

THE NIGHT OF THE GODS

AN INQUIRY INTO
COSMIC AND COSMOGONIC MYTHOLOGY
AND SYMBOLISM

BY JOHN O'NEILL

ΝΥΞ ΜΑΛΛΑ ΜΑΚΡΗ ΛΘΕΟΦΑΤΟΣ

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Now entertain conjecture of a Time
when creeping murmur and the poring Dark
fills the wide vessel of the Universe. (*Hen. V.* iv, 1, 1.)

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The Night of the Gods.

Disputatio Circularis.

All things that move between the quiet Poles.

(Marlowe's *Faustus* i, 1, 54.)

ALMOST beyond belief is the endless number of human sacred ideas founded in a supreme reverence for the revolution of the Universe round the Axis of the Earth, and for the almighty Power that accomplishes that stupendous All-containing motion.

Many of these ideas are still extant as concrete and ineradicable expressions in the languages, liturgies, and sciences of men.

*The Heavens
are telling.* } Every text-book on astronomy is written in the terminology, and the Society that is named Royal talks the idiom. Words and phrases and theories begotten of those ideas have become compacted into the constitution of our minds; and they are all of them—it is a mightiest satire upon the insane pride of the intellect—all of them founded upon a universal Fact which is a Lie.

Let any reader who here hesitates at the very threshold, try and put that most simple and useful of untruths “the sun-rises” into words that accurately convey the facts of the case; or explain the origin of the word ‘heaven’; or get to the Ding an Sich of the Atlas myth on any other than the Axis theory favoured in this *Inquiry*.

It is hard luck that a book like this, which aims at some sort of scientific system, should thus have to start from, and base its investigations on, a falsity; that its author should have to reverse

*In endless
error hurled.* } the “E pur si muove”; to constantly maintain (but only in Myth) that the heavens *do* move round; to make that supposititious motion the primum mobile of his theories; and to argue and re-argue from positions that are untrue in

Nature ; although all the learned to a man believed in them not so very long ago, and the huge majority of human beings do so believe invincibly at this moment.

It is here maintained that the everlasting, stupendous, unfailling rotation of the Heavens round the Earth—which was an ever and everywhere present overpowering universe-fact—must, from the earliest times when human intelligence had grown-up to the notice of it, have exercised an enormous and fascinating and abiding influence upon the observant and reflective, upon the devout portion of mankind ; and must have provided the supreme initial origin of the greater Cosmic Myths which concern themselves with the genesis and mechanism of the Universe.

The earliest and simplest leading conclusion formulated as to this rotation, by the inhabitants of our hemisphere, must have been

<i>The point</i>	}	that it was accomplished around a fixed point, the
<i>quiescent.</i>		

North Pole ; and the next deduction was that in that point, that pivot, there terminated a fixed and rigid Axis, about which the rotation was effected. "The Nature of Man," wrote Bacon when treating of Logic, "doth extremely covet to have somewhat in his Understanding fixed and immoveable, and as a rest and support of the mind. And therefore, as Aristotle

<i>Nirvana.</i>	}	endeavoureth to prove that in all Motion there is

some point quiescent ; and as he elegantly expoundeth the ancient fable of AtLas (that stood fixed and bare up the heaven from falling) to be meant of the Poles or Axle-tree of heaven, whereupon the conversion is accomplished,—so, assuredly, men have a desire to have an AtLas or Axle-tree within, to keep them from fluctuation," and so forth.

It is thus that, seizing the typical instance of the first motion imparted by the Japanese creator-gods, this *Inquiry* starts from the

<i>Creation-myth.</i>	}	churning of the universe-ocean with the Spear-axis ;
		and so endeavours to bring forth the Deus ex machinâ, and to evolve system out of the chaotic empuddlement of myths with which it has to deal.

Thus, too, is here posited as it were a division of Cycletic or

<i>Cycletic</i>	}	Helissal or Kinetic Mythology, a mythology of
<i>Mythology.</i>		

cosmic Machinery-in-motion, which may disclose to us even archaic glimmerings in China of palpitating nebulae, and in Phœnicia of meteoric clashings in space.

The next step of admiring, if not awe-struck and adoring, human minds would have been to seek for the Power that was compelling the rotation ; and it will perhaps be conceded as natural that the Director, the Swayer of the Whole should be placed in imagination

In Caelo quies. } at its sole and highest point quiescent, its pivot, its cheville ouvrière, the Northern Pole.

Anyhow, that was what was done ; and one of the main objects of this *Inquiry* is to identify the Polar Deity with the oldest, the
The Polar God. } supremest, of the cosmic gods of all early Northern religions ; with the Ptah of the Egyptians, the Kronos of the Greeks, the Shang-Ti of the Taoists and the Tai-Ki and Tai-Yi of the philosophic Chinese, with the Ame no miNaka-Nushi of archaic Japan. This is attempted in the chapters concerned with the Polestar and the mythic sacredness of the North ; where also the Eye of Heaven and the Omphalos myths find their local habitation. There too—at the end of the Axis—are placed those Triune emblems, the fleur-de-lis and the trident ; while the Axis itself becomes the Spear, Lance, or Dart of so many classic myths, the δόρυ of Kronos, the trident-handle of Poseidon, the typical Rod of rhabdomancy (which is also a branch of the Universe-Tree).

The Magnetic Pole further gives occasion for the connexion of the North with the natural Magnet, and thence with all sacred
The Magnet. } animated Stones : with meteorites, the touchstone and bēth-Ēls ; and thus is stone-worship centered in the Polar Deity.

Closely connected with the pole, and more closely with a former Polestar, by their position and their revolutions, the Seven stars of Ursa Major are shown to have been the originators of the
The Number Seven. } holiness of the inevitable Number Seven. And to this I have been driven, almost against my will, to conjoin a somewhat full discussion of the Cabiric gods.

All the Atlas-myths, endless and worldwide, are referred to the Axis ; which is also made the Pillar of the heavens, and the type and original of all the sacred pillars of the world. From the Pillar
Irish Round Towers. } the *Inquiry* naturally proceeds to the Tower ; and claims all obelisks, towers, and steeples as having been initially sacred worship-symbols of the great tower of Kronos, of the mainstay of the Universe.

Other chapters pursue the symbolism of the Axis in the trunk

of the Universe-Tree, and in the Bridge to the other world ; which are two of the commonest and most wide-spread " properties " in the world-myths. The Tree in combination with the Seven stars is made to give us the Seven-branched Candlestick ; and the Bridge is also treated-of as the Ladder.

The revolution of the heavens is more directly figured forth in the *Winged Sphere*, which it is here maintained is the true significance of what has been viewed, by a greatly too limited
The winged } interpretation, as merely a winged "disk," in the
"disk." } Egyptian, Assyrian, and other mythologies. With
 the Winged Sphere too are connected all the divine birds and man-birds, and the winged scarab, and all the divine feathers worn by Egyptian deities. To this category, and also to that of the triple emblems, belongs the Prince of Wales's plume. The Universe-Egg can scarcely be separated from the consideration of the divine Bird.

The Dance of the Stars is another figure for the revolution of the heavens ; and that leads to the discussion of religious and
Round Dances. } "round" Dancing, which is found among all races of
men, together with circular worship by walking round
 Trees, Shrines, and other objects ; all of which, it is maintained, are ritualistic practices in the archaic worship of the revolving heavens and their god. With this subject the chapters on the Salii and the Dactyli also connect themselves.

The transition to the sacred symbolism of the rotating (but not the rolling) Wheel is here easy ; and I do my best to convince
The Wheel of } my readers that the Wheel-god of Assyrian and other
the Law. } symbolism is the Compeller of the Universe, and
 that the turning of the "Praying"-wheel is a devout practice in his worship. The Fire-wheel then leads to an important conclusion as to the production of Fire in religious ceremonies ; and the wheel of Fortune is identified with the revolution of Time which brings in his revenges. The Buddhist wheel of the Law is also referred to the revolution of the heavens, while the Law is that of the universe they enclose. And so the Suastika becomes a skeleton symbol of the wheel or the whirligig, and is connected also with the
The Romaunt } Labyrinth. Attention must also be directed to the
of The Rose. } new Romaunt of the Rose, which seeks to identify
 that famous symbol also with the Wheel.

The conception of revolving Time leads to a somewhat full

discussion of the archaic gods who personified Endless Time and its circular symbols. The Old Man of the Mountain belongs to this section.

That very common mythic figure for the heavens-vault—a supremely holy Mountain—is treated at some length ; and leads us to the Cone in religious symbolism.

The starry heavens are also sought to be identified with white Argos and with the White Wall of Memphis as well as with the (mythic) city of Grecian Thebes. They are also the Veil of the universe, to which the chapter headed Weaving is devoted. The quadripartite division of the Chinese sphere is made to accord with the Four Living Creatures of Hebrew mysticism ; and the heavens-River is demonstrated in the Milky Way and in the perennial circulation of the atmospheric and terrestrial waters.

It is impossible to do more in this place than briefly catalogue the other subjects treated-of. Such are, under the heading of the

*Et hoc genus
omne.*

} Heavens-mountain, the Parsi Dakhmas ; the heavens-Boat of Egyptian and other mythologies, with which

are grouped all Arks and the good ship Argo ; the stone-weapons of the gods, the Hindû Chakra, and the Flaming Sword ; the Cherubim of the Hebrews and Assyrians ; the ȚaȚ of Ptah, as an axis-symbol of stability ; the Round Towers of Ireland. The Seven Churches, the Seven Sleepers, and the Week are dwelt-on under the heading of the Number Seven. The heavenly Dogs of the passage to the next world are sought to be connected with the Egyptian 'jackals', and other sacred dogs. The significance of Right and Left in worship, and the Hindû Conchshell, complete this list.

