

THE RATIONAL CONCEPT IN EXPLAINING THE WORLD STRUCTURE IN ANCIENT CHINESE AND ANCIENT GREECE MYTHOLOGY

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QADIMGI XITOIY VA QADIMGI YUNON MIFOLOGIYASIDA DUNYO TUZILISHINI TUSHUNTIRISHDA OQILONA TUSHUNCHA

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РАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ КОНЦЕПЦИЯ В ОБЪЯСНЕНИИ УСТРОЙСТВА МИРА В ДРЕВНЕКИТАЙСКОЙ И ДРЕВНЕГРЕЧЕСКОЙ МИФОЛОГИИ

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Abstract. Humanity has a long history of exploring the mysteries of the universe and the world, and myths were the first interpretations of the origins of the world and natural phenomena by primitive ancestors. Ancient Chinese and ancient Greek mythology both arose during childhood in human development, and myths from this stage reflect the poetic understanding of the structure of the world by the first people of ancient societies. The myth of the world's origin mainly includes the beginning of the universe and the origin of all things. Famous Ancient Chinese myth about Pan Gu and Ancient Greek myth about Chaos contain the understanding of the world's beginning from Eastern and Western civilizations. The study argues that differences between both myths are mostly structural. Analyzing the differences in the archetypes of thought and the characteristics of the concept of rationality as well as discussing similarities of those myths, it is proved that both creation myths greatly influenced the culture of the opposite parts of the World. They formed similar understanding of the world development as the moving from chaos to order and at the same time creating linear (West) and curvilinear (East) types of thinking, as well as heroic (West) and harmonious (East) understanding of the man-nature opposition.

Keywords: creation myths; rational concepts; thinking prototype; structural analysis; hero.

Annotatsiya. Insoniyat Koinot va uning atrofidagi dunyo sirlarini o'rganishi uzoq tarixiga ega, va afsonalarda ibtidoiy odamlarning dunyo va tabiiy hodisalarning kelib chiqishi haqidagi dastlabki tushunchalari

mavjud. Qadimgi Xitoy va qadimgi Yunon mifologiyalari insoniyat ongida paydo bo'lgan, va bu bosqich afsonalari qadimgi madaniyatlar vakillarining dunyo tuzilishini she'riy tushunishni aks ettiradi. Dunyoning kelib chiqishi haqidagi afsonalar koinotning boshlanishi va hamma narsaning kelib chiqishi haqidagi ma'lumotlarni o'z ichiga oladi. Mashhur qadimiy afsonalar: qadimgi Xitoy Pan Gu afsonasi va qadimgi Yunon Chaos afsonasi — bu Sharq va G'arb sivilizatsiyalarining asosi bo'lib xizmat qilgan dunyoning boshlanishi haqidagi g'oyalarni o'z ichiga olgan yaratilish afsonalaridir. Ushbu maqola yaratilish haqidagi ko'rsatib o'tilgan afsonalarni o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Afsonalarni taqqoslash, ular orasidagi farqlar asosan tarkibiy xarakterga ega ekanligini tasdiqlashga imkon beradi. Ushbu afsonalarda keltirilgan fikrlash arxetiplari va ratsionallik tushunchasining xususiyatlaridagi o'xshashlik va farqlarni o'rganish, yaratilish haqidagi ikkala afsona ham Sharq va G'arb madaniyatiga katta ta'sir ko'rsatganligini isbotlaydi. Ular dunyo taraqqiyotining betartiblik (Chaos) dan tartibga o'tish sifatida o'xshash tushunchasini, shuningdek, turli xil fikrlash usullarini aks ettiradi. Ular qatorida: chiziqli (G'arbiy) va aylanma (Sharq) fikrlash turlari, shuningdek, inson va tabiat o'rtasidagi qarama-qarshilikni tushunishda qahramonlik (G'arb) va uyg'unlik (Sharq) printsiplari o'rsatilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: yaratilish afsonalari; ratsional kontsepti; fikrlash prototiplari; tarkibiy tahlil; qahramon.

