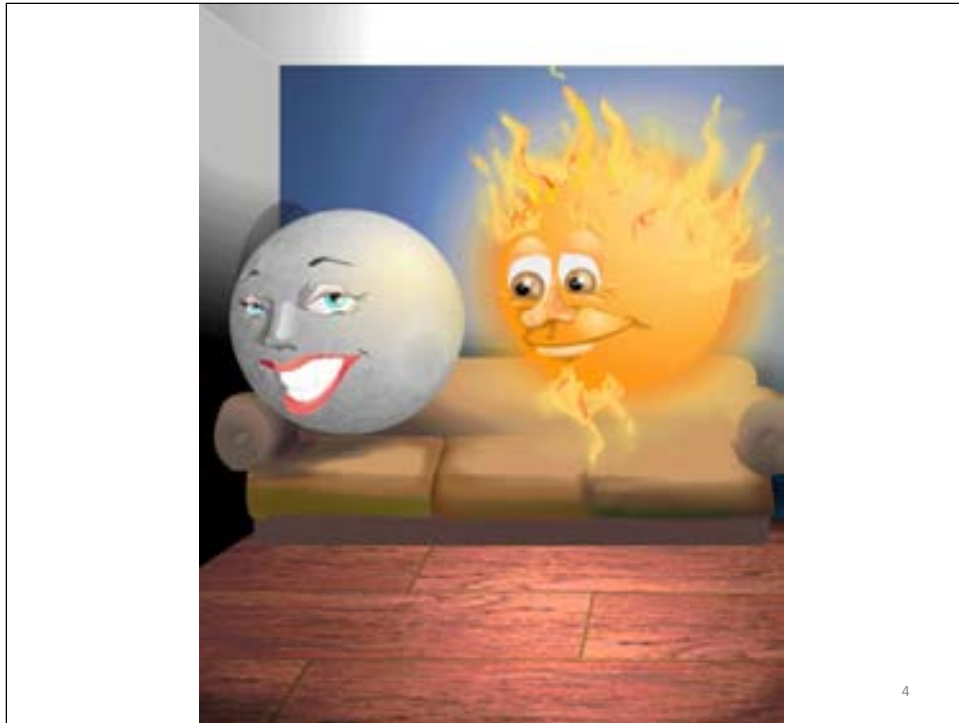
Ideas expressed by Robert L. Carneiro, American Museum of Natural History in an article *Origin Myths*, Nov. 3, 2008.

Explanation amounts to translating the unknown into the known, the unfamiliar into the familiar.

What do humans know best? Themselves. From a very early stage of culture people have projected human thoughts and emotions into the external world, endowing objects and forces of nature with human personality and greater-than-human power. The personalized supernatural beings thus created were assigned the plausible and satisfying explanations of the unknown.

At the heart of explanation is lies causation, deeply rooted in human thought into primitive times. For primitive peoples causation is of a very special kind. It is *personal causation*.

Impersonal forces may be the *immediate* cause of something but they are always uncertain by the *ultimate* causes which are personal in nature. Scientific explanations tend to be regarded as insufficient by primitive peoples.



Cosmology: Nigerian simple tale of the Home of the Sun and the Moon. They got married and invited their friend the ocean to visit. The ocean flooded their house. Not wanting to be rude they rose to the sky and found harmony with the land and ocean.

Throughout the Americas, a common myth explains the female sun and the masculine moon as that of sister and brother who are also illicit lovers. Their incestuous and clandestine meetings take place at night when the sun secretly creeps into her lover's bed. Being unable to see him in the dark, **she paints dark patches on his cheeks** so she will be able to recognize him later.

In Africa the cyclical changes in the apparent shape of the moon are said to go back to a time when Moon unwisely began to boast about his loveliness, which he claimed to exceed that of Sun. In anger Sun broke Moon into small pieces. Ever since, Moon has been scared of Sun and **only rarely does he dare to show his whole self in the sky**

Cosmology: Instructor notes that **knowledge of the heavens and the seasons was extremely important to the life of the ancient hunter-gathers and agriculturalists.** The **roles of the shaman and guru as weather forecaster and advisor** had to be of utmost importance to the survival of tribes and clans. When to leave for the hunt, **when to plant, when to harvest, when to move to winter quarters, when to watch for floods.**

Hence the universal interest by all tribes in *cosmological mythology*, the cycles of the moon and stars and the ability to predict times of rain and drought, cold and hot temperatures and times of potential danger from floods and fires.



A tree grows atop *Mysselhoj* burial mound in Roskilde, Denmark

Structure of the Universe: In myth the visible world of everyday life or middle world is always part of a large whole. Most traditions describe the invisible components of the universe as a world above or heaven, the abode of superior beings, gods or divine ancestors and an underworld, peopled by the dead and by subterranean spirits.

In many mythologies there is a central pillar or axis (*axis mundi*) that unites the three worlds constituting the cosmos. Sometimes this central axis takes the form of a World Tree. The best known is Yggdrasil of Norse tradition. Other notable examples are those of Ngaju Dayak people of Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) and the Mayan peoples of Central America. A similar concept is the Tree of Life which occupies a central position in the Kaballah, the Hebrew mystical tradition.

Axis mundi symbols appear in every region of the world. The image expresses a point of connection between higher and lower realms (sky and earth) where compass points meet and functions as the *omphalous* (navel), the world's point of beginning. Christmas tree, skyscraper, totem pole, obelisk, lighthouse, mountain and many other forms are common. It can be feminine (umbilical providing nourishment) or masculine (a phallus providing insemination into a uterus).



Yggdrasil: The norns Uror, Veroandi, and Skuld beneath the world tree Yggdrasil (1882) by Burger. The Norns are female beings who rule the destiny of gods and men, a kind of disir comparable to the Fates in classical mythology.

