A

Mythological Motifs
Nature of the Creator

Motif A10

Although the precise nature and characteristics of the creator deity may differ from one culture to another, specific archetypal qualities of the creator can be discerned.

The creator often integrates opposites and contraries into one unity, being simultaneously male and female, visible and invisible, first and last, creator and destroyer, very near and very remote. In various creation myths, the creator is depicted as a hermaphroditic deity. The creator is half man and half woman or is thought of as both male and female (Motif A12, “Hermaphroditic creator”). In ancient Egyptian texts, Atum was portrayed as a bisexual god and was sometimes called the “Great He-She.” He was alone in the world and had to produce offspring without a mate (Irons 1968, 26). “God of double sex carries within him seed of gods” (Motif A111.3.0.1). In Genesis (1:27), God created “in his own image,” “male and female,” before Eve was created from Adam’s body. As Freeman (1988, 52) indicates, well-known versions of the creation from Greek mythology also represent an androgynous deity in the union of Father Sky and Mother Earth or Father-Mother God. As shown in Hindu mythology, before the existence of husband and wife there was a being incorporating masculine and feminine features together. Hindu documents known as Upanishads, dating back to 800 BCE, state that in the beginning there was “Self” alone, in the shape of a person (purusha). He was as large as man and wife together. He looked around and saw nothing but his Self. Because he felt no delight, he wished for a second. “He then made his Self to fall in two and thence arose husband and wife” (Watts 1963, 83). In another version of Hindu mythology, Brahma the Creator and Shiva the Destroyer are
“synthesized” in Vishnu the Preserver. But he, too, is of double aspect, male and female (Watts 1963, 88, 101). However, this does not negate other archetypes of deity found in different cultures or myths in which the deity is depicted either as a male, implying fatherhood, masculinity, and aggressiveness, or as a female, implying motherhood, tenderness, and nurturing.

The deity is self-created (A118) and the first being in existence prior to any other entity. The creator is tired of solitude and therefore inaugurates the creation (A73). Creation myth is intended to show that one objective of creative action is to bring into being humans or entities that can mirror basic features or qualities of the creator. It is said that we are created in the image of God. In this context, there is a resemblance between the creator and the created.

The creator is involved in such activities as creating, healing, redeeming, nurturing, and governing. The giver of life creates the universe and other beings through his love, mercy, and reasoning. Reason “has to do with finding the ground of being and the fundamental structuring of the order of the universe” (Campbell with Moyers 1988, 29). Various interpretations of Islamic tradition, for instance, refer to the perfected order of nature as a “sign,” or paradigm for the adoration due the creator (el-Aswad 1994, 2002; Burkhalter 1985). Archetypal examples of creators known for their wisdom are the Egyptian god Ptah, the Persian god Ahura Mazda, and the Hindu god Brahma. However, the creator is not just theoretically wise but is also practical and involved in the actual practices of creation. The creator is conceived of as a handyman, fashioner, molder, or maker. The Egyptian god Ptah, also known as the Divine Artificer, was depicted as a skilled engineer, stonemason, and metalworker. He was also patron of the fine arts (Ions 1968).

The creator is able to emanate himself from a single principle or idea. Because the creator deity exists prior to his creation of the world, his actions seem arbitrary and beyond human understanding. The creator is distinguished by his well-determined will or volition. For instance, Atum was depicted as the “complete one” and “Universal God” because he created himself out of water by his own effort or will (Ions 1968, 40). In order to exercise his will on the universe, the creator must be omnipotent. The universe itself expresses the power, freedom, and wisdom of the creator. After the completion of his creative act, the deity often deserts his creatures and does not concern himself with them except in critical times of calamity.

The creator from above (A21) or the supreme god as creator (A101.1) is associated with sacred space, namely the sky or heaven, which symbolizes might, remoteness, height, and perfection. The “most high” spontaneously becomes an attribute of divinity. However, the creator goes beyond mere identification with the sky because he has created the entire cosmos. Many of the supreme gods of traditional peoples are called by names designating height,
the celestial vault, or meteorological phenomena. The supreme divinity of the Maori, for example, is named Tuhoe, meaning elevated or up high. The supreme god of the Apsos Negros, Wotolotu, also signifies what is high or in the upper regions. To the Kachaw of Micronesian society, the creator is known simply as the Owner or Dweller of the Sky (Goodenough 1986), and to the Ainu, he is known as the Divine Chief of the Sky, the Sky God, and the Divine Creator of the World (Eliade 1959, 118–120). Among the Dinka, the divinity is "in the above" though that place is distinct from the "physical" sky (Lienhardt 1961, 32). These attributes, however, are not necessarily related to the idea of the creator as a supernatural being. Though the word "nhialic" among the Dinka, for example, connotes a personal and masculine reference to God, it is not identical with the concept of God as supernatural being as used in Western culture. Rather, it refers to "Creator," "God the creator," "God (my) father," "Being," a personal "Supreme Being," "Power," and "Divinity" devoid of supernatural implications (Lienhardt 1961, 28–31). Anthropomorphism renders the creator human, and not solely a supernatural being. In Egyptian creation myth, Ptah was represented as a living man wearing horns, a solar disk, and plumes (Ions 1968, 106). Also, the high gods of Babylon "were conceived to be human in their bodily shape, human in their passions, and human in their fate; for like men they were born into the world, and like men they loved and fought and died" (Prager 1951, 309).

In other creation myths, however, god is invisible (Motif A11, Motif A102.9). In ancient Egyptian creation mythology, especially Theban cosmogony, the god Amon was associated with air as an invisible, dynamic force. He was identified with the power of the supreme and invisible creator (Ions 1968, 37). However, being an "immortal archetype," god has been associated with "archetypal light" (Jung 1990, 3). Among the Desana of the Tukano Indians (in the Colombian Northwest Amazon), the Sun Creator is not the sun that illuminates the earth, but rather a creative principle that, although continuing in existence, is invisible and can be known only by the beneficial influence that emanates from it. The Sun Creator sent the visible sun that people see in the sky as his eternal representative. It is through this sun that the Creator Sun exercises his power, giving his creation light, heat, protection and, above all, fertility (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971, 41–42). Among the Dakota Indians, the creator, Wakanda, is the omnipresent, invisible life force represented in seven divine names: the Above, the Below, Darkness, Sun, Moon, Morning Star, and Thunder (Underhill 1965, 202).

The archetype of the "One" or the "All" represents a perfect state of being that contains the opposites and which is therefore self-sufficient, content, and independent (Freeman 1988, 50). In various creation myths, the creator is depicted as being the first and the last as well as the creator and destroyer without any sense of contradiction. In Hindu myths, Krishna says, "I am the self existing in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of the beings" (Watts 1963, 79). The ten-armed Shiva (Motif A123,5.1), the Destroyer, is simply the opposite face of Brahma, the Creator. In Islamic tradition, Allah "is the First and the Last, and the Visible and Invisible" (Qur'an 57:3). About himself, allah says that he was a hidden treasure and desired to be known; therefore he created the creation in order to be known (Chittick 1989, 67; Maclagan 1977, 23).

The creator deity combines the attributes of visibility and invisibility simultaneously. However, his invisibility is more significant than his visibility. In ancient Egyptian creation myth, the sun god Ra was both visible and invisible. Although the sun emerged from the chaos, its original form was invisible and not known. It came into being out of itself. The unique deity, however, was not the visible sun, although it was omnipresent and the entire earth lived, rejoiced, and flourished in its light (el-Awad 1997, 70–80; Sourouzian 1987, 28–29). Degrees of visibility as well as of light and heat were connected to the movements of the sun, whose different names and forms reflected that spectrum. Atum meant the sun in the evening twilight or "he who is not" during the night. Khefren meant "he who becomes," describing an aspect of the rising sun. The name Khefren is related to the verb khefer, meaning "to come into being," as well as to the noun khepera, which refers to the scarab beetle. The name Ra meant the sun reigning in the zenith (Moret 1972, 370). Moreover, the god Ra manifested himself in multiple visible forms, symbols, and archetypal images. He appeared as "a falcon or a ram or in anthropomorphic form with the falcon’s or a ram’s head, and so forth. These are all merely visible effigies, conceived as hieroglyphs, intended to allow recognition throughout his numerous characteristics and attributes" (Sourouzian 1987, 26).

Elite Literature

The archetype of the creator, god or human, is reflected in numerous forms of literature in different periods of time. In most mythological and religious literature, the nature of the divinity is mirrored in the creatures. In Genesis, Adam and Eve, the progenitors of all humankind, are created by God in his own image. Thus, man is defined as fundamentally a (created) creator and maker, as Sir Philip Sidney recognized in his essay A Defense of Poetry and as John Milton portrayed in the poem Paradise Lost (Berman 1981). The story of Eve being created from Adam’s rib is obviously one of Blake’s sources for the Los-Enitharmon episode (Cantor 1984, 49). In the Book of Urizen and within his understanding of the Bible’s "In the beginning was
the Word," Blake depicted Urizen as a creator whose creative activities began when he first uttered words and named things (Cantor 1984, 38).

Man's sense of self-fulfillment is thus inextricably bound up with being true to his "creatoress," which is his God-given nature. As "human creator" (Motif A15), man shares and participates in creating the world (Foster 1988, 177). In Frankenstein, a novel Mary Shelley wrote in 1818, Victor Frankenstein, a young German student of philosophy, desires to be a creator of life. This young man realizes that he himself is the creator as well as the center of his own universe. He does God's work in creating a man, but has the devil's motives: pride and the will to power (Cantor 1984, 105; Foster 1988, 183). Thus the creation is truly made in the image of his creator. Frankenstein and the monster are mirror images of each other. They are the same being, viewed in different aspects, as creator and as creature (Cantor 1984, 106).

el-Sayed el-Aswad

REFERENCES

The Hero Cycle

Various Motifs in A

The essential parts of the hero cycle center around the three main rites of passage: birth, initiation, and death (Raglan 1965; van Gennep 1960). The culture hero’s story begins with his miraculous or in some other way unusual birth; he may be the offspring of a god, a man who is not his mother’s husband, a virgin mother, or a brother-sixter or other incestuous pair. He is usually then abandoned or an attempt may be made on his life. His story typically picks up again after he reaches puberty, at which time a sign or event marks him as special and destined for greatness. The culture hero then undertakes a series of adventures, quests, and/or tests during which he may slay monsters or search for something of value. His death, like his birth, is cloaked in mysterious circumstances, often involving a heroic death or his own sacrifice. The culture hero may then make a journey to the underworld, and a suggestion that he will one day return to his people often lingers (Burrows, Lapides, and Shawcross 1973; Demaille and Demaille 1987; Raglan 1965).

Burrows, Lapides, and Shawcross (1973) note that the hero quest is “ultimately the activity of finding the Self, to unite the conscious with the unconscious . . . [and is] the goal of the hero” (460). In archetypal theory, the adventures of the hero represent the overcoming of unconscious desires, often manifested in various creatures and objects (Burrows, Lapides, and Shawcross 1973). A hero’s descent into the netherworld also represents an important step in his development. Afterward, he often returns to the world of the living. Charlotte Spivack discusses the Jungian implications of this journey: “By psychological extension the descent to the underworld may also be construed as a descent to the dark realm of the unconscious” (1988, 363).

UNIVERSAL PATTERNS

Scholars have tried to devise the quintessential list that would account for the major points of the hero pattern. Otto Rank’s The Myths of the Birth of the Hero (1959), Lord Raglan’s The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama (1956), and Joseph Campbell’s The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1956) provide several such examples. Raglan’s “The Hero of Tradition” sets out twenty-two points of the hero cycle:

1. His mother is a royal virgin.
2. His father is a king, and
3. Often a near relative of his mother, but
4. The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and
5. He is also reputed to be the son of a god.
6. At birth an attempt is made, often by his father, to kill him, but
7. He is spirited away, and
8. Reared by foster parents in a far country.
9. We are told nothing of his childhood, but
10. On reaching manhood he returns or goes to his future kingdom.
11. After a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast,
12. He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
14. For a time he reigns uneventfully, and
15. Prescribes laws, but
16. Later he loses favor with the gods and/or his subjects, and
17. Is driven from the throne and city.
18. He meets with a mysterious death.
19. Often at the top of a hill.
20. His children, if any, do not succeed him.
21. His body is not buried, but nevertheless
22. He has one or more holy sepulchers. (Raglan 1965, 145)

According to this scheme, then, a number of mythical, legendary, and historical figures can be scored. For example, Oedipus receives twenty points, Hercules receives seventeen points, Moses receives twenty-one points, and King Arthur receives sixteen points (Aarne and Thompson 1987). Dundes (1980) applied the “hero pattern” to the story of Jesus Christ and found he scored seventeen points.

The unusual circumstances of the culture hero’s birth can take many forms. He may be the son of a god (A512.3), like Hercules in Greek myth and Jesus in Christianity, or of the creator (A512.2), as in South American tales of the Guaraní. His mother may be a virgin (A511.1.3; A511.1.3.3), as in Roman Catholic and Buddhist tradition. This miraculous conception motif may extend
the hero cycle is, at its core, really the story of a culture hero’s transition through the rites of passage, then we can understand that “the story of the hero of tradition . . . is the story of his ritual progress” (Raglan 1965, 152). In Native American myth and legend, the hero’s short childhood—he often grows up in just a few days—is a widespread concept (this is related to Motif A527.1, “Culture hero precocious”). The truncated childhood of the hero means that little is narrated about the boyhood period—which links the Native American hero cycle to that of Indo-European/Semitic tradition (Thompson 1977).