Аннотация. Человечество имеет долгую историю исследования тайн Вселенной и окружающего мира, и мифы содержат ранние представления первобытных людей о происхождении мира и природных явлений. Древнекитайская и древнегреческая мифологии возникли в период рассвета человечества, и мифы этой стадии отражают поэтическое понимание устройства мира представителей древних культур. Мифы о происхождении мира включают в себя информацию о начале вселенной и происхождении всех вещей. Известные древние мифы: древнекитайский миф о Пань Гу и древнегреческий миф о Хаосе — это именно те мифы о сотворении мира, которые содержат представления о начале мира, послужившие краеугольным камнем восточной и западной цивилизаций. Данная статья посвящена осмыслению указанных мифов о сотворении мира. Сопоставление мифов позволяет утверждать, что различия между ними носят в основном структурный характер. Исследуя сходства и различия в архетипах мышления и характеристиках концепции рациональности, представленных в данных мифах, доказывается, что оба мифа о сотворении мира оказали большое влияние на культуру Востока и Запада. В них отражено сходное понимание мирового развития как перехода от хаоса к порядку, а также различное: линейный (Запад) и циркулярный (Восток) типы мышления, а также героическое (Запад) и гармоническое (Восток) начала в понимании противостояния человека и природы.

Ключевые слова: мифы о сотворении мира; рациональный концепт; прототипы мышления; структурный анализ; герой.

Objectives of the study. Based on structuralism theory and the study of mythological archetypes, this paper uses structuralist analysis to study the Chinese Pan Gu myth and the Greek Chaos myth and to uncover the dichotomous ways of thinking of early humans, identify the primitive logic or ways of thinking shared by humans. The comparative study of the two is of great scientific value and cultural insight into thinking. By putting the study of Greek mythology into a

comparative perspective, it does not only deepen our understanding of Greek culture but also facilitates an in-depth study of ancient Chinese mythology.

The novelty of the study. Through a comparative analysis of both the plot structure and the ideological structure of the Pan Gu and Chaos myths, it explores the evolution of the dichotomous structure of man and nature. The features of rational thinking in ancient Chinese and ancient Greek mythology are summarized by searching for the logical rules of the archetypes of thought and their laws.

Materials and Methods. This paper uses a combination of theoretical interpretative, documentary, and comparative approaches, through a profound structural analysis of ancient Chinese and Greek mythological texts. It identifies the similarities and differences between the two, finds new connections and new patterns, and thus draws its conclusions.

Conclusion. The myth of creation is a metaphorical explanation of the origins of the world, the worldview, and the sacred beliefs of the original first people. Ancient Chinese mythology embodies the idea of rationality as a reverence for morality and a predominance of people-oriented thinking. On the other hand, the sense of destiny and the idea of the divine essence, the veneration of power, is an essential rational thought in Greek mythology and legends. In the dichotomy between man and nature, the reason presented in ancient Greek mythology is predominantly explicit, a rational linear thinking. Chinese creation myths breed predominantly implicit rationality, where man lives in harmony with nature and is of a circular, curvilinear type of thinking.

Introduction. Since the beginning of the 21st century, Neo-mythicism has been sweeping through literature and film. It triggered the 2005 Retelling Myths movement, which has attracted widespread interest and attention in many countries worldwide. The popularity of neo-mythicist creation is not just a literary phenomenon; its intellectual background is the worldwide cultural search for roots that has been taking place since the XX century. In contemporary social life, myth has evolved into a message, a spirit, a symbol, and a way of constituting meaning. Mythological thinking and mythological themes have become a hot topic of common concern for today's academic research and cultural industries providing us with a new path and approach to re-conceptualizing ancient myths.

In the globalization of knowledge, human life and thought are facing a significant transformation, and a new international trend is emerging in recognizing and exploiting cultural capital. Both ancient Chinese and ancient Greek mythology reflect the poetic understanding of the structure of the world by the forbears of ancient societies. The comparative study of the two is of great scientific value and cultural insight into thinking. As early as the 1990s, Chinese scholars studied Greek mythology compared to classical Chinese mythology. Putting the study of Greek mythology into a comparative perspective deepens our understanding of Greek culture and contributes to the promotion of an in-depth study of ancient Chinese mythology.

