PEACE IN THE CHAOS

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONSCIOUS ELIMINATION OF CONFLICT IN DIVINELY DESIGNED AND SPONTANEOUS CREATION FROM THE HEBREW AND CHINESE TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Hebrew and Chinese creation myths appear to stand in mythological contrast to one another, with the significance of the former conceived of in religious terms and the latter in humanistic, though neither can be so simply defined. The early history of comparative scholarship between the two disciplines was dominated by a religious perspective, and a clear connection was thought to have been identified through a shared conception of God. This shaped the discussion up until the early twentieth century when it was replaced by the belief that the Chinese tradition possessed neither a god, nor even an account of the creation of the world. Thus, the two traditions are considered to exist in philosophical contrast to one another sharing very little in common. While this is an accepted observation, the two cultures share a unique connection in their mutual aspiration and conscious effort to eliminate the traces of conflict from their respective creation narratives. This endeavour was motivated by different perspectives fuelled by the religious, political and philosophical requirements of the society to which they spoke. In the hands of one, the creation stories were preserved as etiological accounts to explain both universal and customary truths and were altered so as to set apart the God within them from the others of the mythic age, whereas in the hands of the other, ancient legends were granted new life in support of current institutions. The removal of the motif of violence from the events at the beginning of time, which were so widespread in the mythological corpus of the ancient world, may simply be the result of late editorial work on the various narratives of both traditions, although this would underestimate the impact its removal had upon the fortification of cultural thought.

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled "**Peace in the Chaos: Implications of the Conscious Elimination of Conflict in Divinely Designed and Spontaneous Creation from the Hebrew and Chinese Traditions**" has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information, sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

'*Mythic stories are, or seem, arbitrary, meaningless, absurd, yet nevertheless they seem to re-appear all over the world. A "fanciful" creation of the mind in one place would be unique – you would not find the same creation in a completely different place [...] If this represents a basic need for order in the human mind and since, after all the human mind is only part of the universe, the need probably exists because there is some order in the universe and the universe is not a chaos.*'[1]

It is in the origins of matter that the foundations of civilisation and religion are reinforced. Each age and each culture possesses an account of how and why the world came to be, ranging from the modern quest for scientific discovery to the myths and legends of the ancient past. The former generate a hypothesis to explain a current set of data, which stands until new information requires the formulation of a new hypothesis, what Thomas Kuhn calls a paradigm shift,[2] whereas the latter are increasingly dismissed as echoes of superstitious bygone eras. Yet these myths often put forward the humblest truths in the form of simple questions: 'where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding' (*Job* 38:4); 'at the beginning […] who was there to pass down the tale of what happened? (*Tianwen* 天問 *Questions of Heaven* 1). Much effort has been devoted to the discernment of whether the progression of creation was driven by a wilful hand or by fate.

In these questions lies the heart of the issue of creation studies: any conclusion derived from the field, be it based on culture, context, language or composition of an ancient text, is a matter of interpretation. One element or example may serve in the defence of two contradictory arguments depending on the viewpoint of the scholar, and that viewpoint is often itself coloured by the historical context of the scholar.[3] In response to the rise of scientific knowledge, the field of mythology has experienced much antagonism under the guise of scholarship. It has become unacceptable to examine mythology without first

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[1] Lévi-Strauss, Claude. (1995) *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture*, Schocken Books, New York, pp. 11-13.

[2] See: Kuhn, Thomas (2012) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago; and Weidhorn, Manfred (2001) 'The Great Paradigm Shift,' *JT* 36 (3), pp. 7-19.

[3] For example, the present writer has both an interest in modern scientific research regarding the origin of matter as well as in the myths and legends of the ancient civilisations. Both carry great significance to their respective times and cultures, and both are revealing of their societal values, maintaining only that which serves to uphold and bolster contemporary ideals.

questioning its scientific relevance, although this mindset can overlook the reality that the ancient writers spoke their myths and legends not as fanciful stories, but as tradition.

The only apparent truth of the ancient past is that nothing is true unless it is ancient and this notion led to the most important religious and political features finding their foundations in the origins of the world. The passages regarding creation in the Hebrew Bible are inherently concerned with the identity of Yahweh and his roles, both as the creator of the universe and as the sustainer of it. The survivals of the Chinese creation stories, on the other hand, were reliant on their ability to assert social and political influence within the contemporary settings. The present writer suggests that both traditions reflect late ideas, and that perhaps the commonalities between them are the results of their textual transmission. For example, there are many relics of polytheism in the pages of the Hebrew Bible, and yet the biblical writers seemed to take great pains in their presentations of Yahweh to depict a monotheistic vision. Similarly, in the fragmentation of the Chinese stories their non-cohesion is expected, and yet there is an underlying continuity between them, hidden by the changes in their form, characters and locations.

Both the Hebrew and Chinese accounts are believed to represent comparatively late addition to the creative traditions of the ancient world. That being said, they are composed of a collection of stories that originated from diverse periods, separated both in time and space. Seven texts from each tradition have been selected for the discussion. For the former, these are the two accounts of *Genesis* 1-3, *Isaiah* 51:1-16, *Psalm* 89 and 104, *Job* 38-41 and *Proverbs* 8:22-31. Representing both covenantal and wisdom literature, each of these texts have been identified as offering a considerable contribution to the Hebrew understanding of creation and their application of common mythic tropes.[4] The latter is comprised of passages from *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (*Master(s) of Huainan*) 3.1 and 7.1, *Tianwen* 1-3 *Sanwu liji* 三五歷記 (*Historical Records of the Three*

[4] It must be noted that there were many passages that could have been chosen for the present study. A study on Hebrew creation could hardly omit the Genesis narratives, despite the wealth of academic attention paid to them in both recent and ancient history. However, the other texts were chosen after an initial research period identified them as the most commonly used in connection to the Genesis narratives. That being said, these passages, which were most often represented by just a handful of verses, were almost consistently translated in comparison to Genesis, or occasionally each other. While this approach is not incorrect as there is undoubtedly a level of intertextuality between them, the current author wished to present each text individually, so that a more complete comprehension of each, and thus the whole, could be obtained.

Sovereign Divinities and the Five Gods),[5] *Wuyun Linianji* 五遠歷年紀 (*A Chronicle of the Five Cycles of Time*),[6] *Fengsu Tonyi* 風俗通義 (*Common Meanings and Customs*) 1. 83 and the *Duyi zhi* 獨異志 (*A Treatise on Extraordinary Things*) 3.51. These texts have been identified as the most complete creation stories that remain in the Chinese mythological corpus, and while they have been not been preserved in religious texts they convey both Daoist and Confucian ideas of creation.

The dating of the Hebrew accounts contained within the present study is fraught with disagreements, which makes determining their original historical context problematic. However, whilst exact dates of the passages and the books that narrate them may not be determinable, it is possible to suggest a tentative distance from the supposed source myths based upon the strength of the monotheistic appearance of each episode. The surviving Chinese accounts are more fixed in their temporal settings, with a few exceptions, although this presents its own drawbacks. Several of the myths have been preserved in excerpt form, having been inserted into later works, whereas others only offer brief mentions of popular myth, or are known to have subject to extensive editorial work. What remains are narratives that have been rationalised to varying degrees and repurposed.

It is the premise of the current study that while there are considerable differences between the Hebrew and Chinese traditions, there are certain similarities born out of their shared desire to eliminate the traces of conflict, and therefore their implications, from the creation stories. In other words, while many of the conclusions reached by the two traditions are dissimilar, they both sought to establish a viewpoint that was predominant atypical of the time and employed the same means in which to do so; by the elimination of the cosmic battle that preceded the creation process, and the succession myth that followed it. Undergoing considerable rationalisation and manipulation as they were moulded by the transmission of both oral and written versions, they have utilised the diminution of violence to establish new worldviews that sought to set them apart from their contemporaries.

Neither system of thought was compatible with conflict as the default world state as it would have contradicted the monotheism of the one in its challenge to Yahweh's sovereignty through the existence of other gods and the natural evolution of the other

[5] A lost text cited in *Yiwen leiju* 1.2.
[6] A lost text cited in Ma Su's *Yishi* 1.2.

through the insinuation of divine will. In more specific terms, both traditions developed and transmitted a worldview that centred on the eternal supremacy, per se, of the figure that created it or the process through which it was created. In this light, the questions of this thesis are ostensibly theological for they comprise the foundational beliefs of each culture as they seek to embed the social and moral justifications within the very fabric of creation.

The echoes of conflict can still be found, however, in both traditions to varying degrees and are minimalised in different ways and with different motivations. For example, in the Hebrew accounts, it is often associated with the covenantal tradition or used in apocryphal texts, combining the imagery of the cosmic battle with the conquest over an enemy such as Egypt as a precursor for future victory. It is within such examples that the strongest resonance of conflict is retained, whereas its incorporation with wisdom theology retains similar imagery whilst subduing the implications of conflict. On the other hand, practically all evidence of pre-creation conflict has been excised from the extant Chinese creation stories, persevering instead through the flood myths and figures such as Gonggong where the conflict can be characterised as a subversion of right order and the consequence of immoral action.

Through the alternative employment of similar literary formats, the two traditions demonstrate the underlying motivators of their growth. For example, the writers of *Job* and the *Tianwen* use divine and mortal perspectives respectively, the first questioning humanity's assumption of divine knowledge and the second questioning the divine ability to perpetuate such knowledge. Similarly, in the book of *Proverbs*, the *Huainanzi* and the myths of Pangu 盘古 are located professions of the existence of a witness, who have been identified as observers as well as participants in the process of creation. The authors of the patriarchal narratives of *Genesis* and of the model emperors in Chinese literature have sought to historicise their legends in order to further legitimise current social mores and enhance the concept of cultural superiority. Finally, both traditions culminate in a high-view of humanity whose role on earth is defined by their stewardship over it. Through such examples it becomes evident that parallelism in form ultimately gives way to disparate function. However, the manner by which they are defined links the two together.

There is need for a study in this field that sets aside the deeply entrenched prejudices of biblical scholarship. In the past, the early historians sometimes blatantly refused to

acknowledge the mythological elements contained within the Hebrew Bible, while the later ones refused to acknowledge the significance of these elements within the Yahwistic religion, preferring to see them instead as proof of the invalidity of Hebrew belief.[7] These prejudices are likely embedded in the historians' own belief in the religious tenets of the Bible after its canonisation into sacred scripture, and both seem to ignore the contemporary effect these images have evoked in the mind of the reader, or what new understanding their inclusion introduced to the text. Every writer must write in the conventions of his or her time, using the concepts, metaphors and rhetorical devices that both he or she and their readers are able to comprehend. The Hebrew writers lived during an age of belief, when the mythological stories were more than just the ancient superstitions they have become known as. It is only natural, therefore, that the writers included or retained such imagery as the chaos monster Tiamat, or the solar myths of the ancient Near East and Egypt in order to explain their worldviews and religious conceptions.

In the earliest days of Western research in the field of Chinese mythology, considerable effort was devoted to demonstrating the similarities between the Christian worldview and that of their Chinese counterparts. Correlations were perceived between the ancient Chinese deities and the biblical God and these were stressed by missionaries and scholars in the hope of eliminating the 'otherness' of China for the purposes of proselytising the country. This had a detrimental effect on Chinese scholarship when the trend diverted to the opposite extreme and sought to remove all evidence of a biblical god from the Chinese records, ultimately seeking to prove that the two divergent traditions could share no hope of being connected to one another. Accordingly, criticism was levelled against the Chinese tradition for lacking a determinable supreme deity, or even a creative force to guide the formation of the world and establish natural and civil laws. China was considered utterly unique, an entirely humanistic culture whose mythology shared few commonalities with her neighbours.

The possible existence of a supreme deity in China's prehistory continues to divide opinion, and many highly respected scholars reside on either side of the discussion to

[7] Werner Jeanrond has also lamented this reality, stating that the relationship between theological and biblical studies has been strained for a considerable length of time. However, he has also made note of a new trend in which each, for their own reasons, have begun to have interest in the methods and insights of the other. His article outlines the continued need and benefits of using a combination of both disciplines in related research (Jeanrond, Werner G. (1996) 'Criteria for New Biblical Theologies,' *JR* 76 (2), pp. 233-249).

this day. However, the concept of a supreme being is only a small part of the considerations of Chinese creation myths, and there is need to examine the potential existence of such a deity in regards to his areas of influence: including the concepts of the mandate from heaven and divine heritage, both of which possessed considerable influence in the lines of succession of the ancient kings. Significantly, while it appears evident that should an anthropomorphised figure have existed in her early history, a divine presence was not maintained in the transmission of the written traditions of the creation myths. Furthermore, in light of recent scholarship, there is need for in-depth examinations of the Chinese creation narratives, illuminating their usage of both foreign and native materials.

The survival of myths is dependant on their continued relevance for the community; in them reside the exemplars of morality, religious thought and of the desired mode of living. They are preserved for specific purposes; to enhance a way of life or to justify and shape a mode of living even as the texts themselves are shaped by their transmission. Ultimately, the creative ideas of the two cultures in question developed in opposite directions despite using similar methods in the process. Chinese cosmogony has been omitted from many of the significant comparative studies of creation mythology offered by the field's preeminent scholars. Accordingly, it is hoped that this comprehensive examination of both the Hebrew and Chinese accounts will provide a good introduction for the latter into the field. Finally, it has become evident that like the Hebrew stories, the Chinese accounts share and inherent continuity between themselves, likely due in part to the lateness of the settling of their final forms.

METHODOLOGY

As a work on two cultures, the scope of the present study ostensibly lies within the bounds of the comparative method.[8] This approach is most commonly associated with that used by James Frazer in his *The Golden Bough*.[9] More often than not, the method is

[8] Although, Alan Dundes notes in his article on the use of the comparative method in folkloric studies that the majority of academic disciplines are, in fact, comparative, both in scope and even in nature (Dundes, Alan (1986) 'The Anthropologist and the Comparative Method in Folklore,' *JFR* 23 (2/3 Special Double Issue: The Comparative Method in Folklore), pp. 125-146).

[9] Frazer, James George (2009) *The Golden Bough*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. Kenneth Bock succinctly introduces this method as used by Frazer as 'an arrangement of social or cultural conditions observed among existing peoples into a series that is then taken to represent the process of evolution,' although he also extrapolates on both the difficulties and benefits of the approach (Bock, Kenneth E. (1966) 'The Comparative Method of Anthropology,' *CSSH* 8 (3), pp. 269-280, quotation on p. 269).

employed to display commonalities between certain myths or customs that may postulate a measure of historical association. However, it was also noted by Franz Boas that there exist similar myths, or concepts between two cultures for which no common root can be assumed.[10] The study of Hebrew and Chinese creation mythology falls into the latter of these categories as it is certainly does not seem possible, nor wise, to argue for the existence of a specific historical connection between the two.

Aside from well-known comparativists such as E.B. Tylor, Mircea Eliade and Claude Lévi-Strauss,[11] the comparative method has fallen into relative disuse in the fields of religion and anthropology as the search for parallels can divorce a text from its original meaning or purpose.[12] For this reason, the structure of this dissertation is inspired by the segmented nature of Jaan Puhvel's *Comparative Mythology*.[13] This structure allows for each tradition to be treated individually, free from the restriction of exclusive topics and the demand to find equivalencies between them. Accordingly, this thesis is divided into two halves, each presenting the background, the myths and related themes, as well as their intertextuality before concluding with a comparative discussion.

The use of such an organisational structure is especially pertinent to this study as pre-existing research for the Hebrew and Chinese traditions is uneven and thus requires different approaches. It is argued that works grounded in the social sciences and cross-cultural research will inevitably create comparison through their endeavours to locate Western notion in non-Western texts,[14] and this is certainly a valid claim in view of the early approaches to Chinese cosmogony, for it was searched for similarities that it bore to the Hebrew Bible. For this reason, each discipline will be examined separately, so that the key features of neither will be overshadowed by the other.

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[10] Boas, Franz (1982) *Race, Language and Culture*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 634, see also pp. 270-80 for his opposition the idea of a unilinear evolutionary theory.

[11] Tylor, Edward B. (1889) 'On a Method of Investigating the Development of Institutions: Applied to the Laws of Marriage and Descent,' *JAIGBI* 18, pp. 245-272; Eliade, Mircea (2005) *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Princeton University Press, Princeton; Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1983) *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. by John and Doreen Weightman, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

[12] Indeed, Alan Dundes cautions against this very issue, claiming that 'it is always dangerous to use ready-made patterns since there is an inevitable risk of forcing material into the prefabricated Procrustean pattern' (Dundes, Alan (1962) 'From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folktales,' *JAF* 75 (296), p. 96). See also: Udy Jr., Stanley H. (1973) 'Cross-Cultural Analysis: Methods and Scope,' *ARA* 2, pp. 253-270. For a defence on the benefits of the comparative method see: Segal, Robert A. (2001) 'In Defence of the Comparative Method,' *Numen* 48 (3), pp. 339-373; and Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (1951) 'The Comparative Method in Social Anthropology,' *JRAIGBI* 81 (1/2), pp. 15-22.

[13] Puhvel, Jaan (1989) *Comparative Mythology*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

[14] Hamilton, Gary G; Jai, Ben-Ray; Lu, Hsien-Heng (1989) 'Heaven is High and the Emperor is Far Away: Legitimacy and Structure in the Chinese State,' *RESS* 27 (84: Sociologie de la Chine et sociology chinoise), p. 146.

The questions of creation mythology are universal. However, the answers provided by different cultures around the world wear different masks. Beneath the surface of the investigation for the origins of the world lie ulterior motives, with the writers, scholars and prophets seeking to provide reasons for certain elements of existence. It remains a tempting exercise to categorise ones findings, to group certain ideas under mirroring subheadings, but this would fail to recognise the diversity between the two traditions treated in this dissertation, for the one finds its purpose in the identity of their god, and the other in humanity's control of the universal balance. As such, cultural features that are significant to one may not carry as much weight in the other.

Accordingly, the inclusion of specific ideas is determined by the content and function of the narratives themselves. For example, it is possible to discern the correlation between divine and mortal kingship in *Psalm* 89 and its reliance on the supremacy of Yahweh through his creative power. On the other hand, while the topic of kingship and its foundation is implicit within the context of the *Huainanzi*, it is not explicit in the two passages chosen for this study. For this reason, the elements of divine kingship, the mandate from heaven and its method of bestowal in the Chinese tradition shall be discussed prior to the creation myths themselves, of which several were included in texts whose greatest concern was the correct governance of the state.

Each text is first examined historically to determine a framework of date, localisation, authorship and inspiration within which to contextually ground the following literary analysis.[15] It must be noted that is not always possible to create a definitive picture of the historical environment of a work, whether due to divergent opinions or a lack of evidence, and yet it remains a vital endeavour in the understanding of the external nature of a text. The internal elements of each passage are analysed through close reading, which highlights certain measures of intertextuality both cross-culturally, and with other native texts.[16] Finally, a linguistic approach has been used sparingly where

[15] At its simplest, the historical method seeks to localise the text temporally and geographically, identify its author and his inspiration, a framework known as higher criticism, but also examine its integrity and credibility in its analysis of any given text, known as lower criticism. See: Torstendahl, Rolf (2015) *The Rise and Propagation of Historical Professionalism*, Routledge, New York, esp. Chap. 6 pp. 99-126; and Milligan, John D. (1979) 'The Treatment of an Historical Source,' *HT* 18 (2), pp. 177-196.

[16] Regarding the idea of intertextuality, Samuel Sandmel cautions the scholar of what he calls "parallelomania", that is 'an extravagance [...] which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in and inevitable or predetermined way.' (Sandmel, Samuel (1962) 'Parallelomania,' *JBL* 81 (1), p. 1). Accordingly, one must be careful in assigning influence from one source over another so as to not be lulled

comprehension of the specific meaning or root of a term can enhance the overall understanding of the passage.

In order to contribute greater insight into the field of Hebrew creation mythology, this thesis will examine several passages in the above format from the Hebrew Bible ranging from the most well known narratives in *Genesis*, through songs of praise and lamentation in the psalms, to the works of the prophet in *Isaiah* and the sages in the wisdom literature of *Proverbs* and *Job*. The genre of each text is different, and their recollections of the creation event are included for different reasons and at different points in their literary history. As will be shown through this equal but comprehensive approach, the mythological ties of some passages are far stronger than others, with some appearing to share close thematic bonds to their sources, and others displaying intense adaptation, maintaining the root imagery to transmit certain traditional ideas, but divorced from the polytheism of their previous settings.

Looking beyond earlier misconceptions, the field of Chinese creation mythology has made few forays into comparative studies, and when it has been discussed in correlation with the biblical tradition, it has often proceeded no father than the possible existence of a supreme being. Each text hails from a different era, and a different political and philosophical climate, and although they reflect religious ideas, they are not preserved in religious texts. Accordingly, by delving deeper into the historical context of the different accounts it becomes possible to discern a level of continuity in their style and function that is not evident in existing mythological anthologies or when they are treated individually.

As both the Hebrew and Chinese traditions have been subject to intense scrutiny during their scholarly history, each tradition is therefore preceded by a short history of research. This is done to examine the previous interaction the traditions have had with the field of mythology; the impact of the documentary hypothesis in the case of the biblical tradition, and missionary interference in the Chinese. Similarly, each myth is discussed in regards to its *Nachleben* in order to determine the factors influencing its preservation. Prior exploration of the content and meaning of the Hebrew texts is extensive. On the other hand, much of the early Western interaction with the Chinese

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into a fixed understanding of the relationship between two texts that may be disproven by further research.

myths served as reflections of European values.[17] The Chinese stories have rarely been presented in more than an anthological format in the English language. Furthermore, for these reasons, the intent of this dissertation is to present comprehensive analyses of every passage in question so that the level of deliberate manipulation of the writers in removing the traces of conflict from the creation accounts can be determined.

MYTH

The theory of myth has undergone countless redefinitions throughout the ages. Myths have been considered as undeniable truths and as primitive superstitions; both explanatory and ritualistic in nature. They are stories of morals, ethics, and societal structure, narratives of gods and men, creation and destruction, order and chaos and life and death. Thousands of pages of exposition and analysis have determined that there is no single approach to myth; the different schools providing only a partial view, or as William Doty suggested, a 'dyscrasia' of definitions that are mutually exclusive.[18] Each scholar thus offers his own definition according to the limitations of his research, which ultimately achieves litter more than providing an orientation for his reader to his line of inquiry.[19]

Therefore, as a study on creation, the focus of this dissertation lies predominantly in the etiological classification of myths[20] and their attempts to present the formation of the heavens and the earth, the existence of man and animals and how these traditions demonstrate the ideals of their respective societal structures, cohesion and culture. More specifically, it is concerned with texts situated in primordial history, a period that

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[17] Girardot, Norman J. (2002) 'James Legge and the Strange Saga of British Sinology and the Comparative Science of Religions in the Nineteenth Century,' *JRAS*TS 12 (2), pp. 156-7.

[18] Doty, William G. (1980) 'Mythophiles' Dyscrasia: A Comprehensive Definition of Myth,' *JAAR* 48 (4), p. 532. Similarly, Jonathan Smith explained that one of the fundamental issues of any mythological study is deciding which is the best method by which to analyse the myth itself, as, due to the multitudinous elements and potential meanings a myth may have bubbling under the surface, the decision cannot be an empirical one (Smith, Jonathan Z. (1995) 'Myth' *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion*, ed. Jonathan Z. Smith, HarperCollins, San Francisco, p. 750).

[19] Geertz, Clifford (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Basic, New York, p. 90.

[20] According to Jack Corzani, this endeavour might be more aptly described as cosmological in focus, who defines the differences between the two thus: 'cosmological myths provide an explanation for the birth of the world, the Creation, [and] its order; [whereas] etiological myths present causes of natural phenomena (Corzani, Jack (1994) 'West Indian Mythology and Its Literary Illustrations,' *RAL* 25 (2 Special Issue: Caribbean Literature), p. 131). However, this would seem to disregard Eliade's premise that every aspect of the creation event becomes archetypal for some mortal element, and is therefore, inherently etiological in nature. (Eliade, Mircea (2005) *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, esp. pp. 1-48).

Eliade described as usually coming to an end after the supernatural beings which fashioned the earth, which he elsewhere titled the *deus otiosus*, had completed their task and withdrawn from both the earth and the peoples upon it.[21]

A Myth declares humanity's conception of the world and his place within it.[22] Mythic narratives were not designed to cater to modern scientific requirements, but rather to the experiences and transitional phases of life itself.[23] They were preserved in figurative language, in metaphors and allegory, in poetry, songs and prose. They sought to answer age-old questions regarding the physical nature of matter and the source of all things.[24] In the age of Homer and the epic writers, it is generally accepted that the ancient Greek term 'mythos,' from which our modern term derives, referred to what Bruce Lincoln described as 'an assertive discourse of power and authority that represent[ed] itself as something to be believed and obeyed.'[25] The gods and their related myths were considered (by most) to be definitive sources of authority, and as such, did not carry the pejorative subtext imposed upon it by the Western world.

Since the discussion on myth began, the term has possessed a double meaning as a representation of both history and culture. It can reveal the psyche of an ancient civilisation and provide glimpses of what and how people thought and how this affected

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[21] Mircea Eliade 'Cosmogonic Myth and "Sacred History",' reprinted in Dundes, Alan (1984) *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, pp. 137-151 for his discussion of primordial time; and Eliade, Mircea (1963) *Myth and Reality*, Harper, New York, p. 95 for his definition of the *deus otiosus*.

[22] Middleton, John (1967) *Myth and Cosmos: Readings in Mythology and Symbolism*, University of Texas Press, Austin, p. x.

[23] Shermer, Michael (1997) *Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition, and Other Confusions of our Time*, W. H. Freedman and Company, New York, p. 130.

[24] See: Lenardon, R. J. & Morford, M. P. O. (2007) *Classical Mythology* 8th ed., Oxford University Press, New York p. 130; For further readings on this viewpoint, see also; Ruthven (1976) *The Critical Idiom: Myth*, p. 1, Shapiro (1979) *Mythologies of the World: A Concise Encyclopedia*, pp. xi-xii; and Jung & Kerenyi (1970) *Science of Mythology: Essays on the Myth of the Divine Child and the Mysteries of Eleusis*, p. 6. Kerenyi adds here his belief that 'true mythology' has become alien to us because we have lost our ability to understand it on the same level as those who believed it.

[25] Lincoln, Bruce (1999) *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology and Scholarship*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 17. Lincoln's conclusion here was based upon an earlier study in which he examined the usage of the term when used by Hesiod in *Theogony* and Homer in the *Illiad*, stating that designated the word as 'a speech that is raw and crude, but forceful and true' (Lincoln, Bruce (1996) 'Gendered Discourses: The Early History of "Mythos" and "Logos",' *HR* 36 (1), pp. 3-4). See also Richard Martin's study of the *lliad*, *The Language of Heroes* (1989), which examined the 167 occurrences of the terms 'mythos' and its related term 'mytheomai' and came to a similar conclusion. To this, Maurizio Bettini adds to this that, at its simplest, the term translates to "word" or "discourse," but that its weight fell on the side of reliability, and if the related story was a falsehood, the adjective *skolios* (deceptive) must modify the noun (Bettini, Maurizio (2006) 'Mythos/Fabula: Authoritative and Discredited Speech,' *HR* 45 (3), pp. 165-6). Finally, see Robert Fowler's 'Mythos and Logos' (2011) for a discussion on the development of the term and its relation to *logos*.

the society around them.[26] For this reason, it is essential to examine myths from an emic perspective before introducing etic observations upon them.[27] The tension between these two approaches is still unresolved, as the former is often considered anti-scientific by the adherents to the latter;[28] however, an emic approach is often adopted by studies that fall within the anthropological school, studying the survivals of beliefs and customs of pre-history.[29] The present study seeks to examine the chosen creation narratives within their extended contextual circumstances, thus conforming to the idea that an understanding of the whole can provide greater understanding for the individual units.

There is much that can be learned through a culture's mythic heritage, and yet as scholars we regularly misinterpret them by judging them according to modern criteria, which more often than not results in misunderstanding their original function.[30] However, despite the divergence in anthropological studies between the scientific approach and that of the humanities, discovering the purpose of the myth is more likely to be achieved by understanding the context of the myth itself.[31] In other words, there is much to be gained by first analysing the text diachronically in an effort to first contextualise it, and then examining its meaning synchronically within that setting.[32] Ultimately, the aim of the scholar is to dispassionately discuss and analyse historical or

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[26] Doniger, Wendy (2011) *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth*, Columbia University Press, p.ix.

[27] An emic approach explores a myth from the perspective of the contemporary person, whereas an etic approach provides external information from the perspective of the scholar. See: Zetterberg, Hans L. (2006) 'The Grammar of Social Science,' *AS* 49 (3), pp. 245-256. Although, it must be noted that neither are free of subjective speculation, for the former introduces the historian's opinion as to what something meant to the contemporary witness and the latter the historian's own understanding based on modern standards. Nevertheless, the effort is not wasted.

[28] Feleppa, Robert (1986) 'Emics, Etics, and Social Objectivity,' *CA* 27 (3), p. 245. See also: Sandstrom, Alan R. & Sandstrom, Pamela Effrein (1995) 'The Use and Misuse of Anthropological Methods in Library and Information Science Research,' *LQ* 65 (2), pp. 161-199, esp. pp. 171-80.

[29] Dundes, Alan (1962) 'From Etic to Emic Units,' *JAF* 75 (296), pp. 95-105. Specifically, Dundes intimates that the members of the anthropological school 'were convinces that folklore evolved from historical facts and primordial customs.' (p. 95).

[30] Birenbaum, Harvey (1988) *Myth and Mind*, University Press of America, Lanham, esp. pp. 34-5, 86.

[31] Zetterberg supports this premise, claiming that in order 'to understand a communication we have to know about the context in which it occurs.' (Zetterberg, Hans L. (2006) 'The Grammar of Social Science, *AS*, p. 249. See also: Sandstrom, Alan R. & Sandstrom, Pamela Effrein (1995) 'The Use and Misuse of Anthropological Methods,' *LQ* 65 (2) p. 167.

[32] It was argued by R. W. L. Moberly that there is a drawback to such an approach as synchronic and diachronic conclusions are occasionally presented as alternate explanations of a text as opposed to being employed to formulate a greater understanding of the whole. (Moberly, R. W. L., (1983) *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34*, JSOT Press, Sheffield, p. 23). Furthermore, Paul Noble claims that these methods are often incompatible, especially in biblical scholarship, as the first tends to claim that the authors are nothing more than compilers whereas the latter asserts that they are artists, and yet Noble also states that despite their seemingly irreconcilable juxtaposition, both approaches are indispensible (Noble, Paul R. (1993) 'Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches to Biblical Interpretation,' *LT* 7 (2), pp. 142-3). Therefore, despite the difficulties of choosing such a methodology, it is possible to enhance one's understanding of a text through the synthesis of both approaches.

mythological material, and yet subjectivity is embedded within every aspect of the task.[33] Throughout history writers have chosen to record only the specific stories and legends they desired to survive the passage of time. Because of this, 'truths' are enhanced and falsities embroidered into the very fabric of the text according to the perspectives, beliefs, moral affiliations and cultural context of their writers until the lines demarcating fact from fiction were entirely blurred.

The same is true of the scholar himself, for just as one might claim that God exists and that the world was created by him, so another might declare that there is no God and the world was formed by chance. Both of these statements are equally true for their speakers, both are a matter of individual opinion and neither can be dispassionately verified or proven. Ultimately, the ability to claim precedence of one opinion over another, and by correspondence, the preference for a specific mythic approach, is equally subjective, as demonstrated by the fluctuating interpretations of mythic narratives driven by the rise of different schools of thought. It is not the purpose of this treatise to offer a comprehensive examination of the various schools, as this has already been done by many,[34] but rather to acknowledge that the individual focus of any scholar is influenced by his subscription to a particular mode of analysis as well as his own personal interests. Accordingly, certain aspects of a myth will naturally draw his attention to the detriment of others in his presentation of that which he perceives to be the most plausible.

The scholar inevitably projects himself into and through his work, in the same way that his own culture projects itself through him, and the myth's culture through it.[35] Furthermore, a single myth might not reflect a single culture, but may represent several through cross-pollination between neighbouring societies by trade, travellers and religion. It is equally possible that each facet of a myth could symbolise a native,

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[33] See: Bidney, David (1955) 'Myth, Symbolism and Truth,' *JAF* 68 (270), pp. 379-392.

[34] For example, see works such as: Ackerman (1991) *The Myth and Ritual School*; Walker, Steven F. (2002) *Jung and the Jungians on Myth*, Routledge, New York; Lincoln, Bruce (1999) *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology and Scholarship*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago; Birenbaum, Harvey (1988) *Myth and Mind*, University Press of America, Lanham; Ellwood, Robert (1999) *The Politics of Myth*, State University of New York Press, Albany; Segal, Robert A. (1998) *The Myth and Ritual Theory*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden; Segal, Robert A. (1999) *Theorizing about Myth*, University of Massachusetts, Boston; Dundes, Alan (1984) *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London; and Csapo (2005) *Theories of Mythology*, for detailed analyses of different approaches to the study of myth.

[35] Wendy Doniger believes that we 'depict our own version of the world when we think we are depicting the world; […] we think we are studying an other [but] we are really studying ourselves through the narrative of the other.' (Doniger, Wendy (2011) *The Implied Spider* p. 10, see also pp. 172-3).

traditional survival or the foreign importation of a principle that has altered the society itself.[36] In the modern day, the study of cosmology has taken up the challenge of seeking the fundamental reasons for our existence. It has replaced the stories of gods, of battles and creation with hypotheses and tests designed to determine the origins of the universe and the processes through which it came to be.[37] However, the science-of-creation is often just as fickle and unprovable as the stories told by ancient civilisations, for the subject matter of both originated in prehistory at a moment without witnesses.

One might consider here the example of the modern author, especially those who write in the fantasy genre, who are often inspired by the folklore and mythological traditions of ancient civilisations. They, like the ancient writers before them, provide glimpses of another time and place, another way of living, and their narratives act as vehicles for the dominant ideals of the society that produced them. As such, they are reflections of the world subject to the age, disposition and background of the author in the same way that ancient myths are productions that reflect the worldview of their respective cultures. Mankind has never ceased to question their existence, and it is for this reason that creation mythology is a topic that transcends time and almost every culture on earth has its own answers to these questions, allowing it to be a subject that is both universal, and truly contentious.

When one contemplates on the 'typical' ancient cosmogony, an image is drawn to mind of great celestial battle between the forces of good and evil whereby only the victory of the former results in the creation and order of the known universe. It is argued that one of the purposes of cosmogonical accounts was not to speculate on the origins of the universe, but to heighten the supremacy of the narrative's protagonist, in the eyes of one's countrymen and one's neighbours.[38] The *Chaoskampf* conflict that is so well known in those such as the Greek and Babylonian cosmogonies does not necessarily come to the fore in the first moments of primordial time, but when the gods first start to impose

[36] This process of cross-pollination is even more widespread in the modern world due to the increase of technology and the cultural lines becoming blurred as multiculturalism begins to take precedence in many countries across the world. Accordingly, scholars are perhaps now seemingly less the product of a single culture, but of several.

[37] Holder, Rodney D. (2004) *God, the Multiverse, and Everything: Modern Cosmology and the Argument from Design*, Ashgate Publishing, Hampshire, p. vii.

[38] For a discussion on cosmogonical material being used as propaganda see: S. G. F. Brandon 'The Propaganda Factor in Some Ancient Near Eastern Cosmogonies,' in Bruce, F. F. (1963) *Promise and Fulfilment: Essays Presented to S. H. Hooke*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, pp. 20-35.

their will upon creation, and upon each other.[39] It is in these theomacies, and these battles of succession that the natural order of the cosmos and the world is settled.

The Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, which has been described as a text composed for the glorification of Marduk and the establishment of his right to sit at the head of the pantheon,[40] opens with a brief account of the events of creation. Beginning with the primeval waters and the emergence of the older gods, it culminates with the rise of Marduk and his slaying of Tiamat, who symbolised the monster of chaos. From her halved corpse he separated the heavens and the earth, thereby establishing order from the chaos.[41] Aside from this account, similar patterns have also been perceived in lesser-known stories belonging to the Hittites, the Phoenicians and the Canaanites, though not in exactly the same guise or circumstance.[42]

The dismemberment of the primordial being is a common motif in cosmogony,[43] although whether it results from an act of murder or is a consequence of victory over an

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[39] See: Saggs, H. W. F. (1978) *The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel*, Athlone Press, London, pp. 56-63.

[40] Seri, Andrea (2006) 'The Fifty Names of Marduk in "Enuma elis,' *JAOS* 126 (4), pp. 507-519. See also Sonik, Karen (2008) 'Bad King, False King, True King: Apsu and His Heirs,' *JAOS* 128 (4), pp. 737-743 who describes the characteristics of Apsu (the sweet water correlative to Tiamat's salt water) and the succession of his power to Marduk.

[41] See: Dalley, S. ed. tr. (1989) *Myths from Mesopotamia. Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh and Others*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 228-77; and Foster, B. R. tr. (1995) *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia*, CDL Press, Bethesda, Maryland, pp. 9-51.

[42] For example, see: Hoffner, H. A. (1990) *Hittite Myths*, Scholars Press, Atlanta, pp. 40-43; Frank M. Cross' 'The 'Olden Gods' in Ancient Near Eastern Creation Myths,' in Wright, George Ernest; Cross, Frank Moore; Werner E. and Miller, Patrick D. (1976) *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God, Essays in the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, Doubleday, New York, pp. 329-38; and M. D. Coogan's 'Canaanite Origins and Lineage: Reflections on the Religion of Ancient Israel,' in Miller, Patrick D; Hanson P. D. and McBride S. D. (1987) *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, Fortress, Philadelphia, pp. 115-124. It must be noted here that whilst not all of the theomacies are directly associated with the cosmogony itself, they are all inherently concerned with the consolidation of power by the high god (though even this is not necessarily true in the Canaanite tradition, for Baal remains subject to El despite his pre-eminence, see: Gibson, J. C. L. (1922) 'The Theology of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle,' *Orientalia Nova Series* 53 (2 Memorial Mitchell J. Dahood), pp. 202-219) within the pantheon. The same is equally true for the Hesiodic theogony. See: Stokes, Michael C. (1962) 'Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies: I,' *Phronesis* 7 (1), pp. 1-37. See also: Fisher, Loren R. (1965) 'Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament,' *VT* 15 (3), pp. 313-324. In relation to the Baal myth, Fisher declares that while it is primarily concerned with the theme of kingship, his efforts still bring order to the cosmos. However, Richard Clifford specifies that his acts were not involved with creation, but with the establishment of society, and thus introducing order and structure for the sake of readying the world for the existence of mankind (Clifford, Richard J. (1984) 'Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible,' *ONS* 53 (2: Memorial Mitchell J. Dahood), pp. 183-201).

[43] Seidenberg considers the creation sacrifice and dismemberment to be an important motif from a ritualistic perspective, suggesting that in the separation of heaven and earth, and thereby the establishment of a new kind of order, a sacrifice must be performed for the creation and preservation of a new order, much in the same way that a sacrifice made for the sealing of a covenant is a repetition of this act and serves to uphold its directives. (see: Seidenberg, A (1959) 'The Separation of Sky and Earth at Creation (I) *Folklore* 70 (3), pp. 477-482; and Seidenberg, A (1969) 'The Separation of Sky and Earth at Creation (II) *Folklore* 80 (3), pp. 188-196).

enemy varied culturally. Although not enough remains of China's ancient mythological stories to present a definitive argument, Bruce Lincoln suggests that its creation tradition was inspired by the Rig Veda, in which Indra kills the monster Vrtra and splits the waters.[44] This would imply that the earliest forms of the Chinese creation myths, especially those revolving around the characters of Pangu or Hundun, may have contained evidence of the divine conflict, although the weight of its apparent influence cannot be testified by what remains.

The other tradition that will be mentioned here for the sake of establishing the prevalency of the divine conflict associated with creation is that of the Greeks. Hesiod's story of the birth of the gods and Apollodorus' reproduction of it[45] are familiar to any mythological scholar. The cosmogony opens with the existence of chaos, the characteristics of which has evoked much debate[46] and is discussed later in the present work. From Chaos is born Gaia and Eros, who produces Ouranus, and following on from this the myth relates the castration of Ouranus by his son Kronos who himself consumes his own children to protect his power only to be overthrown by Zeus. Episodes such as these have been more succinctly labelled as 'succession myths,'[47] and are often closely associated with the creation and the establishment of order in the universe.

It must also be acknowledged, however, that the concept of a peaceful creation was not completely foreign to the ancient world. The ancient Egyptian concept of the creation of the world seems to be quite unlike those of the ancient Near East. There are several

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[44] Lincoln, Bruce (1975) 'The Indo-European Myth of Creation,' *HR* 15 (2), pp. 121-145. See also: Puhvel, Jaan (1989) *Comparative Mythology*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, pp. 45-54; Kramrisch, Stella (1962) 'The Triple Structure of Creation in the Rg Veda,' *HR* 2 (1), pp. 140-175. On the other hand, thirty years prior to Lincoln's assertion, which he himself admitted was debatable, Stith Thompson advised that it would be incorrect to suggest that any style of myth grew from a single source (Stith Thompson 'Myth and Folktale' (pp. 169-80) in Sebeok, Thomas A. (1955) *Myth: A Symposium*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p. 169). Similarly, after several decades of research, Doty believes that scholars must surrender Eliade's notion of the Ur-myth, allowing instead for the understanding that two myths of similar meaning or style may have grown independently of one another within unrelated societies. (p. 395) Doty, William G. (2003) 'What's a Myth? Nomological, Topological, and Taxonomic Explorations,' *SAIJ* 86 (3/4), pp. 391-419.

[45] Hesiod (1988) *Theogony and Works and Days*, trans by M. L. West, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford, pp. 6-18; and Smith, Scott R. and Trzaskoma, Stephen M. (2007) *Apollodorus' Library and Hyginus' Fabulae: Two Handbooks of Greek Mythology*, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., Indianapolis and Cambridge, pp.1-2.

[46] For example, see: Bussanich, John (1983) 'A Theoretical Interpretation of Hesiod's Chaos,' *CP* 78 (3), pp. 212-219; and Stokes, Michael C. (1963) 'Hesiodic and Milesian Cosmogonies: II,' *Phronesis* 8 (1), pp. 1-34.

[47] Allen, Nicholas J. (2004) 'Bhisma and Hesiod's Succession Myth,' *IJHS* 8 (1/3), pp. 57-79. See also Solmsen, Friedrich (1989) 'The Two Near Eastern Sources of Hesiod,' *Hermes* 117 (4), pp. 413-422. While both of these scholars suggest foreign relations or influences to the text of Hesiod, they show that evidence of the succession myth, whether related to or independent of Hesiod's Theogony, existed in both the Sanskrit and Hurrian narratives respectively.

versions of the creation narrative, depending on the region from which it hailed, and yet the details of each remain similar. The primal chaos, Nun, bore negative connotations and symbolised disorder and yet possessed the creative potentiality that became active with the emergence of Atum-Re and his children Shu and Tefnut.[48] Generational conflict, most notably in the myth of Osiris, was politically and socially charged rather than being related to the cosmogony.[49] Instead, order was maintained not by application of power but by the existence of Ma'at, who was perceived as both a personal goddess and the embodiment of the forces of order and rightness, inherently insuring the stability of the universe itself,[50] reminiscent of the Chinese concept of the *Dao*.

As will become apparent throughout the course of this thesis is that the Hebrew and Chinese traditions shared a common desire to eliminate the conflict, and the generational succession that is so embedded with it, from their creation narratives. It is not that they are alone unique in their peaceful origins, but that they used the imagery of the divine conflict, in the subjugation of the chaos monster in the case of the former, and in the dying god in the latter, and deliberately tried to reshape it, to mould its meaning to suit new purposes, and thereby describe a peace in the chaos. There is no implication of historical connection or influence between the two, and it is clear that each was driven by culturally specific motivations in this endeavour. Nevertheless, they share a unique bond in their mutual desire to eliminate the primeval conflict and its ramifications from their creation narratives.

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[48] Tobin, Vincent Arieh (1988) 'Mytho-Theology in Ancient Egypt,' *JARCE* 25, p. 175. The concept of Nun's negative connotation was also forwarded by Nicolas Grimal who posited that Re brought order to the universe after his subduing of the chaotic forces (Grimal, Nicolas (1992) *A History of Ancient Egypt*, trans. by Ian Shaw, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, p. 41).

[49] See: Tobin, Vincent Arieh (1993) 'Divine Conflict in the Pyramid Texts,' *JARCE* 30, pp. 93-110; Hollis, Susan Tower (1998) 'Otiose Deities and the Ancient Egyptian Pantheon,' *JARCE* 35, pp. 61-72; and el-Aswad, el-Sayed (1997) Archaic Egyptian Cosmology,' *Anthropos* 92 (1/3), pp. 69-81.

[50] See: Tobin, Vincent Arieh (1988) 'Mytho-Theology in Ancient Egypt,' *JARCE* 25, esp. pp. 171, 176. Furthermore, it must be noted that the Egyptian concept of creation was cyclical in nature and the continuing cycle of regeneration and procreation was represented by the balance of the male and female elements (p. 174).

CHAPTER ONE

ISRAEL: THE BACKGROUND

1.1 MYTH, THE BIBLE AND CHANGING TRENDS

The Hebrew Bible has been examined theologically, culturally, historically and geographically; it has been studied for its anthropomorphic and anthropological relevance, both for its own peoples and later for others who adhere to its teachings. The most well known accounts of creation in this tradition are the two narratives presented in *Genesis*. They have become, in many ways, the figurative eye of the storm;[51] they have been treated as religious text, myth, history and fiction and have been examined by philosophers, scholars and theologians alike. Each has his own interpretation of what lies therein, and through both negative and positive understandings of the nature of the text, one can distinguish a change of approach in Biblical research.

The early years of Biblical research ignored the growing trends of critical analysis. The topic of creation was considered by theologians as fundamental to understanding the Israelite belief system. Many who researched biblical creation during this time did so from a perspective of belief, and the creation week presented in *Genesis* 1 was, accordingly, interpreted literally. The words of the opening chapters of *Genesis* were read as divine revelation, and as an accurate account of the creation process. This led to the formation of constructs such as Bishop Ussher's timeline, which declared that the world was created in 4004 B.C.E. based on the creation week, genealogy lists and datable occurrences throughout the Hebrew Bible.[52] Critical scholarship has long since

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[51] See Anderson's view on why this is the case: Anderson, Bernard W. (1978) 'From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1-11,' *JBL* 97 (1), pp. 23-39.

[52] This opinion has been debunked both theologically; in that the genealogy lists are incomplete, that complex Hebrew words were rendered to a single English translation, and that he did not have access to later scholarship (see: Frame (2009) *Evolution in the Antipodes*, pp. 154-5; and Ross (2014) *Navigating Genesis: A Scientist's Journey Through Genesis 1-11*, pp. 197-201), and scientifically; with the rise of geological studies (see: Hess (1925) *The Age of the Earth*) The majority of theological scholars no longer accept Ussher's timeline. (except for those who subscribe to young-earth creationism, for a detailed

moved on from the acceptance of Ussher's timeline, however, it dominated the theological discussion at the time. As new scientific criteria emerged, scholars began to disregard the findings of these earlier works. The texts were separated from their religious connotations, and were instead investigated for their anthropological worth.[53] The divorce between the Hebrew Bible and its religious implications has largely persisted to the present day and has resulted in a lack of investigation combining insight from both theological and mythological sources.

The rise of comparative studies ushered in a new trend and had a profound impact on biblical studies. The Hebrew Bible was identified as a late tradition that was entirely founded upon ancient Near Eastern concepts and imagery.[54] Having been committed to posterity in a contextually mythic world it is impossible to deny the existence of corresponding imagery within the text. However, the Hebrew writers' adaptations of their source material progressively altered the usage of these images and their intended meaning. As such, they often preserved only certain aspects of the earlier myth and occasionally even stripped them of their mythological roots. For example, parallels to the Babylonian goddess Tiamat have been identified in almost every creation reference throughout the Hebrew Bible. However, the further the text is removed from the source, the more subdued her chaotic presence becomes, until it arrived at the point where her image was embedded in the text, but the conflict associated with her was eliminated.

In the late nineteenth century, the *Genesis* account was conceived of as unique primeval history by those who advocated its veracity. This opinion was centred on a belief that the systematic wholeness of the text distinguished it from the poly and pantheistic traditions of the ancient world. The monotheistic focus forced amendments to the earlier narratives that were seen to negate their reliance on them for interpretation.[55] However, one must acknowledge that the Hebrew writers wrote in the convention of their neighbours, and while the general people may have retained their polytheistic

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discussion on this concept its relevancy and its opposition in old-earth creationism, see Grudem, Wayne (2007) *Systematic Theology*, chapter 15, esp. pp. 289-307).

[53] Rosmarin (1938) 'The New Trend in Biblical Criticism,' *JBR* 6 (2) p. 83.

[54] Walton, John H. (2009) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, p. 17.

[55] Harper criticised the ancient Near Eastern accounts for their 'fragmentary and disconnected' natures, although he does not argue that the Bible presents an historical or scientific truth but rather a moral and religious one. For a complete understanding of his view, see his two 1894 articles: 'Paradise and the First Sin. Genesis III,' *BW* 3 (3), pp. 176-188; and 'Some General Considerations Relating to Genesis I.-XI.' *BW* 4 (3), pp. 184-201.

leanings, the prophets sought to denigrate idol worship and separate their god from those of their neighbours.

They caricatured foreign gods as idols of 'silver and gold, the works of human hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear, and there is no breath in their mouths.'[56] In opposition to this, the prophets sought to present their god as one who answered their prayers and acted on their behalf according to their obedience to his commands, which had a significant impact on their literature.[57] The Hebrew writers drew heavily from mythological imagery, expressing their worldviews through the symbolism and metaphors of their neighbours. The development of the imagery contained within the creation stories may have introduced new meaning during its gradual demythologisation,[58] but the traditional understandings of the texts relied on what it evoked in the mind of its contemporary reader, thus they cannot simply be divorced from their mythological settings.

The Hebrew creation stories, like those from every culture around the world, were looked to as a source of answers and explanation for all things.[59] As a text foundational to both Jewish and Christian religions, *Genesis* 1-3 has been subjected to rigorous examination. It has been studied for its insight on the personhood of God, his role in the creation of the world, humanity and animals, as well as gender differentiation and suffering. Furthermore, the ongoing power and authority of the high god in the ancient world was often tied to his participation in the creative process. Many theologians also sought in the creative texts declarative statements on the character and identity of the Hebrew God, despite the fact that they were more concerned with establishing his authority rather than his character.

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[56] *Psalm* 135:15-17

[57] Cobb Jr, John (1965) 'Christianity and Myth,' *JBR* 33 (4), p. 316. See: 40:36-37 where it talks about the Israelites period of wandering in the wilderness, only moving when the cloud, which represented the presence of God, lifted.

[58] This use of this term does not refer to the process of demythologisation as outlined by Bultmann (See: Bultman, Rudolf (1962) 'On the Problem of Demythologizing,' *JR* 42 (2), pp. 96-102) in which the historian demythologises a myth through the exclusion of the supernatural, but to the process of de-mythologisation performed by the biblical writers as they came to see their religious views as 'other' than those of their neighbours and as their writings became more firmly entrenched within the monotheistic setting.

[59] Peter Bouteneff believes that creation stories are subject to the greatest pressure of any literary genre, stating that they are sought 'for answers to more questions than they [could] possibly bear – questions about the cosmos, humanity, gender, theodicy.' (Bouteneff (2008) *Beginnings*, p. ix) Humanity has demanded a great deal of information from these accounts, and these questions have persisted even into the present day.

More recently, the interest of the scientific community on the assertions of the *Genesis* account shifted the focus away from the theological perspective as the text was asked to answer the questions of modern day science. This resulted in the complete divorce of the Hebrew texts from their theological roots, which ultimately had an impact on the opinions and approach to these works in the field of anthropology. In reaction to this view that has prevailed to the present, there was an unmistakable need for historically focused interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, in order to discover the original intention of the author; what he said, why he said it and what he meant by it.[60] There has been much effort devoted to this task in recent years, although there remains ground to be gained.

Up until the time that biblical studies entered the stage of comparative literature, *Genesis* was primarily considered as the only creation account in the Hebrew Bible, a belief that persisted until other resemblances to the ancient Near Eastern myths were discovered. The two creation myths in *Genesis* are generally perceived as separate accounts that were amalgamated at a later date. The systematic account in *Genesis* 1 is arguably the latest entry in the Hebrew tradition; although it is likely the narrative of *Genesis* 2-3 existed independently of the first and was circulated through oral tradition. The documentary hypothesis theorised that several sources were compiled by a later redactor in the production of the extant text and subscribers to this idea fell predominantly on one of two sides; the first contending that the two accounts were contradictory in nature, and the second proposing an overarching theme that provides them with continuity.[61] Others suggest instead that the two are incomplete in isolation,[62] and that their differences are explained by a shift in focus, the first being concerned with

[60] Muilenberg, James (1958) 'Preface to Hermeneutics,' *JBL* 6 (2), p. 19.
[61] See: Edmund R. Leach's *Genesis as Myth* in Middleton (1967) *Myth and Cosmos*, pp. 1-13. An occasionally defining feature of arguments subscribing to the documentary hypothesis (more of which we will discuss in the following section) is the tendency to perceive it as invalidating the presented narrative. For example, Thompson describes Genesis one and two as 'two divergent and incompatible narratives [that] have been placed side by side […] conflated together to form one continuous narrative in such a way that glaring contradictions and inconsistencies are left in the narrative.' (Thompson (1971) 'The Yahwist Creation Story,' *VT* 21 (2), p. 199) Although on the other hand, there are others who see in the compilation of these two accounts 'a relatively homogenous document, with a singleness in purpose, and a dominant message which overshadows the discrepancies of details.' (Terrien (1946) 'The Theological Significance of Genesis,' *JBR* 14 (1), p. 29).
[62] Schaeffer, Francis A. (1972) *Genesis in Space and Time*, IVP Books, Illinois, pp. 40-1.

the creation of the physical world and the second with God's relationship with humanity.[63]

Biblical creation studies boast a long history of exegesis and examination, and opinions regarding the original intent remain divergent. To this day, the creation story in *Genesis* is the most well known amongst the general populace, and yet it is not the only passage providing insight into the Hebrew understanding of the topic. Several of the minor passages scattered throughout the Hebrew Bible have made their way into creation studies, and are often cited for their shared mythological imagery in conjunction with each other or with *Genesis*. Of these minor passages, five have been chosen for this study, including *Isaiah* 51:1-16, *Psalm* 89 and 104, *Proverbs* 8:22-31 and *Job* 38-41, in order to demonstrate the progression away from the conflict motif that dominated the ancient Near Eastern creation myths. This gradual but marked transition becomes evident as the imagery responded to the historiographical needs of the writers as the battle with the forces of chaos was incorporated into the exodus tradition before being completely subdued.

1.2 THE HEBREW TRADITION AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN MYTHS

When examining a Hebrew text, the scholar is obligated to acknowledge its cultural roots and that it was likely also influenced by the surrounding societies.[64] Every written work inherently portrays the worldview of its author, the period in focus as well as the era during which it was produced. For example, Kenton Sparks suggested that it was 'common for peripheral [oppressed] cultures to seek legitimacy by symbolically imitating the prestigious culture that dominates them. Doing so is always an exercise in similarity and alterity, in seeking both to imitate and to differentiate oneself from "the other".'[65] In the case of the Hebrew creation myths, the majority of the writers are perceived as interacting with the ancient Near Eastern, and occasionally Egyptian, narratives.[66] Furthermore, their works are seen as disagreeing with the traditional

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[63] See: Ross, Hugh (1998) *The Genesis Question: Scientific Advances and the Accuracy of Genesis*, NavPress, Colorado, esp. chapter 9.

[64] Walton, John H., *Interpreting the Bible as an Ancient Near Eastern Document*, p. 299, in: Block, Daniel I. (2008) *Israel: Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention*, B&H Academic, Nashville.

[65] Sparks, Kenton (2007) '"Enuma Elish" and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism,' *JBL* 126 (4), pp. 625-6.

[66] It has been observed that while there are many similarities between the ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian and biblical texts, many of them display thematic discontinuity through the Hebrew writers' reinterpretations of the source material. (Landes, George M. (1967) 'Understanding Genesis by Nahum M.

understandings of the creation event, as resemblance is not always indicative of dependence.[67] Their writings existed contextually in a polytheistic world, in which the forces of nature and the actions of mankind were guided by the various gods who exemplified them. However, as the Hebrew tradition distanced itself from this presentation, its creation myths became almost subversive in nature, projecting a new monotheistic worldview into an age-old struggle to understand humanity's existence.

As will be shown, comparative mythologists have identified regional motifs in the Hebrew creative tradition and believe that they are ultimately traceable to the Sumerian creation myths, visible through similar language and technical terms. Additionally, Jaan Puhvel proposes that the Hebrew Bible itself owes its monotheistic perspective to 'Eighteenth-Dynasty Egypt and to the emergence of a linear time that tends to fuse mythical and historical time and stress uniqueness rather than cyclicity.'[68] The influence that the Babylonian tradition had over the ancient Near East is also well documented; their worldview was widely disseminated throughout the second millennium B.C.E. and impacted the belief systems of many cultures, including the Hebraic civilisation.[69] It is unknown just how deep that influence runs, though it is plausible that certain features of the Hebrew texts are rooted in pre-Israelitic history, and may have subsisted in largely recognisable form as oral tradition from as early as the first half of the second millennium B.C.E.

Conclusions such as these are supported by comparative studies of the patriarchal stories, and their seemingly accurate portrayal of Hurrian society. Furthermore, Biblical Hebrew is thought to contain closer resemblances to the Mari tablets than the Ugaritic texts, to which they are usually compared. This resemblance is tied to linguistic features such as the use of specific terms, names, and even grammatical structures, as well as the lateness of the Ugaritic texts in comparison. If the Hebrew texts were more reliant on

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Sarna,' *JBL* 86 (4), pp. 460+462). On the other hand, Mitchell Dahood believes that while both the Assyriologists and Egyptologists have stressed the reliance of Israelite thought of the language and culture of these two great societies, it has been admitted that the extent of this influence has been exaggerated and that one must also take into consideration Canaanitic studies for the comprehension of the biblical texts. (Dahood, Mitchell (1962) 'Ugaritic Studies and the Bible,' *Gregorianum* 43 (1), pp. 55-79).

[67] Vogt, Peter T (2009) *Interpreting the Pentateuch: An Exegetical Handbook*, p. 62. According to Jastrow, certain similarities are maintained to express direct protest against the Babylonian narratives, and states that if the Genesis accounts as they currently exist had have been recorded and adopted during the exile, it 'would have borne a *much closer* resemblance to its model than is actually the case.' (p. 651) Jastrow Jr., Morris (1901) 'The Hebrew and Babylonian Accounts of Creation,' *JQR* 13 (4), esp. pp. 636-8.

[68] Puhvel, Jaan (1989) *Comparative Mythology*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, p. 23. And: Sayce, A. H. (1905) 'The Babylonian and Biblical Accounts of Creation,' *AJT* 9 (1), p. 6.

[69] See: Whitley, C. F. (1958) 'The Pattern of Creation in Genesis, Chapter 1,' *JNES* 17 (1), pp. 32-40.

Ugaritic literature for their form and function, scholars, such as Mowinckel and Albright, state this would imply that the Hebrew tradition was exempt from the common understanding that 'cosmogony, mythology and heroic saga are created and combined at a very early age in the history of any given culture.'[70] Discoveries like these led scholars to advocate for the early foundation of Hebraic cosmogonic thought, whilst acknowledging their later editorial traditions.

At the time when the ancient Near Eastern myths were unearthed and subsequently analysed, they were considered a threat by many biblical scholars. The wealth of new cultural information contained within their stories, and the rising awareness of similar mythic themes amongst the world mythologies, challenged entrenched assumptions. This evoked a passionate response from the conservative base that was pushed to establish the supremacy of the *Genesis* story in their belief that it was the oldest and most pure version of the creation myth and thus saw the mythical allusions within the Hebrew text as demythologised.[71] They acknowledged that the *Genesis* account might have been inspired by the Babylonian story, but claimed that the new format was religiously beholden to the Israelite mindset. This culminated in the conscious elimination of any mythological or even polytheistic features in the text, thereby purging the biblical reliance on the ancient Near Eastern myths.[72]

Eventually, this reaction resulted in a gradual discrediting of the earlier theological works on the topic, which lost a great deal of their value by choosing to ignore newfound information that was fast becoming widely accepted in the scholarly community. This moment represented the focal shift in biblical studies, after which the Hebrew Bible's narratives were increasingly viewed with derision and hostility and were stripped of their native function. Scholars took their stance on either side of this argument, and the dialogue between them faltered. It was at this point that another trend arose, one in which the biblical narratives regained their meaning and significance. This was not based on a claim of historical accuracy, nor did scholars seek to prove the individuality of the Hebrew texts, instead, they focused on their literary nature as masterfully written

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[70] Mowinckel, Sigmund & Albright, William F. (1939) 'The Babylonian Matter in the Predeuteronomic Primeval History (JE) in Gen 1-11,' *JBL* 58 (2), pp. 92-101, quotation from p. 93.
[71] Rogers, Henry A. (1889) 'The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered,' ONTS 9 (5) pp. 267-8.
[72] See: Wyatt, Nicolas (1993) 'The Darkness of Gen I 2,' *VT* 43 (4), pp. 552-3; and, Ramm, Bernard (1960) *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Paternoster Press, London, p. 123.

and culturally relevant narratives.[73] The fundamental alterations to these narratives began to reveal the development of Hebrew ideas away from the contemporary mythical worldview, as the Hebrew writers employed the known literary allusions to accentuate their new understanding of the world.

Identifying motifs that have been drawn from other contexts and determining the level of transformation they have has undergone through their transmission can illuminate preserved and new meaning as well as cultural significance.[74] At the same time, it is hazardous to presume that all parallels between the Hebrew and ancient Near Eastern traditions are the result of cultural or literary dependence; for once a concept has been absorbed into another belief system it is fundamentally altered by it.[75] There are those who continue to reject comparative studies between these traditions, suggesting that the task has produced artificial theories designed to arouse suspicion and distrust of the biblical narratives.[76] However, further examination of the two cultures could offer clarification in the discussion, and perhaps overcome the idea of literary dependence. Each is unique and adds cultural and theological value to their respective society; therefore, it is important that both are treated equally as independent disciplines.[77] For example, the transition away from conflict in the Hebrew tradition could be attributed to the biblical writers' desire to make the creation narratives more palatable to a monotheistic worldview.

1.3 THE RISING IMPACT OF MONOTHEISM

It is commonly agreed amongst scholars today that the origins of Hebrew religion were not rooted in the monotheism that later came to define it.[78] Some believe that true

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[73] Benjamin, Mara, H. (2007) 'The Tacit Agenda of a Literary Approach to the Bible,' *Prooftexts* 27 (2: Special Issue: Before and After The Art of Biblical Narrative), p. 254.

[74] Morgenstern, Julian (1942) 'The Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis,' *JBL* 61 (1), p. 2 Morgenstern believes that the greatest understanding of the biblical texts are best determined through their 'relation to history, to thoughts, doctrines, institutions, movements, events, [and] aspirations, as these gradually unfolded in the history of Israel and its neighbours,' as these are the guiding factors in their cultural development.

[75] Smith, Morton (1952) 'The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East,' *JBL* 71 (3), p. 146.

[76] Rosmarin, Trude W. (1938) 'The New Trend in Biblical Criticism,' *JBL* 6 (2), p. 85. Rosmarin categorically rejects the fictionalisation of parts of Genesis, and the late origin of the Pentateuch as 'artificially construed theories that crumble to pieces when brought into the light of objective scholarship.' (p. 85).

[77] Walton, John H. (2009) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, p. 19.

[78] Robert Gnuse outlined this trend in his article on the impact of contemporary scholarship on the Bible, concluding that scholars have increasingly 'begun to stress the gradual nature of Israel's religious and

monotheism did not appear until the period of the exile,[79] whereas others suggest that a genuine form of monotheism was awoken in the Hebrew psyche during the late monarchical period.[80] In its place, the earliest forms of Hebrew religion are thought to be akin to a monolatry, in which only one god is addressed and worshipped but lacking the marked denial of the existence of other deities propagated by monotheism.[81] Despite the disagreement in the setting of its form, the impact that the concept had on the Hebrew religion and its use of mythological imagery is considerable.

The earliest known appearance of monotheism occurred briefly in Egypt during the Amarna period during the reign of Akhenaten.[82] While the person and character of Akhenaten is disputed, his religious contributions led to speculative suggestions that he also shared a role in its instigation in the Israelite monotheism.[83] In the Hymn to Aten, Akhenaten's god Aten was recognised as a universal deity who cared for all creatures, including humanity. However, his 'reign' was short-lived as his temples were destroyed and the traditional Egyptian pantheon was reinstated following Akhenaten's death and his name struck from the list of kings.[84] Thus, the likelihood that Hebrew monotheism was directly inspired by its transitory ancient Egyptian counterpart is minimal.

It is suggested that Israel's national identity was already largely developed by the eleventh century B.C.E., but that her religious concepts were not unique in origin but inherited from her neighbours of the preceding millennium.[85] Thus, in opposition to the

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socio-political development (Gnuse, Robert (1994) 'New Directions in Biblical Theology: The Impact of Contemporary Scholarship on the Hebrew Bible,' *JAAR* 62 (3), esp. pp. 896-900).

[79] Nikiprowetzky, V. (1975) 'Ethical Monotheism,' *Daedelus* 104 (2 Wisdom, Revelation, and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millenium B.C.) pp. 69-89.

[80] Kalberg, Stephen (1994) 'Max Weber's Analysis of the Rise of Monotheism: A Reconstruction,' *BJS* 45 (4), pp. 563-583.

[81] Soler, Jean; Lloyd, Janet (2007) 'Why Monotheism,' *AJHCTS* 14 (3), pp. 41-60. Soler believes that this is the most likely scenario as it would correspond with the Babylonian and Assyrian religious forms that accepted the existence of other gods, but tied their fate to and worshipped a single high god.

[82] Donald Redford states that this was not a natural development, but that Akhenaten forced his monotheistic tendency upon an unwilling populace and priesthood (Redford, Donald B. (2013) 'Akhenaten: New Theories and Old Facts,' *BASOR* 369, pp. 9-34). This notion was earlier reinforced by Tobin's declaration that the concept of religious heterodoxy in Egypt to the period of his reign (Tobin, Vincent Arieh (1988) 'Mytho-Theology in Ancient Egypt,' *JARCE* 25, pp. 169-183).

[83] W. W. Meissner places emphasis on the term 'speculative' in this case, as there is nothing but the sheer similarities between the notion of Aten as a universal deity and the denial of the existence of other gods to recommend a distinct relationship between the two (Meissner, W. W. (1968) 'Notes on Monotheism – Origins,' *JRH* 7 (1), pp. 43-60, esp. pp. 51-2). See also: Nikiprowetzky, V. (1975) 'Ethical Monotheism,' *Daedelus* 104 (2 Wisdom, Revelation, and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millenium B.C.) p. 74.

[84] When his name was struck from the Egyptian list of kings, his 'achievements' in propagating a monotheistic religion were simply forgotten (Hornung, Erik (1992) 'The Rediscovery of Akhenaten and His Place in Religion,' *JARCE* 29, pp. 43-49).

[85] See: Schloen, J. David (2002) 'W. F. Albright and the Origins of Israel,' *NEA* 65 (1 The House that Albright Built), pp. 56-62 Schloen states that there is evidence that a Yahwistically centred cult existed by this time

concept's fleeting appearance in Egypt, the majority of scholars adhere to the view that monotheism in Israel was a gradual development.[86] Scholars posit that Yahweh became a personal name relatively early in Israel's national history,[87] and that he likely began as a patron or tribal deity[88] whose power and influence grew as he absorbed the characteristics of others with whom he came into contact. However, it was not until the late monarchical period, more specifically the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.E., that monotheistic ideas began to gain traction within the larger populace.[89]

With the formation of their successive empires in the seventh and six centuries, Assyria and Babylon developed religious texts that proffered what Mark Smith labels as a 'one-deity' discourse, the best known example of which is the *Enuma Elish*. Grounded within traditional Mesopotamian polytheism, these texts served to augment the prominence of their major deities; however, they had a significantly different effect on the Israelite

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at a tribal level, and admits that he favours the midianite hypothesis, suggesting that the origins of Yahwism lay in north-western Arabia during the early iron age (p. 59); and Meissner, W. W. (1968) 'Notes on Monotheism – Origins,' *JRH* 7 (1), p. 45.

[86] Nikiprowetzky claims that Moses sowed the seeds of monotheism but it took centuries for these to mature from a monolatry to a true monotheistic outlook. Furthermore, he argues against the notion that Babylonia and Egypt genuinely influenced the Hebrew notion as they never actually achieved monotheistic thought themselves (Nikiprowetzky, V. (1975) 'Ethical Monotheism,' *Daedelus* 104 (2 Wisdom, Revelation, and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millenium B.C.) pp. 69-89).

[87] For example, Raphael Patai suggested that Yahweh became a proper name in the 15th century B.C.E. before the Israelites settlement in Canaan during the 13th century (Patai, Raphael (1973) 'The God Yahweh-Elohim,' *AA* 75 (4), pp. 1181-1184) and Frank Moore Cross earlier supported this view citing extra-biblical sources that referred to Yahweh as an independent character in the pre-exilic period (Cross, Frank Moore Jr. (1962) 'Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs,' *HTR* 55 (4), pp. 225-259).

[88] See: Hyatt, J. Philip (1967) 'Was Yahweh Originally a Creator Deity?' *JBL* 86 (4), pp. 369-377. Additionally, Stephen Kalberg suggests that Yahweh was originally perceived as a war god, and that his covenant with Moses at Sinai meant that it was impossible for him to remain as either a tribal, or a localised deity (Kalberg, Stephen (1994) 'Max Weber's Analysis of the Rise of Monotheism: A Reconstruction,' *BJS* 45 (4), pp. 565-70). Furthermore, Christopher Rollston specifies that in its earliest form, Israelite religion was markedly Semitic (and therefore polytheistic) in nature, and that Yahweh was a national deity, but he did not sit at the head of the pantheon, it was not until later that he assumed the role of high god (Rollston, Christopher A. (2003) 'The Rise of Monotheism in Ancient Israel: Biblical and Epigraphic Evidence,' *SCJ* 6, pp. 104-5).

[89] Sandra Scham intimates that polytheism persisted in the popular religion of Israel throughout the late iron age, and that this can be seen through archaeological evidence of the continued existence of the cult of Asherah (Scham, Sandra (2005) 'The Lost Goddess of Israel,' *Archaeology* 58 (2), pp. 36-40). Asherah was the chief goddess and consort to El in the Canaanitic pantheon and likely became perceived as the consort of Yahweh after his absorption of El, and was worshipped as such in the early years of Yahwism. It has been noted that biblical references to Asherah are ambiguous at best, and archaeological evidence suggests that systematic attempts to eliminate the cult were performed; however, her cult appeared to survive in Israelite memory up until the time of the exile (See: Patai, Raphael (1965) 'The Goddess Asherah,' *JNES* 24 (1/2), pp. 37-52; Margalit, Baruch (1990) 'The Meaning and Significance of Asherah,' *VT* 40 (3), pp. 264-297; and Wright, G. Ernest (1943) 'How Did Early Israel Differ from Her Neighbours?' *BA* 6 (1), pp. 1-10+13-20, significantly, Wright states that the use of theophoric names honouring foreign gods during the early monarchy expresses the continued prevalence of polytheism during the period).

worldview, enhancing instead the notion of a monotheistic god.[90] Normally, an enemy victory would have diminished the power of a national deity, who would have then be perceived as having failed to protect his people, but as the parallel relationship between the divine and earthly king was 'severed,' a universal kinship took its place and the exile proved to reinforce rather than diminish the power of Yahweh.[91] It was in this historical environment that the concept, which had endured in the pre-exilic period predominant as a minority,[92] to flourish.

This movement resulted in the readaptation of earlier mythic imagery to correspond with a changing worldview. The greatest of these changes occurred in the creation texts themselves, in which the succession myth was removed and Yahweh alone was declared as uncreated, thereby changing the scope of divinity and relegating other deities to created beings under the sovereignty of the Hebrew god.[93] Thomas Thompson maintains that the biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts are not diametrically opposed to one another, and are in fact 'closely related: in theme, in their literary and mythic expressions in story and form, and historically.'[94] However, while it is accurate to say that the Hebrew authors employed the common polytheistic imagery of their neighbours, many scholars agree that they redefined it monotheistically.[95] Furthermore,

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[90] Smith, Mark S. (2014) 'Monotheism and the Redefinition of Divinity in Ancient Israel,' *JISMOR* 9, pp. 3-19. Franz Böhl outlined this difference in the first half of the 20th century, stating that in the Babylonian tradition, Marduk was set over the other gods, but he did not dethrone them, in contrast to the Israelite tradition which leant towards the redefinition of divinity, leaving only Yahweh to claim the name of 'God' and relegating the previously divine characters to the status of angels and servants (Böhl, Franz M. T. (1933) 'Some Notes on Israel in the Light of the Babylonian Discoveries,' *JBL* 52 (2/3), pp. 140-146).

[91] See: Smith, Mark S. (2002) 'Ugaritic Studies and Israelite religion,' *NEA* 65 (1 The House that Albright Built), pp. 17-29; Shermin, Simon J. 'Did the Israelites Really Learn Their Monotheism in Babylon?' in: Block, Daniel I. (2008) Israel: Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention, pp. 257-81; and Gelston, A. (1992) 'Universalism in Second Isaiah,' *JTSNS* 43 (2) pp. 377-398.

[92] See: Eakin Jr., Frank E. (1965) 'Yahwism and Baalism before the Exile,' *JBL* 84 (4), pp. 407-414; and Gnuse, Robert (1994) 'New Directions in Biblical Theology: The Impact of Contemporary Scholarship on the Hebrew Bible,' *JAAR* 62 (3), pp. 898-90. In opposition to the view of earlier scholars such as Barton who professed that the exile served to crystallise ideals laid out by the prophets beforehand (Barton, George A (1911) 'Influence of the Babylonian Exile on the Religion of Israel,' *BW* 37 (6), pp. 369-378), scholars such as Niels Peter Lemche and Thomas Thomson advocate that true monotheism did not emerge until after the exile, though the latter admits it may have classical roots (See: Lemche, Niels Peter (1985) *Early Israel*, VTSup, Brill, Leiden, pp. 386-475; Lemche, Niels Peter (1988) *Ancient Israel*, The Biblical Seminar 5, JSOT, Sheffield, pp. 155-257; and Thompson, Thomas L. (1993) *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archeaological Sources*, Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East, Brill, Leiden, p. 89.

[93] See: Soler, Jean; Lloyd, Janet (2007) 'Why Monotheism,' *AJHCTS* 14 (3), pp. 56-57; Heiser, Michael S. (2008) 'Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry or Henotheism?' *BBR* 18 (1), p. 29; and Smith, Mark S. (2014) 'Monotheism and the Redefinition of Divinity in Ancient Israel,' *JISMOR* 9, p. 15.

[94] Thompson, Thomas L. (2001) 'Jerusalem as the City of God's Kingdom: Common Tropes in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,' *IS* 40 (3/4 Special Issue: Jerusalem), p. 641.

[95] For example, see: Smith, Mark S. (2014) 'Monotheism and the Redefinition of Divinity in Ancient Israel,' *JISMOR* 9, p. 7; Meissner, W. W. (1968) 'Notes on Monotheism – Origins,' *JRH* 7 (1), p. 54; Kalberg, Stephen

Michael Heiser suggested that some of this imagery, such as that of the divine council, didn't threaten or contradict monotheism, but was readily used by the biblical writers to communicate new understandings in a familiar guise.[96]

As will be seen in the following chapters, the degree of alteration to the common mythic tropes varies according to the genre, background and purpose of the texts within which the creation imagery is embedded. It is clear that in its formative years the Hebrew religion and pantheon was structured similarly to those of their neighbours, and Yahweh appeared to be the first among equals. However, as the concept of a universal deity gained traction among the prophets, the biblical writers were no longer content to depict Yahweh as a high god as in the ancient Near Eastern pantheons, and so they sought to differentiate him from the other gods by changing their boundaries and even their identities.

(1994) 'Max Weber's Analysis of the Rise of Monotheism: A Reconstruction,' *BJS* 45 (4), p. 571; and Wright, G. Ernest (1943) 'How Did Early Israel Differ from Her Neighbours?' *BA* 6 (1), pp. 1-10+13-20.

[96] Heiser, Michael S. (2008) 'Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry or Henotheism?' *BBR* 18 (1), pp. 1-30.

CHAPTER TWO

GENESIS

2.1 GENESIS AND THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

The documentary hypothesis is fraught with complications, but has dominated the study of the *Genesis* creation accounts for over 200 years. It replaced the earlier belief that the Pentateuch had been penned by Moses sometime after the exodus from Egypt based on verses such as *Joshua* 8:31-34, *Mark* 12:24 and *John* 1:17, which demonstrated the dominant Hebrew understanding in both the Old and New Testaments of Moses' authorship of the Torah.[97] The theory arose due to scholarly scepticism that a single writer could simultaneously hold and record mutually contradicting positions.[98] Combined with evidence in the historical books of the Hebrew Bible that their authors often directly transcribed source material, adding their own amendments as required to introduce cohesion and give new meaning to the whole,[99] the text was separated into two accounts: the older Yahwist source (J) and the later Priestly source (P).

The hypothesis is credited to Jean Astruc who inferred that Moses utilised two individual accounts during the development of *Genesis* 1-3 and that these could be differentiated by their use of the personal name of Yahweh or the more generic term Elohim.[100] This theory dramatically shifted the approach of biblical scholars, who were able, for the first time, to examine the layers of the text detached from its theological

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[97] This is also argued due to the geographical and historical information of countries, landscapes and events provided in the text that could, it is believed, only have been known by an eyewitness. Still others point to verses such as Exodus 34:27, Deuteronomy 31:9 and 24-26 which depict Moses as the author of the '"Book of the Law".

[98] Propp, William H. C. (1996) 'The Priestly Source Recovered Intact?' *VT* 46 (4), pp. 458-478. Propp ultimately suggests in this article that the editor used multiple sources to produce 'whether by choice […] or by necessity […] a redundant, self-contradictory text,' (p. 460).

[99] Brown, Charles Rufus (1895) 'The Interpretation of the Old Testament as Affected by Modern Scholarship,' *The Biblical World* 5 (2), p. 91. See also: Morgenstern, Julian (1920) 'The Sources of the Creation Story—Genesis 1:1-2:4,' *AJSLL* 36 (3), pp. 169-212.

[100] See: Rogers, Henry A. (1889) 'The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered,' *ONTS* 9 (5), esp. p. 271.

roots.[101] It was not long, however, before the interchangeable nature of the two names became apparent in certain contexts resulted in making this criterion insufficient for distinguishing between the different authors, with some suggesting that the terms were synonyms and others that their usage was dictated by strict contextual rules.[102]

It was, for example, suggested that the usage of the term Elohim and the name Yahweh, as they appear in the creation accounts coincided with a transfer in perspective; the first account centring on the creation of the heavens and the earth and the second on the relationship between the deity and his creations.[103] This understanding was inspired by the theory that the two narratives were specifically chosen by the final redactor to emphasise the focal shift between the divine and mortal realms, as well as a movement from systematic order to worldly disorder.[104] Finally, this transitional idea was also employed as proof that *Genesis* 1-3 was not considered as two separate myths in the ancient Hebrew mindset.[105] Whether the *Genesis* account was composed of two, or more, sources, its redactor was originally seen as producing a homogenous story regardless of the seeming contradictions between them.[106] Accordingly, whether the generic and personal names of the Hebrew God represented a shift in source material or perspective,

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[101] Acosta, Ana M. (2002) 'Conjectures and Speculations: Jean Astruc, Obstetrics and Biblical Criticism in Eighteenth-Century France,' *ECS* 35 (2), p. 263.

[102] See: Levin, Christophe (2007) 'The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch,' *JBL* 126 (2), pp. 209-230, who explains that while the "J" source is believed to be the oldest, it occasionally utilised the term "*Elohim*," whereas several later sources wrote the name "*Yahweh*." Similarly, Segal employs a number of examples, examining their commonality in specific historical periods, to express his theory that 'contrary to the Document Theory, the change of names is not caused by a change of literary source or document,' but that they could 'interchange freely as synonyms' according to the desired intent of the author. (Segal, M. H. (1955) 'El, Elohim, and Yhwh in the Bible,' *JQR* 46 (2), pp. 89-115. esp. pp. 94, 109).

[103] For example, Kaiser et al. propose that 'Yahweh is used whenever the Bible stresses God's personal relationship with his people and the ethical aspect of his nature [whereas] Elohim, […] refers to God as the creator of the whole universe, of people and things, and especially of the material world.' (Kaiser Jr., Walter; Davids, Peter H.; Bruce, F. F.; Brauch, Manfred T. (1996) *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, pp. 87-8) Furthermore, the change of perspective is reflected in the two accounts; '[the Priestly source] is more heaven centred, almost a picture from the sky looking down, while [the Yahwist account] is more human centred (and certainly more anthropomorphic), more like a picture from the earth looking up.' (Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*, P&R Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, p. 228).

[104] Moye, Richard M. (1990) 'In the Beginning: Myth and History in Genesis and Exodus,' *JBL* 109 (4), p. 582.

[105] de Raedt, Jules; Freilich, M (1976) 'On Freilich's Interpretation of Genesis 1-3,' *CA* 17 (1), p. 142.

[106] Terrien (1946) *The Theological Significance of Genesis*, p. 29. It is a seemingly forgotten factor in modern Biblical creation studies, declared succinctly by Freilich et al., that despite the apparent disparate origins of the text and their inclusion of contradictory mythic materials 'they are stories constituting a sacred history and it is the historical element, [and] the sense of ongoing destiny, that gives the Old Testament its value.' Freilich, Morris; de Josselin de Jong, P. E.; Fischer, J. L.; Littleton, C. Scott; Orent, Amnon; Tokarev, S. A.; Er-Wei, John Tu; Voigt, William J. (1975) 'Myth, Method, and Madness [and Comments and Replies],' *CA* 16 (2), p. 211. See also: Matthews, Victor H. (2007) *Studying the Ancient Israelites: A Guide to Sources and Methods*, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, p. 109, who states that one would be 'better served by learning to appreciate the diversity of the Biblical traditions and the skill employed by the editors in blending the disparate materials together.'

it became evident to scholars that each was a deliberate and theologically pertinent inclusion.

The notion that the complexity of the text precluded its ascription to a single era or writer is rarely challenged today. However, there is an increasing level of historical and archaeological evidence that each source contains both pre and post-exilic materials. As such, the *Genesis* account was thought to reflect a long developmental process, which contested the long-standing misconception that the Hebrew tradition was a late invention. Accordingly, a new hypothesis had to rise as the proofs that sustained Astruc's theory began to give way. It was at this point that a new theory of Hebrew religion arose. Julius Wellhausen, heavily influenced by the evolution debate, proposed that the origins of Hebrew religion were not founded on a single deity, but were rooted in naturalism.[107] He thus perceived the Pentateuch as a copy and paste procedure of several sources into a cohesive but contradictory sequence of events.[108]

Wellhausen's work replaced the two writers of Astruc's theory with four and arranged them temporally according to their historical setting; known as the Yahwist (J), the Elohist (E), the Deuteronomist (D) and the Priestly text (P) respectively.[109] The sources were classified by their historical allusions, vocabulary choices, language, and literary and grammatical styles. The (J) text was tentatively attributed to the kingdom of Judah despite its lack of reference to the monarchy itself, which led to the belief that the Yahwist was adapting or editing a pre-existing text.[110] (E) eventually lost support for its status as a separate source and was reintegrated into the works of (J), although it was originally believed to have been penned around the same time. Finally, the (D) and (P) documents were allocated to the period of the Israelite exile in Babylon,[111] and yet questions have arisen regarding the purpose and development of these latter two sources.

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[107] Schodde, George H. (1885) 'The Central Problem of Old Testament Discussion,' *OTS* 6 (4), p. 242.
[108] See: Irwin, William A. (1944) 'The Significance of Julius Wellhausen,' *JBR* 12 (3), pp. 160-173; and Meek, Theophile James (1930) 'The Translation of Gêr in the Hextateuch and Its Bearing on the Documentary Hypothesis,' *JBL* 49 (2), pp. 172-180, who cautions against a piecemeal approach to the Pentateuch, separating individual verses and assigning them to different authors, citing his view that '[they] are not to be separated too arbitrarily the one from the other as definitely distinct entities, but are to be regarded as melting the one into the other' as the end result of their compilation was a theologically cohesive text. (p. 177).
[109] Anderson, Bernard W. (1955) 'Changing Emphasis in Biblical Scholarship,' *JBR* 23 (2), p. 83. See also: Noth, Martin (1962) *Exodus: A Commentary*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, pp. 13-16.
[110] Levin (2007) 'The Yahwist: The Earliest Editor in the Pentateuch,' *JBL* 126 (2), esp. p. 229.
[111] Paton, Lewis Bayles (1915) 'Archaeology and the Book of Genesis,' *BW* 45 (5), esp. p. 297.

