# A Comparison of Two Representative Creation Myths and Their Unconscious Influence on Human Consciousness, Beliefs, and Values

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## Abstract

This paper compares and contrasts two myths to include a Christian metaphor of Creation and a Hindu cosmogony myth. The research explores how the Genesis story from Christianity (part of the Western Tradition) and the cosmogony myths from Hinduism (part of the Eastern Tradition) may have perpetuated unconscious values and beliefs resulting in perceptual blind spots (scotomas) that may limit humanity's evolution of consciousness.

Utilizing the Joy Mills Archetype Motifs and Joseph Campbell's Four Functions, this paper demonstrates that the beliefs and values unconsciously hidden in these myths reveal a level of consciousness open to an emerging paradigm of the oneness of all creation. Such a paradigm may dissolve the illusory boundaries of separation. Beliefs and values shape the way individuals look at the world and provide the basis for interpreting reality and deciding what is socially meaningful for them in their lives. Myths have perpetuated outmoded values and beliefs at an unconscious level that have limited the capacity to access the full range of choices for the betterment of humanity and its related systems and institutions. In attuning to Universal Oneness, where people show greater tolerance for ethnic, sexual, and political differences, there is attention toward greater self-awareness, intention toward healing outcomes, repetition of new behaviors, and guidance from trusted people.

Keywords: creation, creation myth, myth, Hinduism, Christianity, Genesis, Kali, Shiva, esotericism, Joseph Campbell, mysticism, archetypes, motifs, Universal Oneness

**Une comparaison de deux mythes de création représentatifs de la culture occidentale et orientale, et leur influence inconsciente sur la conscience humaine, les croyances et les valeurs**

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**Résumé**

Cet article compare et oppose deux mythes, à savoir une métaphore chrétienne de la Création et un mythe hindou de Cosmogonie. La recherche qui s'ensuit explore comment l'histoire chrétienne de la Genèse (qui fait partie de la tradition occidentale) et les mythes de Cosmogonie de l'hindouisme (qui font partie de la tradition orientale) ont pu perpétuer des valeurs et des croyances inconscientes ayant entraîné des taches aveugles de perception (scotomes) qui peuvent limiter l'évolution de la conscience de l'humanité.

En utilisant les motifs archétypaux de Joy Mills et les quatre fonctions de Joseph Campbell, cet article démontre que les croyances et les valeurs inconsciemment cachées dans ces mythes révèlent un niveau de conscience ouvert à un paradigme émergent de l'unité de toute création. Un tel paradigme peut dissoudre les frontières illusoires de la séparation. Les croyances et les valeurs façonnent la façon dont les individus voient le monde, car elles constituent la base de l'interprétation de la réalité et de la décision de ce qui est socialement significatif pour eux dans leur vie. Les mythes ont perpétué, à un niveau inconscient, des valeurs et des croyances dépassées, qui ont pu limiter la capacité d'accéder à la gamme complète des choix pour l'amélioration de l'humanité et de ses systèmes et institutions connexes. En s'harmonisant avec l'Unicité universelle - où les personnes font preuve d'une grande tolérance à l'égard des différences ethniques, sexuelles et politiques - on s'attache à une plus grande conscience de soi, on tente d'obtenir des résultats de guérison, de répétition de comportements nouveaux et on recherche les conseils de personnes de confiance.

Mots clés : Création, mythe de la création, mythe, hindouisme, christianisme, genèse, Kali, Shiva, Devi, ésotérisme, Joseph Campbell, mysticisme, archétypes, motifs, Unité universelle.

**Una Comparación de Dos Mitos Representativos de la Creación y su Influencia Inconsciente en la Conciencia, las Creencias y los Valores Humanos**

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**Resumen**

Este artículo compara y contrasta dos mitos para incluir una metáfora cristiana de la Creación y un mito de la cosmogonía hindú. La investigación explora cómo la historia del Génesis del cristianismo (parte de la tradición occidental) y los mitos de la cosmogonía del hinduismo (parte de la tradición oriental) pueden haber perpetuado valores y creencias inconscientes resultando en puntos ciegos de percepción (escotomas) que pueden limitar la evolución de la consciencia de la humanidad.

Utilizando los Motivos del Arquetipo de Joy Mills y las Cuatro Funciones de Joseph Campbell, este artículo demuestra que las creencias y los valores ocultos inconscientemente en estos mitos revelan un nivel de conciencia abierto a un paradigma emergente de la unidad de toda la creación. Tal paradigma puede disolver los límites ilusorios de la separación. Las creencias y los valores dan forma a la manera en que las personas ven el mundo y proporcionan la base para interpretar la realidad y decidir qué es socialmente significativo para ellos en sus vidas. Los mitos han perpetuado valores y creencias anticuados a un nivel inconsciente que han limitado la capacidad de acceder a la gama completa de opciones para el mejoramiento de la humanidad y sus sistemas e instituciones relacionados. Al sintonizar con la Unidad Universal, donde las personas muestran una mayor tolerancia por las diferencias étnicas, sexuales y políticas, se presta atención a una mayor conciencia de sí mismo, la intención de obtener resultados curativos, la repetición de nuevos comportamientos y la orientación de personas de confianza.

Palabras clave: creación, mito de la creación, mito, hinduismo, cristianismo, Génesis, Kali, Shiva, Devi, esoterismo, Joseph Campbell, misticismo, arquetipos, motivos, Unidad Universal

**Uma Comparação de Dois Mitos Representativos da Criação e Sua Influência Inconsciente na Consciência, nas Crenças e nos Valores Humanos**

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**Resumo**

Este artigo compara e contrasta dois mitos, incluindo uma metáfora cristã da Criação e um mito da cosmogonia hindu. A pesquisa explora como a história de Gênesis do cristianismo (parte da Tradição Ocidental) e os mitos da cosmogonia do hinduísmo (parte da Tradição Oriental) podem ter perpetuado valores e crenças inconscientes, resultando em pontos cegos perceptivos (escotomas) que podem limitar a evolução da consciência da humanidade.

