



One God, One Story

SESSION FIVE

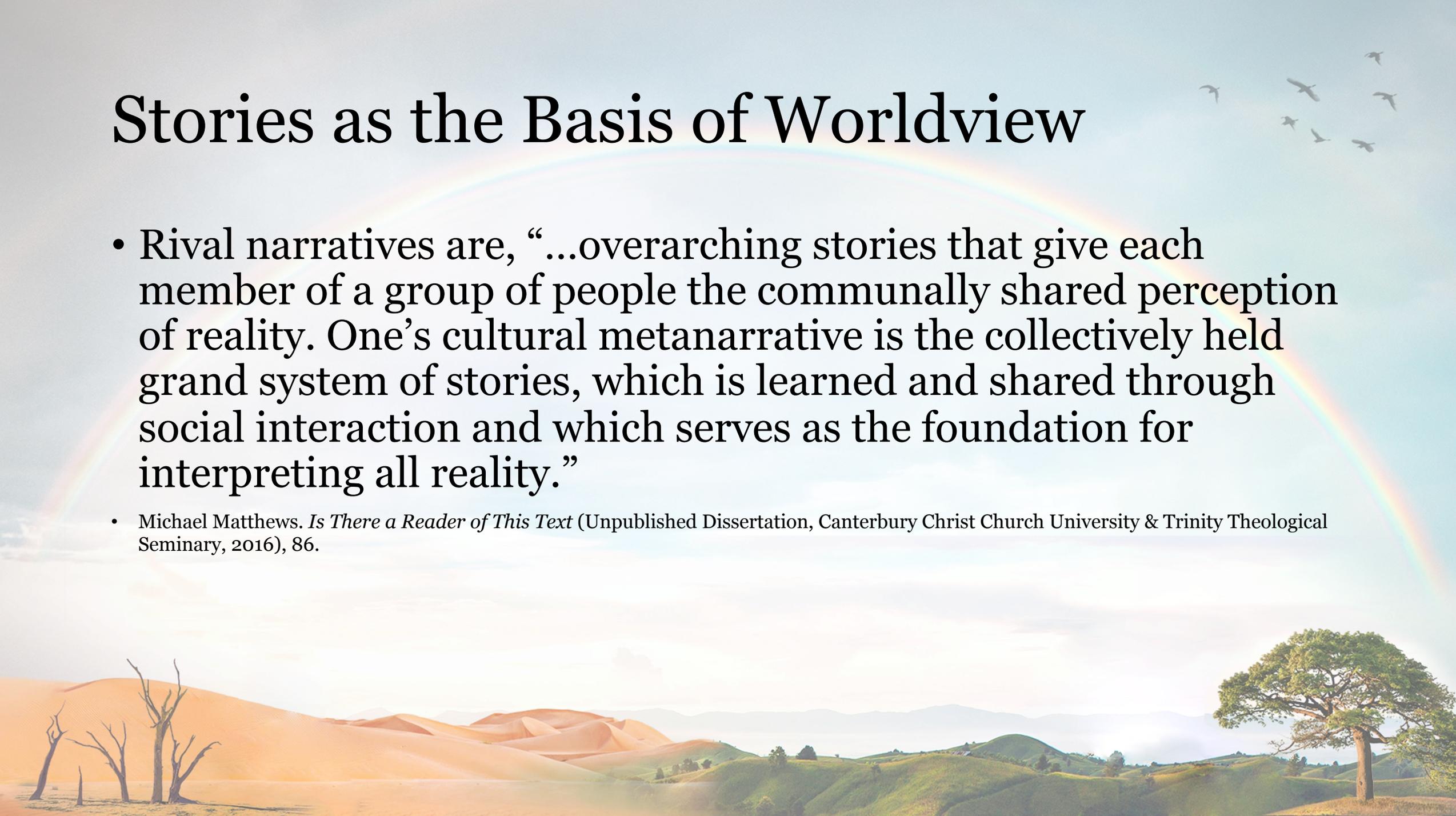
Analyzing and Challenging Worldview
with the Metanarrative