But it still remains to direct the attention of the reader more especially to the pages which deal with the names and myths of PalLas, AtLas, Lātinus, Magnēs, Œdipus, and Battos ; of Sisyphus and TanTalos ; of the god Picus ; of Daphnē, AgLauros and Danaē ; of Numa Pompilius, of the Bees, of the Arcana, and of the Labyrinth. The genesis of Rhodes from the Rose(wheel), with the Colossus and the Colophon, also claim perusal ; as do the sections on Buddha's and all the other Footprints ; on the Gods of the Druids ; on the Dokana, which is brought down to the Lychgate ; and on the Omphalos and the Rock of Ages.

But I must cease fretting the reader with this mere table of contents.

“COMPARATIVE mythology,” which already calls itself a science, is as yet very much like the mythic young Bears with which it has in this *Inquiry* (under the heading of The Number Seven and elsewhere) a good deal to do: it is amorphous. And even all its more shapely works must somehow resemble the patchwork quilts—‘crazy quilts’ they call them still in Ole Virginny—which were the Penelope’s webs of our great-grandmothers. It is a science of shreds and patches, which all lie in a sort of gigantic lucky-bag, out of which everyone pulls very much what comes next to hand. The patches used to get sorted (by our grandmothers) according to colour, or size, or texture, or chance; and so sartor was resartus, the tailor was patched, perhaps over and over again.

The scraps of mythological fact have also been sorted in various ways. There are the racial and the lingual classifications; and the migratory system, which purports to be an advance on these. There is the divine or personal classification (not neglected here) which concentrates on the lay-figure of some one deity all the home and foreign drapery that seems to belong to him and to his analogues; and there is the sorting of the myth-scraps according to their obvious identities: at times very much regardless of the individual divine entities they now purport to clothe.

This last is the method chiefly followed here; and it originally suggested itself doubtless because of the evidently heterogeneous mass of rags (borrowed, stolen, and honestly come by) which even the oldest and most respectable gods had managed in the course of ages to darn and work up into their harlequin suits. This particular method endeavours to pick-over the rags and, if not ever to reconstitute the first new coat, at least to predicate the loom or factory and the trade-mark of the fabric to which the scrap belongs.

To do this on a large scale would require an expenditure of time and other resources which it would take several ‘golden dustmen’ to command; and consequently, and also for the urgent reason that life is short, the present *Inquiry* is sadly defective in every direction.

All is fish that comes to this net. On fait flèche de tout bois. The etymologist, the dreamist and nightmarist, the *timorite*, are all welcome here, to meet Euhemerus ; who may even worship his ancestors, and be frightened of their ghosts, in his moments perdus. Nor, in an Inquiry into matter which is mainly the product of the human fancy, can the theorist who draws upon his own imagination be excluded. But there is no rule without an exception, and one

The migrationist. } exclusion alone is made : the geographer—so to call him—who regards every myth as a migration, finds little or no admittance, even on business. The world is wide, though not so wide as it was ; there is still room for all ; and no cosmic myth is asked whence it came on the map of the world, but only on the chart of the imagination of the human race.

Given a small planet, and an evolution of life and living things thereon ; and of men who, wherever they be on that planet, see the same heavens, and the same phases of those heavens—not, may be, at the same precise hour of the twenty-four, nor on the same exact day of the 360 and odd, nor even in the same year of the cycle—given these men and their (within planet limits) same mode of evolution, propagation, cerebral organisation, and nutriment ; with the sameness of their non-planetary objects of sense and thought ; and there would seem to be no reason why they should not every where—as naturally as any one where—evolve the same or very similar theories, mythological or otherwise, of their cosmic surroundings. “The human mind,” writes Sir M. Monier-Williams about the religious thought of India, “like the body, goes through similar phases everywhere, develops similar proclivities, and is liable to similar diseases.”

By “planet limits” of course the accidents of latitude and of climate are chiefly meant ; and if a man will place himself in imagination at such a distance in space as will reduce this earth to the apparent size, say, of the moon, he will see at once that all these “limits” are, roughly speaking, mere accidents in so far as the relations of the planet to the heavens are concerned.

Or take a metaphysical illustration, and let earthly man identify himself with his planet as *the Subject* ; and then all the rest of the visible (and invisible) universe becomes for him *the Objective*, the same objective which every other *subject* on the planet has to represent to himself. What wonder is it then that all these (by the hypothesis) identical *subjects* should take similar views of the

same objective. Nay, one might carry it farther, and, presuming similar conditions—that is, (as may be seen in the course of the *Inquiry*) presuming a like inclination of the planetary axis, one might say that there is no reason why possible “men” on some other solar planet should not have evolved the self-same theories or cosmic myths (more or less) of the same objective heavens.

The greatest objection that can be urged against the “geographer” or migrationist—and it is a fatal one—is that his theories
The migrationist. } are forcedly exclusive. One migrationist says all
 astrognosy and myth arose in Egypt, and went to Chaldea; another says Chaldean lore came from far Cathay; yet another says the Greek gods came from India, or the reverse—for it isn’t twopence matter. Each of these wants the field, or the shield, for himself; and may hold it for a time; but one fine day some latent old scintilla of fact is discovered and blown-upon, blazes up anew, and explodes him and his theory in a jiffy. It is just the old Nursery Rhyme over again:

The Lion and the Unicorn fighting for the Crown;
 Up jumps the little Dog, and knocks ’em both down.

Nor can I see how it gets us any more forward even to prove indubitably that the Cosmic myths of country A did come from place B. Very well. Granted. Glad to hear it, even. And what of it? What then? It makes in reality no more approach upon the kernel of the question, upon the Ding an Sich that the myth enholds, than if you indubitably proved exactly the reverse. As

The Egg. } Lobeck¹ remarked about the origin-spot of the cosmic
 Egg, quaerere ludicrum est; for the conception is one of the earliest theories that would occur to the rudest imagination. Such a quest is like asking: Which side of an egg is first feathered?—a cryptic way of putting another universal sphinx-riddle: Which came first, the hen or the egg?

Prove to me, indeed, that the celestial myths of this Earth came from outside the planet, and you excite an interest far other than dilettante; and that is the origin that every heavens-myth of the whole human world and of all human prehistory has been always trying, and is still trying, and will perhaps for ever try to prove, till the last syllable of recorded time.

¹ *Aglaophamus*, i, 473.

It has been said that the Imagination shall not here be denied its help. Much mythology has grown doubtless, *Vain* } as much language grows, by some guess innate *Imagination.* } power of growing and grafting and tangling; but the great mass of mythological stuff has been projected by the human imagination. Why then should the imagination be écartée in its analysis? The mind of starkly scientific mould is not the best outfitted for poetical explorations; and mythology and poetry have always been irredeemably intermingled. Who would give much value to the word Science in such a phrase as "the science of Comparative Poetry"; and the only justification of a *science* of comparative mythology lies in the fact that there must be method even in the fine frenzy of the poet, if he would charm the imaginations even of the most poetical minds.

It is written above that the etymologist was received with open arms in these speculations; but this free admission has *The* } unhappily to be clogged with one important re- *Etymologist.* } striction. Philologia had to come rather as a handmaiden than as a mistress to Mythologia.

It will be seen indeed throughout that the skeleton of a myth is employed as the masterkey of a verbal lock much oftener than any reverse operation is attempted. For it is now at last dawning upon a good few that the linguistic fetters—Sanskrit or other—in which divine Mythology has been, for a many recent years, forced to caper for our amazement, might well be hung-up with other old traps of torture, to edify the generations.

Words are emphatically *not* the prime authors of *thoughts*. The name of a god cannot—you may swear it by the god—be the maker of the god himself. This would be, in mythological jargon, to have the Deity proceed from his own Word; to subordinate the cerebrating power to the organs of speech. That there is a subsequent reflex action of the formed word upon the thinking brain that produced it is another matter altogether—just so does every other product of the brain react upon it; just so does everything else in Nature act, switchback, upon the brain: as (may be) the brain does in its turn upon the Will that evolved it. But to say, and to found a cardinal theory

upon the saying, that a certain concatenation of sounds in one human speech naturally and habitually produced or reproduced a divine ideal in the brains of men of the same *or of another* speech, is to heap-up impalpable sand, and build a card-house city on it.

Most god-names, like all their titles, are adjectival, descriptive. The name of
God. } Thus these names and titles irrefragably have, quite naturally, their analogues, their coevals, perhaps their predecessors, in the ordinary words of the language in which they arose. By taking a whole class of resemblant divine and sacred words—first in one, and then in two or more tongues—and running them down backwards into their myths and meanings and roots, it is often found that a marvellous, an electric, light is diffused over the whole class.

As examples of such a mode of treatment, the reader must mercilessly be requested to follow, step by critical step, the pages which deal with words in *ma-*, *me-* and *mag-*; in *the-*; in *pal-*, *dor-* and *lat-*; in *mel-*, in *dru-*; in *lab-*; in *ag-*, *ak-* and *arc-*.

