



# Mythology

An Introductory Study of World Stories

Fifth Edition

Before the beginning,  
who was there to tell the tale?  
When all was still formless, no up or down,  
how was the world investigated?  
When dark and light were a blur,  
who could fathom it?  
When the only image was a churning,  
how was it perceived?

The Heaven Questions  
A 2400 year old Chinese poem

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## FROM THE VERY CLUTTERED DESK OF MR. O



**TO:** STUDENTS, PARENT(S), GUARDIAN(S), AND CAREGIVER(S)  
**FROM:** MR. OPPENNEER, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
**SUBJECT:** MYTHOLOGY

Welcome to Mythology class. I don't feel like coming to class every day and boring you. And I don't want you to bore me with mediocre work because you aren't into this class. So, I've got a deal for you... I'll do my best to make learning an energizing, enlightening, and enjoyable experience – and in return, you will think deeply, be active, talk with me about your concerns, and do thoughtful work. Show me that you can handle a different kind of class atmosphere. Students in my classes *are* required to do a lot of reading, writing, thinking, and participating. They are also expected to relax, enjoy themselves, and laugh at my bad jokes (*all* of them).

Please take a moment to read over this sheet: it is a general introduction to the policies and guidelines for my English courses. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the high school (725-0671) or by e-mail (me@mythinking.net). I look forward to meeting you and to having an exciting, memory-making semester!



## CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

- Take care of personal stuff before class: bathroom, locker, phone, etc.**
- Come to class on time and bring what you will need for class**
- Do your own thoughtful and original work (i.e. avoid plagiarism)**
- Participate fully: be active, learn, read, write, enjoy yourself, and stay awake**
- Show respect for yourself, your environment, and other people**
- Be responsible about missed classes - see me about your absences**
- Assume that all work, including your classroom participation, is graded**
- Turn in your work on time – no late work is accepted**
- Make-up work will be provided for those with legitimate concerns**
- Talk with me...**

I do not bite. If you have any concerns about the class, please come see me. If you don't know where to start... bring chocolate. I will know that this is a signal and will act accordingly. I'm available before and after school most days, but schedule a time with me just to be sure.



Visit Your Class Website: [www.mythinking.net/school](http://www.mythinking.net/school)

## ABOUT THIS TEXT...

This “textbook” is a work in progress. I revise it each year based on comments and feedback I get from students in my classes. Here are some things to keep in mind when using it:

**It is yours.** Write in it, highlight it, dog-ear the pages. Take notes directly in it, or insert notebook paper between pages for notes. I recommend keeping it in a three-ring binder (otherwise it is difficult to keep things in order).

**Assignments.** Use the assignment log! I rarely give due dates for work I assign... I ask *you* to tell *me* when work should be ready. I know that you lead busy and complicated lives. In return for the flexibility I offer regarding homework, I expect that you will remain aware of when work is due.

**Contributions.** Your interests can help shape the text. If you have an interest in a culture or mythology that is not represented here, let me know and I will work with you to incorporate it. Over the years, I keep adding or modifying story selections and sub-units based on suggestions I have received.

**Vocabulary.** I don’t do weekly vocabulary tests, but I do expect you to know and understand the terms we use throughout the course. Not only do they show up in tests, but you may not grasp important concepts that build upon them if you don’t know them. Look for “Terms for Understanding...”

**Extra credit.** Look out for extra credit opportunities. They are each worth a participation point – and you can rack ‘em up if you pay attention to them. Most of them can be accomplished within ten minutes.

## TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING...

### Philosophy

Literally, the love of, including the search after, wisdom; in actual usage, the knowledge of phenomena as explained by, and resolved into, causes and reasons, powers and laws. When applied to any particular department of knowledge, philosophy denotes the general laws or principles under which all the subordinate phenomena or facts relating to that subject are comprehended.

## ☞ Expectations For Journal Entries ☞

Unlike traditional expository writing (citing sources, presenting pre-existing notions, substantiating with fact), your journal entries involve writing philosophy. They will be your attempt at seeking meaning and gaining understanding. You can expect to write at least one full-page journal entry a week.

This is not a philosophy class by title – however, the study of Mythology necessarily requires attention to other areas of scholarship and thought. During lecture and discussions in class, you will hear references to mathematics, music, science, history, popular culture, psychiatry, cinematography, etc. Along these lines, a basic grasp of some philosophical conventions is important to our purpose.

# Mythology: Introduction

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Please read the following article “*Reflection, Articulation & Argument*”. It forms the basis for the rubric I use to grade your journal entries. My grading rubric is provided here so that you may clearly know my expectations for your work:

- Zero** – No assignment turned in; does not respond to the prompt; turned in late
- Ø** – Off-task or confused intent; can resubmit for grade
- 50** – half the assigned work = half the total grade
- 70** – Reflection (and some articulation); or doesn’t fully meet length requirement
- 80** – Reflection and articulation
- 90** – Reflection, clear and detailed articulation (and some argument)
- 100** – Reflection, clear and detailed articulation, and thoughtful argument

## Reflection, Articulation & Argument

Philosophy is, first of all, reflection.

**Reflection – is stepping back, listening to yourself and other people (including the great philosophers), and trying to understand and evaluate what it is that you hear, and what it is that you believe.**

To formulate your own philosophy is to say what it is that you believe, as clearly and as thoroughly as possible. Often we believe that we believe something, but as soon as we try to write it down we find that what seemed so clear a moment ago has disappeared, as if it evaporated just as we were about to express it. Sometimes too we think we don’t have any particular views on a subject, but once we begin to discuss the topic it turns out that we have very definite views – we just have to articulate our views.

**Articulation – spelling out our ideas in clear, concise, readily understandable words and sentences is the primary process of philosophy.**

Sitting down to write out your ideas is an excellent way to articulate them, but most people find that an even better way, and sometimes far more relaxed and enjoyable, is simply to discuss these ideas with other people,

classmates, good friends, or family – even, on occasion, a stranger with whom you happen to strike up a conversation. Indeed, talking with another person not only forces you to be clear and concrete in the articulation of your beliefs; it allows you – or forces you – to engage in a second essential feature of doing philosophy: arguing for your views.

**Argument – the process of supporting your ideas with reasons from other ideas, principles, and observations to establish your conclusions and overcome objections.**

Articulating your opinions still leaves open the question whether they are worth believing, whether they are well thought out and can stand up to criticism from someone who disagrees with you. Arguments serve the purpose of testing our views; they are to philosophy what test matches and practice games are to sports – ways of seeing just how well you are prepared, how skilled you are, and, in philosophy, just how convincing your views really are.

Articulating and arguing your opinions has another familiar benefit: *stating and defending a view is a way of making it very much your own.*

Too many students, in reading and studying philosophy, look at the various statements and arguments of the great philosophers as if they were merely displays in some intellectual museum, curiously contradicting each other, but, in any case, having no real relevance to us. But once you have adopted a viewpoint, which very likely was defended at some time by one of the philosophical geniuses of history, it becomes very much your own as well.

This process of making views genuinely your own by working with them, stating them publicly, defending them and committing yourself to them is how the philosophies of the past become important to us, and how our own half-baked, inarticulate, often borrowed, and typically undigested ideas start to become something more, a philosophy, a sense of who we are, what we are, and where we are.

## René Descartes

René Descartes was born into the French aristocracy in 1596. As a young man, he discovered the connections between algebra and geometry (a field which we now call “analytic geometry”), established the mathematical basis for a number of sciences, and used mathematics-like thinking in philosophy and theology.

An early Enlightenment thinker, he developed a method of thinking based on individual reason which did not allow for appeal to any authorities, except for the “clear light of reason” itself. His approach was to *doubt everything until he could prove it* to his own satisfaction. The first premise of his philosophy was the indubitability of his own existence.

“It is now some years since I detected how many were the false beliefs that I had believed to be true since my earliest youth. And since that time, I have been convinced that I must once and for all seriously try to rid myself of all the opinions which I had formerly accepted, and begin to build anew, if I wanted to establish any firm and permanent structure for my beliefs.” - René Descartes, *Meditations*

## WAYS OF INTERPRETING MYTH...

### 1. As a belief system.

Often books on mythology conveniently forget that myths were once all believed to be “true” (in some sense). The problem arises when we try to figure out in what sense. For example, most Greeks probably believed that there was a god in the sky named Zeus, but did they really believe that this god had all those affairs with mortal women? Because belief is often so personal and individual, questions like this are hard to answer. The question of belief is especially difficult to unravel in *polytheistic* systems, because worshippers often follow personal, family, or local gods rather than bothering about the *pantheon* [“all the gods”] as a whole. Also, polytheistic religions often lack centralized priesthoods and/or central sacred texts which are considered the word of god(s).

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### 2. As disguised history.

Early philosophers tried to rationalize the fantastic events in myth by claiming that they were distortions of historical fact. One of these fellows was a Greek named Euhemerus (c. 300 BC), who gave his name to the theory that claims that the gods were originally historical heroes who were later deified. While this sort of *euhemerism* (Zeus seen as an ancient tribal hero who gradually took on attributes of a god, for example) is considered naive by some, theorists still look for historical truths hidden behind mythological stories.

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### 3. As disguised philosophy or allegory.

Early philosophers were also disturbed by the seemingly immoral or amoral actions of their gods. The Greek philosopher Xenophanes (c. 530 BC) wrote: "Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all the things that are shameful and scandalous among men: theft, adultery, and mutual treachery" (quoted in Curtius 204). In order to rescue myth (and the gods) from charges of immorality, the philosophers decided that these fantastic stories must be hiding deep truths beneath their improbable exteriors. This method of interpretation is called *allegory* (the story parallels and illustrates the deeper philosophical sense). Often, such interpretations are non-historical wishful thinking (people didn't think of their myths as philosophy, but as a traditional religious story), but sometimes, the myths themselves invite allegorical interpretation, as when Zeus swallows Metis ("Wisdom" or "Cunning Intelligence") in order to become wise (Hesiod 85-86).

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### 4. As fables illustrating moral truths.

Using stories to illustrate a moral was very popular in the Middle Ages, when writers wanted to tell pagan myths without getting into trouble with Church authorities. Therefore, they asserted that the stories illustrated moral truths. For example, one Medieval poem, *The Romance of the Rose*, by Jean de Meun (1237-1305 CE) uses the story of Aphrodite (Venus) and Adonis to point up a moral about listening to one's lover. Venus warns Adonis not to go hunting, but he does anyway and is killed by a boar. Of course, the moral of the story is "listen to your lover's advice." This tacking of a moral onto the end of a story tends to focus interpretation on only one aspect of the tale (Adonis didn't listen to his lover), while ignoring other important elements (like Adonis' bizarre conception and birth.)

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### 5. As explanations of natural events.

No one would deny that ancient gods sometimes represent natural phenomena or processes (Zeus, for example, is associated with thunder). However, how are we to understand this connection between gods and nature? Do the actions of the gods "explain" natural events? Are the gods directing nature, or are they in it? Some gods, like Gaia (the Earth) seem to be identical with it. G. S. Kirk has pointed out a further complication: some gods, like Kronos, may have nature-associations when worshipped but not when they appear in mythological stories (44-47). Many scholars believe there is great difference between gods like Zeus, who are associated with natural phenomena, and a god like Yahweh of the Hebrews, who stands outside nature, creating and directing it.

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### 6. As pre-scientific explanation.

Myths often present themselves as explanations of how nature works or how a certain benefit or ill came about. For example, Hesiod says that men burn only the inedible parts of animals (bones and fat) as a sacrifice for the gods because Prometheus once tried to trick Zeus by giving him bones covered with succulent-looking fat and giving humans the good parts. These sorts of "explanations" are called *etiological* ("the study of causes"). However, G. S. Kirk has pointed out that stories which supposedly give reasons or causes for things really don't explain them in a scientific way: they present images, not causes (54). This kind of explanation seems less like scientific cause and effect reasoning than a kind of logic of association. This logic works by similarity or contact; it equates a story or image or symbol with "explanation." This sort of image-thinking is characteristic of non-literate or oral cultures, which do not develop philosophical modes of thought, but rather store their wisdom in more easily-remembered stories, proverbs and genealogies.

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## 7. As charters for customs, institutions, or beliefs.

According to this theory, myths are not primitive gropings for scientific explanation, but rather belief-systems set up to authorize and validate current social customs and institutions. Much as the Constitution provides a charter or fundamental social contract for our society, charter myths validate the social practices of the societies which produced the myths. (This approach looks at how a story functions in a society rather than seeing it as a response to a demand for an explanation.) The most obvious example of a charter myth is the Babylonian creation story, the *Enuma Elish*. In it, the world, humans, the agricultural system, and the city of Babylon are created for one purpose: to serve the gods. The myth thus defines the whole social system and its relation to the gods. However, the *Enuma Elish* is not only a charter for divine rule. It also tells a creation story that had a seasonal ritual function, as well as containing speculations on natural beginnings.

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## 8. As religious power, or metaphors for the unknown.

The Romanian-born theorist of religion Mircea Eliade views myth as an effort to recapture the creative power of the origin of the world. This kind of power is necessary to maintain the divine order of the world and the seasons. This is one way in which myth functions as a charter for a sacred order of the universe and of society. For Eliade, myth and ritual cannot be separated – to attempt an understanding of a myth without understanding its ritual component is impossible.

The mythologist Joseph Campbell sees myth as metaphors or symbols of the unknown. This "unknown" is located in two places: in the spiritual realm and in the depths of the human psyche. Campbell reasons that even though the divine, or "God," or whatever you call it (him/her?) is ultimately unknowable by human thought, men still try to create images of the Godhead. These images and stories may vary from culture to culture, but they remain valid as metaphors which express our experience of something beyond the human. Remarkably, many of themes and motifs in myths reappear in stories told by widely scattered peoples, which for Campbell means that many of them must be inherent in the human psyche. Thus, myths can also tell us truths about our own psychology.

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## 9. As examples of psychological archetypes.

Because certain images or motifs common in myth would appear in the dreams or psychotic fantasies of his patients, the Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) reasoned that many of these motifs or themes must be the products of some sort of "myth-forming structural elements . . . in the unconscious psyche" (Jung 71). These elements he called *archetypes* (Greek, *arkhe*, beginning, original + *tupos*, mold, model). Jung further claimed that myths exhibit these archetypes because in the "primitive" mentality, the "conscious mind is far less developed in scope and intensity" than it is in our supposedly more sophisticated minds. For Jung, "the primitive does not think consciously but . . . thoughts appear" (72). Despite his rather patronizing manner towards "primitives," Jung may have a point here. Recurring themes or motifs in myth can be accounted for in at least two ways: 1) diffusion (someone borrowed the story) or 2) psychology (unconscious ideas or situations often recur among humans).

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## 10. As stories.

Since myths are traditional stories, they often exhibit characteristics of other sorts of traditional tales, most notably folktales. For example, the search to find the secret name of Ra (and thus his power) can be seen as similar to a motif in the folktale Rumpelstiltskin. Several psychologists and folklorists have noticed that traditional tales often exhibit the same or similar plot patterns. Besides studying plot motifs and tale types, folklorists also try to discover character types in stories from different cultures.

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## 11. As embodying irreconcilable structural conflicts in social systems.

Often called "structuralist," this approach was invented by French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and is probably the most difficult to summarize in 25 words or less. Basically, Lévi-Strauss says that myths embody in their structures elementary contradictions or problems which no society can resolve.

(Examples: why is incest forbidden if we are all descended from one parent [the earth]? Or, why are humans allowed to cook and eat meat when the gods get only the smoke from altars?) Since these contradictions cannot be removed, they are hidden, or encoded in mythical stories. We can read the code by noticing pairs of opposites like raw vs. cooked (Prometheus and some Norse tales), high vs. low (sky gods vs. earth gods), male vs. female, men vs. gods, profane vs. sacred, wild vs. tame, waste land vs. cultivated land, and (most importantly) nature vs. culture. These pairs of opposites sometimes appear in the tales only in symbolic form. Myths mediate these oppositions or contradictions, making them acceptable. Often, a term or image or figure will act as mediator in the myths. For example, Prometheus could be seen as mediating the gap or conflict between gods and men. Lévi-Strauss accounts for repetitions and variations of motifs by saying that the message embodied in myth is redundant, repeated over and over so that it will get through even if part of the transmission is lost. Since the message appears many times in different stories, Lévi-Strauss thinks we can ignore the order in which events occur in traditional tales and look only at the repeated patterns and their structural relations to each other.

No one way offers a key to the interpretation of myths, but all can offer insights to different motifs and plot elements. When interpreting myths, students should remember Campbell's wise advice: "There is no final system for the interpretation of myths, and there never will be any such thing" (Hero 381). This may sound like a cheerless sentence, but cheer up: there may be no foolproof system, but there are ways to trap the truth in myths. According to Campbell, myths are like the god Proteus (sometimes called the Old Man of the Sea) in the *Odyssey* who "always speaks the truth" (Homer 52, my emphasis). But first you must catch him and hold onto him, which isn't easy because he constantly changes shape in order to get away. "He will turn into all sorts of shapes to try you, into all the creatures that live and move upon the earth, into water, into blazing fire; but you must hold him fast and press him all the harder" (Homer 53). Great advice for any student of myth! Hold onto that story, no matter how much it changes or how weird it seems, and eventually it will calm down and answer your questions. But Proteus only answers the specific questions put to him. So, to get good answers, you have to ask a lot of different questions.

Source: <http://faculty.gvsu.edu/websterm/ways.htm>



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## WHY STUDY MYTHOLOGY?

(From an interview with Frederic Giacobazzi, teacher)

[Mythology] is an experience which altered my own understanding of things. I believe that it can be much the same for anyone who approaches it in the correct frame of mind. First of all, myths reflect human nature and interpret human experience in the same sense that all literature does. Like the study of other literatures and film, it offers a body of works for the student to study and interpret, and it confers on the student the same benefits as other literary study – everything from knowledge about some of the oldest and greatest human stories to the practice of analysis, interpretation, and other higher-order thinking skills. But beyond this, mythology offers a particular systematic way of understanding human experience which overlaps other areas of inquiry but remains distinct and singular.

### How does mythology relate to the “real world”?

An intriguing question. Let me start by being a little theoretical. I also teach philosophy, whose early history can be viewed as a breaking away from myth and a turning toward a more rationalistic way of looking at the world and human experience. And philosophy, of course, gives birth to science. However, there is a sense in which all three ways of understanding experience – philosophy, science, and myth – are distinct, complementary, and “valid.”

Comparing myth with science might seem like comparing “error” with “truth.” Yet, like science and like philosophy, myth seeks to explain the world and the significance of human experience, but it does so in different terms and on a different level. Myths answer a fundamental need of the human mind. If it were not so, the rationalism, the science, the technology of our world would be enough for us, and would have wiped out forever the lure of the ancient themes and patterns which are reflected in myth. Yet the ancient themes persist; they are everywhere around us – in our modern literature, our popular culture, in our movies. Mythology is not a substitute for science or for philosophy, but it offers a different way of understanding life that reveals its timeless themes and underlying patterns. The student whose understanding has been deepened through the study of mythology will find that neither life nor self looks quite the same as before.

Source: [www.kirtland.cc.mi.us/honors/myth.htm](http://www.kirtland.cc.mi.us/honors/myth.htm)

## FROM THE VERY CLUTTERED DESK OF MR. O



**TO:** PARENT(S), GUARDIAN(S), AND CAREGIVER(S)  
**FROM:** MR. OPPENNEER, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
**SUBJECT:** PERMISSION TO WATCH "THE 13<sup>TH</sup> WARRIOR" IN MYTHOLOGY CLASS  
**DATE:** PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN BY: \_\_\_\_\_

### Permission Form For Viewing "The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior"

In your child's Mythology class, we are moving into a unit on Hero Quests. As part of this unit, we read several works (*The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Kotan Utunnai*, and *Beowulf*), and watch two movies (*Star Wars: A New Hope* and *The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior*). This letter is a request for permission for your child to view the movie *The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior* – **which has a rating of "R"**.

The "R" rating is due to a few graphic battle and fighting scenes. There is no adult language or nudity in the film. The movie is an adaptation of a Michael Crichton book which is based on the epic of *Beowulf*. We will be watching it in part to learn how ancient myth still informs our modern society. Students will compare and contrast the movie to the original version of the myth. Since the story involves Vikings in a struggle against a terrible "monster" that threatens a village, the violence is displayed in a context that should not present any problems with student viewers.

Students have been informed of the movie's rating. I have asked them to have you sign this form which gives them permission to view the movie in class. If for any reason you do not wish your child to view *The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior*, I will provide them with an alternative assignment – which will not affect their grade or standing in class in any way. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Gloversville High School (725-0671) or by e-mail (me@mythinking.net). Thank you!

Please check one of the following and sign below.

- ☐ I give my child permission to view *The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior* (which is rated "R").
- ☐ I **do not** give my child permission to view *The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior* (which is rated "R").

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature



# ⌚ Creation Stories ⌚

(Cosmogonies)



## TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING...

<b>Mythology</b>	The science or study of myths; myths collectively; the body of stories associated with a culture or institution or person.
<b>Myth</b>	A story of great but unknown age which originally embodied a belief regarding some fact or phenomenon of experience, and in which often the forces of nature and of the soul are personified; an ancient legend of a god, a hero, the origin of a race, etc.; a wonder story of prehistoric origin.
<b>Cosmogony</b>	The creation of the world or universe; a theory or account of such creation. Also the branch of astrophysics that studies the origins and structure of the universe.
<b>Monotheism</b>	The doctrine or belief that there is but one God.
<b>Polytheism</b>	The doctrine of, or belief in, a plurality of gods.
<b>Archetype</b>	The original pattern, or model, from which other things of the same kind are made. In Jungian psychology, an inherited pattern of thought or symbolic imagery derived from the past collective experience and present in the individual unconscious.



## Journal Entries



**1. Introduction Exercise.** Suppose the world as we know it will end in 10 minutes. The only thing that will remain on the face of the Earth is the piece of paper in front of you. What do you want the future to know? What is the most important thing?

**2. Creation Story – (1 page).** Write how *you* believe the world (or universe) was created. Try to avoid writing the story you've always been told – or the one *you think* you should believe... unless it happens to coincide with your true beliefs.

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**EC:** When and by whom was the following story written? When was it accepted as an "official" text of faith?

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## 🌀 Hebrew Creation (Bereshith) 🌀

**Notes:** The Book of Genesis is both the first book of the Hebrew Pentateuch (Five Books of Moses) and the first book of the Holy Bible. The Jewish name for Genesis is Bereshith, or "In the Beginning".

**1** 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

**2** 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

12 And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14 And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. [*a helper suitable for him*]

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

**3** <sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more subtil [*crafty*] than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

<sup>2</sup> And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

<sup>3</sup> But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

<sup>4</sup> And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

<sup>5</sup> For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

<sup>6</sup> And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

<sup>7</sup> And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

<sup>8</sup> And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

<sup>9</sup> And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

<sup>10</sup> And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

<sup>11</sup> And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

<sup>12</sup> And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

<sup>14</sup> And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above

all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

<sup>16</sup> Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

<sup>17</sup> And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

<sup>18</sup> Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

<sup>19</sup> In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

<sup>20</sup> And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

<sup>21</sup> Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

<sup>22</sup> And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

<sup>23</sup> Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

<sup>24</sup> So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Source: [www.online-bible.org](http://www.online-bible.org) (King James Version)

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**EC:** When were the planets in our solar system “discovered” – and when was earth first considered a planet?

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## ☪ Zuni Creation ☪ (Recorded in 1884 by Frank Hamilton Cushing)

**Notes:** The Zuni Indians were hunter-gatherers from approximately 5,000 BCE to 1,000 BCE. Their origin and early history are unknown; their mythology pictures their ancestors as emerging from underground and wandering to their present location. When they were first encountered by the Spaniards in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they were living in Hawikuh and five or six other towns. Collectively these came to be called the Seven Cities of Cibola, which became the focus of the golden empire sought vainly by Coronado and other explorers.

The Zuni people are Pueblo Indians. Pueblo is the Spanish word for “village.” It was first given to the high desert tribes in the 16th century by Spanish explorers traveling through New Mexico and Arizona. The Spaniards referred to the Indians’ compact, terraced, apartment-style adobe dwellings as “pueblos.” They also applied this term to the Indians themselves.

Zuni society is composed of thirteen matrilineal clans (of which the major officers are male). The principal masculine occupation is corn (maize) farming, though some men have become excellent silversmiths and turquoise workers. Basketry and pottery are the main feminine crafts.

The Zunis were characterized as a peaceful, deeply religious people by the Spanish. Christianity first came to the region in 1598. In 1821, after Mexico achieved its independence from Spain, the Franciscans were pulled out of the area for more than 100 years. The Zunis were left without a Catholic priest until the Franciscans returned in 1923.

Frank Hamilton Cushing (1857-1900), was one of the first anthropologists to study the Zuni. Eventually he was initiated into the highest levels of the Zuni religion. Cushing is relating the story he heard from a Zuni priest.

Before the beginning of the new-making, Áwonawílona (the Maker and Container of All, the All-father Father), solely had being. There was nothing else whatsoever throughout the great space of the ages save everywhere black darkness in it, and everywhere void desolation.

In the beginning of the new-made, Áwonawílona conceived within himself and thought outward in space, whereby mists of increase, steams potent of growth, were evolved and uplifted. Thus, by means of his innate knowledge, the All-container made himself in person and form of the Sun whom we hold to be our father and who this came to exist and appear. With his appearance came the brightening of the spaces with light and with the brightening of the spaces the great mist-clouds were thickened together and fell, whereby was evolved water in water; yea, and the world-holding sea.

With his substance of flesh (yépnane) outdrawn from the surface of his person, the Sun-father formed the seed-stuff of twain worlds, impregnating therewith the great waters, and lo! in the heat of his light these waters of the sea grew green and scums (k’yanashótsiyallawe) rose upon them, waxing wide and weighty until, behold! they became Áwitelin Tsíta, the “Four-fold Containing

Mother-earth,” and Ápoyan Tã’chu, the “All-covering Father-sky.”

From the lying together of these twain upon the great world-waters, so vitalizing, terrestrial life was conceived; whence began all beings of earth, men and the creatures, in the Four-fold womb of the World.

Thereupon the Earth-mother repulsed the Sky-father, growing big and sinking deep into the embrace of the waters below, thus separating from the Sky-father in the embrace of the waters above. As a woman forebodes evil for her first-born ere born, even so did the Earth-mother forebode, long withholding from birth her myriad progeny and meantime seeking counsel with the Sky-father. “How,” said they to one another, “shall our children when brought forth, know one place from another, even by the white light of the Sun-father!”

Now like all the surpassing beings (píkwaíyin áhai) the Earth-mother and the Sky-father were ‘klímna (changeable), even as smoke in the wind; transmutable at thought, manifesting themselves in any form at will, like as dancers may by mask-making.

Thus, as a man and woman, spoke they, one to the other. "Behold!" said the Earth-mother as a great terraced bowl appeared at hand and within it water, "this is as upon me the homes of my tiny children shall be. On the rim of each world-country they wander in, terraced mountains shall stand, making in one region many whereby country shall be known from country, and within each, place from place. Behold, again!" said she as she spat on the water and rapidly smote and stirred it with her fingers. Foam formed, gathering about the terraced rim, counting higher and higher. "Yea," said she, "and from my bosom they shall draw nourishment, for in such as this shall they find the substance of life whence we were ourselves sustained."

Then with her warm breath she blew across the terraces; white flecks of the foam broke away, and, floating over above the water, were shattered by the cold breath of the Sky-father attending, and forthwith shed downward abundantly fine mist and spray! "Even so, shall white clouds float up from the great waters at the borders of the world, and clustering about the mountain terraces of the horizons be borne aloft and abroad by the breaths of the surpassing soul-beings, and of the children, and shall hardened and broken be by thy cold, shedding downward, in rain-spray, the water of life, even into the hollow places of my lap! For therein chiefly shall nestle our children mankind and creature-kind, for warmth in thy coldness."

Lo! even the trees on high mountains near the clouds and the Sky-father crouch low toward the Earth-mother for warmth and protection! Warm is the Earth-mother, cold the Sky-father, even as woman is the warm, man the cold being!

"Even so!" said the Sky-father; "Yet not alone shall you helpful be unto our children, for behold!" and he spread his hand abroad with the palm downward and into all the wrinkles and crevices thereof he set the semblance of shining yellow corn-grains; in the dark of the early world-dawn they gleamed like sparks of fire, and moved as his hand was moved over the bowl, shining up from and also moving in the depths of the water therein. "See!" said he, pointing to the seven grains clasped by his thumb and four fingers, "by such shall our children be guided; for behold, when the Sun-father is not nigh, and thy terraces are as the dark itself (being all hidden therein), then shall our children be guided by lights—like to these lights of all the six regions turning round the midmost one—as in and around the midmost place, where these our children shall abide, lie all the other regions of space! Yea! and even as these grains gleam up from the water, so shall seed-grains like to them, yet numberless, spring up from thy bosom, when touched by my waters to nourish our children." Thus and in other ways many devised they for their offspring.

Source: FHC, *Outlines of Zuni Creation Myths*

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**EC:** Sigmund Freud developed the notions of *id*, *ego*, and *superego* – what do these words mean?

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## ☞ Pelasgian Creation ☞ (750 BCE) Reconstructed by Robert Graves

**Notes:** In Greek mythology, Pelasgus is the mythical ancestor of the Pelasges, a people that Herodotus called the eldest inhabitants of Greece. It is also the name of the king of Argos who sheltered Danaus and his fifty daughters when they fled from Aegyptus.

In the beginning, Eurynome, the Goddess of All Things, rose naked from Chaos, but found nothing substantial for her feet to rest upon, and therefore divided the sea from the sky, dancing lonely upon its waves. She danced towards the south, and the wind set in motion behind her seemed something new and apart with which to begin a work of creation. Wheeling about, she

caught hold of this North Wind, rubbed it between her hands, and behold! the great serpent Ophion. Eurynome danced to warm herself, wildly and more wildly until Ophion, grown lustful, coiled about those divine limbs and was moved to couple with her. Now, the North Wind, who is also called Boreas, fertilizes; which is why mares often turn their hind-

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quarters to the wind and breed foals without aid of a stallion. So Eurynome was likewise got with child.

Next, she assumed the form of a dove, brooding on the waves and, in due process of time, laid the Universal Egg. At her bidding, Ophion coiled seven times about this egg, until it hatched and split in two. Out tumbled all things that exist, her children: sun, moon, planets, stars, the earth with its mountains and rivers, its trees, herbs, and living creatures.

Eurynome and Ophion made their home upon Mount Olympus, where he vexed her by claiming to be the author of the universe. Forthwith she bruised his head with her heel, kicked out his teeth, and banished him to the dark caves below the earth.

Next, the goddess created the seven planetary powers, setting a Titaness and a Titan over each. Theia and Hyperion for the sun; Phoebe and Atlas for the moon; Dione and Crius for the planet Mars; Metis and Coeus for the planet Mercury; Themis and Eurymedon for the planet Jupiter; Tethys and Oceanus for Venus; Rhea and Cronus for the planet Saturn. But the first man was Pelasgus, ancestor of the Pelasgians; he sprang from the soil of Arcadia, followed by certain others, whom he taught to make huts and feed upon acorns, and sew pig-skin tunics such as poor folk still wear in Euboea and Phocis.

