

Native American Mythology, Legends, and Folklore

"Popular culture seems to represent Native Americans as these mythical beings...[we are] trying to break down those stereotypes. People should know that we aren't a monolithic group of people. We are comedians, authors, singers, and our cultures are very much alive today."

Nickole Fox, Director of Health Education and Prevention at American Indian Health and Family Services

“I hated tonto (and still do)”

– Sherman Alexie

- Who is Tonto?
 - [The Lone Ranger Clip](#)
 - What stereotypes do you notice?
 - [The New Lone Ranger and Tonto](#)
 - [Tonto Controversy](#)

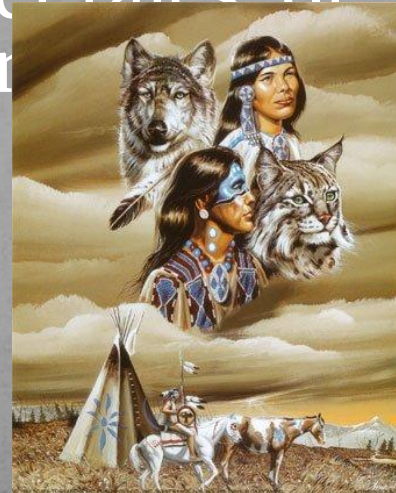
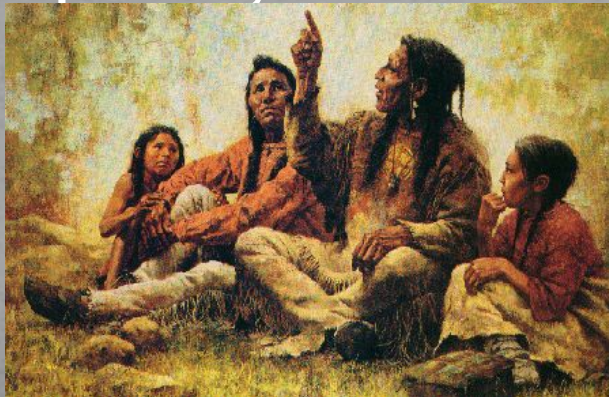


Native American Literature VS. Mainstream Literature

| Mainstream Lit | Native American Lit |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear-cut villains• Focus on individual• Clear-cut plot structure• Clear-cut concluding purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More conversational (Oral Tradition). Audience is included.• Doesn't rely on crisis, conflict or resolution for organization• Space is spherical and time is cyclical (Not linear and sequential. One story may be the beginning of many other stories.)• Indians see all creatures as relatives; <i>relationship is central</i>• Storyteller <u>"Rabbit's Short Tail"</u> |

Characteristics of Native American Lit

- Native peoples have used literature to **see chaos behind order** and to find the ability to laugh at themselves.
- Demonstrates a model for equality or the **relationship** Native Americans have with nature.
- **Consists of:** myths, trickster tales, or contemporary stories and r

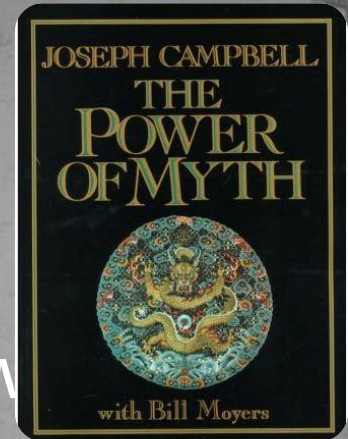


Four Function of Myths

Joseph Campbell: American mythologist, writer and lecturer, best known for his work in comparative mythology and comparative religion.

1. to instill a sense of awe toward the mystery of the universe
2. to explain the workings of the natural world
3. to support and validate social customs
4. to guide people through the trials of living

Where can you recognize these four functions of myths? Think about ninth grade.



Functions of Creation Myths

- Explain how the universe, world, or **life began**
- Explain the **origins** of natural phenomenon
- Contain examples of **cause and effect**
- Reveal what people **value**



All about Trickster Myths (or tales)

- [Joseph Campbell : Trickster Myths](#)
- The figure of the trickster is characterized by:
 - Paradox (inconsistency in nature)
 - Duality (world of opposites, good vs. dark)
 - Shape-shifting
 - Cleverness
 - Deception
 - Knack for survival

