ISSN 2754-2416

Interdisciplinary Discourses, Education and Analysis (IDEA) Journal

London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research

ISSUE 1
MYTH: INTERSECTIONS AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

July 2021

Table of Contents

Editorial Note

Gabriele Biotti

With this first issue on "Myth: Intersections and Interdisciplinary Perspectives", *IDEA - Interdisciplinary Discourses, Education and Analysis*, launched by the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, starts its publications.

The journal's editorial project is the definition of a scholarly work on interdisciplinary subjects. The interdisciplinary approach, which we firmly believe has constituted in recent years a decisive turning point in the academic work, finds in the humanities research field a perfect space of application. *IDEA* will explore in depth the relations and intersections that can be defined in this perspective. *IDEA* is an online academic journal dedicated to the scholarly exploration of some of the riches and most fascinating subjects in an interdisciplinary perspective. The journal will address a variety of disciplines in the humanities, such as literary studies, film studies, representations, identities and experience, memory studies, historiography and anthropology.

This first issue is dedicated to myth, constituting a strong basis for our critical understanding of the world, reality, human relations and dynamics, the meaning of actions and human thought. The issue presents six articles federated by a common element: the approach to myth as a field making possible an interdisciplinary approach to relations, culture, ideas, creations, storytelling and beliefs as anthropological concepts. The contributions also share an interest in finding new, enriching ideas in the academic approach to myth, mythology and the study of stories and traditions.

Myths are stories in societies and communities made possible by the act of telling them. The community itself finds something of its identity in myths and the ways they enact, to the present day, to generate knowledge of the profound movement of inner life. The choice to approach myth in an interdisciplinary perspective can be explained by its fundamental presence in contemporary thought as a form shaping our social identity.

By starting our itinerary from myth, we aim to define a first basis of an academic approach related to the core function of storytelling, invention and oral traditions, but also the actualization and re-enactment of ancient stories, legends and traditions. We believe that myths can still be objects of interpretation according to what concerns our position towards the meanings they carry with them. The interdisciplinary perspective on myth and mythology helps us to clarify their essential function their reception in different historical and geographical contexts; myth, scrutinized in its functions of storytelling, but also as a moment of elaboration providing a production of knowledge, can be questioned and approached, today, under the light of a form still operating in many cultural products, texts, readings and experiences. In this sense, we are also interested in the identities that myths can acquire in our contemporary space of reception and analysis.

According to Robert A. Segal (2015), myth should be considered as simply stories about something significant, that can take place in the past, present or future. In this sense, myth accomplishes something significant and expresses its plenitude for those adhering to it, even if, as Segal argues, we should leave open, in a fruitful and productive way, what that accomplishment might be. Myths say something about this aiming for an accomplishment, a definition, a coding of human experience, but at the same time also express a process of defining and shaping mentalities in human civilizations. Myths are found everywhere humankind has needed to answer important questions.

By approaching myths as stories by which we live by, and by which our contemporary experience is being shaped, we can also develop a scholarly itinerary about the multiple and multifaceted permanences of the ancient in the contemporary: how do we still reckon with signs and texts from other periods? Why, and in which ways, do they still interact with our world today? And why study myths, in the actual research context? If our cultural perception is structured to an important extent on stories and their movements and migrations between different eras, we need to emphasize the fact that myths, traditions and stories ask to be read under the light of their psychological nature of elements shaping our experience, our unconscious knowledge, and our approach to the inner world. Coding myths and defining mythologies as symbolic moments of expression represent a challenge worth undertaking and eventually starting to question again, a complex discourse situated somewhere between cultural codes, rituals, textuality, the unconscious, the pursuit of knowledge and the will to explain by telling stories.

Scholars from various academic backgrounds and research experiences have proposed their readings on some aspects concerning myths. The issue approaches Yuval Noah Harari's book *Homo*

Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow in which the author speculates on: the consequences of human activities connected with scientific and technological advances, between myths of creation and technological development (Tamar Mebuke); myths as an important component of religion and, for this reason, constructions deeply embedded in our psyche, so to direct, guide and formulate our actions, attitude and worldview by providing role models, prescribing certain behaviours and actions and tabooing others, between social discourse and gendered spaces (Hari Priya Pathak); in a Jungian perspective, the strict connection between literary creation, religion and psychotherapy, in a cross-cultural appreciation of human personality (Roula-Maria Dib); a critical analysis of some allegories of the Georgian poetic epic poem "Vepkhistqaosani" ("The Knight in the Panther's Skin," literally translated as "One in the Tiger's Skin"), a masterpiece of Georgian literature, written at the turn of the thirteenth century (Teimuraz Chanturishvili); the gift and meaning of creation in Ridley Scott's film *Prometheus* (2012), analysed as a re-proposition of the myth of Prometheus in a science-fiction and technological context (Bogna Starczewska); and Julius Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic Wars and the tensions between telling history and myth shaping, in the context of ancient Roman history when Caesar's political power was establishing itself against the conquered peoples and their otherness (Sara Arroja-Schürmann). This diversity expresses richness and also makes evident the point to which myth is, still today, an element to be discussed, questioned and approached from distinct focal points. As an interdisciplinary basis, stories and storytelling represent the strategic-symbolic repository by which we can move interrogating texts, traditions, visions of the world and conceptions of life and otherness among other subjects.

References

Armstrong, Karen. 2010. *A Short History of Myth*. Toronto: Knopf Canada.

Basile, Giovanni. 2013. *Il mito: uno strumento per la conoscenza del mondo. Saggio introduttivo attorno all'ermeneutica mitica*. Milan: Mimesis.

Meletinsky, Eleazar M. 2014. *The Poetics of Myth*. Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor & Francis.

Ricœur, Paul. 1974. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, edited by Don Ihde, translated by Willis Domingo et al. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

———. 1984, 1985 and 1988. *Time and Narrative*, 3 vols., translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Segal, Robert A. 2015. *Myth. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Simpson, Jacqueline, and Roud, Steve, eds. 2003. "Myths." In *A Dictionary of English Folklore*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

In the Image of God?

Tamar Mebuke

Being created in the image of God, the human has assumed the role of co-creator. The question is whether all our creations are godly and godlike. Do we always think about the consequences of our creations? According to Professor Yuval Noah Harari, the author of *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (Harari, 2017), scientific and technological progress has bred unrestricted ambitions in humans. Nowadays, advances in the development of artificial intelligence threaten to replace natural laws by reasonable, though artificial ones, which will not only control and direct our actions but change the structure of our society and values we cherish, and turn humans into a "useless class" living a meaningless life, into superfluous beings who will not be able to protect themselves and their planet against their own creation. The challenge is not to stop our development but to think about its direction and consequences.

Prof. Harari maintains that one of the reasons why humankind acquired its unique position on Earth is its ability to believe in collective myths. So, supposedly, that is where we have to look for possible solutions.

Mythological thinking, as the oldest form of symbolic language, has been used by humans to model and interpret the outer world, society and role of humans within them. Friedrich Nietzsche's ideas (Nietzsche, 2007: 59–111) about the life-saving role of a mythologizing "philosophy of life" give grounds to organize forms of cognition as mythopoetic (in opposition to the analytical cognition of life). At the basis of neo-mythologizm is the cyclic concept of the world, or "eternal rotation." In a world that is governed by the principle of constant repetition, we can discern in any event of the present its past and future incarnations (Lotman, Mints and Meletinsky, 1982: 61–62).

Myths, being the main source of archetypes, offer an explanation of religious or supernatural phenomena, as well as many forces of nature (Scott, 1979: 190). They are collective dreams, the outcome of a kind of aesthetic play (Lévi-Strauss, 1963: 206-208) that, according to Joseph Campbell (1965: 4), have a fourfold function within human society: metaphysical, awakening a sense of awe before the mystery of being; cosmological, explaining the shape of the universe; sociological, validating and supporting the existing social order; and pedagogical, guiding the individual through the stages of life.

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963: 209–210), who considered myth as belonging to the Saussurian categories of langue and parole, distinguished mythemes – large constitutional units in which definite functions are ascribed a certain character. Myth, as a historical narration about the past, is diachronic and not inverted in time, as a means of explaining the present and future – it is synchronous and inverted in time.

Carl Gustav Jung treated mythology as a reflection of the common to all people "collective unconscious," an encyclopaedia of archetypes. In psychology, the concept of archetype is defined as a collectively-inherited unconscious idea, pattern of thought, image, etc. that is universally present in individual psyches. In literary studies, it is treated as a constantly recurring symbol or motif (Scott, 1979: 21). The origins of the archetypal hypothesis date back to Plato, whose ideas concerned pure mental forms that were imprinted in the soul before it was born. They were collective, as they embodied the fundamental characteristics of a phenomenon, rather than its specific peculiarities. In *The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature* (1971: 204), Jung defined archetypes as mythological motives, innate, universal prototypes for ideas that may be used to interpret observations in the world that is governed by the principle of "eternal rotation."

One of the main principles of any mythology is the demarcation of gods and people, which indicates the need for a compromise between the arbitrariness of human will and the reaction of the outer world. The dilemma is connected with the main theological question of God's existence.

One of the myths which reveals ambiguous relations between the human and God is about Prometheus. "Its transfer and interpretation started with Hesiod and have continued up to our days since through this myth Western humanity has been interpreting itself in its cultural self-understanding. It is a myth of European fate and history" (Gadamer, 1991: 242).

Prometheus, the fighter for human progress, dared to challenge God himself. The fire, that he stole for humans, used to come to the Earth through lightning exclusively at the will of the thunderer, and humans learnt to obtain and keep it. This fact was regarded by the Olympians as a sin, a fall from the godly, that gave a start to a blasphemous transformation of nature into the area of human activity, into the world where the human dominates.

Prometheus also taught humans numerous arts and crafts, or the basis of culture. Hence the duality of his image as benefactor and criminal, and as the creator of something new and advanced, leading to the rejection of existing laws. "Nevertheless, through this myth Western civilization has been trying to understand itself in its cultural self-consciousness" (Gadamer, 1991: 242–255).

As Prometheus is a reflection of human cultural acts in myth, every meaningful change in the history of human self-consciousness has caused its new interpretation. Starting with Plato's dialogue "Protagoras," where humankind turned its new powerful knowledge against itself, threatening to destroy itself with wars, Prometheus's image has been treated as that of an insurgent rightly punished by God, as a deceiver of gods, who put the tendency to mutiny into the human, and cared more about flesh than soul, whose image is close to those of the fallen angels and Azazel from the Book of Enoch who also taught humankind to use fire and tools; or the image of the apocalyptic beast that gave man fire from heaven; or was compared with the myth about the fall of the human (Nietzsche, 1999); or a reflection of the rebellious spirit and faith in self-sacrifice for humanity's victory over evil, a struggle in which the human appears as a rival, challenging God and fate (Byron, Shelley), or as a predecessor of Christ. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book I, Ch. II, 80–85), Prometheus mixes clay with water to create the human in the likeness of gods, a motive which has become significant in the subsequent development of Prometheus's image.

However, the myth implies one more cultural context. Stated by Aristotle and Plato, the notion of mimesis suggests the existence of order in the world. Significance of the world order and the existence of the spiritual force standing behind it have always been important for humans. According to Plato, it required Zeus's interference and the gift of reverence and justice that gave people the notions of statehood, order, moral law, shame and truth.

The ambiguity of Prometheus's image found a more comprehensive reflection in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's poems "Prometheus" and "Pandora," where he is depicted as a creative and rebellious spirit who, rejected by God, defies him, and asserts himself; he is a symbol of a self-confident genius, the one who trusts his own power to transform the world. However, in Goethe's ode the creation of people is seen as an image-creating power of an artist who, like a god, possesses productive force of limitless omnipotence. Creativity, implying a contradiction between omnipotence in imagination and restriction of its objectification arising from the limits set by natural laws, was inherent to Prometheus who was not only the daring founder of his own world, but also the one whose flesh was constantly tortured by Zeus's eagle. This suffering is perceived as coming from not only God, but the human themselves. Consequently, Prometheus becomes a symbol of the human's torture by their own conscience, a symbol of the tragedy of consciousness.

Goethe's interpretation of the symbol of Prometheus found a reconciling conclusion in the fragment "Pandora," where Prometheus is shown as the titan of persistent, indefatigable activity; but this activity is restrained by the laws of the outer, spiritual worlds.

> Remember, the desired is what earth
> wishes,
> But what is best to give is known in
> heaven.

It required the greatness of Goethe to see the balance between human creative activity and the laws of the universe, the ability that may help people to overcome and restrain themselves.

Nevertheless the story of Prometheus is as incomplete as human history, as can be seen in Harari's *Homo Deus*, which is an attempt to trace the main trends of human development and evolution of creative thought to their logical consequences. The book gives us a glimpse of the dreams and nightmares that will shape the 21st century. Harari's predictions are dystopian and disturbing, though at first sight they seem to verge on science fiction. On the whole, it is a timely warning for humans to think about their future and the possible results of their activities.

As a historian, Harari gives a retrospective overview of the main problems that have faced humankind during its existence: famine, plague and war. In the last few decades, if not completely solved, they have been transformed into manageable challenges. Though Harari sounds overly optimistic about the progress humankind has made (especially taking into account the present COVID-19 epidemic), infectious diseases are now more manageable than they used to be. Even though threats are still possible, we all hope that "in the arms race between doctors and germs, doctors run faster, and if an epidemic nevertheless gets out of control, it is due to human incompetence rather than divine anger. It is therefore likely that major epidemics will continue to endanger humankind in the future only if humankind itself creates them, in the service of some ruthless ideology" (2017: 13).

After World War II, the Law of the Jungle has become less important, as the invention of nuclear weapons has turned war between superpowers into a mad act of collective suicide. Meanwhile, the global economy has been transformed from a material-based economy into a knowledge-based economy. The main sources of wealth, material assets, have been replaced by the main source of wealth, knowledge, which cannot be acquired by war. If incidences of famine, plague and war are decreasing, something is bound to replace them on the human agenda. One of the goals will be to protect humankind and the planet from the dangers inherent in human power. Constant economic growth destabilizes the ecological equilibrium of the planet and may lead to ecological catastrophe. However, humans' greed and limitless ambition are pushing them to set more daring aims. Harari fears that, having secured unprecedented levels of prosperity, health and harmony, humanity's next targets are likely to be immortality, happiness and divinity (2017: 16).

The fact that the modern human has rejected God has led to the transformation of the human's self-perception and destiny. We are now living in a homocentric world where "the right to life" has been transformed into a fight with death that violates this right, and is now treated, not as a natural phenomenon, but as a crime against humanity that ought to be defeated, or solved as a technical problem. The right to the pursuit of happiness has been transformed into the right to happiness, and anything which makes us dissatisfied is treated as a violation of this basic human right. However, science maintains that happiness is determined by our biochemical system; in this case "we can only ensure lasting contentment by artificially exciting this system" (2017: 26). Hence the increased number of drug-related offenders, of people drinking alcohol to forget, smoking marijuana to feel soothed, taking cocaine and methamphetamines to be sharp and confident, or taking ecstasy to experience ecstatic sensations. "What some people hope to get by studying, working or raising a family, others try to obtain far more easily through the right dosage of molecules. This is an existential threat to the social and economic order" (2017: 26–27).

The modern striving for happiness is likely to involve re-engineering *Homo sapiens* so that it can enjoy everlasting pleasure by means of upgrading people's bodies, which can be achieved with the help of biological engineering, cyborg engineering and the engineering of non-organic beings (2017: 29), which will merge the organic body with non-organic devices that will navigate our bloodstream and diagnose problems and repair them, so that a cyborg will be able to enjoy abilities far beyond those of any organic body. The process of upgrading *Homo sapiens* into *Homo Deus* will be gradual, merging people with robots and computers in the process, "until our descendants will realize that they are no longer the kind of animal they used to be" (2017: 32).

Harari fears that the attempt to upgrade *Homo sapiens* will change the world beyond recognition in this century. When people realize how fast they are rushing towards the unknown, their reaction will be to hit the brakes and slowdown, which might become impossible for two reasons: nobody knows where the brakes are, and, though some experts are familiar with developments in one field, such as artificial intelligence, nanotechnology or genetics, no one is an expert on everything, and consequently no one is capable of seeing the full picture (2017: 33).

The same technologies that can upgrade humans into gods might also make humans redundant.

Harari reminds us that *Homo sapiens*, though it prefers to forget the fact, is an animal. Super-intelligent cyborgs may treat ordinary humans just like humans treated less intelligent animals. Another fact that the human tends to forget is that, though theist religions sanctified the great gods, they sanctified humans as well. *Homo sapiens* is accustomed to considering itself as the centre of the universe, judging everything that happens according to its impact on itself. Human superiority was established on the basis that, of all the animals on Earth, only *Homo sapiens* has a conscious mind, which is shaped by subjective experiences. Robots and computers have no consciousness because they feel nothing and wish for nothing. However, modern scientific theories maintain that sensations and emotions are biochemical data-processing algorithms (2017: 66).

Another change, as envisaged by Harari, is connected with the fact that the common myths, which unite and organize people, may be replaced by scientific theories, that are also a kind of myth. Religion, which allows society to define common norms and values that regulate human behaviour, might be replaced by scientific myths (2017: 107). This trend has been prepared by a deal between science and a modern form of religion – humanism. As homocentrism led to atheism and the rejection of belief in a great cosmic plan, life nowadays is seen as having "no script, no playwright, no director, no producer, and no meaning. For a modern man the universe is a blind and purposeless process, full of sound and fury but signifying nothing" (2017: 119). Modern life consists of a constant pursuit of power within a universe devoid of meaning. Humanism has offered people the illusion of power, on the condition

that they renounce their belief in a great cosmic plan that gives meaning to life. It expects human experiences to give meaning to the great cosmos. "Liberalism," as a branch of humanism, declares that in politics the voter knows best. Liberal economics states that the customer is always right. "Liberal aesthetics announces that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. Liberal ethics encourages us: if it feels good – do it! Liberal education teaches: think for yourself! Humanism has also offered a new formula for ethical knowledge: Knowledge = Experiences × Sensitivity" (2017: 136, 141, 148). Experience, a subjective phenomenon, includes personal sensations, emotions and thoughts, while sensitivity implies paying attention to your sensations, emotions and thoughts and letting them influence you. However, in the near future, technology is likely to be able to calculate and design our feelings, undermining not only the liberal belief in free will, but also the belief in individualism by treating the human as a combination of biochemical algorithms. These trends may have unpredictable consequences when artificial intelligence outperforms humans in most cognitive tasks, and the development of nanotechnology and regenerative medicine starts changing the social structures and family relations of humans. According to Harari, the problem is aggravated by the fact that, in spite of an immense advance in artificial intelligence, there has been no advance in artificial consciousness, which means that intelligence is decoupling from consciousness.

The important question of intelligence or consciousness is already inadequate for large corporations, for which intelligence is mandatory but consciousness is optional. If robots have already replaced workers in some manual jobs, highly intelligent algorithms will replace people in white-collar occupations. Harari argues that the idea that humans will always have some unique abilities beyond the reach of non-conscious algorithms is just wishful thinking. In his opinion, the current scientific answer to this pipe dream can be summarized in three simple principles: "1. Organisms are algorithms. 2. Algorithmic calculations are not affected by the materials from which you build the calculator. 3. Hence there is no reason to think that organic algorithms can do things that non-organic algorithms will never be able to replicate or surpass" (2017: 187–188).

Consequently, in the twenty-first century we might witness the creation of a new massive class comprising people devoid of any economic, political or even artistic value, who contribute nothing to society.

It might be possible to feed and support the useless people without any effort on their side. But how to make them occupied and content? Harari suggests one, ironic, solution – drugs and computer games.

Another threat to humankind is the possibility that once artificial intelligence surpasses human intelligence it might simply exterminate humankind for fear that humankind would turn against it and turn it off, for it would be extremely difficult for humans to control the motivation of a system smarter than themselves.

A further threat is connected with the fact that while the system might still need humans, it will not need individuals as it will understand humans better than they understand themselves, and will make most of the important decisions for them. The system will consequently deprive individuals of their authority and freedom. In this way, such corporations as Google, Microsoft, and Facebook will gain control over humankind, turning people into integral parts of a huge, global, all-knowing network from which it will be impossible to disconnect, as disconnection will mean death (2017: 193–200).

