

= Cultural depictions of spiders =

Throughout history , there have been many cultural depictions of spiders in popular culture , mythology and in symbolism . From Greek mythology to African folklore , the spider has been used in human culture to represent many varied things , and endures into the present day with characters such as Shelob from The Lord of the Rings and Spider @-@ Man from the eponymous comic series . The spider has symbolized patience and persistence due to its hunting technique of setting webs and waiting for its prey to become ensnared . It is also a symbol of mischief and malice for its toxic venom and the slow death it causes , which is often seen as a curse . In addition , the spider has inspired creations from an ancient geoglyph to a modern steam @-@ punk spectacle .

Although not all spiders spin webs to hunt prey , numerous cultures attribute this ability with the origin of spinning , textile weaving , basketry , knotwork and net making . Web @-@ spinning has also associated the spider with creation myths because they seemingly can secrete their own artistic worlds . Spiders have been the focus of fears , stories and mythologies of various cultures for centuries . Philosophers often use the spider 's web as a metaphor or analogy ; and today , terms such as the Internet or World Wide Web evoke the inter @-@ connectivity of a spider web .

= = In folklore and mythology = =

The spider , along with its web , is featured in mythological fables , cosmology , artistic spiritual depictions , and in oral traditions throughout the world since ancient times .

In Ancient Egypt , the spider was associated with the goddess Neith in her aspect as spinner and weaver of destiny , this link continuing later through the Babylonian Ishtar and the Greek Athena , who was later equated as the Roman goddess Minerva .

The most notable ancient legend that explains the origin of the spider comes from the Greek story of the weaving competition between Athena the goddess , and Arachne , sometimes described as a princess . This story may have originated in Lydian mythology ; but the myth , briefly mentioned by Virgil in 29 BC , is known from the later Greek mythos after Ovid wrote the poem Metamorphoses between the years AD 2 and 8 . The Greek Arachne (??????) means " spider " , and is the origin of Arachnida , the spiders ' Class in taxonomy .

This myth tells of Arachne , the daughter of a famous Tyrian purple wool dyer in Hypaepa of Lydia . Due to her father 's skill with cloth dyeing , Arachne became adept in the art of weaving . Eventually , she began to consider herself to be a greater weaver than the goddess Athena herself , and challenged the goddess to a weaving contest to prove her superior skill . Athena wove the scene of her victory over Poseidon that had earned her the patronage of Athens , while Arachne wove a tapestry featuring many episodes of infidelity among the Gods of Olympus , which angered Athena . The goddess conceded that Arachne 's weaving was flawless , but she was infuriated by the mortal 's pride . In a final moment of anger , Athena destroyed Arachne 's tapestry and loom with her shuttle and cursed Arachne to live with extreme guilt . Out of sadness , Arachne soon hanged herself . Taking pity on her , Athena brought her back to life transformed as a spider , using the poison aconite ; " ? and ever since , Arachne , as a spider , weaves her web . "

The scholar Robert Graves proposed Ovid 's tale may have its roots in the commercial rivalry between the Athenian citizenry of Greece and that of Miletus on the isle of Crete in Asia Minor , which flourished around 2000 BC . In Miletus , the spider may have been an important figure ; seals with spider emblems have been recovered there .

In African mythology , the spider is personified as a creation deity Anansi , and as a trickster character in African traditional folklore . There are many variations of the name including Kwaku Ananse of the Ashanti in West Africa (his original name) and anglicized as Aunt Nancy (or Sister Nancy) in the West Indies and some other parts of the Americas . Stories of Ananse became such a prominent and familiar part of Ashanti oral culture that the word Anansesem ? " spider tales " ? came to embrace all kinds of fables . This fed into the Anansi toree or " spider tales " ; stories that were brought over from Africa and told to children of Maroon people and other Africans in the diaspora . These tales are allegorical stories that teach a moral lesson .

