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Meaning of Folklore

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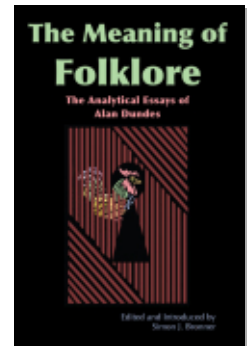
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Earth-Diver: Creation of the Mythopoeic Male

FEW ANTHROPOLOGISTS ARE SATISFIED WITH the present state of scholarship with respect to primitive mythology. While not everyone shares Lévi-Strauss's extreme pessimistic opinion that from a theoretical point of view the study of myth is "very much the same as it was fifty years ago, namely a picture of chaos" (1958:50), still there is general agreement that much remains to be done in elucidating the processes of the formation, transmission, and functioning of myth in culture.

One possible explanation for the failure of anthropologists to make any notable advances in myth studies is the rigid adherence to two fundamental principles: a literal reading of myth and a study of myth in monocultural context. The insistence of most anthropologists upon the literal as opposed to the symbolic interpretation, in terms of cultural relativism as opposed to transcultural universalism, is in part a continuation of the reaction against 19th century thought in which universal symbolism in myth was often argued and in part a direct result of the influence of two dominant figures in the history of anthropology, Boas and Malinowski. Both these pioneers favored studying one culture at a time in depth and both contended that myth was essentially nonsymbolic. Boas often spoke of mythology reflecting culture, implying something of a one-to-one relationship. With this view, purely descriptive ethnographic data could be easily culled from the mythological material of a particular culture. Malinowski argued along similar lines: "Studied alive, myth, as we shall see, is not symbolic, but a direct expression of its subject matter" (1954:101). Certainly, there is much validity in the notion of mythology as a cultural reflector, as the well documented researches of Boas and Malinowski demonstrate. However, as in the case of most all-or-nothing approaches, it does not account for all the data. Later students in the Boas tradition, for example, noted that a comparison between the usual descriptive ethnography and the ethnographical picture obtained from mythology revealed numerous discrepancies. Ruth Benedict (1935) in her important *Introduction to Zuni Mythology* spoke of the tendency to idealize and compensate in folklore. More recently, Katherine Spencer has contrasted the correspondences and discrepancies between the ethnographical and mythological accounts. She also suggests that the occurrence of folkloristic material which contradicts the ethnographic data "may be better explained in psychological than in historical terms" (1947:130). However, anthropologists have tended to mistrust psychological terms, and consequently the pendulum has not yet begun to swing away from the literal to the symbolic reading of myth. Yet it is precisely the insights afforded by advances in human psychology which open up vast vistas for the student of myth. When anthropologists learn that to study the products of the human mind (e.g., myths) one must know something of the mechanics of the human mind, they may well push the pendulum towards not only the symbolic interpretation of myth but also towards the discovery of universals in myth.

Freud himself was very excited at the possibility of applying psychology to mythology. In a letter to D. E. Oppenheim in 1909, he said, "I have long been haunted by the idea that our studies on the content of the neuroses might be destined to solve the riddle of the

formation of myths . . ." (Freud and Oppenheim 1958:13). However, though Freud was pleased at the work of his disciples, Karl Abraham and Otto Rank, in this area, he realized that he and his students were amateurs in mythology. In the same letter to Oppenheim he commented: "We are lacking in academic training and familiarity with the material." Unfortunately, those not lacking in these respects had little interest in psychoanalytic theory. To give just one example out of many, Lewis Spence in his preface to *An Introduction to Mythology* stated: "The theories of Freud and his followers as to religion and the origin of myth have not been considered, since, in the writer's opinion, they are scarcely to be taken seriously." What was this theory which was not to be taken seriously? Freud wrote the following: "As a matter of fact, I believe that a large portion of the mythological conception of the world which reaches far into the most modern religions, is *nothing but psychology projected to the outer world*. The dim perception (the endopsychic perception, as it were) of psychic factors and relations of the unconscious was taken as a model in the construction of a *transcendental reality*, which is destined to be changed again by science into *psychology of the unconscious*" (1938:164). It is this insight perhaps more than any other that is of value to the anthropologist interested in primitive myth.

There is, however, an important theoretical difficulty with respect to the psychoanalytic interpretation of myth. This difficulty stems from the fact that there are basically two ways in which psychoanalytic theory may be applied. A myth may be analyzed *with* a knowledge of a particular myth-maker, or a myth may be analyzed *without* such knowledge. There is some doubt as to whether the two methods are equally valid and, more specifically, whether the second is as valid as the first. The question is, to employ an analogy, can a dream be analyzed without a knowledge of the specific dreamer who dreamed it? In an anthropological context, the question is: can a myth be interpreted without a knowledge of the culture which produced it? Of course, it is obvious that any psychoanalyst would prefer to analyze the dreamer or myth-maker in order to interpret more accurately a dream or myth. Similarly, those anthropologists who are inclined to employ psychoanalysis in interpreting myths prefer to relate the manifest and latent content of myths to specific cultural contexts. However, this raises another important question. Do myths reflect the present, the past, or both? There are some anthropologists who conceive of myths almost exclusively in terms of the present. While tacitly recognizing that traditional myths are of considerable antiquity, such anthropologists, nevertheless, proceed to analyze a present-day culture in terms of its myths. Kardiner's theory of folklore, for instance, reveals this bias. Speaking of the myths of women in Marquesan folklore, Kardiner observes, "These myths are the products of the fantasy of some individual, communicated and probably changed many times before we get them. The uniformity of the stories points to some common experience of all individuals in this culture, not remembered from the remote past, but currently experienced." According to Kardiner, then, myths are responses to current realities (1939:417, 214). Róheim summarizes Kardiner's position before taking issue with it. "According to Kardiner, myths and folklore always reflect the unconscious conflicts of the present generation as they are formed by the pressure brought to bear on them by existing social conditions. In sharp contrast to Freud, Reik, and myself, a myth represents not the dim past but the present" (1940:540).

The evidence available from folklore scholarship suggests that there is remarkable stability in oral narratives. Myths and tales re-collected from the same culture show considerable similarity in structural pattern and detail despite the fact that the myths and tales are from different informants who are perhaps separated by many generations. Excluding

consideration of modern myths (for the myth-making process is an ongoing one), one can see that cosmogonic myths, to take one example, have not changed materially for hundreds of years. In view of this, it is clearly not necessarily valid to analyze a *present-day* culture in terms of that culture's traditional cosmogonic myths, which in all likelihood date from the prehistoric *past*. An example of the disregard of the time element occurs in an interesting HRAF-inspired cross-cultural attempt to relate child-training practices to folk tale content. Although the tales were gathered at various times between 1890 and 1940, it was assumed that "a folk tale represents a kind of summation of the common thought patterns of a number of individuals . . ." (McClelland and Friedman 1952:245). Apparently common thought patterns are supposed to be quite stable and not subject to cultural change during a 50 year period. Thus just one version of a widely diffused North American Indian tale type like the Eye Juggler is deemed sufficient to "diagnose the modal motivations" of the members of a culture. Nevertheless, Kardiner's theoretical perspective is not entirely without merit. Changes in myth do occur and a careful examination of a number of variants of a particular myth may show that these changes tend to cluster around certain points in time or space. Even if such changes are comparatively minor in contrast to the over-all structural stability of a myth, they may well serve as meaningful signals of definite cultural changes. Thus, Martha Wolfenstein's comparison of English and American versions of Jack and the Beanstalk (1955) showed a number of interesting differences in detail, although the basic plot remained the same. She suggested that the more phallic details in the American versions were in accord with other cultural differences between England and America. Whether or not one agrees with Wolfenstein's conclusions, one can appreciate the soundness of her method. The same myth or folktale can be profitably compared using versions from two or more separate cultures, and the differences in detail may well illustrate significant differences in culture. One thinks of Nadel's (1937) adaptation of Bartlett's experiment in giving an artificial folk tale to two neighboring tribes in Africa and his discovery that the variations fell along clear-cut cultural lines, rather than along individualistic lines. However, the basic theoretical problem remains unresolved. Can the myth as a whole be analyzed meaningfully? Margaret Mead in commenting briefly on Wolfenstein's study begs the entire question. She states: "What is important here is that Jack and the Beanstalk, when it was first made up, might have had a precise and beautiful correspondence to the theme of a given culture at a given time. It then traveled and took on all sorts of forms, which you study and correlate with the contemporary cultural usage" (Tax 1953:282). The unfortunate truth is that rarely is the anthropologist in a position to know when and where a myth is "first made up." Consequently, the precise and beautiful correspondence is virtually unattainable or rather unreconstructible. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many, indeed, the majority of myths are found widely distributed throughout the world. The historical record, alas, only goes back so far. In other words, it is, practically speaking, impossible to ascertain the place and date of the first appearance(s) of a given myth. For this reason, anthropologists like Mead despair of finding any correspondence between over-all myth structure and culture. Unfortunately, some naive scholars manifest a profound ignorance of the nature of folklore by their insistent attempts to analyze a specific culture by analyzing myths which are found in a great many cultures. For example, the subject of a recent doctoral dissertation was an analysis of 19th century German culture on the basis of an analysis of the content of various Grimm tales (Mann 1958). Although the analyses of the tales were ingenious and psychologically sound, the fact that the Grimm tales are by no means limited to the confines of Germany,