The underlying premise of the documentary hypothesis has been challenged by discoveries such as the Hurrian family law and archaeological evidence of the settlements and ethnic movement of ancient civilisations during the second millennium B.C.E., which suggest that these biblical sources ultimately rely on ancient traditions.[112] This serves to contest the late composition of the Hebrew text as well as account for the perceived inconsistencies of the Pentateuch.[113] Nevertheless, the timeless nature and content of the text, and the acknowledgement that it was transmitted through oral tradition before being committed to paper[114] makes it practically impossible to fix a date for the composition.

Modern scholarship on the documentary hypothesis remains divided. As a tool of critical analysis, it was introduced to counter the dogmatic defence of the Hebrew texts, and for some, this line of reasoning is still tenable. For others, the historical veracity of the narratives is not an issue. For example, John Oswalt holds the view that even if it was determined that 'none of the biblical documents existed in any form before 400 B.C.E. and that the bulk of their historical statements are false, the data of the biblical worldview would be the same.'[115] In other words, the text can be used a witness to what it narrates or to itself and the worldview of the narrator, representing a return to the earlier premise that the final editors of the Pentateuch did not understand the varying accounts to be contradictory[116] but rather as different perspectives of a greater presentation.

In light of the rising awareness of the Hebrew Bible's Near Eastern context in the latter half of the twentieth century, the documentary hypothesis continued to lose traction as certain features of the text were unable to be accounted for by the documentary hypothesis. Moreover, the discovery of certain ancient Near Eastern sources that

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[112] Irwin, William A. (1944) 'The Significance of Julius Wellhausen,' *JBR* 12 (3), pp. 163-166.

[113] Some historians contest the term 'Pentateuch,' and instead employ the term 'Hextateuch,' believing that the Book of Joshua should also be included within this set of books. For example, Theophile Meek accommodates this theory into his work on the documentary hypothesis, believing the literary nature of Joshua, according to his classification the different writers, validates its inclusion in the 'Book of the Law.' (Meek, Theophile James (1930) 'The Translation of Gêr in the Hextateuch and Its Bearing on the Documentary Hypothesis,' *JBL* 49 (2), pp. 172-180).

[114] Turning specifically to Genesis 1-11, it is impossible to date the primeval history with an absolute degree of certainty for many of the narratives contained therein are 'timeless [… and] could have arisen at almost any time in the history of Israel.' Similarly, references such as those to the Ur of the Chaldeans are pointed to as proof of the late composition of the final redacted text, and yet scholars believe that this is misleading as many sections of the account convey an ancient origin. (Whybray, R. Norman (1995) *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, pp. 39-40).

[115] Oswalt, John N. (2009) *The Bible Among the Myths*, Zondervan, Michigan, p.63.

[116] Schodde, George H. (1886) 'The Literary Problem of Gen. I.-III.' *OTS* 6 (4), pp. 101-105.

predated the biblical manuscripts, which were posited to have influenced Hebrew thought, proved to be incompatible with the hypothesis' claims.[117] Similarly, language features, such as repetition, that were originally utilised as evidence of multiple authors came to be recognised as a widespread ancient Near Eastern literary form often used to emphasise significant data.[118] Finally, one must factor in the importance of oral transmission and the possibility that the existence of several accounts might also have resulted from different stages of oral tradition.[119]

The effect of the documentary hypothesis is manifold, and resulted in the disassociation of the different sources and their related texts. However, the acknowledgement of the oral history of the Hebrew corpus created further doubt in the identification of the hypothesis' sources.[120] The difficulty in determining the content of each document ultimately led to the theory being set aside by many in favour of redactional criticism, which acknowledges the existence of alternate materials and their significance within the greater work.[121] This permitted scholars to consider the overarching thematic accord in the Hebrew Bible in regards to the development of its creation mythology.

2.2 IN THE BEGINNING

One of the premises of this thesis is that the impact and worth of the creation narratives in the Hebrew Bible are not denigrated by their similarities to earlier traditions or retained mythic imagery. The *Genesis* accounts of creation and all that it entails, the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve and the forbidden fruit, has been an integral and universally pervasive part of Western society for close to two thousand years.

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[117] Vogt, Peter T. (2009) *Interpreting the Pentateuch: An Exegetical Handbook*, Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, pp. 131-135.

[118] Whybray, R. Norman (1987) *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*, JSOT Press, Sheffield, p. 81. While Whybray might assert that these repetitions could be indicative of an original author, Emerton states that unless properly corresponding parallels are discovered between the Biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts a reliance on the latter by an original author cannot be proven, however, Whybray's stress on the repetitive aspects could as easily be credited to a final redactor who desired to emphasise a specific idea. (Emerton, J. A. (1989) 'The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study by R. N. Whybray,' *VT* 39 (1), pp. 110-116). See also: Yoder, B. Perry (1971) 'A-B Pairs and Oral Composition in Hebrew Poetry,' *VT* 21 (4), pp. 470-489 for a discussion on the correlation between certain poetical features of Hebrew and Ugaritic styles.

[119] For example, see: Culley, R. C. (1963) 'An Approach to the Problem of Oral Tradition,' *VT* 13 (2), pp. 113-125. See also: Person Jr., Raymond F. (1998) 'The Ancient Israelite Scribe as Performer,' *JBL* 117 (4), pp. 601-609 who suggests that the foundations of all biblical literature is based in oral tradition.

[120] Ahlstöm, G. W. (1966) 'Oral and Written Transmission,' *HTR* 59 (1), pp. 69-81.

[121] See: Rosenberg, Joel W. (1981) 'The Garden Story Forward and Backward: The non-narrative dimension of Gen. 2-3,' *Prooftexts* 1 (1), pp. 1-27.

Regardless of ones attitude towards it, whether it is considered as true or as just another religious belief, it has been integrated into the very foundation of our society.[122] The Hebrew Bible provided motivation and explanation for numerous social and moral elements that regulated the ancient Hebrew culture and was written by men motivated by specific historical circumstances. Their words were written through conviction and were ultimately designed to interact with these conditions.[123] The importance of the biblical stories lies in their collective relevance, despite the fact that their existence as historically accurate depictions or as narratives relegated to the realms of fiction remains debated.[124] Ultimately it is difficult to divorce *Genesis* from its theological roots, for it was not simply a story of creation for the ancient Israelites, but also a declaration about the character of their god.

The opening two verse of *Genesis* have generated thousands of pages of debate. Questions have been raised over its meaning and even its translation, with many scholars positing alternate constructions. Furthermore, some have postulated that it exceeded the parameters determined by its counterparts by trying to account for the origin of matter itself.[125] These verses read:

בראשת ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ:

והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על־פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על־פני המים:

'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.' Ever since Hermann Gunkel hypothesised that the Hebrew T^{e}hom was a direct derivation of the Babylonian Tiamat,[126] despite the apparent absence of the *Chaoskampf* tradition in the Hebrew text, it has been believed that the two verses were influenced, either directly or indirectly, by material from several foreign sources, added to the account of Genesis 1 by another author or the redactor himself.

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[122] Harper, William R. (1894) 'Some General Considerations Relating to Genesis I.-XI.' *BW* 4 (3), p. 108.
[123] Smith, Gerald Birney (1912) 'Theology and Biblical Criticism,' *BW* 40 (1), p. 26.
[124] Brettler, Marc Z. (1997) 'Biblical History and Jewish Biblical Theology, *JR* 77 (4), pp. 577-80.
[125] Morris, Henry, M. (1976) *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids. A theologian and scientist, Morris holds the position that Genesis was 'unique,' rejecting the growing premise that it was merely an adaptation of the Sumerian myth.
[126] Gunkel, Hermann (1895) *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 Ap Joh 12*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen. For an English translation of this book see: Gunkel, Hermann (2006) *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton*, trans. by William Whitney Jr., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids. However, Mark Brett suggests that to achieve this conclusion, Gunkel had to basically ignore the intention and theology of the Priestly writer (Brett, Mark G. (1991) 'Motives and Intentions in Genesis I,' *JTSNS* 42 (1), pp. 1-2).

By some, v.2 and its depiction of the formless void is regarded as a foreign importation that offers no clarification or worth to the narrative, having been constructed of up to three mythological sources and placed within a literary model that may be traceable to a Phoenician model. Additionally, those who adhere to this concept state that the verse should be excised from the text in order to preserve continuity, as they do not believe that the verse could have belonged to the original text.[127] On the other hand, the passage has also been described, firstly, as a compilation of two sequential declarative statements through the use of the conjunction 'and,' which connects the two verses together,[128] secondly, as an introductory verse followed by a circumstantial clause describing the pre-creation state prior to the commencement of v.3,[129] and thirdly as a summary of the following creation narrative, thus aligning closely with the ancient Near Eastern literary models.[130]

The majority of these theories are attempts to shape the contents of *Genesis* according to external factors. Mythologists seek to assimilate the Hebrew text with the ancient Near Eastern narratives, whilst theologians seek to prove the unsound foundation of the passage itself. However, there is an argument that these interpretations overlook common grammatical features of ancient Hebrew, contending that the correct rendering of v.1 is 'in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'[131] For example, John Lennox states that vv.1-2 are a pericope, and that the creation story generally bracketed between 1:1-2:4 does not actually begin until v.3. Inside such a pericope the normal use of a verb in the perfect tense, in this case *bara* ברא 'he created,' is a representative of an action that is situated before the events of the following story.[132] This would indicate that the formation of the heavens and the earth was performed by Elohim before the commencement of the six days of creation, which would suggest that the Hebrew God existed before the primeval void.

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[127] Morgenstern, Julian (1920) 'The Sources of the Creation Story—Genesis 1:1-2:4,' *AJSLL* 36 (3), p. 195.
[128] Morris, Henry, M. (1976) *The Genesis Record*, p. 42. This conjunction is not translated in the NIV, although it is maintained in the NKJV. See: Green Sr., Jay P. (2008) *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English*, Hendrickson Publishing, United States of America, p. 1.
[129] Cheyne, T. K. (1885) 'Notes on Genesis I., 1 and XXIV 14,' *Hebraica* 2 (1), p. 49.
[130] Orlinksi, Harry M. (1983) 'Enigmatic Bible Passages: The Plain Meaning of Genesis 1:1-3,' *BA* 46 (4), Orlinski's supposition is influenced by the "Great commentator Rashi," and his ultimate conclusion is based upon his disbelief that the author of these verses held an understanding of this period different to those of the other ANE myths.
[131] As in the NIV translation.
[132] Lennox, John C. (2011) *Seven Days that Divide the World*, pp. 52-3. It must also be noted that *bara* is thought to be 'a specifically theological term' whose subject is always God, in other words, it is an action that can only ever be undertaken by a single subject: God. See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1994) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol I, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, pp. 153-4.

Disagreeing with this premise, many translations continue to prefer rendering v.1 as above, placing the emphasis on the temporal location of Yahweh's creative action: 'In the beginning *when* God created the heavens and the earth,' in similar fashion to the ancient Near Eastern myths, which would declare the eternal co-existence of the Hebrew God and the primeval waters. In opposition to this interpretation, it is argued that the textual viability of translating *bereshit* בראשית as 'in the beginning when…' relies on the verb's conjugation in the infinitive construct rather than the perfect tense and while the translation might be grammatically possible in the perfect tense, it is inconsistent with the common usage of the verb.[133] There is still very little doubt in academic circles that the imagery in these verses is founded in the now familiar ancient Near Eastern concepts. However, as arguably the latest creation entry in the Hebrew Bible one can observe significant movement away from imagery of Tiamat and the cosmic battle;[134] a transition that becomes more evident in conjunction with the minor creation stories, and is connected by an overarching theological theme.

Contained within the Hebrew Bible are several declarative statements on the nature of Yahweh, influenced to varying degrees by increasingly monotheistic tendencies. He is the 'maker of heaven and earth' (*Psalm* 134:3),[135] the 'one who formed all things' (*Jeremiah* 10:16, *Ecclesiastes* 11:5) and the one who founded 'the world and all that is in it' (*Psalm* 89:11). The Hebrew writers believed that there was nothing in the heavens or on earth that Yahweh had not created. He was alone in his authority, and those, such as Second Isaiah who adopted a strict monotheism, stated that 'before me [Yahweh] no god

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[133] Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*, pp. 50-1. According to HALOT, the translation 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' is preferred when v.1 is treated as an independent clause and act more as a title or a heading. See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1996) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol III, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, pp. 1169-70. On the other hand, according to a discourse analysis of the text, David Tsumura considers vv.1-2 to be a description of the setting for the following narrative (Tsumura, David (2005) *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, p. 33). Nevertheless, whether the term acts as a title or a summary, the argument that *bereshit* referred to an absolute beginning, based on the perceived transcendance of Yahweh over his creation, persisted throughout the twentieth century. For example see: Walther Eichrodt 'In the Beginning' in Anderson, Bernhard W. and Harrelson, Walter (1962) *Israel's Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenberg*, Harper & Row, New York, pp. 1-10.

[134] On the other hand, scholars such as Lambert and Sjöberg question the authenticity of the claim that the Hebrew tale borrowed from the Babylonian myth, suggesting that there is very little evidence of the fact aside from the supposition of the scholar. See: Lambert, W. G. (1965) 'A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis,' *JTS* 41 (2), pp. 295-6; and A. W. Sjöberg 'Eve and the Chameleon,' in Barrick, W. Boyd and Spencer, John R. (1984) *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestine Life and Literature in Honor of G. W. Ahlström*, JSOT Press, Sheffield. Going one step further than Lambert, Sjöberg cautions that it is no longer scientifically sound to assume that common creation imagery was born in Mesopotamia and spread outward (p. 218).

[135] He is also described as the Lord 'who made heaven and earth in Ps: 115:15, 121:2 and 146:6.

was formed, nor shall there be any after me' (*Isaiah* 43:10b). This concept was fundamental to their entire system of belief because if Yahweh did not create everything, he could not have power over everything and he would be, like the other gods of the ancient world, a product of the void and therefore limited by it.[136] In light of this, accepting the premise that the author simply reproduced the form, function and meaning of the ancient Near Easter myths also requires the acceptance that he theologically undermined his own religious worldview.[137] However, the rising importance of monotheism forbore the existence of the chaos monster in order to assert Yahweh as the only, and unchallenged, deity.

This strand of the discussion highlighting the suggestion of an absolute beginning of all matter has been labelled as *creatio ex nihilo*.[138] The concept has generated heated debate as to its status, with contenders arguing that it is a modern theory grafted onto the Hebrew text, or defending it as the true meaning of the verse. It first appeared in second century Christian literature, but it did not appear to be native in Jewish thought.[139] Rather, it permeated philosophical and theological beliefs through the increasing influence of Christian and Muslim thought.[140] On one side of the discussion, scholars argue that Genesis 1:1 should be excised from the passage, and the creation narrative opened with the recognisable image of the primeval waters.[141] Whereas on the other

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[136] *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* describes it in this way: 'if God is not the creator of everything [...] then he is not completely sovereign. If the substance of which the universe is made is not created by God, then it is co-eternal with God [...] he is not omnipotent in creation, nor in providence, nor in redemption.' (Harrison, Everett F., Bromiley, Geoffrey W. & Henry Carl F. (1960) *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, Pickering and Inglis Ltd. Glascow, p. 146).

[137] In the compilation of the various strands outlined by the documentary hypothesis, with its 'doublets, repetitions and contradictions,' the majority of scholars acknowledge the redactors purpose in producing an ultimately theologically sound work. (Thompson, P. E. S. (1971) 'The Yahwist Creation Story,' *VT* 21 (2), p. 198) It would thus be unlikely that the final editor would include a beginning, upon which the whole OT stood, that even to his own eyes contradicted everything that followed.

[138] See: Copan, Paul (1996) 'Is Creation *Ex Nihilo* A Post-Biblical Invention? An Examination of Gerhard May's Proposal,' *TJ* 17 (1), pp. 77-93, who believes that this assertion places the Genesis account in direct opposition to the claims of the other ancient cosmogonies.

[139] Specifically, it is thought to have risen in response to Platonic thought and the extreme ideas of Gnosticism. See: May, G. (1994) *Creatio ex Nihilo: The Doctrine of 'Creation out of Nothing' in Early Christian Thought*, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, pp. 164-178; and Gunton, C. E. (1998) *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study*, Edinburgh Studies in Constructive Theology, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, p. 15, n. 2.

[140] Winston, David (1971) 'The Book of Wisdom's Theory of Cosmogony,' *HR* 11 (2), pp. 191, 199. Winston's view is ultimately negative, regarding the concept as one formulated to counter the rising prevalence of the co-eternal void in cosmogony, which was perceived as an attack on the sovereignty of God. Löning, on the other hand, does not believe that such a concept was conceivable for the ancient Hebrews (Löning, Karl & Zenger, Erich (2000) *To Begin with, God created...*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, pp. 10-11).

[141] Beginning the account with verse two would then permit 'the Hebrew record of the Creation [... to open] with an already existing dark, turbulent, watery abyss named *tᵉhom*, a Hebrew word corresponding

side, scholars admit that the concept is never explicitly stated, although they believe the implication is subtextual, citing evidence from both Old and New Testament passages that point to an understanding of Yahweh as an active agent before the waters came into existence.[142] However, to determine the accuracy of this claim, one would have to examine each text in their individual context.

It is possible that the notion of *creatio ex nihilo* grew out of the widely accepted conception that matter was the residue of a dismembered deity, which sat in contrast to Hebrew thought and led to the introduction of the premise that Yahweh was also responsible for the creation of matter itself. It is a concept that is entirely unnecessary in stories that proffer a balanced dualism; in the forces of order and chaos, or more simply in the co-existence of male and female entities. It is only in the elimination of the conflict in creation that it truly becomes plausible as an idea, especially when one takes into consideration the polytheism of the ancient Near Eastern myths. According to Hebrew religious thought, Yahweh's universal authority is based on his primogeniture, and this distinction must be removed if any entity is co-existent with him. The other high gods of the ancient world are described as gaining their position through theomachic battles and the usurpation of the power of earlier gods.[143] For example, in the Greek tradition, Zeus supplanted Kronos, who himself had wrested power from Ouranus. Similarly, the Babylonian tradition outlines the rise of Marduk based on his killing of the primal goddess Tiamat.

It is argues that v.2 in *Genesis* opposes this interpretation, ultimately rejecting the theme of generation succession and the necessity of conflict in the creation narrative. The meaning of *hayah* היה 'was' in v.2 ('the earth *was* a formless void') in the *qal* form is

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to the Babylonian Tiamat.' (Whatham, A. E. (1910) 'The Yahweh-Tehom Myth,' *BW* 36 (5), p. 329). However, as will be shown momentarily, this interpretation of Tehom is not universally accepted.

[142] Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4*, p. 465, See also: Lennox, John C. (2011) *Seven Days that Divide the World*, pp. 93-95. Whitley, on the other hand, contends that this was almost certainly true of Deutero-Isaiah, (Whitley, C. F. (1958) 'The Pattern of Creation in Genesis, Chapter 1,' *JNES* 18 (1), p. 39) and Lennox compares the understanding found in the writings of John in the gospels: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God [...] through him all things were made' (John 1:1-3) with that of Genesis 1:1, and notes that the Greek term, here translated as "made" has, in this passage, the meaning of "came to be," indicative of earlier inexistence. (Lennox, John C. (2011) *Seven Days that Divide the World*).

[143] This theme of generational conflict in Mesopotamia also reflected contemporary notions of succession, replacing the old and feeble ruler or father, with the son that is stronger and more capable than his elder. For example, see: Jacobsen, Thorkild (1976) *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion*, Yale University Press, New Haven, pp. 186-90; and Harris, Rivkah (1992) 'The Conflict of Generations in Ancient Mesopotamian Myths,' *CSSH* 34 (4), pp. 621-635.

traditionally translated in terms of something that 'came to pass' or 'became,'[144] indicating the object in question had a specific beginning, although it can also refer to a state of existence as in *Genesis* 3:1 where it states that 'the serpent *was* more crafty.' As such, it may be more accurately translated as 'became' in the present context, indicating the transformation of matter from one thing to another, which would seem to correlate with the garnering of materials from the deceased god.

On the other hand, the understanding of *hayah* must be put in context within the larger unit: והארץ היתה תהו ובהו ('and the earth was a formless void'). Since the correlation between *Genesis* and the *Enuma Elish* has been attested, *tohu wa-bohu* תהו ובהו has been interpreted as representing the primeval chaos,[145] and thus the pre-existent opposition between heaven and earth.[146] However, this assumption has been increasingly challenged in the recent past. For example, based on examinations of several versions of the text, Menahem Kister suggests that the most plausible translation of the term is 'desolate and empty.'[147] Similarly, by examining both biblical and extrabiblical occurrences of the phrase, as well as its morphological and semantic correspondences, David Tsumura concludes that *tohu wa-bohu* does not refer to a chaotic and

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[144] As opposed to the *nif'al* form which is more specifically concerned with the state of existence 'to be.' See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1994) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol I, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, pp. 243-4.

[145] Accordinly, many scholars perceive that the writer of *Genesis* 1 conceived of the primordial elements as evil, standing as the contrast to Yahweh in a dualistic narrative. See: Weinfeld, Moshe (1968) 'God the Creator in Gen. 1 and in the Prophecy of Second Isaiah,' *Tarbiz* 37, pp. 121-2; Khohl, I (2003) *The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices*, JPS, Philadelphia, pp. 11-19.See also: Brueggemann, Walter (1982) *Genesis*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching, 1, John Knox Press, Atlanta, p. 29; and Hayes, Katherine M. (1997) 'Jeremiah IV 23: tohu without bohu,' *VT* 47 (2), pp. 247-249. Hayes contrasts the usage of the term in *Genesis* and *Jeremiah*, although her premise, and thus her conclusion, is based on the assumption that the term refers intimately to a negative perception of the chaos. These two examples are the only occurrences of *tohu wa-bohu* in the Hebrew Bible, and while they both describe scenes of utter desolation, it remains unknown whether the two passages are directly related or if they were based on a similar source. For recent discussions on this topic see: Yair Hoffman 'The First Creation Story: Canonical and Diachronical Aspects' in Reventlow, Henning Graf and Hoffman, Yair (2002) *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, Sheffield Academic Press, JSOTS 319, London, pp. 45-47; and J. T. A. G. M. van Rooiten 'Back to Chaos: The Relationship between Jeremiah 4:23-36 and Genesis 1' in van Kooten, G. H. (2005) *The Creation of Heaven and Earth: Re-interpretations of Genesis 1 in the Context of Judaism, Ancient Philosophy, Christianity, and Modern Physics*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 21-30.

[146] Thompson, Thomas (2014) *Biblical Narrative and Palestine's History: Changing Perspectives 2*, Routledge, Abingdon and New York. Thompson bases this on his understanding of the relationship between *tohu wa*-bohu and ruach *elohim*.

[147] Kister, Menahem (2007) '*Tohu wa-Bohu*, Primordial Elements and *Creatio ex Nihilo*,' *JSQ* 14 (3), pp. 231. Translations that rendered the terms as desolate and empty include: the Jewish Aramaic *targumim* (Sperber, A (1992) *The Bible in Aramaic*, Brill, Leiden, p. 1; Klein, M. (1980) *The Fragment-Targum to the Pentateuch according to their Extant Sources*, Biblical Institute, Analecta Biblica 76, Rome, pp. 43, 126; Diez macho, A. (1968) *Neophyti I: Targum Palestinense ms. de la Biblioteca Vaticana*, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, Rome, p.3; and Reider, D. (1974) *Targum Jonathan ben Uziel on the Pentateuch*, American Academy for Jewish Research, Jerusalem, p. 1) and the Samaritan Aramaic *targum* (Tal, A. (1980) *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch: A Critical Edition*, Tel-Aviv University, Tel-Aviv, pp. 2-3).

disorganised state, but one that is empty and therefore lacks the ability to produce matter.[148] Accordingly, the term is seen to be used in the common 'not yet' sense, contrasting the literal emptiness and unproductiveness of the earth with its known created form.[149]

This could be seen to align with the use of the verb *bara* in v.1: 'God *created* the heavens and the earth,' which is suggestive of the creation of something that did not exist in any form.[150] This appears to contradict the idea that the heavens and the earth were transformed from the body of a dying god, and implies that Yahweh had the capacity to create matter itself. However, it has also been argued that the term can refer to the organisation of pre-existing matter,[151] although this is also dependant on ones understanding of *tohu wa-bohu*.[152] Whether or not the writer was influenced by the Babylonian tale, what became increasingly significant was that no element was seen as uncreated.[153] It is evident that the writer could not have conceived of the complexities of

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[148] Tsumura, David (2005) *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, pp. 12-32. It is also possible to see this notion in HALOT's rendition of the term as a 'terrible, eerie, deserted wilderness.' See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1999) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol IV, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, pp. 1689-90; and Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1994) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol I, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, p. 111. Thompson continues to oppose this view, believing instead that the construction of the term *tohu wa-bohu* could be a derivative of the Egyptian notion of the divine male and female couple sharing in the process of creation and thus does not consider it possible that the term signifies nothing more than passive emptiness (Thompson, Thomas (2014) *Biblical Narrative and Palestine's History: Changing Perspectives 2*, Routledge, Abingdon and New York).

[149] See: David Toshio Tsumura 'Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,' in Hess, Richard S. and Tsumura, David Toshio (1994) *I Studies Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, Vol. 4, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, p. 33; Tsumura, David (2005) *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, pp. 34-5; and David Toshio Tsumura 'The Doctrine of Creation *ex nihilo* and the Translation of *tohu wabohu*,' in Moriya, Akio and Hata, Gohei (2012) *Pentateuchal Traditions in the Late Second Temple Period*, p. 19. Tsumura has developed his argument on this notion throughout the last ten years.

[150] See: Kelly, Douglas, F. (1997) *Creation and Change*, Christian Focus, Fearn, p. 83. The translation of *bara* has continued to rouse debates amongst scholars, although its limited usage indicates that it had distinct theological value in Hebrew thought, implying that extrabiblical sources may be unable to explain its meaning (Lane, William R. (1963) 'The Initiation of Creation,' *VT* 13 (1), pp. 63-73).

[151] See: Barney, Kevin L. (2000) 'Examining Six Key Concepts in Joseph Smith's Understanding of Genesis 1:1,' *BYUS* 39 (3), pp. 107-124.

[152] It has been noted that the notion of the *formless* void, i.e. something that has creative substance but is yet undefined, is thought to be a Greek notion and not a Hebrew one. See: David Toshio Tsumura 'The Doctrine of Creation *ex nihilo* and the Translation of *tohu wabohu*,' in Moriya, Akio and Hata, Gohei (2012) *Pentateuchal Traditions in the Late Second Temple Period*, Brill, Leiden and Boston, p. 18.

[153] Kister, Menahem (2007) '*Tohu wa-Bohu*, Primordial Elements and *Creatio ex Nihilo*,' *JSQ* 14 (3), p. 241-4. Kister bases this assumption on a study of tour sources, including: The *Book of Jubilees*, Philo, a saying from the Babylonian Talmud and *Pirqe de Rabbi Eli'ezer*. Furthermore, while the common understanding of ancient cosmogonies is of the pre-existent (and thus co-eternal) chaos, such a reading would prove problematic to its monotheistic tradition. Scholars such as Lambert claim that there is insufficient proof on either side to declare that Genesis 1 is based upon the Enuma Elish, and that it inherently incorporated

creatio ex nihilo in his age, although it is clear that the followers of Yahweh envisaged their god to be dissimilar to those of their neighbours. He was neither a product of the natural world, nor limited by it,[154] and so the writer attempted to display this in his words.

Since the discovery of the ancient Near Eastern creation myths, *Genesis* 1:2 has been intimately linked to the Babylonian story of Marduk, and also by association, Tiamat. The prevailing view was that the accounts were so directly paralleled, albeit with slight modifications, that there could be no other explanation for the development of the former. T^{e}hom תהום 'the deep' is seen as the equivalent of Tiamat from the *Enuma Elish*,[155] and the *ruach elohim* רוה אלהים 'spirit of God' (here translated as 'a wind from God'), is likened to the winds, storms and hurricanes that Marduk employed to defeat Tiamat and thereby separate the waters of the sea and sky.[156] However the premise that the Hebrew and Babylonian 'winds' are analogous relies somewhat on the retention of the *Chaoskampf* tradition, and the imagery of the personified Tiamat in the identity of T^{e}hom.[157] Furthermore, it is important to note that the term *ruach* may hold a variety of meanings depending on its context.

The word *ruach* can be translated as: breath, air, strength, wind, breeze, courage, temper or spirit, although out of these only three may be applicable: wind, breath or spirit in the present context. For example, in *Genesis* 3:8 the term carries the meaning of 'a gentle breeze,' in *Exodus* 10:13 it is a 'strong, constant wind' and in *Jeremiah* it is a 'gale' or 'tornado.' With the ability to bear such interpretations, the correlation between the wind of God and those of Marduk is compelling. A similar image can be seen in *Daniel* 7:2 where it states: 'I, Daniel, saw in my vision by night the four winds of heaven stirring up

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the cosmic battle (Lambert, W. G. (1965) 'A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis,' *JTS* 41 (2), pp. 287-300).

[154] For an insightful discussion of this topic, see: Walton, John H. (2009) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, pp. 191-4.

[155] It is believed that T^{e}hom is not an imported Akkadian word, and its presence in the text is representative of a prominent ancient Near Eastern concept in creation. Namely, that it is intimately connected to the creation process as a source of material. See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1999) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol IV, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, p. 1690.

[156] Waterman, Leroy (1927) 'Cosmogonic Affinities in Genesis 1:2,' *AJSLL* 43, pp. 177-184.

[157] Linguistically, the premise has also been challenged by the uncommon usage of the divine title as a superlative in a context that holds no religious significance or connotation. See: Thomas, D. Winton (1953) 'A Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew,' *VT* 3 (3), pp. 209-224; and Blythin, Islwyn (1962) 'A Note on Genesis I 2,' *VT* 12 (1), pp. 120-121. That being said, there are examples of Elohim being used as a superlative, such as in Jonah 3:3 where Ninevah is literally praised as a city to God, emphasising the greatness of the city.

the great sea.'[158] Here, T^{e}hom is presented as a linguistic and symbolic equivalent to the chaos monster, although the passage is contextually apocalyptic in nature, thereby requiring the retention of the imagery of the celestial battle.[159] However, when *Genesis* 1:2 is read in conjunction with the following creation account, it does not appear that the writer has the cosmic battle in mind,[160] as there is no evidence of conflict.

The primary translation of the term in the context of *Genesis* 1:1 is often considered to be 'spirit of God,' out of which the negative connotations of the ancient Near Eastern primal chaos have been purged.[161] Similarly, it has been hypothesised that the *ruach elohim* was a hypostasis of Yahweh, that according to Michael DeRoche 'expresses Elohim's control over the cosmos and his ability to impose his will upon it […] it is part of the description of the way things were before Elohim executes any specific act of creation.'[162] Thus, God is not presented as one preparing for war, but as one ready and waiting to begin his task. This understanding of the term accords with use in *Genesis* 2:7, where it is rendered as 'breath of God,' which introduces the symbolism of life,[163] where God 'breathed into his [Adam's] nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being,' ultimately agreeing with the portrayal of God as a life-giving deity who is poised to commence his creative works.

The supposed connections throughout the entire Hebrew Bible between T^{e}hom and Tiamat are manifold; ranging from narrative parallels to physical imagery and linguistic correlations. For example, *Psalm* 74:13-14's declaration that 'You [Yahweh] divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters. You crushed the

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[158] See: Waterman, Leroy (1927) 'Cosmogonic Affinities in Genesis 1:2,' *AJSLL* 43, p. 180. The book of Daniel was believed to have been compiled into its extant form during the second century B.C.E. and the author of the seventh chapter drew heavily on historical and cultural knowledge of the Babylonian Empire, presented Daniel as 'living under the Babylonian kings' and used 'Babylonian cosmological material for a considerable portion of his imagery,' (Barton, George A. (1898) 'The Composition of the Book of Daniel,' *JBL* 17 (1), p. 80).

[159] Gardener, Anne E. (1999) 'The Great Sea of Dan. VII 2,' *VT* 49 (3), pp. 412-415; and Ferch, Arthur J. (1980) 'Daniel 7 and Ugarit: A Reconsideration,' *JBL* 99 (1), pp. 75-86.

[160] Harry Orlinsky argues that the most plausible translation in this context is 'wind,' however, unlike Marduk's application, the 'wind of Elohim' does not separate the heavens and the earth (Orlinksy, Harry M. (1957) 'The Plain Meaning of Ruah in Gen 1.2,' *JQR* 48 (2: Dropsie College Jubilee Alumni Issue), pp. 174-182).

[161] Wyatt, Nicolas (1993) 'The Darkness of Gen I 2,' *VT* 43 (4), pp. 546-50.

[162] M. DeRoche ' The rûah 'elohîm in Genesis 1:2c: Creation or Chaos?' in Eslinger, L. and Taylor, G. (1988) *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, JSOTSup 67, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, p. 318.

[163] See: Moscati, Sabatino (1947) 'The Wind in Biblical and Phoenician Cosmogony,' *JBL* 66 (3), pp. 305-310; and, Löning, Karl & Zenger, Erich (2000) *To Begin with, God created…*, The Liturgical Press, Minnesota, p. 19. Löning believes that the *ruach* represents the creative power that Yahweh subsequently breathes into his creation.

heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness,' is thought to correspond with Marduk's conflict with Tiamat via the Ugaritic myth of Baal and Yam, his triumph over her and her subsequent dismemberment. Examples such as this have been recognised as linking the literary history of the Hebrew creation account to the Babylonian tradition through its depiction of Yahweh's victory over the dragons, and to the Canaanitic creation myth through its description of Leviathan.

In the Babylonian story Marduk uses an evil wind to kill Tiamat, driving it into her mouth so that she split in half and became new materials out of which the heavens and the earth could be made. Similarly, *Psalm* 74 depicts Yahweh as using his power to defeat the sea monsters, ultimately killing Leviathan and distributing his body as food for the wild beasts. This action has been likened to Marduk's treatment of Tiamat's body, in that she too has been broken apart into 'food' (raw material) to be used for the creation of the heavens and the earth.[164] However, the description of Leviathan as having multiple heads has been perceived as a direct equivalent to the Canaanite Lotan.[165] Before the discovery of the Ugaritic texts, the monsters of the Hebrew Bible were regarded as personifications of the deep, (later seen as corresponding to the enemies of Baal and Anat), and yet they were depicted as partaking in battles that weren't connected to the event of creation.[166]

In the context of *Psalm* 74, the writer is crying out to Yahweh for help. The Israelites have been defeated by their enemies, and their temple destroyed. Hoping for victory, they employ imagery of Yahweh as a conqueror who is able to defeat the strongest enemy they can envisage. Similarly, *Daniel* 7 looked forward to a mighty battle, prophesying that a great evil would arise only to be eternally destroyed. These narratives used linguistic and thematic features of the cosmic battle, but their purpose was not to recount the creation of the world, but to reassert Yahweh's supremacy.[167]

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[164] The verb used in *Psalm* 74:15, translated as *baqa'* בקע 'cleave' 'break apart,' is Canaanitic in origin and is connected to the imagery of dividing the waters. The verb is also used in connection to the flood narrative in *Genesis* 7:11, and is often tied to the imagery of Yahweh's rescue of the Israelites at the Red Sea (Atwell, James E. (2000) 'An Egyptian Source for Genesis,' *JTS* 51 (2), p. 447).

[165] Waterman, Leroy (1927) 'Cosmogonic Affinities in Genesis 1:2,' *AJSLL* 43, p.180. See also: Ferch, Arthur J. (1980) 'Daniel 7 and Ugarit: A Reconsideration,' *JBL* 99 (1), pp. 79-80. See also: Wallace, Howard (1948) 'Leviathan and the Beast in Revelation,' *BA* 11 (3), pp. 62-3.

[166] Wakeman, Mary (1969) 'The Biblical Earth Monster in the Cosmogonic Combat Myth,' *JBL* 88 (3), pp. 313-4.

[167] Similarly, Wallace intimates that this notion is reinforced through the Hebrew writers' remembrance of the cosmic battle but their omission of the names of the opposing gods, indicating that the emphasis has been placed on God's creation of and strength over them, rather than their individual power. (Wallace, Howard (1948) 'Leviathan and the Beast in Revelation,' *BA* 11 (3), pp. 4-5).

These examples contrast with *Genesis* 1:2's presentation of this imagery, which has been stripped back to its barest essentials.

On the other hand, while it is generally admitted that the reference in Psalm 74 may be inspired by a *Chaoskampf* tradition of some kind, it is argued that there does not seem to be a connection in Genesis to the primeval water as a negative force.[168] There is no evidence of rebellion in the character of T^{e}hom in Genesis 1:2, instead she appears as a passive entity. Tsumura proposes that this is perhaps because T^{e}hom is not a linguistic equivalent to Tiamat, but is closer to the Ugaritic *thm*, which simply refers to the ocean.[169] Furthermore, it has been suggested that the earth and the deep of v.2 act as a hyponymous pair, whilst the earth constitutes an autonomous pair with the heavens in v.1, thus implying that T^{e}hom is part of the earth and not an individual entity and that the cosmology of vv.1-2 is bipartite instead of tripartite.[170]

In additional support of this idea, the sea monsters in *Genesis* 1:21, generally seen as personifications of chaos, have been removed from the scene and are instead relocated to the fifth day of creation. In doing this, the writer is suggested as questioning the contemporary understanding of dualism in which the powers of chaos were eternally on the cusp of gaining ascendancy. This proposition relegates the sea monsters to being members of God's 'good' creation, and prevents them from participating in any primeval conflict. If this were the case, the author's use of the term T^{e}hom and its seemingly obviously allusion to the chaos monster Tiamat acts as a commentary on the earlier myth. It differentiates between the required methods of creation and prepared for the

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[168] See: Norman Habel 'Geophany: The Earth Story in Genesis 1 (pp. 34-48) in Habel, Norman and Wurst Shirley (2000) *The Earth Story in Genesis*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, p. 39; and Fretheim T. E. (1994) *Genesis*, The New Interpreter's Bible, 1, Abingdon Press, Nashville, p. 356.

[169] See: Tsumura, David (2005) *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament*, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, chapter 2; Day, J. (1985) *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. However, whilst Day agrees that a Canaanitic background is the most likely, he presupposes that it must be some echo of a mythical character (p. 50). It must be noted that while he espoused the theory, even Gunkel was unconvinced that the writer of Genesis 1 was actually aware of the connection between T^{e}hom and Tiamat, and that perhaps the common imagery remained without any understanding of its roots (Gunkel, Hermann (1895) *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 Ap Joh 12*, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, Göttingen, pp. 7, 13-14.

[170] David Toshio Tsumura 'Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,' in Hess, Richard S. and Tsumura, David Toshio (1994) *I Studies Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, Vol. 4, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, pp. 75-6. Tsumura clarifies in these pages how the Genesis account appears to differ from the traditional tripartite view of the ancient Near East.

introduction of the *divine fiat*,[171] in an effort to distinguish the Hebrew account of creation from its peers.

There are still some who continue to reject the correlation between the two personalities entirely, citing a belief that an 'attempt to see an allusion to the goddess Tiamat in the Hebrew word T^{e}hom [… violates] the rules of morphology and equivalency in cognate languages.'[172] This overlooks the possibility that the deification of Tiamat could have been transferred to T^{e}hom; however, entertaining the notion that the writer uses a play on words that sounded similar does not necessarily indicate that he intended the two terms to be read as exact equivalents. Ultimately, the way in which the Hebrew writers utilised the pre-existing mythic traditions was subject to their belief system. In the mid-twentieth century, H. L. Ginsberg described it thus: 'Israelite monotheism leaves no room for any powers which are not subject to the sovereign will of God.'[173] In other words, each mythological image was passed through this lens and was adjusted accordingly before being affixed to the Hebrew text. As such, these two controversial verses set the stage for the following creation account, which allowed for the inclusion of mythic elements, but not their exact reproduction.

2.3 "AND GOD SAID…"

The following section refers to the well-known and highly structured account in *Genesis* 1:3-2:4a that records the creation story as occurring over a seven-day period. The progressive focus of each day narrows the scope of creation from the universe down to the creation of man, culminating in the etiological introduction of the Sabbath day. In the same way as vv.1-2, this narrative has been the subject of fierce contention within the scholarly and theological realms alike. Some believe that it was written as a literal explanation of how the world was formed, suggesting that it occurred over six

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[171] Kapelrud, Arvid S. (1974) 'The Mythological Features in Genesis I and the Author's Intentions,' *VT* 24 (2), pp. 178-186. Kapelrud adds that he believes the author intimately knew the Ugaritic and Babylonian myths and that he deliberately chose to disregard its prepositions to show that 'God had no difficulty in his creation, there was no trouble, no opposition of any kind. He spoke and creation took place.' (pp. 183-4) See also Hvidberg who specifies that the author depicted God as making 'the earth out of sea, but the sea was sea, that is an inanimate thing, which God treated according to his will.' (Hvidberg, Flemming (1960) 'The Canaanitic Backgroud of Gen I-III,' *VT* 10 (3), p. 293).

[172] Kaiser et al. (1996) *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, p.89. The primary translations of the word include the ocean (as opposed to the seas), deep floods or sources of water, the depths (in poetical language as opposed to the heavens or skies) or '"all waters," which initially covered the surface of the entire earth. (Strong (2001) *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, pp. 881-2).

[173] Ginsberg, H. L. (1945) 'Ugaritic Studies and the Bible,' *BA* 8 (2), p. 54.

immediately sequential twenty-four hour periods.[174] Whereas the majority accept a more metaphorical interpretation, supported by the many uses of the word yom יום 'day,' implying that each twenty-four hour period was separated by an unspecified amount of time, or that the days themselves were simply sequential but indeterminate lengths of time.[175] It is unlikely that the author had an exact time period in mind, but rather systemised the creation narrative according to the Hebrew weekly cycle. Ultimately, the text is liturgical, written in such a way that everything builds to the seventh day and the explanation as to why it is holy.

Creation myths are often discussed in terms of binary opposition: light and dark, heaven and earth, good and evil and how the balance of these conflicting forces ensures the continuation of the world and everything in it. Edmund Leach, influenced by the Lévi-Straussian methodology, concluded that the presentation of binary extremes in *Genesis* 1 conformed to the general understanding of dualism.[176] However, whilst his faithfulness to the methodology must be admired, the deliberate attempts to eliminate the notion of conflict in these extremes, in the present text as well as the verses that introduce it, do not seem to support his conclusion. If one examines the figure of Baal, for example, who is the Canaanitic rain and fertility god, it can be observed that his authority is cyclically challenged by the forces of drought and sterility. However, in the Hebrew tradition, the staunch Yahwists advocated that Yahweh was both the giver of rain and of drought, of fertility and of sterility.[177] Thus, Yahweh's authority remained unchallenged during the cycles of the year.

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[174] This debate often focuses on Ussher's chronology and its demise. See also Numbers, who discusses the well-known reality that the Biblical genealogies upon which Ussher's theory was based are abbreviated and that unimportant names were omitted. (Numbers, Ronald L. (2000) '"The Most Important Biblical Discovery of our Time": William Henry Green and the Demise of Ussher's Chronology,' *CH* 69 (2), pp. 257-276).

[175] Advocates of this position often quote passages like Psalm 90:4 which state: 'For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night,' to express other usages for the word pertaining to longer periods than a 24 hour day.

[176] See: Leach, Edmund R. *Genesis as Myth*, in: Middleton, John (1967) *Myth and Cosmos: Readings in Mythology and Symbolism*, pp. 1-13. Also, for a discussion of Lévi-Strauss' methodology followed by Leach, see: Csapo, E. (2011) *Theories of Mythology*, pp. 217-234. Leach's hypthesis was grounded in the idea that there must be a mediating element between the two opposing extremes of each dualistic set.

[177] Thompson, P. E. S. (1971) 'The Yahwist Creation Story,' *VT* 21 (2), pp. 206-7. For examples of this, see: Job 5:10, which declares God as the one who sends rain, 1 Kings 18, in which Elijah is given foresight about an impending drought, and Genesis 29:31 in which the two wives of Jacob, one of whom God made fertile, and the other who he made barren.

In the light of the ancient Near Eastern traditions, *Genesis* was subversive in nature by its suggestion that the forces of evil were not equiprimordial with those of good.[178] The text does not focus on the opposition of these forces, but rather emphasises Yahweh's creation of them both, reinforcing this idea by the introduction of several other dichotomies throughout the text, coupled with the rejection of a polytheistic worldview that conceived of their gods as characterisations of these forces.[179] The Hebrew prophets refused to recognise the gods of their neighbours as living deities,[180] often utilising their mythic imagery in direct commentary upon them, just as the writer of *Genesis* 1:2 was possibly aware of the Babylonian myth but altered it to suit a monotheistic worldview. Accordingly, the creation account in *Genesis* 1:3-2:4a depicts the Hebrew God as a sole creator, whose method of creation was unopposed and peaceful.

The creation story has been organised around an arbitrary system of six days populated by eight creative acts, followed by a day of rest. It is possible that this seven-day cycle is another importation from the Babylonian tradition, although it is unknown whether the system was introduced to a pre-existing text at a later date, or if the text itself is late and was written to conform to the seven-day cycle.[181] It is evident that, due to its liturgical, didactic form, the text has undergone considerable manipulation during its

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[178] Middleton, John R. (1994) 'Is Creation Theology Inherently Conservative? A Dialogue with Walter Bruggemann,' *HTR* 87 (3), p. 273.

[179] May, Herbert G. (1939) 'The Creation of Light in Genesis 1:3-5,' *JBL* 58 (3), pp. 203-211. See also: Carroll, who highlights what he believes to be several other misleading dichotomies outlined by Leach such as the association of Adam and Eve with infertility and fertility respectively on which he comments that the commandment to be 'be fruitful and multiply' was directed to the couple as a unit, and not to Eve. While some of Carroll's own conclusions are erroneous, he correctly identifies the reinforcement of the established structure with the elevation of Yahweh. (Carroll, Michael P. (1977) 'Leach, Genesis and Structural Analysis: A Critical Evaluation,' *AE* 4 (4), pp. 663-677)

[180] See: Psalm 135:15-17. Scholars such as Kaufmann mistakenly believe that the Israelites had no knowledge of the surrounding nations polytheistic religions, citing such examples as Job 31:26-28 to show that they did not worship the heavenly bodies, however, the verse acknowledges the existence of the practice. Similarly, he claims that the biblical authors were ignorant other gods, despite references to Chemosh and Baal throughout the OT. (Kaufmann, Yehezkel (1951) 'The Bible and Mythological Polytheism,' *JBL* 70 (3), pp. 179-197) Significantly, the use of the word "Elohim," a common term denoting the plurality of gods, displays Hebrew knowledge of the contemporary polytheistic religions and even their own polytheistic past, however, in the biblical texts, "Elohim" and "Yahweh" only take verbs and adjectives in their singular form, thus discouraging the projection of a polytheistic interpretation. (Foster, R. V. (1887) 'The Word Elohim in Genesis I,' *OTS* 6 (8), pp. 241-243).

[181] Radau believed that this system was introduced by the Priestly writer, who he suggests was inspired by the Babylonian epic. (Radau, Hugo (1902) 'The Creation Story of Genesis I,' *The Monist* 12 (4), pp. 568-625). The significance of the number 7 and thus the seven day/year cycle in the ancient world is well attested; being established in the Ugaritic, Egyptian and Babylonian traditions (Atwell, James E. (2000) 'An Egyptian Source for Genesis,' *JTS* 51 (2), pp. 472-3).

transmission.[182] However, it is still generally classified as a narrative, despite its patterned structure and singular actor. The overarching framework is symmetrically separated into two halves with days 1-3 focused on the form of matter and days 4-6 on function, filling these empty spaces with appropriate things.[183] For example, the first day tells of the creation of light whilst the fourth recounts the creation of the sun and moon. The second day tells of the separation of sky and sea, whereas the fifth populates these regions with winged creatures and sea animals. Finally, the third day recalls the formation of land and its subsequent covering with vegetation, and the sixth the production of land animals and the creation of mankind. The balance of this triadic formula seems designed to stress the orderliness of God's creative activity.

The passage opens in v.3 with a *wayyiqtol* verb, used in this case to denote a succession of events in the past tense.[184] The phrase *vayomer elohim* ויאמר אלהים 'and God said' opens each day, followed by a declaration of the day's creative purpose, and the actualisation of the *divine fiat*, before being closed by the phrase 'and there was evening and there was morning, the nth day.'[185] The tendency to render these as ordinal numbers in the English translation is misleading, as the Hebrew form presents the first five days in the cardinal form, thereby differentiating them from the six and seventh days. This intimates that there was a heightened significance on the final two days, the former of which concerned the creation of mankind and the latter a day of rest that was consecrated and holy to God.

Aside from the use of *bara* 'he created' in v.1 and v.27, which indicate the production of something new,[186] the creation account of *Genesis* 1 is generally accepted as a myth of separation. For example, vv.3-5 outline the creation of light, stating: 'then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light [...] and God separated the light from the darkness.'

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[182] This theory is supported by Whybray who states that the 'neatness and precision of [the narrative's] presentation of the acts of creation [and its repeated use of] the same phraseology [...] lists these with the dryness of a catalogue [... giving] the impression of an account which has been carefully honed and reduced systematically to a minimum.' (Whybray, R. Norman (1995) *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, p. 42).
[183] Lennox, John C. (2011) *Seven Days that Divide the World*, pp. 45-6. See also: Herder, J. G. von (1833) *The Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, Edward Smith, Burlington; and Dana, James D. (1890) 'The Genesis of the Heavens and the Earth and All the Host of Them. I,' *ONT* 11 (1), pp. 12-23.
[184] Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*, pp. 42-3. For a better understanding of a wayyiqtol verb see: Hatav, Galia (2004) 'Anchoring World and Time in Biblical Hebrew,' *JL* 40 (3), pp. 491-526; Saydon, P. P. (1959) 'The Use of Tenses in Deutero-Isaiah,' *Biblica* 40 (2), pp. 290-301 and Baden, Joel S. (2008) 'The Wəyiqtol and the Volitive Sequence,' *VT* 58 (2), pp. 147-158.
[185] The Hebrew form of the first through fifth days is written with cardinal numbers, and rendered literally as 'the one day,' 'the two day' etc. See: Burke, Kenneth (1958) 'On the First Three Chapters of Genesis,' *Daedelus* 87 (3), pp. 37-64.
[186] See: Wardlaw Jr., Terrance Randall (2014) 'The Meaning of ברא in Genesis 1:1-2:3,' *VT* 64, pp. 502-513.

In order to create light, there must be an absence of it. Accordingly, darkness is described as being connected to the primeval state of the universe in v.2; it covered the formless void, and by it nothing could be differentiated. The writer thus introduces a binary opposition by which to distinguish the light. In the Greek tradition, the creation of the dark night and the light day are attributed to the procreative acts of Gaia, who coupled with the Erebos (the realm of darkness) before the creation of the heavens.[187] These verses follow a similar format of progression, however, there is no evidence of procreation in the Hebrew text.

In denying the personification of the deep in v.2, and positing God as the only subject of the creative verb throughout the passage, the writer seeks to emphasise his belief in God's ability to create unaided. Logistically, the creation of light is necessary for the observation of the following creative acts, just as night and day is necessary for the narrative progression begun in v.5b: 'and there was evening and there was morning.' Interestingly, the darkness ultimately appears to be an uncreated element;[188] it is simply the absence of light, just as cold is often described as the absence of heat. Thus the relationship between the light and dark can reflect the relationship between order and chaos in that chaos is just an absence of order rather than an active force warring against it.

In the ancient Near East, the forces of order and chaos exist in an eternal state of tug-of-war, with each fighting against the other for the balance of power. Whereas, the chaos in the Chinese tradition bore no negative connotations; it was simply the undifferentiated whole. An analogous understanding of the chaos also existed in the Grecian tradition, and it is possible that a similar concept could have developed under the weight of monotheism. In this way, the idea of chaos being described as the absence of order as opposed to an entity unto itself would accord with the peaceful setting of creation. Thus the forces of chaos are stripped of their power, just as the darkness has no strength with which to overcome the light.

Vv.6-7 are often associated with the theme of the dying god, which itself often coincides with the motif of separation. 'And God said "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were over the

[187] Hesiod (1988) *Theogony and Works and Days*, trans by. M. L. West, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford, p. 6.
[188] However, whilst *Genesis* does not appear to be explicit on the topic, the distinctly monotheistic view of Second Isaiah asserts that even the darkness was created by God (*Isaiah* 45:7).

dome.' This imagery was common in the ancient world; for example, the Babylonians are said to have conceived of the earth as a flat plane, over which Tiamat's sundered body was placed as a dome, separating the heavens and the earth. Likewise, the Egyptians thought of the dome as being comprised of the sky goddess Nut, who regulated the daily passage of the sun, and whose shape is believed to have corresponded to the shape of the Milky Way in the night sky.[189] While the Hebrew tradition conforms to this cosmological description, it varies somewhat in the method of its creation.

The creation of a thing in the ancient world often revolved around the transformation of divine matter. Furthermore, it was common to conceive of the cosmos in bodily terms, in that the human body was a microcosm of the universe.[190] In the ancient Near East, the separation of the heavens and the earth occurred after the defeat of the chaos monster, whose body was then split in half to become the sea and sky. However, the dying god is absent from the Hebrew narrative, which makes this correlation problematic.[191] Instead, the author has retained only the establishment of the dome as separating the two waters, without specification of that from which it was constructed. The repetitive emphasis on the *divine fiat*, combined with the author's proposition in v.1 that his god is capable of creating new matter, has enabled him to eliminate the chaos monster's participation from the text. This theory would be further enhanced is the introductory pericope of vv.1-2 were a summary as some have claimed, as it would emphasise the newness of each creative act as opposed to positing a reliance on transformable material.

This concept is carried over into day three, whose imagery has generally been linked to Tiamat's rebellion. V.9 reads: 'And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." and it was so.' Here, the hints of the chaos monster's rebellion are suppressed, and the boundaries set for the waters are not

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[189] See: Wells, R. A. (1992) 'The Mythology of Nut and the Birth of Ra,' *SAK* 19, pp. 305-321; Conman, Joanne (2003) 'It's About Time: Ancient Egyptian Cosmology,' *SAK* 31, pp. 33-71; Hollis, Susan Tower (1987) 'Women of Ancient Egypt and the Sky Goddess Nut,' *JAF* 100 (398: Folklore and Feminism), pp. 496-503; and Piankoff, Alexander (1934) 'The Sky-Goddess Nut and the Night Journey of the Sun,' *JEA* 20 (1/2), pp. 57-61.

[190] Simkin, Ronald A. (2014) 'The Embodied World: Creation Metaphors in the Ancient Near East,' *BTB* 44 (1), pp. 40-53. One of the clearest examples of this principle lays in the Chinese story of Pangu. His body was transformed upon his death into the features of the earth, each corresponding geographically and in function to those of the dying god. This story is examined thoroughly in chapter 7 (section 7.3.2) of this dissertation.

[191] Seindenberg states that there is no evidence of a dying god in the *Genesis* story, nor does he believe that it can be explained by the use of architectural (temple) imagery. (Seindenberg, A. (1983) 'The Separation of Sky and Earth at Creation (III),' *Folklore* 94 (2), pp. 192-200).

described in terms of gates and bars as if detaining a prisoner.[192] This is contrasted with earlier Hebrew creation accounts that have been integrated with the exodus tradition, such as those in *Isaiah* 51 and *Psalm* 89, which displayed Yahweh as a conqueror according to the contextual needs. The current creation account is more closely related to wisdom theology, in that it displays God as creating by his spoken word. Thus the sovereignty of God is assumed by the writer and his authority does not need to be justified by the common theme of his victory over chaos.

The ancient gods were geographically and geocentrically based. Their power was limited to their domain; however, these could be expanded through the displacement of earlier, or even other contemporary gods, and the subsequent absorption of their territory. Such was the case, for example, for Zeus who assumed control of his father's domain after he committed patricide. They were generally believed to act in response to those that resided within their boundaries, at the centre of which usually stood their temple. Furthermore, their domain could also increase as their cult grew in popularity, their followers could similarly vanquish an enemy and claim their territories for their own god. Finally, they were also considered to be cosmically bound; they were, according to John Walton, 'bound to particular cosmic phenomena and therefore had little jurisdiction over other cosmic phenomena.'[193]

Over time, Israelite religion became theologically reliant on the distinctiveness of their God. His capacity to perform miracles was often substantiated by his unaccompanied acts of creation, his status as uncreated, his freedom from geographical restraints and his transcendence above the created realm enabling to move and act outside it.[194] Accordingly, the differentiation between the Hebrew and Babylonian conception of this

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[192] Here, Lambert elucidates that there is no guarantee that the parallel between v.9 and the *Enuma Elish* in their separation of heavens and the earth presupposes the existence of conflict in the former. To make his point, Lambert observes that examples from the Hittite, Egyptian, Phoenician and Orphic traditions express this separation in peaceful terms (Lambert, W.G. (1965) 'A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis,' *JTSNS* 16 (2), pp. 293-4). See also: David Toshio Tsumura 'The "*Chaoskampf*" Motif in Ugaritic and Hebrew Literatures' in Michaud, Jean-Marc (2007) *Le Royaume d'Ougarit de la Crète à l'Euphrate. Nouveux axes de Recherche*, Actes de Congrès Internatinal Sherbrooke 2005, Polo II, GGC, Sherbrooke, pp. 475-6, who states that there is no essential connection between the primal waters and conflict, and that the *Enuma Elish* was the only ancient Near Eastern myth that contained an explicit cosmogonical conflict, whereas the others are more generally contained within the divine succession.

[193] Walton, John H. (2009) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, chapter four, pp. 87-112. Similarly, Oswalt describes the gods as 'known through their identity with the great natural cycles of the cosmos.' Oswalt, John N. (2009) *The Bible Among the Myths*, pp. 23-4.

[194] See: Habel, Norman C. (1972) '"Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth": A Study in Tradition Criticism,' *JBL* 91 (3), pp. 321-337. Furthermore, passages such as Jeremiah 27:5, Deuteronomy 4:32-39 and Daniel 3:20-22 display the OT belief that only a god who created the heavens and earth as well as everything on it had the power and wisdom to fulfil all the promises he had made.

issue in *Genesis* 1 can be demonstrated in the creation of the sun and moon on the fourth day. Vv.14-15 declares the purpose of their creation: 'And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so.' Their function conformed to the general astrological comprehension of the sun and moon; the sun marked the passage of days, the moon governed the lunar cycle and marked the months. Together, they governed the passage of time, and yet it is in vv.16-18 that lays a distinction between them and the Hebrew God.

These verses read: 'God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.' It is well documented that the heavenly bodies were, in the same way as all natural phenomena, manifestations of a particular deity and were worshipped as representations of them.[195] In the Babylonian epic, Marduk's domain resides in the regulation and movement of the heavenly bodies and is embodied by the sun. After his ascendency, he sat in supremacy over the other gods of the pantheon, and yet his role remained restricted by his own domain. Declaring that the stars were already in existence by the time of Marduk's rise denies his role as a creator and designates him as one who establishes order.[196] On the other hand, the Hebrew God is depicted both as giving the heavenly bodies their form as well as their function.

In the ancient Egyptian tradition receiving a name was of the utmost importance. Mordechai Gilula explains the awarding of a name as 'designating its essence or a particular trait or feature, the basic concept being that the owner of the name became endowed with all the powers connected with it etymologically.'[197] However, in *Genesis* 1, the writer allocates the domains of the sun and moon and delegates them power to rule

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[195] Gods were personified by their association to the sun, for example, the Egyptian god Re, and the Greek/Roman god Apollo were both worshiped as the god of the sun. See also: Walton, John H. (2009) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*. In this case, it is thought that their commission to rule over the day and the night is associated with an earlier Babylonian tradition, in which 'it was conceived that the heavenly bodies controlled the fates which in turn govern human existence' (Atwell, James E. (2000) 'An Egyptian Source for Genesis,' *JTS* 51 (2), p. 448).

[196] Jastrow Jr., Morris (1916) 'Sumerian and Akkadian Views of Beginnings,' *JAOS* 36, p. 278 and: Jastrow Jr., Morris (1901) 'The Hebrew and Babylonian Accounts of Creation,' *JQR* 13 (4), pp. 630-2, 643-4; The creation of secondary sun-gods and their replacement of their forebears appears in many ancient traditions and while they assume the role and often eclipse their predecessors in prominence, they are restricted by the boundaries imposed by them. Puhvel, Jaan (1989) *Comparative Mythology*, p. 63.

[197] Gilula, Mordechai (1982) 'An Egyptian Etymology of the Name Horus,' *JEA* 68, p. 260.

over the day and the night, but refuses to give them individual names, labelling them instead as 'the two great lights' in v.16.[198] Furthermore, it could be noted that light itself was formed on day one, whereas the heavenly bodies were not created until day four. This separation removes the possibility of importance that would have been attributed to them by their status as the firstborn of creation. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, solar imagery and the power that is associated with it is attributed to Yahweh through the absorption of certain syncretistic elements into the Hebrew religion.[199] By refusing to give the heavenly bodies individual names, the writer rejected their deification, ultimately contesting the plurality of the gods and the tradition of generational displacement. This resulted in the presentation of a god who not only created the heavenly bodies, but also had the power to regulate their movement and could not be supplanted by another.

Day five accounts for the creation of the animals of the sea and sky, corresponding to the latter's formation on day two. It states in v.21 that 'God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind.' In the previous section, it was noted that the sea monster was omitted from the expected context and was instead relocated to the fifth day. Here, the term used to describe it is the plural form Tannin תנינם 'sea monsters,' which corresponds to the Ugaritic version of the sea monster that takes part in the battle between Baal and Yam.[200] In this context, the existence of sea monsters is acknowledged, but placed in submission to the Hebrew God. The sea monster is the most powerful figure aside from Yahweh that the writer can imagine, and rather than retain his imagery as part of the cosmic battle, he is relegated to the list of animals created by God and as such can offer no threat to him or his authority.

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[198] Many scholars take issue with the creation of the sun and moon occurring on day four, however, others have noted that the verb used in verse 16 עשה does not always imply the creation of something entirely new, but may refer to 'working on something that is already there,' (Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4*, p. 57) therefore suggestion that God had already physically formed them but was only now naming their function and outlining their purpose. See also: Lennox, John C. (2011) *Seven Days that Divide the World*, pp. 58-60.

[199] See: Smith, Mark S. (1990) 'The Near Eastern Background of Solar Language for Yahweh,' *JBL* 109 (1), pp. 29-39; and Goff, Beatrice L. (1939) 'Syncretism in the Religion of Israel,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 58 (2), pp. 151-161.

[200] See: Pitard, Wayne T. (1998) 'The Binding of Yamm: A New Edition of the Ugaritic Text KTU 1.83,' *JNES* 57 (4), pp. 261-280; Wakeman, Mary (1969) 'The Biblical Earth Monster in the Cosmogonic Combat Myth,' *JBL* 88 (3), pp. 313-320; and Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1999) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol IV, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, p. 1764.

The sixth day in vv.24-31 recounts the creation of everything that lives on the land, and the double act of creation allowed for a differentiation between humanity and the animals. The ancient Near East had a low-view of humanity, which was intrinsically connected to their equally low-view of the gods themselves. Men were designed to be servants who would provide food for the gods who had been established within their respective domains and could no longer act outside them.[201] For example, the Babylonian *Atrahasis Epic* depicted the gods as working before the creation of humanity. They became tired of their labour and rebelled, forcing the high gods to create a replacement.[202] Examining this idea in tandem with the flood myths, one observes a lack of foresight in the gods who, by deciding to destroy mankind on a whim, simultaneously cut off their food supply.[203] Humanity was made on a whim and could be destroyed on a whim, their ultimate purposes were to serve the gods, offer them sacrifice and worship, and to provide them that which they were too lazy to provide for themselves.

This mentality is contradicted by the Hebrew writer in v.26: 'Then God said, Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' From this point of view, humanity was not created as an afterthought, but as a pinnacle, not to be slaves but to act as representatives and stewards over God's creation.[204] The opening of this verse has resulted in considerable controversy in its use of the plural: 'let *us* make humanity in *our* image, according to *our* likeness.' Some explain this as evidence that the writer must have had both a female and male deity in mind due to v.27's declaration 'male and female he created them,'[205] whereas others suggest that it points to the existence of a divine consort.

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[201] For example, they were seen as 'untrustworthy, seeking their own ends […] constantly fighting among each other […] fearful [of death … and] limited, both in knowledge and power.' Oswalt, John N. (2009) *The Bible Among the Myths*, pp. 59-60 (Oswalt here is specifically speaking of the Babylonian tradition).

[202] Frymer-Kensky, Tikva (1977) 'The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1-9,' *BA* 40 (4), pp. 147-155.

[203] Vogt, Peter T. (2009) *Interpreting the Pentateuch*, p. 64.

[204] Bird, Phyllis A. (1981) '"Male and Female He Created Them": Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation,' *HTR* 74 (2), pp. 129-159.

[205] Pagels, Elaine H. 'What Became of God the Mother? Conflicting Images of God in Early Christianity,' *Signs* 2 (2), p. 294. Pagels' article is inherently concerned the modern view of equality between the sexes, and uses this example anecdotally. Alternatively, based on a comparison with Islamic literature, Leigh Chipman believes that the plural could refer to the angels, stating that the Qu'ran is explicit in the receiver of this announcement. (Chipman, Leigh N. B. (2002) 'Adam and the Angels: An Examination of Mythic Elements in Islamic Sources,' *Arabica* 49 (4), pp. 429-455).

It is thought that at a very early date, Yahweh was associated with the Canaanitic god El before absorbing his qualities and characteristics, and it is similarly assumed that in this merger, Yahweh also received El's consort, Asherah.[206] There is archaeological evidence that suggests that Asherah was worshipped as Yahweh's consort during the monarchichal period and that later, the term became generalised and the asherah was seen as a hypostatic presence of Yahweh himself.[207] It is unknown exactly when this association ceased, but it is plausible that the innovation of the prophets was ultimately responsible for the elimination of this belief. The lateness of *Genesis* 1 perhaps makes it unlikely that this allusion was the intention of the author in his use of the plural in v.26. Instead, the immediate reversion back to the singular verb form in v.27 implies that God was addressing his heavenly council in v.26.

Imagery of the divine council is commonly used in reference to a high god; the king of the heavens is surrounded by his host, just as the king of the earth is surrounded by his court.[208] It was argued that previously polytheistic imagery such as this was utilised by the biblical writers without contradiction to their new monotheistic views.[209] There are several theories regarding the proper explanation for this seemingly contradictory polytheistic resemblence in this verse,[210] although the primarily accepted explanation lies in the rhetorical use of plural deliberation.[211] It is entirely plausible that the roots of this imagery lies in heavenly council, and that Yahweh may have been pictured as addressing divine entities of some kind. However, it is also apparent that the writer's

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[206] Urrutia, Benjamin (1973) 'About El, Asherah, Yahweh and Anath,' *AA* 75 (4), pp. 1180-1181.

[207] See: Dobbs-Allsopp, F. W.; Roberts, J. J. M.; Seow, C. L. & Whitaker, R. E. (2004) *Hebrew Inscriptions: Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, pp. 290, 292-4, and Dever, William G. (1984) 'Asherah, Consort of Yahweh? New Evidence from Kuntillet 'Ajrûd,' *BASOR* 255, pp. 21-37.

[208] This imagery is also coincides with the creation fragment in Psalm 89, and is the most popularly accepted interpretation of v.26. See: Niskanen, Paul (2009) 'The Poetics of Adam: The Creation of מדא in the Image of מיהלא,,' *JBL* 128 (3) pp. 425-6.

[209] Heiser, Michael S. (2008) 'Monotheism, Polytheism, Monolatry or Henotheism?' *BBR* 18 (1), pp. 1-30.

[210] For example, Lyle Eslinger suggested that the repetition of v.26 and its parallels in *Genesis* 3:22 and 11:7 imply that it was used to define the ontological boundaries between divine and mortal, and thus uses the plural in similar notion to the royal 'we', although this theory is regarded with great scepticism (Eslinger, Lyle (2006) 'The Enigmatic Plurals like "One of Us" (Gnesis I 26, III 22, and XI 7) in Hyperchronic Perspective,' *VT* 56 (2), pp. 171-184). For a discussion on the various theories see: Westermann, Claus (1984) *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. by John J. Scullion, Ausberg, Minneapolis, pp. 144-5; Vawter, Bruce (1977) *On Genesis: A New Reading*, Doubleday, Garden City, New York, pp. 53-4; and Miller, P. D. (1978) *Genesis 1-11: Studies in Structure and Theme*, JSOTSup 8, University of Sheffield Press, Sheffield, pp. 9-18.

[211] Barney, Kevin L. (2000) 'Examining Six Key Concepts in Joseph Smith's Understanding of Genesis 1:1,' *BYUS* 39 (3), p. 114.

intention in the present context was for the imagery to be understood monotheistically.[212]

V.27 stresses the centrality of the creation of humanity to the account as a whole through repetition. Furthermore, this triple repetition emphasises that the only subject of the creation verb is God: 'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'[213] Creating mankind in God's own image raises their status above the rest of the created world. An image of a deity, more frequently known as an idol, did not have the power to do what the deity could do; rather, it acted as a vessel through which action could be performed by its possession of the deity's essence.[214] In the same way, humanity was designated as images of their creator and acted on his behalf as representatives. This role was traditionally reserved for kings, granting them the authority to rule, however, the Hebrew account deviated from this by stating that all men, and all women, were created equally in his image[215] and together shared dominion over the rest of his creation.

Often considered as an extension of humanity's creation in the image of God, v.28 has sparked fierce ecological debate in the modern era, generating input from those such as Lynn White Jr. who argued that the verse legitimised human explotation of nature,[216] and others such as Bernhard Anderson who perceived the imperative to have dominion over the earth and subdue it as a charge to responsibly take care of it.[217] Ultimately, however, the verse appears more concerned with royal theology through the usage of

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[212] For an examination of the divine council in the Hebrew Bible and its differences from the ancient Near Eastern heavenly councils see: White, Ellen (2014) *Yahweh's Council*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen. White concludes that while there are episodes in which the divine council appears to be polytheistic in nature, their forms coincide with the journey towards monotheistic thought (pp. 173-9).

[213] Despite the common poetical usage of repetition in reinforcing important issues, Freilich suggests that the repetition indicated that 'God *kept* creating man in his image,' meaning that he was discontent with the earlier forms and that each version became a closer replica of himself. Basing this hypothesis on the modern idea of theistic evolution and basing his argument in scientific knowledge, Freilich surpasses the possible intention of the original Hebrew text. Freilich, Morris et al. (1975) 'Myth, Method, and Madness,' *CA* 16 (2), p. 214. Garr on the other hands claims that the Priestly writer 'affirms, reaffirms, and reaffirms again that God 'created' human beings [because through this] God empowers the human race to continue the work he had begun.' Garr, W. Randall (2004) 'God's Creation: ברא in the Priestly Source,' *HTR* 97 (1), p. 87.

[214] Walton, John H.; Matthews, Victor H.; Chavalas, Mark W. (2000) *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, p. 29.

[215] Curtis, E. M. (1984) *Man as the Image of God in Genesis in Light of Ancient Near Eastern Parallels*, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, pp. 80-90; See also: Middleton John R. (2005) *The Liberating Image*, Brazos, Grand Rapids, pp. 93-231. For a discussion on men and women being equally created in his image, see: Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4*, pp. 61-7.

[216] White Jr. Lynn (1967) 'The Historical Root of Our Ecologic Crisis,' *SNS* 155 (3767), pp. 1203-1207.

[217] Bernhard W. Anderson 'Human Dominion over Nature' in Anderson, Bernhard W. (1994) *Creation to New Creation*, Ausberg Fortress, Minneapolis, pp. 111-131.

terms such as *radah* רדה (to rule) and *kabash* כבש (to subjugate).[218] Therefore, it is seen as the expression of earthly kingship, mirroring Yahweh's divine kingship, and furthermore of the shared inheritance of these imperatives to both genders.

The momentary poetical lapse in the structured composition of the narrative as well as the emphatic repetition reinforces the writer's perception of God's unique investment in mankind. In presenting the account with a single actor, who created through *divine fiat* without conflict or error, and whose creation was not complete nor 'very good' (v.31) until mankind walked upon the earth, the writer introduced a new conception of humanity's role and relationship to their god. Based on the Mesopotamian notion of divine sonship as well as other examples of the expression of being made in another's image, this relationship has also been described like one between a child and their parent.[219] Morris Freilich perceived God's creation of mankind as an attempt to assuage a loneliness that could not be tempered by the creation of the heavens and the earth alone, ultimately likening him to the other ancient gods who created mankind to serve their needs. He argues that the entire Hebrew Bible revolves around the premise that the Hebrew God seeks relationship with mankind.[220] This observation is relatively accurate, however, the extreme systemisation of the text disallows for the perception that humanity was an afterthought in the eyes of the author, as it is indicative of deliberate and intentional action.

At the conclusion of each day's creative activity lay the appellation: 'And God saw that it was good.' This formula was altered on the sixth day to indicate God's heightened satisfaction succeeding his creation of mankind through his declaration that it was 'very good' in v. 31. This, coupled with the immediate cessation of activity, signified the

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[218] See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1995) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol II, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, p. 460 (*kabash*); and Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1996) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol III, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, p. 1190 (*radah*). These terms are used in a variety of contexts throughout the Hebrew Bible, however, Anderson does not believe that the 'violent' nature of these words are carried over into Genesis as he considers there to be a lack of violence in *Genesis* 1. Furthermore, he argues that the royal theology is muted in v.28 in comparison to *Psalm* 8, but agrees that it employs the language of kingship to demonstrate humanities dominion over the earth (Bernhard W. Anderson 'Human Dominion over Nature' in Anderson, Bernhard W. (1994) *Creation to New Creation*, Ausberg Fortress, Minneapolis, pp. 121, 125, 130

[219] Herring, Stephen L. (2008) 'A "Transubstantiated" Humanity: The Relationship between the Divine Image and the Presence of God in Genesis I 26f,' *VT* 58 (4/5), pp. 480-494. The verses in Genesis that Herring points to are Genesis 5:3 which discusses Adam fathering a son 'in his likeness, according to his image,' and Genesis 9:6, which discusses the consequences of murder as it is akin to destroying an image of God. See also Miller's article on the subject: Miller, J. Maxwell (1972) 'In the "Image" and "Likeness" of God,' *JBL* 91 (3), pp. 289-304.

[220] Freilich, Morris et al. (1975) 'Myth, Method, and Madness,' *CA* 16 (2), p. 217.

completion of his work. Humanity, both male and female,[221] were then granted dominion over the earth, and unlike the ancient Near Eastern myths, v.29 outlines God's provision of food for them as opposed to the other way around.[222] One observes here that the Hebrew Bible depicts God as desiring relationship and worship from mankind, but he did not create them to do manual labour that he himself was unable, or unwilling, to perform, which eventuated in the notion that the whole of creation was ordered and designed for the existence of mankind.

The symmetry of the six days of creation led ultimately to the conclusion that the incorporation of the Sabbath on the seventh day was a foreign import, ultimately serving as the climax of the creation story.[223] It is likely that it was not an original feature of the creation myth, but was included to justify the etiological function and importance of the day. It is thought that the Sabbath day was established at an early date in Israel's history, however its exact origin remains unknown. Some argue that the Sabbath was originally associated with festival days, and was an adaptation of the Babylonian seven-day cycle dictated by the lunar cycle, although its designation as a holy day appears to be a purely Hebrew construction.[224] The Sabbath exists in both oral and written traditions and its significance within the Hebrew culture is testified by its inclusion in the Decalogue, and its centrality within the text of *Genesis* 1.[225] Nahum Sarna believed that 'in biblical theology, the Sabbath […] is the symbol of the covenant between God and Israel; thus its neglect could be looked upon as one of the causes of […] natural disasters.'[226] Even before the giving of the Decalogue, it was described in *Exodus* 16:23 as 'a day of solemn

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[221] It has been argues that these verses, similarly to the Greek creation myth; record the formation of men alone, thereby maintaining a patriarchal worldview. This idea however is refuted by Clines who states that the term אדם (commonly translated as the pronoun Adam) is used here collectively in reference to humanity 'without distinction or gender.' (Clines, David J. A. (2003) 'אדם, the Hebrew for "Human, Humanity". A Response to James Barr,' *VT* 53 (3), pp. 309).

[222] Walton, John H. (2009) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, p. 215.

[223] Clifford, Richard J. (1985) 'The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,' *TS* 46, p. 522. See also: Atwell, James E. (2000) 'An Egyptian Source for Genesis,' *JTS* 51 (2), pp. 472-5, which discusses the significance of the seven day cycle and its potential origin, as well as theories of establishment of the Sabbath day in Israelite history, and subsequent incorporation into the creation narrative.

[224] Jastrow Jr., Morris (1901) 'The Hebrew and Babylonian Accounts of Creation,' *JQR* 13 (4), p. 648. Others suggest that its connection to the lunar cycle stemmed from the early Israelites nomadic origin. (Meek, Theophile James (1914) 'The Sabbath in the Old Testament: (Its Origin and Development),' *JBL* 33 (3), pp. 201-212), Finally, some acknowledge both of these arguments as possible but determine neither to be truly provable (Kraeling, E.G. (1933) 'The Present Status of the Sabbath Question,' *AJSLL* 49 (3), pp. 2-18-228). This was also the position taken by Paul Humbert, who considered the seven day cycle in *Genesis* to be a parallel of the Babylonain new yeah festival as shown in the *Enuma Elish* (Humbert, Paul (1958) *Opuscules d'un hébraïsant*, Université de Neuchâtel, Neuchâtel, pp. 166-74.

[225] Moriarty, Frederick L. (1973) 'The Old Testament Sabbath by Niels-Erik A. Andreasen,' *Gregorianum* 54 (4), pp. 775-776.

[226] Sarna, Nahum M. (1962) 'The Psalm for the Sabbath Day (Ps 92),' *JBL* 81 (2), p.157.

rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord,' on which no work could be done, reinforced by God's cessation of work on the seventh day.

The inclusion of the Sabbath day in *Genesis* 1 has been suggested as evidence for an earlier version of the text in which God was unable to perform his creative acts by words alone, and thus required a day of rest following six of exhaustive physical labour.[227] *Genesis* 2:2-3 states 'and on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.' This theory is rooted in the anthropomorphism of the ancient gods, bearing every human trait and desire but in extreme measure. They were born, ate, married, grew weary, slept, felt anger, jealousy and love; but existed in a generational cycle in which none were the sole creative force, but aided in some part of the whole, and in which leadership was taken by force.[228] Etiologically speaking, the Sabbath day served to reinforce an existing six-day work cycle followed by one day of rest, however, if the Hebrew God required rejuvenation after his creative acts, then the presence of the Sabbath would contradict his ability to create through the spoken word alone.

The power of creating through the *divine fiat* is rare in the ancient world but not unknown outside of Israel. A similar concept was discovered in the Pyramid texts in Egypt outlining the *maat kheru*, which affirmed the divine voice as having creative ability and specified that nothing truly existed until the moment that its name was spoken aloud.[229] The most commonly used translation of the Sabbath is 'to rest,' however it also carries the meaning 'to cease,' indicating the completion of a prescribed task.[230] This, in combination with the use of *bara*, which stresses performance and production over physical exertion and whose subject is restricted to God alone, displays an effort on behalf of the author to differentiate his god from those of his neighbours.[231]

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[227] Morgenstern, Julian (1920) 'The Sources of the Creation Story—Genesis 1:1-2:4,' *AJSLL* 36 (3), p. 174.
[228] See Puhvel's explanation of the 'three-generational pattern of overthrow, usurpation, succession, challenge, and consolidation' that is shared by many ancient cosmogonies. In this pattern, the gods are subjected to every challenge that may present itself to the human ruler, and are not therefore omnipotent as they must build upon the foundation of their predecessors. (Puhvel, Jaan (1989) *Comparative Mythology*, pp. 23-31).
[229] Grenfell, Alice (1906) 'Egyptian Mythology and the Bible,' *The Monist* 16 (2), pp. 170-1. However, while creative acts performed by word alone were uncommon, Atwell claims that it was an ancient concept and the the power of the divine word was popularly acknowledged. He states that the notion 'is closely tied to the mentality that believed a ritual at could actually evoke the reality that it portrayed' (Atwell, James E. (2000) 'An Egyptian Source for Genesis,' *JTS* 51 (2), p. 465).
[230] Strong, James (2001) *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, pp. 833-4.
[231] Garr, W. Randall (2004) 'God's Creation: ברא in the Priestly Source,' *HTR* 97 (1), pp. 83-90.

Thus, the writer was able to record the creative acts by *divine fiat*, and include additional information on the specific realisation of that word on each day.

Representing a highly edited tradition, it is improbable that the final redactor understood any element in the text as a deliberate contradiction of his purpose. He sought to eliminate the traces of conflict from within the passage that could have denoted the will of any divine figure aside from the Hebrew God, and achieved this through extensive manipulation of ancient Near Eastern source material. These mythological themes pulse beneath the text; they invoke certain imagery in the mind of the reader, but are altered so as to subject them to God's authority. There is ultimately little doubt that the text was influenced by the ancient Near Eastern creation accounts, just as there is little doubt that the final editor was guided by monotheism in his efforts.

2.4 THE GARDEN OF EDEN

The story of Adam and Eve is well known. Its premises have been adapted in art, literature, poetry, and even in the modern day in television and cinema. The narrative recounts the creation of man from dust, and of woman from the man's rib. It tells of the Garden of Eden, the tree and the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve's disobedience and their subsequent expulsion into the outside world. Having shifted away from the heavenly perspective of *Genesis* 1, *Genesis* 2-3 set aside its rigid composition and elaborates upon a different aspect of Hebrew creation from an earthly perspective. Rather than the incomprehensible truths of the universe, this passage is human-centric, seeking understanding for the common plights of mankind such as their own existence and that of good and evil.

It is probable that this account existed independently and circulated in oral tradition before being amalgamated with *Genesis* 1. It shares closed ties with its ancient Near Eastern counterparts in its introduction by the commonly used 'not yet' style in 2:4: 'in the day […] when no plant of the field was yet in the earth,' arousing suggestions that the process of creation is assumed cultural knowledge and that this narrative overlooks it to focus specifically on the creation of mankind.[232] This theory was pushed further in the

[232] Whybray R. Norman (1965) 'Proverbs VIII 22-31 and Its Supposed Prototypes,' *VT* 15 (4), pp. 504-514. A double account of the creation of mankind has also been observed in the Atrahasis, which depicts first a basic creation act, followed by a second detailed version, each serving slightly different etiological functions. (Kikawada, Isaac, M. (1983) 'The Double Creation of Mankind in "Enki and Ninmah", "Atrahasis"

late nineteenth century by claims that the text was a philosophical treatise that held no interest in the processes of creation, but rather in the consequences of the major events of the narrative.[233] The text is an apophthegm whose context is used to explain contemporary realities. Israelite history is grounded in the relationship between the mortal and the divine and the ramifications of the actions of Adam and Eve shaped their cultural history.

When discussing the two creation accounts in *Genesis*, scholars tend to first make note of the contradictions between them, one of the most prevalent being the adherence to a different timeline. This narrative simply starts in 2:4b-5 the beginning: 'In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground.' There is no account for the creation of the heavens and the earth in this narrative, as it is not specifically a story of creation but of the Golden Age.[234] The focus on the lack of men to till the ground in v.5 is agriculturally based. This further implies that the writer was not seeking to answer questions of creation, but of existence, as agriculture is often treated synonymously with the beginnings of civilisation and culture.

Unlike the first account, this narrative is not introduced by a pericope but by a temporal expression *beyom* ביום 'in the day.'[235] This expression aligns the text with the ancient Near Eastern creation myths by situating the narrative within the entire creation period, without specification to certain events or stages.[236] Despite the reversal of the heavens and the earth in 2:4b, it is probable that the redactor expected the reader to consider both accounts in Genesis concurrently, looking to the first for the creations of the heavens and the earth and the second for the establishment of other realities of humanity's existence.[237] Similarly, the lack of geological or astronomical knowledge

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I 1-351 and "Genesis" 1-2,' *Iraq* 45 (1: Papers of the 29 Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, London 5-9 July 1982), pp. 43-45).

[233] Toy, Crawford H. (1891) 'Analysis of Genesis II., III,' *JBL* 10 (1) p. 3.