North American cultures have traditionally depicted spiders . The Native American Lakota people 's oral tradition also includes a spider @-@ trickster figure , which is known by several names . As chronicled in the legend of The " Wasna " (Pemmican) Man and the Unktomi (Spider) , a man encounters a hungry spider family , and the hero Stone Boy is tricked out of his fancy clothes by Unktomi , a trickster spider figure . The spider is also present as the deity Iktomi , which is occasionally depicted in this form . In Native American mythology , the spider is also seen in the legend about the birth of the constellation Ursa Major . The constellation was seen as seven men transformed into stars and climbing to paradise by unrolling a spider 's web . The Hopi have the creation myth of Spider Grandmother . In this story , Spider Grandmother thought the world into existence through the conscious weaving of her webs . Spider Grandmother also plays an important role in the creation mythology of the Navajo , and there are stories relating to Spider Woman in the heritage of many Southwestern native cultures as a powerful helper and teacher .

The South American Moche people of ancient Peru worshiped nature ; they placed emphasis on animals and often depicted spiders in their art . The people of the Nazca culture created expansive geoglyphs , including a large depiction of a spider on the Nazca plain in southern Peru . The purpose or meaning of the so @-@ called " Nazca lines " is still uncertain .

Spiders are depicted in Indigenous Australian art , in rock and bark paintings , and for clan totems . Spiders in their webs are associated with a sacred rock in central Arnhem Land on the Burnungku clan estate of the Rembarrnga / Kyne people . Their totem design is connected with a major regional ceremony , providing a connection with neighboring clans also having spider totems in their rituals . Nareau , the Lord Spider , created the universe , according to the traditional Cosmology of Oceania 's Kiribati islanders of the Tungaru archipelago (Gilbert Islands) ; similarly , Areop @-@ Enap (" Old Spider ") plays an important part in the creation myth of the traditional Nauru islanders of Micronesia . In the Philippines , there is a Visayan folk tale version of The Spider and the Fly which explains why the spider hates the fly .

The Tsuchigumo (translated as " Earth spiders ") of Japan , is a mythical , supernatural creature faced by the legendary Minamoto no Raiko . Depending on the version of the story , the Tsuchigumo was able to take the visage of either a boy or a woman . In one version , while on a search for a mythical giant skull , Minamoto is lured to a house and placed in an illusion created by a Tsuchigumo in the guise of a young boy . However , after suspecting foul play , Minamoto breaks this illusion by striking out at him with his sword . Minamoto then discovers himself as actually being covered in a spider 's web , and after tracking him down , learns that the boy is in reality , a giant spider Tsuchigumo .

Another Japanese mythological spider figure is the Jor?gumo (" prostitute spider ") which is portrayed as being able to transform into a seductive woman . In some instances , the Jor?gumo attempts to seduce and perhaps marry passing samurai . In other instances she is venerated as a goddess dwelling in the J?ren Falls who saves people from drowning . Her name also refers to a golden orb @-@ spider species *Nephila clavata* (Jor? @-@ gumo , or Jor? spider) .

An Islamic oral tradition holds that during the Hijra , the journey from Mecca to Medina , Muhammad and his companion Abu Bakr were being pursued by Quraysh soldiers , and they decided to take refuge in the Cave of Thawr . The tale goes on to say that Allah commanded a spider to weave a web across the opening of the cave . After seeing the spider 's web , the Quraysh pass the cave by , since Muhammad 's entry to the cave would have broken the web . Since then , it has been held in many Muslim traditions that a spider is , if not holy , then it is at least to be respected . A similar story occurs in the Jewish tradition , where it is David who is being chased by King Saul . David hides in a cave , and Saul and his men do not bother to search the cave because while David was hiding inside , a spider had spun a web over the mouth of the cave .

The 10th Century Saint Conrad of Constance is sometimes represented as a bishop holding a chalice with a spider . According to this story , while he was celebrating Easter Mass , a spider fell into the chalice . Ignoring the commonly @-@ held belief of the time that all or most spiders were poisonous ; as a token of faith , Conrad nevertheless drank the wine with the spider in it .