Mythology has been studied in the West for more than 2,000 years now, beginning in ancient Greek times. In the first half of the XX century, a theory of myth criticism became famous worldwide. It was brought to the fore by the publication in 1957 of Canadian scholar N. Frye's book *Critical Anatomy*. In his book *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye establishes the theory of archetypal criticism centered on mythological archetypes. Since then, the theory of archetypal criticism has become one of the best-known approaches to literary studies in the twentieth century. According to Chinese scholar Ye Shuxian, "Mythic Archetype Criticism, as a way of literary research or a method of literary criticism, originated in Britain in the early twentieth century and flourished in North America after World War II. In terms of influence and popularity, Mythic Archetype Criticism, Marxist criticism, and psychoanalytic criticism are the only truly international literary criticism" (15, 3). The practice of using mythic archetypal theory in literary criticism has also proliferated. The School of Structuralism was formed in the 1950s and flourished in the 1960s. Lévi-Strauss's structuralist mythology is a theoretical mythology that explores the deep structure of human myth and the universal nature of mythological phenomena. He calls the logical structure of the myth a dichotomous structure. If archetypal criticism is combined with Lévi-Strauss's structuralist study of myth, this may give more opportunity for interpreting ancient myths.

The diversity of different people and cultures leads to different ways of thinking about the interpretation of the structure of the world. The creation myths embody the original, latent, and possible differences between the cultures of the various peoples, influencing, governing, and prescribing their intrinsic identity and direction of development. Creation myths are a central feature of all cultures and have long influenced how people think, speak, and behave. Ancient China and Ancient Greece, the important birthplaces of Eastern and Western civilizations, respectively, had distinctive myths. The myth of Pan Gu and the myth of Chaos are among the famous creation myths. A deeper reading of the structure of the creation myths will reveal the essence of the myths and the thinking of the primitive ancestors.

Results. Imagination is the most basic form of thinking in all creation myths, and Chinese creation myth thinking is more often expressed in analogical imaginative thinking. The analogical imaginative thinking influenced the genesis of early Chinese literary thinking. Furthermore, the abundant imagination in the Greek creation myths became a direct source of Greek literature and Western literature.

According to Lévi-Strauss, myths are neither coherent nor logical on the surface and are highly arbitrary. However, mythology's deep structure is stable and relevant, and rational concepts characterize mythic thinking.

Whether in ancient Greece or ancient China, the creation myths formed similar understandings of world development: the movement from Chaos to order. In both cultures, the heroes of the creation myths

have contributed to maintaining world order and promoting social development. These heroes are praised by the people.

As for differences, structural analysis in this article shows that mythological thinking in ancient Greece was rational and linear, while Chinese creation myth thinking is circular and curvilinear. In the dichotomy between man and nature, the Chinese myths aimed to achieve harmony with nature, while Western myths concentrated on struggle with nature.

I. Mythology

1. In Ancient China. The earliest document recording Pan Gu is the 'San Wu Li Ji' written by Xu Zheng, a native of Wu during the Three Kingdoms period: "The universe began as a Chaos, like a chicken's egg, and Pan Gu was born between the Chaos of Sky and Earth. After 18000 years, Sky and Earth separated, the light and clear Yang Qi rose to heaven, and the heavy and turbid Yin Qi sank to the Earth. Pan Gu lived between Sky and Earth, changing in many ways throughout the day. Every day the heavens and the Earth rose and thickened by a fathom, and Pan Gu's body grew longer. After another ten thousand years, heaven and Earth were completely separated, and Pan Gu became the top of the sky and the Earth" (14,1).

Pan Gu is the son of the Sky and Earth, who opened up the heavens and created the world. When the heavens and the Earth opened up, the world was still desolate and lonely because no human beings existed. The myth of Nu Wa's creation of man reads: "According to legend, when the heavens and Earth were created, there were no human beings. Nu Wa created humans by rolling a rope on the Earth. However, because there were so many things to do, there was not enough power to make enough humans, so Nu Wa put a rope into the clay, pulled it out, and the point of clay brought out became a human being. Thus, those Nu Wa made from the yellow Earth were the rich and the poor, and those she made from the rope were the poor" (6, 364).