**Source:** "The Pelasgian Creation Myth," from Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths*, v.I, p. 27: Penguin Books, England, 1955.

## ☪ Greek Creation ☪ (7 BCE) Hesiod's Theogony

In the beginning there was only Chaos, an empty void. This huge vacancy gave birth to Gaea (the earth), to Tartarus (the great region beneath the earth), to Eros (the god of love and attraction, to Erebus (the darkness of the underworld), and Night (the darkness over the earth). Then Erebus slept with Night, who gave birth to Ether (the heavenly light), and to Day (the earthly light). Later Night alone produced Doom, Fate, Death, Sleep, Dreams, Nemesis, etc.

Meanwhile, Gaea alone produced Uranus (the starry sky), the mountains, and the sterile sea. Uranus became mate and equal to Gaea, because he "covered" her on all sides. As a couple, they created the twelve Titans, the three Cyclopes, and the three Hecatoncheires (with fifty heads and a hundred arms each).

Uranus hated these latter children, and they hated him. In anger he pushed them back into Gaea's womb and kept them there. This was very painful for Gaea and she plotted revenge against Uranus.

She fashioned a flint scythe and called upon her children to avenge her. All but Cronus, the youngest Titan, refused to help her for fear of Uranus' wrath.

That night, when Uranus came to lie with Gaea, Cronus, hiding in ambush, castrated Uranus. As the blood fell to the earth the Furies, the Ash-Tree Nymphs, and the Giants were created. When Cronus heaved the testicles into the sea, Aphrodite arose from the foam.

Cronus then became leader of the Titans, and confined the Cyclopes and the Hecatoncheires to Tartarus. He married his sister Rhea and they produced many offspring. But both Uranus and Gaea had warned Cronus that a child of his would replace him as leader of the Titans. So, Cronus swallowed each baby Rhea gave birth to.

This is what happened to Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon shortly after each was born. Rhea finally wised up, and when Zeus was born she presented Cronus a stone wrapped in the swaddling clothes, which he swallowed thinking it was the newest child.

Zeus grew to manhood on the island of Crete, attended to by nymphs. He sought and got advice from Metis, another Titaness, who prepared an emetic potion for him. Soon, disguised as a cupbearer, he was able to get



Cronus to drink the potion. Cronus immediately vomited up all the children he had swallowed, all safe and sound, and fully grown. They overwhelmed Cronus and bound him as a prisoner in Tartarus.

And so the Olympians began their rule. (It took ten more years of strife and war between Titans, Olympians, Cyclopes, Hecatoncheires, assorted monsters and dragons (like Typhoeus) before the rule of the Olympians was solidified.)

## Journal Entry

**3. Importance of Creation Stories – (1 page).** Most mythologies, including lesser-known ones, have creation stories. Why is it important for a culture to have a story that explains its creation? What are some of the functions that cosmogonies serve?

## Australian Creation (ca. 1600 CE) Walumba tribe – Northern Australia

**Notes:** The original inhabitants of Australia who have occupied the continent for at least 40,000 years (or maybe even 60,000 years). The Aborigines arrived either by way of the now-submerged Sahul Shelf or by rafts and canoes, in one or more waves.

The people and languages (or dialects) were associated with stretches of territory, and the largest entities recognized by the people were language-named groups. These groups made up smaller, local groups (clans) which consisted not only of men and women but also of several species. A group bore the name of one of these species, its totem. The men of the clan were divided into lodges, with each man custodian of the mythology, ritual, sites, and symbols associated with one or more natural species and with ancestral heroes. Through ritual reenactment, the creative past became operative in the present, and the life of species and man was assured. The myths and ritual constituted the Dreaming, or Dreamtime, which signified the continuity of life unlimited by space and time.

In the late 18th century there was an estimated population that ranged from 300,000 to more than 1,000,000, but after contact with Europeans their numbers have been decimated by dispossession, poverty, cultural dislocation, and disease. In the mid-eighties they numbered fewer than 230,000, less than 2 percent of the total population of Australia. [Source: [www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/oceania/aboriginal/articles.html](http://www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/oceania/aboriginal/articles.html)]

There was sea, land and sky in the beginning. And on the land were animals and plants and trees. But man was not there. Far out to sea there was an island called Bralgu, the Island of the Eternal Beings, which later became the Island of the Dead. It was here at Bralgu that the Djanggawul lived. They had many sacred objects, drawings and emblems that they called “dreamings” and they left many of their dreamings on the island as sacred paintings and rituals for the people who were to come.



The Djanggawul were three children of the sun. The two sisters Bildjiwuaraju and Miralaldu, had enormous genitals, both male and female combined, so they carried these around in their arms or let them drag along the ground leaving

trails across the sand. But Djanggawul-brother had only one gigantic penis, which he hauled along after him.

One day they loaded their bark canoe with dreamings and sailed across the ocean from Bralgu to arrive at the shore of the new earth that was still uninhabited by people. The sun’s children began their journey inland, and as they traveled, creatures and plants were constantly being created. They made many sacred places and left their dreamings everywhere. At all these places they established their own cult in readiness for the peoples who were to be created from their own offspring.

When night came, the sun-children made a camp, and the two sisters fell asleep by the fire. Djanggawul-brother went hunting. When

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he returned, he cut off the enormous genitals of the two sleeping sisters leaving only vagina-shaped wounds. The next morning they carried on creating beings for their world by copulating with Djanggawul-brother. The two sisters had to follow him everywhere and could produce children only when Djanggawul-brother decided. The boys they created were put into the grass so that when they grew up they would have whiskers and hair. The girls they created were hidden

under a mat so that they would not grow any hair and would have smooth bodies because girls were sacred.

The two sisters remained eternally pregnant as they traveled, following Djanggawul-brother wherever he chose to go. And so it is with all women with their men.

**Source:** Sarah Bartlett's *The World of Myths & Mythology*, p. 46: Blandford, England, 1998.

## ☪ Haudenosaunee (Oneida) Creation ☪

**Notes:** (from the Oneida Indian Nation web site) The Haudenosaunee have always recognized that people are complex, possessing both good and bad qualities. The Creation Story addresses this issue while illustrating that no human is perfect – the Great Spirit alone is perfect.

Keller George, Wolf Clan Representative to the Nation's Men's Council, relates the following story his maternal great-grandmother told to him about the birth of the Evil Spirit and the Good Spirit.

Long, long ago, the earth was deep beneath the water. There was a great darkness because no sun or moon or stars shone. The only creatures living in this dark world were water animals such as the beaver, muskrat, duck and loon.

Far above the water-covered earth was the Land of the Happy Spirits, where the Great Spirit dwelled. In the center of this upper realm was a giant apple tree with roots that sank deep into the ground.

One day the Great Spirit pulled the tree up from its roots creating a pit in the ground. The Great Spirit called to his daughter, who lived in the Upper World. He commanded her to look into the pit. The woman did as she was told and peered through the hole. In the distance, she saw the Lower World covered by water and clouds.

The Great Spirit spoke to his daughter, telling her to go into the world of darkness. He then tenderly picked her up and dropped her into the hole. The woman, who would be called Sky Woman by those

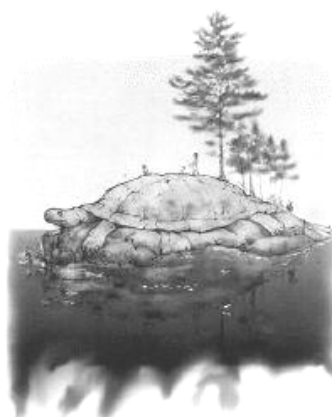
creatures watching her fall, began to slowly float downward.

As Sky Woman continued her descent, the water animals looked up. Far above them they saw a great light that was Sky Woman. The animals were initially afraid because of the light emanating from her. In their fear, they dove deep beneath the water.

The animals eventually conquered their fear and came back up to the surface. Now they were concerned about the woman, and what would happen to her when she reached the water.

The beaver told the others that they must find a dry place for her to rest upon. The beaver plunged deep beneath the water in search of earth. He was unsuccessful. After a time, his dead body surfaced to the top of the water.

The loon was the next creature to try to find some earth. He, too, was unsuccessful. Many others tried, but each animal failed. At last, the muskrat said



he would try. When his dead body floated to the top, his little claws were clenched tight. The others opened his claws and found a little bit of earth.

The water animals summoned a great turtle and patted the earth upon its back. At once the turtle grew and grew, as did the amount of earth. This earth became North America, a great island.

During all this time, Sky Woman continued her gentle fall. The leader of the swans grew concerned as Sky Woman's approach grew imminent. He gathered a flock of swans that flew upward and allowed Sky Woman to rest upon their back. With great care, they placed her upon the newly formed earth.

Soon after her arrival, Sky Woman gave birth to twins. The first born became known as the Good Spirit. The other twin caused his mother so much pain that she died during his birth. He was to be known as the Evil Spirit.

The Good Spirit took his mother's head and hung it in the sky, and it became the sun. The Good Spirit also fashioned the stars and moon from his mother's body. He buried the remaining parts of Sky Woman under the earth. Thus, living things may always find nourishment from the soil for it springs from Mother Earth.

While the Good Spirit provided light, the Evil Spirit created the darkness. The Good Spirit created many things, but each time his brother would attempt to undo his good work.

The Good Spirit made the tall and beautiful trees, including the pines and hemlock. The Evil Spirit, to be contrary, stunted some trees or put gnarls and knots in their trunks. Other trees he covered in thorns or poisoned their fruit.

The Good Spirit made bear and deer. The Evil Spirit made poisonous animals such as lizards and serpents to destroy the animals created by his brother.

When the Good Spirit made springs and streams of pure crystal water, the Evil Spirit poisoned some and placed snakes in others. The Good

Spirit made beautiful rivers. The Evil Spirit pushed rocks and dirt into the rivers creating swift and dangerous currents.

Everything the Good Spirit made his wicked brother attempted to destroy.

After the Good Spirit completed the earth, he created man out of red clay. Placing the man upon the earth, the Good Spirit instructed the man about how he should live. The Evil Spirit made a monkey from sea foam.

Upon completion of his work, the Good Spirit bestowed a protecting spirit upon all of his creations. This done, he called his brother and told him he must cease making trouble. The Evil Spirit emphatically refused. The Good Spirit became enraged at his brother's wickedness. He challenged his evil twin to combat. The winner would become the ruler of the world.

For their weapons they used the thorns of the giant apple tree. The battle raged for many days. The Good Spirit triumphed, overcoming his evil brother. The Good Spirit took his place as ruler of the earth and banished his brother to a dark cave under the ground. In this cave the Evil Spirit was to remain.

The Evil Spirit, however, has wicked servants who do his bidding and roam upon the earth. The wicked spirits are able to take any form and cause men to do evil things.

This is the reason that everyone has both a good heart and a bad heart. Regardless of how good a man is, he still possesses some evil. The reverse also is true. For however evil a man may be, he still has some good qualities. No man is perfect.

The Good Spirit continues to create and protect mankind. It is the Good Spirit who controls the spirits of good men upon their death. His wicked brother takes possession of the souls of those who are evil like himself. And so it remains.

Source: <http://oneida-nation.net/creation.html>

## Journal Entry

### 4. Norse Cosmogony Childrens Book – (no limit)

- 1) Get into groups of 4-5 people and discuss the Norse cosmogony.
- 2) Identify the most important or essential elements.
- 3) Create a children's book that *appropriately* tells the story.
- 4) Try to “distill” – not “water down”.

### Norse Creation Abstracted from The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson

The first world to exist was Muspellheim, a place of light and heat whose flames are so hot that those who are not native to that land cannot endure it. Surt sits at Muspellheim's border, guarding the land with a flaming sword. At the end of the world he will vanquish all the gods and burn the whole world with fire. Beyond Muspellheim lay the great and yawning void named Ginnungagap, and beyond Ginnungagap lay the dark, cold realm of Niflheim. Ice, frost, wind, rain and heavy cold emanated from Niflheim, meeting in Ginnungagap the heat, light, and soft air from Muspellheim.

Where heat and cold met appeared thawing drops, and this running fluid grew into a giant frost ogre named Ymir. Ymir slept, falling into a sweat. Under his left arm there grew a man and a woman. And one of his legs begot a son with the other. This was the beginning of the frost ogres. Thawing frost then became a cow called Audumla. Four rivers of milk ran from her teats, and she fed Ymir. The cow licked salty ice blocks. After one day of licking, she freed a man's hair from the ice. After two days, his head appeared. On the third day the whole man was there. His name was Buri, and he was tall, strong, and handsome. Buri begot a son named Bor, and Bor married Bestla, the daughter of a giant. Bor and Bestla had three sons: Odin was the first, Vili the second, and Vé the third.

It is believed that Odin, in association with his brothers, is the ruler of heaven and earth. He is the greatest and most famous of all men. Odin, Vili, and Vé killed the giant Ymir. When Ymir fell, there issued from his wounds such a flood of blood, that all the frost ogres were drowned, except for the giant Bergelmir who escaped with his wife by climbing onto a lur [a hollowed-out tree trunk that could serve

either as a boat or a coffin]. From them spring the families of frost ogres.

The sons of Bor then carried Ymir to the middle of Ginnungagap and made the world from him. From his blood they made the sea and the lakes, from his flesh the earth, from his hair the trees, and from his bones the mountains. They made rocks and pebbles from his teeth and jaws and those bones that were broken. Maggots appeared in Ymir's flesh and came to life. By the decree of the gods they acquired human understanding and the appearance of men, although they lived in the earth and in rocks. From Ymir's skull the sons of Bor made the sky and set it over the earth with its four sides. Under each corner they put a dwarf, whose names are East, West, North, and South. The sons of Bor flung Ymir's brains into the air, and they became the clouds.

Then they took the sparks and burning embers that were flying about after they had been blown out of Muspell, and placed them in the midst of Ginnungagap to give light to heaven above and earth beneath. To the stars they gave appointed places and paths. The earth was surrounded by a deep sea. The sons of Bor gave lands near the sea to the families of giants for their settlements.

To protect themselves from the hostile giants, the sons of Bor built for themselves an inland stronghold, using Ymir's eyebrows. This stronghold they named Midgard. While walking along the sea shore the sons of Bor found two trees, and from them they created a man and a woman. Odin gave the man and the woman spirit and life. Vili gave them understanding and



the power of movement. Vé gave them clothing and names. The man was named Ask [Ash] and the woman Embla. From Ask and Embla have sprung the races of men who lived in Midgard.

In the middle of the world the sons of Bor built for themselves a stronghold named Asgard, called Troy by later generations. The gods and their kindred lived in Asgard, and many memorable events have happened there. In Asgard was a great hall named Hlidskjálf. Odin sat there on a high seat. From there he could look out over the whole world and see what everyone was doing. He understood everything that he saw.

Odin married Frigg, the daughter of Fjörgvin. From this family has come all the kindred that inhabited ancient Asgard and those kingdoms that belonged to it. Members of this family are called the Æsir, and they are all divinities. This must be the reason why Odin is called All-Father. He is the father of all the

gods and men and of everything that he and his power created.

The earth was Odin's daughter and his wife as well. By her he had his first son, Thor. Might and strength were Thor's characteristics. By these he dominates every living creature. As all informed people know, the gods built a bridge from earth to heaven called Bifröst. Some call it the rainbow. It has three colors and is very strong, made with more skill and cunning than other structures. But strong as it is, it will break when the sons of Muspell ride out over it. The gods are not to blame that this structure will then break. Bifröst is a good bridge, but there is nothing in this world that can be relied on when the sons of Muspell are on the warpath. The chief sanctuary of the gods is by the ash tree Yggdrasil. There they hold their daily court. Yggdrasil is the best and greatest of all trees. Its branches spread out over the whole world and reach up over heaven.

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**EC:** What is a “li” – and how tall would a pillar 9 million li in height measure in feet?

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## ☯ Chinese Creation ☯ (ca. 500 CE) from the San-wu li-chi – Records of Cycles in Threes and Fives

In the beginning, the heavens and earth were still one and all was chaos. The universe was like a big black egg, carrying P'an ku inside itself. After 18 thousand years P'an ku woke from a long sleep. He felt suffocated, so he took up a broadax and wielded it with all his might to crack open the egg. The light, clear part of it floated up and formed the heavens, the cold, turbid matter stayed below to form earth.

P'an ku stood in the middle, his head touching the sky, his feet planted on the earth. The heavens and the earth began to grow at a rate of ten feet per day, and P'an ku grew along with them. After another 18 thousand years, the sky was higher, the earth thicker, and P'an ku stood between them like a pillar 9 million li in height so that they would never join again.

When P'an ku died, his breath became the wind and clouds, his voice the rolling thunder. One eye became the sun and one the moon. His body

and limbs turned to five big mountains and his blood formed the roaring water. His veins became far-stretching roads and his muscles fertile land. The innumerable stars in the sky came from his hair and beard, and flowers and trees from his skin and the fine hairs on his body. His marrow turned to jade and pearls. His sweat flowed like the good rain and sweet dew that nurtured all things on earth. According to some versions of the P'an ku legend, his tears flowed to make rivers and the radiance of his eyes turned into thunder and lighting. When he was happy the sun shone, but when he was angry black clouds gathered in the sky. One version of the legend has it that the fleas and lice on his body became the ancestors of mankind.

Another version tells of Nu Wo, who came after P'an ku died. She came to earth, looked around, and said, “How boring this world is without anyone!” So she took some wet clay from the

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riverbank, and painstakingly molded some little clay figurines into the shape of men. Then she used a magic reed to breathe life into them, so they could walk and talk. However, she soon realized that they were lonely, and said, "Men need companions. I will make women."

So she took some more clay and molded them using her hands into the shape of women. After a while, she decided that making people, both

men and women, by hand was too tiring. So she used her magic reed to spray the mud around. The mud became people. So that is why we have clever and simple people. The clever people are those that were made by Nu Wo's hands, while those simple ones are those that were made from the splattered mud.

**Source:** Sarah Bartlett's *The World of Myths & Mythology*, p. 28: Blandford, England, 1998.

## ☪ Egyptian Creation ☪ (ca. 2800 BCE) The Egyptian Pyramid Texts

At first there was only Nun, the primal ocean of chaos that contained the beginnings of everything to come. From these waters came Ra who, by himself, gave birth to Shu and Tefnut. Shu, the god of air, and Tefnut, the goddess of moisture gave birth to Geb and Nut, the earth god and the sky goddess. And so the physical universe was created.

Men were created from Ra's tears. They proved to be ungrateful so Ra, and a council of gods, decided they should be destroyed. Hathor was dispatched to do the job. She was very efficient and slaughtered all but a remnant, when Ra relented and called her off. Thus was the present world created.

Against Ra's orders, Geb and Nut married. Ra was incensed and ordered Shu to separate them, which he did. But Nut was already pregnant, although unable to give birth as Ra had decreed she could not give birth in any month of any year.

Thoth, the god of learning, decided to help her and gambling with the moon for extra light, was able to add five extra days to the 360-day calendar. On those five days Nut gave birth to Osiris, Horus the Elder, Set, Isis, and Nephthys successively. Osiris became the symbol of good, while Set became the symbol of evil. And thus the two poles of morality were fixed once and for all.

## ☪ Babylonian Creation (Enuma Elish) ☪ (ca. 2100 BCE)

### [TABLET I]

When on high the Heavens had not been named,  
firm ground below had not been called by name,  
nothing but 'Primordial Apsu' the Begetter [Fresh Water],  
and 'Mummu Tiamat', She Who Bore them All [Salt Water],  
—their waters commingling as a single body —

No reed hut had been matted, no marsh land had appeared,  
Uncalled by name, their destinies undetermined —  
then it was that the Gods were formed within Them.

Lahmu [He Mud] and Lahamu [She Mud] were brought forth,  
by name they were called before they had grown in age and stature.

Anshar [Upper Firmament] and Kishar [Lower Firmament] were formed, surpassing the others.  
They prolonged the days, added on the years.

Anu was their heir, the rival of his fathers.  
Yes, Anu, Anshar's first-born, was his equal.

He begot in his image Ea. This Ea was the master of his fathers.  
Of broad wisdom, understanding, mighty in strength, mightier by far than his grandfather Anshar.

He had no rival among the gods, his brothers.

The divine brothers banded together. They disturbed Tiamat as they surged back and forth;  
yes, they troubled the mood of Tiamat

by their hilarity in the abode of Heaven. Apsu could not lessen their clamor and Tiamat was speechless at their ways. Their doings were loathsome to [unintelligible]. Unsavory were their ways; they were overbearing.

Then Apsu, the Begetter of the Great Gods, cried out, addressing Mummu his Vizier: "O Mummu, my Vizier, who makes my spirit rejoice, come hither and let us go to Tiamat!" They went and sat down before Tiamat, exchanging counsel about the gods, their children. Apsu, opening his mouth, said to resplendent Tiamat: "Their ways are truly loathsome to me, by day I find no relief, nor sleep at night. I will destroy, I will wreck their ways, so that quiet may be restored. Let us have rest!"

As soon as Tiamat heard this, she was angry and called out to her husband; she cried out aggrieved as she raged all alone, injecting woe into her mood: "What? Should we destroy that which we have built? Their ways indeed are most troublesome, but let us attend kindly!"

Then answered Mummu, giving counsel to Apsu; ill-wishing and ungracious was Mummu's advice:

"Do destroy, my father, the mutinous ways. Then you will have relief by day and rest at night!" When Apsu heard this, his face grew radiant because of the evil he planned against the Gods, his sons. As for Mummu, he embraced him by the neck as he sat down on his knees to kiss him. Now all that they had planned between them was repeated to the Gods, their children. When the Gods heard, they were upset; then they lapsed into silence and remained speechless.

Ea, surpassing in wisdom, accomplished, resourceful; Ea, the All-Wise, saw through their scheme.

A master design against it he devised and set up, made artful his spell against it...

... Having fettered Apsu he slew him...

[Tiamat appoints Kingu to be her champion to avenge Apsu and conquer the Younger Gods. The Younger Gods respond by deciding to seek their own leader and Champion.]...

## TABLET II

...All the Anunnaki gathered; their lips closed tight they sat in silence: "No god (they thought) can go to battle and facing Tiamat, escape with his life." Lord Anshar, Father of the Gods, arose in grandeur, and having pondered in his heart, said to the Anunnaki: "He whose strength is potent shall be our Avenger, he who is keen in battle, Marduk, the Hero!"...

[Marduk replies to the invitation:]

..."Creator of the Gods, destiny of the Great Gods, if I indeed, as your Avenger, am to vanquish Tiamat and save your lives, set up the assembly, proclaim supreme my destiny! When you have sat down together rejoicing in Ubshukinna let my word, instead of you, determine the fates. Unalterable shall be what I may bring into being; neither recalled nor changed shall be the command of my lips."

## TABLET III

...They made ready to leave on their journey, all the Great Gods who determine the fates. They kissed one another in the Assembly. They ate festive bread, poured the wine, they wetted their drinking tubes with sweet intoxicant. As they drank the strong drink, their bodies swelled. They became very languid as their spirits rose. For Marduk the Avenger they fixed the decrees. They erected for him a princely throne. Facing his fathers, he sat down, presiding....

## Journal Entry

**5. Ways of Interpreting Myth – (1 page).** Re-read the "Ways of Interpreting Myth" section from the Introduction of this compilation. Now that you have encountered a variety of creation stories from around the world, which way(s) of interpreting do you find to be the most effective? Defend your answer using a story from this section.

## ᠔ Scientific Creation (The Big Bang) ᠔

“Ten or twenty billion years ago, something happened—the Big Bang, the event that began our universe... That it happened is reasonably clear. All the matter and energy now in the universe was concentrated at extremely high density kind of cosmic egg... The entire universe, matter and energy, occupied a very small volume.” - Carl Sagan (1980).

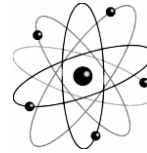
“A number of scientists are unhappy with the big bang theory... For one thing, it leaves unanswered the questions that always arise when a precise date is given for the creation of the universe: Where did the matter come from in the first place?” - Krauskopf and Beiser (1973).

“No existing view of the development of the cosmos is completely satisfactory, and this includes the standard model [the Big Bang], which leads to certain fundamental questions and problems.” - Victor Weisskopf (1983).

“Coincidence of prediction and observation made the big bang seem the most plausible of cosmological theories. From plausibility it became predominant and then virtually an orthodoxy... But now its decade of total dominance may be starting to close.” - Dietrick Thomsen (1978).

“You may know the word ‘entropy.’ It’s a word that physicists use when talking about the amount of disorder in a system. It appears to be a basic physical law that, in our universe, entropy always appears to increase as a system evolves. In other words, once you scramble an egg, it stays scrambled; it doesn’t turn spontaneously back into a whole egg again. Likewise, tidy rooms get messy; you have to keep cleaning your house over and over again. The idea is, in our universe, when things are left to themselves, they tend toward disorder. That’s entropy. Yet, for the last several decades, the most widely believed theory about the birth of the universe says that it began in a Big Bang – a state of unimaginable chaos. Later that chaos had to evolve into the extremely orderly structures we know today: majestically rotating galaxies made of billions of stars; stars that cycle through various predictable [theoretical] stages of evolution; and, last but not least, those most complex of all known

organisms: human beings, who contemplate it all. So how can a universe that tends toward disorder, have evolved such orderly structures?” - Star Date radio (1990).



“It is then tempting to go one step further and speculate that the entire universe evolved from literally nothing.” - Guth and Steinhardt (1984).

“Where did the substance of the universe come from?... Perhaps in an infinite sea of nothingness, globs of positive and negative energy in equal-sized pairs are constantly forming, and after passing through evolutionary changes, combine once more and vanish. We are in one of these globs in the period of time between nothing and nothing, and wondering about it.” - Isaac Asimov (1970).

“It is very hard to realize that this all is just a tiny part of an overwhelmingly hostile universe. It is even harder to realize that this present universe has evolved from an unspeakably unfamiliar early condition, and faces a future extinction of endless cold or intolerable heat. The more the universe seems comprehensible (via the big bang), the more it also seems pointless.” - Steve Weinberg (1977).

“The effort to understand the universe is one of the very few things that lifts human life above the level of farce, and gives it some of the grace of tragedy.” - Steve Weinberg (1977).

“Our Universe had its physical origin as a quantum fluctuation of some pre-existing true vacuum or state of nothingness.” - Edward P. Tyron (1984).

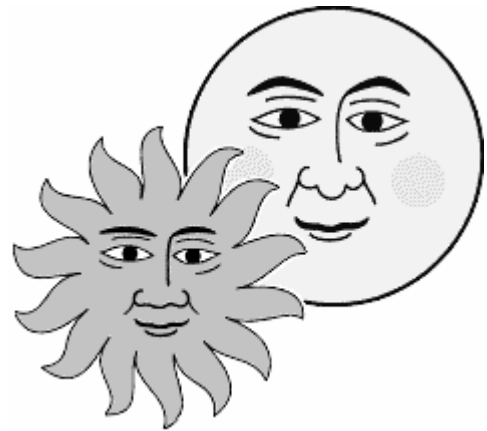
“A scientific study of the universe has suggested a conclusion which may be summed up... In the statement that the universe appears to have been designed by a pure mathematician.”—Sir James Jeans (?).



## ☪ Cosmogony Unit Test Review Sheet ☪

### Know about the following...

- \* What a myth is
- \* Sigmund Freud
- \* Carl Jung
- \* cosmogony
- \* polytheist
- \* monotheist
- \* archetypes
- \* where each story comes from (country / tribe)
- \* general theories of how myths can be interpreted: As...
  1. a belief system
  2. disguised history
  3. disguised philosophy or allegory
  4. fables illustrating moral truths
  5. explanations of natural events
  6. pre-scientific explanation
  7. charters for customs, institutions, or beliefs
  8. religious power, or metaphors for the unknown
  9. examples of psychological archetypes
  10. stories
  11. embodying irreconcilable structural conflicts in social systems



### Be able to identify which myths contain the following archetypes or structures:

- \* World egg (or cosmic egg)
- \* Successive generations of gods & goddesses
- \* A principle female goddess (or mother earth figure)
- \* Light → Water → Land → humans (or variations)
- \* Naming things is very important
- \* World tree or tree of knowledge
- \* A phallic symbol plays an important role

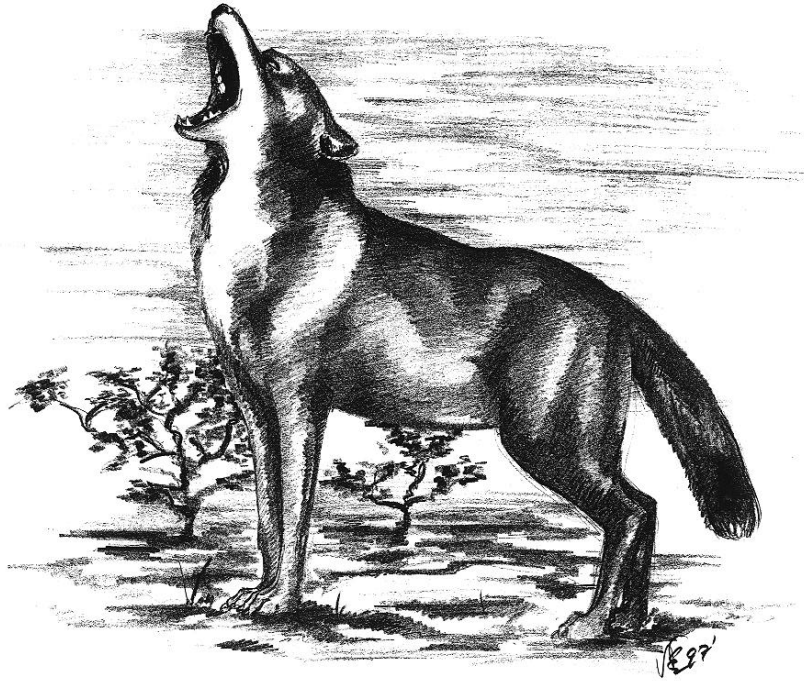
### Focus on the following areas in each story...