Transformative Nature of Narrative

Ways in which Story is Powerful

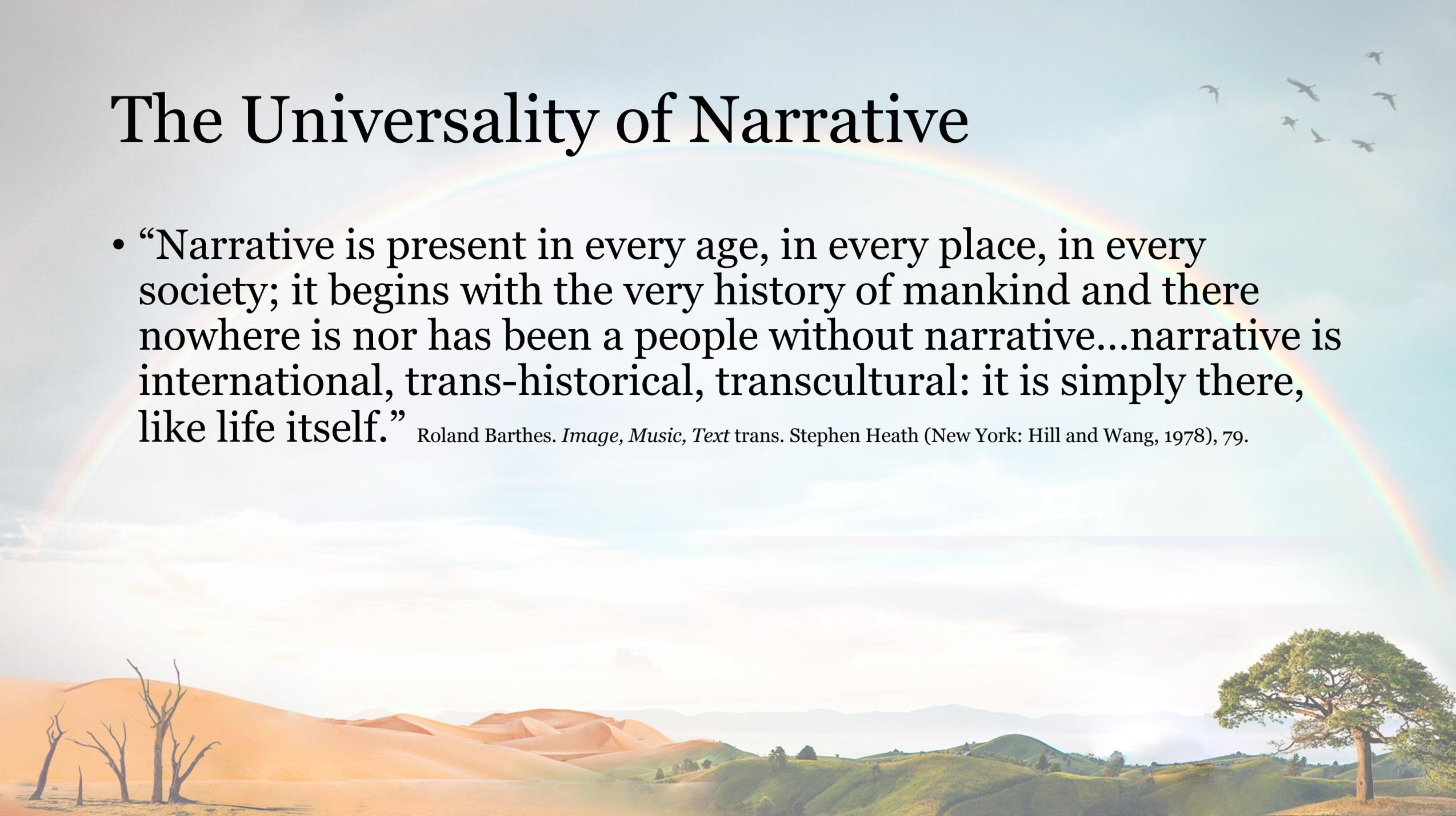
Stories as the Basis of Worldview



- Rival narratives are, “...overarching stories that give each member of a group of people the communally shared perception of reality. One’s cultural metanarrative is the collectively held grand system of stories, which is learned and shared through social interaction and which serves as the foundation for interpreting all reality.”
- Michael Matthews. *Is There a Reader of This Text* (Unpublished Dissertation, Canterbury Christ Church University & Trinity Theological Seminary, 2016), 86.

<i>The Universe Next Door,</i> by James Sire	Christianity	Naturalism	Pantheism	Post-Modernism
Reality	God is	The cosmos exists as a uniformity of cause/effect	Some things are more than others (reality levels of appearance)	The truth about the reality itself is forever hidden from us
Human Being	Created in the image of God	Complex machines (chemical and physical)	Pass beyond personality by realizing oneness with cosmos	We make ourselves by languages constructed
At death...	Gate to life with God or separation in hell	Extinction of personality and individuality	All roads lead to the one – end of personal existence	
Morality	Ethics based on character of God	Social constructs	Cosmos is perfect at every moment	A linguistic and social construct
Meaning of history	History is meaningful sequence leading to God's purposes	Cause and effect with no purpose	Time is unreal; history is cyclical	