For King Robert the Bruce of Scotland , the spider is depicted as an inspirational symbol , according to an early 14th century legend . The legend tells of Robert the Bruce 's encounter with a spider

during the time of a series of military failures against the English . One version tells that while taking refuge in a cave on Rathlin Island , he witnesses a spider continuously failing to climb its silken thread to its web . However , due to perseverance the spider eventually succeeds , demonstrating that , " if at first you don 't succeed , try , try and try again " . Taking this as being symbolic of hope and perseverance , Bruce came out of hiding and eventually won Scotland 's independence .

= = In philosophy = =

In the Vedic philosophy of India , the spider is depicted as hiding the ultimate reality with the veils of illusion . The Vedic god Indra is referred to as *Ṛakṣas* in Buddhism , or with the title *Devānām Indra* . Indra 's net is used as a metaphor for the Buddhist concept of interpenetration , which holds that all phenomena are intimately connected . Indra 's net has a multifaceted jewel at each vertex , and each jewel is reflected in all of the other jewels .

As related in the book , *Vermeer 's Hat* by historian Timothy Brook :

When Indra fashioned the world , he made it as a web , and at every knot in the web is tied a pearl . Everything that exists , or has ever existed , every idea that can be thought about , every datum that is true ? every dharma , in the language of Indian philosophy ? is a pearl in Indra 's net . Not only is every pearl tied to every other pearl by virtue of the web on which they hang , but on the surface of every pearl is reflected every other jewel on the net . Everything that exists in Indra 's web implies all else that exists .

= = In literature = =

The epic poem *Metamorphoses* , written by Ovid two millennia ago , includes the metamorphosis of Arachne . This was retold in Dante Alighieri 's depiction as the half @-@ spider Arachne in the 2nd book of his *Divine Comedy* , *Purgatorio* . In the 16th @-@ century Chinese folk novel , *Wu Cheng 'en 's Journey to the West* , the buddhist monk Xuánzàng 's odyssey includes being trapped in a spider 's cave and bound by beautiful women and many children , who are transformations of spiders .

In the 15th century , the French king Louis XI acquired the nickname " the universal spider " (*l'universelle aragne*) , from Georges Chastelain , a chronicler of the dukes of Burgundy , referring to the king 's tendency to implement schemes and plans during his contention with Burgundy and the following conflicts with Charles the Bold .

The spider gained an evil reputation from the 1842 Biedermeier novella by Jeremias Gotthelf , *The Black Spider* . In this allegorical tale which was adapted to various media , the spider symbolizes evil works and represents the moral consequences of making a pact with the devil .

Spiders recur in themes for works by J. R. R. Tolkien . Tolkien included giant spiders in his 1937 book *The Hobbit* where they roamed Mirkwood attacking and sometimes capturing the main characters . The character of Ungoliant is featured as a spider @-@ like entity , and as a personification of Night from his earliest writings . In *The Lord of the Rings* , the spider takes its form as the menacing giant spider Shelob , and was featured in the film adaption of the last book of the *Lord of the Rings* series . Although described as giant spiders , Tolkien gave them fictional attributes such as compound eyes , beaks and the spinning of black webs . He also resurrected the Old English words *cob* and *lob* for " spider " .

More recently , giant spiders have featured in books such as the 1998 fantasy novel *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J. K. Rowling . This book was later followed by a motion picture of the same name , using the giant spider Aragog from the novel as a supporting character and pet of grounds keeper , Hagrid . In *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* , a book about many of the creatures within the *Harry Potter* universe , these giant spiders are also known as *Acromantulas* .

The 1952 children 's novel *Charlotte 's Web* written by E. B. White , is notable in its portrayal of the spider in a positive manner as a heroine rather than an object of fear or horror .

