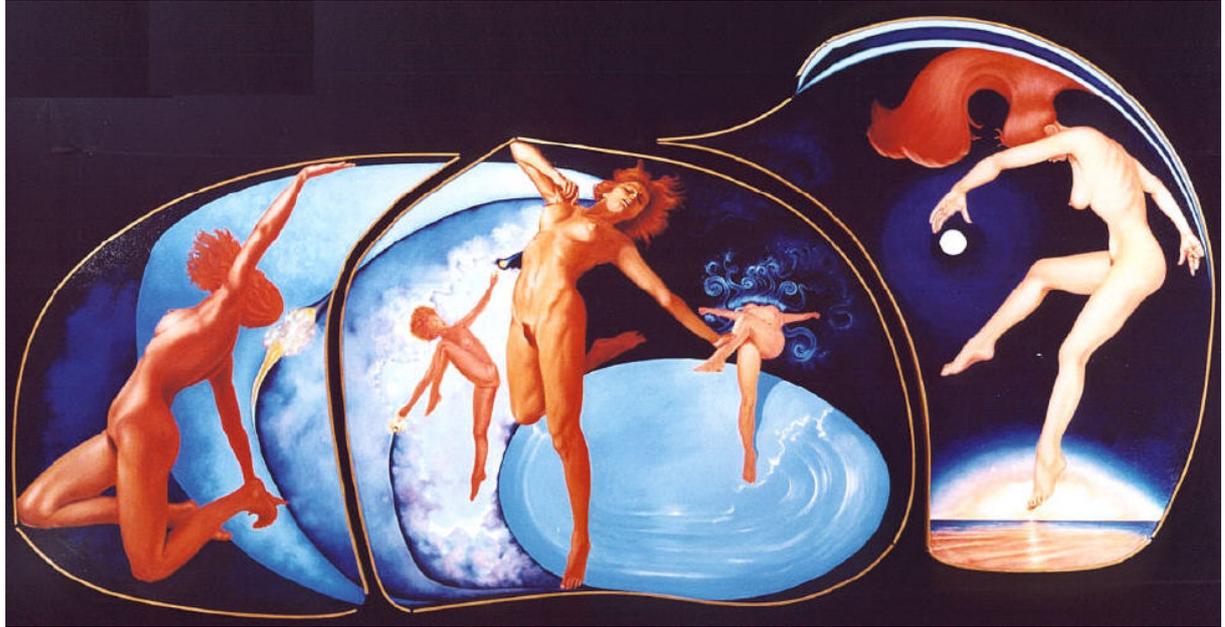


Blog One

Creation Myths

By Mary Moynihan



Black Mountain upon Mountain
As far as the eye can see, beyond memory
To where I am mist and sea, discovering answers
To a silent power I long to be.
From *Black Mountain* by Mary Moynihan

For thousands of years, people from all cultures have told stories to make sense of the world. These stories are called myths. Myths are made-up, they tell fictional stories about ancient people's beliefs and the Gods they worshipped. Long before people understood the science of natural events and what causes things like thunderstorms, floods or the sun setting on the horizon, people often believed that such natural occurrences were caused by mythical Gods. And so myths are passed down by poets and storytellers from generation to generation, telling how the earth was first made and how the first people, plants and animals were formed.

Myths have many different interpretations and can be referred to as the re-telling of sacred or ancient stories or narratives from the past related to explaining cosmological, supernatural or other traditions of particular groups of people. In relation to myths and legends of origin, there are a wide range of traditional stories and narratives that have

been passed down across the world. The myth of creation itself attempts to explain how the world came into being.

Very often myths and legends can be used to pass down narrow minded or patriarchal interpretations and new myths and legends need to be re-invented to reflect traditions and ethics in society that we want to pass on particularly in relation to re-shaping the story of a woman that is powerful and in control of her body and able to live freely in a safe and equal world. Women are powerful beings today and in the past and it is important to reclaim and re-name myths so they show women as powerful cultural heroes playing a key role in the past, present and future. While myths of creation have different interpretations, what appears to be common to many myths across Europe is that in the beginning there was nothingness. And out of this nothingness or chaos the land and seas were formed.

In Celtic mythology there is no one single version of how the world was created. Some Celtic myths suggest the earth was created by giants who were the original Gods while other myths say the earth was sung into existence by a primordial first God who came from the sea of nothingness. As a writer, I have created a fictional narrative inspired by song lines and dreamtimes from warriors of an ancient past and pre-existing stories recalling a woman-like creature known as the Óran Mór.

'Once upon a time, there was no time. There was only a place of nowhere with no water, earth or air and no Gods, humans or animals. There was only the depths of nothingness and its dark, eternal quiet. And in this deep and ultimate silence, slowly a whisper grew becoming a sound moving across the endless dark. The song was the Oran Mór, 'The Great Melody', and it grew singing the darkness into light, a spiralling, momentum of sound reaching a crescendo and out of which a sea-horse was born. A white seahorse, a mare whose name was Lir. She became a piece of white foam and the Oran Mór did not cease here. She kept on singing as creature begot creature and more and more came, emerging out of the song until a whole ocean of white, foaming sea-horses created the deepest oceans.'

In this story, the island of Ireland is born into being out of a song that becomes woman and the woman is the creator of the oceans, land, and sky.

'The song is simply there and the song has sung the darkest ocean into being. And out of the song emerges a she-woman creature that is the eternal spirit of the Óran Mór, emerging to become one with her creations'.

Very often myths and legends can be used to pass down narrow minded or patriarchal interpretations and new myths and legends need to be re-invented to reflect traditions and ethics in society that we want to pass on particularly in relation to re-shaping the story of a woman that is powerful and in control of her body and able to live freely in a safe and equal world. As we move forward in today's changed world, there is need now, more than ever, to tell stories that create new visions for the future with a focus on equality, equity, dignity and diversity for all people equally.

About the author: Mary Moynihan is a Writer, Theatre and Film-Maker and Artistic Director of the Smashing Times international Centre for the Arts and Equality and a Theatre Lecturer for TU Dublin Conservatoire of Music and Drama.

Smashing Times International Centre for the Arts and Equality

www.smashingtimes.ie

Mary Moynihan Twitter: @Mary_Moynihan

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