

Myths of the World—Creation

Symbol of Chaos

In the ancient Babylonian epic “Enuma Elish,” it is imagined that at the beginning of the world’s creation, there existed nothing but a vast expanse of sea, not yet named as heaven or earth. This primordial sea was referred to by the names of two gods, Apsu and Tiamat. Apsu was a male god representing fresh water, while Tiamat was a female goddess representing salt water. It is said that heaven and earth were born when these two gods merged together

The tradition that in the beginning there was a sea or water, from which all things originated, is widely found in ancient myths that explain the creation of the world. This Babylonian creation myth, when traced further back, seems to have its origins in Sumerian tradition. The Sumerian goddess Nammu represented the primordial sea and was called the mother who gave birth to heaven, earth, and all the gods. Therefore, these kinds of myths appear to carry very ancient memories. The primordial sea or water mentioned in these myths symbolizes the chaos from which all things in the world were generated. They are symbols of the undifferentiated state before everything diversified

In ancient Egypt as well, the primordial chaos before the creation of heaven and earth was symbolized by the infinite sea. Before the creation of heaven and earth, there was nothing existing, only an endless sea in the dark abyss where not even waves stirred. This sea was called Nu. The concept of this primordial chaos was conceptualized by the eight gods of Hermopolis, with male gods taking the form of frogs and female gods taking the form of snakes, each symbolizing abyss, infinity, darkness, and invisibility. These forces interacted with each other and eventually became the power that gave birth to the sun.

In ancient Greece, according to Homer, the vast and boundless river Oceanus, encircling the earth and land like a serpent with its tail in its mouth, was considered the origin of all things and the father of all gods. Similarly, in the creation myths of the Aztecs of ancient Mexico, initially there was nothing, and it was imagined that the earth emerged from the endless expanse of water. In ancient Japanese mythology as well, the creation of heaven and earth is depicted as a newly formed land floating like oil or a jellyfish on the surface of the waters. In all these traditions, the great rivers and waters symbolize the chaotic state before the creation of the world.

In ancient Japanese mythology, it is imagined that the two gods Izanagi and Izanami, standing on the Floating Bridge of Heaven, stirred the sea with a spear and lifted it up; the drops of seawater dripping from the tip of the spear solidified and formed Onogoro Island, yet the concept of primordial chaos remains. Similar traditions exist in ancient India as well. There, it is said that gods, together with demons, churned the great ocean, causing its waters to turn into milk. From the frothy sea emerged the moon, wine, swift horses, jewels, physicians, and gods of fortune. It is also said that a deity presumed to be Hiranyagarbha (the golden embryo) impregnated the waters, from which fire was born. In Hinduism, Vishnu is worshipped as having slept atop the giant serpent Ananta on the primordial ocean that spread through the darkness. In all these traditions, the sea or water symbolizes the primordial chaos. The concept of creation from chaos remains in the submerged land creation theory, where humans or demons dive into the primordial waters or sea, bring back soil from the ocean floor, and use it to form the land.

In the ancient mythological world, water symbolized the undifferentiated state from which all forms emerged. It was considered the origin of all life, the wellspring of all existence, and the source of everything. We must recognize that there existed an ancient memory, as evidenced by Thales, the ancient Greek philosopher from around the 7th century BCE, who posited that water is the fundamental principle of all things

The primal chaotic state, considered as the origin of all things, is not merely symbolized by water alone. In ancient Phoenician mythology, it is said that in the beginning there was turbid, foaming atmosphere, the breath of wind, and profound darkness. It was through this breath that the elements mingled and all things were created. Even in the sixth century BCE, the ancient Greek philosopher Anaximenes traced the origin of all things to air, indicating a distant source for these ideas.

Water and air symbolize the primal chaos. Therefore, in ancient myths, this primordial chaotic state is sometimes directly referred to as chaos itself. In ancient Chinese creation myths, there was the concept of the primordial chaos from which the world was formed, as inferred from texts like the "Zhuangzi." Similarly, in Japanese mythology influenced by ancient Chinese historiography, it is described that before the separation of heaven and earth, yin and yang, the world was in a chaotic state without clear form. This chaotic world was dim and vast, with the potential of things contained within it, until eventually heaven and earth separated, and the gods were born. Ancient people saw the origin of all things in the world as an indistinct mixture, an unfathomable chaos where nothing was yet separated.

Chaos and Nothingness

In Greek, "chaos" originally meant a gaping void. According to Hesiod's "Theogony," Chaos first arose, from which broad-breasted Gaia (Earth), Tartarus, the dark abyss beneath the Earth, and Eros, the most beautiful among the immortal gods, were born. Here, Chaos, from which all things are said to originate, signifies a vast chasm with its wide-open mouth. Rather than the chaotic state we typically imagine, it might be better understood as representing an abyss.

In Norse mythology, in Snorri's "Edda," it is also said that at the end of the land where the sea ends, there is a colossal abyss, and to the north of it lies a world of cold mist like ice, and to the south, a world of fire. It's said that the clash of frost and scorching winds from these two worlds brought forth the primeval giant Ymir. Here too, at the beginning, an unfathomable abyss is imagined to exist beyond heaven, earth, and sea. This, rather than chaos, might be better described as nothingness. Ancient people saw in the abyss of nothingness the source from which all things arise.

In ancient creation myths, the term "chaos" often denotes an undifferentiated state rather than complete nothingness. However, what was believed to lie behind this primal chaos? Several creation myths suggest an imagining of absolute nothingness, devoid of sky, earth, gods, or humans. The primordial abyss seems to imply this.

Contrastingly, in the ancient Indian Rigveda hymns of creation, it is believed that there wasn't even nothingness. In the beginning, there was neither non-existence nor existence, neither atmosphere nor covering heavens, neither death nor immortality. Yet, it is imagined that from there emerged an unseen force akin to heat, which brought forth the singular entity. Here, it was thought that everything emerged from an absolute void.

In the 9th century, the Irish philosopher Erigena conceived of "nature that neither creates nor is created" as the ultimate nature. Additionally, in the 13th and 14th centuries, the German mystic Eckhart postulated a divinity behind God, considering it as more akin to nothingness and hidden darkness. One could argue they were attempting to perceive a pre-ontological world, as envisaged in ancient Indian creation myths. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the German philosopher Schelling, in seeking the basis for God's existence, identified an inner divine nature resembling a dark impulse, viewing it rather as a source of light within darkness, positing an abyss

behind God's existence. This too may stem from contemplating a similar type of world. Everything emerges from the void of voids, that is, as a negation of negation.