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Hebrew:       | * Pay attention to the beginning of the story and the order of events  |
| Zuñi:         | * Pay attention to the “characters” of the story; roles of men & women |
| Pelasgian:    | * Know the story well (c’mon... it’s a short one!)                     |
| Greek:        | * Pay attention to the “characters” of the story – who’s who           |
| Australian:   | * Know the story well; the social function of the story                |
| Haudenosaunee | * Know the “characters” and order of events                            |
| Norse:        | * Be familiar with the worlds, “the characters”, and Bifröst           |
| Chinese:      | * Know the general movement of the story                               |
| Egyptian:     | * Know the story well  |
| Babylonian:   | * Pay attention to the “characters” of the story                       |

[illegible]



## 💣 Trickster Tales 💣



### Some Functions of Trickster Tales

1. Shows how humans evolve
2. Explains a natural phenomenon
3. Gives listener hope that things will get better
4. Instructs the listener socially or morally
5. Criticizes socially or politically
6. Makes the listener feel pride in their culture
7. Speaks out against the powerful (the oppressors)
8. ~~Entertains~~

## ☯ Some Tricksters From Around The World ☯

<b>Amaguq</b>	Canadian Inuit	Wolf
<b>Annecy</b>	West Indian	Spider
<b>Azeban</b>	Northeast, Abenaki	Raccoon
<b>Blue Jay</b>	Northwest Coast, Chinook, Coos, Tilamook	Blue Jay
<b>Brer Rabbit</b>	West African	Rabbit
<b>Chulyen</b>	Nootka or Tanaina, Alaska	Raven / Crow
<b>Cin-an-ev</b>	Ute	Wolf
<b>Coyote</b>	Western and Southwestern tribes	Coyote
<b>Eshu-Elegbara</b>	West African	God
<b>Hermes</b>	Greek	God
<b>Inktomi (Unktomi)</b>	Plains, Lakota	Spider
<b>Kaulu</b>	Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian	God
<b>Kwaku-Anansi</b>	Ashanti - West Africa	Spider
<b>Legba</b>	West Africa	God
<b>Letao</b>	Marshall Islands	God?
<b>Loki</b>	Norse	God
<b>Mab</b>	Celtic and Welsh	Faery Queen
<b>Manabozho</b>	Ojibwa, Chippewa, Algonquin	Hare
<b>Maui</b>	Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian	God
<b>Nareau</b>	Micronesia	Spider
<b>Nasreddin Hodja</b>	Turkish/Anatolia	Human
<b>Olifat</b>	Chuuk, Yap, Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian	God
<b>One Tail of Clear Hair</b>	Catawba	Opossum
<b>Prometheus</b>	Greek	God
<b>Phooka (Puck)</b>	Celtic	Horse, Eagle...
<b>Qat</b>	Banks Island, Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian	God
<b>Raven / Crow</b>	Pacific Northwest, Inuit and Arctic tribes	Raven / Crow
<b>Takuskanskan</b>	Dakota	Wind-spirit
<b>Taqwus</b>	Cahuilla	Meteor, Human
<b>Ti Malice</b>	Haiti	Spider
<b>Yehl</b>	Tlingit, Northwest-Pacific-Coast	Raven
<b>Yurugy (Yorugu)</b>	Dagon of Sudan and Mali	Fox

**Tricksters old and new:** Groucho Marx, Wile E. Coyote, Bart Simpson, The Wizard of Oz, Robin Hood, Puck from MTV's Real World, Ken Kesey, Opus, Tom Robbins, Abbie Hoffman, Weird Al Yankovich, Spicoli, John Belushi, David Letterman, Reynard the Fox, Bennie Hill, Jim Carrey, Chris Tucker, Bugs Bunny, Tom Green, Johnny Knoxville...

## ☞ Mind: Trickster, Transformer ☜

**Notes:** Trickster is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself . . . He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being... (*The Trickster, A Study in American Indian Mythology*, Schocken Books, N.Y., 1972; p. xxiii.) – Paul Radin

Few mythological figures have such a remote origin in time and broad distribution among cultures as the one called Trickster. This character has long puzzled its commentators, largely because Trickster defies any purely rational or intellectual analysis. In fact, anyone who has studied any particular trickster story can testify to its disturbing undertones of perplexity and provocation. For Trickster contains a transcendent nature whose epic qualities are truly awesome. We can think, for example, of when Maui, the Polynesian Trickster, snares nothing less than the sun. Yet with all his enormous power he is enormously stupid, the fool of the ages, the epitome or personification of human absurdity.

Attesting to this essential duality and ambiguity of image are the descriptions of Trickster given us by the scholars. A "bestial, human and divine being," says Stanley Diamond (*In Search of the Primitive*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, N.J., 1974; p. xxiii). "A mixture of clown, culture hero and demigod," asserts Weston La Barre (*The Ghost Dance, The Origins of Religion*, Dell Publishing Company, N.Y., 1972; p. 195). . . . What is clear from it all is that this is a figure and a theme which are primal, and which have exercised a permanent fascination for mankind since civilization's dawn and probably even before. They are omnipresent, ambivalent, tragicomic. By such tokens we know the myth obviously has something of immense importance to tell us. But what?

In world mythologies Trickster's guises are legion; so much so that a well-known commentator, Joseph Campbell, has called him the "Hero with a Thousand Faces" (*The Hero With A Thousand Faces*, Bollingen Series XVII, Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1973; passim). He is Krishna as the World Magician, tricking all -- men and gods -- by his playful ruses as an incarnation of Vishnu, Lord of

the World. He is Manabozho or Hare of the Algonkian peoples, whose father, Earthmaker, sent Hare to be born of a virgin as a human being in order to destroy evils threatening mankind. He is Eshu, the trickster-divinity of Yorubaland in West Africa; Raven of the

Eskimos and Northwest Coast Amerindians; Loki of Norse tradition; Coyote or Wolf of western North American native peoples. He is also Hermes of early Greek mythology; but a young Hermes, seen before he became a hero and benefactor to man. And in this we have a clue.

For under whatever name, Trickster, as some like Campbell and Radin have noted, evolves. This outlandish yet remarkable thing learns,

grows in understanding, changes and, at a certain point in his adventuresome blunders, is transformed. Until that moment, however, Trickster keeps changing shape and experimenting with a thousand identities, including shifts in sex, in a seemingly never-ending search for himself. During all this he inflicts great damage on those around him and also suffers innumerable blows, defeats, indignities, and dangers resulting from his thoughtless, reckless forays. On entering upon existence he is first seen as a blurred, chaotic, hardly unified being, having no self-knowledge or life-knowledge, despite his divine parenthood. It is only later on in his peregrinations that Trickster emerges as a culture hero, demigod, and savior of peoples. But this occurs only after his transformation or self-integration takes place, and brings to the fore the great and epic qualities initially given him by his divine progenitor.

**Source:** Excerpted from Blair A. Moffett's article in *Sunrise* magazine, November 1979. Copyright © 1979 by Theosophical University Press.



## Journal Entry

**6. Laughter – (1 page).** Why is laughter important to us? Do we only laugh at funny things, or are there different kinds of laughter? Why is humor an important element of oral tradition?

---

**EC:** Who is Uncle Remus and why is he controversial? What does he have to do with Brer Rabbit?

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## 🌀 How Stories Came to Earth 🌀 West African (Ashanti of Ghana)

It was long ago in Africa, child, when there was First Spider, Kwaku Anansi. He went everywhere, throughout the world, travelling on his strong web strings – sometimes looking more like a wise old man than a spider. In that long-ago time, child, there were no stories on Earth for anyone to tell. The sky-god kept all stories to himself, up high in the sky, and locked away in a wooden box.

These, the spider wanted, as many creatures had before him, so that he could know the beginnings and endings of things. Yet all who had tried for the stories had returned empty-handed. Now Anansi climbed up his web to the sky-god, Nyame, to ask for the sky-god's stories.

Child, when the powerful sky-god saw the thin, spidery, old man crawling up to his throne, he laughed at him, "What makes you think that you, of all creatures, can pay the price I ask for my stories?" Spider only wanted to know, "What is the price of the stories?"

"My stories have a great price, four fearsome, elusive creatures: Onini, the python that swallows men whole; Osebo, the leopard with teeth like spears; Mmoboro, the hornets that swarm and sting; and Mmoatia, the fairy who is never seen. Bring these to me."

Bowing, the spider quietly turned and crept back down through the clouds. He meant to capture the four creatures he needed as price for the stories. He first asked his wife, Aso, how he might capture Onini, the python that swallows men whole. She told him a plan, saying, "Go and cut off a branch of the palm tree and cut some string-creeper as well. Take these to the stream where python lives."

As Anansi went to the swampy stream, carrying these things, he began arguing aloud, "This is longer

than he; You lie, no; it Is true; this branch is longer and he is shorter, much shorter." The python was listening, and asked what spider was talking about, "What are you muttering, Anansi?"

"I tell you that my wife, Aso, is a liar, for she says that you are longer than this palm branch and I say that you are not." Onini, the python, said, "Come and place the branch next to me and we will see if she is a liar."

And so, Anansi put the palm branch next to the python's body, and saw the large snake stretch himself alongside it. Anansi then bound the python to the branch with the string-creeper and wound it over and over – nwenene! nwenene! nwenene! – until he came to the head. Then the spiderman said to Onini, "Fool, I will now take you to the sky-god."

This Anansi did as he spun a web around the snake to carry him back through the clouds to the sky kingdom. On seeing the gigantic snake, Nyame merely said, "There remains what still remains." Spider came back to Earth to find the next creature, Osebo the leopard, with teeth like spears.

His wife, Aso, told him, "Go dig a large hole." Anansi said, "I understand, say no more."

After following the tracks of the leopard, spider dug a very deep pit. He covered it over with the branches of the trees and came home. Returning in the very early morning, he found a large leopard lying in the pit. "Leopard, is this how you act? You should not be prowling around at night; look at where you are! Now put your paw here, and here, and I will help you out."

The leopard put his paws up on the sticks that Anansi placed over the pit and began to climb up. Quickly, Anansi hit him over the head with a wooden knife – gao! Leopard fell back into the pit – fom! Anansi quickly spun the leopard to the sticks with his web string.

“Fool, I am taking you to pay for the sky-god’s stories.” But the sky-god received the leopard saying, “What remains, still remains.”

Next the spiderman went looking for Mmoboro, the hornets that swarm and sting. Spider told his wife, Aso, what he was looking for and she said, “Look for an empty gourd and fill it with water.” This spider did and he went walking through the bush until he saw a swarm of hornets hanging there in a tree. He poured out some of the water and sprinkled it all over their nest. Cutting a leaf from a nearby banana tree, he held it up and covered his head. He then poured the rest of the water from the gourd all over himself.

Then while he was dripping he called out to the hornets, “The rain has come, do you see me standing here with a leaf to cover my head? Fly inside my empty gourd so that the rain will not beat at your wings.” The hornets flew into the gourd, saying, “Thank you – hhhuummm – Aku; thank you – hhhuummm – Anansi.”

Anansi stopped up the mouth of the gourd, and spinning a thick web around it, said, “Fools, I’m taking you to the sky-god as price for his stories.”

The sky-god, Nyame, accepted Mmoboro, the hornets that swarm and sting, and said, “What remains, still remains.”

Anansi knew very well what remained – it was the fairy, Mmoatia, who is never seen. When the spider came back to Earth, he asked Aso what to do. And so, he carved an Akua’s child, a wooden doll with a black, flat face, and covered it with sticky fluid from a tree. Walking through the bush, he found the odum tree, where the fairies like to play. He then made eto, pounded yams, and put some in the doll’s

hand and even more of the yams into a brass basin at her feet – there by the odum tree. Anansi next hid in the bushes, with a vine creeper in his hands that was also tied to the doll’s neck.

It wasn’t long before the fairies came, two sisters, to play. They saw the doll with the eto and asked if they could have some. Anansi made the doll’s head nod, “Yes”, by pulling on the string-creeper. Soon the fairies had eaten all the eto and so, thanked the doll, but the doll did not reply. The fairies became angry. One sister said, “When I thank her, she says nothing.” The other sister replied, “Then slap her in her crying place.”

This the fairy did, she slapped its cheek – “pa!” – but her hand stuck there. She slapped it with her other hand – “pa!” – and that hand stuck, too. She kicked it with one foot, then the other, and both feet stuck to the sticky wooden doll. Finally, she pushed her stomach to it and that stuck. Then Anansi came from his hiding place, and said, “Fool, I have got you, and now I will take you to the sky-god to buy his stories once and for all.”

Anansi spun a web around the last of the four creatures and brought Mmoatia up to Nyame in the sky kingdom. The sky-god, seeing this last catch, called together all his nobles. He put it before them and told them that the spiderman had done what no one else had been able to do. He said in a loud voice that rang in the sky, “From now and forever, my sky-god stories belong to you – kose! kose! kose! – my blessing, my blessing, my blessing. We will now call these ‘Spider Stories’.”

And so, child, stories came to Earth because of the great cunning of Kwaku Anansi, and his wife, Aso. When Anansi brought the wooden box of stories to his home, he and his wife eagerly learned each one of them. And you can still see today that Aku and Aso tell their stories. Everywhere you look, they spin their webs for all to see.

Source: [www.anansi.org/webwalker/story1.htm](http://www.anansi.org/webwalker/story1.htm)



## ☪ Raven finds the First Men ☪ Haida

After the great flood had at long last receded, Raven had gorged himself on the delicacies left by the receding water, so for once, perhaps the first time in his life, he wasn't hungry. But his other appetites, his curiosity and the unquenchable itch to meddle and provoke things, to play tricks on the world and its creatures, these remained unsatisfied.

Raven gazed up and down the beach. It was pretty, but lifeless. There was no one about to upset, or play tricks upon. Raven sighed. He crossed his wings behind him and strutted up and down the sand, his shiny head cocked, his sharp eyes and ears alert for any unusual sight or sound. The mountains and sea, the sky now ablaze with the sun by day and the moon and stars he had placed there, it was all pretty, but lifeless. Finally Raven cried out to the empty sky with a loud exasperated cry.

And before the echoes of his cry faded from the shore, he heard a muffled squeak. He looked up and down the beach for its source and saw nothing. He strutted back and forth, once, twice, three times and still saw nothing. Then he spied a flash of white in the sand.

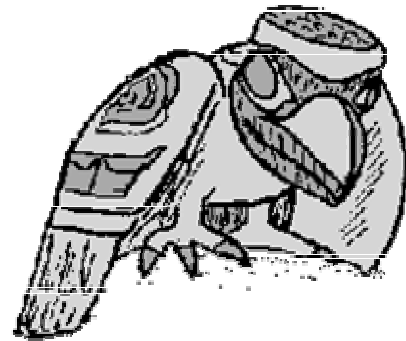
There, half buried in the sand was a giant clamshell. As his shadow fell upon it, he heard another muffled squeak. Peering down into the opening between the halves of the shell, he saw it was full of tiny creatures, cowering in fear at his shadow.

Raven was delighted. Here was a break in the monotony of the day. But how was he to get the creatures to come out of their shell and play with him? Nothing would happen as long as they stayed inside the giant clamshell.

They were not going to come out as long as they were so afraid of him. So Raven leaned over his head, close to the shell, and with all the cunning and skill of that smooth trickster's tongue, that had so often gotten him in and out of so many misadventures during his troubled and troublesome existence, he coaxed and cajoled and coerced the little creatures to come out and play in his wonderful shiny new world.

As you know the Raven has two voices, one harsh and strident, and the other which he used now, a seductive, bell-like croon which seems to come from the depth of the sea, or out of the cave where winds are born. It is an irresistible sound, one of the loveliest in the world.

It wasn't long before first one and then another of the little shell-dwellers emerged from the shell. Some scurried back when they saw the Raven, but eventually curiosity overcame their caution and all of them had crept or scrambled out.



Very strange creatures they were: two legged like Raven, but otherwise very different. They had no feathers. Nor fur. They had no grey beak. Their skin was pale, and they were naked except for the dark hair upon round, flat-featured heads. Instead of strong wings like raven, they had thick stick-like arms that waved and fluttered constantly. They were the first humans.

For a long time Raven amused himself with these new playthings, laughing as they explored with wonder a much expanded world. Sometimes they helped each other, sometimes they fought over something they had found. Raven even taught them some tricks, but soon he became tired of their ceaseless activity.

For one thing, they were so helpless out in the world. They needed shelter from the sun and the rain. They were so fearful and seemed so small. And there were no girls among them, only boys. Raven was about to shove these tired, demanding and annoying creatures back into their shell and forget them, when, as so often happens with Raven, he had an idea for some fun.

Raven began to search for the girls. For it is the way of things in the world that there are both males and females of every creature. Somewhere there must be girls. Raven searched and searched. Under logs and behind rocks, he looked. But he could not find the hiding place of the first girls.

But as he searched, the tide was going out, and as it reached its lowest, the Raven spotted some giant Chitons clinging to the rocks. These giant shell fish had but one shell, fastened tightly to the rocks with huge soft lips around their edges. Raven pried one loose with his beak. And there inside was a girl. He pried off another, and another, and another in each was a girl. They were very similar to the creatures he had found in the clamshell, but more like the Chiton, softer and rounder, in contrast to the hard shell and strong muscles of the clam. And these were just as frightened of the Raven. He gathered them onto his back with difficulty, and brought them to the boys he had found in the clamshell.

Raven was expecting the boy creatures to be very happy he had found the girl creatures, but to his surprise, they were frightened of them and some even ran back into the Giant clamshell to hide. The girl creatures were just as shy and huddled together watching the males with fearful and curious eyes. Both the boy and girl creatures seemed very modest and sought to cover their bodies with strips of kelp and woven sea weed from the shore.

The boy creatures were astonished and embarrassed and confused by feelings they had never before had. They didn't know how to behave. But some of them overcame their fear and began to do things to attract the attention of the girl creatures Raven had brought. Some began to show off the tricks they had been taught – leaping and running and wrestling with other boy creatures. Some of the girls creatures overcame their shyness, first with quick glances then finally allowing the boy creatures to approach them, and even leaving the safety of their huddled group of girl creatures. Gradually the two groups began to mingle into one and just as gradually the boy creatures and girl creatures overcame all their fears and paired off, walking hand in hand, their eyes absorbed in each other totally.

Raven watched all this with increasing interest and surprise. Among all the creatures of the world, there were few whose males and females were so very different. The males – proud, agile, and strong; the females – gentle, soft, and tender. Sometimes the males would be too rough in their play with the females and there would be tears. But those same tears seemed to have an emotional power over the males bringing out of them protective instincts. The strengths of each balanced the weakness of each.

And since that day, Raven has never been bored. In fact, at times he has almost regretted bringing the first men and women together. From the strong muscles of the clam and the soft lips of the Chiton, from the pairing of these first people came the first families. Children were born, some strong and male, some soft and female. Many generations have been born, have grown and flourished, have built and created or fought and destroyed. Many have blamed the Raven for playing a terrible joke on humanity, for often men and women just barely get along. But somehow from this strange combination of reason and intuition, of muscle and emotion arose that which was needed for the race to survive the storms of life on the shores.

Raven himself felt strange protective urges for these first people. Though a glutton and trickster by nature, he would again and again provide for these creatures he found in the clamshell. In time he would bring them the Sun, Moon and Stars; Fire; Salmon and Cedar, teach them the secrets of hunting, and the world. Raven would watch these weak creatures become both strong and loving, courageous and compassionate, able to fend for themselves and survive.

And their children were no timid shell-dwellers, but they continued to be children of the wild coast, of the stormy shores between the land and the sea. They challenged the strength of the stormy north Pacific wresting their livelihoods from the sea even as they made their homes on its shores.

**Source: Bill Reid's and Robert Bringhurst's "Raven Steals The Light" (University of Washington Press, 1984).**

**Note:** In the original Haida story – Raven mates the Chitons with the groins of the men from the Clam shell, they experience strange emotions, then the Chitons, back again on the rocks, grow large and the first Haida – both men and women are “given birth from these” – The sexual correspondence of the clam and the chiton is obvious – as are the allusions to intercourse and pregnancy.

**EC:** Explain in detail a practical joke that you have played on someone else or that someone else has played on you (or that someone you know has played on someone else you know). General rule of thumb: make it clean enough for Grandma to read.

## ☞ The Pot Bears a Son ☞ China (From the Uighur People)

**Notes:** The Uighur are a Turkic-speaking, Islamic people living for the most part in the Sinkiang region of northwestern China.

Once, Nasrdin Avanti borrowed a big iron pot from a rich man who was known to be very stingy. The neighbors even wondered why he should be so kind to Avanti. In fact he was not a bit kind. He let Avanti borrow his pot as if he were making him a loan.

After some time, Avanti came to the rich man and addressed him cheerfully, "Congratulations to you! Congratulations to you!"

"What for?" asked his creditor.

"Your big pot has given birth to a son," declared Avanti. "Isn't this a piece of good news?"

"Nonsense!" retorted the stingy man. "How can a pot give birth to a son?"

"If you don't believe me," replied Avanti, "just look. What's this?"

And Nasrdin untied a woolen cloth and brought out a small iron pot. No matter how serious Nasrdin looked, the rich man would not believe him. But then he thought to himself, "If Avanti is such a fool, it would be silly of me not to take advantage of him." So he acted out his delight at his pot having had a son, and loudly echoed Nasrdin's admiration of this splendid occasion.

As Nasrdin carefully put the small iron pot into his creditor's hand, he said once more, "What a handsome son!"

"Yes, yes," responded the rich man, "the little fellow really looks quite a bit like his mother."

He looked at the pot again and again, sighed with admiration, and then put it away. When Nasrdin took leave, the rich man said to him, "Take good care of my big iron pot from now on. May it have more sons like this one!"

After some time Nasrdin paid another visit to the rich man and said mournfully, "I've come to express my condolences to you!"

"What's happened?" the man asked in surprise. "Your big pot is dead," said Nasrdin. "Nonsense!" shouted the rich man. "How can a pot die?"

Then Nasrdin spoke up, "If the big pot can give birth to a son, why can't it die?"

All of a sudden, it dawned upon the rich man that it was he, after all, who had been fooled, that Nasrdin had played this trick on him very cleverly. Naturally he did not feel like letting Nasrdin have the big pot just like that, so he said, "Well, since my big pot is dead, would you be kind enough to send its corpse back to me?"

"I've already buried it," said Nasrdin.

"Where did you bury it?" the rich man demanded to know.

"In the blacksmith's forge," was the answer.

The moneylender could no longer contain his anger. "You swindler!" he shouted at Nasrdin. "You just want to rob me of my big pot!"

"It was you who robbed me of my small pot first," said Nasrdin.

This started a quarrel, but in the end the rich man was ready for a compromise, for fear of arousing his neighbors and ruining his reputation. If Nasrdin would say nothing of the small pot, the big pot would be given to him. But unexpectedly Nasrdin refused this offer and kept on making a fuss until a big crowd of people had collected around them. Then, with a

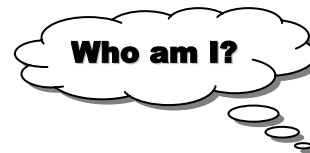
disdainful flip of his sleeves, he drew away. His purpose -- to expose the moneylender's stinginess to public ridicule -- had been achieved.

Source: *Folk Tales from China*, first series (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1957), pp. 141-144. No copyright notice.

## ☞ Nasreddin Hodja ☞ Turkey

**Notes:** Nasreddin Hodja's legendary wit and trickery were possibly based on the exploits of a historical imam. Hodja (a title meaning teacher or scholar) was reputedly born in 1208 and died in 1284. As many as 350 anecdotes have been attributed to him. He is known for his wit, common sense, frankness, ridicule... and the kind of humor that reflects human psychology, exposes the shortcomings of a society, criticizes even state and religious affairs yet always settles matters amicably.

- Nasreddin Hodja was walking down the street one day when he noticed something shining in the dirt. He walked over and picked it up. It was a small mirror. He looked in it, saw himself, and then threw it away, saying to his neighbor who was watching him, "It is not surprising, my friend, that someone threw that thing away. Who would keep such an ugly picture?"
- One day Hodja went to the market and bought a fine piece of meat. On the way home he met a friend who gave him a special recipe for the meat. Hodja was very happy. But then, before he got home, a large crow stole the meat from Hodja's hands and flew off with it. "You thief!" Hodja angrily called after the departing crow. "You have stolen my meat! But you won't enjoy it; I've got the recipe!"
- One day Hodja went to a hamam (Turkish bath) but as he was dressed so poorly, the attendants didn't pay much attention to him. They gave him only a scrap of soap, a rag for a loincloth and an old towel. When Hodja left, he gave each of the two attendants a gold coin. As he had not complained of their poor service, they were very surprised. They wondered had they treated him better whether he would have given them even a larger tip. The next week, Hodja came again. This time, they treated him like royalty and gave him embroidered towels and a loin cloth of silk. After being massaged and perfumed, he left the bath, handing each attendant the smallest copper coin possible. - This, said Hodja, is for the last visit. The gold coins were for today.



- Hodja was once a judge. One day a man came to his house to complain about his neighbor. Hodja listened carefully and then said to him, "My good man, you are right." The man went away happily. In a little while the first man's neighbor came to see Hodja. He complained about the first man. Hodja listened carefully to him, too, and then said, "My good man, you are right." Hodja's wife had been listening to all this, and when the second man left, she turned to Hodja and said, "Hodja, you told both men that they were right. That's impossible. They both can't be right." Hodja listened carefully to his wife and then said to her, "My dear, you are right."
  - A beggar was given a piece of bread, but nothing to put on it. Hoping to get something to go with his bread, he went to a nearby inn and asked for a handout. The innkeeper turned him away with nothing, but the beggar sneaked into the kitchen where he saw a large pot of soup cooking over the fire. He held his piece of bread over the steaming pot, hoping to thus capture a bit of flavor from the good-smelling vapor. Suddenly the innkeeper seized him by the arm and accused him of stealing soup.
- "I took no soup," said the beggar. "I was only smelling the vapor."
- "Then you must pay for the smell," answered the innkeeper.

The poor beggar had no money, so the angry innkeeper dragged him before the qadi.

Now Nasreddin Hodja was at that time serving as qadi, and he heard the innkeeper's complaint and the beggar's explanation.

"So you demand payment for the smell of your soup?" summarized the Hodja after the hearing.

"Yes!" insisted the innkeeper.

"Then I myself will pay you," said the Hodja, "and I will pay for the smell of your soup with the sound of money."

Thus saying, the Hodja drew two coins from his pocket, rang them together loudly, put them back into his pocket, and sent the beggar and the innkeeper each on his own way.

- Nasreddin Hodja was standing in the marketplace when a stranger stepped up to him and slapped him in the face, but then said, "I beg your pardon. I thought that you were someone else." This explanation did not satisfy the Hodja,

so he brought the stranger before the qadi and demanded compensation.

The Hodja soon perceived that the qadi and the defendant were friends. The latter admitted his guilt, and the judge pronounced the sentence: "The settlement for this offense is one piaster, to be paid to the plaintiff. If you do not have a piaster with you, then you may bring it here to the plaintiff at your convenience."

Hearing this sentence, the defendant went on his way. The Hodja waited for him to return with the piaster. And he waited. And he waited. Some time later the Hodja said to the qadi, "Do I understand correctly that one piaster is sufficient payment for a slap?"

"Yes," answered the qadi.

Hearing this answer, the Hodja slapped the judge in the face and said, "You may keep my piaster when the defendant returns with it," then walked away.

Sources: various; [www.pitt.edu/~dash/hodja.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hodja.html)

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**EC:** Tell me about Haiti... where it is, what problems it faces, what the culture is like. And what is Ti Malice sauce?

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## 🌀 Bouki Rents a Horse 🌀 A dramatic telling of a retold translation of an old Haitian tale

**It was time to dig up the yams and take them to market. So, Bouki went out with his big hoe and dug up a huge pile of yams and left them in the sun to dry. While they were drying, he began to consider how he could get them to the city.**

BOUKI: I think I will borrow Moussa's donkey. As long as I'll have the donkey to use, I might as well dig up some more yams.

**So he dug up some more yams, and then he went to Moussa's house for the donkey. But Moussa said...**

MOUSSA: I'm sorry Bouki. My donkey ran away yesterday, and we haven't found him yet. Why don't you rent a horse from Mr. Toussaint?

BOUKI: Toussaint! He'll charge more than I can get for the yams! Why, I bet he'll charge me even for just talking to him!

**But realizing that he didn't have much of a choice, Bouki finally went to Toussaint's house to see if he could rent a horse. Toussaint brought a horse out into the yard and said...**

TOUSSAINT: This is a good horse. He's too good to carry yams. But you can have him for one day for fifteen gourds.

**Bouki only had five gourds.**

TOUSSAINT: I'll take five gourds now, and you can give me ten more tomorrow when you come for the horse.

**They agreed on it and Bouki went home to get some rest. In the morning when he got up to go to market, Moussa was waiting in front of his house with the donkey.**

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MOUSSA: Good morning Bouki! Here's the donkey... he came home in the middle of the night.

BOUKI: Oh no! I already rented Toussaint's horse!

MOUSSA: Never mind. You go tell Toussaint you don't need the horse anymore. You can use my donkey.

BOUKI: But I already gave him five gourds. I'll never get my money back!

**Just then Ti Malice came along. He listened awhile to the conversation and then said...**

TI MALICE: Take me along to Toussaint's. I'll get your money back for you.

**So, together Bouki and Ti Malice went to Toussaint's place. When they got there, Ti Malice said...**

TI MALICE: We've come for the horse.

TOUSSAINT: There he is under the tree. But first give me the ten gourds.

TI MALICE: Not so fast. First we have to see if he's big enough.

TOUSSAINT: He's big enough, all right. He's the biggest horse around here. So give me the ten gourds.

TI MALICE: First we have to measure him.

**Ti Malice took a measuring tape from his pocket and stretched it over the horse's back. He said to Bouki...**

TI MALICE: Let's see, now. You need about eighteen inches, and you can sit in the middle. I need about fifteen inches, and I can sit here. Madame Malice needs about eighteen inches, and she can sit behind me. Madame Bouki needs about twenty inches, and she can sit in the front.

TOUSSAINT: **[A very agitated Toussaint said]** Wait! You can't put four people on that horse!

TI MALICE: Well then, Madame Bouki can go here on the horse's neck. Boukino can sit in his lap, and we can tie young Boukinette right here if we're careful.

TOUSSAINT: Listen! **[Toussaint said, starting to sweat]** You must be crazy. A horse can't carry so many people!

TI MALICE: Well, he can try.

TOUSSAINT: But you'll kill him!

TI MALICE: And we can put my children here, **[Ti Malice continued, measuring behind the horse's ears]** but they'll have to push together.

TOUSSAINT: Just a minute! You can't have the horse!

TI MALICE: Oh, yes we can... **[Ti Malice said, still measuring]** You rented him to us, and today we are going to use him. Bouki, where do you think we should put the baby?

BOUKI: Baby? What baby?

TI MALICE: We'll put the baby here. Madame Bouki can hold him. Then over here we can hang the saddlebags to carry the pigs.

TOUSSAINT: The deal is off! This animal isn't a steam-ship!

TI MALICE: Now don't try to back out of the deal now, or we'll take the matter to the police.

TOUSSAINT: Here! Here are your five gourds back!

TI MALICE: Five! You rented him to us for fifteen, and now you want to give five back? **[He looked at Bouki and smiled]** What do you take us for, a bunch of fools?

BOUKI: Yeah, what do you take us for?

TOUSSAINT: But Bouki only gave me five!

**Ti Malice looked the horse over carefully.**

BOUKI: Where will we put Grandmother?

TOUSSAINT: Here! Here!!! **[He pushed fifteen gourds into Ti Malice's hands]** Now get away from my horse!

**He jumped on its back and rode away. Bouki and Ti Malice watched him go. Then they fell on the ground and began to laugh. They laughed so hard that they had to gasp for air. Suddenly Bouki stopped laughing. He looked worried. He sat up straight.**

TI MALICE: What's the matter?