It is in fact contended here that the functions of a cosmic Nature-god and his consequent name and titles had an immense and far-reaching influence on (often) a whole class of other deities and their names, and upon the words of the ritual and the 'properties,' and the names of the properties, of his and their worship. This broadly defines the chief purpose for which Etymology is summoned as a witness in this *Inquiry* where the nature, that is the function, of the god is made to account for his etymon, instead of the reverse process—his name educating his nature—being imposed upon the student.

Poetry ever clings fast to old words, long long after they have dropped out of the workaday tongue. "If we take a piece of Old-English prose, say the *Tales* translated by Alfred, or Ælfric's *Homilies*, or a chapter of *the Bible*, we shall find that we keep to this day three out of four of all the nouns, adverbs, and verbs employed by the old writer. But of the nouns, adverbs, and verbs used in any poem from the *Beowulf* to the *Song* on Edward the Confessor's death, about half have dropped for ever."¹ That is to say that only 25 words in the 100 of prose were then old, while 50 (or twice as many) were archaic in poetry.

The same is true of myth and fairy-tale and, in an infinitely greater degree, of religious nomenclature. In no division of speech

¹ T. L. Kington Oliphant's *Old and Middle English*, 1878, p. 489.

is the conservative spirit so strong ; and it is in divine names and sacred terms that we must seek for some of the earliest, the most gnarled, and the doziest old roots of every tongue. This to a great extent explains why our philological canons exclude such proper names from consideration. If the Gods were not—like the Rex Romanus—above grammar, they are at least older than philology.¹

It is quite possible that those big conjuring-words Esoteric and Exoteric, with which comparative religionites and mythologists are wont to frighten each other, may not be nearly so big as we think they look and sound. A great deal of the ambitious theory about the elaborate invention—as if anything greatly religious was ever invented!—the elaborate invention of two sacred beliefs: “one to face the world with, one to show” to the initiated, must perhaps be exploded. I would especially indicate chapters 8 and 9 of the 5th Book of Clement of Alexandria’s *Stromata* as a first-rate instance of the glib and transparent *boniments* pattered to us from all time about these Esoteric and Exoteric peas and thimbles.

There are at least three (or more) possible sources for this double view of any myth. (1) A sacred fact being stated, defined, as an extremely naked thing in very naked words by those who completely comprehend it and all its analogues. (2) This statement’s expounding, amplification (in order that it may be understood of those who do not comprehend), by an analogy ; by one or many analogies or allegories ; or by paraphrases of the naked words ; or by parables. (3) By the true sense of the naked definition (or the true drift of the analogy or the allegory or the parable) getting lost in the process of time, or in the ebb and flow of the generations and revolutions of men and of nations.

Now in case (1), the more recondite any matter defined, and the more naked any definition is, the more difficult is it also to be completely understood without study of its context, or viva voce exposition of its full meaning. Here is one fruitful cause of the esoteric and exoteric bifurcation. As to case (2), here we have

¹ “It may be observed that the proper names of the mythological and heroic times contain elements of the Greek language which sometimes cannot be traced elsewhere—cf. Zeus, Seirios, etc.” (Preface of October 1882 to 7th ed. 1883 of Liddell and Scott’s *Lexicon*.) But as to Seirios, see now pp. 24, 453, 584 *infra*.

ample room and verge enough for all the mythological fables and legends ever handed down : if we besides give their full scope to the secretive dog-and-jackdaw faculty of the human brain, which delights in making *caches* and in cultivating covertness ; and also to the innate unlimited power and bent of the same organ for uttering and receiving the thing which is not : for ‘telling stories,’ in point of fact ; and listening to them.

This it is, too, that explains why, as one fire or one nail, so nothing but one god or one mystery drives out another.

As to case (3), we need seek no further for the origin of that
Mysteries. } adorable bugbear of the pietistic and ritualistic mind
 in all and every race, in all and every creed, the ‘mystery of revealed religion’ ; which is never any more than a sphinx-riddle, and generally some mere archaic devinaille. But even that last word enholds the divine as well as the divining ; for there was an early time in all breeds of men when, in the matter of divines and diviners, six of one were half-a-dozen of the other, for their pious frequenters.¹

Does it not seem that these are sufficient ways of accounting for the Esoteric and Exoteric pieces of business ? And then, if we add on Euhemerism (which flourished long before *Εὐήμερος*) and its reverse, and Platonic abstraction and idealizing, we get an immeasurable distance on the way towards a comprehension of the divagation, superfœtation, and overgrowth, of the Mythic Universe.²

Lobeck³ speaks of the “absurd symbolism” of the Platonists. At all events, if they proved nothing else, they were convincing as
Platonic
webs. } to the marvellous inventiveness of their speculative powers, and their unlimited spider-faculty for emitting the tenuous cobweb. And myths are perhaps more maniable by us than in Plato’s time. We are at least emancipating, if we can never

¹ To the mystery of revealed religion belongs Taboo, which might be defined as a silencing of the brain by the feelings—that is by the Will. It is a not-speaking-of, a not-thinking-of, a not-enquiring-into the thing felt. So is intense and helpless reverence for the uttermost absurdities fostered ; so does it grow up and remain.

² In Miss J. E. Harrison’s *Mythology of Ancient Athens* (1890) p. iii, the accomplished writer says : “In many, even in the large majority of cases, ritual practice misunderstood explains the elaboration of myth.” But this theory will not explain the elaboration of the ritual practice.

³ *Aglaophamus*, p. 550.

wholly set free, our tremulous little minds from the theological dreads and trammels which enveloped him. That is a very consoling passage in Mr. Lang's most valuable *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (ii, 202) where he, competent over many, boldly declares that "in fact the classical writers knew rather less than we do about the origin of many of their religious peculiarities." But from another point of view—that of the extreme difficulty of the subject—we must still agree with that subtle and powerful brain of Plato's¹ that it required a man of great zeal and industry, and without any sanguine hope of good fortune, to undertake the task of its investigation. On this K. O. Müller² (too highly appraising the total gratitude of men) said that the more difficult this task, and the less clear gain it promises, the more ought we to thank those who undertake it.

In all mythologies, the complications, the overlappings, the reticulations, which reflect back the secular and multiple complexities of Life, and of the Universe with its manifold machinery, are ultra-infinite, infra-infinitesimal. And yet a mythologist is called upon unflinchingly to expound the whole of the one, of the Reflection (or be for ever silent); while who is expected to explain the other, the Reality—Life and the Universe?

The pursuit of a clear idea through the tangled mass is too often all but impossible. When the chase is at its hottest, one is continually thrown out, as though whole barrels of red herrings were scattered across the track; and then again, when after many a bootless cast the scent once more is breast-high, all at once there comes a grand frost, and it all vanishes into thinnest air.

It was a saying of Jacob Grimm's: "I explain what I can; I cannot explain everything." Mr. Andrew Lang says merrily of one of his admirable books: "this is *not* a Key to all Mythologies"; and I shall, over and above that, even venture to hold that the key we are in quest of is a whole bunch.

A valuable remark of the late accomplished Vicomte Emmanuel de Rougé finds its place here. Of course it applies equally to every other land under the heavens, as well as to Egypt; and it is unfortunately almost ignored by students of myth, instead of being constantly kept in the very forefront of

*Egyptian
myths.*

¹ *Phaed.* 229.

² *Mythol.* ch. x.

their work : " The Egyptian religion was a reunion of local cults. We consequently find in it a repetition of the same ideas under different types, and with important variants." It should be added to this that apparently incongruous qualities and functions are, for the same reason, foisted on to individual types.

There is no myth or legend into which scraps of others have not strayed ; and there is perhaps none in which there are not details which seem to clash with its general central idea, its backbone, its axis. With these apparent " faults "—to talk geology—there is no pretension here otherwise to deal ; but what is attempted is to co-ordinate the similar incidents and characteristics common to a vast and widespread number of myths, dissimilar it may be in their apparent general drift ; and thence to educe, to build up—or rather to re-edify—a system (of Heavens-worship) which has long either fallen to ruin, or been defaced, blocked in, overbuilt, by a long series of subsequent mythical, theological, and religious constructions.

The anatomical truth—learnt only from comparative study—that no organ ever remains (that is, continues to survive) unemployed, is true also of mythology and theology. The disused, neglected, played-out personage or rite decays, becomes decadent, and disappears. The altar to " an Unknown God " could not have been the shrine of an undiscovered deity. He was a fallen god, whose very name had been forgotten. And that is why the reconstruction of a vanished cult is like the building up of the form of an extinct organism. Fortunately, the comparative method of treatment planes the way, taking now a fact from one and now a hint from another of the innumerable species and varieties of myths and creeds ; and even, again, finding some almost whole and sound—and now therefore startling—survival to illustrate the

<i>Polestar worship.</i>	} general theory. Such is, in the case of the Polestar- worship theory, the extremely interesting subsistence
of the Mandoyo, Mendaite, or Sûbban community ; a still contemporary continuation of the old Sabæans, far more striking than the romantic fables about the secluded persistence amid the recesses of the Lebanon of the attaching idolatry of ancient Greece. Here, in these Mandoyo, we strike not the coarse ore of the South-Sea savage, but a genuine old vein of solid metal ; worn indeed and	
<i>Bear worship.</i>	} long-worked, but still unmistakeable in the crucible of the comparative student. Such again

are the startling survivals of the worship of the Great Bear in China and elsewhere, pointed out in the section on the Number Seven.