[234] Morgenstern, Julian (1920) 'The Sources of the Creation Story—Genesis 1:1-2:4,' *AJSLL* 36 (3), p. 199.

[235] This term serves specifically to temporalise the related event to an era. See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1995) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol II, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, pp. 399-401.

[236] Strong, James (2001) *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, pp. 511-2. See also: Brown, F.; Driver, S.; Briggs, C. (2007) *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., Peabody, pp. 398-401.

[237] Robert Alter declares that the two accounts are complementary, and therefore constitute a composite narrative (Alter, Robert (1981) *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Basic Books, New York, pp. 141-147). Similarly, David Tsumura believes that the two accounts tell the same story, with the former describing an

encouraged the understanding that the account was a primitive oral narrative whose composition was influenced by many diverse cultures.[238] The writer introduces the story with an acknowledgement of the creator of the heavens and the earth and the recognition that it was also he who created man, then swiftly progresses to the true intention of the tale. He sought to explain the origin of the separation between God and man, the true relationship that was intended to exist between them. Accordingly, his story did not concern the heavens, but the earth, and humanity's purpose upon it.

The structure of the account has been noted as being chiastic; presenting an initial story, followed by the act of the man naming the woman and the etiological function of their union. This formula is then repeated, introducing a second narrative that plays on the first, after which Adam names his wife Eve, and the etiological consequences of their disobedience is outlined, before being closed by a final narrative.[239] There are several issues explored throughout this story, questions whose answers were communally sought throughout the entire ancient world; the loss of immortality, the gender hierarchy and the existence of suffering. Culturally, this passage is referred back to in numerous sections of both the Old and New Testaments as justification for a specific viewpoint or argument. For example, the reference to the creation event in 1 *Timothy* 2:12-14 served as justification for the contemporaneous gender hierarchy. Accordingly, the creation of Adam and Eve has continued to influence the gender debate from ancient times to the present day.

Unlike in the first account where man and woman are created simultaneously, the man is depicted here as being created alone in v.7: 'then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of like; and the man became a living being.' The fashioning of man from an earthen substance is a feature common to many cultures. For example, in the *Atrahasis Epic*, mankind was fashioned out of clay mixed with flesh and blood of a dying god, from whom he received the property of rationality from the god, which granted him superiority over the animals.[240] Here, the

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earlier stage from the time that the waters covered the earth, and the latter describing a later stage from the time when dry land had already been distinguished from the ocean (David Toshio Tsumura 'Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,' in Hess, Richard S. and Tsumura, David Toshio (1994) *I Studies Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, Vol. 4, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, pp. 28-30).

[238] Paton, Lewis Bayles (1915) 'Archaeology and the Book of Genesis,' *BW* 45 (5), p. 13.

[239] Rosenberg, Joel W. (1981) 'The Garden Story Forward and Backward: The non-narrative dimension of Gen. 2-3,' *Prooftexts* 1 (1), p. 6.

[240] Frymer-Kensky, Tikva (1977) 'The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1-9,' *BA* 40 (4), pp. 147-155.

divine essence that gives life to humanity does not come from a dying god but from the breath of Yahweh. *Genesis* 1 rejected the need for the sacrifice of another deity to provide the divine materials in order to create the world, implying that the Hebrew God has the power to give life singlehandedly.[241] Furthermore, in opposition to *Genesis* 1's depiction of humanity as the pinnacle of creation, their heightened status over the animals through their unsuitability as companions, which are similarly formed out of the ground in v.19, is here the result of their primogeniture. They were created first and this culturally gave them the privilege of the firstborn son.

Many cultures, including the Egyptian, Greek and Chinese, possessed legends of a Golden Age during which 'men lived like gods, with carefree heart, remote from toil and misery. Wretched old age did not affect them either, but with hands and feet ever unchanged they enjoyed themselves in feasting, beyond all ills, and they died as if overcome by sleep.'[242] Hesiod told a story of mankind, still subject to death, but living peaceful and leisurely lives, in relationship with the gods and lacking no good thing. Similarly, following the creation of man, he is placed in the Garden of Eden in vv.8-9 where he lacked for nothing. He is provided food in v.9: 'out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food,' and has ready access to precious metals and stones in v.12: 'and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.' He was free from toil and hardship and walked side-by-side with Yahweh.

Notably, however, the writer attempts to localise the garden in vv.10-14 through the description of the rivers that flowed out of it. Doing this, the Hebrew conception of the Golden Age is separated from mythic prehistory out of a desire to historicise the narrative that follows. This process persists into the patriarchal history and is representative of an endeavour to justify the individuality of the Hebrew God. It was not uncommon for divine genealogies to be established, such as the Sumerian list of antediluvian kings, which established the origins of the royal line in prehistory and validated their reign. However, these sought only to account for the institution of kingship, and not the creation of mankind themselves.[243] More than this, the Hebrew

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[241] Millard, A. R (1967) 'A New Babylonian 'Genesis' Story,' *TB* 18 (1), pp. 3-18.
[242] Hesiod *Works and Days*, lines 114-120 (Hesiod (1988) *Theogony and Works and Days*, trans by. M. L. West, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford).
[243] Hartman, Thomas, C. (1972) 'Some Thoughts on the Sumerian King List and Genesis 5 and 11B,' *JBL* 91 (1), pp. 27-8. For further comparisons between the Sumerian King List and Genesis 5 see also: Walton, John (1981) 'The Antediluvian Section of the Sumerian King List and Genesis 5,' *BA* 44 (4), pp. 207-8. And

writers sought to demythologise their entire history, from the moment of creation to their present; to set both themselves and their god apart.

Vv.15-17 are a repetition of vv.8-9, reiterating the placement of mankind in the garden, but setting a condition upon his existence there. Commanding that 'You may eat freely of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die,'[244] Yahweh introduces the subject of mortality, which features prominently in the second half of this account. The loss of the Golden Age and its promise of immortality inspired the ancient writers, as they sought to understand their own mortality. Thus, the writer has added here a precursor to reinforce the message of the following narrative, warning the reader about the consequences of disobedience and shifting the culpability away from the deity into the hands of humanity.

In the ancient world, to name something was not to simply allocate a title for an object, but to give definition to its very essence and purpose, and in the pronunciation of its name, to complete its creation.[245] In the first account, this ability was accorded solely to God and was demonstrative of his continued authority over his creations. In v.19 of this account, however, 'the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.' God permitted Adam to name the animals, which signified humanity's representational role over the earth and the animals as well as his right of dominion over it despite not explicitly being formed in the image of God.

In a similar fashion, the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam and his subsequent naming of her encouraged a patriarchal reading of the text, placing the man in a position of

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Michalowski, Piotr (1983) 'History as Charter Some Observations on the Sumerian King List,' *JAOS* 103 (1: Studies in Literature from the Ancient Near East, by Members of the American Oriental Society, Dedicated to Samuel Noah Kramer), pp. 237-248 who states that the king list has ultimately been classified as ideological as opposed to historical.

[244] Some perceive that the trees of knowledge and good and evil could have been allusions to the cults of El and Asherah (Wyatt, N. (1981) 'Interpreting the Creation and Fall Story in Genesis 2-3,' *ZAW* 93, pp. 10-21). However, if this was the case, the author appears to have taken great pains to avoid connecting the imagery of the tree to the story of Asherah (David Toshio Tsumura 'Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,' in Hess, Richard S. and Tsumura, David Toshio (1994) *I Studies Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, Vol. 4, Eisenbrauns, United States of America, p. 39).

[245] See: Walton, John H. (2009) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*.

authority over the woman.[246] The creation of women was so often viewed in a negative light in the ancient world; for example, Hesiod believed that their creation was the direct cause of the ending of the Golden Age and the beginning of strife and calamity in the world.[247] In the Greek tradition, the creation of Pandora was a punishment, whereas the Israelites understood creation to be 'very good' after the formation of both genders in *Genesis* 1, in which both shared simultaneously in the Golden Age of walking in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:20b-22 tells of the inability to locate a corresponding helper for Adam, reading: 'but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.' The differentiation between her formation and that of the animals led some to reject the reading of grouping them equally under the under the authority of the man.[248] This premise is often challenged by v.23's emphasis on the common kind of man and woman. 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man she was taken.' The man calls his wife *Ishah* אשה, which is the feminine form of his own title *Ish* איש, which is ultimately posited as emphasising their commonality.[249] Rather than naming her kind, as he does with the animals, he declares her to be part of himself, which has also led to erroneous comparisons between the man's original form and Plato's androgynous, sexually undifferentiated person.[250]

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[246] Walsh, Jerome T. (1977) 'Genesis 24b-3:24: A Synchronic Approach,' *JBL* 96 (2), p. 174. This interpretation is often supported by citing New Testament passages such as 1 Corinthians 11:2-10 which refer back to the creation of woman out of man as justification of his authority over her.

[247] Hesiod (1988) *Theogony and Works and Days*, pp. 20-21, 38-40.

[248] This reading is predominant in feminist readings of the text, for if the man was neither male nor female before the emergence of Eve, the assignment of authority to either is nullified. (See: Trible, Phyllis (1978) *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia p. 98) This hypothesis is often rejected on contextual as well as grammatical grounds, firstly due to the correspondence of the man's punishment with his domain (of working the ground, and not shared with women) (Kawashima, Robert S. (2007) 'Comparative Literature and Biblical Studies: The Case of Illusion,' *Prooftexts* 27 (2 Special Issue: Before and After The Art of Biblical Narrative), pp. 324-344).

[249] Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4*, p. 136. This interpretation relies heavily on the symbioses of the Genesis 1:27 declaration of 'male and female he created them [in the image of God]' as well as verse 28's command for them together to 'be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'

[250] The idea of the recreation of mankind through the halving of the original form (See: Batto, Bernard F. (1992) *Slaying the Dragon*, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, pp. 54, 203-5 for a discussion on this theory) is not supported by the use of the plural form of the term ribs (as opposed to the dual form) 'which is always used to describe nouns [...] that come in pairs,' thus indicating God's taking only a part, rather than a half to form Eve. (Kawashima, Robert S. (2006) 'A Revisionist Reading Revisited: On the Creation of Adam and Then Eve,' *VT* 56 (1), p. 52.

The first half of this story culminates with the etiological declaration regarding the purpose for marriage based on the relationship between the man and his wife. The narrative cycle closes with a depiction of idyllic existence in v.25: 'and the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed,' and sits in stark contrast to the outcome of the second cycle in which they seek to clothe themselves because of their shame. The establishment of the woman as the perfect partner for the man as opposed to the animals is thought to be comparable to the story of Enkidu in the Gilgamesh epic. In the beginning Enkidu is like a wild animal, only to reject them after having been befriended by Gilgamensh and having a sexual encounter with a female of his own kind. Inadvertently, this led to the serpent striking back at humanity in the only way he knew how, by stealing Gilgamesh's chance for immortality.[251]

In the Canaanitic myth of Adapa, the mortality of humankind is attributed to a trick of the gods or perhaps to bad luck,[252] whereas Gilgamesh in the Sumerian myths seeks immortality only to realise that he has been tricked and loses it.[253] Finally, a more distant example from the Melanesian myth of Korvuvu confers that the serpent was instructed to divulge the secrets of immortality to humanity but betrayed and condemned them to death, leading to the conclusion that mankind would have been immortal had these accidents, mistakes or betrayals not occurred.[254] In *Genesis*, however, the roles are reversed; mankind forfeited their immortality by their own disobedience. However, the very capability of Adam to disobey God's command has led to suggestions of a flawed creation reflecting a flawed creator. Morris Freilich, for example, believes that the Hebrew God is being depicted here as participating in a sadistic game through the use of the *vayetzav* verb form, commanding Adam not to eat the fruit. He states that if God, who conceivably knew the outcome of this event, truly 'wanted to protect Adam from harmful consequences […] he would have used the words

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[251] See Rosenberg's analysis and comparison of the two texts in: Rosenberg, Joel W. (1981) 'The Garden Story Forward and Backward: The non-narrative dimension of Gen. 2-3,' *Prooftexts* 1 (1), pp. 7-9.

[252] Hvidberg, Flemming (1960) 'The Canaanitic Backgroud of Gen I-III,' *VT* 10 (3), p. 291. See also: Andreasen, Niels-Erik (1981) 'Adam and Adapa: Two Anthropoloigical Characters,' *AUSS* 19, p. 192. The difference between Adapa and Adam's test in their quest to gain immortality is that Adapa acted in obedience to his god and upset the course of nature, whereas Adam acted in his own freewill and upset the moral order.

[253] Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures*, Cambridge University Press, London, see 'The Epic of Gilgamesh on pp. 132-152.

[254] Frazer, James G. (1923) *Folklore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend and Law*, Macmillan and Co., Limited, London, p. 32. In the Melanesian tradition, Korvuvu is commanded to reveal to mankind the secret to immortality (the annual shedding of skin) and condemn the serpent to death, and in another version of the myth it is the snake that overhears the command and enforces Korvuvu's betrayal.

which make everything happen according to his will, *vayomer Elohim*,'[255] as was used in *Genesis* 1, which would enforce the action of the following discourse; however, Freilich's argument appears to disregard that the command of God in this instance is jussive in mood, suggesting that rather than playing a trick upon humanity, he was allowing them to make a choice.

Freilich's assumption relies heavily on the ancient Near Eastern conception of the divine fault, which is not literarily supported by the text. Rather, created in the image of God, mankind shared many of his characteristics, including the capacity for creativity and also for freewill; which enabled them to reason, make choices, offer worship and sacrifice according to their own desire, and in this case specifically, disobey a direct command. It is in this that the differentiations between *Genesis* 1 and 2-3, as well as between the first and second halves of this narrative become clear. *Genesis* 1 didactically recounts the creation of the world, outlining how each thing received its form and function, whereas 2-3 is concerned with the human condition.[256] Furthermore, the two narrative cycles of this text are divided by the first relating the creation of an idyllic age by God, and the second recounting the loss of it by man.

The phrasing of the commandment in *Genesis* 2:17, in which it states 'but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die,' is a subject of contention. It has resulted in the suggestion of immediate death, the loss of immortality, or the doubt of its existence in the first place. Of the first two propositions, the former (namely that the eating of the fruit would cause immediate death) is problematic in that Adam and Eve do not perish upon eating the fruit.[257] This results in the latter being the more likely interpretation according to many scholars, in which the effect of fruit is the introduction of death, or that it may be brought about as a punishment from God for humanity's disobedience.[258] However, this can be combined with the third premise that declares that mankind was born mortal, and that the tree of life sustained but did not grant immortality. Therefore, when man ate the fruit his punishment was not death, but disbarment from the Garden of Eden and thus from the

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[255] Freilich, Morris et al. (1975) 'Myth, Method, and Madness,' *CA* 16 (2), p. 215.
[256] Walsh, Jerome T. (1977) 'Genesis 24b-3:24,' *JBL* 96 (2), p. 173.
[257] Specifically, Genesis 5:5 states that Adam lived for 930 years before he died, and fathered Seth (after having been expelled from Eden) at the age of 130.
[258] Toy, Crawford H. (1891) 'Analysis of Genesis II., III,' *JBL* 10 (1), p. 4-5.

tree of life, causing his mortality to come into effect.[259] This theory removes the contradiction of the text and allows the Hebrew understanding of the origin of mortality of mankind to be analogous with those of her surrounding nations across the ancient Near East.

Much like its counterparts, this text seeks to understand the trials and tribulations of life, and to determine why humanity exists, but rather than chance determining their right to immortality, they faced a tempting decision. This temptation emerged in the guise of a serpent that 'was more crafty than any other wild animal the Lord God had made' (4:3). A figure common to ancient mythologies world over, the serpent was traditionally identified with fertility and water, and was tied to the struggle of life and death by his annual renewal through the shedding of his skin. Wild animals were often presented as rivals or enemies to humanity and their acquisition of culture in early mythology.[260] Here, the snake is represented as pitting his knowledge against God, tempting humanity to sacrifice their innocence and 'immortality.'

Some interpretations of the passage from 3:3-7, outlining the snake's participation, suggest the opposite, intimating that an earlier version may have featured the serpent as a Promethean facilitator of culture rather than as an antagonist. This is based on the notion that his intervention resulted in knowledge and progress, thus implying that there is no evidence of disobedience in the narrative, but of the fruitfulness of sexual union. Furthermore, it is believed that the serpent's involvement in *Genesis* 3 was altered from positive to negative during the rise of Israelite monotheism, as shown through evidence of cult worship of the brazen serpent up until the time of Hezekiah.[261] Despite this, the author chose to depict the snake as acting in rebellion against his creator by phrasing his initial speech in the form of a question rather than a statement,

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[259] de Raedt, Jules; Freilich, M (1976) 'On Freilich's Interpretation of Genesis 1-3, *CA* 17 (1), p. 139. See also: Geddes, Arthur (1945) '104. Creation, and the Blessing of the Curse Upon Fruitfulness: An Anthropological Interpretation of Genesis I-III,' *Man* 45, p. 125.

[260] Kawashima, Robert S. (2007) 'Comparative Literature and Biblical Studies,' *PT* 27 (2: Special Issue), p. 333. See the Sumerian epic *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*, and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a similar concept can also be seen in chapter six of the *Huainanzi* where before Nüwa repaired the sky 'ferocious animals ate blameless people; [and] predatory birds snatched the elderly and the weak' until order was re-established and 'birds and beasts, noxious vermin and snakes, without exception sheathed claws and fangs.' (Major, John S.; Queen, Sarah A.; Meyer, Andrew Seth; Roth, Harold D. (2010) *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 224-5).

[261] Geddes, Arthur (1945) '104. Creation, and the Blessing of the Curse Upon Fruitfulness,' *Man* 45, pp. 124-5. Furthermore, it was not until after the expulsion from the garden that mankind was forced to cultivate and work the land for nourishment, marking in effect a separation between the "raw" and the "cooked," thereby indicating that "culture" was part of the effect of Adam and Eve's action.

thereby presenting Yahweh as a tyrant.[262] The serpent doesn't lie when he promises the man and his wife in v.5 that 'when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' This can be seen through the symmetry of 2:25 where they are naked and feel no shame, and 3:7 when 'the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.' They gain the knowledge by disobeying the God's command in 2:17,[263] which ultimately sets the groundwork for the etiological function of the subsequent punishment.

According to the story these punishments were twofold; the man, his wife and the serpent all receive a decree imposing a consequence for their actions in the spheres of relationship and function. Relationally, animosity is introduced between the snake and the woman, the ground and the man, and the man with the woman. Each member is then confronted with misery in their area of activity; the serpent in his mode of travel, the woman in her bearing of children, and the man in his acquisition of food and provision.[264] These contrast with the idyllic lifestyle of chapter 2 to explain the difficulties now faced by humanity, although questions remain as to whether these 'curses' overhauled the created functions of the Golden Age of the earth, or if their impact was conditional.

The Hebrew phrases in 3:17b, rendered as 'because of you,' in the English, is not a causal phrase but a relational one. This indicates that the whole expression 'cursed is the ground because of you' does not result in the complete alteration of the set workings of the entire earth, but only in its relation to mankind.[265] Similarly, if one accepts the earlier hypothesis that humanity's immortality was maintained by the garden and the tree of life, and that their mortality came into effect upon their leaving, it follows that the

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[262] Bal, Mieke (1985) 'Sexuality, Sin and Sorrow: The Emergence of the Female Character (A Reading of Genesis 1-3),' *PT* 6 (1/2 The Female Body in Western Culture: Semiotic Perspectives), pp. 21-42. For a discussion on the snake's first speech in verse 4 see: Walsh, Jerome T. (1977) 'Genesis 24b-3:24,' *JBL* 96 (2), p. 164.

[263] The wording of the serpent's speech has aroused much discussion, as many perceive Eve as the sole actor responsible for mankind's downfall, however, the serpent addresses Eve in the plural form, indicating that he is speaking to both her and her husband simultaneously. (See: Bal, Mieke (1985) 'Sexuality, Sin and Sorrow,' *PT* 6 (1/2 The Female Body), pp. 31-2 although Bal pushes this theory too far by saying that this indcated the continued existence of the androgynous, sexually undifferentiated figure postulated by Trible (see: footnote 141 on p. 50)). This interpretation accords with the patriarchal nature of the text in that their actions do not result in enlightenment until Adam also eats the fruit due to the narrative's implication that he alone heard the command, and was present during the moment of temptation and thus failed in his role as the leader of his family, thus sealing the fate of humanity. (See: Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4*, p. 172).

[264] Walsh, Jerome T. (1977) 'Genesis 24b-3:24,' *JBL* 96 (2), p. 168.

[265] Ibid. p. 168.

introduction of physical death only affects mankind, and not the entire world.[266] Therefore, the purpose of this account is not to describe the creation of the universe but to explain current circumstances: humanity's relation to God, their relation to the earth and its functions, and their relation to each other.

There is little in this account that offers comment on the status of the pre-creation conflict, as creation is not the primary focus of the text. Regardless of the contradictions between this narrative and *Genesis* 1, their amalgamation suggests that the redactor of the second assumed the monotheistic worldview of the first. Spoken of by his personal name, Yahweh is ascribed the same creative feats as he is in the first narrative: he created the heavens and the earth, the animals, vegetation, the dry ground and the rivers that shape it. The story of Adam and Eve relies on the didactic method of *Genesis* 1 to set a universal stage, so that it can tell the story of the human condition.

2.5 TRAVERSING THE GAP

These two accounts have been so often separated from each other in modern scholarship through their classification in the documentary hypothesis and their relationship to other mythic traditions. They have become the subject of scientific and anthropological scrutiny; the former concerned with the text's scientific accuracy and the latter with its relevancy to the ancient Hebrew conceptions of God and of life. It is clear that their final redactor included both accounts with specific purpose, and that he did not perceive their differences as discounting their relevancy or worth to the Hebrew culture and religion. They were instead designed to be read together, each providing an alternate viewpoint and distinct information through their circumstances, events and even their environments. The opening of the Torah was planned to provide purpose and setting for everything that followed, it etiologically justified every religious belief presented in the Hebrew Bible.

In the past it was argued that the creation accounts in *Genesis* were the purest and most ancient form of the narrative, and while the latter has been proven to be inaccurate, the former has a ring of truth, but not for the same reasons. As the latest creation account, *Genesis* is the culmination of the saturation of monotheistic thought. The conflict of the ancient Near East has been entirely suppressed, leaving only the Hebrew God, who

[266] Collins, C. John (2006) *Genesis 1-4*, pp. 164-6.

creates without rival in a setting of peace. These three short chapters and the two narratives contained therein are filled with metaphorical and mythological imagery that express the Hebrew belief concerning the identity, personality, and character of their God and his individuality amongst the archaic pantheons. Furthermore, this conception was foundational to their entire religious code and set the stage for the forty-seven chapters of patriarchal Israelite history that follows the creation stories.

A factor that is often missing in these discussions, however, is the recognition that while these two accounts are the most well-known, they are not the only passages that speak of creation and the Hebrew conception of it. The characters that have been so thoroughly demythologised by the strict monotheism of these stories are conceived of in greater detail and furnished by different contexts designed to bring out specific features. Therefore, treating these passages in isolation (even from each other) will provide only an aspect of the Hebrew comprehension of how the world was formed and why humanity exists upon it. For this reason we must leave *Genesis* and discuss other accounts retained by the Hebrew Bible.

These other narratives are often treated in isolation or as comparison to a specific feature in the *Genesis* creation accounts through the extraction of a single verse.[267] Mythological imagery is employed more extensively by different writers and in vastly different ways in each text. They offer representations of the creative narrative from varying geographical and historical locations, with different purpose and in diverse literary genres. They appear to represent transitional stages, reflecting the changing usages of the mythological imagery of the ancient Near East as they came into contact with monotheistic Hebrew thought, and can be broken down into two streams; covenantal and wisdom theology. As will be seen, the first of these retains the combative elements of the creation imagery to varying degrees according to the requirements of their context, whereas the conflict in the second is more actively subdued. Including these passages in their fuller context in this study will deliver greater insight both to the accounts in *Genesis*, and to the Hebrew concept in general.

[267] See, for example, the research method of Ludwig, Hutton, and Ginsberg's articles, which focuses on the similarities between the imagery of individual verses but do not enter extensively into their individual contexts: Ludwig, Theodore M. (1973) 'The Traditions of Establishing the Earth,' *JBL* 92 (3); Hutton, Jeremy M. (2007) 'Isaiah 51:9-11,' *JBL* 126 (2); and Ginsberg, H. L. (1958) 'The Arm of YHWH in Isaiah 51-63 and the Text of Isa 53:10-11,' *JBL* 77 (2).

CHAPTER THREE

ALTERNATE HEBREW NARRATIVES

The passages featured in this section were treated in a rather cursory manner in early Hebrew creation studies.[268] Often, these verses are examined for their mythological imagery and employed as evidence of Hebrew reliance on the ancient Near Eastern narratives. That this is the case is not in doubt, although some seem more closely related than others. The prophet, the psalmists, the sufferer and the wise man have each offered a different story contained within varied genres.[269] Each bears its own theological and contemporary context, and each professes different motivations. Some present these mythological elements relatively straightforwardly, suggesting closer ties with the source material, whereas others have adapted the themes and imagery in order to attach new meaning. The genres of the five passages in this chapter are highly varied, ranging from prophecy, praise, lament and wisdom literature. They employ different aspects of the creation narrative, preserving the features that suit their purpose.

For a study such as this, it is integral that these passages are examined as much as possible within their historiographical context. This endeavour is quite difficult, as the authorship, locality and dating of these texts are highly contested and admittedly unknown. Despite this, these passages utilise common mythic imagery from the ancient Near East and offer unique Hebrew insight on the topics, as they do not appear to reproduce imagery of the cosmogony for its own sake, but to offer an explanation for certain features of the world.[270] The effort by the writers in eliminating the forces of conflict in their version of the creation narrative has resulted in an increasing sense of

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[268] See footnote above discussing the research method of particular articles by those such as Ludwig, Hutton and Ginsberg. Throughout the research performed for this dissertation, this format has been found to be dominant, considering the creative imagery of the specific few verses independently of their participation in their larger context, which might elucidate further upon the purpose of the imagery used by the author.

[269] Though the latter two both belong to the wisdom corpus.

[270] See: Hurowitz, Victor Avigdor (1997) 'Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible by Richard J. Clifford,' *JQR* 87 (3/4), pp. 412-415.

monotheistic continuity that penetrates the core interpretations of the passages and their perspectives of creation.

3.1 THE PROPHET

Isaiah 51:9-11 is often referred to in comparative mythology for its allusion to Rahab; however, for the purpose of this examination these verses will be situated in the fuller context of vv.1-16. Many believe that Rahab is another name for Leviathan or T^{e}hom and therefore link her narrative to the Babylonian creation epic. Contextually, Isaiah is calling the exiled Judahites to trust in Yahweh for salvation and refers to his destruction of Rahab alongside his creation of the heavens and the earth as justification for their continued faith in him. In other words, the imagery of the cosmic battle is included to demonstrate Yahweh's power and authority over the forces of heaven and earth. In early scholarship, the mythological symbolism in these verses of the battle between Yahweh and the dragon of the deep was considered to be dormant and subdued under several layers of monotheistic reinterpretation.[271] It was believed that the later prophetical works were influenced by psalmic literature, but little is known about the book of *Isaiah* and its author.[272] Today the book is divided into three sections by writers designated as First, Second and Third Isaiah, whose works were placed under a collective title and divided into three sections: chapters 1-39, 40-55 and 56-66.

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[271] Lovell, Florence B. (1955) 'Biblical and Classical Myths,' *CJ* 50 (6), pp. 272, 278. The argument that mythological imagery in the Bible has been heavily stripped of its polytheistic origins is a predominant one in this field, with resistance on both sides of it. It is important to note that in admitting this possibility does not deny its existence in the text itself, whether in its conscious or subconscious, but acknowledges that it has undergone significant transformation from its original form.

[272] Knierim, Rolf (1968) 'The Vocation of Isaiah,' *VT* 18 (1), p. 47. On the belief that the prophets were influenced by the Psalms, see: Ginsberg, H. L. (1958) 'The Arm of YHWH in Isaiah 51-63 and the Text of Isa 53:10-11,' *JBL* 77 (2), p. 152. While there is little conclusive proof as to the temporal and geographical location of Isaiah, many have accepted the dating of the book in the latter half of the eighth century B.C.E. under the reign of Uzziah. The range of material and perceived longevity of Isaiah's 'ministry' led to suggestions of a compiler who may have been a contemporary of Ezekiel. This secondary writer is conceived of writing in such a way that his works would be attributed to Isaiah the prophet, which raises the theory of dual (or even multiple) authorship. Some suggest that Isaiah's prophecies regarding the thwarting of the enemies plans and the promises of Israel's victory over them point to the book's origin being found under the reign of Ahaz. (Whitley, C. F. (1959) 'The Call and Mission of Isaiah,' *JNES* 18 (1), p. 38). Others believe that his ministry was both long-lived and diverse, beginning at the close of an era of peace and material wealth and remaining active throughout the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah guided by the hypothesis that it would be inexplicable for Isaiah to have been a prophet only during times of disaster. This culminated in the belief that the book was nothing more than a collection of oracles based upon a corpus of Isaianic sayings, making Isaiah not an author but a character within his own text. (Smith, Louise Pettibone (1917) 'The Messianic Ideal of Isaiah,' *JBL* 36 (3/4), p. 178-189).

The logical break between books 39 and 40 have also resulted in the theory of dual authorship, the first section being ascribed to Isaiah himself and the second to an unknown prophet who lived during the sixth century B.C.E.[273] The prevailing view of Second Isaiah is that he resided in Babylonia during the exile, although certain geographical phenomena referred to in the text suggest that his knowledge of Babylonian religion and customs was not extensive enough for one who supposedly lived in the region.[274] Alongside this is the lack of Babylonian influence in the text, which, combined with his usage of the second plural imperative in 48:20, marks him as an outsider rather than a participator. It was suggested that Second Isaiah lived in Palestine, which connected him to Third Isaiah who is also generally accepted to have been of Palestinian origin, making way for their assimilation under the title of Deutero-Isaiah.[275] Ultimately, it is generally held today that the three 'texts' of Isaiah practised a high degree of intertexuality, which explains their theological unity,[276] and that the earlier texts may have been edited by later hands as they were compiled with the purpose of being read as a whole.

Another consideration, which has had a definable impact on the discussion, is the book's designation as an oral or written composition. The book contains many stylistic features

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[273] Kaminsky, Joel and Stewart, Anne (2006) 'God of All the World: Universalism and Developing Monotheism in Isaiah 40-66,' *HTR* 99 (2), pp. 139-163, esp. p. 143. Similarly, Nahum Sarna elaborates on this point, stating that the chapters of Second [Deutero]-Isaiah 'bear neither date nor other identification. The only historic personality mentioned is Cyrus, founder of the Persian empire.' (Sarna, Nahum (1964) 'The Message of Deutero-Isaiah in Its Sequential Unfolding by Julian Morgenstern,' *JSS* 26 (1), p. 43).

[274] Maynard, John A. (1917) 'The Home of Deutero-Isaiah,' *JBL* 36 (3/4), pp. 213-224.

[275] Buttenweiser, Moses (1919) 'Where did Deutero-Isaiah live?' *JBL* 38 (3/4), p. 96.

[276] That the book belonged to one author by the name of Isaiah was the traditional understanding that extended well into the New Testament era. It was not until approximately two hundred years ago that this fact was challenged. Furthermore, basing his discussion of this idea upon the works of Childs and Brownlee, Evans proposes that the final editor of Isaiah 'deliberately excised the original historical context of the Second and Third Isaiah and has placed these oracles into the historical context of the 8th-century prophet [...] and has thus been able to create a timeless theological theme' based on the desire to divide the book into two parallel volumes, which involved the movement and incorporation of certain passages into different sections of the book. (Evans, Craig A. (1988) 'On the Unity and Parallel Structure of Isaiah,' *VT* 38 (2), pp. 129, 146) See also: Motyer, J. A. (1957) 'The "Servant Songs" in the Unity of Isaiah,' *TSF Bulletins*: Spring, pp. 3-7; and: Motyer, J. A. (1993) *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester. The idea that the text was ultimately designed to be read together, as well as the later writers' reliance on earlier texts can also be seen through vocabulary features and the use of specific terms that are almost exclusively used in the book of *Isaiah*. For example, the expression 'The Holy one of Israel' appears twelve times in books 1-39 and thirteen times in books 40-60. (Carson, D. A. et al. (2007) *New Bible Commentary*, p. 631. For further examination of this subject see also: Margalioth, Rachel (1964) *The Invisible Isaiah: Evidence for the Single Authorship of the Prophetic Book*, Sura Institute for Research, Jerusalem, Yeshiva University, New York) Similarly, the phrase 'the arm of Yahweh' finds an unusual concentration within books 51-63, is found only fourteen times outside of these chapters, three of which are found in the writings of First Isaiah and eight in the Psalms, suggesting the strong influence of the First Isaiah and the Psalmic literature on the Second Isaiah. (Ginsberg, H. L. (1958) 'The Arm of YHWH in Isaiah 51-63 and the Text of Isa 53:10-11,' *JBL* 77 (2), p. 152).

that point towards an originally oral form, and yet the development of specific notions and themes suggest that the composition was planned, implying that there was a period of preparation for the design of its written form. It is likely that the written form of the text is a compilation of individual oracles and prophecies that were gathered with specific purpose. However, the understanding of the prophet's words lie in the rhetorical features he used to address his audience.[277] Up until the mid twentieth century, the prophets were considered to be the true founders of Hebrew religion, as it is known today. While this premise is supported by the frequent polytheistic tendencies throughout Israel and Judah's history, the prophet's dependency on the ancient Hebrew traditions has raised a number of questions against it.[278] The innovations of the prophets appealed to ancient concepts in their attempts to reinforce contemporary beliefs, providing correction to the Israelites where there was misinterpretation or violation of the law of their forefathers.

Isaiah is described as a messenger who recites the words of another, who informs him at the very beginning of his ministry that he is undertaking an impossible task. Travis Kroeker, who discusses the extant form of *Isaiah* as representing the opinions of a single mind, states that Isaiah's 'theology is rooted in a revelation of the holy God, leading to a prophetic critique of political idolatry and a political ethic of covenant responsibility.'[279] Directed towards the Israelites as Yahweh's chosen people, the book of *Isaiah*'s purpose is threefold: it offers first a warning, secondly a condemnation of their disobedience and lack of faith and thirdly a judgement upon them outlining their exile but with a promise of future victory. The prophecies of Isaiah were aimed towards a people who are portrayed as turning away from belief in Yahweh due to national setbacks and the loss of their leaders, resulting in their reversion to belief in the polytheistic gods of old.[280] Ultimately, his words were rejected by the majority, quoted verbatim by some in hope, but were perceived as unfulfilled promises by the dejected many.

An indisputable identification of the date, location and purpose of the book as a whole is unlikely to be achieved with limited external sources, but this does not prohibit the efforts to classify individual chapters. Chapter 51 belongs to the works of Second Isaiah,

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[277] Gitay, Yehoshua (1980) 'Deutero-Isaiah: Oral or Written,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (2), pp. 185-197.
[278] Knierim, Rolf (1968) 'The Vocation of Isaiah,' *VT* 18 (1), p. 48. See also: Simon Sherwin's essay 'Did the Israelites Really Learn their Monotheism in Babylon' in Block, Daniel I. (2008) *Israel*, pp. 257-281.
[279] Kroeker, P. Travis (1993) 'The Theological Politics of Plato and Isaiah: A Debate Rejoined,' *JR* 73 (1), pp. 17-19.
[280] Maynard, John A. (1917) 'The Home of Deutero-Isaiah,' *JBL* 36 (3/4), p. 214.

which suggests that the text may be of Palestinian origin. If this is correct, then it is likely that it was written from the perspective of an outsider with the intention of encouraging those who were exiled in Babylonia. In other words, whether or not the text was also performed locally in oral form, it was stylistically recorded for written dissemination to the exiles and was likely read to its recipients by the messenger that delivered it.

The structure of ch.51:1-16 has engendered lively discussion in which the modern format of two stanzas divided after v.8 was popularly accepted. However, the proposed chiastic structure of vv.1-11, which is a common literary tool in Hebrew poetry suggests an alternate format for the chapter. Shown through thematic progression and the placement of pivotal terms, it implies that the first eleven verses may have been designed as a literary unit and that the structure is original and unrevised.[281] A third hypothesis defends the unity of vv.9-16 based on the belief that vv.12-16 are thematically linked to the imagery of vv.9-10. This structure focuses on the repetition of imagery in vv.9 and 15, suggesting that Yahweh's victory over the forces of chaos have not yet been integrated into the exodus motif.[282] Despite the compelling lines of reasoning used by the defenders of these arguments, they have not penetrated into mainstream criticism and scholars have continued to split the text between vv. 8 and 9.

The passage opens in v.1 with a declaration of its intended audience, stating: 'listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord.'[283] The writer is addressing those who, like the patriarchs before them, continued to seek righteousness despite their circumstances. As outlined in v.7, these are the people 'who have my [the Lord's] teaching in your hearts,' reminiscent of the perceived righteousness of Job. Here, righteousness is defined not as the quest for salvation, but as a desire to live in such a way that pleases Yahweh and is in accordance to his divine will. This idea is further reinforced by the entreaty in vv.2-3 to 'look to the rock from which you were hewn […] look to Abraham your father.' Abraham is the father of righteousness; to him is credited Israel's status as the chosen people. He is set up as a paradigm of right living to be followed and the mention of him in this passage entreats the hearer to remember the blessing promised to Abraham and thus to the Israelites themselves.[284] In v.2, the writer

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[281] Holmgren, Fredrik (1969) 'Chiastic Structure in Isaiah LI 1-11,' *VT* 19 (2), pp. 196-201.
[282] Ludwig, Theodore M. (1973) 'The Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,' *JBL* 92 (3), p. 352.
[283] *Isaiah* 51:1a.
[284] See: Blenkinsopp, Joseph (2009) 'Abraham as Paradigm in the Priestly History in Genesis,' *JBL* 128 (2), pp. 225-241.

draws attention to his solitude: 'for he was but one when I called to him, but I blessed him and made him many,' which appeals to the conviction that Yahweh is capable of fulfilling his promises.

In alluding to Abraham, the purpose of the text is made evident and is reinforced by vv. 3 to 8 where a return to the Edenic state is promised for the Israelites. To this effect, the writer invokes the symbolism of Yahweh's battle with Rahab in v.9: 'Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?' The prophesied deliverance is declared as outlasting the heavens and the earth, ushering in a new Golden Age that will endure for all eternity. To achieve such a feat, the text returns to the beginning, when the forces of order first overcame the forces of chaos and established impassable boundaries. Significantly, while the underlying myth implies that the personified entity was slain, the abstract force must be forever held in check, and yet the prophecy that precedes the creative symbolism declares Yahweh's ability to utterly destroy those opposing forces.

It is clear that the Hebrew Bible assimilated the contemporary mythological imagery into its narratives and equally evident that its writers sought to overlay it with a monotheistic worldview. The discovery and translation of the Ugaritic myths and their legend of the battle with Yam illuminated the pervasiveness of this myth throughout the ancient Near East. At the time that this newfound knowledge was integrated into Hebraic textual studies, Rahab and Leviathan were identified as synonymous with the figure of Yam.[285] Similarly, it was determined in the nineteenth century that there was no feature or characteristic that could be used to describe the two that weren't also considered to be aspects of Tiamat. This initially resulted in the widespread understanding that both Rahab and Leviathan were reflections of and allusions to the earlier Ugaritic Yam.

The identification of the Hebrew cosmic figures with those of the ancient Near East was not universally accepted by early twentieth century scholars who cited examples where Leviathan seemed to be a natural beast such as crocodile or a whale.[286] In addition to this, Rahab was often presented as the personification of the ocean or the cosmic sea

[285] Childs, Brevard S. (1970) 'A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition,' *VT* 20 (4), pp. 406-418.

[286] Michael Fox believes that the identification of the Leviathan as a mythical beast is actually less often attested than his identification as a whale, especially in the context of Job. See: Fox, Michael V. (2012) 'Behemoth and Leviathan,' *Biblica* 93 (2), pp. 261-67, esp. p. 264.

serpent, but also appeared as the representation of Egypt, the arrogance of mankind, or even the abstract traits of pride and arrogance themselves.[287] Thus, it is possible that her identity was dependant on the specific focus of the writer in relaying the cosmic event and the strength of the mythological remnants embedded within each text.

The imagery depicting Yahweh as cutting Rahab to pieces in v.9 resonates strongly with Marduk's tearing apart of Tiamat in the *Enuma Elish*. G. S. Kirk believed that the *Enuma Elish* served the political purpose of fortifying the authority of Marduk by amalgamating his myth with the creation narrative after his ascendency to the role of high god. Marduk is a relatively new god in the Babylonian pantheon that is raised to the position of supreme god after his vanquishing of Tiamat. It is said that he achieved this by driving a violent wind into her belly and then cutting her in half.[288] Piercing the dragon echoes the wind that penetrates Tiamat's body and ultimately kills her, whereas the depiction of Yahweh cutting Rahab to pieces is directly reminiscent of the use of Tiamat's dissected body to create the heavens and the earth, separating the waters in the sky and on the ground. Adopting this imagery serves a similar function in *Isaiah*; by situating Yahweh as the victor in the cosmic battle his superiority over the gods of the neighbouring cultures is asserted.

In the context of *Isaiah* 51, vv.9-10 play upon two creative traditions; the first being the creation of the cosmos and the second being the 'creation' of Israel and the parting of the Red sea during the exodus. The exodus represents the first moment in biblical history that Yahweh was considered as the national god of Israel,[289] and called upon the cosmic battle to encourage the Israelites to participate in an act of new creation in their return from exile in Egypt.[290] Like that of creation, its imagery appears to be closely related to that of the *Enuma Elish*; for example, in *Exodus* 14:21 it says 'the Lord [Yahweh] drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided.' Echoing Marduk's use of the fierce winds with which he split

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[287] Barton, George A. (1893) 'Tiamat,' *JAOS* 15, pp. 1-27.
[288] Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures*, Cambridge University Press, London, pp. 119-122. See also: Jacobsen, Thorkild (1968) 'The Battle between Marduk and Tiamat,' *JAOS* 88 (1), pp. 104-108.
[289] See: Hoffman, Yair (1989) 'A North Israelite Typological Myth and a Judean Historical Tradition: The Exodus in Hosea,' *VT* 39 (2), pp. 169-182; and Noth, Martin (1962) *Exodus*, p. 104.
[290] See: Clifford, Richard J (1985) 'The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,' *TS* 46, p. 518. Furthermore, Herbert May postulated that the waters of chaos were often used metaphorical manifestations of the enemies of Yahweh or of those of Israel herself, regularly coinciding with the Red Sea tradition (May, Herbert G. (1955) 'Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabîm. "Many Waters",' *JBL* 74 (1), pp. 9-21, esp. p. 12).

Tiamat in half, this account is portrayed as a re-enactment of the creation event, thereby justifying Yahweh's status as both the 'creator' of the Israelites, and the creator of the world,[291] and reinforcing his authority as a high god. It is further suggested that Yahweh's reputation is connected to that of Israel, and that for him to rescue the Israelites from exile requires his authority to be universal and his power greather than the god of their oppressors.[292] This ultimately serves to differentiate Yahweh from the other gods of the ancient world through its reappropriation of the story.

Connecting the dismemberment of Rahab to the following verse ('was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over') has led to the belief that Rahab is being depicted not as the cosmic serpent, but as the personification of Egypt. Through the use of the term T^{e}hom to designate the great deep, one might surmise that the act of drying up the sea could also be symbolic of the formation of land during the creation process through the term's etymological association with Tiamat. This would tie the two verses more closely with the cosmic battle as opposed to the exodus. However, an examination of the Red Sea tradition as it is depicted elsewhere in the Hebrew bible displays strong cosmic allusions in its language, vocabulary and presentation, even in its earliest references.[293] Therefore, perceiving Egypt as a strong military threat, the Hebrew people required an example of Yahweh as a conqueror, and as there is arguably no other force imaginable that is more powerful than that of the sea monster, Second Isaiah exploits the strongest imagery at his disposal in the cosmic battle.

The relevancy of this interpretation to the contextual circumstances suggests that the assimilation of the cosmic battle into the Red Sea tradition is quite plausible.[294]

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[291] Sparks, Kenton (2007) '"Enuma Elish",' *JBL* 126 (4), pp. 636-7. See also: Loewenstamm, Samuel E. (1992) *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, Magnes, Jerusalem, esp. p. 246; Batto, Bernard F. (1992) *Slaying the Dragon*, Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, pp. 73-101; and Eakin Jr., Frank E. (1967) 'The Reed Sea and Baalism,' *JBL* 86 (4), pp. 378-384. Specifically, Eakin suggests that the Exodus motif might be indirectly related to the story of Baal and Yam, claiming that the latter was known in Egypt at a relatively early date (pp. 381-3).

[292] See: Sarna, Nahum (1964) 'The Message of Deutero-Isaiah,' *JSS* 26 (1), p. 42; and Levine, Baruch A. (2005) 'Assyrian Ideology and Israelite Monotheism,' *Iraq* 67 (1: Ninevah. Papers of the 49th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Part Two), pp. 414-5.

[293] Childs, Brevard S. (1970) 'A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition,' *VT* 20 (4), esp. pp. 413-4.

[294] Indeed, Hugh Williamson concluded that this allusion is deeply entrenched within the imagery of the Red Sea deliverance (Williamson, Hugh G. M. (1994) *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp. 83-86), and Rebecca Watson expresses that the Exodus theme is dominant not just in vv.9-11, but throughout the greater context (Watson, Rebecca S. (2005) *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the "Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin, 298).

Oppressed and in exile, the promise of deliverance from current persecutions becomes a not easily accepted prophecy. There are certain situational parallels between the Israelites' exile in Babylon and their slavery in Egypt as both oppressed the Israelites as the principal powers of their ages. Thus the adaptation of the earlier myth allows the retention of the divine authority that was reinforced by the event and further bolsters his identity as a supreme god. V.11's repetition of the sentiments of v.3, outlining the promise of a return to a Golden Age when 'the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing,' combined with v.12's declaration that the Israelites enemy is 'a mere mortal who must die, a human being who fades like grass,' seems to support the identification of Rahab with Egypt in v.9. One perceives a gradual demythologisation of the creation conflict, transferring the power of the first event to the historical setting of victory at the Red Sea, ultimately lending weight to the hope of salvation from another seemingly insurmountable situation.

It was suggested in the early twentieth century that Yahweh existed initially as a geographically confined mountain god whose attributes increased as his community, and therefore his territory, expanded. The underlying image of vv.9-10 painted him in the function of the divine warrior, a role that had belonged previously to the Ugaritic god Baal, although there are indications in Second Isaiah's choice of theme and vocabulary that he deliberately sought to excise religious or mythological motifs that were hostile to monotheism.[295] Consequently, as the worship of Yahweh became more prevalent in society the attributes of other deities were assumed by him. For example, as the Hebrew understanding of his identity grew, he assumed new characteristics and became known by their corresponding names such as Yahweh-Jireh: the god of provision, Yahweh-Nissi: the god of protection, Yahweh-Shalom: the god of peace and Yahweh-Rapha: the god of healing.[296] The growth of his attributes implies that the Hebrew writers desired not simply to set Yahweh over an existing pantheon, but to replace and absorb the power of each deity within them.

The ideas of monotheism that grew out of such assertions seem to be a product of necessity. Declaring that one god possessed the capacity to create the world and rule over it unchallenged was incompatible with a polytheistic worldview.[297] Based on

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[295] Hutton, Jeremy M. (2007) 'Isaiah 51:9-11 and the Rhetorical Appropriation and Subversion of Hostile Theologies,' *JBL* 126 (2), pp. 271-303.
[296] *Genesis* 22:14, *Exodus* 17:15, *Judges* 6:24, *Exodus* 15:26 respectively.
[297] Pfeiffer, Robert H. (1927) 'The Dual Origin of Hebrew Monotheism,' *JBR* 46 (3/4), pp. 193-206.

archaeological and literary evidence, it is widely accepted that the majority of the Israelites were polytheistic up until the time of the exile.[298] It remains probable, however, that a monotheistic concept existed amongst the prophets before the age during which the Isaianic writers composed their works. Adhered to by only a minority, the belief gained traction in the greater community around the time of Second Isaiah, making it reasonable to assume that the concept maintained a level of influence in his works.[299] Second Isaiah was likely seeking to remind his audience of their belief in Yahweh's sovereignty in prompting them to recall Abraham and Sarah who, by his power, bore a son despite her barrenness.

The Hebrew writers challenged the power of the gods of the neighbouring cultures, which is achieved in the current passage through the absorption and recontextualisation of the common creation motifs. For example, v.13 presents Yahweh as 'your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth.' The motif of Yahweh as the maker of heaven and earth is part of a rich tradition pertaining to the establishing of heaven and earth through the conquest of the sea serpent. Repeated in v.16, the method of Yahweh's creation stretching out the heavens appears to be thematically tied to Rahab's demise in v.9 through the commonly known ancient Near Eastern imagery of the sea monsters sundered body being transformed into the heavens.[300] However, the inherent dualism implied by the cosmic battle has been subdued in the closing words of v.13 where Yahweh almost mockingly asks 'where is the fury of the oppressor?' He has been presented here without equal, a feature that becomes more evident in v.15 when it states 'I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar.' Believed to be an echo of the pattern in *Job* 26:12-13, in which Yahweh overcomes Rahab by his power and understanding, the roaring waves of v.15 are symbolic of chaos. Alternatively, it is Yahweh who is depicted as provoking the sea as opposed to reacting to its challenge; the sea roars in protest but cannot break free from its restraints.

This short passage offers one of the better-known connections to the ancient Near Eastern creation myths. It is seen as a distinct parallel to the Babylonian creation epic and therefore the retention of the primal battle that engendered the cosmos. However,

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[298] Refer to section 1.3 above.

[299] See: Simon, J. Sherwin's essay ' Did the Israelites Really Learn Their Monotheism in Babylon?' in Block, Daniel I. (2008) *Israel*. pp. 257-281.

[300] By the stage that these motifs occur in biblical writings, their polytheistic implications have been subdued and its usage, especially by Deutero-Isaiah 'heighten the uniqueness of the primordial creative work of Yahweh.' Habel, Norman C. (1972) '"Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth," *JBL* 91 (3), esp. pp. 334-5.

the reiteration of the theme of Yahweh as the maker of heaven and earth later in the passage suggest that the cosmic battle is no longer considered as the primary creation model. The metaphor of stretching of the heavens and the earth, whilst being potentially compatible with the story of Rahab's dismemberment, bears the implications of reduced conflict when read in conjunction with the assertion that he has no equal. The creation event was not included in the passage for its own sake, but for the authority that it brings to the situation, reminding the readers of Yahweh's ability to act. They are used to provide justification for the people's trust in Yahweh, positing that only the creator and ruler of the earth has the power to make such promises of eternal protection. Accordingly, Second Isaiah transferred the imagery of the cosmic battle into a more historical setting to suit the contemporary needs of his intended audience.

3.2 THE PSALMISTS

The Psalter is an intriguing book. Unlike the Pentateuch, the final redactional composition of the psalms was not written with an instructional purpose and was doxological in nature rather than didactic. Covering a wide range of topics, the book employs a great deal of allegorical and metaphorical language, preferring to use the poetic form rather than narrative or legal forms. Contained within this section are examinations of *Psalm* 89 and 104, the first of which uses the imagery of Rahab combined with Yahweh's careful fashioning of the world. This is set in a context of desperation, where the writer recalls the characteristics of the god of his ancestors and calls upon him as having the power to fulfil the promises he made in the songwriter's youth. The second song is one of praise, presenting the Hebrew God as having stretched out the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, as well as maintaining his creation as its ongoing ruler.

In the nineteenth century it was believed that the psalms were not penned with the edification of the entire Hebrew state in mind. They were personal and localised songs of praise, lament, joy and hardship that built upon the religious ideas of their time.[301] The imagery of contemporary myths and their corresponding symbolism were drawn upon by the psalmists in order to add weight to their expressions. Similarly, a twentieth century study on shared verbal phrases between psalmic and Canaanitic literature

[301] Montefiore, C. G. (1889) 'Mystic Passages in the Psalms,' *JQR* 1 (2), p. 146.

determined that their usage and understanding were analogous.[302] The two possessed shared background knowledge of certain phrases and their related imagery. However, it seems that the Hebrew writers were not content to produce a simple adaptation of the mythic themes contained therein. Instead, it appears that they almost sought to destroy their mythological essence through deliberate deconstructions in their quest to reshape them. For example, in their utilisation of Canaanitic seasonal conflict themes in which Baal was depicted as the god of vegetation and Mot the god of death and sterility, Yahweh did not simply take on the role of Baal. Rather, he was attributed the power of both deities so as to diminish the cyclical overthrowing of power.

Such changes were made to align the songs with the perceived agenda of the psalmic literature of pronouncing Yahweh as a god who supersedes all others as well as defending his rights to the title of 'King' over the earth and everything on it. This is demonstrated in *Psalms* 90-99, known as the enthronement psalms, which outline his royal claim according to the Hebrew worldview. He is described firstly as a god who is not territorially confined, thus making his power and authority universal and secondly, as the establisher of natural phenomena, creator of the heavens and the earth. He is specifically named as the creator of the sea, which in the ancient Near Eastern myths typified the forces of evil and chaos, granting him absolute power over it. Finally, he is attributed with defining and maintaining the moral order of the world by which the people upon it should live.[303] The similarities between Canaanitic and Hebrew religious poetry has aided scholars in identifying the genre and context of individual psalms.[304]

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[302] O'Callaghan, Roger T. (1954) 'Echoes of Canaanite Literature in the Psalms,' *VT* 4 (2), pp. 164-173. The focus of this study was on the destruction of a name in both Hebrew and Canaanite literature and examined how the phrase was used and understood and what meaning it carried in varying contexts. O'Callaghan determined that some usages of the term in the former display evidence of its basis in Canaanitic literature, but that it was also adapted for the Hebrew purpose and agenda.

[303] *Psalm* 95:3, 96:4 and 97:7-9. The former two of these examples base their assumption of his control on their subsequent declaration of his sole creation of the earth, and the latter is preceded by a statement of his power over the natural forces of the world. Order of nature: *Psalm* 93:1, 96:10, heavens: 96:5, sea: 95:5, definer of moral order: *Psalm* 99:4, maintainer: 96:10, 98:9. See John Gray's article: (Gray, John (1961) 'The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms,' *VT* 11 (1), pp. 1-29) There are many characteristics of God described in the Psalms; for example, he is labelled as a 'creator' twenty-five times, 'deliverer' twenty-six times, as 'righteous' twenty-six times and 'faithful' twenty-eight times. An interesting observation is that his most commonly ascribed attribute in the entirety of the psalms is 'loving,' which occurs some one hundred and two times.

[304] The discovery of the Ugaritic texts had a significant impact on the investigation and examination of the Psalms for they '[1] provide us with the Canaanitic background of the many mythical conceptions and metaphors in the Psalms [… 2] they give an abundance of contributions […] to lexicography, grammar, poetical phraseology [etc … and 3] they give interesting and illuminating analogies to the numerous versions of […] *parallelismus membrorum* common to all poetry of the ancient Near East.' However, despite concluding that the Ugaritic texts were older than those of the Psalms, Mowinkel admits that an

That being said, one is wise to be cautious in determining the level of reliance of the Hebrew texts on the stylistic traditions of the ancient Near East as too high or too low. A deeper reliance on the Canaanitic tradition is generally acknowledged; however, the strength of that reliance has not yet been determined.

Up until the works or Hermann Gunkel it was generally believed that the psalms were composed relatively late in Israelite history, more specifically, that they were penned in the post-exilic era. The lack of historical references within the psalms themselves caused some to doubt the possibility of determining their temporal location. Early scholarship had accepted the ascription of many of the psalms to King David and thus to the period of the monarchy, however, it quickly became evident that a simple reference to the monarchy or even to a king was not sufficient proof of composition during the monarchical period.[305] Gunkel's work, which led to the general agreement amongst scholars that the songs were composed between 1000-100 B.C.E. and were subjected to post-exilic editorial work, resulted in a focus on parallel groupings.

This served to weaken scholarly confidence in previous dating attempts and widened the potential time frame of composition, leading to the suggestion that some of the psalms may actually have been written by King David.[306] It is tempting to accept a pre-exilic authorship and in the mid twentieth century, the opinion arose that the Psalter served a predominantly cultic function, suggesting that the intended usage of many later psalms were as part of sacrificial acts performed at the temple before the time of the exile.[307] This revelation was believed to shed light upon early Israelite religious practices, their style and employment being tagged as support of a dating earlier than Second Isaiah.[308] Unfortunately, the association of the psalms with the temple and

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exact level of semblance is impossible to determine due to insufficient extant materials. (Mowinckel, Sigmund (1955) 'Psalm Criticism between 1900 and 1935 (Ugarit and Psalm Exegesis),' *VT* 5 (1), p. 23-4).

[305] Furthermore, Gray denies the mention of the royal house to be an indication of an actual living king but a prophesy of the messianic king, echoing a passage from 2 Samuel on the perpetuity of David's seed. (Gray, G. Buchanan (1895) 'The References to the "King" in the Psalter, in Their Bearing on Questions of Date and Messianic Belief,' *JQR* 7 (4), pp. 658-686.

[306] Williams, Walter G. (1957) 'Liturgical Aspects in Enthronement Psalms,' *JBR* 25 (2), p. 118.

[307] Peters qualifies his belief of the Psalter's existence as part of the sacrificial rituals in his adherence to the post-exilic nature of the whole, and his declaration that while some appeared to be specifically composed for this ritualistic purpose, while others seem to have been adapted at a later date after the book had cemented its place as a Temple hymn book. (Peters, John (1910) 'Notes on Some Ritual Uses of the Psalms,' *JBL* 29 (2), pp. 113-125).

[308] Mowinckel writes in opposition to the argument presented by Gray above, stating that Deutero-Isaiah was a student of the psalmic literature, and studied its language and content (of the existing sections) and furthermore that he believed that the 'classical age of psalmography [in Israel] is the period of the monarchy' and that the "royal" and "enthronement" psalms were in fact produced in that age and their style and content evidence their antiquity. (Mowinckel, Sigmund (1955) 'Psalm Criticism,' *VT* 5 (1), p. 20).

sacrifice does not confirm their pre-exilic origin, and evidence suggesting this remains problematic.

In approximately 200 B.C.E. a final redaction of the entire 150 books occurred, dividing the whole into five parts. This was generally understood as an attempt to tighten its relationship to the five books of the Torah, the latter of which related God's wisdom while the former humanity's praise of his wisdom. Each systematic collection of psalms was then closed by a doxology, although their original inclusion in the books before this point is questioned.[309] Many of the individual psalms within these books were preceded by superscriptions that were believed to regulate their dissemination within Israelite culture. As an indicator of exclusivity, the superscript determined who could chant the psalm, the manner of its recitation, the occasion on which it could be performed and the instrument that should accompany it.[310]

Another opinion regarding the superscriptions contended that the employment of common terms amongst small groupings might have been used to tie editorial sets together. This theory was based on the idea that the five books were divided according to their authorship.[311] Unfortunately, the understanding of the musical terms contained within the superscriptions was lost even before the final compilation of the book, leading scholars to further hypothesise about its antiquity. Furthermore, the declaration by some of the superscriptions of specific authorship was regarded as fanciful. Instead, the ascription of many of the psalms to King David may have served no other purpose than the augmenting the authority of its contents.

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[309] de Pinto, Basil (1967) 'The Torah and the Psalms,' *JBL* 86 (2), pp. 154-174.

[310] Solokow, Moshe (1984) 'Saadiah Gaon's Prolegomenon to Psalms,' *PAAJR* 51, pp. 131-174. Solokow's argument is influenced by Gunkel's chapter classification, however he adds that he does not believe that they were organised chronologically by the final redactor but geographically, or perhaps by the days of the year (see: pp. 155-166). See also Bruce Waltke who states that 'the biblical superscripts concern themselves mostly with matters of composition: authorship, genre, classification, historical circumstance, cultic performance, and function of purpose of the psalm.' (Waltke, Bruce K. (1991) 'Superscripts, Postscripts of Both,' *JBL* 110 (4), pp. 583-596).

[311] Wilson, Gerald H. (1984) 'Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Psalter,' *VT* 34 (3), pp. 337-352. Wilson states that this fact is especially relevant to the first three books in which only six psalms are not allocated to any author, however four of these he suggests could be related to their preceding psalm. He also believes that the methods of analysis utilised by those such as Gunkel and Mowinckel, in that they focus their attention on 'the isolation and comparison of psalm-types and on the related attempt to discern the original social matrix of each "type" [...] has had the unfortunate effect of deflecting concern from the editorial organisation of the Psalter as a whole.' (p. 338).

3.2.1 THE EZRAHITE

Like in *Isaiah* 51, *Psalm* 89 offers only a few verses that comment upon the creation event, and these are used as justification for the dominant themes in the song. Significantly, this passage is considered as the most direct adaptation of the Ugaritic and Mesopotamian myths, and has been often used as definitive proof of the influence of ancient Near Eastern cosmological thought on the Hebrew writers. Early scholarship contended that the text was a compilation of several traditions, which implied that the mention of Rahab is unrelated to the greater text. However, recent analytical trends have found the passage to be a single cohesive work. As such, the creation imagery in the text was accepted as an intentional inclusion by the writer.

Psalm 89 continues to defy conventional classification; its superscription claims that it was 'a Maskil of Ethan the Ezrahite.' Generally assumed to be musical terminology, the meaning of the word 'maskil' was lost and remains difficult to interpret. The term is used to introduce 13 psalms, although the content and meter of each is so diverse that the only obvious commonality between them is their status as a musical arrangement.[312] It is thought that the now unknown term may have been an archaic element that fell out of common usage during the Babylonian exile, indicating that their related psalms may have had their origins in pre-exilic times.[313] Other interpretations of the term are based on its root meaning of 'having or giving insight' or 'showing of giving wisdom.' These suggest that it may have been used to classify a unique type of psalm that aligned with this meaning, although the inconsistency of the 'wisdom' offered by these psalms makes the hypothesis doubtful.[314]

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[312] See: Dumortier, Jean-Bernard (1972) 'Un rituel d'intronisation: le Ps. LXXXIX 2-38,' *VT* 22 (2), pp. 176-196; and: Peters, John (1910) 'Notes on Some Ritual Uses of the Psalms,' *JBL* 29 (2), pp. 124-5.

[313] Gevaryahu, H. M. I. (1975) 'Biblical Colophons,' *Congress Volume: Edinburgh 1974 VTS* 28 (Leiden: Brill), pp. 42-59; Williams, Walter G. (1957) 'Liturgical Aspects in Enthronment Psalms,' *JBR* 25 (2), p.120. Waltke also conceded that the prepositional phrases did not appear outside of the first three books or even found in any identifiably post-exilic psalm. For this reason, and the loss of their meaning, he supports the idea that the superscripts leant weight to the pre-exilic origins of many of the psalms contained within these books. (Waltke, Bruce K. (1991) 'Superscripts, Postscripts of Both,' *JBL* 110 (4)) Finally, this discussion was prefaced by Green's suggestion that these musical terms belonged specifically to the temple, and were ceased to be used at the point of its destruction and subsequently forgotten. (Green, W. Henry (1890) 'The Titles of the Psalms,' *ONTS* 11 (3), p. 158).

[314] See: Kosmala, Hans (1973) 'Maśkîl,' in David Marcus (ed.), *The Gaster Festschrift: Theodor Herzl Gaster on the occasion of his retirement from Barnard College and Columbia University* = *JANESCU* 5, pp. 235-241. In his essay, Kosmala states his belief that the titles of the psalms are younger than the psalms themselves and possibly date from the pre-Maccabaean era. See also: Walton, John H. et al. (2000) *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 517; and: Kosmala, Hans (1978) *Studies, Essays and Reviews: Old Testament*, E. J. Brill, Leiden.

The supposed author of *Psalm* 89, Ethan the Ezrahite, is difficult to place in Israel's history. The name is found in the lists of Solomon's sages in 1 Kings 4:31 and in the list of Levitical musicians in 1 Chronicles 15:17. Historically, this would place him within the Davidic and Solomonic eras, although it is unknown whether the prescript is derived from an earlier tradition or if it fed into it. More specifically, it is believed by those who adhere to a pre-exilic origin for the song that he lived in the post-Solomonic era between the ninth and seventh centuries B.C.E. though none dare to propose a firmer date as nothing more is known about him.[315] His song falls into the group of the royal psalms, although there is no consensus as to which king the song refers to despite certain phrases appearing to cite specific events.[316] On the other hand, it has been perceived to correspond with the style, content, and function of Assyrian prophecies regarding their kings. Shared themes between the two include the divine sonship of the king and his dominion over the seas and rivers as well as the subjugation of enemies.[317] Despite the argument of its pre-exilic origin, there are anacrhonisitic linguistic and thematic factors that indicate that the psalm must have been completed either during or shortly after the exile.[318]

The disparate sections of the text that were once seen as evidence of the amalgamation of several sources has now given way to its thematic cohesion based on the psalm's complexity, its metric arrangement, shared key vocabulary and logical thematic progression. The isolation of the three sections of the song arose from the fact that each belonged to a different genre that in other parts of the psalms exist independently; those of praise, oracle and complaint. Following the recognition of the theological significance of their function as a whole, new theories arose as to the author's intention.[319] It was

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[315] Ward, James M. (1961) 'The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX,' *VT* 11 (3), pp. 321-339. On the other hand, Dumortier believes that 'l'attribution de ce Psalm Lxxxix à Eytân l'Ezrahïte permet de préciser davantage et de situer cette composition dans un context de sagesse royale particulièrement renommée.' (Dumortier, Jean-Bernard (1972) 'Un rituel d'intronisation, *VT* 22 (2), p. 177) However, while some may have accepted the premise that it was a pre-exilic royal placement of the psalm, others continue to believe that it was a lament for the fallen monarchy during the period of exile.

[316] Overall, Floyd considers the language of this psalm too vague and generalised to be attributed to one king or even one time period. (Floyd, Michael H. (1992) 'Psalm LXXXIX: A Prophetic Complaint about the Fulfilment of an Oracle,' *VT* 42 (4), pp. 442-457).

[317] The full list of thematic parallels between psalm 89 and some Assyrian oracles posited by Hilber also include the establishment of the throne, dynastic succession, divine love of the king as well as sonship and royal covenant. These parallels are seen to tie the song into a cultic setting and the suggestion that the psalm as a whole 'may be a prophetic adaptation of the lament form performed by one individual.' (Hilber, John W. (2007) 'Cultic Prophecy in Assyria and in the Psalms,' *JAOS* 127 (1), pp. 31-2, 35-6).

[318] Watson, Rebecca S. (2005) *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the "Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin, p. 170.

[319] Floyd, Michael H. (1992) 'Psalm LXXXIX,' *VT* 42 (4), pp. 442-452.

then determined that his main purpose was to produce a prophetic work that expressed hope of future victory based upon the promises laid down by earlier prophets.

As a whole, the song falls into the lament form in which the psalmist invokes a memory of a particular event that is relevant for the current predicament. Richard Clifford explains this correspondence, stating that one could call upon the establishment and regulation of the cosmos in the case of a natural disaster, or upon Yahweh's supremacy in the face of hardship and military defeat.[320] In the same way, the faltering of the kingship, his defiled crown, plundered strongholds and failure in battle in 89:38-51 are echoed in the declaration of Yahweh's covenant with the Davidic line, his rulership over nature and his upholding of the Israelites in battle in vv. 19-37. This relationship between Yahweh and the Davidic king presents a designed parallelism between the victory of the divine and earthly kings. Ultimately, the hymn enhances the understanding of the oracle for '(elle) développe […] le theme hymnique classique de la souveraintè de Yahvé sur les autres dieux et sur le monde divin en general [… et son] capacité à maintenir la stabilité du monde qu'il a créé.'[321] The psalmist recalls the promises made by the one who created and maintained the earth, but these would lose their substance without the declaration of the sovereignty of the one who promised them.

There are several common lexical and semantic elements between *Isaiah* 51 and *Psalm* 89 that indicate a close affinity between the two texts. Under the earlier opinion that the psalm was a post-exilic work, the simplest conclusion was that it was based upon the writings of Isaiah, and yet it shows little evidence of the Red Sea tradition that was incorporated into the Isaianic text. The mythological allusion to Rahab and the cosmic battle resonates more strongly in the psalm, which suggests that *Isaiah* may have been further separated from the source myth. On the other hand, it is also possible that the shared concepts of these passages did not progress in a linear fashion. This would suggest that the two texts may have developed independently from one another and that the difference between them and their employment of the mythological imagery is a matter of context. Nevertheless the argument of Second-Isaiah's reliance on psalmic literature continued to intensify until reaching the point at which the Isaianic writings were believed to be a direct derivative of the psalm meaning that the author was

[320] Clifford, Richard J. (1980) 'Psalm 89: A Lament over the Davidic Ruler's Continued Failure,' *HTR* 73 (1/2), p. 40. These examples of the lament form are found in Psalm 74, 77, 44 and 80 respectively.
[321] Dumortier, Jean-Bernard (1972) 'Un rituel d'intronisation,' *VT* 22 (2), pp. 179-80.

intimately aware of its form and content.[322] Unlike Second Isaiah who prophesised earthly conquest based on heavenly victory, the psalmist declared the perpetuation of the Davidic 'throne' based on its heavenly model.

This premise is outlined in v.2 in the psalmist's declaration that 'your [Yahweh's] steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.' The pronouncement of Yahweh's eternal nature is then immediately followed by the recollection of his covenant with David in v.4, that he 'will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.' Opening the song in this way sets the theme of the remainder of his lament. A heavenly mandate in the ancient world can normally be withdrawn from the king at any time when certain criteria are not met.[323] However this notion is rejected by the psalmist's correspondence between the divine and mortal seat of power. Through this, he displays his belief that the throne of David must endure on the basis that his god has promised that it would be so, and that it cannot be revoked.

It must be noted that the original promise in 2 Samuel 7 was associated with Israel's victory over his enemies and the establishment of peace; however, the debate of the promise's unconditionality is extensive.[324] That being said, it was believed that Yahweh could raise a new king at any time and thereby uphold his promise.[325] On the other hand,

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[322] Ginsberg, H. L. (1945) 'Ugaritic Studies and the Bible,' *BA* 8 (2), pp. 152-3. See also Mitchell's discussion of the term "the arm of Yahweh" which refers not just to his strength and power but also to his power over the forces of chaos. (Mitchell, Matthew W. (2005) 'Genre Disputes and Communal Accusatory Laments,' *VT* 55 (4), p. 518). Similarly, influenced by the works of Gunkel, Mowinckel states that 'the psalmodic style was imitated by the prophets in a quest of a new, effectual way of putting their message, the style of the hymns as well as laments, public (national) psalms of lamentation as well as private (individual) ones is older than Deutero-Isaiah.' (Mowinckel, Sigmund (1955) 'Psalm Criticism between 1900 and 1935,' *VT* 5 (1), p. 20).

[323] One of the clearest examples of this is the mandate from heaven, its bestowal and its withdrawal in the Chinese tradition, which will be discussed in detail in chapter 6. An example from the Hebrew bible may be seen in the story of King Saul, who is chosen by Yahweh to be king in 1 Samuel 9, and who receives God's spirit in 10, thereby granting him the authority to rule. His disobedience after the battle with the Philistines in ch.14-15, however, resulted in the withdrawal of Yahweh's spirit and thus his mandate for Saul's reign. In the case of 2 Samuel 7:14 that punishment, or loss against ones enemies, was not the result of divine insufficiency, or his inability to defend them but Yahweh's allowance of their defeat in response to their disobedience to his command.

[324] For example, see: Michael Avioz 'The Davidic Covenant in 2 Samuel 7: Conditional or Unconditional' in Galil, Gershon; Gilboa, Ayelet; Maeir, Aren M and Kahn, Dan'el (2012) *The Ancient Near East in the 12th-10th Centuries BCE*, Proceedigns of the International Conference held at the Univeristy of Haifa 2010, Ugarit-Verlag, Münster, pp. 43-51.

[325] See: Grisanti, Michael A. (1999) 'The Davidic Covenant,' *MSJ* 10 (2), pp. 233-250; and Knoppers, Gary N. (1996) 'Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants and the Davidic Covenant: A Parallel?' *JAOS* 116 (4), pp. 670-697. On the other hand, Gard Granerød suggests that the promise of 2 Samuel 7 is related to the idea of divine kingship based on geneaological ancestry traced back to Yahweh himself, although this notion has not been perpetuated in ancient Hebrew thought. Granerød suggests that *Psalm* 2 contains imagery of

the extension of the promise to David to the entirety of Israel as a promised nation is also attributed to Second-Isaiah in 55:1-5. As such, it became possible to reinterpret the promise, thus allowing the perpetuation of the Davidic 'throne' to be achieved through the continued survival of Israel.[326]

This immutable quality differentiates Yahweh from the other ancient deities and to further enhance this belief, the writer calls on the testimony of the divine council in vv.5-8. 'Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones. For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord, a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and awesome above all that are around him. O Lord God of hosts, who is as mighty as you, O lord?' The existence of other deities is not questioned, suggesting that the song may have been composed at a time when monotheism was beginning to take root. The inferiority of the heavenly beings in comparison to Yahweh is symbolic of the rising Hebrew perception of the universality of their god and the consequent subordination of the gods of their neighbours.

In the early years of Israel's history, Yahweh was depicted as a high god residing over a heavenly court. This adhered with the common practice of a metaphor using a source domain, in this case the royal court, to structure the target domain, being the heavens as the divine realm and seat of the divine king. His status as the head of the heavenly council can be seen through the name of Yahweh Seba'ot, which refers to his supremacy and righteous judgement. Thus, the usage of this name often coincided with the early creation passages, giving credence to his primacy by utilising the ancient Near Eastern imagery before such times as the conflict was effectively removed from the context.[327] It is likely that the author of this psalm was aware of the widespread devotion to other gods, both amongst his own people and his neighbours, however, it can be seen that he stresses Yahweh's unique stature amongst them in his claims that none are like him, that the other gods fear him, and that they are not as powerful as him.

Early signs of the diminution of the divine council can be seen in the alternate interpretations of the heavenly beings of v.6. More literally translated as 'sons of God,'

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divine procreation of the royal house of Israel (See: Granerød, Gard (2010) 'A Forgotten Reference to Divine Procreation? Psalm 2:6 in Light of Egyptian Royal Ideology,' *VT* 60, pp. 323-336).

[326] Zimmerli, Walther (1978) *Old Testament Theology in Outline*, John Knox Press, Louisville, pp. 220-221.

[327] Ross, J. P. (1967) 'Jahweh Seba'ot in Samuel and Psalms,' *VT* 17 (1), pp. 76-92.

the phrase is often used as a representation of the heavenly court or the angelic host.[328] For example, the same phrase is used in *Job* 1:6 where the sons of God are subject to Yahweh in both authority and power. They must present themselves before him as one does before a king and cannot act without his permission.[329] This understanding coincides with v.8's question 'who among the heavens is like the Lord?' which ultimately challenges the earlier belief that divine decisions were made through a process of consensus. One of the most commonly accepted identifications of the holy ones in the modern period is as angels, although it is unlikely that this was the contemporary image underlining the phrase as it was the result of the strict monotheism that became foundational to the Hebrew system of belief.

Every myth must undergo a measure of transformation as it comes into contact with a new culture, new circumstances, or when it can no longer serve in its original capacity. The strength of the parallelism between the content and language of vv. 8-9 and its ancient Near Eastern counterpart has led to the idea that the two were separated by only a few degrees, the format of the myth itself likely having become embedded in Israel's cultural memory before the rise of monotheism. Unlike her appearance in *Isaiah*, Rahab is not couched here within the language of the Red Sea tradition. Stating that: 'You [Yahweh] rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them. You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your might arm,' the text bears similarities to both the Ugaritic and Babylonian accounts. Admittedly, the story of Baal and Yam is not a creation myth, as Baal is not credited as the god of creation; rather, it is the narrative of Baal's ascendency.

In the act of killing Yam, Baal cements his kingship in the Ugaritic pantheon under El. However, Baal is said to have been unable to accomplish this alone and must instead, rely on the aid of other deities to establish his dominion.[330] A similar motif is employed in Yahweh's slaying of Rahab, though differentiated by his singlehanded victory. Through the symbolism of the sea he rules over chaos, though it rises in opposition against him, he quells it. Resonating with echoes of dualism, Yahweh is depicted here as the one who maintains the balance between good and evil, keeping the latter in check by

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[328] Strong, James (2001) *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, p. 373.
[329] Similarly, Psalm 103:20 describes the heavenly host as Yahweh's servants and the author of Psalm 148:2-6 instructs the angels, heavenly hosts and the sun and moon to praise Yahweh for it was by his command that they were created.
[330] Parker, Simon B. (2000) 'Ugaritic Literature and the Bible,' *NEA* 63 (4: The Mysteries of Ugarit: History, Daily Life, Cult), pp. 228-231.

force. In *Isaiah*, he was portrayed as being able to provoke the personification of chaos without fear, but here, she seems to maintain a modicum of her autonomy, retaining her ability to challenge the omnipotence of the high god at will.

Despite this, the ferocity of the primal battle is dimmed somewhat by the qualification of Rahab. She is described as one who is already dead. Like crushing a bone that has become brittle with age, her power has been diminished and thus she is but a shadow of her previous incarnations. In this way, it is argued that the event is not representative of theomachic combat as there is no indication of Rahab's equality with Yahweh.[331] Despite the weakness of the allusion, some continue to see evidence of the exodus event in v.10b based on the verse's shared imagery with *Isaiah* 51:9. The psalmist's mighty arm of Yahweh corresponds to the Isaianic 'arm of the Lord' and thus the enemies of v.10b are recognised as the Egyptian army.[332] It is more likely however that his enemies are those heavenly beings that flocked to Rahab's banner. Yahweh's slaying of Rahab mirrors Marduk's actions against Tiamat, vanquishing his enemies through conquest and scattering them. Bearing the imagery of a broken army whose head has been destroyed and its morale failing, it enhances the concept of his sovereignty over them.

In regards to the Ugaritic and Babylonian traditions, both Baal and Marduk were late additions to their pantheons. They rose to prominence by their exceptional characteristic and their ability to overcome the primal gods, and yet only Marduk is ascribed creative ability. With the symbolism of the passage remaining firmly embedded in creation imagery, the psalmist has included an addendum to Yahweh's victory over Rahab. V.11 claims: 'The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them.' The implications of generational succession guiding the divine hierarchy are removed from the text. Unlike his mythic predecessors, Yahweh is attributed with creating the heavens and the earth as well as everything upon it. V.12 stresses this further by claiming that Yahweh's creative work stretches between the extremities of north and south.

In this way, Rahab is relegated from her role as the personification of chaos and identified as a rebel, unsuccessfully challenging Yahweh's rule. This alteration reinforces the perpetuity of his throne, declaring that while potential usurpers may rise up against

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[331] Watson, Rebecca S. (2005) *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the "Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin, p. 189.
[332] See: Ward, James M. (1961) 'The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX,' *VT* 11 (3), p. 332.

him, he is capable of repelling them, ultimately breaking away from the concept of the transition of power from the primal deities to the high gods that replaced them. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the theme of the cosmic battle at the moment of creation is not implied by the words of this psalm at even an underlying level,[333] but is rather used as a commonly understood metaphor to demonstrate Yahweh's sole power in heaven and on earth against enemies of supernatural or natural origin.

The psalmist has enclosed the imagery of creation between two affirmations: the praises of Yahweh from the heavens in vv.5-8, and the praises of earth and the people that walk upon it in vv.12b-18. Interestingly, this seems to highlight the factionless nature of the divine hierarchy with its implication that all of heaven and earth are pictured as acknowledging the kingship of Yahweh. However, it also serves to set up the following parallelism between heaven's promise and earth's reality throughout the remainder of the lament. If one accepts Eliade's premise that in the mind of the ancient writers all earthly things are reproductions of heavenly things, then the former is merely conforming to its intended nature.[334] The establishment of the Davidic throne in this passage is thus reliant on its establishment in the heavens, as one cannot conform to an example that doesn't exist.[335] For instance, v.42 contradicts the promise that Yahweh 'will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him' in v.23, declaring instead that he has 'exalted the right hand of his foes.'

This promise is directly related to the creation imagery of vv.9-10, in that the king's military prowess is based on Yahweh's stature as conqueror. In this case, the songwriter preserves the imagery of a cosmic conflict as justification for his surety that the Davidic throne will endure. Furthermore, v.25 draws a parallel between the victory of Yahweh and the promised conquest of the Davidic throne in its declaration that 'I [Yahweh] will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers,' implying that just as Yahweh

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[333] Watson, Rebecca S. (2005) *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the "Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin, p. 189; David Toshio 'The "*Chaoskampf*" Motif in Ugaritic and Hebrew Literatures' in Michaud, Jean-Marc (2007) *Le Royaume d'Ougarit de la Crète à l'Euphrate. Nouveux axes de Recherche*, Actes de Congès Internatinal Sherbrooke 2005, Polo II, GGC, Sherbrooke, pp. 493-4.
[334] Eliade, Mircea (2005) *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, pp. 6-11.
[335] Mowinckel believes that the parallelism between the Davidic and Yahweh's throne is indicative of a direct influence of the Ugaritic myth over that of the Hebrew one, although it may also suggest awareness of the narrative and the subsequent usage of its imagery as opposed to a transliteration of its form and features. (Mowinckel, Sigmund (1955) 'Psalm Criticism between 1900 and 1935' *VT* 5 (1), p. 25).

has authority over the forces of chaos in the heavens, so too will the Davidic king have the authority over his enemies on the earth.[336]

Similarly, v.44 claims that 'You [Yahweh] have removed the sceptre from his hand, and hurled his throne to the ground.' This stands in direct opposition to v. 29, which promises that 'I [Yahweh] will establish his line forever, and his throne as long as the heavens endure,' which is immediately followed by a warning of punishment in the event of disobedience, the writer strengthens the unbreakable nature of his word. The inference in these verses has led scholars to believe that the psalm is exilic in nature, referring back to the original promise to justify hope in future victory. Additionally, repeating the sentiments of v.29, vv.36-37 introduces the celestial witnesses to this promise. 'His line shall continue forever, and his throne endure before me like the sun. It shall be established forever like the moon, an enduring witness in the sky.'

Solar and lunar gods are often integral members of the ancient pantheons, and while the reference here is ambiguous, the sun and moon may have served as another echo of the ancient Near Eastern heavenly council as well as a representation of the stability of the covenant. The appearance of the sun and moon in *Genesis* 1 and their designation as the unnamed greater and lesser lights has been seen as a deliberate act of denying their deification. This view stems from the ancient notion that a thing does not truly exist until it receives a name, for it is in its name that an object receives its function and without function it can have no form. The writer stresses the solitary existence of God in the beginning, thus implying that the celestial beings are simply part of the natural order.

In the present context, the psalmist's words express certain parallels between the celestial bodies and the solar and lunar deities of the neighbouring cultures. It has also been noted that in using the moon as the enduring witness, he has played on the apparent constancy of natural phenomena. The moon becomes not only the witness of his covenant, but its symbol seen nightly in the sky much like the existence of the rainbow was used to signify the promise that a worldwide flood would not reoccur.[337]

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[336] Knoppers, Gary N. (1996) 'Ancient Near Eastern Royal Grants,' *JAOS* 116 (4), esp. p. 684.

[337] Mullen, E. Theodore (1983) 'The Divine Witness and the Davidic Royal Grant: Ps 89:37-38,' *JBL* 102 (2), pp. 207-218. Mullen acknowledges that this opinion is not wholly accepted, but states that the author's intention of making the identity of the witness ambiguous is unknown. Another argument claims that the witness is the Davidic throne itself based on the silence of the lament section on the witness, however, this translation lacks grammatical and vocabulary proof, making this theory highly improbable. (See: Mosca, Paul G. (1986) 'Once Again the Heavenly Witness of Ps 39:38,' *JBL* 105 (1), pp. 27-37).

Furthermore, there appear to be close grammatical similarities between the witness and some Hittite treaties in which a god may be cited as his own witness. In such cases, the deity in question plays two roles: he is not only a party within the treaty itself, but also acts as its guarantor,[338] a hypothesis that finds support in the existence of other unilateral covenants elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.[339] On the other hand, the Babylonian sun god Shamash is also portrayed as the guardian of oaths, suggesting that the witness in the sky is not merely a reminder of the promise but its active guardian.[340] The metaphorical nature of this verse aligns with the Babylonian belief that the moon acted both as a physical witness to the covenant as well as a reminder of it for humanity in the night sky.