BOUKI: I don't think we could have done it. **[Bouki said seriously]**

TI MALICE: Done what?

BOUKI: Put Grandmother on the horse!

Source: Modified from "Best Loved Folktales of the World" by Joanna Cole, Editor (Anchor Books, 1983)

## **The Power of Writing** by Joel Swerdlow, excerpted from National Geographic, August 1999

How, then, do people in societies without writing express themselves? Of the more than 10,000 languages ever spoken, most had no written form. “We talk to each other, listen, visit, and trust the spoken word,” says Guujaaw, a leader of the Haida Nation. “Expressing yourself without writing is natural.”

The Haida have lived on the Queen Charlotte Islands off the coast of British Columbia for more than 10,000 years. Guujaaw and I are walking on Sgan Gwaii, a small island in the south that has some of the world’s last temperate rain forest. Mosses and ferns cushion our steps. In the ocean, sea lions and puffins dive for fish.

“Like most other cultures in the Western Hemisphere, you never developed writing until outsiders brought it in,” I say. “Do you think that’s because you had no need for writing?” “Are you suggesting that writing is better than speaking?” Guujaaw asks in response to my question. The answer seems obvious, I say. Things get distorted when people repeat them to one another, especially over long periods of time.

“Things get distorted in writing as well,” he says. “Oral histories from our people go back thousands of years. They are a living history. They provide a link between storyteller and listeners that written stories cannot. In fact, human intimacy and community can best come through oral communication.”

Guujaaw leans on a rock. “I’ll tell you a Haida story,” he says. “Don’t write it down. Listen. If you are busy writing, you will miss half the story. A story includes the telling and the listening.”

Hearing his story about how animals warn humans not to spoil the water stimulates my senses. Guujaaw’s voice, the breeze, the ocean, and the trees around us all flow through me. If I were reading the story, I would be alone in another world—and much less aware of my surroundings.

Plato would have said, “I told you so.” Living at a time when writing began to challenge Greece’s oral-based culture, he warned that writing would make people “trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves.... They will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing.”

But Plato lived in the fifth century BCE, when reading was physically difficult. Books were papyrus scrolls often more than 60 feet long; the idea of pages, sparked in large part by the availability of parchment, emerged in Europe in the second century CE. Space between words did not become standard in Western society until the seventh century. Long after Plato’s time, writing served mostly as an aid to memory, something to stimulate the spoken word. People read aloud, a practice that died slowly. St. Augustine, one of the world’s leading scholars in the fourth century CE, was shocked to come upon his mentor St. Ambrose reading silently.

This transition from the spoken to the written word occurred because writing meets certain needs so much more effectively. Writing permits analysis, precision, and communication with future generations in a way not possible via the spoken word. The only way I know about St. Augustine’s experience is that he mentions it in a book.

Still, Plato was right—people in an oral culture need strong memories. I have forgotten most of Guujaaw’s story by the time we enter Ninstints, an old Haida village.

Ninstints was home to hundreds of Haida families in the mid-19th century, before white people landed. Now all that remains are the foundations of a few houses and some rotting totem poles. Today, there are only about 4,000 Haida compared with 40,000 in the 19th century.

Despite such decline, Guujaaw insists that the Haida have not been defeated by people with writing. “We’ve been here on this land for thousands of years, and we’re still here,” he says. “Writing is not essential to living. People with writing are a brief chapter in our history.”

## Journal Entry

**7. Oral Tradition – (1 page).** Myths were/are handed down from generation to generation in what is called an oral tradition. Do we have an oral tradition today? How do we pass along the lessons and knowledge of our people? What is your position on the last two lines of the “Power of Writing” article?

## ☪ How Coyote kept death for the people ☪ Caddo

**Notes:** Trickster tales remind us that life isn't necessarily fair, but that nothing, no matter how unhappy, lasts forever. The amoral trickster, as befits his shape-shifting, unpredictable nature, can be a force of wild, primal power, acting on mere whim. Coyote is the form of trickster common to the Native Americans of the West, Southwest, and Great Plains. Anyone who has followed the coyote's triumphs over those who have been trying for the last two hundred years to eradicate him with traps, poison and guns can understand why he was chosen as a mythic symbol.

The Caddo: A group of closely cognate and usually allied tribes formerly holding a considerable territory in Western Louisiana and Eastern Texas. They were a semi-sedentary and agricultural people, living in large, conical, communal, grass-thatched houses, and cultivating abundant crops of corn, beans, and pumpkins.

In the early days, when the rules of the world were still being set up, the people of power held a council meeting. And at that meeting was Coyote, the trickster, the thinker.

“Why should there be death?” pondered the people that day. “Let us do away with it.”  
“Death is already a law,” Coyote reminded them.  
“You cannot cancel it so easily.”

“Then we shall change the law!” the people cried.  
“Folk will still die, yes – but they shall not stay dead forever.” Quickly the growing plan flew from one person to the next.

“We shall build a great lodge,” their chief medicine man said at last. “It shall be a place of great power. Into it the spirits of the newly dead shall fly. And out of it they shall walk, living folk once more.”

“How very nice it sounds,” Coyote drawled. “But you forget one thing, oh wise ones. If folk keep right on being born, yet no one stays dead, the world will be a crowded place pretty soon. How are you going to feed all those people, oh wise ones? Where are you going to put them?”

No, no, the people would not listen to Coyote. They chased him away with angry shouts. They would build the lodge of Power and that was that! But Coyote, watching from a secret place while the medicine men spoke their spells and chanted their chants, grinned to himself. He added his own quiet,

sly spell to those set on the lodge of Power and hid to see what would come next.

It was not long before a human man died. The medicine men played their flutes of bone, luring and tempting, and the dead man's spirit whirled on the wind, drawn towards the lodge by their magic. In another moment it would enter, and return a living man.

But Coyote was swifter than spirit, swifter than wind! He leaped out from hiding in a blur of grey fur and slammed the lodge's door shut.

“No!” the people of power cried.

But it was too late. The spirit whined and whirled about the lodge. But the door was too firmly closed. The spirit could not enter, and the power of the bone flutes was broken. The spirit whirled away on its proper path away from the land of the living, and Coyote laughed.

“Thanks to me, the power of your lodge is gone!” he called to the people. “When the first spirit failed to enter, that lodge became nothing more than a useless grass hut!”

That was all Coyote had time to say. In the next moment, all the furious people of power were chasing him. Of course he escaped, the sly grey one. But from that day to this, all coyotes still run with their heads looking over their shoulders, just in case the people of power – who refuse to admit how Coyote's trick saved the world – might be catching up to them.



## ☪ Coyote and the Stranger ☪ Kiowa

**Notes:** An important Plains tribe, constituting a distinct linguistic stock, the Kiowa are now located in western Oklahoma. Formerly they resided in the mountains about the head of the Missouri River, in western Montana, in close alliance with the Crow. From this position they gradually drifted southward along the Plains, and after having been driven from the Black Hills region by the Sioux about 1800, made their principal headquarters upon the upper Arkansas.

Coyote was going along one day, trotting down the desert way, when he saw the dust of a horse and rider. White man coming! And look at the fancy rig on him!

Well, old Coyote was a shape shifter, of course. In no time, he had taken manshape, looking just like a poor man of the people, dark skin, black hair. Only his eyes were odd, the mocking green eyes of the trickster.

Did the stranger know him by those eyes? Maybe. For the man pointed right at Coyote and said, "Heard there's someone around here who fancies himself a cheater. Someone by the name of Coyote."

Cheater! Coyote thought indignantly. A fine name for someone who set the sun in the sky! "Might be," he answered smoothly, bland of face. But behind that blank mask, his busy mind was plotting.

"Ha, you're Coyote, I know it! But I'm a better cheater than you. Ain't a man alive who can out-trick me, surely not some worn out old Indian! Come on, try me!"

Now, here was a pretty bird, just asking to be plucked! Coyote grinned lazily, tongue lolling out. "The day's too warm."

"Try me! Try to cheat me!"

"No. The sun's too hot."

"You're afraid! You're scared to have a cheating match with me."

Coyote sighed. "Trouble is, I left my cheating medicine back home."

"Well, go get it."

"It's too far. I'm too tired. You want a cheating match, better wait till another day. Or lend me your horse so I can get there and back again."

The stranger thought that one over just for a minute, so eager was he to show what a mighty trickster he was. He jumped down from the saddle. But Coyote slyly moved upwind of the horse. And it, smelling the not-human scent of him, shied, eyes rolling, ears twitching.

"He's scared of me because I don't have a white man's hat," Coyote said. "Let me borrow yours."

"Here, take it. Go get your cheating medicine."

But Coyote still stood upwind. And of course the horse still shied. Coyote shrugged. "He's scared of me because I don't wear a white man's clothes. Guess our match is off."

But the stranger was so eager to prove himself, he peeled out of his fancy shirt and pants and boots without a moments thought. "Here, try them."

Coyote slid into the alien clothes, leaving the man in only his long johns. With the alien hat on his head, Coyote moved downwind. Unable to scent him, the horse stood still. Coyote mounted and urged it into a trot. But then, safely out of reach, old Coyote reined in the horse again, looked back at the denuded man, and grinned.

"Well, stranger. " he called. "Are you content? Learned your lesson?"

"Lesson? What are you talking about?" shouted the man.

"Look down at yourself, stranger. No clothes, no horse. Look down and admit: No man living can trick Coyote!"

"Why you sly, no-good... You come back here!" he raged. But with a wave of his hand, Coyote rode away.

## ☯ Trickster's Buffalo Hunt ☯ Hotcâk (Winnebago)

**Notes:** Trickster (Wak'djûk'aga) was the first of the great demigods created by Earthmaker to rescue mankind. When Earthmaker had completed his creation, almost as an afterthought he made man, the weakest of all his creations. They were soon beset by evil spirits who assailed them without pity and were in danger of altogether destroying this last article of creation. So Earthmaker created Trickster in the image of a man, and charged him to go forth and teach the humans how they should live. Yet it is said that he was as worthless as an infant crawling about on all fours. So foolish was he that he did more damage than good. Consequently, Earthmaker recalled him and placed him at his right hand.

Trickster is at least a negative role model among the Hotcâgara today, and people who behave in a foolish or hypocritical manner are often brought to task by having their actions compared to those of Trickster. Sometimes people who act selfishly also are said to be "playing Wak'djûk'aga." The following story is second in a several story cycle. You can read the first one, "Trickster's Warpath," at <http://hotcakencyclopedia.com/ho.TrickstersWarpath.html>.

After everyone deserted him, Trickster forged on ahead by himself. In those days all the objects in the world could communicate with one another, as they understood each other's language. When Trickster talked to anything, he would always address it as "younger brother."

As he was walking along, he looked up at the top of a knoll ahead of him, and there he saw a buffalo. He thought to himself, "Too bad I threw away my arrows, otherwise I could kill this



animal and make a fine meal of him."

However, he still had his knife, so he took it out and began cutting down the tall grass. He took the grass and formed it into the shapes of men, which he set in a circle with one end open. In front

of the opening the ground was a morass of mud. He then walked to where he had seen the buffalo, and called out to it, "Oho! Younger brother, here you are grazing without a thing to worry about. Continue on, and don't worry about intruders, I'll stand guard here. Say, younger brothers, you know don't you that this place is completely surrounded by human beings. But look over there, there's a gap through which you can escape." The buffalo looked up, and much to his surprise he saw that he was indeed completely surrounded by human beings; but he could see the opening Trickster showed him, and made a mad dash to escape. He no sooner cleared the circle of people, than he fell into the

field of mud and became completely mired in it. Trickster rushed him with his knife and killed him. He dragged the body over to a cluster of trees where he skinned it. As he butchered the carcass, he used the knife only in his right hand.

While all this is going on, suddenly as if it had a mind of its own, his left hand seized the buffalo. The right hand became indignant and exclaimed, "That buffalo is mine, either let go of it, or I'll use this knife to cut you to ribbons!" So the left arm relinquished its grip. However, just as the right arm returned to skinning the buffalo, the left arm suddenly seized it at the wrist. Every time the right arm freed itself and set back to its task, the left arm would renew its attack. Thus did Trickster allow his arms to struggle against one another. Finally, the right arm began to wield its knife, and the left arm was pretty badly cut up. When Trickster saw how badly his left arm was bleeding, he said "Oh no, why have I done this? Why have I acted thus, to cause myself to suffer so?"

When he was done dressing the buffalo, he started on his trek again. However, wherever he would go, the birds would call out, "Look, there goes Trickster walking around!" Then they would fly away. Trickster would always say, "Those nasty little birds, I wonder what they are saying?" Nevertheless, they continued to call out, "There's Trickster walking around, look!" They would do thus whenever they saw him. [This strange "ending" provides a segue into the third story in the Trickster Cycle].

## Journal Entry Pick one of the following prompts...

**8a. Trickster Animal Story – (2 pages).** Choose an animal you feel has natural qualities that when exaggerated would make it a suitable trickster character. Use your trickster to write a tale that explains the creation of a natural phenomenon or teaches a moral lesson.

**8b. Modern Tricksters – (1 page).** Think of someone (person, TV character, cartoon, etc.) that you think fits the bill of modern trickster. Using the functions, attributes, readings, and discussions we've had in class, explain your selection in detail.

## Loki Norse

Always restless and in search of new experiences, Loki began to be laughed at by the gods, especially by Odin, who had no respect or time for him whatsoever.

Loki resented this treatment and decided that the ultimate trick would be to do something to the great Odin himself. He had also grown quite jealous of Balder, Odin's son. The most beautiful of all gods and a threat to Loki's hilarious antics, Balder was the god of light and had runes carved on his tongue. He was a great herbal doctor and could see into the future. But his premonitions became terrifying nightmares that foresaw only an awful fate awaiting him. The light left Balder's eyes, and so Odin and Frigg demanded from every object, mortal and creature in the world that nothing or no one would harm their son. The only thing Frigg forgot to tell was the mistletoe, but she was certain it could really do no harm to Balder at all. Balder had suddenly become invincible – he was not only beautiful and clever but was now a great attraction to the other gods.

Loki heard how many gods had been testing Balder's new-found resilience to anything in the world. Groups of deities would journey to Gladsheim just to see if anything could hurt him. They threw rocks at him, fired arrows and hit him with their axes, but nothing had any effect. In fact they all had so much fun that Balder's popularity became widespread, and Loki's mischievous fun began to turn stale and dull in comparison. Balder's increasing fame also stirred Loki's jealousy and anger.

Loki decided that the god of light would soon be the god of darkness. He plotted to kill Balder, which would also be a fine way of hurting Odin. Loki

traveled to Gladsheim and changed himself into the form of an elderly woman. He found Frigg spinning in the great hall. He knew that she had given Balder his invulnerability, but he felt certain that there was a way to find a chink in his invisible armor.

With the guile and cunning of a fox, he eventually found out from Frigg, as they sat spinning together, that she had forgotten to enlist the help of the mistletoe. Loki yawned wearily. He told Frigg that he was very tired and his back ached, and he really should go and take some rest. But as soon as he was out of the great hall, Loki turned into his own form and rushed into the woods to find some mistletoe. He removed the berries, stripped the leaves until there was one long straight piece and he sharpened one end of it.

Down in the great court the gods were having fun with Balder. Each was taking turns throwing rocks or missiles at Balder's head, and each time they roared with laughter as Balder just stood there smiling his radiant smile. Loki watched from the door, livid with envy, until he spotted the blind Hoder who was doing his best to join in the fun. Because Hoder could not see where he was aiming, he kept missing Balder altogether, which made everyone laugh even more.

Loki went up to Hoder, disguised again as an old woman, and offered to guide his hand in the right direction if he wanted to throw something at Balder. After all, why shouldn't he join in the fun? Hoder nodded enthusiastically and Loki gave him the sharp mistletoe stick he'd pulled out from under his sleeve. Hoder agreed to throw the dart. Loki took his hand and aimed the dart

straight at Balder's heart. As Hoder let go he heard the stick whiz through the air and only silence when there should have been cheers. The dart had struck Balder's chest and he fell dead to the ground.

The gods were horrified; they guessed it was Loki who had tricked Hoder into throwing the dart, but it was Hoder who would have to pay the price for his brother's death.

Odin and Frigg were heart-broken and attempted to save Balder as he lay in Niflheim. Their only chance was to make sure that the whole world – every god, goddess, animal, plant, and creature – mourned for Balder and he would then rise again to Asgard. But one giantess, Thok, refused. This giantess was, of course, Loki in disguise.

Loki was subsequently banished from feasts at Asgard, but he always turned up to irritate and inflict pain on gods and mortals alike. His tricks became more and more spiteful and stirred the gods against one another. Uninvited to one banquet, he turned up anyway and began throwing insults at all the gods. No doubt his words conveyed more than a little truth, and the gods decided Loki had to be destroyed.

Loki knew that Odin and the other gods would easily track him down. Odin was all-seeing, so Loki prepared himself for a visit from the gods. First, he made a net. As he was the cleverest of the gods he reckoned that if he couldn't make a net strong enough to catch him, no one else could. But his incredible skill enabled him to make a net capable of snaring even himself.

Horried at his own incredible creation, he was just about to change his plan, when Odin, Thor and Kvasir came storming toward his house. Panic-struck, Loki jumped into the river, turned into a fish and began to swim away. But the three gods found the strong net and threw it into the water, dragging the flailing fish to the shore.

To make sure that Loki would never plague them or the universe again, they imprisoned him in a deep cave. First, they changed Loki's son, Vali, into a wolf and set him on his brother, Narfi. Vali tore Narfi apart, and the gods used Narfi's entrails to tie Loki to three huge rocks: one under his shoulders, one under his loins and one under his knees.

This cave was the kingdom of Skadi, the giantess. She hated Loki for the various tricks he had played on her in the past, and she was quite happy to hang a serpent above his head so that the venom dripped onto his face until Ragnarok – forever. This was so painful that Loki's wife, Sigyn, who had always been loyal and faithful to him, sat by his side, catching the drips in a cup she held above his head. It is only when she moves away to empty the bowl that the drips fall on Loki's face, causing him such pain and agony that earthquakes shake across the world.

When this cycle of time ends and Ragnarok comes, Loki will escape from the cave and destroy all the gods. Only fire and ice will be left as it was at the beginning of creation.

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**EC:** Find out about Hermes: what was he the patron god of? What are his special talents? What is a caduceus?

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## ☞ Hermes – Apollo's Cows ☞ Greek

Hermes was the son of Zeus and Maia, a wood-nymph. He was born in a cave in Arcadia on Mount Cyllene, and as soon as he was born he wanted to get up to mischief. His anxiety to find something to do, rather than just lie around in his cot, provoked him to get up and explore the world. At this time, Hermes was probably only a few hours old. As he walked out of the cave into the bright spring air his first encounter was with a tortoise. Gazing at the beautiful shell, Hermes

decided that there were far better things he could do with it than just look at it. Killing the poor tortoise, he proceeded to remove the shell, stretched some cow-hide across it and plaited some grass to make the strings. Maia never scolded him for killing the animal because he played the lyre so well.

Eventually Hermes got bored with the lyre, threw it into his cot and went in search of something

else to amuse him. By now he was feeling hungry, and he came across a field of cattle belonging to his brother Apollo. The cattle were guarded by two watchdogs, so Hermes drugged the dogs and led the cattle backwards out of the field, so that their footprints were pointing in the opposite direction to the way that he was leading them. He dragged them by their tails all the way to a cave at Pylos, disguising his own footprints by making a pair of grass sandals so that he left no trace behind.

He killed two of the cattle to cook, divided them up into twelve portions to make a sacrifice to each of the gods, and kept a bit for himself. After he had devoured his sacrificial supper, Hermes wandered back, turned into a wisp of cloud and entered his home through the keyhole. He climbed into his cot and cuddled his tortoiseshell lyre under his arm as if it were a soft toy.

But it wasn't long before Apollo found out that Hermes had stolen his cattle. On his way home, in his usual boastful fashion, Hermes had told an old man that he had robbed his brother of his herd. Unfortunately for Hermes, this old man was none other than Battus, the god of gossip. Apollo arrived at the cave and confronted the sleeping Hermes who protested his innocence from the safety of his cradle.

"Do I look like a cattle thief? I'm only two days old and all I want is sleep and milk. Newborn

babies don't steal cows, my feet are too soft to run, and I don't even know what a cow looks like yet".

But Apollo was not convinced by Hermes's lies. "You're a deceiver and you speak like a thief. You'd better come with me to see Zeus, our father. It will be for him to decide your fate."

So Apollo snatched Hermes out of the cot and dragged him kicking and screaming to Zeus. Hermes cursed every cow in the world and behaved like the brat he was. But when Zeus saw them together, he was charmed by Hermes naiveté and couldn't believe that he had stolen anything.

Apollo pleaded his case, but Hermes just carried on telling his lies, until Zeus, who was finding the whole thing highly amusing, ordered the brothers to be friends and to make up. Hermes agreed to take Apollo to where the cattle were hidden, and when they arrived Hermes began to play his magical lyre. Apollo was enchanted by the music of the lyre and asked Hermes if he would share its secret. Hermes agreed only if he were to have a share of Apollo's cattle. So the bargain was struck, and Apollo and Hermes became close friends. It was, in fact, Apollo who taught Hermes how to tell the future by reading the patterns that ripples made on water.

## ☞ Hermes - Baby Heracles ☞ Greek

Hermes was not a robber, but a thief. The subtle distinction here was that he became the patron of stealth, rather than of outright burglary or mugging. Zeus would often use him to rescue others, particularly divine children, from danger.

He became the messenger of the gods, flying between heaven, earth and the underworld, the only god who could travel freely between these places. He was the supreme trickster, and because no one could cheat him and get away with it, he was given the job of accompanying the souls of the dead on their way to the underworld. It was he who escorted Persephone, Eurydice and Orpheus back from the underworld.

Hermes's trickery was invaluable when it came to rescuing and saving others, as when he came to the aid of the child, Heracles. Heracles was the son of Zeus and a mortal woman, Alcmena. Because he was not wholly divine, Heracles was in danger from Hera's malicious jealousy. The consequences of Hera ever finding out that her husband Zeus had slept with a mortal who subsequently bore him a child were usually murderous.

Hermes decided to help Heracles. If Heracles were to become divine, Hera could not harm him. The only way he could do so was to suckle the milk of a goddess. This is when Hermes came up with one of his better plans. He lay the baby Heracles on a path in the woods and asked Hera

if she would like to go for a walk with him. Hermes was a bit of a flirt and as they talked and walked, he idly commented upon the beauty of Hera's body and breasts. Hera was, of course, flattered by the youthful Hermes and his complimentary words. They came across the crying baby lying on the path. Heracles had been wrapped up well so that Hera couldn't recognize him. If she knew the child to be mortal or one of Zeus's offspring, she would have killed it. Hermes looked down at the poor thing and said: "This baby seems so hungry, and you, Hera, with your

beautiful breasts, you could give this child such wonderful milk."

Hera, still flattered by the attention from the young god, agreed and proudly took the baby to her breast. She began to feed Heracles, but as he suckled she guessed that this was no divine child. She pulled her breast away from the child and drops of milk spurted out into the sky to form the Milky Way. As for Heracles, thanks to the intervention of Hermes, he had received just enough divine milk to become god-like and to follow his own heroic path.

## ð Trickster Unit Test Review Sheet ð

**Know at least two functions (not including “Entertainment”) for every Trickster tale...**

1. Shows how humans evolve
2. Explains a natural phenomenon
3. Gives listener hope that things will get better
4. Instructs the listener culturally or morally
5. Criticizes socially or politically
6. Makes the listener feel pride in their culture
7. Speaks out against the powerful (the oppressors)
8. ~~Entertains~~

**Re-read “Mind: Trickster, Transformer” and “The Power of Writing”**

**Know what tribe or country claims each story**

**Focus on the following areas...**

**How Stories Came to Earth** West African (Ashanti of Ghana)  
Character names & the four creatures (and how they were tricked).

**Raven finds the First Men** Haida  
Functions, and where Raven found the first men and women (and why this is important).

**The Pot Bears a Son** China (From the Uighur People)  
Know basic plot and character actions.

**Nasreddin Hodja** Turkey  
Know all the stories in the text and the one function of all Hodja stories.

**Bouki Rents a Horse** Haiti  
Character names. How does Ti Malice trick Toussaint?

**How Coyote kept death for the people** Caddo  
Why (specific reasons) and how he does it.

**Coyote and the Stranger** Kiowa  
Know three functions.

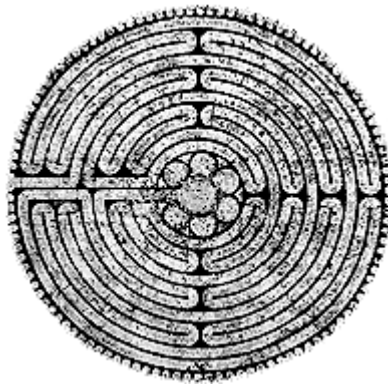
**Trickster’s Buffalo Hunt** Hotcâk (Winnebago)  
Basic story movement, Hotcâk attitude toward trickster.

**Loki** Norse  
Main characters; the one thing that could harm Balder; and two of the shapes Loki changes into.

**Hermes – Apollo’s Cows** Greek  
Characters, and what Zeus orders the boys to do.

**Hermes – Baby Heracles** Greek  
Characters and what was created from Hera’s breast milk.

## Hero Quests



### Some Attributes of the Hero...

is usually a demi-god, has a god in his family,  
or is a member of the nobility (king, prince, son of ruler, etc.)

has some kind of super-natural power  
or has the strong support of a god.

is usually on a quest. He has a task or a challenge (or more than one)  
that an ordinary mortal could not carry out.

is always seeking fame, glory, or honor.  
These are often more important than life itself.

is braver, stronger, bolder and sometimes  
more clever than most men.

usually has a weakness (too much pride or a terrible temper).  
This can lead to problems for him, and usually to his downfall.



## TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING...

- Agon** A conflict, especially between the protagonist and antagonist in a work of literature. A battle or fight. Is the root of the word *agony*.
- Mesopotamia** An ancient region of southwest Asia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (it means “between two rivers”) in modern-day Iraq. Probably settled before 5000 B.C., the area was the home of numerous early civilizations, including Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, and Assyria. It declined in importance after Mongol invaders destroyed its extensive irrigation system in 1258 CE.

## 💀 Epic of Gilgamesh 💀

**Notes:** The Epic of Gilgamesh was an orally-transmitted epic poem of ancient origin written down in Akkadian ca. 2000 BCE. It is a fragmentary written text in cuneiform on clay tablets found at Nineveh, Mesopotamia, in the nineteenth century. The following version is a composite translation of several text fragments discovered since that first fragment was found at Nineveh. It adds even older Sumerian fragments to the later Akkadian. There seems never to have been an “authentic” version of the poem – fragments indicate that the poem evolved and branched out from basic themes through oral transmission, creating a variety of retellings.



## Important names for you to know...

- Anu \_\_\_\_\_
- Dilmun \_\_\_\_\_
- Enkidu \_\_\_\_\_
- Gilgamesh \_\_\_\_\_
- Humbaba \_\_\_\_\_
- Ishtar \_\_\_\_\_
- Ninsun \_\_\_\_\_
- Shamash \_\_\_\_\_
- Shamhat \_\_\_\_\_
- Siduri \_\_\_\_\_
- Urshanabi \_\_\_\_\_
- Uruk \_\_\_\_\_
- Utnapishtim \_\_\_\_\_

## 📖 Journal Entry 📖

**9. Heroes – (1 page).** What is a hero to you? What does your definition of a hero include? By your standards, do any exist today? (If not, explain...) Tell me about one of your heroes. Why is this person important to you?

## 🌀 Tablet I 🌀

**[ Column I ]** Fame haunts the man who visits Hell, who lives to tell my entire tale identically. So like a sage, a trickster or saint, Gilgamesh was a hero who knew secrets and saw forbidden places, who could even speak of the time before the Flood because he lived long, learned much, and spoke his life to those who first cut into clay his bird-like words. He commanded walls for Uruk and for Eanna, our holy ground, walls that you can see still; walls where weep the weary widows of dead soldiers. Go to them and touch their immovable presence

10. with gentle fingers to find yourself. No one else ever built such walls. Climb Uruk's Tower and walk about on a windy night. Look. Touch. Taste. Sense. What force created such mass? Open up the special box that's hidden in the wall and read aloud the story of Gilgamesh's life. Learn what sorrow taught him; learn of those he overcame by wit or force or fear as he, a town's best child, acted nobly in the way one should to lead and acted wisely too as one who sought no fame. Child of Lugalbanda's wife and some great force,

20. Gilgamesh is a fate alive, the finest babe of Ninsun, she who never let a man touch her, indeed so sure and heavenly, so without sin. He knew the secret paths that reached the eagle's nest above the mountain and knew too how just to drop a well into the chilly earth. He sailed the sea to where Shamash comes, explored the world, sought life, and came at last to Utnapishtim far away who did bring back to life the flooded earth. Is there anywhere a greater king who can say, as Gilgamesh may "I am supreme"?

- Specifically, how is Gilgamesh portrayed by the narrator?
- What does Gilgamesh build around Uruk?

**[ Column II ]** 30. The bigger part of him was made in heaven and the smaller part somewhere on earth. She-who-must-be-obeyed fashioned his body's self. She endowed him. Gilgamesh watches the flocks of Uruk himself as if he were a loose bull, nose up in open field. No one else could come close to fighting like that. His clan is roused by howling dreams and with them all he goes howling through sanctuaries. But would he ever let his child come to see him ravish others? "Is this shepherd of Uruk's flocks, our strength, our light, our reason,

40. who hoards the girls of other men for his own purpose?" When Anu in the sky heard this, he said to Aruru, great goddess of creation: "You created humans; create again in the image of Gilgamesh and let this imitation be as quick in heart and as strong in arm so that these counterforces might first engage, then

disengage, and finally let Uruk's children live in peace." Hearing that, Aruru thought of Anu. Then she wet her creative fingers, fashioned a rock, and tossed it as far as she could into the woods. Thus she fathered

50. Enkidu, a forester, and gave birth in terror and in fright without a single cry of pain, bringing forth another likeness of Ninurta, god of war. Hair covered his body and his curls resembled those of any good girl, growing swiftly like the fair hair of Nisaba-giver-of-grain. This Enkidu had neither clan nor race. He went clothed as one who shepherds well, eating the food of grass, drinking from the watery holes of herds and racing swift as wind or silent water. Then Enkidu met a hunter at the watery hole on three consecutive days. And each time the face of the

60. hunter signaled recognition of Enkidu. The herds were uninvited at the hunter's oasis and the hunter was disturbed by this intrusion. His quiet heart rushed up in trouble. His eyes darkened. Fear leaped forth onto a face that looks as if it expects to doubt for a long, long time.

- What does the fact that he is part human suggest?
- What does Gilgamesh do that makes the people angry?
- What is Enkidu supposed to do to Gilgamesh?