Once he comes of age, then, the hero sets out on his adventures—in search of something or committed to overcoming a threat to his people. In the ancient Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh (circa 2000 BCE) the hero, accompanied by his faithful companion Enkidu, slays a monster and, after his companion is killed, embarks on an ill-fated quest for immortality. The Arthurian cycle (including Wolfram von Eschenbach’s Parzival, thirteenth century) set the pattern for medieval romances about “knight errant” (although Daemmrich and Daemmrich [1987] dates the appearance of the quest for the Holy Grail and the adventures of Sir Lancelot and the other knights of the Round Table to Thomas Malory’s 1485 work Morte d’Arthur).

An element of many hero cycle stories is the temptation of the hero by the personification of evil. Here it is an external monster that needs to be slain; rather, the hero must spiritually overcome an adversary and thus establish his moral claim to greatness. These temptations, to some extent, revolve around similar themes: worldly power and escape from hunger, to name two (Conway 1881). In Buddhism, for example, Mara, the personification of evil, tempts the Buddha to give up his quest for enlightenment (Carus 1969), while Christ is tempted by Satan to accept his gift of worldly power in exchange for naying homage to him.

QUEST FOR THE FATHER

One widespread theme in the hero’s adventures is the father quest. Peter Barta describes the three possible forms the search for the father may take: the son does not know his father but has a token making him recognizable to his father; the son and the father fight—but they do not know each other when they begin the fight; the son is raised away from his father but is drawn to him because he is rejected by those around him (Barta 1988). Ancient Greek epic uses the theme of the father-quest with some frequency, including the incident of an often fatal battle between father and son, most famously Oedipus’s unwitting murder of his own father in a fight. In the European Märchen, it is the hero’s departure from his natal home “to seek his fortune” in the wider world that often sets the tale in motion. Seen in this way, the magic tale is an elaboration

rites of passage

The culture hero’s story frequently omits much mention of the rest of his childhood until he reaches adolescence. Arthurian legend picks up when the hero removes the sword from the stone; Jesus does not appear in public after his birth until his encounter with the wise men at the temple at the age of twelve. As Raglan put it so memorably decades ago, “The most surprising things happen to our hero at birth; the most surprising things happen to him as soon as he reaches manhood, but in the meanwhile nothing happens to him at all” (1965, 152). What to make of this strange omission? If we consider that

back a generation or two (in Roman Catholic hagiography, Saint Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, is said to have been barren and conceived only after fervent prayer). Such elaborations bolster the extraordinary pedigree of a culture hero. When the conception involves rape, incest, trickery, or magic, “[t]he underlying implication may be that the abnormality of the act and the overwhelming passion which inspires it create or liberate a powerful magic force with which the hero is imbued and which drives him to transcend normal human limitations” (Cawdrey 1982, 239). Thompson traces the hero cycle in Native American mythology and legend, noting that the motif of the hero’s miraculous birth is found over most of the continent, but involves different circumstances. For example, in the Southwest the hero is conceived through rain falling on his mother, while the theme of a pregnancy resulting from consuming something is spread among most other tribes (Thompson 1977).

The cycle usually continues at this point with the abandonment (A511.2.1, “Abandonment of culture hero at birth”) or attempted elimination of the hero (A511.2.3, “Culture hero hidden in order to escape enemies”). This may be accomplished in a number of ways. In the Old Testament, Moses is set afloat in a basket in order to escape massacre; this ruse leads to his adoption and upbringing by foster parents (A511.3.1, “Culture hero reared in seclusion”). Oedipus is abandoned by his father in an attempt to escape fulfillment of an oracle. The stories of Krishna (an incarnation of Vishnu) and Jesus both include an evil figure who orders the massacre of innocent children in order to destroy the hero as a babe (Krishna is threatened by Kansa, Jesus by Herod). Similarly, some African myths make fairly clear the father’s anxiety over being overthrown by his own son. In an Azande tale, the father uses magic to eliminate an incestuous son (Kluckhohn 1965). In the realm of Märchen, in Type 410, Sleeping Beauty, the heroine is cared for by foster parents in order to avert a prophecy foretelling her lapse into a death-like sleep (Aarne and Thompson 1987).
of the middle part of the hero cycle—a recounting of the adventures and quests that led to his rise to prominence. Type 300, The Dragon Slayer, for example, is a prototypical story of the hero’s quest (and strikingly similar to the story of Perseus) (Aarne and Thompson 1987; Dundes 1980, 1968).

Outside of the Indo-European-Semitic tradition, the hero’s adventures also play an important part in the hero cycle. For instance, Thompson (1977) discusses Manabozho, the culture hero of the Central Woodland Native Americans. As part of the myth, Manabozho dives for earth in floodwaters (A812, “Earth Diver”), but, unlike other creation myths, this activity is one of the culture hero’s many adventures rather than a central creation act. Much of Manabozho’s story concerns two common culture hero activities: vanishing monsters (A531, “Culture hero (demigod) overcomes monsters”) and bringing culture to the people (A541, “Culture hero teaches arts and crafts”). Klaucke (1965) notes that the “slaying of monsters” theme appears in thirty-seven out of the fifty cultures he studied: “here the distribution approaches equality save for a slightly greater frequency in North America and the Insular Pacific. . . . Thus in Bantu Africa (and beyond) a hero is born to a woman who survives after a monster has eaten her spouse (and everyone else). The son immediately turns into a man, slays a monster or monsters, restores his people—but not his father—and becomes chief” (163).

DESCENT INTO THE UNDERWORLD

Death, descent into the underworld, and resurrection are widespread in the world’s tale traditions (Zolla 1981). A few examples are given below.

In Sumerian and Babylonian myth the goddess Inanna/Ishhtar ventures to the underworld to see her lover Dumuzi/Tammuz. The great Greek hero Odysseus must go to the land of the dead in order to learn the predictions of the prophet Tiresias, recounted in Book Eleven of the Odyssey. Aeneas in Virgil’s Aeneid visits the land of the dead to hear the prophecies of the Sibyl, who tells him to take the golden bough from a particular tree so that he can communicate with his dead father and thus succeed in his perilous journey (Spivack 1988). The Norse hero Vainamoinen journeys to the underworld of Tuonela in order to learn a magic formula. In the Catholic tradition, the Apostle’s Creed states that Christ “suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell; the third day he rose again from the dead.” During this “harrowing of hell” Jesus is believed to have freed the souls held captive in the afterworld.

Dante’s Divine Comedy (c. 1320) contains a famous descent into hell in the first book, the Inferno, timed “to parallel Jesus’ harrowing expedition between Good Friday and Easter Sunday” (Spivack 1988, 367). With the shade of Virgil as his guide, the poet explores the nine circles of hell. “Dante begins his journey at age thirty-five, the mid-point of his life, when he suddenly finds himself lost in a dark wood” (Spivack 1988, 367). Modern readings of this work as well as more ancient depictions of underworld journeys stress the inward journey that they symbolize. Spivack remarks that “the descent into hell is a necessary stage not only for the hero but for everyone’s psychological and spiritual development” (1988, 368) and Campbell states that “the really creative acts are represented as those deriving from some sort of dying to the world” (1968, 35).

THE HERO’S RETURN

The hero cycle motif of the expected return of the hero has most notably entered the realm of written literature in the Arthurian legends, where it is prophesied that the king will once again return to help his people (A580, “Culture hero’s (divinity’s) expected return”). Similarly, in Christianity and Hinduism, Jesus Christ and Vishnu, respectively, are expected to return one day to reward the good and punish the bad (Carus 1969). In addition, Thompson notes that the theme of the hero leaving for the west, as well as the hero’s anticipated return, is also found in many areas of North America (1977).

In a provocative study titled Caster and the Epic of Defeat (1974), Bruce Rosenberg demonstrates the recurrence of the hero pattern in popular and literary narrative over many centuries, focusing particularly on the theme of heroic defeat. Elsewhere he writes:

All of these distributional and integrative elements occur repeatedly because of the way our culture has decided, collectively, over several millennia, that certain stories must be told. If a warrior is to be heroic and held in esteem he cannot have led a larger force to its defeat at the hands of a small but skillfully superior enemy. And so on; all the elements in this narrative type reflect the way our culture believes that heroes are defeated and the way their defeat must be related—if they are to be considered heroes. (1991, 247)

The hero cycle thus tells the life history of an extraordinary person who is marked for greatness at birth, accomplishes significant deeds, and yet dies a mysterious death. Scholars have debated whether the discovery of this “hero pattern” effectively disproves the historicity of its subject. Today, most scholars versed in folklore theory realize that the existence of formulaic elements in a narrative neither proves nor disproves the actual existence of an individual; rather, they frame the story of a hero in such a way that tellers and listeners can appreciate, figuratively and allegorically, the esteem in which he is held.
For an excellent discussion of the hero cycle, see Archer Taylor’s (1964) classic “The Biographical Pattern in Traditional Narrative.”

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See also: Death or Departure of the Gods and Return.

REFERENCES


Death or Departure of the Gods

Motif A192, and Return, Motif A193

In The Golden Bough (1914), Sir James Frazer observes that because people have created gods in their own likeness, the issue of mortality has been a central concern in mythology. Many of the gods in world mythologies are immortal, but some die or go away.

The dying god motif (A192) figures prominently in Norse mythology. After the gentle and sweet-natured god Balder has a disquieting dream, his mother, the goddess Frigg, exacts an oath from all living and nonliving things that they will never harm her son. Only the mistletoe does not swear, for Frigg thinks it too small and insignificant (McLeish 1996, 83). Balder’s supposed invulnerability is the source of great amusement among the Aesir gods, who, believing that no harm can befall him, hurl axes and spears at him for sport. The mischief maker Loki, however, gives Balder’s blind half brother Hodr a sprig of mistletoe to throw and Balder is slain by it (Lindow 2001, 66). The other gods light a great pyre on a ship on which they lay Balder’s body (Littleton 2002, 319). As the ship sails out to sea (A192.2.2, “Divinity departs in boat over sea”), it is engulfed in flames (A192.2.4, “Divinity departs in column of flame”). Racked by grief, Odin, chief of the Aesir family of gods, instructs the messenger Hermod to seek Balder’s release from Hel’s kingdom of the dead. Hel is willing to comply with Odin’s request only if all living things shed tears of sorrow for Balder (Jordan 1993, 103). Everyone complies except a giantess (Loki in disguise), and Balder remains in Hel’s kingdom.

The death of Balder leads directly to what the poetic Edda calls ragna rok, the “fate or doom of the gods,” which is a central incident in the larger Teutonic myth of the destruction of the world (MacCulloch 1964, 336–337). Dramatizing the destruction variously by an all-consuming fire, by a mighty winter,
and by the world itself sinking into the sea, the Voluspa shows that “as the gods are not eternal, a parte ante, so their life at last comes to an end” (A196.1, “Fate controls gods”) (MacCulloch 1964, 337). Although Odin and Thor and many other gods are all killed, their sons survive and “the end of the world contained the germ of a new beginning” (Littleton 2002, 325).

In the Aztec mythology of Central America, Quetzalcoatl is the god of the spirit of life, “teacher of the arts, originator of the calendar, and the giver of maize” (Campbell 1973, 358). As monarch of the ancient city of Tollan, he is the helper and benefactor of humanity and is permanently at war with Tezcatlipoca, the god of darkness and sorcery (McLeish 1996, 511). Using trickery to defeat Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca tempts him into carnality and drunkenness and then shows him his own reflection in a mirror. Horrified at the sensual image that he sees, Quetzalcoatl buries his treasures, burns his palace, and abandons the city of Tollan (Cotterell 1997, 224). Dressing himself in his finest robes and wearing his insignia of feathers, he walks into the flames of a funeral pyre at the seashore. At his immolation, a flock of birds arise from his ashes and fly toward the sun (McLeish 1996, 511). Some say his soul (Campbell 1973, 359) and others his heart (Jobes 1961, 1313; Littleton 2002, 560) ascends to heaven (A192.2.1, “Deity departs for heaven (skies)”) and becomes the morning star. According to another tradition, after Quetzalcoatl arrives at the sea, he sails eastward on a raft of serpents (A192.2.2, “Divinity departs in boat over sea”).

In Hawaiian mythology, deities die or depart in a variety of imaginative ways. Most of the Pahuu gods of sorcery on the island of Lanai are killed by the prophet Laniakaua and the rest are banished (Beckwith 1970, 110). Some deities depart for heaven or the skies (A192.2.1, “Deity departs for heaven (skies)”).

Oa-tabou-te- ra’i, child of the war god Oro and the beautiful mortal Waikamati, becomes a great chief, and at his death he ascends to the heavens (Beckwith 1970, 38). His father had previously left the earth in a column of flame (A192.2.4). Kane, who is the leading deity among the Hawaiians and who is responsible for the creation of man and woman, lives on earth with his creatures. After humans break his laws, they become subject to death, and Kane ascends to heaven to live (Beckwith 1970, 42–43). Hina, the goddess of darkness and death, comes from the heavens to be the wife of an industrious Maui chief. Weary of laboring over her children, however, she leaps to the moon (A192.2.1.1, “Deity departs for moon”). Her husband leaps to catch her, but her leg breaks off in his hand, and there she hangs in the moon to this day. A variant of the Hina tradition holds that she “started by the rainbow path to the sun, but, finding it too warm, she climbed instead to the moon” (Beckwith 1970, 241–242, 221).