Generation from Chaos

Interpreting chaos as an undifferentiated state, whether symbolized by water or air, or understanding chaos as an abyss, a state of absolute nothingness or pre-existence, many creation myths across the world share the concept of the generation of all things from chaos, and the subsequent generation of order from that chaos. These cosmogonies do not propose creation from a supreme deity, nor formation of everything from a material substance by a creator, but rather emphasize the idea that all things emerge from chaos itself. It was believed that all things and their order come into being one after another from formless chaos. Here, the concept of generation takes precedence over that of creation or formation.

The ancient Greek philosopher Anaximander, around the 6th century BC., considered the origin of all things to be the "unlimited" or "infinite." From this chaotic "unlimited" state, he believed that opposing forces emerged, leading to the establishment of order — that is, the cosmos. This idea likely had its roots deeply embedded in the mythological world as well.

In today's physics, the concept of the generation of everything from chaos remains relevant. Indeed, contemporary physics seeks the origin of matter in something akin to an infinite sea of energy, from which matter is believed to emerge. Energy is transformed into matter, generating new particles much like vortices in the flow of a river. In this context, particles are described as oscillations or waves in the field with energy.

The same idea as modern physics existed in ancient India. In the hymns of creation in the Rig Veda, the universe was considered to be invisible waves, from which all things arise through some form of force. If we consider matter to exist, the source of infinite energy can be called nothingness. However, it is a rich nothingness, a creative nothingness, an infinite potentiality. All existence has emerged from this creative nothingness.

It seems that modern cosmology is also shaped by the idea of emergence from chaos. In particular, in the Big Bang theory, the universe began with a sudden explosion from a high-energy chaotic state at its core. This was accompanied by rapid expansion, leading to the formation of atoms, molecules, galaxies, and stars as temperature and density decreased. This concept bears resemblance to many creation myths worldwide that describe the genesis of everything from chaos.

Today's cosmology seems to be attempting to derive the origin of this universe from a state of nothingness before the Big Bang. Of course, this pre-Big Bang nothingness is not absolute emptiness or void; rather, it is thought of as an ocean containing infinite energy. This universe has emerged from a vacuum sea filled with energy and waves. The universe constantly evolves and progresses through the process of creating order out of chaos. It must be said that the power to create order from this initial chaotic state was inherent in the energy of the primordial chaos. When it comes to the concept of the creation of everything from chaos, both today's physics and cosmological worldview, ancient philosophical perspectives, and primordial mythical perspectives have not changed all that much.

The cosmogonic mythologies that explain the creation of the universe from chaos generally posit that the world emerged spontaneously from some form of primordial substance or embryo, without intervention from a creator god. This generative creation theory suggests that the world did not originate from a divine act of creation, but rather emerged from a chaotic state.

The creation myths found everywhere in the world explain how all things come into being, how gods are born, how the land is formed, and how humanity came into existence. They express a sense of wonder towards the existence of the world itself. It is precisely this sense of wonder that serves as the starting point for religious feelings. From this primal sense of wonder, creation-myths have emerged.

The generative creation-myth explains the creation of the world through the principle of "generation." In other words, it narrates the emergence of all things from the primordial chaotic state. It was believed that both the world and the gods themselves were endlessly generated. At its core lies the question of "what is existence?" The generative creation myth addresses this question by inquiring into how existence came to be. Essentially, it captures existence through the principle of generation. Here, existence is reduced to generation. To exist is nothing other than to become. The transition from non-being to being, that is generation itself, is considered the essence of the universe.

In the fifth century BC, Heraclitus, who preached the perpetual flux of all things, considered that to exist is nothing but to undergo generation, making generation the principle of the world. He viewed the world as eternal generation. One could say that Heraclitus' philosophy of generation was also a reinterpretation of the worldview found in earlier ancient myths.

In the worldview presented by modern physics and cosmology, the same concept is echoed. Contemporary physics, describing the microcosm, and modern cosmology, describing the macrocosm, both expound on the creation of matter and the universe from a chaotic sea of energy. Both matter and the universe are phenomena that have come into being and are continuously being generated. Here again, existence is reduced to creation.

In another sense, ancient myths attempt to explain the existence of things through a principle of "birth". They believed that an infinite power, operating at the root of the universe, brings forth objects, and through this generative power, all things come into being. The productive force of the universe is inexhaustible, generating everything from there. In this lies the ancient people's profound faith in infinite vitality.

For ancient people, nature was synonymous with living nature. Therefore, concepts such as *physis* in Greek, meaning "nature," and *natura* in Latin, also meaning "nature," originally carried the sense of self-generation. This similarity holds true in Eastern cultures as well.

Many philosophers, whether the Stoic philosophers of ancient Rome or the philosophers of early modern Europe, must be said to have drawn on ancient memories when they conceived of nature as living and productive. For instance, the Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno in the 16th century believed nature housed a sacred power, viewing nature as *natura naturans*, the productive nature. Similarly, in the 17th century, Dutch philosopher Spinoza conceived of God as nature itself and, following Bruno, saw this nature as *natura naturans*, capable of infinitely producing countless things. Schelling, building upon Spinoza's ideas, also regarded nature as an infinite productive power, the true nature, endlessly active and productive like the swirls in a river that create eddies, encountering resistance yet giving birth to material as its product. Thus, material substances themselves are also products of generation.

In the latter half of the 20th century in natural sciences, represented by figures like Prigogine, nature is understood as a self-organizing process. Nature forms and develops itself, possessing the ability to create order within itself.

However, the concept of viewing nature as a living entity and the universe as a living being has roots that trace back to ancient myth.

The universe is a vast, continuous flow that has been generating and evolving incessantly from eternity past. It is an infinite force of activity and perpetual creation. Creation itself is the essence of the universe. At its core, the universe is driven by an infinite, unceasing primal life force that endlessly creates and manifests all things.