**[ Column III ]** Then with trembling lips the hunter told his father this complaint: "Sir, one has come to my watery hole from afar and he is the biggest and best throughout the land. He feels power. His is a strength like that of Anu's swift star, and tirelessly does he roam across the land. He eats the

70. food of beasts and, like the beasts, he comes at will to drink from my watery hole. In fear do I see him come to undo what I have done by wrecking traps, by bursting mounds, by letting animals slip through my grasp, beasts that I would bind." Then with hateful lips, the father told the hunter his reply: "Boy, your answer lies in Uruk where there stalks a man of endless strength named Gilgamesh. He is the biggest and best throughout the land. He feels power. His is a strength like that of Anu's swift star. Start out toward Uruk's ancient palace and tell

80. your tale to Gilgamesh. In turn he'll say to set a trap, take back with you a fine lover, some sacred temple girl, who might let him see what force and charm a girl can have. Then as Enkidu comes again to the watery hole, let her strip in nearby isolation to show him all her grace. If he is drawn toward her, and leaves the herd to mate, his beasts on high will leave him then behind." The hunter heard his father well and went that very night to Uruk where he said this to Gilgamesh: "There is someone from afar whose force is great throughout our land. His is a

90. great strength. He feels power. His is a strength like that of Anu's swift star, and tirelessly does he roam across

the land. He eats the food of beasts and, like the beasts, he comes at will to drink from my watery hole. In fear do I see him come to undo what I have done by wrecking traps, by bursting mounds, by letting animals slip through my grasp, beasts that I would bind.” So Gilgamesh replied: “Go set a trap; take back with you a fine lover, Shamhat, the sacred temple girl, who might let him see what charm and force

100. a girl can have. Then as Enkidu comes again to the watery hole, let her strip in nearby isolation to show him all her grace. If he is drawn toward her, and leaves the herd to mate, his beasts on high will leave him then behind.” The hunter returned, bringing with him the sacred temple girl, and swift was their journey. Three days later, at the watery hole, they set their trap for Enkidu and spoke no word for two whole days waiting and waiting and waiting. Then the herd came slowly in to drink. Beasts arose and sleepy limbs began to flutter

- Why did the hunter complain to his father?
- Why does the story contain so much repetition?
- How will Shamhat be of help to the hunter?

**[ Column IV ]** 110. then. Enkidu, the boy who walked on mountains, who eats the food of beasts and, like the beasts, comes down at will to drink from the watery hole, with the beasts arose and stretched his tired limbs to start the day. She beheld him, as he was in his beginning, the one who gave and took life from the far woods.

[lines omitted contain explicit sexual instructions given to the girl by the hunter. She is told to seduce Enkidu and “Let him see what force a girl can have.” She does this and Enkidu stays with her for seven nights.]

After that week of pleasure, Enkidu returned to the herds but the beasts fled from him in haste. They stampeded away from his new self. He could no longer race as he had once, legs soft now and ankles stiff. The

120. beasts left him behind and he grew sad that he could no longer speed with them. But he enjoyed the memory that no virgin has and, returning to his fine lover, he once more knelt between her legs as she spoke these words to him: “Now you are like a god, my boy, with no more need of dumb beasts, however fair. We can now ascend the road to Uruk’s palace, the immaculate domicile, where Anu and Ishtar dwell, and there we will see Gilgamesh, the powerful, who rides over the herd like any great king.” These words he heard and he stared at her. For the first time he wished

130. for just one friend. Then Enkidu asked the love who was so fine: “Please come with me and be my love at the immaculate domicile, where Anu and Ishtar dwell, and there we will see Gilgamesh, the powerful,

who rides over the herd like any great king. I wish to call on him; to proclaim all things aloud and find a friend in him.”

- What is happening to Enkidu after the seduction?
- What does Enkidu wish for?

**[ Column V ]** Enkidu continued: “Uruk will hear me say, ‘I am the strongest. I alone can do all I wish.’ Forester that I am, a mountainous power is mine. We should march together,

140. face-by-face, so I can promote your fame.” Then fine lover said these words in invitation: “Enter Uruk of the herds, Enkidu, where costumes bright are worn, where it is always time to party, where merry music never fades, where graceful girls do ever play with toys and boys and men; for in the night these revelers do their best to rule the town. There, with a smile, Enkidu will see his other self, great Gilgamesh. Watch him all, please. Note his face, his fists, his fairest sword, and all the strength that dwells in him. Could he be greater than you, this one

150. who’s up and down all day and night? Fear your own anger, boy; for great Gilgamesh adores fair Shamash and is adored in turn. Anu of the blue sky, Enlil from the clouds and clever Ea have empowered him. And before he even sees you, this great Gilgamesh will have first envisioned you in Uruk as a rival in a dream.” Gilgamesh awakens to ask his mother, Ninsun, to leave off the dream. “Mother,” says he, “I saw a star within my head in sleep just now that fell at me like Anu’s dart and I could not escape. Uruk was on high of it, our people did

160. applaud, and gathered Lip to praise his force. Men clenched fists; women danced. And I too embraced this rising star, as a man does the woman he loves best, then took the new one here to you so that you could see us both at once.” Gilgamesh’s mother who is wise in all and worries not, replied: “This bright, new star is your true friend who fell at you like Anu’s

**[ Column VI ]** dart, whom you could not escape.” Then she who is wise in all and worries not continued: “So say this friend is one who is almighty, with strength renowned around the

170. world, like Anu’s dart his force is real so that he draws you in, as does a wife, though he is sure to race away, like that most distant star, with the secrets of your origin. This dissolves your sleep.” Then again, Gilgamesh said to her in reply: “Mother, I slept when some with axes then attacked the herds of Uruk.” So Ninsun reassured the frightened king: “Enkidu will help. He will guard his loves or rescue them from danger; he is your most faithful friend. Expect him to shepherd you and to be sure that all goes well.” Gilgamesh said to

180. his fond source: "I pray for fortune and for fate to send me such a one that I may have a friend who's as kind and patient as a brother." Then in sleep full of repose the temple girl enchanted Enkidu where they lay smiling.

- What does Shamhat warn Enkidu to fear?
- What does the star symbolize in Gilgamesh's dreams?
- What does Gilgamesh wish for?

## 🌀 Tablet II 🌀

[ Column I ] Then Gilgamesh explained his dream to Ninsun: "Last night a vision filled my head with sights of stars and one sent down from heaven. At first I tried and failed to carry forth these signs with me. Then all citizens of Uruk here assisted in my efforts. So I was able then to bring these omens near to you." And she said in reply: "Wisely done, fair son, and rightly so for one well reared as you were. All others too will soon acclaim this god-sent gift to you." Then Gilgamesh concluded: "In another dream I saw an ax and bent toward it with

10. manly interest; so fair was its appearance that it seemed wholesome, young and ready as a woman."

[ Column II ] The day came when the fine lover of Enkidu said: "Now come with me to enter into Uruk where we shall meet the mighty king, enormous Gilgamesh. Now you are like a god, my boy, with no more need of dumb beasts, however fair. We can ascend the road to Uruk's palace, the immaculate domicile, where Anu and Ishtar dwell and there we will see Gilgamesh, the powerful, who rides over the herd like any great king.

20. You will see in him a power rare and fairly learn to love him like yourself." They journeyed from the forest far and wide to venture on toward Uruk. The girl led forth the naked boy as gently as a mother would, tearing her garment right in two to hide their native beauty and clothed his splendid body then with her own cloak as they approached.

[ Column III ] Along the way he learned new human ways... tracking down the gentle sheep and using weapons for the first time to fight away the savage beasts that do attack the

[ Column IV ] 30. herds and farms of men. Along the way he also learned to eat and drink as men and women do. The girl did teach all these things too for Enkidu's first lessons. And with a man upon the road they spoke to learn of customs new to one from far off woods. So Enkidu came then to know of Gilgamesh who harshly ruled and was not loved by those men

whose girls he often played with all night long. And before they entered through the gates of Uruk's mighty walls, Enkidu was hailed as one who might be sent to rival

- In what ways does Enkidu change on his journey to Uruk?

[ Column V ] 40. any king who might treat gentle folk unfairly. In the alleys of Uruk during a display of force the approach of Enkidu stopped everything. Uruk rose before him. The mountain beyond stretched skyward. All creatures worshiped him. Youths rallied round. People adored him as they adore a newborn babe. For so it is when one comes from nowhere to do what no one thought could be done. For Ishara then a wedding bed is set this night because a guest has come who is as strong as any king. And Enkidu stood before the gate where new lovers go

50. and stopped Gilgamesh from coming with nighttime girls. It is there where they first fight throughout the night and round about Uruk's walls which they

- Why do the people of Uruk adore Enkidu so much?
- What does Enkidu try to stop Gilgamesh from doing?

[ Column VI ] chipped and wrecked in places. So the mighty brothers fought at first pushing and shoving each other for hours and hours enraged. Then a calm force gently soothed the well-matched spirits to bring a peace and rest to their strife. It was Enkidu who sued for rest saying: "Gilgamesh, enough! I am here to match some fate with you, not to destroy or rival any king."

## 🌀 Tablet III 🌀

[ Column I, II ] Then Enkidu and Gilgamesh joined in sacred friendship and sealed their solemn bond with noble kiss. Enkidu and Gilgamesh often sat then together, visited Ninsun's shrine, conversed of many plans and fashioned a future together. Once, informed by fears of future sorrow, Enkidu began to weep and warn his friend of coming horror. He said: "If we go there beyond here to where Humbaba-the-awful lives, there will be a gruesome war in a place no one calls home, where no one wants to stay for long or go to rest or rest to gain

10. the strength to reach the forests." The Great One rose within and robed herself appropriately covering herself, ringing her curls beneath her crown to ascend the altar, where she stood lighting the first signals of charcoal for the incense and preparing sacred cups that hold the precious liquids which will be spilled. Then Ninsun asked Shamash: "Why? Why have you called my only son away and shaped his mind in so disturbed a way? For now, he says, you invite him to begin a pilgrimage that ends where Humbaba directs a never ending battle, along

20. a foreign, lonely road far within the forests dark and damp where a man like him might just kill a god like

- How might Anu feel about their friendship?
- What vision does Shamash give the two?

**[ Column III ]** Humbaba or be killed to dissolve the pain that you, Shamash, oppose.” Humbaba stirs within the darkened wood and in the hearts of men there rises fear. When Enkidu spoke at last to Gilgamesh he said these words of warning: “I knew this monster’s reputation long ago. Fire and death mix in his breath, and I for one do not wish now to challenge such a demon.” But Gilgamesh retorted: “All glory will be ours if now we

30. conquer this unprecedented foe and risk the woe that frightens others.” And Enkidu said then in swift

**[ Column IV ]** reply: “How shall we go towards woods so fiercely guarded?” Enlil it was who sent Humbaba there to scare away intruders with fierce and frightening howls. Great Gilgamesh remembered that when he spoke words like these to Enkidu: “Only gods live forever with Shamash, my friend; for even our longest days are numbered. Why worry over being like dust in the wind? Leap up for this great threat. Fear not. Even if I

40. were to fail and fall in combat, all future clans would say I did the job.” Special weapons then were ordered to be made for their assault upon Humbaba. Axes, swords, and combat saddles were prepared and

- Who sent Humbaba to guard the forest?
- What is the gist of Gilgamesh’s pep talk to Enkidu?

**[ Column V ]** all of Uruk’s population flocked round their great departure. The awful monster’s reputation made Uruk’s gentle people fear for their great king. And after all the plans were made to start out to fight Humbaba, a group came forward to see the king. The elders spoke to Gilgamesh: “Fear the force that you control,

50. hot-headed boy. Be sure you watch where you direct your every, heavy swing in battle. Vanguard protect. Friends save friends. Let Enkidu lead on the way through forests that he knows. He knows how to fight in woodlands; he knows where to pick his fight. Enkidu will shield his bosom too as well as that of his companion so as to protect them both. He’ll traverse any ditch of any width. Enkidu will guard our king. Be sure to bring him safely back.” Gilgamesh said to Enkidu: “Arise, my other self, and speed your way to

60. Egalmah to where my mother sits, kind Ninsun. She understands all I need to know. She’ll tell us where we should go and what to do.” Again the men embraced as teammates do. Gilgamesh and Enkidu set out to Egalmah.

- What is Gilgamesh warned to fear?

**[ Column VI ]** Upset by all his thoughts of coming battles and concerned by his consultations with the gods, Gilgamesh then sadly set his palace rooms in order. His weapons were prepared, his helmet shined and garments freshly cleaned. Citizens of Uruk came to say good-bye and wish their

70. daring king farewell. “Go careful through this risky, bold adventure, mighty lord. Be sure of your own safety first of all.” So spoke the elders of his town and then continued: “Let Enkidu take risks for you and have him lead the way through woods he knows so well. Pray that Shamash show him, as your guide, the nearest path and choicest route to where you dare to go. May great Lugalbanda favor you in combat with Humbaba.” Then Enkidu himself spoke finally to his king: “The time is right for us to now depart. Follow me, sir, along the

80. savage way to where a worthy opponent, the awful beast Humbaba, waits for your challenge in the dark woodlands that he guards. Do not fear this. Rely on me in every matter for your most and let me act as careful guide for your most daring venture.”

- Why do the elders tell Gilgamesh to let Enkidu lead?
- Who do you think will win the fight? Is there any doubt?

## Journal Entry

**10. Evil – (1 page).** What is evil? Do you think evil exists as thing outside of us, separate from us? Or is it inside of us, part of our human nature? Does evil even exist? Explain your beliefs.

## 🌀 Tablet IV 🌀

**[ Column I, II ]** Ten miles into the march, they stopped to chat. After thirty miles, they rested, then finished another twenty miles that day. Within three days they covered what would take others a month and a half to travel. They dug for water where there appeared to be none in the dry desert on their way to challenge Humbaba.

**[ Column III, IV, V ]** Onward ventured Gilgamesh and Enkidu and they both knew where danger lurked at their first destination. As up they climbed upon the final hill, they saw a guard put out by Humbaba as fierce as any watchdog. Gilgamesh

10. pursued first. Gilgamesh heard shouts from Enkidu who said to his companion: “Remember promises we made in the city where we live. Recall the courage and the force we vowed to bring upon this mission.” These words dispelled the fear felt in his heart and Gilgamesh in return then shouted back: “Quick. Grab the guard and don’t let go. Race fearlessly and don’t let go. Our enemy, Humbaba, has set out seven uniforms but has only dressed in one so far. So six layers of strength are yet unused by him.” As one mad brute he is enraged, bellowing loudly

- What is meant by the image of seven uniforms?

**[ Column VI ]** 20. while the foresters warn each other what he’s like. Wounded in combat with the guard they killed, Enkidu uses words to say: “I lost my strength in this crushed hand when the gate slammed shut. What shall I do?” Then Gilgamesh spoke: “Brother, as a man in tears would, you transcend all the rest who’ve gathered, for you can cry and kill with equal force. Hold my hand in yours, and we will not fear what hands like ours can do. Scream in unison, we will ascend to death or love, to say in song what we shall do. Our cry will shoot

30. afar so this new weakness, awful doubt, will pass through you. Stay, brother, let us ascend as one.”

- After Enkidu gets hurt, what is the “new weakness”?

## 𐎶 Tablet V 𐎶

**[ Column I ]** Gilgamesh and Enkidu froze and stared into the woods’ great depth and height. When they spied Humbaba’s path, they found the opening toward straight passage. Then they were able to find and see the home of the gods, the paradise of Ishtar’s other self, called Inini-most-attractive. All beauty true is ever there where gods do dwell, where there is cool shade and harmony and sweet-odored food to match their mood.

- What does the vision of paradise suggest?

**[ Column III ]** Then Gilgamesh envisioned yet again another dream high up in the hills where boulders crashed.

10. Again Enkidu said to his brother, as he unraveled this dreary story for his king: “Brother, your song is a

fine omen. This dream will make you well. Brother, that vision you saw is rich for on that mountain top we can capture Humbaba and hurl his earthly form from towering cliffs through sky to earth, making his shape as flat and wide as it is round and high.” “Mountain, mountain in the sky, Break the god and make him die.”

**[ Column IV ]** Mountain-on-high then sent the myth into Enkidu’s sleep, and a chill from the high winds forced him to

20. rest, since he was blown around as grain is on open field. Curled up in a ball, Gilgamesh rested in blessed sleep, the best of friends at the worst of times. But by the moon’s half way course, he rose and then began to speak: “Brother, if you made no noise, what sound woke me? If you didn’t jostle me, what shook my body? There was no god nearby, so why am I so stunned? Brother, I’ve had a third vision in sleep and I am deeply frightened to recall it all. Sky screamed. And Mother Earth moaned. Sun went out of light and

30. blackest night enveloped the heavens. Then came flashes of lightning, source of fire. Storm clouds raced nearby and swept all life away from out of the sky above our heads. Brightness dissolved, light evaporated; cinders turned to ash. When we leave the mountain, this is what we will remember.” When Enkidu learned this myth as told, he replied to Gilgamesh: “Shamash, your god, creates a great attraction for both of us. Shamash now approves of this attack upon Humbaba. Take the sign as some divine dream to urge us on.” Shamash himself said

40. such words to Gilgamesh as if in prayer: “Do not balk now, favored one. Brace yourself for battle and proceed.” Heavenly winds blasted down from out of the sky about and all around Humbaba. From east and west, with sand and grain, they blew him back and forth. His giant self became fatigued. His awesome strength dwindled. Not even his great right foot could step away in flight. So in this way, by Shamash’s intervention, Humbaba-the-awful

- How does Enkidu respond to each of Gilgamesh’s dreams?
- How is the battle won? Who does most of the work?

**[ Column VI ]** beast was brought so low. The dying beast called out for mercy once and part of what he said could still be heard

50. over the howling winds: “Please, Gilgamesh! Have mercy on me, wounded. I shall freely give you all the lumber of my mighty realm and work for you both day and night.” It was Enkidu then who shouted louder than the beast and with his words he urged a swift conclusion: “Kill the beast now, Gilgamesh. Show no weak or silly mercy toward so sly a foe.” Taking his companion’s mean advice, Gilgamesh swiftly cut the beast, splattering

blood upon his cloak and sandals. Soiled by this violent conflict, the friends began their journey back to Uruk's

60. towering walls expecting now to be received as heroes who had fought and won a legendary battle.

- What are we supposed to make of the new "heroes"?
- Do they deserve any credit for the battle?
- What is the function of the first agon?

## 🌀 Tablet VI 🌀

Gilgamesh bathed himself and cleaned his hair, as beautiful as it was long. He cast off bloodied robes and put on his favorite gown, secured the cincture and stood royal. Then Gilgamesh put on his crown. Ishtar looked up at Gilgamesh's handsome pride. "Come to me," she whispered. "Come to me and be my groom. Let me taste all parts of you, treat you as husband, be treated as your wife. And as a gift I'd give to you one regal coach of gold and blue with wheels of yellow and all so new that I would flatter all your might with the sight of demons

10. driven off by my own god, by my own man. Come to my home, most sweetly scented of all places, where holy faces wash your feet with tears as do the priests and priestesses of gods like Anu. All mighty hands of kings and queens will open doors for you. So too will all the countryside donate in duplicate to your fold. And the slow will race ahead for you, so that by association, all that you touch will turn to gold." Gilgamesh replied to mighty Ishtar thus: "But how could I repay you as a wife and still avoid the bitterness

20. and strife that follow you? Is it perfume for a dress you want, or me? Myself or something wrapped around a tree? Do I offer you food, sweet nuts or grapes? Are those for gods or for the savage apes? And who will pour a treat to us in bed, you dressed for life and me as if I'm dead? Here's a song I made for you. Ishtar's the hearth gone cold, a broken door, without the gold; a fort that shuts its soldiers out, a water well that's filled with doubt; tar that can't be washed away, a broken cup, stained and gray; rock that

30. shatters to dust and sand, a useless weapon in the hand; and worse than that or even this, a god's own sandal filled with piss. You've had your share of boys, that's true, but which of them called twice for you? Let me now list the ones that you just blew away. First was Tammuz, the virgin boy you took after a three-year-long seductive look. Then you lusted for a fancy, colored bird and cut its wing so it could not herd. Thus in the lovely woods at night bird sings, 'I'm blind. I have no sight.' You trapped a lion in the past.

40. It fell for you – and then fell flat. Because you dug him seven holes in which to fall on sharpened poles. You let a horse in your back door by dancing on the stable floor; but then you built the world's first chain to choke his throat and end his reign. You let him run with all his might, as boys will sometimes do at night, before you harnessed his brute force with labor fierce, a mean divorce. So did a mother weep and wail to see her child's foot set with a nail. You fondled once a shepherd boy who baked buns for your tongue's joy

50. and daily killed his lambs so coy. So in return for gifts like those you chose to damage his toy. And when his brothers saw this change they knew you'd done something deranged. Ishullanu trimmed your father's trees and brought you carrots, dates and peas. So mighty you sat down to feasts, then turned your thoughts to raping beasts. You saw him naked once and said: 'Come, Ishullanu, into my bed and force your force into my head. Place your fingers where men dread to touch a girl who's dead.' And he in turn said

60. this to you: 'What is it that you'd have me do? I know, kind mother, I won't eat if I can't match your female heat. But would you have me sing and sin as my whistle goes both out and in?' So since he balked to play that role, you switched his jewel into a mole; stuck in the muck of a marshy town his pleasure can't go up or down. And that is how you'd deal with me if we got friendly, warm, and free."

## 📖 Journal Entry 📖

**11. Love – (1 page).** What is love? Is it a feeling or an action? Is it good or bad? What is the general attitude of our society toward love? What is your view?

When Ishtar heard his words so cruel, she turned deep red and lost her cool by blasting off for daddy's distant star, where she said: "Daddy, please,

70. Gilgamesh called me a tease." "Gilgamesh said I sinned and lived without faith in myself or others," she pouted. Her father, Anu, said these exact words to Ishtar: "Now, daughter, did you first insult him, this Gilgamesh who then began to taunt you with jibes about your inclinations?" Ishtar shouted back at him-who-is-her-father: "You! Now! Make him stop! Loose the bull that could trample him at once. Let the bull spill his blood. And you'd better do this now or I'll wreak havoc of my own right down to Hell. I'll loose the damned devil. I'll

80. rain corpses. I'll make zombies eat infants and there will be more dead souls than living ones!" Her father, Anu, said these exact words to Ishtar: "But if I do what you seem now to want, there would be long years of drought and sorrow. Have you stored enough reserve to feed the people who deserve your close protection?" And she said: "Yes, I have reserved a plan for those I love. Now do as I demand and punish all who insult me." Then her father, Anu, heard Ishtar's cry and Ishtar forced her will. Anu set loose a bull from out of the sky and, at the

- What kind of god is Anu – just, rash, thoughtful, cruel?
- How many times have the heroes upset the gods by now?

90. bull's proclamation, there cracks the earth to swallow up nine dozen citizens of Uruk! An earthquake fixed a grave for nine dozen citizens of Uruk. Two or three or four hundred victims, maybe more than that, fell into Hell. And when the quake returned for a third time, it was near to Enkidu, he who fell upon the Abyss so wide and grim. Enkidu collapsed near the earth-shaking bull. Then he leaped to grab the bull by his long horns even with spit upon his face from out the savage mouth, even with the stench of bowels near his nose. Then

100. Enkidu said to Gilgamesh: "Brother, you and I are now hailed as one. How could we defeat a god? Brother, I see great challenge here, but can we dare defy such force? Let's kill it if we can right now. Be unrelenting and hope that god gives us the strength. We must be cold and strong to cut our enemy's weak neck." Enkidu surrounds the bull, pursuing Heaven's beast and finally catches him. So Gilgamesh, like a bull dancer, svelte and mighty then, plunged his sword into the throat held fast by Enkidu. They butchered and bled the bull and then cut out its heart

110. to offer as sacrifice before Shamash. Then Gilgamesh and Enkidu retreated from the altar itself and stood afar in deep respect as they did pray. At last the two sat down, bound by war, bound by worship. Ishtar appeared upon Uruk's walls looking like a wailing widow. She shrieked this curse aloud: "Damn Gilgamesh, who injured me, by slaughtering a divine bull." Enkidu reacted to these words of Ishtar quick by hurling at her head a hunk of meat from the bull's thigh. And from afar he shouted up to her: "This bloody mess of a plain

120. bull would be about what I could make of you if you came near. I'd tie your hands with these rope-like intestines." Ishtar signaled then for her attendants: coiffured bishops, cantors, and girls whose charms keep worshippers coming. Then atop the great wall above the city high standing by the severed part of its

right thigh, she had them shriek laments for the bull who had died. So to complete this ritual and adorn his throne Gilgamesh summoned artisans of all kinds. Some measured the diameter of the bull's horns,

- What is Enkidu thinking! What do you think will happen next?

130. each containing thirty pounds of lapis lazuli. Together those horns could hollow hold half a dozen quarts of oil. And that is what Gilgamesh brought as potion to the altar of Lugalbanda, his special protector. He carried the horns and enshrined them in a palace of honor where his clan held rites. Then Enkidu and Gilgamesh absolved their bloody hands in the forgiving river, the deep, eternal Euphrates that does not change. At last relieved of such a stain, the friends renew their vows with a brief embrace before riding through

140. Uruk's crowded streets amid acclaim. There, Gilgamesh stops to give this speech to gathered girls: "What man is most impressive now? Who is finest, firmest, and most fair? Isn't Gilgamesh that man above men and isn't Enkidu the strongest of all?" Then they party loudly throughout the day so that, come night, they drop down dead in sleep. But Enkidu is resurrected quickly to relieve his soul of fright and sadly he asks Gilgamesh in tears: "Oh brother, why would I dream that gods sat round to set my fate?"

- How does the second agon differ from the first?

## 🌀 Tablet VII 🌀

[ Column I ] Enkidu confessed this dream to Gilgamesh: "The gods all gathered round last night and Anu told Enlil that one of us should die because of what we've done against their names. Though Shamash intervened for us, saying we had slain Humbaba and the bull with his consent, the others sought revenge." Then Enkidu fell ill and soon lost his full strength. Saying words like these as his friend lay dying, Gilgamesh intoned: "Why should you be so condemned and why should I go right on living? Will my own sad eyes soon never

10. look on you again? Shall I descend to depths beneath this earth to visit worlds reserved for those who've died?" Enkidu glanced up, addressing the entryway on which his hand was morbidly crushed: "Door of all forests, that confuses wind and rain – deaf, dumb, and blind portal; I admired your firm texture before I first saw the mighty trees aloft that gave force to you. There is nothing on earth that could replace your splendor or your worth. At two hundred feet in height, at forty feet around are your mighty posts, your priceless hinge cut and crafted in



20. Nippur's holy ground. If I had guessed that you'd become this, I would have shattered you to pieces with my ax and been more careful not to wound my hand so

[ Column III ] badly on your frame." Then cursing the hunter whom he first met and the girl whom he first loved, Enkidu raged: "Slash him. Cut half his face. Raise up floods beneath his feet so that no animal is safe." And at his sacred, former lover Enkidu did swear: "Get up, witch, and hear your fortune guaranteed now and forever. I damn you off and damn you down. I'd break your teeth with stones and let

30. your mouth hang open until you'd say thanks to your killer who would favor you by letting you lie homeless on an open road in some foul ditch. May all and any who can hurt you now often cross the paths you take. I hope you live in fright, unsure of hope and starved always for the touch of love." "The fine lover, my thoughtless boy, invested you with robes of gold, robes of blue and, more important, gave your dear friend the thought that he should do whatever need be done and still more too. Did your brother, Gilgamesh, give you as fine a bed as any on

40. earth or any there in heaven? Did he promote the likes of you to fame unrivaled, so that rulers kneel to kiss the ground you walk upon? He will also show the Uruk people how to mourn for you. An entire people will cry upon your death and he will go in tears ignoring the dirt and dust and mud that stain his hands and hair. So in despair will his mind be as off he roams in lonely woods wearing rags." Shamash responded from on high: "The fine lover, my Enkidu, is cursed by you who gave you bread and meat and stew, the same who offered you some

50. wine." When Enkidu heard these sad words he was speechless and in his heart he knew that Shamash spoke the truth. His anger fled and Enkidu resolved to die in peace. With these last words the dying Enkidu did pray and say to his beloved companion: "In dreams last night

- What seems to be happening to Enkidu?
- In his anger, what three things does Enkidu curse?
- How does Enkidu feel after hearing Shamash's words?

[ Column IV ] the heavens and the earth poured out great groans while I alone stood facing devastation. Some fierce and threatening creature flew down at me and pushed me with its talons toward the horror-filled house of death wherein Irkalla, queen of shades, stands in command.

60. There is darkness that lets no person again see light of day. There is a road leading away from bright and lively life. There dwell those who eat dry dust and have no cooling water to quench their awful thirst. As I stood there I saw all those who've died and even kings among those darkened souls have none of their remote and former glory. All earthly greatness was forfeit and I entered then into the house of death. Others who have been there long did rise to welcome me." Hearing this, great Gilgamesh said to his handsome mother: "My

70. friend, dear Enkidu, has seen his passing now and he lies dying here upon a sad and lonely cot. Each day he weakens more and wonders how much more life may yet belong to his hands and eyes and tongue." Then Enkidu resumed his last remarks and said: "Oh Gilgamesh, some destiny has robbed me of the honor fixed for those who die in battle. I lie now in slow disgrace, withering day by day, deprived as I am of the peace that comes to one who dies suddenly in a swift clash of arms."

- What are Enkidu's feelings about death?
- What can't he take with him to the underworld?

## Journal Entry Pick one of the following:

**12a. Death – (1 page).** For most people, the subject of death seems to be taboo. Contemporary American society shuns it... yet, many cultures embrace and celebrate it (Day of the Dead, for example). Explain *your* thoughts and feelings about your own mortality and death in general.

**12b. Life – (1 page).** For what is life worth living? What is beautiful, inspirational, or at least interesting enough to make us want to wake up another day. Tell me about good things and amazing reasons to live.

## 🌀 Tablet VIII 🌀

[ Column I ] Then once again at break of day did Gilgamesh conclude the silent night by being first to raise his hands and voice and he said: "Oh Enkidu, whose own mother's grace was every bit as sweet as any deer's and whose father raced just as swift and stood as strong as any horse that ever ran, accept all natural customs within the limitless confines of the wild where you were raised by those with tails, by those with hooves, by those with fur

and whiskers. All the roads in and out of your great forest now lie silent, but for the

10. sobbing done by your wild friends. The aged men and women of Uruk mourn today and raise their withered palms in prayer as we carry you by, toward Mount Kur. Grottos weep for you and valleys too and so do those great trees upon the shore where you loved to run. And also crying now are large bears, little dogs, baby cubs of lions and of tigers, and even the hyena now has ceased its laugh. Wild bull and the rapidest of deer... All, all, all sigh, All, all, all cry for you. Ulay's lovely riverbanks are swollen on

20. this day where you did walk as boys alone can do upon the banks of rivers that mother their young thoughts about life and death. Yes, that great brown god, the river Ulay, today mourns for you as does the true Euphrates eternal and silent. Uruk's rugged men mourn for you who killed that sacrificial bull. They all weep tears today and those in Eridu, who loved your fame, and say your name aloud, they too weep tears today and all in days to come, even those who knew you not, all may weep tears someday for your sad lot.