For other Hawaiian gods, departure from this world is by boat over the sea (A192.2.2). The keeper of the god Kaili, for instance, makes a canoe and places Kaili in it, together with food, kava, and tapa cloth. After weeping over the god, the keeper sets Kaili adrift on the ocean, and by the mana of the god the canoe sails onward and is never seen again (Beckwith 1970, 29). Similarly, the god Lono—who descends from heaven on a rainbow, marries the beautiful Ka-iki-ani, and then beats her to death for suspected infidelity—builds a canoe “such as mortal eyes have never seen since” and sails forth alone with a promise to the people that some day he will return in another form (Beckwith 1970, 37).

In the form of a handsome man, the pig god Kamapua’a woos Pele, the goddess of fire (Cotterell 1997, 276). Pele at first refuses his advances, calling him “a pig and the son of a pig” (Beckwith 1970, 205), although the two ultimately have a child, who is the ancestor of the chiefs and commoners of Hawaii. Kamapua’a leaves Hawaii and draws up a new home from the ocean depths (A192.2.3, “Divinity departs to submarine home”), where he establishes a family.

In Japanese mythology, Izanami, sister-wife of the god Izanagi, creates the lesser deities and the natural world, including the Japanese islands (Carlyon 1981, 105). But Izanami dies of a terrible fever in giving birth to the god of fire. She descends to yomeitsu-kuni, the land of gloom (Cotterell 1997, 116; Leeming 1997, 345). There Izanagi follows in order to retrieve her (F81.1, “Orpheus. Journey to land of dead to bring back person from the dead”), but he flees in horror at the appearance of her decomposition.

DYING AND RISING GODS

Some gods who die return to life (A193, “Resurrection of gods”), and this motif is often associated with rituals celebrating the life cycle of vegetation. Frazer was the first modern scholar to write about the dying and rising god in the ancient world: “[u]nder the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially of vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead” (quoted in Mettenger 2001, 18). The dying and rising god has been debated in the scholarly literature throughout the twentieth century (for a summary, see Mettenger 2001, 15–39). By the end of the century, the consensus was that most of the gods identified as dying and rising died, but there was no return or resurrection. In his 1987 article on mystery religions, for example, Kurt Rudolph claims that the oft-made connection between the mystery religions and the idea of dying and rising divinities is defective. However, in 2001 Tryggve Mettenger affirms that many of
the gods of the mystery religions die (often violently), descend to the underworld, are lamented and retrieved by a woman (usually a fertility or earth goddess), and are restored to life, for at least part of each year. Reviewing the critical literature along with primary sources and some important material that was not seen until recently, Mettinger concludes, "The world of ancient Near Eastern religions actually knew a number of deities that may be properly described as dying and rising" (217), although he adds that "One should not hypostatize these gods into a specific type 'the dying and rising god.' On the contrary, the gods mentioned are of very different types, although we have found tendencies to association and syncretism" (218).

Mystery Religions

Beginning about three thousand years ago and lasting into the early days of Christianity in the Mediterranean world, there were a number of mystery religions, so-called because devotees had to be initiated and were sworn to secrecy not to divulge the rites (C423.5, "Tabu: revealing sacred mysteries"). Many of these mystery religions seem to have been based on indigenous fertility festivals and involved the gods mentioned by Frazer (above) as well as others, such as Cybele, Dionysus, Orpheus, Mithra, and Demeter and Persephone. Rudolf says that the mysteries may have been concerned with themes of loss, search, and recovery, (apparent) death and return to life, the passing of tests, and transformations (1987, 237). A few stories about these gods are given below.

The best-known deities connected with mystery religions in Greece were Demeter and Persephone, who were worshipped in the yearly rituals at Eleusis. We know comparatively more detail about the Eleusinian mysteries than others. The ritual is bound up with the myth of the abduction of Persephone by the god of the underworld. Persephone, daughter of Demeter, Greek goddess of the earth and crops, is picking flowers one day when the god of the underworld arises, grabs her, and takes her down to Hades as the earth closes in behind them. Demeter searches for her daughter and in her grief allows the crops to die, and only when Zeus compels Hades to release Persephone for part of each year does Demeter allow the earth to bloom again. About the annual rituals held at Eleusis, one scholar says, "whatever went on at Eleusis dealt with the mystery of life and regeneration as well as with the impenetrable secret of death and the hope for some ray of light in the tenebrous underworld" (Athanasakis 1976, 73).

In ancient Egyptian mythology, Osiris is king and judge of the dead and lord of the flood and vegetation, identified with the rising and falling of the Nile (Cotterell 1997, 40). He is believed to be the wise pharaoh who showed the Egyptians how to use grain for bread. His civilizing reign as pharaoh is brought to an end by his jealous brother Seth, who announces at a festive banquet that he will give a jeweled golden sarcophagus to whoever fits perfectly in it (Leeming 1997, 241). As soon as Osiris lies in it, Seth closes and seals the coffin shut and has it thrown into the Nile, from which it is carried out to sea and then to the Phoenician shore, where a tamarisk tree springs up around it. When Seth learns of the attempt to revive Osiris by the god’s sister and consort Isis, Seth cuts the corpse of Osiris into pieces and disperses them throughout Egypt. The scattering of his body was allegorized later with the winnowing and scattering of grain in the fields (Jordan 1993, 196). Isis carefully reassembles all the pieces of Osiris’s body and revives him long enough to conceive the child Horus. Annually, Osiris is reincarnated in the sacred black bull Apis, but he always returns to the underworld after the growing season (Jobes 1961, 109). The cult of Isis spread to Greece and then to Rome, becoming "one of the most widely disseminated Oriental religions of late antiquity, especially from the second century BCE on" (Rudolph 1987, 235).

Dionysus, god of wine, son of Zeus and the Thban princess Semele, was also not among the deathless Olympian gods (Hamilton 1942, 64). Although different versions of the Dionysus myth exist, he is believed to have died a violent death and to have been resurrected in the annual renewal of the grapes of the vine. The rites associated with his cult were ecstatic and sexual.

Dumuzi/Tammuz was originally a god of shepherding, but "eventually he developed links with gods of vegetation (Ningishzida, Damu) and was presumably a god of vegetation from the Late Bronze Age on" (Mettinger 2001, 218). In the Sumerian myth about him, Inanna/Ishtar (ca. 2000 BCE), Dumuzi is chosen to spend half the year in the underworld, alternating with his sister, Geshinanna. "The concept of the alternation of the two deities in the Netherworld was to a large degree based upon the alternation of the barley and wine-growing seasons: Dumuzi embodied the grain, Geshinanna the vine" (Mettinger 2001, 190). Mettinger finds possible proof that there was ritual activity connected with Dumuzi in a recently discovered letter written by one Yamnite king to another, in which he compares his own difficult circumstances to those of Dumuzi: having escaped death during an uprising, he writes, "Why, now, [am I not] like Dumuzi? They kill him . . . he always comes back to the temple" (201).

HEROES

It is not only gods that people have been loath to let die; one of the distinguishing characteristics of the hero is that he can make the journey to the land
of the dead and return (A580, “Culture hero’s (divinity’s) expected return. Divinity or hero is expected to return at the proper time and rescue his people from their misfortunes”). For example, the Northeastern Woodland Native American groups tell stories of their hero, Glouoscap, who leaves for the west and goes to another world, preparing for “the great battle” on the final day (Thompson 1977, 306). The Central Woodland culture hero Manabozho, after taming monsters (A531) and bringing culture to his people (A541), eventually leaves for the west (A561, “Divinity’s departure for west”), but “there is sometimes a hint that he may eventually return” (Thompson 1977, 308).

In Britain, the earliest writings about King Arthur—Gildas’s Liber quernius de excidio Britanniae (The ruin of Britain)—date to before 547 CE, and Loomis says that belief in Arthur’s survival began by 1113 (1799, 64). Geoffrey of Monmouth’s famous Historia Regum Britanniae (History of the Kings of Britain, ca. 1136) drew on many sources, some now lost. He wrote that after the battle of Camlan, “the renowned king Arthur was mortally wounded and was borne thence to the Isle of Avalon for his wounds to be healed” (Barber 1972, 125). (E481.4.1, “Avalon, Happy otherworld where dead are healed”; A571.2, “Culture hero still alive on mysterious island”). Even when the grave of Arthur was supposedly identified around 1190, the idea of his return persisted; Malory wrote in the fifteenth century, “And many men say that there ys written upon the tumbe thus: hic lacet Arthuras, rex quondam rexque futurus (Here lies Arthur, once king, who shall be king again)” (Barber 1972, 133). Barber notes that the idea of the returning hero is common in the medieval world and that there were legends to that effect about Charlemagne and Frederick Barbarossa (1972, 122).

The motif of the dying god is a powerful one that continues to resonate to this day. In her study Dying Gods in Twentieth-Century Fiction (1990), K.J. Phillips describes its use by modern writers:

> The dying gods have to be reckoned a major modern motif. In fact, most of the principal modernists know and elaborately adapt the stories of these gods... including Conrad, Kafka, Forster, Lawrence, Hemingway, Woolf, Faulkner, Mann, and Welty. Even after the modernists, when the first flush of enthusiasm for Frazer had faded, allusions to dying deities do not slacken off. Authors after 1950 are as steeped in such myths as their elders: Beckett, O’Connor, Bellow, Malamud, García Márquez, Konwicki, and Oates. (14–15)  

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Creation Myth: Cosmogony and Cosmology

Motifs A600–A899

As a primordial archetype, the myth of creation explains the origin of the universe, describing how the world and its animate and inanimate entities were created, and visible and invisible forces brought into being. It provides explanations of the total cosmos, including the primal order of the heavens and the earth, the entities therein, and the origins and hierarchies of human beings and their gods. As such, it concerns the "establishment of natural order" (A1100–A1199) and "ordering of human life" (A1200–A1699). Being a prototype, creation myth establishes an exemplary model of human experience. In brief, creation myth is a symbolic and sacred narrative concerning the origin of the world as conceptually constructed by a particular community or group of people.

The myriad number of creation myths can be understood by concentrating on some of their basic commonalities that can be defined as "motifs" or "universal images that have existed since the remotest times" (Jung 1990, 3). Simultaneously, various themes can be found in one creation myth. These themes are concerned not only with the origin of the universe and the means by which it was created, but also with the dominant cultural paradigms and archetypal images found among different groups of people in widely dispersed places and times (Stephens 1983).

Creation myths accentuate patterns of transformation from nothingness to full existence, from chaos to order, from dark to light, and from meaninglessness to meaningfulness. These patterns of creation become possible through elements such as the thought, volition, and action of the creator. A significant aspect of the term archetype designates the God-image in man (Jung 1990, 3).

Though worlds in creation myths are depicted as having different qualities from those of the ordinary world, divine modes of creative acts are strikingly comparable to those of human beings and include fashioning, molding, carving, weaving, earth-diving, and uttering or speaking among the means of creation (A640, "Other means of creating the universe"). For example, in some versions of ancient Egyptian myths, the creator Khnum is depicted as a potter who creates men from clay and dresses them on a potter’s wheel (Irons 1968, 38).

One of the dominant themes in creation myth is the establishment of order in the face of an overwhelming threat of chaos and fatal disruption. In contrast to a primordial universe consisting of some undifferentiated matter, nearly all of the great creation myths share a pattern in which the ordered universe is either brought out of chaotic disorder or created from nothingness. Chaos "is the state in which everything is, but so undifferentiated that nothing can be manifest in particular; it is pure entropy, an even, indifferent distribution of energy" (Macalagan 1977, 14). According to the Heliopolitan cosmology based on the earliest Egyptian mythologies that go back to the Old Kingdom (2700 BCE), there existed Nun, the primordial ocean in which the germ cells of all things floated. Nun is unorganized chaos, nothingness, or a formless mass without structure. It is the creator Atum who conquers chaos through the creation of the universe. By effort of his will, Atum "stood up out of Nun and rose above the water; thereupon the Sun came into being, the Light was, and Atum, duplicated and made external to the primordial Water, took the name of Ra" (Moret 1972, 374). This divine creative act injects order into preexisting chaos. It is worth noting that after the creation is completed, all chaotic factors and negative forces retreat to the marginal zones of the ordered universe (Grimal 1992, 41). As the lord of the universe, Ra lives in the heavens and is responsible for maintaining order in all aspects of life. Each morning he is reborn in the east and travels across the sky in a boat called the Bark of Millions of Years, accompanied by a number of gods who act as his crew.

If Egyptian creation myth depicts chaos as a primal ocean containing the germ of all things, traditional Chinese creation myth represents it as an immense, formless cosmic egg encompassing all the elements of a featureless universe, intermingled and mixed together. According to the Chinese myth, P’an-ku, the Cosmic Man or first living entity, unfolds inside that chaotic cosmic egg and creates humans. He establishes order in the universe by separating opposing elements such as male and female, yang (sky) and yin (earth), light and dark, and dry and wet (Christie 1968, 43).