Icelandic mythological poems in *Prose Edda*. In the center of the land is a mighty tree, World Ash, Yggdrasil, guardian of the gods. The gods go daily to Yggdrasil (Odin's Horse) to hold their courts. The branches extend far into the heavens. Roots go down into the underworld, and beneath them bubbles a spring, source of hidden wisdom. A nimble squirrel, Ratatoskr, scurries up and down the ash carrying "malicious" messages between the eagle at the top and the serpent gnawing at its roots. A hart feeds on the branches, and from its horn flow mighty rivers; here also grazes a goat, which yields not milk but mead for the warriors in Odin's hall.

Odin was said to have hung in agony from the tree, in voluntary sacrifice, to gain power over the runes, which brought knowledge to those who could interpret them. Dew drops from Yggdrasil to earth and fruits of the tree give help in childbirth. It is a symbol of universality linking the different races of beings, and forming the center of nine worlds. From the lake under the tree come three "maidens deep in knowledge." The maidens "incised the slip of wood," "laid down laws" and "chose lives" for the children of mankind and the destinies of men.

There is much more about the Norse gods of the time. The nine worlds are unknown: they likely are in the sky, underground, and/or may reflect lateral directions, a Pole Star or a rainbow bridge.

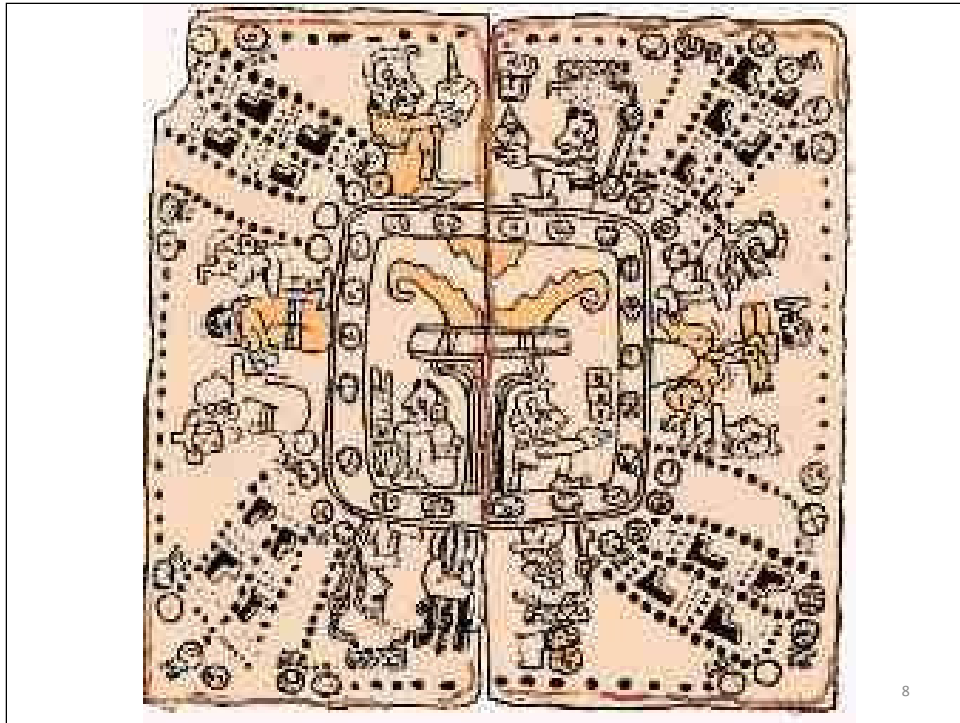
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Prose Edda

Voluspa: An ash I know there stands
 Yggdrasill is its name
 a tall tree, showered
 with shining loam
 From there come the dews
 that drop in the valleys.
 It stands forever green over
 Uror's well

Havamal I know that I hung
 on a windy tree
 nine long nights,
 wounded with a spear,
 dedicated to Odin,
 myself to myself,
 on that tree of which no man knows
 from which its roots run.



Mayan Creation, Central Ceiba tree Connects 9 layered underworld, middle world, and four or more layered sky.

The Ceiba tree is an *axis mundi* – a route along which the souls of the dead as well as the gods could travel. The tree connects a 9 layered underworld (Xibalba), a middle world inhabited by humans, and a heavier upper world supported by Atlantean gods, the Bacabs.



Dubai skyscraper 512 meters height, axis mundi super extraordinary



Tibetan Mandala 14th Century. Tantric Buddhism uses a cosmic diagram, the mandala, as a focus of meditation. The mandala represents a palace of the gods. Categorized as either “peaceful” or “wrathful”, the palace is formed of radiant light of five colors, or of skulls from the orifices of which issue black smoke, violent sparks and stench.

Within the four courtyards of the mandala are to be performed the rites of pacification (white, in the east), enrichment (yellow in the south), control (red in the west) and destruction (green in the north). Within the central area of the palace, as blue as deepest space, the supreme rites of enlightenment are achieved.