Psalm 89 is arguably one of the most easily recognisable episode of the cosmic battle in the Hebrew Bible, although even it has not transmitted without change. Having been inserted between the declaration of Yahweh's individuality amongst the heavenly beings, and the assertion that he alone created the heavens and the earth, the balance of power between his own character and that of Rahab has been tipped in favour of the former. Accordingly, Yahweh's victory over his enemies justifies his own authority as well as the power of his throne in the same way as it did for Baal and Marduk.[341] Meanwhile, the accompanying transition from the heavenly realm to the earthly one implies that the ultimate focus of the text does not lie in a description of the characteristics and achievements of Yahweh, but in how they affected humanity.[342] The spiritual realm was understood through its interaction with the natural. In this case, the earthly king is unable to rule without the authority of his god, and his god does not have the authority to grant such authorisation unless he himself is king. While the monotheistic ideals that dominate Hebrew thought are present in the background of the text, the contemporary necessity to affirm Yahweh's sovereignty over the other gods remains, and thus the symbolism of the cosmic conflict has been retained.

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[338] Veijola, Timo (1988) 'The Witness in the Clouds: Ps 89:38,' *JBL* 107 (3), p. 417.
[339] For example, it is supported by the biblical principle of people acting as 'witnesses against [themselves]' as portrayed in Joshua 24:22, as well as God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 22:16-18, in which it is not the actions of Abraham that ensures the endurance of the covenant but the decision of Yahweh.
[340] Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth*, p. 125.
[341] Mitchell, Matthew W. (2005) 'Genre Disputes and Communal Accusatory Laments,' *VT* 55 (4), p. 519.
[342] Floyd, Michael H. (1992) 'Psalm LXXXIX,' *VT* 42 (4), p. 445.

3.2.2 THE KING

The second psalm in this section offers a different and more expansive view of creation in the Hebrew Bible, identifying Yahweh as both the creator and active maintainer of the world. *Psalm* 104 is contained within the fourth section of the book and is part of a psalter within a psalter. *Psalms* 101-110 are concentrically arranged according to their theme: 102 and 109 are songs of distress, 103 and 108 express praise, 104 and 107 are complementary in their celebration of Yahweh's creation of the world and his deeds of lordship over it, and finally 105 and 106 recite Israel's history of redemption and rebellion.[343] This structure, similar to the commonly used chiastic structure of shorter poetic passages is used to bind the mini psalter literarily and thematically. *Psalm* 104's placement between two king related poems has led to belief in a monarchical origin, and lacking a superscript it was once attributed to king David.[344] Very little is actually known about the production of the psalm, and while many no longer accept its authorship by king David, the possibility of a pre-exilic origin has not been entirely rejected. Instead, estimates range from Solomon's dedication to the temple,[345] to the post-exilic period.[346] As such, it is plausible that the origins of the psalm do indeed lie in the pre-exilic era, but that it remained 'incomplete' editorially until after the exile.

Psalm 104 is suggested as being one of two psalms in which the ideas of creation exist independently and are not subjected to the theme of redemption.[347] In other words, the text conforms to the wisdom tradition, basing its theological perspective not on the exodus but on creation, as seen in v.24's exhortation that 'in wisdom you [Yahweh] have made them all,' and the inference of the final address to the listeners to fear Yahweh who performed the deeds of creation and its ongoing care in vv.31-35. From the outset, this implies that the imagery conflict retained in references of creation associated with

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[343] See: Waltke, Bruce; Houston, James M., and Moore, Erika (2014) *The Psalms as Christian Lament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, p. 221.

[344] Theologians popularly attribute this psalm to King David, and it is clear that transcribers attempted to date this collection to the pre-exilic Davidic era, through evidence that suggests the unreliability of the superscripts themselves. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the evidence of textual corruption points to an early compositional date to allow for transmission errors. For example, Green points out that there are several superscripts that appear in the LXX but not in the Hebrew, and also that psalm 104 is part of these fourteen examples. (Green, W. Henry (1890) 'The Titles of the Psalms,' *ONTS* 11 (3), pp. 156-7) Furthermore, Waltke believes that the superscriptions were actually post scripts that were 'transpositions from the end of one psalm to the beginning of another [that] took place in the course of the text's transmission.' (Waltke, Bruce K. (1991) 'Superscripts, Postscripts of Both,' *JBL* 110 (4), pp. 593-6).

[345] Cragie, P. C. (1974) 'The Comparison of Hebrew Poetry: Psalm 104 in the Light of Egyptian and Ugaritic Poetry,' *Semitics* 4, pp. 19-21.

[346] Crüsemann, Frank (1969) *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel*, Neukirchener Verl, Ansbach, pp. 301-2.

[347] Clifford, Richard J. (1985) 'The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,' *TS* 46, pp. 515-6.

the exodus tradition will not be as prominent. Instead, during the course of the song, the poet seeks to describe Yahweh's omnipotence in his ability to fashion the earth and set its boundaries, and his omniscience in his careful provision for his creation, thereby focusing on his continued relationship with humanity.

To demonstrate different aspects of the created world, the poet employs varying verbal tenses. For example, the perfect form expresses that which is constant, fixed and unchangeable as in v.5's use of the Qal perfect to discuss the immovable foundations of the earth, signifying the irreversibility of its creation. Similarly, he uses the imperfect form to describe repetitive and regular actions, such as in v.30b that uses the Pi'el imperfect to intimate Yahweh's continued undertaking of renewal of his creation. Finally, he uses participles to explain an external state of affairs, seen in v.1 where Yahweh is described as being 'clothed with honour and majesty. This verse employs the Qal active participle to demonstrate an eternal fact regarding the character of Yahweh. These grammatical nuances, which have been almost entirely disguised in the English translation display the perception of the psalmist as he wrote; what he believed was immutable, and what was ongoing.

The psalm tells a narrative of creation although as its purpose is doxological rather than didactic; it does not attempt to convey the story of exact beginnings. The progression of his work follows the same order of creation as in *Genesis*, though it is not so mechanical in its presentation and seems to be based on different mythological imagery.[348] This poetical rendition of the creation story is generally accepted to be more primitive than the *Genesis* account due to its affiliation with the wisdom tradition.[349] The focus of the poem rests predominantly in the animal kingdom, with mankind mentioned in vv.14 and 23 as short references to comment on how the natural world affects and is affected by humanity's existence uttered from the point of view of human focalisation. In similar fashion to the overarching concentric structure of the mini psalter, the main body of *Psalm* 104 (specifically vv.2-26) takes on a grammatically concentric style.

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[348] Fullerton, Kemper (1921) 'The Feeling for Form in Psalm 104,' *JBL* 40 (1/2), pp. 43-56. More than this, Atwell suggests that there are a number of specific conceptual correlations between the *Genesis* and *Psalm* 104 (Atwell, James E. (2000) 'An Egyptian Source for Genesis,' *JTS* 51 (2), p. 460). Similary, Watson observes that the psalm's affinity with *Genesis* is sequential rather than verbal, and cautions the reader to assume no literary dependance between them as the evidence is too minimal to truly support it (Watson, Rebecca S. (2005) *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the "Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin, p. 231).

[349] Briggs, A. (1884) 'The Hebrew Poem of Creation,' *The Old Testament Student* 3 (8), pp. 273-288.

Following an introductory verse, commentators have identified a pattern of five stanzas composed of 3, 5, 9, 5 and 3 verses respectively. This mirrored structure is further distinguished by a purposeful undulation of high to low relating to the cosmology and its levels; passing from an extreme high (heavens/divine realm) in vv. 2-4, to moderate low (foundations) in vv. 5-9, focusing on a central medium (earth) in vv. 10-18, back to a moderate high (heavens/celestial movement) in vv. 19-23 and culminating in the extreme low (waters) in vv. 24-26.[350] The first section speaks of the 'seat of God,' and the last to the symbolism of the forces of chaos. These two shorter stanzas enclose the middle three that discuss the earthly realm, indicating that the author is primarily concerned not with praising Yahweh for his own sake, but for his interactions with the world in which the poet lives.

The description of Yahweh in vv.2-4 has been likened to a famous fourteenth century B.C.E. Egyptian text the *Hymn to Aten* attributed to king Akhenaten (ca. 1353-1334). The term 'Aten' has been translated as a personal noun, the designation 'sun-god,' and also more simply as 'sun.'[351] Accordingly, it seems to be a relatively simple matter to distinguish the connections between Aten and the syncretistic imagery woven into this psalm. These verses read: '… wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretched out the heavens like a tent, you set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind, you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.' It is believed that Yahweh himself was never worshipped as a solar deity; however, sun worship was an acknowledged cultic practice in pre-exilic times under the reign of Mannessah.[352] As the representation of the most powerful natural phenomenon, the sun and its associated imagery were most often associated with the role of the high god. Fittingly, the psalmist's usage of solar imagery

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[350] Fullerton, Kemper (1921) 'The Feeling for Form in Psalm 104,' *JBL* 40 (1/2), pp. 43-56.

[351] The latter of these three translations was argued to be the regular usage of the word up until the Ptolemaic era. Additionally, Bennet suggests that the term was less identified with the sun itself than as a manifestation of sunrays emitting from the God Re (Bennet, John (1965) 'Notes on the 'Aten',' *JEA* 51, pp. 207-209). This opinion fell in opposition to earlier archaeological evidence from the Armanah period of tomb texts and boundary stelae depicting Aten as a co-regent with Akhenaten. Furthermore, Aten is elsewhere identified with other solar deities such as Shu, Harahkte and Re in order to consolidate his authority. Gunn suggests that Aten was simply an earlier solar deity being introduced under a new name. (Gunn, Battiscombe (1923) 'Notes on the Aten and his Names,' *JEA* 9 (3/4), pp. 168-176). The rise of his religion was preceded 'by the growing popularity of the sun-hymns throughout the Eighteenth dynasty' and the growing perception of Re as a universal creative figure. Despite Aten's earlier 'existence (though under a different name) it becomes apparent that the concept of a Supreme deity existed before the Aemanah period and the reign of Akhenaten, but before this time his kingship was restricted to the realm of Egypt. (Stewart, H. M. (1960) 'Some Pre-'Armãnah Sun-Hymns,' *JEA* 46, pp. 83-90).

[352] See for example Ezekiel 8:16 and 2 Kings 23:11 which records Hebrew sun worship under the reign of Mannessah.

highlights the parallelism between Aten and Yahweh, as well as emphasising the latter's sovereignty.

These parallelisms have also been used to theorise about the age of the psalm. Disagreement in the basic functions of the two has ruled out the likelihood of direct influence of the Egyptian text on the psalm. Instead, it is posited that the latter was composed between 500-1000 years after the hymn, although this too remains conjecture.[353] The language of both texts conforms to the ideals of monotheistic tradition in their expressions of praise from the writers to their respective deities. In the eyes of the hymnist, the setting of the sun was the representation of death, and thus the cyclical nature of the world, whereas for the psalmist, it was a representation of his power. Similarly, the celestial bodies were signs of fertility in Egypt but had been relegated to timekeepers in Israel.[354]

There is ample evidence that the Hebrew writers readily absorbed and adapted mythological imagery from the societies with whom they came into contact, and it is clear that the psalmist borrowed the imagery of the solar deity to describe Yahweh despite not having retained their original symbolic value. His description as making the clouds his chariot and riding on the wings of the wind in v.3b have been similarly likened to imagery used to describe other solar deities such as the Egyptian Re and the Mesopotamian Shamash. Both are described as riding in a chariot across the sky each day before traversing the underworld and being reborn the following morning.[355] The daily voyages of these gods ensured the perpetuity of the balance between good and evil, and the application of the imagery in the description of Yahweh asserts his role as the maintainer of order and justice in his creation.

It is also possible to see the presence of the celestial model in this passage through the correspondence between the heavenly and earthly forms. The abode of the gods was regularly depicted as a multi-storeyed palace, housing the different members of the pantheon according to their importance within it. In the ancient Near East the cosmos

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[353] Walton, John H. et al. (2000) *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 548. These similarities have also led to hypotheses regarding the dating of the Exodus itself within a few generations of Akhenaten's reign, tying the events together through shared experience, although this is impossible to prove with lack of evidence. (See: Siddiqui, Kazi Zulkader (2001) 'The Problem of Similarities in Ancient Near Eastern Religions: A Comparison of the Hymn to Aton and Psalm 104,' *IS* 40 (1), pp. 67-88).

[354] Siddiqui, Kazi Zulkader (2001) 'The Problem of Similarities in Ancient Near Eastern Religions: A Comparison of the Hymn to Aton and Psalm 104,' *IS* 40 (1), pp. 74-5, 85-7.

[355] See: Smith, Mark S. (1990) 'The Near Eastern Background of Solar Language for Yahweh,' *JBL* 109 (1), pp. 29-39; and: Littleton, C. Scott (2002) *Mythology*, p. 26.

was described by the same architectural phrases as those used to describe a temple as the two were seen as mirror images in their respective realms.[356] In the Babylonian tradition, the heavens were divided into three main sections; the atmospheric, the planetary and the eternal, the last of which was also the realm of the high god Anu.[357] The psalmist in vv.2b-3a uses this architectural image in his depiction of Yahweh. Following the cosmic separation of the primal waters, Yahweh stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers upon the upper water. Like that of Anu, Yahweh's abode is located above the heavens themselves, thereby distinguishing him from the celestial beings. Finally, v.3b's assertion that he rides the clouds like a chariot immediately evokes the image of the Canaanitic god Baal and his name of 'Rider of the clouds.'[358] The motifs contained within vv.2-4 show that the poet either had contact with and knowledge of the ancient Near Easter, Canaanitic and Egyptian pantheons or that these motifs may have become conventional in Hebrew thought. Using these specific terms to describe Yahweh and his abode displays the equivalence between Yahweh and the high gods of these cultures, and ultimately allows for the transferral of their symbols of power and authority to Yahweh.

Aside from the solar motifs that established Yahweh's authority, evidence of the cosmic battle found in *Psalm* 89 and *Isaiah* 51 is found in vv.5-6. Written in the second person, these verses state that: 'You [Yahweh] set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken. You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.' The use to T^{e}hom here provides a likely reference to the primal deep that existed in the beginning.[359] However, the order is reversed, depicting Yahweh as having fashioned the earth and setting it upon its foundation before covering it with the water as though he was dressing it. This implies that Yahweh's creative action precedes the existence of chaos, ultimately disputing its coexistence with him and subsequently challenging the preconceived notion of a balance of power between the forces of order

[356] Walton, John H. et al. (2000) *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, p. 548.
[357] Warren, William F. (1901) 'Babylonian and Pre-Babylonian Cosmology,' *JAOS* 22, p. 140. Similarly, each layer, symbolically representing the different sections of the temple were described as being constructed from different materials, displaying in no uncertain terms the hierarchy of the gods. (Huxley, Margaret (1997) 'The Shape of the Cosmos According to Cuneiform Sources,' *JAOS* 7 (2), pp. 189-198). This is also reflected in the biblical texts regarding the construction of the temple, in which the materials used for certain areas were defined and purposeful, with gold being reserved for the inner most sanctuary and iron and bronze for the outer gateways. See 1 *Kings* 6 and 1 *Chronicles* 22.
[358] Cassuto, Umberto (1942) 'The Palace of Baal,' *JBL* 61 (1), p. 51.
[359] There are grammatical difficulties in this verse in that both the terms for earth and the deep are feminine and yet the suffix of the object is in the masculine form, however employing the parallelisms in the following verses, it is determined that the object that receives the suffix (and therefore the covering) is the earth. (Clifford, Richard J. (1981) 'A Note on Ps 104:5-9,' *JBL* 100 (1), pp. 87-89).

and chaos. Furthermore, while echoes of the conflict remain, they have been largely subdued by the implication that T^{e}hom is not Yahweh's enemy, but his creation.

The supposed imagery of a cosmic battle is located in v.7, which declares that 'at your rebuke they [the waters] flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.' Followed by their procession to their rightful place behind the impassable boundaries in vv.8-9, these verses are thought to be symbolic of the water's submission to the authority of Yahweh. Furthermore, the accompanying emphasis on the permanency of the fixtures of land and water imply a break from the tradition of the perpetual balance in which the forces of order and chaos were locked in an eternal battle for supremacy.[360] Deviating from the view that this battle is reminiscent of the cosmic event, it has been suggested that vv.6-9 are more closely connected to the Mesopotamian flood motifs adopted by the Israelite traditions early in the first millennium B.C.E. The avowal in v.9 that 'You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth,' echoes *Genesis* 8:21-22 and its promise that the world will never again be destroyed by the waters.[361] The implications of this association, however, would suggest that the complete subjugation of the forces of chaos did not occur until the flood and thus reintroduce a strong sense of dualism that is not supported by the remainder of the text.

It is improbable that the poet was specifically referring to the flood myth here, but it seems evident that he employed its related imagery in his rendition of the cosmic event. Using the rebellion that underpins the creative and re-creative traditions in the ancient world, the psalmist crafts a picture of a god that can quell any uprising. His victory over the chaos and the establishment of new restrictions resonate with concepts found in the Sumerian story of Ninurta and Asag/Kur. In this myth, Ninurta, god of the south wind, must destroy the monster Asag and erect physical boundaries to prevent Kur (the waters) from destroying the land.[362] The proof of power lies in the capability to place and maintain locks around these waters (chaos), thereby keeping them restrained and allowing order, and by definition culture, to prevail unassailed. Alternatively, the poet states in v.7 that this achievement was not performed through physical exertion or by

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[360] Clifford, Richard J. (1981) 'A Note on Ps 104:5-9,' *JBL* 100 (1), pp. 87-9.
[361] Allison, W. T. (1906) 'The Nature Poetry of the Psalms: II. The Cosmos,' *BW* 28 (4), pp. 261-273. Making the flood imagery stronger than that of the creation imagery stresses the goodness of Yawheh, and suggests a literary reliance on the concepts outlined in Genesis one. See also: Ludwig, Theodore M. (1973) 'The Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,' *JBL* 92 (3), 351 who considers the text to be purely creative in context and: Gray, John (1961) 'The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms,' *VT* 11 (1), p. 4, who suggests that the language used enters into the realm of flood myths.
[362] See: Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth*, pp. 90-1.

military victory. Rather, like a master giving instructions to a servant, Yahweh speaks, his voice characterised by the thunder,[363] and commands the waters to assume their place. Being aware of the mythic overtones it is a simple matter to presume the presence of conflict; however, as one delves further into the text, it becomes clear that its presence has been diminished.

According to the oscillation of the 5 stanzas in the psalm, the focus of vv.5-23 as a whole is ultimately concerned with the earth and how it is affected by the other realms. In it, the poet does not account for the origin of the plants and animals in the third stanza (vv.10-18), desiring instead to comment upon Yahweh's ongoing interaction with them after their creation. Its progress is organic, laying out the life-giving properties of water as it transitions from its primeval source to the springs and rivers that in turn support life in abundance. Having attributed the creation of water itself to Yahweh, the poet describes his ongoing effort in maintaining its function: making the 'springs gush forth in the valleys' (v.10), providing rain for the mountains (v.13), and watering the trees of Lebanon (v.16). These then serve to quench the thirst of the wild animals and to grow shelter for the birds (vv.11-12), to produce food for both man and animal alike (vv.14-15), and to sustain the abodes of each animal (vv.17-18) respectively. In detailing such examples, the psalmist plays on the idea of Yahweh's ability to interact with every part of his creation. This continues on into the fourth stanza, which outlines the roles of the sun and the moon in v.19. Fashioned by Yahweh to serve as timekeepers, they are confined to the equivalent of the planetary realm in the Babylonian cosmological model. Subject to Yahweh, their form and function have been determined by him, and they act as his representatives in the sky.

In the ancient Near East, each high god had an equal and opposite force that had to be overcome before his authority could be cemented: Marduk was opposed by Tiamat, Ninurta by Asag and Baal by Yam. The poet returns to the imagery of creation in vv.24-26 to introduce a corresponding figure. He does not employ T^{e}hom or Rahab who are featured in the accounts of *Genesis*, *Isaiah* and *Psalm* 89; instead, he uses the character of Leviathan as a representation of chaos. Significantly, Leviathan is not featured as a divine figure in the heavenly realm here, nor even in the following stanza discussing the foundations of the water and the splitting of the sea in v.7 as would commonly be

[363] Another example of this is found in *Job* 37:4, which describes the roaring sound of his voice equivalent to that of the thunder.

expected mythologically. Somewhat fittingly, he is placed in the fifth stanza in geographic opposition to the abode of Yahweh, and is contained within the domain of the seas and its related symbolism. His location here separates the sea monster from the creative event at the opening of the psalm. Although, by maintaining his connection to the sea, and thus by proxy to the primal waters, he retains a modicum of his identity as Yahweh's opposing force.

The opening line of the fifth stanza, v.24, reads: 'O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.' This line acts as a doxological statement of the perceived perfection of the earth. It displays acknowledgement of the concept of Yahweh's creation by his wisdom rather than his might, and introduces the watery realm, so often seen as coexistent with the creator, as part of that same creation. Leviathan is thus included in the 'living things both small and great' in v.25 that were formed to dwell within the sea, and was further defined as 'the Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.' The grouping of Leviathan under the category of sea creatures has been posited as the mythologising of history as opposed to the historicising of mythology, through the suggestion that the poet could simply be referring to a whale.[364] The summary like nature of the following verses outlines his equal dependence on Yahweh for the provision of food and sustenance and the preservation of his life, which resulted in Leviathan's derisive designation as no more than a plaything.[365]

If the poet's intention was to demythologise Leviathan, he separates the sea monster from its prior context. This would eliminate the implications of duality and places him under the universal rule of the creator. In other words, Leviathan was relegated to one of the creatures Yahweh created in his wisdom and is thus denied the sea monster's power. On the other hand, if his intention was to embellish the story then he adds the weight of the related mythological imagery to the largest sea-creature known to man. This interpretation declares that despite its fearsome size and appearance he too is subject to the creator, and therefore similarly justifies the poet's praise of the latter.

Both readings are viable, the only constant between them being the writer's deliberate manipulation of the adopted mythological features to suit his needs. This can be seen,

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[364] Barton, George A. (1893) 'Tiamat,' *JBL* 15, p. 24. See also: Watson, Rebecca S. (2005) *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the "Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin, pp. 236-7.

[365] Allison, W. T. (1906) 'The Nature Poetry of the Psalms,' *TBW* 28 (4), p. 265.

for example, in his choice of language in v.26. The verb he uses *sachaq* שחק, here translated as 'to sport,' bears the subtext of the manner in which a child plays and laughs, and is often accompanied by the connotations of rejoicing, or occasionally of scorn.[366] If he is rejoicing, Leviathan is stripped of his primeval power; he no longer embodies the threat of chaos against the forces of good, and is pictured as taking pleasure in the realm Yahweh designated for him. However, if his action takes on the less common undertones of scorn, the text ultimately presents an ironic scene. Here, Leviathan is confined, hemmed in by borders that he cannot breach, but where his 'sport' may be conceived of as defiant, a visible echo of the forces of evil. In both instances, the psalmist ensures the subjugation of Leviathan to Yahweh, although palpable hints of his mythological identity remain embedded within the text.

The exact dating of this psalm continues to elude the modern scholar, although it is obvious that the figure of Leviathan has undergone a considerable transformation from the earlier forms of the ancient Near East and Canaan. Its connection to these traditions allows for the elucidation of the mythological imagery of the creature, and yet it is clear that Leviathan has been altered to suit a new purpose. Great effort has been made in this psalm to depict Yahweh as not just a creator, a high god, a god of agriculture, of provision, of life or of death. Instead, the poet has depicted him as being responsible for every aspect of his creation, which could only be achieved through his adaptation of their stories, their power and their legacies.

3.3 THE SUFFERER

The book of *Job* has long been viewed as the story of a righteous man who undergoes unnecessarily severe punishment for what seems, to the reader, to be no reason but the amusement of Yahweh. As a whole it examines and criticises the common misconceptions of the ancient Near Eastern cultures that presented suffering as punishment for committing an offence against the gods. The focus of this section is Yahweh's response to Job at the closure of the book, which presents his creative works from a different perspective. Extra-biblical sources dating back to the second millennium B.C.E. appear to made references to the legend and character of Job, thereby

[366] Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1996) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol III, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, pp. 1315-6. See also: Brown, F et al. (2007) *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, pp. 965-6; and Strong, James (2001) *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, p. 843.

suggesting that the text finds its origin at an early date. The genre of suffering is widespread throughout the ancient world and parallels of his story have been discovered in the literature of Egypt, Babylon and Greece.[367] The overall composition, structure and purpose remain contentiously ill-defined, its literary status ranging from historical, fiction and even a combination of the two.[368] It was previously believed that *Job*, through its depiction of a patriarchal era lifestyle, was one of the earliest written texts in the Hebrew Bible, predating even the Pentateuch, although this hypothesis is no longer as widely accepted. Instead, the lack of reference to the Hebrew culture as established by Moses contributed to the hypothesis that the book of Job predated the Mosaic era.[369] Alternatively, as part of the wisdom corpus, the ideas contained therein are founded on a natural theology based on the creation tradition as opposed to the covenant and the exodus, which would explain the absence of Mosaic thought.

Scholars have detected specific modes of expression and thought that advocate for an acquaintance between the works of *Job* and Second Isaiah, or that one was reliant on the other. The less popular view, based on Job's own beliefs and the development of certain religious concepts, suggests that the book of *Job* was penned first.[370] The still dominant view that arose in the early twentieth century assigns *Job* to a late composition, considering examples such as (1) the use of the term Yahweh, which implies a definitively post-Mosaic date, (2) the inclusion of priests, which requires the date to be pushed back until after the exodus, and (3) the apparent references to Deuteronomic law,[371] each of which could have been added by a scribe during the transmission of the text. That being said, the lack of consensus and extreme range of opinions regarding the dating of the Pentateuch prevents any effort to date definitively the book of *Job*. Faced

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[367] For the extra-biblical sources see: Pfeiffer, Charles F.; Harrison, Everett F. (1962) *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, Southwestern, Nashville, p. 459. And for the parallels of Job's story see: Goodspeed, George S. (1892) The Book of Job in Other Literatures. I,' *ONTS* 15 (1/2), pp. 45-51. And: Goodspeed, George S. (1892) 'The Book of Job in Other Literatures. II,' *ONTS* 15 (3/4), pp. 105-114.

[368] Silver, Daniel Jeremy (1969) 'Nachmanides' Commentary on the Book of Job,' *JQR* 60 (1), p. 15. See also: Hazard, M. C. (1919) 'The Book of Job,' *BW* 53 (1), p. 62.

[369] Henry, Matthew (1961) *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, p. 514. See also: Orr, James (1956) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 3, p. 1680; Pfeiffer, Charles F.; Harrison, Everett F. (1962) *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, pp. 459-60; and Ross, Hugh (2011) *Hidden Treasures in the Book of Job*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, p. 31.

[370] Pfeiffer, Robert H. (1927) 'The Dual Origin of Hebrew Monotheism,' *JBL* 46 (3/4), 202-6. This view is supported by the notion that an author cannot help but insert himself and his own context into his writing. In such a case, anachronisms would undoubtedly exist within the narrative composed during a time later than in which it was set.

[371] Deuteronomic law has been assigned to the seventh century B.C.E. under the reign of King Josiah at the latest. (Hazard, M. C. (1919) 'The Book of Job,' *TBW* 53 (1), p. 257.

with an indeterminable historical setting, one turns to linguistic elements in search of evidence.

The form and content of the book suggest that a text of pre-exilic (or even pre-Mosaic) origin was moulded by a later editor to add further depth and meaning.[372] Certain literary features of the prose prologue and epilogue are characteristic of late biblical Hebrew.[373] For example, the use of the divine name Yahweh, which appears only 13 times and is confined to the prose narratives, belies the possibility of a pre-Mosaic origin. This is comparable to the poetry sections' depiction of a group of men living outside of Israel, and its use of alternate divine names in order to represent non-Israelites living during the patriarchal era.[374] Furthermore, the introduction of conceptual anachronisms such as an identifiable Satan figure, who was not described in this manner until the times of Zechariah and First Chronicles, and the idea of intercession, which appeared in the time of Nehemiah, raise questions over its early composition.[375] These elements, combined with the use of post-exilic phrases, interrupt the final author's suggested effort to colour his work with a patriarchal lens and support the hypothesis of an ancient tale being shaped by a later writer.

Theories regarding the identity of the author are manifold, ranging from a single writer who artistically designed the narrative from beginning to end, an editor who composed the prose to suit an original poetic corpus or vice versa, several writers whose works were compiled at a later date,[376] or even an original text that grew organically throughout its transmission history. Adherence to these interpretations varies with hypotheses that the prose narratives were written during the second millennium B.C.E., that the corresponding poetry was excised from the original text and replaced by the

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[372] Foster, R. V. (1886) 'The Hebrew Wisdom: The Book of Job,' *OTS* 5 (6) 256-261.

[373] However, Nahum Sarna, who argues that the literary parallels between the prologue and epilogue are indicative of the same hand, compares the style, language and literary structure of these two sections and concludes that specific poeticisms are related to Ugaritic. The implication of this, he suggests, is that patriarchal setting should be accepted as belonging to the original work, perhaps pointing to a long oral tradition that culminated in the present text (Sarna, Nahum, M (1957) 'Epic Substratum in the Prose of Job,' *JBL* 76 (1), pp. 13-25).

[374] Harman also believes that this attempt at evading anachronisms through the varying usage of terms such as '*El*, *Eloah*, *Elohim* and *Shadday*' and avoiding *Jehovah* and *El Shadday*, did not automatically posit multiple authorship, but may have simply been chosen according to the desired diction of the author and his poetic license. (Harman, H. M. (1886) 'The Divine Names in the Book of Job,' *JSBLE* 6 (1), p. 119).

[375] Hurvitz, Avi (1974) 'The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered,' *HTR* 67 (1), pp. 17-34.

[376] Hoffman, Yair (1981) 'The Relation Between the Prologue and the Speech Cycles in Job: A Reconsideration,' *VT* 31 (2), pp. 160-170. See: Robertson, David (1973) 'The Book of Job: A Literary Study,' *SAIJ* 56 (4), pp. 446-469. Robertson's theory is based on his view that no single author could hold contradictory views, nor could the myriad themes therein be the result of a single intention.

first editor, and that Yahweh's speech, the wisdom speech and the replies of Elihu were all added at a later date. The conviction that a single author could not have penned the entirety of the book grew out of the perceived contradictions between the character of Job as found in the prologue and dialogue, exacerbated by the closing declaration of his innocence in view of his bitter railings throughout.[377] Despite these thematic features, the most convincing argument for multiple authors revolves around the structure of the text.

Ranging from theories of a three-fold structure that was corrupted during transmission due to the additions of secondary writers, to the author's penchant for the number four producing an artificial pattern that fused the poetry and prose sections, these structures indicate that the final editor sought to harmonise the overall message and theme of the book.[378] Reading the two sections as one, a practice that was viewed as forcing the union between disparate and opposing texts, has gained traction as their interrelationship

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[377] In late nineteenth century scholarship it was suggested that these inconsistencies were deliberately included as a form of irony on the part of the poet, who adapted the story from either oral tradition or a more simplified text. See: Macdonald, Duncan B. (1895) 'The Original Form of the Legend of Job,' *JBL* 14 (1/2), pp. 63-71. While Macdonald's views are tempered by the late nineteenth century understanding that Job was not definitely the produce of several authors, he agrees with the premise that the wisdom poem, located in the centre of the book, may have been part of the original text, even though the final form seems to place it outside of the genre. Furthermore, he believed that it is unlikely that the author drastically changed the original, but rather than he expanded the horizons of the characters therein and developed their participation. According to Steinmann, the wisdom book acts as a central, thematic pivot designed to show the theological differences between the arguments of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar in the first half of the book, and that of Elihu and Job in the second. It is an unpopular view as it advocates for fewer contributors to the creation of the text. (Steinmann, Andrew E. (1996) 'The Structure and Message of the Book of Job,' *VT* 46, pp. 83-90).

[378] The three-fold structure was thought to be the original format of the text, with three sets of six speeches that was corrupted by the attribution of sections to Job that seemed more suited to his friends, as well as the introduction of fragmentary material. See: Steinmann, Andrew E. (1996) 'The Structure and Message of the Book of Job,' *VT* 46. Steinmann explains that this viewpoint was based upon the lack of speech for Zophar, leading scholars to suggest that his words were assimilated into Job's speech in chapters twenty-six and twenty seven. The four-fold structure and its attempt to unify the prose and poetry could be explained in terms of the same writer penning both sections, but deliberately structured the prose differently in order to make a specific literary statement, or that the speeches existed independently from the prose and were carefully rearranged into a new narrative framework. See: Patrick, James E. (2005) 'The Fourfold Structure of Job: Variations on a Theme,' *VT* 55 (2), pp. 185-206. Patrick ultimately cautions against drawing conclusions about authorial intent through the division of the book based upon thematic progression, as any attempt to do so will simply reinforce the viewpoint of the scholar rather than show absolute proof and highlights the fact that alongside his penchant for the number four, the author also shares fondness for other perfect numbers such as three, seven and ten as shown through the members of his family and his possessions. To add further heat to the discussion, Patrick's conclusions are dismissed due to his conviction that the current structure of the book is not due to later textual corruptions. This opinion is held by Lugt who instead proposes a concentric structure based on the numbers three and eleven. (Lugt, Peter van der (2006) 'Speech Cycles in the Book of Job: A Response to James E. Patrick,' *VT* 56 (4), pp. 554-557). A third theory focuses on the theme of dualism, suggest that the book should be split into two parts at the conclusion of Eliphaz's final speech in chapter 22, which serves to clarify and summarise the preceding arguments. See: Wolfers, David (1993) 'The Speech-Cycles in the Book of Job,' *VT* 43 (3), pp. 385-402.

produces an improved comprehension of both.[379] It is clear the writer relied heavily on popular legend and style and displayed the keenly perceived separation between the mortal and divine realms in his compilation of diverse genres. Acknowledging the theological legitimacy of the final compilation is often rejected as accepting a deliberate distortion of the original work; however, when the original form of the text is indeterminate, and the full extent of its transmission history remains unclear, its final shape may provide insight as to where it came from.

The author of Job possessed an exquisite mastery of biblical Hebrew, and yet none of the characters in the story itself are described as Israelites. This produced suppositions of an Arabic origin for the story, implying that the legend spawned in the east and was later adopted by the Hebrew writer who retained many of the original locales and features.[380] Morris Jastrow Jr. posited that the text was based on the Babylonian story of king Tâbi-utu-Bêl, which itself was based upon another text dating back to the third millennium B.C.E. However, while the stories of Job and Tâbi-utu-Bêl are too far removed to argue that there was any direct contact between them, their thematic and structural similarities imply that they may have originated from a similar, more ancient source.[381] Others suggest instead that the relationship between the two narratives may simply be attributed to parallel themes and shared imagery.[382] For example, the writer's description of Sheol in the context of the experiences of Job suggests knowledge of the myth of Ishtar's descent into the underworld.[383] His use of witticisms, puns and intricate

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[379] Caesar, Lael O. (1999) 'Job: Another New Thesis,' *VT* 49 (4), pp. 435-447.

[380] It has been noted that in such a case, the protagonists' devotion to the Hebrew God would be out of place unless it was a feature added at a later date. Hazard, M. C. (1919) 'The Book of Job,' *TBW* 53 (1), pp. 60-64.

[381] Jastrow Jr., Morris (1906) 'A Babylonian Parallel to the Story of Job,' *JBL* 25 (2), 135-191. This story displays the protagonist's compounding guilt through continued declarations of piety, and communicates that only his confession of guilt resulted in his restoration, showing the reader that repentance 'must accompany the appeal for deliverance. Influenced by their respective cultures during the process of transmission, their narratives diverge and their conclusions land on alternate sides of the argument, with Yahweh's declaration of Job's innocence and thus refusing to justify the ancient Near Eastern premise that suffering is deserved. Contrary to this, some regard Job's repentance 'in dust and ashes' in 42:6 as an admission of guilt. (Badalamenti, Anthony F. (2009) 'Job's Story and Family Health,' *JRH* 48 (2), p. 213). However, Albright believes that the story (referring to the king as Tabi-utul-Ellil) may have been more closely tied to the story of Adam's fall in Genesis as opposed to the narrative of Job (Albright, W. F. (1923) 'The Babylonian Antediluvian Kings,' *JAOS* 43, p. 323.)

[382] This theory is supported by Barton who states that if the original form had travelled 'westward from Babylonia, it traveled[sic] orally, in bare outline, shorn of all local features,' although he agrees with the hypothesis that the prose prologue and epilogue represent the earliest version of the text and that their purpose was to 'demonstrate the inadequacy of an out-worn theology.' (Barton, George A. (1912) 'The Original Home of the Story of Job,' *JBL* 31 (2), p. 64).

[383] See: Irwin, William A. (1933) 'An Examination of the Progress of Thought in the Dialogue of Job,' *JR* 13 (2), pp. 150-164; Davies, W. W. (1980) 'The Mythological Element in Job,' *ONTS* 11 (4), pp. 207-212. See also: Barton, George A. (1923) ' Some Text-Critical Notes on Job,' *JBL* 42 (1/2), pp. 29-32; Sarna, Nahum M.

rhetoric displays his keen understanding of the Hebrew language and his source material,[384] and his adaptation of these mythic episodes through native Hebrew forms intimates the hand of a native Israelite writer.

Curiosity about the existence of evil has often gone hand in hand with the study of creation. The style of the text has caused scholars to liken the Hebrew God to his ancient Near Eastern counterparts, suggesting that he is depicted as an irresistible force of nature that is concerned only with the upkeep of the world and its cycles as opposed to a relational deity.[385] Yahweh's capitulation to Satan's taunt is therefore seen as a presentation of his weakness and insecurity, which connects his character to those of the Greek pantheon.[386] However, at the opposite end of this argument lies the claim that Yahweh did not acquiesce to partake in a gamble the outcome of which was unknown. Rather, it served to prove a point to the heavenly beings that Yahweh was unlike them and that he was worthy of worship regardless of one's situation.[387] In this way, the book does not seem to discuss the theodicy of suffering so much as humanity's reaction to it. This viewpoint advocates that through the polarisation of honour and shame in Hebrew thought, the writer has brought into focus the idea that, as Charles Muenchow believes, 'Job has placed a question mark behind the quality of the divine governance of all affairs.'[388] Thus, with the speeches of Job and his friends perceived as challenging

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(1963) 'The Mythological Background of Job 18,' *JBL* 82 (3), pp. 315-318, who discuss the inherent feelings of horror that the concept of Sheol invoked within the Semitic community.

[384] For the use of witticisms and puns see: Noegel, Scott B. (1996) 'Janus Parallelism in Job and Its Literary Significance,' *JBL* 115 (2), pp. 313-320. On the intricate use of Hebrew rhetoric see: Hazard, M. C. (1919) 'The Book of Job,' *JBL* 53 (1), pp. 60-64. For the argument against foreign authorship see: Greenstein, Edward L. (2003) 'The Language of Job and its Poetic Function,' *JBL* 127 (3), pp. 651-666. It is these very intricacies that scholars caution must be examined in the original Hebrew forms for the Greek translation is often unfaithful to it and the meaning of the entire text is changed through the altering of the dialogue, thereby resulting in the drastic modification of both the character of Job and God. (Orlinksi, Harry M. (1935) 'Some Corruptions in the Greek Text of Job,' *JQRNS* 26 (2), pp. 133-145; Gard, Donald H. (1953) 'The Concept of Job's Character According to the Greek Translator of the Hebrew Text,' *JBL* 72 (3), pp. 182-186).

[385] See: Pfeiffer, Robert H. (1927) 'The Dual Origin of Hebrew Monotheism,' *JBR* 46 (3/4), p. 198.

[386] Hoffman, Yair (1981) 'The Relation Between the Prologue and the Speech Cycles in Job,' *VT* 31 (2).

[387] Steinmann, Andrew E. (1996) 'The Structure and Message of the Book of Job,' *VT* 46, pp. 96-100. This viewpoint is also espouses by Caesar who sees within the text deeper and more complex themes than simply suffering in and of itself, but of 'human integrity in the face of unfair suffering' and furthermore that the author intends for the reader to discover the in 'the inscrutability of divine justice, ultimate human integrity is known when, transcending the outrage against personal and social injustice, the individual will answer betrayal with compassion, and treachery with forgiveness.' (Caesar, Lael O. (1999) 'Job: Another New Thesis,' *VT* 49 (4), pp. 444-6).

[388] Muenchow, Charles (1989) 'Dust and Dirt in Job 42:6,' *JBL* 108 (4), pp. 606-7. In Yahweh's response to Job it is observed that he appears to ignore the complaints of Job, although Muenchow believes that his 'response itself is recognition' of Job's grief and grievance. Similarly, Fleming posits that the modern reader's expectations of the divine response to Job is imprudent, believing that the underlying premise of the text is the worthiness of God for being worshipped simply because he is God. In this he states that 'Job

Yahweh's right to sovereignty over his creation, Yahweh's own dialogues may be posited as validation of his character and rulership.

Interpretations of Yahweh's speeches in chapters 38-41 are diverse. For instance, in refusing to answer Job's questions, responding instead in the form of his own unanswerable questions, it has been suggested that the writer intended to portray Yahweh as ignorant.[389] Modern Western convention demands that an initial query be answered before a second question is asked, and the failure to do so is perceived as a dishonest avoidance of the original point. On the other hand, Samuel Meier explains that in Hebrew culture, 'the priority of the second question was so crucial to rabbinic discourse that it was regularly employed as a teaching device [… and that] when the second question remains unanswered, the first by definition must be withdrawn.'[390] Known also as the Socratic method, the first questioner is told nothing by the second that he does not already know, responding instead with an allegorical but thematically related question.[391] Accordingly, each topic that Yahweh addresses in his dialogue echoes a topic that has already been introduced throughout the course of the book. These elements are initially described from a human point-of-view; in the language of what can be seen and touched, and whose effects can be felt. Then they are discussed in the divine speech in terms of what is unobservable by the human eye, such as the secret behaviour of wild animals, permitting the writer to imply that Yahweh possesses a more profound perspective, affording him wisdom and knowledge beyond the comprehension of the reader.

A cursory examination of the these chapters reveals distinct similarities in both theme and content with *Psalm* 104 that become more apparent when the two texts are placed

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is offered not repentance and relief but a choice to recognize or deny the true character of the universe and the God who created it.' (Fleming, Daniel E. (1994) 'Job: The Tale of Patient Faith and the Book of God's Dilemma,' *VT* 44 (4), pp. 480-1).

[389] Robertson believes that the rhetoric assigned to Yahweh shows him to have 'the power and skill of a god but is a fake at the truly divine task of governing with justice and love,' and that this presentation of him is designed to show that he is exactly the same as the gods around him. (Robertson, David (1973) 'The Book of Job,' *SAIJ* 56 (4), pp. 463-4). On the other hand, this may simply reflect the author's own reticence to contradict the purpose of his work and offer responses to such questions that would ultimately place him in the same category as Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar.

[390] Meier, Samuel A. (1999) 'Job and the Unanswered Question,' *Prooftexts* 19 (3), pp. 272-3. It is possible that this is a conventional teaching tool introduced at a date later than the composition of Job; however, Meyers hypothesis is based upon texts from fifth century Athens, second millennium B.C.E. Egypt, post-Biblical rabbinic teaching as well as Old and New Testament passages. His conclusions led Meier to state that modern scholars had made some unfair conclusions about Job in their demand for modern answers from an ancient text. This construct is visible in the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, see for example: as *Matthew* 9:14-15, 15:1-3, *Mark* 10:2-3, 12:14-17, *Luke* 6:1-3, 10:25-26.

[391] Burrows, Millar (1928) 'The Voice from the Whirlwind,' *JBL* 47 (1/2), p. 120.

side by side. For example, *Psalm* 104:5-9 and *Job* 38:4-11 discuss the foundations of the earth and the setting of the boundaries for the waters. *Psalm* 104:10-18 and *Job* 38:25-39:30 focus upon God's provision of food and water for both mankind and animals alike, although this theme is persistent throughout the entirety of the dialogue. 104:19-23 and 38:12-13. 19-20 speak of the sun, moon, light and darkness, and the activity of the lions which is echoed also in 38:39-40. Leviathan is mentioned briefly in vv.25-26 of the psalm, and described in intricate detail in *Job* 41. Finally the speeches profess Yahweh's continuing provision for the world and its animals, thereby mirroring vv.27-30 in the psalm, which claims that 'these all look to you to give them their food in due season.' This basic assessment and the parallels between thought and thematic progression imply that the writer of the dialogues had access to the psalmic text (or vice versa depending on the possible dating of the two works). Throughout the dialogue's narrative progression one can see that the writer has taken great pains to depict a god who provides for all creation.[392] Using imagery of inorganic natural phenomena such as the wind, clouds, rain, thunder, lightning, snow, ice, oceans, lakes and mountains, he presents Yahweh as one unconfined by the traditional realms of power assigned to the gods.[393]

The cosmogony introduced in the opening verses is methodical, prefaced by three rhetorical questions that highlight the limits of human knowledge. 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?' These verses (38:4-7) depict facets of typical creation motifs described architecturally. Laying the foundation, sinking its base into the ground and placing its cornerstone are terms of construction representing the strength that underpins the building itself. If these are improperly placed, the building will crumble; thus, its integrity is based on the architect's ability and wisdom. Additionally, the measuring line was the tool of the master builder, often used

[392] There is a distinct lack of mention of humanity within the speeches of Yahweh, and this has been perceived as an inherent indication of the flaws of creation on the one hand (Lacocque, André (2007) 'The Deconstruction of Job's Fundamentalism,' *JBL* 4 (2)) as well as a declaration that the world is not human-centric, therefore they cannot determine its workings (Schulweis, Harold, M. (1975) 'Karl Barth's Job: "Morality and Theodicy",' *JQR* 65 (3), pp. 156-167).

[393] Of one hundred and eighty allusions, approximately half 'explicitly place nature in relation to its Creator and Ruler' thereby enhancing both the idea of Yahweh's transcendence over all as well as his immanence to all. Brigham, Albert P. (1891) 'Inorganic Nature in the Poem of Job,' *ONTS* 13 (2), p. 105).

in the building of the temple, and denoted the exactitude by which it was designed.[394] In the Babylonian tradition, Marduk was prompted to confront Tiamat on account of his wisdom, and after his victory over her he measured Apsu so that the formations of the heavens and the earth would be precise.[395] As such, the process of creation is described in terms of careful and deliberate planning.

Vv.8-11 are often seen to coincide with the imagery of the creation battle. It continues: 'who shut the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?—when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band, and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors, and said, 'Thus far you shall come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped'?' This can be contrasted with 26:12-13, which relates the myth more explicitly stating: 'By his power he stilled the Sea; by his understanding he struck down Rahab. By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.' The latter of these two accounts is closely related to those of *Isaiah* 51 and *Psalm* 89 in their demonstration of the preservation of cosmic order and the establishment of his dominion. Compared to this version, the presentation in ch.38 appears almost demythologised. There is no longer any mention of Rahab, despite the fact that her supposed rebellion is featured in v.8.[396] Instead, playing on the secondary interpretation of her being the personification of pride, v.11 employs the imagery of an enemy that has been subdued by force.

Having been confined by newly established boundaries, the proud waves of the sea continue to push against them, just as waves wash over a beach. This picture resonates with the implications of dualism, in which the forces of chaos are constantly held in check lest their efforts to escape succeed and order is disrupted. However, in contrast to the traditionally understood methods, Yahweh's victory over the sea was achieved here not by force, but by the power of his word. The sea is simply contained as though imprisoned, shut behind doors and bars and although v.9 infers the separation of the heavens and the earth; the action is not preceded by the slaying of the monster. In presenting it in this way, the poet reduces the threat of rebellion, whilst simultaneously affirming the authority of Yahweh. Coinciding with the allusion in *Psalm* 104, the text

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[394] Walton, John H.; Matthews, Victor H.; Chavalas, Mark W. (2000) *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, IVP Academic, Downers Grove, p. 509.
[395] Hetherington, Norriss S. (2014) *Encyclopedia of Cosmology: Historical, Philosophical and Scientific Foundations of Modern Cosmology*, Routledge, New York, p. 400.
[396] See: Ludwig, Theodore M. (1973) 'The Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,' *JBL* 92 (3), p. 351; and Smick, Elmer B. (1970) 'Mythology and the Book of Job,' *JETS* 13, p. 104.

does not require the death of a god to provide the materials of creation, instead presenting Yahweh as the only active participant in the act of creation.

Psalm 104:19 speaks of the sun knowing its time for setting; it knows its place and function, and it supports the ongoing cycle of night and day. Here, it speaks of these features in terms of Yahweh's initial determination of their cycles. Vv.12-13 asks: 'Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place, so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?' The sun and moon, here unnamed, maintain their roles as timekeepers in their specification of appropriate action, although the contextual focus of *Job* expands their reach to include the themes of justice. The journey of the sun and moon across the sky were often associated with the cyclical struggle between good and evil. Each morning the sun arises after it traverses through the underworld, and overcomes the darkness as its light stretches across the earth. The Babylonian myth offers a similar concept in the figure of the Shamash, who alongside his role as the sun god was also associated with justice, often being called upon during prayers against evil.[397] This correlates with the imagery of v.13 in its description of the dawn shaking the wicked out of the world, chasing them away as it does the darkness.

The adaptation of solar imagery in this chapter enhances the perception of Yahweh as the god of order. The understanding of his character as a supreme god has transitioned from one half of a cosmic duo to being one who creates, and rules, simply by his very nature and the power of his word. Accordingly, vv.16-38 depict his knowledge of and control over various natural phenomena. Extending his reach beyond their creation, the writer describes Yahweh in terms of his ongoing interaction with the celestial figures and with the imagery of a storm: with rain, thunder, lightning, snow and hail. His territory is not limited to the domain of man, as implied by vv.26-27, which state that his actions are performed not just for humanity, but also for 'a land where no one lives, […]

[397] Steele, Laura D. (2002) 'Mesopotamian Elements in the Proem of Parmenides? Correspondences between the Sun-Gods Helios and Shamash,' *CQNS* 52 (2), pp. 585-6 See also: Marinatos, Nanno (2010) *Minoan Kingship and the Solar Goddess*, University of Illinois, Illinois, p. 124. It the hymn to Shamash it states that he is a friend to the lowly, 'the weak, the outcast, the wanderer, and those in humble positions in life […] the robber and the thief, however, are his enemies.' (Gray, Clifton Daggett (1901) 'A Hymn to Samas,' *AJSLL* 17 (3), p. 131). This theme is continued in vv.16-17 whose imagery is reminiscent of the sun god's journey nightly journey through the underworld. The cosmology of the ancient Near East states that there are three worlds: the domed heaven, the flat earth and the corresponding domed underworld. (Radau, Hugo (1902) 'The Cosmology of the Sumerians,' *The Monist* 13 (1), pp. 103-113). The Joban poet employs similar imagery when he writes: 'have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?'

the desert, which is empty of human life, to satisfy the waste and desolate land.' As such, he becomes an omnipresent and omnipotent deity, capable of influencing all aspects of his creation.

Also in these verses is a reiteration of Yahweh's control over the waters as was alluded to in vv.8-11. Mirroring *Psalm* 104:8's description of Yahweh appointing the place for the waters, v.25 here discusses his action of 'cut[ting] a channel for the torrents of rain.' Similarly, his question in v.34: 'can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that a flood of waters may cover you?' is suggestive of his ability to command the floodwaters. Just as the lightning in v.35 responds to his call, the waters are subject to his authority, going only where they are permitted and only when they are called upon. The writer has removed any traces of rebellion in the forces of nature in these verses, instead using them to display the superior wisdom and authority of Yahweh over the natural phenomena.

From 38:39 onwards, the text transitions into a discussion of the animals, which dominates the remainder of the dialogue. This section has been labelled as evidence that displays Yahweh's concern for both man and the animal kingdom.[398] Furthermore, while the previous verses implied the ignorance of humanity compared with Yahweh's knowledge, the following bring to mind their impotence. Each of the wild animals described here dwell in their appropriate habitations and live according to their nature, seemingly unaffected by mankind. Before introducing the behemoth and Leviathan in chapters 40-41 respectively who have both been associated to varying degrees with the cosmic beast, the speech veers away from the topic of creation and onto the topic of Yahweh's ongoing participation in the world. The wild animals presence in the text reminds the reader that humanity has little influence over them; they cannot provide for them (38:39-41), they do not know the hidden matters of their lives (39:2-4), they cannot subdue them and force them to serve (39:9-12). On the other hand, Yahweh

[398] Silver, Daniel Jeremy (1969) 'Nachmanides' Commentary on the Book of Job,' *JQR* 60 (1). Silver falls on the side that these treatises are designed to show 'God's providential care of each human individual,' through the proposition that all animals were fashioned to benefit humanity (pp. 20-1) Although others believe that the overly lengthy passage describing the behemoth and leviathan are indicative of a god who is 'too preoccupied with keeping tabs on two imposing and unearthly creatures' to care about the plight of one man (Cooper, Alan (1997) 'The Sense of the Book of Job,' *Prooftexts* 17 (3), p. 231). However, their inclusion has also been identified as an incomprehensible, secondary addition whose ultimate purpose is unclear. More specifically, Curtis Briggs believes that they serve no purpose but to delay the conclusion of the book and Job's final reaction. Curtis Briggs, John (1979) 'On Job's Response to Yahweh,' *JBL* 98 (4), p. 498.

declares himself as the author of their inherent natures (39:15-17, 19-25) and as the one who assigned to them their homes (39:5-8, 26-28).

The discussion of the animals increases incrementally, ultimately leading to the introduction of the behemoth and Leviathan, both of whom have been seen as epitomising the uncontrollable and uncontainable forces of chaos. They are described as possessing both natural and mythological characteristics, and could easily be portrayed as mythical beasts, realised and brought under the rule of Yahweh, or as real but humanly indomitable animals enhanced by mythological imagery. Others believe that the poet may have been employing their names symbolically to refer to specific traits or countries, much in the same way that Rahab has been thought as a representation of pride or of Egypt.[399] Interpreting the behemoth and Leviathan as political allegory, however, disassociates them from their more probable correlation with chaos.[400] That being said, the writer has been careful to portray them as creatures that have been created by Yahweh, and are, by definition, no threat to him.[401]

The introduction to the passage regarding the behemoth instructs Job to 'Look at the behemoth, which I made just as I made you.' Intimating that Job can in fact see and examine the beast with his own eyes, the poet appears to be offering a description of a natural, albeit powerful, creature. This has, unsurprisingly, led to considerable less argument regarding his identification than Leviathan. He has traditionally been recognised as either an elephant or a hippopotamus, which are often seen as representations of an element of order beyond man's control.[402] Having also been identified as a water buffalo, he has been mythologically tied to the Bull of Heaven from the Epic of Gilgamesh. The bull, a favoured creation of one of the gods, is killed by Enkidu and Gilgamesh, and his presence in the story is designed to emphasise the inferiority of Gilgamesh.[403] The equivalency between the two is found lacking in that the bull readily succumbs to Gilgamesh's attack, whereas in *Job*, the behemoth is described

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[399] Wolfers, David (1990) 'The Lord's Second Speech in the Book of Job,' *VT* 40 (4), pp. 476-83. Wolfers states that 'the behemoth [is] an allegorical figure for the people of Judah [and the leviathan is representative of] the Assyrian King.' While an interesting hypothesis, turning the final chapters of Job into a contemporary political treatise ignores the literary placement within the text and the overall theme of the book.
[400] Davies, W. W. (1980) 'The Mythological Element in Job,' *ONTS* 11 (4), p. 210.
[401] Morriston, Wesley (1996) 'God's Answer to Job,' *RS* 32 (3), p. 342. This concept is predominantly supported by those who perceive a thematic link between Psalm 104 and these chapters.
[402] Good, Edwin M. (1973) Job and the Literary Task,' *SAIJ* 56 (4), p. 480.
[403] Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth*, p. 137. See also: Perdue, Leo G. (1991) *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, Almond Press, Chicago, p. 222.

in v.19 as 'the first of the great acts of God—only its Maker can approach it with the sword,' ultimately declaring that man cannot hope to prevail against it.

On the other hand, in the behemoth's identity as a hippopotamus, scholars have found parallels to the Egyptian god Seth in certain pyramid texts as well as the writings of Manetho. The 'Bones of Seth' that were discovered in central Egypt have been acknowledged as hippopotami bones. The description in *Job* of the bones of the behemoth in 40:18 states: 'its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like bars of iron,' which corresponds to the designation of Seth as a red hippopotamus.[404] While the use of similar imagery suggests that there might be a connection between the two, there is also a contextual reflection of the conflict between Seth and Horus in the relationship between the behemoth and Yahweh.

In Egyptian mythology, it is said that Seth opposed the divine rule of Osiris and killed him. Consequently, the behemoth also represented an entity that must be subdued in order to uphold the balance of nature.[405] This could encourage its contemporary reader to associate the living beast with the power of the foreign god, and to see that he too, despite his overwhelming stature and uncontrollable nature, is subject to Yahweh. For this reason, he is accepted as being a created animal by the dual mention of Yahweh's formation of him in vv.15 and 19. His status as a natural beast, however, is enhanced by the declaration of his primogeniture in v.19, which, following the description of his strength and power, implies the writer's perception that he possesses no earthly rival.

The most notable connection between the behemoth and Leviathan lies in their domains. Speaking of the behemoth, the text states: 'under the lotus plant it lies, in the covert of the reeds and in the marshes,' (40:21) whereas Leviathan is mentioned as being caught 'with a fishhook' (41:1) or having its skin filled 'with harpoons, or its head with fishing spears' (41:7). Both find their existence in the water realm, tying them together figuratively and symbolically to the powers of chaos. Their relation to the primeval waters has led to the belief that their existence supports a notion of dualism in the Hebrew texts, either as monsters subdued but not destroyed, or as representations of deliberately created evil, thereby challenging Yahweh's goodness.[406] On the other

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[404] Wainwright, G. A. (1932) 'Iron in Egypt,' *JEA* 18 (1/2), pp. 3-15. See also: Lang, Bernhard (1980) 'Job XL 18 and the "Bones of Seth",' *VT*, 30 (3), pp. 360-361.
[405] Perdue, Leo G. (2007) *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, pp. 123-5.
[406] Brenner, Athalya (1981) 'God's Answer to Job,' *VT* 31 (2), pp. 129-137.

hand, Leviathan's brief appearance in *Psalm* 104 belied the chaotic aspect of his nature, having presented him as a creature designed to play in the sea. There is no doubt that Leviathan aroused ideas of the ferocity and power of the chaos monster in the mind of the contemporary Israelite. The connection between Leviathan and the behemoth, however, is much more tentative.

There is a rising order of magnitude during Yahweh's discussion of the animals, framed within a semi-chiastic structure: progressing from the untameable wild, through to the domesticated, to the predator and finally to the unconquerable. However, the behemoth is predominantly accepted to be a real animal couched in mythological imagery, whereas Leviathan is described in dragon-like terms, from whose 'mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap out. Out of its nostrils comes smoke, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. Its breath kindles coals, and a flame comes out of its mouth.' (41:19-21)[407] This differentiates him from the behemoth and isolates him from the other animals, suggesting that his inclusion in this list was intentional, but that his characteristics were certainly borrowed from the ancient Near East.

The poet's use of the imagery of Leviathan to close Yahweh's dialogue is a poetical return to the beginning of the book where, in his initial speech, Job demands: 'let those who curse it [the day of his birth] who curse the Sea, those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan.' (3:8)[408] Choosing to mention Leviathan in his curse, Job invokes the highest power under Yahweh that he can imagine, thereby referring to Leviathan in a mythological context as a symbol of chaos and discord.[409] This demarcation highlights the individuality of Leviathan within the closing treatise of the book, and has led to suggestions that it cannot be based upon an existing animal of the natural animal kingdom. Nevertheless, attempts to identify him have likened him to a crocodile, a dragon, or a mythological creature that existed in nothing but ancient Near Eastern myths and legends.[410] As such, the cyclical return to him and his chaotic imagery brings into focus his relationship to Yahweh.

The imagery of v.25 links him with Tiamat declaring: 'when it raises itself up the gods are afraid; at the crashing they are beside themselves.' They, like humanity, are

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[407] See also: Morriston, Wesley (1996) 'God's Answer to Job,' *RS* 32 (3), p. 342.
[408] Good, Edwin M. (1973) Job and the Literary Task,' *SAIJ* 56 (4), p. 481.
[409] Greenstein, Edward L. (2003) 'The Language of Job and its Poetic Function,' *JBL* 127 (3), p. 654.
[410] For a treatise on the leviathan being identified as a dragon, which is popular due to its ability to breath fire, see: Smick, Elmer B. (1970) 'Mythology and the Book of Job,' *JETS* 13, pp. 106-7.

powerless against him. Similarly, in 41:10-11 it says: 'No one is so fierce as to dare stir it up. Who can stand before it [me]? Who can confront it [me] and be safe?—under the whole heaven, who?'[411] Leviathan, in all his mythical glory, is presented as a creature without equal, 'it is the king over all that are proud' (41:34).[412] He is the most powerful image the poet can evoke in the hearer's mind, and yet he is made subject to Yahweh by the dialogue's end. By employing such imagery, the poet establishes the supremacy of Yahweh over the ancient pantheons who have long since been reduced to natural phenomena, for no other figure apart from himself is able to approach and subdue the embodiment of chaos. However, by including Leviathan here in the list of animals as opposed to his opening treatise on the creation process, the poet demythologises his character. In this way, he retains the symbolism of the chaos monster, but loses his power through his relegation to a created being.

Job 38-41 is more than a simple creation story; it is a complex and masterfully written work, which employs conventional imagery to depict the sovereignty of the Hebrew God over those of his neighbours. The text's presentation of Yahweh's relationship with natural phenomena and the animal kingdom supersedes the earlier geographical and influential limitations placed upon the ancient gods. The poet uses these features to designate him as creator, provider and maintainer of all things. It is possible to discern the common elements of creation mythology underlining the book of *Job* and yet they are more subdued than earlier versions. The creation of the world has suppressed the echoes of conflict in their mythic remnants. The process is instead discussed in methodical, architectural terms; the seas have been stripped of their monster, being subdued by the power of Yahweh's word, and while the strength of the chaos monster is evident, he is not presented as an equal opposite to Yahweh.

3.4 THE WISE MAN

The book of *Proverbs* is generally omitted from Hebrew creation studies due to its classification as wisdom literature. The book is considered a post-exilic work compiled by editors, the structure of which is thought to be closely related to the Torah itself.[413]

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[411] The NRSV translates this verse as relating solely to man's relation to the Leviathan, however, the Hebrew is written in the first person (as shown above in square brackets) and thus is more commonly believed to refer to Yahweh as opposed to the Leviathan, a translation that is also supported by the LXX.
[412] See: Rowold, Henry (1986) 'מי ואה !לי הוא?: Leviathan and Job in Job 41:2-3,' *JBL* 105 (1), pp. 104-109.
[413] Murphy, Roland E. & Carm, O (1985) 'Wisdom and Creation,' *JBL* 104 (1), pp. 3-11.

The passage here in question falls in chapter 8 and discusses the creation process from the perspective of personified wisdom. Whilst the proverbs themselves are a compilation of sayings coined by many over a great period of time, chapters 1-9 are thematically linked to the Torah in their subject matter and their preservation of older ideas and concepts.[414] Wisdom tradition is generally less concerned with historicity than other literary genres, shown in the present case through a lack of any reference to salvation history and its famous religious characters.[415] Despite this, the passage in question appears firmly rooted in monotheistic thought.[416] It does not present the creation of the world, and of itself, in the language of the warfare in the ancient Near East but in the terms of wisdom theology. Without wisdom, personified as Lady Wisdom in this passage, creation cannot be intentional, but without the weight of creation, wisdom is left unjustified, thus wisdom becomes witness to creation to testify about the acts of Yahweh, even as her own testimony is validated by her presence.

The pursuit of wisdom is widespread across the entire ancient world. *Proverbs* contains many foreign elements in both form and content, and yet the text retains individuality through its desire to instruct the reader not simply to follow the teachings of the wise, but to seek wisdom itself.[417] The proverbs themselves are often dismissed as a collection of wise sayings based on everyday experiences that cannot contribute to the theological understanding of the Israelites.[418] On the other hand, one might equally argue that they

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[414] Dell, Katharine (2006) *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context*, Cambridge University Press, New York, pp. 18-19. Dell also questions the scholarly hesitation to devote study to the book of Proverbs based on its post-exilic date, stating that every biblical book, whether 'in whole or in parts, must in some way belong to a historical and theological development of a religion.'

[415] At first glance, Proverbs would seem unable to offer insight into the Hebrew mindset, and may simply be a representation of foreign intrusion into the work. As such it cannot be used in a discussion of a Yahwistic worldview. See: Murphy, Roland E. (1981) 'Hebrew Wisdom,' *JAOS* 101 (1), pp. 21-34. See also: Kugel, James (1997) 'Wisdom and the Anthological Temper,' *Prooftexts* 17 (1: The Anthological Imagination in Jewish Literature, Part 1), pp. 9-32; Preuss, H. D. (1970) 'Erwägungen zum theologischen Ort alttestamentlicher Weisheitsliteratur,' *ET* 30, pp. 393-417 and: Preuss, H. D. (1972) 'Das Gottesbild der älteren Weisheit Israels,' *VTS* 23, pp. 117-145.

[416] Perdue, Leo G. (2008) 'Katharine J. Dell, *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context*,' *The Journal of Religion* 88 (3), pp. 394-396.

[417] Fox, Michael V. (1997) 'Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,' *JBL* 116 (4), p. 613.

[418] This point of view often coincides with the belief that the book does not conform to the traditional mores of the Hebrew faith. See, for example, Ernest Wright who specifies that 'there is no explicit reference to or development of the doctrine of history, election or covenant,' three themes that most Old Testament scholars agree actively pervade and shape the OT books. (Wright, G. Ernest (1952) *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology As Recital*, Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, p. 103). This has led to Proverb's classification as 'wisdom empiricism,' which is 'the philosophical principle that all knowledge derives from sensory experience.' (Fox, Michael V. (2007) 'The Epistomology of the Book of Proverbs,' *JBL* 126 (4), p. 670). On the other hand, Bryce qualifies that while these sayings are based on experience, he detects beneath them 'a single tenacious proposition, that behind the multiplicity of phenomena is a hidden order, one which has been created by God,' (Bryce, Glendon E. (1972) 'Another Wisdom-"Book" in Proverbs,' *JBL* 91 (2), p. 157).

reveal more about the conceptions of the average scribe or priest as opposed to the religious elite. The compilers of the proverbs shared several major tenets of the Hebrew worldview, and, based on its literary forms (i.e. the extended use of the *mashal*), designed an educational work whose purpose was to teach virtue and moral character.[419] This self-professed purpose as well as its intended audience is declared in *Proverbs* 1:2-6, which states that the book is 'for learning about wisdom and instruction […] to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young—let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill […]'[420] More specifically, the writers did not seek to teach wisdom for its own sake, but to guide the reader to a greater understanding of Yahweh.[421]

Proverbs shares many features with wisdom literature from the ancient Near East. Its expressions constitute a limited corpus of knowledge that may be learned by any individual, and this conferred upon it certain religiosity. Its wisdom was inherently based in the divine nature of the gods and their rules that regulated the world. In the same way, *Proverbs* presented these same regulations, but from the perspective that they were dictated by Yahweh alone. The discovery of equivalencies between the Hebraic sayings and those of the ancient Near East led to the recognition that the text possessed structure, replacing the earlier view that it was a random and unorganised compilation.[422] For example, the influence of Egyptian works over Hebrew wisdom literature is now considered established fact, although the former is not as topically diverse. While, the strength and logistics of the relationship remains unknown, it is

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[419] James, Fleming (1932) 'Some Aspects of the Religion of Proverbs,' *JBL* 51 (1), pp. 31-39. Not only that the work was created with an educational purpose, Goodspeed suggests that it was also produced through literary studies rather than the more commonly believed popular experience. (Goodspeed, George S. (1891) 'The Proverbs of the Bible and other Proverbs,' *ONTS* 13 (6), pp. 344-348). Furthermore, with the stated audience as the simple, the young, and the wise 'who would add to their learning' (vv. 4-5) the chiastic structure of 1:20-33 indicate that this becomes all inclusive, for all are lacking when confronted with wisdom herself. (Trible, Phyllis (1975) 'Wisdom Builds a Poem: The Architecture of Proverbs 1:20-33,' *JBL* 94 (4), pp. 509-518).

[420] The interruption to the *lamed* prefixes of the preceding verses in v.5 (which are commonly used to express purpose in a text), led Timothy Sandoval to believe the introduction consists only of vv.2-4, and that v.5 'with its finite verbs […] and v.6, with its infinite construct […] by contrast, serve as an "invitation to the addressee to engage this purpose.' (Sandoval, Timothy J. (2007) 'Revisiting the Prologue of Proverbs,' *JBL* 126 (3), pp. 460-5).

[421] See: Perdue, Leo G. (2008) 'Katharine J. Dell,' *JR* 88 (3), p. 396; and Toombs, Lawrence E. (1955) 'O. T. Theology and the Wisdom Literature,' *JBR* 23 (3), pp. 193-196.

[422] This view was so prevalent that at the close of the 19th century it was thought that entire sections could be rearranged under new classifications without harming the overall structure. (Yuasa, Kichiro (1891) 'A Classification of the Solomonic Proverbs,' *ONTS* 13 (3), pp. 147-153). This hypothesis was challenged by the perceived ideological unity of the book, as well as its observance of stricture guidelines than those regulating similar ancient Near East 'instruction' texts. Furthermore, the use of the chiasmus implies a conscious application of language designed to highlight significant concepts (Bryce, Glendon E. (1972) 'Another Wisdom-"Book" in Proverbs,' *JBL* 91 (2), p. 154).

highly probable that many of the sayings preserved in the book were borrowed unchanged from earlier sources that originally had their own context and meaning.[423] In other words, each saying was altered through the application of a Hebrew filter during its transmission.

Proverbs represents a tradition of teaching that extended back to the time of the kings of Israel but whose final form was post-exilic.[424] The book is separated into three collections: chapters 1-9, 10-29 and 30-31, each of which is supposed as the works of different authors. Throughout it there is evidence of pre-exilic language, application and religious features. However, elements such as the characterisation of wisdom, the concern with the individual as opposed to the collective, and the underlying monotheism and lack of obvious idolatry, combined with the parallelisms to *Isaiah* and the *Psalms*, tip the balance to a post-exilic workmanship and their inclusion of earlier traditions.[425] Chapters 1-9 appear to show both Egyptian and Canaanitic influences, such as the latter's legend of Aqht.[426] Furthermore, the contents of chapters 1-9 are closely

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[423] Specifically, it is unknown when or how the Egyptian sayings were assimilated into the Hebrew corpus. See: Murphy, Roland E. (1981) 'Hebrew Wisdom,' *JAOS* 101 (1), p. 27. This hypothesis assumes that the compilation process was deliberate, the original meanings becoming lost in their integration into the Hebrew work. New meanings surfaces based on their association with each other as well as their placement in the book and they were forced to adapt to a new model and overarching theme. (Fox, Michael V. (2007) 'The Epistomology of the Book of Proverbs,' *JBL* 126 (4), p. 683). As such, the connection between these two traditions is thought to be based not in specific language or content, but in the nature and character of the text. (Skinner, John (1905) 'The Cosmopolitan Aspect of Hebrew Wisdom,' *JQR* 60 (1), pp. 252-3; Goodspeed, George S. (1891) 'The Proverbs of the Bible and other Proverbs,' *ONTS* 13 (6), p. 345). See also: Dunsmore, Marion Hiller (1925) 'An Egyptian Contribution to the Book of Proverbs,' *JR* 5 (3), pp. 300-308; Emerton, J. A. (2001) 'The Teachings of Amenemope and Proverbs XXII 17-XXIV 22: Further Reflections on a Long Standing Problem,' *VT* 51 (4), pp. 431-465. These last two discuss the structural and verbal likeness of the *Admonitions of Amenemope* to Proverbs, and the likelihood that the Hebrew writers were not seeking to reproduce the former text, but drew upon it and others as inspiration.

[424] This was a popular discussion topic throughout the 19th century, although modern commentary shifted away from historiography, instead focusing on theological interpretation, as the former seemed impossible to determine. (Stein, Stephen J. (1985) '"Like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver": The Portrait of Wisdom in Jonathan Edward's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs,' *CH* 54 (3), pp. 325-6). For example, the introduction to Solomon's proverbs posit a 10th century B.C.E. compositional date, however, this date is thought to be too recent, as the bulk of the sayings are thought to have been penned before the unification of Israel by Solomon's father David. (McKenzie, John L. (1967) 'Reflections on Wisdom,' *JBL* 86 (1), pp. 1-9). McKenzie's hypothesis is interesting, and there is little doubt that many of the proverbs were coined at very early dates, although his conclusion seems to be based more heavily on speculation than actual proof, as the latter is scarce.

[425] Montefiore, C. G. (1890) 'Notes upon the Date and Religious Value of the Book of Proverbs,' *JQR* 2 (4), pp. 430-453. Modern critical studies have a tendency to assign Jewish wisdom literature to a narrow post-exilic window, and ignore the possibility for early contributions. (Skinner, John (1905) 'The Cosmopolitan Aspect of Hebrew Wisdom,' *JQR* 60 (1), pp. 9-26). Skinner suggests a date of between 380-180 B.C.E. for the writing of Proverbs, and believes that this is also when Job and Ecclesiastes were also written.

[426] This is not an unlikely hypothesis due to the natural transition of legends and concepts from neighbouring countries, especially ones with whom the Israelites had significant relationships with. (see: Smith, William Stevenson (1951) 'The Relationship between Egyptian Ideas and Old Testament Thought,' *JBR* 19 (1), pp. 12-15). However, the idea remains an unproven hypothesis, which if it proven to be accurate would allow for a wide range of possible dates as these foreign transferences could have

related, suggesting that a redactor collected works composed by different writers who held similar views,[427] which in turn serves to amplify the theological unity of the collection.

These introductory chapters are generally accepted as being compiled later than the sayings themselves, allowing the redactor greater opportunity for thematic development and linguistic alterations. Their primary purpose is to present justification for the acceptance of the following sayings by comparing the benefits of wisdom with the consequences of rejecting it. Chapter 8, in which this section's chosen passage sits, discusses the ancestry of wisdom; the time of her birth and her role in creation, preceded by a list of her characteristics. The creation hymn of vv.22-31 is believed to be a later addition to the body of the passage. This is premised on, but not entirely supported by, a comparison between the Hebrew text and the LXX, which implies that the chapter is interrupted by a thematic break and requires the writer to redefine its original purpose following the closure of the hymn.[428] This focal shift is likely the result of later editors, who each added their own insight and elaboration to the original text, suggesting that the composition occurred over an extended period before arriving at its final form.[429]

To emphasise the interconnected nature of chapters 1-9, the creation hymn in 8:22-31 appears to be itself an expansion of the concept laid out in 3:19-20 where it states: 'The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.' The non-violent depiction of creation in these verses aligns closely with the creative acts in *Genesis*, thereby implying that they are representative of late Hebrew tradition of creation. Any reference to the chaos monster has been suppressed and replaced by a single omnipotent and omniscient deity. Alan Lenzi suggests that the relationship between

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occurred at any point in their long histories. Furthermore, it would place Proverbs 1-9 'in active polemic against Canaanite religion.' (Clifford, Richard J. (1975) 'Proverbs IX: A Suggested Ugaritic Parallel,' *VT* 25 (2), p. 299).

[427] Alternatively, others have suggested that the books may have been an original collection of essays penned by a single writer into which smaller portions were inserted as interludes. See: Fox, Michael V. (1997) 'Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,' *JBL* 116 (4) and Fox, Michael V. (2007) 'The Epistomology of the Book of Proverbs,' *JBL* 126 (4). Dell leans toward an assemblage of the works of several wise men divided into 'subunits that are well structured, coherent, and clear in their articulation of themes and proper living.' (summarised in Perdue, Leo G. (2008) 'Katharine J. Dell, *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context*,' *JR* 88 (3) pp. 394-6).

[428] Whybray, R. Norman (1996) 'Some Literary Problems in Proverbs I-IX,' *VT* 16 (4), pp. 482-496.

[429] Fox, Michael V. (2000) *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Doubleday, New York, pp. 328-9.

Proverbs 3:19-20 and 8:22-31 is based upon unique verbal usage and poetic parallelism. He believes that author of the latter had access to the former and that the differences between them (i.e. the change from third to first person) is caused by his desire to situate it within the older traditions behind 8:1-21 in which personified wisdom is describing herself.[430] This demands that any additions to the text are altered accordingly. The use of the same root word and imagery as employed by Second Isaiah posits that the writer was heavily influenced by his works, drawing upon them to shape wisdom's account of creation.[431] This implies that the account might have been influenced by the concepts of the Mesopotamian *Enuma Elish*, much like the other creation accounts of the Hebrew Bible, although much more indirectly.

Lady Wisdom has been recognised as sharing features with the wisdom goddess of Canaan, Isis from the Hellenistic period and the Egyptian Ma'at, the last of which is usually accepted as having the closest resemblance. Ma'at acts as the epitome of certain attributes; for example, she represents order and justice but cannot prescribe them.[432] She represented the ongoing process of creation and the cosmic order established by the high god. Finally, she was the embodiment of truth and harmony, and one ensures societal consonance by following her.[433] Lady Wisdom's similar relationship to wisdom, truth, order and the continued pursuit of these has led commentators to interpret her treatise through an Egyptian lens.[434] The disparity between the Egyptian and Hebrew codes of ethics, however, can produce misleading results as the former punished action that disturbed the established social order whilst the latter was based upon moral absolutes.[435] Nevertheless, their correspondence persists in their shared qualities and their roles as agents through which their respective deities created the world.

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[430] Lenzi, Alan (2006) 'Proverbs 8:22-31,' *JBL* 125 (4), pp. 687-714. Instead, she is more often seen by scholars as a hypostasis rather than a deity. See footnote 441 below.

[431] Ludwig, Theodore M. (1973) 'The Traditions of the Establishing of the Earth in Deutero-Isaiah,' *JBL* 92 (3), p. 355. It is in wisdom's role as a messenger between man and God that she is presented as qualified in speaking of the creation of the world. (Lenzi, Alan (2006) 'Proverbs 8:22-31,' *JBL* 125 (4); and Fox, Michael V. (1997) 'Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,' *JBL* 116 (4), pp. 627-9).

[432] Fox, Michael V. (1997) 'Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,' *JBL* 116 (4), pp. 624-5. Ma'at is indentified as both an abstract force as well as an anthropomorphised deity, also inspiring figures such as the Hesiodic Metis. (Faraone, Christopher A. & Teeter, Emily (2004) 'Egyptian Maat and Hesiodic Metis,' *Mnemosyne*, Fourth Series 57 (2), pp. 177-208).

[433] Littleton, C. Scott (2002) *Mythology: The Illustrated Anthology of World Myth and Storytelling*, Duncan Baird Publishers, London, p. 21.

[434] Murphy, Roland E. (1981) 'Hebrew Wisdom,' *JAOS* 101 (1), p. 26. See also: Kayatz, C. (1966) 'Studien zu Proberien 1-9,' *WMATN* 22, pp. 76-134 who similarly believed that there was an unmistakeable link between Ma'at and the Lady Wisdom of Proverbs.

[435] Smith, William Stevenson (1951) 'The Relationship between Egyptian Ideas and Old Testament Thought,' *JBR* 19 (1), pp. 12-15.

While Lady Wisdom's character is related to her Egyptian counterpart, connecting her speech to the Mesopotamian epic requires somewhat of a conceptual leap. There are no exact semantic parallels between the two, but rather thematic correlations that are arguably the result of transmission through Second-Isaiah. Wisdom is described as coming into existence before creation, which naturally evokes the idea of Tiamat in the mind of the scholar, although the writer contradicts this potential association by deliberately depicting her in terms that make her desirable and accessible. Furthermore, the passage's chosen vocabulary denies her deification, resorting to a common tool of asserting the primacy of a figure through its primogeniture.[436] In this way, Yahweh is exalted over the ancient Near Eastern gods, and Tiamat's role in the creative process is diminished. On the other hand, Yahweh's superiority is not in question; the temporal clauses that are predominantly employed as brief reminders of the established narrative of creation are used here to stress the significance of Lady Wisdom herself.[437]

In 8:22-23 it states: 'the Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.' These verses are often discussed in tandem with Job's assertion that the behemoth was Yahweh's first creation. In Israelite culture, primogeniture determined inheritance and served as justification for the significance of one thing over another. The correlation between *Job* and *Proverbs* forces the reader to resolve the contradiction and decide which figure deserves primacy: the behemoth or Lady Wisdom.[438] However, the closeness of the language suggests that the author of one had access to the text of the other, ultimately indicating that the shared imagery was deliberately transferred.[439]

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[436] Lenzi, Alan (2006) 'Proverbs 8:22-31,' *JBL* 125 (4).

[437] In this way, the temporal clauses deviate from their non-biblical purpose, due to the topic of creation being secondary to its focus on the character of wisdom. In determining this, Whybray examines the *Book of Apophis*, the *Enuma Elish* and *The Creation of the World by Marduk*, and notes that the example in Genesis may serve as an exemption to the rule due to its multiple possible translations. He states that these clauses have 'nothing to do with establishing God's antiquity (as in *Apophis*) or his glory (as in the Mesopotamian texts) [for] these things are all taken for granted in the very first words of the text.' (Whybray R. Norman (1965) 'Proverbs VIII 22-31 and Its Supposed Prototypes,' *VT* 15 (4), pp. 507-512.
See also: Story, Cullen I. K. (1945) 'The Book of Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Literature,' *JBL* 64 (3), p. 337 which clarifies the point that Lady Wisdom is never depicted as an actual goddess in these verses, despite her personification.

[438] Robertson, David (1990) 'Job and Ecclesiastes,' *SAIJ* 56 (4), pp. 257-272. Robertson believes that if the statement in Proverbs is correct and that Lady Wisdom is the first of Yahweh's works 'then the friends are right' and that this would contradict the Lord's chastisement of them in his own speech, but he counters with his hypothesis that if the behemoth remains the "first," then this untameable part of the animal kingdom contradicts his creation of them through wisdom.

[439] Perdue, Leo G. (1991) *Wisdom in Revolt*, p. 222.

Alternatively, if one examines the hypothesis presented by Lenzi alongside this seemingly contradictory similarity, one might posit another interpretation.

If the formation of Lady Wisdom occurred before the creation of the world, and if this imagery evoked ideas of Tiamat, and if the behemoth in *Job* was also a representation of the chaos monster (albeit in a more naturalised guise than Leviathan), one might postulate that Lady Wisdom is an adaptation of the behemoth. This would serve to nullify the contradiction that both are the first of Yahweh's works. It is already established that the author took great pains to reverse the tone of her primordial creation and to remove from her the implications of chaos and disorder, thus situating her within a peaceful creative setting. Furthermore, if one examines this feature in tandem with vv.30b-31 declaration that 'I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race,' it is possible to see an expression of childlike joy, similar to Leviathan's nature in *Psalm* 104. This would further distance Lady Wisdom from any chaotic undertones, and also imply that the text of *Job* preceded the introductory chapters of *Proverbs*. While this would explain the contradiction, the correspondence is perhaps more an exercise of imagination rather than actuality.

A different hypothesis revolves around her classification as a personification or a deified presence based on the common usages of the Hebrew term *qnny* קנני, translated in v.22 as 'created.'[440] William Irwin determined that in only 5/188 instances did it take the meaning of 'create,' and it remained highly contested in each. He concluded that this translation was indefensible and proposed that its predominant meaning referred to the act of begetting or of acquisition. Therefore, Lady Wisdom becomes an abstract force, an internal characteristic of Yahweh personified as a witness to his creative acts. As a reflection of a divine quality, her desirability is increased, and the idea of her hypostatisation is rejected.[441] Many scholars remain discontent with the identification of

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[440] Based on the root word *qanah* קנה, the use of the word in the current context has remained uncertain. Its general meaning is associated with the act ot possessing, acquiring, begetting (through giving birth) or to create, with the Ugaratic usage of the verb being as similarly varied. It is suggested in HALOT that the primary translation here is likely to be associated with the act of creation, or with acquisition. See: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1996) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol III, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, pp. 1111-2.

[441] Irwin, William A. (1961) 'Where Shall Wisdom be Found,' *JBL*80 (2), pp. 133-142. Using similar logic and by denying entirely the usage of the word *qny*'s ability to carry the meaning of "create," Bruce Vawter expresses that Yahweh was not the 'creator of wisdom but its discoverer,' implying that wisdom actually preceded the existence of God, however, this premise is not textually supported. (Vawter, Bruce (1980) 'Prov 8:22,' *JBL* 99 (2), pp. 205-216) For example, verse 23 uses the *niphal* form of נסך "set, install,"

Lady wisdom as a divine attribute, but acknowledge that such a personification conforms to the demands of Israelite tradition.[442]

One final alternative links the imagery to the Greek myth of Athena. Suggesting that v.22a should be rendered as 'the Lord brought me forth/possessed me at the beginning of his work,' this theory claims that the use of the poetical element of *qnny* depicts Yahweh as an origin point.[443] Additionally, the procreative undertones are thought as reflective of earlier foreign materials. In the Greek tradition, Athena, the goddess of wisdom, rationality, justice and order, emerged fully formed from the head of her father Zeus after he consumed her pregnant mother, Metis. A hypostasis, and now divorced from her maternal ancestry, Athena embodied the wisdom of her father.[444] Lady Wisdom is similarly the product of a sole progenitor, although there is no hint of a mother figure as there is in the Greek myth. She is in vv.30-31 pictured sitting at the feet of her god as a child, and in vv.32-36 addressing mankind as her children who should follow her instructions.[445] Her simultaneous role as daughter and patron justifies her role as witness to creation and ongoing guide in the preservation of cosmic order.