A profound sense of awe and reverence towards this cosmic life was the primitive religious sentiment that gave rise to ancient religions. Ancient creation myths, which narrate the generation of all things from chaos, appear to at least hint at these rich perspectives on nature and the universe.

The creation myths around the world often tell of the birth of everything from a primordial egg, a concept known as "generation from chaos." This idea is found throughout various cultures, such as in the accompanying texts of the ancient Indian Vedas, where the creator god, Prajapati, is said to have been born from a golden egg. Before the creation of the world, the primal waters that existed desired to reproduce, generating a golden egg through the power of heat. After a year passed, Prajapati emerged from within it, and another year later, from this god's speech, earth, sky, and heaven were born. Subsequently, many other gods were said to have been born.

The story of Ilmatar from the Finnish epic "Kalevala" conveys a similar imaginative tale. Tired of her infertility and lonely life, Ilmatar, the daughter of the air spirit, fell into the sea, became pregnant by the touch of the wind, and floated on the waves for seven hundred years. Eventually, a teal landed on her knee and laid eggs; one of the eggs fell and broke, with the bottom half becoming the earth, the upper half the sky, the yolk the sun, the white the moon, the speckled parts the stars, and the dark parts the clouds.

The same idea exists in the Orphic teachings of ancient Greece. In the beginning, there was chaos, night, abyss, and the underworld. Among these, Night, with dark wings, laid the wind's egg in the endless chasm of the abyss. From this egg, Eros, adorned with golden wings on his back, was born. Eros combined with the underworld and the chaotic darkness of night, giving birth to heaven, sea, earth, and the sacred gods.

In the cosmogony of ancient Phoenicia, even in their world creation theory, it is said that the atmosphere above the dust of the sky and the clouds, the ether, contained the wind as a creative force filled with its own desire for creation. From this, Chaos and the Egg were born, and Chaos is said to have cracked this Egg, forming heaven and earth from its two halves.

In ancient Egypt, it is said that the eight gods of Hermopolis, born from the primordial ocean Nun, first laid a gigantic egg. From this egg, the sun god Ra was born, and from him, all living beings emerged.

In today's Big Bang theory, it is believed that the universe was suddenly created by the explosion of an infinitely small nucleus with infinite mass. The imagery depicted in modern cosmogony is deeply connected, in its profound aspects, to the primal egg envisioned by ancient humans.

The primal egg in ancient cosmogonies likely symbolized the primordial chaos. Biological eggs contain undifferentiated potentialities from which all growth and development emerge. It signifies an undifferentiated wholeness, a potentiality of wholeness, and a chaos that potentially encompasses everything.

The act of breaking an egg, or the phenomenon of an egg breaking, signifies the primal negation. Through the breaking of the egg, all opposites such as light and darkness, heaven and earth, male and female, come into existence. The primal chaos must be negated. The primal potentiality must deny itself in order to unfold itself. Otherwise, wholeness cannot manifest, and the primal potentiality remains mere possibility, rendering the world inactive. The primal chaotic symbol of the universe's fundamental life, in order to truly be alive, must negate itself and overcome its primal state. It must divide and externalize itself. Only then does the world become visible.

The ancient cosmogonic theory that the universe is born from primordial egg symbolically narrates a negative catalyst in creation. This creation myth also tells of

the idea of emergence from chaos, emphasizing that in order for all things to come into being, the primordial chaos must be negated.

The creation myths that tell of the origin of everything not from a primordial egg, but from the corpses of primordial giants or monsters, are also found in various parts of the world, and they express similar ideas.

For example, according to hymns in the ancient Indian Rig-Veda, there existed a primordial giant named Purusha with a thousand heads, eyes, and feet. When the gods sacrificed this giant, hymns, chants, and rituals arose. Furthermore, all kinds of livestock such as horses, cattle, sheep, and goats were created. From the giant's mouth emerged priests, from his arms came the nobility, from his thighs came the common people, and from his feet came the servants. Moreover, from his heart came the moon, from his eyes came the sun, from his mouth came the gods Indra and Agni, and from his breath arose the wind gods. It is also said that from his navel came the sky, from his head came the heavens, from his feet came the earth, and from his ears came the directions.

In the Norse mythology text "Snorri's Edda," this myth of the dismemberment of the giant also appears as the myth of the creation from the corpse of the primeval giant Ymir. Born from the primal abyss, Ymir was nourished by the milk of a primeval cow born from the drops of frost. He was eventually killed by the gods and giants born from the rock, and the world was made from his corpse. His flesh became the earth, his blood the seas, lakes, and rivers, his bones the mountains, his bone fragments the rocks, his hair the trees and grass, his skull the sky, and his brains the clouds.

In the ancient Babylonian myth "Enuma Elish," there is a similar tale told of Marduk's slaying of Tiamat. Marduk battled Tiamat, the primordial goddess who had taken the form of a serpent-like monster, and killed her. He split her corpse into two halves: with one half he created the heavens, and with the other half he created the earth. From her head, he made mountains, and from her eyes, he formed the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

The well-known Chinese myth of Pangu also tells the story of the creation of the world through the transformation of a giant's body. Heaven and Earth, born from the primordial qi, sensed the duality of yin and yang and thus gave birth to a giant named

Pangu. When Pangu died, his breath became the wind and clouds, his voice became thunder, his left eye became the sun, his right eye became the moon, his limbs and torso became mountains, his blood flowed as rivers, his flesh turned into soil, his hair and beard became stars, his body hair became grass and trees, his teeth and bones transformed into metals and stones, his sweat became rain, and the insects that had lived on his body became humanity.

The creation myths involving the transformation of corpses all share a common feature: rather than explaining the world's creation solely by a single god, they propose that the world was formed through the sacrifice of primeval giants or monsters. These myths are said to reflect rituals of sacrifice that have been practiced since prehistoric times.

As Jensen has pointed out, the myth of useful cultivated plants emerging from the corpse of a goddess is widely preserved around the world. It is said to originate from the mythologies that have been passed down since the Neolithic Age, when humans discovered agriculture. One famous example is the Hainuwele myth, where it is said that tubers and grains sprouted from the corpse of the Earth goddess after she was killed. The mythologies that explain world creation through the sacrifice of giants likely evolved from this ancient myth of corpse-revival that has been passed down since the Neolithic Age.

