Discussion Post Drafts

## Introduction

Hi, my name is Jaiden, pronouns she/her and I’m from Hamilton, AL. I’m a computer engineering major currently interning at Siemens but would love to go back later to school for law. I’ve always enjoyed mythology so hope to just learn more about it in general and get a more in depth look into it. A little about me, I own 4 cats though only really claim 2 as mine. My favorite breed of dog is huskies and hope to have one later in life. I’m a huge MCU fan and spend way too much time on TikTok and keeping up with anything related to the media. I usually spend my free time playing League or going out to see a movie. Below is a picture of me from my recent trip to Biloxi.

## What is Myth

2. The show Westworld holds a few insights that can be taken from watching it. Most notably is the metaphysical insight of what it means to be human and the psychological insight of how to become a mature human being. As the show starts, we follow a number of hosts or robots around the park as they interact with the guests. The show depicts the guests as being more inhuman as they basically live in a world without rules. As the show progresses, the hosts start to deviate from the programming until they end up becoming as unpredictable as the humans. What’s referred to as the maze, is the journey a host takes in order to reach self-awareness or consciousness that being what’s at the center of the maze. From the book in reference to the alligator in the sewers story, “psychologist tells us that an intricate maze like this represents our unconscious hopes and fears as we struggle to become mature human beings.” In the case of Westworld, there is the hope of freedom that comes with gaining self-awareness, a certain free will and the fear is that on the way the humans themselves will stop them. While they may not be trying to become mature human beings in same sense we tend to think about they are trying to achieve a certain human like quality to same the basis that we live today.

Another part of human nature that the show really talks about is the tendency towards violence that humans have, in this case it depicts the violence as something that humans inherently have. The hosts pick up on this as the gain conscious and their own violence is viewed as a response to the violence they received, making their actions seem apart of human development. One more thing the show touches on is the limitations humans have as we find out in season 2 that the entire park was just a sociological experiment for the company to understand how to code humanity so that they could achieve immortality.

## Understanding Myth

Various people study myth for different reasons. “There is more to mythology than false stories.” Myths provide information to crucial elements in human existence. Historians, archeologists, and anthropologist can all use myths to “reconstruct what happened to a particular people, country, period, or individual.” Using the myths told by the people or group you are studying can help historians piece together what may have been going on at a certain time, how the people lived, or what happened to them. Anthropologist could figure out their social construct, beliefs, or cultural development and archeologists could better identify tools that may have been used by the people or get a better idea of the exact location or area the people inhabited.

I’m interested in studying myth because I have always found the stories interesting and honestly just love to learn. I found the idea of earlier people using these gods and goddesses to explain how the world came about or how the world worked genuinely fascinating. The evolution of having multiple gods/goddesses to the western idea of only having one is also something I’ve found interesting to look at. Its also always cool to learn that something you’ve always known the name for actually took its name from an aspect of mythology, such as Nike who was a goddess of victory in Greek mythology.

## Hesiod

Greek culture “emphasized logic and championed the idea of impartial, rational observation of the natural world.” (Khan Academy) It would then make sense to the Greeks since they already knew that birth was the creation of life to then explain and accept the creation of the world as having also been birthed. This thought can be seen as Hesiod explains birth or creation by switching between asexual and sexual reproduction in order to tell the creation myth. “Without pleasant love”, is a key phrase which suggests asexual reproduction whereas, “And then she lay with Heaven”, she being the earth suggests sexual reproduction.

True to life means that something is presented in a realistic and natural way. Creation by birth is true to life because its not a wild assumption or thought that these gods were birthed rather than just appearing. The first nine lines refer to Earth as being more of a place and creation being caused by asexual reproduction which allows a sort of cycle to appear in the poem. That cycle being Chaos just existing in the beginning of the poem and then its birth or creation being explained as the result of Ouranos’s castration, the separation of heaven and earth.

## Native American

I will be comparing the Navajo, Zuni, and Hopi creation myths. “In the Navajo myth as in other Native American stories we have been considering, creation is a gradual process of development that culminates in emergence from a lesser world beneath the earth.” This can be seen as the people or creatures that we follow throughout the story encounter four worlds each better than the last and as they travel they themselves change. The Zuni and Navajo creation myths (I didn’t include Hopi as we aren’t given much on it) also emphasize balance and harmony. The people in the Zuni myth are working “to find where the middle is” which refers to the harmony and balance in life that we work to achieve. The people in the Navajo creation myth are all about harmony and balance as they are kicked out of each world because they couldn’t live with each other in the first world or the others that were already present in the next world.