30. Your favorite aunt, your blessed servant, your first girlfriend, your inspiration, your companion, your darling dear and she you feared to be alone with, all women who ever sat and ate with you, all men you ever helped with food or drink, every one and all, lovers fast and strangers slow. Those you touched or who touched you and those who never knew just how you felt. All and every burst into tears today because they heard that you were

- How does the world respond to Gilgamesh's sadness?

**[ Column II ]** suddenly dead." "I'll cry now, citizens of Uruk, and you will finally hear what no one else has ever had the nerve

40. to say in sorrow. I was family and friend to Enkidu and I shall fill the woodlands where we stalked with loud, sad sobs today. I cry now, Enkidu, like some crazed woman. I howl. I screech for you because you were the ax upon my belt and the bow in my weak hand; the sword within my sheath, the shield that covered me in battle; my happiest robe, the finest clothes I ever wore, the ones that made me look best in the eyes of the world. That is what you were; that is what you'll always be. What devil came to take you off from me? Brother, you chased down the

50. strongest mule, the swiftest horse on mountains high, and the quickest panthers in the flatlands. And they in turn will weep for you. Birds in the air cry aloud. Fish in the lake gather together near the shore.

What else heeds this sorrow? The leaves of the trees and the paths you loved in the forest grow dark. Night itself murmurs and so too does the day. All the eyes of the city that once saw your kind face begin to weep. Why? Because you were my brother and you died. When we met and fought and loved, we went up on mountains high to where we dared

60. to capture god's own strength in one great beast and then to cut its throat, thus humbling Humbaba, green god of woodlands steep. Now there is a sleep-like spell on you, and you are dark as well as deaf." Enkidu can move no more. Enkidu can lift his head no more. "Now there is a sound throughout the land that can mean only one thing. I hear the voice of grief and I know that you have been taken somewhere by death. Weep. Let the roads we walked together flood themselves with tears. Let the beasts we hunted cry out for this: the lion and the leopard,

70. the tiger and the panther. Let their strength be put into their tears. Let the cloud-like mountain where you killed the guardian of woodland treasures place grief upon its sky-blue top. Let the river which soothed our feet overflow its banks as tears do that swell and rush across my dusty cheeks. Let the clouds and stars race swiftly with you into death. Let the rain that makes us dream tell the story of your life tonight. Who mourns for you now, Brother? Everyone who knew you does. The harvesters and the farmers who used to bring you grain

80. are standing alone in their fields. The servants who worked in your house today whispered your name in empty rooms. The lover who kissed every part of you touches her chilled lips with scented fingers. The women of the palace sit and stare at the queen of the city. She sobs and sobs and sobs. The men with whom you played so bold speak fondly of your name. Thus they deal with this misfortune. But what do I do? I only know that a cruel fate robbed me of my dearest friend too soon. What state of being holds you now? Are you

90. lost forever? Do you hear my song?" "I placed my hand upon your quiet heart." One brother covered the set face of another with a bride-white veil. "I flew above you then as if I were an eagle." Then, like some great cat whose darling young have died, Gilgamesh slides back and forth fixed mindlessly on grief. He commands many men to erect statues of honor, saying: "Make his chest a noble blue and on his honored body place a jewel as will allow all viewers then to see how great he was, how great he'll always be." Next day,

- Gilgamesh says, "I'll cry now." Should kings cry publicly?
- What monuments does Gilgamesh order in Enkidu's honor?

**[ Column III ]** 100. Gilgamesh rose from a restless sleep. Then Gilgamesh continued with his bird-like words: "On

a pedestal I will honor your corpse by setting you above all earthly princes who will celebrate you when people from all distant lands both rich and poor in spirit acclaim your memory. And when you are gone, never again to wear good clothes or care for food, I'll still remember how you dressed and how you ate. "When day did break again next morn, Gilgamesh stripped off the lion's cloak and rose to say this prayer: "Your

**[ Column V ]** 110. funeral is a precious gesture I made to hide my own guilt." Goodbye, dear brother. Still grieving reverently after he arose next day, Gilgamesh imagined the Annunaki who decide the fate of those who go to the underworld. After learning how to pause his heart, Gilgamesh created just the same image in the face of a river. At break of day, on the sacred table made of special wood, the grieving king placed a consecrated bowl of blue filled with butter and with honey and this he offered up in solemn prayer to Shamash, lord god.

- Why would Gilgamesh feel guilty about Enkidu's death?

## 🌀 Tablet IX 🌀

**[ Column I ]** Then Gilgamesh wept some more for his dead friend. He wandered over barren hills, mumbling to his own spirit: "Will you too die as Enkidu did? Will grief become your food? Will we both fear the lonely hills, so vacant? I now race from place to place, dissatisfied with wherever I am and turn my step toward Utnapishtim, godchild of Ubaratutu, who lives a pious life in fair Dilmun where the morning sun arises as it does in paradises lost and won. As if in sleep I come upon the mountain door at midnight where I face wild-eyed lions

10. and I am afraid. Then to Sin, the god of mighty light, I raise my solemn chant to beg: 'Save me, please, my god.'" Despite respite he could not sleep or dream that night. Instead he wandered through the woods so like a savage beast just then did he bring death again and again upon the lions' heads with an ax he drew from off his

- In Tablet III, Column IV, Gilgamesh gives a speech about glory and death. How have his feelings about death changed?
- What does Gilgamesh do while wandering the wilderness?

**[ Column II ]** belt. When he finally reached the base of Mt. Mashu, Gilgamesh began to climb the double cliff that guides the rising and setting of Shamash. Now these identical towers touch the distant, distant sky, and far below, their

20. breasts descend toward Hell. Those who guard the gate are poison scorpions that terrorize all, whose spells bring death. And then resplendent power thrives all across the town where I was born and rises farther still to mountaintops. At dawn and dark they shield Shamash. And when he sensed them there, Gilgamesh could not dare to look upon their threat; but held his glance away, suspended fear, and then approached in dread. One among the guardians there said this to his wife: "The one who comes toward us is partly divine, my dear." And then the

30. same one said to the god-like part of Gilgamesh: "Eternal heart, why make this long, long trip trying to come to us through travail? Speak now."

**[ Column III ]** Gilgamesh said: "I come by here to visit my elder, my Utnapishtim, the epitome of both life everlasting and death that is eternal." The poison scorpion guardian said: "No mortal man has ever come to know what you seek here. Not one of all your kind has come so far, the distance you would fall if you fell all day and all night into the pit and through great darkness where there is no

**[ Column IV ]** 40. light without Shamash who raises and lowers the sun; to where I let no one go, to where I forbid anyone to enter." Heartache pain abounds with ice or fire all around. The scorpion one, I do not know whether a man or a woman, said then: "Gilgamesh, I command you to proceed to highest peaks over hills toward heaven. Godspeed! With all permissions given here, I approve your venture." So Gilgamesh set out then over that sacred, sacred path within the mountains of Mashu, near that incarnate ray of sunshine precious to Shamash. Oh dark,

- At first, the guardians won't let him pass – why do they let him?
- What is Gilgamesh seeking from Utnapishtim?

50. dark, dark, dark. Oh the night, unholy and blind, that wrapped him as soon as he stepped forth upon that

**[ Column V ]** path. Darkness. Beneath a moonless, starless sky, Gilgamesh was frozen and unseeing by time before midnight; by midnight's hollow eye he was unseen and frozen. At 1 a.m. he tripped and fell blinded and frozen. At 2 a.m. he staggered on blinded and frozen. At 3 a.m. he faltered not blinded and frozen. By 4 a.m. his second wind warmed him who still was blinded and frozen. And at your final dawn, son of man, you will

60. see only a heap of broken images in an ascending light that gives you sight you may not want, for you will then behold all precious goods and gardens sweet as home to you, as exile, boughs of blue, oh unforgotten gem, as true as any other memory from

[ Column VI ] any other previous life. Then along the path Gilgamesh traveled fast and came at length to shorelines fresh with dew. And there he met a maiden, one who knows the secrets of the sea.

- What does the darkness represent for Gilgamesh?
- Why would Gilgamesh risk *dying* to find *immortality*?

## 🌀 Tablet X 🌀

[ Column I ] This gentle girl is called Siduri and she sits by the sea where she sways from side to side. She made the water pale; she crafted the first gold bowl while peeking at the sun through a slit across her face veil. King Gilgamesh approached the girl's small cottage by the sea dressed as a mountain man, a meat-eater, with an aching heart and the stare of one setting out upon some arduous, horrid trek. The girl who gives her men lifesaving drinks said to herself, "Beware of the one coming now. He walks as if he'd kill." And so Siduri

10. locked the door, put stones in place, and lay on the floor. When Gilgamesh heard sounds inside he yelled at her. "Why do you hide? Shall I have to break through this door?" The girl whose drinks refresh the soul then said these words to Gilgamesh: "Is there a simple reason, sir, why you're so sad or why your face is drawn and thin? Has chance worn out your youth or did some wicked sorrow consume you like food? You look like one setting out on some arduous, horrid trek, like one exposed to extremes of hot and cold, like one

20. who searches everywhere for grace." He responded then to her who gives her men lifesaving drinks: "Girl, there is no simple reason why I'm so sad or why my face is drawn and thin. Chance alone did not wear out my youth. Some wicked sorrow consumes me like food. But I do look like one setting out on some arduous, horrid trek, like one exposed to extreme hot or cold, like one who searches everywhere for the breath of life because my brother, my only true friend, met death; he who raced wild horses there, who caught orange tigers

30. here. This was Enkidu, my soul's good half, who did all things while he conquered mountains and divine bulls that race across the sky like clouds; who gave Humbaba, the woodland god, reason to weep when he stole through the wooded path to slaughter lions."

- How does Siduri react to Gilgamesh at first? Why?
- How has Gilgamesh changed from the start of the epic?

[ Column II ] Gilgamesh continued: "I greatly loved my friend who was always there for me. I loved Enkidu

who was always there for me. What awaits us all caught him first and I did thirst for one whole week to see him once again in splendor until his body decomposed. Then I wept for my

40. future death and I fled home for mountaintops to breathe when my friend's death choked off my wind. On mountaintops I roamed content to breathe again when my friend's death choked off my wind. Walking. Walking. Walking over hills. Could I sit down to rest? Could I stop crying then when my best friend had died as I will someday do?" Then Gilgamesh said to the fair girl whose saving drinks gave life to men: "Tell me, girl, how to get to Utnapishtim. Where do I look for signs? Show me directions. Help, Please let me have safe passage over

50. seas. Give me advice to guide me on my way." She said to him in swift reply: "No man has ever gone that way and lived to say he crossed the sea. Shamash only ventures there, only Shamash would dare to stare into the sun. Pain joins the voyager soon, and soon the traveler grows weary where death surrounds the path on every

[ Column III ] side with danger." The girl whose drinks refresh the soul then said these words to Gilgamesh: "Remember always, mighty king, that gods decreed the fates of all many years ago. They alone are let to be eternal, while we frail

60. humans die, as you yourself must someday do. What is best for us to do is now to sing and dance. Relish warm food and cool drinks. Cherish children to whom your love gives life. Bathe easily in sweet, refreshing waters. Play joyfully with your chosen wife." "It is the will of the gods for you to smile on simple pleasure in the leisure time of your short days." "And what, after all, my fellow man, would you do when you got to that far side where Urshanabi dwells among the hills of Utnapishtim? He knows only the dead weight of what is dead and he is one

- What advice does Siduri give to Gilgamesh? Is it sound?

70. who plays with deadly snakes. Would you put your lips near his? If he befriends you then, go on. But if he walks away, return to me." With that in mind Gilgamesh took up his chore, unsheathed his sword, slipped toward the shore and there joined one who rows the seas of death. Gilgamesh sliced through the underbrush as an arrow goes through air while cracking the stones of the sacred columns. And Urshanabi barely saw the arrow's glint and too late heard the ax's thud. And so surprised was he that there was never any

80. chance to hide or to deny the daring man at least a chance at some safe passage. Gilgamesh traveled on to where he found the ferryman of Utnapishtim. This man, Urshanabi, said to Gilgamesh: "Your face seems tense;

your eyes do not glance well and Hell itself is part of how you look. Grief hangs from your shoulders. You look like one who's been without a home, without a bed or roof for a long time, wandering the wilds on some random search." Gilgamesh replied to the ferryman: "Yes sir, it's true my face is tense and that

90. my eyes seem harsh. My looks are now so hellish, for I wear my grief as ill as any other. I'm not this way as some refugee without a bed or roof for a long time, and I don't wander the wilds randomly. I grieve for Enkidu, my fair companion and true friend, who chased the strongest mule, the swiftest horse on mountain high, the quickest panther of the flatland. Together we did all things, climbing sky-high peaks, stealing divine cattle, humbling the gods, killing Humbaba and the precious lions, guardians of the sky.

100. All this I did with my best friend who now is dead. Mortality reached him first and I am left to weep and wail for his shriveling corpse that scares me. I roam aloft and alone now, by death enthralled, and think of nothing but my dear friend. I roam the lonely path with death upon my mind and think of nothing but my dear friend. Over many seas and across many mountains I roam. I can't stop pacing. I can't stop crying. My friend has died and half my heart is torn from me. Won't I soon be like him, stone-cold and

- What can Urshanabi do for Gilgamesh? What's his job?

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**EC:** Urshanabi has a parallel in Greek mythology – the ferryman who transports the souls of the dead across the river Styx... What is his name?

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110. dead, for all the days to come?" Urshanabi replied as he had done before: "Your face seems tense; your eyes do not glance well and Hell itself is part of how you look. Grief hangs from your shoulders. You look like one who's been without a home, without a bed or roof for a long time, wandering the wilds on some random search." And Gilgamesh said to him then in swift reply: "Of course my face seems tense and my eyes seem harsh. Of course I'm worn out weeping. Why should I not cry? I've come to ask directions to

120. Utnapishtim, who lives so free beyond death's deep, deep lake. Where can he be? Tell me how to venture there where I may learn his secrets." Finally, Urshanabi uttered these last words to Gilgamesh: "You yourself have hurt this effort most, sir, by blasphemy and sacrilege, by breaking idols and by holding the untouchably sacred stones. You broke stone images! So now, Gilgamesh, raise high your ax." Thus chastised, Gilgamesh raised high his ax, unsheathed his

sword, did penance too as he chopped down many trees; prepared

- When he was running to Urshanabi, Gilgamesh seems to have knocked down some sacred idols (Line 77). Before Urshanabi helps him, Gilgamesh must pay for what he did. What does Urshanabi have him do?

130. them, and then brought them to Urshanabi. After this, they cast off together, with push and pull they launched the skiff upon the waving sea. They leaped quickly, in three short days covering a span that any other would traverse only after months of passage and soon they sailed on to Death's own sea. Still directing the

[ Column IV ] king's new efforts, Urshanabi called: "Give me another pull, Gilgamesh, upon the mighty oar and then another. Give ten times twenty and then give twenty times ten pulls upon the mighty oars; then ten more twice; then

140. twice more ten and then confuse the number of the pulls you put upon the oar by losing count aloud and starting over." Halfway through all that pulling, Gilgamesh had worn the oars to bits and torn his shirt from off his back to raise a helping sail upon the mast. Then Utnapishtim glared down from stars and clouds and mused aloud, as if to coach the world: "How could any human dare to break the idols or steer the craft that gods and goddesses use? This stranger is not fit to tie the shoes of servants. I do see, but I am blind. I do know, but cannot

[ Column V ] 150. understand how he behaves like the beasts of here and there." Gilgamesh spoke many words to Utnapishtim and told of strife-in-life and battles rare. He hailed his friend Enkidu, acclaimed their pride and grieved the death that saddened his great heart. Gilgamesh raised his prayer to the remote Utnapishtim: "Oh myth-filled god, I have traveled many roads, crossed many rivers and mountains. I never rested. I never slept. Grief consumed me. My clothing was ragged by the time I met the girl who would help me. I killed all manner of animal in order to eat and

160. clothe myself. When I was rejected, I stooped to squalor. Cursed I went, being unholy." Utnapishtim replied: "Why cry over your fate and nature? Chance fathered you. Your conception was an accidental combination of the divine and mortal. I do not presume to know how to help the likes of you."

- Urshanabi continues to work Gilgamesh. What is his task?
- Continuing his long-standing tradition of upsetting gods, Gilgamesh has offended Utnapishtim. What did he do this time?

[ Column VI ] Utnapishtim continued: "No man has ever seen Death. No one ever heard Death's voice but Death is real and Death is loud. How many times must a home be

restored or a contract revised and approved? How many times must

170. two brothers agree not to dispute what is theirs? How many wars and how many floods must there be with plague and exile in their wake? Shamash is the one who can say. But there is no one else who can see what Shamash only can see within the sun. Behold the cold, cold corpse from a distance, and then regard the body of one who sleeps. There seems no difference. How can we say which is good and which is bad? And it is also like that with other things as well. Somewhere above us, where the goddess Mammetum decides all

180. things, Mother Chance sits with the Anunnaki and there she settles all decrees of fable and of fortune. There they issue lengths of lives; then they issue times of death. But the last, last matter is always veiled from human beings. The length of lives can only be guessed.” Thus spoke Utnapishtim.

- Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh to consider the difference between a corpse and a person who is sleeping – why?

## 🌀 Tablet XI 🌀

[ Column I ] To the most distant and removed of semi-gods, to Utnapishtim, Gilgamesh said: “When I regard you now, my god-like man, it’s like seeing my own face on calm water where I dare to study myself. Like me, you are first of all a fighter who prefers to war-no-more. How could one like you, so human, all-too-human, ascend to be at one with other gods?” Utnapishtim said to him in swift reply: “Only one as bold as you would dare expect such knowledge. But I shall tell you what no person has ever been told. High up the constant

10. Euphrates there rests a place you call Shuruppak where gods and goddesses recline. Then came the flood, sent by gods’ intent. Mama, Anu, and Enlil were at Shuruppak. So too was their coachman, Ninurta, and Ennugi, the beaстиarilis, and one who watches over precious infants, the ever vigilant Ea. And Ea refrained their chant to the highly-grown reeds upon the shore, giving this advice to me: ‘Arise! Arise! Oh wall-like reeds. Arise and hear my words: Citizen of Shuruppak, child of Ubaratutu, abandon your home and build a

- Why does Ea speak to the reeds instead of to Utnapishtim?

20. boat. Reject the corpse-like stench of wealth. Choose to live and choose to love; choose to rise above and give back what you yourself were given. Be moderate as you flee for survival in a boat that has no place for riches. Take the seed of all you need aboard with you and carefully weigh anchor after securing a

roof that will let in no water.’ “Then I said back in reverent prayer: ‘I understand, great Ea. I shall do just as you say to honor god, but for myself I’ll have to find a reason to give the people.’ “Then Ea voiced a fair

30. reply: ‘Tell those who’ll need to know that Enlil hates you. Say: “I must flee the city now and go by sea to where Enlil waits to take my life. I will descend to the brink of Hell to be with Ea, god, who will send riches to you like the rain: all manner of birds... and the rarest of rare fish. The land will fill with crops full grown at break of day. Ea will begin to shower gifts of life upon you

- When Gilgamesh asks Utnapishtim how he gained immortality, Utnapishtim begins to tell him a story. What was Utnapishtim ordered by Ea to build and why?
- Utnapishtim tells Ea that he must give the people an excuse for his actions. What does Ea tell him to say?

[ Column II ] all?”.’ Then Utnapishtim continued, saying words like these: “By week’s end I engineered designs for an acre’s worth of floor upon the ark we built so that its walls rose

40. straight toward heaven; with decks all round did I design its space; 120 cubits measured its deck. With division of six and of seven I patterned its squares and stairs; left space for portals too, secured its beams and stockpiled all that ever could be used. Pitch for the hull I poured into the kiln and ordered three full volumes of oil to start with and two times three more yet. For what is security? Each day I sacrificed the holy bulls and chosen sheep for the people and pushed the laborers to great fatigue and thirst, allayed alone by wine which they drank

50. as if it were water running from barrels set up for holding cheer in preparation for a New Year’s party they expected. I set up an ointment box and cleaned my fingers with its cream. “After one week, the ark was done, though launching was more work than fun since hull boards caught and snapped until the water burst most of its great ton. I supplied the craft with all I owned of silver, gold, and seed. My clan brought on the food they’d eat and all the things we thought we’d need. At last, it was my turn just then to shepherd beasts and birds and babies wet and

60. loud. It was Shamash who ordained the time, saying: ‘Prepare the way for your whole boat and set to sail when the storm begins to threaten you.’ “The Anunnaki too then cried for them. The gods themselves, finally suffering, sat up and let their first tears flow down cheeks and over lips

[ Column III ] pressed closed. “For the whole next week the sky screamed and storms wrecked the earth and finally broke the war which groaned as one in labor’s throes. Even Ishtar then bemoaned the fates of her sad people. Ocean silent. Winds dead. Flood ended. Then I see a dawn so

70. still; all humans beaten to dirt and earth itself like some vast roof. I peeked through the portal into a morning sun then turned, knelt and cried. Tears flooded down my face. "Then I searched high and low for the shoreline, finally spotting an island near and dear. Our boat stuck fast beside Mt. Nimush. Mt. Nimush held the hull that could not sway for one whole week. "I released the watch-bird, to soar in search of land. The bird came back within a day exhausted, unrelieved from lack of rest. I then released a swallow, to soar in search of land, The

80. bird came back within a day exhausted, unrelieved from lack of rest. I then released a raven, to soar in search of land. The bird took flight above more shallow seas, found food and found release and found no need to fly on back to me. "These birds I then released to earth's four corners and offered sacrifice, a small libation to the heights of many mountains, from numbered chalices that I arranged. Under these I spread the scents that gods favored and when the gods smelled the sweet perfume of sacrifice, they gathered in flight

- How does Utnapishtim find dry land?

**[ Column IV ]** 90. all above, like apparitions. "From distant heights with heavenly sights, the female of all female gods descended then; Aruru who aroused the wry thought that Anu made for intercourse. 'Great gods from far and wide keep always in my mind this thought for intercourse, tokened by the sacred blue medallion on my neck, Let me recall with smiles these days in days to come. Gods of my shoreline, gods of my sky, come round this food that I prepared for you; but do not let Enlil enjoy this too, since he's the one

100. who drowned my relatives without telling the gods what he set out to do.' When Enlil saw the boat, he released his calm reason and let in the Igigi, monsters of blood. 'What force dares defy my anger!? How dare a man be still alive!?' Then with these words Ninurta said to Enlil: 'Can any of us besides Ea, maker of words, create such things as speech?' Then with these words Ea himself said to Enlil: 'Sly god, sky darkener, and tough fighter, how dare you drown so many little people without consulting me? Why not

110. just kill the one who offended you, drown only the sinner? Keep hold of his lifecord; harness his destiny. Rather than killing rains, set cats at people's throats. Rather than killing rains, set starvation on dry, parched throats. Rather than killing rains, set sickness on the minds and hearts of people. I was not the one who revealed our god-awful secrets. Blame Utnapishtim, Mr. Know-it-all, who sees everything, who knows

everything." "Reflect on these stories, my Gilgamesh." "Then Enlil swooped down around my boat; he gently

120. raised me from the slime, placed my wife beside my kneeling form and blessed us both at once with hands upon our bowed heads. So was it ordained. So we were ordained." Earlier than that time, Utnapishtim was not divine. Then with his wife he was deified and sent to rule the place where rivers start. "Gods sent me everywhere to rule the place where rivers start." "As for you, Gilgamesh, which gods will be called on to direct your path and future life? Arise! Be alert! Stay up with stars for seven long and sleepless nights!" But

130. even as he tried to stay awake, fog-like sleep rolled over his eyes. Then Utnapishtim said these words: "Dear wife, behold the one who tries to pray while fog-like sleep rolls over his eyes." She said to him who rarely talks: "Arouse him now and let him leave unharmed. Permit that

- Utnapishtim wears a medallion around his neck in honor of all gods except one. Who is it and why isn't he honored?
- Ea told Utnapishtim to prepare for the flood, yet when Enlil asks how a man can still be alive, Ea lies: "I was not the one who revealed our god-awful secrets." He blames Utnapishtim for being a know-it-all. What is Utnapishtim's punishment?

**[ Column V ]** one to go back home at last." Then Utnapishtim said these words: "An upset soul can upset many gods. Be kind with food and generous to him. But keep a count of how he sleeps and what he eats." She was kind with food and gentle with the man and she kept count of how he slept.

140. "One, two, three, abate, he slept with death-the-fairy. Four, five, six, abate, he looked so cold and wary." Then he returned from death to breath! So Gilgamesh said to the One-who-rarely-spoke: "Just as I slipped toward sleep, you sent my dream." And to him in reply, Utnapishtim said these words: "One, two, three, alarie, you slept with death-the-fairy. Four, five, six, alarie, you looked so cold and wary. Then you arose from death to breath." So Gilgamesh said to the One-who-rarely-speaks: "Help me, Utnapishtim. Where is home for one like me

- Note: Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh to stay awake for seven nights, but poor Gilgamesh immediately falls asleep. What this translation doesn't do well is explain why Gilgamesh is given this test. The lesson Utnapishtim teaches Gilgamesh is that he can't stop death any more than he can stop his own body's need for sleep. Death is a natural part of what our bodies do.

150. whose self was robbed of life? My own bed is where death sleeps and I crack her spine on every line where my foot falls." Utnapishtim calls out to the sailor-god: "Urshanabi, dear, you will never land again easily or easily sail the seas to shores where you no more will find safe harbor. Sandy and disheveled hair does not become the one you nearly drowned. Shingles now spoil his

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hidden beauty. Better find a place to clean him up. Better race to pools of saltless water soon so that by noon he'll shine again for all of us to see. Tie up his curly hair with

160. ribbon fair. Place on his shoulders broad the happy robe so that he may return to his native city easily in triumph. Allow him to wear the sacred elder's cloak and see that it is always kept as clean as it can be." The sailor-god brought Gilgamesh to where they cleaned his wounds. By noon he shone again for all to see. He tied his curly hair with ribbon fair, and placed upon his shoulder broad the happy robe so he would return to Uruk easily in triumph with a cloak unstained and unstainable. Urshanabi and Gilgamesh launched the boat over the

**[ Column VI ]** 170. breakers on the beach and started to depart across the seas. To her distant husband, Utnapishtim's wife said: "This Gilgamesh has labored much to come here. Can you reward him for traveling back?" At that very moment, Gilgamesh used paddles to return his craft along the shore. Then Utnapishtim called out to him: "Gilgamesh! You labored much to come here. How can I reward you for traveling back? May I share a special secret, one that the gods alone do know? There is a plant that hides somewhere among the rocks that thirsts and thrusts itself

180. deep in the earth, with thistles that sting. That plant contains eternal life for you." Immediately, Gilgamesh set out in search. Weighed down carefully, he dove beneath the cold, cold waters and saw the plant. Although it stung him when he grabbed its leaf, he held it fast as he then slipped off his weights and soared back to the surface. Then Gilgamesh said this to Urshanabi, the sailor-god: "Here is the leaf that begins all life worth having. I am bound now for Uruk, town-so-full-of-shepherds, and there I'll dare to give this

- In Column V, Utnapishtim calls upon Urshanabi to clean up Gilgamesh for his return to Uruk. But as Urshanabi and Gilgamesh depart, Utnapishtim's wife asks her husband if there isn't something he can do for Gilgamesh. In a surprising change of attitude, Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh where to find something. What is it and why is it so special?

190. plant to aged men as food and they will call it life-giving. I too intend to eat it and to be made forever young." After 10 miles they ate. After 15 miles they set up camp where Gilgamesh slipped into a pool; but in the pool, a cruel snake slithered by and stole the plant from Gilgamesh who saw the snake grow young again, as off it raced with the special, special plant. Right there and then Gilgamesh began to weep and, between sobs, said to the sailor-god who held his hand: "Why do I bother working for nothing? Who even notices what I do?"

- What does Gilgamesh tell Urshanabi he will do with the plant?
- After they set up camp for the night, Gilgamesh takes a dip in a pool. What happens to the treasure?

200. I don't value what I did and now only the snake has won eternal life. In minutes, swift currents will lose forever that special sign that god had left for me." Then they set out again, this time upon the land. After 10 miles they stopped to eat. After 30 miles they set up camp. Next day they came to Uruk, full of shepherds. Then Gilgamesh said this to the boatman: "Rise up now, Urshanabi, and examine Uruk's wall. Study the base, the brick, the old design. Is it permanent as can be? Does it look like wisdom designed it?"

- Note: the epic ends quite suddenly upon their return to Uruk. Gilgamesh asks Urshanabi to examine the walls of Uruk. Although the ending of this translation requires some discussion (I'll be able to clarify some things that aren't readily apparent), what do you think Gilgamesh has learned from his quest? What knowledge has he gained about immortality?

**Source:** <http://ftp.usd.edu/~dpryce/honors/gilgmsh2.htm>.  
**Also, check out** <http://gilgamesh.psnc.pl/> for a cool digital library book version.





## TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING...

<b>Hokkaido</b>	The northern most island of Japan. Location of the present-day Ainu.
<b>Diffusion</b>	The theory that myths developed in cultural centers and traveled via trade routes across the globe. Compare this notion to polygenesis as an explanation for how so many commonalities exist between myth traditions.
<b>Polygenesis</b>	The theory that unrelated cultures separated by space and time could have independently developed mythologies that coincidentally share similarities.

### Journal Entry

**13. Primitive Mind – (1 page).** Early myth theorists (or practically anyone in academe for that matter) referred to tribal groups, especially those without writing, as *primitives* and *savages*. Most scholars nowadays are sensitive to the negative connotations of the terms. Here's the question: who is more primitive? The oral people who have little to no crime, few laws, no government, no schools, no advanced technology – or the literate people who have high crime, thousands and thousands of laws (and lawyers), layers upon layers of governmental bureaucracy, packed schools, and highly advanced technology?

### Kotan Utunnai

名誉

**Notes:** The Ainu people are the remnant of a Stone Age Asiatic people who lived in Japan before the islands were invaded by the Mongoloid people who became the Japanese. The Ainu remained unaffected by civilization for hundreds of years, because they lived in isolated river valleys and an abundant food supply was always available to feed their small population. They had no system of writing, no political organization beyond the small village, no domesticated farm animals or system of agriculture, and no bronze or iron metalwork of their own.

Ainu life remained as it had in ancient times until about 1670, when the Ainu began to have much closer contact with the Japanese. About 200 years later the Japanese began a concerted effort to settle the island of Hokkaido, on which most of the Ainu were living. The Japanese cleared the land of forests and wild animals and set up permanent fishing nets, in the process destroying the Ainu's traditional way of living. The Ainu men became migrant farm workers, and alcoholism and disease ravaged their society.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, 15,000 to 16,000 Ainu were still living on Hokkaido. Because of the great value their society placed upon oral recitation, it was easy to find an Ainu who had a superb command of his oral tradition, and most of the literature we have today was collected and recorded in the 1920's and 1930's. By the 1940's, Ainu adults spoke both Japanese and their native language, but Ainu children spoke only Japanese. By 1955, fewer than twenty Ainu in all of Hokkaido could speak their native language fluently. The plight of the Ainu had become a public issue by the 1970's, and an interest developed in trying to preserve the Ainu heritage.

