



Thematic Guide to World Mythology (Thematic Guides to Literature)

Lorena Laura Stookey

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All around the world, myths address questions that humans have always posed about their origins, their environments, their ultimate destinies, and the meanings of their lives. This book examines 30 common motifs that thread their way through mythological tales across history and around the globe. The themes are presented in alphabetical order, moving from The Afterlife and Animals in Myth to The Underworld, World Tree, and Ymir Motif. Each thematic section defines and discusses a single recognizable motif, compares a number of different mythological traditions, and traces the repeated occurrences of one of these patterns through several different categories of narratives.

The discussion of The Afterlife, for example, examines the theme's earliest known occurrences in ancient Mesopotamia and compares them with those in Greek, Aztec, Norse, and other ancient cultures, as well as with contemporary views from Inuit and Polynesian cultures. A glossary provides concise definitions of recurring terms. A list of suggested readings on these topics will further aid students who desire to deepen their knowledge of world mythology.

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