and furthermore are undoubtedly much older than the 19th century, completely vitiates the theoretical premise underlying the thesis. Assuming the validity of the analyses of the tales, these analyses would presumably be equally valid wherever the tales appeared in the same form. Barnouw (1955) commits exactly the same error when he analyzes Chippewa personality on the basis of a Chippewa "origin legend" which, in fact, contains many standard North American Indian tale types (Wycoco). It is clearly a fallacy to analyze an international tale or widely diffused myth *as if* it belonged to only one culture. Only if a myth is known to be unique, that is, peculiar to a given culture, is this kind of analysis warranted. It is, however, perfectly good procedure to analyze the differences which occur as a myth enters another culture. Certainly, one can gain considerable insight into the mechanics of acculturation by studying a Zuni version of a European cumulative tale or a native's retelling of the story of Beowulf. Kardiner is at his best when he shows how a cultural element is adapted to fit the basic personality structure of the borrowing culture. His account of the Comanche's alteration of the Sun Dance from a masochistic and self-destructive ritual to a demonstration of feats of strength is very convincing (1945:93).

The question is now raised: if it is theoretically only permissible to analyze the differentiae of widely diffused myths or the entire structure of myths peculiar to a particular culture, does this mean that the entire structure of widely diffused myths (which are often the most interesting) cannot be meaningfully analyzed? This is, in essence, the question of whether a dream can be analyzed without knowledge of the dreamer. One answer may be that to the extent that there are human universals, such myths may be analyzed. From this vantage point, while it may be a fallacy to analyze a world-wide myth as if it belonged to only one culture, it is not a fallacy to analyze the myth as if it belonged to all cultures in which it appears. This does not preclude the possibility that one myth found in many cultures may have as many meanings as there are cultural contexts (Boas 1910b:383). Nevertheless, the hypothesis of a limited number of organic human universals suggests some sort of similar, if not identical, meaning. It should not be necessary to observe that, to the extent that anthropologists are scientists, they need not fear anathematic reductionism and the discovery of empirically observable universals. The formula $e = mc^2$ is nonetheless valid for its being reductionistic.

A prime example of an anthropologist interested in universals is Kluckhohn. In his paper, "Universal Categories of Culture," Kluckhohn contends that "The inescapable fact of cultural relativism does not justify the conclusion that cultures are in all respects utterly disparate monads and hence strictly noncomparable entities" and "Valid cross-cultural comparison could best proceed from the invariant points of reference supplied by the biological, psychological, and socio-situational 'givens' of human life" (1953:520, 521). Of even more interest is Kluckhohn's conviction that these "givens" are manifested in myth. In "Recurrent Themes in Myths and Mythmaking," he discusses "certain features of mythology that are apparently universal or that have such wide distribution in space and time that their generality may be presumed to result from recurrent reactions of the human psyche to situations and stimuli of the same general order" (1959:268). Kluckhohn's recurrent themes appear somewhat similar to Freud's typical dreams. Although Freud specifically warned against codifying symbolic translations of dream content and, although he did clearly state his belief that the same dream content could conceal a different meaning in the case of different persons or contexts, he did consider that there are such things as typical dreams, "dreams which almost every one has dreamed in the same manner, and of which we are accustomed to assume that they have the same significance in the case of

every dreamer" (1938:292, 39). While there are not many anthropologists who would support the view that recurrent myths have similar meaning irrespective of specific cultural context, that does not mean that the view is false. For those who deny universal meanings, it might be mentioned that the reasons why a particular myth has widespread distribution have yet to be given. The most ardent diffusionist, as opposed to an advocate of polygenesis or convergence, can do little more than show how a myth spreads. The how rarely includes the why. In order to show the plausibility of a symbolic and universal approach to myth, a concrete example will be analyzed in some detail.

One of the most fascinating myths in North American Indian mythology is that of the earth-diver. Anna Birgitta Rooth in her study of approximately 300 North American Indian creation myths found that, of her eight different types, earth-diver had the widest distribution. Earl W. Count who has studied the myth for a number of years considers the notion of a diver fetching material for making dry land "easily among the most widespread single concepts held by man" (1952:55). Earth-diver has recently been studied quite extensively by the folklorist Elli Kaija Kõngäs (1960) who has skillfully surveyed the mass of previous pertinent scholarship. The myth as summarized by Erminie Wheeler-Voegelin is:

In North American Indian myths of the origin of the world, the culture hero has a succession of animals dive into the primeval waters, or flood of waters, to secure bits of mud or sand from which the earth is to be formed. Various animals, birds, and aquatic creatures are sent down into the waters that cover the earth. One after another animal fails; the last one succeeds, however, and floats to the surface half dead, with a little sand or dirt in his claws. Sometimes it is Muskrat, sometimes Beaver, Hell-diver, Crawfish, Mink who succeeds, after various other animals have failed, in bringing up the tiny bit of mud which is then put on the surface of the water and magically expands to become the world of the present time (1949:334).

Among the interesting features of this myth is the creation from mud or dirt. It is especially curious in view of the widespread myth of the creation of man from a similar substance (Frazer 1935:4–15). Another striking characteristic is the magical expansion of the bit of mud. Moreover, how did the idea of creating the earth from a particle of dirt small enough to be contained beneath a claw or fingernail develop, and what is there in this cosmogonic myth that has caused it to thrive so in a variety of cultures, not only in aboriginal North America but in the rest of the world as well?

Freud's suggestion that mythology is psychology projected upon the external world does not at a first glance seem applicable in the case of the earth-diver myth. The Freudian hypothesis is more obvious in other American Indian cosmogonic conceptions, such as the culture hero's Oedipal separation of Father Sky and Mother Earth (Róheim 1921:163) or the emergence myth, which appears to be a projection of the phenomenon of human birth. This notion of the origin of the emergence myth was clearly stated as early as 1902 by Washington Matthews with apparently no help from psychoanalysis. At that time Matthews proposed the idea that the emergence myth was basically a "myth of gestation and of birth." A more recent study of the emergence myth by Wheeler-Voegelin and Moore makes a similar suggestion *en passant*, but no supporting details are given (1957:73–74). Róheim, however, had previously extended Matthews' thesis by suggesting that primitive man's conception of the world originated in the pre-natal perception of space in the womb (1921:163). In any event, no matter how close the emergence of man from a hole

in Mother Earth might appear to be to actual human birth, it does not appear to help in determining the psychological prototype for the earth-diver myth. Is there really any "endo-psychic" perception which could have served as the model for the construction of a cosmogonic creation from mud?