How can humans face natural disasters? According to the records in Huainanzi, "When Yao ruled, ten suns appeared in the sky at the same time, and the crops withered, and the flowers and trees died. The people did not even have anything to eat. 獬豸、凿齿、九婴、大风、封豨、修蛇 all kinds of monsters came out to harm the people. So Yao sent Yi to kill 凿齿 at the place of Chouhua, killing 九婴 in Xiongshui, shot to death 大风 in the swamp of Qingqiu, Yi shot down the nine suns in the sky, kill the 獬豸 underground, cut off the 修蛇 in Dongting Lake, Captured 封豨 alive in Sanglin. The people were delighted and unanimously supported Dai Yao as the Emperor" (7, 194).

So when did the man take notice of himself? The heroic myth emerged when strange natural phenomena were conquered. According to ancient texts, the myth of Yu's flood control is as follows: "The great flood inundated the whole continent, and Gun stole the sacred soil from the God of Heaven to curb the flood. As Gun refused to wait for the God of Heaven to allow him to do so, the God of Heaven ordered Zhurong to kill him near Mount Yushan. Later Gun gave birth to King

Da Yu. The God of Heaven then ordered King Da Yu to draw the borders and settle in the country's nine provinces” (13, 321).

Thus, through the above three significant parts of mythology, the inner logic of the development of ancient Chinese mythology is reflected as the primitive ancestors gradually established a dichotomous view based on heaven and Earth in their constant observation and reflection. It reflects the turn in human thinking towards nature and society. It shows that there is a logic to be found in the development of human society. Humanity is a gradual shift from knowledge of nature to knowledge of self.

2. In Ancient Greek. The Greek creation myths are mainly recorded in Hesiod's *Theogony* (3); he begins with Chaos, a yawning nothingness. Out of the void emerged Gaia (the Earth) and some other primary divine beings: Eros (Love), the Abyss (the Tartarus), and the Erebus (3, 116–138).

Gaia gave birth to Uranus (the sky) without male assistance, and then he fertilized her. From that union were born first the Titans — six males: Coeus — the god of darkness, Crius — the god of growth, Cronus — the god of the heavens (the second generation of gods), Hyperion — the earliest sun god, Iapetus — the father of Prometheus and Atlas, and Oceanus — the god of rivers; and six females: Mnemosyne — the goddess of memory, mother of the nine muses, Phoebe — the earliest moon goddess, Rhea — the goddess of time (the second queen of the gods), Theia — the earliest goddess of light, Themis — the goddess of water, order and justice, mother of the goddesses of fate, and Tethys — the earliest goddess of the sea. After Cronus was born, Gaia and Uranus decreed that no more Titans would be born. They were followed by the one-eyed Cyclopes and the Hecatonchires, or Hundred-Handed Ones, who were thrown into Tartarus by Uranus. This made Gaia furious. She convinced Cronus (“the wily, youngest and most terrible of Gaia's children” (3, 116–138)) to castrate his father. He did this and became the ruler of the Titans with his sister-wife, Rhea, as his consort, and the other Titans became his court.

Uranus' wife, Rhea, hid the youngest son — Zeus. Zeus grew up to overthrow his father, Cronos, and rescue his siblings. Zeus took his sister Hera as his wife. After that, Zeus became the lord god of the universe, ruling over all things on Earth, and with his wife, Hera, gave birth to a new generation of gods on Mount Olympus to replace the older Titans in running the world. In the Greek creation myth, Caius, the god of Chaos, gave birth to Caius, the mother of the Earth, and thus the world came into being. After that, the gods who governed the world came into being by reproducing the sexes between the gods. Thus, the early Greeks believed that everything in the world was sheltered and governed by the gods on Mount Olympus. Everything in the world had its corresponding governing god on Olympus. Prometheus, one of the Titans, supported humankind. Legend says that he was punished by Zeus for creating man out of clay, teaching him various skills, and stealing fire for man.