Some mythological Axioms might be usefully sketched out in
Axioms. } a book which concerns itself so much with Axial
 } mythological facts :

(1) There is such a thing as mythological Time ; and it is a very long time.

(2) Old gods, like the Roman Empire and most other terrestrial things, have had their Rise, as well as their Decline and Fall.

(3) The leading myths of these three periods of a divine existence in mythological Time may generally be separated, and should be carefully kept separate.

(4) An infernal god has generally been a supernal deity ; and thus every " devil " is possibly a fallen god. *Victa jacit Pietas !*

(5) The tendency is for the young generation to oust the old, whether among animals, men, or gods.

(6) The genealogies of the gods are therefore important.

(7) It is generally the rising generation that makes the
War in } successful " war in heaven," and sends the oldsters to
heaven. } rule in hell. Sometimes however the rebel is not a family relation, and is defeated. It was the merest sycophancy in the poets to say that the gods know all, but have suffered nothing.

(On this subject the *Inquiry* is necessarily busied here and there throughout ; but there is a section on Fallen Gods in the chapter headed " Kronos and Ptah.")

As to the paternal relation of the gods—the idea of the " father of gods and of men," to whom human sacrifice was made, who ate
Le Père } his own children—it is needless to seek any origin
Éternel. } for it other than the natural human love, reverence, and real fear, if not hate, felt in turn for the producing, protecting and walloping, the often killing, and the once eating, parent. Matriarchy would have given worship of the Great Mother.

" Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land " was the beginning of " the fear of the Lord " ; and that honour and that fear were hammered into human children

from the beginning—from the beginning of the race as well as of the individual child—until the feelings have, so far as we can eliminate them for analysis, become that for which we have formed the word Instinct.

Ancestor-worship is a mere extension of father and mother reverence ; at need only an inherited father and mother worship.

*Ancestor
worship.* } I have seen my father and mother revering their
father and mother from my tenderest years ; and
so I have learned to revere them too. There are accessory
causes (as there are in everything) but it is practically needless
to pother about them here, as we are only discussing the parental
idea.

The head of the tribe being the father of his people,—which he was at first in the actual physical sense,—and the divine right of kings, are easy natural stepping-stones of the firmest kind to the terms used in honouring the gods. To this day the Mikado of Japan is regarded, in Chinese phrase, as “the father and mother

Pedigree. } of his people.” Thus, too, the gods got their genealo-
gies, and these dovetail into the genealogies of men ;
for actual generative communion and procreation between gods
and women, goddesses and men, is superabundant in all mytholo-
gies. Man—perhaps it was woman ?—made gods in his own image
and likeness.

Refinements upon the gross conceptions of genealogy began to arise later ; as when Phanes “appears,” or Unkulunkulu “came to be.” The first god of all is then without parents ; he is the great “I am” merely. But these were, by the nature of the considerant, mere unfilling figments of the brain. The human understanding is still incapable, and may always remain incapable, of conceiving a beginning out of Nothing, except as a form of words.

So the Egyptians said that Ra was born but not engendered, or again that he engendered himself. The Phœnician Rûa'h becomes enamoured of his own principle, and calls the mystic coalescence Hîpesh. Or again, in order to reconcile the belief in divine immortality with the practice of human generation, the Egyptian tied his mind into a knot, and said that Amen was the fecundator of his own mother. Aditi (Space) the Deva-mâtr, the mother of the gods, is said to be at once the mother and the daughter of Daksha. Daksha sprang from Aditi and Aditi from Daksha, who is the Right, the Lawgiver, the trident-bearing creator.

The "common form" in Irish mythology of the reappearance of an ancestor-god in the person of his divine descendant¹ is the same idea differently expressed. (The subject of god-genesis is pursued under the heading of "The Three Kabeiroi.")

MANY a reader will have already detected that the Revolving-Heavens, the Axis, the Polestar, and the Great Bear theories very considerably neglect the Sun; *Sun-worship.* } and may have been wondering why the Sun has as yet been scarcely mentioned. The fact is that the present student is not a Sun-worshipper, in so far as Cosmic and Cosmogonic mainspring myths are radically concerned; and it was the manifest insufficiency of the solar theories to account for such myths that first prompted the elaboration of this *Inquiry*.

The most recent and valuable résumé of this subject that I am aware of is in the chapter on Aryan myths in Dr. Isaac Taylor's *Origin of the Aryans*. In my section on "Polar versus Solar Worship" this subject is also touched upon; and a great deal of further matter upon the point is even kept out; for it is really beyond the present scope of this *Inquiry*. But it may here be noted that it is now a good long while since Eusebius in the *Præparatio Evangelica* ridiculed, with a good deal of humour, the old theories which resolved so many mythical heroes into the Sun. He remarked that while one school was contented to regard Zeus as mere fire and air, another school recognised him as the higher Reason; while Héraklès, Dionusos, Apollo and Asklépios (father and child) were all indifferently the Sun. Mr. Lang has seized upon this in his *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (i, 17).

Professor Rhys in his Hibbert Lectures on Celtic Heathendom (of which I venture to predict that the more they are studied the

¹ Prof. Rhys's *Hibbert Lectures*, 431.

greater will their value appear) says (p. 435) that the divine hero "Cúchulainn is the Sun, but the sun as a person about whom a mass of stories have gathered, some of which probably never had any reference to the sun. So it is in vain to search for a solar key to all the literature about him." This is true not alone of Cúchulainn but of every so-called Solar hero and god in the pantheon.

Professor Rhys has some further natural and cogent observations (pp. 379, 466) about the group of mythic beings loosely called dawn-goddesses; and suggests that at least some of them would be as correctly named dusk-goddesses. He even goes so far as to say that Derborgaill behaves in the same way as "a goddess of dawn *and* dusk."

The dawn-myth is a sweetly poetical and entrancing fantasy; but it has been done to death. Athenê springing from the
The Dawn. } forehead of Zeus was "the light of dawn flashing out
 with sudden splendour" (which it doesn't) "at the edge of the Eastern sky"; and Hephaistos splitting open that forehead with his axe personified the unrisen Sun. Romulus was the dawn and Remus was the twilight. Saoshyant the Zoroastrian Messiah is to come from the region of the Dawn. The same might be maintained of most of the stars in the heavens: they too rise "from the region of the Dawn"! Astartê (Ashtoreth and Ishtarit) the queen of heaven, was the goddess of the Dawn. Mélusine and Raimond de Toulouse were the dawn and the sun. Hermès was a dawn-god or the son of the dawn, or else twilight. Prokris and Kephalos were the dawn and the sun. Erinns was the dawn, and so was Daphnê. Cinderella "grey and dark and dull," was "Aurora the Dawn with the fairy Prince who is the morning Sun ever pursuing her to claim her for his bride." Saramâ, the Dog of Indra, and the mother of dogs, was (like Ushas and Aruna!) the dawn. Penelope was the dawn; and her fortune was the golden clouds of dawn; and she was also the twilight; and her Web was the dawn also, which is perhaps the reductio of the whole thing ad absurdum. The Web (as here viewed in the chapter headed "Weaving") is the gorgeous Veil of the Universe-god:

So schaff' ich am sausenden Webstuhl der Zeit,
 Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid.

Thus the dawn-maidens and the sun-heroes are now farther to

seek than ever; and (contrary to what was once believed, as above) Aphroditë's identification with Istar has, says Dr. Isaac Taylor, put an end to her appearance in the part of the Dawn; while Athênê, instead of being the same dawn "creeping over the sky," is now "thought to be" the lightning. In the case of all these dawn and solar explanations of the supremest deities, it always seems to be forgotten that the day, the period of the heavens-revolution, not alone included the night, but began with it. That the dawn, the clouds, twilight, and so forth, which are mere transient though striking phases of the Sphere, should (in the firm belief of modern scientists) have not alone masked but blotted out the Eternal reality of the Heavens from the great body of human worshippers in ages long vanished, and so have got the upper hand in myth-ravelling, may well give us pause.

However, one must be cautious not to swing-back with the pendulum too far in the other direction; but to admit the Sun to its full share (and no more) of original and syncreted and assimilated mythic significance and symbolism.

Dr. Isaac Taylor, in one of his masterly résumés in the *Origin of the Aryans*, says that of all the Sanskrit analogies, that of Ouranos and Varuna has alone survived. But before sounding the *Hallali!* over even this, we might humbly trust that it may be given to us to see why there was a Zeus *Oûrios*; why *oûpòs* was a socket and *oûpà* a tail; why *oûpos* was a term or boundary as well as a mountain; why *oupon* was a boundary as well as space; and why (Ursa Major and Minor being roundabout the Pole) *ursus*¹, *ursa*, *ours* (French) and *ors* (Provençal) are so close to *oûpos*; and why *ΚυνὸςΟὐρὰ*, Dog-Tail, was a name for the Little Bear and the Polar star. Why should not *Οὐρανὸς* and *Οὐρανία* be the dual deity of the Extreme of the heavens, like the Chinese Great-Extreme, Tai-Ki the Polar deity? This would make plain all these points, and also explain (as is shown in the course of this *Inquiry*) the name of *ΠαλίνΟὔρος*. *Οὐρανὸς* would thus have been the deity of the highest polar extreme heavens, before his name came to signify by extension the whole sky. Dr. O. Schrader

¹ Ursus is now, I believe, considered to be certainly identified with the Greek, *ἄρκτος*, see p. 46.

says that "an Indo-European¹ form for Greek Οὐρανός = Sanskrit Váruṇa has not yet been found."²

The farbackest instance now extant of this idea of the Tail of the heavens is perhaps to be found in the explanation of the stellar universe preserved to us in the *Vishnu-purāṇa*, where it has the shape of a porpoise, Sisumāra, at the heart of which is Vishnu, while Dhruva the Polestar-god is in its tail. "As Dhruva turns he causes the sun moon and other planets to revolve also; and the lunar asterisms follow in his circular course, for all the celestial lights are in fact bound to the Polestar by airy cords."³ Thus—not to be irreverent—it was the tail that wagged the dog.