The hypothesis here proposed depends upon two key assumptions. The two assumptions (and they are admittedly only assumptions) are: (1) the existence of a cloacal theory of birth; and (2) the existence of pregnancy envy on the part of males. With regard to the first assumption, it was Freud himself who included the cloacal theory as one of the common sexual theories of children. The theory, in essence, states that since the child is ignorant of the vagina and is rarely permitted to watch childbirth, he assumes that the lump in the pregnant woman's abdomen leaves her body in the only way he can imagine material leaving the body, namely via the anus. In Freud's words: "Children are all united from the outset in the belief that the birth of a child takes place by the bowel; that is to say, that the baby is produced like a piece of faeces" (1953:328). The second assumption concerns man's envy of woman's childbearing role. Whether it is called "parturition envy" (Boehm) or "pregnancy envy" (Fromm), the basic idea is that men would like to be able to produce or create valuable material from within their bodies as women do. Incidentally, it is this second assumption which is the basis of Bruno Bettelheim's explanation of puberty initiation rites and the custom of *couvade*. His thesis is that puberty rites consist of a rebirth ritual of a special kind to the effect that the initiate is born anew *from males*. The denial of women's part in giving birth is evidenced by the banning of women from the ceremonies. *Couvade* is similarly explained as the male's desire to imitate female behavior in childbirth. A number of psychoanalysts have suggested that man's desire for mental and artistic creativity stems in part from the wish to conceive or produce on a par with women (Jones 1957:40; Fromm 1951:233; Huckel 1953:44). What is even more significant from the point of view of mythology is the large number of clinical cases in which men seek to have babies in the form of feces, or cases in which men imagine themselves excreting the world. Felix Boehm makes a rather sweeping generalization when he says: "In all analyses of men we meet with phantasies of anal birth, and we know how common it is for men to treat their faeces as a child" (1930:455; see also Silberer 1925:393). However, there is a good deal of clinical evidence supporting the existence of this phantasy. Stekel (1959:45), for example, mentions a child who called the feces "Baby." The possible relevance of this notion to the myth of the origin of man occurred to Abraham (1948:320), Jung (1916:214), and Rank (1922:54). Jung's comment is: "The first people were made from excrement, potter's earth and clay." (Cf. Schwarzbaum 1960:48). In fact, Jung rather ingeniously suggests that the idea of anal birth is the basis of the motif of creating by "throwing behind oneself" as in the case of Deucalion and Pyrrha. Nevertheless, neither Abraham, Jung, nor Rank emphasized the fact that anal birth is especially employed by men. It is true that little girls also have this phantasy, but presumably the need for the phantasy disappears upon the giving of birth to a child. (There may well be some connection between this phantasy and the widespread occurrence of *geophagy* among pregnant women [Elwin 1949:292, n. 1].)

Both of the assumptions underlying the hypothesis attempting to explain the earth-diver myth are found in Genesis. As Fromm points out (1951:234), the woman's creative role is denied. It is man who creates and, in fact, it is man who gives birth to woman. Eve is created from substance taken from the body of Adam. Moreover, if one were inclined to see the Noah story as a gestation myth, it would be noteworthy that it is the man who builds the womb-ark. It would also be interesting that the flood waters abate only after

a period roughly corresponding to the length of human pregnancy. Incidentally, it is quite likely that the Noah story is a modified earth-diver myth. The male figure sends a raven once and a dove twice to brave the primordial waters seeking traces of earth. (Cf. Schwarzbaum 1960:52, n. 15a.) In one apocryphal account, the raven disobeys instructions by stopping to feast on a dead man, and in another he is punished by having his feathers change color from white to black (Ginzberg 1925:39, 164). Both of these incidents are found in American Indian earth-diver myths (Rooth 1957:498). In any case, one can see that there are male myths of creation in Genesis, although Fromm does not describe them all. Just as Abraham, Jung, and Rank had anal birth without pregnancy envy, Fromm has pregnancy envy without anal birth. He neglects to mention that man was created from dust. One is tempted to speculate as to whether male creation myths might be in any way correlated with highly patriarchal social organization.

Of especial pertinence to the present thesis is the clinical data on phantasies of excreting the universe. Lombroso, for example, describes two artists, each of whom had the delusion that they were lords of the world which they had excreted from their bodies. One of them painted a full-length picture of himself, naked, among women, ejecting worlds (1895:201). In this phantasy world, the artist flaunting his anal creativity depicts himself as superior to the women who surround him. Both Freud and Stekel have reported cases in which men fancied defecating upon the world, and Abraham cites a dream of a patient in which the patient dreamed he expelled the universe out of his anus (Freud 1949b:407; Stekel 1959:44; Abraham 1948:320). Of course, the important question for the present study is whether or not such phantasies ever occur in mythical form. Undoubtedly, the majority of anthropologists would be somewhat loath to interpret the earth-diver myth as an anal birth fantasy on the basis of a few clinical examples drawn exclusively from Western civilization. However, the dearth of mythological data results partly from the traditional prudery of some ethnographers and many folklorists. Few myths dealing with excretory processes find their way into print. Nevertheless, there are several examples, primarily of the creation of man from excrement. John G. Bourke (1891: 266) cites an Australian myth of such a creation of man. In India, the elephant-headed god Ganesh is derived from the excrement of his mother (Berkeley-Hill 1921: 330). In modern India, the indefatigable Elwin has collected quite a few myths in which the earth is excreted. For instance, a Lanjhia Saora version describes how Bhimo defecates on Rama's head. The feces is thrown into the water which immediately dries up and the earth is formed (1949:44). In a Gadaba myth, Larang the great Dano devoured the world, but Mahaprabhu "caught hold of him and squeezed him so hard that he excreted the earth he had devoured. . . . From the earth that Larang excreted, the world was formed again" (1949:37). In other versions, a worm excretes the earth, or the world is formed from the excreta of ants (1949:47; 1954:9). An example closer to continental North America is reported by Bogoras. In this Chukchee creation myth, Raven's wife tells Raven to go and try to create the earth, but Raven protests that he cannot. Raven's wife then announces that she will try to create a "spleen-companion" and goes to sleep. Raven "looks at his wife. Her abdomen has enlarged. In her sleep she creates without effort. He is frightened, and turns his face away." After Raven's wife gives birth to twins, Raven says, "There, you have created men! Now I shall go and try to create the earth." Then "Raven flies and defecates. Every piece of excrement falls upon water, grows quickly, and becomes land." In this fashion, Raven succeeds in creating the whole earth (Bogoras 1913:152). Here there can be no doubt of the connection between pregnancy envy and anal creation. Unfortunately, there are few examples which

are as clear as the Chukchee account. One of the only excremental creation myths reported in North America proper was collected by Boas. He relates (1895:159) a Kwakiutl tale of Mink making a youth from his excrement. However, the paucity of American Indian versions does not necessarily reflect the nonexistence of the myth in North America. The combination of puritanical publishing standards in the United States with similar collecting standards may well explain in part the lack of data. In this connection it is noteworthy that whereas the earlier German translation of Boas' Kwakiutl version refers specifically to excrement, the later English translation speaks of a musk-bag (1910a:159). Most probably ethnographers and editors alike share Andrew Lang's sentiments when he alludes to a myth of the Encounter Bay people, "which might have been attributed by Dean Swift to the Yahoos, so foul an origin does it allot to mankind" (1899:166). Despite the lack of a great number of actual excremental myths, the existence of any at all would appear to lend support to the hypothesis that men do think of creativity in anal terms, and further that this conception is projected into mythical cosmogonic terms.

There is, of course, another possible reason for the lack of overtly excremental creation myths and this is the process of sublimation. Ferenczi in his essay, "The Ontogenesis of the Interest in Money" (1956), has given the most explicit account of this process as he traces the weaning of the child's interest from its feces through a whole graduated series of socially sanctioned substitutes ranging from moist mud, sand, clay, and stones to gold or money. Anthropologists will object that Ferenczi's ontogenetic pattern is at best only applicable to Viennese type culture. But, to the extent that any culture has toilet training (and this includes any culture in which the child is not permitted to play indiscriminately with his feces), there is some degree of sublimation. As a matter of fact, so-called anal personality characteristics have been noted among the Yurok (Posinsky), Mohave (Devereux), and Chippewa (Barnouw, Hallowell). Devereux (1951:412) specifically comments upon the use of mud as a fecal substitute among the Mohave. Moreover, it may well be that the widespread practices of smearing the body with paint or daubing it with clay in preparation for aggressive activities have some anal basis. As for the gold-feces equation, anthropologists have yet to explain the curious linguistic fact that in Nahuatl the word for gold is *leocuitlatl*, which is a compound of *teoll*, "god," and *cuitlatl*, "excrement." Gold is thus "excrement of the gods" or "divine excrement" (Saville 1920:118). This extraordinary confirmation of Freudian symbolism which was pointed out by Reik as early as 1915 has had apparently little impact upon anthropologists blindly committed to cultural relativism. (See also Róheim 1923:387. However, for an example of money/feces symbolism in the dream of a Salteaux Indian, see Hallowell 1938.) While the gold-feces symbolism is hardly likely in cultures where gold was unknown, there is reason for assuming that some sort of sublimation does occur in most cultures. (For American Indian instances of "jewels from excrements" see Thompson 1929:329, n. 190a. In this connection, it might be pointed out that in Oceanic versions of the creation of earth from an object thrown on the primeval waters, as found in Lessa's recent comprehensive study [1961], the items thrown include, in addition to sand, such materials as rice chaff, betel nut husks, and ashes, which would appear to be waste products.) If this is so, then it may be seen that a portion of Ferenczi's account of the evolutionary course of anal sublimation is of no mean importance to the analysis of the earth-diver myth. Ferenczi states: "Even the interest for the specific odour of excrement does not cease at once, but is only displaced on to other odours that in any way resemble this. The children continue to show a liking for the smell of sticky materials with a characteristic odour, especially the strongly smelling degenerated produce of

