

Question for Myth and Theology seminar, 3/31/77:

You said in class that once we recognize in our own lives a myth as myth, it is no longer a myth for us. What does this mean? For if true, it raises further questions:

If we only know myth when it has ceased to be myth for us, then we do not really ever know myth but only the broken shell of dead myth. This same applies to the myths of other peoples. Then how can we ever know what myth is?

What of Ricoeur's second *saivté*? Ricoeur would allow that myth even known as such can still function as myth, though not in all the same ways as previously (e.g., the etiological function falls out).

If we had a proper understanding of myth, would this not allow myth to operate better in our lives rather than less? (The presupposition here is that with our pseudo-sophisticated understanding of myth we prevent myth from functioning in our lives and so are in the situation which Eliade decries near the end of his *Sacred and Profane*.)

It seems that recognizing and understanding myth as such should not prevent myth from still functioning. Analogous cases would be the discovery of Reason among the Greeks (cf. Voegelin, "Reason: The Classic Experience," p. 238), the staking out of interiority in your works, the definition of compunction by the theologians. Does myth differ from these? If so, how and why?

This question comes from the discussion group and Prof. Bill Shea.

Myth and Theology, 3/31/77

Myth, mystification, demystification, mythologize, demythologize,
second naivete

Clear understanding always requires transition from ordinary language
and introduction of some measure of systematization

Distinguish

- 1) Undifferentiated or less differentiated consciousness
- 2) Differentiated or more differentiated consciousness
- 3) Transition from (1) to (2)

In (1) there is one mode of apprehension, one set of procedures,
one set of criteria

In (2) there are two modes of apprehension, two sets of procedures,
two sets of criteria

In (3) there is an early period in which the original criteria prevail,
a later period when the second set of criteria alone prevail, and
an intermediate period of doubt and hesitation

- indiffer-
ent/
- (1) illustrated by the man in the street, the average man, woman, etc.,
/the people in Plato's cave
 - (2) illustrated by Aristotle's first for us and first in itself,
by Eddington's two tables, by Ricoeur's second naivete, origin coordin/
 - (3) the man dragged out of Plato's cave, blinded by the light,
gradually adjusted to it, killed when he returns and tries to
teach his fellow prisoners his new truth

in the early period the original criteria prevail: the earth
really is flat, the sun really moves across the heavens, theoretical
physics is not statement of fact ~~is~~ but a speculative construction
to guide us in manipulating matter

in the later ~~period~~ period the original criteria and the apprehension
they justified ~~is~~ are just so much primitive ignorance; man became
rational when ~~is~~ Newton deduced the orbits of the moon and of Mars,
when Darwin wrote the Origin of Species, the Descent of Man, when
Freud explored the human psyche

- (1) is the case of myth and mythologizing
- (2) is the case of demythologizing, second naivete
- (3) is the case of mystification when original criteria prevail
and of demystification when the later criteria alone prevail

Note that second naivete is naive inasmuch as understands the power
significance utility of the symbolic; but it is not naive inasmuch
as in distinct realm of consciousness it has come to understand symbols
in a manner unknown to ~~is~~ original ~~is~~ naivete.

Crossan pp 9, 40

The crucial question; five ways of story; knowledge of reality

Constitutive meaning: man is the self-completing animal

in the individual: reality of drifter, of self-actualizing person

in the group: the accepted social arrangements and cultural legitimations

are constitutive of the/reality of the group /socio-cultural reality

change them and you change the group

The actuality of existence: the actual constitutive meaning of ind/group

The truth of existence, the order of the soul (vs order of society)

subjectivity: an immanent principle of movement and of rest

of movement: questions for intelligence, reflection, deliberation

of rest: in so far as satisfactory answers are reached

satisfactory: no further questions on the same issue

Voegelin, "The Gospel and Culture," # II, pp. 66-76; zetein, 'elkein

Alienation, the lie in the soul: burking further qq., doubts, qualms of conscience

Conversion: from the lie to the truth of existence

putting off the old man and putting on the new; dying to the old

The CONSTANT in history: equivalences of experience and symbolization

constant of experience: the actuality of existence via constitutive

meaning and its norm in subjectivity; the occurrence of alienation

and of conversion

The Variable in history: differentiation of \times consciousness and

deformation of consciousness

differentiations: pneumatic, noetic, scientific, historical, modern

philosophic, from clinical psychology

Historiogenesis: The Ecumenic Age pp 59-113

Let us speak of the Saving Tale

1. It reveals socio-cultural reality in so far as it is effective

2. It does not make claims to truth in the sense in which differentiated consciousness makes such claims \times or disclaimers

3. It will be superseded inasmuch as it narrates what later narrators will pronounce false.

4. I would advance a fuller hermenetic of recovery than Voegelin seems to: the saving tale means no more than the normativeness of questioning and \times answering.