***Origins and characteristics of the myth***

Myth (from the Greek mythos) is a fictional tale that seeks to give one explanation of the origin of the world and of humanity and of the different aspects of reality (natural phenomena, landscape elements, social institutions, conditions existential). There are also myths describing the birth and deeds of gods and heroes. From the myth you can also get a lot of information about the people who have it elaborate. For example information related to the type of environment, the type of society, type of civilization, religion ... Greek and Roman myths have been handed down to us in written form by poets and You can find several versions of the same myth even with different endings because they have been transcribed many times. Similar myths in different peoples are due to constant themes in the cultures of all civilizations. The narrative structure of a myth is similar to that of other types of narrative and, therefore, it foresees an initial situation, a central part or development and a final situation or conclusion. Characters can be ordinary men, heroes, gods, fantastic creatures or monstrous. Time is almost always very distant and indeterminate. The places are almost always open and fantastic, imaginary, therefore indeterminate Myths were tales made more to be heard than to be read, of consequently those who narrated them had to remember them easily and those who listened to them he had to understand them without difficulty. So the language of the myth is characterized by simple and short sentences, it is rich in repetition and frequent are the similes which, by means of similes, clarify complex concepts.

***The different types of myth***

The main types of the myth are distinguished between:

- myths of creation or origins, which tell how a divinity created and ordered the universe from nothing or from chaos;

- naturalistic myths, whose fundamental purpose is to provide an explanation of natural or biological phenomena;

-historical myths, which have the function of handing down fundamental events for the history of a people, whose protagonists are historically existed or legendary characters.

***The symbolic value***

The myths reflect the beliefs and values ​​of the civilization that elaborated them and therefore represent a very useful means for us moderns to know and understand them better. The myths deal symbolically with universal themes that have their roots in the deepest part of the human soul. In addition to the explanation of the birth of the world and of the gods, the problem of the complex relationship that has always linked fathers and sons emerges in these myths.

***The characters*** can be: common men, heroes with exceptional powers, sometimes children of a deity and a mortal creature; supernatural beings, such as gods or powerful spirits with exceptional powers;

fantastic or monstrous creatures, such as talking animals or giants with great powers.

***Time*** is almost always indefinite, very far away ("in the beginning ...", "once upon a time ...").

***The places*** are almost always open and fantastic, imaginary. Even when they are real, they are immersed in a fantastic atmosphere.

***The language*** of the myth is characterized by short and simple sentences with a prevalence of nouns and verbs, rich in words and expressions that are repeated so as to allow those who listened to the narration to learn it easily. There are also frequent similarities which, by means of comparisons, clarify complex concepts.

***Mythology*** defines instead the complex of myths of a people but also the study of their origin and their meaning. There are therefore as many mythologies as there are peoples of the Earth. However, the one that has most influenced Latin civilization and therefore our culture is undoubtedly Greek mythology.

***The (mis) adventures of a princess***

Europa is mentioned by Homer in the Iliad, in Hesiod's Theogony and also in Ovid's Metamorphoses. History and characters do not always coincide between these sources.

In the Homeric work she is Agenore's grandson, while in Ovid's version she is his daughter. For Hesiod she is the daughter of Ocean. However, the spread of the myth is due to the Latin author through the ages. In fact this was artistically revived during the Renaissance and in subsequent periods by painters such as Tiepolo, Veronese, Reni, Carracci and Tiziano.

Princess Europa collected flowers by the sea, in all the lightness of her youth, when she was deceived by Zeus. The mighty god approached her in the guise of a white bull. After the initial fright, the daughter of Agenore, king of Tire, decided to ride and tame the animal. Zeus, however, had other plans. The flowers left on the ground, the coast that is receding becoming a faint line on the horizon and the immensity of the sea that swallowed the girl's dreams, certainties and illusions, were the background to the kidnapping divine. Agenore sent his valiant sons Celix, Felix and Cadmus in search of his beloved lost sister, but no one was able to find her. The Mediterranean was the scenario of the impervious crossing west to Crete, where Zeus finally revealed his identity and his mad love. According to some sources, the king of Olympus won the proud one resistance of the girl with violence by transforming herself into an eagle; according to others, however, in the end nothing but love would prevail. In any case, Europe had three sons of Zeus, including the legendary King Minos, the father of the gods left the princess to her earthly fate. She became queen of Crete by marrying the king of the island Asterius. Zeus le made three divine gifts: a magical javelin, a trained dog and a bronze guardian. On the death of Asterio, he was succeeded by his adopted son Minos. From that moment I Greeks would have indicated with "Europe" the lands north of the Aegean; subsequently with their expansion, those north of the Mediterranean. Something that went beyond their imagination.

Then in Mythology Zeus fell in love with her, observing her on a beach together with some maids, with whom he collected flowers and for having her he ordered Hermes to lead the oxen of Europa's father towards that beach. Then he assumed the form of a white bull and approached her to stretch out at her feet.

Europa climbed on the back of the bull, impressed by her meekness, and he kidnapped her and carried her across the sea to the island of Crete.

Zeus then revealed her true identity and attempted to use violence to her, but she resisted. The god turned into an eagle and managed to overwhelm it in a willow forest or, according to others, below an evergreen plane tree. His father Agenore sent his children in search of his sister but no one went to Crete and so she was never found again. Zeus gave Europa the gifts of Talus, Laelaps and a javelin that never missed the target. He later recreated the shape of the white bull in the stars thatmake up the constellation of Taurus.

Europa then married the king of Crete Asterius and became the first queen of the Greek island.