In Babylonian creation myth, chaos is perceived as an enemy to life and order. In an effort to establish order in the universe, Marduk destroys Tiamat, the primordial mother of the ocean, representing a liquid chaos, and divides her body into two cosmic halves: the sky and the earth (Ellade 1959, 54). In
Greek creation myths and their Roman counterparts, darkness and the featureless state of the universe constitutes the initial chaotic condition from which order emerges. In this void there is only the bird, Nyx, that lays a golden egg from which Eros, the god of love, is born. The shell splits into two halves; one half becomes the Sky or Uranus, and the other becomes Earth or Gaia. However, with the aid of Eros, the two halves are reunited (Stapleton 1978), establishing unity and order in the universe.

Creation myth shows how the universe is created by command of the creator (A611, “Fiat creation, Universe is created at command of creator”) and how the creator’s thought materializes (A612, “Creation: materialization of creator’s thinking, Creator thinks outward in space and thus produces the universe”) and is transformed into reality. This myth explains that the whole universe in some mythical and religious traditions is created by the verbal command of God: “Be!”—it became (A611.0.1, “Creator uses particular formula (letters) to create universe”). In the Bible we read, “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1). “Word” is the Greek logos or “reason,” signifying order in both man and universe (Foster 1988). We see further that the Arabic word al-kaun, “cosmos” or “universe,” is derived from the root k-a-n, which means “to be, to exist, to take place, to happen” (el-Aswad 2002, 165). It refers to the dynamic process of being and becoming as exclusively exercised by God, who “when He intends a thing, His command is, ‘Be,’ and it is!” (Qur’an 30:82). In ancient Egypt, the great God Ptah creates all creatures through his uttered thought or spoken word (Frankfort 1948, 20; Ions 1968, 34). Also, in some versions of ancient Egyptian creation myth, Atum, known also as Ra, creates himself out of Nun by an effort of thought or will as well as by uttering his own name. The secret of Ra’s power is derived from and depends on his hidden name (Sourouzian 1987, 26, el-Aswad 1997, 70–71). It is “the thought which came into the heart of a god and the commanding utterance which brought that thought into reality. This creation by thought conception and speech delivery has its experiential background in human life: the authority of a ruler to create by command” (Wilson 1946, 65).

Another theme found in several creation myths is that significant components of the universe are made of the bodily substance of the primordial being or creator. The Egyptian god Atum creates the world from his own substance through masturbation (Ions 1968, 26). However, in some versions of archaic Egyptian creation myths Ra, having no female or wife, creates out of himself a divine pair of offspring. One is male, called Shu (air), the lord of dryness, and the other is female, known as Tefnut, the goddess of humidity or moisture. Ra is called the “father of the gods” and of all other living creatures, which are thought to have grown from his sweat and tears (Ions 1968, 41). In the Persian creation myth, the first man is born from the sweat of the creator, Ahura Mazda. Meanwhile, in Babylonian creation myth, Marduk creates the cosmos from a fragment of Tiamat’s torn body and creates man “from the blood of the demon Kingu, to whom Tiamat had entrusted the Tablets of Destiny” (Eliade 1959, 55). Creation takes place in Hindu creation myth when a cosmic lotus emerges from the navel of Vishnu (A123.9). When the lotus blossoms, the creator Brahma appears from inside the lotus and carries on the creative process by fashioning a multitude of worlds, including the world in which we live (Kinsley 1982, 66). In Norse creation mythology, Ymir, the progenitor of the giants and the first being in the world, is killed by three creators, Oden, Vili, and Ve, who fashion the earth from his body, the sea from his blood, the mountains from his bones, and the heavens from his skull (Gabriel 1975, 275–278).

Chinese creation myth also indicates that the cosmos is created from the bodily parts or remains of a primordial being or deity. After his death, P’an-Ku’s body becomes the substance from which significant parts of the cosmos, including the sky and earth, are made. The sun and moon are made from his eyes, the wind from his breath, thunder from his voice, and rain from his sweat (von Franz 1968, 213–14; Maclagan 1977, 25). In some creation myths, parts of the universe are created not directly from the body of the primordial god, but rather from one of his descendants. In Maori creation mythology, Vatea and Tangaroa argue about the first-born of Papa’s children. To settle the dispute, Papa cuts the child into two halves and distributes them to the two gods. Vatea throws his portion to the heaven where it turns into the sun. Meanwhile, after keeping his part for a while, Tangaroa casts it to the sky, where it becomes the moon (Alpers 1966).

Some creation myths involve several levels or stages of creation, indicating the ceaseless processes of continuous creation of the universe through to the end of time. This means that the universe or parts of the cosmos are gradually created. The biblical narrative shows the order of creation as occurring successively in six days and describes the occurrences of each day. In both biblical and Islamic cosmogonies, God, after creating the heavens and some of its creatures, creates man or Adam from potter’s clay (Burkhalter 1985, 224–226). Eve is then created out of Adam’s rib. Creation myths involve the creation of man by deities or other entities at various stages. Among the Desana group of the Tukano Indians, the sun is called the Sun Father because it created the universe by the power of its yellow light, giving life and nourishment to the whole universe. The Sun Father creates the earth with its animals and plants, but there are still no people. The Sun Father, however, fashions a man who serves as a creator of people. The man creates various beings in such a way that they would represent him (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971, 23–25). Through this creative action, a hierarchical structure in the universe, in which human
beings are situated between deities and animals, is established. Continuous creation also implies repetition and regeneration in the sense that the creation of the world can be repeated and reproduced. "Allah is He who effects the creation, hence He repeats it" (Qur'an 10:3). This eternal repetition of the cosmic act "permits the return of the dead to life, and maintains the hope of the faithful in the resurrection of the body" (Eliaud 1959, 62).

As primordial god creates part of the universe, other agents, such as his offspring, create and differentiate further parts from each other. This process implies hierarchy as well as competition and conflict between genealogies and generations of gods. Atum or Ra creates his eldest children Shu (air) and Tefnet (moisture), from whose union another two deities, Geb (earth) and Nut (sky), are born. Nut is represented as a woman stretching her naked body over the earth. The lord Shu (air), however, holds up the sky, separating her from her husband Geb (earth). Four deities, opposed in pairs, are born from the union of the earth and sky. These four deities, Osiris and Isis, and Seth and Nephthys, are integrated in the Great Ennead of Heliopolis, forming what can be called a social cosmology (el-Aswad 1997). Hierarchical order establishes the cosmic order or cosmic state (Wilson 1946, 139), in which dominant forces of the universe are ordered based on rank (Ricoeur 1967, 176).

God exists yet is invisible and his creations or actions that affect the natural world are perceived in myths as evidence of his hidden nature. Put differently, many creation myths imply that there is an invisible world that underlies the world of created entities. For instance, the Iroquois believed that "everything on earth had an 'elder brother' in the sky realm" (Maclagan 1977, 24). The invisible quality as the underlying principle or theme of the creation act is repeatedly stressed in various forms of narratives. In official doctrines of the Twelfth Dynasty, Osiris is "the soul of Ra, his great hidden Name which resides in him" (Moret 1972, 385). The name of Osiris is enough to turn a dead man into a god (Moret 1972, 260). Also, Isis painstakingly attempts to seize Ra's secret or hidden name to empower herself.

ELITE LITERATURE

Archetypal patterns implicit in creation myths are not restricted to archaic or folk cultures. They are found in modern elite literature and science fiction. All forms of literature — plays, short stories, novels, and motion pictures — reveal the recurrent themes or archetypes, indicating how a contemporary artist has adapted an ancient myth to the values and aspirations of modern culture (Knapp 1984). The search for authentic mythic archetypes can begin with William Blake's Book of Urizen. Blake introduces the character of Urizen, an old man with a white beard representing the being men worship under the name of Jehovah, as doing the work of the creator, "establishing time and space and thus creating the world as we know it" (Cantor 1984, 30). As a creator Urizen does not bring the world out of nothingness, but rather establishes a cosmic order by "staking out boundaries in what had been an undifferentiated unity" (Cantor 1984, 31).

A striking example of the impact of traditional mythic patterns on science fiction is Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818), in which as "the creator of a man Frankenstein plays the role of God" (Cantor 1984, 103). In the story, the creature or man is created in the image of his creator in such a way that both of them are mirror images of each other. This homology between the creator and the created indicates that human lives have significance for people on the whole who follow these stories. Frankenstein creates a being because he wants someone to worship him with complete devotion: "A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs" (quoted in Cantor 1984, 110). However, as original as the Frankenstein myth was, much of the power of Shelley's novel can be traced to the ways she found of drawing upon traditional mythic patterns (Cantor 1984, 103).

The archetype of creating beings is also mirrored in popular children's literature. In Carlo Collodi's story, Pinocchio, Geppetto, the woodcarver, creates a special puppet and wishes it were a real boy. The Blue Fairy touches the puppet gently, bringing it to life and advising proper and moral behavior. Pinocchio, however, does not follow her advice and as a result begins to transform into a donkey. Recognizing his errors, Pinocchio changes his behavior and demonstrates noble actions, especially toward his father, Geppetto, whom he rescues from the sea and for whom he was about to lose his life. Finally the Blue Fairy reappears and brings him into life as a real boy (Collodi 2001).

Another well-known example is the Star Wars film trilogy, in which the cosmic battle between natural humans and machine creations constitutes a profound theme. As Ferrell (2000) and Roemer (1998) note, George Lucas, the writer, producer, and director of the films, engaged Joseph Campbell as an adviser to create a modern myth that connects to audiences of all ages. The force or power, a dominant theme in Star Wars, not only creates distinct and powerful beings or humans but also re-creates or changes them dramatically into machines. For instance, Anakin Skywalker is a child conceived by the will of the Force (or God). He has extreme force potential, as evidenced by a record number of certain elements in his bloodstream that render him undefeatable. Though he is a humble and innocent character in his childhood, when he lives in slavery, Anakin shows great power that attracts Obi-Wan Kenobi, a Jedi Knight, to train him to become a Jedi. However, Anakin, later,
falls to the destructive zone of the force and abandons his past and his humanity. He becomes the destructive machine Darth Vader, Dark Lord of the Sith, representing the dark side of the force. The monster mask of Darth Vader represents the soulless or monster force in the modern world. Darth Vader is a robot or “a bureaucrat, living not in terms of himself but in terms of an imposed system” (Campbell with Moyers 1988, 1440). As the Star Wars trilogy shows, when a successful reworking of myth takes place the novel, play, or film achieves merit and classic status.

el-Sayed el-Aswad

See also: Nature of the Creator.

REFERENCES

Fight of the Gods and Giants

Motif A162.1

Webster’s Dictionary (1983) defines giant as a “legendary manlike being of
great stature and strength” and does not assign any negative attributes. In world
mythologies, however, giants are generally colossal figures of evil disposition,
enemies of gods and mortals, and frequently exhibiting an unusual trait such as
breathing fire, having multiple heads, or engaging in cannibalism.

GIANTS AND GODS

Giants have a complicated relationship with gods. Sometimes giants have
given birth to gods, for example, the god Loki, the evil trickster in Norse
mythology, whose parents were both giants. Alternatively, gods have given
birth to giants, for example, Diti, granddaughter of Brahma, and mother of
Dautjas or giants. Gods have also created and installed giants as guardians of
a particular place, person, or thing, such as in Sumerian mythology when
Enlil, the divine ruler of earth (George 1999, 223), makes Humbaba the guard-
ian of the great cedar forest.

Both gods and giants are apt at transforming themselves into any creature
of their choice and sometimes manipulating their own body parts. For ex-
ample, in Chinese mythology, when the god Huang Di decapitates the name-
less giant, the giant rises up again as Xing Tian, the Headless One (F531.1.2.1,
“Headless giant”). Using his nipples as eyes and his navel as his mouth, he
takes up arms again in search of his head (Walls and Walls 1988, 48).

In some cases, a god assumes the form of a giant to conquer evil (Vishnu),
and sometimes giants assume human or animal form to bully mortals and
divinities (Shurpanakha and Marichi) (D630, “Transformation and disenchant-
ment at will”) (Menon 2001, 175, 187–197).

FIGHT BETWEEN GODS AND GIANTS

Particularly in Norse, Greek, and Indian mythologies, there are important
contests between gods and giants.

The Giants at War with Olympian Gods

The war between the giants and the Olympian gods, the Gigantomachia, is
presented as one of the fiercest of all battles in Greek mythology. It is first
mentioned by Xenophon (ca. 535–500 BCE), and the writings of Apollodorus
contain numerous references to it.

The giants, often regarded as the fourth race of monsters (Hamilton 1942,80), are born from the blood of Uranus (Sky), the father of the Titans. Often
described as a race of reptilian creatures (F531.1.8.2, “Giant as serpent”)
(Leeming 1976, 55), giants receive a boon from their mother, Gaea (Earth),
that makes them impervious to the weapons of the gods. However, they do
not have immunity from the weapons of men.

When Zeus overthrows his father, Cronus, and establishes the dynasty of
the Olympian gods, he faces severe, continuous opposition from Titans and
other children of Gaea. During this war, Porphyon, the king of the giants,
Attempts to seize Zeus’s wife Hera (R11.3, “Abduction by giants”), and
Alycensues, the most powerful of all giants, hurls rocks at the Olympian
gods (F531.3.2, “Giant throws a great rock”).

When the gods are not able to prevail against the giants, they invite mort-
als, product of their creation, to defeat those with whom the gods share
blood ties. With the aid of the mighty Herakles (Hercules), weapons of men,
and the stratagems of commanding the sun and the moon not to shine and
cutting down the herb that “furnished the giants with a charm against wounds”
(F531.6.5.3, “Giant has wound-healing balm”) (Murray 1935, 44), Zeus is
able to launch a powerful campaign against the giants (A165.7, “Army of
the gods”).