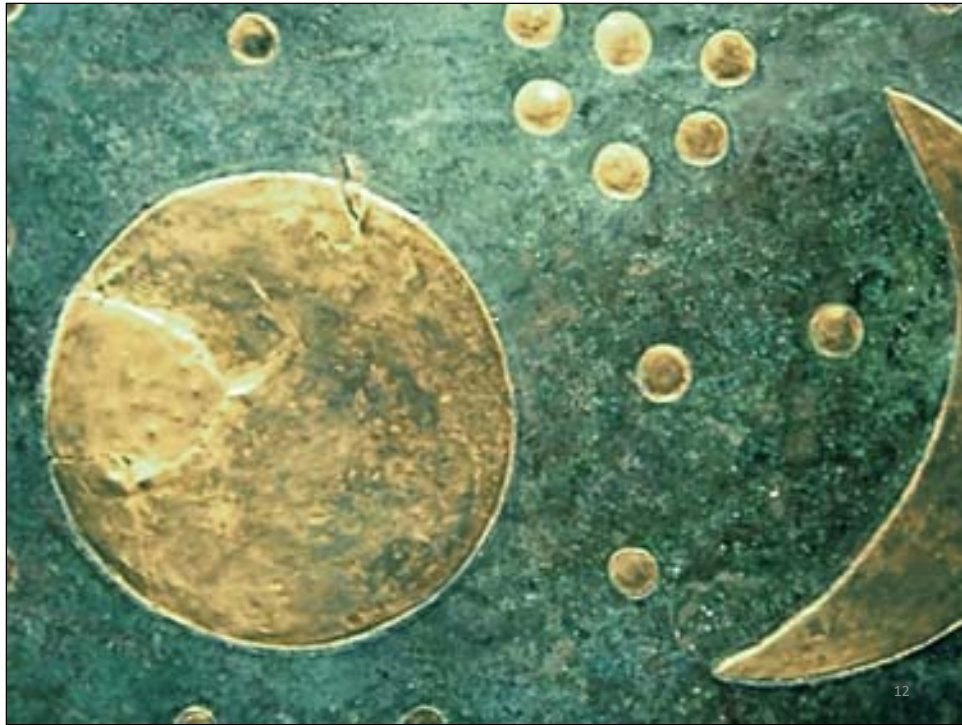


Amaterasu Omikami (the Sun Goddess) of Japan and ancestor of the Imperial family.

The Heavenly Bodies: The celestial bodies commonly appear in myth as living things, variously divine, human or animal. **The sun appears most often as a male divinity as in the ancient Egyptian cult of the sun god. However, as we have seen in the Americas, the sun can also be female (the goddess Amaterasu in Japan) and the moon male.**

Certain **grouping of stars** are also personalized. In the Southern Hemisphere, the **constellation of the Pleiades is regarded in the myths of South America, Southeast Asia and Australia** as a group of sisters whose appearance in the night sky heralds the onset of rains.

The Greeks identified the constellation Ursa Major (the Great Bear) with the nymph Callisto, whom Zeus placed in the heavens as a bear, together with her son Arcas, the “bear keeper.” The part of this constellation which we call the Plough or the Big Dipper is known to Native North Americans as the heavenly bear.



The Nebra sky disc dated c 1600 BC. The cluster of seven dots near the upper right portion of the disk is believed to be the **seven sisters of the Pleiades**.

The Sacred Skies – Inca Calendar: ...The Inca world-view manifested itself in a rich tapestry of beliefs, which correlated earthly events with those of the night sky. ...The stars themselves were regarded as lesser deities and as the patrons of certain early activities.

Particularly prominent were the Pleiades, know as Collca (the granary), and considered to be the celestial guardian of seeds and agriculture. Together with several other constellations, they were used to construct a sidereal lunar calendar.

The Pleiades were also important for prognostication of agricultural fertility and animal husbandry. The star group know as Orqo-Cilay (the multicolored llama), was thought to protect the royal llama flocks from harm, and Chaska-Qoylor (the shaggy star) was identified with Venus as the morning star.

Llamas were among the most prized sacrificial animals, and were offered on mountaintops at the new moon. Black llamas were starved during October in order to make them weep and thereby sympathetically petition the deities for rain.



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Mayan calendar, my observations four directions, 10 sections each side, 4 squares (seasons?)



Manchu Picchu Temple of the Sun. Note holes in the sides akin to intiquata.

Inca Calendar: The Inca calendar day by day counting system was followed from **observation stations**. All movements of the sun, moon, stars and occurrence of the solstice, equinox and all types of celestial phenomenon were observed. The Inca observation stations historically were called *intiquata* from inti, that means sun, and guata that means year.

Each intiquata had many yancas (kind of Inca astronomers) working in 24- hour shifts. They often operated in an empty square building with carved places in the walls for observing the skies.

The yanca's knowledge was used by architects to orient construction with the stars, by religious officials to determine when ceremonies should start and by agriculturalists to determine when the lands have to be prepared and even the day to seed the fields. Basically, nothing was done before asking for advice of the yancas.

The Inca government built hundreds of intiquatas all over the kingdom because each calendar was designed for that specific area, dealing with different temperatures, altitudes and traditions of the people that lived there. The current calendar is for 5511.

The House as a Cosmic Model: In many parts of the world, houses or dwelling places are characteristically modeled on a mythological picture of the universe.

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The roundhouses of the Venezuelan Yekuana tribe are designed as imitations of the primordial structure built by an incarnation of the sun god Wanadi. The central house-post (topped by a sculpture of a crimson-crested woodpecker, the animal form of Wanadi's incarnation) symbolically links the netherworld of lost souls with the middle earth of men and the vault of heavens; the two crossbeams are oriented north-south to mirror the appearance of the Milky Way in the night sky; and the main entrance faces east, permitting the rising equinoctial sun to shine onto the central post.