Another thing all three stories have in common is the emphasis on the number four. Multiple times we see that the people stopped in a place for four days or nights, maturity was reached in four days, and there were four worlds that each group had to go through before reaching the final world. This is because four is a sacred number that represents a number of things to Native Americans. Some of those being the fours seasons, stages of life, compass points, and human needs amongst a number of other things.

## Uganda & Nigeria

Both stories explain how death came to be apart of human’s lives. In both cases, it is because the people did not heed the words of the sky god. In the first story, the sky god tells them “if you forget anything, don’t come back to fetch it” to which Kintu returns anyway and ends up bringing Warumbe (death) back with him to Uganda. In the second story, the people never got the sky god’s initial message but even after hearing it, refused to listen because they were lazy and because of this death stayed in Nigeria.

The stories differ in how death is portrayed and what explanation or emphasis it has on a specific aspect of their respective cultures. In the Uganda story, death is personified and something that the people fear as it’s because of the children’s fear of death that causes them to make noise. The breaking of the silence allowed death to continue to hide and kill. To me it seems in this story, that Kintu resigned himself to the fact that death wasn’t going anywhere and in order to combat him, the goal was to populate faster than he could kill. This could put emphasis on the people of Uganda’s want for children or could be an explanation for polygamy which is legal there.

In the Nigeria story, death seems to be a part of the cycle of human life that just hasn’t show up before and has no tangibility to it. The humans don’t become immortal because of laziness and refusal to do what could be considered the ritual to achieve immortality. I think this story tries to put emphasis on death rituals so that one doesn’t truly die and goes to the afterlife. I think it could be interpreted as an example of why you should now do said death rituals because if you are lazy and don’t then said person will truly die.

## Mesoamerica: Popul Vuh discussion

In the Popul Vuh, we see gender plays an important role in power and balance synonymous with the Mayan’s beliefs. In the Popul Vuh, in response to how much knowledge the first four males had the gods created women, “and then their wives and women came into being”. For some communities it was required to be married in order for the man to gain political power. In the case of the Popul Vuh, having wives is what limited the male’s power to surpass their gods. Mayans placed themselves into categories using complementary pairings one being male and female. For some in order to be complete or have balance you need to be married because of this you could view husband and wife as being one unit. An example of this in the Popul Vuh is Xpiyacoc and Xmucance both being referred to as Grandmother, even though Xpiyacoc is male, “Grandmother of Day, Grandmother of Light.” Another example of this is the use of corn as being one of the ingredients used to make humans. Corn has both male and female parts and corn is not mature until it has both parts present, in other words corn is not corn if it just has the male part it needs the female part to become whole.

## Ragnarök

Ragnarök is a battle that takes place among several pairs of enemies that annihilate each other. (pg.204) it is the result of natural causes such as harsh winters and earthquakes and warfare among the gods. In my opinion, the new gods are the winners of the battle as it’s the sons of Odin and Thor that survive, along with Baldr and Hod returning from Hel or death. These new gods seem to not want to conduct destructive wars with each other or monsters, thus probably preventing another big destruction of the world. The old gods lose because their time is up and all their older wars between their enemies have finally reached a tipping point.

Ragnarök tells us that to the Norse the end didn’t really mean the end and that life was a cycle. As in Ragnarök, after everything was destroyed a new earth was formed with a brighter sun. As mentioned before Baldr and Hod return from death furthering showing another rebirth. There is also emphasis on dying as a warrior as those are the men who after the battle will go on to live in a great hall, which is also another example of cyclic life. (pg.209)

Used these two sites to confirm the warrior belief: here and here

Used this site to help with beliefs it shows: here

## Here /w Thousand Faces

According to Campbell’s analysis, the entire journey except the meeting with a goddess or temptress is gendered male. Campbell’s theories that he draws upon represent the experience of men with female heroes being the slight distortion to the pattern he has been/is describing in this chapter. (pg. 222) I don’t remember see anything about it specifically, but I think another reason the hero’s journey is gendered male is because in a lot of cultures, the boys would have to prove themselves as men which could be seen as a hero’s journey.