The epic of Kotan Utunnai was recorded between 1880 and 1888 by John Batchelor, an English missionary. It was first published, in both Ainu and English, in an 1890 volume of the Transactions of the Asiatic Society in Japan.

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## Important names for you to know...

Nameless Narrator	_____
Older Sister	_____
Kamui-otopush	_____
Dangling Nose	_____
Shipish-un-kur	_____
Shipish-un-mat	_____

Aspects of this epic are so old that they were unfamiliar to those who recited it. The Ainu of the 1880's and later did not know who the Repunkur (people of the sea) were. Many years later, archeologists discovered that the term refers to the Okhotsk, a people who lived on the northern coast of Hokkaido. The Ainu, who were the Yaunkur (people of the land), defeated the Okhotsk (the Repunkur) in a series of wars between the 10<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kotan Utunnai, like a number of other Ainu heroic epics, reflects these wars.

Like the other Ainu epics, Kotan Utunnai was recorded as it was sung, in the form of a first-person narrative. The first-person narrative is the most immediate kind of narration. The narrator is the hero of the epic, and he describes his own experiences as they unfold. We see what he sees as he sees it, and we hear what he hears as he hears it. We know only what he knows, and nothing more. We must depend upon what he tells us, and we learn as he learns from what others say or do to him.

I was raised by my older sister in the land of the Repunkur. For many years, we lived in a little grass hut. I would often hear a rumbling sound throughout our land. My sister told me that this was the sound of gods fighting. When many gods were dying, the sound would go on and on without interruption.

When I grew older, I would often hear similar sounds made by the spirits of the Yaunkur upon the roof of our grass hut. I could not understand this, so I said, "Older Sister, you have reared me well. Now it is time to tell me how this has come to be."

As my sister looked at me, her eyes trembled with fear and shining tears coursed down her cheeks. She replied, "I intended to tell you the story when you were older. I shall tell you now, since you wish it, but I must warn you not to act rashly when you have heard it."

- Compare this advice to that Enkidu and Gilgamesh receive.

"Although I have reared you, you and I belong to different people," she began. "Mine are the Repunkur, people of the sea. Yours are the Yaunkur, people of the land. Long ago your father ruled the upper and lower regions of Shinutapka.

He was a great warrior and hero. One day he decided to go across the sea on a trading expedition. He invited his second son, Kamui-otopush, and your mother to join him on his journey. Since you were just a baby, she strapped you to her back and took you along.

- Note that the hero comes from a noble family.

"When they sailed by the coast of the island of Karapto, the people invited them ashore. Although they were Repunkur, they offered a sign of peace and wine to drink. Day and night, the people of the island encouraged your family to drink that poison. Your father became drunk with the wine, and his mind became clouded. He announced that he and his family intended to buy the major treasure of the people of Karapto and take it away.

"Your father's announcement caused fighting to break out, which spread to neighboring lands, including my own. My country is a land of many great warriors, and in one of his battles against the Repunkur, your father was killed.

"I was there when he died," my sister continued. "I took your father's war helmet and his clothes from his dead body. To help your mother, I took

you from her back and tied you securely to me with my baby-carrying cords. With my sword, I did my best to protect your mother's life, but she had been a warrior all her life, so she insisted on fighting. Like your father, she was killed in that battle.

"Seeing that both your mother and your father were dead and that you were far too young to help your brother or survive on your own, I carried you to this land where we have been living all these years. It is a safe and isolated place; neither gods nor humans ever visit it.

- Why did she protect him – and fight against her own people?

"Since the time of your parents' death," my sister concluded, "your older brother, Kamui-otopush, has been fighting all alone against the Repunkur to avenge them. I must tell you this, for you asked to hear the whole story. However, remember that it would be unwise for you to act rashly."

- Again, the warning not to act in anger...

I listened to the words of my older sister with complete surprise. My heart overflowed with rage. Was she not my enemy? Her own people had killed my parents. It took a great effort to calm myself and refrain from killing her!

I did not feel like thanking her for saving my life, but I forced myself to be polite. "You have reared me well, Older Sister," I said. "Now I would like you to find my father's clothes and give them to me."

She immediately entered the hut, untied the cord of her treasure bag, and brought forth six magnificent robes, a belt with a metal buckle, a small metal helmet, and a wondrous sword. All of these she held out to me.

With great pride and pleasure I put on my father's robes, placed his belt around my waist, tied his helmet on my head, and thrust his sword beneath his belt. My father's heroic spirit infused my body through his war gear. I strode up and back in front of the fireplace, flexing my shoulders and

stamping my feet. Soon I felt my body go up the smoke hole of our little hut. Then I found myself being pushed through the air by a strong wind.

- The acquisition of a sword is important in many mythologies – it marks the moment that a Hero transcends his ordinary existence. Can you think of other stories where this occurs?

The mighty breeze blew me into a country formed of majestic mountains. I landed on the shore of the sea, not far from the mountains. My older sister dropped down at my side with the roaring of the wind. We traveled over a series of metal spruce forests, which clinked and clanked as the wind struck their branches. Certainly only great gods would live in a land such as this!

- Why metal forests? Think about the video we watched – what explanation could there be for this image?

Suddenly I smelled smoke. When I descended into the lower regions of the forest, I found its source – a great bonfire. Along one side of the fire sat six men wearing stone armor. Next to them sat six women. Across the fire from them sat six men wearing metal armor, and next to them sat six women.

- Why the symmetry? There is a lot of repetition in this story... be thinking about why repetition is important.

At the far end of the fire, between the two groups of warriors, stood a very strange-looking being I had never seen before. I wondered whether he could possibly be human, for he looked more like a small mountain that had arms and legs sprouting from it. His face looked like a cliff sheared off by a landslide. His huge nose looked like an overhanging rock. Strapped to his side he wore a sword as large as the oar of a boat. I knew that he must be the evil human demon called Dangling Nose, a famous Repunkur warrior.

While I stood gazing upon this strange group, the earth beneath my feet moved this way and that, and the metal branches of the spruce trees clinked and clanked as they struck each other. When my eyes left the group by the fire and searched the trees, I saw the most surprising sight. A gravely wounded man was tied to the top of a large spruce

tree. Now and then he would rearrange his bound limbs, and it was his movements that were causing the earth beneath my feet to move this way and that. Even though I had never seen him before, I knew that he must be Kamui-otopush, my older brother.

- Should we suspend our disbelief at such a coincidence?

My older sister said, “Younger Brother, this man is too sorely wounded to accompany us to battle. His presence will only hurt us. Let me carry off his body while you fight these people alone.”

As soon as my ears had heard her words, the six warriors in metal armor announced together, “We are the people of Metal River, six brothers and six sisters. We were hunting in the mountains today when we came upon Kamui-otopush. He was returning to his country, for he had finished fighting. He was moving slowly, for his many battles had sorely wounded him. We would have killed him then and there if we did not fear the anger of Shipish-un-kur, our mighty uncle and ruler. So we tied him to a large spruce tree.”

They added, “Soon these six warriors of Stone River came by with their sisters, and they stopped here with us. And now you also have come along. Are you a god, or are you human? Together, let us take Kamui-otopush as a gift to Shipish-un-kur. He surely will praise us when he sees this trophy!”

- The warriors are talking to Dangling Nose at this point. Our nameless Hero is still hiding.

The man standing at the head of the fire proclaimed, “The famous warrior Dangling Nose adds his deep voice in agreement.”

While he was speaking, my older sister went to the top of the spruce tree and freed my older brother. The sound of his loosened ropes falling on the metal branches drew the eyes of all the demons in that direction.

I did my best to prevent them from seeing me in my human form. Like a light breeze I flew with my sword into their midst. Beginning on one side of the fire, I raised my father’s wondrous sword and sliced into the flesh of three of the warriors in

stone armor with a single stroke, slashing three of their women as well. Turning to the other side of the fire, I sliced into the flesh of three of the warriors in metal armor with a single stroke, slashing three of their women as well.

Swinging my sword back, I aimed to kill Dangling Nose. However, he flew over my blade like a light breeze and said, “I thought that Kamui-otopush was bound to the top of the spruce tree, but he has strength enough to kill our people. I doubt that we would be able to kill such a man in battle. Let us take him to the battle-chasm, for it will be easier to kill him there.”

- Who does Dangling Nose think he is fighting?

Meanwhile, our sword blades gleamed as he and I fought fiercely against one another. In the midst of our battle, my older sister dropped down at my side with the roaring of the wind. “I have taken the body of your older brother back to your country,” she announced. “There I found your oldest brother, now the ruler of your land, and your oldest sister. It is fortunate that your parents left them behind when they set off on that trading expedition across the sea so many years ago. Before I left, we restored Kamui-otopush to life, so do not let concern for him distract your fighting.”

While my older sister was speaking, the remaining six women attacked her with their swords. Wicked women can be brave and strong fighters! My sister raised her sword, her blade shining against theirs. She was a match for them, but she would not be able to kill them easily.

As their battle carried the women toward the distant mountains, an attack by the six remaining warriors and Dangling Nose directed my attention back to the men. I raised my sword, my blade shining against theirs. I was a match for them, but I would not be able to kill them easily. I did my best to prevent them from seeing me in my human form. Like a light breeze, I flew with my sword over their blades.

- The repeating elements of the story create a kind of rhythm. Remember, the epic was originally sung.

As we fought, I noticed a river flowing from one group of mountains to the next. Between them, it descended into a deep ravine. When I saw many sharp sword-blades and spear-blades of stone rising from the poisonous water, I knew that this must be the battle-chasm Dangling Nose had mentioned.

The warriors banded together and forced me toward the chasm. Time and again they almost killed me, but I did my best to prevent them from seeing me in my human form. Like a light breeze, I flew with my sword over their blades.

Meanwhile, I chanted, "Hear me, gods of the chasm, gods of the deep ravine! I am one Yaunkur against many Repunkur. If I die here, my blood will give you little wine to drink. Take my side against these warriors, and you can gorge yourselves upon their blood!"

With these words, my heart flooded with renewed spirit and strength. With my father's wondrous sword, I drove the Repunkur toward the battle-chasm. The oldest of the warriors in stone armor was the first to fall to the bottom of the ravine and be sliced into chunks of human meat. His spirit left his body with a loud roar and rumbled as it flew off to the west.

Next, the largest of the warriors in metal armor fell to the bottom of the ravine and was sliced into chunks of human meat. His spirit left his body with a loud roar and rumbled as it flew off to the west.

In time I killed all but Dangling Nose. One by one, their spirits left their bodies with a loud roar and rumbled as they flew off to the west. Not one among the dead would be restored to life.

- How worried are you about the Hero? Any doubt he'll live?

Dangling Nose and I then fought to the death. Time and again he almost killed me, but each time I returned his sword thrust with one of my own. Finally he said, "Great warriors fight in more than one way. I now challenge you to a contest of strength!"

He did not wait for my response but quickly rushed toward me. As we wrestled together, he enclosed me between his mighty hands and began to press the breath out of me. My heart fluttered with pain, but I made a quick twist and escaped from his hands as running water rushes through open fingers.

Finally I was able to hurl Dangling Nose down into the deep ravine. When his body hit bottom, the sharp blades of the stone swords and stone spears sliced him into chunks of human meat. His spirit left his body with a loud roar and rumbled as it flew off to the west. He would not be restored to life either.



In the quiet time that followed, I walked along the river and said to myself, "Who is this fearsome ruler who would have received my older brother as a trophy? If I were to return to my country without seeing Shipish-un-kur, my people would look upon me as a coward. He may kill me, but I must see how we two warriors compare with one another."

- What is the Hero seeking? Have his intentions changed?

A light breeze carried me above the river as it flowed down to the sea. At its mouth I found the large village of Shipish surrounding a lone, majestic mountain. Its peak soared so far into the heavens that it was wrapped in clouds of mist. I followed the winding trail to the stockade at the top. Fearsome spirits rumbled their warnings from the top of the stockade, but I entered in spite of them.

Peering through the windows of the large house, I saw the fearsome ruler of this country. The sight of Shipish-un-kur filled my heart with awe, for he wore magnificent robes and carried wondrous swords. However, he was only a young man. Whiskers had just begun to grow upon his chin.

As he sat by the side of the glowing hearth, the most beautiful young woman I had ever seen sat next to him. Even my older sister was not this beautiful! I could tell from her face that she possessed the magical powers of a prophet, and their conversation soon proved my judgment correct.

- Compare the “love interest” here to Gilgamesh and Ishtar.

“Shipish-un-mat, dear younger sister,” I heard him say, “ever since you were a child, you could tell the future. Tell me, then, why do I have the feeling that danger is approaching?”

Shipish-un-mat tied her hair with the band of a prophet and picked up her magical wand. A prophecy immediately streamed forth from her mouth. “By the battle-chasm of our river,” she began, “I can see that people have joined together to fight a Yaunkur. At times the blood and gore conceal my view of the scene. At other times, I see the tangle of their swords in battle. Then I see the broken swords of the Repunkur disappear into the west. Meanwhile, the sword of the Yaunkur is brightly shining in the east.

“Then,” the prophetess continued, “I see the Yaunkur, in the form of a marvelous little bird with speckled feathers, flying downstream above our river. Fierce fighting suddenly breaks out in our land, completely destroying our villages. I see your sword entangled with the sword of the Yaunkur. At times the blood and gore conceal my view of the scene. At other times, I see the tangle of swords in battle. Then I see a terrible sight – your broken sword disappearing under blood and gore. Meanwhile, the sword of the Yaunkur is brightly shining in the east. Then the entire vision disappears.”

“You have spoken dreadful, wicked words!” Shipish-un-kur exclaimed, with rage blazing forth in his eyes and in his voice. “The gods may be speaking through you, but their words infuriate me. I fight only against the gods; I keep peace with human beings. The evil Repunkur may have fought against the young Yaunkur all his life, but I will not fight him! Should he ever come here, I

will greet him with kindness and peace in my heart.”

- How does this story play with our notions of “good guys” and “bad guys”? Are our bad guys ever “good”?

I flew through the window and up to the rafters of their large house. I walked this way and that on the beams, stamping my feet so that the rafters creaked and the household gods rumbled with fright. Then I dropped down beside the young ruler with the roaring of the wind. I caught him by his hair and twisted his head this way and that.

As I tossed him about, I said, “Tell me, Shipish-un-kur, why was Kamui-otopush taken prisoner and bound at the top of a spruce tree? I avenged him by fighting the Repunkur. They spoke of you as a fearsome ruler who would have received my older brother as a trophy. I knew that if I were to return to my country without seeing you, my people would look upon me as a coward. So I have come. If you greet me with kindness and peace in your heart, I cannot accept that. I must see how we two warriors compare with one another. Even if we kill each other, our hearts will be content. Show me your courage, strength, and skill.”

With these words, I grabbed the great warrior’s younger sister and carried her toward the smoke hole, while she screamed for help. Shipish-un-kur quickly drew his sword and prevented me from leaving through the smoke hole. I then dashed to the window, but again I could not get past his sword. The two of us flew from side to side beneath the ceiling like a pair of birds. Angry at her prophecy, the great warrior became determined to kill his sister.

- How many instances of shifting loyalties can you identify?

I carried Shipish-un-mat before me as a shield, believing that her brother would spare us both because of his loyalty to her. I was wrong. Shipish-un-kur’s repeated sword-thrusts finally turned Shipish-un-mat against him, and she became determined to kill him. As soon as I released her, she drew a dagger from her robes and

began to attack him, gaining strength from the wrath in her heart.

Hearing the commotion, throngs of armed men rushed in and attacked us. My companion spirits joined the local spirits on top of the stockade, and they rumbled together like one great spirit. The gods sent a fearsome wind rushing into the house, fanning the flames in the hearth until they left their bounds and began to consume the house itself. We escaped just before the building collapsed.

When I saw armies of spearmen coming toward me, I chased them toward Shipish-un-mat. Somewhat to my surprise, she proved to be as courageous and as skilled as she was beautiful. She stood her ground and fought them off, slashing as if she were facing only a few warriors rather than hundreds of them. The flashing of her sword concealed all other swords. She cut down the warriors like blades of grass, and corpses soon covered the earth like a blanket.

Strong as we were, we could not have killed hundreds if a mass of clouds had not blown toward us as swiftly as an arrow in flight. While a mighty god rumbled a warning, my older brother dropped down beside me with the roaring of the wind. We saluted one another with our swords, and then Kamui-otopush began his attack.

- How does the fantastical nature of the narrative affect us? With so many Hollywood-style occurrences, surely this story was not meant to be taken as *fact* – but can it be taken as *truth*?

Although I swung my father's wondrous sword against the warriors, my skill was small compared to that of Kamui-otopush. The flashing of his sword concealed all other swords. He cut down the warriors like blades of grass, and corpses covered the earth like a blanket.

Suddenly Shipish-un-mat screamed, "Valiant Yaunkur warrior, your older sister is fighting mighty demons in a far land. Unless we hurry to her aid, they may kill her, and you will never see her again! Kamui-otopush has the strength and skill to stand alone against all the warriors here. Let us quickly depart!"

Shipish-un-mat flew into the heavens. I sheathed my sword and quickly flew behind her. When we came to the land Shipish-un-mat had seen in her vision, we heard the loud rumbling crashes that told of many dying gods. Below us, battle-mists concealed the earth. Through the clamor we could hear the sad rumblings of my older sister's companion spirits.

The rumbling of my sister's spirits led me to her rescue. I saw with dismay that she was gravely wounded. She would swing her sword once or twice but then faint from the effort. When she regained consciousness, she would swing her sword again. I dropped down at her side with the roaring of the wind.

I unsheathed my father's wondrous sword and swung it against the warriors, but my skill was small compared to that of Shipish-un-mat. Once she began her attack, the flashing of her sword concealed all other swords. She cut down the warriors like blades of grass, and corpses soon covered the earth like a blanket.

Then my older sister collapsed to the ground while a host of spears fell upon her. I pulled her into my arms and held her body up toward the heavens. "Oh gods," I said, "you to whom my father prayed, my older sister reared me lovingly and well. Reward her for the care she gave me. Even though she is the child of my enemy, I pray you to restore her to life!"

The gods heard my words, and their hearts were kind. My sister's spirit left the body in my hands as a new, living spirit. It flew up with a loud roar and rumbled all along its eastward journey to our land, the land of the Yaunkur.

Shipish-un-mat and I continued the fight with renewed spirit. We did not stop until we had avenged my older sister by completely destroying those who had fought against her. When we had finished and all was quiet, Shipish-un-mat's eyes suddenly filled with tears. She said to me, "I can see that to the west of this land, the storm demon and his younger sister are preparing to attack us, man to man and woman to woman!"

Before long a mass of clouds rose in the west, bringing stormy weather upon us. I watched as two creatures walked toward us. First came a very strange-looking being whom I had never seen before. I wondered whether he could possibly be human, for he looked more like a small mountain that had arms and legs sprouting from it. His face looked like a cliff sheared off by a landslide. Strapped to his side he wore a sword as large as the oar of a boat. Behind him came a woman dressed in leather armor sewn from the skins of both land and sea animals. She walked toward Shipish-un-mat with a red knife poised in her hand. As Shipish-un-mat had foretold, the storm demon fiercely attacked me, and his younger sister fiercely attacked her.

I did my best to hold onto my life. I flew here and there like a light breeze, avoiding the storm demon's sword-thrusts. Then I discovered how his armor was tied together. Holding my father's wondrous sword like a spear, I stabbed the storm god through those ties. Good fortune smiled upon my blade, for the tip went right into his flesh, and he fell flat upon the earth. "He must be human after all!" I thought.

- Remember that sentiment – it will come back to haunt us...

To my surprise, a handsome young boy jumped out from beneath the storm god's armor! He looked at me and said, "You amaze me, young Yaunkur! Even the greatest gods cannot destroy my armor, and yet you have succeeded. But great warriors should fight without armor. I must see how we compare with one another. Even if we kill each other, our hearts will be content, for everyone will speak of our fame. Now show me your courage, strength, and skill!"

He drew his sword and thrust it at me. Again I flew here and there like a light breeze, avoiding his sword-thrusts. Finally good fortune smiled upon my blade, for the tip of my father's wondrous sword slashed right into his flesh, and I heard his spirit leave his body and fly up with a loud roar.

- Compare the agons in this epic to those in Gilgamesh. Are they similar or different in pattern and function?

Meanwhile, Shipish-un-mat and the storm demon's younger sister were also fighting fiercely. I discovered how the demon's armor was tied together. Holding my father's wondrous sword like a spear, I stabbed the goddess through those ties. Good fortune smiled upon my blade, for the tip went right into her flesh, and she fell flat upon the earth. "She must be human after all!" I thought.

To my surprise, a beautiful young woman jumped out from beneath the leather armor! She looked at me and said, "You amaze me, young Yaunkur! Even the greatest gods cannot destroy my armor, and yet you have succeeded. But do not let Shipish-un-mat hurt me!"

Shipish-un-mat angrily replied, "I must see how we compare with one another. Even if we kill each other, our hearts will be content, for everyone will speak of our fame. Now show me your courage, strength, and skill!"

Shipish-un-mat drew her sword and thrust it at the demon. Good fortune smiled upon her blade, for the tip of her sword slashed right into the goddess' flesh, and I heard her spirit leave her body and fly up with a loud roar. Her living spirit rumbled as it traveled to the east.

Shipish-un-mat said to me, "I know that after we left them, Kamui-otopush and my brother fought one another until your older brother killed mine. Because my brother was your enemy, perhaps you think of me as your enemy also. If you choose to kill me right now, my heart will be content. Or you may choose to pity me and take me to your country. Either way, it is time to stop fighting."

- Compare this to Enkidu's words to Gilgamesh... I chose to take Shipish-un-mat with me, for I knew that no other woman could ever compare with her. We traveled to my country, the land of the Yaunkur, which I had never seen. When we dropped down at the majestic house of my father, I called out to the herald, "Have my older brother



and my sister who reared me arrived? If not, I will leave right now to fight the Repunkur.”

The herald replied, “Kamui-otopush has finished fighting and has returned. The gods have restored your older sister to life, and she is here also.” It was as he said. My older sister had indeed been restored to life, and she was now more beautiful

than ever. In gratitude for saving my life, my oldest brother gave my older sister to Kamui-otopush in marriage. In gratitude for saving my life, he gave Shipish-un-mat to me in marriage.

From that time until this, we have lived in peace.

Source: Donna Rosenberg's World Mythology, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.

## TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING...

- Epic Poem** a long narrative poem telling of a hero's deeds.
- Neanderthal** An extinct human species (*Homo neanderthalensis*) or subspecies (*Homo sapiens neanderthalensis*) living during the late Pleistocene Epoch throughout most of Europe and parts of Asia and northern Africa and associated with Middle Paleolithic tools.
- Venus of Willendorf** a limestone female figurine painted with ochre dated between 30,000 and 18,000 years old. The Venus measures 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches. It is currently housed at the Naturhistorisches Museum in Vienna.

## Journal Entry

**14. Honor – (1 page).** What does honor mean to you? Are you or people you know honorable? Can a true code of honor exist in today's world? Did true honor ever exist (among the knights of medieval times, the Japanese Samurai, etc.)? Explain...

## ⚡ Beowulf / 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior ⚡

**Notes:** Scholars believe that the extraordinary epic poem called *Beowulf* was written around between the middle 7<sup>th</sup> century to the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE in Old English, probably by a monk or poet in an Anglo-Saxon court. The writer was most probably a Christian who was inspired by the pagan heroics of the Anglo-Saxon tradition still interwoven into the culture of the time. The *Beowulf* manuscript was not discovered until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and although it was written in Old English by an Englishman, the story takes place in southern Sweden and Denmark, probably from where the ancestors of the writer originally came.



Michael Crichton's 1999 movie *The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior* (based on his book, *Eaters of the Dead*), is adapted from the *Beowulf* epic. In the movie, an Arab named Ahmed Ibn Fadlan (played by Antonio Banderas), narrates and brings the story alive. The character of Ibn is based on a real man by the same name who had traveled north from Baghdad into what is now Russia, where he came in contact with the Vikings. His manuscript, well-known to scholars, provides one of the earliest eyewitness accounts of Viking life and culture. Although Ibn was a real person, his involvement with this particular story is a fiction.

*The 13<sup>th</sup> Warrior* introduces Ibn as a man who is banished from Baghdad for making eyes at a courtier's wife. He is given the post of ambassador to a group of people living in the north. On his way to his new post, he meets up with a band of Vikings. Although initially horrified by their barbaric customs and lack of hygiene, Ibn unexpectedly becomes one of their number when the Vikings' leader, Buliwyf (Beowulf), includes him in a small band of adventurers. Their goal: report to aging King Hrothgar and offer their assistance in protecting his people from a monster that is terrorizing and decimating the population. Soon, Ibn is on the front lines, fighting alongside Buliwyf and his right-hand man, Herger, to defeat the monster.

## 🌀 A Very Abridged Version of Beowulf 🌀

The Danish king, Hrothgar, ruler of the Spear-Danes, had recently built a great hall for his warriors. The palace was splendidly filled with treasures, and it was a feasting center for those who deserved to enjoy their success as warriors in battle and as a reward for their courage and valor. The glamorous hall was called Heorot, and many champions came to feast under the gabled roof, receiving their prizes and trophies from the generous king. But unknown to them all, there lurked an evil and gruesome monster.

Grendel was a foul and loathsome creature who dwelt on the misty moors and marshes beyond the palace walls. Hate and malevolent thoughts filled his mind by day. He was spiteful and full of vengeance, having been subjected to evil himself as the result of a murderous curse from his cruel ancestors. Grendel had been banished from love and from enjoyment of life, and he lived alone in the dark swamps with only his hungry heart, his wicked mother and the other monsters of this deep and dreadful place.

One night Grendel's greed led him to the hall of the Spear-Danes. Peeping in through the darkened windows, he saw a group of sleeping warriors, drowsy from mead and too much food and snoring in a corner. The grim and greedy monster put his great arm through the iron gates and grabbed two of the sleeping warriors, then threw them over his shoulder to return to his deep lair to feast upon their bodies.

Each night the monster came to devour more and more of Hrothgar's men, his hunger for flesh becoming an obsession. Whatever the great king offered the beast he rejected, desiring nothing else except to eat flesh and to prove his great power over the land.

For many years the dreadful demon monster stalked the moors and haunted the woods, many warriors died and many ran away terrified by Grendel's devouring sport. Stories of Grendel's grisly greed traveled far and wide, and bards sang of his terror and the Spear-Danes' never-ending struggle against him. The news traveled to the southern coast of Sweden, where the Storm-Geats lived. Beowulf was the greatest of these warriors, and when he heard about Grendel he was determined to help rid the Danes of the terrible beast.

When Hrothgar heard of Beowulf's arrival in his land he was overjoyed. He had known him as a child, and many rumors had grown up that Beowulf had the strength of thirty men just in the grip of one hand. He welcomed Beowulf into his hall and they discussed how best to rid the land of Grendel. Beowulf convinced the king that he should stay the night in the great hall and wait for the beast to come. He would slay him with his bare hands, for Grendel had no weapons either.

That night Beowulf and some of his companions remained in the great feasting hall. Some fell asleep but Beowulf lay awake, ready and waiting. As the moon fell behind some clouds, Grendel slipped out of his dark cavern among the swamps of the moor and made his way towards the hall. He saw the lights still glowing and knew warriors were sleeping off their fine banquet. His mouth drooled and his lips turned to a grin at the thought of such succulent meals ahead of him. Sneaking into the hall, Grendel found a sleeping warrior. He seized him by the throat, tore his body to shreds and then began to bite into the flesh. The corpse soon ran with blood, which Grendel drank like water, tossing away the bones. Grendel was about to snatch another warrior when Beowulf jumped up from his pretend sleep and seized the great monster's arm in his own mighty grip.



The monster was frightened. He had never met a living being as strong as himself. His courage left him, and he wanted to escape and return to his own dark, dank cavern to hide, but Beowulf held on to him. Clutching his hand, Beowulf pulled him back, and as he pulled on the monster's arm it began to tear away from the shoulder and Beowulf ripped Grendel's arm from its socket. Grendel ran away from the palace shrieking in agony. He managed to drag himself back to his swampy home and there, with his own blood swimming around him and the life-force draining from his evil heart, the great monster died.

To prove his success, Beowulf hung the ghastly arm from the rafters of the great hall so that all who came to feast might see it.

Hrothgar insisted on having a ceremonial banquet. He ordered that the hall be cleansed and that Beowulf should receive many gifts and treasures for his bravery and courage. And for that night at least, they drank, enjoyed themselves and slept in peace. But it was not the end of terror in the hall

of Heorot. Grendel's mother, a water-witch, had grieved deeply at the death of her terrifying son, and as she sat alone in the darkness beneath the swamps and moors she began to weave her own spell of evil revenge on the warriors of the great hall.

That night she surged up from her underwater lair in anger and broke into the great hall. She grabbed one of the king's favorite comrades in her teeth and then snatched from the ceiling Grendel's revolting arm. Grendel's mother returned to her lair deep in the underground caverns and waters of the swamp.

Again Beowulf agreed to challenge this monster, but this time he knew he would have to follow her down to her lair, for now that she had retrieved Grendel's arm she might never return to the surface. Beowulf dived into the black, bubbling swamp and swam like a seal into the dark depths of the underground waters.

He found the water-witch in her lair, and the terrible battle began. Yet the sword on which Beowulf had decided to rely to kill her was useless, and he began to struggle under her fearsome power. But then, just as she drew her own dagger to slay him, Beowulf saw sticking out of the rocks an ancient sword, encrusted with the barnacles of time. Its golden hilt glinted, willing him to reach for it, and impulsively he grabbed at the blade. The sword came instantly to his hand as if by some supernatural power, so he thrust it between the witch's eyes, sliced it down through her head, and completely chopped her body in half, as if she had been a slab of butter.

He swam back to the surface of the black waters carrying the monster's head and the bejeweled hilt of the magic sword. His return to Heorot was glorious, and so he became one of the most honored and renowned of warriors. Then Beowulf returned to Sweden and ruled his people in peace and honor for fifty years.

But many hundreds of years before Beowulf had gained fame as a hero, a fire-eating dragon had taken up residence in a stone-barrow at the base of a cliff, far below the surface of the earth. Here the dragon guarded a secret hoard of treasure, which had been left under the curse of a lone warrior a thousand years before. The dragon loved its hoard and would gloat day and night over its possessions, not interested in anything else or even in eating anyone, until the fateful day when it was disturbed.

One of Beowulf's servants stumbled by accident upon the secret path that led down to the underground cavern. The servant was terrified when he saw the dragon, but he was also tempted by a golden goblet that lay near the dragon's head. The servant snatched the goblet and ran quickly away to prove to his friends that he had found the treasure trove.

The dragon made a daily count of all its bits and pieces, and finding a golden goblet had gone missing it puffed itself up and frantically searched everywhere for the cup. Dragons are not known for their tolerance of mankind, and it set off up the path, sure that someone had been down and

robbed it. Now only vengeance was in its mind, and not even the safe return of the cup would satisfy its disturbed head. For a whole day the dragon savaged the villagers, burned their buildings, then flew back to its nest and safety.