Having established Lady Wisdom's right to describe the creative events, the text goes on to explain the pre-creation cosmic state. The likelihood that the writer of *Proverbs* was aware of the Mesopotamian creation myth, whether as a primary source, or as a secondary one through other works makes the presentation of the primeval state appear to be a commentary on the earlier account. The underlying premise of Lady Wisdom's speech is that she is the first of Yahweh's works, and that he, by definition, already existed. In vv.24-26, she outlines that this took place 'when there were no

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indicating that it is to be read in the passive voice, i.e. "I was installed," therefore challenging Vawter's suggestion that wisdom preceded Yahweh. (See: Brown, F.; Driver, S.; Briggs, C. (2007) *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, pp. 888-9; and Strong, James (2001) *The New Strong's Expanded Dictionary of Bible Words*, p. 788 although Strongs dictionary suggests that while "to get, acquire, earn" are the dominant translations, it can carry the meaning of "create" in certain poetic passages). Similarly, when utilising Lenzi's relationship between 8:22-31 and 3:19-20 it is evident that wisdom, understanding and knowledge are all ascribed to Yahweh as attributes and not as previously existent independent entities. Furthermore, compare 3:19-20 to 24:3-4 where it states 'by wisdom he laid the earth's foundations' and 'by wisdom a house is built' respectively displaying the transferability of wisdom from God to man, and the emphasis that creative acts are performed through knowledge and wisdom alone.

[442] Murphy, Roland E. & Carm, O (1985) 'Wisdom and Creation,' *JBL* 104 (1), p. 28.

[443] See also the writings of the author of *Proverbs* 2:6 who says that 'the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding,' epitomising the belief that wisdom both originated from and is disseminated by Yahweh.

[444] See: Harris, Stephen L.; Platzner, Gloria (2008) *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*, 5th ed., McGraw-Hill Higher Education, New York, pp. 196-200; and Hornblower, Simon; Spawforth, Antony (2003) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed. revised, Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 201-2.

[445] Fox, Michael V. (1997) 'Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9,' *JBL* 116 (4), p. 629.

depths […] when there were no springs abounding with water […] before the mountains had been shaped […] when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bit of soil.' In doing this she distances the deep and its connotations from being present during the primeval period, and eliminates the dualistic co-existence of the forces of good and evil from the narrative.

The demythologised allusions to the Mesopotamian myth lie in vv.27-29 and their description of the creation of the heavens and the earth. Significantly, the assigning of the waters' boundaries in v.29, which are primarily associated with the rebellion of the chaos monster, appears after the establishment of the heavens in v.27 and the skies being made firm in v.28, which further serves to separate the slaying of the monster from the creative event as was seen in *Genesis* 1 with the separation of the heavens and earth occurring before the introduction of the sea monsters. However, while the necessity for conflict is removed, some scholars suggest that Yahweh received aid from Lady Wisdom. This debate is focused upon the proper rendition of the term *'amon* אמון in v.30a, which has primarily been translated in one of two ways.[446] The first understands the term as 'master craftsman,' and as an active participant in the creative process, and the second as 'nursling' or 'child,' and taking on the role of a passive witness.

There are admittedly weaknesses to both translations. The introduction of wisdom as an active agent would be unique to this context and is a relatively recent understanding of the text, thus making it improbable that this was the intended meaning. On the other hand, translating it as a passive agent results in grammatical disagreement between *'amon*, which is written in its masculine form, and its subject (Lady Wisdom), with the expectation that it should be rendered in the feminine to accord with the first person.[447] There was considerable confusion surrounding the meaning and vocalisation of the word even in the earliest commentaries, as each possible translation had its own merits and drawbacks. Examining the support from the ancient commentaries, Robert Scott concluded that while each could make contextual sense, the most likely lay in the

[446] For example, see: Hurowitz, Victor Avigdor (1999) 'Nursling, Advisor, Architect? אמון and the Role of Wisdom in Proverbs 8,22-31,' *Biblica* 80 (3), pp. 391-400; Weeks, Stuart (2006) 'The Context and Meaning of Proverbs 8:30a,' *JBL* 125 (3), pp. 433-442; Fox, Michael V. (1996) ',Amon Again,' *JBL* 115 (4), pp. 699-702; and Scott, Robert B. Y (1960) 'Wisdom in Creation: The 'amôn of Proverbs VIII 30,' *VT* 10 (2), pp. 213-223. See also: Koehler, Ludwig & Baumgartner (1994) *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Vol I, E.J. Brill, Leiden, New York, Köln, p. 62.

[447] Weeks, Stuart, (2006) 'The Context and Meaning of Proverbs 30a,' *JBL* 125 (3), pp. 433-442. Weeks states that when scholars attempt to marry the terms grammatically often 'obscures the very technical sense of the verb' (p. 434).

concept of personified wisdom as the representation of divine order, much like the Egyptian Ma'at. As such, he conceives of the term as serving a congruous role that aligns with the overall presentation of wisdom in chapters 1-9, i.e. in the capacity of a binding agent between Yahweh and humanity.[448] This translation supports her status as a literary personification rather than a physical hypostasis, and denies her the deification accorded to her counterparts.[449]

Another different, but improbable, theory in the positioning of Lady Wisdom as being at the side of Yahweh 'like a master worker,' she could be described in similar terms as that of the earth-diver. The earth-diver was positioned as a helper to his deity and his role in creation was generally depicted as one who must literally dive into the depths of the primal waters and return with some material that the creator lacks, such as mud or sand, so that he can perform his creative feats.[450] This act of fetching is crucial to the creation process, but does not place the helper in an active state in that they do not participate in the specific act of creation (in the majority of cases), but rather enables their deity to do so. The tenuous correlation between Lady Wisdom and the earth-diver is inexact, as she does not fetch materials for Yahweh. However, her presence could be described as enabling him to create when one takes into account the many verses that account for him creating by or with wisdom.

Finally, v.30a's syntactical link with the following verse and its declaration that 'I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world, and delighting in the human race,' presents an image of a child who, after watching their parent build them a tree-house, delights in its completion. Temporally situating these verses after the completion of the creation process creates a feeling reminiscent of *Genesis* 1's declaration that 'it was good.' Despite this, the poem seems more concerned

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[448] Scott, Robert B. Y (1960) 'Wisdom in Creation: The 'amôn of Proverbs VIII 30,' *VT* 10 (2), p. 215. Scott bases his conclusion on the fact that this rendering is supported by the LXX, the Syriac and the Vulgate, and is 'in keeping with both the immediate and larger context,' however, his opinion is also influenced by a New Testament concept in which Wisdom and the person of Jesus is synonymous through the allegory of both being able to represent the "Word," shown through *John* 1:1-3 in which it states: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.'

[449] This premise is challenged by those who accept a very late date for the origins of these chapters and the theory that the Hebrew concept of wisdom was highly influenced by that of the Greek tradition, which would not allow for the simple personification of wisdom without the implication of godhood (de Savinac, J. (1962) 'La sagesse en Proverbs VIII 22-31,' *VT* 12 (2), pp. 211-215).

[450] Dundes, Alan (1962) 'Earth-Diver: Creations of the Mythopoeic Male,' *AANS* 64 (5: Part 1) pp. 1032-1051. Earth-Diver myths are most prominent in the America's, although also exist in the Eurasian regions, and the helpers were traditionally animals, although later versions saw a sort of dualism and role reversal being introduced to the myth type. See also: Köngäs, Elli Kaija (1960) 'The Earth-Diver,' *Ethnohistory* 7 (2), pp. 151-180.

with the reliability of wisdom as opposed to her role in creation; her testimony is not specifically designed to provide another account of Yahweh's creative acts but to defend her own worth.[451] Nevertheless, her position can only be guaranteed by her service to the highest god, whose own position is attested to by the text's offering of him as the single subject to the creative verb, thereby removing all challengers to his authority.

The correspondence between *Psalm* 104 and the *Hymn to Aten* has also resulted in a suggested connection between the latter and *Proverbs* through the equation of wisdom and desire. The *Hymn to Aten* reads 'how manifold it is, what you have made […] oh sole god, beside whom there is no other! You created the earth for your desire, while you were alone.'[452] The rest of the Egyptian pantheon was denied, and their presence was eliminated from the period of creation, thereby affirming him as the sole creator. Whilst his reign was short-lived, the Aten of this period was a jealous, universal god who, unaided, created the world and everything that lived upon it and would brook no competition. He did not absorb the surrounding gods henotheistically, but simply voided their claim to godhood and thus their authority.[453] In similar fashion, the characters that traditionally took part in the creative process were eliminated by the author of proverbs as a result of the ever-increasing importance of monotheistic thought. Conflict is born through the existence of rivals, and the insistence that Yahweh created alone and unhindered, through wisdom and knowledge rather than force simultaneously affirms his creative authority whilst denying the power of those usually associated with it.

Proverbs is often dismissed as a book of little theological significance due to its lack of contact with salvation history. The language and imagery employed by the author of *Proverbs* 8 brings to mind the creative acts as set out in *Isaiah* and *Psalms*, and yet Yahweh is not the main character of the text. Instead, the focus remains on Lady Wisdom; whose role as a guide depends on her identity, and whose depiction of Yahweh

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[451] Weeks, Stuart, (2006) 'The Context and Meaning of Proverbs 30a,' *JBL* 125 (3), pp. 339-41. Weeks states that this translation, that the poem is focused on the fidelity of Wisdom through her ongoing relationship to Yahweh, has fallen out of favour with modern scholars, but that it was popular in ancient times. Similarly, Victor Hurvitz describes this passage as 'a description of things done to Wisdom or Wisdom's own actions corresponding with the different stages of YHWH's activity. Wisdom stands cetre stage describing her life against a backdrop of YHWH's creative works' (Hurowitz, Victor Avigdor (1999) 'Nursling, Advisor, Architect? אמון and the Role of Wisdom in Proverbs 8,22-31,' *Biblica* 80 (3), pp. 392-3), the implication being that Lady Wisdom must recommend her own worth in respect to Yahweh and his creation.

[452] Lorton, David (1993) 'God's Beneficent Creation: Coffin Texts Spell 1130, the Instructions for Merikare, and the Great Hymn to Aton,' *SAK* 20, pp. 125-155.

[453] Nikipowetzky, V. (1975) 'Ethical Monotheism,' *Daedelus* 104 (2: Wisdom, Revelation and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millenium B.C.), p. 74.

depends on her reliability, both of which are rooted in her connection to the creative acts. She may be a foreign importation, and her forebears may have played a part in creation, either as personifications or hypostasisations. However, she was filtered through the writer's monotheistic mindset as he wove the tale of creation from her perspective. The inclusion of the creation account may have been incidental, and yet its narrative lies in agreement with the progression of the Hebrew narrative towards an entirely peaceful creative event.

CHAPTER FOUR

ISRAEL: INTERTEXTUALITY

INTERWOVEN CONNECTIONS

It is evident that in much of the recent discussion the Hebrew creation stories have been labelled as being either devoid of all mythological traces, or being so reliant on foreign mythology that their accounts can only be interpreted through these importations. It is one of the premises of this thesis that neither viewpoint is entirely accurate. There is no doubt that the Hebrew writers leaned heavily on the mythological imagery of their neighbours, however, the measure of its preservation was determined by their religious agendas. In the modern day, most of these texts are treated individually, in isolation from one another and yet their interconnectedness is far more significant than previously imagined. As a whole, the passages discussed above are representative of a long literary history, and each text appears to show awareness of at least one of the others, through grammatical and linguistic similarities or through shared imagery and concepts.

When examined side by side one is able to see the development of ideas, and the influence that Hebrew thought had on the utilisation of the ancient Near Eastern mythology with its elimination of conflict from the creation narrative. Every mythological episode was deliberately chosen, although they were not all as demythologised as popularly believed. Their imagery was used to evoke specific ideas and concepts in the hearers' minds. Some passages retain stronger imagery according to their contextual requirements, but each has been adapted to suit that which the Hebrew Bible wished to define as the Hebrew mindset. In each case, the authorship of the individual texts, as well as the books in which they are contained, remains highly contested. They are reflective of multiple authors, or prophets and scholars, sages and 'kings,' whose context varied across time and geography and whose situations conceivably ranged from peacetime to exile.

As it is nigh impossible to fix determinate dates upon these texts, it has been shown that the general consensus amongst scholars is that these books are all post-exilic; however, the belief that their contents contain older, pre-exilic sources has become more prevalent. Moses is no longer accepted as the author of the Pentateuch with the advent of the modern critical theory. In the same way, Isaiah is considered to be not one man, but two or three; King David, to whom was attributed much of the psalmic literature, has been stripped of that title and Solomon is no longer seen as the author of the proverbs. With so much uncertainty and contention regarding the writers themselves, it would seem difficult to connect any of these texts together thematically, and yet the agenda of each seems to be impacted by the desire to cement the sovereignty of the Hebrew God above all others. As such, their mythic sources and their related imagery have been employed in furthering that specific religious schema.÷

It is possible to speculate from the foreign imagery contained within each passage the degree of its separation from its source material. For example, if there has been little alteration then one might consider it to be relatively close to the earlier version, either temporally or geographically, although the development of any particular mythic theme is often dependent on the the writer's purpose for incorporating it, which can in turn impact a perception of the degree of proximity. Similarly, one might perceive more than one foreign influence that served to shape the outcome of the texts. Each seems to rely on different source material; some relying on Babylonian or Ugaritic ideas, whilst others include Egyptian imagery. However, as the difficulty dating the texts ultimately obscures the progress of their mythological transmission, one must inevitably remain in the realm of assumption.

Based on the information hitherto provided, it might be reasonable to suppose that *Psalm* 89 represents the earliest text, taking into account its strong parallels to Ugaritic and Mesopotamian models and the existence of the divine council. These are suggestive of an earlier notion of Yahweh, in which his sovereignty over the gods of the other pantheons and his heavenly council may have only been newly established in the greater Israelite community. The memories of the primeval battle are only lightly buried by the author of this psalm who employs the chaotic waters and Rahab as the sea monster to reinforce Yahweh's supremacy and thereby justify belief in the promise of perpetuation for the Davidic line. Despite this, Rahab was not pictured in the chaotic glory of her mythic predecessors and as such was powerless against the creator of the earth and everything in it.

On the other hand, *Isaiah* 51 shares close mythological ties to *Psalm* 89, and similarly uses the image of the destruction of Rahab to demonstrate the power of the Hebrew God. This text is often referenced as proof of the primal battle between Yahweh and the powers of chaos, although it is better known for its assimilation of the creation myth with the exodus tradition, making Rahab synonymous with Egypt as opposed to the ancient Near Eastern chaos monster. The text was directed towards the followers of the God of Abraham and accordingly adheres to strict monotheism. Rahab's power is mocked in comparison to Yahweh, who is depicted as being able to stir up her wrath without fear.

Both of these examples were utilised to reinforce the superiority of Yahweh over the ancient gods, and drew upon the strongest image of chaos and evil available to them to achieve this. Furthermore, despite their contextual necessity to depict Yahweh as a conqueror, both declared his unshared creative power. It seems probable that the two authors had access to the same source, or perhaps even that Second-Isaiah drew upon the work of the psalmist based on the closeness of the imagery between them, and the suggested progressive element of the former away from latter through its integration of the cosmic battle with the Red Sea tradition. Together, these two accounts arguably represent the most ancient and least altered versions of the cosmic battle.

The imagery of *Proverbs* 8 has been similarly connected to the traditions of *Psalm* 89 and *Isaiah* 51 but is rooted in wisdom theology. Accordingly, the battle between Tiamat and Marduk has been eliminated and replaced with a peaceful creative setting, suggesting that this passage is further removed from the original than both Isaiah and the psalmist. The primary objective of the poem is to establish the identity of wisdom based on its connection to the period of creation. It incorporates Egyptian and Canaanitic aspects into its composition, implying that the author had access to a greater number of cultures upon which to draw in his attempt to present Yahweh as single creative force and Lady Wisdom as a trustworthy witness of his deeds.

Further than this, the introductory chapters of *Proverbs* 8 are believed to contain links to the closing chapters of *Job*, suggesting that the quest to compile Hebrew wisdom allowed for access to many Hebrew texts, as well as enabling it to act as a crossover point in the development of the concepts of creation. This can be seen in Yahweh's rhetorical question to Job in 38:4 when he asks 'where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding,' which mirrors *Proverbs* 8:27 'I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep.' Using the same picture to express the

creation of the earth, the writer depicts Lady Wisdom as being able to answer the unanswerable questions set by Yahweh, which permitted her to comment upon his actions and the laws he has set upon the earth. Her story acts as a pivot point in the timeline between the older, mythological vestiges and the emerging Israelite mindset that continued to shape their usage in the Hebrew Bible.

From these observations, the other three accounts included in these chapters would seem to be representative of a later tradition, one that had spent more time be moulded by a monotheistic Hebrew filter. Of these, *Job* was originally believed to be the oldest, although as its vocabulary and linguistic features display evidence of anachronism this interpretation was discarded, instead being defined as a text that was the product of a long transmission history. Yahweh's speech shares links to the narrative progression in *Genesis* and *Psalm* 104, and the intricacies and depth of its treatise imply that they are a further expansion of the psalm, indicating that it may have been a later addition to the wisdom corpus, postdated only by *Proverbs* and *Genesis* in the present study.

The sources employed by the Joban writers appear firmly accepted as being rooted in the pre-exilic era, although the book was not completed until after the exile. Furthermore, they seemed not only extremely knowledgeable of the Hebrew language, but were also highly aware of the ancient Near Eastern perspectives and mythological legends. The composition of this text challenged many contemporary polytheistic conceptions; in depicting Yahweh as both creator and ongoing sustainer of the world it rejected the idea of the generational succession of the gods. Furthermore, his mastery over the natural phenomena contradicted the notion of divine geographic and geocentric limitations. Finally, declaring as the creator of the behemoth and Leviathan denies the possibility of identifying them as Yahweh's dualistic opposites as the personifications of chaos and instead reinforces their subservience to him.

In the past, *Psalm* 104 was considered to be one of the oldest creation texts through the claim that it found its origins in the monarchic period. While this is no longer the case, it is, at the very least, arguably the oldest creation text in the Hebrew Bible founded in wisdom theology. As an expansive poetical rendition of the creation narrative, it follows the same Mesopotamian and Canaanitic models in describing creation itself, but focuses primarily on the ongoing relationship Yahweh shares with it. Yahweh became a recognisable force to the hearers, presented as he was in his heavenly abode and couched in solar imagery. In this way he effectively supplanted any sun god previously

worshipped by the Israelites. Furthermore, his creative acts are presented architecturally, which emphasises the idea of careful and deliberate planning.

The psalms were not designed as a teaching aid, rather their purpose was predominantly doxological, composed in response to genuine emotions; rejoicing in praise or crying out in sadness. Many of the psalms that utilised the creation imagery did so in order to justify or encourage faithfulness and obedience as was the case in *Psalm* 89; however, the writer of this psalm sought instead to justify Yahweh's right to be worshipped. He had knowledge of many traditions and used each to his advantage. He transformed the figure of Leviathan, which was conceived in *Job* as the fiercest natural creature and the strongest supernatural entity that one could imagine, into nothing more than an animal confined to the realm of the seas, which sports there, much like a dolphin plays in the waves.

This ultimately returns us to *Genesis*, the stories that introduce any discussion of biblical creation and are dismissed more often than not as late and contradictory sources. It is now generally accepted that *Genesis* represents the final development of the Hebrew tradition of creation, and while the dating of these accounts remains controversial, its contradictions are minimised by their adherence to a single creator and alternate points of view. *Genesis* 2-3 sits more in line with the ancient Near Eastern myths, in its increased focus on the creation of mankind. Its purpose is etiological; to introduce the patriarchal history and lay out the social mores that would reinforce the cultural and religious development of the Israelites. It addresses the loss of the Golden Age, humanity's failure to obtain immortality, and the roots of human suffering.

While there is no reference to the primeval battle in *Genesis* 2-3, scholars have argued that the faintest glimmer of it exists in *Genesis* 1. This account presents a liturgical version of the story, hypothesised as an outgrowth of the ancient (though fleeting) Egyptian concept of creation through the spoken word. The liturgical nature of the narrative and its purposeful symmetry is indicative of the manipulation and demythologisation of the concepts therein. Similarly, it served as an ideal format within which to present a narrative stripped of any dualistic tendencies and evidence of any primeval conflict. The text's allusion to Tiamat is minimal, her role in the creative process diminished and her chaotic identity buried beneath a new façade.

Additionally, the weariness of the ancient Near Eastern gods after the performance of their acts of creation is repressed by the stated purpose of the Sabbath day, and

expressing the reason as to why the day is holy. In other words, there is no sense of fatigue in the Hebrew text, rather God rested because his work was finished. Similarly, instead of being replaced by a younger and more dominant deity after his feats, Yahweh is established as sovereign over all things through his creation of them, which also serves to differentiate him from the geographically confined gods of the ancient world. Finally, the writer of this narrative sought to defy the commonly accepted low-view of humanity, declaring them instead to be formed in the image of God, a privilege that was principally reserved for the royal families. *Genesis* 1 is the target of much criticism, it is admittedly the most unique of all of the Hebrew creation stories, and yet it acts as the foundation of the tenets of Hebrew religion and its concept of the character of God.

In these stories, assertions of monotheism shine at different intensities through borrowed mythological imagery. It is possible to see the gradual solidification of monotheistic thought in the alterations made to the creation narratives as they became further embedded in the Hebrew system of thought and were propagated as 'truths.' By the time that the extant version of *Genesis* 1-3 was compiled, the conflict had been entirely replaced by a single deity who created without aid, and without rival. His supremacy becomes established not because he was victorious in the battle, but because he alone was first and there was no other being by which he could be challenged.[454] Despite this, the echoes of conflict can be seen if one is determined to look for them, however, one must also be willing to acknowledge when the imagery has been relegated to the subtext and assumed new meaning.

There is no doubt that the Hebrew authors drew upon a rich corpus of mythological material from many of their neighbours, just as there is no doubt that they possessed a very specific agenda in the myths' every adaptation and survival. Their goal was to break away from the henotheistic tendencies of the past, and to reject the worship of the gods of their neighbours that persisted throughout much of the Hebrew Bible. They used the existing imagery to incite understanding and evoke common concepts within the mind of the general listener, but introduced them through a desire to establish Yahweh as the only true god. Almost every aspect of the creation imagery is traceable to earlier ideas

[454] On this point, based on her study of the the *Chaoskampf* theme throughout the poetic passages in the Hebrew Bible, Rebecca Watson believes that 'the language of "chaos" has been inappropriately applied to the material her considered, and that there is a strong case for abandoning it in respect of the Old Testament.' She argues that there is no true combat in these passages (including those which have been discussed in this thesis) for there is no possibility of the lesser partner gaining ascendancy over Yahweh, in fact there is no reaction from the sea or its inhabitants other than compliance. See: Watson, Rebecca S. (2005) *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the "Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin, pp. 369-71.

and it is evident that the Hebrew writers were heavily influenced by the ancient Near Eastern myths, literature and oral tradition. That being said, they were ultimately devoted to Yahweh, and this coloured everything they wrote, every image they used and every concept they reinforced.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHINA: THE BACKGROUND

5.1 CHINA, MYTH AND THE RISING INTEREST IN CHINESE COSMOGONY

The world of Chinese creation mythology has long been considered unique; its content, form and purpose so alien that they appear incomparable to the long established histories of the likes of Egypt or Mesopotamia. It is a field that, when compared to the length, breadth and depth of scholarly studies on those such as the Greco-Roman traditions, is still very much in its infancy. It has suffered acutely under the weight of almost absolute dismissal as a mythological tradition in its own right; with many of its survivals seen either as foreign imports or so minimalistic that they barely warranted study. Furthermore, China's legends, folklore and oral narratives have been predominantly excluded from the works of highly respected comparative scholars such as Puhvel and Dumézil.

Interest in Chinese mythological studies has risen sharply in the last fifty years, although as recently as 1971, Sinologist Frederic Mote noted that 'the Chinese, among all peoples ancient and recent, primitive and modern, are apparently unique in having no creation myth; that is, they have regarded the world and man as uncreated, as constituting the central features of a spontaneously self-generating cosmos having no creator, god, ultimate cause or will external to itself.'[455] This mindset prevailed until the 80's and was a contributing factor in the exclusion of Chinese creation mythology on the world stage. The perception of an 'uncreated' people and culture was challenging to the Western worldview in which everything on earth was a reproduction of heavenly models and human creativity was limited by divine potential.[456] Accordingly, Chinese cosmogony

[455] Mote, Frederic W. (1971) *Intellectual Foundations of China*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, pp. 17-18.
[456] Wong, Sit-kit (1987) *Notes on Poetry from the Ginger Studio by Fuzhi Wang*, Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, p. xiv.

was barred from comparative mythological studies through the apparent inability to associate earthly forms to heavenly archetypes.

It was soon pointed out that it was a grave error to consider China as a country without a mythic history. On the contrary, the myths of ancient China constitute a corpus that is as equally inspiring and imaginative as those of the ancient Near East.[457] This being the case, one must wonder why so many eminent twentieth century scholars disputed their existence. There are many possible explanations for this assumption, including the inability to recognise common mythic themes within the Chinese creation myths' dissimilar presentations. However, the most prevalent theory regards the fragmentation of the mythological corpus and the attribution of its survivals to relatively late dates in Chinese history.[458] The lateness of these accounts temporally situated them in an era when the cultural and religious foundations were established, which resulted in their assimilation with contemporary social mores.[459] China lacked a systematic mythological tradition such as those produced by Hesiod and Homer, but this does not negate their existence.

Many Chinese myths were redacted and repurposed into political and religious treatises. Their meanings and significance are altered in these transitions, although they maintained many of their etiological functions. This is visible, for example, in the *Huainanzi* myth of Nüwa 女娲 repairing the sky. At the conclusion of this narrative the female deity is relegated to a subservient position, denoting her acceptance of her proper place as dictated by contemporary society. Similarly, legendary characters of the old mythic stories such as the model emperors Yao 尧 and Yu 禹, are often perceived as undergoing a process of de-deification and are instead labelled as mortal exemplars.[460] The rationalisation of the divine figures into more tractable mortal forms has too often been posited as the root of the degradation of Chinese mythology.

The point of view that the mythological tradition has been forced to adopt and conform to Confucian philosophical standards during the Han era claims that there is little

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[457] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, pp. xi-xiii. Stated by Yuan Ke in his foreword to Birrell's book. See also: Goldin, Paul R. (2008) 'The Myth that China has No Creation Myth,' *MS* 56, pp. 1-22.
[458] Girardot, Norman J. (1976) 'The Problem of Creation Mythology in the Study of Chinese Religion,' *HR* 15 (4), pp. 289-318.
[459] Yong, Ren (1998) 'Cosmogony, Fictionality, Poetic Creativity: Western and Traditional Chinese Cultural Perspectives,' *CLS* 50 (2), pp. 98-119.
[460] Boltz calls this process "reverse euhemerisation." Boltz, William G. (1981) 'Kung Kung and the Flood: Reverse Euhemerism in the *Yao tien*,' *TP* 67 (3-5), pp. 141-153.

information to be gleaned about the earlier ages in the remnants.[461] Yet, despite being coloured by a Han lens, there remain vestiges of ancient culture, beliefs and society in their words. It is said that the very reason 'survivals' survive is because there is reason for their continued existence.[462] A certain point is made through them; an example, a piece of evidence that justifies current norms and standards. Their renowned or notorious characters were well known; their works, triumphs, battles and failures each served as suitable illustrations of the writer's new agenda.

Recent scholarship has challenged the earlier misconceptions regarding the fragmentation of Chinese myths. There may not be any homogenous versions of Chinese myths comparable to those transmitted by the great historians of the Greco-Roman traditions, nor were they organised in a similar fashion to those of the ancient Near East. Instead, they were the product of the culmination of many sources, and the ability of diverse writers to produce unrelated works whose mythic narratives remained relatively consistent advocates for a stronger tradition than was generally supposed.[463] It is in their plurality that the significance of the Chinese myths lays, and in the fundamental constancy of their characters and situations regardless of the varying levels of education, religious persuasion and political ties of their writers. The Chinese tradition questions the existence of a supreme deity; it offers alternate origins of the divine and moral law codes and the concept of morality. Their tradition demanded different responses than the Occidental world, which is why it suffered under the prejudice of non-existence for so long.

During the early years of this discipline, the discussion was directed by religious studies, and was heavily influenced by the immediate context of the researchers. In the middle of the twentieth century, Derk Bodde examined the reality that when he began his research, Sinological studies had been conducted in one of two ways. In the first, subject matter was analysed for its inspirational qualities; materials were treated as sacred canon and textual or historical criticism was sacrificed in search of religious implications. The second method, on the other hand, examined the text scientifically,

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[461] Girardot, Norman J. (1976) 'The Problem of Creation Mythology,' *HR* 15 (4), p. 295.
[462] James, Edwin O. (1964) *History of Religions*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, p. 206.
[463] See: Birrell, Anne (1994) 'Studies on Chinese Myth Since 1970: An Appraisal, Part 1,' *HR* 33 (4), pp. 380-393; and Birrell, Anne (1999) 'James Legge and the Chinese Biblical Tradition,' *HR* 38 (4), pp. 331-353. Birrell states here that the different authors 'whether he was a philosopher, political theorist, or chronicler, utilised remembered episodes of myth in very different ways, often rewriting the myth in a process of mythopoeia' (p. 333). See also: Yang, Lihui; An Deming; Turner, Jessica A. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 4.

investigating its overall strength and weakness based on the concepts contained within. Each method had its benefits and drawbacks, and therefore required a balance of the two fixed within the framework of the society as a whole in order to achieve a more complete understanding of the texts in question.[464] In the case of creation mythology in particular, the cosmogonical myths were more often used for political manoeuvring rather than for religious justification.[465] As such, the scholar must also take the political nature of history into account.

While the majority of scholars adhered to the belief that China shared no common ground with the European mythological systems, some postulated that the origins of Chinese culture could be found in Mesopotamia. The theory suggested that the rapid advancement of her early history was due to her reliance on the pre-established civilisations of the ancient Near East.[466] Assyriologists readily accepted the premise, whilst Sinologists remained sceptical due to factual inaccuracies. Based on the earlier works of the Jesuits, the hypothesis was ultimately rejected due to its declaration of monogenesis,[467] and while it did not have a lasting impact on Sinological studies, it featured prominently in the works of those with religious or missionary backgrounds.[468] Influenced by the desire to locate recognisable elements, scholars found reflections of their own beliefs in the Chinese classics, although these correlations are regularly thought to stretch the source material beyond its own capabilities.

For the Western scholar, China was the 'other,' it was something that seemed completely new and unfathomable in which no simple association with the Hellenic, Semitic or Indo-European traditions could be found. The other was formed through an innate need to qualify who we are and what constitutes our core; our lives and upbringings, our beliefs and convictions, and everything that makes us who we are. This can often only be achieved by describing ourselves in terms of what we are and what we are not in

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[464] Bodde, Derk (1947) 'Chinese Philosophy and the Social Sciences,' *PA* 20 (2), p. 199. Bodde states that in doing this 'the historian of philosophy should become more socially minded, and the social scientist more philosophically minded' in order to create a balanced hypothesis.

[465] Yu, Anthony C. (2001) *Rereading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber*, Princeton University Press, Princeton & Oxford, p. 37.

[466] de Lacouperie, Terrien (1894) *Western Origin of the Early Chinese Civilisation, From 2,300 B.C. to 200 A.D.*, Asher & Co., London.

[467] Hon, Tze-ki (2010) 'From a Hierarchy in Time to a Hierarchy in Space: The Meanings of Sino-Babylonianism in Early Twentieth Century China,' *MC* 36 (2), p. 140.

[468] Lai, Whalen (2006) 'Borrowed Gods and Foreign Bodies: Christian Missionaries Imagine Chinese Religion by Eric Reinders,' *BCS* 26, pp. 226-229.

comparison to an outside factor.[469] For example, one's ability to say that the sky is blue is dependent on their ability to differentiate colours. However, this seemingly immutable fact is subjective, for another who is colour-blind may declare the sky to be green, or still another that it is red if this is what he is taught from childhood. In a similar fashion, Western scholars are influenced by Western sensibilities, and thus the early years of Chinese studies concentrated their search on finding a supreme deity surrounded by a pantheon of gods, employing their own god as a point of reference.

Archaeological evidence from the late Neolithic era suggested that the Chinese people were already long established in agricultural settlements without evidence of a nomadic period in her written history. Accordingly, one might reasonably expect that the development of her myths and rituals would coincide with other agricultural societies.[470] This pursuit has borne fruit in recent years, although it was ignored as futile in early research in favour of the Jesuit search for religious compatibility, which resulted in, on account of the humanistic styling of Confucian teaching, the perception of China's mythological culture as utterly unlike their own.[471] Confucianism was regularly cited as the reason many Chinese myths did not survive intact, being regarded as they were as superstitious remnants of the past making their survival unnecessary. However, with the translation and analysis of an increasing number of Chinese texts, this notion is being increasingly rejected.[472]

There are several scholars who have made significant contributions to the field, although the stages of Chinese research history can be pinpointed in the works of a few. The first of these is Matteo Ricci, who arrived in China in 1582 and earned great respect by his dedication to his study of Chinese culture and its language.[473] Ricci's works were

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[469] Zhang, Longxi (1988) 'The Myth of the Other: China in the Eyes of the West,' *CI* 15 (1), pp. 110-113. Zhang's opinion on the "other" is influenced by the earlier works and viewpoints of Müller and de Saussure.

[470] Smith, D. Howard (1957) 'Divine Kingship in Ancient China,' *Numen* 4 (3), pp. 171-203. Smith's work on this topic was coloured by his belief that there was no real comparison to be found between the Chinese myths and those of the ancient Near East that attempting to find one would 'leave the scholar with the inevitable conclusion that [they] were fundamentally different.' (p. 171).

[471] Zhang, Longxi (1988) 'The Myth of the Other,' *CI* 15 (1), pp. 113-121.

[472] Laufer, Berthold (1912) *Jade: A Study in Chinese Archaeology and Religion*, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, pp. 146-7.

[473] Ricci arrived in China amidst an atmosphere of change. It was a time when Daoism was declining in significance due to its increasing inability to fulfil its promises, coupled with the Late Ming period's interest with the supernatural. (See: Zhang, Qiong (1999) 'About God, Demons, and Miracles: The Jesuit Discourse on the Supernatural in Late Ming China,' *ESM* 4 (1), 1-36) Ricci is best remembered for his contribution to the geographical knowledge of China, and while his work maintained certain erroneous suppositions (such as the length of latitudinal degrees and his subscription to the Ptolemaic formula of the sun revolving around the earth, he made an indelible impression upon the Chinese geographical

seen by some as deliberate attempts to introduce Catholicism into China. Furthermore, his accommodations for certain Chinese rites earned him the censure of his native country in his attempts to 'sinicise' himself.[474] His work has since been labelled as dressing a Western heart and sensibilities in Chinese clothes and composition. He masterfully adapted European (especially ancient Grecian) stories in Chinese rhetoric to present concepts and ideals, at once foreign and native, to the Chinese people.[475] He was a missionary at heart, and while some of his conclusions are specious, he is still often hailed as one whose works opened wider the doors of interest into China's mythological history.

The missionary field of the sixteenth century gave way to that of the early twentieth century. Few names are known as well in the field of Sinology than that of James Legge, who has retained his title as the father of Sinology despite the majority of his writing being dismissed due to its Victorian considerations,[476] although his translations of the Chinese classics are still widely used in present day scholarship.[477] He was isolated from the mainstream scepticism of mythology and its consideration of myth as false history, however his pragmatic approach often interfered with his treatment of mythic material. His biblical background caused him to examine such episodes from a historical and literal perspective, which ultimately resulted in his oversight of certain universal mythic

understanding of the world. It is believed that Ricci was unaware of Copernicus' heliocentric theory despite his having lived almost a century later, and that he was a firm adherent to the teachings of the Catholic church, which at the time 'rejected any notion which tended to disturb the views of the universe as propounded in the Bible. (Ch'en, Kenneth; Ricci, Matteo (1939) 'Matteo Ricci's Contribution to, and Influence on, Geographical Knowledge in China,' *JAOS* 59 (3), pp. 325-6). Several Chinese philosophers were also highly offended by Ricci's geographic postulations and rejected them due to its depiction of China not in a central position and thus its relegation to a less important country, which led them to believe that Ricci's suppositions were blindly dogmatic to his own faith and should therefore be discarded by the Chinese people. (Chang, Wei-hua (1934) *A Commentary of the Four Chapters on Portugal, Spain, Holland, and Italy in the History of the Ming Dynasty*, Yenching Journal of Chinese Studies 7, Harvard-Yenching Institute, Yenching University, Peiping).

[474] See: Ch'en, Kenneth (1939) 'Matteo Ricci's Contribution to, and Influence on, Geographical Knowledge in China,' *JAOS* 59 (3), p. 350; and Sebes, Joseph S. (1978) 'China's Jesuit Century,' *WQ* 2 (1), pp. 170-183. Ricci's missionary efforts were ultimately rejected by the Vatican after his acceptance of the term 天主 (Tianzhu) to represent God. However, despite his overall desire to proselytise China, he held a deep respect for Chinese culture and possessed a mastery of the language.

[475] Goodman, Howard L.; Grafton, Anthony (1990) 'Ricci, the Chinese, and the Toolkits of Textualists,' *AM* 3 (2), pp. 95-148.

[476] Legge hailed from a middle class background and had a keen aptitude for academics. He undertook a degree in theology and decided to become a missionary in 1939. (Girardot, Norman J. (2002) 'James Legge and the Strange Saga of British Sinology and the Comparative Science of Religions in the Nineteenth Century,' *JRAS*TS 12 (2), pp. 155-165).

[477] Girardot, Norman J. (2002) 'James Legge and the Strange Saga of British Sinology,' *JRAS* 12 (2), pp. 155-161.

themes in the Chinese texts.[478] Finally, his work was thought to not adhere strongly enough to the methods and conventions of either the missionary or academic fields. Aware of many parallel passages, he regularly participated in an exercise of mythopoeia, extrapolating details from one to fill gaps in another as opposed to rendering each account faithfully, ultimately confusing the meaning of the text.[479] Legge's voice has been diminished with the rise of new scholarship, but it has not been erased entirely.

The translations of Chinese literature led to new awareness of her mythology. The works of Anne Birrell have had a considerable impact in challenging the deep-rooted prejudices of the past, and encouraging future scholars to enter into the discussion. Dealing predominantly with Han and pre-Han texts, she undertook the monumental task of collecting and systemising the mythic fragments of various Chinese works. She is regarded as a 'careful textualist',[480] although her assertion that the fragmentary nature of Chinese myths is truly advantageous is not wholly accepted as it can lead down the path of classification and reorganisation.[481] With the ability to classify myths under several subheadings due to varying usages across the Chinese classics, a systematic approach has its own weaknesses as it generally focuses only on one layer of the narrative to the negligence of the cross-pollination of certain legends.[482] Despite this, Birrell's anthology is invaluable to the study of Chinese mythology. There is still a long way to go before Chinese mythological studies carries the same weight as the ancient Near Eastern traditions, but it has taken considerable ground over the past half century.

5.2 THE RELIGION EFFECT

Religion in China has had a chequered history,[483] facing prejudice from scholars who chose not to delve into its discipline, methods or theories despite the growing evidence

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[478] Birrell, Anne (1999) 'James Legge and the Chinese Biblical Tradition,' *HR* 38 (4), pp. 332-337.
[479] Girardot, Norman J. (2002) 'James Legge and the Strange Saga of British Sinology,' *JRAS* 52 (1), pp. 155-161.
[480] Lai, Whalen (1996) 'An Anthology of Sources on Chinese Mythology,' *AFS* 55 (2), p. 321.
[481] This, in Birrell's own words, can cause the scholar to 'merge several myths and […] inject a totally new motif [… and] create a neomyth to suit one's theory,' thereby diverging from the original meaning of the text in the same way as Legge was often perceived as doing (Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, p. 256).
[482] Lai, Whalen (1996) 'An Anthology of Sources on Chinese Mythology,' *AFS* 26, p. 325.
[483] For example, it must be noted that there was no word for 'religion' in ancient Chinese, but was rather developed by academics when the need arose for a defining term. However, Robert Campany cautions the scholar not to assume that this negated the existence of religious thought (See: Campany, Robert Ford (2003) 'On the Very Idea of Religions (in the Modern West and in Early Medieval China),' *HR* 42 (4), pp. 287-319).

pointing to a rich tradition of shamanism and even animism in its earliest ages. Much like the mythological traditions, it suffered under the weight of Western interests and its eventual equivocation with Catholicism or their classification by the early missionaries as false religion.[484] The foremost religions held a complex balance in the society at large at the time that European interest in the country, its people and its culture, began to grow. There were three predominant schools of thought, Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, each of which asserted high levels of influence on the other two whilst simultaneously existing in a state of rivalry,[485] and of which the latter two had a significant impact on the preservation of Chinese myths.

Similar to the majority of what remains of Chinese mythology, much of what is known about the official religions of China is rooted in the Han era, and therefore requires an understanding of the contemporary philosophical leanings. Throughout the Imperial period, for example, formal education and promotion in official offices was dominated by the study and mastery of the Confucian texts, which subsequently had an impact on the preservation of ancient works.[486] It would thus be a seemingly natural supposition to state that the negative Confucian standpoint on the supernatural, as well as its interest in the dominance of man over the world rather than the creation of it affected the popular opinion of Chinese creation mythology. The humanistic focus of Confucianism led scholars to conclude that its followers made every effort to suppress the divine and mystical aspects of the world around them. This is highlighted by the fact that most of the extant creation stories, and even many of the Chinese myths and legends in general, were recorded by Daoists, within whose philosophies supposedly existed the remnants of a creator, or creative force.[487]

Most early scholars contend that China had no ostensible creation story reminiscent of those that were already known. However, their ancient religion appeared to maintain a similarly structured pantheon to those of the ancient Near East; partaking in a system of geographically confined minor deities.[488] The identification of these ancient deities has

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[484] Barrett, T. H. (2005) 'Chinese Religion in English Guise: The History of an Illusion,' *MAS* 39 (3), pp. 509-533.
[485] Yu, Anthony C. (2005) *State and Religion in China: Historical and Textual Perspectives*, Open Court, Chicago & La Salle, p. 31.
[486] Ibid. p. 54.
[487] See: Gates, Jean (1936) 'Model Emperors of the Golden Age in Chinese Lore,' *JAOS* 56 (1), p. 66, who also points out that the majority of mythical literature also originate in the southern regions of China which was the home of Daoist writings.
[488] Michael Loewe, for example, states that in her primeval history 'there were spirits [...] of hill or river; there were others who supervised the growth of the grain [and] of the fertility of the soil; and there were

been a popular discussion point, for it offers familiar ground to mythologists who see in the characters of Heaven and Earth characterisations similar to those of Ouranus and Gaia from the Grecian tradition. Each is an equal opposite to the other but they co-exist in a relatively harmonious state, corresponding here to the well-known concepts of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽.

The extent of dualism in the ancient world is now considered common knowledge; wars are fought (usually) between two groups, each receiving divine endorsement for their conquest. This is developed through the propaganda of the victor into a battle between the righteous and unrighteous, with the eventual vindication of the victors by their success. The same concepts are applied to mythology, which is regularly discussed in terms of contrary pairs. These dualistic pairs are stretched into the hierarchy of the pantheon in the combination of figures such as Zeus and Hades, Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, Re and Apophis, Marduk and Tiamat. The relationships between these duos were ones of rivalry; one seeking order, the other chaos, eventuating in an eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil in which the former must constantly contain and overcome the enemy forces lest they succeed in plunging the world back into the chaos from whence it came.

Dualism has existed in China since her early history; however, it has been largely misunderstood due to the impact of the ancient Near Eastern comprehension. Rather than a relentless battle to maintain the balance, the Chinese premise is based upon the notion of primeval unity. It required the forces of *yin* and *yang* not to act in opposition to one another but to exist harmoniously, allowing for the creative process to continue through the diversity of their natures. *Yin* and *yang* were not anthropomorphised figures; they were treated in the terms of abstract forces, which refuted the possibility for a personalised war between them.[489] Despite this, the ancient Near Eastern understanding of dualism had significant influence upon the dialogue and its interaction with the Chinese creation myths.

The Han period, in which the majority of the creation texts are dated, was characterised by a pervasive concern with the classification of men according to their merits. Sages

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gods who presided over the skills and equipment, such as the oven, with which daily life was sustained. [It] also comprised the belief of the powers of shamans who acted as intermediaries between this world and other realms [… as well as] a pervasive trust in oracles and divination as a mean of ascertaining the will of superior beings and determining the appropriate time and place for the principles actions of a life time.' (Loewe, Michael (1988) 'Imperial China's Reaction to the Catholic Missions,' *Numen* 35 (2), p. 182).

[489] Smith, D. Howard (1957) 'Divine Kingship in Ancient China,' *Numen* 4 (3), pp. 194-6.

were the epitome of the human condition, and while some few achieved this status throughout history, the majority lived in the legendary eras predating the Xia and Shang dynasties. The classification of the sages was determined by the political hierarchy, by which those who subscribed to the Confucian schools were accorded higher honour than those of the Daoist, Mohist and Legalists in descending order, demonstrating the prevalence of Confucian thought during this period.[490] As such, Confucian ethics moulded the foundations of Chinese civilisation; spiritual guidance was garnered from the human paradigms of the past, rather than from divine examples.[491] The philosophies of Confucianism and Daoism influenced the survival of the creation myths, and while a comprehensive treatise on the development and impact of Chinese religion is unnecessary, certain features require recognition.

As was previously noted, Confucianism was almost unerringly posited as the explanation for the perceived non-existence, or even destruction, of Chinese creation myths since the conception of the field. The humanistic sensibilities that defined the school propagated an ongoing prejudice that it caused the systematic devaluing of the religious and mythical elements of history.[492] According to renowned Sinologist Michael Loewe, Confucian ideology believed that the 'universe was man-centered, each individual being obliged to serve his fellow men and to educate himself to the best of his capacity [… it] looked back to a golden age of the past in which these ideals had been achieved by blessed monarchs and their wise advisors.'[493] It hearkened back to a time when the sages ruled in peace and mankind did not know strife. Its structure was rooted in the governance of the state, although it is considered as sharing many cultic features, which identified it as a pseudo-religion with the government officials as its clergy and the emperor as its bishop.[494]

Confucianism was the shaper of Chinese culture and was also simultaneously shaped by it. Its tendency to naturalise the supernatural elements of legendary history, and to offer explanation for the seemingly inexplicable displayed a philosophical concern with

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[490] Bodde, Derk (1939) 'Types of Chinese Categorical Thinking,' *JAOS* 59 (2), pp. 200-219. While it is believed that this table the 'Table of Ancient and Modern Men' was finished by Ban Zhao, Bodde suggests that it represents a longer compilation that was probably begun by her brother and noted historian Ban Gu, but also probably received some final editing by one of her own students.
[491] Bodde, Derk (1942) 'Dominant Ideas in the Formation of Chinese Culture,' *JAOS* 59 (2), p. 293.
[492] Birrell, Anne (1994) 'Studies on Chinese Myth Since 1970,' (pt.1), *HR* 33 (4), p. 381.
[493] Loewe, Michael (1988) 'Imperial China's Reaction to the Catholic Missions,' *Numen* 35 (2), p. 183.
[494] Smith, D. Howard (1973) *Confucius*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, pp. 13-14.

transforming the mystical into common phenomena.[495] The classics that are now known as the Confucian canon were recovered under the Han dynasty and subsequently became an official authority on philosophical and governmental practices.[496] From this viewpoint, the Han dynasty was ultimately unconcerned with the faithful propagation of historical events but with the remembrance of features that furthered their agenda. This affected historical and political literature and infused them with the undercurrents of socially acceptable behaviour. Thus, like all works of their kind, they reflected more about their contemporary society than their original subject matter, and that which could not be assimilated was naturally forgotten.[497] It is easy to assume here that little could remain of an original myth when subjected to such a rigorous process, but it is a worldwide theme.[498] All myths are recreations of earlier models, and this feature does not alienate the Chinese myths from those of the ancient Near East, but instead introduces a comparable element.

On the other hand, religious Daoism reached the height of its influence in the late Han dynasty and enjoyed an analogous position to Buddhism, with which it alternated in favour with the general populace from the 3rd-9th centuries C.E.[499] After this, it began to fall out of favour with the rising influence of Confucianism in the Imperial court and many of its texts are still shrouded by an air of mystery and ambiguity. Dismissed in early Sinological studies as little more than unorganised superstition, it was not until the thematic cohesiveness of Daoist belief came to light that it procured the title of religion.[500] The status of Daoism as a native outgrowth or a foreign importation is still debated, although it seems that the philosophy was introduced into China at a late date in her history. It posited that the origins of the cosmos and everything in it were

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[495] Bodde, Derk (1939) 'Types of Chinese Categorical Thinking,' *JAOS* 59 (2), p. 213.
[496] Gates, Jean (1936) 'Model Emperors,' *JAOS* 56 (1), p. 52.
[497] Freilich, Morris et al. (1975) 'Myth, Method, and Madness,' *CA* 16 (2), p. 223. See also: Arthur Hocart who specifies that the stories were reapplied in order to 'impart that knowledge which is necessary of the welfare of the community' (Hocart, Arthur Maurice (1952) *The Life Giving Myth*, Meuthen and Co., London, p. 11) and Moye expands this thought by saying that they offer '[stabilisation, order, regeneration and meaning] to what is seen as the chaos of human [...] existence.' (Moye, Richard M. (1990) 'In the Beginning,' *JBL* 109 (4), p. 579).
[498] Lucente, Gregory (1981) 'The Creation of Myth's Rhetoric: Views of the Mythic Sign,' *CLS* 18 (1), pp. 50-68.
[499] In its entirety, religious Daoism remains a difficult concept to understand and is well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, for an enlightnening introduction to the topic, see: Schipper, Kristofer (1993) *The Taoist Body*, trans. by Karen C. Duval, University of California Press, Berkeley.
[500] Girardot, Norman J. (1983) '"Let's Get Physical": The Way of Liturgical Taoism,' *HR* 23 (2), pp. 169-180. Girardot believes that while Confucianism may have muted the importance of Daoism 'there is the simple fact that the classic documents were at least taken seriously as important formative factors in the development of Chinese civilisation' (p. 170).

explained by the balance of *yin* and *yang*,[501] which permitted its equation with the ancient Near Eastern creation myths. This elicited the argument that the stories proliferated by Daoist literature were irrelevant Sinicised interpretation of foreign material.

Daoism has been described as being akin to the concept of metaphysics, a traditional branch of philosophy whose main concern is seeking to explain the fundamental natures of the universe. Its tenets taught that humanity was designed to obey the laws of earth, which was in turn designed to obey the laws of the heavens. The heavens were regulated by the *Dao* 道 and its nature was determined by the patterns set by nature itself.[502] It is by this definition that scholars perceived within it similar creative forces as found in the ancient Near Eastern cultures; however, the Daoist notion developed along a different path. For example, it is commonly known that in the creation myths of the former, the gods determined the workings and balances of the natural world and that they are in turn representatives and oversights of their perpetuation. On the other hand, the spirits in the latter were productions of the natural phenomena that engendered them, but did not possess the power to alter their processes. Instead, the universe was understood as a spontaneous entity that operates accordingly, rather than being created to serve a specific purpose.

The followers of Daoism understood the universe to be maintained by innate rhythms dictated by the harmonious balance of *yin* and *yang*.[503] Although, due to the oversaturation of the inherent opposition that dualism represented, it was difficult for the early scholars to avoid comparisons between the ancient Near Eastern and Chinese systems. In the place of primeval chaos was found harmony and the fundamental conviction that both elements were required in equal measure for the creation and maintenance of the universe contributed to the misunderstanding of the religion.

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[501] Fung, Yu-Lan; Bodde, Derk (1942) 'The Rise of Neo-Confucianism and Its Borrowings From Buddhism and Taoism,' *HJAS* 7 (2), p. 114.

[502] Yang, Qingzhong; Yun, Yufen (2006) 'On the "Dao" in the "Commentary of the Book of Change",' *FPC* 1 (4), p. 573-83. It has been noted that there appears to be a difference between dynastic Daoism, which sought stability and popular Daoism, which sought justice and a new social order. Kristofer Schipper outlined that the elevation of Confucianism during the Han dynasty ostracised Daoist philosophy. In this way, Daoism at a popular level was set in opposition to the state religion and was thus embroiled with themes of revolt and justice under the 'hope of establishing the reign of Great Peace [… which] was believed to have existed before civilisation.' (Schipper, Kristofer (1993) *The Taoist Body*, trans. by Karen C. Duval, University of California Press, Berkeley, p.9) See also: Yu, Anthony C. (2005) *State and Religion in China: Historical and Textual Perspectives*, Open Court, Chicago & La Salle, pp. 53-89. However, the passages chosen for this study are reflective of the dynastic viewpoint; the preservation of peace and stability.

[503] Loewe, Michael (1988) 'Imperial China's Reaction to the Catholic Missions,' *Numen* 35 (2), p. 184.

Despite this, Daoist literature contains many familiar religious motifs including speculation on the origin of evil and the concept of morality, the quest for immortality and the position of humanity.

Daoism and Confucianism are often pitted against each other in a discussion of philosophy, and opinions are historically skewed in favour of the latter due to its continued dominance in China to the present day.[504] They both played a significant role in the preservation of the creation myths, but cannot be as simply described by the view that the one categorically ignored it whilst the other strove to save it. There is no doubt that Confucianism had a profound effect on the replication and preservation of mythic fragments as it did not require divine models as justification for social mores. However, in regards to the cosmogonical remnants, there is weight in the suggestion that Daoism possessed greater cause for their survival as the majority of these myths were preserved in texts that hailed from a Daoist mindset. Ultimately, each had their own motives and purposes and each chose to utilise specific episodes according to their own internal criteria. Their social influence illumines their respective focuses; as a humanistic philosophy, Confucianism was more concerned with the existence of mankind, and the mystical nature of Daoism directed its attention towards the creation of the universe as a whole.

5.3 THE LAWS OF MORALITY

Social customs in the ancient world were heavily influenced by the religious traditions of their regions, as were the law codes that monitored them. Belief in a single omnipotent deity, such as those in the Judaic and Islamic traditions, naturally generated the conviction that any and all laws were mandated by him. Similarly, the Babylonian laws of Hammurabi prescribed the creation of their legal code to a supreme deity,[505] a practice that was pervasive throughout almost the entire ancient world. However, the

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[504] Thomas Michael, who also included the role of Buddhism in his article, believes that Daoism and Confucianism should not be discussed in terms that distinguish and alienate them from one another, stating that 'members of each tradition commonly called upon the experts from each of the other traditions in order to meet the different kinds of social and ritual needs at hand' (Michael, Thomas (2002) 'Closing the gap between Daoist studies and religious theory: two recent publications,' *JRH* 82 (3), p. 425).

[505] It should be noted that while Hammurabi ascribed the giving of this legal code to Shamash, he did not subscribe to a monotheistic worldview, but rather he accepted the common notion of a high god ruling over other deities (for example, see: Thompson, Thomas L. (2001) 'Jerusalem as the City of God's Kingdom: Common Tropes in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,' *IS* 40 (3/4 Special Issue: Jerusalem), p. 633).

prevailing view of Chinese religion was that in it there existed no profession of a supreme being, meaning that the laws of the country were not divinely determined and furthered the prejudice of China as being mythologically unique.

Regardless of this, the Chinese legal system was embedded within the understanding of creation and its foundation of balance, and perpetuated by the function and patterns of the universe. The earliest sages upheld this balance during the legendary age and fixed the modelled specifications of human interaction required in maintaining it.[506] By the time of the empire, the emperor was seen as the 'cosmic man' whose actions were a microcosm of the larger universe. Following the natural order of the world, his primary duty was living and acting according to its will.[507] The legal code was not designed to legalise or normalise religious custom but to regulate the needs of economic and political aspects of society and was primarily concerned with the penalisation of infringements.[508] Later, when these regulations were deeply rooted in society, non-mythological etiological explanations for their existence were established.

It appears that the Chinese worldview suggests that there is no overarching structure dictating the balance to which each part of creation must conform. Instead, each individual facet possesses its own self-determined function and fate allows them to work concurrently with one another.[509] In certain schools of thought during her early history, the balance of *yin* and *yang* were thought to be regulated by the changing of the seasons. This constant cycle of warmth and coolness, and light and dark bound all of the heavenly and earthly elements into their proper places, and determined their fluctuating relationship to each other. However, this structure, seemingly akin to the European conception, did not penetrate mainstream mindsets and faded into obscurity as the reputation of the self-contained and self-operating ideas of Confucian philosophy rose in society.[510] Furthermore, it was this same balance that also had a great impact upon the

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[506] Taylor, Romeyn (1997) 'Official Altars, Temples and Shrines Mandated for All Counties in Ming and Qing,' *TP* 83 (1/3), pp. 93-125.

[507] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven: Sacral Kingship in Ancient China,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), pp. 3-41. Ching's analysis is based upon a description of the Bright hall from the *Luo Shu*, which itself was based upon the concept of the magic square, although she believes that the institution had faded long before the time of the Zhou dynasty.

[508] Bodde, suggests the origins for the written legal code was developed by the Miao people. Bodde, Derk (1963) 'Basic Concepts of Chinese Law: The Genesis and Evolution of Legal Thought in Traditional China,' *PAAPS* 107 (5), p. 380.

[509] Needham, Jospeh (1956) *Science and Civilisation in China. Vol II: History of Scientific Thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, Melbournes, p. 582.

[510] Bodde, Derk (1959) 'Evidence of "Laws of Nature" in Chinese Thought,' *HJAS* 20 (3/4), pp. 709-727. The inability for this mindset to take root in Chinese thought on a larger scale could be attributed to the idea

concept of morality, which was guided more by a system of ethics than any religious considerations.

The juxtaposition of good and evil in occidental societies has often predisposed scholars to conceive of the Chinese terms *yin* and *yang* in similar fashion. Equating them with the traditional dichotomy of good and evil and their fundamental opposition to the other is misleading, as they are the embodiment of a different set of values.[511] For example, aside from philosophers such as Xunzi who believed that mankind was fundamentally evil, the majority of the Confucian scholars believed that because Heaven was a moral absolute and was the representation of good, mankind must also share an innate sense of goodness. This sat in direct contrast to the creation of morally ambiguous humans by the Hebrew God, which led post-Ricci scholars to state that he could not be the sole source of good when he was also the source of evil.[512] They believed that their own native concept of Heaven was more complete and just, and preferred instead to argue that the forces of the universe were complementary.

Morality's religious affiliations were diminished in the transition from the Shang to Zhou dynasties, when the figure of Shangdi 上帝 (Lord on High) was replaced by Tian 天 (Heaven). Heaven came to be known and described through the terms and attributes of mankind and Shangdi was stripped of his spiritual and supernatural qualities as humanity rose to supplant him. As such, the spontaneous production of the heaven and its perfect balance became an example of morality for man to follow.[513] Humanity thus became a reflection of Heaven, whose original character was transformed into the image of humanity, and Heaven's mandate became an expectation of superior morality and adherence to its rites and virtues.

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that just as the ancient Near Eastern cultures struggled to conceive of a world that was not created by and under the jurisdiction of a deity, the Chinese thinkers found it difficult to accept a world that was divinely fashioned and maintained. For this reason they were unable to incorporate such an argument into their core belief system. (See: Bodde, Derk (1979) 'Chinese "Laws of Nature": A Reconsideration,' *HJAS* 39 (1), pp. 139-155).

[511] Santangelo compares the yin-yang system with the western idea of good and evil as distinct, ontological categories. He states that the Christian church, especially throughout the classical period, dramatised the ideas of sin and death, a factor that was non-existent in Chinese thought. (Santangelo, Paolo (1987) 'The Concept of Good and Evil, Positive and Negative Forces in Late Imperial China, A Preliminary Approach,' *EW* 37 (1/4), pp. 373-398).

[512] See: Lancashire, Douglas (1969) 'Anti-Christian Polemics in Seventeenth Century China,' *CH* 38 (2), pp. 218-241.

[513] Li, Youguang (2002) 'The True of the Artificial: Theories on Human Nature before Mencius and Xunzi—Based on "*Sheng* is from *Ming*, and *Ming* is from *Tian*",' *FPC* 5 (1), pp. 31-50.

Accordingly, Mencius taught that mankind was innately good. He believed that they would be moved to action when confronted by the suffering of others, challenging the contemporary ideas espoused by Yangism who considered nothing more important than self-interest and the Mohists who taught excessive selflessness. However, this innate goodness seems to lie at odds with the Chinese sense of propriety.[514] Proper action was based upon the relationship between the subject and the object, thus making morality subjective. The intention of an action could not be considered inherently good or bad until it was performed; for desire to choose one course of action over another does not offer proof of innate nature when it can be influenced through interaction with the cultural norms of society.[515] Just as mankind is a microcosmic representation of the universe at large, he is also a culmination of likes and dislikes, comprised as he is of both *yin* and *yang* elements.

Finally, the Confucian concept of morality relies on the relationship between internal nature and external fate. Nature refers to the ascribed characteristics of Heaven, who was benevolent and took pleasure in those who maintained its standards. Fate, on the other hand, is not the manifestation of original goodness in mankind, but Heaven's intention for them. It might seek benevolence for the individual, but the individual must determine his own course, which, while influenced by fate, is decided by his own choices

[514] For example, Lai posits two scenarios; the first being a child in danger of falling into a well, and the second being a woman in danger. A compassionate man would not hesitate to act in the first situation, but would be confronted with social propriety in the second should the woman turn out to be his sister in law. A third situation is then posited, if the person was an evil man, the man might ignore his plight or even consider pushing him in. Similarly, should the man in danger be a corrupt king, it may be thought as a greater evil to save him. With abundant examples to the contrary, Mencius was unable to declare all of mankind to be innately good, and stated instead that these people who lacked the four natural traits of goodness were "non-persons" and did not deserved to be treated as true people. For this reason, a greater good could be achieved by allowing a murderer or sadist to fall to their death. Lai concludes that these laws of goodness and propriety were implemented for usage during normal times, although exceptions could be made during times of emergency to serve these greater goods, so that the Chinese sense of propriety did not contradict the conception of morality (Lai, Whalen (1990) 'Of One Mind or Two? Query on the Innate Good of Mencius,' *RS* 26 (2), pp. 247-255).

[515] Li, Youguang (2010) 'The True of the Artificial,' *FPC* 5 (1), pp. 39-41. Li bases his hypothesis on an etymological examination of the character 性 (xing) which he believes stemmed from the character 心 (xin) suggesting that morality is related to emotion rather than good and evil (p. 39). Transitioning away from Mencius' concept of innate good lies Xunzi's cynical judgement on the subject. Xunzi rejects Mencius' hypothesis through the belief that the goodness of humanity would extend into the goodness of the individual, and yet the motivation of right action comes through social pressure and thought of personal benefit. Right action in the ancient Chinese world, was therefore likely determined by the decisions and examples of the upper echelon and government officials, who gained their positions through the support of "Heaven" (Behuniak, James (2000) 'Nivision and the "Problem" in Xunzi's Ethics,' *Philosophy East and West* 50 (1), pp. 97-110).

through his nature.[516] Philosophical arguments have revolved around the creation of humankind and whether their nature was good, bad, or neither with the capacity for both. Again, aside from Xunxi, the Confucians taught the former, whilst the influences of Daoism and Buddhism resulted in the debasement of the human nature through the belief of innate internal wickedness.[517] Chinese thought on the subject is similar to that of the Greek model, in which the Golden Age gave way to the silver and so on as the heart of humanity became corrupted.[518] Evil is primarily explained as a lack of good, in the same way as darkness is scientifically explained as a lack of light. In other words, goodness is not determined by a divine being, but is sculpted by the natural balances of the cosmos.

There is no common term designated to the ideas of sin and punishment, nor is there an equal partnership between good and evil, but rather a true state and the deviation away from it.[519] China had no notion of original sin, her religious beliefs were not built around an identical concept of crime and punishment, or the reward of devotion as in the ancient Near East.[520] Finally, it is generally supposed that mankind was simply one of the myriad creatures, they were not representatives of the divine on earth, but neither

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[516] Zhang, Pengwei; Guo, Qiyong; Wang, Bei (2008) 'New Insight into Mencius' Theory of the Original Goodness in Human Nature,' *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* 3 (1), pp. 27-38. On the other hand, Neo-Confucianism emerged during the Tang dynasty and was largely pessimistic in nature, departing from the idea of original goodness and emphasising their capacity for evil. (Santangelo, Paolo (19990) 'The Origin of Good and Evil in Human Nature According to Neo-Confucianism: Some Aspects of the Question,' *East and West* 40 (1/4), p. 232). For a discussion of the understanding of human nature during the Warring States period, see: Lewis, Mark Edward (2003) 'Custom and Human Nature in Early China,' *PEW* 53 (3), pp. 308-322.

[517] Santangelo, Paolo (1990) 'The Origin of Good and Evil in Human Nature,' *EW* 37 (1/4), p. 249.

[518] According to Mencius, no one was born to be evil at heart, but his conscience can become affected by his actions and his nature gives way to evil tendencies once the original goodness has been overcome. (See: Zhang, Pengwei et al. (2008) 'New Insight into Mencius' Theory,' *FPC* 3 (1), pp. 37-8). Furthermore, a later philosopher and follower of Mencius, by the name of Mou Zongsan, suggests that the nature of a man is not something that he is born with, but something that he learns, just in the same way that a child does not know the difference between right and wrong, for example, he does not innately that fire is dangerous and it can burn him if he plays with it. He is instead born with emotions; love, fear, sorrow etc, and yet even today in modern day ethics, goodness and right action is subjective and malleable according to its environment. (See: Guo, Qiyong (2007) 'Mou Zongsan's view of interpreting Confucianism by "moral autonomy",' *FPC* 2 (3), pp. 345-362.

[519] Santangelo, Paolo (1987) 'The Concept of Good and Evil,' *EW* 37 (1/4), p. 376.

[520] In the middle of the twentieth century it was also believed that the concept of an afterlife (which is intrinsically tied to the notion of rewards or punishment according to ones actions) was introduced with the migration of Buddhism in the first century C.E. (Bodde, Derk (1942) 'Dominant Ideas in the Formation of Chinese Culture,' *JAOS* 62 (4), pp. 293-299). However, this is no longer accepted as being the case, as the concept has existed natively in China since the Neolithic period. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the notion gained new significance under the teachings of Buddhism (Loewe, Michael (1982) *Faith Myth and Reason in Han China*, Hackett Publishing Company Inc., Indianapolis & Cambridge, pp. 25-37). See also Loewe's book *Ways to Paradise,* which discusses the Chinese quest for immortality in ancient Chinese texts stretching from the second century B.C.E to the second century C.E. when the influence of Buddhism was rising. (Loewe, Michael (1979) *Ways to Paradise: The Chinese Quest for Immortality*, George Allen & Unwin, London).

were they formed as servants to cater to the whims and needs of the pantheon.[521] Rather, they were a natural outworking of the creation process, and as a by-product; misfortune, illness and death were simply aberrations; a by-product of imbalance.[522]

It is postulated that a lack of true dualism in China's early history could be evidence of a period of monotheism in her ancient past, though this is improbable. If it were, one must wonder how it was so neatly absorbed into the humanistic ideals that replaced it. It is possible that the Shang and Zhou dynasties may have worshipped a polytheistic pantheon at the head of which sat a high god. However, it is argued that the natural phenomena were not beholden to him, suggesting that these forces were still maintained through their adherence to nature's cycles and not by an omnipotent deity.[523] That being said, trying to identify an early monotheistic religion was an attractive undertaking for many researchers up until the twentieth century, for with it, certain features could be described through recognisable means. Without it, however, the creation of the world, morality, religion and the law codes seemed utterly foreign, which was a view that dominated the early years of Sinological research.

[521] Loewe, Michael (1988) 'Imperial China's Reaction to the Catholic Missions,' *Numen* 35 (2), p. 184.
[522] Santangelo, Paolo (1987) 'The Concept of Good and Evil, Positive and Negative Forces in Late Imperial China: A Preliminary Approach,' *EW* 37 (1/4), p. 377.
[523] See: Yu, Anthony C. (2005) *State and Religion in China*, p. 35. See also: Barrett, T. H. (2005) 'Chinese Religion in English Guise,' *MAS*, p. 200. Barrett points out that the discovery of the oracle bones has had a great impact on this discussion, and made it apparent that while there may have been a Supreme Deity, he was not alone in the pantheon.

CHAPTER SIX

SHANGDI, DIVINITY AND KINGSHIP

One may wonder what the existence of a single supreme deity, and his bestowal of power upon the rulers of the ancient Chinese kingdom might have to do with the elimination of conflict in the creation narratives. This is an especially prevalent question when one considers the fact that Shangdi is rarely, if ever, presented as an active force in the process of creation, more often than not appearing simply as a high god that came into existence at an undetermined point in prehistory. It has been argued that the allocation of certain sacrifices to him indicated that he was associated with some aspects of creation, although these examples appear to be a late exception rather than a norm. With the general evidence of conflict increasingly excised from the cosmogonical texts, one would expect to find signs of it in the accounts and activity of the earliest deified figures. It is for this reason that this chapter will diverge slightly from an obvious study of creation, and discuss the identity and impact of the deity who was so often seen as an equivalency to the Western notion of divinity. For, the longest standing question in Chinese mythology is the identity of Shangdi and whether he was the god that Ricci perceived him to be, or if he was even a god at all.

Additionally, if one takes a cursory look at the Chinese flood narratives, it is possible to see that the idea of conflict between the deities is very much present in Chinese mythology. Being myths of recreation, and existing worldwide in cultures of varying developmental stages,[524] explanations as to the cause of the deluge often falls into the realm of discord between the gods. According to the eighth chapter of the *Huainanzi*, *yin* and *yang* existed in a perfect and harmonious balance, acting together as a single force until the formation of culture forced humanity to forget its roots and brought the Golden Age to an end.[525] This, it is said (though no longer popularly), was brought about by the

[524] Dundes, Alan (1988) *The Flood Myth*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
[525] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, pp. 267-270.

opposition of *yin* and *yang*, and this conflict found voice in the stories of the flood. The myth of Gonggong 共工 and Zhuanxu 顓頊, for instance, portrays an archetypal act of rebellion despite not being a dominant flood myth. Gonggong, who is a subordinate to the sky god Zhuanxu, creates havoc in his desires to be more powerful by ramming Mount Buzhou, thereby damaging the pillar holding up the sky. Like his chaotic ancient Near Eastern counterparts, Gonggong's actions threaten to plunge the universe into chaos.[526]

At face value, it would appear that in her legendary period, China possessed an assembly of gods, divided up into a hierarchy much like the ancient Near Eastern pantheons. It seems equally evident that these gods reflected both the positive and negative traits of humanity after their departure from the Golden Age, and were at least somewhat anthropomorphised in nature. Being exemplars of certain attributes, the good and the bad are enhanced, and as the pantheon began to more closely resemble the political organisation, these stories were often historicised and their characters drawn away from any supernatural ties. This was the case for Gonggong, as his story was later euhemerised and used to represent the chaos and instability that threaten the world when the social order is challenged.

This allowed such stories to be used as deterrents, and as etiological reinforcements of the social and legal mores even as their significance faded in the rise of the humanistic focus of Confucianism. Shangdi and Tian, the 'gods' of the Shang and Zhou dynasties respectively, provided legitimisation and authority to the kings and kingdom as a whole. Conflict existed within the natural realm, and this would imply that the concerns and actions of the spiritual realm would serve as a mirror to the issues of the former. One could suggest that the harmonious nature of *yin* and *yang* may be a later development, offering a deliberate critique on the earlier creation conflict, and distancing itself from it; for with conflict comes desire, and desire comes will, and with will, one is faced with a deified figure who has the potential and the ability to impact upon the human plane.

[526] Birrell, Anne (1997) 'The Four Flood Myths of Classical China,' *TPSS* 83 (4/5), pp. 231. The motifs and themes of Gonggong's story are closely resembled by the rebellion of Lucifer in the Hebrew bible where he claims 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit on the mount of assembly on the heights of Zaphon. I will ascend to the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' (*Isaiah* 14:13-14).

6.1 SHANGDI, GOD OR ANCESTOR

The identity of Shangdi has long been debated; for some he was the long awaited evidence that at some point in her history, China had conceived of a quasi-monotheistic deity, while for others it was proof of prehistoric animistic or naturalistic religions and was not the manifestation of a divine figure, but of an ancestor. Both of these opinions have persisted to the present day, each presenting credible evidence to support their argument. However, the view that Shangdi was in fact a divine figure (though perhaps not the one the seventeenth century scholars sought) has become prevalent. It is possible that the religious backdrop to the rise of the Confucian school during the middle of the first millennium B.C.E. was theistic in nature, although by the time Confucius and Mencius were composing their now famous works, the notion of a personal god was already fading.

The fall of the Shang dynasty brought about a transition, during which Shangdi was incorporated into and replaced by Tian (Heaven) of the Zhou dynasty. This transition signified the depersonalisation of the ancient deity and the introduction of an alternate divine identification to justify a new reign.[527] It was the younger contemporary of Mencius, Xunzi, who is credited as forging a more complete rationalistic view of the universe and substituting an impersonal metaphysical system in the place of a relational god who could be affected by and respond to the plight of humanity.[528] As the understanding of the workings of the natural world increased, the supernatural became rationalised and set aside. The seemingly more anthropomorphised figures of the Shang and Zhou dynasties became an unthinking force with no will of its own, and became unable to intentionally affect the human world, ultimately leaving 'Heaven' as an entity inferior to mankind.

Popularised by the writings of Ricci, it was common for early scholars to conceive of Shangdi in the omnipotent and omniscient terms of the Christian God. Ricci argued in his

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[527] Lancashire, Douglas (1969) 'Anti-Christian Polemics,' *CH* 38 (2), pp. 321-5. See also: Eno, Robert (1990) *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, State University of New York Press, Albany, pp. 23-4. Eno clarifies this transition, stating that while the Zhou conquest over the Shang was legitmised by the support of Tian he does not belief that the relationship between divine and mortal was the same. Instead, based on his hypothesis that Di was not a single deity but represented a multitude of gods, he suggests that the Shang king acted as a chief priest to the gods, whereas the Zhou king looked to Tian as a personal deity.

[528] Ibid. Lancashire here expands upon his argument, stating that there is clearly evidence of a Supreme deity within the pages of the Confucian classics, and that it is impossible to deny this fact, but also that it is 'equally impossible […] to brand the bulk of Confucian thought subsequent to Confucius and Mencius as fallacious, […] an increasing knowledge of the nature of the universe […] brought about a more adequate understanding of what these terms really stood for' (p. 226).

book *Tianzhu Shiyi* 天主實義 (*The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*) that there was a certain level of agreement between Confucian and Christian thought.[529] He equated the deity that he found within the pages of the Chinese classics with the God that he served, saying 吾天主，即華言上帝 ('He who is called Lord of Heaven in my humble country is called Shang-ti [Shangdi] in Chinese') and 歷觀古書，而和上帝與天主特異以名也 ('Therefore, having leafed through a great number of ancient books, it is quite clear to me that the Sovereign on High [Shangdi] and the Lord of Heaven [Tianzhu] are different only in name').[530] Ricci's desire to find a corresponding deity in the Chinese tradition was informed by his own understanding, which caused him to see meaning that may not have existed.[531] Ultimately, the Chinese scholars did not imagine the world in terms of a relational god and deliberate creation; however, they seemed to accept the idea of an external influence.[532] Rather, a more accurate suggestion of his role existed as the most senior member of a collective of spirits.

The deity located in the Shang oracle bones has been described as a curiously anthropomorphic figure. Discovered at Anyang in the late nineteenth century, the oracle bones represented unadulterated material from the Shang era concerned principally with religious matter. They were the first primary source material discovered that brought the Shang dynasty out from its legendary status and allowed for the elucidation

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[529] Ricci, despite his desire, faced many difficulties in his attempt to equate the Eastern and Western gods to one another. Lancashire, in his introduction to his translation to Ricci's work states that 'in the earliest part of the Confucian canon and, in particular, in the person of [*Shangdi*] or Lord on High, they believed they had found traces of the early theism they were looking for. The word [*Tian*] or Heaven, however, was attractive since it was in wide use as a term equivalent to Heaven as this was sometimes used in the West, that is, as the equivalent of Providence. The dilemma was that to employ the ancient term [*Shangdi*] might have led to a mere equation of Christianity with Confucianism, or worse still, with popular [Daoism] where the term [...] had been taken over as the name for a popular deity, where as to use the term [*Tian*] would have opened the way to a degree of imprecision regarding the personal nature of God' (Ricci, Matteo (1985) 天主實義 *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 35.

[530] It must be noted that Ricci takes certain liberties in his rendition of the Chinese text, for example, the translation includes the amendation 'in my humble country,' which is not in the Chinese. Ricci, Matteo (1985) 天主實義 *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp. 120-1, 124-5 (The English rendition of the Chinese text is located on the odd numbered paged opposite from the Chinese text). Liu admits that the classics contained certain references that may have applied to a deity but that its form could not have been as easily synchronised to the Christian idea as Ricci implied. (Liu, Yu (2005) 'Seeing God Differently: Chinese Piety and European Modernity,' *HR* 45 (1), p. 34). In a later article, Liu declares that Ricci was able to make the classics 'sound like they were amenable to Christianity only because he deliberately chose to be literal in his reading of the involved Chinese texts.' (Liu, Yu (2008) 'The Intricacies of Accommodation,' *JWH* 19 (4), p. 473).

[531] Li, Shuzeng (2002), *The Chinese Philosophy of the Ming Dynasty (Zhongguo Mingdai Zhexue)*, People's Press of the Henan Province, Zhengzhou, p. 1790.

[532] Liu, Yu (2008) 'The Intricacies of Accommodation: The Proselytizing Strategy of Matteo Ricci,' *JWH* 19 (4), p.472.

on the composition of their societal norms, cultural institutions and modes of thought.[533] There remain some, however, who do not consider it possible for the oracle bones to shed light upon the general religious beliefs of the Shang people, believing instead that only the elite were represented in the inscriptions.[534] The divinations inscribed on the oracle bones are presumed to have been requesting the assistance of the high God Shangdi,[535] and their questions encompassed many different topics.

Challenging the idea that the 'Di' in the oracle bones was a high god, advocated by those such as Guo Moruo and H.G. Creel,[536] Robert Eno suggested that the term was used generically, referring to the gods as plural, or that it was employed as an ancestral term.[537] However, his premise is not widely accepted as it causes both literary and

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[533] Chang, K. C. (1981) 'Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China by David N. Keightley,' *HJAS* 41 (2), pp. 633-640.

[534] Pulleyblank, E. G. (1981) 'Divination Records as Sources for the History of Ancient China, Sources of Chang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China by David N. Keightley,' *HR* 20 (3), pp. 287-289. This is the most likely scenario, as the divinations were performed on behalf of the king, thus they would naturally represent his interests and beliefs and not those of his subjects.

[535] Keightley, David N. (1978) *Sources of Shang History: The Oracle-Bone Inscriptions of Bronze Age China*, California Press, Berkeley, see pp. 33, 84 which offer examples of the king seeking military support from the high god. Keightley's book *Sources of Shang History* provides a thorough introduction to reading and understanding the oracle bones, covering topics such as the materials used, how to interpret and date the inscriptions, and their reliability as historical sources amongst many others. See also: Serruys, Paul L.-M. (1974) 'Studies in the Language of the Shang Oracle Inscriptions,' *TPSS* 60 (1/3) pp. 12-120. Serruys article discusses how the language and individual characters are used to denote certain aspects of the divinations.

[536] Specifcally, Guo and Creel intimate that Di as referred to in the oracle bone inscriptions was the Shang high god, and clarify that Tian was introduced as a deified figure after the Zhou conquest. See: Gu Liya 顧立雅 [Herrlee. G. Creel] (1935) 'Shi tian 釋天,' *YX* 18, pp. 59-71; Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1936) *Xian-Qin tiandao guan zhi jinzhan* 先秦天道觀之進展, Shangwu, Shanghai; Creel, Herrlee G. (1970) *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, Vol. 1: *The Western Zhou Empire*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, Appendix C: 'The Origin of the Deity T'ien [Tian],' pp. 493-506. Allan also used to accept this premise in her earlier works (see: Allan, Sarah (1991) *The Shape of the Turtle: Myth Art and Cosmos in Early China*, State University of New York Press, Albany and New York). However, despite the relatively wide acceptance that it has obtained amongst scholars, she later put forward the notion that the Shang kings identified themselves with the ten suns, and that Shangdi was associated with the pole star, which granted his identification as a single ruler that held unique power in the Shang pantheon. Additionally, she states that when the term 'tian' is used in the oracle bone inscriptions it refers almost exclusively to the sky and lacks any divine features (Allan, Sarah (2007) 'On the Identity of Shang di 上帝 and the Origin of the Concept of a Celestial Mandate (Tian ming 天命),' *EC* 31, pp. 1-46, esp. pp. 26-28 for her discussion of the term 'tian'). The pole star, representative of the central pivot preserving the relationship and movement of the round heaven and square earth, has also been associated with the *Dao* (Jia, Jinhua (2009) 'Religious Origins of the Terms Dao and De and Their Significance in the Laozi,' *JRASTS* 19 (4) pp. 459-488). It was said to have been the divine correspondant to the earthly king, and acted in conjunction with a bureaucratic structure. See: Harper, Donald (1978-79) 'The Han Cosmic Board,' *EC* 4, pp. 1-10; Kalinowski, Marc (1991) *Cosmologie et divination dans la Chine ancienne*, École française d'Extrême-orient, Paris, pp. 68-74; and Li, Ling (2006) *Zhongguo fangshu zhengkao* 中國方術正考, Zhonghua, Beijing, pp. 69-140.

[537] Eno, Robert (1990) 'Was there a High God Ti in Shang Religion?' *EC* 15, pp. 1-26. See also: Eno, Robert (1984) *Masters of the Dance: The Role of T'ien [Tian] in the Teachings of the Early Juist [Ruist] Community*. Vol. 1 and 2, University Microfilms International, Michigan, pp. 58-9 for a more detailed discussion of the term being used as denoting a collection of deities.

thematic inconsistencies.[538] Ultimately, this is admitted by Eno when he cautions that the surviving texts are inadequate for assembling a complete picture, although he declares that 'a single spirit of great power and abstractness seems to function as the apex of the Shang pantheon.'[539] There remains a considerable amount of controversy regarding the identity of Di in the oracle bone inscriptions, what becomes clear, however, is that he was not analogous with the deity that replaced him under the Zhou dynasty.

According to Joseph Shih, Shangdi was purportedly described as a deity who possessed authority over the natural phenomena. Everything that happened on earth, whether it was good or bad was attributed to him. The annual ritual sacrifices were offered to him and his will was thought to be the equivalent of the law. Shangdi was 'said to see, to hear, and to watch over all men. He is affected by men's doings. He is happy and angry with them. He blesses those who please Him and sends calamities upon those who offend him [… he is] compassionate, ready to satisfy the desires of men. On him depend both the life of each man and the dynasties of the country.'[540] However, it is probable that this understanding of Shangdi's character was heavily influenced by the Western notion and represented an attempt to locate an equivalent figure in the Chinese tradition.[541] Nevertheless, when Tian replaced Shangdi under the reign of the Zhou dynasty, he became more analogous with the acts of fate and destiny.

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[538] For example, Sarah Allan disagrees with Eno's conclusion, stating that it is inconsistent, pointing out that Di was able to give specific commands and that he alone appeared to be responsible for catastrophes, which differentiated him from the ancestors who were said to have been able to invoke curses, but they could not bring catastrophes down upon the realm (Allan, Sarah (2007) 'On the Identity of Shang di 上帝 and the Origin of the Concept of a Celestial Mandate (Tian ming 天命),' *EC* 31, pp. 8-9).

