



This is a graded discussion: 100 points possible

due Mar 29



## Week 2 Discussion: Mythology and Symbolism

169 173

[Arion Melidonis](#)

Select a specific religious symbol or myth and analyze it utilizing the course theories and perspectives. You may select any symbol or myth from the textbook, the instructor guidance, or any other myth/symbol that you are familiar with. Which theory best explains what is being expressed by the myth or symbol and why? How does the symbol/myth function or operate in the culture? How does this symbol/myth relate to the culture's worldview? Does it impact the way that people in the culture live? Does it grant or limit power in any way?

Complete your initial post by Wednesday at 11:59 pm. Respond to at least two other posts by Sunday at 11:59 pm. When completing this assignment be sure to apply the course theories and perspectives. When you respond to another student, don't just tell us that you like their post or not, utilize the course theories to analyze their posts.

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[Manuela Lamas](#)



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Tuesday

### Discussion 2:

The Symbol I chose is the Catholic Holy Cross

I believe Radcliffe-Brown best explains the myth about this symbol because I agree that this symbol is used "to express the basic sentiments of a society and to pass these ideas down from generation to generation." (Rebecca L. Stein, Philip L. Stein, Third Edition, pg. 19)

- How does the symbol/myth function or operate in the culture?

The symbol is a religious reminder that the cross represents the violent death and subsequent resurrection of the Messiah, Jesus, which is the basis of the Christian faith.

- How does this symbol/myth relate to the culture's worldview?

The symbol has a very strong and positive worldview. It seems to be common knowledge that the symbol represents good not evil.

- Does it impact the way that people in the culture live?

Yes, Catholics believe that the crucifix is a powerful symbol which represents the focal point of their beliefs. It is there to remind them that Jesus died on the cross to redeem humanity. Therefore, people try not to take life for granted. They see life as a blessing and do their best to do good every day.

- Does it grant or limit power in any way?

People believe that the marking of a cross upon the forehead or chest is a talisman against the powers of demons. It provides a feeling of protection.

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Wednesday

I really enjoyed your post but I also see how this could fall under Durkheim's theory as well. He believed in the theory of functionalism. This symbol tells us a story. As we learned in the lecture "Christ crucified on the cross represents the sacrifice of one for the many and just as Christ sacrificed himself, a good Christian sacrifices their individual desires to live a proper life." Therefore, this cross symbolizes a story which tells us how Christians live their way of life based on tis belief. As we read in the textbook, he saw "religious and other cultural phenomena as serving some essential purpose in maintaining the society." [1] Basically, the holy cross serves as a purpose to maintain the beliefs in christian society. To keep everyone humble and remember what sacrifice is.

[1] Stein, Rebecca L; Stein, Philip. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft -- Pearson e Text (Kindle Location 5716). Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

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Wednesday

Thanks for your feedback Maham, I am still trying to memorize all the theories from our textbook. There are a few anthropologists that have used similar definitions of religion.

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Wednesday

wow! i have always thought that christianity and catholic was so similar. From what you've stated it seems like christianity and catholics has plenty of similarities.

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 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994> 

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Thursday

Great job everyone,

I really like how you are utilizing the course theories to help support your arguments. It really makes sense that these values are functional to the society. Any society, dependent on the social contract where people give up individual rights for the benefit of the community, needs to adapt values that encourage them to work together.

It is interesting to reconcile these Christian values with contemporary capitalism where individual benefit seems to be more important than sacrifice. What do you think about this point? Is capitalism eroding Christian values?

Arion

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Friday

Dr. Arion Melidonis, After reading your comment and thinking about it, I do believe that capitalism does eroded some Christian values. People are now more concerned with themselves than lending a helping hand to another. They think about the benefit that they will receive in doing so and if there is none, they wont do it for the sake of kindness. Unlike then, now there is so much more development and technology in the world that no one really connects anymore. I feel that now people are not in tune with their faith and religion as much as they were then because of all the distractions. There are fewer and fewer people that you can find out there that are truly humble and giving toward others.

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Yesterday

I really agree specifically with all you've said about the Catholic Holy Cross, although I'm unaware of certain things that come from my religion which is Catholic. I fully know and understand how it impacts people from the culture they live and also on how it grants or limits power. I certainly believe as a catholic that the cross upon our forehead grants power towards us since we highly believe it protects us from not only demons but danger as well. I really enjoyed your post and couldn't agree with it more!

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Yesterday

I agree with the amount of power the Holy Cross contains in the eyes of a catholic follower. The cross can give someone a sense of hope during an extreme time of need in their life. The intangible strength of this symbol can alter peoples lives because it represents the ultimate sacrifice that the holy father gave.

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Tuesday

hey guys

so the symbol i am going to use is Jesus being on the cross. with Him being on the cross symbolizing him sacrificing his life for us for the people because of our sins. Christians worship Jesus because he is the son of God. and he died so that we do not have to. this operates in the culture because we the people or Christians believe that they can talk to him and get answers that they need from him which i am spiritual i believe that he makes ways and open doors because he wants us to have certain things in our lives even when they are not good for us. belief in God the Father, Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Holy Spirit the death, descent into hell, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. the holiness of the Church and the communion of saints. Christ's second coming, the Day of Judgement and salvation of the faithful. Emile Durkheim and Clifford Geertz i believe both agreed with this religion

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 [Katrina Sarah Walls](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/8008) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/8008>

Wednesday

The crucifix is a great symbol to remind Christians how painful the Son of God went through to save us from the sin that Adam and Eve had committed for us. It keeps our behavior in check and be more noble and ethical towards humankind because God sacrifices his only begotten child for us. I believe this is why Geertz say that symbols are powerful and meaningful to those who believe in it.

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 [Mabam Shah](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/16367) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/16367>

Wednesday

I completely agree in your analysts of the theories. I think that the holy cross represented a great deal of sacrifice which is present in the christian religion and their beliefs. The cross reminds them of the belief that Christ sacrificed himself and therefore it plays in the way they live their daily lives. Belief is very important and their belief derived from this symbol. Another thing that this symbol does as we learned from the textbook "symbols can create a supernatural world or create myths about the past." [1]. The holy cross tells us a myth a story of how Christ sacrificed himself. That is one thing that we fail to see, symbols are so important because they tell us an important story which depicts lots of cultures ways of life.

[1] Stein, Rebecca L; Stein, Philip. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft -- Pearson eText (Kindle Location 1906). Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

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 [Oscar Sanchez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/13446) 

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Wednesday

Hello Leilani, I understand why you would utilize both Durkheim and Geertz in your post. Because Geertz would agree that this symbol would influence very powerful moods and emotions and also help those who believe in this symbol explain their existence by giving them ultimate meaning. However, I believe that Karl Marx can also fit in with your post, because he believed that religion helps people stay in check and "teaches them to be obedient to authority as a condition for achieving future happiness through salvation" (Stein 18).

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 [Leilani Richardson](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19464) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19464>

Wednesday

hi oscar

so i was thinking the same exact thing but see thats where it gets complicated see i do not think religion really keeps people in check not going against you but what about the people that do not believe in religion and just like to be a free person that is to themselves they are more in check and obedient than people that follow religion. but yes i was thinking about adding Karl because he mentions salvation.

but thanks

Oscar you rock

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 [Gabriel Lemor](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/15526) 

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Wednesday

I agree God sent his only son to save us from eternal damnation. You should check out what i wrote about this topic (:

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Gabrielle Zacuto](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/22758) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/22758>

Yesterday

Leilani,

I think you have a great analysis explaining the theory of the cross. As someone who is foreign to Christianity, I always find it fascinating to listen to people's versions of what their religious symbols mean and how they apply to an individual's life. You explain that the cross symbolizes Jesus' death as he died for all of the Christian people's sins. The textbook mentions that the Roman Catholic crosses are what originally depicted the crucifixion scene. However, each sector of Christianity adorns the cross to symbolize different events. Protestants, for example, do not show the body of Jesus on the cross. While the United Methodist Church incorporates a flame to represent the Holy Spirit.

You mentioned Durkheim as a theorist that fits your choice of symbol. However, I think that Geertz's theory is more accurate fit particularly as he states, "Religion is a story we tell ourselves about ourselves that works to motivate us". You explained that the cross is a reminder of the sins that Jesus died for. Here, Geertz implies that Jesus's death in Christianity acts as a reminder for how Christians can choose to act out his or her lives. As Geertz states, people need reasons behind actions, and religion and religious symbols can take on this responsibility.

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Darlene Jeda



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5743>

Tuesday

A symbol that I find very interesting (although do not believe in or condone its negative beliefs in any way) is the swastika. Our textbook tells us that this symbol is found in a great many religious systems, which is ironically true because we (or at least I do) automatically think that it's in relation to white supremacists, Nazi's, white power, etc. However, this symbol was actually seen in the art of the Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, Celts, and Natives. Additionally, this symbol is used in all Hindu yantras and religious designs. I find it amazing how a symbol that is first thought of with such hatred is actually seen in a beautiful artistic manner in other religions. The symbol in Hinduism is a sign of our solar system and also known as the sign of wisdom used by the Hopi and Mayan civilizations as part of their sun worship ceremonies.

To relate this symbol to a perspective, I would have to say the perspective depends on what way you are viewing the symbol. For instance, used with its negative connotations which define it in law associated with a hate crime as well as negativity towards all non-white cultures, I think Karl Marx perspective would best relate in that he would view symbol as a way to control the masses. He would feel that this would create a system to maintain inequality, which is exactly what this symbol represents in this way.

Now, in regards to other ways this symbol is viewed, for instance with the Hopi, they see this symbol as a masculine symbol of purity and a symbol of the sun. For this manner, I would say the perspective that best relates is Edward Burnett Tylor in that he believes religions are based on a belief of spirits and that the human shapes that appear in our dreams and visions are the soul and spirit. This symbol viewed in this culture by this perspective would be seen as an understanding of worship.

Work Cited:

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No Author, (2016, November 21), Swastika. Retrieved from <http://www.religionfacts.com/swastika> (<http://www.religionfacts.com/swastika>).

Water, Frank (1993, December 31), Hopi Prophecy. Retrieved from <http://www.welcomehome.org/rainbow/prophecy/hopi1.html> (<http://www.welcomehome.org/rainbow/prophecy/hopi1.html>).

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Jess Flower



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/22599>

Friday

Hi Darlene,

I also wrote about the swastika! However, I focused solely on how it relates to Greet's Interpretive Approach in the context of WWII and its polar opposite meanings during that time. I really enjoyed your approach and found great value in your annalists. I think its great that you took the time to explore the less known meanings of the symbol! Thank you for sharing!

~Jess

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Friday

Hi Darlene,

The swastika is a great symbol to talk about. I like the fact that you stated how there is two perspectives in which people see the symbol now. I guess the way we each view that symbol is exactly part of what we have been learning so far in the class, it pretty much goes back to what we were taught of it and what we believe. The fact that you stated the good side about it was a good idea because personally, I did not know about it!

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Yesterday

Darlene,

I too am fascinated by the history of the Swastika. I think that post-WWII, we have become accustomed to viewing the Swastika in a particular way because of its adoption by the Nazi party. However, I was surprised to learn that the symbol was originally used in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism well before WWII. Contrary to the Nazi adaptation, these earlier uses were actually representative of positivity and good luck.

In terms of context, I think you did a great job linking the Swastika to the theories of Karl Marx. During WWII, the Nazi party utilized the symbol as a representation of their political party. From there it became a symbol of rage, darkness, and suffering; something completely different than what it represented in other religions centuries before. As Marx suggests, this symbol has the power to elicit a strong human response, enough to cause action or even hate.

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Yesterday

When I was on deployment in the Philippines I went to a sacred place of worship and on the gates were two large gold swastika's. That day was the first time that I had ever learned that the swastika originated as a symbol of peace like you wrote about. I think the perspective in which we view this symbol in our culture takes precedence because of the pain that is associated with the holocaust. Great post and good job connecting the different theories to this symbol.

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3:07am

Hello Darlene

I also did my symbol on the swastika. I liked how you brought up the different cultures views and how you focused on the well cultural aspect of the symbol. I also liked how you compared the one symbol with two different theories. The swastika in western society has lost most if not all religious meaning. I like how you used Marx's theory to touch on that. You compared the religious and social aspects of the symbol very well.

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Jennavi Schenck



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Tuesday

I am selecting the Prince Siddhartha myth that belongs to the Buddhist religion as I recently learned about this in my Asian art history class. Prince Siddhartha lived a happy and safe life as a prince surrounded by great luxuries in a palace. It was foreseen that he would either be a great military or spiritual leader. The prince was sheltered until his late 20s and when he finally left his father's palace he began to see the realities of life. He saw for the first time suffering in the outside world. The prince then decides to seek out enlightenment. After learning what he can from wise teachers he rests under a Bodhi tree. Under this tree is where he fights and wins against a demon. He becomes a Buddha because he is now enlightened. Reaching enlightenment or nirvana means becoming a Buddha and ending the cycle of birth and death.