¹ It is proposed in this *Inquiry* to employ Mr. E. R. Wharton's convenient and logical term Celtindic instead of Indo-Celtic, Indo-Germanic, Indo-European or Aryan. Under the heading of "The White Wall" it is also suggested that the genuine original signification of the *Aryans* was the *bright, white, shining* star-gods of the heavens; and that the adjectival name was taken by priests and people from their gods, from whom, by a universal human bent, they claimed and traced their descent.

² Jevons's *Prehist. Aryan Antiq.* 412. See also the note at p. 46.

³ See what is said elsewhere as to Seirios (Sirius).

THE practical labour in composing this Book has been to collect and focus on the several salient points of the general
The Method. } subject some of the endless traces of the Divinities of
(again) } the Universe-machine, its Axis, and its Poles, which are to be found scattered and lost or in the curious condition of the open secret in myth, legend, etymon, sacred literature, or common idioms. That this task is a practically endless one has been often forced in upon the writer; but the best that could be done in a limited number of years has been done; and now that the snowball has once been set rolling it may perhaps more rapidly accrete. One-man-power is a sadly insufficient force (sadly inefficient too, as the writer keenly feels) to apply to such a mass of matter.

The divine Plato and the marvellous Kant (wrote Schopenhauer)¹ unite their mighty voices in recommending a rule to serve as the method of all philosophising, as well as of all other science. Two laws, they tell us: the law of homogeneity and the law of specification, should be equally observed, neither to the disadvantage of the other. The first law directs us to collect things together into kinds, by observing their resemblances and correspondences; to collect kinds again into species, species into genera, and so on, till at last we come to the highest all-comprehensive conception. As for the law of specification, it requires that we should clearly distinguish one from another the different genera collected under one comprehensive conception; likewise that we should not confound the higher and lower species comprised in each genus; that we should be careful not to overleap any—and so forth.

The first of these rules (which, Plato answers for it, were flung down from the seat of the gods with the Promethean fire) is, it is trusted, fairly well observed in this *Inquiry*; but as for the second—well, the gigantic Octopus of mythology will not rule out as straight as the avenues of a brand-new American city. It is impossible even to arrange the chapters and sub-sections in an

¹ Two Essays by Arthur Schopenhauer. (Bohn's Series, 1889.) An admirable anonymous translation.

ascending order of relative importance, or to prevent every chapter and sub-section from tangling its tentaculæ into every other.

It is feared also that the constant struggle towards such a logical arrangement, and the endless cross-references indispensable to the student that wrote and the students that read, have ruined all literary effect, and so ensured the fatigue of the most willing reader. For this, the indulgence of his second thoughts is craved. However strong the original desire may have been to make this Book light reading, it was very soon found out in the practical composition of it that the desire was to be another of the myriads that remain unsatisfied. However, by condemning the driest of the stuff to a smaller type, I often venture to invite the reader to that blessed pastime of skipping, which has so much to do with the flourishing of circulating libraries ; and even—it is sad to think—with the popularity of “our best authors.”

To provide an antidote, in the absence of a preventive of all this faultiness, a very full Index is offered. And thus, to those who

<i>The Index.</i>	}	find the book dislocated and discursive, and therefore obscure, I shall not have the assurance to say, as Stephenson did of the Drinkwater Canal, “Puddle it again !” ; but shall in all humility ask them to read-up any puzzling point by the Index, which (E. and O. E.) is as good as I could make it.
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A tentative and suggestive rather than a demonstrative treatment of the very complicated and treacherous subjects dealt-with has generally proved imperative. This may convey a sensation of lack of definiteness ; but even that reproach is in such speculations preferable to an accusation of cocksuredness and dogmatism. It has been the constant desire, too, to invite the Reader to draw his own conclusions, rather than to hammer away at him with perpetual and perhaps superfluous pointing of the moral. Every student of mythology must still say, as Sheffield said of his writings : *dubius, sed non improbus*—full of doubt, but open to proof. And, of course, it goes without telling that the term “*Disputatio*” is here used in its mildest classic sense of examination, consideration.

While everywhere “making for” accuracy, endeavours have been also made to avoid iotacismus. As the late and justly honoured François Lenormant wrote¹ of one of his books : *Sans aucun doute on relevera dans ce livre des fautes, des erreurs. Elles*

¹ *Origines de l'histoire* (1880) i, xxi.

étaient inévitables dans une recherche aussi étendue, sur des matières aussi difficiles. Mais du moins, ce que devront je crois reconnaître les censeurs même les plus sévères, c'est que l'étude a été poursuivie consciencieusement . . . J'ai pu me tromper, mais ç'a été toujours avec une entière bonne foi, et en me défendant de mon mieux contre l'esprit de système. Hume justly admired Rousseau's lament that half a man's life was too short a time for writing a book ; while the other half was too brief for correcting it.

I shall feel very grateful to every one who has the patience to go through this Book in a critical and enquiring frame of mind, *Read me and be not wroth.* } especially if he will be so good as to communicate to me (either privately or publicly) the errors and difficulties which must infallibly be detected. The more searching and unsparing the criticisms are, the better will they be for the final result of the *Inquiry* which is their object. One leading reason for two heads with four eyes being better than one head with two, is that they enjoy the faculty, now generally denied to Sir Boyle Roche's notorious bird, of being in two places at once ; and thus possibly getting independent views of any one object.

It must be in great part an author's indivestible prejudice for his own production ; but I cannot help thinking that there is something that will remain even after the most destructive criticism of the theories here advocated. One éclatante proof of their likelihood is the universal encounter, the endless ramifications and persistent up-cropping throughout mythology, of the evidences on which they are based. It is hardly credible, either, that false unfounded suppositions should be so coherent in their numerous phases.

Should any of these theories survive the ordeal to which they are now surrendered, it is hoped that it may be even possible for some few wide readers of critical and willing minds to come together and help in indicating and collecting further evidences of Heavens and Polestar Worship, either in the directions here inadequately sketched out, or in others.

JOHN O'NEILL.

TRAFALGAR HOUSE, SELLING,
BY FAVERSHAM,
12th February 1891.

A SHORT series of brief articles on a few of the theories here urged appeared in print some three years ago¹; and I trust I do not commit too great a breach of etiquette in here thanking so eminent a publicist as my kind friend Mr. Frederick Greenwood for the space which he afforded them.

That one writer on any subject human or divine should borrow from others has, at this stage of the literature of the world become inevitable; and a comparative study like the present necessarily borrows its materials from innumerable quarters; but nothing has been wittingly taken or set down without acknowledgment (in so far as reasonable space would admit). The crime has been committed from time to time, in matters not of primary importance, of copying references in trustworthy books without actually running them down in the original authorities. And it would have been an endless and fruitless work of repetition to have given individual references to the mere mythological-dictionary matter throughout.

This *Inquiry* owes much to many friends and to many other writers; though they are in no way answerable for the present deductions from their facts, and would perhaps hasten to repudiate my theories. There is as yet, thank Heavens, no such thing as orthodoxy in Mythology; its field is one vast prairie or rolling veldt, where every man may "put out" and trek and lager for himself.

Some names have already been mentioned, and to these must be added Dr. W. F. Warren, the able and versatile president of Boston University (Mass.), whose books on Cosmology are a mass of erudition and suggestion,² although many may regret they cannot go all the way with him in some of his conclusions. His active readiness to assist students is well known, and I have often acknowledged my separate obligations throughout this *Inquiry*.

It was subsequently to an examination of the late Lazarus Geiger's *Development of the Human Race*³ and M. Henri Gaidoz's *Le Dieu Gaulois du Soleil et le symbolisme de la Roue*,⁴ that the Wheel and Winged Sphere theories here advocated took their final shape. The name of the latter distinguished mythologist and Celtic scholar is frequently invoked; and his criticisms have been highly valued.

To Professor Sayce of Oxford and Professor Gustav Schlegel of Leiden I am indebted for kind encouragement, interest in my labours, and suggestions. To the latter's wonderful *Uranographie Chinoise* most of the matter on the Chinese Sphere is due; and with great generosity he has read my proof-sheets.

My manuscript was indexed before reading Professor Robertson Smith's

¹ "Northern Lights," in the *St. James's Gazette*, December 1887.

² E.g. *The true Key to ancient Cosmology and Mythical Geography*, and *Paradise Found: The cradle of the human race at the North Pole*.

³ *Lectures and Dissertations*. Translation of Dr. David Asher: Trübner's 1880.

⁴ Paris, Leroux, 1886.

Religion of the Semites (vol. i). The valuable corroborative references to that very able book have therefore been inserted after this Book was practically complete. I owe him besides my thanks for his personal encouragement and criticism.

Some of Sir G. Birdwood's work upon symbol questions was still, he regrets to confess, unstudied by the writer when the MS. was ready for the press ; still, several references (notably as to the deduction of the number Seven from *Ursa Major*) have, even so been inserted ; and the writer has besides to express his indebtedness to that authority upon Indian symbolism for excellent suggestions and much too indulgent criticism.