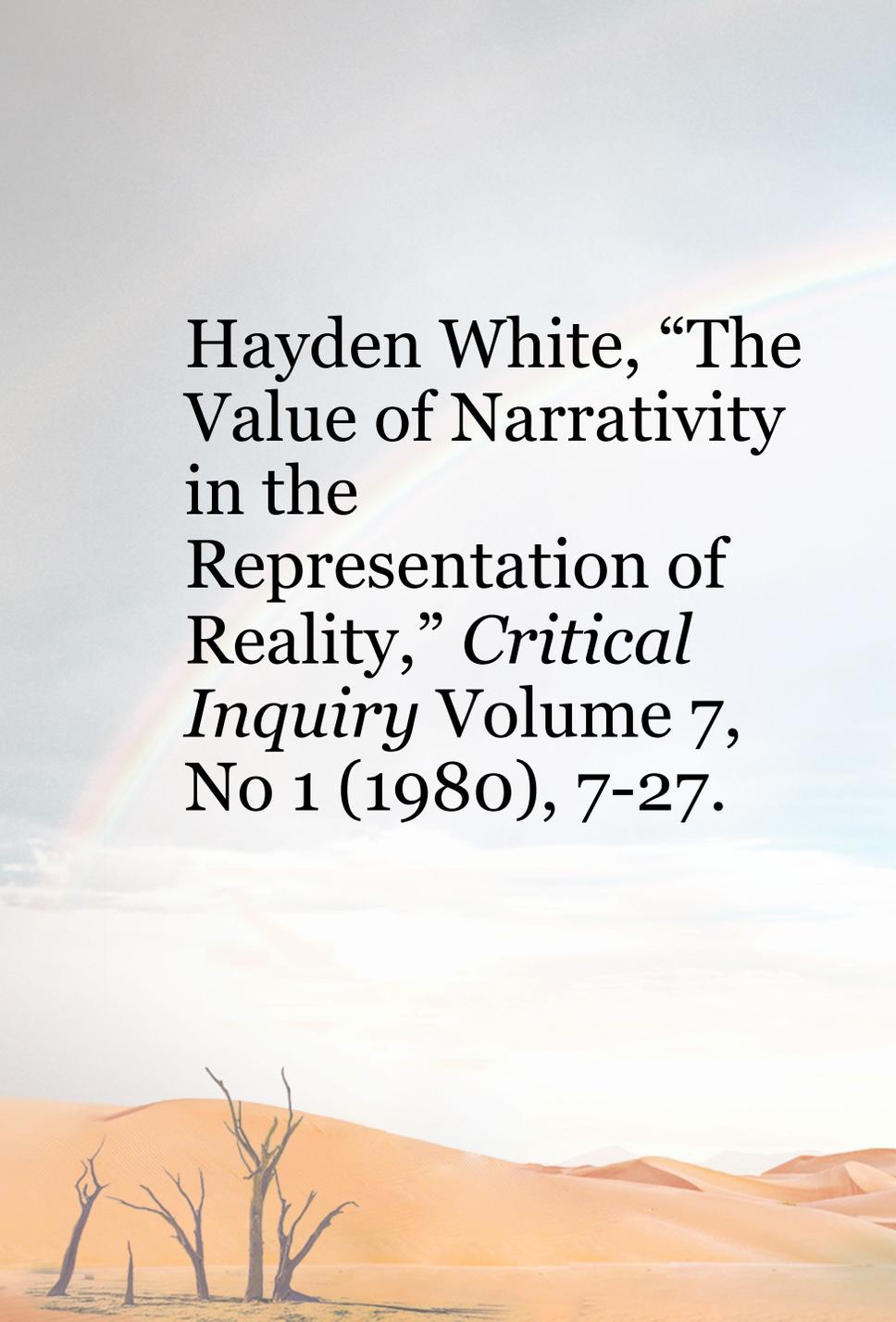
The Universality of Narrative



- “Narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative...narrative is international, trans-historical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself.” Roland Barthes. *Image, Music, Text* trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 79.

Human beings attempt to make sense of their experiences by way of story.

- “Story is a basic principle of mind. Most of our experience, our knowledge, and our thinking is organized as stories.” Mark Turner. *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford UP, 1996), v.
- Events are understood by the way in which they correlate to other events.
- A narrative is an arrangement of events in relation to one another, with the underlying belief that the meaning of the events must be seen in light of their correlations.