Though some people are horrified by this development, millions willingly welcome it. Even today, many people give up their privacy and individuality by recording and uploading their actions, conducting their lives online, and panic if connection to the internet is interrupted for a few minutes. This shifting of authority from humans to algorithms is already happening around us. Though a small, privileged elite of upgraded humans that make the most important decisions in the world will still exist, the majority of humans will constitute an inferior class, dominated by computer algorithms and the new supermen. As this will destroy the basis of liberal ideology, a new religion is bound to fill the resulting gap to guide the subsequent evolution of our "godlike" descendants, which is likely to come from Silicon Valley and have "little to do with God, and everything to do with technology" (2017: 205).

Harari assumes that this new form of religion will be Dataism, which venerates neither gods nor human, worships data and regards the universe as consisting of data flows, in which the value of any phenomenon or entity is determined by its contribution to data processing. From a Dataist standpoint, all human species are a single data-processing system, for which individual humans serve the role of chips. This system will be constantly modified in order to achieve a more perfect data-processing system called the Internet-of-All-Things. Once this mission is accomplished, *Homo sapiens* will vanish as, according to Dataism, it is an obsolete algorithm (2017: 221)

Harari's book enables us to think in more imaginative ways about our future, taking into account a wide spectrum of options. Nobody really knows what life will be like even in 20 years from now as the world is changing faster than ever. As Harari rightly states, "We are akin to the inhabitants of a small, isolated island who have just invented the first boat, and are about to set sail without a map or even a destination" (2017: 230). The growing inequality and disruption of the job market are the main challenges at present. However, in the long run all other problems and developments are overshadowed by three interlinked processes that we had better think about in advance:

1. 1. Are organisms really just algorithms, and is life really just data processing?
2. 2. What's more valuable – intelligence or consciousness?
3. 3. What will happen to society, politics and daily life when non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms know us better than we know ourselves? (2017: 230).

The book *Homo Deus* is daring and thought-provoking as it challenges our faith in human reason, values and experience. It calls to mind the first science-fiction novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* written by Mary Shelley in which the protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, carried away by the study of science, devises a plan to recreate and reanimate a dead body as a scientific experiment. After succeeding with his ambition, Victor feels guilty that he has brought a new life into the world with no provisions for taking care of the "monster." He runs away in fear and disgust from his creation and his conscience. The monster follows Victor in the vain hope of becoming at least his mate. Having taught himself to read and write, the monster accidentally comes across a notebook and letters that were lost by Victor from which he learns his story and decides to take revenge on his creator's family for the injury and sorrow he endures from people.

It seems that the excitement of creation and brainwork gets scientists so carried away with the desire to achieve their aim that they rarely think about what might follow, and not only in science-fiction stories. A classic example is the work of the best minds in the three leading states of the world at the end of World War II with the creation of the Atom Bomb. In the desire to be the first, they failed to think about the consequences of their creation until two bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

How can the striving for creation be balanced with the laws of reason and harmony of the universe? As Harari suggests that our actions are guided by common myths, we may try to resort to a mythic method, which, according to TS Eliot (1920: 3) "is a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history."

In Greek mythology, a myth which treats the problem of creators is that of Daedalus, as reflected in the image of Doctor Faustus in legend and fictional works. On the one hand, it is essential for understanding the nature of West European culture, and on the other hand it reveals the self-destructive nature of the work of the human intellect uncontrolled by moral values. Doctor Faustus – the protagonist of a German legend based on Johann Georg Faust (1480–1540), a magician, astrologer, fortune teller and a highly successful scholar – makes a pact with the Devil, exchanging his soul and moral integrity for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures for a delimited term. The archetype can be traced back to Greek and biblical mythologies that form the basis of European culture. In the prologue to Christopher Marlowe's play *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* we find an indication of the myth of Daedalus and his son Icarus in Greek mythology:

> The fruitful plot of scholarism grac'd,
> That shortly he was grac'd with doctor's name,
> Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
> In heavenly matters of theology;
> Till swoln with cunning, of a self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
> And, melting, heavens conspir'd his overthrow;
> For, falling to a devilish exercise,
> And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,
> He surfeits upon cursed necromancy;
> Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
> Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss:
> And this the man that in his study sits.
>
> (From the Quarto of 1604, Prologue 21)

In Greek mythology Daedalus (meaning "clever worker") was a skilful craftsman and artist, inventor and innovator in many arts, the father of Icarus (Ovid, 2008: VIII: 183–235). In an attempt to escape from King Minos and imprisonment on Crete for telling Ariadne how to escape his Labyrinth,

Daedalus fabricated wings for himself and his young son. When both were prepared for flight, Daedalus warned Icarus not to fly too high because the heat of the sun would melt the wax, nor too low because the sea foam would soak the feathers. However the boy, carried away by the excitement of the flight, began to soar upwards towards the sun. The sun softened the wax which held the feathers together and they came off. Icarus fell into the sea and drowned. His father cried, bitterly lamenting his own arts, and called the land near the place where Icarus fell into the ocean Icaria in memory of his son (Sfyroera, 2003: 214–215). Afterwards, Daedalus arrived safely in Sicily where he built a temple to Apollo, and hung up his wings as an offering to the god.

The flight of Icarus symbolizes the limits determined to humans and voiced by Icarus's father Daedalus – the golden middle to avoid the pride of trying to reach the height of God and be cast to Hell as the result, and humble, meaningless existence lacking aspiration and ambition.

Daedalus's quest for knowledge and inability to bear any restrictions of his creative mind bring about his and his son`s downfall (Icarus may be viewed as Daedalus's second self that, in spite of reason, carries him higher than the boundaries defined for the human in striving to achieve the height of the Highest Creator). This pride and unlimited ambition bring about his downfall. He is cast down from the height like the biblical Lucifer. However, the final reconciliation with God re-establishes the former order.

The same theme is traced through three successive mythologies: Greek polytheistic, Hebrew monotheistic and Christian, giving new dimensions to the treatment of the archetype and representing the base of allomorphs in alternative fictional texts. The German legend of Doctor Faustus connects the initial archetype with such famous works of fiction as Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust*, and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn, as Told by a Friend*. Works about great, ambitious scientists, such as *Life of Galileo* by Bertolt Brecht, are likely to belong to the same archetype.

Icarus may be compared with the one who tasted the apple of knowledge in the Garden of Eden after being tempted by the serpent. In fictional works, the temptation is either symbolized by a demonic character (Mephistopheles), or is shown as trespassing the principles of faith that shutter the foundation of society (*Life of Galileo*), leading to acquiring supernatural knowledge with the blindness that follows as the symbol of inability to discern right from wrong (as in Marlowe's Faustus, Goethe's Faust, Brecht's Galileo, or the dementia of Leverkühn in the novel by Mann).

The outcome of the bold challenge of life and fate depends on acceptance of the boundaries of human knowledge and humility. The final salvation is seen as dependent on love for humanity (as in Goethe's Faust and Brecht's Galileo), the rejection of which leads to the self-annihilation of Marlowe's Faustus, who could not apply his supernatural powers to anything worthy, or Leverkühn's end as the result of the denial of the main principle of faith – love – the sin that contradicts Christian faith as stated by Christ in the Gospels as the love of the human for human, and as the love of the human for God.

Goethe's Faust, despite the fact that he loses the bet, views the land-reclamation project as his greatest achievement (Tantillo, 2007: 459). For him, the moment of happiness comes when he does good on behalf of humankind, not evil on behalf of his own self-gratification. The final words of Brecht's Galileo are: "Had I stood firm the scientists could have developed something like the doctors' Hippocratic oath, a vow to use their knowledge exclusively for mankind's benefit" (scene 14).

References

Baron, Frank. 1978. *Doctor Faustus, from History to Legend*. Munich: Fink.

Beall, Edgar F. 1991. "Hesiod`s Prometheus and Development in Myth." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52(3): 355–371.

Bible. *Daniel* 9:24, *Enoch*, xc.5, *Assumptio Mosis*, x.11, *Ezra* xi, *Revelation* 12:3.

Brecht, Bertolt. 1995. *Life of Galileo*. In *Collected Plays: Five*. Translated by John Willett. Edited by John Willett and Ralph Mannheim. London: Bloomsbury.

Campbell, Joseph. 1965. *The Masks of God*, vol. 4: *Creative Mythology*. New York: Viking.

———. 2008. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns. 1922. *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism. Tradition and the Individual Talent*. New York: Dover Publications, www.bartleby.com/200, 1–3, http://www.faust.com/legend/johann-georg-faust.

Encyclopædia Britannica Online (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012). Available at: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/202814/Faust.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. 1991. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*. Translated by Nicholas Walker. Edited by Robert Bernasconi, 242–255. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harari, Yuval Noah. 2017. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Jung, Carl Gustav, and Franz, Marie-Louise von. 1964. *Man and His Symbols*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Jung, Carl Gustav. 1971. *The Spirit in Man, Art and Literature*. Collected Works of C. G. Jung (book 15). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1963. *The Structural Study of Myth*. In *Structural Anthropology*, vol. 1. Translated by Clair Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest. New York: Shoepf.

Lotman Yuri Mikhailovich, Mintz Zara Grigoryevna, and Meletinsky Yeleazar. 1982. "Literature and Myths." In *Myths of the Peoples of the World*, vol. 2: 58–65. Moscow: Soviet Encyclopedia.

Mann, Thomas. 1961. *The Story of a Novel: The Genesis of Doctor Faustus*. New York: Alfred Knopf.

Marlowe, Christopher. 2001. *Doctor Faustus*. Edited by Sylvan Barnet. New York: Signet.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. 2007. *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*. In *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*. Edited by Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ovid, Publius Ovidius Naso. 2008. *Metamorphoses*. Translated by A. D. Melville. Introduction and notes by Edward J. Kenney. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scott, Arthur F. 1979. *Current Literary Terms. A Concise Dictionary*. New York: Macmillan.

Sfyroera, Sofia. 2003. *The Essential Greek Mythology*. Athens: Ellinika Grammata Publishing.

Tantillo, Astrida Orle. 2007. "Damned to Heaven: The Tragedy of 'Faust' Revisited." *Monatshefte* 99(4): 454. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30154412.

Imaginative Order, Myths, Discourses and Gendered Spaces

Hari Priya Pathak

> There are no gods in the universe, no nations, no money, no human rights, no laws and no justice outside the common imagination of human beings.[1]
>
> (Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*)

Yuval Noah Harari, in his much talked about book *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, writes about "an imagined order." According to him, myths, stories and fiction play a significant role in creating a society, because believing in them "enables us to cooperate effectively and forge a better society" (Harari, 2014: 124). It is the common myth which binds the strangers together. "The imagined order is embedded in the material world" (127), it "shapes our desires" (128) and is "inter-subjective" (131). Harari further states:

> A natural order is a stable order … In contrast, an imagined order is always in danger of collapse, because it depends upon myths, and myths vanish once people stop believing in them. In order to safeguard an imagined order, continuous and strenuous efforts are imperative. Some of these efforts take the shape of violence and coercion. (125)

This imagined order is created by powerful people insisting "that the order sustaining society is an objective reality created by the great gods or by the laws of nature" (126). Thus, imagined order depends upon myths which are usually intertwined with religion and culture, making it very difficult to question. In a chapter titled "There is no Justice in History," Harari states: "Most of the laws, norms, rights and obligations that define manhood and womanhood reflect human imagination more than historical reality" (166).

Since the Agricultural Revolution, society has been patriarchal, and the patriarchal system has been based on several myths. Further, making myths has been the prerogative of a chosen class of men who, with the help of these myths and beliefs, have formed rules and norms to be followed strictly by men and women through customs and traditions. Our desires, attitudes, behaviour, decisions, actions, and moralities in day-to-day life are all defined by certain myths and beliefs. Bronislaw Malinowski claims that "myth expresses, enhances and codifies belief; safeguards and enforces morality, and vouches for the efficiency of ritual" (Kaberry, 1957: 48). Myths are deeply ingrained in our psyche, and getting rid of them is extremely difficult. According to Carl Gustav Jung, the most important thing about myths is the psychology of their adherents. It is difficult to dissolve them as they belong to the reality of the psyche. Myth is an unconscious projection of the account of the creation of the cosmos and the natural phenomenon. "All myths emanate from the collective unconscious" (Segal, 1999: 81), but overemphasising the unconscious is not wholly appropriate, as "myths are consciously created, even if their creators are guided by the unconscious" (80). Myths are dependent upon their interpretation for their meaning, and thus the meaning may change according to who is the benefactor. Myths cannot be destroyed but can be reinterpreted or be taken over by stronger myths, and thus forgotten with the passage of time. Jung emphasizes the social significance of myths. Myths are the guides to be followed in attitudes, behaviours and functions, through the archetypes which form the myths. For psychologists like Freud and Jung, mythic thinking is fantasy thinking, yet depends upon reinforcements to sustain itself. It begins to fade once the belief and experience get severed from the knowledge: "even faith requires experience to sustain itself, according to Jung" (Segal, 1999: 90).

It is in this light that this paper discusses the significance of the myth of Indra killing Vritra in the *Rig Veda*, one of the oldest (1500–1000 BCE) scriptures of Hinduism, composed in Vedic Sanskrit, and the extension of the same myth in the later scriptures in relation to the mythic origin of menstruation in women leading to their already subjugated self to degrading and polluting beings.

The myth of Indra slaying Vritra is mentioned in the *Rig Veda* more than one hundred times. This dramatic event has been interpreted by several historians and anthropologists in different ways.

> In the *Rig Veda*, Vritra is depicted as the withholder of the waters, the demon of droughts, a snake or dragon like figure who dwells in the rivers or celestial

1 - Yuval Noah Harari, Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind (London: Vintage Books, 2014), 31.

> waters, or in a cavern in the earth. He lives in the caves with the cows. Indra kills Vritra with his thunderbolt, thus releasing the waters, the cows, and wealth, prosperity, and progeny. (Chawla, 1994: 2818)

Arthur Berriedale Keith, in *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, considers Vritra to be the chief enemy of the gods mentioned in the *Rig Veda*. "He is a serpent with power over the lightning, mist, hail and thunder, when he wars with Indra; his mother is Danu, apparently the stream or the waters of heaven, but he bears that name himself as well as a Danava, offspring of Danu" (Keith, 1969: 7). Indra is frequently called, along with "Vritra slayer," "fort breaker." Keith writes that Vritra "has ninety-nine forts which Indra shatters as he slays him" (7). This shattering of forts has led many scholars to believe that the people called by the names Vritras, Asuras and Dasas were actually the aboriginal people of the Harappan civilization, and the slaying of Vritra by Indra can be taken as a historical event relating to the invasion, looting, exploiting and subjugation of the non-Aryan indigenous people by the Aryans. The move from the demonization to extreme deification of Indra by the *Rig Veda* "constructs an ideology which (legitimises) the Indo-European dominion over the native peoples" (Chawla, 1994: 2818). It also appropriates the pre-existing cultural forms of the indigenous people. Janet Chawla hypothesises that the "figure of Vritra is inextricably linked with a pre-existing matristic social system and a world-view which valued the sacred (or powerful) feminine" (2818). This is reinforced by the fact that all the demons in the *Rig Veda* are known by their matronymics instead of patronymics. The imagery of a cow and its calf (the mother Danu trying to protect her son Danav or Vritra from Indra's thunderbolt) in the *Rig Veda*, according to Chawla, can be:

> Mythically and symbolically linked to pre-patriarchal, pre-Vedic social formations. By reinterpreting the slaying of the "son of the mother," we discover the mythic origin of the later pollution brahmanic ideology which devalues and de-sacralises the female bodily processes of menstruation and childbirth while simultaneously glorifying the patriarchally constructed institution of motherhood. (1994: 2818)

She suggests that the killing of Vritra be taken as a metaphor for the destruction of the pre-existing social order and worldview of the indigenous people by the Indo-Europeans and replacing it with their own culture and worldview. This view is further reinforced by the invaders with the help of myths, rituals and other beliefs which are woven into religions, customs and traditional practices. Monica Sjoo and Barbara Mor suggest the same idea in their work *The Great Cosmic Mother*. The killing of Vritra by Indra is not about the creation but the initiation of patriarchy: "In the Indo-European view the dark serpentine Danu and Vritra had 'withheld the waters in the mountain hollows' and so hindered the world from coming into being. The Indo-European patriarchal world, that is" (Sjoo and More, 1987: 11).

Vritra, who is a dragon, a serpent or a formless being in the *Rig Veda*, is given the form of a Brahmin, a being of flesh and bones, in later scriptures like *Taittiriya Sanhita* (400–300 BCE) and *Vashistha Dharmasutra* (300–100 BCE). In *Taittiriya Samhita*, when Indra kills Vishwarupa, Trisira or Vritra:

> He seized with his hand the guilt of slaying him, and bore it for a year. Creatures called out upon him, "Thou art a Brahman slayer." He appealed to the earth, "Take a third part of my guilt." She said, "Let me choose a boon. I deem that I shall be overcome through digging. Let me not be overcome by that." He replied, "Before a year is out it will grow up for thee." Therefore before the year is out the dug-out portion of earth grows up again, for that was what she chose as a boon. She took a third of his guilt. That became a natural fissure; therefore one who has piled up a fire-altar and whose deity is faith should not choose a natural fissure, for that is the colour of guilt. He appealed to the trees, "Take a third part of my guilt." They said, "Let us choose a boon. We deem that we shall be overcome through pruning. Let us not be overcome by that." He replied, "From pruning shall more (shoots) spring up for you." Therefore from the pruning of trees more (shoots) spring up, for that was what they chose as a boon. They took a third part of his guilt, it became sap; therefore one should not partake of sap, for it is the colour of guilt. Or rather of the sap which is red or which comes from the pruning one should not partake but of other sap at will. He appealed to a concourse of women, "Take the third of my guilt." They said, "Let us choose a

> boon; let us obtain offspring from after the menses; let us enjoy intercourse at will up to birth." Therefore women obtain offspring from after the menses, and enjoy intercourse at will up to birth, for that was what they chose as a boon. They took a third of his guilt, it became (a woman) with stained garments; therefore one should not converse with (a woman) with stained garments, one should not sit with her, nor eat her food, for she keeps emitting the colour of guilt. (Keith, 1914: 2.5.1)

In a well-known Hindu scripture the *Mahabharata* (400–300 BCE), when the myth of Vritra shows up, he, who was a formless being in earlier myth, is a Brahmin whose killing makes Indra feel guilty and scared (killing a Brahmin, the highest of the Hindu caste hierarchy, was the most heinous crime one could do, thus reserving hell for themselves). He needs to be expiated, and every time it is the women who share the guilt of Indra along with other two things which somehow keep changing with different myths, but what remains static is the presence of women in the myth who share the guilt of Indra killing Vritra.

Why is it that in later scriptures Vritra is a Brahmin and not a serpent or a formless being as depicted in the *Rig Veda*? It is clear that in the later periods the priestly class or the Brahmins had become powerful and were perhaps "appropriating some of the power and legitimacy of Vritra to themselves" (Chawla, 1994: 2820). This device seems to project their significance in the class system of the later Aryans. Even Indra, a powerful god, needed to be punished for killing a Brahmin, even if it was Vritra.

Thus, the menstrual flow is actually the guilt which keeps women impure, polluted, and untouchable for three days at least, and along with that come several religious injunctions. In *Taittiriya Sanhita* and *Vashistha Dharmasutra* it is clearly mentioned that:

> A woman cannot act independently; she is under the authority of the man. "A woman who is neither a girl running naked nor in her menstrual period," it is stated, "is ambrosia."
>
> For month after month their menstrual flow washes away their sins. A menstruating woman remains impure for three days. She should not apply collyrium on her eyes or oil on her body, or bathe in water; she should sleep on the floor and not sleep during the day; she should not touch the fire, make a rope, brush her teeth, eat meat, or look at the planets; she should not laugh, do any work, or run; and she should drink out of a large pot or from her cupped hands or a copper vessel. For it is stated: "Indra, after he had killed the three-headed son of Tvastr, was seized by sin, and he regarded himself in this manner: 'An exceedingly great guilt attaches to me.' And all creatures railed against him: 'Brahmin-killer! Brahmin-killer!' He ran to the women and said: 'Take over one-third of this my guilt of killing a Brahmin.' They asked: 'What will we get?' He replied: 'Make a wish.' They said: 'Let us obtain offspring during our season, and let us enjoy sexual intercourse freely until we give birth.' He replied: 'So be it!' And they took the guilt upon themselves. That guilt of killing a Brahmin manifests itself every month. Therefore, one should not eat the food of a menstruating woman, for such a woman has put on the aspect of the guilt of killing a Brahmin."
>
> People in whose homes there are menstruating women, people who do not maintain the sacred fires, and people in whose family there hasn't been a vedic scholar – all these are equal to Sudras. (Olivelle, 1999: 264–265)

In another Dharmasutra, one must clean oneself if touched by a corpse, dog or woman who is menstruating. "When a man touches an outcaste, a Chandala, a woman who has just given birth or is menstruating, a corpse, or someone who has touched any of these, he becomes purified by bathing with his clothes on; as also when he has gone behind a corpse or touched a dog" (Olivelle, 1999: 103). Thus, a menstruating woman is juxtaposed with a dead body or an abominable dog.