II. Characteristics of Rational Thinking in Ancient Chinese and Ancient Greek Creation Myths

1. Characteristics of Rational Thinking in Ancient Chinese Mythology

Pan Gu was born amid Chaos as the god who opened the heavens. This way, the world has moved from disorder to order. This state of Chaos is expressed centrally as harmony. Therefore, the Pan Gu mythology's plot structure contains two elements: the concept of time and space and the idea of combining Yin and Yang.

Some scholars have pointed out that “an important dividing line between Chinese and Western mythology is that Greek myths can be classified as narrative archetypes, while Chinese myths are non-narrative archetypes. The former is structured on the principle of temporal, while the latter operates on the principle of spatial” (11, 60). The space of ancient Chinese mythology often implies a change in time, where time and space are combined as one. It is only in a metaphorical way. The myth of Pan Gu describes the structure of heaven and Earth as being in the shape of an egg, a primitive concept of the universe in which Pan Gu changes daily between heaven and Earth. Heaven and Earth are separated, with Yang Qi as the sky and Yin Qi as the Earth. Yin and Yang are conceptual categories unique to ancient Chinese philosophy. Ancient ancestors had the idea of Yin and Yang and the combination of Yin and Yang giving birth to all things very early on, and Lao Tzu combined Yin and Yang with the Tao as the beginning of all things. In the same vein, Fu Xi's view of heaven and Earth and his eight trigrams implicitly point out that all things in the universe are the product of dualistic opposites such as yin and yang.

The concept of Yin and Yang was in its infancy during the mythological period, represented by the opposition of heaven and Earth, male and female: Heaven — Yang — male; Earth — Yin — female. Heaven and Earth, as the basis for the thinking of the primitive ancestors, must have contained all the ancestors' emotions. We can speculate through the mythology that the world was in Chaos, heaven and Earth naturally intersected, and that Pan Gu's parents were Sky and Earth. This idea influenced the mythological paradigm of the later conception of the parents of Heaven and Earth and was the basis for the sacredness of the mythical lineage of the Patriarchs, with Fu Xi, Nu Wa, Yan Di, and the Emperor all representing the divine Patriarchs of the parental type of Heaven and Earth. The opposition between Heaven and Earth is transferred to that between men and women. The opposition between males and females extends to the dichotomy between nature and all aspects of human society, such as superior and inferior, husband and woman, father and mother, and ruler and subject. Thus, from ancient mythology, we can see that the subject of thought and the object of thought not only interact but can also penetrate and relate to each other, thus disregarding their inherent contradictions in nature, form, and role.

In China, the myth of Pan Gu depicts the opening of heaven and Earth and contains elements of the origin of things. For example, according to Zhang Junfang of the Song Dynasty Collection: “Before

Pan Gu died, he turned his eyes into the sun and the moon, his limbs and a head into the five mountains, his blood into the Yangtze River and the Yellow River, his hair into mountains, forests, and trees, his muscles into the soil, his bones into gold and stones, and the parasites on his body into the Earth. His breath turned into the ordinary people” (5). As the creator god, Pan Gu had the same form and organs as a human being, forming the natural world and taking on human life. The various parts of Pan Gu's body form an organic and unified microcosm. The macrocosm of the ancestors' life is a large universe, and the microcosm is a small one, both organically unified and inseparable within complete imagery. Combining a series of images also shows the spirit of Pan Gu's creation. Man — God — Nature form a unified trinity. It shows that the ancestors could grasp things. As thinking subjects, the primitive ancestors projected their emotions, will, actions, and even their entire lives onto the natural phenomena as objects. This way of experiencing contains the primitive ancestors' knowledge and judgment of the universe, nature, and human beings. People integrated their own will to live into all things in society, interpreted all things in terms of their intuitive feelings, and then created gods, spirits, and myths with the gods as the main thread. This way of thinking was essential for the first people to understand the external world.

Nevertheless, by projecting the subject's emotions, everything in nature has the same emotions as a man. The boundaries with man are blurred, with man and nature merging and living in harmony. The snake-bodied Nu Wa created man from yellow clay, a sublime sublimation of the human consciousness of reproduction, and represents a unique and aesthetic culture of reproduction. The characters in Chinese creation myths are mostly protectors of humanity and embodiment of truth, goodness, and beauty.

