

KNOWLEDGE NUGGETS



From Ancient Myths to Superhero Comics

Human beings have been telling incredible stories about the creation of the universe since time immemorial. What can they tell us today?

Link: <https://lab.sapienship.co/whats-humanitys-oldest-myth/>

Which of these **creation myths** is the oldest?

| Enuma Elish (Babylonian) | Genesis (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) | Popol Vuh (Mayan) | Poetic Edda (Norse) |
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Human beings have been telling incredible stories about the creation of the universe, humanity's origin, and the acts of gods since time immemorial. These stories, known today as myths, helped shape different peoples' faith, ethics, rituals, and their collective understanding of the world and their place within it.

Some of these stories may seem weird or absurd to our modern mindset, but we need to remember that they represent humanity's ancient attempts at making sense of the world, using fictions that enabled people to come together and believe in a shared story. And if one of these stories seems more reasonable than others, it may have to do with it being a part of our culture.

Over the years, many of these myths were put in writing. While we don't know exactly when these stories were first transcribed from oral tales into written texts, the Babylonian 'Enuma Elish' is widely considered to be one of the oldest written creation myths in the world (its composition dating back to mid-late 2nd millennium BCE).

Questions

1. Myths around the world share many similar characteristics, which may be called archetypes. Why do you think that is?
2. Sigmund Freud wrote that myths are “the distorted vestiges of the wish-phantasies of whole nations”. What do you make of this?
3. Both science and myth try to explain the world. What's the difference between them?
4. People often cite modern popular fiction, such as superhero comics and films or the Star Wars movies, as modern myths. What do these works have in common with ancient myths?
 - a. Article 1: Superhero Stories Aren't Myths. They're Anti-Myths. Pacific Standard, April 2018
<https://psmag.com/social-justice/superhero-stories-arent-myths-theyre-anti-myths>
 - b. Article 2: Marvel meets Mesopotamia: how modern comics preserve ancient myths. The Conversation, August 2018
<https://theconversation.com/marvel-meets-mesopotamia-how-modern-comics-preserve-ancient-myths-101529>
 - c. Article 3: Modern Mythology: What Superheroes Can Show Us About Humanity. Owlcation, July 2022
<https://owlcation.com/social-sciences/Modern-Mythology-What-Comic-Books-Can-Tell-Us-About-Humanity>
 - d. Article 4: How mythologist Joseph Campbell made Luke Skywalker a hero. CBC, September 2019
<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/how-mythologist-joseph-campbell-made-luke-skywalker-a-hero-1.5262649>