Atlach @-@ Nacha is the creation of Clark Ashton Smith and first appeared in his short story " *The Seven Geases* " (1934) . Atlach @-@ Nacha resembles a huge spider with an almost @-@ human

face . In the story , Atlach @-@ Nacha is the reluctant recipient of a human sacrifice given to it by the toad @-@ god Tsathoggua .

The spider is also found in modern children 's tales . The nursery rhymes Itsy Bitsy Spider and Little Miss Muffet have spiders as focal characters . The poem " The Spider and the Fly " (1829) by Mary Howitt is a cautionary tale of seduction and betrayal which later inspired a 1949 film and a 1965 Rolling Stones song , each sharing the same title , as well as a 1923 cartoon by Aesop Fables Studio .

The poet Walt Whitman describes a ballooning spider in his 1868 poem , A Noiseless Patient Spider :

= = = In comics and manga = = =

In graphic novels , spiders are often adapted by superheroes or villains as their symbols or alter egos due to the arachnid 's strengths and weaknesses . One of the most notable characters in comic book history has taken his identity from the spider , the Marvel comic book hero Spider @-@ Man . Peter Parker was accidentally bitten by a radioactive spider and then , as Spider @-@ Man , was able to scale tall buildings and shoot web fluid from a device attached to his wrist . Along with these abilities , came super senses and instant reflexes . Writer Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko originated this franchise . Due to the character 's popularity , Spider @-@ Man appeared in movies and various other media . In addition to Spider @-@ Man , the Marvel universe included several new characters using the spider as their patron ; including Spider @-@ Woman , Spider @-@ Girl , the Scarlet Spider , Venom , Araña , Black Widow , and Tarantula . The DC Comics universe also include characters named Spider Girl and Tarantula .

Many other comic book , manga and anime characters have taken the guise of a spider , such as Black Spider from the Batman universe ; in the Pokémon franchise , Spinarak and Ariados are similar to spiders in shape . In the Static Shock series , Anansi the Spider takes his name and techniques from the African trickster god . In the second season of the anime based on the manga Kuroshitsuji , one main antagonist , the demon butler Claude Faustus , has spider @-@ like qualities and powers . He is also capable of transforming into a spider and making webs .

In the manga The Saga of Darren Shan , the titular character is fascinated by spiders . He kept them as pets until he killed one that he got when he was nine years old . He used to let them go into his mouth and he 'd imagine them eating him from the inside out . Normally , the spiders would stay with him for about a day or two , but some lasted longer . Later on , we find out that he can communicate with spiders .

= = In film and television = =

Spiders have been present for many decades both in film and on television , predominantly in the horror genre . Those who suffer from arachnophobia , an acute fear of spiders , become particularly horrified . The spider web is used as a motif to adorn dark passageways , depicting the recesses of the unknown . Many horror films have featured the spider , including 1955 's Tarantula , exploiting America 's fear of atomic radiation during the nuclear arms race , The 1967 Godzilla film Son of Godzilla featured a spider kaiju named Kumonga (also known occasionally as " Spiga " in English) and another version of Kumonga featured in 2004 's Godzilla : Final Wars. the 1975 low @-@ budget cult film The Giant Spider Invasion , and Kingdom of the Spiders , a 1977 film starring William Shatner , depicting the consequence of hungry spiders deprived of their natural food supply due to pesticides . The fear of spiders culminates in Arachnophobia , a 1990 movie in which spiders multiply in large numbers .

On the other hand , a person who admires spiders is referred to as an " arachnophile " ; such as Virginia , an orphan who likes to play spider games in the black comedy horror B movie , Spider Baby .

The 1999 film Wild Wild West features a giant mechanical spider . Experiments with spiders in space tend to go horribly wrong , as with a DNA experiment on board a NASA space shuttle in the

2000 film *Spiders* , or mutant spiders from a derelict Soviet space station in the 2013 film *Spiders 3D* . Before there were *Snakes on a Plane* (2006) , there were spiders on a plane in *Tarantulas : The Deadly Cargo* (1977) . Radiation and spiders once again combine to wreak havoc in the 2002 film *Eight Legged Freaks* , this time due to nuclear waste .