2. Characteristics of Rational Thinking in Ancient Greek Mythology

The main plot structures of the Greek creation myths: Chaos gave birth to Gaia, Gaia (the Earth) gave birth to Uranus (the sky), Gaia (the Earth) and Uranus (the sky) united to give birth to the first Titans — six males and six females, Kronos castrated his father, married his sister Rhea and became the ruler of the Titans, and Zeus overthrew his father Cronos and married his sister Hera to become the chief god of the universe. The succession of the gods in Greek mythology has a familiar pattern of the son gods overthrowing the father gods to establish a new order. One of these is the ‘slaying of the father’ archetype, which has been commonly noted in later times. Oedipus the King is a typical representative of this.

The gods of Chaos gave rise to five major creator gods, each with a precise symbolic meaning. Gaia, goddess of the Earth — symbolizing Earth and material forces; Tartarus, god of the infernal abyss — symbolizing the forces of death; Erebus, god of darkness and Nyx, goddess of the night — symbolizing the terrible unknowable forces (such as fate and the human subconscious); and Eros, god of love — symbolizing love, life, and pleasure. Each of the gods in ancient Greek mythology had a specific priesthood, and each god's will

and godhead were independent, and no god could deny the existence of the other gods. Zeus becomes the embodiment and symbol of thunder and lightning and supreme power, Apollo the embodiment and symbol of the sun and war, Poseidon the embodiment and symbol of the Mediterranean, and Athena the embodiment and symbol of fertility and wisdom. Although they are fully personified, their essential attributes as things of nature and social life are still evident in their character and temperament. The will and character of the gods were fundamental elements that formed the worldview of the ancient Greeks. We find that these elements contain the bud of the basic binary opposition proposition of human beings in the history of western culture: spirit and flesh, good and evil, life and death, fate and struggle, present pleasure and ultimate inquiry.

Throughout the creation and development of ancient Greek mythology, the Greeks evolved from a struggle against nature to a struggle against an authoritarian society. In Greek mythology, god is not made of clay or any other material but is an absolute spiritual being. He represents the sublime heavens, and the clay, which is opposite to him, represents the Earth, which is inferior. The Earth gives man the dark ingredients and attributes of flesh, instinct, sensuality, and desire. Man wants to sin because it is caused by the worldliness of man belonging to the Earth, and man is noble because he has a heavenly soul given by god. This argumentative composition of human nature leads to an eternal conflict: spirit and flesh, spirit and instinct, reason and sensuality, light and darkness; humanity is doomed to a predestined fate. Herodotus said in his *Histories* that “even as a god, it is impossible to escape a predestination” (4,91). This supreme destiny felt by the Greeks is understood today as an objective law that does not depend on the will of man. It was the power of nature that the Greeks worshiped, showing that the primitive Greeks had already begun to ponder the nature behind all phenomena. The spirit of ancient Greek rationalism was thus born from the tragic rationality of ancient Greek myths and legends. The ancient Greeks saw fate as something to be thought about using reason. However, the reason could not fully explain fate, so ancient Greek mythology alludes to the ancient Greeks' desire for the freedom of the secular individual.

III. Similarities and Differences between Ancient China and Ancient Greek Creation Myths

1. Similarities

In summary, comparing ancient Chinese mythology with ancient Greek mythology, the world was in a state of Chaos before it arose. Although the text of the Pan Gu myth appears later, it is as much a starting point for the structure of the world in the mythological genealogy as the Greek myth of Chaos. They both played a crucial archetypal role in developing their respective cultures. Scholars regard creation myths as the first fruits of human thought and the source of many subsequent scientific occurrences. Chaos became the collective imagination of the ancestors for the most primitive state of the universe. This imagining of a pre-cosmic state in the creation myth was

the starting point for the development of human thought (1, 93). The reason why the pre-cosmic state is imagined as a state of Chaos is directly related to the environment in which the first people lived. For primitive peoples, certain situations in their lives first appeared as Chaos, and then various things gradually emerged from them.