Utilizando os Padrões do Arquétipo de Joy Mills e as Quatro Funções de Joseph Campbell, este artigo demonstra que as crenças e valores inconscientemente ocultos nesses mitos revelam um nível de consciência aberto a um paradigma emergente da unidade de toda a criação. Tal paradigma pode dissolver os limites ilusórios da separação. Crenças e valores moldam a maneira como os indivíduos olham para o mundo e fornecem a base para interpretar a realidade e decidir o que é socialmente significativo em suas vidas. Os mitos perpetuaram valores e crenças ultrapassados, em um nível inconsciente, limitando a capacidade de acessar toda a gama de opções para o aperfeiçoamento da humanidade e de seus sistemas e instituições. Em sintonia com a Unidade Universal, onde as pessoas mostram maior tolerância para diferenças étnicas, sexuais e políticas, há atenção para uma maior autoconsciência, intenção para resultados de cura, repetição de novos comportamentos e orientação por pessoas de confiança.

Palavras-chave: criação, mito da criação, mito, hinduísmo, cristianismo, Gênesis, Kali, Shiva, Devi, esoterismo, Joseph Campbell, misticismo, arquétipos, padrões, Unidade Universal

**Zwei maßgebliche Schöpfungsmythen, wie sie unterschiedlich das menschliche Bewusstsein, ihr Glauben und ihre Werte unbewusst beeinflussen**

**Cindy John, BSE, MS and Frank Hutchinson, PhD**

**Zusammenfassung**

Diesen Beitrag stellt die christliche Metapher der hinduistischen Kosmogonie gegenüber im Vergleich. Es wird untersucht, wie die Geschichte der Genesis des Christentums (Teil der westlichen Tradition) und die Weltentstehungsmythen des Hinduismus (Teil der östlichen Tradition) unbewusste Werte und einen Glauben aufrechterhalten, die zur perzeptiven Blindheit (Skotom) leiten und die Entwicklung des menschlichen Bewusstseins einschränkt. Diese Arbeit zeigt anhand der Joy Mills Archetype Motive und der vier Funktionen des Joseph Campbell, dass Glauben und Werte, die in Mythen verhüllt sind, eine höhere Stufe des Bewusstseins für ein neues Konzept der universellen Einheit in der gesamten Schöpfung öffnen. Solch ein Konzept dürfte die illusorischen Bände der Trennung  auflösen. Glauben und Werte gestalten eine Basis für eine individuelle Weltanschauung. Sie erschaffen also eine Grundlage für die Interpretation der Realität

und beeinflussen definitiv was gesellschaftlich im Leben wichtig ist. Mythen haben veraltete Werte und Glauben im Unterbewusstsein verewigt. Sie haben die Fähigkeit, alle Wahlmöglichkeiten für eine bessere Welt, ihre Systeme und Institutionen wahrzunehmen, eingeschränkt. Wenn man eingestimmt ist auf die Universale Einheit, ist man den ethnischen, sexuellen und politischen Unterschieden gegenüber toleranter. Man achtet schließlich mehr auf Selbsterkenntnis, Heilungsergebnisse, neue Verhaltensmuster und eine Führung durch vertrauensvolle Menschen.

Schlüsselworte: Schöpfung, Schöpfungsmythos, Mythos, Hinduismus, Christentum, Genesis, Kali, Shiva, Devi, Esoterik, Joseph Campbell, Mystik, Archetypen, Motiv, Universale Einheit

**Introduction**

This paper explores how the Genesis stories from Christianity (part of the Western Tradition) and the cosmogony myths from Hinduism (part of the Eastern Tradition) have perpetuated unconscious values and beliefs (which have led to metaphorical blind spots) that have limited humanity's capacity to access the full range of choices available for its balanced evolutionary development. Within the field of psychology, these unconscious perceptual blind spots could be called "scotomas." Myths are stories that can reveal or limit the nature of our personal, interpersonal, and cultural realities. Recent scientific and consciousness research has sought to better understand the true nature of our connection to the universe and to each other. This latest research confirms a dynamic which has been long espoused by some ancient mystics, namely that absolutely everything is interconnected by a primordial "substance" that has been called by some "Ether" (Lyne 2012).

A number of renowned mathematicians and physicists have articulated the notion of a similar omnipresent substance, which was originally written off as "empty space." This previously termed empty space is now recognized by scientists to be substantively full and validated by the phenomenon described in quantum physics as "vacuum fluctuations" (Haramein 2021). In essence, modern researchers have concluded, like the mystics of old, that everything inside and outside of ourselves is connected and constantly communicating with all parts of "the whole." In other words, there is an interconnection throughout the entire universe, with no exceptions. Therefore, rather than seeing celestial objects in space as being separated by "nothingness," a more accurate perception shift would be to see those objects suspended in a primordial fabric. This fabric can be perceived not only as embracing the celestial bodies in space; it can also be seen as having an unbroken connection to and inside of each celestial object and sentient being. For human beings, this connection is not a choice. It is part of the actuality of our existence. Yet, we do have a choice as to whether we allow that connection to manifest in our personal, interpersonal, and cultural realities. In this research, we differentiate actuality from reality. Actuality is the spectrum of vibratory potential available for humanity's use in revealing the nature of the manifested world. On the other hand, reality is a subset of that spectrum selected and filtered by the five senses. Reality reveals those beliefs and values upon which individuals, groups, and cultures shape how they perceive and act in the world. Note, however, that one researcher referenced throughout, Joy Mills (2001), at times uses "Reality" in ways more properly denoted as "Actuality" within the Rosicrucian context of this specific paper (H. S. Lewis 1972, 160 and 189).