I would like to tie this myth in with Emile Durkheim's theory of reinforced social values. In Buddhism, there are bodhisattvas, who are people who have reached enlightenment yet chose to stay on earth so that they can help others reach enlightenment. I think the fact that bodhisattvas delay their own happiness for others is a very kind and social thing to do. In Buddhism there is also the concept of karma in which whatever someone does good or bad will come back to them. Durkheim believed that religion will stop people from committing bad deeds that are not socially acceptable. Therefore, Durkheim would believe that the fear of bad karma would stop people from stealing from or lying to someone. In the Buddhist culture, there are many statues that depict Buddhas. There are many Buddha statues and temples in India (where Buddhism began), Japan, Korea, and elsewhere. This means that many Buddhists today still look up to Buddha and his great deeds. The Buddhist culture's worldview is that people are reborn over and over again until they reach nirvana, so Buddhists want others to be taught how to reach nirvana so they don't have to suffer anymore. Buddhists are known as very peaceful people and I believe that is because Buddhism is all about ending suffering, so yes it does impact how people in the culture live their lives. Today non-Buddhists will practice yoga or meditate because it brings them inner peace. I think Buddhism both grants and limits power. For example, Buddhists can look forward to spreading peace to others which will in turn give them joy. On the other hand it can limit their power because if a tsunami and then an earthquake were to happen in their village they could think it was because they had done something evil in a previous life even though the event occurred because it was a natural disaster and no one could have prevented it. Yet, I suppose that is the same in every religion, like maybe someone might think if they prayed more this bad event wouldn't have happened.

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Katrina Sarah Wells



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/8008>

Wednesday

Durkheim has a very interesting theory. I also believe in karma, whether it is good or bad. And symbols all around us reminds of that. I'm pretty sure it does the same to everyone. This is why religions uses symbols to control society with their actions and desires.

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Maricela Lopez



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/7823>

Wednesday

I really enjoyed your post. I am learning so much about many different religions and cultures. I know about the Buddhist religion. However, I have never learned the details about it. I agree that it ties with Durkheim's theory, that states society is a system of interrelated parts where no one part can function without the other. From what you described Buddhist look forward to spreading peace to others, which in return gives them joy, joy helps them function.

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 [Aimee Trujillo](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19116) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19116>

Wednesday

Hello there Jennavi!

Since I do not know much of the Buddhist religion I found your post very informative. You shared much insight on the origins of this particular myth and its symbolism. As you mentioned Durkheim's theory here would come into play as well as Malinowski's. Malinowski would argue that this myth is an aid for functionalism in the society that practices it. It also gives an identity to those that actively participate in this religion. I agree with your opinion about who practice of Buddhism can give power to the people but also limit them. From Malinowski's perspective we see that a myth can define the distinction between a natural and supernatural event. As you explained if a natural disaster were to happen they would think they did something bad in their previous lives, therefore they seek a supernatural being "higher power" to protect them from things they have no control of. I was raised in a Catholic home and would always see Jesus on the crucifix and I could see how much he suffered for us because he loves us. On the other hand I also remember seeing for the first time a statue of Buddha and ask myself how can people worship someone that clearing does not look like her has suffered at all for his people? Of course now that I am able to see it from an anthropological perspective I can understand that different religions attach different meanings to their symbols. Great discussion! :)

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Ariya Melidopis](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994) 

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Thursday

Great discussion everyone,

There is a really great retelling of the Siddhartha myth in the book Siddhartha by Herman Hesse. Anthropologists argue that myths like these work to help us understand difficult concepts that we could not necessarily learn simply by being told. For example, I could tell someone to be more accepting of what life throws at them but simply getting this information doesn't help them be more accepting. Myths help teach us these values because we live along side the main characters as they go through their journeys of discovery. They help us discover these values for ourselves. What do you think about this point?

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 [Jennavi Schenbisch](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/18844) 

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Thursday

I'd like to check out that book by Hesse, it sounds interesting. I agree that myths can help us go through life more positively. We can imagine ourselves as the hero in a journey to understand why certain aspects of life are tough. It's hard to go

through a trial alone, so by having a hero in a myth to look up to gives us hope that life will get better as long as we stay strong on the journey. I like the Ancient Greek myth of Pandora's box in where the goddess Pandora is warned against opening her box, but opens it anyway due to her curiosity and releases a great evil. This myth can teach people to not give in to temptation, because bad things can and will happen. Parents can tell children not to open a cookie jar, but they will anyway. Yet maybe after parents tell their kids the story of Pandora they wont be tempted to steal a cookie.

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Friday

Great job Jennavi!

The Pandora myth is one of my favorites. Many theorists have made the connection between Pandora and Eve. Both are tempted by curiosity and unleash calamity onto the world. Some feminist anthropologists have suggested that these myths reinforce male dominance in these culture. They basically demonstrate the danger of women to men because women are understood to not be able to control their natural urges. At the same time, they may reflect the danger of desire of women by men (both stories contain sexual imagery- Pandora's jar and the recognition of nakedness by Adam and Eve).

Some mystics have actually interpreted both of these stories in a positive way, however. They argue that it is unclear in the Pandora story whether she gives hope to humankind or whether she prevents us from having hope (perhaps hope is in the child that she makes possible by being first woman). Likewise, Eve gives us knowledge of good and evil. Although this gets us kicked out of the garden, would we truly be human without this knowledge (would we be able to choose to follow God without it)? What do you think about these interpretations?

Arion

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Wednesday

Hello everyone, for my discussion post I have selected La Santa Muerte (The Lady of the Holy Death), which is also known as La Huesuda (the Boney Lady) as my religious symbol. Many people would believe that praying to La Santa Muerte is something that isn't considered functional in a society. Therefore, it is very important that we keep an open mind when trying to understand the symbol of this culture. Most people are afraid of La Santa Muerte, in fact, some people don't even like to mention her. La Santa Muerte, for the people that pray to her, is like praying to the Virgin of Guadalupe to others. The intentions are the same, they pray to her and ask her to bless, help and protect them and their loved ones. According to the video, they ask her to help the sick, those in prison and the unemployed. The people who pray to her do pertain to a certain social class. She is known as the Goddess of crisis, the people turn to her when they need someone to help them fix or end their problems (just like how anyone else prays to whichever God it is they believe in). La Santa Muerte is something that resulted as a crisis of faith. Ultimately it is the faith of the people that keeps them moving forward. I personally don't view people praying to La Santa Muerte as something bad because after all as Clifford Geertz would agree that we need some type of meaning in our lives, because without meaning we feel lost with no sense of direction and empty. Although many people wouldn't agree with my opinion, I believe that those who pray to La Santa Muerte aren't affected by what others feel or think about their beliefs. In fact, I believe that it grants them power towards what they believe in, it's almost as if they want to let others know what they believe in (just like most people do). Something I found interesting about the people who pray or believe in La Santa Muerte is that every single person can relate to her, because she is a symbol of death and death is in fact inevitable and everyone will go through it someday.

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Wednesday

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Wednesday

Being able to believe and have faith is the key to everything. The people who pray to La Santa Muerte has an adamant faith and belief which explains Geertz theory of symbolism. It has shaped the culture by giving them fear and at the same time hope. Great post-Oscar. The impulse La Santa Muerte give to the people who believes in her keeps them in check and limits their own negative desires.

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Wednesday

I believe there is misconception about what La Santa Muerte represents. This is a good example of ethnocentrism. A lot of people in Mexico are Catholic and they use their own society to judge people that pray to La Santa Muerte. They should try to understand that it gives people hope, which is a really good thing. Perhaps they should read the words of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, "I have made a ceaseless effort not to ridicule, not to bewail, not to scorn human actions, but to understand them." (Rebecca L. Stein, Philip L. Stein. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft, Third Edition, pg. 25)

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Wednesday

so Oscar i think they prayed and talked to her like they talk to Jesus or God or for a better example like the virgin Mary Catholics pray to her so i believe its like the same thing but its just like Christians praying hahah i think i repeated my self but these two both ties into each other

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Thursday

Hello Oscar,

I agree with you, sooner or later we will relate to the Santa Muerte. Once we find ourselves close to death, we may start to pray to her. Anybody can believe in whatever they choose to, but maybe Sigmund Freud was right, "Religion is an illusion and it derives its strength from the fact that it falls in with our instinctual desires." So, with any Saint or Virgin our mind may be role playing that illustration of what one wants to believe in.

Cited Work:

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Thursday

Great discussion everyone,

Comparing La Santa Muerte to the Virgin of Guadalupe is really fascinating. As female religious figures, both seem to offer more compassion to religious followers than their male counterparts. Some theorists have suggested that both of these figures reflect the Aztec culture and their various mother Goddesses. The Virgin of Guadalupe is compassionate as long as you follow the fundamental rules of the Catholic culture. She offers salvation, but you must submit to a particular way of life. Consider how belief in the Virgin reflects the colonial message. Some theorists argue that the message of the Virgin is that if you follow the rules of the colonial power, you will be taken care of.

Now, consider La Santa Muerte. She offers you compassion no matter what you do. She protects even people who violate the rules of the society. Some anthropologists have suggested that she represents resistance to colonial authority, particularly given that many promises of the colonials have failed to come true. Many people in Mexico have lived by the rules and yet they are still marginalized and facing financial difficulties. What do you think about these interpretations?

Arion

[← Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4334>



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4334>

Thursday

Thank you for openly sharing your opinion Oscar. As I read your post I nodded my head because these are some of the same ideas that crossed my mind when learning about La Santa Muerte. It is true that so many people shun down upon the worship of this symbol yet I agree with you that often times people seek a higher power when they are in need of guidance or support they cannot find elsewhere. These people openly speak about the acts they have committed and how that brought them to seek someone who would accept them for their "wrongful" behavior and that someone being La Santa Muerte. I can see how Clifford Geertz idea that meaning to life provides a sense of direction is exemplified in this culture that prays and worships a symbol of death. Like you argue, who are we to judge them for praying to death when they only seek for the same thing other worshipers of various religion seek for: Protection, guidance, and reassurance.

Darwin

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21301>



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21301>

Yesterday

Very interesting information about this religious symbol, La Santa Muerte is something important to people just as the cross and many other symbols. I have never heard of this symbol and like the many other topics we will be learning about they are all part of different society's around the world. you are right we can all relate to her because none of us can live forever we will all die someday.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

The lotus flower is one symbol of fortune for Buddhism. It is a psychological and psychical symbol that firstly and literally means: rising and blooming above the murk to achieve enlightenment. When a person is born, they are encroached in murky waters, filled with mud like obstacles that people need to overcome to achieve enlightenment and purification, which is the second meaning to the lotus flower. The spirit needs to be purified when traveling through murky waters, and then come the third meaning: faithfulness. People need to be and stay faithful to rise above the murky filled waters. Color plays an important part of the lotus flower in Buddhism. A white lotus means purity of the mind and spirit. A red lotus means compassion and love. A blue lotus flower represents common sense, using wisdom and knowledge to create enlightenment. A purple lotus flower represents spirituality and mysticism. Pink lotus flowers are seen as a historical legends of the Buddha and history of the Buddha. The gold lotus flower represents all achievement of enlightenment, especially by the Buddha. The different growth stages of the lotus blossom are seen as a stage in enlightenment. The closed lotus blossom represents the time before a Buddhist follower found Buddha or enlightenment. An open lotus blossom that's fully bloomed represents achieved enlightenment and self-awareness. Mud represents a big part in the lotus flower. It shows that every person is born in a world of suffering, which is the mud surrounding and encasing the lotus blossom. People need to rise above temptation and evil thoughts to break through the mud to become one with Buddha. The mud shows us who we are and teaches to choose the right path over the easy one. The last representation of the lotus flower is rebirth, both in a literal and figurative sense. Rebirth can be seen as a change in ideas, the dawn after the darkest day, or finding Buddhism when there was none in the beginning. Now in the literal sense, it is seen as reincarnation, like in Buddhist religion. Where the soul leaves is world in its present form and gets reborn in another. The worldview of Buddhism is in many Asian countries. Followers of Buddhism, and the symbol the lotus flower represents means to strive to do better even if the road is not smooth and clear. I think instead of granting or limiting power it presents a new awareness one didn't have before turning to Buddhism. Today still there are monks that live in temples and practice Buddhism, with the lotus blossom as a symbol of enlightenment and rebirth. It can be seen as a legend, because a the Buddha practiced this religion to the end of his days, and with his enlightenment brought clarity and rebirth when he left the world. The lotus blossom is a precise symbol to Buddhism, and represents different aspects of a persons life.

◀ [Reply](#)

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19116>

Wednesday

hey there Ashley!