The patriarchy has taken menstruation as a reason to control women since the beginning, and myths have played a significant role in strengthening and making it a part of the social organization, moral order and behavioural pattern in the society. According to Malinowski, myths should not be taken as a dispassionate history. He states: "Myths taken as a whole cannot be sober dispassionate history, since it is always made *ad hoc* to fulfil a certain sociological function, to glorify a certain group or to justify an anomalous status" (Kaberry, 1957: 48).

At first there is a physical and psychological notion of being impure and polluted, leading to isolation and several other degrading restrictions. This also becomes the reason for inferiority among the women folk (when actually they should be proud of it, for it is *the* reason of creation!). Menstrual blood is abhorrent, and this idea which had already been made so strong through myths and other beliefs in several scriptures also gives justification for child marriage. A girl must be married after her third menstruation, or even before the menstruation begins. *Parashara Smriti* threatens dire consequences if the girl is not married according to the scriptural instructions. It states: "If a person does not give away a maiden when she has reached her twelfth year, his pitrs (ancestors) will have to drink every month her menstrual discharge. The parents and also the eldest brother go to hell on seeing an unmarried girl becoming Rajasvala" (Vaitheeswaran, 2009: 5–7).

All these constructions to suppress and harass women, not only physically but also psychologically, have played an important part in deciding the fate of women. The age-old and well-established weapons of impurity and pollution have been used against women as a group since the beginning of civilization. Men, through myths, have been able to convince the other half of the population that they are polluted, weak, capricious, undependable and thus not to be trusted. Wendy Doniger's first few sentences on the chapter "Women" in her translated work on the *Rig Veda* are: "The *Rig Veda* is a book by men about male concerns in a world dominated by men; one of these concerns is women, who appear throughout the hymns as objects, though seldom as subjects" (Doniger, 1981: 245). The great grandfathers could not have neglected women; neither could they be taken as the centre for they were too powerful and mysterious, with blood emanating from them periodically, the source of creation like a goddess. They were to be marginalised through the creation of myths which negated their power. It might have been because of the fear or hatred for so powerful a being, otherwise why is it that in almost all civilizations around the globe women experience the same isolation and degradation?

As Harari writes:

> All societies are based on imagined hierarchies … Why did traditional Indian society classify people according to caste, Ottoman society according to religion, and American society according to race? In most cases the hierarchy originated as the result of a set of accidental historical circumstances and was then perpetuated and refined over many generations as different groups developed vested interests in it. (Harari, 2014: 154)

In the case of women, who constitute nearly half of the total population and are responsible for creation, which is inadvertently related to menstruation, why has their growth as human beings been impeded? Why is it that women have been deprived of the human rights which men have been enjoying since ancient times? Why was it that the unconscious of all the men around the globe formed such myths so as to deal with women in more or less the same way?

The Golden Age, an imaginative and desirable age, where men and women were free of any sexuality or attachments and were least bothered about any sort of seduction which could threaten their desires or ambitions (and there were no such ambitions), is gone (if it even existed). The resentment towards women which followed the disappearance of the Golden Age is supposedly because of the appearance of sexuality, the beginning of menstruation, with which also began the lust, desire and hunger among humanity, making it extremely difficult to achieve the ultimate goal of salvation. Ages have gone, times have changed, contexts too, and myths are forgotten, but these myths still have a stronghold through age-old traditional practices, customs and rituals.

Myths are the product of a primitive mind where the consciousness is less developed than the mind of a civilized being. If a primitive mind can create myths, why can a civilized mind not reinterpret them? Psychologists like Jung believe that primitive myths are so deeply ingrained in our minds that it is impossible to get rid of them, but it is possible to reinterpret them in the changed contexts and times. In the modern times, when science and technology have brought about unbelievable changes in our understanding of the cosmos and nature around us, is it prudent to stick to myths and beliefs which have withheld the strength, both mental and physical, of half the population, and deny it the role it can play in the progress of a society, a nation and the world as a whole?

It is high time that the religious discourses, which were once the only succour for sustaining oneself in society, be considered redundant and replaced by their fresh interpretations which impart women a significant place in society as human beings long denied to them. The religious discourses on menstruation ought to be replaced by scientific discourses. It is also necessary to do this because myths need faith and experience together to give

them strength. Three things – faith, experience and knowledge – must go together to sustain a myth. With the changing times, when science has developed so much for making creation possible through biogenetics, it is utterly foolish to stick to myths and beliefs which carry no meaning now and are only hindrances in the progress of human beings. The experience of menstruation in the old times can be understood through the non-availability of sanitary napkins or medicines and other facilities to get rid of the pain or anxiety experienced during that time, or the injunctions regarding the spaces to be occupied, foods and other things not to be touched, the avoidance of bathing and particular spaces lest one should pollute the whole of it (especially a water source), and remaining isolated for a few days. At that time, faith, experience and knowledge went together, and undoubtedly certain injunctions were wisely ordained. Harvey Ferguson writes:

> Conventions and institutions are merely organized and more or less sanctified habits. These are the real gods of human society, which transcend and outlive all other gods. All of them originate as group expedients which have some social value at some time, but they remain the object of a passionate adoration long after they have outlived their usefulness. (in Kluckhohn, 1942: 66)

This passionate adoration for the religious conventions related to menstruation and restrictions are still prominent in several parts of India, in spite of the drastic changes that science and technology have brought to today's world. All the injunctions on menstruating women seem not to be helping them, but actually impeding their overall development.

Mobility and education for all are essential for the progress of a society or a nation. Menstruation has always been an obstruction to receiving education, and has actually been taken as an excuse for depriving education to girls. In the Garhwal and Kumaon hills of northern India, located in the western region of the Himalayas in the state of Uttarakhand, especially in the interiors, the taboo of menstruation is strong enough to prohibit girls from taking a road to school which happens to be in the vicinity of a temple of a local god (of which there are many in the hills, distributed randomly). This alone can become a strong reason to remove a girl's right to education, apart from many other reasons. In spite of several government schemes to make education accessible to each and every one, social stigmas related to menstruation hinder the speed or effect of these schemes when it comes to girls. The mobility of girls is a must for competing in today's world, and is affected by menstruation and the restrictions posed on it. There is a need to change with the times, to change the discourses from religious to much rational scientific ones. As Chris Weedon says, we must think about "how our femininity and sexuality are defined for us and how we might begin to redefine them for ourselves" (1987: 1)

Redefining femininity and sexuality is possible by reinterpreting the myths in the light of rationality, and then strengthening and reinforcing these rational discourses through academics, media, films, documentaries and other social platforms. The roles of mothers become very significant here. The mothers as women must create positive and rational attitudes towards natural events like menstruation. The taboos which inculcate inferiority of any kind must be discouraged by women themselves as mothers or any other role they have. The onus also falls on men to understand things in changed times and contexts. The government must also take steps to strongly discourage the distinctions based on sexuality and natural periodical process like menstruation. The judgement of the honourable

Supreme Court on the "Sabrimala case"[2] is highly appropriate and praiseworthy in this direction: "To exclude women from worship by allowing the right to worship to men is to place women in a position of subordination. The constitution should not become an instrument for the perpetuation of patriarchy" (Mishra, 2018: 35).

It also states:

> Women have a right to control their own bodies. The menstrual status of a woman is an attribute of her privacy and person. Women have a constitutional entitlement that their biological processes must be free from social and religious practices, which enforce segregation and exclusion. (Kini, 2018: 20)

Let faith, experience and knowledge go together. Let men, who constitute half of the population just like women, also think scientifically in the changed scenario, empathise and transform

2 - The Sabrimala case - in 1991 the high court of Kerala banned the entry of women aged 10 to 50 (menstruating age) to the holy temple of Ayappa. This was challenged by some young lawyers and the case moved to the honorable Supreme Court in 2018. The verdict was passed against the ban on women entering the temple as it violates the right to equality and encourages gender discrimination.

their mentality, attitudes and behaviours, keeping in view the dignity of being a human, for after all, human rights are undoubtedly women's rights too.

References

Chawla, Janet. 1994. "Mythic Origins of Menstrual Taboo in Rig Veda." *Economic and Political Weekly* 29(43); 2817-2827.

Doniger, Wendy. 1975. *Hindu Myths*. London: Penguin Classics.

———. 1976. *Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.

———. 1981. *The Rig Veda*. London: Penguin Classics.

Harari, Yuval Noah. 2014. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. London: Vintage.

Kaberry, M. Phyllis. 1957. "Myth and Ritual: Some Recent Theories." *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 4: 42–54.

Kluckhohn, Clyde. 1942. "Myth and Ritual: A General Theory." *The Harvard Theological Review* 35(1): 45–79.

Keith, Arthur B. (trans.). 1914. *Taittiriya Sanhita*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, http://www.sanskritweb.net/yajurveda/keith.pdf.

———. 1969. *Religion and Philosophy of The Veda and Upanishads*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.

Kini, Ashok. 2018. "Social Exclusion Of Women, Based On Menstrual Status, Is A Form of Untouchability." Live Low, https://www.livelaw.in/social-exclusion-of-women-based-on-menstrual-status-is-a-form-ofuntouchability-justice-dy-chandrachud.

Mishra, Soni. 2018. "Sabrimala Verdict: How Supreme Court Sought to Quash Patriarchy in Religion." *The Week* (September 28). https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2018/09 Sabarimala-verdict-Patriarchy-inreligion-cannot-be-allowed-writes-CJI-Misra.html.

Olivelle, Patrick (trans. and ed.). 1999. *Dharmasutras: The Law Codes of Ancient India*. New York: Oxford University Press. http://www.ahandfulofleaves.org/documents/Dharmasutras

_Olivelle_1999.pdf.

Segal, Robert A. 1999. *Theorizing About Myth*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Sjoo, Monica, and More, Barbara. 1987. *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Vaitheeswaran, B. 2009. *Parashar Smriti with English Translation*. https://archive.org/details

/ParasharaSmriti.

Weedon Chris. 1987. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Literary Jung: Mythos, Individuation, and Poetics

Roula-Maria Dib

The Jungian view of human development, and life in general, can be read as a poetic one: Carl Gustav Jung's perspective embraced mythology and the history of humanity. As noted by Donald Nathanson, Jung's psychology "became increasingly popular among those who seek more connection between religion and psychotherapy, also those who seek a cross-cultural appreciation of the personality" (Nathanson, 1996: 272). But can it also become a popular perspective among literary critics and creative writers? A closer look at the poetic roots of Jungian psychology may provide hope for a Jungian poetics. First, this paper will explore Jung's ideas on mythopoeic imagination, symbols and the notion of the "visionary" in art, in relation to poetry. Then, I shall discuss the idea of individuation, moving on to Jung's notion of active imagination and the practice of writing his *Red Book* (Jung, 2009). The paper will further explore the dialogue between Jungian notions and recent studies in neuroscience and psychoanalysis on the nature of metaphor and its role as a poetic thought process.

At the core of Jungian theory is the notion of the collective unconscious and archetypes. The collective unconscious is an impersonal unconscious, common among people from different cultures and historical epochs. Its main constituents are the "archetypes," or psychic energies – invisible until they are projected as symbols of representation. Archetypes are not images per se, as they are phylogenetically inherited a priori possibilities, existing to "apperceive a universal, emotional core human experience, myth, or thought-image-fantasy. [An archetype] can never be exactly pinpointed or apprehended because it exists in such a primitive formal state" (Maduro and Wheelwright, 1992: 182)

Archetypes however become visible once they manifest as images. Jung differentiates between the archetype as such (psychic energy, possibility) and the archetypal image (the archetype's projection through an image or symbol, such as images in art): "The archetype as such is a psychoid factor that belongs, as it were, to the invisible, ultraviolet end of the psychic spectrum … We must … constantly bear in mind that what we mean by 'archetype' is in itself irrepresentable, but it has effects which make visualizations of it possible, namely, the archetypal images" (Jung, 2014a: 69). It is essential to spot major archetypes in literary works, as this helps in identifying the connections that give the works their shape and structure: "The detection of governing archetypes serves principally to show hidden connections that universalize what might seem highly idiosyncratic" (Radford and Wilson, 1992: 320). What differentiates symbols from the archetypes as such is that the former are not inherited: "the material of the collective unconscious is a collection of archetypes. But it must be understood that the archetype cannot be named until it is represented by a symbol" (Rowland, 2001: 44).

Thus, symbols – like those found in literature – are archetypal images which then become open to observation once they are expressed by the senses: "The raw symbols of dream must be considered apart from the symbols formed by the conscious mind, which are beyond the nonsensical and open to rational inspection. Both groups are reflections of archetypes, but there could be no conscious artistry if the symbol were simply automatic" (Baird, 1992: 46). For Jung, the understanding of symbols and symbolization is not limited to reactive formations (as in Freud's view); however, Jung saw symbols as having their own integrity.

We find that Jung's impact on modern literature is mostly seen in the importance attributed to myth in light of his psychological theory (of archetypes and individuation), for the "first benchmark for Jung's impact is his interpretation of myth as universal and as a projection of mental activity" (Dib, 2020: 17). Jung's standpoint on myth as stemming from psychological origins and forming a communication between the individual and the universal has actually greatly influenced literature and other facets of modern culture. According to F. L. Radford and R. R. Wilson:

> In modern literature, Jung's influence shows most emphatically in the significance that has been attributed to myth and in the stressing of certain aspects of this psychological theory, such as the concept of the archetype and the problem of individuation, which have only a tangential significance within the generalized psychoanalytic system. Jung's interpretation of myth as both a universal (and interconnected) body of concepts and also a projection of inherent mental activities, themselves also universal, provides the first touchstone of his influence. His view of myth as possessing psychological roots – and thus projecting correspondence

> between the interior and the exterior, the individual and the universal – has affected many aspects of modern culture, including literature. (1992: 318)

Mental processes, then, like unconscious fantasies and dream images, make the human mind a mythological one, in the following particular sense: the archetypes in the collective unconscious (which is of a universal nature) are universally signifying patterns that change "their empirical expression (as personal symbols) from life-world to life-world as much as from one individual (writer) or another" (Dib, 2020: 17).

Jung correlates myths and the functioning of the mind, viewing mythological narratives as manifestations of psychological structuring. As Susan Rowland argues, "What is intrinsic to Jung's use of mythology is the use of mythical narratives as stories of being, of psychological structuring, that value the unconscious as superior" (Rowland, 2002: 28).

Among all available psychoanalytic therapies, Jungian psychology, at the clinical level (analytical psychology), has the most closely knit connection with metaphor, for "Analytical psychology is a mythopoetic, imaginally-based, metaphorically-centered model of the psyche" (Winborn, 2019: loc. 1110). Jung held the notion that the writings and drawings in his *Red Book*, the products/records of his active imagination, are significant because they are rooted in the mythopoeic imagination, something that the rational age lacks. Years later, after writing the *Red Book*, and while explaining active imagination in 1928, Jung showed the necessity of such a method in the rational age, where, "As against the scientific credo of our time has developed a superstitious phobia about fantasy. But the real is what works. The fantasies of the unconscious work – there can be no doubt about that" (Jung, 2009: 49).

With Jung's assertion of the mythopoetic nature of the psyche, or the "matrix of mythopoeic imagination which has vanished from our rational age" (Jung, 1971), he establishes that it is the psyche that creates myth. Yet, Mark Winborn asserts that "myths are metaphors for ways of perceiving, experiencing, understanding, and being in the world. Concepts like myth, image, imaginal, and mythopoesis all involve metaphorical processes … Image and symbol are powerful psychic influences because they are viewed with metaphoric processes. Analytical psychologists often think of myths, fairy tales, alchemy, and religious motifs as representations of the collective unconscious and as potential symbols. But, on the most fundamental level, all of these systems serve as metaphors" (Winborn, 2019: loc. 1110). Jung clearly declares the significance of metaphors in analytical psychology:

> An archetypal content expresses itself in metaphors as such a content should speak of the sun and identify it with the lion, the king, the hoard of gold guarded by the dragon or the power that makes for the life and health of man; it is neither the one thing nor the other, but the unknown third thing that finds more or less adequate expression in all of these similes. Even the best attempts at explanation are only more or less successful translations in the other metaphorical language. (Jung, 2014e: par. 267)

For Jungian critics, mythology is found to be especially interesting as it is seen as clearly representing the collective unconscious, similar in a way to a "group dream," which is a rich area for mining that dimension of the psyche: "Mythology as a raw representation of this group dream can be an area of investigation for the Jungian critic" (Baird, 1992: 46). Yet, going back to the symbol, critics should not limit themselves to mythology, for when Jung also looks at poetry he sees the symbol as a connective force between the conscious and unconscious. A person can scarcely be a critic of art when restricting oneself to the raw materials of mythology. When Jung faces challenges in assessing poetry as an art, he speaks of "the saving factor … the symbol, which is able to reconcile the conscious with the unconscious and embrace them both" (Baird, 1992: 47).

Moreover, Jung resonates the mythic method's juxtaposition of antiquity with contemporaneity, as he mines ancient Hermetic alchemical texts to find in them metaphors of people's needs to develop the self through their own personal alchemical journeys, or the *individuation* process consummated by the union of the female (anima) and male (animus) counterparts of the psyche within. Jung observes that modern people have lost a sense of "self" that can still be regained through myth and ritual, which may facilitate the necessary connection with the collective unconscious and help in the regeneration process. In fact, the notion of linking the collective unconscious with mythology had already been established, with the collective unconscious also being referred to as the "universality of mythopoeic mental condition," since "Jung's theory of the communicability of archetypes through a 'collective unconscious' had been essentially established in

the work of Tylor and Lang, who discovered 'the universality of the mythopoeic mental condition'" (Carpentier, 1998: 26). Similarly, for Jung, it is deep within this collective unconscious that archetypal images carry the memory of ancestral experience; hence, the symbols and images that arise from it "can also draw out our potential for transcendence in the future" (Elgin, 1997: 5). Subsequently, a good way to get in touch with the collective unconscious is by discovering, through myth, the link between the ancient past and modern present. Here, this Jungian view captures appropriately T. S. Eliot's mythic method, which juxtaposes and parallelizes the ancient with the modern, highlighting similarities in two different eras, which transcend the narrative; in other words, the mythic method is a revelatory collage combining fragments of both the past and the present in literature (Dib, 2020).

According to Jung, an artist is a vessel through which art materializes and realizes its purpose; for that reason, an artist does not have free will. For Jung, art transcends the personal; instead, it is the collective unconscious that leads consciousness towards forming symbols and representations. Therefore, the artist is the shaper of psychic life, and poetry, or the poet's work, is more important than his or her personal experience. In other words, the artist is not someone with free will seeking personal ends, but a vessel that lets art achieve its purposes through them, for they are "'collective man' – one who carries and shapes the unconscious, psychic life of mankind" (Jung, 1933: 169). Jung also asserts that, "The work of the poet comes to meet the spiritual need of the society in which he lives, and for this reason his work means more to him than his personal fate, whether he is aware of this or not. Being essentially the instrument for his work, he is subordinate to it, and we have no reason for expecting him to interpret it for us" (Jung, 1933: 171). From a literary standpoint, Jung expresses a notion similar to T. S. Eliot's theory of impersonality. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Eliot asserts that the artist continuously yields to a certain "continual extinction of personality" for art's sake, which is valued more than the artist's own self (Eliot, 1975: 40). Eliot clarifies this notion of depersonalization in an analogy of a chemical reaction in need of platinum as a catalyst for the production of sulphurous acid. This results in the formation of a new compound (not containing platinum), leaving the platinum unchanged, just like the mind of a poet, which is like the impersonal agent producing artistic emotions different than its own, where "the mind of the poet is the shred of platinum … The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together" (1975: 41). Eliot, then, does not consider the poet to be a personality, but rather a medium through which art escapes both personality and emotion; according to him, "The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done" (1975: 44). Jung, then, echoes Eliot's ideas in terms of the collective unconscious, adding a sense of aesthetics to psychology. A poet's role is not to discover but rather to be sensitive to certain truths that many know but are not aware of. This is because the poet is able to express and comprehend the collective unconscious, since poets:

> voice rather more clearly and resoundingly what all know … The mass does not understand it although unconsciously living what it expresses; not because the poet proclaims it, but because its life issues from the collective unconscious into which he has peered. (Jung, 2014c: 191)

In a note from the *Red Book*'s Appendix B, Jung associates this "impersonal essence" with poets:

> The old prophet expresses persistence, but the young maiden denotes movement. Their impersonal essence is expressed by the fact that they are figures belonging to general human history; they do not belong to a person but have been a spiritual content of the world's peoples since time immemorial. Everyone has them, and therefore these figures recur in the work of thinkers and poets. (Jung, 2009: 563–564)

Moving from this link with Eliot's notion of impersonality, we are led to another Jungian concept of the "visionary" in art. Jung believes that, "It is essential that we give serious consideration to the basic experience that underlies it – namely, to the vision" (in Seldon, 2014: 228). He posits that artists are visionaries since the plethora of unconscious content cannot be defined, only known through the work of art regarded as a symbol. Jung "reads" a work of art in light of the "vision," which is the basic experience responsible for its creation. Because of this perception, a "Jungian poetics" differs from a psychological approach to a text. Jung sees art (poetry) as a phenomenon that is beyond analysis

from a psychological perspective, for he asserts that "the work of art exists in its own right and cannot be got rid of by changing it into a personal complex" (1978: 93). For Jung, symbols express the collective unconscious, which, by its own nature, transcends the personal and is therefore an element of the visionary. Jung's psychology focused on alchemy (and alchemical symbols), mythology, art, and the collective unconscious (with its archetypes), which renders his approach to literature a rather untraditional psychoanalytical one. A Jungian reading, therefore, synthesizes these theories (art, alchemy, symbolism) along with the "coniunctio" (the union of two archetypes, the female anima and male animus), which resembles and illustrates the poetic idea of creative tension.