[539] Robert Eno 'Deities and Ancestors in Early Oracle Inscriptions,' in Lopez, Donald S. (1996) *Religions of China in Practice*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 44. Eno bases his assertion on inscriptions that prescribe to Di power over the natural forces such as rain and drought, such as: 'will Di perhaps send down drought upon us?' (*Qianbian* 3.24.4), which he states was paramount to an agriculturally based society. Additionally, Di was looked towards to support military campaigns: 'If the king joined with Guo of Zhi (a military ally) in attacking the (non-Shang) tribe of X, would Di provide support?' (*Yibian* 3787) Examples such as these can demonstrate that Di, whether he was a deity or a powerful ancestor (Eno himself seems undecided on this point), held the place at the head of the Shang pantheon (see pp. 46-8 for other inscriptions relating to Di).

[540] Shih, Joseph (1969) 'The Notions of God in the Ancient Chinese Religion,' *Numen* 16 (2), pp. 100-1.

[541] For example, the Judeo-Christian God is also described as one who commands the rain, wind and thunder (Ps 148:8, Jon 1:4), the drought and the harvest (Lev 26:19-20, Deu 28:24, 2 Sam 21:1). Victory is his (Jos 8:1, Jud 7:9, 1 Chr 14:10b), defeat (Jud 2:14, 3:12, 4:1, 6:1), as well as disasters, illness and death (of which, the most well known example is the ten plagues of Egypt in Ex 7:14-11:10). He is omniscient, cares for and delivers his people out of trouble (Neh 9:9, Ps 106:44-46), he is said to bless the righteous (Ps 5:12) and punish the wicked (Is 13:11).

Shangdi was worshipped as the leader of a quasi-council[542] and, through the influence of ancestral worship, came to be accepted as an ancestor rather than a deity.[543] On the other hand, interaction with Tian was limited as he was connected to the human world only through the emperor.[544] The idea of privileged access to the divine was a common feature of the ancient world; the king or ruler was often seen as the representative of their god on earth. He was responsible for both his own actions and those of his people as a whole, requiring him to act as an emissary between his god and his people. It was this singular relationship with the divine that legitimised his rule and granted him the necessary authority to lead his people.[545] Shangdi maintained the balance of the cosmos, assisted by a heavenly council that was comprised of the celestial beings and territorial deities, in conjunction with whom the ancestors of the ruling and aristocratic families worked.[546] This heavenly structure was mirrored by the Chinese government, at the head of which sat the emperor who was similarly tasked with regulating the balance and function of the natural world, supported by the lesser officials of his court. However, the rationalisation of the heavenly realms suggests that its previous members and structure, whatever it may have been, were reworked to model the earthly realm and thereby legitimise political structures.

On the other hand, Shangdi's significance in ancient Chinese society is called into question by its absolute lack of theophoric names preceding the introduction of Buddhism into China. A theophoric name was one that fixed the name of the chosen god

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[542] This notion is advocated by David Keightley, who argued that the Shang pantheon possessed a bureaucratic structure atop which sat the high god Di. Furthermore, he suggests that it was this structure that later inspired the organisation of the Chinese bureaucratic ideals (Keightley, David N. (1978) 'The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture,' *HR* 17 (3/4), pp. 214-16, 221-3). However, scholars such as Robert Eno remain unconvinced that this was in fact the case especially as there does not appear to be specific evidence of a divine structure of command. See: Eno, Robert (1990) 'Was there a High God Ti in Shang Religion?' *EC* 15, pp. 1-6; and Chang, Ruth H. (2000) 'Understanding *Di* and *Tian*: Deity and Heaven from Shang to Tang Dynasties,' *SPP* 108, p. 7.

[543] Robert Eno hypothesises that the root of the term *di* 'might have been tied to an image of a nuclear family unit, father, principle, wife, and eldest son, a meaning which would strongly supprt a view of Di as an ancestral figure (Eno, Robert (1984) *Masters of the Dance: The Role of T'ien [Tian] in the Teachings of the Early Juist [Ruist] Community*. Vol. 1 and 2, University Microfilms International, Michigan, p. 56). However, Ruth Chang observes that irregardless of the argument, the majority of the evidence points to Di's identification as an anthropomorphic deity, or at the very least the gods as a collective whole, as opposed to just an ancestor (Chang, Ruth H. (2000) 'Understanding *Di* and *Tian*: Deity and Heaven from Shang to Tang Dynasties,' *SPP* 108, p. 7).

[544] Loewe, Michael (1988) 'Imperial China's Reaction,' *Numen* 35 (2), p. 189.

[545] For examples of this notion throughout the ancient world see: Thompson, Thomas L. (2001) 'Jerusalem as the City of God's Kingdom: Common Tropes in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,' *IS* 40 (3/4, Special Issue: Jerusalem), pp. 631-647; and Grebe, Sabine (2004) 'Augustus' Divine Authority and Vergil's "Aeneid",' *Vergilius* 50, pp. 35-62. One can also perceive this relationship in the narratives regarding Moses who communes with God to learn his commandments for his chosen people (Exodus 19).

[546] Ricci, Matteo (1985) 天主實義 *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp. 33-4.

within the given name of a person. This practice was pervasive across the entirety of the ancient Near East, and yet its absence augmented the view of China's religious individuality.[547] The existence of theophoric names as well as their prominence in society was dependent on the cultural significance of the deity in question. Therefore, the lack of these names reinforces the idea that Shangdi was unlike the ancient Near Eastern gods, and that the ancient Chinese people did not worship a god whose form and function was immediately compatible with them. Finally, it presents doubt as to the extent of his anthropomorphisation, pointing rather to the antiquity of the forces of fate and destiny in the natural equilibrium of the universe.

It was at the opening of the twentieth century that Shangdi and Tian truly began to lose the divine identities given them by the Jesuit missionaries. It was instead suggested that they were manifestations of deified ancestors of the royal house. This hypothesis was influenced by the writings of Gao You 高誘 (fl. 160-220) who, in his commentary on the thirteenth chapter of the *Huainanzi*, equated the recipient of the most solemn of the four annual sacrifices with Shangdi.[548] Eventually, the same attributes that were ascribed to the gods of the heavens and the earth also came to be associated with the ancestors. As both parties could be seen as responsible for the outworking of cruelty and kindness on earth, certain rituals were performed that honoured to the local deities as well as the ancestors, who provided blessing and protection for their supplicants.[549]

This point of view contrasted with earlier propositions of the existence of duality in the term Huangtian Shangdi 皇天上帝 (Lord on High in Highest Heaven) and its opposite Hou Tu 后土 (Sovereign Earth). Disagreeing with the idea that early Chinese religion was rooted in animism and naturalism, it was argued that the gods of the heavens and the earth did not share the same level of power, but were instead local deities who rose and fell in prominence according to the relative power of the peoples who followed and sacrificed to them. In this way, the supreme god was seen as nothing more than a member of a large contingent of divine beings and was incomparable to the Christian god, having perhaps more in common with the gods of the Greco-Roman pantheons.

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[547] Chen, Sanping (2002) 'Son of Heaven and Son of God,' *JRAS* 12 (3), p. 315.
[548] Shih, Joseph (1969) 'The Notions of God,' *Numen* 16 (2), p. 111.
[549] Chavannes, Edouard (1901) 'Dieu du sol dans l'ancienne religion Chinoise,' *RHR*, pp. 27-48. Chavannes opinion is coloured by his belief that China, at no time in her history, had a concept of a supreme god, that she was as humanistic in her ancient beliefs and practices as she is in the modern era. His assumptions are no longer as widely accepted for while Shangdi and Tian may not be the gods as Ricci portrayed them, but they share divine qualities that remove them from being simple representations of elevated humanity.

Despite the fact that the god of the soil was not feminised until the Han period, the impact of the dualism of *yin* and *yang* caused her to be seen as a parallel to Mother Earth, and thus as the equal and opposite force to the god of heaven. It has become clear that Hou Tu (in his masculine form), and the cults that were developed around him shared prominence in ancient China with Shangdi, although his significance was always overshadowed by the latter.[550] For example, the annual border sacrifices were offered to Shangdi, and then to Tian after him. His supremacy over the god of the earth was shown through the location, manner and purpose of these sacrifices,[551] which ultimately raised questions regarding the antiquity of the dualism between heaven and earth in China.

On this topic, Edoard Chavannes declared that the spirits of the soil and the sovereign earth were one and the same, rising and falling in prominence with the expansion and contraction of their territory. Although this hypothesis is no longer considered defensible, his observations that the cults of heaven and earth were connected, and that the former was intricately bound with ancestor worship, are still viewed as sound. However, it has become impossible to regard Hou Tu as a simple extension of the spirits of the soil. The former's power remained steady and unrestricted, acting in tandem with the god of heaven, whilst the latter's fluctuated, being confided to a single locality with limited influence, in similar fashion to the gods of the hearth presided over individual families in ancient societies such as Greece and Rome.[552] These gods were differentiated from Hou Tu by their geographical restrictions, for while they were honoured for their continued favour and protection, their influence did not extend outside the family to which they were bound.

The term Shangdi, or even Di alone, appeared in the earliest canonical Confucian texts and was primarily used in reference to a deity or deified figure. Being understandable in both the singular and the plural, (especially in the case of Di, which is often translatable in its plural form), the debate as to whether these terms refer to a god or to the ancestors continues. Today, however, it appears that the general consensus is falling on

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[550] Laufer, Berthold (1912) *Jade*, pp. 144-5.

[551] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), p. 34. Ching actually uses this fact to question the antiquity of dualism and the yin-yang school in China, stating that both the cult of Heaven and the cult of Earth disappeared since the collapse of the monarchy in 1911.

[552] Shih, Joseph (1969) 'The Notions of God,' *Numen* 16 (2), pp. 103-5. Smith suggests that each homestead had its own god of the soil, and that these homesteads were then grouped together 'into villages of cantonments, ideally [… consisting] of twenty five families, and each of these groups had its [own] 'god of the soil',' and that this pattern extended to the feudal fiefs and to the imperial palace. (Smith, D. Howard (1957) 'Divine Kingship,' *Numen* 4 (3), p. 181).

the side of his identification as a single high god presiding over a divine council. Both interpretations have merit, for both a council of deities or of ancestors could work in mimicry to the earthly government in its efforts to regulate the balance of the world.[553] However, a study on the alternate translations of the character *tian* 天 (sky/heaven) has revealed a potential relationship between it and the character *ren* 人 (person), suggesting an etymologically based connection between the heavens and humanity.

The translation offered in the study of these two characters attempts to humanise the term in order to show that it was in the ancestors that the identity of the gods could be determined.[554] The relationship could certainly appear to refer to the highest state of man, to those who were deemed worthy of deification; the sages and the wise man of the past. However, this hypothesis is not universally accepted, rather, it is perceived more likely that it refers to a physical and symbolic relationship between mankind on earth and their deity who resides in the highest realm of heaven. Whilst it is generally accepted that Shangdi became Tian during the political upheaval,[555] their synonymity is questioned due to the differences in their basic nature.

The difference between them comes in the form of the oracle bones pertaining to the idea that Shangdi, at least in his earliest appearance, was conceived of as a deity.[556] Evidence suggests that the Shang rulers paid close attention to their religious duties in serving the spirits and local deities. On the other hand, the Zhou period saw a gradual rise of a humanistic worldview and movement away from dogmatic adherence to supernatural requirements. It is possible that Tian may originally have been a demigod of the Zhou tribes, who was then imposed upon the Shang peoples after their downfall,[557] although his characteristics also permitted his potential identification as a deceased ancestor. From this, it would seem that Shangdi and Tian are not as analogous

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[553] See: Douglas Lancashire's introduction to Ricci's work. Ricci, Matteo (1985) 天主實義 *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp. 33-4.
[554] This study was based on Liu Xiang's postulation of what he believed was in fact the true meaning of the character. He states that the shared phonetic sound between the tip of the human head and the heavens implies a close relationship between the two. See: Liu Xiang 劉翔 (1993) *Zhongguo chuantong jiazhi guannian quanshi xue* 中國傳統價值觀念詮釋學, Kuikuan Publishing, Taipei, pp. 18-19.
[555] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), p. 16.
[556] Chen, Sanping (2002) 'Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions among Ancient Asian Cultures Regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names,' *JRAS* 12 (3), pp. 289-325.
[557] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), p. 5.

as previously thought, their natures overlapping for only certain periods of their existence.[558]

This differentiation is easily explainable when one takes into account the diminishment of religious thought and the need for a deity to sustain the world. The probability that Tian of the Zhou period was less a god than a deified ancestor is possibly what led to scholars identifying Shangdi along similar lines, coupled with the fact that the religion of the Shang period was focused to a marked degree around ancestor worship. Ultimately, the Chinese people's conception of Shangdi varied, but his presence in her formative age is undisputed. His societal importance dwindled until the Han dynasty, when his nature was separated into five under the influence of the Daoist literature.[559] Shangdi did not sit at the head of a monotheistic religion, nor was he conceived of in the same vein as the gods of the ancient Near East. Rather, it is likely that he was less than a personal deity who took action for the individual and his plight, but more than a deified ancestor. Although, he was, at least in the initial stages of China's mythic history, one who responded to the needs of the society as a whole through the divination of the king and his council.

6.2 THE MANDATE OF SONSHIP

The idea of divine sonship in the ancient world is not commonly known and is closely linked in the Chinese tradition to the mandate from heaven, which grants the king the right to rule over his country, its people, and occasionally even the neighbouring nations. The mandate from heaven that existed in historical and poetical literature since approximately the twelfth century B.C.E. was heavily influenced by the idea of a pre-existing independent moral code. This code was a universal law undetermined by an omniscient force and required the participation of man in its maintenance.[560] The idea of

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[558] For an in depth study of the understanding and differentiation between Shangdi (Di) and Tian and the usage of their names throughout the Shang, Zhou, Han and Tang dynasties, see: Chang, Ruth H. (2000) 'Understanding *Di* and *Tian*: Deity and Heaven from Shang to Tang Dynasties,' *SPP* 108, pp. 1-54.

[559] Shih, Joseph (1969) 'The Notions of God,' *Numen* 16 (2), pp. 131-2. Shih believes that the Chinese people shared a belief in a Supreme God in her ancient past, and states that in the Shang period he was associated with the moon, which held prominence in the contemporary religion and iconography. This transitioned in the Zhou era to becoming the king of the spiritual world as the natural and spiritual orders began to coincide.

[560] Liu, Yu (2005) 'Seeing God Differently,' *HR* 45 (1), p. 33. See also Chan, Wing-Tsit (1963) *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*, NJ: Princeton University Press, Princeton, whose work heavily impacted Liu's understanding of the mandate from heaven and its representation in classic Chinese literature.

a heavenly mandate is believed to have entered China in a realised form from the steppe region during the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.E.

The culture of the steppes was ruled by force and military prowess, therefore possession of a heavenly mandate was verified through victory on the battlefield against competing tribes.[561] This allowed for the transference of the mandate from one ruler to another, irrespective of lineage or clan, and justified new leadership in hindsight, claiming that success could not have been possible without the approval of Heaven itself. In the ancient world, success in military campaigns under the endorsement of a deity was primarily based on that god's ability to conquer and rise above his fellow gods. Accordingly, the establishment of a high god's throne was often coupled with the creation story to intensify his claim through his victory in the cosmic battle. There is, however, practically no evidence of this conflict in the Chinese mandate.

The earliest archaeological evidence of the concept from the Neolithic period onwards suggests that it was related to the worship and movements of the heavenly bodies before their association with divination.[562] Furthermore, it was during the Spring and Autumn period (ca. 771-476 B.C.E.) that the characteristics of the god of the Shang dynasty completed its transition into an impersonal moral guide.[563] As was established in the previous section, it is highly possible that this transformation began during the transference of Shangdi's qualities into those of Tian in order to present a more palatable system to the defeated aristocracy by attempting to guarantee their submission through the reinforcement of an already established social structure. Furthermore, it is plausible that the mandate from heaven was a foreign construct introduced into China by Zhou propaganda to fortify its position as the natural heir of the Shang dynasty.

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[561] Fletcher, Joseph (1986) 'The Mongols,' *HJAS* 46 (1), p. 31. The Mongols looked to Tengri (the Sky-God) for his blessing, and those who were considered to have obtained it could rally an army around himself, men who accepted his claim, and the truth of it would be tested in the battle.

[562] Pankenier, David W. (1998) 'The Mandate of Heaven,' *Archaeology* 51 (2), p.28.

[563] Zhang, Pengwei; Guo, Qiyong; Wang, Bei (2008) 'New Insight into Mencius' Theory,' *FPC* 3 (1), p. 28. The amalgamation of Shangdi into Tian involved more than a simple name change, but rather the latter maintained his own characteristics whilst taking on that of the former. Similarly, Michael Loewe demonstrates the evidence of this transition, stating that during the Imperial age 'the cults of state had at first been addressed to [Shangdi] or his derivatives; [but] later they were transferred to the service of Heaven […] in the hope of acquiring cosmic blessing on the dispensation over which the emperor presided. […] justifying the emperor's authority and obliging him to do so according to certain ideals.' (Loewe, Michael (1988) 'Imperial China's Reaction to the Catholic Missions,' *Numen* 35 (2), pp. 182-3) This allowed for a smoother transition between both the religious and social protocols at the beginning of the Zhou period. Furthermore, Shih attests to a period during the Zhou dynasty during which the transition overlapped, citing two bronze vessels bearing similar inscriptions, one carrying the name of Tian and the other Shangdi (Shih, Joseph (1969) 'The Notions of God,' *Numen* 16 (2)).

The success of the Zhou propaganda, as well as its longevity, is testament to the impact it had over the general political and moral psyche of China.[564] An altered form of the mandate was absorbed by the teaching of the *yin-yang* school of thought and was factored into the continual rotation of the five agents.[565] In this way, the mandate was divorced from the religious convictions of a deity who possessed the authority to give and remove his blessing over a specific household and became subject to the natural cycles of the universe. For example, in the *Shijing* 詩經 (*Book of Poetry*) it speaks of the appointment of Shangdi upon the Zhou clan, which elevated them over the Shang people. It was said that the divine mandate was withdrawn from the final Shang king because of his neglect of the proper sacrifices to Heaven and earth.[566] Therefore, his failure to perform his duty upset the natural balances of the world and declared him to be an unworthy king.

Later, the concept became intertwined with the Confucian code of ethics. In the nineteenth chapter of his *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*Doctrine of the Mean*), Confucius spoke of the integrity of King Wu and the Duke of Zhou, describing them as exemplars of moral authority and filial piety. He stated that: 郊社之禮，所以事上帝也；宗廟之禮，所以祀乎其先也。明乎郊社之禮、禘嘗之義，治國其如示諸掌乎 ('By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth they served God, and by the ceremonies of the ancestral temple they sacrificed to their ancestors. He who understands the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, and the meaning of the several sacrifices to ancestors, would find the government of a kingdom as easy as to look into his palm').[567] The goodness of the first kings was reliant on their upholding of tradition, of performing

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[564] Chen, Sanping (2002) 'Son of Heaven and Son of God,' *JRAS* 12 (3), p. 291.
[565] Shih, Joseph (1969) 'The Notions of God,' *Numen* 16 (2), pp. 135-6.
[566] Laufer, Berthold (1912) *Jade*, p. 147. This is the most common understanding of the mandate from heaven and its correspondance to divine sonship. The framework set out by the Zhou dynasty remained unchanged until the Qin ruler desired to increase the power of their empire by 'deifying' their emperor and claiming that their dynasty would endure forever (See: Michael Puett's article 'Human and Divine Kingship in Early China: Comparative Reflections' in Brisch, Nicole (2012) *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Oriental Institute Seminars Number 4, Chicago, pp. 207-220.
[567] To his translation, Legge offered a commentary suggesting that the remnants of the ancient religion of China are found in the reference to these sacrifices and that through them, Confucius taught that 'proper knowledge and practice of the duties of religion and filial piety would amply equip a ruler for all the duties of his government.' (Legge, James (1861) *The Chinese Classics*, Trübner & co., London, p. 268). To these sacrifices, Sarah Allan also attributes another kind of sacrifice to the Shang kings that was offensive to Confucian ethics and carefully excised form the classical literature and archaeological evidence, stating that human sacrifice was an acceptable and widespread practice during their era. (Allan, Sarah (1984) 'Drought, Human Sacrifice and the Mandate of Heaven in a Lost Text from the "Shang shu",' *BSOAS University of London* 47 (3), pp. 523-539).

necessary duties and adhering to religious customs. This enhanced their claim to moral superiority in the eyes of Confucius and the later historians, and therefore justified their receipt of the mandate as well as reinforcing the remodeled understanding of the concept itself.

The king resided in an exclusive position, acting as a bridge between three realms; heaven, earth, and the underworld. This was a figurative and symbolic role, although one can perceive its literal nature in the very character that described him. It is believed by some scholars that the character, *wang* 王, which consisted of three horizontal strokes and a single vertical stroke, symbolically represented the three planes and the king as the mediator between them.[568] According to K. C. Chang, this was an expansion of earlier Shamanism. Based on a fourth century text outlining the special role the shaman played between the spiritual and human worlds, Chang intimated that the necessary separation of these realms was maintained through the shamanistic intermediaries. It was believed that when laymen took matters into their own hands and begun to disregard the supernatural world that disasters began to descend upon the country. As authority was established through access to the wisdom of Heaven, the king was naturally declared as the head of the shaman order, simultaneously legitimising his own reign and the shaman order.[569]

Shamans in ancient China were not witch-doctors, but were instead revered for the knowledge and wisdom they gained from the spirits and their ability to comprehend the mysteries of the world. Accordingly, the king was recognised as a high priest, whose duties required him to offer annual sacrifices and discover the will of Heaven through divination, although he was assisted in these duties by many others stationed within his court. What differentiated him was a perception of favour upon him, and the implication that he was both son and servant of the gods.[570] His position was undoubtedly unique; although the suggestion of his divine sonship did not hold the same weight as it might under the personal deities of Babylon, Greece or Rome.

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[568] See Taylor's article in which he explains that 'the three horizontal strokes represent the cosmic trinity: Man flanked by heaven above and Earth below' and 'the vertical line represents the emperor, who by his carefully regulated activities, maintains the three domains in their proper relationship with one another' (Taylor, Romeyn (1997) 'Official Altars,' *TP* 83 (1/3), p. 95.
[569] Chang, K. C. (1983) *Art, Myth and Ritual*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, pp. 44-5. For a further look into the scope of Shamanism and its importance in the early period of Chinese history, see pp. 44-55.
[570] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), p. 12.

The Shang dynasty was founded upon the idea that the progenitor of their clan was a product of divine conception. The legends that recount the origin of the first king show an effort to link his heritage, and that of the Shang clan as a whole, to a god, or to certain ancestors in order to justify his authority. The story tells of a woman, a goddess in some versions, who conceived a child by eating a bird's egg sent by Heaven, whereas that of the Zhou dynasty relates the coupling of a goddess with the Supreme God, the mothers subsequent abandonment of her baby due to his perceived unluckiness and his ensuing protection from wild animals after his exposure on the mountainside.[571] These myths allowed for not only the Shang kingdom to be established, but also the Zhou to rightfully succeed them.

A similar theme is also visible in the story of Romulus and Remus in the foundations of Rome. Their myth tells of the violation of a vestal virgin by the god Mars, whose offspring were then abandoned and suckled by wolves. The divine heritage of the twins granted Romulus the authority to reign over his new city for nearly forty years.[572] Additionally, before the rise of Augustus, Sextus Pompeius began calling himself *Neptuni filius* (son of Neptune) in an effort to legitimise his claim, and Augustus consolidated his power by creating a new family name, going by the title *Imperator Caesar divi filius* (Imperator Caesar, son of the deified Julius Caesar).[573] Such examples express precedence for a god, or one's ancestors (had they been worthy enough for deification), having the ability to endorse a ruler, and their chosen used their names as evidence for their merit.

Divine appointment conferred authority upon the ancient rulers, and China found her equivalent in the term *Tianzi* 天子 (son of heaven), although it does not appear to carry the same gravitas. The Chinese term is symbolic in nature, and is tied closely to moral superiority as well as supernatural intervention.[574] It is suggested that the term is

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[571] See Birrell's treatement of Legge's translation of these myths from the *Book of Poetry*, the *Historical Records* by Sima Qian and the *Songs of Chu* in Birrell, Anne (1999) 'James Legge,' *HR* 38 (4), pp. 338-344. Legge performed a style of mythopoeia on these myths, combining facets from separate myths, using ideas or names from one to extrapolate another.

[572] Hornblower, Simon et al. (2003) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 1335.

[573] Eck, Werner (2007) *The Age of Augustus*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, pp. 24, 57. Before this time, the name Caesar was merely a cognomen for the Julian family. One final example of this principle is found in the story of Abraham in the Hebrew Bible. In this story, God promises that from Abraham will spring a great nation and that his descendents will equal the number of stars in the sky (Gen 15:4-5). Childless, and with a barren wife, it is only through divine intervention that the promised son could be born (Gen 18, 21:1-7).

[574] It is thought that this title permitted the king to offer sacrifices to Heaven and thus act as mediator between it and the earth, for it is the duty of the filial son alone to offer a sacrifice to his parents.

related to titles from the Sinitic, Iranic and Altaic cultures, and especially to the Parthian and Sogdian names of *baɣpuhr* and *bɣpwr* (son of god) respectively.[575] These phonetically and etymologically equivalent expressions were employed extensively in the steppe region along the outskirts of China to refer to the nomadic tribe leaders. The term then migrated southward and was in widespread usage by the time of its first appearance in Chinese literature.

There is little doubt that these titles influenced the Chinese concept. However, by the time they had migrated from the steppe, they no longer seemed to possess the same social and religious connotations that the Parthian and Sogdian versions carried. Rather, the son of heaven in the steppe was simply a title for the king and lacked any divine association.[576] It was theorised that the concept of the son of heaven and the heavenly mandate for his kingship may have been transmitted through the steppe nomads into China from such countries as India or Iran. In this it was implied that it was in the idea of a supreme deity that one king could extend his domain, subjugating his enemies in the quest of creating a universal kingdom. Furthermore, it was a requirement of submission that the defeated must also convert to following the god of their conqueror in the adoption of new social structures.[577] Finally, it is thought that the Zhou clan originated from amongst the nomadic tribes of the steppe, which would explain shared religious features between them.[578] It would also support the earlier identification of Tian as a territorial deity who absorbed the larger aspects of Shangdi when they conquered the Shang dynasty.

When there was practically nothing remaining of the anthropomorphised figure of the Shang period, it would seem unnecessary for the king to act as a mediator between the

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Furthermore, he goes on to clarify that in Confucian thought, the title did not correspond to a biological connection, but rather that the king makes himself the son of heaven through the very act of sacrificing to it. In this way, the emperor becomes both son to heavean and parent to his people. (See: Puett, Michael 'The offering of Food and the Creation of Order: The Practice of Sacrifice in Early China,' in: Sterckx, Roel (2005) *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, p. 84-91).

575 Chen, Sanping (2002) 'Son of Heaven and Son of God,' *JRAS* 12 (3), pp. 293-8.

576 Chen, Sanping (2002) 'Son of Heaven and Son of God,' *JRAS* 12 (3), pp. 293-8. Chen does not believe that these terms were indigenous to the Steppe region, but claims that they must have been borrowed from foreign sources, citing the fact that it is well known the titles of royals and officials were inherited. Similarly, the transmission of a myth or a title that has been divorced from, or lost its original meaning and therefore granted new representation is a common feature of myth, and one that the myth and ritual school is well versed in.

577 Fletcher, Joseph (1986) 'The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives,' *HJAS* 46 (1), pp. 11-50. It must be noted that Fletcher's self-admitted purpose was to provoke new debate on the topic, and entered into the realm of speculation.

578 Chen, Sanping (2002) 'Son of Heaven and Son of God,' *JRAS* 12 (3), p. 312-3.

spiritual and earthly realms. Being the son of heaven and having its mandate became synonymous with one another, and lost any supernatural connotations. Disorder in the heavens was reflective of the moral state on earth; disasters would strike an immoral king, whereas peace would endure in the wake of a moral one. Heaven became an abstract force, and the king stood as the representation of every man that fell under his jurisdiction.[579] As time passed, and the role of the king was increasingly estranged from its shamanistic correlations, the mandate persisted through the continued adherence to the annual sacrifices even though they no longer carried religious importance.[580] The role of the mandate during the formative years of the monarchy cannot be overlooked, however, its disassociation to an anthropomorphised deity, seemed to occur at an early stage of its development.

6.3 THE MODEL OF DIVINE KINGSHIP

The model emperors provide perhaps the clearest example of the reverse euhemerisation process that the Chinese myths are said to have undergone. Their transition from the divine to the mortal worlds is indicative of the religious development as a whole, and the rise in humanistic focus.[581] Textually, they appear in both deified and human forms, and served as etiological examples of kingship and moral authority. It was said that they lived in legendary times: 天下猶未平，洪水横流，氾濫於天下。草木暢茂，禽獸繁殖，五穀不登，禽獸偪人 ('when the world had not yet been perfectly reduced to order, the vast waters, flowing out of their channels made a universal inundation. Vegetation was luxuriant, and birds and beasts swarmed. The various kinds of grains could not be grown. The birds and beasts pressed upon men').[582] This period was not described as one of peace and prosperity, but a Golden Age of moral virtue and perfect governance. Nature maintained supremacy over the development of culture, and

[579] Allan, Sarah (1984) 'Drought, Human Sacrifice and the Mandate of,' *BSOAS* 47 (3), pp. 526-7. The idea of a kings mediator-ship for his people is well known, take for example king David in 1 Chronicles 21:7 where he asks for the punishment of his action to be doled out solely upon himself and not upon his people as an extension of him.
[580] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), p. 41.
[581] This premise is rather generally accepted by the majority of Sinologists; however, Whalen Lai believes that there has not been sufficient study on the concept and thus it still needs a great deal of critiquing and deconstruction (Lai, Whalen (1996) 'An Anthology of Sources,' *AFS* 55 (2), p. 324.
[582] Legge, James (2011) *The Works of Mencius*, Unabridged Reprint, Dover Publications Inc., New York, p. 250.

the animals were unchallenged in their dominance. Mankind did not cohabitate on the earth with the gods, but lived simply, in balance with the world.

Known as the emperors Yao, Shun 舜 and Yu, they were representations of exceptional virtue, epitomising the attributes of wisdom, humility and unselfishness. The model emperors were in essence perfect, and were looked to as examples of how a good man should act. To each was also attributed an extraordinary achievement, allowing for the historicising of their mythological tradition as well as their characters. By the time of the Han era, they had achieved historical orthodoxy; their stories were not regarded as fictional narrative, but as an accurate rendition of history.[583] They appeared quite late in Chinese literature, arousing extensive suspicion regarding the authenticity of these figures. Indeed, many of the extant sources containing references to the Golden Age and its legendary inhabitants are dated nearly fifteen hundred years after the end of the era, thus leaving little doubt that they have only a slight or no basis in fact.[584] Rather, the narratives were categorised as deliberate works of fancy, drawing on earlier myths and legends to create idealised characters and rooting them within the earliest known period to grant them weight. This permitted the Confucian scholars to exemplify their philosophical ideals in the ancient past, thereby encouraging the desire to ascertain their moral attributes.

The model emperors asserted considerable influence over Chinese thought and it is probable that their stories were born from older, now forgotten myths that were embellished over time. For example, little is known about the personhood of Yao. His name is mentioned many times although rarely with a narrative connected to it. It is said that historical time began with his reign, and he is occasionally linked with older versions of the myth of Yi 羿 shooting down the nine suns to maintain order and save humanity.[585] Despite the lack of information about him, he is mainly presented as a sage-king and ideal ruler in the Confucian mindset.[586] Shun, on the other hand is the exemplar of filial piety, chosen by Yao in preference over his own two sons for his unrivalled merit. Stories concerning Shun are assumed to have been based on folklore, from which he has

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583 Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 55.

584 This had led scholars to question the authenticity of the sources in which episodes regarding the model emperors have been inserted. See, for example, the *Songs of the Five Sons* contained within the *Book of Poetry* as outlined by James Legge in the fourth volume of his Chinese Classics.

585 For a discussion on this myth see: Allan, Sarah (1981) 'Sons of Suns: Myth and Totemism in Early China,' *BSOAS* 44 (2), pp. 290-326; and Masako, Mori (1995) 'Restoring the "Epic of Hou Yi",' *AFS* 54 (2), pp. 239-257.

586 Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, pp. 55, 138-9, 238-9.

assimilated the characteristics and feats of lesser-known figures and assumed their place in the narrative. He is accredited with designating the ministerial roles of the first government, simultaneously historicising the ancient mythological figures and assigning them corresponding roles, for example, the grain god Houji 后稷 became the minister for agriculture and the storm god Kui 夔 became the minister for music.[587] Shun's actions mirror those of the Babylonian Enki, who similarly assigned the 'governmental' roles of specific deities,[588] displaying the stark contrast between the two cultures in the former's designation of these roles to mortals.

It is Yu that appears to have undergone the greatest transformation, boasting a divine identity through his link to the flood myths and his accomplishment of overcoming it, bring the world back to order. His story is used as a cyclical illustration of virtue overcoming moral deviance in order to regain the correct path and returning to virtuous and moral action, thereby bringing order back to the threatening chaos. Yu's father Gun 鯀 is portrayed as a moral failure, a man unable to subdue the forces of nature due to his perversion of right action. Yu, on the other hand, is exemplary in his conduct; he is the hero that rises up against an un-virtuous leader and replaces him.[589] In this way, the flood story becomes less about mankind's victory over the flood but a politically driven archetype displaying how nature itself will rebel against an unrighteous king as evidence of the removal of Heaven's mandate from upon him and its transference to another. So often seen in a re-creative context, the flood stories offer insight into the discussion of conflict in creation myths, for they preserve certain features otherwise lost and upheld the ideals of the mandate from heaven, but were also demonstrative of China's movement away from any remnants of a personalised deity.

Despite having been so neatly eliminated in the creation accounts by the Han period, which produced many of the final extant forms of the narratives, the Mesopotamia-like conflict, and perhaps evidence of earlier traditions, is found in the legends of the deluge. However, this conflict has been brought almost entirely into the human realm; there is no cosmic battle raging in the heavens, fighting an eternal war to maintain the primacy of the forces of good. Instead, it is described in terms of natural consequences for the misconduct of mankind. Much like as in the Hebrew Bible, the fault for malfunctions in

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587 Birrell, Anne (1999) 'James Legge,' *HR* 38 (4), pp. 345-6.
588 Averbeck, Richard E. (2003) 'Myth, Ritual, and Order in "Enki and the World Order",' *JAOS* 123 (4), pp. 757-771, esp. p. 757.
589 Birrell, Anne (1997) 'The Four Flood Myths,' *TP* 83 (4/5), pp. 240-2.

the equilibrium of the universe falls squarely upon the shoulders of humanity, and they must take responsibility both for their own actions, and occasionally for those of their forebears. In the same way, the different examples set by the model emperors were interpreted to suit contemporary issues; their plights were universalised and made relevant to the current kings so as to encourage them into moral action,[590] and in so doing emphasising the Confucian ideals of kingship.

The model emperors played an integral role in shaping the society and culture of the country, and yet they were rarely conceived of by later philosophers as being primeval gods. Apart from in the opening chapters of the *Shujing*, they were consistently located at the beginning of historical time rather than appearing in the genealogy of the primeval pantheon in the major classics.[591] They achieved herculean tasks but were depicted a nothing more than men. With so little known about Yao and even Shun, it would seem a simple task to adapt their legends and situate them within the Golden Age when the cultural mores were in the midst of being determined. This allowed for redefined ideals to be inserted into the ancient past, granting them influence and power in political affairs. The reinterpretation of mythic materials was a commonly used method in the ancient world to base the societal regulations within the realm of history.[592] The suggestion that the model emperors have been divorced from their mythological roots has been employed as verification for the lack of myth in China. However, it is perhaps a truer testimony of the different requirements for the development of Chinese culture.

While the mandate from heaven was more of an abstract idea, and being the son of heaven a blessing that could be displayed through military prowess, it was the model emperors who became the basis of these concepts. They provided the expectations of a royal figure, demonstrating the ways through which the mandate could be granted, and conduct by which it could be lost. As was seen in the transition between the Shang and Zhou dynasties, there is evidence of a series of rites that had to be performed by the emperor to ensure the continued prosperity of the kingdom through the regulations of nature. These rites were performed according to strict calendars lest the cosmic order was disturbed.

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590 Gates, Jean (1936) 'Model Emperors,' *JAOS* 56 (1), p. 73.
591 Birrell, Anne (1999) 'James Legge,' *HR* 38 (4), pp. 345-6.
592 Gates, Jean (1936) 'Model Emperors,' *JAOS* 56 (1), p. 75.

Yu's success was based upon his receipt of a 'Great Plan' that outlined the responsibilities of his reign and illustrating the relationship between the balance of the cosmos and the morality of the king.[593] His adherence to such a plan resulted in effects at both personal and kingdom-wide levels. Likewise, the later kings were required to follow his example, and they were rewarded for their virtue and their vice reminiscent of the Mesopotamian and Israelite kings. However, the Chinese idea of kingship was closer to the Mesopotamian model than it was to those of the Egyptian model in which the pharaohs were deified even in life. In China, virtuous rulers could enter the spiritual world after death, acting as ancestors and receiving sacrifices from their clans in return for their continued protection over the household.[594] Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, the king, a mere mortal, was tasked with the necessity to maintain the balance, and this was achieved through the annual sacrifices.

6.4 THE SACRIFICIAL TRADITION

The subject of the annual sacrifices and season rites performed by the ancient kings brings the argument back to its beginning and its discussion on the divinity of Shangdi. More than that, the sacrificial rituals diverges from the normal format of the ancient Near Eastern cultures and reinforces the alternate way in which Chinese mythology matured.[595] The rituals of ancient China are said to have found their origins within chthonic religions similar to those in the ancient Near East where ancestor worship and fertility cults played a dominant role in society. It must be noted, however, that the growth of Chinese rituals seem only superficially related to these traditions, especially those that are considered standard within the myth and ritual schools.

This fact was outlined by Howard Smith, who declared that there were, for example, 'no dramatic representations of the death of a rising god, no ritual combat to represent the

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[593] Gates, Jean (1936) 'Model Emperors,' *JAOS* 56 (1), p. 67. This view has been heavily influenced by Hocart's observations on kingship in his book of the same title (Hocart, Arthur Maurice (1927) *Kingship*, Oxford University Press, London, see especially p. 46).

[594] Smith, D. Howard (1957) 'Divine Kingship,' *Numen* 4 (3), pp. 172, 238. In Mesopotamia, as in China, a royal mandate could be bestowed and removed at whim.

[595] For example, it is commonly accepted that the sacrifial tradition was determined by the early sages according to what they deemed necessary. In other words, it was predominantly seen as relating to supernatural elements that were relevant for humanity and was not reliant on divine power (See: Puett, Michael 'The offering of Food and the Creation of Order: The Practice of Sacrifice in Early China,' in: Sterckx, Roel (2005) *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 77-8; and Puett, Michael (2002) *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China*, Harvard University Asia Centre, Cambridge, p. 78).

victory of the god over his enemies, no sacred marriage, [and] no triumphal procession in which the king played the role of a god.'[596] The lack of these ritual elements, combined with the supposed antiquity of the rites themselves, suggests that the elimination of the cosmic conflict occurred at a relatively early date during China's history. There appeared to be vestiges of the concepts of Gaia and Ouranos from the Greek tradition in the figures of Heaven and Earth, but there were no anthropomorphised deities represented in the sacrificial acts of the emperors. The rites and rituals of ancient China were not designed to appease the gods and seek their blessing, but to serve in maintaining the balance between life and death, wealth and poverty, peace and war, and misfortune and favour among others.

It is important to remember that much of what remains of Chinese religion and mythology is a reflection of the Han dynasty. Its scholars attributed much of what they understood of kingship, its mandate, and the rites and traditions attached to them to the first dynasties.[597] The extent of earlier material contained within the descriptions of the sacrifices and the importance they held in the early monarchy is unknown, and what remains is interpreted in Han terms. The upholding of the sacrifices in the Shang dynasty was required to strengthen the Zhou foothold in the kingdom, and continuing the established traditions was the most effective method to do so. The rites are tied to the model emperors, or more specifically to Shun, of whom there are stories regarding the period immediately after he ascended the throne. They claim that in the year that he took up his royal office, he dutifully toured the kingdom, offering up the necessary sacrifices to ensure its endurance and legitimise his position.[598]

It was to Tian, who by this stage had already become identified as a representation of the ideal cosmic structure of the cosmos than a god, that the annual border sacrifices were offered during the winter solstice at the Temple of Heaven. These rituals could only be performed by the emperor himself and were seen to be responsible for the prosperity (or privation by their neglect) of the kingdom as a whole. Furthermore, the privilege of offering sacrifices to the spirits and ancestors was one that was confined to

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[596] Smith, D. Howard (1957) 'Divine Kingship,' *Numen* 4 (3), p. 173.
[597] Smith, D. Howard (1957) 'Divine Kingship,' *Numen* 4 (3), p. 182.
[598] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), p. 19. Ching specifies that while there is no possibility of these stories being historically accurate, they show connection to the later model, pointing to 'an ancient tradition that associated Mount [Tai], a sacred mountain, with kingship and ritual, as well as shamanism and the cult of immortals.' Furthermore, from the extant sources, it is believed that only six rulers, from the Zhou period and later are actually recorded as performing these 'political functions in announcing to the world the legitimacy of the rulers.'

the upper echelon and thus restricted the common people who were considered to be without ancestry and therefore shared no connection to the spirit world.[599] This allowed for the subjugation of the common people for they could not contribute to the governing of the state, and the ruling classes were then free to dictate the customs and religious practices through the support of the mandate. In this way, the Han philosophers were also able to justify contemporary practices by situating their origin in the ancient past.

The Chinese sacrifices are said to have been intimately associated with ancestor worship. They honoured the figures of heaven and earth themselves as opposed to the creator of them, being infused as they were with strong elements of dualism from the *yin-yang* school of thought, and were intricately associated with ancestor worship.[600] While it has been established that Shangdi and Tian were not birthed from the same mould as the ancient Near Eastern gods, a study on the border sacrifices based on passages from the eighty-second chapter of the *Daming Huidian* 大明會典 (*Ming Statutes*) suggested that Shangdi was more than just the unthinking force of the Confucian scholars.[601] It was believed that the border sacrifices were offered to Shangdi who was welcomed at the beginning of the sacrificial procession by the performance of two songs inviting him to witness the proceedings.

The first of these songs was the *Zhonghe Zhiqu* 中和之曲 (Song of Central Peace), which describes the primeval state of matter before the moment of differentiation occurred. It declares that: '於昔洪荒之初兮混蒙。 五行未運兮、 兩曜未明。 其中挺立兮、 有無容聲。神皇出御兮、始判濁清。立天立地立人兮、群物生生.' (In the beginning, immense turbid waters covered the earth [which was without form]. The five [planets] had not yet begun to revolve, the two lights were not yet bright. In the midst of what was established, there existed no form or sound. The Spiritual Sovereign came forth in his chariot and began to discriminate between the pure and impure. He established heaven

[599] Ching, Julia (1997) 'Son of Heaven,' *TP* 83 (1/3 State and Ritual in China), p. 19. On this topic, Michael Puett elaborates that the king was permitted 7 ancestral temples at which he could honour his ancestors; the lords were permitted 5, 'the nobles three, the officers two, and petty officers one, whereas the common people were considered to have no ancestors at all (See: Puett, Michael 'The offering of Food and the Creation of Order: The Practice of Sacrifice in Early China,' in: Sterckx, Roel (2005) *Of Tripod and Palate: Food, Politics, and Religion in Traditional China*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 77-8).
[600] Blodget, Henry (1899) 'The Worship of Heaven and Earth,' *JAOS* 20, pp. 68-9.
[601] See C. K. Thong's study chapter 4 of his book: Thong, Chan Kei; Fu, Charlene F. (2009) *Finding God in Ancient China*, Zondervan, Michigan, pp.108-150. It is important to note, however, that Thong firmly believes that the ancient Chinese concept of Shangdi corresponds to the Christian God.

and earth and formed mankind and gave life to the multitudinous things.)[602] This song connects the Spiritual Sovereign, who is described in the typical imagery of a sky deity, to the creative period, implying that he participated in its process.

Similarly, the second song is the *Yuanhe Zhiqu* 元和之曲 (Song of Original Peace), which reads that '帝闢陰陽兮造化張。神生七政兮精華光。圓覆方載兮兆物康.' (Di settled the *yin* and the *yang* and began to change and stretch them. His spirit gave life to the seven essences whose illustrious light covers the round (sky) and the square (earth) and all things were good/peaceful).[603] It has been postulated from these examples that Shangdi may have been associated with the creation event; however the singularity of his inclusion makes this hypothesis highly improbable. As the imagery depicted in these two excerpts are similar to the Daoist account that is preserved in the *Huainanzi* it is likely that the ritual was based on a similar model. It sat in accordance with the Daoist notion that in the beginning there was no form, there were no images or sound, everything was undifferentiated and that from this the pure was then separated from the impure and they settled into the *yin* and the *yang*, whose essences created the multitude.

The Spiritual Sovereign, or Di, is depicted here in the role that in the Daoist tradition was stated as belonging to the *Dao*, which passively guides the process of creation. Ultimately, the Ming Statutes were composed ca. 1500, and these two episodes are unique in the Chinese creative tradition, suggesting that their inclusion of a realised creative power was influenced by the Jesuit missionaries. This discussion has also investigated the differences between the terms *zhen* 朕 and *chen* 臣; the first of which was used as a first-person reference up until the third century B.C.E. when it became an appellation for the emperor as the Imperial 'we,' and the second described a minister, statesman or official, denoting the acquiescence of a subject to his ruler. The emperor's status exceeded every being in both the natural and supernatural worlds, and as such always used the term *zhen* to refer to himself. However, when referring to or addressing Shangdi, he uses *chen* to signify his subservience to Heaven alone.[604]

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[602] Own translation. http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=904570 This passage is a part of a digital edition of the 大明會典 by the Chinese Text Project, Chapter 82, lines 474-6.
[603] Own translation. http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=904570 This passage is a part of a digital edition of the 大明會典 by the Chinese Text Project, Chapter 82, lines 477-79a.
[604] Thong, Chan Kei; Fu, Charlene F. (2009) *Finding God in Ancient China*, Zondervan, Michigan, p. 119. When this character takes on the character 子, and becomes 臣子*chenzi*, it takes on the literal meaning of

This structure affirmed the idea of an equitable hierarchy between the spiritual and natural worlds, which ultimately led scholars to presume that it was an outgrowth of the celestial archetype. The regularity of the connection between the heavenly and earthly models throughout the ancient world made the correlation between the way in which the king ruled his kingdom and how the supreme deity managed the heavenly kindgom only natural.[605] However, while this portrait of Shangdi aligns with early portrayals of him as residing over a heavenly government, it is likely that this singular example of his assimilation with creation mythology is a foreign intrusion rather than proof of a personal and active deity.

Today, almost all that is known about the sacrificial rites is found within the Collected Statutes of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Romeyn Taylor postulates that the level of detail in these statutes is reminiscent of Leviticus in the Hebrew Bible; 'the spirits of the official pantheon were named, the calendar and the liturgical rules for offerings were provided, together with the specifications for the design and construction of the altars, temples and shrines where the rites were performed.'[606] It is unknown just how much of the ancient traditions were preserved during their dynastical reconstructions according to contemporary needs, although the rites were continued to be practiced up until the dissolution of the empire.

The two major annual sacrifices were offered to heaven and earth. The first, known as the *feng* sacrifice, was offered to heaven on the summit of the tallest mountain in central Shandong province, while the latter, known as the *shan* sacrifice, was offered to earth at its base. Having originated in 110 B.C.E.,[607] these rituals were executed on the winter and summer solstices respectively. They appeared to serve a regenerative and cyclical purpose, with the sacrifice to Heaven occurring at the moment when the power of the *yin* began to recede, and that of earth when the prevalence of *yang* ended.[608] Similar to the ancient Near Eastern and Mesopotamian rituals surrounding the new year, it would appear that these rituals were designed to ensure the balanced continuation of the cycle,

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"subject and son" or "the subjects" and it is suggested that this meaning stemmed from the 'general recognition of the emperor as the father of his subjects' (Chen, Sanping (2002) 'Son of Heaven,' *JRAS* 12 (3), p. 306).

[605] Shih, Joseph (1969) 'The Notions of God,' *Numen* 16 (2), pp. 11-12.

[606] Taylor, Romeyn (1997) 'Official Altars,' *TP* 83 (1/3), p. 96.

[607] Laufer, Berthold (1912) *Jade*, p. 149.

[608] For a detailed discussion on these rites, see Henry Blodget's article: Blodget, Henry (1899) 'The Worship of Heaven and Earth by the Emperor of China,' *JAOS* 20, pp. 64-5.

thereby ushering in the next season whilst seeking the ongoing success of the king and kingdom as a whole.

Significantly, the altars of Heaven earth were constructed in such a way that they matched the Chinese conception of a domed heaven supported by the flat plane of the earth; the altar of heaven being round and that of earth being square. One might postulate here that the symbolism of the round heaven and the square earth, as well as the central pillar that upholds them is echoed here in the role of the emperor. The responsibility of the early kings to uphold the balance of the realms was established through his character,[609] and was reinforced in the creation stories of Pangu who both figuratively and literally maintained the separation of the heaven and the earth. Therefore, just as the central pillar served the function of supporting the balance of heaven and earth, it similarly maintained the balance between *yin* and *yang*.

In the same way, the emperor's role in performing these sacrificial rites was to maintain the balance of the universe. He was perceived as the connection between the heavens and the earth, and is thus representatively performing the crucial action of the central pillar. This echoes the notion that the responsibility for the upkeep of the cosmos has been withdrawn from the divine realm and instead lies in the hands of humanity. Others have claimed that the intended purpose of the rituals, based on offshoots of Daoist philosophy, were designed to ensure the immortality of the emperor, through the prolonging of his life or warding off death.[610] However, it is more likely that the association between the rites and the cult of immortality was introduced at a later date, and that the original function was akin to the upkeep of a delicate system.

6.5 THE DIVINE CONNECTION

The development of the argument as to whether China possessed the concept of a god has attracted a great deal of scholarly attention, for it is relevant to the questions of dualism, creation, and the determination of social mores and customs. Across the ancient world these matters, and more, were etiologically justified through the movements and legends of the gods. In China, however, the Confucian philosophers deftly humanised these characters, placing the examples of right and wrong action

[609] To be specific, 'character' here refers to the character *wang* 王, as opposed to his personality.
[610] Yü, Yin-shih (1964-1965) 'Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China,' *HJAS* 25, p. 101.

squarely upon the shoulders of their ancestors, who were able to observe the inherent morality and balance of the universe and thus maintain it. Through this discussion, it is clear that the early Sinologists saw a link between the Christian and Chinese tradition. However, it is now evident that this was not the result of the existence of a comparable deity, despite many arguments to the contrary.

As will be examined in the following chapter, there is a distinct lack of conflict within the Chinese ideas of creation. There was no cosmic battle between the cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang*, there was no tug-of-war in an eternal bid for power; rather, each power willingly ceded to the other at the proper time and the sacrifices were performed in order to ensure the continuation of their cyclical oscillation. The mandate, and the king's relationship to Heaven were not perpetuated as a divine decree, but were heavily influenced by the concept of the *Dao*, and its qualities of destiny and fate. It would seem obvious that in her early history China was exposed to the common mythological motifs of the ancient world; she was introduced to the divine qualities of kingship and the unique privilege and burden that accompanied it. The king's need to regulate the balances of the world is tied to the theme of dualism, and yet the Chinese writers were very specific in what concepts they permitted into the histories. That being said, the idea of conflict between the creative forces did not appear to be one of them.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHINESE CREATION MYTHS

The creation accounts located in the Chinese literary corpus are limited, and it has been well argued that much of what remains has been dissected, altered and inserted into seemingly unrelated, non-religious texts in order to serve a new purpose in the justification of current traditions and politics. The assumption that these mythic fragments are singularly unique is unfair, as it was common for a myth to be re-imagined and given new purpose when its original meaning was lost or had lost its relevancy across the entire ancient world. In the present cases it is clear that the creation stories have undergone a certain degree of deliberate manipulation, and it is possible that they have become far removed from their original forms during their transition into Han literature.

Many of the extant fragments are found within texts dating from the Han era, which is believed to be the period during which China first began recording its histories in written form. Textual criticism can present several difficulties, and it has been suggested that the Chinese scholars in the Imperial libraries took little care to accurately transmit texts, influenced by bribery, political agendas, or philosophical ideals.[611] What remains are multiple versions of the creation stories; which, through their similarities, could point back to a common or dominant tradition, and through their differences, display developmental trends. In addition to this, it is possible to see a deliberate movement away from the conflict model of the first moments of creation within these accounts, as new religious and political ideals adopted the stories in their efforts to establish deeper roots within the society as a whole.

[611] Nylan, Michael (2000) 'Textual Authority in Pre-Han and Han,' *EC* 25, pp. 205-258.

7.1 THE REBEL

The *Huainanzi* was fundamentally an early Han political text, believed to have been composed by a number of scholars under the authority, auspices and even contribution of the second king of his dynasty, Liu An 劉安 (ca. 179-122 B.C.E.). It is reportedly the earliest known Chinese text whose argument consistently featured the cosmogony as more than just a preface. The creation story was utilised at several points throughout the text in varying concentrations and for different reasons. These episodes were part of a philosophical underlay for the work as a whole, and appear twice in relatively full forms; first in the third chapter, and then again in the seventh. Both are located in the first half of the book, whose primary focus is on the basic principles of the galaxy as guided by the *Dao*. These accounts do not feature specific mythical characters, or an intentionally created world, presenting instead a process that seems akin to the modern ideas of natural evolution.[612] As such, it discusses creation in more abstract terms; expressing the formation of all things as an instinctive outworking of the *Dao*, that enabled everything to spawn according to its basic nature.

As a text, the *Huainanzi* did not receive much attention from scholars until the latter half of the twentieth century. This was primarily due to its non-conformance to the dominant Confucian traditions and orthodoxy of the period during which it was written. Furthermore, it was not until the early 90's that new translations were published, allowing several studies to shed new light on the text and topics therein.[613] The book is filled with typical Han thought; such as its idealised depiction of the Zhou dynasty out of which sprouted the roots of Confucian theology, the requisites of moral kingship and sage-hood, and its significant disdain and criticism for the Qin dynasty that preceded their reign.[614] As such, it is a work that exemplified the systematic approach of the Han dynasty in its quest to integrate ancient materials into new contexts.[615]

The date of the book's composition is still contested. It was first presented to emperor Wu in 139 B.C.E. but is thought to have remained subject to editorial changes until 122 B.C.E.[616] On the other hand, it is believed that the majority of the text was penned during

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[612] Loewe, Michael (1994) 'Huang-Lao Thought and the "Huainanzi",' *JRAS* 4 (3), p. 390.
[613] Lewis, Mark Edward (1995) 'The Huainanzi,' *JHS* 28 (3), pp. 339-343.
[614] Queen, Sarah A. (2001) 'Inventories of the Past: Rethinking the "School" Affiliation of the "Huainanzi",' *AM* 14 (1), p. 69.
[615] Kohn, Livia (1994) 'Cosmology, Myth and Philosophy in Ancient China: New Studies on the "Huainan zi",' *AFS* 53, (2), p. 327.
[616] Loewe, Michael (1994) 'Huang-Lao Thought,' *JRAS* 4 (3), pp. 377-395.

the reign of emperor Jing in the middle of the second century B.C.E. in response to Liu An's own desire to promote himself at court.[617] It appears to rely most heavily on the Daoist philosophy, but did not fail to also incorporate certain Confucian and Legalist elements in an effort to synthesise the different aspects of ancient Chinese thought.[618] This produced a blend of mythological, religious and philosophical ideas, ultimately representing a unique moment in Chinese history, when the different schools of thought were in the midst of solidifying their place in society. Despite this, however, the *Huainanzi*'s theories were ultimately unpopular, as testified by its dismissal from mainstream literature.

The book conforms to a typical Han era academic structure, dividing the text into categories based on different aspects of human existence; covering topics such as religion, politics, philosophy and moral affiliation.[619] These were then placed within a larger superstructure comprising of three parts, labeled as the outer, central and inner works, according to their outlook and argument.[620] Of these, it is believed that only chapters from the inner work, which was concerned primarily with the *Dao* and its correlation to the general processes of the world, survived to the present.[621] This literary device enabled the writers to demonstrate the relationship between the Han and pre-Han cosmological ideas to their worldly manifestations, despite the increasing unpopularity of Daoist thought.[622] To achieve this, they used certain myths and legends in an etiological capacity to illustrate how the understanding of the *Dao* would result in right governmental practices.[623]

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[617] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 5. This desire, they believe, was 'shaped by the complicated court politics and policies of that era.'
[618] Kohn, Livia (1994) 'Cosmology, Myth and Philosophy in Ancient China,' *AFS* 53 (2), pp. 320-1.
[619] Nylan, Michael (2000) 'Textual Authority,' *EC* 25, p. 226.
[620] Honey, David B. (1994) 'Philology, Filiation, and Bibliography in the Textual Criticism of the "Huainanzi": A Review Article,' *EC* 19, pp. 161-192. The outer work was concerned with the philosophical schools, while the central work dealt with the ideas of alchemy and its practices.
[621] Of the estimated 33 chapters of the original book, the modern version of the *Huainanzi* dates from circa 79-78 B.C.E. and is comprised of only 21 chapters. This version was renamed to become the *Huainanzi* by its first editor Liu Xiang in honour of its original compiler. Liu Xiang edited the work 'on the basis of two versions, one from the imperial library, [and] the other either a version from Liu An's court or a separate, corrupt imperial copy.' (Kohn, Livia (1994) 'Cosmology, Myth and Philosophy in Ancient China,' *AFS* 53, p. 321).
[622] Due to the youth of emperor Wu when he ascended the throne, he was guided in his statecraft by his mother who herself favoured the Daoist and Huang-Lao schools of thought. Her son, on the other hand, preferred the classics. For this reason 'imperial patronage swung back and forth like a pendulum depending on who momentarily enjoyed the upper hand.' (Queen, Sarah A. (2001) 'Inventories of the Past,' *AM* 14 (1), p. 59).
[623] Queen, Sarah A. (2001) 'Inventories of the Past,' *AM* 14 (1), p. 66.

In addition to this, the writers employed historical examples to justify modern constructs, reinforcing the archetypes set out in the legendary narratives. Common rhetorical techniques were used to explicate difficult matters, and acute observations of the animal kingdom served as demonstrations of natural law for mankind. For example, the opening lines of chapter 3 speak of the undifferentiated primal state from which all things emerged. The characteristics and nature of each species is unique, and by acting in accordance with their predetermined nature, the original balance is maintained.[624] This becomes a rhetorical example of how humankind, who do not always act according to their nature, can regain their purpose through their mimicry of natural order.

The exact details of the authorship of the *Huainanzi* remains contested. However, it is generally agreed that the work was produced as a collaborative effort styled under the direction of a redactor, often identified as Liu An himself.[625] Despite the wide range of topics, ranging from cosmology to military strategy, the intentional unity of the whole is displayed through the organisation of the chapter titles into a rhymed set.[626] Liu An is described as an inept politician who, through his gift of the *Huainanzi* to the emperor, desired to protect his kingdom (and thus his position) at a time when the empire was assimilating the smaller kingdoms by his self-professed knowledge of proper administration.[627] The official records portrayed him as a seditionist, whilst his advocacy for the Daoist philosophy and its search for immortality led its followers to claim that he achieved sage-hood,[628] although it is reasonable to assume that neither is

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[624] Ibid. p. 54.

[625] At least 8 collaborators are thought to have been identified. (Wallacker, Benjamin E. (1972) 'Liu An, Second King of Huai-nan (180?-122 B.C.),' *JAOS* 92 (1), pp. 36-51).

[626] Roth, Henry D. (1992) *The Textual History of the "Huai-nan Tzu"*, The Association for Asian Studies, Ann Arbor, chapter one. Roth presents a list of the range of topics that are covered in the *Huainanzi*, including 'cosmology, physiology, and psychology, self-cultivation, government, military strategy, astronomy, geography, and seasonal ordinances.' (p. 20). See also: Kern, Martin (2003) 'Western Han Aesthetics and the Genesis of the "Fu",' *HJAS* 63 (2), pp. 383-437. See also John Major who believes that the 'text's structure and organization are purposeful and coherent, and the author's viewpoints on key issues of the day are informed, reasons and readily discernable.' (Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 12).

[627] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 5. On the other hand, Vankeerberghen sees in his gesture 'an element of submissiveness (it signals Liu An's acceptance of the authority of the emperor) and an element of self-assertion (it asserts Liu An as the one who possesses the Way).' (Vankeerberghen, Griet (2001) *The Huainanzi and Liu An's Claim to Moral Authority*, State University of New York Press, Albany). Then again, that emperor Wu was the intended target for the text based on its overarching theme. However, the bulk of the work was produced under the reign of emperor Jing. The implication being that Liu An's initial intention was to present himself as a wise and viable candidate for succession for the emperor's throne. (Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, pp. 10-22).

[628] The former claimed that he was actively involved in rebellious activity against the Han Empire and ultimately ended up taking his own life rather than face a sentence of execution. He is reported to have gathered around himself a court likened to those of the 'contending kings of pre-unified China' filled with 'vagrant soothsayers, poets, displaced warriors, experts in esoterica and the occult, magicians, philosophers, tacticians and strategists.' (Yü, Yin-shih (1964-1965) 'Life and Immortality,' *HJAS* 25, p.

entirely true when dealing with such extremes.[629] However, his search for earthly immortality highlights an interesting feature in that the moral division between good and evil, and therefore heaven and hell was not introduced into China until the introduction of Buddhism.[630] As such, an argument supporting the dichotomy of the *yin-yang* dualism during this period might be misplaced, ultimately implying that the elements were more likely perceived as complementary.

While the *Huainanzi* is certainly infused with Daoist tendencies, some scholars have rejected the notion that the writers rallied behind any particular school of thought.[631] Therefore, throughout the course of its composition, it is believed that the writers drew upon the strengths of several philosophical traditions, so as to produce a manual of sorts displaying the tenets of righteous leadership based upon the examples of the legendary sages.[632] The original book existed as part of an encyclopaedic series that combined past concepts with contemporary innovation.[633] The chapters were organised according to a shrinking framework, which as stated by Mark Lewis, was founded on 'contemporary cosmogonic models, beginning with chapters devoted to the undifferentiated guiding principle (*dao*) and the energetic, primal stuff of nature (*qi*), proceeding through the

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104). The latter, on the other hand claim that he ascended into heaven with his entire family and were saved from execution.

[629] It is likely that he 'was neither so actively seditious as the official accounts would indicate, nor was he so celestially and preciously removed from worldly interests.' (Wallacker, Benjamin E. (1972) 'Liu an,' *JAOS* 92 (1), p. 38). He is, however, the first well-known follower of Daoism reported to have undertaken extensive research on alchemy, a topic that had great impact on the quest to create the 'pill of immortality.' (Davis, Tenney L. (1936) 'The Dualistic Cosmogony of Huai-nan-tzu and Its Relations to the Background of Chinese and European Alchemy,' *Isis* 25 (2), p. 333).

[630] Loewe, Michael (1975) *Ancient Cosmologies*, Cox & Wyman Ltd., London, pp. 87-109 in Joseph Needham's *The Cosmology of Early China*. This resulted in true immortality being the acquisition of it upon this plane of existence and in ones present body.

[631] Queen, Sarah A. (2001) 'Inventories of the Past,' *AM* 14 (1), p. 61. Queen bases this hypothesis on an examination of the works of Sima Qian and Li Xiang alongside texts such as the *Zhuangzi* and the *Hanfeizi*, which were designed to sway its readers towards a particular point of view. However, the discovery of the Mawangdui manuscripts from 168 B.C.E. produced an unconvincing argument that the *Huainanzi* was influenced by the Huang-Lao school of thought. Some modern scholars were encouraged by this, as they were able to perceive vestiges of scientifically objective thought through the potential disassociation between the natural, spiritual and human realms. There were a number of high-profile followers of the school, but due to its unpopularity, it is unlikely that it was included for any other reason than being comprehensively eclectic. See: Loewe, Michael (1994) 'Huang-Lao Thought,' *JRAS* 4 (3), pp. 378-389; Lewis, Mark Edward (1995) 'The Huainanzi,' *JHS* 28 (3), p. 342.

[632] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 232. The existence of certain strands of thought reveals the hand of the later editors. However, the majority of the text is based upon the concepts found within the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi* and *Shanhaijing* among others that have now been lost. (Loewe, Michael (1975) *Ancient Cosmologies*).

[633] More specifically, Lewis states that the primary purpose of the text was 'to combine the historical accounts, myths, philosophical polemics and scientific theories of the preceding centuries into unitary structures that would provide the imperial court with models for effective action. (Lewis, Mark Edward (1995) 'The Huainanzi,' *JHS* 28 (3), p. 339). See also: Queen, Sarah A. (2001) 'Inventories of the Past,' *AM*, p. 52.

structure of the Heavens, the shape of the Earth and the pattern of the seasons, and going to principles of rulership, government, military and social action.'[634] As such it has been suggested that one must approach the text both diachronically and synchronically in order to understand the text as a whole.[635]

The gradual concentration from universal to human affairs presented the natural mirroring between the two, and the reliance of the various aspects of human society on the examples of the cosmos. The heavens provide the structure of the earth and the seasons, which in turn (in conjunction with the heavens) displays the principles of kingship and its method of governing the people. Each adheres to the model imparted to it by its progenitor, and the culmination of this pattern serves to present its reader with an objective expression of the qualities of appropriate leadership.[636] The inability to divorce the workings of the universe from the workings of the earthly government imply that the ideas of creation in the *Huainanzi* were not maintained for their own sake, but for the integrity of and authority of the state.

7.1.1 THE COSMOGONY OF THE THIRD

The first creation passage in the *Huainanzi* is located at the beginning of chapter 3. It is concerned with the origin and movement of the patterns of heaven, the seasonal changes and permanent fixtures that determine the integral workings of the universe. Through these, the writer depicts the existence of a universal pattern that impacts the moral precedent of humanity and their role in sustaining cosmic harmony. This passage described the creation of the world from the undifferentiated one through to the myriad things, and has received substantial attention from scholars due to its potential likeness to the creative processes of the ancient Near Eastern myths. Furthermore, it posits the existence of a prehistoric Golden Age, when everything was still in the state of the original balance, until a divine war and an attempted usurpation of power disrupted it and caused the great flood.

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[634] Lewis, Mark Edward (1995) 'The Huainanzi,' *JHS* 28 (3), p. 339.
[635] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 19.
[636] See: Major, John S. (1993) *Heaven and Earth in Early Han Thought: Chapters Three, Four, and Five of the Huainanzi*, State University of New York Press, Albany; Major, John S. (2008) 'Animals and Animal Metaphors in "Huainanzi",' *AMTS* 21 (1: Star Gazing, Firephasing, and Healing in China: Essays in Honor of Nathan Sivin), pp. 133-151.

It is probable that this creation narrative represents the amalgamation of several accounts. This approach was a commonly used Han literary technique designed to integrate divergent stories to fashion a superior model through the adoption of the best features of each.[637] However, as a great deal of ancient Chinese literature has not survived to the present, it is practically impossible to identify the wide range of sources used in the production of this chapter and its cosmological model. Instead, the previous existence of certain texts can only be inferred through examples from the *Huainanzi* itself, which produces many textual difficulties.

In regards to potentially identifiable sources, the description of orbital patterns points to a correlation to the 168 B.C.E. Mawangdui manuscripts found in the 1970's. Of these, it is suggested that the cosmogonical reference to the Five Phase correlations in this chapter is a direct quotation of the *Wuxingzhan* 五星占 (*The Divination of the Five Planets*). Additionally, it is believed the writers sought to respond to the questions posed within the *Tianwen*,[638] which would serve to display the writer's masterful use of philosophic modes in his attempt to demonstrate his superior understanding of the world as demonstrated by his ability to offer responses to previously unanswered questions.

The chapter opens with a description of heaven and earth as yet unformed and undefined. Out of this vacant chaos emerged the *Dao* 道, followed by the cosmos which produced the *qi* 气 (vital breath). The remainder of the passage speaks in terms of the binary opposites that resulted from the development of *yin* and *yang*, their characterization, properties and spheres of influence. The text is discursive in form and seems to be grounded in the idea of the natural evolution of the universe, unguided by an outside force.[639] It was this observation that finally contradicted the early belief that Chinese cosmogony was unique, as scholars began to notice thematic links between this chapters presentation of creation and that of Lucretius who lived almost a century later in Rome.[640]

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[637] Kohn, Livia (1994) 'Cosmology, Myth and Philosophy in Ancient China,' *AFS* 53 (2), p. 331.
[638] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 112.
[639] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 28.
[640] Not much is known about the life of Lucretius apart from the fact that he 'lived in the last days of Roman republic, was a member of a great Roman family, and a friend of Cicero.' He was a follower of the philosophical ideas of Epicurus and Democritus, but is not believed to be a great philosopher himself but rather 'an intelligent disciple, who can assimilate and expound his master's doctrines.' Furthermore, his work is more poetic in nature for his focus lay in the visual realm instead of logical reasoning, and he liked

Lucretius' worldview was heavily influenced by the works of Epicurus, who argued that everything could be explained through natural means and did not require supernatural intervention or regulation. Hoping to quell religious superstition and disgusted by the heavy abuse of religion by the authorities in response to contemporary events, he argued that the world was formed by chance rather than by design.[641] The philosophical ideas presented in his work, *De Rerum Natura*, eventuated in the disbelief in premeditated creation, the benevolence of the gods, their worthiness of praise and even their intentions should they have proven capable of these acts. Ultimately, Lucretius opposed the notion that humanity's existence was dependent upon the unpredictable whims of the gods.

Wondering how the archetypes of the patterns of the universe were introduced into their minds, Lucretius postulated that nature itself was formed by the 'energies of primal germs [...] from immemorial aeons, in motion too/By their own weights, have evermore been want/To be borne along and in all modes/To meet together and to try all sorts/Which, by combining one with other, they/Are powerful to create, that thus it is/No marvel now, if they have also fallen/Into arrangements such, and if they've passed/Into vibrations such, as those hereby/This sum of thing is carried on to-day/By fixed renewal.'[642] Here, he intimated that the balances and patterns of nature were self-created and self-regulated, and that nature itself engendered and standardised the functions of the world. Through this, it can be seen that similar concepts to those held by the writer of *Huainanzi* chapter 3 developed independently from Chinese thought at approximately the same time. Furthermore, Lucretius' theory coincides with the idea of creation through natural progression as opposed to the conflict and opposition saturating the ancient Near Eastern creation myths.

The cosmogonical account in this chapter has received expert translations by two highly respected Sinologists: John Major and Anne Birrell. Each uses significantly different language to portray the intended meaning of the Chinese characters, which reflects their own individual understanding of Chinese thought. Accordingly, a comparison between

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to speak in terms of 'concrete images [...] rather than abstract arguments.' (Bailey, Cyril (1940) 'The Mind of Lucretius,' *AJP* 61 (3), pp. 278-291).

[641] Bailey, Cyril (1940) 'The Mind of Lucretius,' *AJP*, p. 280. See also: Keen, Ralph (1985) 'Lucretius and His Reader,' *JAPS* 19 (1), pp. 1-10.

[642] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, 5:187-234, quotations from lines 180-194 (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.02.0131). Additionally, in line 202 he states that if one were to believe that the gods created the world, 'so great the faults [the world] stands encumbered with' that the gods could not be worthy of worship.

the two serves to highlight certain features of the text. For example, the opening line: 天墜未形，馮馮翼翼，洞洞灟灟，故曰太昭[643] refers to the pre-created state of the cosmos. Major, seeking to preserve its poetical form, translates it lyrically: 'When heaven and Earth were yet unformed,/all was ascending and flying,/diving and delving./Thus it was called the great Inception.'[644] On the other hand, Birrell translates the text more literally: 'Before heaven and earth had formed there was a shapeless, dark expanse, a gaping mass; thus it was called the 'Great Glory.'[645]

Vastly different in their form and structure, these two translations offer diverse portraits of the composition of pre-formed matter. The first presented a picture of writhing movement, when matter existed in a chaotic and undifferentiated state. It was unconfined by the boundaries that were established during the creation process, thus matter was able to intermingle, delving into the lowest reaches and ascending to the loftiest heights of the cosmos. The second, on the other hand, produces an image of similarly undifferentiated substance, but in a context of darkness and lifelessness, a mass awaiting a catalyst. Both refer to the same period of time, but provide an alternate perspective that modifies the setting of the remainder of the passage. However, the significance of this variation lies in the subtle differences of the following lines.

These lines are concerned with the first moments of activity and reads: 道始生虛廓，虛廓生宇宙，宇宙生氣. Major translates this as: 'The Grand inception produced the Nebulous Void./The Nebulous void produced space-time;/space-time produced the original *qi*,' whereas Birrell suggests that the following rendition is more faithful to the text: 'The Way [Dao] first came from vacant space, vacant space gave birth to the cosmos, the cosmos gave birth to the breath.' There is an element in Major's translation that is suggestive of the deliberate creative action of the Grand Inception in its production of the Nebulous Void. That being said, the Grand Inception is not personified, nor is there a presence of a conscious being in the primal chaos. However, this translation implies that rather than being brought forth from the void, the *Dao* produced it, thus placing it in a position of an intentional guiding force of creative activity.

On the other hand, Birrell's interpretation transmits a sense of passivity within the text, emphasising instead the spontaneity of the event. Here, the *Dao* is represented as an

[643] References to the Chinese version of the *Huainanzi* 3.1 in this section are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/huainanzi/tian-wen-xun.
[644] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 114.
[645] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 32.

abstract force; it originated in the chaos but did not birth it. This contrasts to the depiction of the vacant space giving birth to the cosmos, and the cosmos to the breath, which imitates the idea of gestation and ancestry. However, the vacant space is not personified like Gaia or Ouranus from the Greek tradition, but is portrayed as an entity filled with the necessary building materials required for new essences to be formed. Thus, it would seem that Birrell's translation better conforms to the concept of matter developing according to its nature; vacant space has no consciousness with which to decide the moment of creation, rather it was simply in its nature to produce the cosmos. More than this, it suggests that the *Dao* had no creative input in the formation of the cosmos; it was first, and was thus granted religious and philosophical weight by its primogeniture, but it did not actively participate in the act of creation.

It is possible that in the characterisation of *xukuo* 虛廓 (vacant space) lies an association with the myth of Hundun 混沌. Hundun is one of the earliest representations of chaos in the Chinese mythos. However, unlike the Western notion of chaos, which predominantly epitomises dysfunction and disorder, the Chinese term, bore connotations of potentiality and perfection, especially in the pre-Qin era. He has form but he is shapeless, he has function but he is undefined, and he holds creative potential but it has not yet been unleashed. He is the essence of the whole, the perfect chemistry of primeval matter, and yet in him there is no evidence of chaos because there is not yet order, and disorder cannot be assumed without distinction from its opposite.[646]

Consequently, Birrell describes him as having 'a shapeless body, coloured yellow with scarlet markings, and with double wings, and the feet of a reptile.'[647] He has no face; no eyes, ears, nostrils or mouth, and there is a level of symbolism in his inability to see, hear smell or taste, for it is through these senses that humanity often determines the goodness of something. Hundun, on the other hand, had no need of these features existing as he did in the undifferentiated chaos where there was nothing to see, hear, taste or smell. In this way, every aspect of his nature, his name and his physical attributes are associated with the primordial state and its formlessness.

The writer's perceived knowledge of the Hundun myth is seen in the second and third phrases of the passage: *fengfeng yiyi, dongdong zhuzhu* 馮馮翼翼，洞洞灟灟. The

[646] See: Kao Lifeng's *Sacred Order: Cosmogonic Myth in the Chu Silk Manuscript* pp. 117-133, printed in: Schipper, Mineke; Ye, Shuxian; Yin, Hubin (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths: Cross-cultural Explorations in Oral and Written Traditions*, Leiden, Boston.
[647] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 240.

onomatopoeic nature and pronunciation of these words are designed to emulate the primordial chaos. Furthermore, the description imprints the imagery of a cave or a grotto into the passage, emphasising the featurelessness of the object as well as the perception of its internal emptiness, which is echoed by the use of *xukuo* in the following phrase. Finally, the *kuo* of *xukuo* carries the imagery of a cocoon or pupa, thereby introducing an object into the text that has the appearance of death but out of which life springs.[648] It is for this reason that Birrell's translation seems to be preferable, for it captures the confusion of the vacant space, its cocoon like structure and its preparedness for the onset of creation.

It is believed that the myth of Hundun endured up until the fourth century B.C.E. and was afterwards propagated in a diminished form by the Daoist schools.[649] The primeval unity in the Huainanzi took the name *Taizhao* 太昭 (Great Glory) and was perceived as a container of primal potential and the representation of perfect unity between *yin* and *yang* prior to their separation. The cosmogonical concerns of Daoism were intimately connected to the primeval form of matter before the creation of duality, and it was through this duality that they conceived of the creation event in terms of an ongoing process, as opposed to a single event influenced by an external force.[650] It must be noted here that in his earliest surviving myths, Hundun appeared to be closely related to the concept of the dying god, thereby incorporating secondary characters and thus external forces into his narrative. However, this imagery is more connected to the development of the Pangu creation myth than that of the *Huainanzi*, and as such, this aspect of his nature will be discussed in further detail in association with Pangu.

The lack of disorder in the Chinese chaos can also be found in the works of the Greek poet Hesiod who lived and wrote during the 8th century B.C.E. Scholars believe that he drew upon the Sumerian and Babylonian traditions in the determination of his cosmogony; however, his presentation of the chaos was dissimilar.[651] In his *Theogony*, Hesiod wrote: 'first came the chasm.' The chasm was a direct translation of the name Chaos, but is utterly devoid of the negative connotations that are generally associated

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[648] Yu, David C. (1981) 'The Creation Myth and Its Symbolism in Classical Taoism,' *PEW* 31 (4), pp. 479-500.
[649] Ibid.
[650] Girardot, Norman J. (1977) 'Myth and Meaning in the "Tao Te Ching": Chapters 25 and 42,' *HR* 16 (4), pp. 294-328.
[651] See: Harris, Stephen L. et al. (2008) *Classical Mythology*, p. 66.

with the word.[652] The verb used in the sentence to describe the chaos, on the other hand, denotes its non-eternal status; whether or not its creation was planned or spontaneous, it was believed to have had a beginning.[653] Following the formation of chaos came Gaia, who, after the emergence of Eros, produced her heavenly counterpart Ouranus. This introduced the concepts of sexual activity and humanised propagation into the production of the various elements of the universe.

While there appears to be a slight reminiscence of sexual reproduction in the comingling of *yin* and *yang* in the Chinese account, it is at this point that the similarities end. For example, the *Huainanzi* expresses that the male and female entities emerged from the void simultaneously, however, the *yang* achieved its final form more quickly and easily than the *yin*: 清陽者薄靡而為天，重濁者凝滯而為地。清妙之合專易，重濁之凝竭難，故天先成而地後定 ('The limpid light [*yang*] rose mistily and became the sky, the heavy turbidity [*yin*] congealed with difficulty, the sky was first to form, and earth settled into shape later').[654] As such, the masculine element was seemingly granted a measure of primacy over the feminine one, which was demonstrative of contemporary social structures and acted as etiological reinforcement of patriarchal custom.

The idea of sexual reproduction was a common feature of creation stories involving an anthropomorphised pantheon. As human procreation required both a male and female participant, it was only natural to conceive of the origins of the universe in a similar fashion. This dualism is present throughout the majority of ancient cultures; although their interaction is predominantly described in terms of opposition and conflict.[655] However, the cyclical balance of *yin* and *yang* in Chinese thought, combined with the implicit affiliation that this account shares with the Hundun myth, supports the notion of

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652 Hesiod (1988) *Theogony and Works and Days*, trans by. M. L. West, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford, ll. 117-129 on p. 6. See also West's comments on p. 64.
653 Hornblower, Simon et al. (2003) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 317.
654 Birrell's translation. Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 32.
655 As was established earlier, this pair is believed to have been influenced by the ANE's Apsu and Tiamat. The Akkadian creation epic largely serves a religious purpose, not seeking to justify the existence of the government but of the pantheon itself. The story of Apsu and Tiamat itself is suggested to have been drawn from the earlier Sumerian model, which offered no explanation for the source of the primeval chaos other than its constitution of waters. To this, the Akkadian version added the primal male and female pair, Apsu and Tiamat, who represented sweet and salt water respectively, from whom the later gods were born. (Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth*, 121). It was also this dominant view of dualism that influenced the understanding of *yin* and *yang*, which, due to the maturity of its associated philosophy and ease of its comparability with the ancient Near Eastern models, was suggested to be an importation into China. (Davis, Tenney L. (1936) 'The Dualistic Cosmogony of Huai-nan-tzu,' *Isis* 25 (2), p. 328).

peaceful co-existence between them.[656] Additionally, it has been posited that truly spontaneous creative activity could only result from a position of harmony, as conflict between the two forces would associate the text with the typical ancient Near Eastern motifs of rebellion and the forced repurposing of divine materials.

Similarly reinforcing the internal harmony of *yin* and *yang*, Robert Neville rejects the conclusion that the latter's primacy is based on its quicker achievement of its completed form. He states that the implications of this idea contradicts the Daoist conviction. However, it is possible that the concept may have been inserted into the text at a later date for political and social reasons, aligning as it does with Confucian thought. Nevertheless, Neville concludes that in the underlying Daoist context, neither could possess precedence over the other for it would change the nature of the creative process, making it flawed and tumultuous.[657] This account offers a narrative of creation without apparent cause, thereby distancing itself from the violence of the ancient Near Eastern myths. Alternatively, the *Dao* simply came forth from the void, without an identifiable catalyst, and introduced a natural process of division and expansion.

It is this progressive expansion that dominates the remainder of the passage, focusing on the divergence of *yin* and *yang* and the assignment of the nature and characteristics of each new form. It is here that the settled interaction between the two elements takes form, in the natural fluctuation between light and dark, hot and cold and the changing of the seasons. These cycles are no longer spontaneous, rather, they are predetermined by the nature of *yin* and *yang*; effects of the creation period as opposed to causal agents within it. The subsequent lines explain that: 天地之襲精為陰陽，陰陽之專精為四時，四時之散精為萬物 ('The double essence of sky and earth became Yin and Yang, the complex essence of Yin and Yang become the four seasons, the diffuse essences of the four seasons became the ten thousand things').[658] Unlike the Egyptian conception, an object did not have to be named in the Chinese tradition in order for it to receive its function. Instead, the nature of an object determined its being and its nature was borne from its inherent association with *yin* and *yang*.

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[656] Furthermore, Anne Birrell suggests that 'they may have been the vestige of a much older mythological paradigm that was then rationalized and diminished.' (Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 29).
[657] Neville, Robert (1980) 'From Nothing to Being: The Notion of Creation in Chinese and Western Thought,' *Philosophy East and West* 30 (1), p. 26. See also: Hsu, Sung-peng (1977) 'Two Kinds of Changes in Lao Tzu's Thought,' *JCP* 4, pp. 329-355. Hsu outlines the differences between spontaneous and un-spontaneous change based upon the harmony and discord of *yin* and *yang* respectively.
[658] Birrell's translation. Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 32.

The progression from the one to the ten thousand things is closely related to the cosmogonical format used in the chapter 42 of the *Daodejing* 道德經 (*Classic of the Way of Power*). It states here: 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物 ('The Dao begets the one./the one begets the two,/the two begets the three,/the three begets the myriad things').[659] This structure depicts the natural progression of reproduction, in which two opposite elements interact and produce a third with a mixture of the characteristics of the first two. This new composition is then able to produce further variations as they combine with other elements and so on and so forth. This multiplication diffuses the two elements, and serves as the representation of the movement away from the perfect whole of the original, therefore resulting in the increasing imbalances of the world.[660] However, the wording of the *Daodejing* implies that the primeval chaos was produced by the *Dao*, rather than the other way around.

The *Dao* is not a personified force, it is an abstract one and does not physically create matter, but guides the determination of its nature. In the *Daodejing*, even the primal unity has a nature, and the *Dao*'s begetting of it can be understood in kind. It is differentiated from its *Huainanzi* counterpart through the implication that it existed apart from the chaos. It is depicted as an eternal and absolute moral force, whereas its status in the *Huainanzi* has been somewhat downgraded. The *Dao* still maintains the authority of primogeniture as the firstborn of the vacant space, but the nature of the primal unity was undetermined by it as the chaos existed first, ultimately reinforcing the notion that matter was uncreated.