With the emergence of clans, the spoken language developed, imagination developed, and rational thought began to emerge. The primitive ancestors began to understand and explain various natural phenomena and the origins of humankind itself through their imagination. Once the human mind entered the world of imagination, it also entered a state of creation. For the primitive ancestors, this creation was a myth told orally. As Levi-Strauss says: "Myth is language: to be known, the myth must be spoken; it is part of human language" (8, 224). Myth is a unique linguistic phenomenon, a particular cultural product created by human beings using linguistic forms, a remarkable story that people tell in the narrative. So, as far as thinking is concerned, "only primitive people with a developed imagination and a certain degree of budding rational thought would have been capable of creating myths" (12, 17). Imagination and the budding of rational thought are advanced human attributes, and these advanced attributes are the product of creation myths. Myth is a product of imagination, and imagination is the most basic way of thinking in all myths. Regarding the way of thinking employed by myth, Marx also makes this clear in his *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*: "Any myth uses and draws on the imagination to conquer the forces of nature, to dominate them, to visualize them" (10, 113).

Human thought is most freely expressed in mythology, and mythology is the fullest expression of the essential properties of human thought. Mythical thinking is, on the surface, extraordinarily free and seemingly unregulated, but it follows a strict logic of thought. A particular universal nature of the human mind determines, at a deep level, the face of myth. Chinese scholar Ye Shuxian also believes that mythic thinking has its logic: "Mythic thinking, as one of the early forms of the development of thought, is after all not a boundless fantasy and rhapsody; it also has its formal laws, that is to say, mythic thinking also follows a logic specific to it" (16, 125). He outlines the basic logic of mythic thought as analogy. He argues that the analogical logic of mythic thought has a long history, having emerged in the form of action and representational thought, the predecessors of mythic thought. In his exploration of the structure of myth, Lévi-Strauss asserts that the most fundamental dichotomy in myth is that of culture versus nature. The dichotomy between culture and nature is the most basic and typical structure of thought from which human thought is derived. All the concepts and categories used in mythic thinking are not directly visible; they are hidden behind concrete objects. Levi-Strauss says that myth analysis does not and cannot have as its goal to show how people think, "I am arguing not for showing how people think with myths, but for showing how myths think with people without being known" (9, 20). Lévi-Strauss's structuralist study of

myth aims to unearth the deep structure of the unconscious behind the myth. He is more fundamental and closer to the heart of myth than Jung's unconscious structure. The unconscious structure of Lévi-Strauss is the a priori root of unconscious rationality common to human society, the deep structure and core of the unconscious structure. The aim is to make these deep structures of the unconscious visible to the conscious mind and to elaborate on them.

2. Differences

The creation myths of Pan Gu and Nu Wa answer not only the question of where humankind came from but also how it came to be. What is the environment of human existence? It provides “food for thought” for our understanding of the three fundamental relationships between man and nature, man and man, and man and the spiritual world. These myths show that in our Chinese ancestors, everything in heaven and Earth originated from humans. Nature nurtures humankind, nature becomes meaningful because of humankind, and humankind survives because of nature. Humanity and nature are a community of destiny, interdependent and harmonious, which is the way to sustainable development. Engels pointed out, “The problem of the relation of thought to being, of spirit to nature, the supreme problem of all philosophy, like all religions, has its roots in the narrow and foolish conceptions of the age of obscurantism” (2, 220). The Chinese creation myths embody the view of the universe, nature, and life. It became the earliest Chinese source of the philosophical idea of Tian Ren Heyi and Wu Wo Yiti.