In the myths of these corpse-reviving primordial beings, the original giants and monsters are considered to symbolize the primordial chaos, just as the original egg did, expressing the entirety of primordial existence. Moreover, the sacrifice of these primordial giants and monsters through being "killed" or "dying" represents the negation of the primordial, akin to the cracking of the original egg. Through the sacrifice of these giants and monsters, the entire world and all things come into being. For true entirety to manifest as entirety, the primordial entirety must be negated and fragmented. Rather than believing that the whole is formed by synthesizing parts, it is thought that the world manifests and becomes visible through the splitting of the whole into parts, much like cells divide, not from parts to the whole but from the whole to the parts. These myths narrate a life-theoretical worldview that considers the world as generating from the whole to the part, rather than from the part to the whole.

These myths express also the idea that individual entities exist within the whole, while the whole flows through individual entities. It discusses how the newly generated world contains a divided aspect of the original divine entity that was sacrificed. As the whole is negated and becomes individual, the whole lives within the individual. Similarly, the whole exists within the individual, and the individual within the whole. The myth explaining the creation of all things through the sacrifice of a divine existence symbolically narrates profound philosophical thoughts.

The world is the body of God, and all things are the manifestation of God. In this respect, the ideas conveyed by the cosmogonic myths we have discussed so far resonate with the emanationist thought of the third-century mystic philosopher of ancient Rome, Plotinus. The primal One flows forth from itself like water springing from a fountain, becoming the entirety of the cosmos. All things flow forth from God.

These creation myths can also be understood as expressing the idea that 'the one is many, and the many are one.' Above all, they speak of the concept that the entirety of the universe and all things already exist within the primal egg or divine existence—that is, the many exist within the one. For instance, in the ancient Indian myth of the primeval giant Purusha, it is said that he had a thousand heads, eyes, and feet, emphasizing the idea of the many within the one. Furthermore, the notion that everything emerges from the primal egg or divine existence signifies the birth of the many from the one; thus, it also speaks of the one flowing forth into the many. Moreover, these creation myths symbolize the necessity of negation and division between the one and the many, expressed through the imagery of the egg's division or the sacrifice of the giant. The primal egg or giant symbolizes the primordial life force of the universe from which everything originates. Between this cosmic life and all things of the universe, there exists affirmation along with negation, and continuity alongside discontinuity.

Division from One to Two

In creation myths found throughout the world, the primordial chaos from which all things emerge is often symbolized by water, abysses, or represented by primal cosmic eggs or giant beings. However, when this primordial entity is personified as a single deity, it is commonly expressed as a hermaphroditic god. This hermaphroditic deity symbolizes the totality and completeness of the primordial whole. Ancient Indian

primordial giant Purusha, for example, was also considered hermaphroditic. Reflecting this, deities like Dyaus and Shiva are also sometimes considered hermaphroditic. In ancient Mexico, the Aztec god responsible for the beginning of the universe, Ometeotl, is also a hermaphroditic deity. It is said that he resides at the center of the world, and is considered both the father and mother of all the gods that emerge from there, spreading outwards in all directions.

Ancient people's thinking is dominated by symbolic thought, which expresses universality through particularities. Therefore, the unified wholeness of heaven and earth, yin and yang, is symbolically expressed through the biological terms of sexual ambiguity, referred to as hermaphroditism. Hermaphroditic gods in ancient myths actually carry philosophical significance. They represent nothing less than expressions of wholeness and completeness.

In Plato's well-known dialogue "Symposium," he introduces a famous mythological story of the original human being, which was also presented by the contemporary playwright Aristophanes. This story likely originates from a distant mythical world. According to it, humans were originally creatures with two heads, four arms, and four legs, joined back-to-back as one entity composed of both male and female halves. These original humans were powerful and rebellious against the gods, so Zeus split them into two, resulting in the separation of male and female. As a consequence, men and women forever seek their other half, their original counterpart, in a quest to become whole again. Whether describing the hermaphroditic original humans or the hermaphroditic gods, this myth expresses a longing for unity and completeness.

Therefore, hermaphroditic gods also embody the idea of the unity of opposites. In the primordial god, who is complete, opposites such as heaven and earth, yin and yang, light and darkness, are unified as one. The 15th-century philosopher Nicholas of Cusa believed that what opposes each other in finite things becomes unified in infinite things. Thus, under the principle of God as infinite, all opposites are unified. However, ancient myths had already anticipated this idea of the unity of opposites, contrary to that of Cusa.

The primal unity, however, must, to come to know its own completeness, paradoxically divide into two opposing entities, rather than remain undivided. Unity splits into duality. It is through separating and giving birth to opposites that generation

and creation occur. Without the emergence of opposites, neither generation nor creation is possible. Just as in the cells of living organisms, division is an essential catalyst for generation and creation. Through this division, wholeness and completeness are fragmented into finite parts.

The generation of the world consists only in the separation of opposites, and therein must lie negativity. As the German mystic Jacob Boehme stated in the 16th and 17th centuries, God is infinite power and life as absolute affirmation, yet God cannot know himself without absolute self-negation by God himself. The world persists through perpetually creating opposites.

The generative power of this antagonist originates from the contrast between existence and non-existence. The primordial chaos is an undifferentiated state of existence and non-existence, the point of contact between the two. Therefore, it is filled with a fundamental force, like a taut bow, striving to create everything. Within itself, it already possesses the power to negate itself and generate antagonists. Hence, the primal unity splits into two, giving rise to the creation of the entire world. This concept of division from unity to duality is already expressed in creation myths where the primal cosmic egg or the primeval giant is divided or sacrificed to bring forth the heavens and the earth.

One of the most representative concepts discussing the creation of adversaries from fundamental opposition is found in creation myths that exist worldwide, notably those that depict the separation of heaven and earth. These myths narrate how, from an initial state of undivided heaven and earth, the antagonistic entities of heaven and earth were divided.

The myth of Rangi and Papa of the Maori people in New Zealand is also one of the creation myths of the separation of heaven and earth. In the beginning of the world, there were the heavenly father Rangi and the earth mother Papa. They loved each other deeply and embraced each other, giving birth to many gods. However, the gods born between them were cramped in the darkness between their bodies. Many gods tried to discover the difference between light and darkness and make efforts to separate them, but the heavenly father and earth mother held each other tightly and would not part. Finally, Tane Mahuta, the god of forests and all that dwell within them, exerted all his strength, stood upside down, stretched himself out, and finally Rangi

and Papa began to move apart from each other. And so, even now, it is said that heaven and earth remain far apart.