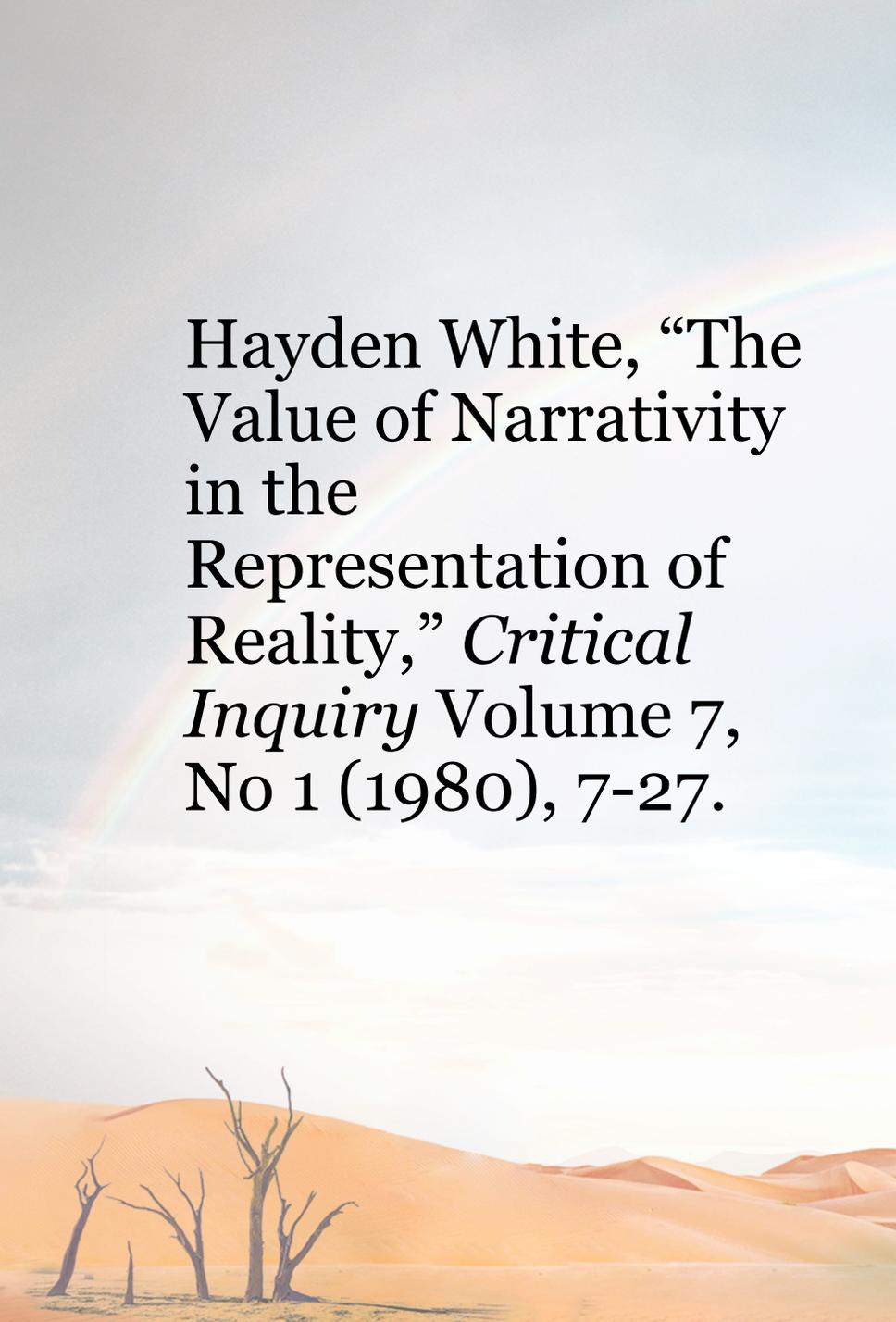


Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry* Volume 7, No 1 (1980), 7-27.

no peripeteia, and no identifiable narrative voice. In what are, for us, the theoretically most interesting segments of the text, there is no suggestion of any necessary connection between one event and another. Thus, for the period 709–734, we have the following entries:

- 709. Hard winter. Duke Gottfried died.
- 710. Hard year and deficient in crops.
- 711.
- 712. Flood everywhere.
- 713.
- 714. Pippin, Mayor of the Palace, died.
- 715. 716. 717.
- 718. Charles devastated the Saxon with great destruction.
- 719.
- 720. Charles fought against the Saxons.
- 721. Theudo drove the Saracens out of Aquitaine.
- 722. Great crops.
- 723.
- 724.
- 725. Saracens came for the first time.
- 726.
- 727.
- 728.
- 729.
- 730.
- 731. Blessed Bede, the presbyter, died.
- 732. Charles fought against the Saracens at Poitiers on Saturday.
- 733.
- 734.