cast off epidermis cells which collects between the toes, nasal secretion, ear-wax, and the dirt of the nails, while many children do not content themselves with the moulding and sniffing of these substances, but also take them into the mouth" (1956:273). Anyone who is familiar with American Indian creation myths will immediately think of examples of the creation of man from the rubbings of skin (Thompson 1955:Motif A 1263.3), birth from mucus from the nose (Motif T 541.8.3), etc. The empirical fact is that these myths do exist! With respect to the earth-diver myth, the common detail of the successful diver's returning with a little dirt under his fingernail is entirely in accord with Ferenczi's analysis. The fecal nature of the particle is also suggested by its magical expansion. One could imagine that as one defecates one is thereby creating an ever-increasing amount of earth. (Incidentally, the notion of creating land masses through defecation has the corollary idea of creating bodies of water such as oceans through micturition [Motif A 923.1]. For example, in the previously mentioned Chukchee myth, Raven, after producing the earth, began to pass water. A drop became a lake, while a jet formed a river.)

The present hypothesis may also serve to elucidate the reasons why Christian dualism is so frequently found in Eurasian earth-diver versions. Earl Count considers the question of the dualistic nature of earth-diver as one of the main problems connected with the study of the myth (1952:56). Count is not willing to commit himself as to whether the earth-diver is older than a possible dualistic overlay, but Köngäs agrees with earlier scholars that the dualism is a later development (Count 1952:61; Köngäs 1960:168). The dualism usually takes the form of a contest between God and the devil. As might be expected from the tradition of philosophical dualism, the devil is associated with the body, while God is concerned with the spiritual element. Thus it is the devil who dives for the literally lowly dirt and returns with some under his nails. An interesting incident in view of Ferenczi's account of anal sublimation is the devil's attempt to save a bit of earth by putting it in his mouth. However, when God expands the earth, the stolen bit also expands, forcing the devil to spit it out, whereupon mountains or rocks are formed (Köngäs 1960:160-61). In this connection, another dualistic creation myth is quite informative. God is unable to stop the earth from growing and sends the bee to spy on the devil to find a way to accomplish this. When the bee buzzes, in leaving the devil to report back to God, the devil exclaims, "Let him eat your excrement, whoever sent you!" God did this and the earth stopped growing (Dragomanov 1961:3). Since the eating of excrement prevented the further growth of the earth, one can see the fecal nature of the substance forming the earth. In still another dualistic creation myth, there is even an attempt made to explain why feces exists at all in man. In this narrative, God creates a pure body for man but has to leave it briefly in order to obtain a soul. In God's absence, the devil defiles the body. God, upon returning, has no alternative but to turn his creation inside out, which is the reason why man has impurities in his intestines (Campbell 1956:294). These few examples should be sufficient to show that the dualism is primarily a matter of separating the dross of matter from the essence of spirit. The devil is clearly identified with matter and in particular with defecation. In a phrase, it is the devil who does the dirty work. Thus Köngäs is quite right in seeing a psycho-physical dualism, that is, the concept of the soul as being separable from the body, as the basis for the Christian traditional dualism. However, she errs in assuming that both the creator and his "doppelgänger" are spiritual or concerned with the spiritual (1960:169). Dualism includes one material entity and, specifically in earth-diver dualism, one element deals with dirt while the other creates beauty and valuable substance from the dirt.

It should be noted that earth-diver has been previously studied from a psychoanalytic perspective. Géza Róheim, the first psychoanalytic anthropologist, made a great number of studies of the folklore and mythology of primitive peoples. In his earlier writings, Róheim tended to follow along the lines suggested by Freud, Abraham, and Rank in seeing folk tales as analogous to dreams (1922:182), but later, after he discovered, for example, that the Aranda word *altjira* meant both dream and folk tale (1941:267), he began to speculate as to a more genetic relationship between dream and folk tale or myth. In a posthumously published paper, "Fairy Tale and Dream" (1953a), this new theory of mythology and the folk tale is explained. "To put this theory briefly: It seems that dreams and myths are not merely similar but that a large part of mythology is actually derived from dreams. In other words, we can not only apply the standard technique of dream interpretation in analyzing a fairy tale but can actually think of tales and myths as having arisen from a dream, which a person dreamed and then told to others, who retold it again, perhaps elaborated in accord with their own dreams" (1953a:394; for a sample of Róheim's exegesis of what he terms a dream-derived folk tale, see 1953b). The obvious criticism of this theory has been made by E. K. Schwartz in noting that "one can accept the same psychoanalytic approach and techniques for the understanding of the fairy tale and the dream, without having to accept the hypothesis that the fairy tale is nothing else but an elaboration of a dream" (1956:747-48). Thus Schwartz, although he lists 12 characteristics of fairy tales which he also finds in dreams, including such features as condensation, displacement, symbolism, etc., does conclude that it is not necessary to assume that fairy tales are dreams. Róheim, in *The Gates of the Dream*, a brilliant if somewhat erratic full-length treatment of primitive myth and dream, had already addressed himself to this very criticism. He phrases the criticism rhetorically: "Then why assume the dream stage, since the unconscious would contain the same elements, even without dreams?" His answer is that the dream theory would explain not only the identity in content but also the striking similarity in structure and plot sequence (1951:348). Actually, the fundamental criticism is not completely explained away. There is no reason why both dream and myth cannot be derived from the human mind without making the myth only indirectly derived via the dream.

Róheim's theory comes to the fore in his analysis of earth-diver. In fact, he even states that the earth-diver myth is "a striking illustration of the dream origin of mythology" (1951:423). Róheim has assumed the existence of what he calls a basic dream in which the dreamer falls into something, such as a lake or a hole. According to Róheim, this dream is characterized by a "double vector" movement consisting both of a regression to the womb and the idea of the body as penis entering the vagina. In interpreting the earth-diver as an example of this basic dream, Róheim considers the diving into the primeval waters of the womb as an erection. Of considerable theoretical interest is Róheim's apparent postulation of a monogenetic origin of earth-diver: "*The core of the myth is a dream actually dreamed once upon a time by one person. Told and retold it became a myth . . .*" (1951:428). Actually, Róheim's over-all theory of the dream origin of myth is not at all necessarily a matter of monogenesis. In fact, he states that it is hardly likely as a general rule that an original dream was dreamed by one person in a definite locality, from which the story spread by migration. Rather, "many have dreamed such dreams, they shaped the narrative form in many centers, became traditional, then merged and influenced each other in the course of history" (1951:348).

