

The background of the slide features a light beige, textured surface resembling handmade paper. In the background, there is a faint, stylized illustration of a mountain range. On the right side, a dark, thin branch of a willow tree hangs down, adorned with numerous small, dark, round buds or leaves.

Exploring the Boundaries of Nature

Science as Modern Myth

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What is Science?

- ❖ The observation, identification, description, experimentation, and theoretical explanation of nature
- ❖ Objectivity
- ❖ The scientific method



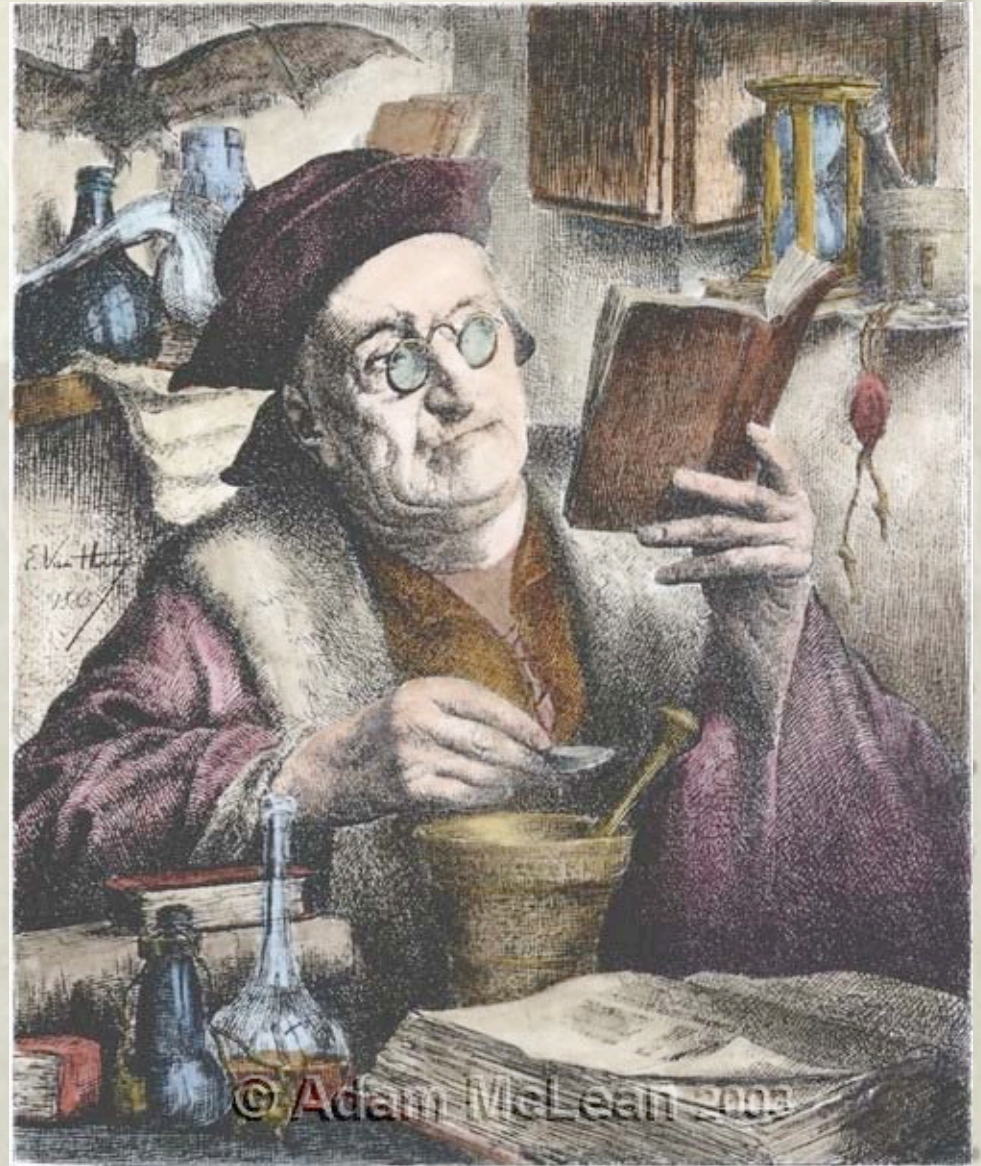
Cause and Effect

- ❖ Impersonal
- ❖ Scientists look for causes
- ❖ Scientific findings fuel technology
- ❖ Technology: is it a shadow side of science



The Null Hypothesis

- ❖ No relationship exists between x and y
- ❖ Experiments disprove the hypothesis



Null Hypothesis

- ❖ There is no relationship between global warming and the intensity of hurricanes
- ❖ It is a myth.....