Furthermore, Jung's development of his individuation theory originated from a *poetic* approach towards alchemical texts. In "Psychology of the Child Archetype" (1940), Jung states that, "Identity does not make consciousness possible; it is only separation, detachment and agonizing confrontation through opposition that produce consciousness and insight" (Jung, 2014b: 169). In alchemy, Jung did not read the medieval texts preoccupied with transforming base metals into gold literally. This was not about the physical transmutation of lead, but rather a metaphor for the transformation of consciousness in individuation. The god Mercury, or Hermes, was also believed to guide the alchemist to ultimately achieving wisdom (Sophia). The symbolic language of alchemy, then, resembles that of poetry; hence, alchemy for Jung is a "technique for relating to the unconscious" (Rowland, 2005: 87) and not a "primitive" pseudoscience. Instead, he finds in alchemy an advanced symbolic system. Furthermore, a similarity between Jung's psychology and poetics is found in their metaphoric natures. In his *Mysterium Coniunctionis* (1963) he claims that his psychology is a metaphor. Furthermore, Jung likens himself to an artist, which might align him with the poets. Moreover, in Jung's quest metaphor (individuation) he holds a creative, transformational approach in "reconceiving or rebirthing the world and the psyche as dynamically co-creative" (Rowland, 2012: loc. 477). Emphasizing the quest metaphor and rebirth, Jung portrays the psyche and language as co-creative with the world, allowing poetry to be a welcoming host for psychological expression. A Jungian poetics therefore focuses on a new sense of reality created by poetry.

The psyche therefore encases both the conscious and the unconscious; however, the psyche's complexity is the challenge in getting to "know it" without any direct empirical experience. Since the psyche is unobservable in the conventional "scientific" way, Jung does so via images and symbols; this way, as Susan Rowland posits, Jung follows the unknowable "dark impulse" that guides both the artist and the psychologist. In this similar way, poetry translates the creative impulse from the manifestation of an archetype to an image to a word. The language of poetry helps the artist to "come to terms with the pain of the inferior part of the personality or shadow" (Rowland, 2005: 90).

Jung's *Red Book* is a home for the poetic experience – which had helped to crystallize his technique of active imagination – he had actively conducted during his personal self-experimentation from 1913 to 1916. After Jung's difficult break with Freud in 1913, he hoped to discover his own personal myth through this long period of self-exploration, "deliberately evoking a fantasy in a waking state, and then entering into it as into a drama" (Jung, 2009: 23). These fantasies were initially written (in dated entries) in the *Black Books*, which he wrote from 1913 to 1932 (and which were not published until 2020). Sonu Shamdasani, however, states that these fantasies and reflections "are not diaries of events … Rather, they are the records of an experiment" (Jung, 2009: 24). Jung himself indicated that he was "writing autobiographical material, but not as an autobiography" (20). Interestingly, this self-therapy offered by active imagination also used the poetic medium of metaphor. When Jung started his active imagination, he wrote in unique metaphoric expressions of the unconscious that appeared: "He noted his inner states in metaphors, such as being in a desert with an unbearably hot sun (that is, consciousness)" (Jung, 2009). Thus, Jung's *Red Book* may be revisited as his personal demonstration of the psyche's metaphorical processes.

Additionally, a healthy synthesis of poetics with Jungian psychology and neuroscience may improve the view of a "literary" Jung. Jung has often been criticized for the lack of empiricism in his approach. It is the phenomenology of archetypal experience and expression that Jung regards as more essential than the origins of the archetypal images. He explains that: "I would not give priority to understanding, for the important thing is not to interpret and understand the fantasies but primarily to experience them" (Jung, 2014d: par. 347). However, recent neuro-scientific or biological explanations of "affects" can interweave with the literary and explain the process of symbol making. In her essay "Neuroscience and Imagination," Margaret Browning presents the work of philosopher Susanne Langer to show how psychoanalysis can benefit from neuroscience. Browning, through Langer, backs up her argument that a person's affects provide the basis for all human

experience. She shows how affects not only provoke learning about the world but also create the basis of the symbolic mind:

> To imagine is to feel spontaneously. Imagination can function involuntarily, as it does in dream consciousness, or voluntarily, as it does when we speak. To speak is to symbolically render the world and ourselves into a "new key" through our imagination. It is the capacity to voluntarily control our imagination that is the basis of our symbolic activity and that produces our pursuit of meaning. Langer argues that our symbolic capacity developed not for survival purposes, but rather for the purpose of self-expression. (Browning, 2006: 1135)

Therefore, it may be said that affects are the projection of feeling into form as the basis of the symbolic process. The symbolic process, being alchemical for Jung, may also be said to have its roots in emotion. For Jung: "On the one hand, emotion is the alchemical fire whose warmth brings everything into existence and whose heat burns all superfluities to ashes (omnes superfluitates comburit). But on the other hand, emotion is the moment when steel meets flint and a spark is struck forth, for emotion is the chief source of consciousness. There is no change from darkness to light or from inertia to movement without emotion" (Jung, 2014e: 96). Also, as Louis Stewart describes, "the affects are the life blood of the psyche … In Jung's theory of analytical psychology, they are given appropriate attention as energy, value, source of imagery and new consciousness … Perhaps most significant, the affects are the bridge between body and psyche, instinct and spirit" (Nathanson, 1996: 273).

Also, Browning summarizes the distinctive connection between symbols and affective consciousness as follows: "symbols depend on the capacity to render affect into external form, most notably, language" (2019: 38); and, "Psychoanalysis has always privileged affect as the basis of our mental lives, but it has not necessarily recognized affect as the basis of our uniquely *symbolic minds* and the import this has for psychoanalytic theory and treatment" (2019: 43). Browning elaborates on the relationship between affect, symbolic thought and individuation, saying: "the riches of a symbolic culture are vast, but they are always wielded from an emotional base … this capacity to feel, this affective consciousness is the very basis of our unique symbolic minds, with which to a considerable degree we create ourselves" (2019: 49). She also notes that "of special importance for Langer is the role of imagination … What the early appearance of symbolic communication afforded has some *voluntary* control over this faculty for imagining. Feeling is what the human species utilizes in its unique fashion to create symbols – symbols that imbed us in a culture mediated by these very symbols themselves" (2019: 42–43).

So what does this tell us about metaphor from a more recent psychoanalytic perspective? Jungian psychoanalyst Mark Winborn claims that metaphor involves "the utilization of one conceptional imaginal domain to map or articulate the experience of a different conceptual or imaginal domain. Therefore, it transfers meaning between domains of experience (from conscious to unconscious, from cognitive to somatic, from somatic to affective, from past to present, and from present to future), linking realms in ways not previously seen and transforming meaning by means of novel recombination between domains" (Winborn, 2019: loc. 1054). This is precisely the connection Jung finds in alchemy: the relationship between the alchemist and the metal, or the effect the alchemist (inner) has on the metal (outer) – all rendering the process of alchemy as a metaphor for personal transformation. The alchemist is transformed (individuated) simultaneously with the metal.

In *Metaphors We Live By*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson indicate that the human mind is innately embodied, most thought is unconscious, and abstract concepts are greatly metaphorical. They argue that metaphor is a natural phenomenon: "conventional language is metaphorical, and the metaphorical meanings are given by conceptual metaphorical mappings that ultimately arise from correlations in our embodied existence" (1980: 190). Moreover, Lakoff and Johnson acknowledge the weakening of adopting metaphor as a descriptive means of expression with the advent of empirical science: "With the rise of empirical science as a model for truth, the suspicion of poetry and rhetoric became dominant in Western thought, with metaphor and other figurative devices becoming objects of scorn once again" (1980: 190). Similarly, For Jung, the rational language of science is problematic because it overlooks the work of the unconscious – especially the creative work. In his essay "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry," Jung calls for a more exploratory, less cognitive approach: "indeed we ought not to understand, for nothing is more injurious to immediate experience than cognition. But for the purposes of cognitive understanding we must detach ourselves from the creative process and look at it from the outside … In this way we meet the demands of science" (Jung, 1978: 78). Later

on, in the "Liber Secundus" of his *Red Book*, Jung also employs a non-cognitive method, albeit rather paradoxically, in the alignment of reason with what he calls "unreason": "We recognized that the world comprises reason and unreason; and we also understood that our way needs not only reason but also unreason" (Jung, 2009: 404). Jung therefore focuses on a-rationality, which was completely dismissed by Freud – the "unreason" that is, for Jung, "the greater part of the world [that] eludes our understanding … part of the incomprehensible, however, is only presently incomprehensible and might already concur with reason tomorrow" (Jung, 2009: 404). Perhaps here, we find in Jung an echo of Aristotle, in that "ordinary words covey what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh" (Aristotle, 1996: 226).

From Jung's studies on alchemy, then, one can say that metaphor is the bridge between (mental) images, emotions and language. For Jung, the teleological mind is constantly thinking metaphorically, as the journey towards individuation is actually the process of alchemy. Similarly, Lakoff and Johnson describe metaphor as "a tool so ordinary that we use it unconsciously and automatically. It is omnipresent. Metaphor suffuses our thoughts, no matter what we are thinking about. Metaphor allows us to understand ourselves and our world in ways that no other modes of thought can" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1989: xi). That is, metaphor is a necessary built-in function of the mind, which is constantly (whether consciously or unconsciously) seeking individuation. It is not only a linguistic phenomenon, as it has its own duties towards the psyche. Again, Winborn asserts that "Metaphor is constantly used both consciously and unconsciously in everyday life. Everyday speech is filled with metaphor … However, it is important to note that metaphor is not merely linguistic" (2019: loc. 1066). Metaphor is a thought process and, like alchemy (which is a metaphor itself), poetry may also be seen as an individuating thought process.

For Arnold Modell, the role of metaphor transcends the linguistic, as metaphors also link knowledge with feelings, claiming that "metaphor is now viewed as an emergent property of the mind" (Modell, 1997: 105). Metaphor, for Jung, may be read as a means of precipitation, of materialization of feeling, with poetry being an archetypal manifestation of emotions, truths, and ideas. Linking this with Modell: "Metaphor and affects enjoy a privileged connection. Inchoate feelings that are cognitively unspecified require metaphors" (Modell, 1997: 109). Through the language of poetry, for Jung, not only are feelings precipitated but the archetypal manifestations involved also speak for the personal and collective experiences of many: "Whoever speaks in primordial images speaks with a thousand voices; he enthrals and overpowers" (Jung, 1978: par. 130). In *Psychological Types*, Jung claims that "when referring to the transcendent function and unconscious fantasies, he noted that examples where such material had been subjected to aesthetic elaboration could be found in literature" (Jung, 2009: 65).

According to Sonu Shamdasani, "At times, metaphorical experience may appeal to the intellect, but it reaches more deeply, making connections on an emotional and imaginal level rather than solely cognitive. Metaphor is the process that allows sacred texts, music, art, poetry, and film, to move us, bringing our imaginations to life" (Winborn, 2019: loc. 1075). Active imagination involved in artistic expression (like poetry) was a means for Jung to discover his inner processes and "translate his emotions into images" (Jung, 2009: xi). This translation or interpretation of feelings occurs through the figurative language of poetry. Returning to the neuroscientific aspect of poetry, Modell also asserts that: "As metaphor is the interpreter of feelings, our own, and that of the other, we may pre-consciously construct simulated interactions that may or may not actually occur. An unconscious metaphor process constructs a simulated and anticipatory reality" (Modell, 2009: 9). This "simulated and anticipatory reality" rings true in the case of Jung's active imagination: "I earnestly confronted my devil and behaved with him as with a real person. This I learned in the Mysterium: to take seriously every unknown wanderer who personally inhabits the inner world, since they are real because they are effectual" (Jung, 2009: 217).

Finally, it is through a Jungian poetics that metaphor becomes the umbrella under which myths, fairy tales, art, poetry and alchemy are contained. Metaphor, for Jung, transcends the linguistic and the personal, and reveals the connection between the different elements and aspects of experience. Individuation, along with its healing and transformational properties, can be achieved by the medium of our "poetic" experience and interpretation of life: with the visionary, the symbolic, and the metaphoric, for "The wealth of the soul exists in images" (Jung, 2009: 130).

References

Aristotle. 1996. *The Art of Rhetoric*. Translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred. London: Penguin Classics.

Baird, James. 1992. "Ishmael, Jungian Psychology in Criticism: Some Theoretical Problems." In *Jungian Literary Criticism*, edited by Richard P. Sugg. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Browning, Margaret M. 2006. "Neuroscience and Imagination: the Relevance of Susanne Langer's Work to Psychoanalytic Theory." *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 75(4): 1131–1139.

———. 2019. "Our Symbolic Minds: What are they Really?" *The Psychoanalytic*

Quarterly, 88(1): 25–52.

Carpentier, Martha Celeste. 1998. *Ritual, Myth, and the Modernist Text: The Influence of Jane Ellen Harrison on Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf*. Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach.

Dib, Roula-Maria. 2020. *Jungian Metaphor in Modernist Literature*. London: Routledge.

Elgin, Duane. 1997. "Collective Consciousness and Cultural Healing." *Emergent Mind* (October).

http://www.emergentmind.org/new_page_204.htm.

Eliot, T. S. 1975. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." In *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, edited by Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Jung, Carl Gustav. 1933. *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co.

———. 1971. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, edited by Aniela Jaffé. London: Random House.

———. 1978. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 15: The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, edited and translated by Gerhard Adler and Richard F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

———. 2009. *The Red Book*. London: Norton and Company.

———. 2014a. "On the Nature of the Psyche." In *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 8: The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche,* edited and translated by Gerhard Adler and Richard F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

———. 2014b. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2014c. "The Problem of Types in Poetry." in *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 6: Psychological Types*, edited and translated by Gerhard Adler and Richard F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

———. 2014d. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 7: Two Essays in Analytical Psychology,* edited and translated by Gerhard Adler and Richard F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2014e. *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 9.1: Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, edited and translated by Gerhard Adler and Richard F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1989. *More Cool than Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Maduro, Renaldo J., and Joseph B. Wheelwright. 1992. "Archetype and Archetypal Image." *Jungian Literary Criticism*, edited by Richard P. Sugg. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Modell, Arnold. 2009. "Metaphor – the Bridge between Feelings and Knowledge." *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 29.

———. 1997. "The Synergy of Memory, Affects, and Metaphor." *The Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 42.

Nathanson, Donald L. 1996. "The Archetypal Affects." In *Knowing Feeling: Affect, Script, and Psychotherapy*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Nathanson, Donald L. (ed.). 1996. *Knowing Feeling: Affect, Script, and Psychotherapy* New York: W. W. Norton.

Radford, F. L., and R. R. Wilson. 1992. "Some Phases of the Jungian Moon: Jung's Influence on Modern Literature." *Jungian Literary Criticism*, edited by Richard P. Sugg. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Rowland, Susan. 2001. *C. G. Jung and Literary Theory: The Challenge from Fiction*. London: Palgrave.

———. 2002. *Jung: A Feminist Revision*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

———. 2005. *Jung as a Writer*. Hove and New York: Routledge.

———. 2012. *C. G. Jung in the Humanities: Taking the Soul's Path*. New Orleans: Spring Journal, Amazon Kindle e-book.

Seldon, Raman. 2014. *The Theory of Criticism from Plato to the Present: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.

Winborn, Mark. 2019. *Interpretation in Jungian Analysis: Art and Technique*. London: Routledge, Amazon Kindle e-book.

Allegory of the 13th Century Poetic Epic Poem *One in the Tiger's Skin*

Teimuraz Chanturishvili

This article presents an analysis of some allegories of the Georgian epic poem *Vepkhistqaosani*, written at the turn of the 13th century. Its author is recognized to be Shota Rustaveli, and the work a monument of Georgian literature. For centuries, it was considered a model of literary skill and a storehouse of wisdom, a valuable asset in every Georgian family.

The work has been translated into many languages of the world; the first was into English by Marjory Wardrop at the beginning of the 20th century, though in prose. Wardrop was an employee of the British Embassy in Russia. By that time, the former Georgian Kingdom was the part of the Russian Empire. Exactly that translation stimulated others. The Russian poet Konstantin D. Balmont, having met Ms. Wardrop and having learned from her about the epic poem, translated it into Russian. So far, the only complete verse translation into English has been made by Lyn Coffin.

As mentioned above, the author is called Shota Rustaveli, although history has not left indisputable proof of this, and therefore there is no full agreement on the authorship. There are many versions, among which, in my opinion, the best is that of the late Tamar Eristavi. In her book *Vepkhistqaosani – the Second Dimension of the Plot*, she argues that the author is Prince Demeter (Demna), the cousin of Queen Tamar, who loved her. Tamar ruled in Georgia at the turn of the 13th century (Eristavi, 2010).

For a complete understanding of the content of the article, it would be ideal to read the work, or at least get acquainted with its contents. The head of an autonomous region of India, Saridan, gives his son Tariel to the childless king Parsadan. The latter raises his "namesake" as his heir, but the subsequent birth of the Princess Nestan-Daredjan pushes Tariel into the background. A great love arises between Tariel and Nestan, which they hide from everyone, but a witness and accomplice to it is Asmat, a maid of the princess.

The time comes and the king decides to marry his daughter off to the Prince of Shirvan. A feast is prepared which, Parsadan tells Tariel, should be as his "sister" deserves. At the instigation of Nestan, Tariel kills the bridegroom, stating his claims to the throne. On the advice of the same Nestan, Tariel does not say anything about their love, which they will declare "after."

The princess's aunt and mentor Davar scolds and beats her niece who set Tariel up to kill the bridegroom, and orders two black servants to take Nestan to a distant island somewhere in the middle of the sea.

Tariel goes in search of his beloved. In his travels and misadventures he meets Pridon, the king of a small kingdom, and helps him in a war against his evil uncle. Tariel learns from Pridon that the latter once saw two black men taking away some beautiful maiden. Pridon failed to take her from them and they escaped. Tariel continues his search on a black horse, given to him by Pridon.

Tariel then comes to Arabia, where Rostevan reigns. This king has recently enthroned his daughter Tinatin, and is now hunting with his beloved pupil Avtandyl, the commander of the army of the Arabs.

Resting after the hunt, they see a grieving hero at a riverbank, holding his black horse by the bridle. He is wearing a tiger-skin cape and hat. The king orders the stranger to be brought before his eyes and sends a guard after him, but the stranger – Tariel – scatters the visitors in different directions, mercilessly whipping them with his massive whip. Then he disappears from view.

The search for the missing person begins. The daughter of the enraged king, Tinatin, sends Avtandyl – her beloved -–to search for the missing stranger. Avtandyl finds Tariel in a remote cave where he lives as a hermit; his only companion there is Nestan's maid Asmat, who takes care of him in a sisterly way. Hereafter Tariel, along with Avtandyl and Pridon, frees Nestan-Daredjan from captivity, and the poem has a happy ending.

Ms. Eristavi believes that the three men, the three main characters of the epic poem, are three hypostases of Prince Demna, and the two main heroines are hypostases of Queen Tamar, and with such a plan in mind the author wrote his work.