The validity of Róheim's interpretation of earth-diver depends a great deal on, first of all, his theory of the dream origin of myth and, secondly, the specific nature of his so-called basic dream. One could say, without going so far as to deny categorically Róheim's theoretical

contentions, that neither the dream origin of myth nor the existence of the “basic dream” is necessary for an understanding of the latent content of the earth-diver myth. Curiously enough, Róheim himself anticipates in part the present hypothesis in the course of making some additional comments on earth-diver. In discussing the characteristic trait of the gradual growth of the earth, Róheim cites an Onondaga version in which he points out the parallelism between a pregnant woman and the growing earth. From the point of view of the present hypothesis, the parallelism is quite logically attributable to the male creator’s desire to achieve something like female procreativity. Thus the substance produced from his body, his baby so to speak, must gradually increase in size, just as the process of female creativity entails a gradually increasing expansion. (Here again, the observation of the apparently magically expanding belly of a pregnant woman is clearly a human universal.) Róheim goes on to mention what he considers to be a parallel myth, namely that of “the egg-born earth or cloacal creation.” As will be shown later, Róheim is quite correct in drawing attention to the egg myth. Then following his discussion of the Eurasian dualistic version in which the devil tries to keep a piece of swelling earth in his mouth, Róheim makes the following analysis: “If we substitute the rectum for the mouth the myth makes sense as an awakening dream conditioned by excremental pressure” (1951: 429). In other words, Róheim does recognize the excremental aspects of earth-diver and in accordance with his theory of the dream origin of myth, he considers the myth as initially a dream caused by the purely organic stimulus of the need to defecate. Róheim also follows Rank (1912, 1922:89) in interpreting deluge myths as transformations of vesical dreams (1951:439–65). Certainly, one could make a good case for the idea that some folk tales and myths are based upon excremental pressures, perhaps originally occurring during sleep. In European folklore, there are numerous examples, as Freud and Oppenheim have amply demonstrated, of folk tales which relate how individuals attempt to mark buried treasure only to awake to find they have defecated on themselves or on their sleeping partners. It is quite possible that there is a similar basis for the Winnebago story reported by Radin (1956:26–27) in which Trickster, after eating a laxative bulb, begins to defecate endlessly. In order to escape the rising level of excrement, Trickster climbs a tree, but he is forced to go higher and higher until he finally falls down right into the rising tide. Another version of this Trickster adventure is found in Barnouw’s account of a Chippewa cycle (1955:82). The idea of the movement being impossible to stop once it has started is also suggested in the previously cited Eurasian account of God’s inability to stop the earth’s growth. That God must eat excrement to stop the movement is thematically similar to another Trickster version in which Trickster’s own excrement, rising with flood waters, comes perilously close to his mouth and nose. However, the fact that there may be “excremental pressure myths” with or without a dream origin does not mean that excremental pressure is the sole underlying motivation of such a myth as earth-diver. To call earth-diver simply a dream-like myth resulting from a call of nature without reference to the notions of male pregnancy envy and anal birth theory is vastly to oversimplify the psychological etiology of the myth. Róheim, by the way, never does reconcile the rather phallic interpretation of his basic dream with the excremental awakening dream interpretation of earth-diver. A multi-causal hypothesis is, of course, perfectly possible, but Róheim’s two interpretations seem rather to conflict. In any event, Róheim sees creation myths as prime examples of his dream-myth thesis. He says, “It seems very probable that creation myths, wherever they exist, are ultimately based on dreams” (1951:430).

The idea of anal creation myths spurred by male pregnancy envy is not tied to the dream origin of myth theory. That is not to say that the dream theory is not entirely

possible but only to affirm the independence of the two hypotheses. In order to document further the psychological explanation of earth-diver, several other creation myths will be very briefly discussed. As already mentioned, Róheim drew attention to the cosmic egg myths. There is clinical evidence suggesting that men who have pregnancy phantasies often evince a special interest in the activities of hens, particularly with regard to their laying of eggs (Eisler 1921:260, 285). The hens appear to defecate the eggs. Freud's famous "Little Hans" in addition to formulating a "lumpf" baby theory also imagined that he laid an egg (1949b:227–28). Lombroso (1895:182) mentions a demented pseudo-artist who painted himself as excreting eggs which symbolized worlds. Ferenczi, moreover, specifically comments upon what he calls the "symbolic identity of the egg with faeces and child." He suggests that excessive fondness for eggs "approximates much more closely to primitive coprophilia than does the more abstract love of money" (1950:328). Certainly the egg-creation myth is common enough throughout the world (Lukas 1894), despite its absence in North America. It is noteworthy that there are creations of men from eggs (Motifs T 542 or A 1222) and creation of the world from a cosmic egg (Motif A 641). As in the case of feces (or mud, clay, or dirt), the cloacal creation is capable of producing either men or worlds or both.

Another anal creation myth which does occur in aboriginal North America has the spider as creator. The Spider myth, which is one of Rooth's eight creation myth types found in North America, is reported primarily in California and the Southwest. The spider as creator is also found in Asia and Africa. Empirical observation of spiders would quite easily give rise to the notion of the spider as a self-sufficient creator who appeared to excrete his own world, and a beautiful and artistic world at that. Although psychoanalysts have generally tended to interpret the spider as a mother symbol (Abraham 1948: 326–32; cf. Spider Woman in the Southwest), Freud noted at least one instance in folklore where the thread spun by a spider was a symbol for evacuated feces. In a Prussian-Silesian tale, a peasant wishing to return to earth from heaven is turned into a spider by Peter. As a spider, the peasant spins a long thread by which he descends, but he is horrified to discover as he arrives just over his home that he could spin no more. He squeezes and squeezes to make the thread longer and then suddenly wakes up from his dream to discover that "something very human had happened to him while he slept" (Freud and Oppenheim 1958:45). The spider as the perfect symbol of male artistic creativity is described in a poem by Whitman entitled "The Spider." In the poem, the spider is compared to the soul of the poet as it stands detached and alone in "measureless oceans of space" launching forth filament out of itself (Wilbur and Muensterberger 1951:405). Without going into primitive Spider creation myths in great detail, it should suffice to note that, as in other types of male myths of creation, the creator is able to create without any reference to women. Whether a male creator spins material, molds clay, lays an egg, fabricates from mucus or epidermal tissue, or dives for fecal mud, the psychological motivation is much the same.

Other cosmogonic depictions of anal birth have been barely touched upon. As Ernest Jones has shown in some detail (1951:266–357), some of the other aspects of defecation such as the sound (creation by thunder or the spoken word), or the passage of air (creation by wind or breath), are also of considerable importance in the study of mythology. With respect to the latter characteristic, there is the obvious Vedic example of Pragapati who created mankind by means of "downward breathings" from the "back part" cited by Jones (1951:279). One account of Pragapati's creation of the earth relates the passing of air with the earth-diver story. "Prajapati first becomes a wind and stirs up the primeval

ocean; he sees the earth in the depths of the ocean; he turns himself into a boar and draws the earth up" (Dragomanov 1961:28). Another ancient male anal wind myth is found in the Babylonian account of Marduk. Marduk conquers Tiamat by the following means: "The evil wind which followed him, he loosed it in her face. . . . He drove in the evil wind so that she could not close her lips. The terrible winds filled her belly" (Guirand 1959:51). Marduk then pierces Tiamat's belly and kills her. The passage of wind by the male Marduk leads to the destruction of the female Tiamat. Marduk rips open the rival creator, the belly of woman, which had given birth to the world. There is also the Biblical instance of the divine (af)flatulence moving on the face of the waters. Köngäs (1960:169) made a very astute intuitive observation when she suggested that there was a basic similarity between the spirit of God moving upon the primeval water and the earth-diver myth. The common denominator is the male myth of creation whereby the male creator uses various aspects of the only means available, namely the creative power of the anus.