The natural progression of creation in the *Huainanzi* is described in terms of similar essences being drawn together to create new elements, as seen in the final lines of the text: 積陽之熱氣生火，火氣之精者為日；積陰之寒氣為水，水氣之精者為月；日月之淫為精者為星辰，天受日月星辰，地受水潦塵埃. ('The hot breath of concentrated Yang gave birth to fire, the essence of the fiery Breath became the sun, and the cold Breath of the concentrated Yin became water, the essence of the watery Breath became the moon. The excess from sun and moon became the stars. The sky received the sun, moon and stars, and the earth received rivers and rain water and dust and silt').[661] Each element adheres to its nature, seeking out and coalescing with its like components to produce the

[659] Sabbadini, Shatena Augusto (2013) *Tao Te Ching: A Guide to the Interpretation of the Foundational Book of Taoism*, Augusto Sabbadini, Lexington, pp. 347, 349-50.
[660] Girardot, Norman J. (1977) 'Myth and Meaning in the "Tao Te Ching",' *HR* 16 (4), p. 324.
[661] Birrell's translation. Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 32.

myriad things of the universe. In this way, the production of the world through natural means without the influence of a third party becomes possible.

The interaction between *yin* and *yang* is not portrayed in terms of violence. However it has been argued that their conceptualisation in the text is arguably anachronistic, as they were not depicted in this fashion until long after the text's original composition. Countering this, Norman Girardot hypothesised that the underlying premise of *yin* and *yang* was a remnant of an earlier structure which featured 'a cosmic ancestral giant animal, or Great Mother that spawns a male and female offspring who in turn incestuously engender the human world.'[662] This can be seen through the implied connection between the *Dao* and Hundun, as well as the production of the feminine and masculine forces at the outset of the creative period. However this imagery has been more heavily incorporated into the flood myths and the creation of mankind.

It cannot be denied that the binary opposites of the Akkadian and Mesopotamian traditions have influenced the understanding of *yin* and *yang*. Their creation narratives depict a universe that has been engendered through copulation, which produces both the natural forces as well as the pantheon that personify and regulate its motions. On the other hand, the feminine and masculine natures of *yin* and *yang* are relative notions in the process of creation itself; they are simply two basic energies involved in the ongoing process. For example, *yin* is not quintessentially cold, but becomes so in comparison to heat, just as darkness can only be described as such in contrast to light. Accordingly the attributes of *yin* and *yang* are determinable only through their relationship to one another,[663] which emphasises the inherent balance between them and introduces the Confucian ideal that everything has its predetermined place into the text.

7.1.2 THE ECHOES IN THE SEVENTH

The second creation passage in the *Huainanzi* is found in chapter 7 and unsurprisingly sits primarily in thematic agreement with the opening passage from chapter 3. Described in sequential terms, this text is thought to be closely related to the creation

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[662] Girardot, Norman J. (1977) 'Myth and Meaning in the "Tao Te Ching",' *HR* 16 (4), p. 303. In the Chinese tradition, this anthropomorphised male and female pair has been largely omitted from the creation narrative, instead being tied to the repopulation of the earth after the flood. Their myths incorporate the symbolism of the gourd, or misshapen lump of flesh, into its account of the origin of humanity and its various ethnicities (Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, see pp. 22, 69, 115).
[663] Sabbadini, Shatena Augusto (2013) *Tao Te Ching*, p. 349.

account in the *Daodejing*; either as a direct revision of the earlier text or a straightforward commentary on it.[664] The chapter falls near the end of the first half of the book whose focus lies in the outlining of the basic principles of the world. Accordingly, its attention is no longer seen on a universal scale, and is more human-centric than the first. It is ultimately more concerned with the creation of mankind; their substance, place in the world, their goals and purpose.

The title of the chapter *Jingshen* 精神, translated as 'Divine Gods' by Birrell,[665] gives the impression of an ancient conception of divine beings who embodied the perfect balance of *yin* and *yang*. On the other hand, Major renders it as 'Quintessential Spirit,' explaining that the term is indicative of an object's highest form, which coincides with the purest intentions of its nature.[666] As one progresses through the narrative, it becomes evident that the overarching contextual theme lies in proving that the Daoist sages are the best equipped to rule. To this effect, the writer criticises the Confucian sage-kings, declaring them to be inferior to those who have obtained an understanding of the *Dao*.[667] The introductory creation account elucidates further upon certain themes presented in chapter 3, with a more pointed focus on the formation of humanity.

The narrative opens with a description of chaos: 古未有天地之時， 惟像無形， 窈窈冥冥，芒芠漠閔，澒蒙鴻洞，莫知其門 ('Long ago, before Heaven and earth existed, there were only images but no forms, and all was dark and obscure, a vast desolation, a misty expanse, and nothing knew where its own portals were').[668] It may be reasonable to assume here that the writer had knowledge of the creation account in chapter 3 at the time of his writing, or perhaps even that he was aware of the Hundun myth, as he seems to allude to it through his choice of vocabulary. He describes the undifferentiated state of the primal chaos before the moment of creation; nothing had been able to assume its proper form, nor even knew where its suitable place was in the cosmos. The inability to discern between the forms, or to identify the images through obscurity and darkness is reminiscent of the outward appearance of Hundun.

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[664] Girardot, Norman J. (1977) 'Myth and Meaning,' *HR* 16 (4), p. 317.
[665] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 28.
[666] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 234.
[667] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 237.
[668] Birrell's translation. Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 32. The writer will continue to refer to Birrell's translation of this passage throughout the remainder of this section. References to the Chinese version of the *Huainanzi* 7.1 are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/huainanzi/jing-shen-xun.

In one version of his myth, it is said that Hundun resided in the central kingdom, and had two friends that lived in the northern and southern regions. One day, they came to visit him: 他們說，每個人都有眼、耳、口、鼻等七竅，用來看呀，聽，吃東西呀等，偏那混沌一竅也沒有 (They said, everyone has the seven openings of eyes, ears, mouth and nose to be used for seeing, hearing and eating, but contrary to that, Hundun has none of these).[669] Without the five senses, it is impossible to determine and distinguish between the nature of things, and Hundun, who lived during the time of undifferentiated matter, and furthermore embodied it, had no need of these features, for there was not yet anything to see, hear, taste or feel. As such, the writer is able to play upon Hundun's features, or lack thereof, in order to describe the original form of chaos.

At the same time, the remnants of his myth are diminished through their incorporation with the present model. He is the personification of chaos, but without sight he cannot describe it, thus he cannot be posited as the witness of the initial development of the cosmos. Similarly, without a voice, he embodies the inability to speak things into existence, as in the cases of the *divine fiat* in Egypt and Israel, thus his active participation in the creation event cannot be implied. Finally, being quintessentially symbolic of the whole, he cannot to divide himself and guide the myriad things to their portals. Read in conjunction with the account in chapter 3, one might postulate that the writer is reaffirming the nature of the *Dao* as the Way, for it is only when the *Dao* came forth from the chaos that the elements began to find their places and congeal into new forms. Accordingly, the *Dao* is not presented as a creative force, but as a catalyst that brought about a chain reaction of natural progression; it came first, but it only showed the way.

Significantly, the existence of the *Dao* in this text is unspoken. Although its similarity to the previous narrative makes its implied reality a reasonable assumption. In its place, the writer introduces in the following lines a potentially archaic feature in the form of two deities emerging from the chaos: 有二神混生，經天營地，孔乎莫知其所終極，滔乎莫知其所止息 ('There were two gods born out of the chaos who wove the skies and designed the earth. So profound were they that no one knew their lowest deeps, and so

[669] Own translation. Chinese text is quoted in simplified form but has been rendered here in traditional characters: Ke, Yuan 袁珂 (2012) *Zhongguo shenhua zhuanshuo* 中国神话转说, World Publishing Company, Shanghai, p. 46.

exalted were they that no one knew where they came to rest').[670] It is possible that these gods are remnants of a now lost creation account, or that their existence in the text could be evidence of an earlier reliance on foreign sources, akin to Girardot's theory that the Chinese concept of creation was influenced by Akkadian culture. Before the differentiation of *yin* and *yang*, these two deities are depicted as active participants in the creation of the world; weaving the skies and designing the earth, however, the manner of their action is undetermined, as the text does not speculate on how these achievements were performed.

The presence of the two gods in the text conjures imagery of Apsu and Tiamat, the two primeval waters from the Akkadian tradition. It is from this pair that the gods of the pantheon are born, including Marduk, who ultimately slays Tiamat and uses her corpse to create the heavens and the earth.[671] However, the two gods of the *Huainanzi* do not create *yin* and *yang*, but are in essence transformed into them. Their identities are unknown; they are described as being so profound that they are unfathomable and so exalted that they are unapproachable. However, the implication that their place of residence is unknown suggests that it has not yet been determined. On the other hand, their description as transcending the highest imaginable heights and the lowest of depths suggests that they may have been related to the primal heaven and earth, akin to the Greek model, at some point in their history. Whatever their previous connections, they have been divorced from a divine pantheon. Instead, one might posit that they have become the pre-differentiated forms of *yin* and *yang*, constituted of the same essences before the establishment of their boundaries.

This would align with the chapter's title 'Quintessential Spirit,' suggesting that they represent the purest form of matter. They are symbolic of the first moments of separation and as such, they are defined by some scholars as not divine beings, but as spirits, embodying the qualities of *yin* and *yang*.[672] Once they began this process: 於是乃別為陰陽，離為八極，剛柔相成，萬物乃形. ('They were divided into Yin and Yang and separated into the eight poles. The hard and the soft formed, and the myriad things took shape').[673] Here, the reproduction through the convergence of like materials mirrors the

[670] Birrell's translation.
[671] Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth*, pp. 121-2.
[672] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 240.
[673] Birrell's translation.

process outlined in chapter 3. However, this passage introduces new information to the narrative according to the requirements of its context.

Chapter 7 is ultimately a discussion of the sages, and thus the creation of the world serves as a backdrop for the existence of humanity in order to introduce their place in the universe.[674] This occurs in a similar fashion to the Hebrew narratives in *Genesis* and their transition from a general overview to a more specific, human-centric narrative. Humanity was not differentiated from the myriad things in chapter 3, instead they were formed to act according to their predetermined place in the natural kingdom, indistinguishable from the animals. To counter this, the writer of chapter 7 included an addendum to the creation of the ten thousand things, saying: 煩氣為蟲，精氣為人 ('The dense cloudy vapour became insects, and the pure vapour became humans').[675] Here, mankind is tasked with a purpose different from that of the animals and are thus separated from and elevated over them in form and function through their constitution being formed of pure vapour.

In addition to this, there is a division between humankind and animals in the composition of their spirits and their bodies. The physical human body is a microcosm of the universe; their heads being rounded like heaven and their feet forming a square like the earth. Accordingly, humanity is described as possessing both the qualities of *yin* and *yang*, with their spirit being a product of heaven and their bodies a product of earth. Their stature in the world is utterly unique amongst every created thing; formed from the purest of essences, but capable of a multitude of evils.[676] Taking this into account, it would seem as though the text was written from the perspective of a high-view of humanity. This was not based on their creation by a Supreme Being who demanded their worship, nor is there a reason posited for their creation, and yet humanity was depicted as the final coalescence of the pure spirit.

The level of influence that the stories of Hundun and other foreign materials had over the composition of these two creation accounts cannot be measured. In the ancient Near Eastern myths, conflict arose at the moment of succession, when the time of the primal gods had come to its closure and their children began to desire power. However, the system of belief espoused by the *Huainanzi* narratives did not require an archetypal

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[674] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 233.
[675] Birrell's translation.
[676] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, pp. 234-9.

triumph over the forces of evil, as the elements of conflict were subdued by the emphasising of the natural progression of creation and the redefinition of *yin* and *yang*. The *yin-yang* schools taught that their essential balance dictated the movements of the world. Everything, and everyone was made to act according to their natures, and if they deviated from this path the balance had to be restored. For example, if a king acted against his noble nature fate decreed that he must be replaced. The subsequent succession was not understood in terms of conquest, but of transferral, for nature would uphold that which adhered to its proper function. Thus the echoes of the primal gods are counteracted by the mindlessness of the transformative power, which guides and embodies the entire creative process.

7.2 THE DISILLUSIONED SCHOLAR

The *Tianwen*, a chapter of the *Chuci* 楚辭 (*Songs of the South*), holds what is believed to be the earliest extant texts referring to the Chinese cosmogonic myths. Appropriately, the *Tianwen* is formatted as a series of questions, of which the first three paragraphs serve as the focus of this section. The queries in these paragraphs speak of general assumptions of the day; challenging the supposed knowledge of what occurred at the beginning of time, and how the myriad things came to possess their current forms. The *Chuci* was penned around the fourth century B.C.E., approximately two centuries earlier than the *Huainanzi*, and is arguably free of the euhemerisation and systemisation to which the latter was subjected.[677] It is not outwardly Daoist in its sensibilities; however, its origination from central China, which was steeped in the philosophy during the Han and Zhou periods, heightens the likelihood that it was influenced by the school.[678]

It is thought that the *Chuci* was an anthology of songs, poetry and religious hymns from earlier dynasties that were employed during the Warring States period (ca. 475-221 B.C.E.) as a means of creating authority.[679] It covers an extensive range of topics and has

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[677] Hawkes, David (2011) *The Songs of The South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets*, Penguin Classics, London, p. 125.

[678] Yu, David C. (1981) 'The Creation Myth,' *PEW* 31 (4), p. 483. In addition to this, Major, who is an advocate of the influence of the Huang-Lao school of thought on the *Huainanzi*, and also of the literary connections between the *Huainanzi* and the *Chuci*, supposes that the Chu culture was also impacted by the Huang-Lao school. He bases this supposition upon the discoveries at the Mawangdui tombs and suggests that a magical and religiously based variety of Daoism, as well as the dominance of the *yin-yang* and five-phases cosmology is indicative of that connection. (Major, John S. (1978) 'Research Priorities in the Study of Ch'u Religion,' *HR* 17 (3/4), pp. 226-243).

[679] Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority*, p. 177.

remained an integral part of the studies of Chinese mythology to the present. Its importance to the field lies in the richness of its content, allowing it to be used as a standard against which the majority of Chinese mythological episodes can be compared and contrasted.[680] It is representative of the core mythological beliefs of the Chu and pre-Chu eras and has preserved a considerable number of primary and secondary myths, making it the most comprehensive extant collection of Chinese mythology. Furthermore, in the case of the *Tianwen* specifically, its non-narrative form and rhetorical line of questioning imply that the intended reader was already well versed in the subject matter.[681] The format is not without its difficulties, for the truncated method of transmission leaves the scholar unable to determine the intended meaning despite the richness of its source material.[682] That being said, there are hints of earlier versions of both surviving and lost mythological traditions contained within the questions.

The origins of the content of Chu literature and whether or not it was influenced by or contributed to the shaping of Zhou culture has long been debated. The Chu society was perceived as being heavily religious, and it is suggested that their system of beliefs inherited a shamanistic character through their connection with the northern regions of Asia.[683] Additionally, it is thought that the Chu state shared good relations with the Shang kingdom at the time of its downfall, thereby making it possible that the Chu scholars referred to some now forgotten Shang myths, as opposed to propagating versions filtered by Zhou propaganda.[684] For example, the ancient narratives pertained to in the *Tianwen* are thought to have become established in the Chu region in the early Western Zhou period (ca. 1046-771 B.C.E.). This implies that the importation of these myths occurred at an earlier date that previously supposed,[685] a theory that is supported by the archaic nature of the phrasing and language used within the text.[686]

The persistency of Chu commitment to honouring their religious traditions, as well as the myths and legends that upheld them resulted in the formation of a new hypothesis.

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[680] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 26.
[681] Field, Stephen (1986) *Tian Wen: A Chinese Book of Origins*, New Directions Books, New York, p. ix.
[682] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 30.
[683] Major, John S. (1978) 'Research Priorities in the Study of Ch'u Religion,' *HR* 17 (3/4), pp. 228-231.
[684] Ho, Ping-ti (1975) *The Cradle of the East: an Inquiry into the Indigenous Origins of Techniques and Ideas of Neolithic and Early Historic China 5000-1000 B.C.*, Chinese University Publications Offices, Hong Kong, pp. 316-7.
[685] See: Hayashi Minao's essay 'The Twelve Gods of the Chan-Kuo Period Silk Manuscript Excavated at Ch'ang-sha' in: Barnard, Noel (1972) *Early Chinese Art and Its Possible Influence in the Pacific Basin*, Intercultural Arts Press, New York, pp. 177-9.
[686] Hawkes, David (2011) *The Songs of The South*, p. 126.

It was suggested that the cosmological mythology preserved within the *Tianwen* was not introduced into the culture from the Zhou or even the Shang peoples. Instead, as it is likely that the Chu people migrated from the northern regions of China, scholars have posited that they may have been the original disseminators of the cosmological tradition proliferated by the Shang and Zhou dynasties. The Chu mythological corpus then underwent necessary modification upon its encounter with and diffusion into the Shang kingdom, however its cosmological ideas were firmly rooted in the culture at an early date in her history.[687] If this theory were correct, it would lend weight to the belief that the cosmogonic themes in the *Tianwen* represent the oldest known Chinese creation accounts.

The *Tianwen* is the largest surviving collection of riddles from the Warring states period, comprising an approximate total of 172 questions, likely derived from the *Shijing*.[688] Its structure is relatively unique in extant classical Chinese writings, although the use of a question format is thought to have been relatively common in the pre-Qin era. A similar passage is found in the fourteenth chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (*Master Zhuang*) which is also concerned with the nature of heaven, earth and their cycles. The resemblance between the format and content between these two poems has led to a tempting correlative effort, however, their different religious and philosophical ideas suggest that the two texts are unrelated. Ultimately, the *Tianwen* is believed to have spawned from an earlier unidentified work and bears greater concern for ancient mythic and folkloric elements,[689] preserving their legends in rhetorical snippets.

The exact purpose of the *Tianwen* is unknown. Its tone is progressive; displaying first a disbelief in humanity's ability to comprehend the method of creation, and then confidence in the perceivable patterns of the universe and their ability to enlighten the scholar of the formation of their cycles. Finally, the text is saturated with dissatisfaction as it begins to focus on the faults and fallibilities of the created realms.[690] Several theories have arisen to explain the *Tianwen*'s function, with suggestions that: (1) it was a debate exercise, (2) it was based off graffiti on a temple wall, (2) it was a book of riddles

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[687] Major, John S. (1978) 'Research Priorities in the Study of Ch'u Religion,' *HR* 17 (3/4), p. 234.
[688] The total number of questions contained with the *Tianwen* remains contested, with suggestions ranging from just over one hundred to the one hundred and seventy two that is now generally accepted.
[689] See: Field, Stephen (1986) *Tian Wen*; Field, Stephen (1992) 'Cosmos, Cosmograph, and the Inquiring Poet,' *EC*, p. 85.
[690] Field, Stephen (1992) 'Cosmos, Cosmograph, and the Inquiring Poet: New Answers to the "Heaven Questions",' *EC* 17, p. 108.

designed to tease the reader with a set of unanswerable questions, (4) it was a test for assessing the knowledge of a candidate for a religious organisation, or (5) its questions were titles or prompts, acting as cues for well known tales to allow an audience to identify the narrative a storyteller was about to recall.[691]

More recently, however, the text has come to be considered as an academic achievement as opposed to a deliberate compilation of popular local legends. The *Chuci* is a classic example of the musical traditions of southern China, visible through the author's keen interest in the supernatural world and its interaction with the natural. It is characterised by a distinctively Chu flavour in its dialect, rhythm and its localisation to the Chu region, suggesting that while other traditions may have been incorporated, the majority of the text represented Chu religious and political beliefs.[692] Being a wandering scholar was a popular occupation for the academia of the era throughout the Song and Chu regions, and it is thought that the poem as a whole was an assemblage of their learned knowledge.[693] This theory lessens the complications arising from the extensiveness of the included topics and the unlikelihood that it was the product of a single writer. Instead, the author of the current work is suggested to be a redactor of a previously existing textual tradition.

Out of the 76 compositions in the *Chuci*, approximately 25 have been attributed to Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340–278 B.C.E.), an eminent member of King Huai's court during the Warring States period who was exiled from the kingdom due to the jealousy of his peers.[694] His societal standing provided him with access to a good education, and likely even the imperial libraries, allowing him to become well versed in the contemporary literary and cultural traditions. His background has been used to explain the Herodotean nature of his questions, which lent credence to the notion that they were designed to evoke aspects of common knowledge.[695] Whilst the majority of the poems contained within the *Chuci* have remained anonymous, the *Tianwen* has been tentatively attributed

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[691] See: Field, Stephen (1986) *Tian Wen*, p. xvi; Hawkes, David (2011) *The Songs of The South*, p. 122-5; and Watson, Burton (1962) *Early Chinese Literature*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp. 246-8.
[692] See: Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*; and Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority*.
[693] Field, Stephen (1986) *Tian Wen*, p. xv.
[694] As such, he was later categorised as 'the emblematic figure of the unappreciated scholar […] and the model of martyrdom for one's country.' (Schimmelpfennig, Michael (2004) 'The Quest for a Classic: Wang Yi and the Exegetical Prehistory of his Commentary to the "Songs of Chu",' *EC* 29, pp. 111-162).
[695] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 27. Herodotus was famed for offering his readers varying and often contradictory accounts of the histories that he recorded. In doing so, he preserved the commonly known versions of the same story from differing regions.

to Qu Yuan,[696] after his unfair dismissal from the capital. Furthermore, espousing a relationship to the legend of the graffiti on the temple wall, some have suggested that Qu Yuan was so affected by his exile that he expressed his indignation over the event, calling to question the accepted ethical and moral justices of the universe and therefore to the reality of the universe itself by writing questions on the wall at the ancestral temple.[697]

As indicated by the title, the poem covers all manner of material related to the heavens, and is divided into three categories, the patterns of heaven, the patterns of earth, and the patterns of men. This progression follows the cosmological development, beginning in the celestial realm and ending with humanity.[698] Like most cosmogonical works, it attempts to offer etiological reasons for the contemporary tenets of the spiritual and natural realms. The rhetorical nature of the questions themselves serves to highlight the insignificance of human knowledge, offering an almost irreverent viewpoint on life. Ultimately, the text lacks an underlying narrative theme, which would have allowed it to exist as a standalone work.[699] Instead, the poem seems to raise awareness of culturally significant ideas, directing its readers to pursue further investigation.

It is practically impossible to identify every myth that is referred to in the *Tianwen*'s questions; however, amongst them one can perceive elements of the myth of Hundun.[700] During the chaotic Warring states period, stories of Hundun brought to mind a Golden Age of virtue when there was no strife, conflict or disunity. It presence in the Tianwen acted as a commentary on the fragmented nature of the current regime.[701] Furthermore, correlating the unity of Hundun with the *Dao* was seen as an attempt to counteract the rising influence of Confucianism, whose sages interrupted the perfect balance of the original nature in the minds of the Daoists.[702] In this manner, the writer designates the

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[696] Although scholars such as Stephen Field are hesitant to accept Qu Yuan's singular authorship of the *Tianwen* based on that 'total absence of "breathing sounds" [...] characteristic of all other songs attributed to [him]' thereby implying that while he may have recorded its present form, he was working from a prior text. (Field, Stephen (1986) *Tian Wen*, p. x; see also: Hawkes, David (2011) *The Songs of The South*, p. 126).
[697] See Yang and An's essay in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, pp. 29-30.
[698] See: Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority in Early China*, p. 182.; and Masako, Mori (1987) 'Tian Wen. A Chinese Book of Origin by Stephen Field,' *AFS* 46, pp. 301-302. This categorisation, as well as the progression that represents it, is believed to be a traditional format tracing back to the Tang dynasty.
[699] Field, Stephen (1986) *Tian Wen*, pp. x-xi.
[700] Yu, David C. (1981) 'The Creation Myth,' *PEW* 31 (4), p. 483.
[701] Needham, Jospeh (1956) *Science and Civilisation in China*, p. 115.
[702] Girardot, Norman J. (1978) 'Chaotic "Order" (hun-tun) and Benevolent "Disorder" (luan) in the "Chuang Tzu",' *PEW* 28 (3), pp. 305-9.

current state of affairs as a symptom of the separation of primal harmony and implies that the only way to regain natural peace was to seek understanding of the *Dao*.

Hundun has appeared in many different roles and has been described in many different forms throughout his various appearances in Chinese mythology. Having served as probable inspiration for the cosmogonical passages in the *Tianwen* and the *Huainanzi*, and even for creative figures such as Pangu; his descriptions range from 'an apertureless god, an avian god without facial features, an anthropomorphised human rebel, or a minor deity, and also a cosmogonic concept.'[703] His characteristic evolution was similarly severe; for up until the late Zhou era he was a benign and neutral figure when he became associated with negative forces and was ultimately exiled from the pantheon for his rebellious nature. His divinity was finally restored during the Han era, but in diminished form, being relegated to the status of a minor deity.

In the context of the *Huainanzi*, Hundun's relation to the primal unity was based on his physical features. Here in the *Tianwen*, however, the significance lies in the next part of his story, following on from his friends' identification of his featureless face. Accordingly, the myth continues on with a declaration by his friends: 我們不如去替他鑿出幾竅來。於是就帶了斧頭、鑿子之類的工具，去給混沌開竅。一天鑿一竅，七天鑿了七 竅，但是可憐的混沌，經他好朋友這麼一鑿，卻"嗚呼哀哉，壽終正寢"了[704] (Let us go and help him carve some openings onto his face, so they brought an axe, and using a chisel as a tool, they went to give Hundun openings. Each day, they chiselled one opening onto his face, and by the seventh day had chiselled seven openings. But poor Hundun, for after he underwent the chiselling of his good friends, he sadly came to his end and died).[705]

His friends who carve out the openings on his face are the gods Shu and Hu, the representatives of time and direction. As such, they are symbolic of artificial order. They are motivated by a sense of gratitude; their desire to give Hundun facial openings is not performed with malice and yet despite their good intentions, their actions result in his death. Hundun appears to be a quintessential representative of the dying god motif, but

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[703] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 98-9. The progression of Hundun's story and identity is unsurprising, for his character was altered to suit the needs of the times. For the Daoists he could act as the representative of primal harmony, for the Zhou an example of a rebellious people, and for the Han his new subservient position reflected the euhemerisation of Chinese mythology, he became a spirit rather than a god.

[704] Own translation. Chinese text is quoted in simplified form but has been rendered here in traditional characters: Ke, Yuan 袁珂 (2012) *Zhongguo shenhua zhuanshuo* 中国神话转说, p. 46.

[705] Own translation.

the aspect of conflict has been lost through the accidental nature of his death. There is an ironic element to this story, for when his friends went to give him facial openings, the phrase *kaiqiao* 开窍 is employed. This phrase also bears connotations of the beginning of proper understanding, which in Hundun's case would have allowed him to comprehend the world around him by seeing, hearing and smelling it for the first time. Accordingly, his story can be invoked as an example of artificial order (culture) disrupting the natural order and destroying it.[706] Its inclusion in a text would therefore chastise its readers and encourage them to respect the proper order of the world.

The *Tianwen* is opened with the character yue 曰, literally meaning 'to speak/say,' although in the present context it takes on the meaning 'it is said' in a similar fashion to the penchant of introducing with 'once upon a time.'[707] This literary tool was often used to signify that the subsequent tradition was well known, or when a scholar wished to critique or embellish upon the dominant version of a tale. However, due to the brevity of each question, the former of these options is the most likely understanding of the term. Question 1 asks: 遂古之初，誰傳道之? ('At the beginning of remote antiquity, who was there to pass down the tale of what happened?')[708] The question is simple, wondering as to how the information of the first moments of creation was transmitted, although one might suggest two possible answers for its intended purpose.

The first is a relatively straightforward suggestion that the question is rhetorical. It is indicative of the writer's absolute disbelief in humanity's capacity to understand what happened in the beginning because there was no one in existence to tell the tale. The second, on the other hand, requires a touch of extrapolation based on the religious context of the book. Being a product of a predominantly Daoist culture, one might propose that the intended answer to the question was the *Dao* itself. In the creation account in *Huainanzi* chapter 3, the *Dao* came forth from the void before the

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[706] See Yang Lihui and An Deming's essay 'The World of Chinese Mythology: An Introduction' on p. 35 of: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*. Similarly, Bell states that in the present example, the 'logic of [the] story is shown to underlie not only the metaphysics of early [Daoism] but its soteriology as well: [...] human salvation requires "resychronization" with the primal chaos of [*Hundun*].' (Bell, Catherine (1985) 'On Chinese Chaos: Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism by N. J. Girardot,' *HR* 24 (3), p. 280).

[707] A similar literary tool is used in fiction, 'Once upon a time' is used to introduce many folktales to situate it within an undetermined time, and allowing the moral of its story to be transcendent and remain relevant for whomsoever is reading.

[708] References to the Chinese version of *Tianwen* 1-3 from the *Chuci* are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/chu-ci/tian-wen. For the purpose of the following analysis, Anne Birrell's translation will be used unless otherwise stated. See: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 31.

commencement of the creation process. It represents the perfect nature of all things, and as such can serve as a reliable witness to the creation event, much in the same way as Lady Wisdom in the book of *Proverbs*. If this was the case, in asking 'who was there?' the author posits that one can only know the answer with proper understanding of the *Dao*. Conversely, if the scholar was disillusioned with the religion, the question becomes subversive; challenging the very tenets of Daoist philosophy through the assertion that it is unable to provide insight into the origin of all things.

Questions 2-5 all refer to the chaotic pre-creation period and following the same line of reasoning as question 1, asking: 上下未形，何由考之？冥昭瞢暗，誰能極之？馮翼惟象，何以識之？明明暗暗，惟時何為? ('And before the upper and lower worlds were formed, how could they be explored? Since darkness and light were hidden and closed, who could fathom them? In the formless expanse when there were only images, how could anyone know what they were? When were brightness and gloom created?')[709] These are common images in Daoist creation mythology and were likely part of the popular tradition of the day. It is possible that the two gods of *Huainanzi* chapter 7 served either as an answer to these questions or could even have been characters from the popular myth alluded to here.

Before there is differentiation of the initial chaos, there can be no determination of its various paths. In addition to the two gods who wove the skies and designed the earth in the *Huainanzi*, these questions also appear to pertain to Hundun who, at this stage in his literary history, was still a figure of benign neutrality. As was shown above, his story is connected to the dying god motif, although it remains debatable whether the collator of the *Tianwen* was aware of it. His inadvertent murder at the hands of his friends lacks evidence of conspiracy or the deliberate conflict and the ancient Near Eastern myths. However, as the symbol of the whole, the motif demands his death for his redistribution into the many. From this, one might suggest that light and dark cannot be differentiated until the ability to discern between them has been formed. If these elements cannot be distinguished, they cannot be described, therefore, until Hundun has gained the faculties of sight and hearing, the process of creation cannot begin, as it is with his death that the division of the one into the myriad things can commence.

[709] Birrell's translation.

The division of the one into two is made clear in question 6, which introduces the essences of *yin* and *yang*: 陰陽三合，何本何化? ('Yin and Yang comingled three times; what was their original form and how were they transformed?')[710] The *Huainanzi* posited that *yin* and *yang* were the transformed manifestations of the two gods that emerged from the chaos. Preceding these forces to which the differentiation of the materials of the universe are attributed, these gods are presented as the answer to the question as to who was able to explore the length and breadth of the chaos and known what the images were. However, it is indeterminable whether the presentation of the two gods in the *Huainanzi* were simply used as explanation for the original forms of *yin* and *yang*, or if they belonged to an older tradition, and yet it seems clear that the writer of the chapter 7 text was influenced by this question in his attempt to recreate correlative imagery.

The interaction of *yin* and *yang* in question 6 marked the transition between the undifferentiated chaos, and the completed form of creation. Accordingly, questions 7-8 refer to the construction of the boundaries of the heavens: 圜則九重，孰營度之? 惟茲何功，孰初作之? ('The round sphere and its ninefold gates, who planned and measured them? Whose achievement was this? Who first created them?')[711] It is tempting to see within this query evidence of a creative hand as the act of planning and measuring the heavens was often associated with the high gods of the ancient Near Eastern mythological traditions. It is similarly tempting to imply that the writer question was of a religious nature reminiscent of a concept long forgotten.

For example, the mythological figures of Nüwa and Fuxi 伏羲, who are depicted as both divine and mortal depending on the legends in which they are featured, are often associated with the compass and carpenters square, which symbolically associated them with the ability to establish the universal laws and take the measurements of the heavens.[712] However, the writer's verb choice in these questions rejects their connection to a deity by contextually grounding them within the imagery of human planning and construction.[713] Therefore, it is more likely that the unidentified subject of the question

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[710] Ibid.
[711] Birrell's translation.
[712] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 119.
[713] Field, Stephen (1992) 'Cosmos, Cosmograph, and the Inquiring Poet,' *EC* 17, pp. 92-3. Field suggests here that the lack of divine figure calls into question the basis for the mandate of heaven, as there is no equivalent to the ANE high god who could decree the rule of a single man. This view overlooks the natural

could refer to a model emperor or sage-king as opposed to a divine creator. This feature is most commonly explained as a by-product of the euhemerisation of the Chinese pantheon, appropriating the abilities and tasks normally prescribed to the gods and assigning them to the human rulers of the ancient past, thereby implying that the principles of the world and or man was wholly determined by humanity itself.

The final six questions included in this study are concerned with the movements and cycles of the heavens. According to *Huainanzi* 3.27, questions 9 and 13-14 are together used to describe the passage of the months and seasons of the year. Question 9 relates to the dipper's ladle and cord: 斡維焉系，天極焉加? ('How are the Dipper's ladle and the Cord fastened, and how were the poles of the sky linked?')[714] Whereas 13-14 refer to the coordination of the heavens: 天何所沓，十二焉分? 日月安屬，列星安陳? ('How do the heavens coordinate their twelve divisions? How are the sun and moon connected? How are the serried stars arranged?')[715] The passage of time, it is said, is determined by the dipper revolving through the heavens, drawn by the cord that is guided by one whom Major translates as the 'Celestial Thearch.'[716] It is possible that ancient Chinese thought conceived of Major's Celestial Thearch in a similar fashion; however, examples such as these demonstrate the *Tianwen*'s distinctive movement toward the later, dominant theory of natural evolution and self-regulation.

The text appears to retain elements of earlier supernatural participation in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the establishment of their cycles. Heaven does not yet seem to be able to regulate itself as it is supposed in the later Daoist works, but rather the gods or spirits are still perceived as being responsible for certain features of the cosmos. For example, consider the topic of question 10, which asks: 八柱何當，東南何虧? ('Why do the eight pillars lean to the southeast and why is there a fault?')[717] This query refers to the myth of the water god Gonggong ramming Mount Buzhou after failing to claim the throne of heaven. His narrative, as well as his rebellion, are associated with the flood myths, and were thought to have been a contemporary myth

balance of the universe and the fact that the mandate was bestowed upon the one who maintains this balance, and like the cyclical nature of yin and yang, and will be replaced when his time comes to an end.

[714] Birrell's translation.

[715] Ibid.

[716] Major, John S. et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, p. 132-3. In the Babylonian tradition, the order and regularity of the heavenly bodies was arranged by Marduk. See: Rochberg, Francesca (2007) 'Marduk in Heaven,' *WZKM* 97 (Festschrift für Hermann Hunger zum 65. Geburtstag dewidmet von seinen Freunden, Kollegen und Schülern), pp. 433-442.

[717] Birrell's translation.

during the Warring states period.[718] Situated in the present context, the question relays the consequences of immoral behaviour and the impact that it has on the natural world.

Finally, the significance of questions 11-12 falls in their reference to the nine skies, and their repetition of the imagery of question 7 of the round sphere and its ninefold gates. They ask: 九天之際，安放安屬？隅隈多有，誰知其數? ('Where are the ends of the nine skies situated and where do they join up? Their corners and edges are so many that who knows what they number?')[719] At some point during the pre-Warring States period, the number five came to replace the number nine as the principal magic number. This indicates that the *Tianwen*'s preference for the latter numeral corresponded to a much earlier mythic tradition.[720] The use of the number nine was symbolic of completeness and perfection, and was employed as a rhetorical feature embedded within the structure of the entirety of the *Chuci*.[721] Furthermore, it usage was prevalent in the earliest conceptions of the cosmos as a square earth covered by a round heaven.

Livia Kohn explains that the 'central land areas was patterned in concentric squares, and the sky or heaven above was built of increasing layers or strata. Both were arranged in accordance with the number nine, the number of perfect yang and highest completeness.'[722] The nine levels of heaven were connected by gateways that allowed unrestricted access to the spiritual world during the Golden Age. These were eventually closed due to the misconduct of mankind, thereby forcing them to rely on intermediaries such the shaman, or the king, for guidance.[723] The use of this imagery in the *Tianwen* hints of the existence of an ancient pantheon of supernatural figures organised hierarchically within the layers of heaven in a similar fashion to those of the ancient Near Eastern myths. It is also from this archetype (and the gods and goddesses contained within it) that Emperor Shun was later said to have adapted his earthly government.

Aside from the recollection of Gonggong's rebellion, which demanded an element of discord for its moral lesson, there is no depiction of conflict borne creation within the

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[718] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 124.
[719] Birrell's translation.
[720] Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority in Early China*, p. 104.
[721] Field, Stephen (1992) 'Cosmos, Cosmograph, and the Inquiring Poet,' *EC* 17.
[722] Kohn, Livia (1992) *Early Chinese Mysticism: Philosophy and Soteriology in the Taoist Tradition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 86.
[723] Ibid. p. 87-8. See also Yang's discussion on the various myths of the sky ladders that acted as passageways between the heavenly layers and earth (Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, pp. 205-8).

text of the *Tianwen*. It is possible to see allusions to the primal entities of the ancient Near East within the characterisation of *yin* and *yang* and the requirement that both the male and female essences in the process of reproduction. However, their comingling is not discussed in terms of war and battle but of mutual harmony. Ultimately, the purpose of many of the questions remains unclear, yet the *Tianwen* has retained its status as a rich source of ancient Chinese mythology despite its fragmented nature. Many of these myths have been fleshed out in later works, such as those from the *Huainanzi* creation myths. However one must be cautious in assuming shared meaning, for the answer may not necessarily know the heart of the question.

7.3 THE QUINTESSENTIAL CREATOR

In the discussion of a specific figure one is forced away from a single text due to the reality of several surviving versions of the story. The majority of legends that feature Pangu and his creation of the world date from the Three Kingdoms period (220-280 C.E.). These narratives employ common mythemes from across the ancient world, encompassing the methods of separation and transformation. The story of Pangu was, for a significant time in modern scholarship, considered as the only recognisable creation myth of China, and as such has also been subjected to the greatest level of comparative studies with the ancient Near Eastern accounts.[724] There are two primary stories relating to Pangu; the first telling the story of the cosmic giant, a gargantuan figure who is represented as physically separating the heavens from the earth, and the second being closely related to the dying god motif, in which his body is broken down after his death, and transformed into all the things in and on the earth.

The myth of Pangu is a relatively late entry into China's history and the multiple forms of his story have introduced controversy into the discussion of Chinese creation myths. For example, it is the opinion of some that the tardiness of his emergence suggests that he should be omitted entirely from the conversation. This is based on the assumption that it is likely that is a foreign importation that could have had little impact on the formation of Chinese thought.[725] Regardless, the story of Pangu is widely known in Chinese culture

[724] This idea was attested to by Derk Bodde in 'Myths of Ancient China,' in Kramer, Samuel Noah (1961) *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, p. 383.
[725] Girardot, Norman J. (1976) 'The Problem of Creation Mythology,' *HR* 15 (4).

today, having even been incorporated into children's books.[726] His myth is not confined to the Han people, but has been transmitted both orally and textually amongst several ethnic minorities. Each version of his story is diverse, and in many cases the two main accounts have been combined and embellished.[727] Ultimately, for those who have not rejected Pangu's right to be included in Chinese creation mythology, he symbolises an amalgamation of both early Chinese and foreign concepts.

Throughout the ages, Pangu has been seen, in both mythology and folklore as being, in some capacity, the creator of the world. However, while his primary myths focus upon his transformation from the cosmic egg into the myriad things, he is regularly identified as human rather than divine. Furthermore, he is not described as a creative force, but the product of it and his participation in its processes is passive.[728] Instead, the heavens and the earth separated through natural means, forming themselves through the congealing of like elements following the differentiation of earth and sky, much in a similar fashion to the *Huainanzi*. Within this setting, Pangu becomes an observer to the creation event, acting as its witness in his coexistence with the chaos.[729] His assimilation of the observational role played by the *Dao* in earlier creation traditions is symptomatic of the Confucian influence on the myth and its desire to replace earlier religious elements with new human-centric ones.

Pangu's involvement in the creation myth has instead been expanded to suggest that the correspondence of his birth to the separation of heaven and earth is connected to the origins of the Three Sovereigns. Identified as heaven, earth and mankind, the Three Sovereigns represent the balance of the universe, and Pangu serves as the etiological example for humanity's ability to mediate between the two extremes.[730] This interpretation is founded in Confucian ideology and its implication that creation itself is not as important as man's relation to and place within it. If this were the case, it is possible that the creative properties of the text were the result of later embellishments,

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[726] For example, one version of the Pangu narrative begins on the first page of: Liu Jiandong 刘建东; Zhou Li 周丽 (2009) *Qianziwen* 千字文 (1000 character essay), Zhejiang shaonian ertong chubanshe 浙江少年儿童出版社 (Zhejiang Children's press), Hangzhou.
[727] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 177.
[728] See Wu Xiaodong's essay 'Pangu and the Origin of the Universe' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, pp. 163-176.
[729] Wang, Luchang (1995) 'A Study on the Origin of Pangu Myth,' *ZJ* 3, p. 92, referenced in: Wu Xiaodong's essay 'Pangu and the Origin of the Universe' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, pp. 164-9.
[730] Wu Xiaodong's essay 'Pangu and the Origin of the Universe' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, pp. 164-9.

which would in turn explain why Pangu was not named as a creative deity until the Three Kingdoms era.

On the other hand, it is also possible that the opposite is true and the origin story of the Three Sovereigns was added to the creation narrative, thereby granting it the validity of primogeniture. Early scholarship regarding Pangu often focused on the initial emergence of his name in connection to the creation myths, rather than evidence of earlier narrative types within his story. It is likely that in addition to the foreign elements, older native works have been grafted into his myth. For example, as it exists today, certain features of the Pangu myths align with those of the *Huainanzi* texts and the *Tianwen*, which suggests that the writers of the former were aware of the Daoist creation accounts.

The two main accounts of Pangu are located within the *Sanwu liji* and the *Wuyun linianji* Both texts are arguably penned by the same writer, although practically nothing is known about him aside from the fact that he lived and wrote during the Three Kingdoms period in the third century C.E. and that he was a man of Daoist persuasion. The Three Kingdoms era succeeded the Han dynasty after corruption and factionalism brought about its downfall, and was classified as one of the bloodiest periods in Chinese history through its chaotic infighting and disunity.[731] The author of these two narratives was a man by the name of Xu Zheng 徐整 (220-65), who was believed to be a minister from the southern state of Wu. Unfortunately, his works were lost and now exist only as fragmented citations in later texts, making it difficult to determine the intention of his text.

Despite this, his depiction of Pangu became the most well-known and generally accepted creation text in China.[732] It appeared to incorporate earlier traditions such the emergence of *yin* and *yang* from a primal unified state, the myth of Hundun, and the natural expansion found in the *Huainanzi* texts. It is a reasonable assumption that the discrepancies between the extant versions of his myth are the result of oral transmission and its geographical variations. This implies that the origin of the Pangu myth is rooted in a much earlier period, which allowed for the development of several

[731] Psarras, Sophia-Karin (1993) 'The Poliical Climate of the Later Han,' *JAH* 27 (1), pp. 16-29. At the time of her downfall, it was generally believed that the Han had lost the mandate from Heaven.
[732] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 29.

versions of his tale[733] and ultimately gave credence to the hypothesis that he was a blend of both old and new elements.

In the late twentieth century there was a great deal of debate surrounding the foundations of the Pangu myth, with the majority of scholars concluding that it was a foreign importation regardless of its local flavouring. Accordingly, several theories have arisen in an attempt to explain its origins; for example, thematic similarities have led to suggestions that it hailed from the ancient Near East,[734] whereas others claim that the myth originated in the southwest Tibetan tribes, amongst whom Xu Zheng is believed to have resided.[735] Still others reject his native status based on analyses of pre-Qin texts in which there are no traces of him or an equivalent figure, and posit instead that he migrated from India.[736] On the other hand, archaeological evidence from the Han dynasty has pointed to the existence of a temple devoted to Pangu, which seemingly belies the possibility of his migration into China through Buddhism. Finally, a parallel from the Miao people has led to suggestions that the roots of Pangu's myth may have originated from the Miao clans.[737]

Foreign influences in the development and proliferation of the Pangu myth are undeniable, although there has been no real agreement amongst scholars as to the degree of that influence. Versions of his myth exist in almost every ethnicity throughout China, each believing that they are the original source of his narrative.[738] However, the popularity of the foreign influence theory is now succumbing to the notion that Pangu's myth originated in either central or southern China.[739] This has led to a shifting of focus

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[733] Kósa, Gábor (2009) 'Pangu's Birth and Death as Recorded in a Tang Dynasty Buddhist Source,' *OA* 77, pp. 169-192. Kósa suggests that there was more than one author of the Pangu myths, and that 'during the Six Dynasties and Tang Period [that] there were at least three complete, but differing, versions,' which is the reason he believes that his origin must have been founded at a much earlier date (p. 179).
[734] Puhvel, Jaan (1989) *Comparative Mythology*, p. 285.
[735] Mathieu, Rémi (1989) *Anthologie des myths et legends de la Chine ancienne*, Gallimard, Paris, p. 28.
[736] He, Xin (1996) *The Origins of the Gods*, Guangming Publishing House, Beijing.
[737] Wu, Xiaodong (2001) 'The Rhinoceros Totem and Pangu Myth: An Exploration of the Archetype of Pangu,' *OT* 16 (2), pp. 364-380.
[738] There have been documented celebrations of Pangu and his achievements in many rural provinces such as Henan, Shanxi and Shandong in the present day. These celebrations draw pilgrims to temples constructed in Pangu's honour, which were believed to have been constructed before the Tang era and serve as demonstrations of the ongoing significance of Pangu and the countrywide orthodoxy of his myth. He may not have adopted the role of a creator god early in his career, however, according to archaeological evidence, these temples were dedicated to him as the creator of the universe. (Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 179).
[739] Hou, Hongliang (2008) 'Shi shi, fei fei hua Pangu: jindai yilai Pangu shenhua yanjiu shuping' 是是非非话盘古：近代以来盘古神话研究述评, *Guangxi minzu yanjiu* 广西民族研究 91, pp. 118-126.

towards understanding the migration patterns of oral traditions,[740] although it is reasonable to assume that by the time Pangu's myth was committed to text, his myth was an infusion of factors from both home and abroad.

Finally, the theory that the similarity between the characters and themes of the *Sanwu liji* and the *Wuyun linianji* supported their authorship by the same hand also produced another hypothesis. Scholars argued that the two narratives could be combined and read together as two halves of the same story. This would form a complete pattern from the creation of the universe through to the creation of the ten thousand things.[741] This is an attractive hypothesis, and has been supported by both modern and ancient scholars. However, the textual and stylistic differences between the two narratives, as well as the apparent failure of the *Wuyun linianji* to show knowledge of the *Sanwu liji* version has made the theory improbable.[742] Ultimately it is difficult to ascertain the truth of the theory, although it is evident that these two accounts have different focuses in regards to their scope and content, and that they can and have been amalgamated into a single narrative in order to explain the diversity of the natural phenomena.

7.3.1 THE TRANSFORMER

The first account of Pangu's myth from the *Sanwu liji* appears to be a fairly straightforward description of the formation of the world through the acts of separation and transformation. It discusses creation at a universal level, concerned only with the formation of the heavens and the earth through the properties of *yin* and *yang*, and ending with the establishment of the Three Sovereigns. The surviving fragment of this myth was preserved in the Tang dynasty encyclopaedic work *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (*Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories*), which was compiled by a scholar named Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641 C.E.). Xun was a Confucian scholar, calligrapher and a high official in the courts of emperor Taizong.[743] The *Yiwen leiju* covered a wide

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[740] Kósa, Gábor (2009) 'Pangu's Birth and Death,' *OA* 77.
[741] Jung Jaeseo 'Myths of Giant Corpse Transformation' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 102.
[742] Kósa, Gábor (2009) 'Pangu's Birth and Death,' *OA* 77, p. 169. Kósa points out here that the two accounts are 'not presented together in any of [the later] sources, they are both temporally and spatially disjointed.'
[743] McNair, Amy (1995) 'Public Values in Calligraphy and Orthography in the Tang Dynasty,' *MS* 43, pp. 265, 271. Xun also served under emperor Gaozu of the preceding Sui dynasty. As an eminent scholar, Xun's role included his appointment to the prestigious College for the Development of Literature, where he instructed elite students in the Kaishu style of calligraphy. (See: Goldberg, Stephen J. (1988-1989) 'Court Calligraphy of the Early T'ang dynasty,' *ArA* 49 (3/4), pp. 189-237).

range of sources, reflecting the heightened significance of both Daoism and Buddhism during the early years of the Tang era, alongside the continually increasing prominence of Confucian ethics. As such, it is possible to see elements of each system of thought woven into the text. However its reliance on the earlier Daoist creation stories is palpable.

It is widely accepted that this version of the Pangu myth is structurally related to that of Hundun, whose concepts act as a common thread between Pangu, the *Tianwen* and the texts in the *Huainanzi*.[744] This relationship is so pronounced that studies have implied that while the *Wuyun linianji* version of the story could be a direct literary descendant of the opening lines of *Huainanzi* chapters 3 and 7, the *Sanwu liji* account is considered to have undergone only minor variation and adjustment.[745] For example, the opening line of this text proffers a direct link to Hundun: 曰：天地混沌如雞子，盤古生其中 (It is said that heaven and earth was turbid and murky [Hundun] like a chicken's egg and Pangu was born in the middle of it).[746] Like Hundun, who is the emperor of the central region of the world, Pangu is born in the middle of the chaos and became symbolic of the central support pillar of the universe as he grew.

The egg from which Pangu was born parallels the featureless sac-like form of Hundun. This imagery connects the opening sequence of the narrative to the Daoist concept of creation. It perpetuates the dying the god motif firstly through Hundun, out of whom the universe was formed, and secondly through Pangu, who emerged from the egg to differentiate matter and give it new form.[747] However, the use of the egg imagery in the form of a simile is suggested as being indicative of its demythologisation, and its departure from the original format, which culminated in the eventual removal of the egg

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[744] Girardot, Norman J. (1976) 'The Problem of Creation Mythology,' *HR* 15 (4), p. 302. Specifically, Girardot states that 'the [Pangu] myth may be prefigured by much earlier Chinese myths of an essentially similar cosmogonic intentionality [… whose] mythological traces reveal a structural and paradigmatic connection with early [Daoist] ideology.'

[745] Wu Xiaodong, 'Pangu and the Origin of the Universe' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 170.

[746] References to the Chinese version of the passage from the *Sanwu liji* 1.1.23 that is preserved in the *Yiwen leiju* are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/text.pl?node=539866&if=en (paragraph 23). Own translation.

[747] The myth of the cosmic egg appears in several forms throughout the ancient world, including the Rig Veda, which aside from Indra's battle with Vrtra also offers tales of a primordial egg that is formed from the watery essences, either by chance or by supernatural intervention, out of which the first being came into existence. Interestingly, the Rig Veda propagates that creation was aided through the cooperation of the Devas and the Asuras which represent the binary opposites of day and night. (Kuiper, F. B. J. (1970) 'Cosmogony and Conception: A Query,' *HR* 10 (2), pp. 100-1).

entirely.[748] For example, Gábor Kósa conducted a search for the Pangu motif in the *Taisho shinshu daizokyo* 大正新脩大藏經 (*Taisho Era Revised Tripitaka*), the major edition of the Chinese Mahayana Buddhist canon. In doing so, he found a reworking of the myth that incorporated the premises of both versions of Pangu's tale.

This narrative is located in the *Dafang guangfo huayanjing suishu yanyi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔 (*Commentary on Eliciting the True Meaning of the Flower Garland Sutra*)[749] and was undoubtedly subjected to new scholarly criticism and values as a result of its new context. However, the first line reads almost identically to that of the *Sanwu liji*: 天地渾沌，盤古生其中 (The heavens and the earth were muddy and chaotic, [and] Pangu was born within it).[750] Aside from the omission of the egg, the phrasing of the two lines is exact, making it probable that the writer of the *Dafang* had access to the earlier work. However, the retention of Hundun without its associated imagery is telling, arousing in the mind of the modern scholar the philosophical question of the chicken or the egg. The existence of the egg leads one to search for the creator of it, and whether it was birthed as from a mother hen or designed by an external force. It symbolises the original perfect unity, and is intrinsically Daoist in its thematic concerns. On the other hand the removal of egg allows for the de-personification of Hundun and emphasises the natural processes of creation. Its removal is thus reflective of the changing social values, and the humanistic Confucian worldview as the matters of creation became more concerned with humanity's entrance onto the stage of history as opposed to the speculation of what came before.

Pangu's relationship to Hundun was downplayed in early research due to the demythologisation of Chinese literature, and the Western desire to find within the early Daoist traditions evidence of an external creative force.[751] Instead, some have found within the story traces of the modern theory of abiogensis, which is defined as 'the formation of living organisms from non-living organisms' or the 'supposed spontaneous generation of living organisms.'[752] The applications of this process have been applied to the next lines of Pangu's story 萬八千歲，天地開闢，陽清為天，陰濁為地，盤古在其中 ('In eighteen thousand years, Heaven and earth opened and unfolded. The limpid that

[748] Kósa, Gábor (2009) 'Pangu's Birth and Death,' *OA* 77, p. 173.
[749] Hereafter refered to as Dafang.
[750] Chinese text quoted in: Kósa, Gábor (2009) 'Pangu's Birth and Death,' *OA* 77. Own translation.
[751] Girardot, Norman J. (1976) 'The Problem of Creation Mythology,' *HR* 15 (4), p. 306.
[752] (2006) *The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* 4th ed. p. 3.

was Yang became the heavens and the turbid that was Yin became the earth. P'an Ku [Pangu] lived within them').[753] Ultimately, the theory of abiogenesis requires that there is no external power compelling the formation of matter, and therefore is not compatible with a protracted primal conflict.[754]

Accordingly, the text uses the balanced interaction of *yin* and *yang*, reiterating the process found in the *Huainanzi* passages, to fulfill the conceptual requirement for the spontaneity of creation. However, the addition of Pangu introduces a new element into the narrative. For example, the next lines of the myth state that: 天日高一丈，地日厚一丈，盤古日長一丈，如此萬八千歲，天數極高，地數極深，盤古極長. ('Each day the heavens rose ten feet higher, each day the earth grew ten feet thicker, and each day P'an Ku [Pangu] grew ten feet taller. And so it was that in eighteen thousand years the heavens reached their fullest height, earth reached its lowest depth, and P'an Ku [Pangu] became fully grown').[755] Pangu's growth has predominantly been translated in one of two ways; that he was either restricted by the highest reaches of the heavens and is unable to grow until it lifts, or that he, by his growth, forced the lowest reaches of the sky to move further away from the earth.

The implications of these interpretations are diverse; the former presents Pangu as the first sentient being of the creation story, but like the *Dao* in *Huainanzi* chapter 3, he is a passive witness. The latter introduces him as a creative figure, drawing upon typical creation motifs in its depiction of his stretching of the canvas of the heavens, and covering the earth with the sky like a tent. It is possible that the second of these two theories may have been compatible with ideas of conflict through his actions of enforcing the boundaries of the heavens and the earth and maintaining their separation in his role as the central support pillar. Both interpretations are plausible; however, while Pangu has been perceived as a creative deity in later times, the creative process is not reliant on external will, or on the inevitable conflict that arises between two contradictory forces, but is confined to internal motions,[756] ultimately built upon a foundation of harmonious interaction between *yin* and *yang*.

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[753] Birrell's translation. See: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 32.
[754] Jung Jaeseo 'Myths of Giant Corpse Transformation' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 109.
[755] Birrell's translation.
[756] See: Jung Jaeseo 'Myths of Giant Corpse Transformation' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 109.

While the conflict of the Indo-European accounts appears to have been eliminated, the text shares certain similarities with the creative primal forces of Hesiod. In his writings, Hesiod presents the interaction of the gendered primeval forces in their anthropomorphic states, describing the females as giving birth to the various features of the earth while her male counterpart acts somewhat as a divine fertilizer. In this tradition, both entities are required to participate in equal measure for the creation and transformation of matter.[757] Their interaction is discussed in terms of human reproduction, acting out of mutual 'love' through Eros, temporarily free of the conflict that arose with their children's desire for power.

The lack of conflict in the earliest stages of the Greek cosmogony brings into question the perceived individuality of the Chinese creation myths, for the latter shares in the basic premises but avoids the topic of succession by refusing the personification of *yin* and *yang* and omitting the production of children. An additional connection can be made through the androgynous state out of which they emerged. In Pangu's myth, the egg (the one) must be split in order to effect change and begin the creation process. The forces of *yin* and *yang* must be polarised before they can begin to transform previously inert matter.[758] In *Symposium*, Plato postulated that 'the original nature [of things] was by no means the same as it is now,'[759] explaining that in the beginning there was an androgynous figure, 'globular in shape [… symbolic of] unity in form no less than name, composed of both sexes and sharing equally in male and female.'[760] In much the same way as Pangu's egg was the representation of completeness and unity; Plato's androgynous figure was superior to the sundered figures it became when it was split in half, thereby mirroring the Chinese conception that the original unity was lost in its transformation into the myriad things.

Prior to the separation of the heavens and the earth in the *Sanwu liji* lies a description of the transformations Pangu underwent before the separation of the heavens and the earth could begin. It states that: 一日九變，神於天，聖於地. (In one day [he underwent] nine changes, [becoming] more divine than Heaven and more sage-like than

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[757] Hesiod (1988) *Theogony and Works and Days*, pp. 6-9.
[758] See: Yu, David C. (1981) 'The Creation Myth,' *PEW* 31 (4), p. 488.
[759] Plato (1925) *Symposium*, trans. by Harold N. Fowler, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.; William Heinemann, London, ll. 189-90.
[760] Ibid. Significantly though, the Greek version of the primal 'one' breaks away from the Chinese version in that their sundering was the result of a schemes assault from the heavens and a punishment for their actions.

Earth).[761] Similarly to the *Tianwen*, the writer adheres to the use of the magic number nine, its significance laying in the text's final lines: 後乃有三皇，數起於一，立於三，成於五，盛於七，處於九，故天去地九萬里. ('Afterwards, there were the Three Sovereign Divinities. Numbers began with one, were established with three, perfected by five, multiplied with seven and fixed with nine. This is why Heaven is Ninety Thousand leagues from earth').[762] The progression from one to three through to nine was a Daoist cosmological principle that had a significant influence on certain factions of Confucianism.[763] It was a template through which one was able to describe, categorise and understand the world, how it was formed and how it worked.

The achievement of perfection in the state of five is indicative of its replacement of nine as the magic number, and yet its retention of the significance of the latter number served as validation of Pangu's role in creation. His growth and transformation was guided by a perfect number, which allowed for the presentation of morality within his characteristics. The 'one' from which he was birthed represented the most ideal form of existence, and yet the final condition of Pangu, guided by this magic number, produced a seemingly perfect amalgamation of opposites without the limitations of either. This serves to reinforce the humanistic sensibilities of the text, for as the first human Pangu is symbolic of the entire human race, and in his example lies the premise that there is no figure superior to humanity. In the place of a supernatural pantheon, humanity is depicted as the outworkers of fate, being both the source and sustainers of the balance between the heavens and the earth through Pangu as the central pillar, and continued through the ritual sacrifices by the early kings.

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[761] Own translation.

[762] Birrell's translation.

[763] Yu, David C. (1981) 'The Creation Myth,' *PEW* 31 (4), p. 480. This association with the magic number was also appropriated in the Laozi myth after his deification in the second century C.E., His connection to the number nine enabled him to maintain harmony in both the divine and mortal realms Livia Kohn 'The Lao-tzu myth,' in Kohn, Livia and Lafargue, Michael (1998) *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching*, State University of New York Press, Albany, p. 48. It must be noted that while it became firmly established during the second century C.E., Laozi's transition from human to divine occurred over several centuries, beginning after the fall of the Han dynasty (Livia Kohn 'The Lao-tzu myth,' p. 46; and Puett, Michael (2010) 'Becoming Laozi: Cultivating and Visualizing Spirits in Early-Medieval China,' *AMTS* 23 (1 The Birth of Early-Medieval China Studies), p. 228). At this time he became the embodiment of the *Dao* and was thus representative of cosmic harmony. The *Dao* was said to guide human affairs and this became essential to Laozi's spiritual qualities as he is said to have returned to human form throughout history to correct the course of events, however, it was first and foremost seen as the force that set the course for the universe. See: Jia, Jinhua (2009) 'Religious Origins of the Terms Dao and De and Their Significance in the Laozi,' *JRASTS* 19 (4) p. 475; and Needham, Joseph (1954) *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 3, *Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 36-7.

The use of the number nine fortifies Pangu's place in the creation story, but it has also encouraged scholars to disregard him as a late and therefore irrelevant intrusion into the Chinese cosmogony. Their doubt is grounded in the eleventh question of the *Tianwen* and its query on the nine levels of heaven, stating that if Pangu's myth were contemporary with the *Tianwen*, there would be no need for such a question as the answer would be known. However, it is also claimed that the two texts are thematically and structurally consistent, implying that both writers sought to understand the natural development of the universe; the first simply asking a question in order to understand the process, and the second offering a witness to it.[764] Ultimately, this narrative is entirely etiological in nature, seeking to explain the physical nature of the world, how *yin* and *yang* assumed their current forms, and how humanity became positioned as the mediators between them.

7.3.2 THE DYING GOD

The second major version of Pangu's myth was originally located in the now lost third century C.E. text *Wuyun linianji* and appears to be a classic example of the archetype of corpse transformation. This narrative is not as dominant as the first, but thematically follows the creation of the universe with the creation of the myriad things on the earth through the sacrifice of blood and flesh.[765] The dying god myth is often featured concurrently with the creation conflict, one of the most prominent examples of this being the goddess Tiamat in the *Enuma Elish*. However, while the evidence of primal battle is predominantly absent in Chinese creation mythology, this account displays the most marked movement away from it.

The earliest known versions of this story in China are visible in the account of Hundun's death at the hands of his friends, although even in this myth his 'murder' was inadvertent. By the time that the archetype was adapted into the Pangu myth, the evidence of manslaughter had been erased and replaced with the concept of a natural death.[766] The continuity between the two texts suggests that with the solidification of the elements, the universe has reached its final state, Pangu's primary function has been

[764] Wu Xiaodong, 'Pangu and the Origin of the Universe' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 172.
[765] Derk Bodde 'Myths of Ancient China' in: Kramer, Samuel Noah (1961) *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, Double Day, New York, p. 383.
[766] Jung Jaeseo 'Myths of Giant Corpse Transformation' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 108.

achieved, and his secondary objective can only be achieved through his death, thereby providing new materials to be transformed. The opening line of the passage sets the tone for what follows: 首生盤古垂死化身 (When the first-born Pangu [was] approaching death, his body transformed).[767] Read in this neutral tone, the line simply outlines the premise of the narrative; that at the time of his death, Pangu's body became the natural features of the world. However, the line has been translated in both the active and passive voices, as shown by Kósa and Birrell respectively, altering the underlying meaning of the text.

Kósa's rendition that 'he transformed his body'[768] places Pangu in a state of willful action, suggesting that he played the role of an active participant in the creation process. This translation may have been influenced by his later recognition in certain cults as a creator deity, or it may have also been the result of the early Sinologists acceptance of his narrative as the only acceptable creation myth. On the other side, Birrell translated the phrase passively, 'his body was transformed,'[769] which seems to align more closely with the Daoist sensibilities of the writer. The use of the passive voice emphasises the natural progression of the transformation, evoking imagery of a human body decaying and becoming building blocks for something new. Furthermore, it distances Pangu from the role he adopted later in his tradition, and instead seems to borrow concepts from the *Huainanzi* and *Tianwen* in that his transformation is guided by the laws of nature as dictated by the *Dao*.

Behind his transformation lies the common ancient concept that the human body was a microcosm of the universe.[770] Accordingly, there is a sense of continuity between the 'creator' and the created, the correlation between them providing explanation for the form and function of each element. The first example of this is found in the next lines of the text: 氣成風雲，聲爲雷霆，左眼爲日，右眼爲月 ('His breath became the winds and clouds; his voice became peals of thunder. His left eye became the sun; his right eye became the moon').[771] Each transformation corresponds thematically and functionally to their previous incarnation, just as a breath can move the air to make wind, and the

[767] This passage was preserved in Ma Su's Yishi 1.2a, Chinese version quoted from: Kósa, Gábor (2009) 'Pangu's Birth and Death,' *OA* 77, appendix 1, p. 180. Own translation.
[768] Kósa, Gábor (2009) 'Pangu's Birth and Death,' *OA* 77, appendix 1, p. 180.
[769] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 33.
[770] Simkin, Ronald A. (2014) 'The Embodied World: Creation Metaphors in the Ancient Near East,' *BTB* 44 (1), pp. 40-53.
[771] Birrell's translation.

voice rumbles to create a sound. The identification of the sun and moon as being the eyes of a deity is common, whether it be through the personification of the solar and lunar gods, or in the repurposing of their eyes upon their death.[772] In Chinese thought, the roundness of the human head corresponded to the shape of the heavens; and as such his facial features became the elements of the sky and heavens; with his eyes becoming the two great lights in the sky, whilst the innumerable hairs on his head, as it can be seen in the following lines, became the innumerable stars in the sky.

The remainder of the narrative is a systematic account of the transformation of the external and internal features of the microcosm of Pangu becoming the macrocosm of the world: 四肢五體爲四極五嶽，血液爲江河，筋脈爲地里，肌肉爲田土，發爲星辰，皮膚爲草木，齒骨爲金石，精髓爲珠玉，汗流爲雨澤 ('His four limbs and five extremities became the four cardinal points and the five peaks. His blood and semen became the water and rivers. His muscles and veins became the earth's arteries; his flesh became fields and land. His hair and beard became plants and trees. His teeth and bones became metal and rock; his vital marrow became pearls and jade. His sweat and bodily fluids became streaming rain').[773] Again, just as the features of his round head matched the features of the heavens, so to did the features of his body match those of the earth.

This desire to understand the universe through the faculty of the human body is a commonly used concept in ancient China. For example, in Daoist thought the human body was conceived as correlating to the state or country.[774] The *Zhuangzi* posited that the heavens and mankind were one and the same, differentiated only by their scale, through the phrase *Tianren heyi* 天人合一, translated as the 'oneness of heaven and

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[772] For example, the eyes of the Egyptian god Horus were seen as representations of the sun and the moon, although, the order is reversed, as Horus right eye is the sun and his left eye, the moon. (Littleton, C. Scott (2002) *Mythology*, p. 39). Other traditions posit that the victor of the primal battle plucked out the eyes of his slain enemy, and threw them into the sky to become the sun and moon (Seindenberg, A. (1983) 'The Separation of Sky and Earth at Creation (III),' *Folklore* 94 (2), pp. 192-200).

[773] Birrell's translation.

[774] Schipper, Kristofer (1978) 'The Taoist Body,' *HR* 17 (3/4 Current Perspectives in the Study of Chinese Religions), p. 355. See also: Kohn, Livia (1996) 'The Looks of Laozi,' *AFS* 55 (2), pp. 193-236, which discusses the physical description of Laozi after his deification and embodiment with the *Dao*. Kohn identifies features that he has absorbed from culture heroes such as Fuxi in becoming the representative of the perfect ruler and thus the perfect state. Finally, for further research on the identity of the deified Laozi, see: Seidel, Anna K. (1969-70) 'The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism: Lao-tzu and Li Hung,' *HR* 9 (2/3), pp. 216-247.

humanity.'[775] Accordingly, the function of each bodily feature is figuratively matched to its worldly counterpart; for instance, it is possible to imagine the human body, arms and legs splayed, pointing towards the cardinal points like a compass whilst the bumps and curves of the body dictate the geography of the land. Blood is both figuratively and literally compared to the waters and rivers carried across the earth by arterial rivers, for nature cannot grow and flourish without water just as life cannot be sustained without blood. The soil is associated with human muscle, and the grass covers it like a flexible skin, for just as the human muscle can be worked to change its shape, the shape of the land can be worked to suit new purposes. Finally, teeth and bones are structural supports of the body, and become that which supports the body of civilisation; acting as currency and building blocks, just as the marrow inside the bones becomes the most precious of gems.

In *Huainanzi* chapter 7, it stated that humanity was formed from the pure vapour, and was distinguished from the animals and insects by their production from the cloudy vapour. This expanded upon the premise of chapter 3 which did not offer any distinction within the ten thousand things of nature in order to present a high-view of humanity. Being uncreated by the gods, mankind was not formed to serve them. They were not designed to be slaves, nor in the cases of the *Huainanzi* or the Pangu myths were they made in the image of a god. Instead, much in the same way as the Hebrew tradition, but without divine appointment, they were created to be stewards over creation, maintaining the balance of the universe as one of the Three Sovereigns.

At first glance, the *Wuyun linianji* text seems to break away from a high-view of humanity in its final lines: 身之諸蟲，因風所感，化爲黎甿 ('All the mites on his body were touched by the wind and were turned into the black haired people').[776] Pangu's second myth deviates from the earlier Daoist notion of man's composition of the highest elements, recounting instead their transformation from the parasitic entities upon his body.[777] It is possible to recognise in this alteration the changing philosophical views on humanity's inherent morality. By the time this account was penned, a more negative mindset had taken root, and humanity was no longer considered to be cut from the same cloth as their ancestors. They were more capable of harm than good, much in the same

[775] Chen, Hui-Hung (2007) 'The Human Body as a Universe: Understanding Heaven by Visualization and Sensibility in Jesuit Cartography in China,' *CHR* 93 (3), pp. 546-7.
[776] Birrell's translation.
[777] Jung Jaeseo 'Myths of Giant Corpse Transformation' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 104.

way that a parasite bites its host to steal its life force, the actions of humanity painted them in similar fashion in connection with the earth itself.

There is an undeniable likeness in this interpretation to the ancient Near Eastern myths regarding the placement of humanity in the universal hierarchy, and while this low-view would coincide with the dominant concept throughout the ancient world, there exists an alternative observation in Pangu's tale. For example, if one takes into account the above presentation of his body as the microcosm of the universe, it was noted that Pangu's muscles constituted the land, and his skin the covering over it. Accordingly, that which crawled over his skin became that which walks on the surface of the earth. Under this hypothesis, the writer simply maintains the textual correlation between the human body and the heavens, allocating the former to their natural geographic position as that which resides upon the earth. If this is the case, the account agrees with the spontaneous creation process and aligns with the Daoist sensibilities of the earlier myths.

The creation myths of China have more often been employed for political justification that for religious significance. Pangu epitomises the perfection of the natural cycles through his transformation. He is not vanquished so that the forces of chaos can be overcome, rather, the balance of *yin* and *yang* is intrinsic to their natures and Pangu is able to succumb peacefully to death in his old age. The microcosm of his body is used to reinforce the notion that everything is the cosmos has its determined place and purpose, and that the universe demands adherence to these designations in order to promote its continued equilibrium.

7.4 THE LONELY SURVIVOR

The myth of Nüwa is the first to truly break away from the Daoist model of natural creation that has dominated the majority of Chinese creation myths. Her stories do not account for the creation of the world, or even the production of all life upon it, but is solely restricted to the formation of mankind. Her figure has been attached to several narratives, and her place and role within the Chinese pantheon is different in each. These are often contradictory; for in one myth she is presented as a divine creative figure, whereas in another she has become mortal and placed in submission to a husband in order to uphold Confucian standards of interaction between the genders. In addition to this, she is also found in stories of recreation, being depicted as one who

repaired the broken sky after the flood, and thus is associated with the restoration of order. Amongst all of the variations of the Chinese creation myths, hers is the first to detail a deliberate and separate fashioning of mankind.

The persistence of a female deity through the euhemerisation of the Chinese mythological tradition in an increasingly patriarchal society is no small feat. It is believed that many divine female figures were masculinised as their divinity was stripped and their associated mythology historicised in accordance to contemporary requirements. Despite this, her survival is suggestive of an ancient matriarchal presence in the earliest years of Chinese myth and a more balanced dualism between the masculine and feminine forces that was not preserved in extant sources.[778] The loss of the female deity is often attributed to the rise of Confucianism, and its persistence credited to the Daoist philosophies, which upheld above all the harmony of both *yin* and *yang* and the supremacy of neither.[779] On the other hand, it has been pointed out that her femininity was not definitively declared until the Han era when her myth became entwined with that of Fuxi,[780] implying that she may never have existed as a matriarchal presence in China's ancient past.

Like Pangu, Nüwa is a cultural heroine and is thought to be one of the most significant ancient goddesses in the Chinese pantheon.[781] Her role as the creator of mankind predates the natural transformation process espoused by the Pangu myth, although it postdates the *Huainanzi*. This myth was recorded in the *Fengsu tongi* and was unique in its presentation of humanity being fashioned through the wilful desire of the gods, and shares greater similarities with certain ancient Near Eastern traditions. However, while the archetype has been preserved in some ethnic oral traditions, its presence in literature is arguably singular.[782] The eventual Confucian subjugation of the female

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[778] Cheng, Christina Miu Bing (2004) 'Matriarchy at the Edge: The Mythic Cult of Nu Wa 女娲 in Macau,' *Paper Presented at the 17th Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, August 8-15,* Hong Kong. Many female primal deities share a vital function in the initial moments of the creation period, although, while their presence is fundamental, they are often 'moved to the background or seem to have disappeared in later versions.' This causes their personas and characteristics to become so diluted that it is difficult to establish their original nature. (Mineke Schipper 'Humanity's Origin' in Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 20).
[779] Paper, Jordan (1990) 'The Persistence of Female Deities in Patriarchal China,' *JFSR* 6 (1), pp. 25-40.
[780] Derk Bodde 'Myths of Ancient China' in: Kramer, Samuel Noah (1961) *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, Double Day, New York, p. 386.
[781] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 170.
[782] See, for example, part IV: Anthology of Creation and Origin Myths in *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, which has compiled a collection of creation myths from minority cultures. Schipper, Mineke; Ye, Shuxian; Yin, Hubin (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths: Cross-cultural Explorations in Oral and Written Traditions*, Leiden, Boston, pp. 277-324.

gender during the Han era resulted in the dilution of Nüwa's powers, and their redistribution between her and her brother as the first human pair.[783] The earliest known version of the primal couple was recorded in the *Duyi zhi* and effectively eliminated the divine intention implied within the earlier myth.

There are many variations of the legend of the first, incestuous marriage still being transmitted today. However, while it has been situated within prehistory, the mytheme is more commonly tied to the repopulation efforts after the flood. This story effectively transitions Nüwa from creator to created, and features across its variations both sexual reproduction and fashioning in clay to account for the formation of mankind. Nüwa's character, divinity and power underwent considerable alterations throughout the passage of time, facets of which can be illuminated through fragments of her myths. Due to these modifications, it is argued that she does not truly suit a discussion on creation, having been excluded as she has from participation in the creation of the universe as a whole and acting as nothing more than a surrogate mother of humanity.[784] She is consistently pictured as divorced from the creation of the world, and is introduced after the settling of *yin* and *yang* into the heavens and the earth. Furthermore, nowhere is she painted as a personification of yin, which would make her comparable with figures such as Tiamat. Instead, she appears to be a remnant of the ancient Chinese mythological tradition whose sole purpose is to account for the entrance of humanity onto history's stage.

Nüwa's name fleetingly appeared in early Chinese literature, located in both the *Shanhaijing* 山海经 (*Classic of Mountains and Seas*) and the *Tianwen*, the first of which associates her with the powers of transformation, and the second identifies her as a divine empress. The *Shanhaijing* is a highly contested composition, with no general consensus regarding its authorship, its purpose or its origin.[785] It is comprised of 18 chapters whose topics range from geography to medicine, history to witchcraft.

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[783] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 33-4. A later Tang dynasty account demoted her from her deified status and pictured her as sitting in service to Tian. This acted as a nullification of her own power, and placed her in a more socially acceptable position.

[784] See: Derk Bodde 'Myths of Ancient China' in: Kramer, Samuel Noah (1961) *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, Double Day, New York, p. 389; and Wang, Jing (1992) *The Story of the Stone: Intertextuality, Ancient Chinese Stone Lore, and the Stone Symbolism in Dream of Red Chamber*, Duke University Press, Durham & London, p. 36.

[785] However, most now generally accept that it was written at some point between the fourth and second centuries B.C.E.

However, its inclusion of both partial and occasionally complete mythic narratives has cemented its place as an important source of Chinese mythology.[786]

The lack of mythopoeia and euhemerisation that categorised the later mythic traditions has led to suggestions that the text belonged to an 'age of belief' when the ancient legends still held a measure of sanctity.[787] The book's structure is consistent with Eliade's theory of centrality; the gods and goddesses within are geographically limited and their importance to the Chinese pantheon is determined by the location of their seat of power. This is visible through the chapter divisions; for example, chapters 1-5 concern the central region and are saturated by a pervasive sense of order and harmony. This feeling is lost in chapters 6-18 as the attention turns towards the outlying regions, ultimately implying that the deities reigning in these areas were perhaps smaller, less important territorial gods.[788] The composition of the book itself is thought to span several centuries, although the appearance of Nüwa stems from the first century C.E.

Nüwa appears in chapter 16 in a list of deities who reside beyond the northwest seas. Here, she takes the role of a dying god out of whom ten other gods spring forth: 有神十人，名曰女媧之腸，化為神，處栗廣之野。橫道而處. (Nüwa's intestines transformed into ten gods of the same name, they reside in the broad Chestnut wilderness across which they journeyed and settled).[789] Procreation in the *Shanhaijing* was attributed to male gods through the process of parthenogenesis, ultimately making Nüwa's function unique.[790] In these mythic types, creative power is withdrawn from the female and can

[786] Yang Lihui & An Deming 'The World of Chinese Mythology' in: Schipper, Mineke et al. (2011) *China's Creation and Origin Myths*, p. 28. When the *Shanhaijing* first came to the attention of scholars it was originally classified as a work on omens and categorised under the topics of geomancy and physiognomy. During the first millennium C.E., the focus of academic attention turned towards its geographical knowledge although it wasn't until after the tenth century that it 'became prized as a cosmological on the Five Agents' before finally being reclassified as a work of fiction (Birrell, Anne (1999) *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, Penguin Books, London, p. xiii).
[787] Birrell, Anne (1994) 'Studies on Chinese Myth Since 1970: Part 1,' *HR* 33 (4), p. 387.
[788] Birrell, Anne (1999) *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, Penguin Books, London, p. xxix.
[789] Own translation. References to the Chinese version of the *Shanhaijing* 16.3 are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work http://ctext.org/shan-hai-jing/da-huang-xi-jing, the above translation has been rearranged for readability in the target language, here is a more faithful rendition: 'There were ten gods, whose name was the Intestines of Nüwa. [Nüwa's intestines] transformed into [these] gods, they live in the expansive Chestnut wilderness across which they journeyed and settled (own translation).
[790] Birrell, Anne (1999) *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, Penguin Books, London, p. xxiv.

be utilised in the fortification of patriarchal custom,[791] as is evident in the male oriented Pangu myth.

In this short passage, Nüwa is depicted as a localised minor deity far removed from the authority of the centre. Unlike her other creative appearances in which she gives birth to mankind through traditional methods, the transformation of a part of her body (presumably at the time of her death) into ten new gods bears resemblance to the myth of Pangu. There is no element of personal desire in her chance, nor is she presented as capable of guiding it, but rather it echoes the notion that divine material cannot be wasted and must engender something new.[792] The method of her creative act here reinforces the ongoing process of regeneration of one thing into another.[793] The phrase's focus is ultimately concerned with the gods that replace her as opposed to her creative capacity; however, it remains a singular example of female parthenogenesis in Chinese mythology that has been effectively eradicated in later myths.

The earliest known reference to Nüwa is located in the *Tianwen*, although it seems to have no visible connection to her identity as a creator. It is unknown exactly what form of her myth existed at the time of the production of the *Chuci*, but it is clear that she was part of the popular tradition. Predating the myth of Pangu by approximately six centuries, the question does not seek to establish her function, but her position in the pantheon. The writer asks: 女媧有體孰制匠之，舜服厥弟終然為害. ('How was Nü Kua's [Nüwa's] body made? How did she ascend when she rose on high and became empress?')[794] Through his question, the scholar seeks to determine her divine classification, as well as her claim to authority and her physical appearance.[795]

Nüwa, alongside Fuxi and Shennong 神农, was a member of the Three Sovereigns who reigned before the time of the model emperors. To each of these figures was attributed

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[791] For a discussion of parthenogenesis, see Mary Carroll Smith's article in which she examines the term in various Indo-European myths. Smith, Mary Carroll (1985) 'Epic Parthenogenesis,' *JSAL* 20 (1: Part I: Essays on the Mahabharata), pp. 79-92.

[792] See, for example, the myth of Erichthonius who was autochthonuous. He was born when Hephaestus attempted to copulate with Athena but failed, his semen then fell to the ground, but as divine material, transformed into Erichthonius. (Lenardon, R. J. & Morford, M. P. O. (2007) *Classical Mythology* 8th ed., p. 593).

[793] See: Plaks, Andrew H. (1976) *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 30 and Girardot, Norman J. (1983) *Myth and Meaning*, p. 204.

[794] References to the Chinese version of *Tianwen* 13 from the *Chuci* are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/chu-ci/tian-wen. English translation is Birrell's: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 35.

[795] Her form is often described as serpentine with a human head. The implications of this will be discussed in tandem to her relationship with Fuxi who shares her physical form.

the development of certain tools of civilisation, without which Chinese culture could not have progressed. This implies that in her earliest manifestations, Nüwa was not only an ancient figure in the pantheon, but also a central one.[796] Disregarding the lack of contextual knowledge about her sphere of influence, her existence as an archaic mythic character by the fourth century B.C.E. seems apparent. Her deeply rooted presence in the Chinese psyche at the time when the *Tianwen* was defining its ideas of creation, makes it a reasonable assumption that she was native to China, or if this was not the case, that she was introduced during an early period.

It is noteworthy that Nüwa's separation from the creation of the cosmogony was already evident when the *Tianwen* was composed. Her association with the Three Sovereigns alongside her later coupling with Fuxi tempts the scholar to conceive of their relationship as coinciding with the male and female elements of heaven and earth, and thereby correlate them to the primal forces at the beginning of time. However, this would belie the writer's question of how her body was made. The weight of later additions to her mythological tradition has led to the supposition that the author of the *Tianwen* must have been aware of her status as a creative deity,[797] which is what led him to ask how the creator of mankind first came to be in order that she could in fact perform this task.

Andrew Plaks describes the writer's question 'as an occurrence of the perennial chicken-or-egg-riddle.'[798] The quest to determine who fashioned mankind begs the similar question as to who formed the fashioner, leading all the way back to the moment of creation in the first paragraphs of the *Tianwen* and culminating in a cyclical search for the catalyst. As such, the question could be classified as sarcastic rhetoric, expressing skepticism in the face of an uncreated creator. The uncertainty and confusion caused by these two questions may ultimately be the result of intense familiarity with the subject, which would prevent the desire to record the myth in its entirety, or the more likely theory that it was perhaps itself the product of an already half-forgotten myth. If the scholar was recording a fraction of a fragmented narrative, it becomes nearly impossible to determine the intention behind his question; however, it lends proof to the antiquity of her origin.

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[796] Girardot, Norman J. (1983) *Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism*, p. 138.
[797] Lewis, Mark Edward (2006) *The Flood Myths of Early China*, State University of New York, Albany, p. 120.
[798] Plaks, Andrew H. (1976) *Archetype and Allegory in the Dream of the Red Chamber*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 30.

7.4.1 THE ARTIST

Nüwa's creative properties are firmly entrenched in her ability to transform matter, both internally and externally. However, the passage in the *Fengsu tongyi* breaks away from the established passive tradition and introduces the element of divine will. Unlike the *Shanhaijing* in which new life was brought about by her presumed death, she is here depicted as an artist that works clay into the form of humanity. The text is situated after the creation of the world and the myriad things, but has removed mankind from the natural process of creation and asserts their intentional design.[799] The *Fengsu tongyi* was an encyclopaedically styled work from the late Han era and contains local customs and legends from the Han dynasty. As such, it is considered to be a key source of values of the contemporary elite.[800] The text was originally believed to have consisted of 23 chapters; however only 10 have survived to the present,[801] leaving fragments of its lost chapters to be preserved as quotations in other works.

