We are accustomed to think of myths as the opposite of science. But in fact they are an essential part of it: the part that decides its significance in our lives. So we very much need to understand them.

Myths are not lies. Nor are they detached stories. They are imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world. They shape its meaning.

Our imaginative visions are central to our understanding of the world. They are not a distraction from our serious thinking but a necessary part of it... There is nothing wrong with the fact that our imagination plays a part in shaping our world view. We need it to do so. But we also need to notice how it is doing it.

Mary Midgley, *The Myths We Live By*, Routledge 2004