## Introduction

There are four basic theories of myth. Those theories are: the rational myth theory, functional myth theory, structural myth theory, and the psychological myth theory. The rational myth theory states that myths were created to explain natural events and forces. Functional myths are what you call the kinds of myths that were created as a type of social control. The third myth theory is the structural myth theory. This theory says that myths were patterned after human mind and human nature. The psychological myth theory is the fourth myth theory, which states that myths are based on human emotion.

## Rational Myth

The rational myth theory states that myths were made to better understand natural events and forces that occurred in the everyday lives of people. This theory also explains that the gods and goddesses controlled all of these happenings of nature. Examples of this type of myth are creation myths from different cultures. Creation myths explain how man was created and explain what the gods and goddesses used and what actions they took to create humans. These myths also tell what substances were used (if any) in order for man to exist. The existence of man is a natural event but creation myths give other explanations.

## Functional Myth

The functional myth theory talks about how myths were used to teach morality and social behavior. It states that myths told about what types of things should and shouldn’t be done, and the consequences for those wrong doings. The functional myth theory also states that myths were created for social control and served the function of insuring stability in a society. A story about a tribe who rebelled against the great serpent, Degei, is a good example of a functional myth[[1]](#footnote-1). This story is about a tribe who learned many skills from their great serpent god, Degei, and then became Degei’s workers and servants. Two chiefs of this tribe were sick of working for him and tried to defeat him; they were too weak for Degei. Instead of winning their freedom, they were killed in a great flood caused by Degei. This myth is trying to say that you should not be lazy because if you are, then you will regret it.

## Structural Myth

Structural myths are said to be myths based on human emotion. These types of myths show the two sides of the human mind; the good side and the bad side. They show the divided self and the duality of human nature. Myths about Hercules show how the human mind can be both good and bad. Hercules did both good and bad things. One of the bad things he did was (in “Jason and the Argonauts”) he stole a broach pin from the treasure chamber of the god Talos. This sin caused his friend to be killed. Hercules knew that his friend was killed because of his sin, so to make up for it; he vowed to stay on the island until his friend was found.

## Psychological Myth

The psychological myth theory states how myths are based on human emotion and that they come from the human subconscious mind. Cultures all around the world had similar fears, questions, and wishes which, to them, were unexplainable. That is the reason that psychological myths were made; and that is why there are archetypes shared between cultures. Archetypes are general forms and characters used by all cultures. Some archetypes found between cultures are having a sky god (Zeus and Oleron),a sea god (Poseidon and Olokun), and an agricultural god (Orisha-Oko and Demeter). These archetypes are examples of how people think alike when it comes to things that are to them mysteries and fears.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)