Myth-Definitions

- ❖ **false belief:** a widely held but mistaken belief
- ❖ **fictitious person or thing:** something fictitious or nonexistent, but whose existence is widely believed in
- ❖ **ancient story:** a traditional story about heroes or supernatural beings, often attempting to explain the origins of natural phenomena or aspects of human behavior

Myth-Definitions

- ❖ **myths:** a group or genre of stories (creation,etc.)
- ❖ **idealized conception:** idealized ideas and stories surrounding a particular phenomenon or concept
- ❖ All of the above can be applied to science in relation to nature

Simplistic correlations

- ❖ **ancient story:**
 - discovery of penicillin
- ❖ **myths:**
 - creation of the universe
- ❖ **idealized concept:**
 - walking on the moon
- ❖ **false belief**
 - the world is flat
- ❖ **fictitious idea**
 - scientists can change the weather



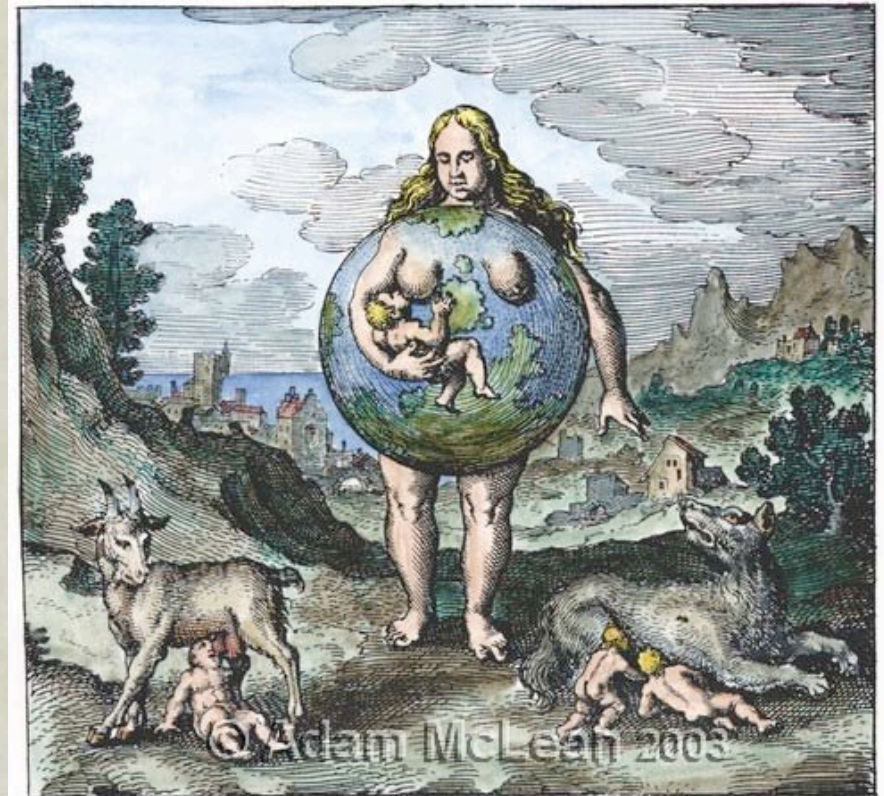
One I like...

- ❖ Myths are stories that endure
 - C.G. Jung often saw them as Archetypal
 - rooted in the human collective psyche
 - they represent familiar patterns
 - we can relate to the stories as universal and cross cultural



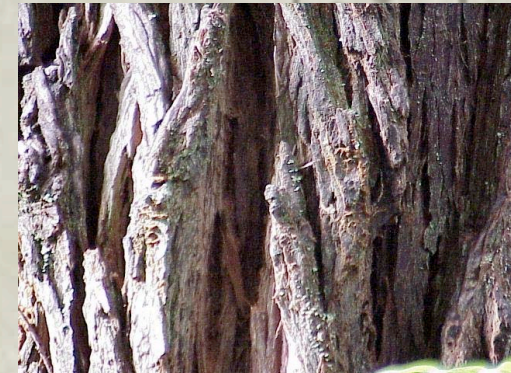
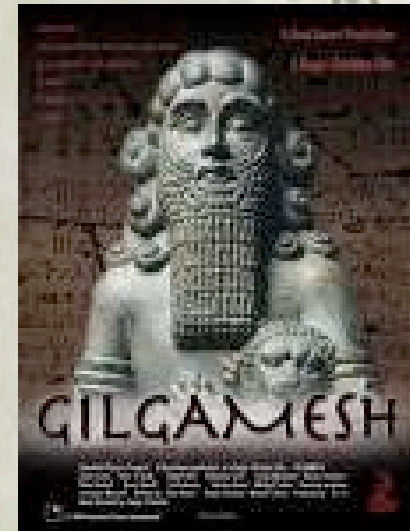
Myth and the Natural World

