



Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture

Claude Levi-Strauss

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Ever since the rise of science and the scientific method in the seventeenth century, we have rejected mythology as the product of superstitious and primitive minds. Only now are we coming to a fuller appreciation of the nature and role of myth in human history. In these five lectures originally prepared for Canadian radio, Claude Lévi-Strauss offers, in brief summations, the insights of a lifetime spent interpreting myths and trying to discover their significance for human understanding.

The lectures begin with a discussion of the historical split between mythology and science and the evidence that mythic levels of understanding are being reintegrated in our approach to knowledge. In an extension of this theme, Professor Lévi-Strauss analyzes what we have called “primitive thinking” and discusses some universal features of human mythology. The final two lectures outline the functional relationship between mythology and history and the structural relationship between mythology and music.

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