In the allegorical narrative two stories are told: one the explicit story, involving characters and actions, the other the implicit or esoteric story. Sometimes there is a one-to-one correspondence between elements of these two stories (Scruton, 2017: 11).

At the beginning of our article, let us list the coincidences between the events described in the epic poem and the historical events in Georgia at

that time: there exists the legend of Shota Rustaveli's love for Queen Tamar and the dedication of his work to her, in which is the author's (Rustaveli's) love confession to Queen Tamar; historically, according to one version, the young Prince Demna was being prepared for the kingdom under the leadership of the King Regent George III (Orbeliani, 1978: 40–41); in the epic poem, Saridan gives his son Tariel to his relative, King Parsadan, who prepares him for the kingdom. Parsadan took Tariel with the words: "I'll rear him as my son; his race is even my own" (Rustaveli: 74). Historically, the birth of the Princess Tamar moved Demna aside, and in the work Nestan-Daredjan's birth moves Tariel aside. Historically, George III enthroned his daughter Tamar; in the epic poem, King Parsadan prepares Nestan for the kingdom, and King Rostevan enthrones his daughter Tinatin (Tinatin – reflection). Historically, there was a rebellion against George III in Georgia and Demna struggled for the throne, and in the epic poem Tariel struggles for the kingdom against Parsadan, and Pridon wages war against his uncle. Historically, there exists a Georgian folk legend of Tamar's and Demna's love, and in the epic poem Nestan's aunt Davar disconnects the lovers. "Davar" in Georgian means "I am a sister." At the same time, in Persian it means "arbiter of justice." It should be noted that, in Georgia, as an Orthodox Christian country, cousins were considered as siblings.

The following fact can also be attributed to the category of the abovementioned allegories: Queen Tamar was married in her first marriage to the Rus Prince Yuri, but the marriage was dissolved, allegedly because of the unworthy qualities of the latter – he was accused of drunkenness and sodomy (Ibboson, 2016).

Maybe some of these vices were implied in the words of Tariel in his story about the murder of Nestan's groom? When he breaks into the tent, he sees some disgusting scene: "I went into the tent. It is a horror to tell with the tongue how the bridegroom was lying" (Rustaveli: 86).

Incest is defined as a sexual activity between family members or close relatives. The incest taboo is one of the most widespread of all cultural ones in both present and past societies. A common justification for prohibiting incest is avoiding inbreeding.

In some societies, such as ancient Egypt, such relations were accepted as a means of perpetuating the royal lineage. Incest is a kind of archetype that underlies many myths (e.g. Sophocles' "Oedipus"). In this connection, "the emotion of shame, linked closely to the individual as social personality, can be a violent feeling, making one wish that the ground would open and swallow him" (Hultberg, 1987: 158). Who knows – maybe the author, creating this work, suffered morally because the thought was in his mind?

We do not understand why this phenomenon, which even animals reflexively displace from their lives, is sometimes present in human society, and why the very possibility of incest is not eradicated from the human psyche. Is not the absolute idea of the human destined to come true in this world?

English-speaking readers, as mentioned above, first became acquainted with the epic poem through the translation by Marjorie Wardrop. In the prologue of that translation, the word "sadchodchmanebi" is translated in its old Georgian meaning as "praiseworthy." At the same time, a footnote to that translation indicates that the word has another meaning as well – "equivocal." Wardrop could have learn about that only from someone who helped her translate and who knew about the allegory of the epic poem (Rustaveli: 3).

In Georgia, the rumours about the mutual love of Princess Tamar and Prince Demna hovered, although there is no documentary data available. As a child, I happened to hear that Demna and Tamar loved each other. That conversation was inspired by my book, the meaning of which I struggled to understand at that time.

As for the legend of Rustaveli's love for Queen Tamar, its origins lie in the work itself, as the author himself states (Rustaveli: verse 8). The synthesis of those rumours in classical Georgian literature is Akaki Tsereteli's (a Georgian poet of the 19th century) poem "What Caused Vepkhistqaosani?" Tsereteli describes how Tamar loves Shota but tells him that no one should know about it. She also encourages him to sing their love poetically. In response, Shota writes the named poem: "Allegorically I will write for you *Vepkhistqaosani*." Said and wrote, he praises Tamar, names himself Tariel and names her Nestan-Daredjan. In the end he portrays himself as Homer and Georgia as Hellas (Tsereteli, 1907: 577). We don't know what else Tsereteli knew about the motives for writing his poem, but we know that he, the prince's son, was given to a peasant family (such a custom existed in Georgia), and there he could hear the legends existing among ordinary people. Who knows, maybe by comparing the author of the poem with Homer, Tsereteli meant the author's blindness as, according to one historical version, Demna was blinded for participating in the anti-king conspiracy. This assumption does not infringe on but adds to our argument about the allegorical nature of the epic poem.

To the tune of Tamar's and Rustaveli's love, the Hungarian artist Mihály Zichy painted a picture showing Rustaveli presenting his work to Queen Tamar.

(*Shota Rustaveli presents his epic poem to Queen Tamar*, Mihály Zichy, 1880s)

Here it should be said that the gaps in this field – such as the relationship between Tamar and Demna – may be due to the political repressions in Georgia in the 1920s and 30s where many thousands of its citizens were "eradicated as a political class" (Gorky, 2008: 41). Together with this, Georgia lost its great spiritual heritage, accumulated knowledge, archives, etc. The epic poem begins with an appeal to God:

> By whom the universe was created with his almighty will and strength,
>
> And all the beings were inspired with the celestial vivid breath,
>
> And who us, man, this world had given, this such an inexhaustible wealth,
>
> He's who ordains the reign of kings, in His own image shaped their face.
>
> (Rustaveli, verse 1)

In the lines "He's who ordains the reign of kings, in His own image shaped their face" we recognize the biblical "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him" (New American Standard Bible, 1998: 14). The mortal is able to "see" God only by the sign granted by him to man, by the creativeness. In Georgian, "king" (khelmtsipe) means "capable of creating, working." Accordingly, along with the praise of God, we read here: "God, thou endowed everyone with the ability to create, everyone – from the king to a simple worker." So, right from the outset the work sounds allegorically.

In the prologue the author calls himself Rustaveli, the person who once praised Tamar, and that description was approved by all. The Archbishop of Georgia Anton Cathalicos should be mentioned here; in his book "Georgian Grammar" he mentions Shota Rustaveli, who in the past described Queen Tamar's life (Cathalicos 1753). These lines surprise us – why did Anton not name Shota Rustaveli the author of this work? According to Tamar Eristavi, the true author Demna hid behind the name of Shota Rustaveli, and even then partially, by the modified surname Rustveli. The same can be said about the epilogue: "And when Rustveli praised Tariel, with tears was washed his every word." Why not "Shota Rustveli praised Tariel …"? Eristavi believes that Demna did not fully identify with Shota Rustaveli but left room for suspicion.

The epilogue and its interpretation are also interesting in the sense that at the very beginning of it the author claims that he is some Meskhetian who writes this in imitation of Rustveli. It is customary to consider the epilogue as a late postscript by a certain copyist. Eristavi gives a clear and logical explanation - in the prologue Demna hides behind the name Rustveli, and in the epilogue he admits that he wrote this in imitation of Rustveli.

It is a pity that this idea does not appear in the translations, as it should look like this: "I'm some Meskhetian, rhyming this Rustveli's imitating name" (Epilogue, verse I).

In the prologue, Rustveli speaks of his love for Tamar and adds that later in the story her name is often referred to allegorically (Rustaveli: verse 19). In the poem, this mentioning can only apply to Nestan and Tinatin, no one else. Who knows, maybe these easily resolved allegories were the reason that in Queen Tamar's time nothing was heard of this epic poem, unlike those poets who composed for her the laudatory hymns?

So, Demna and Tamar, like Tariel and Nestan, were cousins, and the love between them was unacceptable. Maybe this was what the chronicler implied when he wrote that "Demna was a good

young man until the devil penetrated his heart and consciousness" (*Life of Kartli*, 1956: 18).

The appeal to God in the prologue logically goes into a statement about the structure of a normal human society (Rustaveli: verse 11). This is Plato's idea – he believed that at the head of the harmoniously functioning society should be an appropriately worthy leader (Oluwafemi, 2009: 10). If we get ahead of events and say right here that the killing of the lion and tigress by Tariel is an allegory of the renunciation of the throne and love, we should add that it was performed for the sake of his beloved, in the name of wellbeing and peace in the country.

It was the claim to the throne that caused the civil war in Georgia. Therefore, the happy ending of the epic poem with the construction of a harmonious society is only a desired fantasy, and in Tsereteli's aforementioned poem, the lovers' coming together was impossible for moral reasons and the social unrest. It should be remembered that, according to historians, during the uprising, Demna looked very passive – the noble feudal lords who wanted to make him king were more active. The education of the epic poem's author is striking. He is a representative of the high aristocratic strata. All allegories and philosophical hints in the work serve the highest goal to ensure the wellbeing of the country despite the tragic vicissitudes and misfortunes of the main characters. In the epic poem, except for the allegorical description of real historical events, are allegories – colourful descriptions of nature, cosmic phenomena, social cataclysms – designed to fix the main idea of the author in the reader's mind.

Analysing the description of love in the prologue, we conclude that it is platonic – the inadmissibility of love relationships between the main characters is represented by the aunt Davar (I am a sister). As we have said, the search for Nestan, her liberation and happy conclusion of the narration comprise a fantasy similar to the meeting of Dante and Beatrice in the final of Dante's *Divine Comedy* – Beatrice had passed away a long time earlier, and whose death had been a bitter experience for Dante all his life.

The expression "platonic love" does not belong to Plato, but occurred in the process of studying the teachings of the philosopher. In Rustaveli's verses, such a love is described by appropriate expressions (Rustaveli: verses 26–27). The fact that the marriage of Tariel and Nestan is unacceptable is also evident from the king's appeal to Tariel: "Let's celebrate the wedding of one who's like a sister to you" (Rustaveli: 127). The platonic love of the author for Tamar is also evidenced by the fact that in the prologue the author praises David, Tamar's husband and co-ruler. The author proves with his life his own words (in the prologue), "True midjnur (lover) he, who doesn't regret his life for the sake of his beloved."

What denies the possibility of Demna's authorship? According to the annals, Demna was blinded, castrated and died. But those tragic incidents are described in only one sentence, and there is no detailed description by a witness, and it was written two to three decades after what might have happened. And also, from the annals it is not clear how much time passed from the punishment (if it really happened) to the death, and if the period was that of many years then Demna could have written the poem at home – the punishment did not imply his banishment. Yes, it is difficult to assume that a mutilated person could write such a vivid work, but such an example does exist in history in the platonic love of disfigured Abelard and Eloise in France of the 12th century, which continued after his punishment (Nehring, 2005: 8).

On the other hand, it is not impossible that the uncle spared his nephew but expelled him from Georgia, and Demna wrote the epic poem in exile. Putting on the tiger's skin in India is a sign of seclusion (in Persia it was considered an indicator of power and might). If the uncle's mercy is hard to imagine, maybe Demna broke out from the besieged fortress Lore and retired from Georgia? The finale would be the same.

The work is saturated with allusions to Plato's philosophy. We have already talked about the author's views on the structure of the prosperous society and platonic love. Then, in the epic poem, Tariel is on a black horse, and Avtandyl on a white one. This corresponds to the platonic allegory of the soul – the charioteer driving a cart to which black and white horses are harnessed (McKay and McKay, 2020). Speaking of Plato's black and white horses, it should be remembered that the black horse looks like a personification of the hard-to-hold emotions of Tariel, and the white one of the rationalities and cleverness of Avtandyl. It is interesting to remember that Plato's white horse is immortal, and the black one is mortal. Overcoming the earthly sinfulness and striving for higher spiritual values should be the ideal for a "superior" man. Apparently, in his work the author idealistically creates such a reality.

Tinatin sends Avtandyl in search of a stranger in the tiger's skin. According to Eristavi, it was Queen Tamar (then still a princess) who preached to Demna to understand himself and his own thoughts and feelings, and answer his own dramatic questions.

Avtandyl finds Tariel living in a cave – recall Plato's famous allegory of the cave (Trumpeter, 2012) – then makes friends with him and admonishes him.

After that, the "enlightened" Tariel makes a choice and renounces his kingdom claims (kills the lion) and refuses his love (kills the tigress).

Here, it should certainly be noted that dressing in a tiger's skin is a sign of a hermit. On the other hand, Tariel wore a tiger's hide as it reminded him of his beloved. The author interestingly depicts this most important episode of the poem when Tariel watches the game of the lion and the tigress and sees that it has turned into a fight. Angry with the lion for having offended his beloved, Tariel kills it with a sword. Then he grabs the tigress that reminds him of Nestan and tries to kiss her! But the tigress bites and claws him, and the distraught Tariel strangles her.

This scene is really impressive. First, the author knows that a lion and a tiger can be found together only in India. Further, the description of Tariel's passionate desire to hug and kiss the tigress is very touching, as is the rescue of the torn-to-pieces and bleeding Tariel, the midjnur (lover) by Avtandyl. The content of the poem after this episode and its happy ending is a fantasy realized in the author's imagination.

Tinatin in Georgian means "reflected beam." This emphasizes that she and Nestan are two hypostases of one person, of that Tamar whose name the author allegorically mentions in his work many times.

How do Demna's three hypostases personify him? In the case of Avtandyl, his love of Tinatin has no barriers. From the religious point of view, nothing can interfere with his happiness, even if he and Tinatin are cousins! (They are Muslims.) In the version of Pridon, Demna would have reigned without his beloved and waged war with his uncle! The author of the poem did not want such an outcome, so Pridon gives his black horse to Tariel. The beginning of the advents of Tariel in the poem looks like a description of Demna's real story, but the subsequent adventures – the liberation of Nestan and the prosperous end, are the desired fantasy, just like the establishment of the successful societies in the kingdoms of all three heroes.

The Eristavi version regarding the other heroes of the epic poem fits perfectly into our course of events: Asmat – indelible sadness and constant remembrance of the lost love; Fatima – who tells Avtandyl about Nestan, whom she had taken from two blacks – the muse of history, often telling truth, but sometimes associated with lies and gossip, which one should get rid of (Avtandyl killing Fatima's former lover); Rostevan – Queen Tamar's father's partial allegory; Parsadan – also George III's allegory; Saridan – Demna's father's allegory.

The three friends, preparing to release Nestan from the captivity of evil spirits, break the locks of forty rooms in Tariel's dwelling – the cave – and discover innumerable treasures there. But a more valuable find is the magical armour that cannot be cut and the swords that can easily cut any chainmail. Most interesting are the valuables and weapons stored in the cave that belonged to giants and were taken from them by Tariel after a bloody struggle.

A cave with treasure and weapons, making their discoverer omnipotent, is a common theme of many legends worldwide. This topic is organically woven into Roger Scruton's research. It is not an exaggeration to say that a part of his analysis may be applied to the named episode of the epic poem: "Giants have power, but not technology. They are not able to comprehend it; they are only able to blindly own it. Such is the fate of power, which is not in the grip of creativeness" (Scruton, 2017: 188).

This circumstance of the hero's creative activity in unity with the forces of nature is clearly stated in Avtandyl's appeal to the stars, to all living creatures, to people:

> Behold, the stars bear witness; yes, all seven confirm what I say;
>
> The Sun, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars pity me as I go my way.
>
> And Venus, Mercury, and the Moon bear me witness as they may.
>
> All seven of these will let her know what fires consume me today,
>
> All the world's creatures came to praise him. From far and near. They drew nigh.
>
> Bears came from the woods; fish, crocodiles from the sea, birds from the sky.
>
> Indians, Arabs, Greeks, Slavs from East and West, of low birth and high,
>
> From Persia, Europe, Egypt's kingdoms, no one did the chance deny.
>
> (Rustaveli, 208, verses 972–976)

The intervention of arch-ancient forces, which inspire the heroes who crush the stronghold of evil and injustice, is beautifully described in the scenes of storming the fortress of the evil spirits:

> The measureless wrath of God struck Kadjeti on that fateful day.
>
> Kronos, in anger, cast off the sweet shield of the sun and held sway.

> To the Kadjis the wheel and circle of heave turned the wrong way.
>
> The army of the dead grew large; so many Kadjis did they slay.
>
> (Rustaveli, 303, verse 1422)

Most of the literary critics and researchers who have studied this work scientifically have paid attention to the motives of friendship, love, loyalty, and various philosophical aspects of the poem. Meanwhile, it ends with a sentence which had been the main thrust of the heroes and that they accomplished – "In the realm of their kingdoms, the goat with the wolf could safely go" (Rustaveli, 344, verse 1656).

Based on the foregoing, Eristavi's version that the author of *One in the Tiger's Skin* was Prince Demna, seems logical to us – the work might be the allegorical exposition of the tragic life and love of Prince Demna, told by himself.

As for the picture by Zichy, it beautifully reminds us of the meaning of mortmain in law: the will that survives in an object after the conscious life that ordered it has fled. In the case of *One in the Tiger's Skin*, the "dead hand" survived and is forever imprinted in deeds of the author and the memory of his descendants – both as his renunciation and as his gift of love.

References

Cathalicos, Anton. 1753. *Georgian Grammar*. Tbilisi: Raf. Eristavi Edition, 1885.

Eristavi, Tamar. 2010. *The Second Dimension of the Story of Vepkhistqaosani*. Tbilisi: Global-Print Publishing House.

Gorky, Igor. 2008. *Cross of Russia*. Saratov: Editions "Science."

Hultberg, Peer. 1987. "Shame: An Overshadowed Emotion." In: *Tenth International Congress of Analytical Psychology. The Archetype of Shadow in a Split World*. Zürich: DAIMON.

Ibboson, Sophie. 2016. "King Tamar, the Caucasian Queen. The Greatest of Georgian Rulers." *Asian Geographic* 118. https://www.asiangeo.com/articles/king-tamar-caucasian-queen/.

King James Bible Online. "Genesis." https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Genesis-Chapter-1.

Life of Kartli. 1956. T. 2, Tbilisi: House of the Academy of Sciences.

McKay, Brett, and McKay, Kate. 2020. "What is a Man? The Allegory of the Chariot." www.artofmanliness.com. https://www.artofmanliness.com/articles/what-is-a-man-the-allegory-of-the-chariot.

Nehring, Cristina. 2005. "Heloise and Abelard: Love Hurts." *The New York Times* (February 13). https://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/13/books/review/heloise-abelard-love-hurts.html.

New American Standard Bible. 1998. Anaheim: Foundation Publications.

Oluwafemi, Bolarfinwa. 2009. *An Evaluation of Plato's Ideal state*. Munich: GRIN Verlag. https://www.grin.com/document/183975.

Orbeliani, Stephanus. 1978. *Life of the Orbelians*. Tbilisi: Publishing House of E. Tsagareishvili.

Rustaveli, Shota. 1912. *Vepkhistqaosani*. Translated into English by Marjory Wardrop as *The Man in The Panther's Skin*. London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 22 Albemarle Street. https://archive.org/details/WardropMps/page/n107/mode/2up.

Rustaveli, Shota. 2015. *Vepkhistqaosani*. Translated into English by Lyn Coffin as *The Knight in The Panther's Skin*. Tbilisi: POEZIA press.

Rustaveli, Shota. 2019. On Facebook: Chanturishvili, Teimuraz (June 18). https://www.facebook.com/teimuraz.chanturishvili; https://www.rustavelipublishing.com/why-rustaveli?fbclid=IwAR0UY43mj35MEyq7GXTryjKCI6_E3-4PlH5iTgPA_hibVSOlw26sP6w2c90

Scruton, Roger. 2017. *The Ring of Truth*: *The Wisdom of Wagner's The Ring of the Nibelung*. London: Penguin.

Trumpeter, Amy. 2012. "'The Allegory of the Cave' by Plato: Summary and Meaning." https://www.philosophyzer.com/the-allegory-of-the-cave-by-plato-summary-and-meaning.

Tsereteli, Akaki. 1907. *What Caused the "Vepkhistqaosani?"* vol. 1. Tbilisi: "Soviet Georgia."

The Gift of Creation in *Prometheus*

Bogna Starczewska

In this article I will explore the notion of the gift of creation in Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (2012). The film is set in the future, following an expedition to a planet located far from the Earth. Dr Elizabeth Shaw (Noomi Rapace) and Dr Charlie Holloway (Logan Marshall-Green) hope to find humanity's makers, who they are calling the Engineers in the belief that they once engineered the human race. Their quest appears promising as they find a deceased Engineer and upon inspecting his DNA learn that it not only matches human DNA, but predates it, confirming their initial thesis.