Dia de la Raza

The Day of the Race

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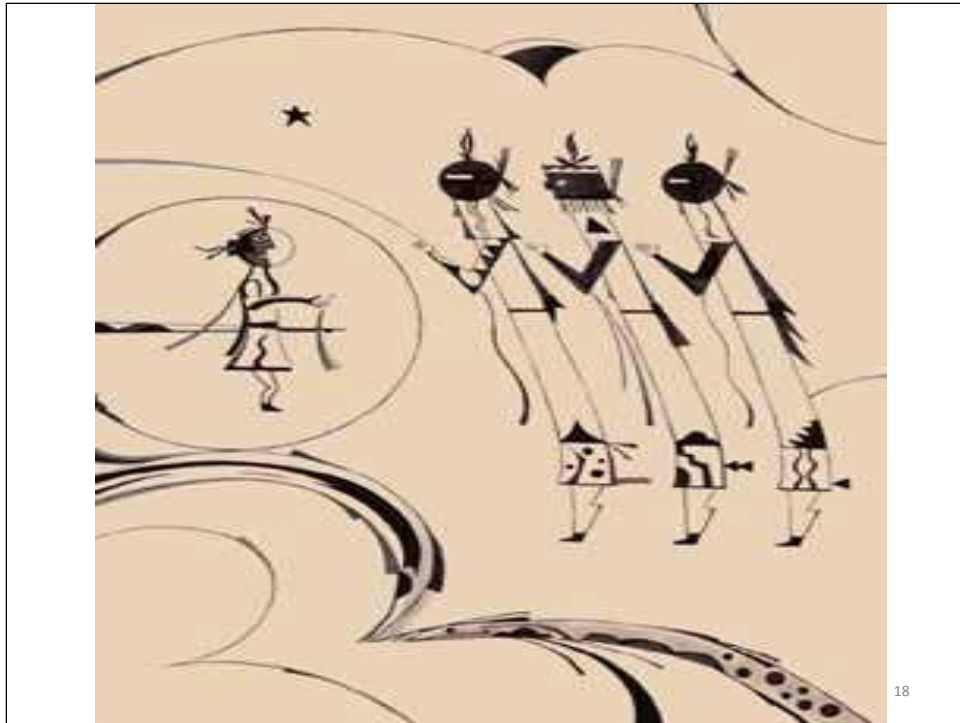
October 12 (or the Monday nearest to it October 10) is traditionally celebrated throughout the Americas as the day Christopher Columbus arrived in 1492.

In Spanish speaking countries it is known as *Dia de la Raza*, the Day of the Race.

Cristobal Colon following the newly accepted theory that the world was round and not flat (older mythology), sailed west from Spain to find a new route to China or the East Indies. He wanted also to prove his calculations of the earth's circumference.

Myths of Humanity

- Humanity is very broad and can cover a range of topics..
- **Our goal will be to look at the origins of humankind, origins of woman, myths of sexuality, food and farming, origins of fire, origins of misfortune and origins of death.**
- We will tend to leave supernatural beings and spirit and the afterlife for a future lesson.



"Gods Dreamed of Man and Danced in Wonderment"
From the *Indian Genesis Series* of Paintings
© [David Chethlahe Paladin](http://www.earthspirit.com/fireheart/fhpmyth.html)
(used with permission of Lynda Paladin)
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Spider Woman Jessica Drew in Marvel Comics.

Willis notes that, surprisingly, many mythologies around the world have comparatively little to say about the creation of human beings. According to one Greek myth, the **first man was created from clay and the first woman from earth**. There is no one single account.

The image of pot making frequently appears in African creation mythology. Believing that God shapes children in the mothers womb, women in Rwanda of child-bearing age are careful to leave water ready, before going to bed, so that **God may use it to form the clay of which human beings are made**. The Dinka of southern Sudan say that God fashioned people from mud, just as pots and toys are made by the people themselves.

In North America, a **Hopi myth** describes the first **human beings as formed from earth by Spider Woman**, the creator divinity.



Herero Women Namibia The long dress has become a symbol of Herero tradition.

In Africa myths usually speak of the Creator as **making humans in some place apart**, from which they are then introduced into the world.

Some stories have them **falling from the sky** at the beginning of time, while the Herero of southwest Africa say that people **emerged from “a tree of life”** in the underworld.

Another African motif is the idea of God making **a vessel from which human beings later come forth**. The Azande tribe of north central Africa version of this story relates that **men were originally sealed inside a canoe**, together with the sun, moon, stars, night and cold; the sun managed to melt the seal and humanity emerged.



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First Humans: Egypt: First deity, Ra-Atum, one of the nine Gods of Heliopolis, created first a division into male and female gods who became lost in the Nun. Eye, a fiery power, found them and the **first humans were formed out of Ra's tears** on being reunited with his children.

Babylonian myth: Marduk, king of the gods, takes the Tablet of Destiny from Kingu and kills him. **From his blood, mixed with earth, he creates mankind.**

India: Brahma produces a lovely young woman as a daughter from his body. The union of father and daughter produces the first man.

China: Creator goddess Nu Gua produces people from **flicking a vine coated with watery mud**; each droplet becomes another human being. Nu Gua is goddess in ancient Chinese mythology best known for creating mankind and repairing walls of heaven



PANDORA was the very first woman who was formed out of clay by the gods.

The Titan [Prometheus](#) had originally been assigned with the task of creating man. But because he was displeased with their lot, stole fire from heaven. [Zeus](#) was angered, and commanded [Hephaistos](#) and the other gods to create a woman, Pandora, and endow her with the beauty and cunning.

He then delivered her to [Epimetheus](#), the foolish younger brother of Prometheus, for a bride. When he had received her into his house, Pandora opened the *pithos* (storage jar) which Zeus had given her as a wedding present, and released the swarm of [evil spirits](#) trapped within. They would ever afterwards plague mankind.

Only [Elpis](#) (Hope) remained behind, a single blessing to succor mankind in their suffering.

Pandora's daughter Pyrrha (Fire) was the first-born mortal child. She and her husband Deukalion alone survived the Great Deluge. To repopulate the earth they each cast stones over their shoulder. Those cast by Deukalion formed men, and those of Pyrrha women.

In ancient Greek vase painting Pandora was depicted in the scene of her creation as either a statue-like figure surrounded by gods, or as a woman rising out of the earth (the *anodos*). Sometimes she is surrounded by dancing [Satyroi](#), in a scene from a lost Satyr-play of Sophokles.