- ❖ For the ancients, the myth described natural phenomena
- ❖ Myths had ritual (religious) purpose
- ❖ Myths offered meaning
- ❖ Myths provided perspective
- ❖ Infused a relationship with nature
- ❖ Relieved anxiety around natural events



Dominance over Nature

- ❖ Gilgamesh & Enkidu
 - cut down the cedar of the great forest after killing its protector
- ❖ Erisichthon
 - felled the sacred tree in Demeter's grove, was visited by Hunger, sold his daughter and finally consumed himself



Respect for nature

❖ Demeter and Persephone

- Hades takes Persephone to the underworld
- Demeter mourns her loss
- Her anger turn the world to winter
- Persephone brings back the sun
- the seasonal cycles continue



Science Myth

- ❖ The myth of “Duck and Cover”
- ❖ What does it mean to you?

Science Myth

❖ Duck and Cover



The Science behind the Myth

- ❖ Nuclear suns
- ❖ Nuclear winters



On a positive note...

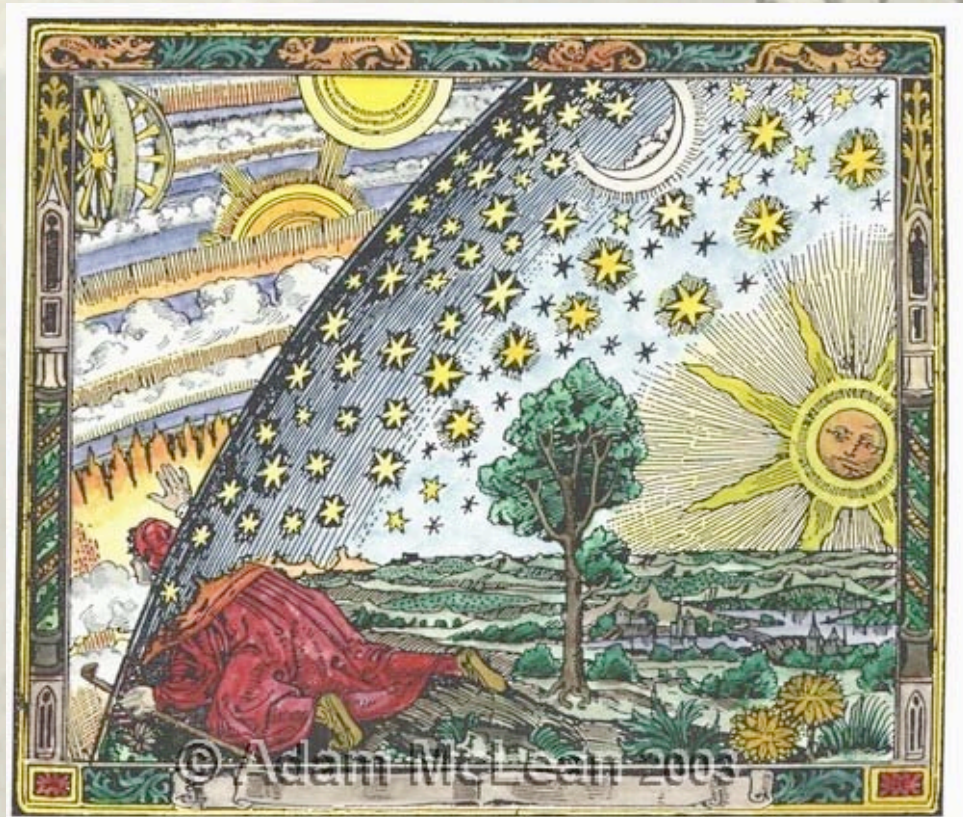
❖ Observations:

- scientists have a passion about science
- working with nature forces scientist into relationship
- nature engenders personal meaning
- science looks for relationship



