

Compare and
contrast "genesis"
and "penetrating to
the heart of the
forest",

[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



Topic # 3 Compare and Contrast " Genesis" and " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest", Looking at both myth and short story. Although there are many similarities present, a distinct difference is made between " Genesis" and " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" in that " Genesis" is a mythical narrative while " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" is an adaptation of a mythic story (Adam and Eve) in the form of a short story. When comparing and contrasting these two stories we see similarities in storyline, themes, symbols, differences in detail, and the extent and significance of the stories themselves. When deciding whether these narratives are myths or short stories, one must look at the contents of each piece of work. " Genesis" can clearly be defined as a myth because it contains all the characteristics of a myth. These characteristics include casual and vague descriptive writing about a very significant and important piece of work. Characteristics of myths also include " superstitious" themes, characters and the establishment of traditional ways of life and belief systems for a wide variety of people. Although " Genesis" contains one of the most popular and significant creation tales today, its lack of description and vague details account for its acceptance of being a myth. An example of this is the seven days of creation being written in one chapter; " In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was formless and voice" (The Access Bible 2). This suggests that " Genesis" may have been passed down orally from generation to generation, which, according to Campbell (" The First Storytellers"), resembles all other myths. The presence of solely flat or static characters (such as Adam and Ever) is a good example to show why " Genesis is considered a myth". Only imprecise details about Adam and Eve

are given and we lack any understanding of personality or character traits. The existence of superstition is also very apparent in " Genesis". God (the embodiment of good) is constantly at work as is the Serpent (the embodiment of evil). The supernatural is a key element in the " Genesis" creation myth. Examples of these elements are; the presence of angels, a holy sword, and a tree of unnatural, divine abilities (Bible 2, 6, 7). Supernatural elements form " Genesis" into an idealized narrative of mystic and mythic qualities. As with many other myths, " Genesis" forms the core of many religious beliefs, cultural ideals, and the basis of moral living. " Genesis" is able to fit the origins of life's everyday occurrences, such as human curiosity, sin, good and evil, and a woman's pain in childbirth into four chapters. " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" is an adaptation of the story of Adam and Eve in " Genesis," however; it cannot be classified as a myth because of its deviation from the story in the Bible and the clear presence of short story traits. While the similarities between " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" and the story of Adam and Eve in " Genesis" are apparent in the setting and themes, " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" lacks the explanation of creation and many of the fictitious aspects of " Genesis". " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" contains many opposites to " Genesis" in that it has very descriptive writing style, both round and flat characters, and numerous amounts of other requirements for a short story. Descriptive detailed writing is seen when looking at the forest and village: " The straw-thatched villages looked like inhabited gardens, for the soil was of amazing richness and flora proliferated in such luxuriance" (Carter 53). Another evident example of short story characteristics is the presence of

both static characters, like Dubois and the villagers, and dynamic characters, such as Emile and Madeline. When looking at these two narratives, we see similarities in the use of surreal events and in occurrences and beliefs, such as the attitudes towards "magical" or "superstitious" trees in both stories and the dangerous "living" plant in "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest". While magic, fantasy and surrealism can be found in "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest," the enormity and importance of these features in the story is not nearly as important as that in "Genesis". "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" however, is not dependent on supernatural elements to convey the message as is "Genesis". "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" fails to incorporate mythical traits with the absence of a supreme being, and the idealized principles and notions of the story. In comparison these narratives have a great deal in common, mainly in regards to story line, events, and symbols. The story of Adam and Eve in "Genesis" can be seen in "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" through the plot and the characters that are present. In "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" Emile takes the place of Adam and Madeline takes the place of Eve. The account of the descent into sin is very similar between these two pieces. An example of this is in both "Genesis" and "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest," one tree has severe consequences if one was to find and eat the fruit the tree bears (Carter 52, 53, 66). Also, in both narratives, the curiosity of the characters is too much and they violate the unwritten law of pursuing the tree. While innocence makes up all these characters to begin with, in the end Adam, Eve, Emile and Madeline are exposed to sin, shame, and the knowledge that there is more to the world than the perfection of the

village/Eden which in turn causes them to lose their innocence. The setting is very similar in both pieces as with the flourishing, " rich soiled" (Carter 53) forest being the recreation of the Garden of Eden which contained " vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, trees of every kind bearing fruit" (Bible 2). In all, " Penetrating to the Heart of the forest" does an excellent job in reconstructing Adam and Eve's story in the form of two children's adventure of the exploration, discovery and search for truth. In contrast, " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" lacks much of the " epic" qualities that " Genesis" has, as well as religious and supernatural figures and themes. " Genesis" can be seen as a basis of entire cultures and religions and explains much of the world in short as sates the passage when God speaks to Eve of the consequences of her actions (Bible 6). Whereas " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" lacks this, and focuses on entertainment rather than education. The absence of God and other supernatural characters contributes to a lack of mythical sensation. " Genesis" focus is to " teach truths about the nature of reality, the meaning of life, and the purpose of human existence," (Bible 2) while " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" is a purely entertainment driven short story. Although both " Genesis" and " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest" can be seen as fictitious narratives containing similar qualities, themes, and storylines, both present clear differences in purpose, direction, and description as well as " Genesis" being a myth and " Penetrating to the heart of the forest" as being a short story with a mythic plot. Word Count: 1, 187 Works Cited Access Bible, The. New Revised Standard Version. Ed. Gail R. O'day, David Petersen. Oxford University Press; pg 1-7. " The First

Storytellers." Prod. Apostrophe S. Productions, Inc. New York: Mystic Fire Video Inc., 1988. Carter, A. " Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest"; Fireworks: Nine Profane Pieces; 1974: Penguin books; pg 51-66.