**The Power of Values and Beliefs in Myth**

With the foregoing in mind, this research explores the limiting effects of values and beliefs inherent in the identified stories and myths that may keep humanity bound to outdated modes of thinking and acting. Thus, these modes of thinking may no longer productively serve the positive intent for which they may have been created and perpetuated. Western and Eastern spiritual cosmologies both incorporate the use of espoused divisions to represent characteristics of the human and conjectured Divine experience. Each, however, approaches its stories from unique and different etiological foundations. Christian Creation stories clearly state that the Divine unilaterally created people and the world. This is in contrast to Hindu cosmogony myths, which posit that which has been revealed to human consciousness has always existed with no beginning or end. In a statement of reconciliation, Joseph Campbell wrote that a

> universal [Oneness] doctrine teaches that all the visible structures of the world … are the effects of a ubiquitous power out of which they rise, which supports and fills them during their manifestation, and back into which they must ultimately dissolve. This is the power known to science as energy, to the Melanesians as mana, to the Sioux Indians as wakonda, the Hindus as Shakti, and the Christians as the power of [the Divine]. (Campbell 2008, 22)

Much of the process and the impact of myths on humanity takes place below the level of conscious awareness. This paper presents research that suggests humanity can begin undertaking the task of surfacing those unconscious beliefs and values hidden in these creation stories and cosmogony myths. This may be one key to kickstarting a spiritual evolution in ways that allow for remarkable advances in the elevation of humanity's personal, cultural, and universal consciousness. Many stories and myths embody not only values and beliefs, but also veiled, little-understood ideas and images related to the sacred feminine and the sacred masculine. Often these energetic polarities are considered opposites. Yet, in actuality, these so-called opposites are part of the same expression of Divine Consciousness. A unity perpetually exists that needs to be revealed only by a transcendent elevation of consciousness. Campbell stated it in this manner: "the 'he' or 'she' is a springboard to the transcendent, that transcendent means to go past duality. Everything in the field of time and space is dual. The incarnation appears either as male or female … [but] there comes a time, as we go inside deeper, there is a realization, we are both mortal and immortal, male and female" (Campbell 1988, 58).

Commonalities and differences between the creation stories are here identified with a focus on the four functions of myth, as described by Campbell in *The Power of Myth,* and by utilizing the archetypal patterns within myths as described by Mills. Regarding the latter, she stated, "In dealing with myth, one must be concerned with archetypes, with patterns, and with their images in human consciousness and transforming consciousness from within so that the cosmos will more accurately reflect the ordering principles of chaos" (Mills 2001, 18).

Interestingly, the pairing of opposites is perceived as more readily occurring in times of chaos and uncertainty. Every period of chaos comes with an opportunity to experience and reveal more fully the wholeness of ourselves as divine beings. What we create from chaos may be about evolving a level of consciousness emerging from our conscious understanding. Myths and

stories hold the potential to transcend a limited understanding that once served to provide order and comfort. In considering the limited understanding and the increasing pace of the modern world, Campbell expressed the near impossibility of new transcendent myths emerging (Campbell 1991, 55-62). A more hopeful Mills (2001) suggested that myth is a psychic reality, an interior perception that enables us to approach actuality in an experiential manner.

**The Nature of Myth**

The myths we are discussing relate to a primordial event that has taken place at the beginning of time. Typically, it is structured as a special story about past events which some believe to be real. The actors in the myth are, in most cases, divinities or cultural heroes, and not human beings as we understand them. Incorporated in the myth is the assumption that humanity cannot know the nature of those events except by revelation. The myth, therefore, is an imperfect recital of what the divinities or the semi-divine beings did at the beginning of time. In the majority of cases, the myth shows how a specific reality came into existence. As such, myths are accounts with an absolute authority that is implied rather than stated. Many times, myths override facts of the ordinary human world (Iduigwomen 2015, 1).

Myths abound in different parts of the world. The major subjects of myths found all over the world include origin stories, eschatology, destruction, eternity, transformation, rebirth, and renewal. Others are myths about celestial divinities, founders of religions, other religious figures, kings, and ascetics. Although the same myths can be held in different places and times, local differences abound among different cultures, but, nevertheless, the pattern is typically somewhat the same. Although the exact methods of creation of the first human may differ in different cultures, it is generally believed that the creation of humanity came after other creatures had been created. Within myth, this is the reason humanity is typically regarded as the crown of the Divine's creation in almost all cultures of the world (Iduigwomen 2015, 1).

Within the realm of African myths, representing both pre-history and history, there are innumerable variations. For instance, they include myths about the creation of the universe, the first human on the planet Earth, the withdrawal of the Divine from the world as a result of humankind's disobedience, and the origin of the community. In the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria, there are myths about objects of nature such as rivers, streams, oceans, seas, lakes, permanent ponds, animals, forests, the sun, the moon, mountains, boulders, and so on (Iduigwomen 2015, 1). In the eyes of the traditional Africans, spirits and divinities are real entities which have been in existence throughout eternity. Such pre-history and history are telescoped by the traditional African society into a neatly fitted oral tradition handed down from generation to generation. The traditional African myths reference primordial times when mythical events took place.

In the mythic trend of Greek thought, objects and the world around them were usually personified. Consciousness, emotions, states, and processes were usually deified. Things like the earth, sky, river, sun, and night were personified and deified. Mythic thought of ancient Greece also frequently relied on human analogy. Change, for instance, was depicted in the form of generation and procreation. In Greek myths, the great mystery was explained with an analogy using the terminology of biological processes, and the actors were anthropomorphic beings (Iduigwomen 2015, 1).