I enjoyed reading your post. I found it interesting that a lotus flower would have a psychological symbol to a religion like buddhism. It depicts a beautiful picture of how just as a person goes through purification to overcome obstacles in life so does a lotus flower. While you mentioned what the different colors of lotus signified I thought about the meaning of color that the text book explains. How one color in one culture can have a completely different meaning in another. This is due to the meaning that each culture attaches to a certain symbol in this case the symbol being color. In the examples you shared with us, states many different colors more than three whereas in other cultures like the "Yoruba Color Terminology" categorizes different colors in only three terms. We can ask ourselves here how is it that color as a symbol interacts and impacts the worldview of all the diverse cultures that exist today.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Friday

I really liked your entire post! Some really interesting facts about the lotus flower, which I have always found very interesting. Great job!

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

The Freemasonry symbol describes Geertz theory because it reminds the Brotherhood members how to act and behave. The symbol encourages them to keep themselves in check and squared. The square makes them realize that there is no special treatment amongst the fellowship members of the Brotherhood. In other words, they are all equal. For example, if one of them works hard every single day for the lodge to be better, they do get some kind of praise I guess, not sure what they get, though, for they keep everything a secret from the society. But if that same person did nothing even just for one day, then he goes back to square 1 like everyone else. The compass makes them control their personal desires and urges. Everything is on the whole, and no one should think of themselves only. They constantly talk about respect for each other. And every time they lose focus; the symbols remind them of what a member of a Freemasonry is supposed to act and be for the society of men representing their lodge. Like Geertz said, the symbols shape their moods and motivations.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

Hi Katrina, I agree with you that Geertz's theory aligns with the Freemasonry symbol. I don't know much about Freemasons like most people, but I know that since it is such a secret society the members must feel like they have something important to contribute to their cause. I do know however it is a strong brotherhood. It motivates the members to have a purpose in society as Geertz would say and helps them become maybe in their minds better American citizens or people. When Freemasons see the symbol they probably feel a strong bond or belonging to something that is bigger than them.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Darwin Perez



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4334>

Wednesday

### The Lady of the Holy Death

The symbol of "The Lady of the Holy Death" has emerged rapidly in the Mexican culture over the past decade and has given hope and guidance to those outcasted by Catholic Religion. As poverty in Mexico is spiking due to economic hardships, violence, robbery, and criminal acts are growing in sync with the poverty. In a Mexican society revolving around Catholic beliefs, it has been instilled by myths that those who commit harm or cheat are damned as a way of controlling the society from reverting back to human nature of survival of the fittest. Those who deviate from the rules Catholicism has implemented in society feel outcasted and therefore have created their own culture and a symbol of worship that gives them a sense of protection from the shame they receive from the rest of society. Several anthropologist believe that there are universal symbols that mean the same thing for all cultures and that can be seen in the case of the "Lady of the Holy Death". It has been noted that the first appearance of this symbolic figure is traced back to a prison where prisoners wanted to rebel against the commonly seen tattoo of the "Lady de Guadalupe" and therefore transformed the cloaked woman into a cloaked body death woman. The cloak around these women serve as a universal symbol that these symbolic figures have the ability to provide protection to their worshipers.

By creating this symbolic death lady, worshipers of the Lady of the Holy Death have found a way to cope with what anthropologist Marshall Sahlins argues that the fundamental myth in culture is based on an understanding of nature vs. culture. For these deviants, popular culture has held them constant to the common beliefs, but the Lady of the Holy Death helps protect them as they live out there nature seeking for food even if it means stealing and killing for it. This symbol grants its worshipers power over their natural desires and hinders the cost of living out their nature in a society that shuns down upon it. Feeling confident that the Lady of the Holy Death will provide protection and salvation, worshipers continue to steal for nutrition, fight for survival, and hope that life will workout in their favor living in the slums.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5743>

Darlene Infa



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5743>

Wednesday

Darwin, I like how you stated that the Lady of the Holy Death provided hope and guidance to those outcasted by Catholic Religion. I also feel that Our Lady of the Holy Death provides a sort of safe haven for those people who haven't made the best decisions in their life and are now looking for some kind of "god" to believe in but just not in the "traditional sense". Because our Lady of the Holy Death is not presented in the beautiful angelic manner that Our Lady of Guadalupe is, it makes these people feel accepted because maybe they feel like they are praying to something that will accept them no matter what they've done. To me, this relates to Bronislaw Malinowski's perspective in that he believed that religion was there to alleviate individual anxieties. So maybe a person who doesn't feel they can go to church and worship, feels safer and more accepted relating to Our Lady of the Holy Death.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Lesley Cuervo



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5769>

Wednesday

Darwin,

I had contemplated discussion on this topic and found your post to be very insightful in discussing this symbol of The Lady of the Holy Death. I found it especially interesting how you noted the fact that this symbol was popular in prisons and for those who felt outcasted by the religion of their family and peers. As discussed through the theories of anthropologist Geertz, this symbol casts a sense of relief amongst those who have been shunned by religion and society. Through the circumstances of the prisoners who "created" the idea of The Lady of the Holy Death, reflects the human need of those to find some sort of motivation and an idea to rely on. Especially in places like a prison it's very common to feel alone and a sense of rejection which is why many inmates especially in hispanic culture turn to La Virgen de Guadalupe and others as discussed through The Lady of Holy Death. It is an interesting concept in which this symbol defends those who feel as though their actions are justified within the means of survival.

Great Post !

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Arion Melendez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

Thursday

Wonderful work Darwin and great discussion everyone,

I like the way that you relate La Santa Muerte's worship to anxiety and lack of options. Many theorists suggest that the people of Mexico have been consistently marginalized and exploited as a result of colonialism and proximity to the US. La Santa Muerte may be a way that people can feel empowered and to generate resistance to these forces. Do you think that she represents a society that is in trouble? Could we utilize the existence of symbols like these to understand that social struggles that people in a society face? Could the frustration that many people in the US feel towards government be understood in a similar way?

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Catherine Suarez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12721) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12721>

Friday

Hey Darwin, your post is very interesting. Did not really think of what La Santa Muerte really symbolizes to the people who worship her. It made really think of how you thought of the people rejected by society or the people that do not follow the rules of the Catholic religion and how they find comfort and meaning in her. Like Geertz stated people need meaning in their lives and religion gives them that. La Santa Muerte is always thought of negatively by people being ethnocentric.

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Esmeralda Villanueva](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/7735) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/7735>

Friday

Darwin,

I enjoyed reading your post. I also wrote about The Lady of Holy Death but I really enjoy getting to read others discussion on the same topic because I get to read from others point of view. The way people go into worshipping her because they feel they don't fit in

with the catholic church because they feel like they just judge them and ask for money when many of them are poor and are in need of money themselves.

◀ Reply

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/16367>



Maham Shah

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/16367>

Wednesday



Symbols are very important in our lives. As we learned in the textbook, "[t]he complexity of human communication is made possible through the ability of humans to create and use symbols." [1] Symbols are even more important in religious practice; they mean something and they are a way of life for many. Myths are also very important; they are sacred stories. "They tell of the origin of the world and humankind, the existence and activities of gods and spirits, the creation of order in the universe, and the nature of illness and death." [2] Today I am going to be analyzing a very interesting myth. I come from a background of being around Islam. In Islam one is taught that always 24/7 there is a right angel sitting on your shoulder recording your good deeds and an angel on your left shoulder recording all your bad deeds. This is a myth because it is a sacred story basically. This sacred story is in the holy book The Quran. It is stated in chapter 83. "And indeed, [appointed] over you are keepers, noble and recording; they know whatever you do." Muslims believe this and they take it very seriously. True or not it is still a myth. The theory that I think best explains this myth is Malinowski's approach. As stated in the textbook I agree with his approach "[m]yths are not told for entertainment or to impart historical information, but are used to justify and explain religious rituals as well as social and moral rules." He states "it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality" and this is exactly what I believe this myth means in the Islamic religion. I think that this myth is providing Muslims their way of life, it enhances their belief of peacefulness. In Islam, conducting good deeds such as doing good for others and not lying or doing the wrong things is important. So, this belief is held to an importance and is pushed with the myth that there are angels sitting on our shoulders recording everything we do. With this myth, Muslims are cautious and do the right thing more than they do the wrong thing. It pushes Islam's morals and principles to the best of its abilities. I think this myth is very important in Islam and you are told it as a kid and it stays with you for the rest of your life. It impacts it in a huge way because it encourages Muslims to do and be "good" in Islamic guidelines. It doesn't necessarily grant power but it does limit power. In Islam greed is bad and technically if we believe we have an angel recording all the bad things we do then we will always want to do good therefore it limits the amount of bad deeds be conduct such as be greedy or prideful.

[1] Stein, Rebecca L; Stein, Philip. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft -- Pearson e-text (Kindle Locations 1883-1884). Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

[2] Stein, Rebecca L; Stein, Philip. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft -- Pearson e-text (Kindle Locations 1176-1177). Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

[3] Stein, Rebecca L; Stein, Philip. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft -- Pearson e-text (Kindle Locations 1434-1435). Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

[4]. Stein, Rebecca L; Stein, Philip. The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft -- Pearson eText (Kindle Locations 1429-1430). Taylor and Francis. Kindle Edition.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

I meant to put a [3] after "rules" and a [4] after "morality"

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

Hello Maham, I found your post extremely interesting! I've seen this myth expressed in cartoons and movies before but I never knew it was an actual religious practice. Malinowski's approach does apply well to your myth. But I also believe that Edward Burnett Tylor's theory could apply to your post as well. This is due to the fact that this religious practice believes in some type of spiritual beings.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

For this week's discussion post on religious symbols and myths, I chose the Celtic cross. I did so because of the wide range of meaning it represents to both the Christian believer and non-believer. A cross represents the event of Jesus dying, in the manner of being nailed to a cross, which was interpreted as the symbolic price paid for our sins. This symbol, if you subscribe to this belief, can inspire a multitude of emotion (reverence, hope, joy, thankfulness, etc.). But whatever emotion it stirs, it ultimately stems from the singular meaning of this symbol.

Now, add a simple circle connecting the center of this cross and you have the opportunity to expand on its meaning and symbolic definition. At least that's the way it appears based on the multitude of meanings I found that this symbol represents. But I'll stick with the ones that stood out.

First off, this symbols origins differ and are ultimately uncertain. It appears though that it became widely used during the 9<sup>th</sup> century, spawned by Irish missionaries. Irish legend says it was introduced by Saint Patrick in an effort to convert Irish pagans. These pagans worshipped a sun and moon goddess. The circle was to help draw attention to life through Christ - through a symbol (the circle representing the sun and moon goddess), that these people could relate to. Basically bringing some familiarity in meaning to this new Christian idea being presented. Other theorists suggest that this symbol was to show the superiority of the cross over the sun and moon goddess. Another theory suggests it was Druid symbol originally. A practical theory suggests that this symbol is simply just more structurally sound in design over a

standard Roman cross, the arches of the circle supporting the members of the cross. Ultimately, it has become a popular design piece for home décor and head stones.

A cross on its own, even though the most recognizable of Christian symbols, can be interpreted as pagan symbol by those beliefs that say Jesus died on a stake, or single upright pole, rather than a cross. But when this simple symbol was expanded on, in the case of the Celtic cross, its meaning seemed unlimited in possibilities. That is what made this Celtic cross symbol interesting. You may have two people wearing this symbol around their neck or have it as a tattoo, each for a very different reason. One may call it a Christian symbol of hope and inspiration; the other would call it an anti Christian statement. The symbol serving the same purpose, to express that person's view of the world as they have interpreted it. As Anthropologist Clifford Geertz described religion as a system of symbols to enhance a belief, it seems that symbols can also be used to show hierarchy within or between beliefs as well as to also contradict a belief.



◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

Kris,

I appreciate the diversity of your discussion in exploring a symbol that is relatable to not only religious but also non-religious views. In many cases through symbols, many cultures may symbolize them all very differently, some in own interpersonal form and others in religious form and practices. Just as the Mayans and their views of the moon, sun and stars and other astronomical ideas that reflected their way of life and ultimately controlled to some extent their cultural beliefs and practices.

This symbol you chose, the celtic cross, reflects a literal worldview of a variety of cultures and the different ways to interpret the symbol without any definite definition. This is a great description of a symbol and the roles it plays not only in religion but through culture. As you mentioned as well this symbol dates back to Irish legend and culture which in itself could reflect the culture through myth. Interestingly enough myths can closely relate with symbols such as this one as for this culture the myth may include the use of

this symbol and through its lack of steadiness in use in one form, evolved into a worldwide symbol of many different views. I have also heard of a celtic knot and it closely ties into this symbol and the complexity of its creation through patterns which in itself may express the ideas of culture and art more so than religion.

Very interesting topic! Great post!

◀ [Reply](#)

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Friday

I liked that you explored multiple different viewpoints throughout your discussion. Your post was very interesting and I learned a lot about the celtic cross. This symbol is definitely a big one for a number of different groups and you were able to touch on most of the meanings of this symbol. Very interesting, well done.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Friday

I love how you make the very true point that this symbol can be both one of Christianity or that of the Irish pagans. One of the things that I found in my personal research as I was completing my family's lineage history was that Christianity was successful in spreading through the Celtic tribes as they mirrored in symbolism. Whether that was coincidence or purposeful, it eased tremendously the pagan acceptance of this new religion.