The same kind of cosmogonic myth about the separation of heaven and earth also existed in ancient Greece. According to Hesiod's "Theogony," from the primordial Chaos emerged first Gaia, the Earth Mother, and from her emerged Uranus, the Sky. Gaia and Uranus then married and produced the gods known as the Titans. Cronus, the youngest of these Titan gods, following Gaia's plan due to her discord with Uranus, castrated Uranus with a great sickle, thereby severing the marital bond between Gaia and Uranus. Since then, it is said that heaven and earth have been separated.

In ancient Egypt, the sun god Atum, who emerged from the primordial ocean Nun, gave birth to the first pair of deities, Shu (air) and Tefnut (water), from within himself. Shu and Tefnut then married and gave birth to the earth god Geb and the sky goddess Nut. Goddess Nut lay over Geb, her husband, and they had four children together. However, at the command of Atum, Shu separated them from each other.

The creation myths of Greece and Egypt probably have their origins in the Sumerian creation myth. The Sumerian term for the universe is "Anki," which signifies the unified heaven and earth. Anki, or heaven and earth, emerged from the primordial sea represented by the goddess Nammu. Through the sacred union of heaven and earth, the atmosphere god Enlil was born. However, it is said that the birth of this child led to the separation of the heaven and earth deities.

The mythological story that the heavens and earth were originally joined together but became separated and distanced due to a certain event is found in various parts of the world. These myths all speak of the idea that the visible world came into being through the separation from unity to duality.

Many myths, not just creation myths like those of the origin of heaven and earth or the separation of heaven and earth, explain the generation of gods as one deity giving birth to two or more other gods. In such cases, the question arises of how one deity could generate others from themselves. Ancient myths creatively address this issue using biological metaphors. Just as single-celled organisms reproduce by division to create many individuals, some myths suggest gods were generated through a form of asexual reproduction. There are also stories likening the process to plants propagating

through cuttings, where new gods emerge from parts of the original deity's body. Many myths tell of gods creating other gods from their saliva, vomit, tears, or other bodily secretions, offering explanations for this perplexing question.

In Hinduism, worshippers of the supreme god Shiva revere him as the highest deity. They believe that both Vishnu, the supreme god of the same Hindu tradition, and Brahma, the creator god, were born from a massive, erect phallus called the linga of Shiva. According to their beliefs, Vishnu and Brahma once argued over who was the true creator of the world in the primordial ocean. Suddenly, a gigantic phallus rose above the sea, extending infinitely upwards and downwards. Eventually, Shiva emerged from the cleft of this phallus, declaring himself as the source of both gods and bringing an end to their dispute. This narrative also describes the creation of gods through a form of asexual reproduction.

The so-called virgin conception myths belong to the method of explaining the birth of gods through parthenogenesis. In ancient Greece, the goddess Gaia of the earth is said to have, on her own, given birth to the sky (Ouranos), mountains, and the sea (Pontus), assuming virgin conception. Similarly, the Christian virgin conception myth states that the Virgin Mary conceived the spirit of God while remaining a virgin, and gave birth to the son of God, Jesus, drawing upon the cultural backdrop of these ancient religions.

The stories of the birth of gods through parthenogenetic means, whether by a male god, a female goddess, or a hermaphroditic deity, should all be considered myths attempting to convey that within a single supreme deity resides all the subsequent powers of the world. This concept elucidates how the transition from one to two comes into being.

The fusion from two into one

However, that which has divided into two must also, simultaneously, create something new by combining back into one. What has manifested in opposition within the two can also resolve that opposition by reuniting into one, thereby gaining new vitality.

The widespread presence of myths depicting two deities, male and female, who were originally separated but married and gave birth to many gods, speaks to the concept of generation through the union of these two principles. The idea of new gods being born from the marriage and reproductive acts of the male and female deities is indeed a primitive one. However, it reflects a worldview that seeks to understand the universe through the model of life, and holds a belief in the infinite life force. This faith in a primordial life force constituted the essence of ancient religions. The feeling of unity with this primordial life is a fundamental religious sentiment that humanity has cherished since the earliest times of standing upon the earth as humans. Myths express this sentiment through the sacred union of the male and female deities.

The myth of the island creation by the two Japanese gods Izanagi and Izanami was also one of the sacred union tales of the heavenly gods. The male and female gods, Izanagi and Izanami, descended from heaven onto the island they created by stirring the sea of the underworld. There, they came together as husband and wife, giving birth to many islands of Japan. This story of island creation through the primal union of Izanagi and Izanami also reflects the belief that all things are brought forth only through the union of heaven and earth.

In ancient Greece, Gaia, the Earth mother born from the primordial Chaos, gave birth to Uranus herself. She then married Uranus and together they produced many gods and giants.

In ancient Egypt as well, from Shu and Tefnut, the male earth god Geb and the sky goddess Nut were born. Geb and Nut married, and from them came four gods: Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. Here, unlike in other myths, the division of heaven and earth and male and female roles is reversed, but the concept remains unchanged that new life is born from the sacred union of the sky and earth gods.

The ancient concept among people was that through the sacred marriage of the Heavenly Father and Earth Mother, the gods were generated. According to this notion, for all things to come into being, there was a belief that they needed to return to the immense life force of the pre-separation universe, before heaven and earth split apart. The sacred marriage of heaven and earth symbolizes a return to the fundamental life force of the universe before their separation. Prior to the creation of heaven and earth and all things, it was believed that there existed vast chaos, which was considered to

embody the fundamental life of the universe. To generate new life, it was necessary to return to this fundamental life. The background of the idea that the union of opposites can generate new life lies in the belief that only by returning to the unity and completeness that existed before the separation of opposites can new things be created. Such philosophies are implicit in the concept of the sacred marriage of heaven and earth.