This list immediately locates us in a culture hovering on the brink of dissolution, a society of radical scarcity, a world of human groups threatened by death, devastation, flood, and famine. All of the events are extreme, and the implicit criterion for their selection is their liminal nature. Basic needs—food, security from external enemies, political and



Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* Volume 7, No 1 (1980), 7-27.

1045. 1046. 1047. 1048. 1049. 1050. 1051. 1052.

1053. 1054. 1055.

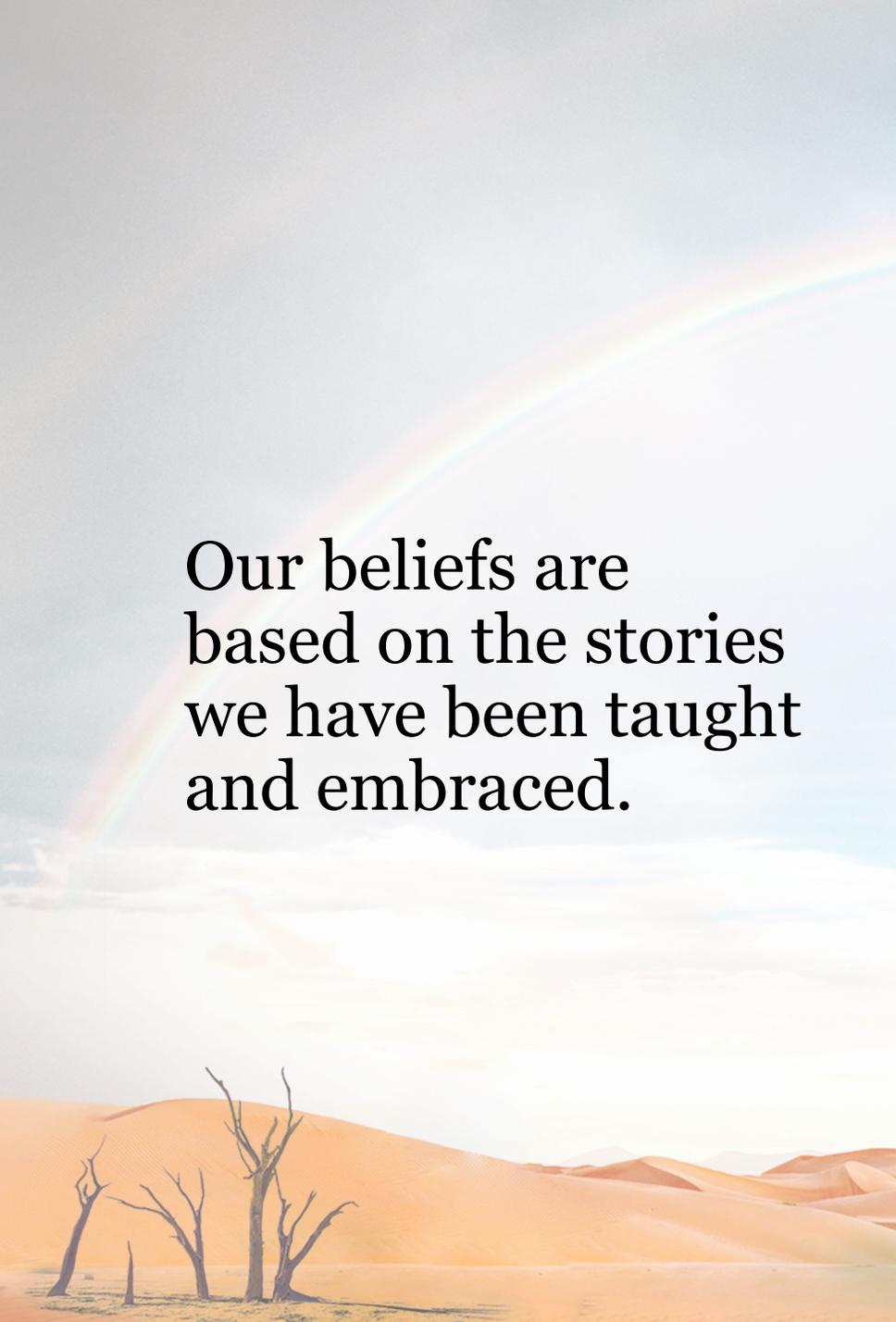
1056. The Emperor Henry died; and his son Henry succeeded to the rule.

1057. 1058. 1059. 1060. 1061. 1062. 1063. 1064.

1065. 1066. 1067. 1068. 1069. 1070. 1071. 1072.