**The Logic of Myth**

The logic behind most myths is that they are means of acting upon the present from archetypes created in the distant past. However, a myth is not only focused on the past but also most assuredly deeply concerned with the present. In fact, myths influence the entire spectrum of current social conditions. Further, a myth is often a story perpetuated to satisfy the present moral, religious, social, and even practical pinning of the society in which it finds itself. Much of the thrust of the mythmaker is about the present. For the mythmaker, the primordial event established the present condition of humankind. The mythical event (and not personal memory) is what is important because it is a creative event. Primordial myths communicate the principles and paradigms that repeatedly attempt to recover or recreate an idealized original state of being. Many suggest that this logic is fallacious (Isichei 1975, 15). The reason is that the mythmaker tends to present happenings as though they were accurate descriptions of the past. Obviously, the mythmaker aims to shield the past from revision or modification. In this way, a myth can determine irrevocably the meaning of the past, which in turn compels a corresponding view of the present, and the mythmaker thus shields the past and holds it as a stronghold in its perpetual retelling (Iduigwomen 2015, 1).

Therefore, a myth often has a fixed or pre-determined pattern, which, as it were, can close its view of the past from further research. Research opens the past to scrutiny and can thus bring us closer to the nature of actuality. However, mythmakers have no need for any revision as they assure themselves that the ultimate truth is already embedded in their account. The mythmaker therefore resists or fights any attempt to destroy cherished perceptions. Efforts are geared towards protecting the past from corruption by the present. Mythmakers tend to project their accounts as infallible, yet no mortal can claim to have given us a final word, view, or account about the past. The fallibility of memory and the fact that forgetfulness is a disease without cure confirms this fact (Iduigwomen 2015, 1).

**Types of Myth**

At times, "cosmogony" and "creation myth" are often used as synonyms; for this paper, cosmogony is a preferable term because it refers to the origin of the world in a neutral fashion, whereas creation myth implies a creator and something created.

> Creation may have an implication unsuited to a number of myths that refer to the origin of the world as growth or emanation, rather than as a supreme act. Instead, cosmogonic myths are concerned with origins in the sense of the foundation or validity of the world as it is. Creation stories in both early and later cultures frequently speak of the act of creation as a fashioning of Earth out of raw material that was already present. (Isichei 1975, 15)

All cosmogonic accounts have certain formal features in common. They speak of irreconcilable opposites (e.g., heaven and earth, darkness and light) and, at the same time, of events or things totally outside the common range of perception and reason (e.g., a "time" in which heaven and earth were not yet separated and darkness and light intermingled). In other words, the basic

ingredients of the human world and its orientation are presupposed yet are realized, constituted, or brought about anew in the narration. The narrative can arrive at such a reconstitution only by transcending the limits of ordinary perception and reason. The origin of human beings is usually linked immediately to cosmogony. Humans, for instance, are placed on Earth by the Divine, or in some other way, their origin is from heaven.

Nevertheless, it is only in mythologies influenced by philosophical reflections that the place of humans becomes the conspicuous center of the cosmogony (e.g., Pythagoreanism, a Greek mystical philosophical system; Orphism, a Greek mystical religious movement; Gnosticism, a Christian dualistic and esoteric movement; and Tantrism, a Hindu and Buddhist esoteric meditation system). Humans are sometimes said to have ascended from the depths of Earth (as with the Zuni, a Native American people) or a certain rock or tree of cultic significance. These images are often related to the idea of a realm of ancestors as the origin of newborn children. Humans are also said to be fashioned from the dust of the ground (as in Genesis) or a mixture of clay and blood (as in the Babylonian creation myth). In all cases, however, humans have a particular place (because of their duties to the divinities, because of their limitations, or even because of their gifts), even though – especially in many hunter-centric civilizations (e.g., the African San peoples and many Native American peoples) – the harmony of humanity and other forms of nature is emphasized (Isichei 1975, 15).

**The Christian Creation Stories**

Greg Salyer, President of the Philosophical Research Society, wrote that in most Western cultures, there are two or three creation stories, not just one. He states that there are two versions in the Bible, even though people treat them as one story (Salyer 2020). A third version of the Genesis Story is also revealed in a poignant recorded conversation between Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers (Campbell and Moyers 1988).

The following is an encapsulated version of the Genesis story as interpreted by Campbell from the Bible, which will be utilized in this research:

> In the beginning the Divine created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of the Divine was moving over the face of the waters. And the Divine said, "Let there be light"; and there was light… So, the Divine created humankind in Its own image, in the image of the Divine It created people; male and female he created them. And the Divine blessed them, and the Divine said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply…" Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day the Divine finished Its work which It had done…And the Divine saw everything that It had made, and behold, it was very good…. (The Divine asked,) "Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom thou gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord Divine said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, I ate." (Campbell 1991, 50-56)

**Hindu Cosmogony Myths**

As Joseph Campbell explains, Hinduism speaks of "a state in which the ears have opened to the song of the universe and the eye has opened to the radiance of the mind of the Divine. They would reject the idea of the Fall in the Garden. Under no conditions could humanity be cut off from its source" (Campbell 1991, 31-32). However, there is, like the Christian Creation story, a clear shift from singular consciousness of identity to the perception of participation in a world of duality; a world in which all phenomena are governed in a field of time and space.

