



## **Different interpretative perceptions for Claude Lévi-Strauss' mythical narratives**

### **Diferentes percepções interpretativas para as narrativas míticas de Claude Lévi-Strauss**

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#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Mythic narratives are facts, stories or events, separated by large intervals of time, reassembled into truths, without the need for proof, that happen to people, through metaphors, with the purpose of dealing with themes and explaining the reality that human reason cannot explain. This generating capacity exists because they promote this action and give meaning to time, it has an explanatory and metaphorical force (FARIAS, 2006), it is based on timelessness, even without exhausting it in its meaning, since man needs not only to know it, but also as an extremely complex cultural reality, to reuse it. This is because stories interpenetrate in different areas of knowledge and diverse contexts.

In this work, we present some interpretative possibilities through the proposal to think that the contents of the most varied subjects of the curricular matrix of Basic Education can direct the teaching and learning process to the priority of the individual and collective construction opting for a more constructivist context at the same time in which the students can feel present in the construction of this knowledge that will be undertaken to attribute meaning to them. Before, however, to situate the reader, we present our interpretative synthesis of the mythical narratives referring to Myths 56 and 188, taken from the book *Mythology I - The Raw and the Cooked* and *Mythology II - From Honey to Ashes*, respectively, by Claude Lévi-Strauss.

To understand this interpretative universe, the narrative referring to Myth 188 discusses a certain structure already known from myths or legends. There is a hero, in this case a shaman-hero, who goes on adventures and learns things that will later be taught. First the hero has to learn how to hunt the birds in the same tree where the jaguars went



to gather honey. Since the hero's brother did not learn what his brother already knew, he ends up paying with his life. After this, following the blood trails of his brother, the hero-shaman will metamorphose into an ant, which is an attribute of the shamans and a characteristic of mythological narratives. Thus, he will get to know the world of the jaguars, and already as a man he will fall in love with a jaguar girl.

Staying among the jaguars, he learns all the rites of the honey festival. Then, feeling nostalgic for his human wife, he returns to the old tribe. Since he lingered among them, when he returns to his jaguar wife, he no longer finds her, nor does he find the way to the jaguars' village. However, what the hero has learned; that is, the rites, songs and dances of the honey festival will be taught to the Tenetehara. It is characteristic here of the junction of the human and the animal, and the ability of the shaman to travel to other worlds and bring back from them some teaching, some information. What we see there is a kind of etiological narrative that tells the origin of the honey festival and its rituals.

The narrative of Myth 56, on the other hand, portrays that there is no distinction between Aruwé and his brother. Both are facets of the same condition of the Tenetehara hunter who needs nature to survive and sustain the community and, precisely for this reason, cannot exceed the limits of his hunting duties, respecting the taboos linked to nature and the supernatural. We indicate, therefore, Aruwé as the alter ego of the hunter and his brother, the hunter. If Aruwé had already killed so many animals, shouldn't he have given feathers to his brother instead of giving in to his pleas? Thus, Aruwé, as the hunter's alter-ego, knows and respects the rules; while the hunter knows them, but doubts them, disrespecting them. When it comes to breaking taboos, as a pretext for acquiring intangible cultural goods, the hunter coincides with the profile of a trikster hero.

The taboos were broken, therefore, not when the hunter shot his arrows at the jaguars, but when Aruwé went on the prowl for two consecutive times to kill more birds. It is in this domain that the mythical narratives are inserted in a diversity of interpretations according to the interpretative light of each person. In the sequence, we will expose the objective of the work, the methodology used, through the interpretation of a group of Basic Education teachers from the region of Itabirito - MG, the development making the connection of examples of excerpts from the narratives that can establish association with mathematical content, as well as the reflective thinking of the narratives related to the area of expertise of each one, and, finally, the final conclusions.



## 2 OBJECTIVE

To discuss the possibilities that narratives 56 and 118 have to mobilize, via an interpretative process, mathematical content for teaching in basic education.

## 3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

It is about varied interpretative possibilities about two mythical narratives, Myth 56 and Myth 188, extracted from the book *Mythological I - The Raw and the Cooked* and *Mythological II - From Honey to Ashes*, respectively, using the proposal: to describe their interpretative analysis about the narratives highlighting, if possible, possibilities of association with the Mathematics contents of Basic Education. We selected seven teachers from the municipal network of Itabirito - MG from the areas of Portuguese, Mathematics, Arts, Sciences, History, Geography and English. The analysis was individual, requesting that there was no communication between them during the writing process, under the risk of duplicity or proximity in the answers.

## 4 DEVELOPMENT

In this study, diversified perceptions of each area of knowledge were observed, according to each person's reading and interpretation. During this process, some thoughts were presented and highlighted as a possibility for reflection. Thus, to enrich the analysis, some excerpts from the narratives will be pointed out in association with some content of the curricular matrix of Basic Education. All this, because it is fundamental that the subject produces contextualized learning, realizes how mathematical culture emerges from these relations (VERGANI, 1991) and attributes meaning and relevance in order to favor the structuring of thought and progress in a valid logical way that avoids a lack of connection between disciplines at school. This is what we will see next.

Table 1: Area x Reflective Thinking

Area	Reflective Thinking
Portuguese	"Narrative sequence is noticeable in the face of plot development (space, characters, conflict, climax, and outcome). It can be proposed to separate each fact in the text by the order in which it happens"
Mathematics	"I understand geometric shapes and planification of figures. In the case of trees, dichotomization, radius, and angles. As for animals, we can approach basic math such as addition, division, subtraction."