The continuation of the list of years at the end of the account does, to be sure, suggest a continuation of the series *ad infinitum* or, rather, until the Second Coming. But there is no story conclusion. How could there be, since there is no central subject *about which* a story could be told?

Nonetheless, there must be a story since there is surely a plot—if by “plot” we mean a structure of relationships by which the events contained in the account are endowed with a meaning by being identified as parts of an integrated whole. By the plot of this story, however, I do not mean the myth of the Fall and Redemption (of the just parts of humankind) contained in the Bible; rather, I am referring to the list of dates given in the left-hand file of the text which confers coherence and fullness on the events by registering them under *the years in which they occurred*. To put it another way, the list of dates can be seen as the signifieds of which the events given in the right-hand column are the signifiers. The “meaning” of the events is their registration in this kind of list. This is why, I presume, the annalist would have felt little of the anxiety which the modern scholar feels when confronted with what appear to be “gaps,” “discontinuities,” and lack of causal connections between the events recorded in the text. The modern scholar seeks fullness and continuity in an order of events; the annalist has both in the sequence of the years. Which is the more “realistic” expectation?



Our beliefs are
based on the stories
we have been taught
and embraced.





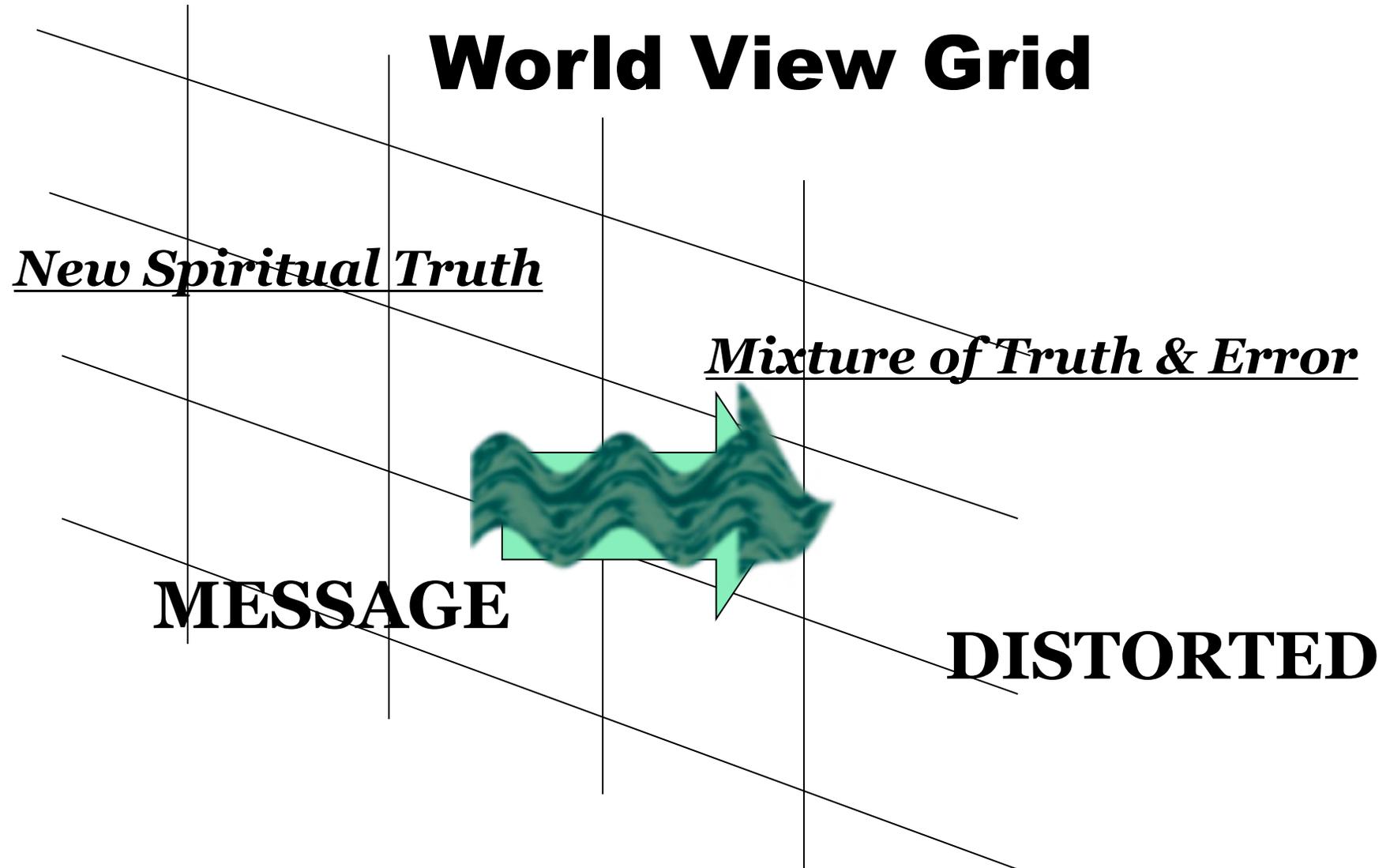
Discussion Questions

Worldview FAQs

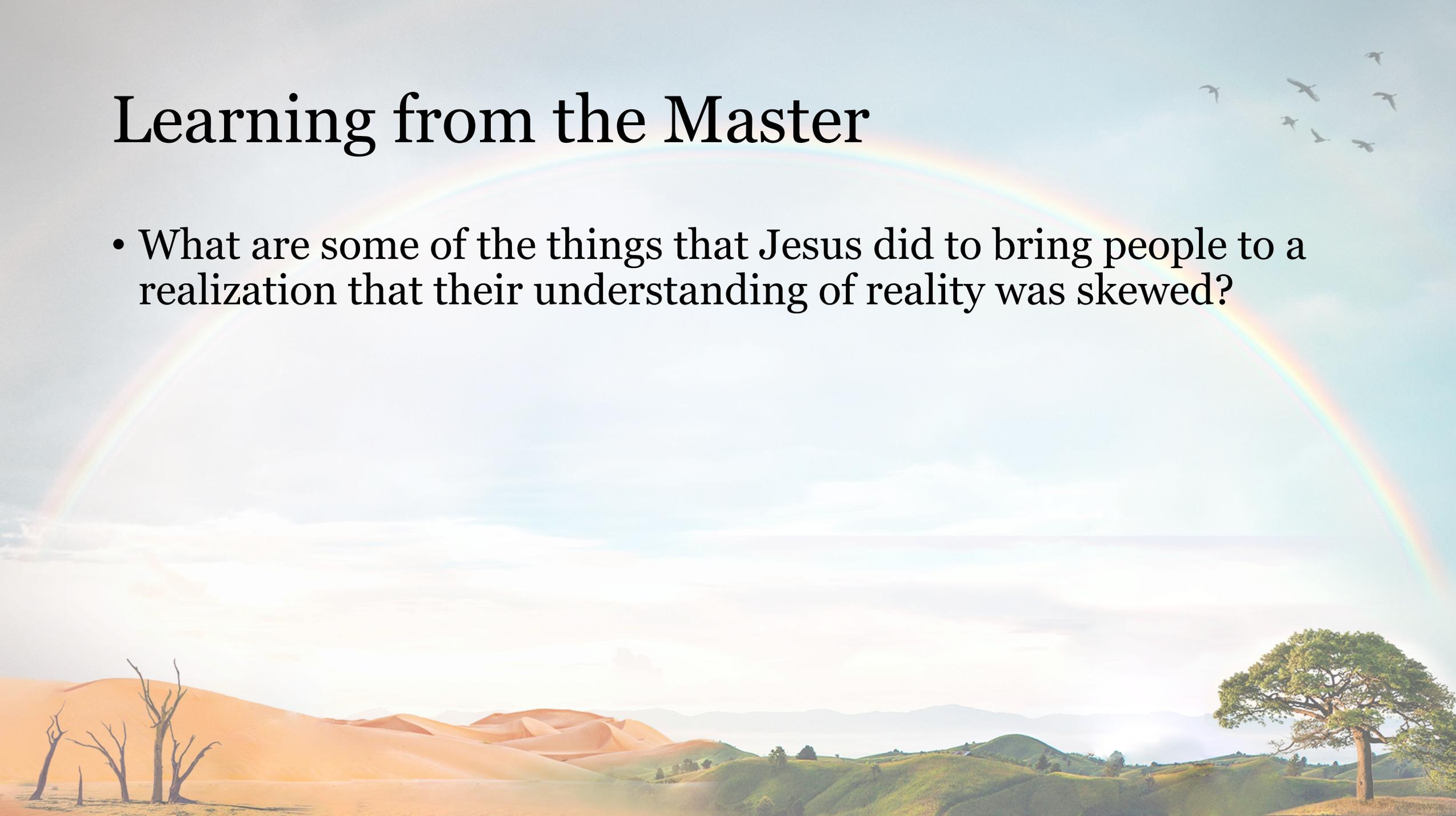
- Every worldview asks and answers questions such as:
 - **What is reality?** *Stories that deal with ultimate reality.*
 - Who are we? *Stories that shape our sense of identity*
 - Why are we here? *Stories that shape our sense of purpose and value*
 - What's wrong? *Stories that explain the broken world in which we live and of which we are a part*
 - What's the remedy? *Stories that shape our hope or expectations*

ALWAYS ask yourself how these compare to a biblical worldview.
Highlight the disparity.

