

If we ask ourselves what makes a nation, the most common answer would probably be the national attributes such as the same language, race, shared territory or history platform. But then how is it in the case of the United States of America? Its language, English, is originally a language from the British Isles, its population consists of many people of different races and cultural backgrounds. It would be quite problematic even to speak about some common past or a specific territory.¹ So, what is it then that makes the United States of America? Harvard's Sacvan Bercovitch argues that this "nation is defined by the mythic word America"² and for him "America is a myth."²

Taking the definition of myths, in the original meaning of the word they are "stories, usually concerning superhumans or gods, which are related to accompany or to explain religious beliefs: they originate far back in the culture of oral societies. A mythology is a system of mythical stories which, taken together, elaborate the religious or metaphysical beliefs of the society."³ Myths are important in functioning as building blocks of the nation, more precisely they "shape the way we see the world, how we think of ourselves, where we look for origins and purpose, including national origins and purpose." Finally, "every great culture has had a myth to concretize its goals and give it momentum."

The core myth of America can be considered the 'American Dream' or the 'Dream of Success'; to wit, the belief that every man, through the power of his will and determination, can achieve material prosperity in his life regardless of his origins and environment. Myths that are closely connected with the 'Dream of Success', or in some ways make its fiber, are the myths of the frontier and the westward movement, and also the myth of a self-made person.