In ancient myths, the prevalence of tales involving incest among the gods was a natural consequence of such beliefs. The heavenly male deity and the earthly female deity were often thought to have emerged from the same primordial chaos, a hermaphroditic deity, or the union of a primordial father and mother deity. Therefore, the divine pair representing heaven and earth were symbolically conceived as siblings born from the same source. The sacred union of these celestial and terrestrial deities was understood primarily through the concept of sibling incest, as there seemed to be no other way to express the idea that new gods were born from their union.

The myth of the Japanese gods Izanagi and Izanami is thought to have its origins in the sibling ancestor flood myth widely distributed from southern China through Southeast Asia to central India. Therefore, it is conjectured that the divine marriage of Izanagi and Izanami was also a sibling marriage. The sibling ancestor flood myth is a myth where a brother and sister who survived a great flood marry and establish a new human society.

Even in cases like the marriage of Geb and Nut in ancient Egypt, who were born from the same Shu and Tefnut, the structure inevitably leads to sibling marriage, not necessarily in the form of a flood myth involving siblings. In some instances, this takes the form of a mother-son marriage. For example, the marriage of Gaia and Uranus in ancient Greece takes this form of mother-son marriage. However, it is reasonable to consider this as an exceptional case.

In this passage, the concept of consanguineous marriage symbolically represents the contradictory logic of separation and union between one and two. It portrays the creation of two from one through siblings born of the same parents, and the subsequent recombination of these separated twos back into one through sibling marriage. The term "siblings" expresses both the shared origin from one and the separation into two simultaneously. Through sibling marriage, it attempts to depict the

union of two back into one. Thus, in various myths, a lineage of creation unfolds where one divides into two, these divided twos reunite into one, and thus new twos are continually born. This logic of mythology constitutes a dialectic of creation.

In ancient Egypt, the sun god Atum was born from the primordial chaos represented by the sea Nun. From Atum came air (Shu) and moisture (Tefnut), and through their union as siblings, the earth (Geb) and the sky (Nut) were born. From the incestuous union of these sky and earth gods, Osiris, the king of the underworld, and the fertility goddess Isis, as well as Set and Nephthys, were born. It is said that the source of the Egyptian kingship, Horus, was born from the incestuous union of Osiris and Isis.

The genealogy of these gods explains the creation of all things from chaos through a logic of one to two, two to one, and one to two. This genealogy, found in myths from various cultures, is constructed by such a logic of creation. At the same time, it symbolically attempts to express a vast cosmology through this process. It harbors a profound existential worldview that captures existence from the perspective of generation.

The Principle of Battle

Mythology not only explains the creation of all things through principles of division from one to two and unity from two to one, but also through battles between generations of gods, it describes the genesis of everything and its order.

For instance, the ancient Babylonian "Enuma Elish" narrates the battle between younger gods and older gods, culminating in the triumph of the hero-god Marduk, who becomes the sovereign ruler. Ea kills Apsu, who sought to annihilate the noisy younger gods, and Marduk, born from Ea and Damkina, battles the monstrous Tiamat. He seizes dominion over the world and establishes its order.

In Hesiod's "Theogony" from ancient Greece, there is also a tale of Uranus, Cronus, and Zeus, spanning three generations of conflict. Cronus castrated Uranus, seizing control of the heavens, while Zeus subsequently fought Cronus to claim dominion over the world.

In the mythology of the ancient Aztecs of Mexico, the transition of the five ages of the sun is recounted through the battles of the four brother gods: the red Tezcatlipoca, the black Tezcatlipoca, Quetzalcoatl, and Huitzilopochtli. When a victorious god creates a new world, and when a god is defeated, the next victor creates yet another world. Thus, the cycle of creation and destruction of the world is depicted.

Mythologies that recount battles among gods for control over the world all describe the process whereby the order of the universe is generated through these conflicts. In them lies the idea that conflict is the origin of everything and its creation.

Similarly, Zoroastrian dualistic doctrine, which explains the creation of the world through the conflict between the two opposing forces of good and evil gods, also speaks of creation through the battle of gods and their adversaries.

In the Zoroastrian belief, Ahura Mazda, the omniscient and omnipotent god representing ultimate goodness, and Angra Mainyu, the source of evil, are destined to battle for a period of 12,000 years. During the first 3,000 years, Ahura Mazda created the sky, water, earth, plants, animals, and humans, but kept them invisible. In the subsequent 3,000 years, these creations became visible, and Angra Mainyu attempted to invade the world created by Ahura Mazda but was repelled. However, in the following 3,000 years, Angra Mainyu regained strength and began attacking Ahura Mazda's creation, introducing death, destruction, sickness, and various vices previously unknown to the world. In the final 3,000-year period, the savior Zoroaster will appear. It is believed we are currently in this last period of 3,000 years, a time characterized by a mixture of good and evil, with a savior appearing every thousand years.

The myth of world creation by the dual gods of good and evil in Zoroastrianism also speaks to the idea that conflict is the driving force behind creation. As Heraclitus suggests, strife is the father and king of all things. Through the struggle of opposing forces, creative elements emerge. Just as a bow and its string work against each other to function, all things come into being through conflict. Many myths around the world, not just the extreme dualism of Zoroastrianism, feature tricksters or rebels who hinder the creator's efforts, highlighting how conflict is often a catalyst for creation.

Through division from one to two, union from two to one, and the struggle of opposites, all things are created. The world evolves from chaos to order. Light and

darkness, time and space, heaven and earth, sun and moon, day and night, stars, underworld, land and sea, mountains and rivers, fields, metals and stones, animals and plants, and humans—all things are created, and their order is formed.

The primordial life of the universe, which began to operate within the original chaos, differentiated itself in myriad ways from unity to multiplicity, expressing itself fully within that diversity. The world itself embodies the perpetual creation from unity to multiplicity. The unity operates within the multiplicity, and the multiplicity operates within the unity. This is the principle of creation.

Ancient Indian Hindu gods best exemplify this truth. For instance, Vishnu, deified as the radiant power of the sun, is imagined to have incarnated in various forms during the epic and Puranic ages: as a boar, a man-lion, a dwarf, a fish, a turtle, Parashurama (Rama with an axe), Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki (the white horse). Indian gods generally manifest in multiple incarnations, displaying a fluid and ever-changing appearance. This symbolizes the cosmic principle of unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

The life in the universe is both the unity of multiplicity and the multiplicity of unity. Unity operates within multiplicity, and multiplicity operates within unity. The fundamental unity exists within all things, and all things exist within the fundamental unity. Creation myths from around the world that speak of emergence from chaos, at the very least, express such truths.