Grunke, Kimberly Rachel. *The Effect of Christianity upon the British Celts*. Diss. University of Wisconsin La Crosse, 2008.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

The menorah symbolizes universal enlightenment and knowledge. The seven different branches on the menorah represent the seven branches of wisdom. The seven branches are also a symbol of the seven days and the center represents the sabbath. The menorah is an expression of the belief that God created the heavens and the earth and provides us with enlightenment and knowledge. This symbol shapes Jewish worldview through the belief in a higher power and a sense of order. Jewish morals and priorities are completely dependent upon the religion. The menorah definitely impacts the way this culture lives. The lighting of the menorah is a sacred act and is very special to all those who witness it. I don't think the menorah limits power in anyway, however, it is said to empower those who light it.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

Hi Samantha, I admire the story behind the menorah because it motivates people to keep their faith in a higher power even in hard times. I had no idea the center meant to represent the sabbath day. I feel Geertz's theory applies as religion motivates people to have a purpose in life and tells people where they came from. It gives meaning to lives and helps us understand what the purpose in life is depending on what religion we belong to.

[← Reply](#)

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Wednesday

George Lucas's Star Wars trilogy is best explained with Joseph Campbell's idea of the monomyth. "Although there are thousands of different stories involving heroes throughout the world, they all follow the same basic story line..." (Stein 51). Star Wars follows the journey of a young protagonist who is removed from his simple, normal life and is thrown into a world of laser swords, the Force, and wise masters. In modern society the films serve as a form of entertainment, but the symbolism/meaning derived from them sought to encourage all those who watched (from young children to adults) to fight the forces of evil just as a simple boy from a moisture farm did. People were entranced by the magical properties of the Force. Such myths "created networks of meaning that affect the life of people in that culture far beyond the domain of religion" (Stein 53). The monomyth is popular because it is a simple, effective system of storytelling that includes the elements that make for an intriguing story. This myth relate to our societies worldview that anyone is capable of accomplishing anything as it grants power to the powerless or gives hope to those who live "ordinary" or boring lifestyles that anything can happen. Star Wars itself has many different fan bases that have become cultures in themselves; all derived from the myth and symbolism expressed in these films.

[← Reply](#)

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/31333>

11:58am

Hi Kalvyn,

It took me years to finally get around to watch the Star Wars movies. Ive always been a "trekkie" so I was never interested. My son has become very interested in Star Wars so I gave the movies a chance. The journey of Luke Skywalker is most definitely a monomyth, where he journeys from the normal life he knows to become a hero in places he never knew to exist. The textbook also compared this storyline to that of Harry Potter. Similarly, Harry lives in a miserable world of muggles with his aunt and uncle until he is whisked away to learn magic at Hogwarts and ultimately save the world by defeating Lord Voldemort. It goes to show that these myths, symbols and legends are all around us, in everything we read and watch.

[← Reply](#)

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Wednesday

As a child growing up in a hispanic household, I heard the story of "La Llorona" (crying lady) countless times. The story of La Llorona is commonly told in hispanic families. It is a myth about a lady that killed her children and later regretted it. At nights she would come out and cry for her children. This story was told to me specifically when I was misbehaving. My mother would tell me that if I didn't behave La Llorona would come for me and take me with her. My fear that La Llorona would haunt me made me obey my mother.

In addition, this myth can be classified as a "trickster myth" since it depicts a picture of how people should and should not behave. In the story La Llorona committed a horrible act of violence that made her feel regret and suffering from the loss of her children. At that time I seriously did believe I would be haunted by La Llorona if I didn't listen and follow my mothers rules. Durkheim's theory would reassure that this myth was told to me so that I would follow my mother's instructions. Now because I am older I obviously do not fear the Llorona anymore (or do I? just kidding), but because I have come to realize that it was a story my mother told to cause fear in me so that I would behave. In comparison we can see how the myth of La Llorona resembles that of the apocalyptic myths that are mentioned in the text book. Apocalyptic myths are much more serious and are taken with much importance in contrast with the trickster myths. From an anthropological perspective we can see how apocalyptic myths also create fear and lead the members of a society to follow social values. A myth that illustrates the catastrophic destruction of the world can be a form of regulating the way people behave. It is much easier for a person to behave when there is a horrible consequence for their actions as to if there wasn't any. Malinowski theory would agree that apocalyptic myths are told to maintain a "functional" society. From a functional perspective it can be argued that religions use apocalyptic myths as a tool to cause fear. Furthermore, the fear of ending up in a horrible death can reenforce good conduct and morality within the society.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Wednesday

Being scared of a ghostly figure when you are small and told that if you behave badly someone will come take you away is part of the story that people want to happen. At times when we do regret the actions, we took at certain moments should have repercussions but in the story, there aren't any except that the ghost would wonder around looking for the kids that she herself killed. This myth plays upon the fear kids have of leaving their parents and it is interesting to hear a story that plays upon that emotion for kids.

◀ [Reply](#)

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21687>

Thursday

As a child i was always told the same story by my dad and aunts and uncles. They created this fear in us to maintain order with my siblings and cousins while not realizing the emotional toll we took on as children. Although it did keep us all in line behavior wise but it also posed a s threat among each other. At some point our parents didn't have to repeat the story because we would remind each other what would happen if we saw each other doing something we weren't supposed to. Crazy as an adult to think that a myth like this is what made us reevaluate behavioral choices as adolescents.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

Hello Aimee,

I am Hispanic and yes, I heard that myth also as I grew up. I agree with our lecture that myths that are not written down change very frequently. Either I never heard the whole entire myth or just heard a short version. I agree that she killed her children and would go around crying looking for her children and would grab any children she would find but never heard she would kill them.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

Hey Aimee,

I remember my mother threatening my sisters with La Llorona coming to them at night if they didn't do what she asked of them. I can definitely see how Durkheim's idea that religion and myths establish social order in a society and therefore create obedience within the group to keep the group functional. I think it is the fear of being outcasted by the group that leads people to believe what can be seen as ridiculous things. It is with no doubt that the hostility the "Llorona" created in my sisters that made them question their acts every single time while growing up. That was the purpose right? The sole purpose was to keep them from braking societal expectations by the means of fear. If this myth did not have such a powerful impact then it would be of no use, which is why it is told at a young age when the mind is vulnerable and developing.

Darwin

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4018> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4018>

Thursday

Hello Aimee,

I can definitely see how Durkheim's theory of how myths function in a society ties to the myth of La Llorana as he states that it helps keep social order in which this case the myth was used to scare you as a child to modify your behavior. I also agree with you categorizing the myth into a trickster myths as in trickster myths, the trickster is often seen as adventurous, dishonest, and selfish and according to the story I have heard La Llorona seems like she was selfish for whatever reason and enough to kill her own kids. Growing up I heard this story a lot but it was not used by my parents to scare me to misbehave, but hearing this story from cousins made me paranoid as I too was scared of La Llorona visiting.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5743> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5743>

Thursday

Aimee, reading your post makes me laugh in the sense that my husband who is mexican tell our kids that same story when they are acting up or even when he's trying to get them to go to bed. He'll tell them "If you don't get in bed, La Llorona will get you". It's funny because it works! It's like the story of the "coocooie", a.k.a., the boogeyman. The story of La Llorona was told to my husband by his abuelita when he was a small child, but not necessarily used to scare him into doing what she wanted him to do, but she actually said

when she was a little girl and even as an older lady living in Mexico, she had seen her walking the streets at night (whether this is actually true has always been the question among him and his cousins), but what it did for her was always ensured that she was indoors when it got dark so she wouldn't see La Llorona. So in a sense it worked the same way it did for you, which was as a deterrent. La Llorona is known as an urban legend which our textbook defines as stories that are recounted as having really happened. Because it's such an old legend, we will never know if it's true and can only rely on our ancestors' stories who believe they encountered her. I would agree with you that the perspective that best relates to this myth would be that of Malinowski in that he would believe that this was a form of magic to alleviate individual anxieties. You listened to your mother when she threatened you with La Llorona because you were afraid that she may actually appear. Great post!

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Arion Melidonis](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

Friday

Wonderful discussion everyone,

I really like myths like these. Consider how they both work to reinforce social values and how they are utilized as a tool of control. Of course, when the child grows up, they realize that the story is just a story told to encourage a particular type of behavior. Do you think that there are parallels between stories like this and other religious stories that speak of bad things happening to people who do not follow the rules of a supernatural power?

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Emeralds Villanueva](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/7735) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/7735>

Friday

Aimee,

Great post, I can totally relate to that being told La Llorona was coming to get me if I did not behave. It actually did not occur to me to write about her so that is why I really enjoy reading other's posts. But even though it is just a very old myth that was told to me by my parents I still go on to tell my kids the same thing when they do not behave.

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Catherine Suarez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12721) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12721>

Friday

Hey Aimee, I really liked your post. It was funny to me because I also thought about having my discussion post on La Llorona. I can relate to your story because I'm Mexican and this myth is very famous. Parents used this myth to control our actions.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21301>

Melanie Gozon



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21301>

Yesterday

Hello Aimee this story is a story i found out about as a child also and i have passed on to my kids. once young children are told of this story they have the fear of la Llorona and can be brought up and kids are instantly frightened. If i am correct isn't La Llorona the myth that if you drive up rice ave near central at night with the lights off on your vehicle you can look in your rear vie mirror and see her? and that she supposed to be walking up and down the road looking for her child?

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/15526>

Gabriel Lemon



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/15526>

Wednesday

d

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/15526>

Gabriel Lemon



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/15526>

Wednesday

Growing up christian i have always been accustomed to giving recognition to the cross in the remembrance of the death and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Emile Durkheim and Clifford Geertz i believe both agreed with this religion. To believe and accept him into your heart is to believe that he bled and died on the cross for our sins and that we have a chance at heaven when we die. This has effected us from a cultural standpoint due to us eating bread and wine as a remembrance of his flesh and his blood being broken that day on the cross. To live a life for jesus christ is a life turned away from sins or any wickedness of the devil who rules earth. Since satan controls earth we as christians are tempted by flesh to fall in temptation. Also as christians we are to turn from wicked ways and if we do sin to repent and ask God for forgiveness. We won't go to hell for our sins because God sent his son through a virgin Mary to die for us and save us from hell.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/31333>

Crystal Delacruz



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/31333>

Wednesday

The Holy Grail is one of the most mysterious symbols of Christianity. Some believe it to be the actual cup that Jesus Christ drank from at the Last Supper (where he broke bread with his disciples before he was crucified on the cross). The grail is to some a myth, to some a symbol

and to some believers, a legend. For those that believe it to be legend (based on actual events that have actually taken place), the cup was also used by Joseph of Arimathea to catch Jesus' blood as he was crucified. Legend also has it that Joseph brought the cup to Britain and arranged for a long line of guardians to keep the sacred cup safe. It was believed to hold miraculous powers, including eternal life. The legend has endured from early 12th century all the way to more recent years and even in pop culture. There have been reality shows depicting archaeologists following maps and artifacts to find the hidden cup. One of my favorite movies, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade is loosely based on the myth of the Holy Grail.

As a believer in the Holy Grail, it is a legend that is greatly sought after. As a Christian symbol, the Holy Grail signifies the forgiveness of sin and promise of eternal life, as referenced in the bible. Matthew 26:27-30 states, "27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." Many people uphold this as the true symbol of faith in God in Christianity. It also signifies the essence of Jesus when he made his ultimate sacrifice to save humanity. It gives many hope and faith which many may consider a type of power. In culture, the symbol of the Holy Grail in the form of a golden chalice is a large part of the Catholic mass worship and is done in honor and memory of Jesus Christ.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/29012> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/29012>

Wednesday

The holy grail can be interpreted in many different ways like it having the power to grant one's wishes. It even has gone mainstream as being a part of the animation world of anime. There are also stories of how many would travel the world in order to find it. People can find deeper meaning not only in the story behind it but in the object itself.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/14615> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/14615>

Wednesday

The myth I chose was the story of "La Llorona". This story basically talks about how a lady goes on and drowns her kids in a river and then commits suicide then her spirit comes back in hopes that she will find her children. It is said that she wanders around the river banks crying and weeping for her children. It is also said that any kids who miss behave and are out in the dark will be snatched by La Llorona. Malinowski's theory best explains because he basically says it is taking something you can't control and be able to feel in control of it. Such as parents not being able to fully control kids actions but with after telling their children this story they have alleviated that worry of the kids messing around due to the scary myth. The culture's worldview if this myth would be behave or else La Llorona is going to get you. In a way it gives power to adults because they could use it against children to behave.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/7823> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/7823>

Friday

I am very familiar with this story regarding La Llorona. My parents told me this story when I was young. It really ties into Radcliffe-Brown's theory where he states that people "pass these ideas down from generation to generation." (Rebecca L. Stein, Philip L. Stein,

Third Edition, pg. 19) It is a story that has been passed down for many generations. It is one of those stories that has great impact in our society and culture.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21047> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21047>

Friday

I totally agree with your point that this is one of those myths parents tell their kids and the use of the story for control. I could see a lot of myths and legends starting just from parents trying to raise kids.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/9593> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/9593>

3:36am

Hello Miguel.