Beowulf was by now over seventy years old, but he was determined to destroy the dragon who had burned his own gift-hall and killed many of his people. With only his trusted companion, Wiglaf, he descended the steep path down the cliff face into the depths of the earth and the dragon's lair. The servant had eventually owned up to Beowulf how he had accidentally found the barrow. It did not take long for Beowulf and Wiglaf to destroy the dragon, but Beowulf was mortally wounded in the terrible fight and died from his wounds.

His body was cremated on the cliff top above the great dragon's lair. The huge treasure hoard was laid out all around him so that when the fire was lit he could be honored from far across the sea. With the ashes of his bones and the dragon's hoard, the warriors built a barrow on the headland to keep his fame remembered for always. His immortality was now assured, and the thread of the Wyrd had been woven for Beowulf.

## TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING...

<b>Monomyth</b>	a long narrative poem telling of a hero's deeds.
<b>Sigmund Freud</b>	1856-1939. Austrian neurologist; founder of psychoanalysis.
<b>Carl Jung</b>	1875-1961. Swiss psychiatrist / psychologist. Student of Freud.
<b>Joseph Campbell</b>	1904-1987. Perhaps the best known Mythologist. Student of Jung.
<b>George Lucas</b>	1944. Cinematographer, director. Friend of Campbell.
<b>Bill Moyers</b>	1934. Journalist, author, etc. Friend of Campbell.

**EC:** Interview your parents or someone over 30 years old... find out what it was like to see Star Wars when it first came out. How long were the lines? Why was it so big? What impact did the movie have on them?

## Journal Entry

**15. The Problem of Modern Man – (1 page).** 50 years ago, Joseph Campbell wrote that the problem of modern man is to make life spiritually significant. Smaller tribal communities shared common beliefs that were based on the culture's collective identity. In today's world, less emphasis is placed on the community. We seem to have lost a sense of meaningful (perhaps spiritual) connectedness within our culture and are only concerned with the individual (me, me, me). Do you think Campbell is right? Is our problem that we lack spiritual significance? That we no longer have a sense of connectedness with each other? What do *you* think is the greatest problem facing humanity?

## Star Wars: A New Hope

"I've always tried to be aware of what I say in my films, because all of us who make motion pictures are teachers – teachers with very loud voices."  
– George Lucas



## Move over, Odysseus, here comes Luke Skywalker

Nobody paid \$7 to hear Homer read *The Odyssey*, or lined up to buy Thomas Malory's 15th-century version of King Arthur's legend. But, when *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace* opened, George Lucas' epic of galactic good and evil was seen by more people in one day than Homer or Malory ever dreamed of reaching in their lifetimes.

Different eras, different heroes, yet Lucas' film series contains the same mythic qualities those ancient storytellers and others used to fuel imaginations throughout the ages.

Lucas always claimed that his lucrative *Star Wars* saga blends mythology and technology. Instead of a Scylla, he has Darth Vader. Luke Skywalker and Thor have more in common than you may think.

Indeed, Lucas' fascination with mythology led to an enduring friendship with the late Joseph Campbell, perhaps the best-known expert in the field of myth studies.

Lucas blended archetypes of legends and visionary cinema into three *Star Wars* chapters between 1977 and 1983. *Star Wars: A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* have grossed billions of dollars in worldwide ticket sales and merchandising.

The reason goes beyond state-of-the-art special effects and studio hype. Lucas' film series isn't merely a hit, it's a myth.

"*Star Wars* is an example of what Joseph Campbell called the Monomyth, which reaches a broader audience and is more enduring," said Shanti Feder, editor of *Parabola* magazine, a publication of the Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition.

"The stories speak to something inside us that wants to know how our world lives, that wants to make order of it and find some meaning. Myths fulfill that in a way that science and facts don't always do, because science and facts don't always give us meaning."

Campbell – known to mass audiences through *The Power of Myth*, the PBS TV series based on his books – was an expert in the construction and cultural resonance of mythology. His books *Masks of God* and *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* are considered the ultimate guides to what has enthralled the world for centuries.

Campbell defined the Hero Cycle, a course of events that occurs as a rite of initiation in every myth, pinpointing the need for mentors, villains, elixirs and jesters along the way. Each step can be traced in the adventures of Star Wars hero Luke Skywalker.

Before Campbell died in 1987, the scholar and Lucas became friends. A storyteller needs a mentor as much as a hero does.

“Yes, I consider him a mentor,” Lucas said at a recent New York press conference. “He was an amazing scholar and an amazing person. When I started doing Star Wars, I re-read *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. After Return of the Jedi, somebody gave me a tape of one of his lectures. I was just blown away by that. He was much more powerful as a speaker than he was as a writer.”

A short time later, Lucas loaned his studios to PBS to produce the Campbell series. Letters and gifts exchanged by the two visionaries are on display in the Joseph Campbell Archives in Santa Barbara, Calif.

The founding curator of that museum, Dr. Jonathan Young, said Campbell compared Lucas to the masters.

“Campbell was very grateful that Lucas presented the elements of Luke's initiation so clearly,” Young said. “The idea of a calling, of being drawn away into a place of wisdom, finding allies and mentors, accomplishing the ordeals, and then returning.”

In Campbell's teachings, myths inspire both awe and recognition. They communicate a sense of universal order and show how people should live.

Sound like Star Wars? Campbell thought so.

“Campbell was impressed that Lucas had so diligently presented this large mystery in a way that was so accessible to large numbers of people,” Young said.

## The Hero and the Quest

“Luke fulfills a number of the characteristics that you see in mythic heroes,” Feder said: “A royal lineage that he grows up ignorant about in a simple, obscure way, and he has special powers

and abilities that are brought out by a series of teachers.

In classic mythology, the hero reluctantly leaves the homeland (in Luke's case, the planet Tatooine) on a quest that takes him over a supernatural threshold into a strange land. A helper/co-hero such as space smuggler Han Solo lends a steady hand through a series of ordeals. Comic relief is provided by tricksters such as the Greek muse Thalia or C3PO and R2-D2.

Ultimately, the hero must stand on his own, face the darkness and conquer it before returning to reality, stronger and wiser.

For Luke, the darkness was the evil side of the Force, a cosmic spiritualism that Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda taught him to harness for good purposes, another element of the Hero Cycle. Luke and Han, by association with the Force, both evolve from self-centered people into crusaders with a grand purpose.

“No one becomes much in this life without powerful mentoring experiences,” Young said. “These are both universal and precious. It is a rare and beautiful thing that everyone knows on some level is of great, great value.”

A series of obstacles must block the hero's path to an enchanted land where final victory – the elixir or a golden fleece or galactic peace – awaits. Threshold guardians constantly interfere with the hero, whether it's the terror of Medusa, Mordred, or the Empire's stormtroopers and a conniving Jabba the Hutt.

Even after defeating the guardians, mythological heroes can't breathe easily.

“The seeker has to go through a death and rebirth experience,” Young said. “When Luke is trapped in the garbage dump in the first movie, or Han Solo is turned to stone in that carbonite block, these are experiences equal to Jonah being swallowed by the great fish.”

“They are being completely overwhelmed by defeat, a near-death experience, and then they're revived and are able to become new people. That's a challenge that every human being goes through.”

After the hero prevails, the final showdown with the villain, either real or psychological, can begin. Psychologist Carl Jung, a mentor of sorts to Campbell, called this antagonist the Shadow archetype. Darth Vader's black cloak and helmet, or his estranged conflict with his son certainly fit that description.

This pattern of myth appears in plenty of books, TV shows and films. Consider Dorothy's trek to OZ or Rocky Balboa's heavyweight boxing career.

"Every culture has them, and they're essentially the same story," said Liam Neeson, who plays Jedi master Qui-Gon Jinn in *The Phantom Menace*. "We're living in such a complex world, with so much confusion each time we turn around, that we want to see something that makes the world more palatable. (Myths) just remind you of those basic pillars of wisdom that everybody should have."

## Moving beyond Myth

Lucas is the first mass media mythologist, which causes some academics to question placing him among the elite creators of legends. Ancient myths

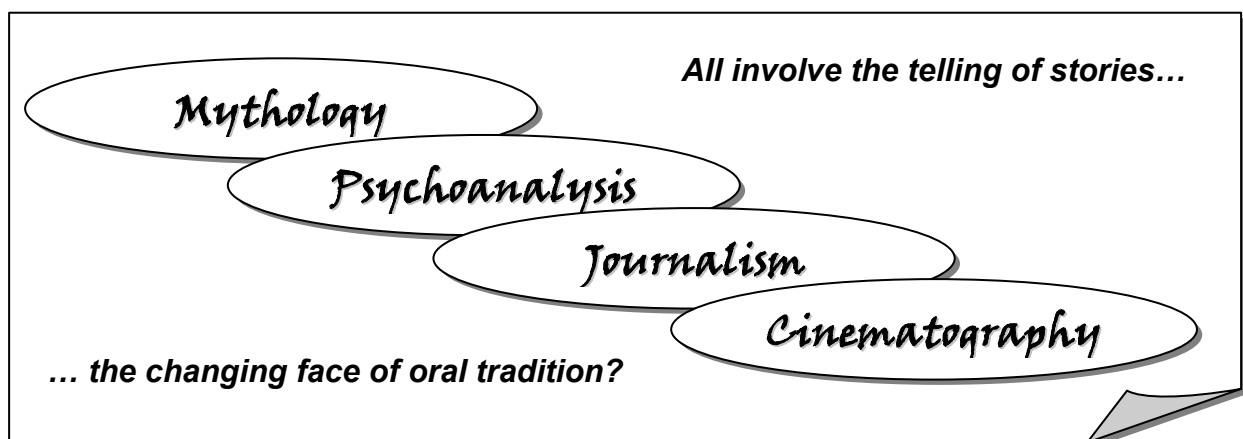
thrived on the power of their stories alone, not mass communication.

"There is the test-of-time thing to consider," Feder said. "A lot of people would hesitate to put the label of 'myth' on something relatively new like Star Wars. But, a myth is a myth, no matter what trappings we put on it. Give them light sabers instead of swords and it doesn't matter."

Feder also noted Luke's shift toward pacifism, which is different from past mythological heroes. Yoda and Obi-Wan teach Luke to use the Force for knowledge and defense, and the young Jedi knight tosses away his weapon during the climactic battle with Darth Vader in *Return of the Jedi*.

"That's a pretty radical idea," she said. "We're used to the hero fighting; slaying the dragon or killing the monster. That's what we find most familiar. This idea of triumphing by not fighting, of being passive, of letting this power work through you, is a very Zen type of idea."

Source: Steve Persall, © 1999 St. Petersburg Times.



The struggle between good and evil within us has been around since the beginning of time. All mythology and all religions address it, and it's the most intimate struggle that we cope with — trying to do the right thing and what's expected of us by society, by our peers, and in our hearts. The issues of falling from grace and being redeemed, and the strength of family and love — they're all very primary issues.

— George Lucas, *Premiere Magazine*, May 1999

## 🌀 The Stages of the Monomyth 🌀

### 1) THE HERO IS INTRODUCED IN HIS ORDINARY WORLD.

Most stories take place in a special world, one that is new and alien to its hero.

### 2) THE CALL TO ADVENTURE.

The hero is presented with a problem, challenge, or adventure.



### 3) THE HERO IS RELUCTANT AT FIRST.

The hero balks at the threshold of adventure. S/he is facing the greatest of all fears: fear of the unknown.

### 4) THE HERO IS ENCOURAGED BY THE WISE OLD MAN OR WOMAN.

The mentor can only go so far with the hero. Eventually the hero must face the unknown by himself.

### 5) THE HERO PASSES THE FIRST THRESHOLD.

He fully enters the special world of his story. The hero is now committed to his journey... there's no turning back.

### 6) THE HERO ENCOUNTERS TESTS & HELPERS.

He makes allies and enemies in the special world; passes certain tests/challenges that are part of his training.

### 7) THE HERO REACHES THE INNERMOST CAVE.

The hero comes at last to a dangerous place, often deep underground, where the object of his quest is hidden.

### 8) THE HERO ENDURES THE SUPREME ORDEAL.

The moment he touches bottom. He faces possible death, brought to the brink in a fight with a mythical beast.

### 9) THE HERO SIEZES THE SWORD.

Having survived death, the hero now takes possession of the treasure he's come seeking – or settles a conflict.

### 10) THE ROAD BACK.

The hero's not safe yet... the hero is pursued by the vengeful forces from whom he has stolen the treasure.

### 11) RESURRECTION.

The hero emerges from the special world, transformed by his experience.

### 12) RETURN WITH THE TREASURE.

He returns to his ordinary world, but his adventure would be meaningless unless he brought back the treasure.



## Of Myth and Men

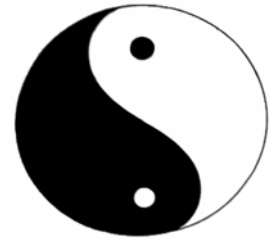
1. **MOYERS:** Joseph Campbell once said all the great myths, the ancient great stories, have to be regenerated in every generation. He said that's what you are doing with Star Wars. You are taking these old stories and putting them into the most modern of idioms, the cinema. Are you conscious of doing that? Or are you just setting out to make a good action-movie adventure?  
  
**LUCAS:** With Star Wars I consciously set about to re-create myths and the classic mythological motifs. I wanted to use those motifs to deal with issues that exist today. The more research I did, the more I realized that the issues are the same ones that existed 3,000 years ago. That we haven't come very far emotionally.
2. **MOYERS:** What do you make of the fact that so many people have interpreted your work as being profoundly religious?  
  
**LUCAS:** I don't see Star Wars as profoundly religious. I see Star Wars as taking all the issues that religion represents and trying to distill them down into a more modern and easily accessible construct—that there is a greater mystery out there. I remember when I was 10 years old, I asked my mother, "If there's only one God, why are there so many religions?" I've been pondering that question ever since, and the conclusion I've come to is that all the religions are true.
3. **MOYERS:** Is one religion as good as another?  
  
**LUCAS:** I would say so. Religion is basically a container for faith. And faith in our culture, our world and on a larger issue, the mystical level—which is God, what one might describe as a supernatural, or the things that we can't explain—is a very important part of what allows us to remain stable, remain balanced.
4. **MOYERS:** One explanation for the popularity of Star Wars when it appeared is that by the end of the 1970s, the hunger for spiritual experience was no longer being satisfied sufficiently by the traditional vessels of faith.  
  
**LUCAS:** I put the Force into the movie in order to try to awaken a certain kind of spirituality in young people—more a belief in God than a belief in any particular religious system. I wanted to make it so that young people would begin to ask questions about the mystery. Not having enough interest in the mysteries of life to ask the question, "Is there a God or is there not a God?"—that is for me the worst thing that can happen. I think you should have an opinion about that. Or you should be saying, "I'm looking. I'm very curious about this, and I am going to continue to look until I can find an answer, and if I can't find an answer, then I'll die trying." I think it's important to have a belief system and to have faith.
5. **MOYERS:** Do you have an opinion, or are you looking?  
  
**LUCAS:** I think there is a God. No question. What that God is or what we know about that God, I'm not sure. The one thing I know about life and about the human race is that we've always tried to construct some kind of context for the unknown. Even the cavemen thought they had it figured out. I would say that cavemen understood on a scale of about 1. Now we've made it up to about 5. The only thing that most people don't realize is the scale goes to 1 million.
6. **MOYERS:** The central ethic of our culture has been the Bible. Like your stories, it's about the fall, wandering, redemption, return. But the Bible no longer occupies that central place in our culture today. Young people in particular are turning to movies for their inspiration, not to organized religion.  
  
**LUCAS:** Well, I hope that doesn't end up being the course this whole thing takes, because I think there's definitely a place for organized religion. I would hate to find ourselves in a completely secular world where entertainment was passing for some kind of religious experience.

**7. MOYERS:** You said you put the Force into Star Wars because you wanted us to think on these things. Some people have traced the notion of the Force to Eastern views of God—particularly Buddhist—as a vast reservoir of energy that is the ground of all of our being. Was that conscious?

**LUCAS:** I guess it's more specific in Buddhism, but it is a notion that's been around before that. When I wrote the first Star Wars, I had to come up with a whole cosmology: What do people believe in? I had to do something that was relevant, something that imitated a belief system that has been around for thousands of years, and that most people on the planet, one way or another, have some kind of connection to. I didn't want to invent a religion. I wanted to try to explain in a different way the religions that have already existed. I wanted to express it all.

**8. MOYERS:** You're creating a new myth?

**LUCAS:** I'm telling an old myth in a new way. Each society takes that myth and retells it in a different way, which relates to the particular environment they live in. The motif is the same. It's just that it gets localized. As it turns out, I'm localizing it for the planet. I guess I'm localizing it for the end of the millennium more than I am for any particular place.



**9. MOYERS:** What lessons do you think people around the world are taking away from Star Wars?

**LUCAS:** Star Wars is made up of many themes. It's not just one little simple parable. One is our relationship to machines, which are fearful, but also benign. Then there is the lesson of friendship and symbiotic relationships, of your obligations to your fellowman, to other people that are around you. This is a world where evil has run amuck. But you have control over your destiny, you have many paths to walk down, and you can choose which destiny is going to be yours.

**10. MOYERS:** So while Star Wars is about cosmic, galactic epic struggles, it's at heart about a family?

**LUCAS:** And a hero. Most myths center on a hero, and it's about how you conduct yourself as you go through the hero's journey, which in all classical myth takes the form of a voyage of transformation by trials and revelations. You must let go of your past and must embrace your future and figure out what path you're going to go down.

**11. MOYERS:** The psychologist Jonathan Young says that whether we say, "I'm trusting my inner voice," or use more traditional language—"I'm trusting the Holy Spirit," as we do in the Christian tradition—somehow we're acknowledging that we're not alone in the universe. Is this what Ben Kenobi urges upon Luke Skywalker when he says, "Trust your feelings"?

**LUCAS:** Ultimately the Force is the larger mystery of the universe. And to trust your feelings is your way into that.

**12. MOYERS:** One scholar has called Star Wars "mysticism for the masses." You've been accused of trivializing religion, promoting religion with no strings attached.

**LUCAS:** That's why I would hesitate to call the Force God. It's designed primarily to make young people think about the mystery. Not to say, "Here's the answer." It's to say, "Think about this for a second. Is there a God? What does God look like? What does God sound like? What does God feel like? How do we relate to God?" just getting young people to think at that level is what I've been trying to do in the films. What eventual manifestation that takes place in terms of how they describe their God, what form their faith takes, is not the point of the movie.

**13. MOYERS:** And stories are the way to ask these questions?

**LUCAS:** When the film came out, almost every single religion took Star Wars and used it as an example of their religion; they were able to relate it to stories in the Bible, in the Koran and in the Torah.

**14. MOYERS:** It's certainly true that Star Wars was seen by a lot of adults, yours truly included. Even if I hadn't wanted to pay attention, I realized that I had to take it seriously because my kids were taking it seriously. And now my grandkids take it seriously.

**LUCAS:** Well, it's because I try to make it believable in its own fantastic way. And I am dealing with core issues that were valid 3,000 years ago and are still valid today, even though they're not in fashion.

**15. MOYERS:** Why are they out of fashion?

**LUCAS:** Because the world we live in is more complex. I think that a lot of those moralities have been degraded to the point that they don't exist anymore. But the emotional and psychological part of those issues are still there in most people's minds.

**16. MOYERS:** What do you mean by the "emotional" side?

**LUCAS:** The importance of, say, friendship and loyalty. Most people look at that and say, "How corny." But the issues of friendship and loyalty are very, very important to the way we live, and somebody has got to tell young people that these are very important values. Young people are still learning. They're still picking up ideas. They are still using these ideas to shape the way they're going to conduct their lives.

**17. MOYERS:** How do you explain the power of film to move us?

**LUCAS:** It takes all the aspects of other art forms—painting, music, literature, theater—and puts them into one art form. It's a combination of all these, and it works on all the senses. For that reason it's a very alluring, kind of dreamlike experience. You sit in a dark room and have this other world come at you in a very realistic way.

**18. MOYERS:** Wendy Doniger, who is a scholar of mythology at the University of Chicago, says that myths are important because they remind us that our lives are real and our lives are not real. We have these bodies, which we can touch, but we also have within us this omnipotent magical world of thought.

**LUCAS:** Myths tell us these old stories in a way that doesn't threaten us. They're in an imaginary land where you can be safe. But they deal with real truths that need to be told. Sometimes the truths are so painful that stories are the only way you can get through to them psychologically.

**19. MOYERS:** When Darth Vader tempts Luke to come over to the Empire side, offering him all that the Empire has to offer, I am taken back to the story of Satan taking Christ to the mountain and offering him the kingdoms of the world, if only he will turn away from his mission. Was that conscious in your mind?

**LUCAS:** Yes. That story also has been retold. Buddha was tempted in the same way. It's all through mythology. The gods are constantly tempting. Everybody and everything. So the idea of temptation is one of the things we struggle against, and the temptation obviously is the temptation to go to the dark side.

**20. MOYERS:** I hear many young people today talk about a world that's empty of heroism, where there are no more noble things to do.

**LUCAS:** Heroes come in all sizes, and you don't have to be a giant hero. You can be a very small hero. It's just as important to understand that accepting self-responsibility for the things you do, having good manners, caring about other people—these are heroic acts. Everybody has the choice of being a hero or not being a hero every day of their lives. You don't have to get into a giant laser-sword fight and blow up three spaceships to become a hero.

## ☪ The Myth of Sisyphus ☪ by Albert Camus

The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor.

If one believes Homer, Sisyphus was the wisest and most prudent of mortals. According to another tradition, however, he was disposed to practice the profession of highwayman. I see no contradiction in this. Opinions differ as to the reasons why he became the futile laborer of the underworld. To begin with, he is accused of a certain levity in regard to the gods. He stole their secrets. Ægina, the daughter of Æsopus, was carried off by Jupiter. The father was shocked by that disappearance and complained to Sisyphus. He, who knew of the abduction, offered to tell about it on condition that Æsopus would give water to the citadel of Corinth. To the celestial thunderbolts he preferred the benediction of water. He was punished for this in the underworld. Homer tells us also that Sisyphus had put Death in chains. Pluto could not endure the sight of his deserted, silent empire. He dispatched the god of war, who liberated Death from the bands of her conqueror.

It is said also that Sisyphus, being near to death, rashly wanted to test his wife's love. He ordered her to cast his unburied body into the middle of the public square. Sisyphus woke up in the underworld. And there, annoyed by an obedience so contrary to human love, he obtained from Pluto permission to return to earth in order to chastise his wife. But when he had seen again the face of this world, enjoyed water and sun, warm stones and the sea, he no longer wanted to go back to the infernal darkness. Recalls, signs of anger, warnings were of no avail. Many years more he lived facing the curve of the gulf, the sparkling sea, and the smiles of earth. A decree of the gods was necessary. Mercury came and seized the impudent man by the collar and, snatching him from his joys, led him forcibly back to the underworld, where his rock was ready for him.

You have already grasped that Sisyphus is the absurd hero. He *is*, as much through his passions as through his torture. His scorn of the gods, his

hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing. This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth. Nothing is told us about Sisyphus in the underworld. Myths are made for the imagination to breathe life into them. As for this myth, one sees merely the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone, to roll it and push it up a slope a hundred times over; one sees the face screwed up, the cheek tight against the stone, the shoulder bracing the clay-covered mass, the foot wedging it, the fresh start with arms outstretched, the wholly human security of two earth-clotted bands. At the very end of his long effort measured by skyless space and time without depth, the purpose is achieved. Then Sisyphus watches the stone rush down in a few moments toward that lower world whence he will have to push it up again toward the summit. He goes back down to the plain.

It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end. That hour like a breathing-space which returns as surely as his suffering, that is the hour of consciousness. At each of those moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks toward the lairs of the gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock.

If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd. But it is tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious. Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn.

If the descent is thus sometimes performed in sorrow, it can also take place in joy. This word is not too much. Again I fancy Sisyphus returning toward his rock, and the sorrow was in the beginning. When the images of earth cling too tightly to memory, when the call of happiness becomes too insistent, it happens that melancholy rises in man's heart: this is the rock's victory, this is the rock itself. The boundless grief is too heavy to bear. These are our nights of Gethsemane. But crushing truths perish from being acknowledged. Thus, Œdipus at the outset obeys fate without knowing it. But from the moment he knows, his tragedy begins. Yet at the same moment, blind and desperate, he realizes that the only bond linking him to the world is the cool hand of a girl. Then a tremendous remark rings out: "Despite so many ordeals, my advanced age and the nobility of my soul make me conclude that all is well." Sophocles' Œdipus, like Dostoevsky's Kirilov, thus gives the recipe for the absurd victory. Ancient wisdom confirms modern heroism.

One does not discover the absurd without being tempted to write a manual of happiness. "What! by such narrow ways—?" There is but one world, however. Happiness and the absurd are two sons of the same earth. They are inseparable. It would be a mistake to say that happiness necessarily springs from the absurd discovery.

It happens as well that the feeling of the absurd springs from happiness. "I conclude that all is well," says Œdipus, and that remark is sacred. It echoes in the wild and limited universe of man. It teaches that all is not, has not been, exhausted. It drives out of this world a god who had come into it with dissatisfaction and a preference for futile sufferings. It makes of fate a human matter, which must be settled among men.

All Sisyphus' silent joy is contained therein. His fate belongs to him. His rock is his thing. Likewise, the absurd man, when he contemplates his torment, silences all the idols. In the universe suddenly restored to its silence, the myriad wondering little voices of the earth rise up. Unconscious, secret calls, invitations from all the faces, they are the necessary reverse and price of victory. There is no sun without shadow, and it is essential to know the night. The absurd man says yes and his effort will henceforth be unceasing. If there is a personal fate, there is no higher destiny, or at least there is but one which he concludes is inevitable and despicable. For the rest, he knows himself to be the master of his days. At that subtle moment when man glances backward over his life, Sisyphus returning toward his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which becomes his fate, created by him, combined under his memory's eye and soon sealed by his death. Thus, convinced of the wholly human origin of all that is human, a blind man eager to see who knows that the night has no end, he is still on the go. The rock is still rolling.

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.

## Hero Quest Bingo

CARD A				

CARD B				

CARD C				

### Instructions:

1. Randomly write the numbers 1 through 25 in the squares of each card above.
2. I will call a number and ask a question. If you know the answer to the question, fill in the appropriate square (make sure you can still see the number).
3. Call Bingo if:

**Corners:** Each corner square is filled

**Columns or Rows:** Any column or row is completely filled

**Diagonals:** Squares from one corner to another in a diagonal line are completely filled


4. If you call Bingo, I will ask the questions that correspond to your bingo numbers. If you can answer them all correctly, you score 3 participation points.
5. We will move to the next card after Bingo has been called three times. Before we continue, I will ask any remaining questions that have not been answered. If you answer one correctly you score 1 participation point.

## Inquiry Project





## Inquiry Project Guidelines


There is a special difference between writing a research paper and doing an *Inquiry Project*. When writing a research paper, the writer often already has in mind a specific goal: something to prove or to say about a particular subject. The writer researches to find out what others have said about his/her idea. The entire research process is geared toward proving or disproving an idea the writer has already formulated. The goal of this Inquiry Project is not to begin with a preconceived notion or hypothesis. It is to ask questions, seek answers, and then create a unique method of sharing your newfound knowledge with the rest of us.


 **STEP 1: Choose your topic.** Your first step is to relax. This isn't as hard as it will first appear. Next, choose a thematic grouping from the list below. Hopefully, one of them will appeal to you more than the others.


- Cosmogonies
- Flood Myths
- Stories of Death, Re-birth and the Underworld
- Heroes, Warriors and Their Quests
- Divine Lovers
- Tricksters
- Beasts and Monsters

 **STEP 2: Begin searching for stories.** After you have picked a thematic grouping, you will begin your inquiry. Your goal is to find five stories from around the world that fall within your grouping. I recommend using a variety of resources: books and articles, the Internet, audio and video resources, etc. The GHS Library and the Gloversville Free Library offer a wealth of resources. You may not count a story from the class text as one of your five. You may only use one from the text if you find five others from elsewhere. *You must use a minimum of three valid sources.*

 **STEP 3: Build your Works Cited page.** Once you have located your stories, you will need to prepare your works cited page following MLA guidelines.

 **STEP 4: Read the stories.** Read the stories. Read them again. Grab a cup of coffee and read them once more. Become immersed in the stories so that you know them thoroughly. Know everything about them.

 **STEP 5: Begin your inquiry.** This is the most difficult part of the project because it requires original thought. Analyze the stories you have read and consider them from a variety of angles: How are they similar? How are they different? What symbols or archetypes do they share? What is their main concern or function? Who are the principle characters (and how do they compare to each other)? And so on. Inquire deeply about the connections you see between the stories and make many notes along the way – they will help you out during the next step.

 **STEP 6: Write an essay.** The essay you write will be no less than three pages long (typewritten, double-spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12, stapled). Please use a cover page and remember to include your typewritten Works Cited page (these are not counted as essay pages). The essay will be your deeply informative exploration of the five stories you chose. It will clearly demonstrate your understanding of each story as well as your ability to compare symbols, archetypes, functions, etc. in a meaningful and insightful way.



## Inquiry Project Checklist

### **STEP 1: Choose your topic.**

- ☐ Cosmogonies
- ☐ Flood Myths
- ☐ Death, Re-birth and the Underworld
- ☐ Heroes, Warriors and Their Quests
- ☐ Divine Lovers
- ☐ Tricksters
- ☐ Beasts and Monsters

### **STEP 2: Begin searching for stories.**

Source 1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source 2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source 3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source 4: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Source 5: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4	Story 5
Country of origin					
Tribe or locale					
Name of story					
Age of story					

Take notes about each story on a separate sheet of paper. I may ask to see your notes throughout the project.

### **STEP 3: Build your Works Cited page using MLA guidelines.**

YES \_\_\_\_\_

### **STEP 4: Read the stories several times.**

YES \_\_\_\_\_

### **STEP 5: Begin your inquiry.**

YES \_\_\_\_\_

### **STEP 6: Write an essay.**

- ☐ Cover page
- ☐ Three page essay
- ☐ Works Cited page
- ☐ Typewritten / Double-spaced
- ☐ Times New Roman at font size 12
- ☐ Stapled in the upper left hand corner

# Mythology: Assignment Log

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## Assignment Log

Journal Entries	Due Date	Grade
1. Introduction Exercise		
2. Creation Story		
3. Importance of Creation Stories		
4. Norse Cosmogony Children's Book		
5. Ways of Interpreting Myth		
6. Laughter		
7. Oral Tradition		
8. Trickster Animal Story / Modern Trickster		
9. Heroes		
10. Evil		
11. Love		
12. Death / Life		
13. Primitive Mind		
14. Honor		
15. The Problem of Modern Man		

Unit Tests		
1. Cosmogonies		
2. Trickster Tales		
3. The Epic of Gilgamesh		
4. Final Exam: Inquiry Project		
5. Final Exam: Objective Test		

Extra Credit / Other Assignments		
1.		
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A current copy of this sheet will be posted in the classroom.