In comparison to the creation passages in the *Huainanzi* and the *Tianwen*, the *Fengsu tongyi* was a comparatively late contribution, but played a considerable role in the establishment of *Nüwa* as a creative figure.[802] It was written by a scholar named Ying Shao 應劭 of the Eastern Han dynasty in the third century C.E. The text was predominantly Confucian in nature, but offered harsh criticism of certain mainstream practices under the influence that Confucius' teachings had been degraded and divorced from their true intent by contemporary philosophers. Ying was well versed in the classical tradition and compared modern norms to ancient ideals, writing from the perspective that the government had failed to uphold traditional values.[803] This allowed

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[799] For a discussion on the significance of spontaneous generation and divinely guided transformation see: Doeringer, Franklin N. (1982) 'The Gate in the Circle: A Paradigmatic Symbol in Early Chinese Cosmology,' *PEW* 32 (3), pp. 315-322 and Neville, Robert (1985) 'Review: From Légumes à la Grecque to Bouillabaisse in Early Taoism: A Review of N. J. Girardot "Myth and Meaning in Early Taoism: The Them of Chaos (Hun-tun)",' *PEW* 35 (4), p. 441.

[800] Nylan, Michael (1996) 'Confucian Piety and Individualism in Han China,' *JAOS* 116 (1), p. 2.

[801] Mathieu, Rémi (1989) *Anthologie des myths et legends de la Chine ancienne*, p. 241. The exact number of chapters is unknown, Mathieu alludes to a total of twenty three, while others, such as Nylan, suggest that there may have been thirty one (Nylan, Michael (1996) 'Confucian Piety,' *JAOS* 116 (1), p. 2).

[802] Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority*, p. 202.

[803] See: Nylan, Michael (1996) 'Confucian Piety,' *JAOS* 116 (1), pp. 15-17 and Nylan, Michael (1997) 'Han Classicists Writing in Dialogue about Their Own Tradition,' *PEW* 47 (2), pp. 133-55. To demonstrate this notion, Nylan utilises various examples from the text in tandem with known Han practices, such as the alteration to the concept of filial piety, which originally reserved for a blood related parent (the father), was becoming a notion reserved for the state and local administrator, as well as in mourning practices in an attempt to increase patronage as opposed to displaying genuine sorrow. This revealed, as Ying perceived it, that a desire for power and not purity of nature was the leading motivation for the common man.

him to comment on popular belief and demonstrate the fallaciousness of its claims when by contrasting them to the pure ancient concepts.

The chapter that contained the legend of Nüwa as the fashioner of mankind was unfortunately one of those that was lost to the passage of time. Instead, her myth survived through quotations in two later works whose meanings are analogous despite minor textual variations.[804] The narrative was situated in a period of divine inhabitance: 天地開闢，未有人民 ('when Heaven and Earth had opened forth, but before there were human beings'),[805] and bears a close resemblance to other ancient accounts that tell of the formation of mankind from an earthen substance. Placing her in this context distances Nüwa from the creative event and thus the authority that would accompany her involvement. However, it is probable that this was influenced by the Confucian focus on the human realm as opposed to what came before it.

Nüwa's creative role in this text is supplementary; she is not depicted as giving birth to humanity as she did to the ten gods in the *Shanhaijing*, rather, her transformative powers have been externalised. It is the earth that must supply her with materials, and thus it is also the earth that is posited as the progenitor of mankind, with Nüwa acting as a catalyst and a guide for the process.[806] The context of the narrative allows for the spontaneous generation of the universe, however, Nüwa's presence interrupts its progression to highlight the significance of man. Ultimately, the deliberate willfulness of her actions carries a faint hint of subversion, as her actions forces one element into the shape of another, thereby diverting it from its original function.

The passage is introduced by the phrase: *su shuo* 俗說 (it is commonly said), a typically formulaic phrase used to open a well known narrative. This format was often followed with a commentary, noting the writer's objections to popular opinion or to the content of the legend itself. It is similarly likely that the present text was accompanied by such remarks in its original format, although the loss of the chapter does not permit the scholar to determine the writer's judgment on the myth.[807] Following the establishment of the temporal context, the narrative begins to outline Nüwa's actions: 女媧摶黃土為人

[804] Lewis, Mark Edward (2006) *The Flood Myths of Early China*, see footnote 49 on p. 197.
[805] Plaks' interpretation: Plaks, Andrew H. (1976) *Archetype and Allegory*, p. 29. The Chinese version chosen to quote from in this section is supplied from: Ying, Shao 應劭 (1980) *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義, Renmin Chubanshe 人民出版社, Tianjin, p. 449.
[806] Wang, Jing (1992) *The Story of the Stone*, p. 46.
[807] Nylan, Michael (1997) 'Han Classicists,' *PEW* 47 (2), p. 138.

(Nüwa moulded yellow soil with her hands to create mankind).[808] The verb used here, *tuan* 摶, carries the imagery of a potter's careful and meticulous effort in the shaping of their creation.[809] Through the transference of this concept onto Nüwa's actions, it has been postulated that she desired to provide enrichment to the world through her creation,[810] although the sense of goodwill in her actions attached itself to the myth more recently.

This raises certain questions about Nüwa's purpose for fashioning humanity from the clay, as well as the intention behind it. Firstly, despite assertions to the contrary based on the independence of her activity, her physical appearance indicates that she was not creating them in her own image.[811] As a non-anthropomorphised figure, she is not seen as one seeking to glorify herself through their creation, especially as the text appears to be more concerned with the results of her work rather than her specific role in their creation. Secondly, later developments of the legend incorporate Nüwa's motherly attachment to mankind, although, like her goodwill toward humanity, it is unknown whether this was an original feature or added to the legend during its transmission history. Her actions have otherwise been interpreted as an exercise in power, an act of desperation fuelled by loneliness, or the creation of humanity as servants to the heavens, thus aligning with the concept of mankind as the mediators between heaven and earth; made by a heavenly being out of the earth.

While her intention remains unknown, she initially took great care in her task, presumably fashioning each person individually up until her strength failed: 劇務力不暇供，乃引繩絙泥中，舉以為人 (So severe was this matter, she had no more strength to offer it. Therefore she pulled a cord through the mud and raised it up so that it could become men).[812] Alternatively, Rémi Mathieu offers a slightly different translation: 'Elle y consacra toute son énergie et accomplit sa tâche sans répit. Puis, elle tira une corde du milieu de la boue et l'en souleva afin de former d'autres hommes.'[813] Each of these

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808 Own translation.
809 This metaphor is not unknown in the ancient world. For example, *Isaiah* 64:8 states 'we are the clay, You [God] are the potter; we are all the work of your hand,' which is a sentiment often connected to the Hebrew God's love for humanity.
810 Cheng, Christina Miu Bing (2004) 'Matriarchy at the Edge,' *Paper Presented at the 17th Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, August 8-15*.
811 Plaks, Andrew H. (1976) *Archetype and Allegory*, p. 30.
812 Own translation.
813 Mathieu, Rémi (1989) *Anthologie des myths et legends de la Chine ancienne*, p. 63.

translations focus upon a different aspect of the situation, the first on the magnitude of the task, and the second on Nüwa's capacity to complete it.

Divine exhaustion was a common theme in creation mythology. For example, a Mesopotamian narrative depicted the gods as being tired of their work, eventually creating humanity as the solution to their problem. According to this story, 'Enki instructs his mother Nammu, the primeval ocean, to provide clay, and Ninmah-Ninhursag the earth-goddess (who is also thereby the mother-goddess) to impose on the clay the shape of the gods.'[814] In a similar fashion to Ninmah-Ninhursag, Nüwa is tasked with fashioning mankind, but unlike her ancient Near Eastern counterpart, she does not possess the strength or power to complete her objective. This is suggestive of the limitations of her divine influence, implying that she too might be acting under the instruction of a higher god than her own personal willpower.

It must be noted here that the underlying premise of the myth is not so much concerned with the actual creation of mankind, but the lack of equality amongst them. The final lines of the myth offer an explanation for the discrepancy in Nüwa's creative process: 故富貴者，黃土人也，貧賤凡庸者，人也. (For this reason, the rich and noble were those formed from the yellow earth, and the poor and lowly, the ordinary people, were those formed from the mud).[815] As a result of her exhaustion, Nüwa is presented as forming two distinct types of men; some through careful moulding, and the rest by a cord dragged haphazardly through the mud. This feature serves to justify the contemporary social hierarchy, conveying a sense of predestination that simultaneously reinforces the fixed nature of the system whilst discouraging rebellion against it.

The use of yellow clay in the myth connects it to the yellow river, which was the cradle of Chinese culture and civilisation, and ultimately gave it the weight of centrality.[816] There is an element of literal observation in the text's specification of colour and its etiological function or reinforcing the caste system. For example, the elite are noble and wealthy because they were carefully moulded from the finest of material, whereas the ordinary people were created with little thought from the commonest of resources. This differentiation corresponds to the general observation of economic status; the labourer that works in the field will become tanned and his darker skin serves as an outward

[814] Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth*, p. 105.
[815] Own translation.
[816] Cheng, Christina Miu Bing (2004) 'Matriarchy at the Edge,' *Paper Presented at the 17th Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, August 8-15*.

expression of his lowly status. On the other hand, the lighter, yellow-toned skin becomes the privilege of the wealthy that retain the luxury of forgoing manual labour.

In addition to this, there is a possible thematic correlation between this presentation of the creation of humanity and that supplied in the *Wuyun linianji*. As was noted, it declared that mankind originated from the parasites on Pangu's body: 化爲黎甿 ([the parasites] transformed and became the common people),[817] which Birrell translates as 'the black haired people' based on the use of the term *li* 黎 (black).'[818] It is from this word that the modern term *limin* 黎民 (common people) is derived, ultimately supporting its thematic link with the myth of Nüwa and her creation of the majority of humanity from the mud, as well as the implication that the latter accounts for the creation of the social hierarchy rather than the whole of humanity.

By this stage in her development, Nüwa no longer appears to be the empress on high as in the *Tianwen*. However, her use of the yellow clay has also linked her symbolically to the Yellow Emperor as well as Hundun through their traditional association with the colour. Scholars under the Han dynasty sought to integrate the Yellow Emperor into the Daoist conception of Hundun and his cosmogonic narrative. They achieved this through their shared connection to the 'centre,' which ultimately led to the former's eventual replacement of the latter as the creative agent in the chaos. Through the suggested link between Nüwa and these figures, she has been inserted into the traditional Daoist progression from one to two, two to three, and three to the many things, by taking the third position to complete the process with the creation of humanity.[819]

Potential evidence of this connection has been observed in *Huainanzi* chapter 17 in the form of an aphorism associating Nüwa with both the Yellow emperor and her powers of transformation. 黄帝生陰陽，上駢生耳目，桑林生臂手，此女媧所以七十化也 (Huang Di birthed *yin* and *yang*, Shang Pian birthed ears and eyes, Sang Lin birthed arms and hands, Nüwa used these to transform seventy times).[820] The meaning and overall

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[817] Own translation.
[818] Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 33.
[819] Girardot, Norman J. (1983) *Myth and Meaning*, pp. 200-1.
[820] Own translation. This Reference to the Chinese version of *Huainanzi* 17.5 are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/huainanzi/shuo-lin-xun#n3370. Chapters sixteen and seventeen are closely related, both are believed to be collections of 'brief, persuasive utterances […] aphorisms that could be used in a variety of settings […] meant both to illustrate and to persuade the listener to accept some fundamental point about the nature of a wide array of things.' Whilst predominantly decontextualised, these utterences preserve fragments of popular myth. (Major, John et al. (2010) *The Huainanzi*, pp. 617-8).

context of this brief utterance is obscure, although its basic structure agrees with the presentation of the *Fengsu tongyi*. Nüwa is distanced from the first motions of creation and is provided with materials with which to transform. There is also a tentative connection in this passage to the death and dismemberment of Hundun in Shang Pian and Sang Lin's provision of ears, eyes arms and hands, retaining the notion of the dying god motif that divine material must be provided before the transformation can begin.

To further separate Nüwa from her divine heritage, the myth of Pangu may have been inserted into the period between the beginning of the universe with Hundun and the moment when Nüwa fashioned mankind, to explain the progression of matter from the undefined to the settled. As a symbolic and literal connection between the heavens and the earth, Pangu's insertion into the timeline adheres to Confucian ideals and establishes Nüwa's association with the earthly realm, separating her physically from the heavens. This allowed him to absorb her claim to a status of primogeniture and thus her significance as she transitioned from a divine figure to a legendary human.[821] Despite the fact that she was replaced by her male counterpart in her transformative role with the rise of Pangu, Nüwa possessed a rich mythic heritage as a creative deity before her final relegation to mortality.

7.4.2 THE MOTHER

Nüwa's transformation from divine to mortal is most prominent in the myths of the primordial couple. This couple is more closely related to the flood myths and the quest to repopulate the earth as opposed to the creation story. However, it has been thematically linked to Hundun and the cosmological themes of *Huainanzi* chapter 7 in its presentation of *yin* and *yang* comingling to engender the myriad things.[822] There are several versions of the story in existence across China, transmitted both orally and in written format, but the clearest example of the type is found in Nüwa and Fuxi. However, while they appeared in their own traditions independently from the other more regularly than together, it was not until the Han dynasty that the traditions of Nüwa and Fuxi were collated.

[821] See: Girardot, Norman J. (1983) *Myth and Meaning*, pp. 176-9.
[822] Ibid. p. 202.

In the myth of the primordial couple, Nüwa adopts the socially acceptable role of a helper, sitting under the authority of her husband and brother.[823] Significantly, Fuxi's creative role does not appear to antedate his coupling with Nüwa, which has raised considerable doubt as to the antiquity of their association. Furthermore, Fuxi is not specifically featured in the earliest extant version of the myth; instead Nüwa's husband is simply named as her older brother, implying that Fuxi took on the role of the brother to solidify his association with creation. Accordingly, it is suggested that he absorbed Nüwa's creative authority upon contact with her myth, as he does not seem to possess such powers prior to this moment.[824] After this occurred, however, the pair became closely linked with several creation motifs that could be tied into their natural realms of influence.

The earliest physical description of Nüwa depicted her as having a human head and the body of a serpent. In art, she was often pictured alongside Fuxi who was identically described in recognition of their shared procreative function. Their connection to serpent imagery associates them with marriage and fertility through its phallic symbolism and its ability to both shed and renew its skin signifying the act of rebirth.[825] In China, the serpent was intrinsically linked with dragons, which were perceived as the physical manifestations of spirits or deities, which therefore connected the similar physical form of the snake to divinity. This style of personification was shared by all of the main characters of the flood myths, whose names were also etymologically grounded in aquatic origins, ultimately strengthening the bond between the story of Nüwa and her brother and the flood, rather than to the creation period.

Finally, the dragon's association with water additionally represented its ability to act as a mediator between the heavens and the earth, which was also accorded to Nüwa through their shared physicality, reflecting her semi-divine status. Later, however, when her divinity was stripped, she was pictured bereft of her serpentine tail in an effort to root her legend in the mortal realm.[826] Together with Fuxi, Nüwa was often depicted on funeral stones holding a carpenter's square or the moon, whilst Fuxi bore a pair of

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[823] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 119.
[824] Derk Bodde 'Myths of Ancient China' in: Kramer, Samuel Noah (1961) *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, Double Day, New York, p. 386.
[825] Cheng, Christina Miu Bing (2004) 'Matriarchy at the Edge,' *Paper Presented at the 17th Triennial Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association, August 8-15*. Such imagery is common across the ancient world; see, for example, the Aztec goddess Coalicue or the Persian goddess Yima.
[826] Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority*, pp. 203-4.

compasses or the sun.[827] Their association with these items tied them to the dualism of *yin* and *yang*, as well as the cosmological principle of the round heavens and square earth, thereby anchoring them to native ideas of creation.[828] Ultimately, the primordial couple became a significant concept in Daoist philosophy through the myth's requirement that the two return to the one prior to the commencement of any creative event.[829] In this was, they became quintessential personifications of *yin* and *yang*, unable to create or transform matter without the other present in equal force and measure.

According to Yang Lihui, the iconography of the compass and the carpenter's square is interpreted as 'representing the order that Fuxi and Nüwa created subsequently by establishing the rules of the world and the harmony of the universe between *yang* and *yin*.[830] This in turn forges the union of Nüwa and Fuxi into a metaphysical construct that ensured the ongoing process of creation and upheld the order of the universe.[831] As creative figures they embody the philosophy set forth in the original comingling of *yin* and *yang*, however, being anthropomorphised they are unable to reproduce via transformation, and must, therefore, perform this task through sexual experience.

The earliest known account of Nüwa and her brother appears in the *Duyi zhi*, a ninth century C.E. Tang text composed by Li Rong 李冗, about whom very little is known. Only three of the original ten chapters remain and have been examined with great interest by scholars for their depiction of the ancient myths through a Tang lens.[832] The Tang period was marked by relatively stability and adhered to Daoism as its state philosophy, emphasised by the ruling family's claim to descendency from Laozi.[833] However, one

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[827] Yang, Lihui 杨利慧 (1999) Nüwa Suyuan - Nüwa Xinyang Qiyuandide Zaituice 女娲溯源－女娲信仰起源地的再推测, Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe 北京师范大学出版社, Beijing. See relief 15 on p. 71, which shows an example of a funeral stone carving dated from the Han dynasty, that was found in the Wuliang Shrine, Jiaxiang County in the Shandong Province.

[828] Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority*, The carpenter's square is not only associated with the imagery of the square earth, but also with the trigrams and hexagrams that are believed to have been created by Fuxi. Lewis here points to a Han apocryphal text which states that Fuxi existed 'when all was chaotic and undivided, and that he used the carpenter's square to divide it and create the trigrams' (p. 204) These correlations, however, were employed inconsistently throughout Han dynasty art, and acted in the case of Nüwa as an emphasis of her role as repairer of the heavens rather than strengthening the bonds between her and Fuxi and the opposition in their natures. Furthermore, apart form their identification as two of the Three Sovereigns, they were predominantly separate from one another until the introduction of their incestuous marriage into the mythic corpus. (See: Tseng, Lillian Lan-Ying (2011) *Picturing Heaven and Earth in Early China*, The Harvard Univeristy Asia Center, Cambridge, pp. 286-9.

[829] Girardot, Norman J. (1983) *Myth and Meaning*, p. 204.

[830] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 119.

[831] Plaks, Andrew H. (1976) *Archetype and Allegory*, p. 38.

[832] Mathieu, Rémi (1989) *Anthologie des myths et legends de la Chine ancienne*, p. 241.

[833] Benn, Charles (2002) *China's Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p. 60.

might expect to find Buddhist and Confucian elements within the mythic narratives of the age due to the former's rising significance and the latter's continued presence in the academic circles and education.

The narrative fell several centuries after the mainstream establishment of creation mythology in China. Accordingly, the conception of the world is dealt with only as much as it concerns the placement of humanity within it.[834] Like the *Wuyun linianji* and its depiction of the heavens and earth before the death of Pangu, the passage from the *Duyi zhi* does not offer a detailed cosmogony, but rather situates the narrative near the beginning: 昔宇宙初開之時，只有女媧兄妹二人在崑崙山 (When the universe was beginning to unfold, there existed only two people in the world; Nüwa and her older brother, and they lived on Mount Kunlun).[835] Mount Kunlun was said to be the earthly seat of the supreme deity and his court of lesser deities and immortal beings, akin to the Grecian Mount Olympus. It was furthermore said to be the location of one of the pillars that supported the sky and the ladder that was thought to connect the earth to the nine layers of heaven before its gates were closed.[836]

Localising the myth at Mount Kunlun offers legitimacy to the conclusion of the myth; however, the narrative is immediately drawn away from the heavens once its temporal location has been established. This could be symptomatic of the cosmogony existing as part of popular myth, or its irrelevancy for the myth as a whole. Either way, the text is focused on the plight of the first man and woman on earth, outlined in the following lines: 而天下未有人民，議以為夫妻，又自羞恥 (There were not yet any [other] people on earth, and for this reason, they discussed becoming husband and wife, but [this idea] made them feel ashamed). Faced with the contemporary taboo of incest, the primary question of the narrative becomes not one of populating the earth, but doing so with the persistence of moral superiority. Therefore, lacking divine instruction, the brother and sister must determine the appropriateness of becoming man and wife in their quest for procreation within the bounds of social convention.

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[834] This is often given as a reason why the myth has more often been closely linked with the flood stories and the desire to repopulate the earth after its desolation. Furthermore, it is believed that this association has existed in mythology from quite early in China's history. See: Wen, Yiduo 聞一多 (1982) *Quanji* 全集, Sanlian, Beijing.

[835] References to the Chinese version of *Duyu Zhi* 3.99 are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=738235. English translations are the writer's own unless otherwise specified.

[836] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 160-4.

Pursuing this quest, the pair travelled to the peak of the mountain to seek the approval of heaven: 兄即與其妹上崑崙山，兄曰：天若遣我兄妹二人為夫妻而煙悉合；若不使，煙散. (Immediately, the older brother went up Mount Kunlun with his younger sister. He said: if Heaven would send us forth as husband and wife, let the smoke combine [together], if not, then let the smoke disperse). The mountain's association with the earthen seat of the gods likens their action to religious supplication at a temple. However, the depersonalisation of Shangdi and Tian from the Shang and Zhou dynasties implies that in the present context, heaven is being addressed as an abstract force. Therefore, in similar fashion to the mandate of heaven, Heaven's response does not constitute an act of divine will but is a matter of fate.

Heaven represented superior morality and the proper order of nature, which enabled it to determine the morality of the primal couples situation. This allowed for the resolution of the cultural taboo with the comingling of the smoke in the following lines: 於是煙即合，其妹即來就兄. (The smoke immediately combined, [Nüwa] came to know her brother intimately).[837] It is significant that the role of seeking heaven's blessing for the union falls under the responsibility of the brother, who, according to contemporary ideals, assumed the role of leader and protector of his soon to be wife. This was based on the conception of the family as a microcosm of the greater patriarchal state,[838] and coincides with the rising Confucian notion that the *yang* element was superior to the *yin*.

In this myth, Nüwa and her brother became the embodiment of current Tang dynasty norms, which ultimately associated them as personifications of *yin* and *yang*. In the chapter 43 of the *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (*Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Classic*) it justifies the relationship between a man and his wife based on their fundamental essences: 丈夫雖賤皆為陽，婦人雖貴皆為陰 (Husbands, though they might be low-born, they are all *yang*; wives, though they might be noble-born, they are

[837] The closing lines of the passage are rarely included in discussions on the accounts relevancy in creation studies. Explaining that after the siblings came together as husband and wife they wove fans to shield their faces, they serve as a foundational myth for a later custom. 乃結草為扇，以障其面。今時人取婦執扇，象其事也. 'After this, they knotted grass to make fans in order to cover their faces. [This is why] today, when a man takes a wife, they hold a fan in their hands as an image of what happened back then.' Birrell suggests that these fans are reminiscent of the mythologem of shame and guilt associated with sexual intercourse in the Hebrew Bible, although the reasons for their shame are different. (See: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology*, p. 34).

[838] Yu, Anthony C. (2005) *State and Religion in China*, pp. 19, 43.

all *yin*).[839] The earlier Daoist creation accounts displayed the interaction of *yin* and *yang* as a harmonious balance of equal matter, whereas the narrative in the *Duyi zhi* subscribes to the Confucian view of the subservience of the former to the latter, and thus of the wife to her husband. On the other hand, it has been argued that despite the writer's alteration to the ancient principles in order to justify current social mores, the myth does not entirely eliminate the original understanding of *yin* and *yang*, shown through its requirement that the two must again become one to procreate.[840]

The older brother was replaced in later versions of the narrative by Fuxi, which served to combine Fuxi's individual identity as the first sage-king and thus the source of both leadership and kingship[841] with his new position at the head of the primal couple, and resulted in the minimalisation of Nüwa's role as he absorbed her creative power. As the correlation did not appear beforehand, it is probable that Fuxi's existence as one half of the primordial couple was forged during the Han era and was done to bring social acceptability to a previously female dominated myth. It is also possible that the amalgamation of their traditions resulted from their individual involvement in the institution of marriage,[842] ultimately justifying their condensation into a single mythic episode.

The introduction of new elements into a creation myth often causes it to evolve into a new form that contradicts earlier versions, as can be seen here through the demotion of Nüwa and her relegation to be the helper of her husband in a manner reminiscent of

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[839] Own translation. Reference to the Chinese version of *Chunqiu fanlu* 43.1 are quoted from the Chinese Text Project's digital edition of the work: http://ctext.org/chun-qiu-fan-lu/yang-zun-yin-bei.

[840] Girardot, Norman J. (1983) *Myth and Meaning*, p. 247. For a more indepth study of the female place in Chinese society see: Yu, Anthony C. (2005) *State and Religion in China*, pp. 70-1 and Rosenlee, Li-Hsiang Lisa (2006) *Confucianism and Women: A Philosophical Interpretation*, State University of New York, Albany, pp. 55-6. The examination of funary customs in early Confucian society also shows the consistency of patriarchal thought for 'status perogatives were inherited through the patriline […] women were systematically assigned privileges lower than those of their husbands.' This stark difference is visible through the fact that the amount of women buried in tombs is considerably less than their contemporary men, and when they are buried they are accompanied into death with consistently less in the way of furniture and sacrifices than their spousal counterparts, displaying their subservience to their husbands even where their familial rank places them above their partner in nobility (See: Falkenhausen, Lothar von (2006) *Chinese Society in the Age of Confucius (1000-250 BC)*, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, Los Angeles, pp. 111-26, 150-1 and 3757-9).

[841] Lewis, Mark Edward (1999) *Writing and Authority*, p. 117.

[842] Plaks, Andrew H. (1976) *Archetype and Allegory*, p. 37. In a similar fashion to Plato's hypothesis that immortality is gained through procreation, Plaks suggests that the addition to marriage to Nüwa's list of accomplishments is an attempt to counteract the issue of mortality (p. 40, Plato (1925) *Symposium*, p. 54-6).

Eve's relationship with Adam in *Genesis*.[843] New characters emerge through these changes, which also brings about a reassignment of function of old elements. For example, the power of transformation is granted to Fuxi in another version of this myth, which declared that the production of his union with Nüwa was a sacred gourd, or a formless lump of flesh. It was said that they attempted to carry the flesh up to the heavens, but it fell back down to earth and smashed into many pieces, which in turn transformed into people. The form of the flesh plays on the return to the primordial one through the reunion of the two and also plays on the creative process of the Pangu myth.[844] This version retains the incestual taboo of the original, positing instead that the product of such a union will be abnormal. However, it also removes the element of divine will in its return to a concept that is more akin to the theory of spontaneous generation.

A third version of the myth, originating from the Henan and Hebei provinces, combines the myth of the primordial couple with that of Nüwa's fashioning of mankind from the clay, eliminating the taboo entirely. It tells of the joint action of Nüwa and Fuxi in the modeling of the clay, explaining that when they had completed their task, they placed the figures in the sun to let them dry. However, it began to rain, and in their haste to save their creations some were broken. The narrative deviates from the earlier etiological explanation for the caste system and offers instead the origin of the malformed or disabled,[845] providing the reason why some are born healthy while others are not.

In the same way as the loss of immortality is regularly attributed to the will of the gods across the ancient Near East, whether by an accident or manipulation, the deformities of mankind are attributed to a chance of fate. A similar myth is found in the Mesopotamian tradition following Ninmah-Ninhursag's initial creation of mankind. Following her achievement, Enki and Ninmah became drunk in celebration and crafted six more figures, which, due to the inebriated state of their creators, were defective and malformed.[846] On the other hand, unlike their Mesopotamian counterparts, there was no intentionality in Nüwa and Fuxi's actions, nor were the deformities truly caused by a

[843] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 119. Although it should be noted that the translation of the term 'helper' in this case and its subsequent interpretation is highly disputed.
[844] Plaks, Andrew H. (1976) *Archetype and Allegory*, p. 37.
[845] Yang, Lihui et al. (2005) *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*, p. 173.
[846] Kirk, G. S. (1998) *Myth*, p. 106.

deliberate form of negligence or misjudgement, but were instead presented as an equally natural feature as that of the rain itself.

Ultimately, Nüwa is unique on the Chinese cosmogonical stage in that she is the sole female actor amongst masculine figures. She has appeared in many forms in accordance to the contextual needs and times of those who recorded her myths. By general consensus, she is a survival of an ancient era, possessing the ability to create and transform matter, but remaining excluded from the cosmic creation event. Her physical and mythological shape has itself undergone considerable transformation, although the strength of her presence in modern myth is suggestive of her earlier significance. Her existence as part of the ancient Chinese pantheon cannot be doubted, despite her later demotion from it, even as her status as a native or imported myth remains unknown.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CHINA: INTERTEXTUALITY

A VIEW TO A CONNECTION

The perception that Chinese creation myths were nonexistent or utterly unique persevered for a considerable length of time. This view gave way to the notion that the myths and thus also the religious motifs that supported them were more likely foreign in origin, introduced into China at a late date without possibility of their influence on the formation of Chinese culture. It has since become evident that this was not the case, although such characters as Nüwa, Fuxi and Pangu appear in extant literature at a time when concern with the spirit world had all but faded from society.[847] Each narrative appears to contain a measure of awareness of the other extant sources, or elements of the ancient, intrinsically Chinese concept of Hundun. Religious and philosophical thought played a significant role in the method and style of their preservation, and yet the motivation for recounting the creation event did not lie in the bolstering of religious doctrine. Instead, they were employed as political machinations to reinforce contemporary structures based on ancient ideals.

The fragmentation of the creation narratives caused by the extensive reworking of the legends to match contemporary circumstances has produced great difficulty in the determination of the context or intent of the episode. It is unknown just how much of the extant works can be attributed to the original writers as opposed to the various editors of their transmission histories. Furthermore, this problem is enhanced by the fact that the myths were not conserved for their own sake as in the case of much of the Grecian repertoire. However, despite the length and breadth spanned by the texts, both temporally and geographically, the integration of foreign and native concepts has illuminated a greater measure of continuity between the extant sources than previously suspected.

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[847] Birrell, Anne (1994) 'Studies on Chinese Myth Since 1970,' *HR* 33 (4), pp. 392-3.

There is a sense of deliberate effort in the systemisation of the creation myths and the progression from the one to the many. Out of the primal unity of Hundun came the *Dao*, followed by the binary opposition of *yin* and *yang*. From the separation of *yin* and *yang* came the myriad things, first through the transformation of Pangu upon his death until the creation of mankind through Nüwa. Each of these figures entered, and exited, the Chinese pantheon at different stages in her mythological history and it might be reasonable to suggest that the later writers were aware of at least some of the earlier texts through their apparent desire to fill the gaps in the overarching cosmogonical design.

In a similar fashion to other cultures across the ancient world, the Chinese understanding of morality, laws and kingship were heavily influenced by the heavens, which dictated social and cultural standards as well as the rituals and traditions associated with the annual sacrifices. As Chinese philosophy grew more human-centric, the divine figures of the legendary past became historicised, given mortal form and credited with achievements normally ascribed to the supernatural realm. Humanity became responsible for upholding the balances of the universe and the regulation of its cycles, and heaven's mandate became associated with the concepts of morality and adherence to tradition as opposed to the idea that a single family was divinely chosen to rule. However, the development of the decreasing value of the supernatural realm reflected through these social elements was inherently connected to the Chinese ideas of the cosmogony.

Traditionally, creation stories of any society upheld specific cultural features, ranging from religious beliefs to social hierarchy and the questions of the *Tianwen* represented the oldest recorded assumptions of Chinese creation mythology. Incapable of purveying the legends in their entirety, it nevertheless presented snippets of Chinese thought that began to paint a picture of the diversity of the early pantheon. It speculated on the transformation of *yin* and *yang* and questioned the veracity of the legend without the existence of a witness to pass on the tradition. Furthermore, while it remains disputed whether the text was an earnest search for answers or an exercise of rhetoric, there is an air of disbelief in the writer's queries.

The *Tianwen* reflected popular tradition suggested to predate the rise of Zhou propaganda, referring to long forgotten myths. There is no evidence of a creative hand, or an explicit reference to figures such as the two gods in *Huainanzi* chapter 7 that wove

the skies and designed the earth. It is possible to see traces of the amorphous form of Hundun in the description of the primeval chaos, and the presence of characters such as Nüwa later in the chapter indicates that the writer was aware of an extensive pantheon, and yet they are not associated with creative powers. Instead, the passage depicts the natural progression of creation through the comingling of *yin* and *yang*, supporting the theory that the idea of spontaneous generation took root at a relatively early age in China's history.

It is this same theme that is found in *Huainanzi* chapter 3, which drew upon many sources during its composition including the *Tianwen*. It was suggested that the writer of the *Huainanzi* sought to expand upon the utterances of the *Tianwen*, offering answers to its unanswerable questions to augment the book's claim to greater enlightenment. This work appears to bear several formulaic resemblances to the ancient Near Eastern myths through the supposition of the undifferentiated chaos of the beginning and that its initial separation was cause by the interaction of two primal binary opposites. However, it did not permit the interference of a force external to itself. The vacant space of the *Huainanzi*, more closely linked to the imagery of Hundun than the vague references of the *Tianwen*, contained all the energy required for the creation of the myriad things. Accordingly, its cosmogonical conception aligned more closely with the self-created and regulated cosmos of Lucretius.

The nature of all things was determined by the *Dao*, which was borne out of the chaos and was itself declared as a witness to the creation process, thereby increasing its own status as well as the account with which it was associated. An object's nature was determined by its composition, and its composition by its allocation of like essences. As such, there was no need for a name, or for a deity to designate one, in order to demonstrate the existence of a thing as was required in the Egyptian tradition in which everything is in a state of non-existence and non-functionality until it is given a title.[848] Ultimately, the observational tone relating the act of separation in the text describes *yin* and *yang* as like a blend of oil and water; they did not exist in conflict with one another but rather their internal structures were so inherently diverse that their division was inevitable.

One of the most prominent features in both of the *Huainanzi* passages is their retention of an arbitrary system outlining the theory of natural expansion through a numbered

[848] Gilula, Mordechai (1982) 'An Egyptian Etymology of the Name Horus,' *JEA* 68, p. 260.

progression. Each number is ascribed to a certain element; the one *Dao*, the two *yin* and *yang*, the three sovereigns, the four seasons or cardinal points, the five agents and so on. The structured nature of this system epitomised the Daoist notion of the innate order of the universe. On the other hand, the incorporation of the two gods that transformed into *yin* and *yang* in chapter 7 is suggestive of a long forgotten myth, which perhaps told the story of creation as wrought by the gods. However, the memory of these active participants was erased in their replacement with *yin* and *yang*.

The removal of these figures supports the notion that if the cosmic battle existed in her ancient mythology, a conscious effort was made to eliminate it. In the traditional ancient conception of the gods as akin to humanity on a larger scale, they were believed to share similar thoughts, feelings and desires which ultimately led them to fight for power. However, without the personification of the primeval forces, there is no possibility for a clash of wills and no need for the death of one to bring life and shape to the world. In this way, the conversion between the two gods into the abstract forces of *yin* and *yang* served to remove the active participants from the transformation of matter and allowed for natural processes to guide its ongoing regeneration. Furthermore, it countered the idea that humanity was at the mercy of the whims of the gods; laying the groundwork for the belief that mankind was ultimately responsible for maintaining the balance of the cosmos.

This human-centricity was dominant in the later Pangu myth located in the *Sanwu liji*. Like the *Dao* before him, he is presented as the firstborn of creation and the passive witness of its processes. Mythically, he has been labelled as a semi-divine cosmic giant; however, his association with Confucian ideology encouraged his identification as the first human being. As such, his presence at the beginning of creation solidifies the importance of mankind, reversing the creation order so that they were not just the final transformation of the myriad things. He is the quintessential representative of the human state, embodying the position of the king who figuratively takes his place as the cosmic giant to maintain the separation of the heavens and the earth and act as the mediator between them.

The second version of Pangu's myth from the *Wuyun linianji* is strongly reminiscent of the archetype of the dying god through his association with Hundun. As the latest entry in the field of Chinese creation mythology, this myth was arguably composed of the widest range of native and foreign sources, which also allowed time for the reshaping of

philosophically unacceptable features. In the myth of Hundun, the dying god is murdered inadvertently by his friends. Although, even in this early version of the mythic trope in China, the conflict borne of rebellion or lust for power is absent. On the other hand, the myth of Pangu further counteracted the underlying premise of the trope in the writer's decision to feature him alone, which transformed the resonances of Hundun's murder into a natural death in his old age, without enemy or undue motive.

The myths of Pangu served to reinforce the contemporary political structure, and remind the reader that everything in the universe had a predetermined purpose and must therefore act according to its nature. This was achieved through the presentation of his body as the microcosm of the universe; just as every part of the human body has its place and its function, so too did the corresponding features of the world perform a specific purpose in their allocated locations. There is little wonder that Pangu became revered as a creative deity both in and out of China. He was the most readily comparable figure to the ancient Near Eastern myths, which was also perhaps partly the cause of his censure as a foreign intrusion. Despite the relative youth of his myth, his persistence in the field has marked him as a culmination of the ancient creation accounts.

He incorporated the concepts of Hundun, *yin* and *yang* and the theory of natural progression, but in a similar fashion to the *Tianwen*, which employed verbs indicative of human action, Pangu brought a touch of humanity in his microcosmic imitation of the greater universe. Accordingly, it is implied that he operates as the catalyst for creation, not as an active participant but in a similar vein to the Grecian Atlas who must support the pillars that maintain the separation of heaven and earth.[849] As the central pillar, Pangu alone could support the heavens and thus his height increased in conjunction with their distance from the earth. Finally, his presence in the story answers the question of how the essences of *yin* and *yang*, which had previously coexisted in an undifferentiated state, were able to divide and congeal into new forms.

Nüwa is a lone survivor, persevering through multiple transformations of her character, identity and power, ultimately epitomising the progressive impact of euhemerisation on the Chinese pantheon. Her survival in an increasingly patriarchal state is likely due to the variety of roles she played throughout the development of her legend. For, unlike Hundun who disappeared into the subtext of later myths, and Pangu who appeared so late in history that his extant form is arguably his only one, Nüwa's shape was constantly

[849] Hornblower, Simon; Spawforth, Antony (2003) *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, p. 208.

transformed to suit contemporary needs. However, the consequences of her sole focus on the creation of mankind meant that she did not truly belong to the initial period of creation, and yet her conformance to recognisable archetypes has resulted in an expectation of her inclusion in the field of study.

Her association with the colour yellow in the *Fengsu tongyi*, as well as her transformative powers connected her to the figures of Hundun and the Yellow Emperor. This grounded her within the creation narrative, although she is consistently located after the settling of *yin* and *yang* had taken place. Additionally, this bond was strengthened by her capacity to determine order and regulate the systems of the universe, a role normally reserved in the ancient world for the high gods of the pantheon. However, as the culture matured and Chinese civilisation expanded and the concerns of creation became more enmeshed with the affairs of mankind, Nüwa assumed her rightful place as part of the microcosm of the state to ensure her survival.

Aside from Pangu's portrayal of the dying god, Nüwa's creation of humanity through the moulding of clay presented the most easily identifiable comparison between the Chinese and ancient Near Eastern myths. The account of her moulding humanity from the clay is relatively singular in mainstream Chinese creation mythology, serving predominantly to uphold the social hierarchy and differentiate the ruling elite from the common man. Eventually, the implication of divine will gave way to her identification as a mortal wife and mother, procreating naturally as one half of the original couple. Guided by the increasing influence of Confucianism, this completed her transition from the ancient empress on high to a legendary human and justified contemporary patriarchal norms through the presentation of her legend.

Many of the most well known features of worldwide creation mythology can be located within the different myths of China in varying levels of intensity, belying the assumption that they were unique in their lack of a creation narrative. It is perhaps more accurate to suggest that their creation myths were based upon a rich assortment of legends, from which they adapted and developed themes that complemented the spontaneous generation of matter. The fragmented nature of Chinese mythology has been seen by so many as a crippling feature, revealing only glimpses of the legends of the past. However, it is within this same fragmentation that one observes thematic overlapping between the mythic episodes; the participants may vary between sources, and yet certain essential elements can be traced and identified within each. Thus, the presentation of the

cosmogony from several viewpoints illuminates the concerted efforts to remove the traces of conflict from the scene. While the evidence of the cosmic battles survived in the stories of the flood, their survival in the myths of creation became untenable following the establishment of the harmonious interaction between *yin* and *yang*. There cannot be conflict without desire, and there cannot be desire without conflict and the characterisation of *yin* and *yang* as abstract, non-anthropomorphised forces ultimately eliminated this possibility from the tradition.

CHAPTER NINE

COMPARATIVE CONCLUSIONS

A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE WORLDS

All mythological stories must remain culturally relevant in order to survive. They must adapt. They must assimilate new content and functions as they are redefined and consolidated, for if they do not, they will be left behind to crumble in the long forgotten past. The myths examined as part of this dissertation reflect the core values of the society that preserved it. However, it is popularly believed that Hebrew and Chinese creation stories do not lend themselves easily to comparison. Their fundamental objectives are so divergent from one another that they do not seem able to share common ground; for the one is seeking to prove that their god is the one true god, and the other categorically that there is no external divine power. The attempts of the Jesuit missionaries to introduce the Western world to Chinese religious thought aroused the hypothesis that there was an inherent connection between the Christian God and that of the ancient Chinese dynasties. The early scholars suggested that this was the result of a common prehistory, an ur-myth, or perhaps part of the collective unconscious of the human mind; however, they were ultimately misled in their assumptions.

It is not in a misunderstood notion of God that a connection between the Chinese and Hebrew traditions can be identified, nor is it located in the relative historical tardiness of the two creative theories, although this feature certainly facilitated it. Instead, the relationship between them is founded on their shared cultural requirements for a peaceful creative process. For example, it is possible to discern a progressive movement away from the imagery of the conflict between Tiamat and Marduk in the accounts in the Hebrew Bible, which became more prominent in later traditions as the monotheistic vision of Hebrew religion gained momentum. These changes were designed to demonstrate the prophets' perception of the individuality of the Hebrew God. Therefore, to counteract the common understanding of the ancient pantheons in which the divine

children uprooted their parents and usurped their power, the writers of the Hebrew creation texts gradually eliminated the conflict. This was achieved by first incorporating the imagery with the exodus tradition, and then by altering the identities of the secondary characters in the wisdom tradition to reinforce the omnipotence of their god eradicate the implications of dualism from the texts.

On the other hand, the advancement of the nonviolence of creation is not so evident in the Chinese tradition as there is no extant narrative relating the existence of conflict in direct correlation to the cosmogony; however, its cultural significance is in no way lessened. For conflict to be present in the concept of creation, and thus to exist as a natural world state in China, it would have encouraged the practices of rebellion and undermined the ordered balance of the universe. Furthermore, the forces of *yin* and *yang* were not categorised as representations of good and evil, regardless of their later hierarchy in Confucian thought, and as such were not pitted against each other. The element of conflict was retained in certain versions of the Chinese flood myth, allowing it to be depicted as a subversion of the original and perfect order. The ideals of Daoist philosophy, which arguably played a key role in the preservation of the creation myths, demanded the existence of a primal unity out of which the cosmos sprung spontaneously; a picture that would not permit the intrusion of a pre-creation struggle.

The intended goals of these two traditions are primarily incompatible with one another, and yet they provide one of the clearest examples in mythology of how similar patterns and tropes may be employed as proof of radically opposite ideas. Both traditions display their reliance on earlier myths and are comprised of foreign and native materials. Similarly, both maintain a considerable measure of consistency across their narratives; expressing a desire to depart from the general understandings invoked by the creative archetypes and replace them with new meaning rather than adhere to expectation and simply localise the legend. For example, the imagery of Tiamat and Marduk can be found in the stories of Pangu and T^{e}hom. In the Babylonian version, Tiamat was physically torn apart and the parts of her body reappropriated based on the ancient belief that divine matter could not fail to engender new matter.

In the story of Pangu as the dying god, his body was figuratively broken apart to become the myriad things, and yet being alone in his existence he achieved old age and died unchallenged and peacefully once his life had come to its natural end. In this way the story focused not on the outcome of a primal battle, but on the correlation of his body to

the greater universe, guided by the principles that each element would settle according to its own nature and not by divine intent. Accordingly, just as the head is the highest point in the body so does its features become the celestial bodies in the highest realms and so forth. This allowed the potentiality of matter to be discernable through natural observation and purged the religious need of divine revelation.

It has been shown that the echoes of Tiamat are seen as resonating much stronger in the Hebrew texts and have engendered much controversy. The earliest references to the creation imagery are contextually embedded on the brink of defeat, where the writers utilised the ancient near Eastern imagery to reinforce Yahweh's status as a conqueror. However, when the creation myth is assimilated with wisdom theology, evidence of the conflict is subdued; the sea becomes an abstract entity and the sea monster just a creature that lives within it. Tiamat's 'appearance' in the *Genesis* displays the greatest measure of transformation whilst conceivably maintaining the highest level of contextual faithfulness. In the form of T^{e}hom, she is de-personified, her imagery is used to describe the state of the earth before the commencement of creation but she is static. However, unlike Hundun who holds within him all of the potentiality required to complete the process, T^{e}hom's is completely externalised. Yahweh does not need her energy or material in order to create the world, for he alone is already in possession of it. These changes permitted the deliberate excision of opposition from the narrative, so that like Pangu, Yahweh is similarly unchallenged by contenders.

The notion that both the male and female essences are required for the processes of creation is still found in *Genesis* 1 through the gender of the deep, which coincided with the predominant conception of a masculinised heavenly deity and a feminised earthly one. However, the introduction of Yahweh's *divine fiat* shifted the authority of the earth to the heavens and stripped the former of her divinity. There cannot be conflict where there is only one will, just as an argument is only an opinion until it is confronted with a second incompatible observation. In this case, it might be suggested that the concepts of *yin* and *yang* resemble the archetype of the primal waters more closely through the retention of both the male and female essences. Similarly to T^{e}hom, *yin* and *yang* were not personified; they had no will or personal desires but simply existed according to their nature. However, unlike the Hebrew story, the philosophy required the equal and balanced interaction between the two forces. It is impossible for one to create without the other for the differentiation of matter cannot be distinguished without an opposite

with which to compare it, and yet the belief in their essential harmony doesn't allow for the preservation of primeval disunity.

To take this analogy further, both traditions begin with a single entity; the Hebrew with one god, and the Chinese with primal unity and it was from these 'ones' that the universe is brought forth without external intervention. This idea is absent from the Babylonian account which posited that the primal waters from which the cosmos was birthed was not a single undifferentiated form, but the combination of the already personified figures of Apsu and Tiamat. A similar format is visible in the Greek tradition and its description of the primeval chaos before the emergence of Gaia, which like Hundun bore no connotation of disorder or disharmony. However, the immediate introduction of the divine generations and the battle of succession distinguish it from the Hebrew and Chinese traditions, for which the continuation of peace in the cosmogony had a significant impact on cultural thought.

It is a common feature of mythology to describe the affairs of the celestial realm in a similar fashion to the earthly one, just as heaven itself is often discussed in architectural terms and the heavenly council as that of a king's court. Therefore, the retention of peace was representative of the belief in the sovereignty of Yahweh for the one, and the inherent cosmic balance for the other. For the Israelites, it reflected the prophets' perception they were a people chosen by a universal god who had no rival and whose creation of the heavens and the earth by his spoken word demonstrated his limitless authority in both realms. On the other hand, for the Chinese, the lack of conflict allowed the scholars to describe *yin* and *yang* as being in perfect balance as opposed to the eternal tug-of-war between the forces of good and evil in the ancient Near East. Instead, the ascendency of each essence was structure through the seasons like the waxing and waning of the moon ceding to one another in annual rotation without indignation or struggle.

The interruption of the tradition of divine succession in the period of creation impacted the understanding of kingship in these societies. The idea of divine sponsorship by descendency or with the blessing of the ruling deity was closely intertwined with religious thought and was common all throughout the ancient world. It was from this perspective that the existence of the mandate from heaven in China was conceived of as evidence of a personal deity and thus a connection to the ancient Near Eastern traditions. This was an easy assumption to make, as there were several mythic examples

of divine ancestry in the heritage of the early kings; however, as the concept matured, the divine hand was replaced with a human one.

The Hebrew understanding of the concept, on the other hand, was fairly typical of the age, although unlike their Egyptian and Babylonian counterparts, the Israelite kings were barred from deification. Instead, they were chosen by Yahweh based on their righteousness and devotion to him, and the perpetuation of their reign was influenced by their compliance to his will. The Chinese mandate was somewhat less connected to the supernatural; as the divine persona of the Shang and Zhou dynasty shifted away from its personified form, the retention of the mandate fell squarely on the morality of the king. It was his duty to uphold the natural balance of the world through the traditions and sacrifices determined by the model emperors, and his failure in this task resulted in its loss, as in the case of the final Shang king. The alternative usages of the same motif provide one of the starkest differences between the Hebrew and Chinese accounts and their conception of god, for in the former the mandate was Yahweh's to give and take, and in the latter it was humanity's to obtain and lose.

The elimination of conflict does not appear to be a natural development of creation myths, for if it were, one could reasonably assume that it would have featured more prominently across the ancient world. While there are some isolated cases where the concept has briefly taken root in other societies, or others such as the ancient Egyptian tradition, which adhered solely to peaceful notions, there are none that fully share the concentrated effort to remove evidence of pre-existing conflict from the cosmogonies as in the Hebrew and Chinese traditions. The completion of this process was undoubtedly enabled by the dating of the myths' extant forms, having being reworked and edited by scholars and prophets with ulterior motivations until a relatively late period in their respective histories. Despite their shared declaration of a nonviolent creation event, the underlying thematic premises of the two systems of thought diverge upon alternate routes, which becomes evident in their employment of certain textual features.

The different approaches of each can be seen, for example, through a comparison of the passages from the *Tianwen* and the book of *Job*, both penned in the form of rhetorical questions and concerned with the origin of the world. At the heart of each text seems to lay the conviction that it is impossible for humanity to truly know what happened at the beginning; however the two texts use different narrators to demonstrate their particular point of view. For example, the *Tianwen* questions the assertions of popular myth: Who

was there to explain it? How could they know what it was and describe it when there are no words to describe it? Regardless of the writer's primary motivation, the text acknowledges the limitations of human understanding. In the same way, the passage in *Job* challenged the arrogant assumption that man could comprehend what happened at the beginning or elucidate upon events in the hidden places of the world.

The chosen narrator differentiates the two texts according to their cultural ideals. For example, using Yahweh as the interrogator in *Job* anchors the passage to a heavenly perspective, bringing the reader's focus back to an omniscient deity who designed the earth, filled it with the myriad things and continued to maintain it. Yahweh's response to Job served to encourage belief in a deity whose knowledge and authority far exceeded that of humanity. On the other hand, the *Tianwen* offers no such answer, highlighting the concept that if the current form of matter was transformed by natural processes, there could be no one to pass on knowledge of the events. Accordingly, the text was written from an earthly perspective, thereby denying any implications of an omnipotent deity. However, it must also be noted that in the book of *Job*, Yahweh declared himself to be the author of the inherent nature of the world and everything upon it, whereas in the *Tianwen*, and the *Huainanzi* which elucidate further on the subject, the innate nature of things was predetermined by their composition from primordial matter rather than by an external force.

To substantiate these claims, both traditions employ the figure of a non-participatory witness to the event of creation. The existence of a 'helper' is common to motifs such as that of the earth diver; however, considerable effort has been made to show that the Hebrew and Chinese creative texts did not preserve the exact mechanics of this trope. The *Dao* was thought to guide the transformation of matter. Pangu stretched the heavens away from the earth, and Lady Wisdom was the worker at Yahweh's side. Each is depicted as the first works of creation, and therefore carries the weight of primogeniture, granting them the authority to speak as witness to the events that followed their emergence from the void. Furthermore, each could be interpreted as an example of the existence of secondary creative characters in the narratives, and yet their passivity is heavily emphasised in order to uphold the peace during the creation period.

In *Huainanzi* chapter 3, the *Dao* was the first to come forth from the chaos, but was then externalised from the procreative process; passively observing as the chaos produced the cosmos, the cosmos produced the vital breath and so on. Like Lady Wisdom, the *Dao*

represented the intrinsic order of the universe; their function was not connected with the power to create, but in their ability to pass on the tales of what happened according to their own traditions. In this way, the two serve in a religious capacity, acting ultimately as guides to whomsoever would seek enlightenment and wisdom. Similarly, Pangu appears to be less of a creator than an etiological symbol of the place of humanity, and especially the king, in relation to the heavens and the earth. Hailing from a Confucian standpoint, Pangu ostensibly replaces the *Dao*. His function is more humanistic in nature; lessening the significance of any supernatural activity through the introduction of the concept that mankind has upheld the balance since the beginning of time.

This mindset is prevalent in the demythologisation of the legendary era in China. It was written that emperor Shun historicised the Chinese pantheon, redesignating the various deities into mortal form with a corresponding governmental rank. This was a natural effect of the lessening significance of mythological thought as the Confucian philosophical ideals rose to dominance within the society. As such, the origin of all things became less important than the origin of human interaction with them. A similar feature is employed in the Pentateuch in regards to the patriarchal history and its relation to the creation event. The historicisation of early Israelite history minimalised the contemporary mythological world, however, this was done not to enhance the position of mankind but the supremacy of their god. By separating Yahweh from mythic thought, the Hebrew writers claimed his individuality over the other deities of the ancient Near East. Furthermore, the Hebrew patriarchs and the Chinese model emperors exemplify the developmental paths of each culture; for the Israelites, the patriarchs were righteous men who obeyed Yahweh's commands and were correspondingly blessed by him, whereas for the Chinese, the model emperors were paradigms of morality whose right social and filial actions remained in accordance with both the *Dao* and Confucian ethics.

Finally, the elimination of conflict in the Hebrew and Chinese traditions allowed for a high-view of humanity to be established, in opposition to the majority of the ancient world. This offers a unique comparison between the two, for while they utilise predominantly incompatible motivations in their accounts of the creation of man, they both arrive at the same endpoint. In the Hebrew Bible, mankind was handcrafted by Yahweh as the pinnacle of his creation. Alternatively, aside from the myth of Nüwa

fashioning mankind from the clay and determining their social hierarchy, humanity in the Chinese narratives is simply part of the myriad things spontaneously formed from the comingling of *yin* and *yang*.

In the tradition of the former, mankind was made in Yahweh's image to be his representatives on the earth, and were thus granted dominion over it, whereas in the latter, they are not made in the image of any gods, and yet their composition from the purer elements sets them apart from the rest of creation to act as stewards over it. In spite of the purposeful creation of the one and natural evolution of the other, the absence of divine plurality allows for a similar outcome; if there are no gods one cannot be made to serve them. Under a high-view of humanity, mankind are not formed to be slaves to do the work of which the gods have grown tired. To be a steward, on the contrary, is to hold a position of honour, which increases the validity of their authority over the earth.

This presentation of humanity emphasises the inherent goodness of the created world in the Hebrew and Chinese worldviews. There is no sense of opposition, but rather an original peaceful state and humanity's maintenance of or deviation away from it. In both traditions, the culpability for the current state of affairs is attributed solely to humanity; in the consequences of the choice of Adam and Eve in the former and the virtue of the ancient kings and their efforts to uphold the balance in the latter. This observation highlights a comparative sense of harmony and order between the two, which can be seen through the repetition of the declared goodness of creation in *Genesis* 1 and its culmination as 'very good' in v.31, and in the underlying motif of perfection in the primal unity that sits at the beginning of the Chinese narratives. Furthermore, there is no haphazard element in either mode of creation, for while the one is consciously and carefully designed, the spontaneous generation of the other is as equally ordered in the development of the myriad things according to their inherent natures.

Both the Chinese and Hebrew creation accounts have been forced to shrug off certain misconceptions during their relationships with the academic world. The perception of the nonexistence of the Chinese accounts gave way to a corpus defined by its richness as opposed to its fragmentation, its plurality displaying a measure of textual cohesion despite the brevity of its narratives. On the other hand, the Hebrew texts were more heavily reliant on the mythic imagery that the early scholars preferred to admit, incorporating a considerable amount of contemporary mythological imagery even as it

was changed to adhere to a fundamentally different system of belief. When one leaves the age of belief, certain aspects of mythology become irrelevant; they can no longer serve the same etiological functions they did in the past and as such they must adapt, or be left behind.

In order to preserve their creation myths and the services they rendered to the underlying foundation of their societies, their composition and format were subjected to a great deal of manipulation to retain their cultural significance during the passage of time. The existence of the cosmic conflict and the inherent violence it proliferated would not be able to uphold the Hebrew and Chinese traditions, for it would ultimately undermine their social, political and religious systems. There is much dissimilarity between the two traditions and it would do each a disservice to attempt to liken their features. However, their shared desire to eliminate the traces of conflict from the creation narratives bore surprising results, permitting the transference of their mythological tradition into the historical realm. It was mentioned at the outset of this thesis that the same premise or feature could be used to prove different and contrary opinions, a statement that is vindicated by the present discussion. The Chinese and Hebrew traditions employ several commonly known creation motifs in their quests to explain the origin of all things. Their connection to the other, however, is found not in the shared notion of a supreme being, but in the removal of the conflict driven by the whims and impulses of the gods, which ultimately made way for the peace in the chaos.

NOTES

1. All references from the Bible are quoted from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) copyright (1989) the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

2. References to the Hebrew form of the biblical texts are taken from *The Interlinear Bible* (2008) edited and translated by Jay P. Green Sr.

3. Chinese characters are written in simplified form with the exception of book titles and primary references, which are rendered in the traditional script.

4. All Chinese terms have been rendered in standard pinyin, and have been included in square brackets in quotations where older systems were used. This is to ensure no confusion regarding the subject matter.

APPENDIX I – HEBREW CREATION MYTHS

2.2 IN THE BEGINNING (GENESIS 1:1-2 NRSV)

1 **1** In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, **2** the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

2.3 "AND GOD SAID…" (GENESIS 1:3-2:4A NRSV)

3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. **4** And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." **7** So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. **8** God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. **11** Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, **15** and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. **16** God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. **17** God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, **18** to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." **21** So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. **22** God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." **23** And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. **25** God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

27 So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the

fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." **29** God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. **30** And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. **31** God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

2 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. **2** And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. **3** So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

2.4 THE GARDEN OF EDEN (GENESIS 2:4B-3:24 NRSV)

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, **5** when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; **6** but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— **7** then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. **8** And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. **9** Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. **11** The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; **12** and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. **13** The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. **14** The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. **16** And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." **19** So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. **20** The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. **21** So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. **22** And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. **23** Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."
24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. **25** And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

3 1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the

garden'?" **2** The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; **3** but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" **4** But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; **5** for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,[l] knowing good and evil." **6** So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. **7** Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

8 They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" **10** He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." **11** He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" **12** The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." **13** Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." **14** The Lord God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.
15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said,"I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." **17** And to the man he said,

"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; **18** thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. **19** By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

20 The man named his wife Eve,[n] because she was the mother of all living. **21** And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man[o] and for his wife, and clothed them.

22 Then the Lord God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— **23** therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. **24** He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

3.1 THE PROPHET (ISAIAH 51:1-16 NRSV)

51 **1** Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the Lord. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.
2 Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many.
3 For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.
4 Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out

from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples.
5 I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope.
6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.
7 Listen to me, you who know righteousness, you people who have my teaching in your hearts; do not fear the reproach of others, and do not be dismayed when they revile you.
8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but my deliverance will be forever, and my salvation to all generations.
9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon?
10 Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over?
11 So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
12 I, I am he who comforts you; why then are you afraid of a mere mortal who must die, a human being who fades like grass?
13 You have forgotten the Lord, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. You fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction. But where is the fury of the oppressor?
14 The oppressed shall speedily be released; they shall not die and go down to the Pit, nor shall they lack bread.
15 For I am the Lord your God, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord of hosts is his name.
16 I have put my words in your mouth, and hidden you in the shadow of my hand, stretching out the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth, and saying to Zion, "You are my people."

3.2.1 ETHAN THE EZRAHITE (PSALM 89 NRSV)

89 **1** I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
2 I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
3 You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David:
4 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"
Selah
5 Let the heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones.
6 For who in the skies can be compared to the Lord? Who among the heavenly beings is like the Lord,
7 a God feared in the council of the holy ones, great and awesome above all that are around him?
8 O Lord God of hosts, who is as mighty as you, O Lord? Your faithfulness surrounds you.
9 You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.
10 You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.
11 The heavens are yours, the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it—you have founded them.
12 The north and the south—you created them; Tabor and Hermon joyously praise your name.
13 You have a mighty arm; strong is your hand, high your right hand.
14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

15 Happy are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance;
16 they exult in your name all day long, and extol your righteousness.
17 For you are the glory of their strength; by your favor our horn is exalted.
18 For our shield belongs to the Lord, our king to the Holy One of Israel.
19 Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people.
20 I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him;
21 my hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.
22 The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him.
23 I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.
24 My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted.
25 I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.
26 He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'
27 I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.
28 Forever I will keep my steadfast love for him, and my covenant with him will stand firm.
29 I will establish his line forever, and his throne as long as the heavens endure.
30 If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my ordinances,
31 if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments,
32 then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with scourges;
33 but I will not remove from him my steadfast love, or be false to my faithfulness.
34 I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips.
35 Once and for all I have sworn by my holiness; I will not lie to David.
36 His line shall continue forever, and his throne endure before me like the sun.
37 It shall be established forever like the moon, an enduring witness in the skies."
Selah
38 But now you have spurned and rejected him; you are full of wrath against your anointed.
39 You have renounced the covenant with your servant; you have defiled his crown in the dust.
40 You have broken through all his walls; you have laid his strongholds in ruins.
41 All who pass by plunder him; he has become the scorn of his neighbors.
42 You have exalted the right hand of his foes; you have made all his enemies rejoice.
43 Moreover, you have turned back the edge of his sword, and you have not supported him in battle.
44 You have removed the scepter from his hand, and hurled his throne to the ground.
45 You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with shame.
Selah
46 How long, O Lord? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire?
47 Remember how short my time is—for what vanity you have created all mortals!
48 Who can live and never see death? Who can escape the power of Sheol? *Selah*
49 Lord, where is your steadfast love of old, which by your faithfulness you swore to David?
50 Remember, O Lord, how your servant is taunted; how I bear in my bosom the insults of the peoples,
51 with which your enemies taunt, O Lord, with which they taunted the footsteps of your anointed.
52 Blessed be the Lord forever. Amen and Amen.

3.2.2 A KING IN AWE (PSALM 104 NRSV)

104 **1** Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty,
2 wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
3 you set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your

chariot, you ride on the wings of the wind,
4 you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.
5 You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.
6 You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.
7 At your rebuke they flee; at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.
8 They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.
9 You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.
10 You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills,
11 giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst.
12 By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.
13 From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work.
14 You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use, to bring forth food from the earth,
15 and wine to gladden the human heart, oil to make the face shine, and bread to strengthen the human heart.
16 The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
17 In them the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the fir trees.
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the coneys.
19 You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.
20 You make darkness, and it is night, when all the animals of the forest come creeping out.
21 The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.
22 When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens.
23 People go out to their work and to their labor until the evening.
24 O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.
25 Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great.
26 There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.
27 These all look to you to give them their food in due season;
28 when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.
29 When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
30 When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.
31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works—
32 who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.
33 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.
34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord.
35 Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!

3.3 THE SUFFERER (JOB 38-41 NRSV)

38 **1** Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:

2 "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?
3 Gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me.
4 "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.
5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?
6 On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone
7 when the morning stars sang together and

all the heavenly beings shouted for joy?
8 "Or who shut in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?—
9 when I made the clouds its garment, and thick darkness its swaddling band,
10 and prescribed bounds for it, and set bars and doors,
11 and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped'?
12 "Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place,
13 so that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?
14 It is changed like clay under the seal, and it is dyed like a garment.
15 Light is withheld from the wicked, and their uplifted arm is broken.
16 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep?
17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?
18 Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this.
19 "Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and where is the place of darkness,
20 that you may take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home?
21 Surely you know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!
22
"Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,
23 which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war?
24 What is the way to the place where the light is distributed, or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?
25 "Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain, and a way for the thunderbolt,
26 to bring rain on a land where no one lives, on the desert, which is empty of human life,
27 to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground put forth grass?
28 "Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew?
29 From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven?
30 The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.
31 "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?
32 Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children?
33 Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you establish their rule on the earth?
34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that a flood of waters may cover you?
35 Can you send forth lightnings, so that they may go and say to you, 'Here we are'?
36 Who has put wisdom in the inward parts, or given understanding to the mind?
37 Who has the wisdom to number the clouds? Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens,
38 when the dust runs into a mass and the clods cling together?
39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
40 when they crouch in their dens, or lie in wait in their covert?
41 Who provides for the raven its prey, when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for lack of food?
39 "Do you know when the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer?
2 Can you number the months that they fulfill, and do you know the time when they give birth,
3 when they crouch to give birth to their offspring, and are delivered of their young?
4 Their young ones become strong, they grow up in the open; they go forth, and do not return to them.
5 "Who has let the wild ass go free? Who has loosed the bonds of the swift ass,
6 to which I have given the steppe for its home, the salt land for its dwelling place?
7 It scorns the tumult of the city; it does not hear the shouts of the driver.
8 It ranges the mountains as its pasture, and it searches after every green thing.
9 "Is the wild ox willing to serve you? Will it spend the night at your crib?
10 Can you tie it in the furrow with ropes, or will it harrow the valleys after you?
11 Will you depend on it because its strength is great, and will you hand over your labor to it?
12 Do you have faith in it that it will return, and bring your grain to your threshing

floor?
13 "The ostrich's wings flap wildly, though its pinions lack plumage.
14 For it leaves its eggs to the earth, and lets them be warmed on the ground,
15 forgetting that a foot may crush them, and that a wild animal may trample them.
16 It deals cruelly with its young, as if they were not its own; though its labor should be in vain, yet it has no fear;
17 because God has made it forget wisdom, and given it no share in understanding.
18 When it spreads its plumes aloft, it laughs at the horse and its rider.
19 "Do you give the horse its might? Do you clothe its neck with mane?
20 Do you make it leap like the locust? Its majestic snorting is terrible.
21 It paws violently, exults mightily; it goes out to meet the weapons.
22 It laughs at fear, and is not dismayed; it does not turn back from the sword.
23 Upon it rattle the quiver, the flashing spear, and the javelin.
24 With fierceness and rage it swallows the ground; it cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet.
25 When the trumpet sounds, it says 'Aha!' From a distance it smells the battle, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.
26 "Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and spreads its wings toward the south?
27 Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes its nest on high?
28 It lives on the rock and makes its home in the fastness of the rocky crag.
29 From there it spies the prey; its eyes see it from far away.
30 Its young ones suck up blood; and where the slain are, there it is."

40 **1** And the Lord said to Job:

2 "Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Anyone who argues with God must respond."

Job's Response to God

3 Then Job answered the Lord:

4 "See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth.
5 I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but will proceed no further."

God's Challenge to Job

6 Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:

7 "Gird up your loins like a man; I will question you, and you declare to me.
8 Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be justified?
9 Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?
10 "Deck yourself with majesty and dignity; clothe yourself with glory and splendor.
11 Pour out the overflowings of your anger, and look on all who are proud, and abase them.
12 Look on all who are proud, and bring them low; tread down the wicked where they stand.
13 Hide them all in the dust together; bind their faces in the world below.
14 Then I will also acknowledge to you that your own right hand can give you victory.
15 "Look at Behemoth, which I made just as I made you; it eats grass like an ox.
16 Its strength is in its loins, and its power in the muscles of its belly.
17 It makes its tail stiff like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are knit together.
18 Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like bars of iron.
19 "It is the first of the great acts of God—only its Maker can approach it with the sword.
20 For the mountains yield food for it where all the wild animals play.
21 Under the lotus plants it lies, in the covert of the reeds and in the marsh.
22 The lotus trees cover it for shade; the willows of the wadi surround it.
23 Even if the river is turbulent, it is not frightened; it is confident though Jordan rushes against its mouth.
24 Can one take it with hooks or pierce its nose with a snare?

41 **1** "Can you draw out Leviathan with a fishhook, or press down its tongue with a cord?
2 Can you put a rope in its nose, or pierce its jaw with a hook?
3 Will it make many supplications to you? Will it speak soft words to you?
4 Will it make a covenant with you to be taken as your servant forever?
5 Will you play with it as with a bird, or will you put it on leash for your girls?

6 Will traders bargain over it? Will they divide it up among the merchants?
7 Can you fill its skin with harpoons, or its head with fishing spears?
8 Lay hands on it; think of the battle; you will not do it again!
9 Any hope of capturing it will be disappointed; were not even the gods overwhelmed at the sight of it?
10 No one is so fierce as to dare to stir it up. Who can stand before it?
11 Who can confront it and be safe?—under the whole heaven, who?
12 "I will not keep silence concerning its limbs, or its mighty strength, or its splendid frame.
13 Who can strip off its outer garment? Who can penetrate its double coat of mail?
14 Who can open the doors of its face? There is terror all around its teeth.
15 Its back is made of shields in rows, shut up closely as with a seal.
16 One is so near to another that no air can come between them.
17 They are joined one to another; they clasp each other and cannot be separated.
18 Its sneezes flash forth light, and its eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn.
19 From its mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap out.
20 Out of its nostrils comes smoke, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes.
21 Its breath kindles coals, and a flame comes out of its mouth.
22 In its neck abides strength, and terror dances before it.
23 The folds of its flesh cling together; it is firmly cast and immovable.
24 Its heart is as hard as stone, as hard as the lower millstone.
25 When it raises itself up the gods are afraid; at the crashing they are beside themselves.
26 Though the sword reaches it, it does not avail, nor does the spear, the dart, or the javelin.
27 It counts iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood.
28 The arrow cannot make it flee; slingstones, for it, are turned to chaff.
29 Clubs are counted as chaff; it laughs at the rattle of javelins.
30 Its underparts are like sharp potsherds; it spreads itself like a threshing sledge on the mire.
31 It makes the deep boil like a pot; it makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
32 It leaves a shining wake behind it; one would think the deep to be white-haired.
33 On earth it has no equal, a creature without fear.
34 It surveys everything that is lofty; it is king over all that are proud."

3.4 THE WISE MAN (PROVERBS 8:22-31 NRSV)

22 The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago.
23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth—
26 when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil.
27 When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep,
29 when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,
31 rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

APPENDIX II – CHINESE CREATION MYTHS

7.1.1 THE COSMOGONY OF THE THIRD (HUAINANZI 3.1)

天墜未形， 馮馮翼翼， 洞洞灝灝， 故曰太昭。 道始生虛廓， 虛廓生宇宙， 宇宙生氣。 氣有涯垠，清陽者薄靡而為天，重濁者凝滯而為地。清妙之合專易，重濁之凝竭難，故天先成而地後定。天地之襲精為陰陽，陰陽之專精為四時，四時之散精為萬物。積陽之熱氣生火，火氣之精者為日；積陰之寒氣為水，水氣之精者為月；日月之淫為精者為星辰，天受日月星辰，地受水潦塵埃。

Before Heaven and earth had formed, there was a shapeless, dark expanse, a gaping mass; thus it was called the Great Glory. The Way [Tao] first came from vacant space, vacant space gave birth to the cosmos, the cosmos gave birth to the Breath, and the Breath had its limits. The limpid light [Yang] rose mistily and became the sky, the heavy turbidness congealed and became earth. Because rare limpidity easily condensed but heavy turbidity congealed with difficulty, the sky was the first to form, and the earth settled into shape later. The double essence of sky and earth became Yin and Yang, the complex essence of Yin and Yang became the four seasons, the diffuse essence of the four seasons became the ten thousand things in nature. The hot Breath of concentrated Yang gave birth to fire, the essence of the fiery Breath became the sun, and the cold Breath of the concentrated Yin became water, the essence of watery Breath became the moon. The excess from the sun and moon became the stars. The sky received the sun, moon, and stars, and the earth received rivers and rain water, and dust and silt.

(Birrell's translation: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, p. 32)

When Heaven and Earth were yet unformed, all was
ascending and flying,
diving and delving.
This it was called the Grand Inception.
The Grand Inception produced the Nebulous Void.
The Nebulous Void produced space-time;
space-time produced the original *qi*.
A boundary [divided] the original *qi*.
That which was pure and bright spread out to form Heaven;
that which was heavy and turbid congealed to form Earth.
It is easy for that which is pure and subtle to converge
but difficult for the heavy and turbid to congeal.
Therefore
Heaven was completed first;
Earth was fixed afterward.
The conjoined essences of Heaven and Earth produced yin and yang.
The supersessive essences of yin and yang caused the four seasons.
The scattered essences of the four seasons created the myriad things.
The hot *qi* of accumulated yang produced fire; the essence of fiery *qi* became the sun.
The cold *qi* of accumulated yin produced water; the essence of watery *qi* became the moon.
The overflowing qi of the essences of the sun and moon made the stars and planets.
To Heaven belong the sun, moon, stars and planets;
to Earth belong waters and floods, dust and soil.

(Major's translation: Major et al (2010) *The Huainanzi*, pp. 114-115)

7.1.2 THE ECHOES IN THE SEVENTH (HUANANZI 7.1)

古未有天地之時，惟像無形，窈窈冥冥，芒芠漠閔，澒蒙鴻洞，莫知其門。有二神混生，經天營地，孔乎莫知其所終極，滔乎莫知其所止息，於是乃別為陰陽，離為八極，剛柔相成，萬物乃形，煩氣為蟲，精氣為人。

Long ago, before Heaven and earth existed, there were only images but no forms, and all was dark and obscure, a vast desolation, a misty expanse, and nothing knew where its own portals were. There were two gods born out of chaos who wove the skies and designed the earth. So profound were they that no one knew their lowest deeps, and so exalted were they that no one knew where they came to rest. Then they divided into Yin and Yang and separated into the Eight Poles. The hard and soft formed, and the myriad living things took shape. The dense cloudy vapor became insects, and the pure vapor became humans.

(Birrell's translation: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, p. 32)

7.3 THE DISILLUSIONED SCHOLAR (CHUCI, TIANWEN 1-3)

曰：遂古之初，誰傳道之?
上下未形，何由考之?
冥昭瞢暗，誰能極之?
馮翼惟象，何以識之?
明明暗暗，惟時何為?
陰陽三合，何本何化?

圜則九重，孰營度之?
惟茲何功，孰初作之?
斡維焉系，天極焉加?
八柱何當，東南何虧?
九天之際，安放安屬?
隅隈多有，誰知其數?

天何所沓，十二焉分?
日月安屬，列星安陳?

It says: At the beginning of remote antiquity, who was there to pass down the tale of what happened? And before the upper and lower worlds were formed, how could they be explored? Since darkness and light were hidden and closed, who could fathom them? In the formless expanse when there were only images, how could anyone know what they were? When were brightness and gloom created? Yin and Yang comingled three times; what was their original form and how were they transformed? The round sphere and its ninefold gates, who planned and measured them? Whose achievement was this? Who first created them? How are Dipper's Ladle and the Cord fastened, and how were the poles of the sky linked? Where are the ends of the Nine Skies situated and where do they join up? Their corners and edges are so many that who knows what they number? How do the heavens coordinate their twelve divisions? How are the sun and moon connected? How are the serried stars arranged?

(Birrell's translation: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, p. 31)

7.3.1 THE TRANSFORMER (SANWU LIJI, CITED IN YIWEN LEIJU 1.2)

曰：天地混沌如雞子，盤古生其中，萬八千歲，天地開闢，陽清為天，陰濁為地，盤古在其中，一日九變，神於天，聖於地，天日高一丈，地日厚一丈，盤古日長一丈，如此萬八千歲，天數極高，地數極深，盤古極長，後乃有三皇，數起於一，立於三，成於五，盛於七，處於九，故天去地九萬里。

[It is said] Heaven and earth were in chaos like a chicken's egg, and P'an Ku [Pangu] was born in the middle of it. In Eighteen thousand years Heaven and Earth opened and unfolded. The limpid that was Yang became the heavens, the turbid that was Yin became the earth. P'an Ku [Pangu] lived within them, and in one day he went through nine transformations, become more divine than Heaven and wiser than earth. Each day the heavens rose ten feet higher, each day the earth grew ten feet thicker, and each day P'an Ku [Pangu] grew ten feet taller. And so it was that in eighteen thousand years the heavens reached their fullest height, earth reached its lowest depth, and P'an Ku [Pangu] became fully grown. Afterward, there were the Three Sovereign Divinities. Numbers began with one, were established with three, perfected by five, multiplied with seven, and fixed with nine. That is why Heaven is ninety thousand leagues from earth.

(Birrell's translation: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, pp. 32-33)

7.3.2 THE DYING GOD (WUYUN LINIANJI IN MA SU'S YISHI 1.2)

首生盤古垂死化身，氣成風雲，聲爲雷霆，左眼爲日，右眼爲月，四肢五體爲四極五嶽，血液爲江河，筋脈爲地里，肌肉爲田土，發爲星辰，皮膚爲草木，齒骨爲金石，精髓爲珠玉，汗流爲雨澤，身之諸蟲，因風所感，化爲黎甿。

When the first, P'an Ku [Pangu], was approaching death, his body was transformed. His breath became the wind and clouds; his voice became peals of thunder. His left eye became the sun; his right eye became the moon. His four limbs and five extremities became the four cardinal points and the five peaks. His blood and semen became water and rivers. His muscles and veins became the earth's arteries; his flesh became fields and land. His hair and beard became the stars; his bodily hair became plants and trees. His teeth and bones became metal and rock; his vital marrow became pearls and jade. His sweat and bodily fluids became streaming rain. All the mites on his body were touched by the wind and were turned into the black-haired people.

(Birrell's translation: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, p. 33)

7.4 THE LONELY SURVIVOR

SHANHAIJING 16

有神十人，名曰女媧之腸，化為神，處栗廣之野。橫道而處。

Nüwa's intestines transformed into ten gods of the same name (Nüwa's Intestines), they reside in the broad Chestnut wilderness across which they journeyed and settled.

(own translation)

CHUCI, TIANWEN 13

女媧有體孰制匠之， 舜服厥弟終然為害。

How was Nü Kua's [Nüwa's] body made? How did she ascend when she rose on high and became empress?
(Birrell's translation: Birrell, Anne (1999) *Chinese Mythology: An Introduction*, p. 35)

7.4.1 THE ARTIST (FENGSU TONGYI 1.83)

俗說： 天地開闢，未有人民，女媧摶黃土為人， 劇務力不暇供，乃引繩絙泥中，舉以為人，故富貴者，黃土人也，貧賤凡庸者，人也。

It is commonly said that when Heaven and earth had begun to open and unfold, there were not yet any human beings. Nüwa moulded yellow soil with her hands to create mankind. So severe was this matter, she had no more strength to offer it, therefore she pulled a cord through the mud and raised it up so that it could become men. For this reason, the rich and noble are those formed from the yellow earth, and the poor and lowly, the ordinary people, were those formed from the mud.
(own translation)

7.4.2 THE MOTHER (DUYI ZHI 3.51)

昔宇宙初開之時，只有女媧兄妹二人在崑崙山，而天下未有人民，議以為夫妻，又自羞恥。兄即與其妹上崑崙山，兄曰：天若遣我兄妹二人為夫妻而煙悉合；若不使，煙散。於是煙即合，其妹即來就兄，乃結草為扇，以障其面。今時人取婦執扇，象其事也。

When the universe was beginning to unfold, there existed only two people in the world; Nüwa and her older brother, and they lived on Mount Kunlun. There were not yet any [other] people [on earth], and for this reason they discussed becoming husband and wife, but [this idea] made them feel ashamed. Immediately, the [older] brother went up Mount Kunlun with his [younger] sister. He said: 'if Heaven would send us forth as husband and wife, let the smoke combine [together], if not, then let the smoke disperse. The smoke immediately combined, and as husband and wife [Nüwa] came to know her brother [intimately]. After this, they knotted grass together to make fans in order to shield their faces. [This is why] today, when a man takes a wife, they hold a fan in their hands as an image of what happened back then.

(own translation)

MYTH OF HUNDUN

南海的天帝叫儵（同倏），北海的天帝叫忽，中央的天帝叫混沌。儵和忽兩人常到混沌那裡去玩耍，混沌非常殷勤周到地招待他們。有一天，儵和忽商量怎樣報答混沌的恩德。他們說，每個人都有眼、耳、口、鼻等七竅，用來看呀，聽，吃東西呀等，偏那混沌一竅也沒有，未免美中不足，我們不如去替他鑿出幾竅來。於是就帶了斧頭、鑿子之類的工具，去給混沌開竅。一

天鑿一竅，七天鑿了七 竅，但是可憐的混沌，經他好朋友這麼一鑿，卻“嗚呼哀哉，壽終正寢”了。

The god of the Southern sea was named Shu, the god of the Northern sea was named Hu, the god of the middle was named Hundun. Both Shu and Hu often went to Hundun's place to enjoy themselves; Hundun was extremely polite and considerate when he received them. One day, Shu and Hu talked about how they could repay Hundun's kindness. They said, 'everyone has the seven openings of eyes, ears, mouth and nose to be used for seeing, hearing and eating, but contrary to that, Hundun has none of these. He is fine except for this flaw. It would be better for us to go and help him carve some openings onto his face.' So they brought an axe, and using a chisel as a tool, they went to give Hundun openings. Each day, they chiselled one opening onto his face, and by the seventh day had chiselled seven openings. But poor Hundun, for after he underwent the chiselling of his good friends, for he sadly came to his end and died.

(own translation)

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	*American Anthropologist*
AANS	*American Anthropologist, New Series*
ArA	*Artibus Asiae*
AE	*American Ethnologist*
AFS	*Asian Folklore Studies*
AJHCTS	*Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics, Third Series*
AJP	*The American Journal of Philology*
AJT	*The American Journal of Theology*
AJSLL	*The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
AM	*Asia Major*
AMTS	*Asia Major, Third Series*
ARA	*Annual Review of Anthropology*
AS	*Acta Sociologica*
AUSS	*Andrews University Seminary Studies*
BA	*The Biblical Archaeologist*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BCS	*Buddhist-Christian Studies*
BJS	*The British Journal of Sociology*
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BYUS	*Brigham Young University Studies*
BW	*The Biblical World*
CA	*Current Anthropology*
CH	*Church History*
CHR	*The Catholic Historical Review*
CI	*Critical Inquiry*
CJ	*The Classic Journal*
CP	*Classical Philology*
CLS	*Comparative Literature Studies*
CQNS	*The Classical Quarterly, New Series*
CSSH	*Comparative Studies in Society and History*
EC	*Early China*
ECS	*Eighteenth-Century Studies*
ESM	*Early Science and Medicine*
ET	*Evangelische Theologie*
EW	*East and West*
FPC	*Frontiers of Philosophy in China*
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
HR	*History of Religions*
HT	*History and Theory*
HTR	*The Harvard Theological Review*
IJHS	*Interntational Journal of Hindu Studies*
IS	*Islamic Studies*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*
JAF	*The Journal of American Folklore*
JAH	*Journal of Asian History*

JAIGBI	*The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JAPS	*A Journal for Ancient Philosophy and Science*
JAAR	*Journal of the American Academy of Religions*
JANESCU	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JARCE	*Journal of the American Research Centre in Egypt*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBR	*Journal of Bible and Religion*
JCP	*Journal of Chinese Philosophy*
JEA	*The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JETS	*Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
JFR	*Journal of Folklore Research*
JFSR	*Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*
JHeS	*The Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JHS	*Journal for the History of Science*
JISMOR	*Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions*
JL	*Journal of Linguistics*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JQR	*The Jewish Quarterly Review*
JQRNS	*The Jewish Quarterly Review, New Series*
JR	*The Journal of Religion*
JRAIGBI	*The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JRASTS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series*
JRH	*Journal of Religion and Health*
JSAL	*Journal of South Asian Literature*
JSBLE	*Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*
JSQ	*Jewish Quartely Studies*
JSS	*Jewish Social Studies*
JT	*Journal of Thought*
JTS	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
JTSNS	*The Journal of Theological Studies, New Series*
JWH	*Journal of World History*
LT	*Literature and Theology*
LQ	*The Library Quarterly*
MAS	*Modern Asian Studies*
MC	*Modern China*
MS	*Monumenta Serica*
MSJ	*The Master's Seminary Journal*
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
OA	*Oriental Archive*
ONS	*Orientalia Nova Series*
ONT	*The Old and New Testament*
ONTS	*The Old and New Testament Student*
OT	*Oral Tradition*
OTS	*The Old Testament Student*
PA	*Pacific Affairs*
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*

PAAPS	*Proceedings of the American Academy Philosophical Society*
PEW	*Philosophy East and West*
PT	*Poetics Today*
RAL	*Research in African Literatures*
RESS	*Revue européenne des sciences sociales*
RHR	*Revue d'histoire des religions*
RS	*Religious Studies*
SAIJ	*Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*
SAK	*Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur*
SCJ	*Stone-Campbell Journal*
SNS	*Science, New Series*
SPP	*Sino-Platonic Papers*
TB	*Tyndale Bulletin*
TJ	*Trinity Journal*
TS	*Theological Studies*
TP	*T'oung Pao*
TPSS	*T'oung Pao, Second Series*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTS	*Vetus Testamentum Supplements*
WMATN	*Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten Testament (Neukirchen)*
WQ	*The Wilson Quarterly*
WZKM	*Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
YX	*Yanjing xuebao* 燕京學報
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZJ	*Zhongzhou Journal*

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