I read your post and I remember hearing about her as a child once. It was at a assembly where a children's book author was talking about different myths and folklore. The story of La Llorna really stood out to me because I saw her as the boogie man just in a female perspective. I didn't believe that myth just because the first time I heard the story was when I was 10 or so. Anyways, personal experience aside I think that Durkheim's perspective fits slightly better with this myth. His theory basically says that religion or in this case the myth is a social contact. I think his theory fits best because from what I remember being told, parents would tell their children about La Llorna to get them to behave. This myth is like a story passed down from generations to scare their children to not whine and act right. In this way I see it like a social contact because parents of parents would rely this story, almost like an agreement, as a method to control their kids. Stories like this that have been passed down for years and years I see it like its scare tactic to control the youth therefore its almost like an tradition or method to control the youth. Anyways those are just my thoughts.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/29012> 

Victoria Saidana

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/29012>

Wednesday

The crucifix is a very important symbol to many Christians as it represents a reminder to always repent and make yourself better as a person. The crucifix shapes our behavior to reinforce the values of the culture like Durkheim argued. The crucifix provides people with the hope of enteral life with Jesus as he sacrificed himself in order to save everyone else. The world sees Jesus on the cross as a symbol of Jesus sacrifice and also a promise of salvation or redemption for the wicked. As people live their lives they see the crucifix and think of ways to make one better, pray to God on a daily in order to talk to him or to read the bible. It does not grant any power but helps people think about Jesus' suffering and what one should do of that worthy sacrific.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/26966>

Mayra Ramona



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/26966>

Wednesday

Hi everyone, I hope you are all well. For this weeks discussion the religious symbol I chose will be the crucifix. I am Christian and it serves as a reminder to us of Jesus dying in the cross for our sins. I do agree with Durkheim's theory and how it reinforces values of the society that believes in it. In my religion, we don't worship the cross, it simply serves as a reminder to never forget and always give thanks for the sacrifice Jesus made for us. I mention this because before my mom converted to Christianity, she was Catholic. In this week's lecture there was a video that shows how some people crawl on their knees till they get to Guadalupe's temple. My mom actually did that once when she was younger, and she would bring flowers to Guadalupe's image that they have inside that same temple. Nonetheless, the crucifix is key in Christianity as a reminder. I think it does impact the way people live, specially in the sense of "power". For me it allows me to be humble and to always give thanks for all that I have.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21687>

Diana Lara



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21687>

Thursday

Hi Mayra,

I agree, the perception of the cross and what its actually used for is sometimes misunderstood. To those who don't practice the same religion a cross could be perceived as a basic symbol or logo for Christianity where as to Catholic or Christians it serves as a significant symbol and reminder about sacrifices and helps one regroup in times where they need to take a moment in prayer and reflection.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12105>

Zachary Commins



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12105>

Wednesday

### **Mormonism**

Generally speaking Mormons identify with the broader scale title of Christianity. However, not all Christians feel this is an accurate religious stratification of Mormonism. The common mythical belief shared by the two independent titles is that Jesus Christ was sent to earth from God. This belief has an effect on the whole of Catholicism and through the morals of the founding fathers has strongly influenced the cultural pillars of the United States.

While the Christian faith is found solely in the stories and tellings of the New Testament, Mormonism considers "The Book of Mormon" to be the most accurate doctrine of spiritual knowledge. Mormons do not necessarily dispute the legitimacy of sources of the New Testament gospels but rather suggest that it has been slowly diluted and lost it's accuracy due to extensive time since it's origin and countless deviations of interpretations. Therefore Mormons trust that the "The Book of Mormon" is a more reliable source of sacred information. The key belief here would be that the sacred text contains the writings of ancient prophets who lived from approximately 2200 BC to AD 421. Although, the book was not first published until the year 1830 by author Joseph Smith. Smith claimed that an angel came to him and revealed ancient golden plates of scripture that had been buried underground in modern-day New York and then instructed him to translate the text of those plates to English.

The adherents of the Mormon faith believe they have a responsibility to fulfill the commandments of their scriptures in order to reach heaven. In Christian religious terminology this would be considered a belief of salvation by works whereas Christians primarily believe that salvation

is achieved by faith and faith alone due to the grace of God. This Mormon belief that one has to be worthy of reaching heaven puts a heavy burden on the life of the Mormon believer but very positively impacts their culture. Mormons are called to love thy neighbor, tithe by giving ten percent of their income to the church, remain abstinent until marriage, and to offer their time and talents to those in need. As a way of life Mormonism produces a kind, giving community of people that tend to act very selfless and peaceful. By living in accordance with the words of "The Book of Mormon" believers trust that their prayers will be answered and they will in turn earn their way into an eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

This type of faith serves as an example for the theory of religion proposed by Emile Durkheim. Durkheim offers the concept that religion serves as a social contract binding the individual participants to morals and behaviors that benefit the whole of society. Even if you personally do not agree with the core myth that lead to Joseph Smith's writing of "The Book of Mormon" it is fair to objectively assess that Mormon believers have a positive impact on their surrounding culture due to the practices of their faith.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4618>

Janem Viveros

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4618>

Wednesday

The cross is known worldwide as being the highest symbol of importance in the Catholic religion. As stated in the lecture Mr. Melidonis gave, one who knows nothing about its meaning would be baffled to know that many praise this object and worship it. Not only that, but they also cross themselves when asking for a blessing, after saying a prayer, while passing by a Catholic church, and many like I, even before leaving the house or driving off. Why is it that there is so much comfort and faith in this symbol. It takes me back to the belief on animism. Is there a sub conscious if not visible aspect in us that leads us to believe that without the blessing of this object, we are nothing, we are not protected. I know for a fact, I always cross myself as soon as I wake up, after my night prayers, before I drive off, when I say later on to my loved ones, etc.

My friend Emily, who is not high on religion once question me about why I do so, and my answer was simple. I fear that if I don't, something horrible will happen and I will not have the forgiveness of the Lord. To non believers, this might seem odd, whereas to me, it just seems normal. I feel like it empowers me in knowing that Christ is with me and will guide me along my path. I guess it might also come out of fear and knowing something bad will happen. For example the times I have been in car accidents or have gotten pulled over, were all times in which I forgot to cross myself. I was talking to another friend Rebecca about this and she didn't really seem to believe me. Up until we were leaving the parking lot, completely forgot to cross myself (she doesn't do it) and we were almost hit by a huge speeding truck. Fear entered my body and we both looked at each other and crossed ourselves. As far as today runs, I am not sure if she still believes or not, what I can say is that my faith overrules the "coincidences."

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12105>

Zachery Commans

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12105>

Thursday

Janelli, I find your post here very interesting and I am slightly hesitant to question it only because it is written in a first person narrative. I hope you understand that my intent is only to gain knowledge about the faith that you are discussing and not to cast doubt or negativity onto your own personal beliefs. That being said, it seems to me that the type of ritual you are discussing runs closer to a description of magic than of religion. I am not extremely familiar with the practices of the Catholic faith but it seems that if you are required to perform certain tasks to gain safe guarding then ultimately you are in control. As if to say that if you did not perform this task then bad things would happen. This seems like you have personal control over the outcome of events. To the best of my knowledge that seems closer to an example of witchcraft or magic than a religion based in Christ. I suppose to form this in a question that you could answer, I would ask, does the faith you discussed believe that it's followers are rewarded for their faith in an earthly manner? Whether it be through health, relationships, material gains, or otherwise?

Again, I sincerely hope this is in no way offensive. I know it can be a very sensitive subject when trying to openly discuss our personal beliefs.

All the best,

Zac

[← Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19979>

[Kharel Corona](#)



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19979>

Wednesday

The story of the red salmon portrays a theme that states to not desire things which are not ours to obtain; envy or irrational wanting, may bring punishment and bad luck in the end. Bronislaw Malinowski states that a myth "expresses, enhances and codifies belief, it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man". This theory that myths are for teaching morality and creates a template to man as to what behavior is acceptable and what is deserving of punishment is apparent in the myth of the Red Salmon. Geertz would most likely state that it gives direction and meaning to those who follow its message, and he would be correct in that aspect, because to those who do follow its message of refraining from feeling envy or unnecessary want feel protected because they know if they were to disobey the message of the myth, then they would be punished just as the salmon.

[← Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4018>

[Kimberly Cruz](#)



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4018>

Wednesday

The myth I will choose to elaborate on will be the Raven Steals the Light. This myth is known as a trickster story, I can see why the Raven Steals the Light myth can be a main representation of a trickster myth as in the myth, the Raven is part animal and part human, impulsive, adventurous, dishonest, and he was responsible for bringing the sun and stars to life. Malinowski's interpretation of what myths fulfill in a culture fits the one of the raven. Malinowski states that a myth is a narrative that portrays moral desires, the raven symbolizes the desire for adventure and how his selfishness led to him stealing the light. Malinowski also states that myths enforces and safeguards morality like seen in the raven myth as many morals are portrayed like what being dishonest and selfish may cause. The myth operates in the culture to provide faith and wisdom, for example in this case the myth provides those that hear this story and believe in the culture on how the sun became. Since this myth displays how the sun was made, it causes the culture to think that the raven was the reason as to how the sun exists. I am aware that some cultures believe that animals and nature created them and other elements, and I think that this myth is a perfect example. I think that if this myth were to impact the way the people in the culture live it would be through one of the many messages delivered by this myth such as never be dishonest as there will be consequences. I believe that this myth serves those who are a part of a culture that believe that animals and nature are the reason as to why everything exists respect towards the raven and may symbolize positivity because the raven brought light or negativity because the raven was dishonest. I think it may grant some power to the symbols that participated in this myth such as the raven, the eagle that struck the raven, and the light that resulted in the stars.

[← Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/16637>

[Jesus Quintino](#)



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/16637>

Wednesday

The Virgin of Guadalupe is one of the biggest symbols in the Catholic church, especially in the western hemisphere, and the most popular in Mexico. It is believed the Virgin Mary appeared in a Mestizo woman to an indigenous man, Juan Diego, to offer hope and faith to the indigenous at times of the Spanish conquest in Mexico. It is also believed that the Virgin requested for a church to be built for her, what is now known as the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is not only a symbol to the Mexican culture, she is a major part of their everyday lives. Elders pass on the faith and devotion that is supposed to be demonstrated towards the Virgin of Guadalupe. From a young age they are raised to live by the catholic culture and guidance of the Lady of Guadalupe. Many people see the Lady of Guadalupe as a ray of hope in their everyday lives. They create altars in their homes and pray every day and night in hope that with their devotion the Virgin will grant them guidance.

As part of the culture, many catholics around the world gather every 12th of December to celebrate the day of her appearance to the Mexican people. She is celebrated with music, aztec dances, and pilgrimages.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/28932>

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/28932>

Wednesday

i am a follower of Christianity . i never quite understood Guadalupe, catholic, or the worship of mary. thanks on the enlightenment on the subject. the separation between religions (jesus,god,mary,guadalupe)to me is absurd as they all believe in the same god .

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

Thursday

Good job Jesus and Drew,

Some theorists have suggested that the Virgin is particularly important in Mexican culture given the original Aztec beliefs in mother goddess. Catholics often utilized elements of existing religions or religious practices to help get people to convert (Christmas trees from the pagans, for example). It is interesting to note that the Virgin of Guadalupe first appeared to Juan Diego at the site of a former temple to the Aztec Goddess Tonatzin. What do you think about this point?

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/19057>

Wednesday

## Week 2 Discussion

After being taught one specific religion your whole life it is hard to pull yourself away from your own culture to understand and comprehend another culture's actions and reasons behind certain rituals. Different cultures use a variety of different symbols and methods to show their faith throughout their life on earth. These symbols are often used to guide the individual in a time of need or guidance. Reading about the totems used in the Tlingit clans were also interesting because they are a visual reference to a myth or folktale past on throughout the community so everyone would know the significance of the salmon as well as the raven used in the totem. These images stand tall and proud throughout the community sending a bigger message than just the stories passed down but they teach morality from a young age the same way we use certain rituals in our own culture today such as Santa watching over you all year. I believe stories like these play more than one role in a community rather than just morality or a nice bedtime story to tell, these stories offer different layers of understanding that the individual will take with them the rest of their life. They learn that not all questions in this world have distinct answers and also what may seem like a simple answer can have deeper layers than just a raven stealing a light but teaches about greed. These morals hidden within the myths are understood after hearing the stories over and over and finally understanding the bigger picture to the folktale also helps realize there is a bigger picture in life.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

Thursday

Great job Virgil,

I really love your point about the many layers of myth and symbols. Anthropologists argue that religious symbols tend to be ambiguous precisely so that mediating on them encourages a person to think on multiple levels. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss said that symbols like these are good to think with. The idea is that rather than just tell you about the world, they help you think through different difficult issues (many of which are impossible to reconcile using logic). Questions like how are we born from our mother's and from God or how are we are alive but come from nothingness and go to death, etc. What do you think about this point?