Greg Salyer, as a preface to telling the myth, wrote:

> Hindu deities are not like anything…we know in the West. They're just hard to understand…because there are…all these deities emerging from other deities…. We don't really have that notion in the West. We like our deities separate and fairly distinct: In the Hindu Kali and Shiva myth, Kali emerges from a previous goddess who came from a previous goddess. Hinduism makes room for transformation, as reflected in their emerging deities. (Salyer 2018)

The divinity Devi is one of the earliest forms of the feminine in Hinduism, and she is described as being in all things eternal and infinite. "Devi exclaims 'I, Devi, have created all worlds at my will without being urged by any higher being, and I dwell within them. I permeate Earth and heaven and all created entities with my greatness'" (Salyer 2018).

In one mythic episode about the emergence from Devi to Durga, a buffalo-headed monster named Mahisha gets together an army of Demons to take over the world. In human form, Mahisha and his army bring havoc to the world in a battle of one hundred years. As a result, the divinities are banished from heaven, and the creator divinity, Brahma, asks his fellow divinities Vishnu and Shiva what had happened. The divinities explain that they had been expelled by the demons. In response, Brahma calls upon Devi. She emerges from Vishnu and Shiva's anger. In a battle that follows, enraged and fighting, the embodiment of Durga's anger becomes Kali.

> The Hindu gods [divinities] represent functions; here they are emotions; they are things in the world…. Given all the divine weapons of the gods [divinities], Kali seeks out this demon and all the other demons that emerged from his blood. She swallows each whole, so as not to spill any of their blood. Finally, only one demon, Octavia, is left; who[m] Kali dispatches with a vengeance…. The gods [divinities] are (then) fearful she's going to destroy the world, and so god [divinity] Shiva comes to her … and lies down…. Something in that gesture, something in that movement, stops her rage and gives her pause and saves the world. She steps up unconsciously on the static, passive figure of her consort, Shiva.…
>
> At the dissolution of things, Shiva says, "It is Kali who will devour all, and since you devour (the demon) himself, it is you who are the supreme primordial Kali because you devour time. You are Kali the original form of all, and because you are the origin of and devour all things, you are called Adya Kali, resuming after dissolution your own form, dark and formless. You alone remain as one ineffable and inconceivable. Though having

a form, you are formless. Though yourself without beginning, multiform by the power of Maya, you are the beginning of all … creator, protectress, de-constructress that you are." Both Shiva and Kali are the static and the dynamic. It is so different from a Western view where the world is split into two parts. There is no split here; there is just this constant coming out of bubbles from the sea, and the sea itself is not changed but then it is because… of its transformation. (Salyer 2018)

**Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

This research has taken a comparative approach to the study of the impact that myths have had on the consciousness of humanity. Traditionally, most studies of myths have been comparative. The prevalence of the comparative approach has meant that, since the nineteenth century, even the most specialized studies have generalized more than one tradition, or at the very least have had to take comparative works by others into account (Buxton, Bolle, and Smith 2022). Indeed, for there to be any philosophical inquiry into the nature and function of myths at all, there must exist a body of data about myths across a range of societies. Such data would not exist without a comparative approach. This exploration begins here with two cultures broadly representing the values and operational assumptions of Eastern and Western mythical conceptualizations. In every mythological tradition, one myth or cluster of myths tends to be central. The characteristics of the central mythologies of the two cultures provided the basis for selecting them for comparison as represented in this research.

Commonalities and differences between the stories were identified with an analytic focus on the archetypal patterns within myths, as identified by Joy Mills (2001). Also used for comparison of the two myths are the four functions of myth, as described by Joseph Campbell in *The Power of Myth* (Campbell and Moyers 1988). "In dealing with myth, one must be concerned with archetypes, with patterns, and with their images in human consciousness and transforming consciousness from within so that the cosmos will more accurately reflect the ordering principles of chaos" (Mills 2001, 18).

The following are the Twelve Archetypes taken from *The Secret Doctrine: 100 Years Later* (Mills 1988) and the Four Functions from *Creative Mythology: Masks of the Gods* (Campbell 1991:4-8).

**Comparison of the Myths Utilizing the Archetype Motifs**

The following compares sections of the Hindu and Christian myths in the context of Joy Mills' Twelve Archetype Motifs (Mills 2001, 18-28).

1. Mystery Motif: This motif focuses on the unknown, the unknowable, the secret.

> In the Christian Myth: Genesis begins with a formless void. "The Spirit of God" [the Divine] moves over primordial waters and "speaks" light into existence, then divides light from darkness and creates heaven and Earth.

> In the Hindu Myth: While Devi (a female divinity) permeates earth and heaven with greatness, her singularity forms all, and from the void she creates.

2. <u>Mirror Motif</u>: This motif has a repeatability called a "mirror principle," which, when at work, can be described as a mirroring of the universal mind reflected in all subsequent stages of manifested existence with little to no distortion from the universal.

In the Christian Myth: The Divine creates humankind in Its image.

In the Hindu Myth: Like her (Kali), he (Shiva) is both the creator and the destroyer. They are the static and the dynamic.

3. <u>Reflection Motif:</u> In this motif, creation from above is matched by creation below, generating a distortion with each replication.

In the Christian Myth: The Divine creates all manner of living things. Male and female are created by the Divine in Its image.

In the Hindu Myth: Out of the void of Devi emerges Shakti, a force, the primordial cosmic energy of the Universe.

4. <u>Awakening Motif</u>: This motif involves an emergence of creation itself from slumber, sometimes by accident or error.

In the Christian Myth: After eating from the tree of knowledge, the two, the first man and first woman, now see they are naked and different; they awaken from the bliss of not knowing to world duality and manifestation.

In the Hindu Myth: Divinities Brahma (creator), Vishnu (destroyer), and Shiva (combination) are thrown out of heaven by demons. Seeking answers to "What happened?" they call upon Devi.

5. <u>Polarity Motif</u>: In this motif, the existence of two opposing poles or pairs when coupled bring the world into consciousness.