However, as this is just a pattern or type of framework observed in stories and myths over the years, in my opinion, the hero’s journey is not specifically gendered male or female at all. While the hero’s journey is generally associated with having a male protagonist, I believe today this is mainly due to media portrayal and an objection in some cases to having female hero stories. A hero’s journey can be seen in all facets of life and doesn’t have to be as grand or epic as the stories and myths you encounter. One example is this story, which can be found here, breaking down how going to the gym fits the hero’s journey.

## Ramayana

One difference with beliefs in American society is that of reincarnation. For the most part, American’s believe in one life, or life after death. Another difference is the goals that guide humans in activities. In the Ramayana, the people, specifically Rama, have dharma, artha, karma, and moksa to guide them. (pg. 279) In my limited knowledge, it seems to me these ideals are mutually agreed upon as to what they are. In American society, I wouldn’t say we have a name to the ideals that we should follow the same way as it’s listed on pg. 279. We do have legal law which dictates some legal behavior for us, and we have some agreed upon morals as to what is good and bad etc., but for the most part though, I would say things like that are learned by our core institutions: education, family, religion, government, and economy. I would also argue that a lot of times, not all the time, that money and economy guide humans a lot more in American society but maybe that is a just a stereotype of American society. One belief, that I think could be said as being shared in American society and classical Hinduism at least is that of karma. In American society, the word karma is used to mean the result of your actions will have consequences whether good or bad depends on what you did. Karma for the Hindu’s is when the soul is reborn after death to a better or worse station in life based upon dharma which is like a principle of justice in this case, or how we define karma. (pg. 274) While for the Hindu’s it doesn’t take place until after death, there is still the idea that you’ll get what’s coming to you at some point.

## Heroes

Baldr is the most favored son and person among the gods. He essentially represents the absolute that cannot survive in the world and is also named Baldr the Good (pg 304). Baldr has a terrible dream that threatens his life so Frigg exacts oaths from everything that they will not harm Baldr. However, Loki finds out that mistletoe did not take this oath and gives it to Hod, who is blind, and convinces him to throw it at Baldr, who dies until Ragnarök. The gods weep and give Baldr what is today known as the Vikings funeral.

I think this shows that even the Icelandic gods have their favorites amongst them and someone that they’re willing to “break all the rules for” essentially. I think it gave the gods a relatable quality as they took so much precaution in ensuring that Baldr wouldn’t be harmed, and then they took that for granted by constantly throwing things at him for amusement. It shows that even something the gods have that is good can be taken and they are subject to the same things we experience. Where humans would have generally cherished what they know to be good because they expect it to leave at some point, this feels like the god’s first interaction with that type of scenario, and we see that they messed up it up.

## The Mwindo Epic

The two easiest to spot ceremonies are that of the marriage between Iyangura and Mukiti (pg 352) and the passing of chiefdom from Sheimwindo to Mwindo (pg 380). In the marriage ceremony, we see that the two cannot be married until Mukiti obtains the valuables needed to satisfy the bride dowry that Sheimwindo has asked for. This is why Sheimwindo also doesn’t want boys because then he’d have to give away things instead of receiving them. We also see that to complete the wedding ceremony, the husband and wife feed each other. (pg 353). For the passing of chiefdom or kingship as it is referred to specifically in the book, we see Sheimwindo takes off himself a red dyed dress, two red belts, some expensive bracelets, a hat, more belts, and a hide. These are all items associated with being a chief. Mwindo also received another scepter and some items that had the royal emblems on them. There is also a note in the book that the kikoka plant is used for magical ceremonies; however, there is not more information into the specifics of such a ceremony.

## Raven

1. In what ways do tricksters mediate between gods and men? Why do you think tricksters take the side of humans?
2. Tricksters can be both creators and destroyers. When and why?
3. What do you think these trickster stories say about the uses and character of cunning intelligence? (Can intelligence be both good and evil? When and why?)

## African and African American Tricksters

## Prometheus

## Demeter and Persephone

## Isis and Osiris

## Heracles and Dionysius

## Man and His symbols

## How to perform a Jungian analysis

## Grimm’s Household Tales

## Cupid and Psyche

## Building the Myth

## Stagecoach and Firefly

## Vampire as Hero: Undead in Contemporary Tales

## Poetry and Myth

## The Yellow Woman

## Narrative and Myth

## Final Discussion