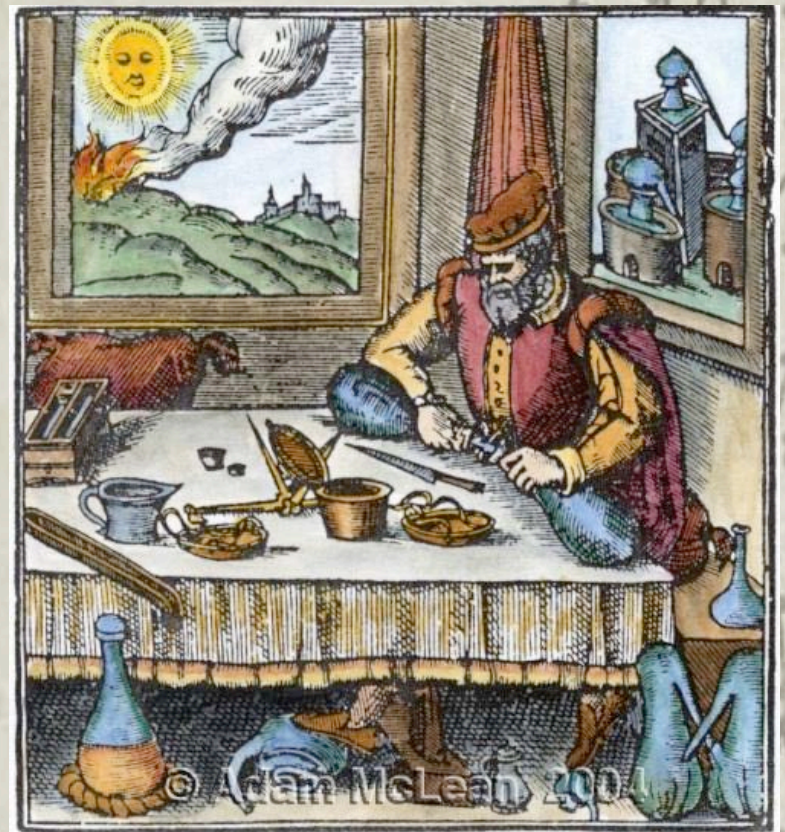
Science of Mythic Proportions

- ❖ Narrow perspectives don't work
- ❖ Science requires new perspectives:
 - Hermeneutics
 - Phenomenology
 - Interdisciplinary approaches
 - Weight of evidence
 - Personal heroic stories
 - etc.



A Psychological Awareness

- ❖ Shadow
 - why can't we grasp that our actions have consequences
- ❖ Externalization
 - why can we dump our waste without concern
- ❖ Denial
 - why can't we see the evidence
- ❖ Relationships



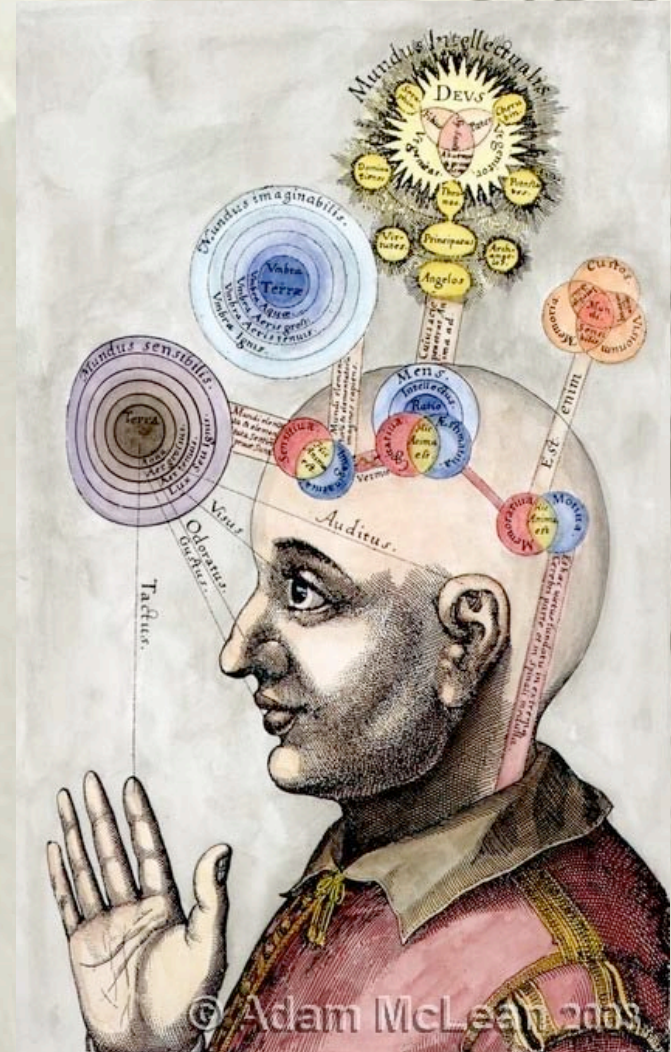
Phaethon

- ❖ Son of Helios (Sun God)
- ❖ Borrowed his father's chariot
- ❖ Could not control the steeds
- ❖ The chariot scorched the earth
- ❖ Created the Libyan desert
- ❖ Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt
- ❖ Phaethon's sisters cried and became trees



It is only a Myth

- ❖ Are myths even relevant today?
- ❖ The ancients believed their actions (prayer & sacrifice) could influence the Gods
- ❖ Has science become our belief system (modern myth)?
- ❖ Is our collective reliance on science and technology the same psychological process?



Personal perspective

- ❖ Bringing parts together:
- ❖ Science-
 - with attention to detail
 - a focus on facts
 - following the collective
- ❖ Nature-
 - relationship to other
 - a focus on feeling
 - individual experience
 - mystery
- ❖ A strange blend