The Frost Giants and the Creation of Earth and Giants at the End

According to the Norse Eddu, in the beginning of the world there was nothing
except an empty space, bordered by the region of mist, ice, and snow on the
northern side. The “warm breaths” from the “sun-land” cause the ice to melt
and topple over. From this frozen wreckage springs Ymir, the first frost giant
(F531.1.9), who feeds on the milk of the cow who in turn lives by licking the
ice-blocks, “from which, in consequence of the licking, was produced Bori, the fashioner of the world” (Murray 1935, 357–358).

In the combat between the children of Bori and Ymir, Ymir is killed (F531.6.12, “Disappearance or death of giants”) and the dynasty of the frost giants is ended (F531.6.1.7, “Giants as sons of Ymir or Aurgelmir”). The victors devise creative uses for Ymir’s body parts. Thus, “the flesh of the Ymir became the earth; his blood the sea; his bones, the mountains; his teeth, cliffs and crags; his skull, the heavens, wherein his brains float in the form of clouds” (Murray 1935, 358). It is the killing of Ymir and the other frost giants and the accomplishment of creation that gives Bori’s sons a divine position in Norse mythology.

Orchard says that the primary characteristic of the giants is their “essential hostility to gods and men” (1997, 55). In the apocalyptic final battle, known as Ragnarok, it was believed that the world would come to an end. Many factions would meet on the battlefield of Vigrold, including the giants, who would fight against both gods and men.

The Suras and the Asuras: In Quest for Immortality

Although the Sanskrit word asura and its synonyms daitya, danava, and rakshasa are generally translated as “demon” in English, in terms of iconography, attributes, and literal meaning for certain types of asuras the term “giant” is more suitable. (Mohan and Kapoor 1990, 350, 366).

According to Vedic mythology, as recounted in the epic Mahabharata, at the beginning of the universe both the suras (gods) and the asuras (giants) are equal in strength. Over time, the giants improve their skills and become adept at defeating gods and conquering heaven. The only thing that replenishes the energy of gods and helps them reconquer heaven is amrit, the drink of immortality. However, in one of the periodic cycles of the creation of the universe, amrit and other precious things fail to reappear. The only way to recover them is by churning the Ksheer Sagar or the ocean of milk.

The gods need the strength of the giants to recover amrit from the depths of the great ocean, so they seek collaboration with them by promising them a share of the drink of immortality for their help. However, as soon as the pot of amrit emerges, the gods and the giants start quarrelling about who should drink it first. Vishnu then takes the form of a beautiful maiden called Mohini and lures the giants into handing her the pot. Failing to recognize the true identity of Mohini, the giants ask her to distribute amrit to everyone. However, as soon as Mohini finishes distributing amrit to the gods, she disappears. When the giants realize that the gods have cheated them of their rightful share, they become violent and a fierce battle ensues. But this time, having consumed the drink of immortality, the gods successfully subdue the giants and take control of heaven.

Soon the asuras realize that without amrit they are neither strong nor immortal. The only way to regain their former powers is to please the mightiest of deities and obtain their protection. They diligently devote themselves either to Brahma, the Creator, or to Vishnu, the Preserver, or to Shiva, the Destroyer, and succeed in attaining divine boons that grant them immunity from death in an extraordinary way. For example, Hiranyakashyapa asks Brahma:

Let me never be killed by these means: the striking and throwing weapons of my enemies, thunderbolts, dried tree trunks, high mountains, by water or fire. Let me be free from the threat of death from gods, Daityas, seers, Siddhas, and whatever other beings you have created. But why go on? Let me not be slain in heaven, on earth, in the daytime, at night, from neither above or below.” (Dimmitt and van Buiten 1978, 77)

At another time it is Ravana, the villain in the epic Ramayana, who asks Shiva for strength that makes him invincible and then asks Brahma for immunity against death: “Bless me that I never find death at the hands of a deva, danava, daitya, asura, rakshasa, gangadvara, kinnara, charana, siddha, or any of the divine and demonic beings of heaven and earth” (Menon 2001, xvii). Ravana excludes men from his list because he doubts if anyone from the “puny race of men” could ever possess the strength to hold weapon against him (Menon 2001, xvii).

However, once the wish of asuras is granted, as a general rule, they renounce their austerities and become tyrants. Often they become the masters of the entire three worlds, inflict cruelty upon their citizens, and force men to worship them instead of gods. During this period of oppression, the gods hold several councils to eliminate the threat, and frequently Vishnu, the Preserver of the world, takes incarnations, visits the three worlds, vanquishes the evil, and restores the order of the universe.

Since a god who has granted the wish of his devotee, regardless of whether the devotee is a human or an asura, is also his or her lifelong protector, the god cannot take away the boon he has given due to the power of his divine word. However, he can allow another god to take the initiative and end the calamity his protégé has brought upon the universe. Generally, the god punishing the asura devises a strategy that will not conflict with the boon granted by a deity. In the case of Hiranyakashyapa, for example, Vishnu brings an end to his life by taking incarnation as Narasimha, a giant who is half man and half lion (A122, “God half mortal half immortal”) and therefore not a man, animal, god, demon, or product of the creation of Brahma, against whom the asura had obtained immunity. Vishnu kills Hiranyakashyapa at dusk (which is
neither day nor night), hoisting the asura on his thigh (so that he is neither in earth nor in sky) and using his claws instead of a weapon.

Another path for achieving immortality and divinity is by accumulating merit. The asuras know that anyone who attains one hundred merits in accordance with the Vedas can become Indra, the king of heaven and therefore divine. When King Bali, a daitya (giant), conquers the three worlds with his austerities, gods lose control over heaven. Eventually, Vishnu decides to take incarnation as a Brahmin (learned man) and reinstate gods in heaven. When Bali organizes a religious sacrifice to honor the Brahmins of his kingdom, Vishnu in the form of a Vamana (dwarf) asks him for as much land as he can cover in three paces. The moment Bali grants his wish, the Vamana assumes the form of an enormous giant (A 133.2.1, “Giant god goes with three steps through the world”). In the first step he covers the heaven, in the second the earth (F531.3.5.2, “Giant’s mighty stride spans earth’s width”), restoring the kingdom of gods to them; he relinquishes his right to a third pace by granting King Bali the dominion of Patala, the nether regions (Ions 1967, 51). This example illustrates that the conflict between gods and giants does not consist of war alone. Sometimes there are contests like these through which gods can inflict a crushing defeat over giants by sheer strategy.

INDIVIDUAL COMBATS BETWEEN GIANTS AND GODS

Individual combats between gods and giants are unusually thrilling and full of suspense. In Brahmanical mythology, even though in their incarnations as humans gods may possess the ability to distinguish a giant from a human, they may still be quite vulnerable. For example, when a giantess named Putna assumes the form of a beautiful woman (D35.2.3, “Giant changes to normal size”) and comes to kill baby Krishna, the latter is able to recognize her true form right away. Although as an infant he can do very little to protect himself, when Putna tries to poison him by pretending to nurse him under the cover of her dress, Krishna sucks so hard at her breast that he kills her.

Although one may assume that gods are all-knowing, in their human forms they are often oblivious to future events. Rama, an incarnation of lord Vishnu, is unaware that his chase after the golden deer is a ploy to remove him from the scene so that Ravana can kidnap his wife, Sita. Rama also struggles hard and long to kill Ravana. Since the latter is blessed with ten heads and twenty arms, each time Rama cuts one head, another appears in its place (D1602.12, “Self-returning head. When head is cut off it returns to proper place without harm to owner”). Finally, Ravana’s brother Vibhishana informs Rama that he should aim at the asura’s navel to kill him.

The analysis of various motifs depicting the fights of the gods and giants shows that often the two share familial ties and similar aspirations and ambitions. Most of their fights are directed toward gaining control over the universe. Giants do not have any allies. They primarily rely on their own resources and often possess superior strength to gods. Gods, on the other hand, may seek assistance from mortals, including their own incarnations, to defeat giants. Such combats are usually violent and result in the victory of gods. In certain circumstances when gods fear defeat in war, they employ strategies to achieve victory.

The motif of the fight of gods and giants functions at a symbolic level, with gods representing good and giants evil. The war between good and evil is a bitter one and there are occasions when even gods must suffer and struggle and, in Norse mythology, die. But in spite of all obstacles, as guardians of order and justice, gods (and those allied with gods) must strive to defeat and remove giants, symbols of chaos and unrest, in order to safeguard the beauty and order of their creation.

Deeksha Nagar

REFERENCES


Doomsday (Day of Judgment)

Motif A1002

Doomsday (from Old English *doom*) is the Day of Judgment when Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead, determining who will be saved and who will be damned. The names Doomsday and Judgment Day are also used more generally to refer to the events leading to and including the end of this world, as we know it. The belief that the world will end on a predeter-
mined date is a concept as universal as that of Creation (A1000, “World catastrophe. The world is destroyed. The incidents are usually the same whether a final destruction is thought of or a destruction which may be overcome by a renewal of the earth”).

The events leading to the Christian doomsday are described in greatest and most authoritative detail in the Apocalypse (in English, Revelation). *Apoca-
lypse*, the Greek word for “uncover” or “reveal,” is the title of the last book of the New Testament. The Apocalypse purports to be St. John the Apostle’s vision of the end of the world, a vision that he received from God through an angel on the Isle of Patmos. The book dates from about 96 CE. This book is neither the first nor the only version of the end of the world, although not all apocalypses contain a final Day of Judgment (which is the crowning moment of Christian eschatology, the study of last things, and the science of salvation). The closest analogues of the Apocalypse appear in such Old Testament canonical works as the books of Daniel, written about 165 CE (McGinn 1979, 6), Ezekiel, Joel, Zechariah, Jeremiah, and Isaiah. Noncanonical Old Testa-
ment passages containing doomsday images (the names used in the Old Testa-

Both the Old and New Testament apocalyptic images and themes have sources or analogues in such earlier cultures and systems of belief as the Babylonian, the Persian, the Zoroastrian, the Gnostic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean (Daniels 1999, 19–47). Among the elements generally consid-
ered definitive of apocalyptic tone and thought are a final predetermined flood (A1010, “Deluge. Inundation of whole world”) or conflagration (A1030, “World-fire. A conflagration destroys the earth”), a last battle be-
tween the forces of good and evil (A1080, “Battle at end of world. Armageddon—Revelations”), a sequence of signs and portents that marks the approach of the end, often including the rise of a treacherous adversary (the Antichrist in Christianity) (Rucconi 1999, 287–235), the coming of a messiah, a reign of peace, a last judgment that separates the good souls from the evil, and, finally, a joyous proclamation of a new and different world (A1006, “Renewal of world after world calamity”). Apocalyptic books or passages of books and the accompanying belief in predetermined last days are common not only to the major Western religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but also to Zoroastrianism and Baha’i, and the major Eastern reli-
gions and philosophies of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Taoism. The end of time appears in such widely diverse sites as North and South American Indian religions, African tribal religions, and Indonesian, Maori, Polyneian, Melanesian, and Micronesian religious myth and lore (World Scripture 1991, 783; Daniels 1999, 19–47).

Although by no means a universal source for all of the apocalyptic views, Christian Book of Revelation is the definitive text for all Western apocalypses. Its imagery and motifs are sufficiently archetypal to make its general outline crucial to understanding the meaning of doomsday. The narrator, John, de-
scribes himself as “in the spirit on the Lord’s day” and says, “I heard . . . a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, ‘What thou seest write in a book and send to the seven churches’” (Apocalypse 1:10–11). John obediently records “the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him [through His angel] to make known to his servants the things that may shortly come to pass.” These are the events that will signify the end of the Old World and the beginning of a “new heaven and a new earth” (Apocalypse 21:1).

Doomsday is supposed to occur at the end of time after the sounding of seven trumpets, the appearance of seven signs, and the lifting of the seven
seals of the closed book, which reveals the mysteries they concealed. The natural signs of the end include earthquakes, oceans filled with blood, floods, fire, falling stars, the darkening of the sun and the moon, various plagues, and other catastrophes (A1002.2, “Signs before the Day of Judgment”). These disasters herald a war in heaven and a final battle called Armageddon, in which good triumphs over evil. The dragon, Satan, will be bound for a thousand years, during which there will be a reign of peace. From this thousand-year reign of peace that precedes the end of the world comes the term “millenarianism” (or chiliastic), used to characterize apocalyptic faith and tone (McIver 1999, 4; McGinn 1992, 17). After a thousand years, Satan will be loosed. Disguising himself as Christ, this Antichrist will deceive the nations by performing miracles in order to win converts who will worship him instead of God (A1075, “End of world heralded by coming of Antichrist”). Finally, the Antichrist will be defeated and the divine Christ will come again on Doomsday to judge the living and the dead. These events and scenes are considered significant warnings for those of an apocalyptic bent are always on the alert. Among the most familiar and most often cited scenes in John’s book are the trumpets of judgment, the adoration of the Lamb, and the 144,000 virgins in the procession of Christ, the bridegroom, past the jeweled walls and through the streets of the Heavenly Jerusalem (McIver 1999, 11–13). Among the best-known characters in the tale are Christ (called “the son of man”), the woman clothed with the sun and the moon, the seven-headed beast, the Whore of Babylon, and the Great Beast who is the Antichrist. Among the most popular symbols are the seven-branched candelabrum, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the twenty-four elders with their cups and harps, and Christ in a cloud of glory, sometimes holding the Great Book of the beginning and the end. In it are inscribed Alpha and Omega, from Christ’s words, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end” (Apocalypse 1:8).