The Idealistic Myth of World Creation

In creation myths that explain how the world came into being, one or multiple gods are said to have created the universe and everything within it through various means. Particularly, in Hebrew mythology, the singular supreme God is depicted as creating the world alone. According to the account in the "Book of Genesis" from the Old Testament, God first created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, with darkness over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness, calling the light "day" and the darkness "night." Thus, from then on,

through God's word, the sky, the earth, the seas, plants, stars, the sun, the moon, birds, fish, insects, livestock, wild animals, and humans were created.

The first water mentioned in Genesis likely symbolizes the primordial chaos. If so, then the creation myth of the Old Testament also must trace its origins to an earlier cosmogony that describes the generation from chaos. Certainly, in this creation myth of Genesis, the ordering of chaos is achieved through the divine power of God's word, transcending chaos itself. This aspect of creation by a transcendent God distinguishes it from other myths and indeed characterizes it as unique to Judeo-Christian tradition. Here lies the difference in worldview between "generation" and "creation."

The creation myth that everything in the world was created from words is not just found in the Old Testament but is also present in various cultures around the world. For example, in the myth surrounding the ancient Indian deity Prajapati, there is a part about creation through words. It is said that Prajapati emerged after a golden egg cracked open, and upon speaking, words of this god became the earth, the sky, and the heavens.

In ancient Egypt, there is a similar creation myth. In the mythology concerning the god Ptah, it is said that this deity created everything by thinking in his heart and calling out their names using his tongue. It was believed that the power of his utterances, by vocalizing the names of all things, endowed life to everything.

The concept of creation through the power of words, as seen in myths worldwide, necessitates viewing the creation myth of the Old Testament as having ancient and pagan origins. Indeed, whether considering Japan's belief in kotodama (the spirit of words) or the Greek reverence for logos, in ancient times, words were believed to possess great spiritual power capable of influencing events. Words were thought to

hold infinite vitality and were considered the force that brought order out of chaos. This faith in the spiritual power of words is also evident in the Old Testament.

In addition to those that describe the creation of all things from language, many creation myths also include stories where desires, wills, thoughts, and other aspects give birth to the universe. These myths emphasize a somewhat idealistic cosmogony that places importance on psychological catalysts in creation. For instance, in the ancient Indian Rig-Veda, creation through desire is mentioned. It speaks of an initial state where only water existed, containing the seed of life. From this seed with life, desire arose, and from that desire, everything else was born.

In ancient India's Brahmaṇa period, the creator Nārāyaṇa, by his own will, also created all things. For a long time, Nārāyaṇa floated on the primeval waters, atop a leaf of the bodhi tree, inhaling his own feet. After this introspective dialogue, through his will to create, the universe took shape. It is said that the azure sky emerged from his nose, heaven and the sun from his eyelids, pilgrimage sites from his ears, clouds and rain from his hair, flashes of lightning from his beard, rocks from his nails, and mountains from his bones.

In the primordial ocean, Vishnu, the god who slept lying on the great serpent Ananta with his colossal body, had already been envisioning the entirety of the world that would eventually be created. When the time for creation arrived, a lotus sprouted from Vishnu's navel, from which emerged Brahma, the creator god with four faces. It is said that this lotus flower became the earth, and the world that Vishnu had dreamed of came into existence as reality.

Whether through linguistic creation, creation from desire or will, creation from dreams or thoughts, in any case, I hold the concept that the world was created from mental activity. The notion that the world was created by this mental power requires

us to acknowledge an idealistic worldview that posits mental power at the root of the world.

Certainly, this world is not merely constituted by material alone. There must exist a mental force that shapes, integrates, and gives order to material substances. The fundamental force operating at the root of the universe is also a mental force, which not only shapes matter but also becomes the life force that sustains living organisms, the soul that animates animals, and the spirit that moves human beings. The creation myths that describe the world's origin from spiritual action emphasize this mental force at work in the cosmos. Anaxagoras, an ancient Greek philosopher around the 5th century BCE, conceived of "nous" (intellect or reason) as the principle giving order and motion to the world, yet this spiritual principle moving the world had already been discussed in earlier ancient creation myths.

The concept of creation through language in Hebrew mythology can also be seen as belonging to this idealistic theory of creation. However, Hebrew mythology unifies the creation of all things in such a world under the concept of the creation by a single transcendent God. In other words, it explains creation by the concept of "existence itself" or "the one who exists," creating "that which exists." Remaining issues in this worldview include how the God as existence itself relates to chaos or the prior non-being, which may not be fully resolved. The subsequent theological and philosophical efforts in the Judeo-Christian tradition can be said, in a sense, to have been dedicated to solving this greatest problem.

Creation and destruction

In world mythology, there existed the concept of the created world being destroyed, then recreated, and this cycle repeating. It was believed that the world continually renewed itself through a process of constant creation and destruction.

At its end, the world would return to its origins, revert to primal chaos, and be recreated once again.

The flood myths found in many cultures around the world symbolically narrate the concepts of creation and destruction. These myths typically describe the world being destroyed by a great flood, with only a few human survivors, and after the waters recede, a new world begins again. The deluge plunges the world back into chaos, but from there, an ordered world is reconstructed, and a new life begins anew.

In Sumerian tradition, this flood legend is recounted as the story of King Ziusudra. According to this legend, despite opposition from some gods in the pantheon, a decision is made to cause a flood and bring about the extinction of humanity. King Ziusudra learns of this decision from his patron deity and manages to escape this great flood. After seven days and seven nights, the sun rises again. The king prostrates himself before the sun god and is granted eternal life by the supreme deity, living thereafter in paradise.

The flood myth of Sumer was later incorporated, with some modifications, into the well-known Epic of Gilgamesh from ancient Babylon. Utnapishtim, the king granted eternal life, spoke to Gilgamesh, who sought the secret of immortality, as follows: The gods decided to bring about a great flood to destroy humanity, but the god Ea informed Utnapishtim of their decision and instructed him on how to escape the deluge. Following the god's instructions, Utnapishtim demolished his house and built a large, square boat with six decks, on which he loaded his possessions, family, servants, and animals. Then, torrential rains fell, causing a great flood that lasted six days and nights. Thus, humanity perished and turned to clay. However, on the seventh day, the waters subsided, and the boat came to rest on Mount Nisir. When a dove was released, it returned; when a raven was released, it did not. Thus, they knew the floodwaters had receded, and Utnapishtim and his family survived, as the tale goes.