The heroes eulogized and praised in Chinese creation myths are all examples of virtuous people, showing a tendency to emphasize human decency. Blood is the bond of human decency, and human decency in ancient Chinese society was not maintained by coercive means such as law but by non-coercive means such as morality and ritual. After his death, Pan Gu ultimately gave everything he had to humankind. In addition, the myths of Nu Wa mending the sky and Hou Yi shooting the sun embodies the Chinese ancestors' fearless and active spirit and contain the fundamental pursuit of morality, ethics, and life values. Their personalities are diluted, and these heroic figures are men who have taken on the power and character of god and are treated as gods. The relationship between god and man is one in which god works for the good of man, and man worships a god. The relationship between man and god is one of natural harmony. Extraordinary powers and high morals thus become symbols of the qualities of a god. Shangde has also become one of the fundamental characteristics of traditional Chinese culture. The heroic role models in Chinese creation myths embody the pragmatic spirit of the ancient Chinese ancestors who were intensely concerned with and focused on the existence of sensual life in the present world. Due to the influence of Confucianism, most mythical heroes have been historicized. Mythical heroes can be found in historical figures.

In the eyes of the Greeks, the gods and the descendants of the gods were gods. The descendants of the gods and men were heroes. The Genealogy of the Gods, in addition to recounting the genealogy of

the gods, also contains heroes. Heroes are born in two ways: the union of a male god with an earthly woman (Zeus united with an earthly woman, Alcmena, to give birth to Hercules); and the union of a goddess with an earthly man (Thetis, the goddess of the sea, united with the hero of Thetia, Peleus, to give birth to the valiant Achilles). The most widely circulated stories are the twelve incredible feats accomplished by Heracles, the voyages of the Argo heroes, led by Iason, in search of the Golden Fleece, and the Trojan War. If Hercules represents individual heroism, the story of the hero of Argo and the Golden Fleece symbolizes collective heroism. The heroes of ancient Greek mythology are representatives of the human strength and wisdom idealized by the ancient Greeks, reflecting their hard work, bravery, and tenacity in adapting to the process of conquering nature with a solid humanist spirit. In the Greek national spirit, strength was the basis for all development and was the most highly regarded, while ethical judgments about behavior were less so. This norm of evaluating people's behavior based on ability and bravery has been steeped in ancient Greek and Western society.

Conclusion. The creation myths are a metaphorical way of thinking about the origins of the world, the worldview, and the sacred beliefs of the primitive first people. After the rise of rational thought, mythical (metaphorical) thinking has remained a fundamental way of thinking alongside scientific thinking. The mythological displacement morphed into literature, leading back into the realm of literature and symbolism, which had a subtle impact on the development of literature. Mythology provides the archetypal model for a work's literary elements of structure, theme, and imagery. Heroic legend has always been a theme in mythology.

Ancient Chinese and ancient Greek mythology portrays heroes with different objects of struggle. Nu Wa's mending of heaven and Gun Yu's healing of water show the superb performance of mythical heroes in their struggle against nature, emphasizing the harmonious relationship between gods and men. At the same time, ancient Greek mythology reflects the struggles of the subjective world, such as a father killing his children and a son overthrowing his father's rule, showing the struggle between gods and goddesses, gods and fate, and men and fate.

Mythological thinking in ancient Greece was rational and linear. The characteristics embodied in the passage from Chaos to Gaia and Uranus to Kronos show precisely how the world originated and developed. The world does begin with Chaos, then space, and on to time. This is the line of development of human rational thought. Furthermore, none of the scenarios described in this creation myth of the overthrow of the son by the father have any coordination or coexistence in them, showing an irreversible linearity of thought. Because of this linear, rational thinking, the Greeks exalted strength. They emphasized the role of the human being, individuality and innovation, and superior power, which was one of the core elements of humanism.

Chinese creation myth thinking is circular and curvilinear. Ren, nature, and Tiandi are the so-called Sancai. Since Tian (Yin and Yang), Di (Rigid and Flexible), and Ren (Benevolence and Righteousness) are equal and essentially the same, Ren is as divine and eternal as all natural things. Therefore, it is only suitable that man and the society he forms should also be in harmony with the laws of nature. By following the laws of heaven and Earth, we can ensure society's longevity. After a cycle of time, everything in the world returns to its original state. This view of time was gradually expanded into a view of the universe, from which ideas such as Yin Yang Five Elements were derived. Life in the universe is a great cycle. Because of the influence of this cyclical thinking, the Chinese ancestors emphasized a balanced view of nature and revered morality.

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