However, the joy of this discovery is short-lived as robot David (Michael Fassbender) secretly conducts an experiment at Charlie's expense, placing a drop of a foreign fluid found on the planet in his glass, infecting him and leading to Charlie infecting Elizabeth who, despite being unable to bear children, becomes "pregnant" with an alien foetus. The pregnancy progresses dynamically and painfully, and Elizabeth, having witnessed Charlie's infection which ultimately led to his demise, removes the baby surgically, escaping death. She discovers that Peter Weyland (Guy Pearce), a CEO of the Weyland Corporation which made this space mission possible, is still alive and onboard, hoping that the Engineer will extend his life – as it turns out, David found an Engineer in hyper sleep. Instead of providing help, the Engineer violently attacks them, ripping David's head off. Elizabeth warns the ship's captain that the Engineer is headed to the Earth, intending to exterminate the human race – to prevent that from happening the captain crashes the ship into the Engineer's ship.

Nonetheless, the Engineer survives and chases after Elizabeth, but the alien which she "mothered" fights with the Engineer while she escapes them both. Elizabeth helps the decapitated but still functioning David as he claims that he can fly an alien ship. They leave the planet, heading towards the Engineers' planet as Elizabeth wants to find out why they decided to destroy humans.

The film's title relates to the name of the spaceship which allows Elizabeth and others to discover the truth about the human race. IMDB's trivia offers an explanation of the film's title: "Ridley Scott named the film *Prometheus*, seeing the name aptly fit the film's themes: 'It's the story of creation; the gods and the man who stood against them'" (Prometheus (2012): IMDb, 2020). Robin Hard and H. J. Rose provide an insight into Prometheus's varying portrayals, as his myth:

> was altered and developed significantly as time progressed. In the Hesiodic poems, he advanced the interests of mortals in two specific respects alone and suffered for his actions ever afterwards, while in the later tradition from Aeschylus onwards, he was the general benefactor (and sometimes even the creator and saviour) of the human race. (Hard and Rose, 2003: 92–94)

Therefore, the perception of Prometheus's connection to humanity gained significance over the years. It is interesting to consider the customary sacrificial offering practised in Greece in relation to Prometheus, a description of which can be found in *The Routledge Handbook Of Greek Mythology*: "According to Greek custom, the flesh and offal of the victims would be eaten after the sacrifice while their bones would be wrapped in fat and burned on the altar for the gods" (Hard and Rose, 2003: 93). Citing Hesiod, Hard and Rose explain how Prometheus has impacted the customary sacrificial offering:

> When the gods and mortals had quarrelled over the matter in the earliest times at Mekone (later Sicyon), Prometheus, for some unexplained reason, settled the dispute to the advantage of mortals by working a deception on Zeus. He killed an ox, cut it up, and separated the flesh and entrails from the bones; and he then covered the flesh and entrails with the ox's stomach to make that portion look unappetizing, and concealed the bones under a layer of shining fat. (93)

Prometheus's actions resulted in Zeus's anger, causing him to withhold the gift of fire from the race of mortals. Luckily, Prometheus decided to help humans further, resulting to "stealing some fire from heaven in the dry, pithy stalk of a fennel-plant," which resulted in Zeus "imposing a second punishment on mortal men (for there were no women as yet) and by consigning Prometheus to everlasting torment. As man's price for the stolen fire, Zeus arranged for the creation of a 'beautiful evil' (*kalon kakon*), the first woman" (Hard and Rose, 2003: 93). Consequently it can be said that Prometheus continued to take actions which greatly benefited humanity, despite the anger they awoke in Zeus.

"*Prometheus Bound*, a tragedy of the fifth century BC that is ascribed to Aeschylus" provides us with further insight into Prometheus's devotion to humankind, claiming that he "even saved them from being destroyed by a tyrannical Zeus who grudges their very existence" as "Zeus not only ignored the interests of human beings after his rise to power, but wanted to eliminate them to replace them with a new race" (Hard and Rose, 2003: 95). This connects directly to the action of Scott's *Prometheus* as the Engineers plan to destroy humanity. The mythological Prometheus seems a pivotal figure for the human race, as "he introduced or invented all the arts that raise human beings from a state of nature," which included for instance teaching humans "how to make houses from bricks and wood" and how "to cross the seas on sailing ships." What is more "he invented the art of numbers for them" as well as "writing and medicine" (Hard and Rose, 2003: 96).

Therefore, it is implied that Prometheus had an enormous influence on the human race, preventing their extinction and looking after them, raising them as if they were his own children, a parallel similar to that between Weyland and David as Weyland is a father figure for the robot, programming him. Just as Prometheus had a huge impact on human identity, Weyland has not just impacted David's identity, but he designed it, along with his behavioural patterns, deciding what David would be capable of doing.

William Madsen provides an example of an ancient association between a god and destruction which bares similarity to Zeus's intention to exterminate humankind:

> Tecospa's God is no gentle God of Love but a harsh creator who, in the Aztec tradition of multiple creations, periodically destroys the world and remakes it. Centuries ago when the earth was born the soil was white but man's sins quickly turned it black, says Tecospa's creation story. When God looked down and saw the earth was black he got so angry and disgusted with mankind that he resolved to exterminate the human race. But the dark-skinned Virgin of Guadalupe, mother of all Mexicans, still loved her children and felt compassion for them. She begged God, who also is her son, to spare them. (Madsen, 1960: 125)

It raises the question of whether life should be allowed to continue once it has been created or if there is a set of actions which would justify destroying life which was once perceived as precious. *Prometheus* demonstrates the Engineers' intention to exterminate the human race. Elizabeth seems shocked upon the discovery of the hatred and rage which the Engineer expresses towards humankind. But knowing human history, it is not difficult to see potential reasons why the Engineers to regret their creation, their gift of life and endless possibilities repaid by wars, religious persecution, hate manifesting itself in numerous forms, continuous destruction of the environment leading to climate change, violence against each other as well as many other negative traits and actions of humanity.

If creation is perceived from a cold, scientific, reasonable point of view, it would be more appropriate to alter the question Elizabeth wants to ask the Engineers to – why have they not destroyed the human race sooner, seeing all their evil actions? What if the Engineers participated in the creation of Earth's environment which humans consistently damage, potentially leading to the Earth's transformation into an uninhabitable planet? Surely that could be seen as a justification for the Engineers' disappointment and rage.

Another reason for the Engineer's anger might be the fact that humans dared to create life, as he meets David, a shining example of artificial intelligence. Perhaps the Engineers perceive themselves as the only beings allowed to create new life. The creation of David might appear as a gift for humankind, making the *Prometheus* crew's lives easier, looking after them during their hyper sleep, potentially making space expeditions, if not altogether possible, then at the very least easier. While David might be lucky to exist at all, he appears obsessed with the notion of creation, performing an experiment on Charlie in order to create a new life.

David specifically asks Charlie: "How far would you go to get what you came all this way for? What are you willing to do?" to which Charlie replies: "Anything and everything." It is not until after this exchange that David infects Charlie's drink with the alien substance he found on the planet. Although this act ultimately leads to Charlie's death, as due to his infection one of the ship's crew members kills him with fire, in a twisted way it is what Charlie himself asked for. However, if we perceive artificial intelligence purely in the context of keeping the human race safe and obeying clear orders without an ounce of improvisation, the creation of David could be seen as a curse, as his actions have dire consequences.

One could ask whether *Prometheus* portrays life as a gift or a curse, set to become the reason for humanity's downfall as objects of creation and

the creators of artificial intelligence. There are four levels of creation featured in the movie: someone created the Engineers (unless they came to be through evolution), Engineers created humans, humans created robots (David), and David, a robot, attempts to create life via the use of the alien substance. Hence, the idea of life appears to be the movie's main preoccupation which progresses into an obsession. According to Hard and Rose:

> It was often said that Prometheus was not merely the benefactor of the human race, but the ancestor of part or all of it, or even its creator ... The idea that Prometheus created the first human beings by moulding them from clay first appears in the Hellenistic period; this would at least explain why he should have wished to act as their champion. (Hard and Rose, 2003: 96)

Therefore, the movie's title could not be more accurate, as Elizabeth and Charlie risk their lives in order to meet their potential "makers." They appear to perceive life as a great gift as they happily pursue the Engineers. In the film, humans owe their very existence to the Engineers. However, as the film progresses Elizabeth discovers that the very same beings who decided to create the human race in the first place are now set on destroying it, which reminds us of Zeus's plans – as I have mentioned earlier, Prometheus was able to prevent the destruction of humankind. In this scenario it is humans themselves who act against the race of their makers, as they prevent a ship full of biological weapons from flying to Earth. Over the course of the film, the alien virus infects some of the ship's crew, leading to their destruction. It is unclear whether the Engineers created any lifeforms apart from humans and the alien virus.

It is intriguing how pivotal the theme of life and creation is deemed in the movie. Elizabeth is unable to have children – could that have anything to do with the level of desperation with which she pursues the Engineers, even though she becomes aware of the danger they pose? She is obsessed with the thought of gifting life and then deciding to take it back, and seems unable to come to terms with the Engineers' decision. David, perhaps due to the fact that he is a robot, an artificial being, is obsessed with creating new life, even at the price of sacrificing a human life. Despite being given potentially everlasting life by humans, he is not satisfied with what he has. Maybe because he is not a human being himself he does not value human life the way people do.

It is worth asking what the benefits, challenges and moral obligations relating to the creation of life are. Benefits include servitude, as David and any other robots which humans have created are useful – as the film demonstrates, a robot can take care of a spaceship, making sure that everything is running smoothly while the human crew rest safely in hyper sleep. This potentially allows for travelling much further than before as it reduces the resources required by the human crew during space missions. It also means the possibility of sending robots far into space, exploring the universe in a way which remains impossible for humans. Robots could also be utilized as doctors, themselves immune to human diseases hence proving extremely useful during, for instance, a pandemic, or while working on the development of vaccines for human diseases without risking contraction of a given illness. They could help people who require care as well as be used for scientific expeditions which might be unattainable for humans due to hostile environments.

The notion of a robot's programming presents a challenge as often it will require for allowing it a certain level of improvisation, but which could easily get out of hand. A robot will never be fully human, but it is the people who create it that bear at least a partial responsibility for its actions as a robot does not have the same moral compass that many people have – at the end of the day, it remains a calculating, soulless machine which serves humans, but as *Prometheus* shows its actions cannot be fully controlled and predicted. In the film, David experiments with an alien lifeform which he adds to Charlie's drink. As a robot, he is able to experiment with a foreign substance and avoid contracting disease and potentially death. He can find out the specifics of this substance, test it and even alter it, determining its full characteristics and behaviour in different environments. However, due to being a robot David cannot inject himself with it and become a living creature. He is an eager observant of life, but it is clear that he would like to participate in the creation of life.

Where human beings see danger, David sees opportunity. He displays a curiosity for the unknown and, just as he himself is a product of possibly, many experiments and years of technical advancements, he aims to produce a new being, even if it means threatening human lives. David appears to value the potential of creating new life more than preserving the lives of the *Prometheus* crew. He appears to lack moral concerns; however, he does admire Elizabeth's survival instinct and seems offended by Charlie's comments which emphasize the fact that he is not human. Ironically, David's non-human status allows him to survive while Charlie's humanity and

curiousness lead to his downfall. Despite all his brilliance, David is unable to create life without utilizing an already living host for the alien virus.

The Engineers are clearly dissatisfied with the human race, their creation. I listed earlier a number of potential reasons as to why they might be seeking to bring destruction to humans. However, the exact reason remains unclear – we do not know whether the Engineers decided to eliminate us based on a David-like, cold logic, or if their decision was emotional, caused by their disappointment in humankind's actions. In my view, the lack of a clear, straightforward answer is the film's great strength. The movie poses many questions and provides very few answers, forcing the viewer to think for themselves, trying to guess what those answers might be. In fact, it would be difficult to offer satisfactory answers to the big questions this film leaves for the audience to ponder, hence the lack of answers is in my opinion a very clever solution which also keeps the viewers interested in a continuation of this story.

In the case of the human race, the gift of life is initially presented as wonderful and extremely advantageous. However, with time it is revealed that what appeared as a gift is in fact a curse, as idealized Engineers decide to eradicate humankind in its entity. Perhaps the reason for humanity's downfall could be their hubris in daring to create life themselves, both in the form of the artificial intelligence as well as during in-vitro related procedures. Maybe, in the future, cloning will become natural as even now it is possible to clone a cat which has passed away. Science refrains from perceiving life as sacred and saved for married, heteronormative couples as nowadays it is possible to be single, homosexual, at an advanced age, etc. and still become a parent via a number of different ways. This liberty could be perceived by the Engineers as unforgivable if they deem themselves godly, convinced that they are the only race allowed to not only create but also facilitate the creation of life.

It is also interesting to consider the alien virus as a lifeform. It would appear to humans that this particular lifeform has mainly disadvantages, is evil from the outset, and whose sole purpose is to destroy any lifeforms it comes into contact with. The *Prometheus*' captain perceives it as a straightforward danger: "It's an installation. Maybe even military. They put it out here because they're not stupid enough to make weapons of mass destruction on their own doorstep." However, from a scientific point of view this virus takes over different lifeforms and seems incredibly resilient, and therefore could be useful to study as the research outcomes might provide various immunity solutions for humankind.

One might ask, what are the boundaries in terms of creating life and the consequences thereof? Who and how gets to decide the value of a particular lifeform? It appears that humans' ability to create life infuriates the Engineers as their representative brutally rips the head off the humanmade robot David. As mentioned earlier, this might be the reason for their overall rage directed at the human race – the simple fact that they have dared to experiment with the creation of life.

The planet which the *Prometheus* crew travel to was found with the help of maps to the stars discovered on Earth. This hence begs the question of the purpose of providing the directions to this hostile place for the human race. Perhaps the Engineers expected only a small amount of humans to find that planet and wanted to conduct an experiment, seeing if anyone could survive in that dangerous environment? It is possible that, due to human experiments with life, the punishment intended by the Engineers was death, either on this hostile planet or on the Earth, caused by biological weapons the Engineer was about to fly to Earth.

The value of life is often questioned even by humankind, as it is perceived as more precious in certain circumstances than in others, for instance in order to create a vaccine for a deadly virus it is usually required that people participate in a trial which might lead to casualties. Abortion and in-vitro, as well as experimenting on human embryos, selling them for a financial gain, serving as a surrogate mother, and using a donor's sperm in order to get pregnant, are viewed in a variety of ways by different people, as their opinions are influenced by the media, family members, politicians, friends, religion, the ideological believes they grew up with, personal experience, and so on. To someone like David, human life appears to have an experimental value more than anything else.

According to Damon Lindelof, Ridley Scott was "interested in Greco-Roman creation or Aztec creation where there are many gods, and these gods basically make man out of themselves. This idea that they sacrifice themselves or take a piece of themselves and create man in their own image" (Reed, 2012).

I will explore how the aspect of self-sacrifice affects the creator and the life created. *Aztec Mythology: A Comprehensive Guide To Aztec Mythology Including Myths, Art, Religion And Culture* provides information about the Aztec's approach to cosmogony:

> The creation myth according to the Aztecs is a continuous story of creations and destructions, called suns. The myth which tells the story of the creation is called the Legend of the Fifth Sun. At the beginning of the world, there was only darkness, void. Creation began when the dual Ometecuhtli (Lord of Duality) / Omecihuatl (Lady of Duality) created itself. This first god was good and bad, male and female, and gave birth to four other gods: Huitzilopochtli, Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca, and Xipe Totec. These gods created the world. The first things created by Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli were fire and a half Sun. They then undertook the creation of humanity by sacrificing a god whose blood dripped on a mass of ground-up bones and produced the first man and woman, named Oxomoco and Cipactonal respectively. The birth of each took 4 days. (2020: 12)

Hence, in the Aztec tradition, creation is heavily connected to destruction as well as sacrifice. At the beginning of *Prometheus* we witness an Engineer ingesting the alien virus and falling into the water, his DNA being destroyed. As the film later demonstrates, the virus requires a living host which it can inhabit in order to create a new lifeform. Although normally the creation of a new lifeform is not possible without destruction of the host, Elizabeth proves that one can grow an alien form and survive as she has the alien foetus removed from her body before it destroys her.

The alien creature is hostile and its only mission appears to be bringing destruction and incubating any lifeform available. If we perceive the Engineers as gods then there is a clear parallel between the Aztec's beliefs and the film's plot as one Engineer sacrifices himself potentially to give live and strength to the virus, while another dies fighting the virus as the alien lifeform incubates his body. Despite all their technological and biological knowledge, the Engineers seem unable to give life to the alien lifeform without sacrificing one of their own.

I would like to explore the idea of sacrifice further, considering its importance in relation to creation. There are a number of examples of sacrifice in the Mexica Universe – for instance, the myth explaining the creation of heaven and earth:

> The first act of creation was attributed to the supreme couple, Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl, whose four children were gods [...] Those gods decided to create the heavens and the earth from a being known as Tlalteotl – the earth deity – floating on the primeval waters. Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca entered the body of Tlalteotl and split it in two, thus creating heaven and earth. They erected four posts to prevent Tlalteotl from reconstituting himself. (Olivier, 2016: 573)

Consequently, in order to create pivotal elements of the universe, the gods were forced to apply violence, and what could be perceived as murder if posts had to be utilized in order to stop Tlalteotl from resuming his earlier form. The creation of the sun and the moon required not only sacrifice, but also great courage:

> The birth of the sun and the moon is another myth fundamental to the Mexica worldview. The gods gathered at Teotihuacan to choose two from among them to be transformed into these celestial bodies. Hoping to become the sun, the rich and proud Tecuciztecatl could not bring himself to jump into the fire. Meanwhile, the poor but brave Nanahuatzin courageously threw himself in. Tecuciztecatl followed him but fell into the ashes and was transformed into the moon. Both stars sat motionless in the sky. The sun then demanded the sacrifice of the other gods in order to set the stars in motion. (Olivier, 2016: 574)

This myth establishes courage as a pivotal value. Creation requires a significant amount of sacrifice as, in addition to Nanahuatzin and Tecuciztecatl, there is a demand for further gods as sacrifices to guarantee celestial movement. Therefore, the Mexica gods had to resort to self-sacrifice on a number of occasions, creating a world in which humans could happily exist, enjoying the advantages of their creation in relative bliss. However, this bliss was disrupted by the notion of a human sacrifice. Guilhem Olivier provides an insight into the different versions of a human sacrifice:

> We can distinguish two types of sacrificial victims: the prisoners of war who served as food for the gods – men

> were regarded as beings of corn with which the gods were nourished – and ixiptla, or representatives of the gods. Children, unmarried men, young girls, adult women, and even elderly men could be the "images" of different deities for a given time, at the end of which they were sacrificed. These ritual sacrifices of divine representatives were thought to permit the periodic rebirth of the gods. (Olivier, 2016: 577)

Hence, it could be assumed that the human sacrifices appear as a type of a repayment on behalf of humanity for various gods' actions and their sacrifices which have led to the creation of the world as humankind knows it. If we perceive the human sacrifice as performing the function of food for the gods, it is clearly a straightforward exchange for the creation of the Earth which provides food for the human race. Ritual sacrifice is described as allowing the gods to be reborn, which perhaps could be seen as the price humankind has to pay for its own existence as well as fertility. Apart from the one Engineer we witness sacrificing himself at the beginning of *Prometheus*, it remains unclear whether the Engineers as a race provided similar sacrifices for the human race.

However, even though contemporary humans are far more intellectually advanced than the Aztecs and their perception of the world has evolved greatly, the Engineers are just as mysterious in *Prometheus* to the characters portrayed as the ancient gods were to the Aztecs. Perhaps humankind had to be sacrificed in order for another race created by the Engineers to take the planet over, brought about by the thousands of years the human race has already spend of the Earth, systematically destroying it and leading to a climate crisis? It is also possible that the Engineers were not happy with human hubris in exploring the universe, perceiving them as a threat to themselves, their makers.

If one was desperate for a positive explanation of the Engineers' decision, it is possible that they could somehow predict that a terrible natural disaster, a horrible, uncurable plague or a violent, unbearable war, and by terminating humankind were saving them from a far worse fate than what they engineered.

Prometheus provides a number of examples of human sacrifice. Charlie is sacrificed in David's scientific experience as he ingests the alien substance, which later causes Elizabeth to become pregnant with the alien foetus as Charlie unknowingly transfers the infection to her. Even though her case is terrifying as she barely avoids death, knowing that she is unable to bare human children it is highly impressive that the Engineers' technology allows for her to become a mother – her almost-sacrifice becomes the source of a new life, reminding us of many examples of gods' sacrifices in order to create something new.