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/928> 

Rogelio Lemus

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/928>

Wednesday

Growing up in a Catholic family, I have seen the cross a lot. The reason why it's really special is because it is a major symbol. The cross symbolizes the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. During the Roman times, people were executed on these crosses but what makes it different is Jesus Christ. In Christianity, Jesus is the son of god. The cross in many cultures is used for protection. An example of that is a lot of people wear a cross around their neck because it protects them from the devil and evil spirits. Also it is used for good luck and guidance. I grew up in the Mexican culture and we would pray to the cross for guidance and help to the right path.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/28932> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/28932>

Wednesday

you worded your thoughts very well in trying explain the cross. you got a point across similar to mine.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21685> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21685>

Thursday

Growing up also in a Catholic family I also saw the cross a lot and carried one in a necklace or bracelet, or even had them around in the house like the ones we would make out of las palmas they would give us at church. The cross even though there is more than one type symbolizes a powerful being in most other cultures as well. Don't forget that priests also use the cross to get rid of evil spirits such as when they are doing and exorcism on somebody. I can relate to you in many ways with they way you grew up and the religion that was implied to us since we were little. Good job on explaining the cross and how its an important symbol.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/26966> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/26966>

Friday

Hi Rogelio. I appreciate how you went into details on your post :) I am Christian and you are right. In different religions its used for different purposes. I like how you included your Mexican culture. I'm Mexican too and I have both Christian and Catholic family members. Nonetheless, the crucifix I think is a huge symbol in Hispanic culture, no matter which religion you chose to follow. Great post!

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/28932> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/28932>

Wednesday

For my discussion today, i will be speak on the cross. The cross is another symbol for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The most popular usage of this symbol is for the religion Christianity which is the most popular religion in the in world. With 2.3 billion followers, it is safe to assume that all of its followers do not have the same traditions or practices. The cross symbol itself is used for many things. Some may clinch a cross for luck, for protection of a power they cannot control, or even using the cross as a good place to say a prayer. There's a reason why the cross exist. You may see a cross hanging from someone's rear view mirror, or on top of a mountain but why? I believe its to not only put its followers at ease, but to remind them of who they are and what they represent in the Christianity culture. In my theory the cross is supposed to grant you power within yourself spiritually,while still understanding there's a power above greater than you which brings humbleness to that individual. The cross serves many positive effects on society bringing happiness and joy "to be blessed". On the other hand the cross can make others cringe or feel judged. The vilification of homosexuality, the fear of burning in hell for eternity if you commit certain sins, or women be treated less equal than men in the early christian teachings. Malinowski theory on religion used to make one feel at ease is correct, but at the same time the cross can have reverse unsettling feelings instead.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/9593>

Jennifer Rose



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/9593>

Wednesday

The symbol I will be discussing is the swastika. I believe Emile Durkheim theory best describes the history of the swastika. At first it was a symbol associated with many religions in a positive way. It was a symbol of peace, prosperity, and good fortune. However; over the years, more specifically in the year 1919 the Nazi Party adopted it and made it their own symbol with a whole new meaning. It is now a tainted symbol in my opinion associated with hate, racism, and genocide. This is where Durkheim's theory comes into play. He theorized "that the function of religion is more about the social than the individual". In this case the swastika was a religious symbol turned social. The swastika now represents a group of people and to most people something much larger. A symbol of peace now turned in a symbol of destruction. This happened because a collective group of people decided to put it on flags, wear it on arm bands, hang it on banners while mass murdering targeted groups of people and giving hate speeches about said groups of people. Because of this, the world now looks at the swastika, as I mentioned before, a symbol of hate. The swastika impacts modern day culture in a few ways. If someone is seen with that symbol being worn or tattooed that person is avoided. That person is usually seen as a racist, and markings such as that can prevent people from getting jobs. In that sense, it limits a person's power or way of living because the symbol has such a negative connotation. To some people that swastika maybe a symbol of power. Neo Nazi's still use the symbol. Anything to do with Nazi Germany is associated with the swastika and the salute that the people of Germany used to praise their dictator. Like the swastika, the distinctive salute with the arm stretched out and straight is a hate symbol. Both are used now days to show power and community within these small neo Nazi groups.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Lesley Guerrero



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5769>

Wednesday

Coming from a Hispanic culture and partially Mexican through religious customs and practices La Virgen de Guadalupe is one of my closely related and cherished religious symbols. Tied into Aztec culture and reflection of Catholicism, La Virgen de Guadalupe is a symbol that reflects women in the culture and the interpretation of mothers. Throughout my own personal and religious experience, the idea of La Virgen de Guadalupe and her representation of a mother figure who is caring, always provided a sense of protection to me as a young girl and was my most closely held religious symbol. As a young girl growing up in a Hispanic household, every year around Christmas time the celebration of La Virgen de Guadalupe was so moving and beautiful to watch an entire culture come together to celebrate the idea of La Virgencita; beautiful songs and dances all dedicated to a symbol of love and protection. Reflecting upon the theories of anthropologists such as Malinowski and Geertz, I feel both can best express the ideas of a religious symbol and its purpose. Malinowski proposes that religion is for alleviating anxieties and trying to control something out of one's control such as this belief in La Virgen de Guadalupe allows the culture to believe that they will be forgiven and accepted just as one's mother always accepts their child after any mistake. Geertz' theory discusses the need for people to find something to give them some type of motivation and meaning and for the Catholic culture the symbol of La Virgen de Guadalupe allows for them to feel the warmth of mother's love in a spiritual sense. Joseph Campbell reflects on this as well through his discussion of myths and how beliefs in myths and figures create a tranquility within the stresses of modern life (51). The Catholic culture's views are based on a set of rules and traditional values that are needed to be followed and passed on through religious practices and beliefs and the symbol of La Virgen de Guadalupe gives the culture a sense of relief that they may seek and receive forgiveness for their repent under mostly any circumstance. The beliefs and religious traditions do greatly affect the way the culture lives through cultural celebrations as mentioned before for La Virgen de Guadalupe's celebration in December and ways of life to follow in reference to Catholic religion. The culture's strong belief system and cultural bonds empowers them in the sense that through the will of God and symbols such as La Virgencita, all is possible and there is a path to live a life full of precious rewards through following religious practices.



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<https://vccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

<https://vccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

Thursday

Great job Lesley,

The Virgin of Guadalupe is a very important symbol of Mexican identity. Some theorists have argued that being both indigenous and foreign, she represent the Mexican mestizo (mixed) identity. Some have also suggested that she has been very important in both oppressing the Mexican people by being a symbol of colonialism and in helping them deal with colonialism. What do you think about this point?

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4509>

Kiera Frost

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4509>

Wednesday

The second I read the prompt, I thought of the swastika. This symbol has always stood out to me because any mention or sight of it causes an immediate uproar in most situations. I think this proves that the idea of displacement is a very effective way to make a something into a symbol. I believe that the use of the swastika supports Karl Marx's social theory. Marx saw religion as "a construction of those in power" (Stein 18). I think the use of power is exactly how the swastika became the symbol it is today. If you show someone a swastika and ask them what it means, there is a very high chance that they'll mention Nazis, Hitler, or the Holocaust. Before the 1900s came about, however, one may have answered the question by stating that the lines made up a religious symbol. Like our textbook mentions, the symbol is used religiously by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. I also remember seeing the symbol in my History of California textbook used in many spiritual pieces of artwork made by Native Americans. Back then, the symbol did not always bring fear or discomfort to those who saw it. Instead, it could mean luck or success. Although, when the symbol is seen reversed, in some cultures, it "stands for darkness, misfortune, and suffering" (Stein 57). Unfortunately, when the Nazi Party of Germany took the swastika as their symbol, it became an entirely new symbol to others. Hitler used the symbol as a sign of victory, but we all know what his victory consisted of. Once the Nazi Party established power, having the symbol on their uniform granted them even more power. Seeing the swastika brought immense fear to those being targeted as it represented the savagery and sheer power the party had over everyone at that time. Nowadays, the second we learn about the Holocaust, our perspective on the swastika changes forever.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/2994>

Thursday

Great job Kiera,

Isn't it fascinating how a symbol like this utilized by many different cultures now is associated with only one particular group. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss argued that symbols mean everything that is associated with them, which means that it is impossible to separate out a symbol from its various interpretations (they will always influence how people think about the symbol). Levi-Strauss's point is interesting as we think about stories like those told in the Bible. Can we separate what these stories initially meant from all the subsequent retellings of them? What do you think?

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/26413>

Wednesday

Taking a functional approach, Religion brings worship to God. In the Christian Religion, people of God get together to sing psalms and hymns, and play praise music to God. The role that the religion plays in society, is that it bring people in the community together in a place or worship to bring praise to God. The singing and songs creates a sense of peace and joy. This would help to uplift the community and create a place for people to go and join in on a practice that helps to bring the people together in a good way. It also helps to get to know who your neighbors are by bring them together in a room or sanctuary. The practice can put the community at ease, knowing their neighbors and seeing that they are doing good for one another by singing songs to God and getting along with neighbors while singing.

The worship time is also a time to talk to neighbors, to consider what it is that each person believes. It may help to change unbeliever's to believer and/or also confirm beliefs or solidify their understanding or interpretation of their beliefs of the Bible. The meetings or Church services, also give services to teachings of scripture. The pastor or leader of the group, discusses scripture and then teaches his

interpretation of the scripture from the Bible. The music worship is part of the ritual or the coming together of the group, then creating a collective conscious, that their actions are pleasing to God as well as the community. I think that the Religious practice of singing worship impacts the way the people live in their culture because it brings happiness to their lives. Whether someone is Religious or not, I think music impacts everyone's life. Just having tunes or instrumentals can give our minds a sense of ease or peace, depending on the type of instruments. But also lyrics can have an impact on our people in a given culture. I think it's important to pay attention to lyrics whether you agree with what is being said or not, even if you like the melody or instrumentals. Good music brings peace and is uplifting. I think music can grant power to the individual, by giving them confidence in the flesh, but also with good lyrics can help guide people in a well pleasing manner. Of course a good song can bring a good smile, and everyone like to be happy. Hope you can relate.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4063>

[Auriana Shi](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4063>

Thursday



I choose symbols, in my culture we tend to believe in Saints and Virgins. Catholics do believe in God and Jesus Christ; as well as, The Lady of Guadalupe, San Martin de Porres and many others. We believe in them because of stories people claiming some type of miracle. In other cases, also follow traditions because a Saint or Virgin appeared in the town and now proclaim as the "Patron(a)", (patroness or boss) and could possibly be the only in the one town. To us Mexicans a huge symbol is Nuestra Virgen de Guadalupe (Our Lady of Guadalupe). We celebrate her first appearance to Juan Diego on December 12 of every year. It is a one day of celebration with a Midnight Mass celebration, dancing rituals with specific clothing per what Indians use to wear in the period of her appearance in the Cerro de Tepeyac in Mexico City in Mexico.

The celebration brings a numerous amount of people even of different ethnicity here in the US, but also in Mexico brings together just about the entire Nation to celebrate her. But also, remember she made John Paul II a true believer of her.

It is said that the only power is to believe have a sincere faith. She is knowing to watch over us, to make miracles of saving people from death, helping people solve life problem. Such that now there is even a program called "La Rosa De Guadalupe." They are said to be acted scenes of true stories. In this show they make her presence to be knowing by the appearance of a white rose. In true life people claim to have her imprint on a glass or any article that can somehow distinguish her image.

Like I have mentioned before San Martin de Porres, is one of many Saints also to be known to do miracles or saving people from death. He is also very well known to us Mexicans but he comes from Peru. Yet he was said to be a real person that lived among us mortals and became a Saint. So, to see that around the world there are many more that would be difficult to mention all. But until now I have never heard of any granting any power really what so ever to any other person that has been touched or saved by her or any other saint.