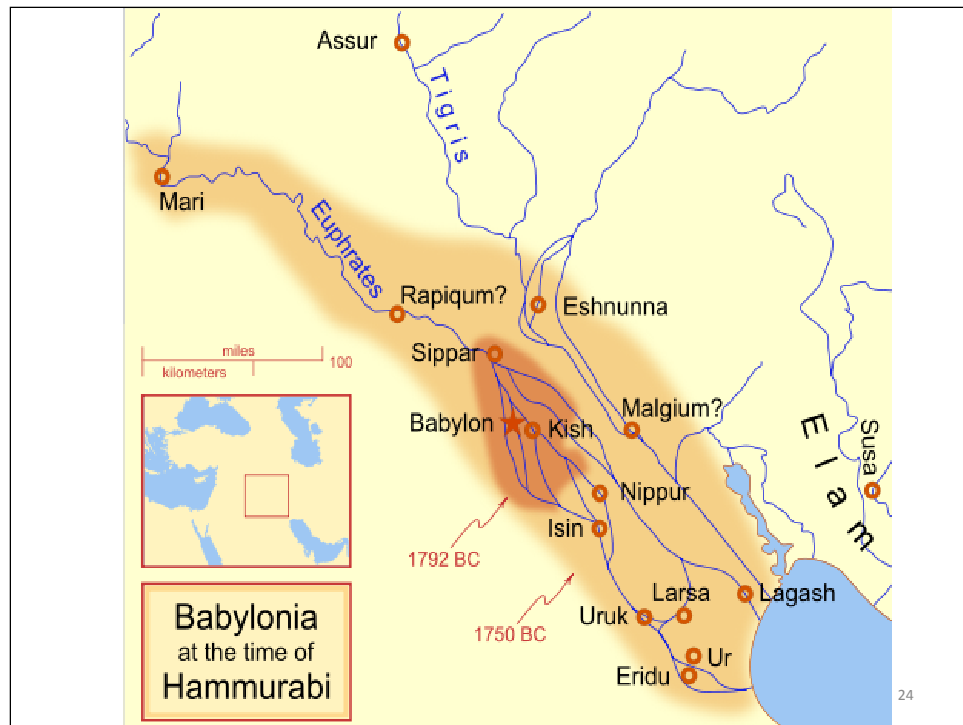
Southeast Asian myths carry the implication that all things in the world have one source or are otherwise closely connected to each other. The Dayak of Borneo believe that **humans, animals and plants are all descended from the same spirit** and are therefore related. The Chewong of Malaysia suppose that **children are metamorphosed flowers**.

Adam and Eve from Florentine illustrated manuscript Escorial Beatus, 950 likely produced at monastery at San Millan de La Cogolla.

The idea of the first woman as a physical **offshoot of the first man** is seen in the Biblical story of God making Eve from Adam's rib (likely dates between 600 and 400 BCE). The many parallels include a Central African myth which has the first woman created from the left knee of the first man.

In the second version, likely several centuries older, Yahweh (God) made **Adam from dust** and breathed "the breath of life" into his nostrils, created animals so he would not be alone and made Eve from his rib. Like other earthly paradises in mythology of the arid Near East, Eden was a well-watered fertile place.

The traditional reading of "rib" has been questioned recently by feminist theologians who suggest it should instead be rendered as "by man's side," supporting the idea that woman is man's equal and not his subordinate. Even in ancient times, the presence of two distinct accounts of the creation of the first man (or couple) was noted. The first account says *male and female [God] created them*, implying simultaneous creation, whereas the second account states that God created Eve subsequent to the creation of Adam.



[Babylonia](#) in the time of [Hammurabi](#) King 1792-1750 BCE Tablets found in ruins of Nineveh on the east bank of the Tigris across from Mosul on the east bank.

Adam, Eve and Eden Etymology: "Adamu" is the name in the Sumerian mythology for the first man, created by the "Enki", the creator god and inventor of civilization. Adam is Hebrew for "man" and *adamah* is a Hebrew word signifying dust and earth, and in Aramaic signifying blood. Etymologically it is related to the words *adam* (red), *adomi* (ruddy) and *dam* (blood).

The Eden motif itself, and the biblical tale of the flood, are in fact far older than the Bible; dating back at least to the civilization of Sumer and perhaps 5000 to 6000 BCE. *Edin* is the Sumerian word for an uncultivated plain, so "Eden" (reaching English by way of Akkadian and Hebrew through a chain of lexical borrowing) simply describes lowland geography like the present-day southeast Iraq where the Tigris and Euphrates meet. Professor Zarins and other experts believe that the Garden of Eden lies presently under the waters of the Persian Gulf, and they further believe that the story of Adam and Eve in—and especially *out*—of the Garden of Eden is a highly condensed and evocative account of the shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture.

The Etymology of Eve is of interest. In an ancient Sumerian poem Enki the water god angered Mother Goddess Ninhursag by eating eight magical plants. She put a curse on Enki and he became very ill. She relented and summoned eight healing dieties, one for each ailing organ. The Sumerian word for "rib" is "ti", but the same word

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means “to make live.” The healing deity who worked on Enki’s rib was called “Nin-ti” or both “lady of the rib” and “lady of the live”. This did not translate into Hebrew but the rib itself went into Biblical accounts and “Eve” came to symbolize the “mother of all living”.

The oldest material in the Hebrew Bible—an therefore in the Christian Old Testament—may date from the 13th century BCE along with later material between the 5th century and 2nd century BCE



Kava Ceremony The drink yaqona (kava) plays an important part in public business and social life.

Myths of Sexuality: A myth sung at the Tongan *kava* ceremony relates how an **eel had intercourse with Hina**, a noblewoman whose virginity is revered and protected by the community. When she becomes pregnant and tells people what has happened, they capture the eel and cut it to pieces except for the head, which Hina keeps and buries. From the head sprouts **the first coconut**.

Melanesian myths often relate how **plants grow from ground made fertile by semen or menstrual blood**. Soido, the culture hero of Kiwai Island off southern Papua, tries to have sex with a woman, but his penis is so large that he kills her in the attempt. He then ejaculates and **shakes semen** over the island. Where it lands, **all the different vegetables grow**.