The Hebrew flood legend of the Old Testament, and the tradition of Noah's Ark, were likely created based on common source materials with this Babylonian legend. However, in Hebrew mythology, the interpretation was added that a great flood was caused by God, and humanity was destroyed due to human sin. Therefore, the idea was also introduced that only the righteous would be saved before God. It was believed that in order to recreate an orderly human world and return to its original perfection, the corrupted human world had to be destroyed, and the sinful world thoroughly annihilated.

The myth of Deucalion from Greek mythology belongs to the same category of flood myths with similar motifs. Zeus, having witnessed humanity's extreme corruption, caused a great flood to destroy them. However, he allowed the righteous man Deucalion and his wife to survive the disaster by boarding an ark. Upon reaching Mount Parnassus and descending from the ark after the waters receded, they threw stones over their shoulders. These stones transformed into men and women, thus giving rise to the many humans who followed. They are believed to be the ancestors of humanity today.

In contrast, in the ancient Indian text 'Shatapatha Brahmana', this flood myth is told as the story of the sage Manu. When Manu fostered a fish, it warned him that a flood would come and advised him to build an ark. Following its instructions, when the flood came, the fish guided the ark to the Himalayan mountains, where Manu was saved. However, being alone, Manu performed a sacrifice, during which the offerings transformed into a woman. He married this woman and had offspring with her.

The sibling ancestor-type flood myths widely found in Asia do not involve themes of human corruption. However, they share a commonality with other flood myths in that they depict the survival of the first humans who become ancestors of humanity after a great flood. In these myths, surviving siblings emerge from the flood and often stand on rocks or mountains that rise above the water, eventually marrying

and giving birth to descendants of humanity. When considering the story of Japan's Izanagi and Izanami, who married on an island emerging from the water, it is plausible to interpret it as a remnant of this sibling ancestor-type flood myth.

In Aztec mythology, there is a similar flood myth. According to the Aztecs, the creation of the world occurred four times, each time under the rule of different gods, with different kinds of humans believed to have subsisted on different types of food. The great flood happened in the fourth era, during which all humans were said to have been transformed into fish. After this flood destroyed the world, the heavens, the earth, and humans were recreated. Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl were responsible for drying up the waters, raising up the fallen heavens, creating fire, and other gods created the sky, earth, rain, night, stars, and the underworld. Later, Quetzalcoatl created humans from the bones and ashes of the deceased, and additionally created maize as their sustenance, along with the creation of the sun and the moon.

The flood myths found widespread across the world often emphasize ethical motifs. In regions like West Asia, some myths attribute floods to humanity's sins or corruption, while in the Pacific region, floods may be caused by taboo violations. However, these ethical motifs were not necessarily central themes from the outset in global flood myths. For instance, in ancient Sumerian and Babylonian flood myths, which belong to the deeper layers of this mythology in West Asia, there is no emphasis on human sin, corruption, or divine punishment. Similarly, in East Asia, sibling-founder flood myths often lack ethical motifs.

The theme originally carried by flood myths was rather that of world regeneration or recreation. Just as living beings do, the world is believed to be born, age, and eventually perish, but like living beings, it was also thought that the world must create a new world and revive itself. This reflects the ancient belief of humans who sought to model everything after the concept of life itself.

The world falls into ruin and returns to its original chaos, but it is recreated once more from that chaos. Intervening between the destruction and recreation of this world, between decline and renewal, and between return to the primordial and rebirth, is the Great Flood, symbolized by water. Water was the symbol of the primordial chaos. Through the Great Flood, the world returns to the primordial waters and is recreated from within this water once more. The world returns to chaos, only to regenerate from there.

When ethical motifs are added to flood myths, it is important to consider not only punishment for human sin and evil, but also emphasis on purification from sin and evil. Through the waters of the Great Flood, humanity's sins and evils are washed away, thus allowing for the beginning of a new world. Flood myths found worldwide often embody the concept of the death and rebirth of the world

As is well known, within the Nordic saga "Edda," there is a myth that tells of the twilight of the gods and the death and rebirth of the world. The ancient Nordic people believed that in the distant future, the world would be destroyed and a new world would be created again. In the era of the twilight of the gods, even the gods of Asgard gradually lose their power. A terrible winter comes three times without intervening summers, and humans begin to betray and kill each other. Seeing this, the giants, including Loki, rise up to battle against the gods. After a fierce battle between the gods and Loki's forces, both sides perish. The world is then consumed by flames, followed by a great flood that submerges the land in the sea, leading to the world's destruction. However, among those who survive, the gods manage to create a new dwelling in the palaces that survived the fiery battle, and thus a new world of gods is formed. Life returns to the earth, with the sun and vegetation revived. The descendants of the surviving men and women will multiply on that land, as it is said.

The sun rises in the morning and sets on the earth in the evening, repeating this cycle. The moon also waxes and wanes. Seasons too, after the vigorous seasons of

spring and summer, wane into autumn and winter. Correspondingly, plants sprout and bloom from spring to summer, then bear fruit and wither from autumn to winter, repeating the cycle. All creations in the world undergo cycles of death and rebirth. Likewise, the entire created world is thought to undergo cycles of death and rebirth—this concept of the world's death and rebirth, involving cycles of creation and destruction, returning to chaos and then being recreated from there, is imagined from the vitality and cycles of life of all things in this world.

The ancient concept of the universe as an endless cycle of creation and destruction resonates in modern cosmology as well. According to modern cosmology, the universe is considered to be an infinite cycle of expansion and contraction. An expanding universe eventually contracts back, returning to nothingness at its extreme, only to be born anew from this nothingness. This cycle repeats itself indefinitely. The universe thus exists as a single living entity perpetually experiencing death and rebirth, eternally continuing its existence. The ancient religious sentiments, originating from awe towards the great cosmic life, conceived the idea of the world as a repetition of creation and destruction, a concept that also parallels modern cosmology's view of the death and rebirth of the world.