Commentators on the Apocalypse have naturally been concerned to know the exact date of Doomsday. A long tradition of numerical calculations and comparisons of natural, political, social, and religious events with those described in the text has produced a series of predicted dates of the end of the world, some of which are now past. The majority, though by no means all, of the predicted dates of Doomsday have been millennial. Thus, the year 1000 was considered by many a likely time for the world to end. Great debate has surrounded the question of whether the number of Romanesque churches built around the year 1000 was due to millenarian terror and its relief (Focillon 1969, 50 et passim; Alexander 2000, 45, 46). At the time of the next great millennium in 2000, the world feared that chaos, caused by computer malfunction over the number of the year, would cause a complete breakdown of society. This “Y2K” phenomenon was a technologically imagined form of Doomsday. Since apocalyptic thoughts and words seem to increase in times of political, social, physical, and even technological change and instability, it is not surprising that millenarianism persists today. In 1997, an Associated Press poll found that “nearly 25% of adult Christians—more than 26 million people [in the United States alone]—believe that Jesus Christ will return to earth in their lifetimes and set in motion the horrific events laid out in the biblical books of Revelation and Daniel.” By 2000, the director of the Millennium Watch Institute had over 1,200 cults in his database (“Apocalypse Really Soon” 1999).

An American tradition of apocalypticism has flourished since the founding of this country. It appeared in the eighteenth-century hellfire and brimstone imagery of such divines as Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards, and in the establishment of nineteenth-century Utopian communities such as the Oneida Community, the Ephrata Community, New Harmony, Bethel, and Aurora (Lamy 1996, 27). A few of the many well-known millenialist sects are the Shakers, the Mennonites, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Mormons, and the Seventh-Day Adventists.

DOOMSDAY TODAY

Since the 1960s, millenialist movements have mushroomed. These range in orientation from UFOlogy to the survivalism of such groups as the Montana Freemen and the Wisconsin Posse (Daniels 1999, 127–224). Such groups are well represented by Soldier of Fortune magazine, in which an advertisement for Sally’s Survival Outfitters promised, “We’ll supply you til Doomsday” (Lamy 1996, 79). Prominent millenialist groups of the late twentieth century have included The Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon; the Hare Krishnas; the People’s Temple, of Jonestown fame; the Branch Davidians, whose leader, David Koresh, died in a standoff in Waco, Texas, in 1993; and Heaven’s Gate, thirty-nine of whose members committed suicide in 1997 (Daniels 1999, 224–233).

Currently, one of the most popular themes among many Christian sects is the Rapture, an event based, but never explicitly named, in both Old and New Testament Apocalypses. It refers to an ecstatic moment at “the end of time, [when] the born-again will be snatched up to meet the Lord in the air” (Alexander 2000, 72). Of course, this short list gives a too-scant idea of both the long history and present popularity of such an emphasis not only in America but also throughout the world. Millenialism has appeared, not only in religious and technological forms, but also in such varied areas as philosophy, art, economics, politics, cosology, ecology, and literature (Bynum and Freedman 2000, passim; Landes 2000, 129–131). Altizer might have been speaking
of many of these disciplines when he wrote, "It is extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible to discover a truly major work of twentieth-century literature that is not apocalyptic" (1999, 3: 347). If apocalyptic determinism does flourish in times of stress and upheaval, twenty-first-century citizens can expect many predictions that Doomsday is at hand.

Judith Neaman

See also: Origin of Pentecost.

REFERENCES


Although it has been impossible to prove archaeologically, scholars speculate that there may have been a specific ziggurat at Babylon that inspired this story. Kramer (1968, 108) confirms and corroborates the earlier work of E.A. Speiser, who pointed to a Sumerian source in the epic tale “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,” contained on tablets written during the Third Dynasty of Ur (about 2130–2101 BCE). The tale evokes a golden age—

Once upon a time there was no snake, there was no scorpion, there was no hyena, there was no lion, there was no wild dog, no wolf, there was no fear, no terror.

—and goes on to tell how “the whole universe . . . to Enlil [one of the primary deities of the Sumerian pantheon] in one tongue spoke” (Kramer 1968, 109). Later, the god of wisdom, Enki, “changed the speech in their mouths / Brought contention into it, / Into the speech of man that until then / Had been one” (110). The text does not explain why Enki confounded the people’s speech, but Kramer speculates that he might have been jealous of their devotion to Enlil. Kramer also says that the Biblical story implying man’s hubris is “undoubtedly a product of Hebrew religious imagination and moralistic temperament” (111).

In addition to Jewish myth, the Motif-Index lists the confusion of tongues motif as being found in India, Ireland, Indochina (Burma), North America, and Central America. Thompson remarks that the motif is quite prevalent among North American Indians, especially in the West, and to a lesser extent in the Northeast (1977, 317). It is also found in Africa in tales from the Kaffir (South Africa), Lamba (Zambia), and Ziba (Tanzania) people (Kipple 1992, 357). The frequency with which this motif occurs in North American Indian mythology is probably a result of the efforts of missionaries who promulgated stories from the Bible. “Not surprisingly, the range of recorded Indian Bible stories corresponds very closely to the range of stories the early missionaries say they emphasized: the Creation and its immediate aftermath, especially the creation of Adam and Eve and their temptation and fall; the Flood and Noah’s survival; the Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues; the Dispersal of the Tribes; Jonah and the Whale; the Red Sea Crossing” (Ramsey 1977, 447). The same explanation may account for its presence in Burma, Central America, Africa, and India.

However, of the many citations Thompson gives for this motif in Tales of the North American Indians (1929), he lists only one version (Choctaw) as similar to the Tower of Babel. In this story, the people marvel at the sky and determine to build a mound to reach the heavens, but every night while they sleep the winds scatter their rocks, and one morning they find they cannot understand each other, so they scatter. The Chins of Burma tell a Babel-like tale of their ancestors building a tower so they could reach the moon to do away with its phases. Their action angered the spirit of the moon, who wrecked the tower, scattering the people (Scott 1918, 266).

There are also versions of the confusion of tongues motif without the secondary motif of the tower-building. In the Kono creation myth from Guinea (Africa), the children of the god Ailatanga talk their ancestors building a tower so they could reach the moon to do away with its phases. Their action angered the spirit of the moon, who wrecked the tower, scattering the people (Leeming and Leeming 1994, 163–164). From the Crow, a Plains Indians group, we have the story of Little Coyote, a trickster double of the creator Old Man Coyote. Little Coyote suggests to Old Man that he give the people different languages so that they will misunderstand each other and use their weapons in wars (Leeming and Leeming 1994, 64). Thus, in these two stories, people lose their universal tongue not as punishment for striving heavenward, but on the whim of an angry father-in-law in the first case and a troublesome trickster in the second.

Jane Garry

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Origin of Pentecost

Motif A1541.6

Pentecost, meaning "fiftieth" in Greek, is a holiday that takes its name from its calendrical position on the fiftieth day after Easter. The Greek name Pentecost was first used in the Book of Tobit (Cabié 1965, 16; Gunstone 1967, 13). The Hebrew name of the holiday, Shavuot, means "seven weeks," because it falls seven weeks or fifty days after Passover and is sometimes known as the Festival of Weeks. It was originally an ancient Jewish festival that celebrated the wheat harvest in Israel. Exodus 23.16 proclaims, "you will observe the feast of the harvest, of first fruits of what the fields have produced from your sowing." It was one of the three "feasts of pilgrimage and sanctuary" during which pilgrims came to the temple to "offer the first fruits" of the three harvests: barley at Passover, wheat at Pentecost, and fruit at Succos (Potin 1971, 118). Only later did this feast come to be associated with the renewal of the covenant when the law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai (Potin 1971, 123).

The Essenes considered Pentecost a very important holiday, one on which to celebrate the entrance of new members into the community as well as the renewal of the covenant. Thus, the holiday that began as a harvest and pilgrimage festival devoted to offerings of the first agricultural fruits later came to be associated with spiritual first fruits, the conversion of new souls, and a community of the spirit. This tone marks the first New Testament record of Pentecost when the now dead Christ appears to the multitudes of all nations who are assembled "in one place." The moment, described in Acts 2.1–21, involves the thunderous sounds and tongues of flame associated with the theophany on Mount Sinai. At this Pentecost, the Word of God was understood in as many tongues as God created during the presumptuous building of the Tower of Babel, for which the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit speaking in tongues was a remedy.

And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak.

Now there were staying at Jerusalem devout Jews from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude gathered and were bewildered in mind because each heard them speaking in his own language. But they were all amazed and marveled.

[and all the people of the many nations gathered there said]
we have heard them speaking in our own languages of the wonderful works of God.

In Christianity, as in Judaism, Pentecost is one of the three most important feasts of the year, ranking beside Christmas and Easter. In Acts 2, Jesus is understood as the Word and the ultimate fulfillment of God's covenant with those who are born again in spirit when the Holy Spirit communicates to the people of all nations, unifying them by the words intelligible to all in tongues of flame. While this is the biblical and religious underpinning of the holiday, these texts and doctrines alone do not begin to encompass either the rich associations or the long celebratory history of the holiday. The Pentecostal traditions and customs are linked with pagan festivities, with ecclesiastical rites and sacraments, with civil celebrations, and, naturally, with folklore.

In the early church, Pentecost was the favored time for ordinations and entries of novices into orders and of converts into the faith (Burns and Fagin 1964, 52). Second only to Easter, it was the holiday favored for baptism, since the Pentecostal verses actually contain the passage "Now they who received his word were baptized" (Acts 2.41). No doubt its associations with baptism were partially responsible for the fact that Pentecost came to be understood as the day of the founding of the church. Still later, it was the day favored for knighting and coronations. Throughout Christendom, the time from Easter through Pentecost became the primary season for pilgrimage. Its English name was Whitsunide, from White Sunday, so called because of the many baptismal robes in church on that day.

Domestic and royal celebrations of the day included hearty eating, drinking, and dance. Whitsun ale festivals accompanied by "ludicrous gestures and
acts of foolery and buffoonery" (Brand and Hazelett 1870, 1:156) testify that Pentecost was by no means universally celebrated in a manner consonant with its pious origins. In England, ale brewer especially for the day and known as either Whitson or lamb ale was the subject of "A Serious Dissuasive Against Whitson Ales" as late as 1736 (Brand and Hazelett 1870, 1:157). It is clear that, even in the New World, many of the early harvest festival associations with the day survived. Pentecost was a May feast. Occurring much later than May Day, the holiday became so standard an occasion for legendary Arthurian feasts and spring festivals in literature that it is now associated with the convention or topos of spring settings for medieval romances. These literary settings of the holiday celebrate Pentecost as the most joyous spring holiday after Easter, observed in many pagan festivals that survived after their meanings had been lost to the celebrants. Both before and after the fiest day, spring customs like Maypole dances and the crowning of a May King and Queen were observed. Robin Hood and Maid Marian are often considered late literary survivals of the May King and Queen.

While Pentecost has remained a major holy day in both Judaism and Christianity, it has recently seen a growing popularity and increasing influence in the form of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism is a religious movement that seems to have first appeared in the nineteenth century, but has gathered its most dramatic number of adherents in the twentieth century. In the United States, it is sometimes colloquially designated as "born-again Christianity." The phenomenon is worldwide, however, and the numbers of Pentecostals are smaller in America, the country where it originated, than in Latin America (Goff 1988, 4, 6, 8). The movement is now gaining great numbers of converts in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion calls it "probably the fastest growing Christian religious movement during the twentieth century" and cites the "worldwide membership in Pentecostal denominations in the 1980s [as] estimated at 175,000,000—6.7 million in the United States with millions more identifying with various charismatic movements" (Smith 1992, 836). Since that time, the numbers throughout the world have increased exponentially. The movement began in the Protestant denominations and certainly by the 1970s included not only many of such traditional Protestant groups as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, and Baptists, but also Roman Catholics (Goff 1988, 4).

Pentecostals are frequently classified into three groups: those calling themselves "classical Pentecostals," who trace their beginnings to the Pentecostal revival in the United States about 1907; those who call themselves "charismatics," who date from the 1960s in the United States; and those, largely nonwhite, African, Latin American, and Asian, who believe in the fundamental traits and rites of the other two groups, but are rarely accepted by the charismatics and classical Pentecostals "because some of their beliefs are considered heretical or non-Christian" (Anderson 1987, 11:230). The history of Pentecostalism is complex and sometimes ambiguous. It started in the United States in "the radical separatist wing of the Holiness movement" of the late nineteenth century (Anderson 1987, 11:232). It first appeared in Europe in 1907 and continues to develop there. Its beginnings in Asia and Africa are generally linked to the mission activity of other Pentecostal groups from the 1950s to the 1960s, and again in the 1980s.