The Maori relate how the **god Rongo-maui went up to heaven** to his brother Wahnui, who was the keeper of the sweet potato or yam. Rongo-maui hid it in his loincloth and then **returned to earth and made his wife, Pani, pregnant**. She later **gave birth to the first earthly yam**, which was given to humans.



Many Greek myths tell of transgressions and their punishment. Their stories may have been told to help maintain the proper order of things, especially within the family, as many of the myths involve overstepping the bounds of sexual propriety.

Oedipus was the most celebrated sexual transgressor. He is the prime example of the Greek hero who possesses all the noble heroic qualities but is nevertheless condemned by fate to commit grave crimes against the natural order. He would **murder his father and marry his mother**.

One notorious **sexual transgressor** was Ixion, king of the Lapiths, a race of Thessaly. He attempted to **rape his mother** Hera, but she deceived him by putting in her bed a cloud in her shape, with which Ixion mated when he was drunk. Zeus punished Ixion for attempting to **seduce his wife** by condemning him to be tied to a wheel which would turn forever in the underworld. The offspring of Ixion and the cloud was Centauros, who later became a sexual transgressor himself by **coupling with a mare** to produce the first Centaur.



Sumerian god Enki, with characteristic bird, goat, and water flows. Two water flows Tigris and Euphrates. Enki was considered a god of life and replenishment. Trees symbolize female and male aspects of nature.

Food and Farming: Sumerian cosmogony has to be pieced together from a variety of origin myths. The ultimate origin of all things was the primeval sea personified as the goddess Nammu. She gave birth to the female earth goddess, Ki, whose union in turn produced the “great gods.”

Among these was Enlil, source of the ordered universe, responsible for vegetation, cattle, agricultural tools and arts of cultivation. The same role is ascribed to Enki who is god of wisdom and is the possessor of *me*, a central concept of Sumerian religion. The *me* are pre-ordained divine decrees (probably on tablets) of Sumerian religion and society.

Wikipedia indicates Enki was later known as Ea in Akkadian and Babylonian mythology. He was the deity of crafts; also, of mischief; water, seawater and lakewater; and intelligence. The name translates as “Lord of the Earth” (the Sumerian *en* means the equivalent of lord or high priest and *ki* means earth).

His grandson Enki, chosen to represent the younger gods, takes on all duties including fertilizing powers as lord of the waters and lord of semen. Royal inscriptions of the 3rd millennium BCE mention “the reeds of Enki,” a very important building material. Enki symbols include the goat Capricorn.

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Enki assisted humanity in irrigation, granaries, and medicine. He instructed Atrahasis to construct some kind of boat for his family or brought him to the heavens in a boat. After the Deluge the boat landed and a sacrifice was organized to the gods.

Enki was not perfect; as god of water he had a penchant for beer and as god of semen he had a string of incestuous affairs.

Enki, in summary, is a god or symbolizes gods of civilization, wisdom and culture. He was also creator and protector of man and of the world in general. Temples and shrines to Enki were found at Nipper, Girsu, Ur, Babylon, Sippar and Nineveh



Saxman Totem Park, Ketchikan, Alaska.

Animals play a major part in Native American mythology because they are believed to possess a close kinship with humans.

For example, some peoples of the Northwest coast believe that their ancestors were animals which landed on the beaches and took off their animal guises, becoming human and establishing various clans.

The hunting and killing of beasts is carried out in accordance with numerous important rituals and myths. Animals are regarded as an important source of spirit power.

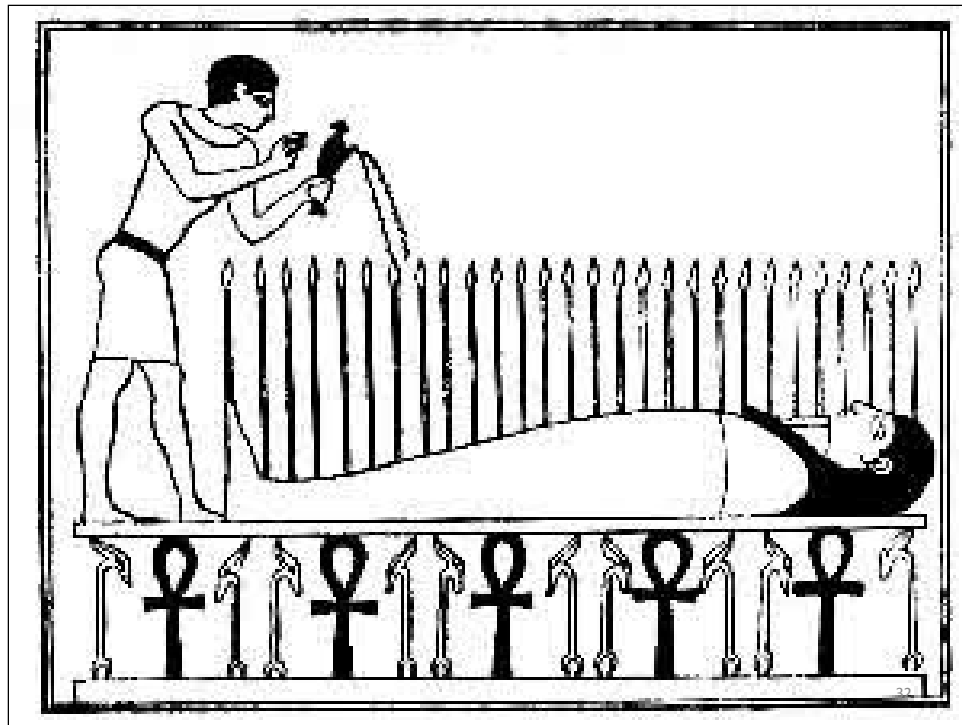
The mythology of the Arctic regions reflects a harsh dangerous environment—a lonely landscape with a thinly spread population.