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 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/20787> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/20787>

Thursday

This was a great post! This symbolism is so powerful and actually so beautiful. I have seen it so many times but never really came to ask what it meant until this post. It is amazing how much this symbol brings people together. Thank you for the enlightenment.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

I selected the pentagram. Geertz theory best explains this symbols expression he believed religion was a system of symbols, and that they held forms of power or helped establish power, and they influenced pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations. Different symbols provide different ways to interpret the world being both "models for" and "models of". Geertz elaborated that symbols connect humans to different versions of reality thus giving religion more power and higher status above regular life. The Pentagram holds different meanings for different cultures. Christianity associates it with the five wounds of Christ, while Hebrews apply it to represent the five books of Pentateuch. As time progressed and religion continued to evolve to some the Pentagram took on the connotation for evil and was referred to as a satanist symbol. It was a form of worship for Satanist groups who would turn the symbol upside down to represent the evil within. In most other cultures it held a more positive power and was used as a form of protection. Til this day current studies consider the Pentagram as a symbol for unity of mankind.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

I have heard and seen of the pentagram many times but never really came to asking or reading about its true meaning unfortunately. I just always associated it with different cultures when I did see it but never came to ask what the real meaning behind it is. I do know some about it but your post gave me a lot of knowledge about it and inspired me to look further into it. Thank you Dianna!

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

Good work Dianna and Jake,

It is interesting to see how this symbol has changed over time. It was not until the 1800's that it really became associated with the occult. In the 1960's, it became associated with the Church of Satan founded by Anton Lavay (who don't believe in Satan by the way). One of the things that I like about the pentagram is its symmetry and the way that it reproduces the golden ration in its sides.

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21685> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21685>

Thursday

I've seen the pentagram as a kid but wasn't really sure what it was until I read it in this section. Its interesting to see that for some people it represents evil and for others it represents power. This comes to show that every culture is different and that our ways of thinking have to do with what we believe in. Thank you for going a little more into depth as to explaining the pentagram and how its not just evil.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

For this discussion topic the first thing that popped into mind when thinking deeper into the symbols and myths of different cultures and/or religions was one that seems to be very popular through a wide range of cultures and has been adopted in the over all society of this world. The symbol of light has been a very strong symbol for a lot of different reasons. It is hard to say exactly which theory would best explain the symbol of light but I think that the Marxist theory would be most fair to acknowledge because the person that lead Karl Marx to most of his epiphanies was an author by the name of Lewis H. Morgan who wrote a book call the *In Light of Investigations*. Light literally helps you see so this symbol usually refers to knowledge or life. The University of Michigan states in a very simple web page, "Light is one of the most universal and fundamental symbols. It is the spiritual and the divine, it is illumination and intelligence. Light is the source of goodness and the ultimate reality, and it accompanies transcendence into the Nirvana of Buddhist doctrine. It is the SUN, and it is the avenger of evil forces and DARKNESS. Light is knowledge. Purity and morality are connected terms as well. The masculine principle of evolution is symbolized through light. Cosmic energy, creative force and optimism are all related to light." I could not agree any more with this and could not have said it any better. The symbol of light is used with in so many cultures and for the most part all use it as the same symbolism. Through the worldview of the many religions that this symbol accompanies, the meaning of light usually brings hope, happiness, and optimistic realizations through all that is treated with such a sign. Light does impact the way the people live because the symbol really opens the mind and can change anyones perspective on anything on any given day if they read, hear, or see it. There is a sense of pleasure and peacefulness when this symbol is shown. Even to someone who has no religious background they can not admit that light doesn't find peace with in them. No one can admit that a gloomy morose dark day doesn't make them feel different then a bright blue skied day. I think in millions of different scenarios it is shown just how light can grant power. In the Bible for instance, God's appearance is shown as a bright figure. In fact, there is belief in the Christian religion that if you look at the light in which God appears to you in you will be blinded just to show how powerful he really is. Even when looking all the way to a cinematic perspective light shined on a person usually shows how powerful one is. Light is a symbol for all cultures. It is a good symbolism for the most part. From the Jewish religion as light being apart of one of their biggest celebrations to the first thing God is known to say, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3) light has been one of the most known symbolism in all cultures worldwide.

<http://umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html/L/light.html>

<http://umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html/L/light.html>

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

Great job Jake,

This is one of those universal symbols that can be found in almost every culture probably because everyone can relate to darkness being replaced by light. The understanding of illumination is also important to many mystical traditions where the uninitiated are said to be in darkness. Plato also talks about illumination in the allegory of the cave where the philosopher is able to go into the light. The eye of providence found on our dollar bill is a classic example of this symbol. For some, the journey into illumination also reflects the child's growing into adulthood. The child's world is one constructed by her parents, one that is designed to protect and to guide her, and it is only when she becomes an adult does she understand how the world really works. What do you think about this point?

Arion

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

There is many different symbols that can be written about, but the one that stood out to me right away when I read this assignment was La Virgen de Guadalupe, in other words the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Her symbolism caught my attention because I have known about her since a child due to my background and how my parents, family members would respect her. Her symbol is very well known in the mexican culture where we celebrate her on the 12th of December. On that specific day, many people come together at midnight and walk to church, sometimes they even have a certain dance after. It is known as a fiesta. Sherry Ortner argument about getting to understand a culture you would have to understand the symbols or myth that go with it. Moreover, La Virgen's image is used in many places and is seen as a "guardian angel" when put in rough situations. For example some people possible would have a time with her before leaving on a trip or before a certain event for like a goodluck charm. As Eric Wolf stated, "The Guadalupe symbol thus links together family, politics and religion. It reflects the salient social relationships of Mexican life, and embodies emotions which they generate" (pg.115). To conclude all of this, Our Lady of Guadalupe is seen as powerful to many, but may not to others; however it is a good example of a symbol many Mexicans look up to and celebrate.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

I am picking a video link that was on the instructor guidance which was about la Santa Muerte. I believe that the theory that best describes this would be sort of like a hero myth/symbol. The reason why I believe this is because while watching the video they perceived la Santa Muerte as their hero. To them la Santa Muerte is another god in which they worship and respect. This symbol as I would call it functions in their culture is that they have mass for her and they also have statues that they take to these masses and they sing and pray for her to protect them and to help them out. She is everywhere in this particular part of Mexico and her followers have big statues of her around town as well as in their houses and they have different colored ones depending on what they need help or are asking her for. This powerful symbol relates to the cultures worldview because they all believe that she is their to help them and that maybe what they do or is done to them is because she wants it that way and that the world is the way it is because more people are not like them. I believe that this symbol does impact the way that people in this culture live because some of the people in this culture and in the video from what I saw made me think that they were a bit consumed to her and that would affect their life because in order for them to live a happy life they would always talk to her and see her. I don't think it limits power, more like it gives people the power to enforce their beliefs on other people around them.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4018>

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Thursday

Hello Erika,

I agree on your point that the Santa Muerte does not limit the power of those who worship her but in contrast provides them with strength and relieves their anxiety. In the clip in which a worshipper gives her reason as to why she believes in the Santa Muerte, it seems like she felt empowered and relieved when her sick son got better. I also think that the Santa Muerte is a key symbol because it helps one who is viewing the culture to understand what it is like to be a part of the culture and what takes place in their rituals. I think Geertz interpretation of religion fits that of the Santa Muerte as the Santa Muerte is a key symbol in the religion that creates a certain mood and motivation, as seen in the video like a sense of peace, relief, and motivation for the future.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Thursday

The religious symbol that I have selected to write about is the cross (or the crucifix). The cross is a symbol of love, pain, peace, endurance, and strength for most people who believe in a religion that uses the cross. Bronislaw Malinowski believed that religion was designed to free people of stress in their day to day lives. I agree with this theory. When people are nervous they may kiss the cross on their chain. Many people get tattoos of a cross on their body to signify strength. The cross is used to uplift people in their time of need. If you are on a battle field and you see a red cross, that means medical care is close by. I also agree that the cross is the logo for certain religions. I find it interesting that if we see a cross burning in the grass we will have a different feeling and definition for what that cross represents. The cross is a symbol that carries multiple meanings, both good and bad. The good cross relates to our cultures word view by reiterating what religion was dominant when this country was founded. The cross also leads us into wars against country's that have a different religion. Some people in our culture have committed their life to worshipping the cross and other people in our society could care less about it. The cross can grant a person or a group of people a lot of power is used a strategic way. A good example of this is the use of the cross in politics.

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/25933>

Vince Baldes



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/25933>

Thursday

Religious symbols? Until this week, I never really thought about how many different symbols exist. The first thing I saw was a cross on the top of a church. A church not a long way from where I travel all the time, yet am so use to it, I never noticed. Next, I noticed a car with a "fish" on the back. After a little research, I discovered the "fish" symbol went back to the time shortly after the time of Christ. The symbol was meant as a method for "members" to identify each other and remain free from persecution.

As I began looking at more and more symbols in our culture, I found all kinds of symbols, on necklaces, bumper stickers, back of cars, rings, and anywhere else they could be hung, placed, glued, sewed or stitched.

I then discovered there is a whole field of opposites. The symbol which is used to represent something is changed or modified to express the opposite of the original meaning.

Lastly, looking far from my own backyard, I found the headscarfs worn by Muslims, again depicting humility and modesty; is in fact a religious symbol.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Catherine Suarez



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/12721>

Thursday

The symbol that I chose is the wedding ring. The wedding ring is used in many cultures and religions as a sign of love and ownership. Many cultures believed that the wedding ring should be used in the left hand because your heart is on your left side. Also the ring is worn on the fourth finger because many cultures believed that we have a vein in our fourth finger that connects to our heart. The symbol of the ring also symbolizes an eternal never ending marriage. That is why the ring is round. A wedding ring in society means a lot. A woman is looked at differently if they do not have a wedding ring and they have children than a woman that does have it. I feel like a wedding ring can fall under psychological symbols because even when somebody has one on I feel like they respect their significant other more. In many tv shows when somebody is going to cheat, they take off their ring. The wedding ring has a very special, important, and valuable meaning even though it is just a round thing made out of gold, silver, bronze and other materials. In many religions the wedding ring is sacred.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Liliana Martins



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4858>

Thursday

Great post, Catherine!

Would you agree that perhaps Durkheim's theory applies here? The wedding ring is used to enlist social control. Like you said, you found yourself believing that a wedding ring symbolizes a stronger marriage (respect each other more). Perhaps this encourages other couples to do it right, so to speak. The way society says it's supposed to be done. Though for what purpose? Like you mentioned, could it be that it is a form of subordination (in many cultures the man owns the woman)? It could perhaps even help to stave off suitors.

Whatever the meaning behind it, you are correct in stating that it is a powerful symbol. In my own experience, my husband and I acquired wedding rings to symbolize our everlasting love. :)

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/10507>



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/10507>

Yesterday

Great information you've brought on the wedding ring! I never knew about how our fourth finger on our left hand is believed to have a vein that connects to our heart, thank you for providing great resource into my brain! But I agree with how the wedding ring can be looked as a symbol rather than a myth since it symbolizes tons of different meanings towards the people and has a significant behind it.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/15476>



Robert Johnson

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/15476>

Thursday

When I think of religious symbols, I am most limited. I think of the cross. In my culture, Jesus is not on the cross, as he has been resurrected. However, I have a friend who is Catholic. They are also Christians, they have a cross, but Jesus is still on the cross as a reminder of what he did for their sins.

The Text states, "We can manipulate symbols in ways impossible with the things they stand for, and so arrive at novel and even creative versions of reality...." (Joseph Church)

Is this what is happening with those who turn the cross upside down. They have manipulated the religious symbol and have a different meaning. It offends some while not others.

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◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/31333>



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/31333>

12:31pm

Hi Robert,

I think that no matter what religion you may be, the cross is a very universal symbol for faith. Other believers may use christian symbols in their own way to ridicule Christianity. Like you said, to flip the cross upside down or use 3:30am as the "evil" hour in ridicule of the 3:30pm time that Christ was crucified.

On another note, I like your avatar picture. I am a huge Superman fan. The S is a symbol on Krypton that means "hope".

◀ [Reply](#)

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4858>

[Liliana Martinez](#)



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/4858>

Thursday

The Virgin of Guadalupe is one of the most iconic symbols in Mexico. This is interesting to think about since the Virgin of Guadalupe has a stronger meaning to women than to men. Mexico being a country mostly dominated by males and heavy sexism towards women. Durkheim's theory that religion (it works with symbols) is used to "reinforce social values." In order to control, the Virgin of Guadalupe must not be exposed as a controlling symbol but one that women can relate to. It is a symbol of protection for women and symbolizes the good that women bring to society if they are kept in line so to speak. That is, they must be virgins (until marriage), they must help the men in their lives, etc. She is also a poignant symbol for mothers since she is the mother of Jesus.\* Since Mexico's culture revolves around controlling women and taking a step back behind men, the Virgin of Guadalupe does seem to fit this purpose.

Almost all women in Mexico culture from a very young age are taught about the Virgin of Guadalupe. We pray to her and celebrate her birthday. There are even prayers specifically dedicated to her. Mexico culture believes that God is first. However, the Virgin of Guadalupe is used as the powerful mother that watches all of us. In fact, it can be argued that in Mexican culture, most kids fear their mothers more than their fathers (I know I did!). This type of mother symbols tends to steer people on the right path since mothers are the ones to educate and raise children with proper mannerisms and values.