Common to the various forms of Pentecostalism are millennialism, fundamentalism, the belief in spirit baptism, and spiritual healing. The majority of American Pentecostals "believe that the "initial evidence" of spirit baptism is always glossolalia, or speaking in tongues." But other Pentecostals think that spirit baptism can be "evidenced by any one of the other charismata" or gifts of the spirit that appear in I Corinthians 12-14 (Anderson 1987, 232). They include "the manifestation of the spirit," "gifts of healing, services of help, power of administration and the speaking of various tongues" (I Corinthians 12:28). In general, Pentecostalism has been recognized as a "ritual prolongation of the original Pentecostal event" (Shaull and Cesar 2000, 92) in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit descends on the multitudes of various nations.

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Origins of Inequality

Motifs A1600–A1699

A principal function of myths in all cultures is to explain and justify the existence of observable things and phenomena. Among these are differences in human language, physical appearance, perceived abilities, and social position. The resulting stories extend across a wide spectrum of style and purpose. Some are presented with scriptural dignity, demanding belief and adherence, while others are told as frivolous jokes with any serious intent hidden behind a cloak of irony and paradox. And some combine the sublime with the ridiculous, casting gods, saints, and shamans in humorous roles.

One such story is the account of the Norse god Heimdall, as recorded in the "Rigsthula" (lay of Rig), one of the most engaging stories in the Poetic Edda. As the tale unfolds, Heimdall, who has assumed the name Rig, journeys in disguise from farmstead to farmstead and, in keeping with ancient hospitality traditions, is offered not only food and shelter, but also a place to sleep next to the host’s wife. The meal in the first house is coarse bran bread with broth. The boy conceived during this stay grows into a swarthily lad named Thrall, with dull eyes, wrinkled skin, gnarled knuckles, and a bulging back. His offspring are slaves and servants (A1657, "Origin of slaves"). At the next house, Rig is served boiled calf-meat and other delicacies. The boy conceived here is named Karl, and from this ruddy-skinned, bright-eyed lad come common folk, but free: yeomen, craftsmen, and farmers (A1655, "Origin of peasantry"). At the third house, Rig receives white bread, bacon, roasted fowl, and wine. The boy conceived here is named Earl, and this handsome lad becomes the progenitor of nobles and kings (A1656, "Origin of noblemen"). One of Earl’s sons is given particular notice, a boy named Kon, whose name means "king" and who becomes a master of runic lore. Thus the main social divisions derive from one god’s extramarital cohabitation in various human households.

A widespread story within the Judeo-Christian tradition offering similar explanations is "Eve’s Unequal Children" (AT 758; Motif A1650.1), exemplified by the Grimm’s version (KHM 180). Here God announces that he himself will inspect Adam and Eve’s household. Eve, ashamed of her less attractive children, hides them in various nooks and crannies, putting only her good-looking offspring on display. God blesses the attractive children with a progeny of kings, princes, counts, knights, nobles,burghers, merchants, and scholars. The ugly, hidden children, however, are promised offspring of peasants, fishermen, smiths, tanners, weavers, shoemakers, tailors, potters, teamsters, sailors, messengers, and household servants. When Eve complains about the Lord’s unequal blessings, he replies, “Eve, you do not understand. It is right and necessary that the entire world should be served by your children. If they were all princes and lords, who would plant grain, thresh it, grind and bake it? Who would forge iron, weave cloth, build houses, plant crops, dig ditches, and cut out and sew clothing? Each shall stay in his own place, so that one shall support the other, and all shall be fed like the parts of a body.” Thus a rigid class structure is explained and given a pseudo-biblical validation.

In a Tagalog analogue, “The Creation Story” (Cole 1916, 187–188), the first man and woman on earth have many children, “and from them came all the different races of people.” However, their house soon becomes so overcrowded that the father, in desperation, begins beating the children with a stick, causing them to flee in all directions. Those who take refuge in rooms within the house become chiefs. Those who conceal themselves inside the walls become slaves. Those who hide in the fireplace become black people. Those who run outside become free people. Those who flee to the sea disappear, coming back many years later as white people. Here, unlike in the Grimm’s version, social position has a racial component.

Type 758 stories are also told with an alternate ending, for example as in the Icelandic tale “The Genesis of the Hidden Folk” (Armason 1864, 19–20). Here, instead of Eve’s hidden children producing the lower social classes, their offspring lose their humanity altogether, turning into trolls, elves, fairies, and other such “hidden people” (F251.4).

A less playful mythological explanation of a racial foundation for social inequality comes from two enigmatic passages in Genesis. One tells of the mark placed on Cain to prevent vigilantes from killing him after his murder of Abel (4:15). Although the mark is not described and is characterized as a mark of protection, not a curse, many generations of segregationist theologians have equated it with dark skin, claiming that the descendants of Cain, so
marked, are spiritually inferior to those who trace their ancestry through Seth, a son born to Adam and Eve after the fratricide.

Other traditions are even more extreme. For example, in Beowulf (lines 102–114), we learn that the wicked monster Grendel is one of the “kinsmen of Cain.” Those with whom he shares this ancestry are an evil lot: “From him [Cain] sprung every misbegotten thing, monsters and elves and the walking dead, and also those giants who fought against God time and again.” Another example of Cain’s descendants’ grotesque appearance comes from the Jewish folktale “The Man with Two Heads” (Sadeh 1989, 56–58), where we are told that Cain’s descendants now constitute a two-headed race that lives at the center of the earth.

Another biblical event traditionally used to explain and justify race-based segregation and slavery is the curse of Ham and Canaan (Genesis 9:18–27). This account, recorded with ambiguous brevity, relates how Noah is seen drunken and naked in his tent by his son Ham. He reports this to his brothers Shem and Japheth, who walk backward into the tent to avoid seeing their father and cover him. Upon learning what Ham has done, Noah pronounces a curse on Ham’s son Canaan: “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” A Jewish folkloric explanation of Canaan’s curse is that Noah, in a drunken state, threatens to marry again and establish a new race. To prevent this from happening, his grandson Canaan “did him a horrible bodily injury,” upon which Noah curses him and all his descendants with permanent servitude (Hanauer 1935, 17).

According to long-standing tradition, Shem, Ham, and Japheth are the progenitors of the earth’s three principal races, with Ham’s offspring, through Canaan, being dark-skinned people, predestined by Noah’s curse to be servants forever (A1614.1, “Negroes as curse on Ham for laughing at Noah’s nakedness”). For many generations the shameful exploitation of these views, still alive in some circles, has provided religious validation for race-based slavery, inequality, and segregation.

There are many antibiblical explanations for physical and social differences based on race. For example, according to a Seminole legend (Reaver 1987, no. 22; Motif A1631), in the beginning people emerged from a mountain, Indians came out first. A black man came out last. “He stayed in the mud so long that when he emerged he was coal black.”

According to Joel Chandler Harris’s Uncle Remus in “Why the Negro Is Black” (1880, no. 33), “way back yander” all humans were black. But then a pond is discovered whose water can wash a person white. There is a great rush to the pond, and the first people to arrive wash themselves white, using up much of the water. A second group, now with much less water, washed themselves to the shades of mulattoes, Chinese, and Indians. When the slowest group arrive, the water is nearly all gone, so they can only patter about in the puddles with the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet, and they remain black on the rest of their bodies (A1614.2, “Races dark-skinned from bathing after white men”). There is a general consensus that Harris’s Uncle Remus stories, especially the early ones, were based on authentic African-American oral folklore current in nineteenth-century rural Georgia (Brookes 1950).

A pseudo-mythological explanation for hard menial labor falling disproportionately to blacks is offered in the frequently collected African-American folktale “Why Black People Work.” A Creole version from Louisiana titled “An Old Black Man and an Old White Man Had a Race” is typical (Lindahl, Owens, and Harvison 1997, no. 35; Motif A1671.1). A black man and a white man engage in a race, and the winner is to select as his prize one of two closed sacks, a large one and a small one. The black man wins the race and chooses the large sack. Inside are plows, hoes, and other such heavy tools. The white man’s smaller sack contains a book and a pencil. Thus the white man learns to read and write, and the black man has to work in the fields and is miserable all his life. This story is told as a joke, but serious, ironic contempt lies behind its humor. For additional tales explaining or reflecting the social differences between blacks and other ethnic and racial groups—including whites, Jews, Mexicans, and Chinese—see Dorson (1967, 171–186) and Dance (1977, 1985, 3–8).

Other disadvantaged groups have similar explanations for their own situations, and again the question arises whether such tales express an inferiority complex or a sardonic gallows humor, allowing a victim to gain a psychological advantage over his oppressors by laughing at his own predicament. For example, according to a Yaruro Indian myth from Venezuela (Karlinger and Pogt 1995, no. 28), soon after the creation of the earth the Yaruro people are given horses, but are afraid of them because of their great size. The whites are not afraid of the horses. The Yaruro are also given giant maize and tobacco plants and banana trees. In harvesting their first crop, they cut down the plants, unwittingly allowing the tops, which contain all the seeds, to fall onto the land of the whites. Thus the whites now have horses and plantations with bananas, maize, and tobacco, while the Yaruro have none of these.

Gypsy etiological legends offer similar examples. According to one such tale from Spain (Tong 1989, 178–179), before peopling the earth the Lord announce an assembly for the purpose of assigning positions in life. “Whoever gets there too late won’t get any,” he warns. The two Gypsies invited are very lazy and do not arrive at the meeting until after all the destinies have been assigned to others, so the Lord says to them, “You can get on any way you can.” Thus Gypsies must live by their wits, having no assigned place in
the world (A1611.2, "Origin of Gypsies"). Additional tales told by Gypsies themselves explain why their people are scattered about the earth (Tong 1989, 34–35), how they became musicians (102–103), and why they do not have an alphabet (169).

Of course, not all origin legends are first-person accounts. They are often told by competing clans, and in such cases they are rarely benevolent. A legend about the origin of the Turks, current in Egypt as late as 1970 (El-Shamy 1980, no. 24; Motif A1611.6) and told as “fact, not story,” tells how Alexander the Great walks in the evil people of Gog and Magog, except for a few who escape because they are away herding their animals. The offspring of these herdsmen are the Turks, whose name, according to folk etymology, means “those who were left out.”

Similarly, cultures with slave or untouchable castes often have legends describing their origins. In one such account from Sri Lanka, “How the Rodiya Caste Was Born” (Ratnaratne 1991, no. 22), a king discovers that a tribe of hunters is providing human flesh to his royal kitchen and that his daughter knows their gruesome secret but has said nothing, having herself acquired a taste for such meat. The king decrees that she and the hunters should be an untouchable caste, from generation to generation. And, as the story concludes, “to this day they are the wandering tribe of the island. They beg by dancing and singing or performing tricks. They are hardly ever employed.”

The existence of a slave caste in ancient Hawaii is explained by the consequences of the strained marital relationship between two of Polynesia’s most important deities. According to tradition, Wakea and his wife Papa have a daughter, Ho’ohoku who matures into a beautiful woman. Wakea was attracted to his daughter sexually, but sees no way to consummate his desires without arousing Papa’s jealousy. A priest instructs Wakea to tell Papa that certain tabu nights have been decreed when husband and wife are not to sleep together. Papa accepts the tabu, thus giving her husband freedom to sleep with Ho’ohoku. In spite of Wakea’s precautions, however, Papa discovers the deception and the two separate. Wakea then flouts his relationship with his daughter, and the spurned Papa seeks revenge by entering into a liaison with one of her former husband’s slaves. This union produces a son named Kekeu, and from him comes a caste of slaves so strictly defined that if a member of any class should have a child by an offspring of Kekeu, this child too would become a slave (Beckwith 1970, 296–301).

Myths and legends that justify and codify inherited class inequality are supplemented by a large body of folktales suggesting that poverty is not necessarily a bad thing. A prominent example of such rationalization is the widespread tale “A Happy Man’s Shirt” (AT 444), in which a king or other wealthy individual takes ill and is told that he will be cured only if he puts on the shirt of a truly happy man. After a long search, the king finds such a man, only to learn that this truly happy man has no possessions, not even a shirt. Similarly, in the Greek folktale “The Poor Man and the Money” (Megas 1965, no. 64; AT 754; Motif J1085.1, “The happy friar becomes unhappier as he receives ever more and more money. Gets rid of money and is happy as before”), a poor but happy man is given a sum of money by a rich neighbor, but the riches bring their new owner only worry and conflict. Recognizing the source of his woes, he returns the gift and thus regains his former happiness.

The Indian tale “Less Inequality Than Men Deem” (Freyre 1881, no. 8) summarizes, both in its title and in its plot, the apologetic philosophy of the folklore in this section. Here a rajah complains that he is often ill, whereas a poor shepherds of his acquaintance always appears to be healthy, in spite of his constant exposure to wet and cold. As an experiment, the rajah transplants the shepherd into his palace, where he is protected from every discomfort. After some months of such coddling, the shepherd gets his feet a little wet, catches cold, and dies. The rajah’s vizier concludes, “You see now to what dangers we are exposed from which the poor are exempt. It is thus that nature equalizes her best gifts; wealth and opulence tend too frequently to destroy health and shorten life, though they may give much enjoyment to it whilst it lasts.”

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See also: Justice and Injustice.

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Hermaphroditism

Hermaphroditism and androgyne are terms that designate the female's birth-giving capacity within a male or—less frequently—the male's inseminating capability within a female (also known as gynandry). In the context of combining the procreative functions of both sexes, this aspect of being bisexual is to be differentiated from sexual practices that may be labeled homosexuality and/or heterosexuality. It has been pointed out that a more expanded definition of the concept of "androgyne" suggests a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the male (the rational) and the female (the intuitive) aspects of the human psyche, between socially imposed traits and modes of behavior for the male and female sexes, or between the masculine (analytical) and the feminine (synthetic) approaches to reality (Freeman 1988, 49).