Agriculture was impossible and all food must come from animals.

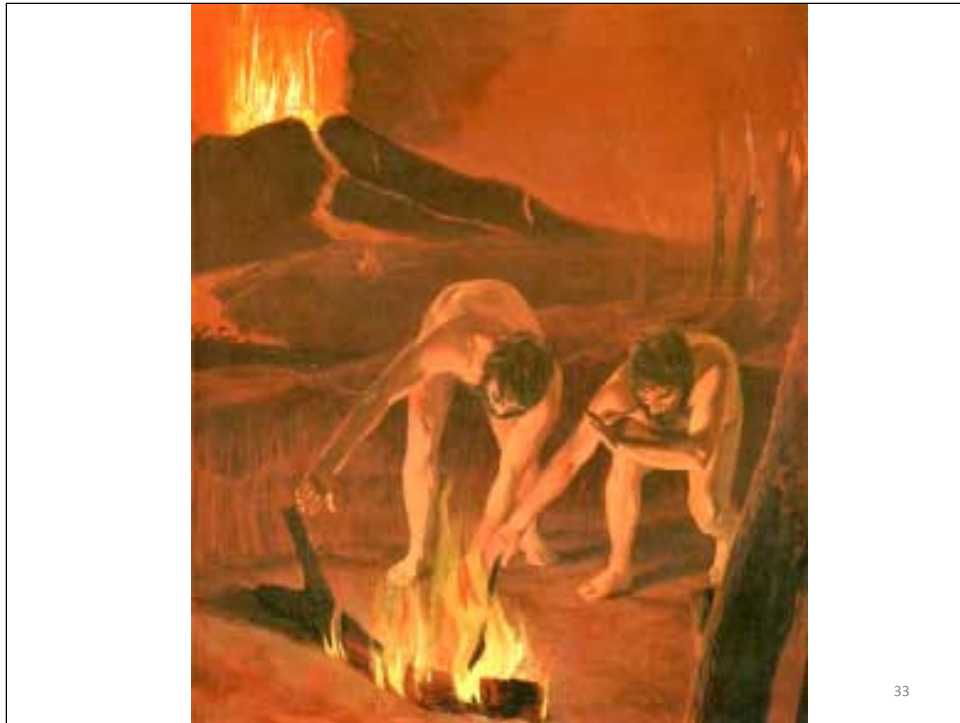
Critical to survival, animals were regarded throughout the Arctic as having souls of their own, and were respected accordingly; it was common for the hunter to apologize to the animal he had just brought down.



Confederation Park Ottawa, A life size bronze statue of an Aboriginal and an eagle above him; there is a bear to his right and a wolf to his left, they are all looking upward to a blue and white sky.



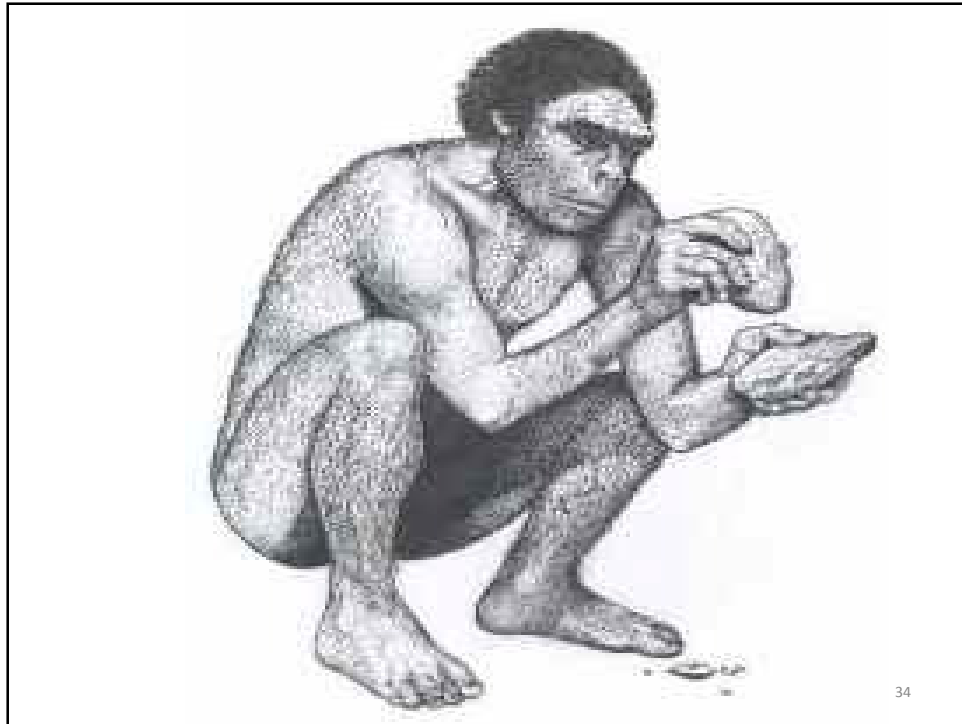
Osiris-Neptra with seed growing from his body. The sprouting corn implied resurrection. Osiris, Egyptian god of the afterlife, the underworld and the dead



Discovery of fire

Origins of Fire: In a dispute with Zeus, Prometheus fostered the development of men, who had been treated as equals in the days of Kronos but were now regarded as beneath the gods. Zeus became furious and in revenge withheld fire from humans, who were forced to live without heat and light. Prometheus came to their aid and stole a flame from the forge of the god Hephaistos, hidden in a stalk of fennel.

Maui, a Polynesian culture hero, stole fire for humans from its keeper, the ancestor heroine Mahui-ike who lived in the underworld. He tricked her into relinquishing her burning fingernails, the source of fire, one by one, until she had only one left, which she flung to the ground, starting a blaze. Maui called upon the rain to put the fire out, but Mahui-ike saved a few sparks by throwing them up onto the trees. As a result of this action they knew they could use wood to make fire.