Undoubtedly anthropologists will be sceptical of any presentation in which evidence is marshalled à la Frazer and where the only criteria for the evidence appears to be the grist-worthiness for the mill. Nevertheless, what is important is the possibility of a theory of universal symbolism which can be verified by empirical observation in the field in decades to come. Kluckhohn, despite a deep-seated mistrust of pan-human symbolism, confesses that his own field work as well as that of his collaborators has forced him to the conclusion that "Freud and other psychoanalysts have depicted with astonishing correctness many central themes in motivational life which are universal. The styles of expression of these themes and much of the manifest content are culturally determined but the underlying psychological drama transcends cultural difference" (Wilbur and Muensterberger 1951:120). Kluckhohn bases his assumptions on the notion of a limited number of human "givens," such as human anatomy and physiology. While it is true that thoughts about the "givens" are not "given" in the same sense, it may be that their arising is inevitable. In other words, man is not born with the idea of pregnancy envy. It is acquired through experience, that is, through the mediation of culture. But if certain experiences are universal, such as the observation of female pregnancy, then there may be said to be secondary or derived "givens," using the term in an admittedly idiosyncratic sense. This is very important for the study of myth. It has already been pointed out that from a cultural relativistic perspective, the only portion of mythology which can be profitably studied is limited to those myths which are peculiar to a particular culture or those differences in the details of a widely diffused myth. Similarly, the literal approach can glean only so much ethnographic data from reflector myths. Without the assumption of symbolism and universals in myth, a vast amount of mythology remains of little use to the anthropologist. It should also be noted that there is, in theory, no conflict between accepting the idea of universals and advocating cultural relativism. It is not an "either/or" proposition. Some myths may be universal and others not. It is the all-or-nothing approach which appears to be erroneous. The same is true for the polygenesis-diffusion controversy; they also are by no means mutually exclusive. In the same way, there is no inconsistency in the statement that myths can either reflect or refract culture. (The phrase was suggested by A. K. Ramanujan.) Lévi-Strauss (1958:51) criticizes psychoanalytic interpretations of myth because, as he puts it, if there's an evil grandmother in the myths, "it will be claimed that in such a society grandmothers are actually evil and that mythology reflects the social structure and the social relations; but should the actual data be conflicting, it would be readily claimed that the purpose of mythology is to provide an outlet for repressed feelings. Whatever the situation may be,

a clever dialectic will always find a way to pretend that a meaning has been unravelled.” Although Lévi-Strauss may be justified insofar as he is attacking the “Have you stopped beating your wife?” antics of some psychoanalysts, there is not necessarily any inconsistency stemming from data showing that in culture A evil grandmothers in fact are also found in myth, while in culture B conscious norms of pleasant grandmothers disguise unconscious hatred for “evil” grandmothers, a situation which may be expressed in myth. In other words, myths can and usually do contain both conscious and unconscious cultural materials. To the extent that conscious and unconscious motivation may vary or be contradictory, so likewise can myth differ from or contradict ethnographic data. There is no safe monolithic theory of myth except that of judicious eclecticism as championed by E. B. Tylor. Mythology must be studied in cultural context in order to determine which individual mythological elements reflect and which refract the culture. But, more than this, the cultural relative approach must not preclude the recognition and identification of transcultural similarities and potential universals. As Kluckhohn said, “. . . the anthropologist for two generations has been obsessed with the differences between peoples, neglecting the equally real similarities—upon which the ‘universal culture pattern’ as well as the psychological uniformities are clearly built (Wilbur and Muensterberger 1951:121).” The theoretical implications for practical field work of seeking psychological uniformities are implicit. Ethnographers must remove the traditional blinders and must be willing to collect *all* pertinent material even if it borders on what is obscene by the ethnographer’s ethnocentric standards. The ideal ethnographer must not be afraid of diving deep and coming up with a little dirt; for, as the myth relates, such a particle may prove immensely valuable and may expand so as to form an entirely new world for the students of man.

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Postscript

Madness in Method Plus a Plea for Projective Inversion in Myth

MYTH AS A FORM OF folk narrative has long fascinated scholars from a variety of academic disciplines including anthropology, classics, literature, philosophy, religion, among others. Yet the study of myth by folklorists tends to be virtually ignored by these would-be mythologists. Consequently, from a folkloristic perspective, most of these academic discussions of “myth” have little or nothing to do with myth in the strict and technical sense of the term. Even in volumes purportedly treating “myth and method” one will find essays treating folktales and legends, rather than myths. There is, of course, nothing inherently wrong with analyzing folktales and legends, or short stories or poems for that matter, but it is truly dismaying to folklorists to see such analyses wantonly labeled discussions of “myth.”

The generic distinctions between myth, folktale, and legend have been standard among folklorists for at least two centuries, going back to the publications of the brothers Grimm, who published separate works on each of these genres.¹ For the folklorist, a myth is a sacred narrative explaining how the world and mankind came to be in their present form. Myths and legends (narratives told as true and set in the postcreation era) are different from folktales, which are narratives understood to be fictional, often introduced as such by an opening formula such as “Once upon a time.” These generic distinctions are independent of dramatic personae. Thus it is possible to have a myth of the creation of Adam and Eve, but once these individuals are created, one can tell legends of these same individuals. Moreover, it is also possible to have folktales involving Adam and Eve.²

If we agree that a myth must minimally involve a narrative, then we can dismiss all the references to “myth” as a synonym for error or fallacy. In popular as opposed to academic parlance, myth, like the word “folklore,” is frequently used in this sense. The phrase “That’s just folklore” or “That’s a myth” means typically that the previously mentioned subject is an erroneous belief. Such usage is certainly worth noting, but it has nothing to do with the formal definition of myth as employed by folklorists.

Members of other academic disciplines may complain about what they perceive to be the narrowness and specificity of the folkloristic concept of myth. They claim the right to interpret the term “myth” any way they wish, even at the risk of inventing idiosyncratic definitions of the term. This is just fine as an illustration of free speech or poetic license, but such a practice has little to do with scholarship and intellectual rigor. Let me cite one or two examples of what I mean.

Little Red Riding Hood is a standard folktale. It is Aarne-Thompson tale-type 333, The Glutton (Red Riding Hood), and it is almost certainly related to Aarne-Thompson tale-type 123, The Wolf and the Kids, which is the same tale using exclusively animal characters.³

It has been the subject of numerous analyses as it is quite a fascinating tale. In no way can the story be considered a sacred explanation of how the world or mankind came to be in their present form. Hence it is not a myth. Nor is it told as true. It is a fictional story set in no particular place and time—"Once upon a time" partly signals the timelessness of the plot. As it falls under the rubric of tales of magic (Aarne-Thompson tales 300 to 749), it is a particular kind of folktale, namely, a tale of magic, or fairy tale. (*Fairy tale*, the term of choice in English, is a misnomer inasmuch as fairies rarely if ever appear in fairy tales. Stories involving fairies—and other supernatural creatures—are usually told as true and are consequently legends.) No folklorist would call Little Red Riding Hood a "myth" any more than he or she would call Cinderella a myth. (Cinderella is Aarne-Thompson tale-type 510A, Cinderella.)⁴

Another all too common mislabeling occurs with respect to the story of Oedipus. Classicists, psychoanalysts, and others adamantly insist upon calling the Oedipus story a myth. Yet the story is *not* a sacred narrative offering an explanation of how the world and humankind came to be in their present form. It is the standard folktale, namely, Aarne-Thompson tale-type 931, Oedipus.⁵

One unfortunate result of the sloppiness of literary critics and anthropologists and others in claiming almost any narrative as a "myth" is that folklorists simply cannot trust the titles of books and articles allegedly concerned with the subject of myth. For example, if one examines *Recent Studies in Myths and Literature 1970–1990*, one finds that more than half the entries have nothing whatever to do with myth in the folkloristic sense.⁶ Most of these tend to refer to either themes or patterns, but definitely not myths.

In the absence of a proper myth-type index, folklorists usually refer to myths by motif number. The six volume *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, first published in 1932–1936 (second revised edition, 1955–58) employs letter prefixes to indicate motif categories. A motifs are mythological motifs, B motifs are animal motifs, C motifs are taboo motifs, and so on. The system is not airtight and there is obviously overlap, as in the case of a myth involving an animal that breaks a taboo! Nevertheless, the A section of the *Motif-Index* does in effect constitute an inventory of the world's myths. Thus A 710, Creation of the sun, and A 740, Creation of the moon, would refer to narratives treating the origins of those celestial bodies. Folklorists expect fellow professionals to use motif designations when appropriate, and they deem writings amateurish that fail to do so.

Unlike the tale-type index, wherein all references following a tale-type number are assumed to be cognate—that is, historically or genetically related—the references grouped under a motif rubric may or may not be cognate. Any myth of the origin of death, for example, could in theory be labeled A 1335, Origin of death. Still, one can often get some sense of the geographic distribution of a particular myth (motif) from the *Motif-Index*. While on the subject of geographic distribution of myths, let me point out that even the most cursory examination of the various A motifs clearly demonstrates that *no motif is universal*. To my knowledge, there is not one single myth that is universal, "universal" meaning that it is found among every single people on the face of the earth, past and present. Indeed, myth scholarship clearly and conclusively proves that individual myths have their own particular circumscribed areas of geographical or cultural provenience.