<b>Arts</b>	"Teaching from myth permeates the capacity for abstraction between the real and the imaginary through an interpretive reading and discussion, essential for effective understanding. The creation of drawings that illustrate these scenarios can be proposed."
<b>History</b>	"The transfiguration of the real into the fantastic (the characters within the narrative). It's a text, not a film. Discuss the moments when the transfiguration occurs."
<b>Science</b>	"Fire can be approached through a graph about the transformation and consumption of matter. Balancing."
<b>Geography</b>	"The text has traces of the fantastic tale, which is characterized by myths and legends. We can think of abstraction, setting, and space almost immediately at the end of it."
<b>English</b>	"I loved the narrative, but I don't know if they would give scope for creating some Math activity. He is great for Portuguese activities".

Source: Research data

These different reflective thoughts, related to the area of performance of each Basic Education professional, clearly show that mythical narratives can be discussed, in different contexts and scenarios, without becoming boring or repetitive. For this, it is fundamental the creativity and willingness to dare in each specific area encouraging students to be motivated during the production of their analyses. In different ways, it is essential to make it clear that every contribution should be stimulated, and there can be, on the part of each teacher, a constant concern not to discourage perceptions, since the possible interpretations for mythical narratives are not a categorical list and, on the contrary, put under new optics can always generate unprecedented analyses.

Table 2: Relationship Excerpt x Content MYTH 56

<b>Content</b>	<b>Excerpt</b>
<b>Proportion</b>	"They danced and sang drinking honey mixed with water."
<b>Timing</b>	"The songs began at dawn and ceased at sunset."
<b>Geometric figure</b>	"The fire spreads, reaching as far as your <b>village...</b> ";
<b>Geometric figure</b>	"Cover her with pindó <b>leaf</b> anyway...".
<b>Timing</b>	"But, it was received so warmly that it took a long time to return."
<b>Geometric figure</b>	"Meanwhile, the firebrand (which, from what comes next, looks more like a splinter of <b>wood</b> )..."
<b>Consumption of matter</b>	"...it keeps burning, and gets lighter and lighter to carry."



<b>Basic mathematical operations</b>	"The same misfortune occurs with the agouti, then with the tapir, the monkey, the howler monkey, in short, with all animals.
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Source: Research data

The contents presented as a reflection of the interpretation of the professional who has specific knowledge of these topics, shows that the term village relates to geometric figures because, generally, indigenous villages have a circular shape, and the wood chip, because, generally, it has a rectangular or square shape. The temporality occurs when it associates the sunrise and sunset as well as the delay of time to return. The basic operations, when it relates a possible comparison or relationship between the animals: length, weight, speed, .... And the consumption of matter when relating the burning process. In this sense, even knowing that it is not the same, we can establish a relationship between the unit of time in the human world and inside the anthill.

When entering the village and witnessing the honey festival, the context leads us to imagine the size dimension to which the human form can be transformed. It is about contributing to the development of the learner by making a mathematical reading that leaves aside absolute truths, respects the learning and knowledge socially produced (MENDES; FARIAS, 2014), enables the elevation of cultural identity, complements the practice by confronting new challenges, criticality, aesthetics and ethics, in the service of a quality training aimed at realities.

Table 3: Excerpt x Content Relationship MYTH 188

<b>Content</b>	<b>Excerpt</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	"After killing many birds, I wanted to come down,..."
<b>Distance</b>	"...to their shelter because the jaguars were <b>approaching.</b> "
<b>Length (height)</b>	"The targeted beast took a leap ..."
<b>Capacity</b>	"...where they <b>collected</b> wild honey."
<b>Length (height)</b>	"... Aruwê's brother climbed the tree ..."

Source: Research data

Already these contents, show that the percentage can be evidenced when announcing the high quantity of dead birds. In this same excerpt a presentation in tables or graphs highlighting the periodic quantity of dead birds can be discussed. The length, on the other hand, is highlighted when the terms hop and climb are exposed in the periods.



Capacity, when listing the honey collection that will probably have to be stored somewhere. And distance, when referring to the proximity of the jaguars to their shelter. As a result, it is time to think that the universe of the fantastic tale has a wonderful escape and escapism from reality and assumes no commitment to harmony between facts.

In face of these analyses and observations, we realize how rich it is to approach the sociocultural context in the classroom and not be limited to the universe of the textbook only. In the interpretative scenario of the two mythical narratives presented here, it was possible to verify the relationship between the Mythological work and the interdisciplinary educational context through the mobilization and exposure of interpretative processes in connection with the mathematical content for teaching in basic education.

## **5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In the interpretative context of the mythical narratives presented, we noticed the diversity of interpretative possibilities related to the most varied areas of knowledge, inserted in their cultural forms of action, perception, and reflection. Its implicit context enabled the promotion of studies about the most different themes related to contemporaneity, as well as made explicit paths that allowed us to transit between the imaginary and the real, in the face of easily recognizable symbols. To understand this interpretative universe of the narratives, we noticed that the teachers' participation ratified the wealth of paths and itineraries that can be traced for the discussion of a mythical narrative, without the need to distance oneself from one's area of work.

In different ways, we found that the same narrative can be discussed in different ways, either through the creation of drawings that illustrate the most diverse scenarios addressed, either by the idea of temporality, consumption of matter, or by the perception of proportion, percentage, and relationship with basic operations. This leads us to see that, from the perspective of valuing traditionally constructed knowledge, education enables culture to be a determining variable in human behavior through a dialogue with people who experience their own cultural knowledge. Therefore, interpreting and producing meanings are diversified ways to consolidate manifestations that have been witnessed, interpreted, and experienced.



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