The captain sacrifices his life along with those of the willing crew of the *Prometheus* as well as the ship itself in order to prevent the Engineer from attacking the Earth, saving the human race – this brings to mind the myth of Prometheus as he also saved humankind from Zeus. At the end of the film, Elizabeth decides to risk her life again, embarking on a journey to the Engineers' planet in order to receive answers to her existential questions.

One could ask why humans were created in Scott's cinematic universe. It remains unclear as, even though Elizabeth hopes for an answer from the Engineer in that regard, he fails to provide it as he does not engage in a conversation with humans at all, rendering Elizabeth unable to ask this very significant question. Maybe the Engineers created the human race as an experiment which they perceive as an unsuccessful one. Similar to the question regarding the reasoning behind the Engineers' decision to eradicate the humans, the purpose of human existence remains a mystery and the audience is free to make its own assumptions.

If we perceive the Engineers as logical creatures preoccupied with technological advancement, it is possible that they might have perceived humans as a sociological or biotechnological experiment, observing how long it took them to find the Engineers and how quickly they progressed technologically to at least a stage comparable to the one occupied by the Engineers on the advancement scale. Perhaps they found the results unsatisfactory and decided to try again with another race? It also remains unclear why the Engineers decided to create humans in this particular form. They might have intended to create a race inferior to themselves – as *Prometheus* demonstrates, the Engineers are far more technologically advanced than humans, capable of creating different lifeforms. And yet there is a genetic similarity between humans and the Engineers as their DNA predates human DNA. Maybe the Engineers intended for humans to be similar enough to them so they could trace the progression of their race and compare their actions, decisions and development to their own, but at the same time did not want human beings to exceed their own level of development. It is possible that there was a Prometheus-like figure amongst the Engineers who advocated against the destruction of the human race out of sentiment or scientific curiosity.

In my view, *Prometheus* can be perceived through the existentialist lens. Scott Paeth provides a resourceful definition of this complex philosophical movement: "Existentialism is interested in the way in which human beings confront what they see as the fundamentally unanswerable dilemmas of existence and the possibility that human life is ultimately a meaningless and absurd farce, to which philosophy can give no final answer" (Paeth, 2015: 133). The *Prometheus* crew's entire mission can be perceived as an attempt to get the answers humankind so desperately longs for, expecting an explanation of their own creation which they hope has a purpose. Once the Engineers' plan to destroy the human race is revealed the question regarding the reasoning behind this decision becomes perhaps even more important than the notion of creation. More than anything, humankind continues to look for a purpose and a justification, or, at the very least, an explanation of things beyond human understanding. In *Prometheus*, this quest for answers causes many violent deaths and disappointment, but also allows for preventing humanity's extermination.

Paeth describes an important theme in the writing of Friedrich Nietzsche:

> Another central theme in Nietzsche's philosophy is the Death of God. [...] By proclaiming not merely that God does not exist but that God has in fact been killed, Nietzsche is calling into question the kind of complacent atheism represented by the townspeople. God's nonexistence is a philosophical problem, but God's death is also a tragedy – one that requires a complete reevaluation of all of our prior assumptions about the world, our place in it, and the meaning and purpose of human life. To proclaim that God is dead, for Nietzsche, means that the whole foundation of human existence and the moral structure of Western society has been shaken and that all objective reference points for human life have been destroyed along with God. (Paeth, 2015: 141)

The concept of the Death of God can be applied to *Prometheus* as the movie shows the human quest for answers to existential questions such as who created us. The extreme hostility and lack of communication on behalf of the Engineer that Elizabeth and others encounter appear to shatter her worldview. As she has learned that the Engineers intend to destroy humankind just before the Engineer wakes from the hyper sleep, she attempts to gain some answers from him, but he does not respond. As with Nietzsche's concept of the Death of God, the Engineer's behaviour and his intention to eliminate humankind altogether destroys Elizabeth's point of reference, also ruining her vision of humanity's makers as she clearly expected her creators to be different and willing to engage in a dialogue. The crushing of her worldview is tragic, as is the fact that almost all the crew members die without gaining answers to the questions regarding the human existence. The question of why the Engineers decided to eradicate the human race is so unbearable for Elizabeth that she is willing to put her life in jeopardy just so she can find the answer.

Paeth also sheds light on Jean-Paul Sartre's approach to existentialism:

> Sartre's most succinct description of existentialism as a philosophy is found in his essay "Existentialism is a Humanism." In this short piece, he explains that atheistic existentialism, which is the position he advocates, operates from the premise that existence precedes essence. That is to say, there is no pre-given human nature that defines who we are or how we should be in the world. Rather, as human beings, we find ourselves in the world, and it is up to us to make our own meaning out of our experiences and decisions. Because there is no cosmic reference point outside of ourselves, we as individuals are wholly responsible for our actions. (2005: 148)

Sartre's take on existentialism can be used as a solution for a desperate yearning to know one's purpose in the world and the very reason why the human race was created in the first place. The lack of an answer on behalf of the Engineer indicates that it is absolutely crucial for humankind to find the meaning and purpose of existence independently and individually. It is worth considering whether David, as a representative of artificial intelligence, should be considered responsible for his actions or do logic and morals stand in opposition to one another? Lacking the fear of death but being very much interested in the concept of creating life, David risks the lives of others just so that he, a robot, can offer the gift of life to an alien lifeform. His non-human status explains his actions, which could be caused by a lack of a moral reference point which we associate with the possession of a soul; his inhumanity could also be enhanced by Weyland's programming who,

despite being a human, risks the lives of the ship's crew just so that he can request an extension of his own life from the Engineer, his hubris potentially causing the Engineer's terrifying rage.

All in all, the creation of life and the universe, as well as the preservation of life and expanding the field of science, are complex and controversial subjects which have been troubling the human race for thousands of years as certain questions are universal and still as applicable today as in ancient times when the answers were sought through different mythologies. It appears that the more we know about life and how to create it, preserve it, clone it, and terminate it, the more questions trouble us. *Prometheus* appears to portray the gift of creation as a curse and something which can be easily taken away from humankind. The film denies its audience definite answers to existential dilemmas, instead leaving each viewer to come up with their own individual answers. And yet, despite all the challenges, Elizabeth and David survive, only to risk their existence once again by chasing after the Engineers due to Elizabeth's desperate determination to learn why they decided to exterminate the race they created.

References

Aztec Mythology: A Comprehensive Guide To Aztec Mythology Including Myths, Art, Religion And Culture. 2020. Historical Publishing.

Hard, Robin, and Rose, H. J. 2003. *The Routledge Handbook Of Greek Mythology: Based On H. J. Rose's "Handbook Of Greek Mythology."* Abingdon-on-Thames: Taylor & Francis.

IMDB. 2020. *Prometheus* (2012). https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1446714/trivia (accessed 24 September 2020).

Madsen, William. 1960. *The Virgin's Children: Life In An Aztec Village Today*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Olivier, Guilhem. 2016. "Humans and Gods in the Mexica Universe." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Aztecs*, edited by Nichols, Deborah L., and Rodríguez-Alegría, Enrique. New York: Oxford University Press.

Paeth, Scott. 2015. *Philosophy: A Short, Visual Introduction*. Minneapolis: 1517 Media and Fortress Press.

Reed, Becky. 2012. *A Long Prometheus Discussion With Writer Damon Lindelof*. Diymag.com. https://diymag.com/archive/a-long-prometheus-discussion-with-writer-damon-lindelof (accessed 24 September 2020).

Film References

Prometheus (Ridley Scott, USA and UK, 2012).

Julius Caesar's Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*: A subjective vision of History*

Sara Arroja-Schürmann

As the title of this article reveals, the reader will dig into the depth of subjective History (with a capital "H") in order to focus on one of Rome's "favourite" politicians: Julius Caesar. Considered one of the best strategists in military history, he also revealed his writing talents. As a matter of fact, his *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* contains the successive events of Caesar's path to Roman glory, or better said his political ambitions. By disowning the ethnic, religious and political *others* of their identity, he offers himself the merit of "national" (and obviously individual) pride. The work was written by the victor for the victors. How could his account reduce people to being spectators of their own civilization and lives? It eventually leads one to wonder who in reality are the barbarians and who are the civilized. In order to do so, let us go back to some necessary events describing the context leading to such bellicose times.

The politico-historical context

An ambiguity is raised when we mention Rome and its "accomplishments." From glory to pain, from immense culture to murderous hobbies, from artistic talents to political scandals – everything seems contradictory, and yet fascinating. A similar ambivalence transpires from its origins. We are in possession of both a mythological and a historically accurate birth. The first, exposing the mythological creation, displays the famous story of two brothers: Romulus and Remus. Considered as descendants of god Mars and the human Ilia, daughter of the king of Alba Longa, they were thrown into the Tiber by their uncle. Sadly, it all started with a political conflict between brothers. Numitor (the one king of Alba Longa) was overthrown by his sibling Amulius, whose ambition and selfishness led him to fratricide, and later infanticide. Saved by the subsiding of floodwater, they were left orphaned. However, they were fortunately both rescued by a she-wolf, Luperca, who nourished them as her own children. Despite their fraternal link, Romulus ended up murdering his own blood, his brother, during the creation of the city. Wishing to build a whole urban complex on their rescue site (basically on Mount Palatine, one of Rome's seven hills), the said land was divided into two parts, one for each brother (traditionally believed to have been erected in 753 BC, the exact date remains uncertain partly due to the mythological aspect of the story). Not acknowledging his brother's threats, Remus trespassed to Romulus' side and was directly executed for disrespecting the established frontiers. Romulus thus became the sole heir to the Roman throne and head of the newly created city. As a result, the city owned a powerful strength when confronted with its possibly divine creation. If Romulus could create it as such, it would only be so because of the gods' will (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, 2006). His act of violence was supported and claimed as legitimate by the gods so that the "real" rise of Rome came about. Its birth was heavily related to the rise of another mythical city, Troy, and its Aenean origins.

In parallel to this story are the archaeological references. According to academic studies (whose main focus is the city's ancient history) the first occupiers of the region happened to live on Mount Palatine in the 8th century BC (Boak, 1921). The Roman region was shared by many populations (the Etruscan civilization in the north, the Carthaginian civilization, the Greek civilization in the south), and eventually the Etruscan people managed to fortify their villages around the Latium in the 7th century BC and created what would become the well-known city of Rome (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, 2006).

Rome is now one of the world's oldest cities and has been constantly inhabited for three millennia. It was at the end of the 7th century BC that Rome adopted urban infrastructures and later became one of the world's meeting cultural points. In the 2nd century BC, during the republican era, it turned into demographically the most important city in the world. Since its establishment, the Roman territory importantly expanded due to numerous invasions and occupations. A few of the most notable ones can be highlighted. Firstly, there was the conquest of modern Italy that occurred between the 4th and the 1st centuries BC. Gradually conquering every city around the Latium, the Italic peninsula fell to the Roman authority. Despite some revolts and resistances from the oppressed, Rome managed to impose its power on the newly acquired territory. And, due to the creation of numerous institutions, Rome established its authority through a dogmatic tyranny. With the first Punic War, Sicily was handed to Rome by Carthage (the other main power in the region). The Conquest of the Mediterranean basin followed and took place between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. Starting while the conquest of Italy was still in process, the second Punic War led Rome to directly attack Carthage and its structures.

During the conflict, Rome intended to "protect" the Hellenistic regions from possible invasions (being notably influenced by the Greek cultures and civilizations, Rome admired the Hellenistic world). In order to do so, they installed political alliances that finally tied the Greek populations to their conqueror. The humiliating consequences imposed a wish for a third Punic War that occurred in the 2nd century BC and concluded in the destruction of Carthage and the imposition of its status as a Roman colony. The Iberian Peninsula was also invaded during the 2nd century BC. Finally, at the end of the 1st century BC, Julius Caesar offered the Gallic regions to Rome (with the Gallic Wars) and the Roman power finally gained control over the province of Asia, which included Egypt, the last Hellenistic region to fall to the Romans (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, 2006).

The thirst for power and geographical omnipresence channels the crisis on an internal level. The city was the victim of what is called the Republican Crisis. The republican institutions appeared to be unprepared for the gradual expansion of the Roman Empire, and this opened the gates for rebellions and internal revolts, both in political and social terms. The Social War (whose official and proper name is the War of the Allies) revealed the conflict between the Roman allies (*socii* of the Roman Republic) who participated in the various conquests and the Roman power (91–88 BC). Regardless of their help and sacrifice, Rome did not pay them back and refused to recognize their Roman citizenship. After a four-year war led by the rebels (especially the Samnites and the Marsi, two ancient Italic populations from today's central Italy), Rome decreed many laws confirming that the cities and tribes who remained faithful to Rome and its authority would receive Roman citizenship. As a result, the revolt ended with the unification of peninsular Italy.

However, the dark consequence of the demographic boom was the establishment of the financial elite who would dominate the political stage (only the richest aristocratic men could be a part of the political world). As such, rival political and military forces generally collapsed. This was the case with the opposition of two *imperatores*: Marius and Sylla (90–80 BC). The former, a soldier whose political affiliation was to the *populares* (a political group whose objective was to include the lower social classes), succeeded in permitting the military recruitment to lower classes. The latter was an aristocrat whose military talents equalled his cultural abilities. Their conflicts led to the exile of Sylla during Marius's power alongside the *populares* and Sylla's dictatorship after his military victories and Marius's death. In order to regain control of the empire, Sylla imposed executions and persecutions of numerous senators who were to be denounced and/or accused by the population (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, 2006). Soon, another duo would become even more famous: Pompey and Caesar (79–59 BC).

The Author: Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar was born circa 100 BC and was from a patrician (the Roman higher classes) family. His family had played nothing but a modest role in politics and their personal fortune was not relevant. Anecdotally, Caesar's aunt had been married to Marius, thus bringing Sylla's wrath on the young man. Persisting in his wish for political recognition, Caesar finally emerged as the supreme leader of the *populares*, taking advantage of Pompey's absence. In fact Pompey, being a member of the Roman aristocracy, was militarily powerful, and his power rapidly grew. His diverse travels disadvantaged him as the Roman people quickly abandoned him in favour of a new face: Caesar. Nevertheless, Pompey and Caesar allied themselves with a third military figure, Crassus, to create the first triumvirate (60 BC), a political agreement in relation to the management of the state (Cébeillac-Gervasoni, 2006).

To boost his political ascension, he started his military campaign of the Gallic territories (58–51 BC), meaning the territories not yet under Roman occupation. This relevant historical period is the one described in Caesar's military testimony *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*. Not wanting to spoil anything, it is nonetheless necessary to reveal that the Gallic civilizations were finally vanquished by the Roman armies, and Caesar returned to his city as a victor granting ultimate omnipotence to its people. Soon after, he became a part of a civil war against his former friend Pompey (49–45 BC). The objective was Roman power and its direction. After many violent years, Pompey was defeated and retreated to Egypt, where he was finally murdered. Caesar could then embody several joined roles: *imperator*, supreme chief of the Roman armies; *consul*, a role that implicated an election every year; *grand pontifex*, leader of religious matters; and *dictator* until death. Trying to maintain public support, he intended to lighten debts, and decided to provide lands to soldiers. In parallel to his desire for popularity, he adopted a *cult of personality*. Designated "father of the patria" by the Senate itself, he saw statues of himself erected, coins minted representing his effigy and a month dedicated to him (July). All these "marketing" actions permitted him to control the propaganda in his favour. This attitude caused him to be assassinated by several

senators, including his adopted son Brutus (let us recall the historically uncertain and infamous sentence attributed to Caesar: *Tu quoque, Brute, fili mi*, literally: "you too, Brutus, my son"). Believed to be planning the imposition of a new monarchy, he was eliminated by his political opponents.

Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*: a Personal Perception of the Enemy

Prior to diving into the core of this paper, here are some fundamental truths about this historical writing. It is important to note that throughout the entire text, the description of the enemies' various capacities is only used to enhance Caesar's own political and military merits and talents. By delivering his notes on the conflict, he embellishes his determination and power, and, by extrapolation, the superior glory of Rome. The grand success of the text could also be explained by Caesar's intention to always flatter the Roman population – not only was it his own victory but also the triumph of an entire people. Alongside his historical adaptation of the events, he presents literary aspects that become essential for his final goal. To further extend his desire of "objectivity" he narrates the whole war in the third person singular. Consisting of eight books (each one containing various chapters), it is important to notify that the last one was written posthumously by Aulus Hirtius, a Roman writer and political figure.

Social perception of the enemies

"All Gaul is divided into three parts" (Caesar, Book I, Chapter I). This is the writing's *incipit*. Directly confronted by the geographical description of the Gallic regions and their divisions with respect to the different populations, the reader is drawn to the middle of an active situation. The narrator drags into action *in medias res*. He is opposed to the barbaric *others*, the Gauls who seem to be reluctant to submit to Rome and Caesar jointly. Their direct categorization as the object of Caesar's writing and not as their own subject leads the reader to understand the emphasized hierarchization brought by the narrator. He puts himself in the position of the superior judge who is going to "civilize" the poor, unfortunate and inferior *other*. With this mere sentence, various tribes are reduced to a classification realized by an external mediator who knows nothing of them but still insists on their internal divergences. The three parts that "differ from each other in language, customs and laws" (Caesar, Book I, Chapter I) include the Belgae, who are perceived as the bravest of all because "they are farthest from the civilization and refinement of [our] Province" (i.e. Rome) (Caesar, Book I, Chapter I); the Aquitani; and "those who in their language are called Celts" (Caesar, Book I, Chapter I), the Gauls. Another classification is made amongst the said Gauls, with the Helvetii being described as the strongest of all in both valour and force. They are said to be particularly drawn to war and conflict in general. The narrator then continues his affirmations with a peculiar opinion of these populations' societies.

Mentioned throughout Book I, the Helvetii were a Celtic tribal confederation located in present-day Switzerland. The narration insists on their barbaric senses and acts, and on their distressing longing for violence and territorial expansion. Interestingly, we can focus on the proposed description. Their historically doubted wish for power leads the Romans to declare war with the Gallic tribes, thus placing themselves as an unnecessary mediator. Ridding himself of any responsibility, Caesar is creating a motive for his military invasions. Unable to conquer without a plausible cause, the Helvetii's social identity provides him with a strong excuse for politicizing his intentions: the other Gallic tribes need Roman help in order to fight the conquerors. His talent is to lure the reader into believing such events, especially when his excuse to attack becomes part of his own crimes.

The Belgae were established in present-day Belgium. Being socially described as a threat for Roman power and authority, they appear uncontrollable because they are completely uncivilized. Due to their wild nature, the narrator expresses a certain fear that they might "try to invade" the already conquered Roman territories (Caesar, Book II, Chapters I-VI). Therefore, the "defensive" actions displayed by Caesar and his armies do not seem unjust. On the contrary, they appear justified and even necessary for the "maintenance of peace." They are perceived as divided in their decisions regarding the Roman invading approach. Some tribes choose to surrender to Caesar, whereas others prefer to rebel and resist for as long as they possibly can. The emphasized portrayal of their strong military capacities completely allows the author to be further praised for his superior realizations. In fact, in spite of his enemy's extreme aggressiveness, Caesar is eventually able to defeat them.

The Suevi were settled in present-day Germany. Presented in Book IV (Chapters I; III; VIII), they are portrayed as dangerous, brutal and incredibly powerful due to their physical presence and important demographic number. Once again,

the narrator confers the terrific risks of an alliance between them and the Gauls. Such an outcome could mean the destruction of the Roman armies or at least severe damage for the still-rising empire. As a result, the literary skills are revealed to be incredibly powerful. The invasion is turned into a defensive action. Unfortunately, the consequences are atrocious for the said Celtic tribe, and they are completely annihilated.