Accordingly, there are Indo-European myths that are *not* found among native North or South American Indians; there are Asian-Amerind myths that are not found in Europe or Africa. So it is one thing to say that all peoples may have some myth allegedly explaining

how death came into the world, but *it is not the same myth*. In Africa, for example, the most popular origin-of-death myth, according to Abrahamsson's superb 1951 monograph is "The Message that Failed."⁸ This is motif A 1335.1 Origin of death from falsified message. The gist of this myth is that "God sends the chameleon to mankind with the message that they should have eternal life, and the lizard with the message that they must die. The chameleon dawdled on the way, and the lizard arrived first. When she had delivered her message, the matter was settled. The chameleon's message was no longer valid, and death had entered the world."⁹

This is quite different from the standard myth of the origin of death in Oceania. According to Anell's excellent survey, the most common story refers to how "primitive man in a bygone age could rejuvenate himself by changing his skin like a snake. In the usual version it is an old woman who is rejuvenated in this matter and subsequently reappears before her young children (grandchildren). They fail to recognize her in this young woman, however, and cry for their mother (grandmother) until she is forced to resume her old skin. This act, alas, leads to death for all mankind."¹⁰ This is motif A 1335.4 Origin of death when early people put on new skins.

Neither the African perverted-message myth nor the Oceanic skin-renewal myths are to be found among the large corpus of native North American Indian origin-of-death myths.¹¹ The important theoretical point is that no one origin-of-death myth is found among all peoples. Different peoples have different myths!

The implications of the limited distribution of any of the world's inventory of myths should give pause to all those mythologists who espouse universalist or psychic unity theories. If there really were panhuman Jungian archetypes, then all peoples should in theory have the same myths. They do not! So how is it that dozens of literary scholars find credible the mystical and nonrational concept of Jungian archetypes? Without empirical evidence to support the notion of archetype, it is astounding to folklorists that so many writers on myth continue to advocate such an implausible theory.

It would take too long to demonstrate all the logical (not to say psychological) flaws in the Jungian archetype, but let me cite just a few of Jung's own words on the subject. Consider his double talk on the issue of whether archetypes are "inherited." In a statement made in August 1957, he said, "It is important to bear in mind that my concept of the 'archetypes' has been frequently misunderstood as denoting inherited patterns of thought." Note his clarification: "In reality they belong to the realm of the activities of the instincts and in that sense they represent inherited forms of psychic behavior."¹² Actually, in his famous essay "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," Jung's view is less garbled. Speaking of "impersonal fantasies" "which cannot be reduced to experiences in the individual's past," Jung maintains that "they correspond to certain *collective* (and not personal) structural elements of the human psyche in general, and like the morphological elements of the human body, are inherited."¹³

I shall forebear commenting on the blatant ethnocentrism of Jungian myth theory with its claim that Jesus Christ is an archetype!¹⁴ Keep in mind that archetypes are supposed to be pan-human, and as Jung says, "For the archetype, of course, exists a priori."¹⁵ Since archetypes are panhuman, and since Jesus Christ is an archetype, then Jesus Christ is presumably part of *all* people's collective unconscious. What hubris and arrogance in such an assumption!

The real problem for mythologists comes from the difficulty in applying Jungian theory to myth texts. The problem stems from the fact that, according to Jung, archetypes are unknowable: "Contents of an archetypal character are manifestations of processes in the

collective unconscious. Hence they do not refer to anything that is or has been conscious, but to something essentially unconscious. In the last analysis, therefore, it is impossible to say what they refer to."¹⁶ If the master of archetypes admits that it is impossible to ascertain the referents of archetypes, then how can lesser critics presume to do so? Jung continues, "If, then, we proceed in accordance with the above principle, there is no longer any question whether a myth refers to the sun or the moon, the father or the mother. . . . The ultimate meaning of this nucleus was never conscious and never will be."¹⁷ I cannot improve on this pessimistic statement. What amazes me is how serious scholars could possibly take this kind of vague approach as a bona fide means of studying myth. It is vastly different from Freud's approach to myth, which is utterly opposed to mysticism and a know-nothing attitude. Freud believes that the unconscious content of myth (and other forms of folklore) is knowable, and it is precisely the task of the mythologist to decipher that content.

Most folklorists refuse to consider either Jung or Freud when analyzing myth texts. They prefer to avoid dealing with the unconscious content of myths; instead they employ every means possible to avoid confronting that content. Whether it is motifying the texts, or mapping a myth's geographical distribution and guessing at possible paths of diffusion, or deconstructing a text into its structural constituents, any method of myth analysis is preferable to coming to grips with the highly human content of myths.

One reason why Freudian theory can be used in myth analysis (whereas Jungian theory cannot) is that it is possible to reconcile some Freudian theory with cultural relativism. With Jungian pan-human archetypes (Jung refers as follows to them: "the archetype—let us never forget this—is a psychic organ present in all of us")¹⁸ there is no place for the intervention of culture and cultural differences. Archetypes are basically precultural givens. In contrast to the Freudian notions of symbolism, displacement, condensation, and projection, one can add the dimension of culture.

If we assume, for example, that there may be a correlation between patterns of infantile conditioning in a culture with adult-projective systems in that same culture (including folklore, film, literature, and the like), then to the extent that infantile conditioning differs from culture to culture, there could and should be different adult-projective systems. And that is precisely what the empirical data suggest. Different cultures have different myths; and different cultures have different norms of infantile conditioning (with respect to weaning, toilet training, etc.). In any case, a possible correlation between infantile conditioning and adult-projective systems in a given culture is certainly knowable. One can examine infantile conditioning and the adult-projective systems in a culture, and either there is a demonstrable correlation or there is not. It is not a question of dealing with something that "was never conscious and never will be."

I should like to indicate very briefly the utility of Freudian theory to the analysis of myth by distinguishing projection from what I call projective inversion. Simple projection, in my view, consists of displacing an individual psychological configuration directly onto another plane or into a different arena. It is roughly analogous to shining a light behind shadow puppets (or the fingers of a hand) to "project" an image or shadow on a wall or screen or other surface. Stellar constellations in the heavens, if perceived as mythological gestalt figures (often involving myths) would be an illustration of simple projection. A human drama is projected to the heavens such that heavenly bodies enact or play out the problems of human bodies here on earth. (Is it just a coincidence that in Western cosmology the earth is situated between the planets Venus [love] and Mars [war]?) Sex and violence are surely earthly or earthy matters.

Perhaps a more striking example of projection in myth is found in the World parents myth. The basic myth is motif A 625 World parents: sky-father and earth-mother as parents of the universe. The sky-father descends upon the earth-mother and begets the world. This is a widespread myth, but it is not universal. Consider motif A 625.1 Heaven-mother–earth-father. The World-parents myth would appear to be a celestial projection of one of the more common forms of human sexual intercourse, a form that also reflects male dominance: man on top, woman on the bottom. But the more interesting projection occurs in motif A 625.2 Raising of the sky. In this widespread myth, a male culture hero (= son) pushes the sky-father upward, off the earth-mother to make room for mankind. Even a non-Freudian ought to be able to see the possible Oedipal implications of that myth.

What I term *projective inversion* differs from straightforward projection inasmuch as a reversal or inversion takes place. The terminology difficulty arises from the fact that it is this latter psychological process that Freud and his followers called “projection.” In Freud’s terms, the “proposition ‘I hate him’ becomes transformed by *projection* into another one: ‘He *hates* (persecutes) me,’ which will justify me in hating him.”¹⁹ An individual’s view of hate or dislike, for example, is supposedly projected outward onto the object of hate or dislike. In this way, subject and object exchange places. I think this transformational principle was a brilliant insight and further that it has enormous relevance to the study of myth content. Otto Rank illustrated it beautifully in his classic *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*.²⁰ Using Oedipal theory, Rank argues convincingly that sons want to get rid of their fathers (in order to marry their mothers) but as this is a taboo thought, the narrative projection transforms this wish into the invariable attempt by the fathers to get rid of their sons.²¹ Inasmuch as the majority of Rank’s narrative illustrations come from folktales (such as Oedipus) or legends (such as Romulus and Siegfried), it is clear that the device of projection, or what I prefer to call projective inversion, occurs in narrative genres other than myth. Curiously enough, Rank fails to interpret the detail of the father’s refusal to give his daughter to any of her suitors in the same way, instead understanding it literally from the father’s perspective (as wishing to retain his daughter for himself). If Rank were consistent (keep in mind that most of the early Freudians did *not* understand women as well as they understood men), he might have realized that the father’s keeping his daughter for himself could have been a projective inversion of the daughter’s (Electral) wish to keep her father for herself!²² The point here is that I do think there is a critical distinction between straightforward one-to-one projection, as to the heavens, and projective inversion, a distinction that is in many ways analogous to the literal-versus-symbolic approaches to myth. Simple projection would be parallel to a literal approach while projective inversion would be parallel to a symbolic approach.