Mr. Herbert D. Darbishire of St. John's College, Cambridge, an expert in classical etymology, has been good enough to go through some of the work, and to point out the most erratic of my views. Of course he is in no way answerable for any of my aberrations.

Japanese mythology has been taken as the starting-point of the *Inquiry*, partly because of a slender acquaintance of some years' standing with Japanese,¹ and chiefly because of its aptness to the matter in hand, and its general neglect. In this I have to acknowledge the greatest obligations to my old friends Mr. E. M. Satow and Mr. W. G. Aston, the authorities on the subject, whose patience in bearing with me is far beyond the return of ordinary gratitude. Attention is also frequently drawn to Professor B. H. Chamberlain's labours, especially his great translation of the *Kojiki*, so profitable to the student.

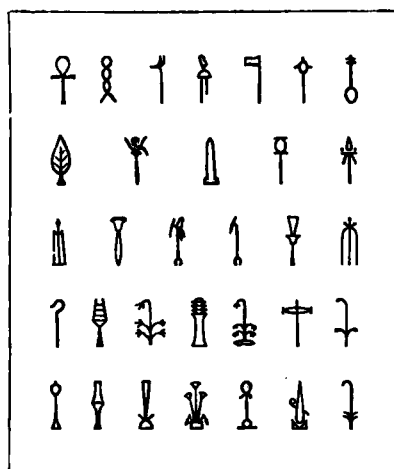
It is hoped that the Chinese characters and Egyptian hieroglyphs scattered through the book will not frighten people away. They are often inserted only to save certain students the trouble of referring to other books. The writer's acquaintance with either language is limited in the extreme, and he has here to express his obligations to his old friend Professor R. K. Douglas and Mr. E. A. Wallis Budge of the British Museum for their very kind correction of his blunders in these matters.

All the facts relating to the Dervishes have been submitted to the excellent Shêikh of the Mevlevî Tekkê of Cyprus, the devout and kindly Essêid Mustafa Safvet Dêdê, to whom I am indebted for many facts, and for the stones of the Dervishes which are here figured.

The lowest deep of ingratitude would be reached by anyone who works steadily at myth, symbol, and religion if he did not again and again declare the fruit he has at every handsturn gathered from Professor F. Max Müller's valiant undertaking and great achievement, *The Sacred Books of the East*. The valuable work especially of M. James Darmesteter, Dr. Legge, and Mr. E. W. West in the volumes of that series has been perpetually used and referred-to throughout. And in this connection should again be mentioned another most important Japanese sacred book (which is not in the Series) Mr. B. H. Chamberlain's *Kojiki*.²

¹ Nishi-Higashi Kotoba no Yenishi ; A first Japanese Book for English students, by John O'Neill ; London, Harrison & Sons, 1874.

² *Trans. As. Soc. Japan*, vol. x.



Axis Myths.

- 1 The Axis as Spear, Pike, or Pal.
 - 2 The God Picus.
 - 3 Divine names in Pal-.
 - 4 The Rod and Rhabdomancy.
 - 5 The Fleur-de-Lis at the Axis-point.
 - 6 The Trident.
 - 7 The *Δόρυ* and *Ἄρπη* of Kronos.
 8. Divine Names in Harp- and Dor-.
-

1.—The Spear, Pike, or Pal.

IN the cosmogony which the Japanese fondly believe to be purely native, all the heavenly gods, the Kami, designate two of their number, Izanagi and Izanami, male and female, brother and sister, to “make, consolidate, and give birth” to the land of Japan. For this purpose they are provided with a heavenly spear made of “a jewel.” The pair stood on the “floating Bridge of Heaven,” and stirred round the ocean with the spear¹ until the brine was churned into the foam which has given their German name to Meerschaum pipes. As the spear was withdrawn, some of this coagulated matter, or curdled foam, dropped from its point, and was heaped-up until it became an island, the name of which means self-curdled, Onogoro.

This Island has long been our property in Greek myth. Délos was the centre or hub of the Cyclades, which were so called “from a wheel,” ἀπὸ κύκλου, and were situated *περὶ αὐτὴν τὴν Δῆλον*, around this very Délos ; and *Δῆλος* (*δέελος*) also meaning manifest, it was said that the island was so called because it became manifest, suddenly emerged from the sea. This seems a truly extraordinary parallel to Onogoro the “self-formed” (or curdled) island ; and as for its churning there is the similar operation, the “cycling” of the

¹ Mr. B. H. Chamberlain's *Kojiki*, pp. 18, 19.

Cyclades, of which Dêlos was the nucleus, the centre. One account of its origin said Poseidôn with one blow of his trident made it surge from the bottom of the ocean, a still further amazing coincidence with the Japanese legend, for it gives us the spear of Izanagi. Dêlos floated at first, but became fixed when Latô had brought forth, at the (Universe) Olive-tree there, or else when her son Apollo fixed it. The coming of Latô to the island, if the name be understood of a stone-pillar, an al-Lât, is a reproduction of the pillar of the Japanese island.

[The Reader must get at least as far as "Divine names in Lat-" before giving its full weight to this.]

The orders to the Japanese pair were "to make, consolidate, and give birth to this drifting land."¹ Hatori Nakatsune, a celebrated native commentator, said that Onogoro was originally at the North Pole but was subsequently moved to its present position.²

Another name of Dêlos, *Ὀρνυγία*, may have nothing to do with the *ὄρνυξ* or quail, as an old construing would have it. It may be, I suggest, from *ὄρω* to stir-up, to rise (we have exactly what we want in the Latin *ortus*, from *orior*) and *γη* or *γέα* or *γαία*, the Earth (although I believe that under the philological rules of letter-changes as they stand there is no way in which either *γαία* or *γη* could become *-για*). If however *Ὀρνυγία* and *ὄρνυξ* are to be referred to a same origin, we should have to take the sense of "dancing" or twirling: Latin *verto*, Lithuanian *wersti* turn, Welsh *gwerthyd* spindle, Sanskrit *vart* turn, *vartakas* quail; which would make it the turned land; and would entail a meaning absolutely similar to that of all the Varshas of Hindû mythic cosmogony. It would thus be the churned, or the up-risen land. Yet another Dêlos origin-myth is this: Asteriê was the daughter of Polos (the polar deity?) and mother of Hêraklês; or *altrô* she was daughter of the Titan Koïos—the hollower (of the heavens)?, and sister of Latô. Zeus cast her into the Cosmic Ocean—the fate of innumerable deities—and where she fell arose the island of Asteria or Ortugia or Dêlos. Asteriê was also changed into a quail, which is a variant of the muddle already mentioned, and really means that Asteriê and Ortugia were one and the same.

Again we have the churning idea in the Strophadês, the turning-islands, of the Argo-voyage. They were also called Plôtês, the Floaters. "And so it is that men call those isles the isles of

¹ *Kojiki*, p. 18.

² Mr. E. M. Satow's *Fure Shintô*, 68.

turning, though aforetime they called them the floating isles."¹ The change of name was connected with the descent of the bird-gods, the harpies.

Rhodes, spun on the golden spindle of Lachesis at the prayer of Hêlios, is I venture to suggest a similar myth (see "The Romaunt of the Rose," later on); and so is Corcyra (Corfu) whose name *Kórkypa* comes from *κερκίς*, a spindle. *Εὐρύπυλος* son of Poseidôn, or a Triton, gave a *clod of earth* to *Εὐφρημος*, another son of Poseidôn, and an Argo-sailor, light in the course, skilful in chariot-driving. This clod fell into the Ocean, or was thrown into it by Euphêmos on the counsel of Jason (*Îêsôn*); and on the instant became the island Kallistê. Here, though we have no spear, we have a *trident-god*, the *Triton*.

In the *Argonautikôn* (iv, 1552, 1562) Tritôn, in the guise of a youth, takes up the clod, and Euphêmos (The Good Word?) accepts it, and has a very strange vision about it (1734 etc.) which recalls the union of heavens and earth. The clod speaks as a woman, says she is the daughter of Tritôn, and asks to be given back to the deep nigh unto the Isle of Appearing, *'Ανάφη*, "and I will come back to the sunlight." He flings the clod, the *βῶλος*, into the deep (1756), and therefrom arose the island Kallistê (that is the most beauteous, simply) also called Thêrés or Thêra; which is one of our Divine names in The-. Thêras son of Autesiôn (Self-made?) brought men there, after the time of Euphêmos. This brings the voyage of the Argo (in the *Argonautikôn*) somewhat abruptly to an end. But the event and the ending may be thought perfectly appropriate, if it be looked upon as a legend of the creation of the Earth by the divine Word. The previous voyage of the Argo would thus be a pre-terrestrial series of celestial cosmic legends; and if this view be novel, it is not devoid of supports.

[See too what is said of Crete under the head of the Loadstone mountain.]

I think no other interpretation of any of these "islands" will suffice, except that which views them all as allegories of the Earth itself. And I now (upon the completion of the MS. of this *Inquiry*) add the deliberate conclusion that this churning of the Island is a *leading and world-wide Creation-myth, of which the real significance is the spinning, stirring-round, or churning of the Earth (figured-forth as insulated in the Universe) by Deity, out of the Cosmic Ocean of the Waters, the Chaos of other cosmogonies.* The

¹ *Argonautikôn*, ii, 296.