Flint Rapping to start a fire.

According to the [Rig Veda](#) (3:9.5), the hero Mātariśvan recovered fire, which had been hidden from mankind.

In [Cherokee](#) myth, after Possum and Buzzard had failed to steal fire, Grandmother Spider used her web to sneak into the land of light. She stole fire, hiding it in a clay pot.

Among various Native American tribes of the [Pacific Northwest](#) and [First Nations](#), fire was stolen and given to humans by Coyote, Beaver or Dog.

According to some Yukon [First Nations](#) people, Crow stole fire from a volcano in the middle of the water.

According to the Creek Indians, Rabbit stole fire from the Weasels.

In [Algonquin](#) myth, Rabbit stole fire from an old man and his two daughters.

In [Ojibwa](#) myth, [Nanabozho](#) the hare stole fire and gave it to humans.

In [Polynesian](#) myth, [Māui](#) stole fire from the Mudhens (alternative story).

In the [Book of Enoch](#), the fallen angels and [Azazel](#) teach early mankind to use tools and fire.

According to the Chewong of Malaysia, a boy fell into the eighth earth below and was frightened; kind people gave him both light and fire for his own earth and showed him how to cook food before helping him to climb back.

In Aztec mythology, Xolotl was the god with associations to both lighting and death. He also guarded the son when it went through the underworld at night.

Fact: Homo erectus likely discovered fire one to two million years ago, much earlier than originally thought.



Eris (Discordia), goddess of strife

The Origins of Misfortune: Whether the world came into existence by accident or design, once created it is seen in all mythologies as subject to arbitrary change.

The cause of unpredictable events is often put down to the whim of divinities motivated by such apparently human emotions as sexual desire, anger or jealousy.

The spite of the Greek goddess Eris (strife), insulted because Zeus had not invited her to go to the wedding of the sea-nymph Thetis to the mortal Peleus, leads indirectly to the Trojan war.

Greek mythology delivers a similar message in its account of how evil, in the form of sickness and death, came into the world in the first place.

After a long struggle Zeus created the first woman, Pandora, to even the score against his supernatural foe, Prometheus.

She was sent with a sealed jar (or box) to Prometheus's brother, Epimetheus, who introduced her into human society.

She opened the fatal jar in curiosity, releasing into the world its dire contents of evils, including every kind of sickness; only hope remained inside.

Throughout this myth, Prometheus appears as the promoter of human civilization but subconsciously we can blame her for bring evils into the world



As Nataraja, Hindu god Shiva is the lord of the dance. Four armed encircled by flames (creation), Dance to alleviate suffering, balances on back of dwarf who symbolizes ignorance. Drum (creation), flame (destruction), raised hand peace, lifted leg release.

Shiva and Misfortune: Daksha, father-in-law to Shiva, had arranged a horse sacrifice in accordance with Vedic rites; all the gods decided to attend the ceremony but Shiva was not invited. Shiva's anger was distilled into a drop of sweat on his forehead. When this drop fell to earth, an enormous fire broke out and from it appeared a squat hairy man with bright red eyes and monstrous teeth who burned the sacrifice to ashes, and caused the gods to flee.

This was Disease, who brought grief and mourning wherever he went. Brahma promised Shiva a share in future sacrifices, begging him to moderate his anger and bring the pestilence he had created under control. Shiva divided disease into many forms.

Thus it was that everything came to have its own ailment—headaches for elephants, sore hooves for bulls, salinity for the earth, blindness for cattle, coughing for horses, crest-splitting for peacocks, eye diseases for cuckoos, hiccups for parrots, exhaustion for tigers and fever for mankind.

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As an observation, there are few explicit gods of misfortune. Many gods and deities are geared to dealing with problems, warding off problems, helping to prevent or cure disease and bringing about desirable outcomes. Mankind tends to recognize a need to appease the gods and to engage in rituals and ceremonies that will ideally enhance the work of various agents and divinities. **In general it is the positive aspects of mythologies that survive the tests of time.**

Cherokee legend regards snakes as “supernaturals,” having an intimate connection with the rain and thunder gods, and possessing a certain influence over other animals and plant tribes. Snakes are feared and revered and every precaution is taken to avoid killing or offending one, especially the rattlesnake.

He who kills a snake will soon see others and become dazed at the sight of their **glistening eyes and darting tongues**. One’s fate will be to go wandering about like a crazy man, unable to find one’s way out of the woods. To guard against this misfortune, there are certain prayers which the initiated say in order that a snake may not cross their path, and on meeting the first one of the season the hunter humbly begs of him, **“Let us not see each other this summer.”**



Yourba twins. The Yoruba present the highest dizygotic (non-identical) twinning rate in the world (4.4% of all maternities).

In the medical philosophy of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, which were brought to earth by the god Ifa, everyone has in his or her body the causative agents which give rise to disease. These agents are various kinds of "worms," and a number of each kind are normally contained in "bags" located in different parts of the body. Their presence is said to be necessary for the maintenance of health: disease occurs only when "worms" multiply excessively and burst forth from their "bags." To prevent this from happening it is necessary to observe moderation in eating, drinking and sex.

On the other side of Africa, the Mandari people of the southern Sudan attribute the main causes of disease to invasion of the sufferer's body by spirits, or sorcery by the enemy. Sickness caused by the sky spirit manifests itself as pain in the head or upper part of the body. The cure is ritual sacrifice to persuade the spirits to withdraw. Mandari mythology contains stories of ancient people who had dogs with horns that were featured in rain rituals. Allegedly the Mandari also believe that the primal dogs could speak and warn people of impending danger, and that it was dogs who taught humans the use of fire.