Communication Breakdown



Learning from the Master

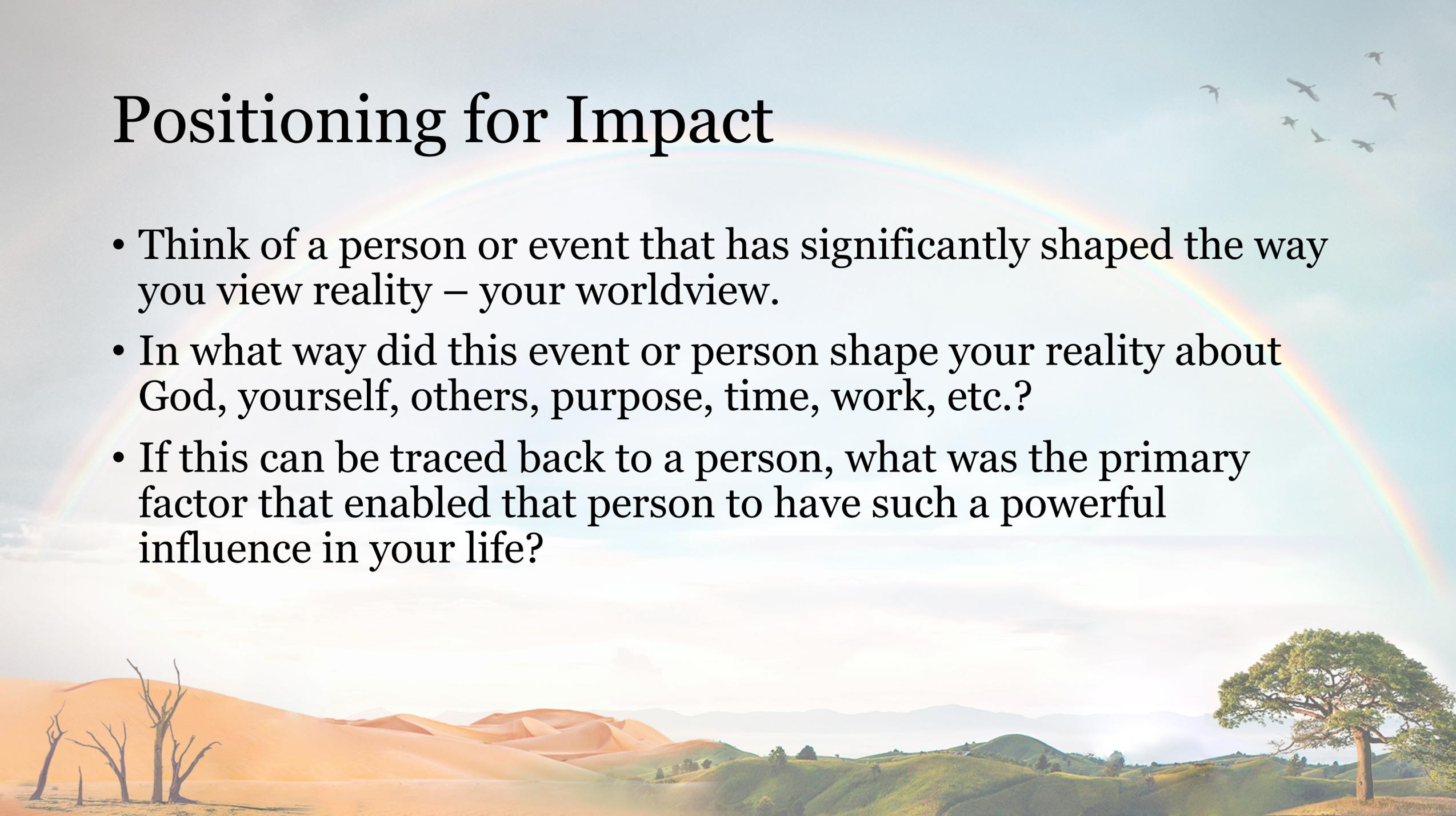


- What are some of the things that Jesus did to bring people to a realization that their understanding of reality was skewed?

Positioning for Impact



Positioning for Impact



- Think of a person or event that has significantly shaped the way you view reality – your worldview.
- In what way did this event or person shape your reality about God, yourself, others, purpose, time, work, etc.?
- If this can be traced back to a person, what was the primary factor that enabled that person to have such a powerful influence in your life?