Hindû Bhârata (or Churned ?) Varsha may be another example of the myth.

Another island, which must reluctantly be left for future investigation is "the isle of Êlektra daughter of Atlas" where the Argo was beached in order that her crew might be initiated.¹ This island is explained as SamoThrakê, the mysteries being those of the Kabeiroi, patrons of mariners. But it was also nigh to the heavens-river Êridanos,² was sacred, and was the chiefest of isles. The Argonauts also visited the island of Kirkê, and in describing their visit to Korkura (Corcyra) Apollonius³ gave us its oldest name of Drepanê, and the legend of the origin of that name, which was that beneath it lay the drepanê or sickle with which Kronos mutilated his sire, alias the harpê in fact. This sickle was also said to be the "harpê" of Δῆώ Χθόνια, that is the Earth-goddess DêMêtêr; for Dêô once lived in that land, and taught the Titans to reap the corn-crop for her love of Makris (which is too cryptic and perhaps corrupt to arrest us). Makris was also a name of the island, and so was Scheriê or Scheria (Order ? Law, Tâo). However much these incidents and names have got muddled, they indicate the Earth, as an island in the Universe-Ocean. Its inhabitants the Phaiêkês were of the blood of Ouranos.

We have the island turning up later in Japano-Buddhic myth when an Apsaras appears in the clouds over the spot inhabited by a dragon. An island suddenly rises up out of the sea, she descends upon it and there espouses the dragon who is thus becalmed.⁴

"According to Babylonian thought, the Earth came forth from the waters, and rested on the waters."⁵

The island Hawaiki, the only land then known, perhaps, is clearly put for the Earth in a New Zealand hymn which says "the sky that floats above dwelt with Hawaiki and produced" certain other islands. Hawaiki here is for Papa the Earth-goddess, and the sky for Rangi the heavens-god.⁶

There is another curious parallel to part of the Japanese creation-legend, in the Hindû allegory in which the gods and the demons, standing opposite to each other, use the great serpent Vâsukî as a rope, and the mountain Meru or Mandara as a pivot and a churning-rod—the "properties" have got mixed—and churn the milky ocean of the universe violently until fourteen inestimable typical objects emerge.⁷ One of these is the Universe-Tree Pârijâti, bearing all the objects of desire.

Plate 49 in Moor's *Hindû Pantheon* clearly makes the mountain a central

¹ Argon., i, 916.

² Argon., iv, 505.

³ Argon., iv, 990.

⁴ Satow and Hawes's *Handbook*.

⁵ Dr. E. G. King's *Akkadian Genesis* (1888), p. 32.

⁶ Taylor : *New Zealand*, p. 110.

⁷ Guignaut's *Creuzer's Relig. de l'Antiq.*, i, 184. Sir Monier Williams : *Hindûism*, 105; *Rel. Thought and Life in India*, i, 108, 344.

conical axial peak. It rests on the Tortoise (Vishnu in the Kurmāvatāra), and Vishnu in youthful human form is seated on the summit of Mandara. Vishnu is also seen among the gods who, pull-devil-pull-baker fashion, haul the serpent Vāsukī against the horned Asurās.

The modern Japanese commentator Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843) said that the stirring round with the spear was the origin of the revolution of the earth.¹ Sir Edward Reed² repeated this theory of the spear being the Axis from Hatori Nakatsune; and Dr. Warren³ cites Sir E. Reed. It would be extremely interesting if we could consider this to be an indigenous idea; but it must not be forgotten that there was one important modern source of information as to Western Ptolemaic Astronomy which was doubtless open to Hirata, in the treatises written in Chinese by the Jesuit Missionaries to China, by Sabatin de Ursis in 1611 and Emmanuel Diaz in 1614, and by others later.⁴ Hirata too may have acquired at Nagasaki some further tincture of Western learning.

Another case of creation by the spear is the achievement of Athênê when she struck the ground and brought forth the Olive. Here we get the two axis-symbols of the tree and spear together; and the spear-axis not merely produces the Earth but the whole Universe, which the tree figures forth. And was not the aged stump of this fallen miracle shown in the temple of Erechtheus on the Acropolis of Athens,⁵ as the original of all the olive-trees in the world?

There is yet another strange parallel to the Japanese spear-myth in Garcilasso de la Vega.⁶ The Inca told him that Our Father (the Sun) sent down from heaven two of his children, son and daughter, near the Marsh (Japanese Ashihara) of Titicaca; and when they desired to rest anywhere, they were to stick into the ground a golden rod, two fingers thick and half-an-ell long, which he expressly gave them as an infallible sign of his will that wherever it would enter the earth at one push, there he desired that they should halt, establish themselves, and hold their court. After several fruitless efforts, the golden rod pierced the ground at the site of Cuzco, and embedded itself so completely that they never saw it more. We shall see that Cuzco was an omphalos.

Hatori's and Hirata's gloss that Onogoro, when formed, lay under the Pivot of the vault of heaven, the North Pole, although it has since moved to the present latitude of Japan—may (or may not) conceal a recognition of the revolution of the equatorial round the equinoctial pole, which revolution is completed in about 25,868 years. Of course this causes no change of the terrestrial pole.

¹ *Pure Shintō*, 68.

² *Japan*, i, 31.

³ *Paradise Found*, 141.

⁴ Wylie: *Notes on Chinese Literature*, 87.

⁵ Bötticher: *Baumcult*, 107, 423.

⁶ Baudouin's French edition, Amsterdam 1704, i, 63, 66.

It is at least curious that the churning legend could also be fitted to the theory of the evolution of solar systems from revolving nebulous matter, to which attention will again be directed farther on as regards a Chinese speculation.

[Professor Oliver Lodge,¹ in adopting Sir Wm. Thomson's theory of vortex atoms, has suggested a universal substance in space, some portions of which are either at rest, or in simple irrotational motion, while others are in rotational motion—in vortices, that is. These whirling portions constitute what we call matter; their motion gives them rigidity. This is a modern view of Ether and its functions.—*Nature* 1 Feb. 1883, p. 330.]

This mythic Spear may be recognised again in the shadowless lance² which in the Alexander legends the hero plucks either out of Atlas or out of the topmost peak of the Taurus mountains; and in the golden blade with which the Irânian Jemshîd pierced the bosom of the earth.³

The Nagelring sword of Nithathr and of Hotherus in Saxo Grammaticus (*Hist. Dan.* p. 110) belongs to the same armoury.⁴ It is made by Volund (that is Weyland the smith, Hephaistos) and is of untold value; getting possession of it puts the Asa-gods to flight; it is in the remote regions of the direst frost; in a subterranean cave (that is, plunged in the Earth); Nithathr surprises Volund and takes the sword; its companion is a marvellous Ring, which becomes an arm-ring in the myths, and is called Draupnir, from which eight rings (making nine) drop every ninth night. Volund's smithy (the heavens) is therefore full of rings.

The hasta set up in the ground during the judicial debates of the centumvires is another re-appearance of the Axis, at the point of which sits the world-judge. (Hasta posita pro æde Jovis Satoris. *Cicero*, *Phil.* ii, 26, 64) and the Sheriff's javelin-men doubtless give us a relict of the Roman curis, of the spear of the Judge of heaven.

The pair of Japanese Kami immediately took possession of their island—which, as above, we must by extension, understand as the Earth—and having firmly planted their spear therein, made a heavens-Pillar of it.⁵ Heaven and earth were then very close to each other, we are told, and so, when this divine couple sent their daughter, Amaterasu, or Heaven-shine, to rule as goddess of the Sun the lofty expanse of heaven, she went up the Pillar or

¹ Lecture at London Institution, December 1882.

² *Paradise Found*, 135.

³ Guignaut's *Creuzer's Relig. de l'Ant.*, i, 335, 375.

⁴ Rydberg's *Teut. Myth.*, 1889, p. 430.

⁵ Chamberlain's *Kojiki*, 19, 322.

Hashira.¹ The name Amaterasu has as strong a likeness as can well be expected to Pasi-phaë (see Index); note, too, that the Japanese legend recognises her existing *before* she was made sun-goddess. Heaven-shine is thus her name; the Greek being "to-All-shine." It is notable that in the *Satapatha-Brâhmana*² it is said that "in the beginning, yonder sun was verily here on earth."

The thesis favoured throughout this *Inquiry* will be that *this spear and pillar are but symbols of the Earth-axis and its prolongation, that is of the Universe-axis itself as it seemed (and still seems) to be when the Earth was quite naturally taken to be the centre of the cosmos which perpetually revolved round that axis.* It must be remembered that this supreme, sublime, motion of the megacosm was patent only at night, and that its majestic progress could be noted only by the stars. The Axis upon which the stupendous machine turned itself thus became an all-important origin of endless symbols in, as is here suggested, a heavens-worship of the very remotest and most faded antiquity, a worship which culminates in the adoration of the Polar deity's self.

Eventually when Ninigi, the first divine ruler of Japan, had been duly appointed, and had descended, Heaven and Earth drew apart, and actual connection between them ceased.³ "The separation of Heavens and Earth" is the Japanese phrase which answers to our "beginning of the world."⁴ The Chinesy preface to the *Kozhiki* makes an exposition of this cosmical philosophy as follows: "I Yasumaro⁵ say: Now when Chaos had begun to condense, but force and form were not yet manifest, and there was naught named, naught done; who could know its shape? Nevertheless Heavens and Earth first parted, and the Three Kami⁶ performed the commencement of creation. The Passive and Active essences then developed, and the Two Spirits became the ancestors of all things." The passive and active

¹ *Trans. As. Soc. Jap.*, vii, 419.