In the Christian Myth: Male Adam blames Female Eve for the eating of the fruit. This opposition is compounded with the emergence of the polar forces of good and evil.

In the Hindu Myth: No split occurs because there is a coming out of one another in the process of transformation. Kali in her unbounded rage seemingly cannot be stopped until Shiva comes to her and lies down. Reflecting upon Shiva, Kali pauses and then calms.

6. <u>The Creator as Artisan, Builder</u>: In this motif, when projected from the Creator's being, the world manifests.

In the Christian Myth: The Divine creates everything – Light, the earth, the Garden, Adam, Eve, the world.

In the Hindu Myth: Out of the void of Devi, a force that exists starts rolling with something else emerging out of that force.

7. <u>Sacrifice Motif</u>: This motif involves the idea that something must die for something to be created.

In the Christian Myth: Without the bliss of the Garden of not knowing, Adam and Eve face a new world of knowledge with its limits.

In the Hindu Myth: To stop monsters who terrorize heaven and earth, the divinities pool their Divine Feminine energy to produce Kali, and they give away their divine weapons to her. She then destroys every monster.

8. <u>Desire Motif</u>: This motif involves that which creates intensity of focus, "A brooding… bending back toward oneself … to give warmth to an inner seed."

In the Christian Myth: The pressure of desiring the forbidden results in their eating the fruit, which in turn results in perpetuating the tug and pull of polarity, separation, and confusion.

In the Hindu Myth: From the desire to be rid of monsters and demons, a richness of cooperation amidst the divinities transcends their troubles.

9. <u>Egg, the Germ Motif</u>: This motif asserts that from desire hatches the egg.

In the Christian Myth: From desire emerges self-consciousness in an external world outside the Garden.

In the Hindu Myth: Shiva says, "It is you (Kali) who are the supreme primordial Kali … the original form of all … resuming after dissolution your own form, dark and formless. You alone remain as one ineffable and inconceivable."

10. <u>Separation Motif</u>: This motif includes the moment when there is division in the Primal Unity.

In the Christian Myth: After the Fall, Adam and Eve recognize their nakedness, and cover themselves in shame.

In the Hindu Myth: Shiva as a reflection of Kali in himself says to her, "Though having a form, you are formless. Though yourself without beginning, multiform by the power of Maya, you are the beginning of all … creator, protectress, de-constructress that you are."

11. <u>Chains or Generations Motif</u>: In this motif, layer by layer, from beingness to becoming, consciousness must evolve from awareness of separate things to awareness of a process that both conceals and reveals aspects of Actuality into and from Reality.

In the Christian Myth: Adam blames Eve for eating the fruit; she blames the snake, and

the snake becomes a Western world symbol of evil, hiding in shadowy darkness. This pattern reflects a process of separation from Unity with the Divine and a looking toward externals for the truth of humanity's nature.

In the Hindu Myth: The interrelating of the divinities and their dynamic transformation and emergence from one another is reflective of an underlying unity. It is Shiva who unifies with the primordial energy. That vital essence, which is creative, sustaining, and also destructive, is sometimes referred to as an auspicious source energy embodied in Kali.

12. Failure Motif: This motif involves attempts that fail (i.e., the creation of monsters).

In the Christian Myth: Somebody else different from self is potentially "the enemy," the monster, the snake.

In the Hindu Myth: Monsters and Demons exist and transform into divinities.

**Comparison of the Myths Utilizing the Four Functions**

In this section, the Hindu and Christian myths are analyzed in the context of Joseph Campbell's Four Functions of Myth (Campbell 1968, 4-7).

Function 1. Philosophical – This function of myth is supposed to reconcile waking consciousness to the mystery of the universe.

In the Christian Myth: In Genesis, before the world ever was, the Divine "…looked over the waters and said, 'Let there be light' and there was." Out of nothingness, the world of becoming is thus sparked by the will of the Divine, who creates man and woman. After eating the fruit of knowledge, Adam and Eve become conscious of being different from each other and their creator (Salyer 2020).

In the Hindu Myth: In the Kali and Shiva myth, Devi "is the infinite origin from which all finite shapes take place. Emerging from her is Shakti, primordial Cosmic energy … dynamic, creative, sustaining and destructive energy." There is no split, only being from which, each deity emerges, offering "an understanding of ourselves in the world" (Salyer 2018).

Function 2. Cosmological – This function of myth is for understanding the mystery of the origin, and for understanding the development of consciousness.

In the Christian Myth: Adam and Eve's eyes are opened after they eat from the tree of knowledge. "Among the things they see is that they are naked … and that they are forced to reckon with the limits of their knowing in an entire world of which they had been unaware" (Salyer 2020). From this comes their reliance on the Divine, outside of themselves.

In the Hindu Myth: All the Hindu deities emerge from other deities through transformation. This is a given, a repeated emanation and precipitation of energy, "like bubbles coming out of the sea" (Salyer 2018). Each exemplifies creation and destruction in being and becoming, emanating from oneness.

Function 3.  Sociological – This function of myth is supposed to lead toward the enforcement of a moral code to be in relationship with the community, validating and maintaining social order.

In the Christian Myth: Once fallen from grace, Adam and Eve are separate from the Divine. What they have become, apart from the Divine, activates blame and shame (Campbell 1991).  Adam blames Eve for offering the fruit; Eve blames the snake. Though separate from the Divine, obeying the Divine is the lesson to reduce fear of further fall.

In the Hindu Myth: Kali is described as emerging from the original being, Devi. Everything in the myth arises in relation to everything else, so there is no one to blame. This reverberating transformation of one from another exemplifies a world of light of all that is (Campbell 1991, 63).  As opposed to blaming Kali, Shiva's ability to calm her offers a compassionate relationship as a gleam of light.