Lastly, there are the Germanic tribes who came from present-day Germany. Intensely depicted in book six, they are (mis)judged as "primitive" hunter-gatherer (let us recall that such societies were mainly based on prehistoric values and customs) societies. As a consequence, their lifestyle is viewed as "archaic" when compared to Roman self-entitled advanced "civilization." Considering war and violence as proof of someone's true valour and dignity, they are described as being led by their wartime magistrates who possess the power of life and death (Bonfante, 2011). Another literary device is used in this part. The narrator's perception of their culture mixes fact with magical/mythological aspects. The narration is awkwardly turned into an ambiguous "truth." He describes the said tribes living in the Hercynian (an old-growth forest in present-day Germany that tragically no longer exists) forest and cohabiting with legendary creatures: "ox(en) of the shape of a stag, between whose ears a horn rises from the middle of the forehead" (Book VI, Chapter XXVI); elks, animals "much like roes, but in size they surpass them a little and are destitute of horns and have legs without joints and ligatures" (Book VI, Chapter XXVII); and uri, which are "little below the elephant in size, and of the appearance, colour and shape of a bull" (Caesar, Book VI, Chapter XXVIII). The blurred line between the dichotomies of fiction/truth and imagination/reality hides a particular intention. In doing this, the narrator confides a major power to this human/mythological tribe. They appear to possess superhuman force and capacities. Therefore, once again, this narrative twist is meant to maximize Caesar's own heroism in defeating even the most terrifying of them all. Besides, in order to assert such ideas the narrator states that their reportedly aggressive and violent behaviour gradually transforms them into "barbaric" societies where vandalism can be adopted and thus encouraged to determine one's bravery.

The presentation of those cultures is strongly (ab)used by Caesar. His objective is to oppose such "non-evolving" societies to the extremely powerful, omnipotent, developed and magnificent Roman Empire. His words reflect a prejudiced mind and his false presumptions construct the basis of historical (mis)conceptions.

Religious perception of the enemies

Equally to a socially discriminative vision, religious difference can also lead to violent intolerance. The narrator enumerates the religious characteristics of the "primitive" tribes throughout Book VI. Caesar offers a long portrayal of religious presence with two specific populations: the Gallic tribes with their supposed religious hierarchization, and the Germanic tribes with their seemingly simple religious system.

The Gallic tribes are defined by a strict socio-religious hierarchy. While stating his opinion as a universal truth, Caesar displays a system whose real leaders are on the one hand the knights (military individuals), who possess a fundamental role, and on the other hand the Druids, representing the highest power in Celtic polytheism. They are essential for the wellbeing and correct function of any Celtic society (Webster, 1999). Despite the notable number of qualities that could be said about their varied talents and knowledge, the narrator sticks to one specific characteristic: sacrifice. According to him, it was usual for these tribes to practice human and animal sacrifice. By affirming such a strong religious trait, he is highlighting the rare violence and barbarism of these populations whose own beliefs can apparently lead them to murder their own people. The narrator goes even further in the descriptive dramatization when he says that the victims are all innocent and that they can be either burnt alive or stabbed to death for the sake of their people's salvation. In fact, it is supposed to prevent them from famine, war and conflicts as well as disease: "they who are troubled with unusually severe diseases, and they who are engaged in battles and dangers, either sacrifice men as victims, or vow that they will sacrifice them, and employ the Druids as the performers of those sacrifices" (Caesar, Book VI, Chapter XVI). The narrator persists in saying that their practices are the living proof of their devoted superstitions and their related rites. Their horrific conjectures are to be definitely opposed to the Roman "civilized" religious system and beliefs. These latter's desired rightfulness is indeed strongly understandable here.

The Germanic tribes are described in a different manner. Caesar chooses to consider them as possessing a different yet less developed religious system. They are displayed as having a religion whose system is even more "archaic" than their "barbaric" contemporaries. As mentioned earlier, their society is based on a hunter-gatherer structure and still maintains a certain nomadism. As a result, alongside their perceived inability to build strong and permanent city-states, they do not appear to practice

any specific religious ritual such as sacrifice and/or any sort of religious hierarchy. Their gods are mostly related to nature and its distinct powers: "the sun, fire and the moon; they have not heard of the other deities even by report" (Caesar, Book VI, Chapter XXI). The reader is confronted with non-Roman civilizations whose customs and traditions are either ridiculed or blamed for being violent. Little is left for the reader to analyse. Such descriptions direct the narrator to "justify" his colonization and massive occupation of the dehumanized enemies' territories. Their conquest seems legitimate and useful. They can finally "civilize" the "barbaric" tribes.

Political perception of the enemies

These approaches appear to be primary for Caesar and his Roman fellow citizens. It is indeed by mentioning some Gallic and Germanic tribal chiefs that his neat desire for recognition is understood. By comparing tribal forces and political decisions to his own/and Rome's own, he manages to enlighten the drastic distinction between the combative sides. As clarified earlier on, the rebellious actions undertaken against the Roman armies and thus the Roman Empire are depicted as incorrect and unjustified. Why would they resist when they could be part of such a powerful civilization?

The unfortunate weakness of one Gallic leader is enough to shatter the plausible political union among Gallic tribes. Caesar uses the example of Diviciacos who was a tribal chief of the Aedui, situated in present-day France. The narration tells us how he meets Caesar and befriends him. After plotting and rebelling against Caesar, Diviciacos' brother was accused of rebellion against the Romans. Following his brother's pleas for mercy, he was spared by Caesar himself who later establishes a strategic relationship with Diviciacos based mainly on dependence and abusive interest. The military man seizes the opportunity to strengthen his alliance with the Gallic chief and the union between Rome and its allies (Caesar, Books I and VI). Within the tribal groups, many divergent opinions are present. We have already discussed the Belgae population who were divided by different attitudes regarding the Roman offensive attacks. Such differences led to a separatist system whose success is unfortunately highly doubtful. Moreover, it appears that no sign of homogeneity can be found within the "barbaric" populations. They do not display unity against the invader and do not cherish solidarity – contrary to the Romans, as Caesar implies. With the example of Vorenus and Pullo, two centurions fighting in the garrison of Cicero, the narrator describes the Roman unification when confronted with the enemy (Caesar, Book V; Chapter XLIV). They are initially seen as being rivals who hate each other. Nevertheless, when their garrison is attacked and comes under siege (obviously, because of a rebellion) they manage to put aside their respective rancour so as to join forces to defeat the attacker (Brown, 2004). Despite being in difficult positions, they save each other and are equally worthy of their known valour: "fortune so dealt with both in this rivalry and conflict, that the one competitor as a succour and a safeguard to the other, nor could it be determined which of the two appeared worthy of being preferred to the other" (Caesar, Book V, Chapter XLIV).

The reader can easily understand the comparison drawn between both civilizations. While the Gallic tribes fight with each other over power, land or different views concerning the oppressor, the Romans find their way to solidarity regardless of their personal feelings. Pettiness is completely opposed to the grand dignity of the others.

The only exception to the generalization is Vercingetorix, whose story happens in Book VI and will be particularly detailed later on. Despite desperately wanting and trying to unify the Gallic tribes, Vercingetorix faces certain difficulties in doing so. Once again, his wish persists and, in the end, he succeeds in maintaining a Gallic solidarity in front of the Roman Empire. Unfortunately, he ultimately fails to defend his territories and has to surrender to the invader. His failure is marked by the final Roman victory at the Battle of Alesia. It symbolically represents the end of the Gallic Wars and the final days of the free "primitive" societies. Vercingetorix can represent the ultimate brave Celt as he eventually sacrifices himself in order to save the lives of his companions.

Vercingetorix was imprisoned by Caesar, who later brought him to Rome and exhibited him as a war trophy. After some years, when his usefulness ended, he was executed as an enemy of the state. Ironically, if we analyse the narratives, even when dealing with a strong and robust Gallic man, the Roman armies (and particularly Caesar) are stronger and more robust. They would always be superior.

Military capacities

Many situations could determine an army's manners and customs. One is the hostages' case during a military conflict. Caesar explains that most "primitive" tribes tend to apply the hostages' system as a military strategy. Indeed, it could be used to assure a successful exchange. For example, throughout the

Commentaries the narrator discusses the numerous times when such circumstances seem to prevail. In Book II he explains the Roman necessity for maintaining hostages alive and "well." According to him, hostages are mostly related to powerful figures within their tribes. Therefore, by letting them live under Roman rules and influences they would later return to their original community. Consequently, they could eventually favour political relations with Rome and possibly "convert" their fellow Gallic/ Germanic citizens to Roman civilization. Said actions represent assimilation and acculturation hidden behind a blurred "benevolence" with respect to the hostages' lives and wellbeing. Even if both sides apply the same rule with hostages, the intentions are completely different. The first wants something in return, whereas the second one wishes to "reset" the hostages' mind and use it against their own people. The first seeks a way to get their partners back, the second designs a map of tricks and manipulative strategies.

The exaggerated extent of military exploits from both sides is to reach one special purpose: Caesar's recognition as a perfect leader. Throughout the numerous battles, the strategic strength of Rome is designed as unrivalled. Let us focus on one particular bellicose moment that occurs in Book 3. The reader is confronted (alongside the Roman army) with the Gallic tribes who are on the edge of a naval combat. Incited by the Veneti (a Gallic tribe from northern Brittany), many tribes have joined forces to counter the Roman offensive, outnumbering them. The events that follow are described in a very dramatic and terrifying way. Possessing a powerful maritime army and undeniable military skills, the Roman armies finally win the battle due to their implanted strategy: destroy one boat after another, and wait for the weather to turn in their favour. The condescending tone is set with the recollection of the aftermath: "they had collected in that one place whatever naval forces they had anywhere; and when these were lost, the survivors had no place to retreat to, nor means of defending their towns. They accordingly surrendered themselves and all their possessions to Caesar" (Caesar, Book III, Chapter XVI).

Lastly, the final battle is also decisive in asserting Rome's military superiority (Caesar, Book VII, Chapters IV, VIII-XXXVI, LXXXVIII). After reuniting most of the Gallic tribes against the Romans, Vercingetorix takes the military lead. They take the city of Narbonne (in present-day France) and burn everything that could serve the Romans and their territorial advancements. Unfortunately, the Roman siege of the city ends with the massacre of the population. Following many battles and continuous progressions from the Roman armies, Vercingetorix and the Gallic troops have to retreat to Alesia (also in present-day France), whereupon the siege of Alesia begins. After failed Gallic attempts to trick their enemy, the Roman military strategy and diverse procedures allow them to counterattack by surprise. Besides, amidst the epic narration of this battle, the narrator suddenly describes the arrival of Caesar in front of his troops and the enemy. He is perceived as provoking a standing ovation from his soldiers and surprising awe from the opponents. Such "wonder" allows him to strike down the Gallic tribes and seize Vercingetorix as his captive proof of victory. Many historians have agreed that the Gallic chief's qualities were heavily enhanced by Caesar. By doing so, we come back to what we said at the very beginning of the article: he does not conceive the *other*'s talent as something defining the *other*, but rather as something defining him and his extra-qualities. The *other*'s strength is mentioned just so that he can parade his even more powerful one. The *other*'s intelligence is exposed only for Caesar to be strategically and politically superior.

The aftermath was historically tragic for the Gallic tribes and their respective cultures. As desired by the Roman lust for territories, a certain political and cultural hegemony was imposed.

Caesar's commentaries display a structure closer to an epic narrative than to historiography. The latter is based on the history of history and expected to narrate facts and true historical events with serious documentation, with the objective being to honour the past and its memory. On the contrary, a story is supposed to tell an episode with the aim of appealing to people's curiosity (Caire-Jabinet, 2020). Historiography needs to follow specific rules. First, the concept of *truthlikeness* is necessary in order to obtain historical objectivity. This consists in detailing and portraying everything as it occurred. Neither particular opinions nor any specific emotional outbursts should be involved in this "transcription of History." Documentation must be done effectively by seeking historical information, official recordings and evidence. It is important to note that "historiography and evidence are linked by theories that identify the evidence as such in the first place. Competing historiographies are competing explanations of the evidence that posit different descriptions of historical events to explain the evidence. Disagreements are due to the absence of knowledge of history, incomplete theories, and the underdetermination of evidence by theories" (Laas, 2016). These incomplete theories (causing a misunderstanding of the evidence) can result from a failure of historical truth. Indeed, as used to affirm Antoon van den Braembussche, "historical truth embodies a constant dialectical play between

the remembering and the forgetting of the past" (Schinkel, 2004). Depending on the historian, some elements from the past and from history have been featured more prominently, while others have been neglected. This unobjective account of history has been a source for historiographic scepticism and the rejection of a true distinction between fiction and true knowledge. Moreover, the personal desire to convince and persuade destroys the study's objectivity.

Julius Caesar annihilated history with his work. Not only did he report incomplete theories concerning his battles and military campaigns, but he also decided to forge a story which forgot its proper past. The lack of a historical prism allowed him to possess the monopole of valuable narrative. Nonetheless, his strong wish to portray himself as the exemplary Roman hero (particularly with the use of mythological literary processes) discredited his narrative as a possible historiography.

As a conclusion, Caesar's written work displays his military talents, political abilities and acknowledged writing skills. His work is considered as the only direct historical evidence of the Gallic Wars. As a result, these violent invasions possess only a subjective description whose purpose is to praise the author. A narration for the victors written by the victor. The propaganda behind it appears obvious and very neatly exposed. The "barbaric" *other* had to be occupied and "civilized" by the formidably strong and magnificent Roman general (embodying the empire). By adopting this specific perception, the text leads to the second annihilation of the resisting opponents: besides having been beaten, their story is stolen from them and provided from a completely unfair and opinionated vision. Their existence is despised, their cultures condescendingly portrayed and their victimization completely disdained.

Instead of portraying an accurate historical testimony, Caesar chose to adopt a subjective, and sometimes mythological perception of the events. His twisted narration became a powerful tool for his own socio-political recognition, leading him on the path to fame and success; but it also represented an instrument of Roman propaganda. In order to firmly accentuate Rome's power and military abilities, *De Bello Gallico* aligned with many Roman legends-turned-uncertain historical events (like the story of Remus and Romulus regarding the origins of the city). This particular narrative allowed Caesar to explicitly reveal his megalomania and greed for power (Siedler, 1956). From military strategist to heroic figure, the distinction seems to be quite frail. When historiography is replaced by subjective realities, facts become perceptions and truths become doubts.

References

Primary source

Caesar, Julius. 2015. *The Gallic Wars*, translated by W. A. MacDevitt. Saint-Paul, MIN: Wilder Publications. Kindle Version.

Secondary sources

Boak, Arthur E. R. 1921. *A History of Rome to 565 A. D*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Bonfante, Larissa. 2011. "The Barbarians of Ancient Europe: Realities and Interactions." In *The Ancient Germans*, edited by Peter S. Wells, 211–232. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, Robert. 2004. "Virtus Consili Express: An Interpretation of the Centurions' Context in Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* 5: 44." *Hermes*, 132(3): 292–308.

Caire-Jabinet, Marie-Paule. 2020. *Introduction à l'Historiographie*. 5th ed. Paris: Armand Colin.

Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Mireille. 2006. "Partie 1: Les rois et la république jusqu'à la prise de Véies. Chapitre 1: Romulus et ses successeurs immédiats." In *Histoire Romaine*, edited by Mireille Cébeillac-Gervasoni, Alain Chauvot and Jean-Pierre Martin, 9–188. Paris: Armand Colin.

Henige, David. 1998. "He Came, He Saw, We Counted: The Historiography and Demography of Caesar's Gallic Numbers." *Annales de démographie historique* 1, *Le mariage, règles et pratiques*: 215–242.

Hulot, Sophie. 2018. "César génocidaire? Le massacre des Usipètes et des Tenctères (55 av. J.-C.)." *Revue des études anciennes*, Université Bordeaux Montaigne, 120(1): 73–99.

Laas, Oliver. 2016. "Toward Truthlikeness in Historiography." *Symposia. Pragmatism and the Writing of History*, 8 (2).

Presland, James. "The Ethnography of Gauls, Celts and Germans in Caesar's Gallic Wars." Academia. https://www.academia.edu/13174658/The_Ethnography_of_Gauls_Celts_and_Germans_in_Caesar_s_Gallic_Wars.

Schinkel, Anders. 2004. "History and Historiography in Process." *History and Theory*, 43(1): 39–56.

Siedler, Charles W. 1956. "Rhetorical Devices in Caesar's Commentaries." *The Classical Weekly*, 50(2): 28–31.

Verbruggen, Peer. 2016. "Internal Aliens: Northern Gaul in the Early Empire. The Roman Representation of Gauls in the First and Early Second Century." MA thesis, sup. Dr Robert Flierman, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. https://theses.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/123456789/3981/Verbruggen%2C_G.P._1.pdf?sequence=1.

Webster, Jane. 1999. "At the End of the World: Druidic and Other Revitalization. Movements in Post-Conquest Gaul and Britain." *Britannia*, *Society for the Promotion of Roman Culture*, 30: 1–20.

Contributors

Tamar Mebuke, Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages at Georgian State Technical University, graduated from the Georgian State Institute of Foreign Languages in 1981 and undertook postgraduate studies at the Department of the English Language at the Georgian State University, obtaining her MA in Text Linguistics in 1985. In 2006 she obtained her PhD in the Theory of Literature. She has 106 publications in English, Georgian and Russian to her credit, including five books on the Theory of Prose Genres, Mythological Archetypes in Literature, and a Reader in Text Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, and has participated in 51 International Conferences. She is currently a member of the Editorial Board and a reviewer for six international peer-reviewed journals.

Dr **Hari Priya Pathak** has been teaching in the department of English, D.S.B. Campus, Nainital, Uttarakhand (India) for fifteen years. Her areas of interest and research are Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, Religious Studies (mainly in relation to gender) and Translation Studies. She has published several papers in various national and international journals. Dr Pathak has research scholars working predominately on gender and cultural studies and film adaptation.

Roula-Maria Dib (PhD, Leeds) is a creative writer and literary scholar whose poems and articles have appeared in several journals. She has authored two books, *Jungian Metaphor in Modernist Literature* (Routledge, 2020) and a poetry collection, *Simply Being* (Chiron Press, 2021). She is the founding editor of literary and arts journal *Indelible* and creative producer of the literary event series Indelible Evenings. Dib is also the founder and director of Psychreative, a monthly event for artists and writers with a background in Jungian psychology and the food blogger behind Beyond Zucchini. Roula-Maria is a member of the Poetry Society, the British Association for Modernist Studies, the International Association for Jungian Studies, and the Jungian Society for Scholarly Studies. She is currently an assistant professor of English at the American University in Dubai.

Teimuraz Chanturishvili was born on July 28, 1947 in Batumi, Georgia (then the Soviet Republic), the son of a professor of zoology. After graduating from secondary school in Tbilisi, he entered the Tbilisi Medical Institute and graduated with honours in 1971. After that, he worked as a physician in a village hospital for three years. In 1971 he defended his PhD thesis and received the degree of Candidate of Medical Sciences in the specialty Cardiology. He has worked as a cardiologist in various hospitals in Georgia, including a prison hospital and the Georgian military hospital.

He is married and has three children. In the 1990s he began translating Georgian and Russian poetry into English. Some of his translations have been published in American literary magazines.

At the heart of his desire to translate has been the wish to introduce works of art that elevate the human soul to as many people as possible. There really do exist such impulses, and for various reasons these "drives" are not instilled in different people at the same speed.

Bogna Starczewska is a PhD candidate in Film at the University of Exeter. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film and Television and Drama and a Master's degree in Scriptwriting, both earned at Aberystwyth University. Her PhD explores the European City and the notions of displacement and escapism in Woody Allen's films. She has worked as a Postgraduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Exeter and holds the Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy and the University of Exeter ASPIRE Associate Fellowship. She participated in The Place of Memory and Memory of Place International Conference in London, with a paper titled: "Representation of the European capital in Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris*." She also delivered a paper at the Men Writing Women: Women in the work of Woody Allen and Beyond International Conference at the York St John University titled: "Portrayal of Women in *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*." Her article "One city, different visions: Woody Allen's image of London in *Scoop* and *Cassandra's Dream*" has been published in an e-book titled *London: Myths, Tales and Urban Legends* (edited by Elena Nistor, 2021). Her piece *The Turning Point* was published in the third issue of the *Gendered Voices* magazine.

Sara Arroja-Schürmann is a PhD student at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. After the completion of a Bachelor degree in Hispanic

Literature and Linguistics and English Literature and Linguistics she continued her studies with a Master's degree in Spanish Literature (specialising in Medieval Literature and Early Modern Literature). She is currently doing a PhD in Spanish Literature focusing on themes such as Gender, Feminism and Otherness in the Spanish Golden Age period. These themes represent the main focus of her research broadened from Medieval to Early Modern Literature. The other (sexual, political, religious or social) and their situation embody the core of her research.

Interdisciplinary Discourses, Education and Analysis (IDEA) Journal

London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research

ISSN 2754-2416

Cover image courtesy of Pixabay, 2021

Interdisciplinary Discourses
London Centre
for Interdisciplinary Research
Unit 3A, Gateway Tower
32 Western Gateway
London, E16 1YL, UK
www.lcir.co.uk
info@lcir.co.uk