Because of this powerful female symbol, it can also be argued that many women do not see it as control. This would be the case since they also pray this symbol, which happens to be female (as supposed to also praying to God or Jesus; males).

I'd like to end with some personal experience. When my daughter was 1 month old, my mother insisted we go to church to pray to the Virgin of Guadalupe for safely giving birth to a healthy baby girl. I was not particularly against this and so we went. I never really noticed this about myself but I always lit a candle and sang happy birthday to the Virgin of Guadalupe on her supposed birthday (December 12). I felt like it needed to be done, yet I never felt that way in relation to Jesus. My mother always said that the Virgin of Guadalupe protects her fellow women and so I guess I felt attached to the symbol she represented: a safe haven. While we were in church, I began to think. I had to thank someone for the ability to produce children, the idea that it wasn't my body but the control of a deity. In fact, if I didn't thank her or forget about her, I actually felt guilty. Even realizing what I do now and the fact that I still feel rather safe doing my prayers to her, I would argue that this symbol limits power on women. Of course, we all want to feel safe but to the extent that I believed someone protecting me is, to me, not a feeling of freedom but fear: a fear that if I did not pray to her or thanked her properly, then that safety, that protection could be gone.

\*This is the case in Catholicism.

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/10507>

[Emelyn Ortiz](#)



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/10507>

Thursday

Out of all the myths I've read now and simply heard then, the lady of Guadalupe is one I am most familiar with due to my ethnicity being Catholic and my Hispanic family mentioning her a few times to me. While I read the concept about the meaning of the lady of Guadalupe, Eric wolf argues on how she is a key symbol to the Mexican culture based on her representing the hybridity with the Mexican experience in which I agree. I've heard the story of Juan Diego with the lady of Guadalupe to whereas she asked him for flowers and he brought them to her,

he then (correct me if I'm wrong it's been awhile) told people on how he saw her but no one believed him until she showed up on his cover. I believe she's being used more as a symbol rather than a myth due to the powerful beliefs and stories people come across with. The lady of Guadalupe is symbolized toward the Mexican culture as a powerful morenita, whereas she will protect you no matter the circumstances. In regard to relating it to the cultures worldview, people get on their knees and it's a way of showing her that they are truly humbled before her, showing their love and devotion. She has an impact on the people from this culture with just love the people believe that without sacrifice there is no love which can seem to grant power.

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 [Antoinette Chavira](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/25413) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/25413>

Friday

Hi Emelyn, I also agree with Eric Wolf's theory of the lady of Guadalupe being a symbol in the Mexican culture. I also say she is a symbol and not a myth because of her appearances that have proved that she is not just a myth. She is a very powerful figure in the Hispanic culture. The way people will drop to their knees displays the respect and gratitude they have for her.

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 [Daisy Martinez](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/18863) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/18863>

Friday

I agree with you Antoinette, she is symbol and not a myth. There are days dedicated to her and many people worship her as much as they worship Jesus. Without her, Jesus would have never been born therefore, she is seen as a very powerful figure in Christianity, especially in the Mexican culture.

◀ [Reply](#)

 [Jonathan Mendoza](https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/18729) 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/18729>

Friday

One of the symbols talked about in the book is the swastika. When people see the swastika, people feel enraged and hate that symbol because that was the symbol Adolf Hitler used for the Nazi's during World War 2. Of course, it is understandable why people hate it but they don't know the swastika was used many years before Hitler. The swastika is often found in many religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism and it symbolizes prosperity and good luck, but after World War 2 it meant racial purity and war. At first the swastika could fall under Geertz theory because he says "Religion is a symbol that establishes powerful persuasive and long lasting moods and motivations," and the swastika is a symbol of good luck which means people will have a sense of motivation. After Hitler adopted the symbol, the swastika falls under Morgan's theory which says that people just acted because of urge. How did the death of millions of Jewish people benefit Hitler? There was no benefit he just did it out of urge. Depending on your culture and if you know what the history of the swastika, the swastika could have many different meanings.

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/3364>

Vanessa Romero



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/3364>

Friday

The number 12 is a holy number and a holy symbol. The Interpretive Approach expresses how believing in something far greater than ourselves gives religion a higher status in our everyday human life and answers questions or uncertainty of our existence (p.20) and ultimately gives us purpose for being here because we all are here to serve a purpose. The number 12 being a holy symbol only reminds us of what the creator made and how his symbol is everywhere, how he is everywhere and once again answers those question that we ask our selves. It basically serves as proof. Now, not the whole world sees the number 12 as holy or even meaningful but many societies include a worldview on there being something greater than themselves, whatever that may be. For those that do believe in a greater being, it does impact their culture because it is all around them for example, the number twelve is in so many things that I can't list them all but it you really look around it is everywhere. Believing in God, a god, or anything for that matter impacts people in various ways, most of which are positive and since we live in such a dark world, religion may be the only light we see to try and make sense of it all. Knowing that the holy symbol of number 12 is true only grants us power to be great, to be good, and I have said this so many times but it grants us the power to have purpose in life.

Stein, Rebecca L., and Philip L. Stein. *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017. Print.

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5996>

Daphne Daniel



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/5996>

Friday

Trees are used as a religious symbol, significant ways trees are used is through their association with religion. They are used as a representation of god, they are used for gathering around for ceremonies or for worshiping. "The association of trees with longevity and of fertility is well documented and this may give some base to the sacred position that some trees hold. (Davies 1988). The Pagans it is thought, used the Yew tree as the focus for their attentions. It must have been seen by Pagans as more of a mythological deity rather than a place for worship. The Yew itself has particular qualities which emanate a feeling of awe in its presence. The natural Yew forests that still cover parts of Europe are places with an intense feeling of atmosphere. In the early morning mists, such vast forests become forbidding places that can give a strange sense of unease to a modern day visitor, let alone a hapless Pagan, at the mercy of natural forces and of simpler mind and understanding". <http://www.ancient-yew.org/mi.php/trees-in-mythology/79> <http://www.ancient-yew.org/mi.php/trees-in-mythology/79>. I believe the theory that it representations longevity because trees are strong and hard to break down using a tree for worship or represented as a god used in culture makes sense to me. It gives the people a symbol of their god within the trees to come gather and pray to. It relates to cultures world view because trees are extremely important, and we need tress to survive although not everyone may worship trees. Everyone is aware that without trees we would not be alive, with that we try to take care of the environment by planting more trees for shade, planting more trees to survive in general. Without realizing it we do worship trees in a way, we are grateful to have them provide us with air to breathe.

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21047>

Melissa Gratchel



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21047>

Friday

“The Tale of the Three Brothers” is a myth from the Harry Potter universe; it coincides with Malinowski’s argument that myths are functional and set up codes of belief and morality.

In this tale three brothers use magic to cross a very deadly river, but after getting across Death meets them on the other side. Death was upset that they took three lives from him, so he pulled a trickster move and decided to congratulate them and give each brother a prize for being so clever.

The first brother asked for a wand more powerful than any other, the Elder Wand. He killed a foe that day and gloated about his wand’s power which resulted in him being murdered in his sleep and the wand was taken.

In 1887, the English historian Lord Acton stated the universal idea that, “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” This brother thought he was invincible and impervious to death. Abuse of power is extremely dangerous in a culture that can perform real magic. It’s no surprise that in this common bedtime story this man gets his throat slit first, symbolically enforcing the worldview that this culture regards power abuse very negatively.

The second brother wanted to embarrass Death so he asked for a way to bring loved ones back to life, he received the Resurrection Stone. He used the stone to bring back his dead fiancé but she was just in a zombie state, a shell of her former self. This made the second brother so sad he ended up killing himself.

I’m sure there are many old myths that teach the lesson you can’t beat death. Even in modern culture trying to bring the dead back to life never really works out for the person who is brought back or the person responsible. Khaleesi trying to keep Khal Drogo alive with blood magic in Game of Thrones left him in a vegetative state, so she had to smother him. It stresses that in this magical world it isn’t ethical for one to play with mortality, because they literally have the power to do so. Death will always get the last laugh.

The third brother just wanted to leave this situation without being followed by Death for the rest of his life, so Death tore a piece of fabric from his own cloak and gave the brother the Invisibility Cloak. He lived his life avoiding Death, and when he got old enough the third brother made a choice to pass on the cloak to his son and join Death on good terms.

In the tale this brother is described as “humble” and he meets with Death as a friend and departs as “equals”. This culture views death as a force of nature that should be accepted as a part of life. You can’t beat it and you can’t reverse it and if you live your life trying to do so, it will be an unhappy and stressful life to live. When one can accept the fact that they will die one day, it’s easier to live a full and enlightened life.



Though, “The Tale of the Three Brothers” is not only a bedtime story in this magical universe. The Deathly Hallows is the symbol of three sought after magical items. The line in the center represents the powerful Elder Wand, the circle is the Resurrection Stone, and the triangle stands for the Invisibility Cloak. And as lore goes, when all three items are united the possessor will become the master of Death, but at what cost?

**Rowling, J. K. (2013). *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. Lumos.**

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<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/22599>



<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/22599>

Friday

Hi Melissa,

I like that you used a bit of "pop culture" as your myths to analyze. They are great examples of how, even though we are no longer a "primitive" society, lessons and understanding through story still have value in our modern day. You did a great job of illustrating how stories can provide a moral frame work and give understanding to the harder questions surrounding life and death. Thanks for sharing!

~Jess

◀ [Reply](#)

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8:31am

Melissa, I was very impacted by your usage of contemporary literature in an anthropological perspective. It is true the Tales of Beedle the Bard does serve a purpose in promoting morality. I believe that Emile Durkheim words it well when he explains that society is an environment which experiences many problems and religion is the method by which we try to maintain an established template of morals. This story serving as a symbol may even correspond on a level which connects to Geertz's theory that religion gives purpose to life, at least to some people, Beedle the Bard may leave the impression on the reader that as long as they maintain a humble, selfless, and wise attitude, life will be fruitful for them.

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Friday

The swastika, until the rise of Hitler, did not always carry the negative connotation it now holds. As explained in the text *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, the swastika "is basically a pattern of lines set at right angles to one another and, as such, carries not inherent meaning." (Stein 58) The swastika can be found in many religions throughout the world and tends to be a more positive symbol than not in those contexts.

However, I'd like to narrow the focus onto the meaning it gained from Nazi Germany, as that is it's most known implication among living generations. Sadly in the context of the 1930's to present, the swastika is a symbol of oppression and death. It became the face genocide during World War Two and continues to be seen as a symbol of hate. While this symbol is known as something negative to most, the supporters of Nazi Germany found empowerment and camaraderie in it. During the rise of Nazi Germany and the duration of World War Two, the swastika's impact on daily life was drastically different among the population of that time. It evoked terror and intimidation in the Jewish and other targeted ethnicities, while the supporters of Hitler found it empowering.

The reasoning behind the double meaning of this symbol is best explained via Clifford Geertz's theory of Interpretive Approach. Humans assign the meanings to symbols, not the other way around, and symbols are best described "as playing a double role. They are both "models of" and "models for" in that they both represent the way things are while also directing human activity." (Stein 20) The swastika's influence on the lives of the oppressed, the allies, and the supporters of Nazi Germany during World War Two were drastically different; all because each party identified their own meanings to the symbol and acted accordingly.

Works cite:

Stein, R & Stein, P. (2011) The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition . Pearson: NY, NY.

◀ [Reply](#)

 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21047> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/21047>

Friday

That's an interesting viewpoint you took on supporters of Nazi Germany finding empowerment through the swastika. It's a great example of Geertz's theory of humans assigning meaning to symbols and how different peoples' experiences can drastically change how they define them.

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 <https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/25413> 

<https://vcccd.instructure.com/courses/1509/users/25413>

Friday

I agree, the swastika is a good example of Geertz's theory. The symbol alone could have an impact on someone's life just as the meaning behind the symbol. Even to date, the symbol of the swastika has a horrific meaning because of the actions that are held behind it.

◀ [Reply](#)

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Friday

My family is from England and my fathers side of the family are Catholics. I was baptized when I was a baby but have chosen not to follow this religion. Just recently my grandfather, my fathers dad, passed away. While we were in the hospital my aunt asked to have a priest come read my grandfather his Last Rites. I don't know in great detail what this means but I was present while the priest read my grandfather his Last Rites. I know the Last Rites have to be read by a priest and that it is meant to prepare the dying person for death by providing absolution for their sins. If the dying persons able to they confess their sins. The priest also uses blessed oil to anoint the dying person. I do not believe the reading of the Last Rites does what my aunt and grandmother believe but I do believe it brought them comfort during my grandfathers passing. I believe it helps explain what comes after death and relieves any anxiety they have regarding death.

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Friday

Hi Michelle. I'm sorry for your loss. I too lost my grandfather a month ago, and before he passed he enjoyed going to church every Sunday, or just listening to Christian music. Which was something he stopped doing because of his health conditions, but I agree with