Several books featuring spiders have been adapted to film , including *The Lord of the Rings : The Return of the King* featuring Shelob and *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* with Aragog the Acromantula . Charlotte 's positive portrayal of a spider character can be seen in two full @-@ length feature versions of *Charlotte 's Web* . The first *Charlotte 's Web* was a Hanna @-@ Barbera musical animation released in 1973 , followed by a live @-@ action 2006 film version of the original story . Furthermore , spider characters have crawled out of the pages of comic books and onto the big screen , most notably the *Spider @-@ Man* film adaptations .

In Ingmar Bergman 's 1961 Swedish film adaptation *Through a Glass Darkly* , the psychotic Karin believes she has an encounter with God as a spider . Surreal spider imagery , symbolism and themes are featured prominently in the 2013 psychological thriller *Enemy* ; director Denis Villeneuve 's film adaptation of the novel *The Double* by José Saramago .

On television , the 1990 miniseries *Stephen King 's It* is based on his novel *It* , where the true form of Pennywise the Dancing Clown resembles a monstrous spider . The character Kamen Rider Leangle from the 2004 Japanese TV show *Kamen Rider Blade* has a motif based on the onigumo spider .

Spider themes are also featured in early film history . Fritz Lang 's 1919 and 1920 *The Spiders* series were considered lost films , until these two parts of the action @-@ adventure serial episodes were restored in 1978 from rediscovered original prints . In this adventure , a spider was the calling @-@ card for " *The Spiders* " criminal organization . *Pan Si Dong* (1927) , ??? , (*The Cave of the Silken Web*) was a film adaptation of the classic tale of Xuánzàng 's encounter from a chapter of the 16th century Great Classical Novel , *Journey to the West* , and was remade as a 1967 Hong Kong cinema production .

The *Ghost in The Shell* manga by Masamune Shirow prominently features spider @-@ like , AI @-@ equipped , multi @-@ legged combat vehicles called Fuchikoma (evolving into the Tachikoma , Uchikoma and Logicoma in subsequent anime versions of the series) . These mobile weapons platforms are used by the members of Section 9 to aid in their various missions . In real life , Shirow is known to keep numerous spiders as pets .

= = In music = =

The Rolling Stones adapted themes from Mary Howitt 's poem in their 1965 song " *The Spider and the Fly* " . Released in 1966 , " *Boris the Spider* " was the first song written by John Entwistle for The Who , and became a staple of their live concerts . " *Spiderwebs* " became a hit for No Doubt in 1995 . Alice Cooper 's 2008 concept album , *Along Came a Spider* is about a fictitious serial killer known as ' *Spider* ' , who wraps his victims in silk and cuts off one of their legs in order to create his own eight @-@ legged arachnoid . *The Spiders from Mars* was a backing band with Mick Ronson , actually from Hull , for David Bowie .

= = Other depictions = =

Information technology terms such as the " *web spider* " (or " *web crawler* ") and the World Wide Web imply the spider @-@ like connection of information accessed on the Internet .

A dance , the tarantella , refers to the spider *Lycosa tarantula* .

Giant spider sculptures (11 feet tall and 22 feet across) described as " looming and powerful protectresses , yet are nurturing , delicate , and vulnerable " and a " favorite with children " have been found in Washington DC , Denver CO , and elsewhere . Even larger sculptures are found in places like Ottawa and Zürich . These sculptures , two series of six by Louise Bourgeois , can be seen at the National Gallery of Art , Denver Art Museum , London 's Tate Modern and in a few other select sculpture gardens . The larger series is titled *Maman* and the other simply titled *Spider* . One

Spider sold at a Christie 's auction house for over \$ 10 million .