² Eggeling's, ii, 309.

³ *Pure Shintô*, 51.

⁴ Mr. Chamberlain's *Kojiki*, pp. xxi, 4, 15.

⁵ Futo no Yasumaro, a pure Japanese imbued with Chinese culture, and editing the *Kozhiki*, here writes. His death is recorded on 30th August A.D. 723.

⁶ This triad is the Lord of the awful Mid-heavens Ame no Minaka-Nushi, the Lofty-Dread-Producer Taka Mi-Musubi, and the Divine-Producer Kami-Musubi. "These three Kami were all alone-born Kami, and hid their beings."

powers are here the Chinese Yin and Yang ; and the two Spirits with whom Yasumaro identified them were Izanami and Izanagi.

In a New Zealand myth, Rangi and Papa, Heavens and Earth the universal parents, were once closely joined (see Index) but were at length separated by one of their children, the god of forests¹; a reminder of Goethe's saying: Order has been taken that the trees shall not grow through the sky.

[It is odd that in archaic Japanese the modern *haha* (mother) is supposed to have been *papa*, which word is remarkable, says Mr. B. H. Chamberlain ; "for most languages possessing it or a similar one, use it not to denote mother but father."² Ukko and Akka are the names which were given among the Finns to father heavens and mother earth.³]

The idea of the former union and later separation of heaven and earth is also to be found in the *Aitareya-brâhmana*⁴; and it is, of course, ever present in Chinese cosmical philosophy. Another form or off-shoot of the myth is the union of Kronos with Rhea, who in Phrygia and generally in Asia Minor was the goddess of forests and mountains.⁵

Photius (citing Eutychius Proclus of Sicca) said the Greek epic cycle began with the fabled union of heaven and earth.⁶ The conceit is still too the common property of the poets as part of the ubiquitous idea of a Fall :

In the Morning of the World,
when Earth was nigher Heaven than now.—(*Pippa Passes.*)

We still uphold in our "Mother-Earth" half the idea which is completed by the Sanskrit dyâus-Pitâ, the Greek Zeus-Patêr and the Latin Ju-Piter = Father-Sky (or Heavens). The Finnish Mother-Earth, Maa-emmae or Maan-emo is consort of Ukka,⁷ as Jordh is of Odin, Papa of Rangi, or Gê of Ouranos.

[The subject of the Spear, Lance, pal, curis, spike, pike, and sword, runs through the whole *Inquiry* like a file through its leaves ; and the Reader is requested to refer to the pages treating on Ares and the Curetes ; and above all to the Index, to which patient attention cannot too often be invited.]

[The chain of gold fastened from heaven, by which Zeus boasts in the *Iliad* (viii) that he could hang gods and earth and sea to a pinnacle of Olympus, may be a variant of the Universe-axis myth.

¹ Lang's *Custom and Myth*, 48 ; Tylor's *Prim. Culture*, i, 290.

² *Trans. As. Soc. Japan*, xvi, 262.

³ Castren : *Finnische Mythologie*, pp. 32, 86.

⁴ Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, v, 23.

⁵ Tiele : *Kronos*, p. 26.

⁶ Bibl. Didot : *Cycli epici reliquia*, p. 581.

⁷ Crawford's *Kalevala* (1889), p. xx.

A chain or thread of gold was part of the head-gear of Great Maine, the mythic ancestor of the HyMany, and the son of Niall of the Nine hostages, who appears in so many Irish pedigrees, but must be equated with the equally mythic Welsh Neol. Maine, Mane or Mani, again, is identical with the Welsh Menyw of Arthur's Court.¹]

¹ Prof. Rhys's *Hibbert Lectures*, 374, 375.

2.—The God Picus.

PICUS the father of Faunus (=Pan?) seems to be a Pike, Spear, or Axis god. He was the son of Saturnus (=Kronos). Faunus was also said to be the son of Mars, which equates Picus the pike-god and Mars the spear-god. He was also father of Fauna the Bona Dea, (whose true name was taboo) an alias of Cybele.

Fauna also meant *good*, and thus of course, being connected with *fauere* to be propitious, implied good fortune, which gives me a desired connection with the central lucky emblems. Faunus it was said became a serpent in his relations with Fauna,¹ which gives us a connection with the Egyptian Arâ serpent.

The changing of Picus into a *picus-bird*, a pie, is a muddling of words, favoured by the archaic conditions which have brought *peck* and *beak* from the same root as *pike*. It is odd that there is a similar contact—not to call it confusion—in the case of ἀρπη (see later) which means both a weapon and a bird.

Dr. O. Schrader makes the *picus* (OHG *specht*) into the woodpecker. Mr. E. R. Wharton says OHG *speh* magpie goes rather with *speciô*; but he too makes *picus* a woodpecker.

The following is a philological table of the matter as regards *Picus*:

Latin	Picus	The Pike-god.
"	picea	<i>pinus silvestris</i> .
French	pic	peak.
"	bec	beak.
Celtic. Irish	pice	pike, <i>fork</i> .
"	picidh	pike, long spear.
Gaelic	pic	pike, weapon.
Welsh	picell	javelin.
"	pig	pike, beak.
"	pigo	to pick, peck, prick.
Cornish	piga	to prick.
Breton	psk	a pick.
English	pike	pointed staff.
"	peak	variant of pike.
"	to peck	variant of to pick.
"	beak	variant of pike.
Mid-English	pic	spike.

¹ Preller: Röm. Mythol., pp. 340, 352; and Gerhard.

Pitchfork or pikforke thus compares with the Trident and Bident. [It is needless here to run down spike, spica &c., which are almost certainly connected, as there was a moveable prefix, s.]

Picus was king of the Ab-origines, that is he was a First-Man. He was besought by all the nymphs of the land (an incident which needs no commentary) but gave his choice to the sweet-voiced Canente (singing), clearly a heavens-harmony goddess, the daughter of Ianus and Venilia (ocean-nymph of the Venus class; also consort of Neptune, and otherwise called Salacia). When the enchantress Circe changed Picus into a picus, Canente faded away in grief, and became (what she always was) vox et præterea nihil. The fact that she and Picus take their places among the Indigetes, whose real names were taboo, "dii quorum nomina vulgari non licet" (*Festus*) proves their archaically lofty rank.

Were the Indigetes indicated by mudras, by a sort of sacred talking on the fingers? Were they thus worshipped as Hindû gods are at this day? This would make mudras of the indigitamenta. The verb was indigito and indigito.

Circe struck Picus with her Wand to metamorphose him, in revenge for his insensibility. Here we have two figures of the Universe-Axis in actual contact. Picus was, according to Virgil (*Æn.* vii, 189), a horsey god, a horse-lover, which is a central centaureal note of a heavens-deity.

The province of Picenum took its name from Picus (sabini . . . in vexillo eorum picus consederit—*Festus*; where picus must be a pike). In the most extended, that is the mythic, sense, Picenum was the northernmost seat of the Picentes (that is to say the Ab-origines) the Sabines, the Pelasgi and the Umbri, who were all comprised under this general designation.¹ With Picus must be catalogued the brothers Picumnus and Pilumnus, the companions of Mars (with whom we have above equated Picus). According to Varro and Nonius and every one else they were conjugal gods, beds being set-up for them in the temples; and they were sons of Jupiter. When a child was born it was stood on the ground with a recommendation to these Axis-gods (*statuebatur in terra, ut auspicaretur rectus esse—Varro*). Picumnus was an Etruscan god. His partner Pilumnus invented the grinding or pounding of corn, whence he is seen to be a pestle-god (and as such has his double in Japan²), and was thus the patron-saint of millers, and said by

¹ Freund und Theil.

² The Eastern pestle for pounding rice is about five feet long, and is of wood tipped with iron. It is found in every house, and is connected with many superstitions and

insufficient mythologists to be an actual personification of the pilum, while Picumnus was made a personification of the picus-bird, the pie, quod est absurdum. Pil-umnus deserves contrasting with Col-umnus. The pilum of course was both a javelin and a pestle, whence confusion in sacred words; Pilumnos poploe in the hymns of the Salii (*Festus*) is a good instance of this; and Mount Pilatus and the superstitions connected with it must be put in the same category.

Piliat-chuchi seems to be a supreme heavens-god of the Kamschatkans, and Picollus an ancient Prussian divinity.

I place here on record, without satisfying myself on the subject, the picataphorus or Eighth house of the astrologer's heavens. It is also the "upper gate," the "idle place," and the "house of death"; terms which apply to the northern heavens-omphalos. Predictions touching deaths and inheritances are made from it (*Noël*). To this is appended the Picati whose feet are sphinx-formed (?): Picati appellantur quidam quorum pedes formati sunt in speciem Sphingum: quod eas Dori *picas* vocant (*Festus*). This "Dori" gives us a connection with the *δόρυ*-spear of Kronos (see later).

As to the bird pica and picus it must however be borne in mind that it was augural, and was also a sort of fabulous griffin or gryphon, which was called γρύψ (an eagle-winged lion, which is one of the four heavens-beasts, see Index). Pici divitiis qui aureos montes (that is the heavens) colunt.¹

ceremonies. (Hardy: *Manual of Buddhism*, 154.) The Japanese name for it surikogi.

¹ Nonius, 152, 7.