In a previous study I have sought to utilize projective inversion as a means of explaining the puzzling blood-libel legend in which the Jews were said to murder Christian infants so as to extract their blood to use in making matzohs. Jews are forbidden to eat blood whereas Christians are encouraged to do so, especially via partaking of the Eucharist.²³ I have argued that Christians have displaced any guilt arising from their cannibalistic eating of the blood and body of Jesus Christ through a legend involving projective inversion: by means of this inversion it is no longer Christians eating the blood-body of a Jew (Jesus) but Jews eating the blood-body of a Christian sacrificial victim!²⁴ Let me add that without invoking the transformational principle of projective inversion, the blood-libel legend remains an enigmatic, bizarre, and virtually incomprehensible plot in terms of normal logic. These examples suggest that projective inversion can indeed be applied to the content of tales and legends. The question is, Can projective inversion also illuminate myths?

In the Old Testament there are two distinct creation myths that recount the origin of man. In the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, we find what might be termed the *simultaneous* creation of man and woman. Genesis 1:27 reads: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Less egalitarian is the myth found in the second chapter of Genesis. First in 2:7 we are told "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." And then after God planted a garden in Eden, placed man there, instructed man not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and after the man, Adam, named all the animals, then and only then did God begin a totally separate creation of woman. According to Genesis 2:21 and 22; "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."

The first part of the second myth is a version of motif A 1241. Man made from clay (earth) while the second part is motif A 1275.1 Creation of first woman from man's rib. The second myth clearly implies a *sequential* (as opposed to *simultaneous*) creation inasmuch as man has to be created prior to woman if his rib is to be used in that creative act. Both second-creation myths reflect a strong undeniable male bias. In the first portion we have a typical male creation myth involving the creation of the world or man from feces or fecal substitute (clay earth, dust). Men trying to compete with women who are apparently magically able to create new life from their bodies have to resort to cloacal creation in order to create new life from *their* inadequate bodies. In the second portion the very order of creation implies social priority man first, woman second! This male bias is entirely consistent with the notion of a *male* god as creator, and a male savior figure, Noah, who in a re-creation myth builds a male womb (ark) that floats for approximately nine months. (It is noteworthy in this context that Mrs. Noah doesn't even merit having a name!) in Noahian Arkology, we have an echo or reverberation of the male creation myths of Genesis 1:27, and 2:7, 21–22. All this may be persuasive in the light of feminist ideology, but what about projective inversion? Can it be applied to these two myths of creation or not?

In the second myth, we see an articulation of the male wish to procreate like females. How do females procreate? From their bodies. In biological reality man comes from woman's body. In the fantasy world of mythical reality, biology is reversed. It is woman who comes from man's body. Moreover, inasmuch as biology dictates that man comes specifically from the woman's genital area, the reversal would logically have woman coming from man's genital area. That is why it is almost certainly the missing bone in man, the *os baculum* that is the likely *fons et origo* of woman. The penis bone is found among a number of animals, a fact no doubt observed by early hunters who slaughtered such animals for food. The first recorders of the biblical narratives would not easily include narratives involving a penis bone and so the euphemistic dodge of substituting a rib bone instead was doubtless employed.²⁵ There are few texts in print from any culture exemplifying motif A 1263.6 Man created from culture hero's genitals (but the very existence of the motif at all makes this hypothetical interpretation plausible). The inevitable censorship difficulties involved in translating oral tradition into writing or print could account for the dearth of such texts. In the Bible, we know that euphemisms were frequently employed. When Abraham asks his eldest servant to swear an oath, he instructs that servant "Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh" (Genesis 24:2). If one swears by something holy, then it was very likely the male genitals, not the thigh, on which the oath was sworn through placement of the

hands. This is signaled even in contemporary times by the words “testify” and “testimony” (from *testes*) and even the word *Testament* itself. In any event, it is the principle of projective inversion that allows us to propose such a hypothetical reading of the second myth of the creation of woman.

Returning now to the first myth, we recall “So God created man in his own image,” which would strongly suggest a very anthropomorphic deity fully equipped with ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and so on. If man were created in God’s image, then one could logically assume that God must look very much like man does. However, armed with the principle of projective inversion, we can understand that it was not God who created man in his image, but rather man who created God in *his* image! So just as a patriarchal society demanded that normal biology be contravened through myth—by creating a male myth whereby woman was said to come from man’s body, so the male invention of a male deity (to justify and fortify a male-oriented society) can be denied or concealed by constructing a male myth whereby it is a male deity who creates males in his image. Myth once created and accepted as dogma or truth is not easily overturned.

The long-term effects of these two instances of male-inspired projective inversions in the form of two separate creation myths in Genesis are indisputable. They constitute in large measure the “sociological charters for belief” (in Malinowski’s words) in a male-dominated society.²⁶ The belief in such a society is bolstered by the assumed existence of a male deity as well as a myth which claims that woman was created secondarily, almost as an afterthought. When fantasy is elevated to the level of myth, it becomes a force to be reckoned with. Thus the principle of projective inversion can add a new dimension to the burgeoning feminist literature on myth. The power and deleterious impact of these two myths in Genesis continue unabated, and it is hard to gauge just how long it will take to undo the social damage and mental anguish of Western women caused directly or indirectly by these two fundamental myths in Genesis.

Notes

1. For a useful delineation of these three genres, see William Bascom, “The Forms of Folklore,” 3–20. For further definitions of these genres as well as numerous subgenres, see Laurits Bødker, *Folk Literature (Germanic)*.
2. All tale-type numbers cited come from Aarne and Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale*. For this tale in particular, see Geddes, *Various Children of Eve*.
3. For details, see Dundes, *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*.
4. Dundes, *Cinderella: A Casebook*.
5. Edmunds and Dundes, *Oedipus: A Folklore Casebook*.
6. Accardi et al. *Recent Studies in Myths and Literature 1970–1990*.
7. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*.
8. Abrahamson, *The Origin of Death: Studies in African Mythology*, 4–34.
9. *Ibid.*, 4.
10. Anell, *The Origin of Death According to the Traditions in Oceania*, 1.
11. For surveys of native American origin-of-death myths, see Boas, “The Origin of Death,” 486–91, and Dangel, “Mythen vom Ursprung des Todes bei den Indianern Nordamerikas,” 341–74.
12. Jung, Preface, in de Laszlo, *Psyche & Symbol*, xvi.
13. Jung, “The Psychology of the Child Archetype,” in Jung and Kerényi, *Essays on a Science of Mythology*, 74.
14. Jung, “Aion,” in *Psyche & Symbol*, 36.
15. *Ibid.*, 15.

16. Jung, "The Psychology of the Child Archetype," 75.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Ibid.*, 79.
19. Freud, "Psycho-Analytic Notes upon an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia," 449. For representative discussions of "projection," see Bellak, "On the Problems of the Concept of Projection," in Abt and Bellak, *Projective Psychology*, 7–32; and Lindzey, *Projective Techniques and Cross Cultural Research*, 25–31. Rycroft in his *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* 125–26, includes both types of projection under the same rubric noting only that "reversal" occurs more frequently.
20. Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* was first published in 1909.
21. *Ibid.*, 78.
22. *Ibid.*, 80. For an Electral interpretation, see Dundes, "To Love My Father All: A Psychoanalytical Study of the Folktale Source of *King Lear*," in Dundes, *Interpreting Folklore*, 211–22.
23. Dundes, "The Ritual Murder or Blood Libel Legend," in Dundes, *The Blood Libel Legend: A Casebook in Anti-Semitic Folklore*, 336–76.
24. *Ibid.*, 354–59.
25. Dundes, "Couvade in Genesis," in Dundes, *Parsing through Customs*, 145–66.
26. Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion*, 144.

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