A four @-@ day performance art spectacle in Liverpool (September 2008) featured La Princesse by the French performance art company La Machine . This giant steam @-@ punk spider climbed walls , stalked the streets and sprayed unwary citizens while in search of a nest .

= = = Games and toys = = =

Giant spiders appear in several role @-@ playing video games , such as Lolth , the Spider Queen of Dungeons & Dragons , and the first edition of Warcraft , where spiders are described as being " of staggering size ? perhaps 15 feet around ? with great furred body . " In the Metroid series of video games , spider @-@ shaped foes are common , with the trilogy 's antagonist , Metroid Prime , having a spider @-@ like Metroid as her primary physical form . The trilogy also includes the Ing , antagonists of Echoes , whose warrior forms resemble spiders , albeit with five legs rather than eight . Atlach @-@ Nacha is an H @-@ game centered on a spider demon disguising herself as a human . In The Legend of Zelda series , giant spiders are a frequent foe . In particular , Ocarina of Time features large spiders named Skulltulas , and Twilight Princess has an enormous spider boss . A spider @-@ like creature named Muffet is featured in the 2015 video game Undertale . She will attack the player if they did not buy anything from her bakesale in Hotland , but will spare the player if they bought from a bakesale in the Ruins early in the game .

In the Lego toylane Bionicle series , the Visorak horde is a species consisting of six spider @-@ like breeds . They are created by the Brotherhood of Makuta to conquer islands ; they possess mutagenic venom and spin sticky green webs . In the Transformers franchise , Tarantulas and Blackarachnia are both Predacons that turn into giant spiders . Blackarachnia , being part biological , has venom that paralyzes other Transformers and she is capable of spinning webs .

= = = Sports = = =

Notable athletes with spider nicknames include Olympic skier " Spider " Sabich , so named by his father due to his long , thin arms and legs as a baby , and UFC Middleweight Champion Anderson " The Spider " Silva who was dubbed " Brazil 's Spiderman " by an announcer who thought he looked like a superhero in the ring . Spider mascots are associated with the Cleveland Spiders baseball team and the San Francisco Spiders hockey team .

= = = Modern myths and urban legends = = =

Huntsman spiders are large and swift , often eliciting arachnophobic reactions from susceptible people , and are the subject of many superstitions , exaggerations and myths . The banana spider myth claims that the Huntsman spider lays its eggs in banana flower blossoms , resulting in spiders inside the tip of bananas , waiting to terrorize an unsuspecting consumer . This is supposed to explain why monkeys allegedly peel bananas from the " wrong " end . Another example is the clock spider urban legend from around 2002 . A discussion was started on an Internet message board based on pictures of an allegedly " clock @-@ sized " Sparassid (Huntsman) spider on a wall . That discussion , and its derivatives , lasted for several months .

According to another urban legend , daddy long legs (Pholcidae) have very potent venom , but their fangs are too short to deliver the poison . This myth might have arisen due to its similarity in appearance with the Brown recluse spider . In a 2004 episode of Discovery Channel 's Mythbusters , it was shown that host Adam Savage survived a bite from the spider .

A modern myth depicts a young woman who found out that her beehive hairdo was infested with Black widow spiders .

The Spider Bite legend emerged in Europe in the late 1970s . In most versions of this tale , a young vacationing female sunbather is bitten on the cheek by a spider . After seeking medical attention for the resultant swelling , hundreds of tiny spiders are discovered emerging from her lanced wound , which causes the victim to go insane .

An email hoax describes the attacks by the South American Blush Spider in public toilets . The alleged spider 's scientific name is Arachnius gluteus , where " gluteus " is supposed to mean " buttocks " (since there are muscles in the buttocks called gluteus maximus) , and " arachnius " is a made @-@ up word intended to mean " spider " . The hoax spider shares some characteristics with the two @-@ striped telamonia (Telamonia dimidiata) , and there is an updated version of the hoax using that name for the spider 's species , with the rest of the text left unchanged .