Jung describes the concept of an androgynous being as a projection of unconscious wholeness that archetypally refers back to a primordial state of mind (collective unconscious) in which procreation and sex differences are either totally fused or largely undifferentiated. This archetype, or stream of feelings, has become a unifying symbol, or a symbol of the creative union of opposites (Jung 1958, 139). Eliade and O'Flaherty point out that androgynes may be divided into two groups: separate male and female beings fused into one, and one fused being splitting into male and female parts, the splitting androgyne being far more common (1988, 281).

In folklore studies, hermaphroditism per se was not identified nor assigned a specific motif in the Motif-Index nor does it constitute a tale type. Yet incidents of its recurrence in folk literature have been encountered and designated as detail motifs elaborating on other acts or characters. These elaborations include A12, "Hermaphroditic creator: The creator is half man and half woman or is thought of as both male and female" (cited from Greek, Egyptian, Hindu, and Aztec sources); F547.2, "Hermaphrodite: Person with both male and
female sexual organs” (cited from Greek and North American Navaho sources); T578, “Pregnant man” (cited from Irish, Icelandic, Eskimo [Greenland], North American Indian, and African [Basuto] sources); and T578.2, “Man transformed to female (human or animal) bears offspring,” reported from “Irish myth” (see discussion of Type 705B8, below).

HERMAPHRODITISM IN ANCIENT CREATION MYTHS

In ancient mythologies, hermaphroditism plays a major role in accounting for the emergence of life in the act of creation by a creator. In ancient Egypt, bisexuality is associated with the earliest phases of creation: Nun (or Nu) is chaos—or the primordial waste of waters in which all creation is immanent—and is guarded by a bisexual frog- and serpent-headed deities (Ions 1968, 38). More explicitly, the god Atum seems to have been regarded as a bisexual deity who was sometimes called the “Great He-Shē.” The Egyptians, conceiving of creation only in terms of sexual generation, were able through this concept to present Atum as an intensely powerful creative force owing nothing to the agency of another (Ions 1968, 26, 40). Similarly, the goddess Mut was perceived in a gynandrous context: despite being the consort of Amon, with whom she forms one of four divine couples as creators (A2.8.1), she is also said to be bisexual. This belief is seen by some scholars as a way of reinforcing Mut’s position as mother of all living things (Ions 1968, 103).

Another form for the expression of this concept is the highly salient motif of male pregnancy due to eating or drinking; it is found in the ancient Egyptian account of the conflict between Horus and Seth for the rule. Seth—who had made homosexual advances toward Horus—is tricked by Horus’s mother, Isis, into eating lettuce which has Horus’s semen on it; he becomes pregnant and gives birth to moon (El-Shamy 1984).

Related to these concepts and beliefs are depictions of androgynous pairs seeking to be fused with each other. The Egyptian Nut (Sky) and Geb (Earth) as brother and sister separated by Shu (atmosphere) seek to be reunited into their former entity as one (Ions 1968, 46). As Alma S. Freeman (1988) shows, this archetypal theme exists in other cultures. In Greek mythology, well-known versions of the creation also represent an androgynous, or hermaphroditic, deity in the union of Mother Earth and Father Sky—a union responsible for all the duality and multiplicity in the universe. Likewise, in Hindu mythology, both the Purnas (compiled ca. fourth to eleventh centuries CE) and the Upanishads (ca. tenth to seventh centuries BCE) contain accounts of the separation of the originally androgynous godhead.

Freeman also points out that Taoism, the system of beliefs through which the ancient Chinese sought to explain the world, embodies a clear expression of androgyny. The Tao (male)—the undivided unity lying behind all earthly phenomena—gives rise to the yin (female) and yang (male) principles that signify the duality of nature. According to ancient Chinese thought, the harmonious interaction of yin and yang in the universe and in human beings resolves all the conflicts of nature and brings prosperity to the world (Freeman 1988, 52–53).

In Genesis (1:27), God creates man in his own image, “male and female,” before Eve is taken from Adam’s body; thus Adam and the Judeo-Christian God are androgynous. Similarly, the supreme being in American Indian creation mythology represents an androgynous whole from which male and female are created. The Cheyenne creation myth “How the World Was Made,” for example, describes Maheo, the All Spirit, who fashions man from a rib taken out of his right side and woman from a rib taken out of his left side. Not only do ancient stories of the creation reveal a separation of the originally androgynous one into two, but many also describe the halves as thereafter striving unceasingly to reunite, to restore the primal state of wholeness.

HERMAPHRODITISM IN FOLKLORE

In contemporary lore, expressions of hermaphroditic beliefs seem to occur predominantly in two spheres: in folk elaborations on established religious beliefs (especially Semitic: in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), and in ordinary folktales.

In the first sphere, or what may be labeled “religion among the folk,” is the incongruent fact that only one male Satan (Lucifer, Eblis) was cast out of Paradise, yet multitudes of Satan’s descendants are believed to populate the universe. This incongruity is explained in terms of “Hermaphroditic Eblis (Satan) begets he-satans and she-satans” (Motif A2924); a related elaboration states that “Sex-organisms [were] added to Eblis: penis on the right thigh, and vagina in the left thigh” (Motif A2924.0.1.18; Damīrī 1963, 1:209). A variation on this theme is that Satan had sexual intercourse with himself and laid four eggs, out of which came his offspring (cf. Motif T512.6, “Conception from drinking sperm”; El-Shamy 1984).

A related belief narrative from Moslem traditions reports how a “Man transformed to female (human or animal) bears offspring” (Motif T578.2; Type 705B8). The story is given as a personal experience narrative (i.e., told by its protagonist, named “Khurfa”—i.e., “Myth”). His report may be summed up as follows:

I set out [from my home town] in flight. I suffered from strong thirst. I got to a well and went down into it to drink. A supernatural voice shouted at me
from the inside of the well: “Halt!” But I drank anyway. Then, the voice from within the well said: “If he happened to be a man, may God turn him into a woman; and if he happened to be a woman, may God turn her into a man?” Lo and behold: I became a woman. I came to the town, a man married me, and I bore from him two boys. Then I longed for returning to my hometown. On my way back, I drank from the same well. The voice said, “If he happened to be a man, may God turn him into a woman; and if he happened to be a woman, may God turn her into a man!” I turned into a man as I was before. I reached the town in which I lived, I married some woman; she bore for me two boys.

The account is concluded: “Thus: [as a man] I have two sons from my loins; and two sons [born earlier] from my ‘womb!’” (cited in El-Shamy 1995, 169–171. Although associated with a curse, this is clearly a story about androgyny.

Pregnant Man

In ordinary folktales, one of the most overt expressions of this archetype is the theme of “Pregnant man” (T378) and his offspring. In AT 705, Born from a Fish, a story known only from Scandinavia, a man eats a fish that he is supposed to feed to his wife and he becomes pregnant. A sequel to the tale elaborates on the experiences of the offspring of that male pregnancy. The tale (Type 705B§) may be summarized as follows:

A man disobeys his wife’s instructions and eats magic food (usually a fruit) intended to make her pregnant; he becomes pregnant. When the time comes for him to give birth, his wife instructs him to go to the woods (or desert), and to bring the baby home if it is a boy, and to abandon it, if it is a girl. Via an unusual part of his body (e.g., knee, calf, etc.), he brings forth a baby girl and abandons her as his wife had ordered. The infant is raised by a wild bird (usually a falcon or eagle) on top of a tree. A prince sees her (reflection on water, or as she attends a circumcision event) and falls in love with her but cannot reach her. An old woman tricks the maiden into descending; she is captured and married to the prince. (See El-Shamy 1984 and 1999, no. 5).

Varying versions of the male pregnancy theme have been reported from the Scandinavian Peninsula and other parts of Europe, Asia Minor, the Iberian Peninsula (and its cultural extensions in South America), North Africa and the Middle East—particularly in the Nile Valley area (and Somalia)—and various regions of sub-Saharan Africa. The sub-Saharan narrative seems to be, or to have been until recently, a belief account (i.e., sacred narrative, myth, belief legend, etc.), often with etiological functions.

A man (usually a hunter) gives birth to a number of children through his knee. He places them on top of a tree and warns them not to lower a rope with which someone can climb up to their abode, except for him. An ogre (or a wolf or a similar predator or adversary) tricks one of the children into lowering the rope. The ogre climbs the tree and devours the children. When the father returns and learns what happened, he challenges the ogre to a duel and splits its belly (or toe). The children come out alive. They become the forefathers of the various tribes in that region. (See El-Shamy 1984)

There are other African variants from the Kikuyu, Akanba, and Masai. The story has also been reported from Southern Africa (Basuto), West Africa (Yoruba), and Central Africa.

LITERATURE AND POPULAR CULTURE

Manifestations of this archetype have permeated a wide spectrum of formal and popular literary forms throughout the world. One of its latest manifestations is, perhaps, a film titled Junior (1994). In this Hollywood production, a powerful popular-culture heroic figure—cast in roles akin to those of mythological legendary characters of the ancient world—conceives and delivers a human infant. In this respect, the modern actor (Arnold Schwarzenegger) seems to have been cast in the archetypal stream of emotions that fashioned such mythological characters as Atum, Seth, and Zeus, who preceded him in the hermaphroditic, or androgynous, act of a pregnant male bringing forth a child.

With reference to elite literature, the androgyny theme is perceived in broad terms that tend to be dependent on interpretation. An example of such perception is Freeman’s view that during the Renaissance, William Shakespeare emerged as the chief exponent of “the androgynous vision.” That vision is delineated in terms of androgynous roles in which Shakespeare, like the Greek writers, is argued to have portrayed certain characters. One such character is “the lively little sprite Ariel, who defies final gender/sexual identification” in The Tempest. Freeman also asserts that Shakespeare skillfully exploited the Renaissance tradition of depicting girls disguised as boys and boys disguised as girls in plays such as The Two Gentlemen of Verona and As You Like It. Freeman concludes that “disguise for Shakespeare is not always falsification.” Rather, it “may be another indication of the wide spectrum of roles possible to individuals if they can but find the convenient trappings of another persona.” Shakespeare’s drama—like the Greek tragedies—also embody an interplay between the masculine and feminine opposites. They further demonstrate the necessity for a proper balance between these two opposing principles if chaos and destruction are to be averted (Freeman 1988, 53–54).
Other powerful female characters in Shakespeare's works can be shown to derive from folk tradition of that period; these include Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* (ca. 1593), (Type 901, same title), and Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* (ca. 1596), (Type 890, *A Pound of Flesh*). In many Arab variants of Type 890, the "pound of flesh" contract (J1161.2) is between a girl's (Shakespeare's Portia) father and her future husband; disguised as a male judge or ruler, the girl frees her husband from the ghoulish contract with her own father. In the words of several female narrators of tales belonging to the victorious female theme, "A woman needs to be a man" (Motif P149.0.18, "Manly woman, or girl [ ... ]: resolute, serious, business-like (no-nonsense gal)").

Throughout the ages and across the globe, the themes of "Disguise of man in woman's dress" (K1836) and "Disguise of woman in man's clothes" (K1837), along with their narrative correlates, have been recurrent. They appear in reports intended as fact as well as ones that are manifestly fiction. Thus, this ever-present theme may owe its impetus to its archetypal nature and the fact that it incorporates three of Jung's four fundamental archetypes, the persona, the anima, the animus, and the shadow: The persona (or outermost aspect of personality) conceals the true self; it is the mask that an individual wears publicly and is comparable to the concept of role-playing. The anima is the feminine characteristics in the male. The animus is the masculine characteristics in the female. The shadow (or darker self) is the inferior, animal-like part of the personality; it is something primitive in our human nature." (El-Shamy 1997, 38)

There are numerous tale types revolving around the character of the victorious female-as-male (K1837, "Disguise of woman in man's clothes"). Companion motifs — such as "Test of sex: to discover person masking as of other sex" (H1578) — provide narrative pattern elaboration.

The tale types in the cycle include the following: *Search in Man's Clothing* (Type 425K) — a subtype of *The Search for the Lost Husband* (Type 425); *The Forsaken Fiancée: Service in Man's Clothing* as Mental (Type 884); *The Girl Disguised as Man is Wooed by the Queen* (Type 884A); *The Girl as Soldier* (Type 884B); *Girl Dressed as a Man Deceives the King* (Type 884B*); and the new tale types: *Girl Raised as Boy Falls in Love with the Boy to Whom She Should Have Been Betrothed* (Play-mate) (Type 884G); and *Girl Wins Against Boy (Usually, Her Eldest Paternal-cousin) in a Contest of Worth—Typically, She Masks as Man* (Type 923C); see El-Shamy 1999, no. 9.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that Jung saw utilitarian functions for the hermaphroditism archetype. With reference to the role of hermaphroditism (and androgyny, its companion) in culture and society, Jung asserted, “Notwithstanding its monstrosity, the hermaphroditism has gradually turned into a subder of conflicts and a bringer of healing, and it acquired this meaning in relatively early phases of civilization” (Jung 1958, 139–140). The data designated as new Type 953B§, cited above—according to which a hermaphroditic’s experiences help in “freeing” a human captive—seem to lend support to Jung’s assertion.

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