Function 4. Pedagogical – The purpose of this function of myth is to foster the centering and unfolding of the individual in integrity, in accord with self, culture, the universe, and the mystery beyond and within self and all things. Campbell referred to this function as the most critical.

In the Christian Myth: The ultimate source of authority for Adam and Eve to reduce their fear of being in the world is to look outward to an external Divinity, who in heaven, is the ultimate source of authority and of everything. In this action of looking outward to the Divine while in the world, they connote "something transcendent of the action … in accord with the universal being (at least in feeling)" (Campbell 1991, 65).

In the Hindu Myth: Both Kali and Shiva, sometimes horrendous deities, symbolize terrifying aspects of the nature of being.  They cancel life's illusion.  They each are also creators of life as generator, illuminator. They each express the potentiality of everything which relates with All and that which emerges from All (Campbell 1991, 280).

**Discussion**

There appear to be twelve universal archetypes found in all myths (Mills 2001). Utilizing these archetypes for comparison there is an unexpected similarity between the Creation myth of Genesis and the cosmogeny myth of Kali and Shiva. The twelve motifs uncover an unconscious function which awakens the interior memory of the underlying mystery of the Divine. In beginning a deeper exploration of the archetypes, a specific similarity is found in Motif 1 where both myths acknowledge an element of mystery. Also, in using Motif 12, both the Christian and Hindu myths recognize the metaphorical utilization of demons, monsters, and other powerful challengers.

Not anticipated were the findings of significant differences between the stories in the use of these motifs for analysis. Upon closer examination, Motifs 2 through 11 reveal three kernel differences, as follows:

- A Creative Divinity is external to being (Genesis) versus divinities that emerge from Primordial Cosmic Energy eternally existing (Kali and Shiva).
- Adam and Eve are portrayed as being separate from the Divine and each other versus deities (Kali and Shiva) who are never apart in actuality, emerging from one another to characterize the various qualities of the Divine.
- In the Garden of Eden myth, fear leads to blaming an external monster (the snake). With Kali and Shiva, myriad monsters simply show up; yet the Hindu pair in union destroy threats in order to save the world.

**A Myth's Impact on Values, Culture, and Consciousness**

Cultural myths influence values by impacting functions related to personal levels of awareness (Krippner and Feinstein 2008).   In the field of psychology, the word myth more easily embraces those dimensions of human consciousness that often transcend early conditioning and cultural setting.  Mythmaking at the individual, familial, cultural, and collective level is the primary, though often unperceived, psychological mechanism by which human beings order reality and navigate their way through life. Mircea Eliade notes that "[humankind] has felt the need to reproduce the cosmogony in [its] constructions, whatever be their nature that this reproduction made [humanity] contemporary with the mythical moment of the beginning of the world and that [humankind] felt the need of returning to that moment, as often as possible, (for centuries) in order to regenerate [itself]" (Eliade 1991, 76-77).

Eliade saw a repeated pattern in Western thinking:

> Insofar as [people allow themselves] to be influenced by history, modern [humanity] feels [itself] diminished by the possibility of this impersonal survival.  But interest in the "irreversible" and the "new" in history is a recent discovery in the timeline of humanity.  On the contrary, archaic humanity defended itself, to the utmost of its powers, against all the novelty and irreversibility which history entails…. All that is needed is a modern [human] with a sensibility less closed to the miracle of life. (Eliade 1991, 48)

While Eliade does bring into focus the possibility of conscious choice to repeat or not to repeat, another studious observer of the evolution of humanity, Ralph Lewis in his 1957 book *The Conscious Interlude*, stated: "The unconscious is like a stage, but it is thought to be a dark one existing in some actual recess in the mind. In this dark area, in this recess, are deposited the ideas and thoughts waiting to be called forth to take their places and assume their roles on the brilliantly lighted stage of consciousness" (2015, 40). As described by Campbell, our myths reflect what we think of ourselves – they shape our worldview.  Mills expounds on the notion of archetypes and myths: "while many of the elements found in the creation myths may seem weird and abstract, sometimes even rather alien for we who are so proud of our rational minds, certain (unconscious) archetypal patterns occur repeatedly" (2001, 18).

Myth is a psychic reality, an interior reality that enables us to approach actuality in an

experiential manner (Mills 2001, 18). Furthermore, Salyer states,

> There are whole spectrums of information that we do not even know about. We must make a world with words that we can live in while the world outside of our words constantly affirms or challenges these beliefs. This perennial tension creates a space where life is lived at its most interesting, that subliminal zone between ignorance and knowledge where the imagination resides. (2020)

**Myth and Psychology**

One theorist energized by psychological aspects of myth was the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung. He began to regard the foundation of mythical images as positive and creative-forming – a theory utilizing archetypes. Broadly, similar images and symbols occur in myths, fairy tales, and dreams because the human psyche has an inbuilt tendency to dwell on certain inherited motifs (archetypes), the basic pattern of which persists, although culture-specific details may vary. One notable objection has been raised to the archetypal symbols identified by Jung: that they are static, representing personal types that conflate aspects of the personality, and that they are essentially aimed at relating myth to the individual psyche, whereas myth is above all a socio-cultural phenomenon, embedded in society (Buxton 2022).

Campbell's research supported the premise that the human psyche is essentially the same all over the world. The psyche is the inward experience of the human body, which is essentially the same in all human beings, with the same organs, the same instincts, the same impulses, the same conflicts, and the same fears. Out of this common ground has come Jung's interpretation of archetypes, which are the common ideas of myths. All over the world and at different times in human history, these archetypes, or elementary ideas, have appeared in different costumes. The differences in the costumes are the results of the environment and historical conditions.

"In looking for some accord with the mystery that informs all things, that vast ground of silence that all humanity shares, the challenge is to recognize and encounter that mystery to help manifest a more humane humanity; to co-create that which will enable humanity to truly experience the divine presence" (Campbell 1988). Ralph M. Lewis (2015) posits, "Almost all systems of metaphysics and ontology, which are considered advanced, have one principle in common: they do not expound a static or inert universe. We use the term universe, in this particular, to mean the whole being. Even a mind, as a teleological cause behind such a universe, could not be static." By extrapolation, there is no more active principle than consciousness or thought. If being, including the mind, is a coordinated force in continual flux, then absolute truths would have to be like little seeds floating in an ever-changing stream. The effect of myths at the unconscious level compels the human psyche on a quest for meaning interpersonally and culturally. "Personal myths act as lenses that explain the world, guide the individual development, provide social direction, and address spiritual yearning in a manner that is analogous to the way cultural myths carry out these functions for entire societies" (Krippner and Feinstein 2008, 21). The implication for myths is that transforming at the personal level ultimately leads to changing values and beliefs that broaden cultural myths to welcome new ways of knowing into the collective consciousness.

As Salyer explains, "Myths burst us!" (Salyer, 2020), and as Joseph Campbell adds, "The norms of myth … will enable … individual[s] to anticipate and activate in [themselves] the centers of [their] own creative imagination[s], out of which [their] own myth and life-building 'Yes because' may then unfold" (Campbell 1959, 677).

## Myth-Embedded Beliefs and Values in Society

Lou Tice suggests not only do values shape the way individuals look at the world, but they provide the basis for interpreting reality and deciding what is socially meaningful for them in their lives. Further, he states that often what is perceived as reality can vary greatly from person to person (Tice 1983). This occurs because people tend to lock onto information that supports their dominant values. Hultman calls this phenomenon "looking at life through a belief darkly" (Hultman 1979).

## Vision for the Future

A conclusion reached from this study is that myths have perpetuated outmoded values and beliefs at an unconscious level that have limited the capacity to access the full range of choices for the betterment of humanity and its related systems and institutions. Admittedly, some progress has been made over time. Nevertheless, it appears that inevitably the pull of myths of separation continues to divide members of humanity from one another as based on physical boundaries, ethnicity, politics, social status, and differing beliefs. There is a critical need for new ways of seeing and operating in the world that can bring humanity together. This new vision would require the conscious identification of static myths and replacing them with more fluid transformative models. Such models may reflect new values and beliefs that underpin an evolving paradigm of universal oneness (Inglehart 1997, 3-6).

## Vision of Universal Oneness

Throughout history, universal oneness has been called by many names—from the Vedic web of light to the Tibetan wheel of time. It is the Way of Taoism and the One God of Islam. We have become aware of oneness through the study of myths and the research from quantum physics. Yet it has been present in the depth of our connection to life in the simplest moments of intimacy and care when we realize our vulnerabilities and power as human beings in a vast universe.

Universal oneness is a consciousness and dimension of existence in which all life is interconnected. Present throughout nature, it is alive within each of us. What makes it different from the simple reality of interdependence? It is consciousness reflected in how we know and feel interdependence. In turning away from self-interest and considering how we can serve others, we realize that oneness grows as we thus fit into life as a whole. "Just as our sense of who we are can change the more we see how and where we are connected to the world around us, so does universal oneness continually draw us into wider, deeper, and more responsible relationships, always emphasizing the shared equality and inherent value within those relationships" (Hart 2009).

Universal oneness is not static – it is not just how things are. It aids in human evolution. While

exploring the conceptual understanding of oneness in philosophical systems for centuries, humanity has searched the particulars of life for an underlying reality of unification. As this reality has led to the development of moral and ethical codes, universal oneness is evident in world political systems that aim to protect universal human rights and freedoms; and it activates a growing awareness and urge to value nature as something more than a commodity. Driving our psychological search for wholeness, it navigates our spiritual quest to unite with the one divine source of life.

> As we align more and more with the qualities and principles of universal oneness, we can strengthen our lived experience of interdependence and renew inner and outer structures – cognitive, psychological, political, economic – that have been degraded by self-interest. This process is already taking place, as individuals and groups work for global changes that serve all of us – not just a few. But becoming more aware of oneness and more skilled at working with it can play a significant role in how quickly and effectively such changes come about. A good place to start is by examining up close how oneness works in ourselves and in nature. (Hart 2009)

**Conclusion**

When left unidentified, myths play in our minds and hearts like old recordings; and whether or not they still serve to benefit humanity's wellbeing, the messages continue to play.

Understanding that myths are one aspect of consciousness that has served to guide humanity, the recognition of consciousness as the source of infinite potential harkens to a calling that longs for emerging choices. Though uncharted, such choices leave room for exploring further the mystery of our being and the very interconnectedness of ourselves with one another. No doubt, myths of a variety of types have played significant roles in facilitating and restraining the evolution of humanity. Slowly and sometimes more rapidly, myths have been a source for revealing aspects of actuality that elevate our consciousness and realization of Universal Oneness. Joseph Campbell summarized the central thrust of this paper by suggesting that we engage with myths in a universal way and not as specific "ethnic" ideas when he exhorts us to turn within:

> But in the end, … the guide within will be [one's] own noble heart alone, and the guide without, the image of beauty, the radiance of divinity, that wakes in [one's] hearty *amor*: the deepest, inmost seed of [one's] nature, consubstantial with the process of the All, 'thus come.' And in this life-creative adventure the criterion of achievement will be … the courage to let go the past, with its truths, its goals, its dogmas of "meaning," and its gifts: to die to the world and to come to birth from within. (Campbell 1968, 677-678)

**Conflict of Interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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